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*AMERICAN LITERATURE SERIES*

*HARRY HAYDEN CLARK, GENERAL EDITOR*

# A COLLEGE BOOK OF

# *American Literature*

EDITED BY

MILTON ELLIS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

LOUISE POUND
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

GEORGE WEIDA SPOHN
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH,
ST. OLAF COLLEGE

VOLUME II

*From the Middle of the Nineteenth Century to the Present*

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ELLIS, POUND, AND SPOHN'S
A COLLEGE BOOK OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, II

E. P. 5

MADE IN U. S. A.

# ~ *Preface* ~

IN THE preparation of this collection of material for survey courses in the study of American literature, the editors have kept in mind the following large objectives:

First, that the material included should represent, as fully and adequately as possible, the significant utterances of the spokesmen of our life since the first settlements within the limits of the United States. It has become increasingly apparent that if we would understand the deeper spirit of our people, their ideals and institutions, we must begin at the beginning with a study of the Puritan and pioneer attitudes and must gain some understanding of the controversies between the Federalists and Antifederalists which culminated in the formation of the Union and the Constitution. It is equally apparent that a chief interest of present-day students is in the many-sided expression of their own time as represented in the writings of very recent or still living authors with their frankly appreciative, experimental, or iconoclastic attitudes, and their wide range of literary forms. And between these chronological extremes there stands the lasting traditional interest in the supreme flowering of Romanticism, in the subsequent development of Realism, and in the recognition of the forces that brought about the so-called Machine Age. All the phases of our literary development have had careful consideration and an effort has been made to combine selections which embody reflections of the political and social history of the age with those which embody their authors' best literary art, without allowing either tendency to go to an extreme.

Second, balanced variety and allowance for many different emphases. It is recognized that, in accord with the marked diversity of critical approaches to American literature, individual teachers like to emphasize widely different aspects of the subject, and provision has been made to this end. It is much easier for one instructor to omit what he does not think important than for another instructor to have his students read material "outside" which he would prefer to have in the anthology. Whether it is wished to emphasize Puritanism, the Frontier, the Revolution, Romanticism, Realism, or Naturalism, and whatever one's critical preferences and approaches, most teachers will find the present work adequate. The editors have brought to the making of this book the practical results of long teaching experience which has shown them not only what students like and dislike but also what material lends itself to interesting, significant, and effective teaching.

Third, suggestive editorial work which results in a combination of anthology, literary history, and comprehensive guide to interpretation and critical reading. The long introductions to each of the main sections deal mainly with the back-

grounds out of which the literature grew. The sketches of individual authors are full enough to present the essential biographical and critical points. The bibliographies for each author, in addition to listing the usual general authorities, call attention to many of the special investigations which have enriched the study of our literature. Many headnotes offer, in unobtrusive fashion, suggestions that will help in pointing the way to a better understanding of some particular selections. There is also a minimum of footnote material where such material has seemed of value.

Fourth, an attempt to present the individual and distinctive literary theories and aims of authors as a basis for interpreting and judging their work. Paragraphs on literary theory are included as integral parts of about one hundred of the author-sketches, mainly of those after 1800, when writers became self-conscious craftsmen. The student is thus enabled to measure an author's artistic achievement and to appreciate the author in the light of his own literary standards.

The physical scope of the work allows a more liberal representation than usual of the modern American short story, of our recent poetry and critical writing, and of selected chapters from a large number of significant novels.

The date of publication is given in roman type at the end of selections; the date of writing, if earlier, is in italics.

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# *The Later Nineteenth Century*

# The Later Nineteenth Century

## 1850–1890

### I

After the Civil War a new America emerged, marked by internal reconstruction as well as by external growth and material changes. Some review of social and political conditions [1] is needed for comprehension of the new after-war literature, since these affect all forms of writing. Chief determining factors for the period were the sweeping westward movement of population, the growth of expansive industrial organization, the discoveries of mechanistic and other science, and changes in agriculture, these combining to transform conditions of living and to modify the national temper. The era as a whole was marked by political corruption, feverish speculation, the exploitation of natural resources, and a somewhat rococo taste in art and architecture. The bad days of post-war disillusionment proved to be no very auspicious time for culture and the intellectual life. The dominance of New England in the field of letters persisted, chiefly in the magazines, which dictated even more than they reflected the literary taste of the country; but it was a nerveless and imitative dominance, and this region did not regain its earlier prestige. The leading literary phenomenon of the later century was the rise of realism, which came partly as an outgrowth of Western humor and of the new emphasis on local color, and partly from the influence of fiction writers of continental Europe, such as Balzac, Zola, Flaubert, Turgenev, and others.

The Civil War was a definite turning point in American history. Signs of change had been evident before the armed conflict broke out, but the significance of the signs was not always fully recognized. The North and the South, as though caught in the clutches of malevolent fate, had drawn farther and farther apart because of sectional differences, real or imagined, and sometimes exaggerated, until they had drifted to the brink of war. Among these sectional differences was the increasing confidence of the South in its economic system as a result of the successful weathering of the Panic of 1857, which had been disastrous in the North. The semi-feudal traditions which were deeply rooted in Southern society, the clear-cut demarcations between the different social strata topped by the planter's aristocracy, had no counterpart in the industrial North and were not regarded there with understanding or sympathy. Educational and cultural ideals in the respective sections had little in common. Even the church and its teachings were affected by sectional

[1] The best comprehensive accounts are Allan Nevins's *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865–1878* (1927), and A. M. Schlesinger's *The Rise of the City, 1878–1898* (1933). Both have fine bibliographies which will serve as guides to further reading in the many-sided life of the period.

prejudices. With characteristic pride many Southerners looked upon themselves as descendants of superior stock and resented the prospect of being dominated by the socially inferior "Puritans" of the North. By 1861 the situation resembled that of two suspicious nations watching each other across the line of the frontier. Although the signs became clearer as the conflict progressed, their implications for the future were only vaguely understood, and at the time of Lee's surrender at Appomattox no one could anticipate precisely in what direction the new course would tend. It is doubtful whether even the most thoughtful men realized how completely past conditions were to fade.

As is true for most wars, the issues were confused. In the North one heard much about free and slave labor and the preservation of the Union; in the South, about federal power and states' rights. Controversy over the status of new states and territories contributed to the cleavage. Basically the war was a struggle between two fundamentally different economic systems: the democratic agrarianism of the Southern planters on the one hand, and the rapidly developing industrialism of the republican North—a struggle that involved the change from a land economy to a money economy as the foundation of the coming economic set-up. The shift of the Western farmers, under Lincoln, from their natural affiliation with the Southern agrarians to a sixty-year alliance with the industrial East assured the victory of the North over the South in the war. The results [1] of these changes were far-reaching, extending beyond the bounds of industry, commerce, and other economic enterprises, into the realm of the cultural and spiritual life of the nation. Ultimately the optimistic, idealistic, romantic view of life which had characterized the first half of the nineteenth century yielded to the realistic spirit, with its increasing pessimism, a spirit still dominant in the first half of the present century.

## II

The steady westward movement of population with its shifting frontier was to be a factor of major national significance. The tide of emigration moved over the plains till the frontier had receded beyond the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. The movement had begun before the Civil War. Some of the best blood had been drained from New England and other eastern states before the Confederate guns had opened on Fort Sumter. Henceforth the role of the New Englander decreased in importance. The discovery of gold in California made it the Mecca of thousands, men of all races, types, and conditions, who endured all manner of hardships in the hope of sharing the new source of wealth. While the gold-seekers were concentrating on a mad rush to the west coast, the land-grabbers were threading their way across the Alleghenies to take possession of the intervening territory, especially the fertile valley of the Mississippi. After the war new land, made available by the

[1] Consult Paul Buck's *The Road to Reunion* (1937).

Homestead Act of 1862 as well as by easy purchase from the railroads to which the Government made vast grants, attracted thousands of discharged soldiers and other restless spirits with the lure of quick prosperity. The scramble for land and speculation in land lasted until free land was exhausted. The period was characterized also by the building of railroads. The first continental railway was completed in 1869. Four railroads crossed the continent by 1880, and soon railroads entered everywhere. Means of communication became easier and travel increased.[1]

Another factor which helped to change the national temper was the tide of immigration which swept into the country following the Civil War. Because of the rapid expansion of industrial enterprise native labor was inadequate for the demand, and the sure prospect of work, together with the activity of the steamship lines, induced immigrants from many lands to come to America. According to André Siegfried,[2] some 2,356,000 were admitted in the decade from 1860 to 1870, and 4,273,000 in that from 1880 to 1890. Among them were Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, Russians, and a sprinkling of others. It was only after strict immigration laws were passed (1907, 1924) that the flow ceased. The population, native and foreign, increased from thirty-one millions in 1860 to seventy-five millions in 1900.

This diffusion of diversified national blood had the inevitable result of changing the complexion of the American scene. At first the various groups remained largely by themselves, like patches of alien texture dotting the landscape, and continued to live for the most part in accordance with the folkways and culture which they had brought from their native lands. This clannish isolating tendency gradually disappeared as the immigrants became more and more used to American ways, but many of them remained and still remain conscious of their national origin. It was through this persisting loyalty to ancestral customs and culture that they were enabled to contribute their spiritual heritage to their adopted country and thereby to enrich American civilization. Many have risen to positions of leadership in politics, art, literature, science, and education. The record of American progress since 1865 is generously sprinkled with non-English names. Another phase of the enriching process is seen in the expansion of the social fabric, bringing greater and greater diversification of character and experience, a matter of great significance to the literary artist, as a comparison of two such novels as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* will show.

## III

Many economic changes were brought about by the Civil War. During the colonial period of our history agrarian interests were predominant. By the time of

[1] See William H. Clark's *Railroads and Rivers* (1939).

[2] *America Comes of Age* (1927). Translated from French by H. H. and Doris Hemming.

the Revolution, however, a mercantile group, although an inconsiderable minority, had developed sufficient power to influence the Constitution itself. But it was not until the newly born sovereign nation had passed the infantile period that industrialism, as such, began to challenge seriously the agrarian interests as an economic rival. Before 1850 it was evident that the economic future of the North lay in the realm of manufacture and industry, while the South remained more and more doggedly agricultural. Apparently the divergent economic interests could not be reduced to a common denominator.

The war left both sides in a seriously impaired condition. As an effect of the almost continuous campaigning within its territory and of later maltreatment, the South was prostrate; even the victorious North felt the pinch of strained finances and the temporary disruption of its industrial system. When peace finally came about, the most pressing task was the restoration of normal industrial activity in order to satisfy the peacetime demand for goods, and to begin as soon as possible to liquidate the enormous war debt. The dual task was made easier because of the industrial stimulus and development which resulted from wartime demands. It has been said that the war was won in Northern factories. The use of steadily improved machinery in turn made possible a steadily increasing rate of production. The wartime impetus and the peacetime demands carried a vigorous industrial program into the new era, and marked the beginning of almost unprecedented expansion. Once the strain and uncertainty of conflict lifted, all energies were focused upon economic rehabilitation. The stage was set for the next period, a period often referred to by a name coined by Mark Twain, the Gilded Age, though it also goes by others such as the Diffusive Period, the Frontier Period, the Age of Innocence, the Great Barbecue, the Wasted Generation, the Tragic Era, none of which is very satisfactory.

The Gilded Age, roughly speaking, extended from 1865 to 1890. It was a period marked by vast industrial expansion and further characterized by reckless and often inexcusably wasteful exploitation of natural resources, by huge investment of capital, the increasing use of machinery, and an ever-mounting speed of production. Companies were formed for great undertakings. Nation-wide corporations grew up. With an eye to profitable enterprise, the country set to work with every available means to convert all known resources into usable and therefore profit-producing commodities. The nation's resources of forest, coal, iron, copper, and oil were exploited.

From one standpoint the period might be called the age of steel and lumber, for these lay at the heart of the industrial enterprise and prosperity. With the discovery of oil in western Pennsylvania in 1859, the constantly improved methods of refining it and the growing multiplicity of its uses, as well as those of its by-products ranging from quack medicine to illumination and power, the oil industry rapidly

assumed national proportions. Before the Civil War the manufacture of steel was a slow and expensive process. For this reason production was limited, and its use confined largely to cutlery and high-grade tools. With the invention of the Bessemer process, introduced into America in 1864, both the production and the use of steel were revolutionized. The large scale output and less costly process were able to meet the insistent demands for steel caused by the rapid expansion of railroad lines and the growing use of machinery in manufacturing plants. As a result of this response to the requirements of a new age, mining and the conversion of crude ore into usable iron and steel also became a major industry. And while drilling machines and pumping towers dotted sections of the landscape in ever increasing numbers, and blast furnaces threw their lurid glare against the night sky throughout the cities and countryside of the East, the lumber industry was taking its toll of virgin forests, especially in the north Mississippi valley. Vast stretches of timberland were denuded with a reckless abandon and wastefulness which cannot be justified in the face even of a limitless plenty, a wastefulness so improvident that signs of depletion early pointed in the direction of an inescapable conservation program, if this resource is to meet the demands of the future. Among the new enterprises should be mentioned also the meat-packing industry, which took its place beside the oil, steel, and lumber interests; likewise the improved industries such as the manufacture of shoes and clothing on a scale that impressed foreign observers. The present purpose is not, however, to recount details of industrial and economic history, but rather to examine the effect which this period of industrialization had upon the temper and spirit of the people.

While industry was booming and laying the foundation of an unprecedented prosperity the farmers of the West and South fared less well. They were menaced by discriminative freight rates giving them unfair competition, were dependent on Eastern tradesmen and financiers regarding the prices of goods they produced and consumed, were without the advantages of such a tariff as protected manufactured articles, and were harassed by the foreclosure of mortgages. The Southern farmers, their land devastated by military campaigns, hampered by the lack of labor, victimized by reconstruction agencies, found rehabilitation slow and sometimes frustrated. To recapitalize their individual enterprises, to re-establish their shattered markets, and to secure the means of a respectable livelihood or a measure of economic security seemed nearly hopeless. A few attempts to assist the farmer were made, however. The Grange movement, founded in 1867, spread with rapidity, and endeavors were made through concerted effort to obtain legislation favorable to the farmer. During the nineties, a third party movement growing out of the widespread organization of the Farmer's Alliance resulted in the formation of the Populist Party[1] which brought considerable pressure to bear upon national affairs.

[1] See J. D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt* (1931).

## IV

The rapid expansion of industrial enterprise and the ready market for the ever-increasing variety of manufactured commodities made possible the acquisition of large profits. Aside from many legitimate methods of money-making, get-rich-quick schemes, speculation, and financial manipulation on a gigantic scale were resorted to. Instances are the Erie Railroad scandal, involving the watering of stock, and the Crédit Mobilier, a joint stock company organized in 1863 under the laws of Pennsylvania and reorganized in 1867 to build up the Union Pacific Railroad. It collapsed through scandal from charges of bribery of members of Congress. There was more than the usual friction between capital and labor. Strikes gave stimulus to the organization of labor unions. A group of men in 1881 formed a labor union which, five years later, was reorganized as the American Federation of Labor.[1] The movement was complicated by the tendency toward socialism and anarchism which in the Haymarket Riot in Chicago in 1886 resulted in the killing and wounding of several policemen and the subsequent hanging of a number of the rioters. The industrializing era is also responsible for the concentration of vast numbers of people in the cities and the consequent urbanization of a large part of the population. Since the factory system made it necessary that the workers live in centers of production, a steady drift of people from country to city, in place of the earlier exodus of town dwellers to the frontier, accompanied the industrial expansion. Thus cities became more numerous and larger. In 1860 the neighboring cities of New York and Brooklyn had a population of a million. Chicago, outstripping St. Louis, had by 1900 a population of upward of a million seven hundred thousand.

Along with the change from rural to urban environment there came also a change in the spiritual outlook and temper. Shorter and more regular hours of work, comforts and conveniences which only cities could provide, greater opportunities for social intercourse, means of entertainment, cultural advantages such as music and the drama, and a gradually growing sophistication gave the newly inducted city dwellers advantages over their country cousins who continued to live the same restricted lives that their ancestors had lived for generations. Rural and small town life was looked upon as narrow, culturally barren, and provincial. Further, the rise of capitalistic industrialism with its factory system resulted in the demarcation of classes and the growth of class feeling.

## V

Since the days of Franklin and Edwards, American scientists have made notable contributions to the organized knowledge of physical nature. Men like Asa Gray

[1] See J. R. Commons and Others, *History of Labor in the United States* (1918); F. T. Carlton, *Organized Labor in American History* (1920); and A. Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class* (1927).

the botanist, 1810–1888, won a permanent place in the annals of scientific achievement. As inhabitants of a new continent, beset with problems thrust upon them by a strange environment, Americans were intellectually hospitable to any and all increase of knowledge which might have a bearing upon the vicissitudes of life. They received gratefully the application of scientific principles to industry, the invention of devices to lighten human toil. The discoveries of mechanistic and other science and greater wealth improved standards of living. Use of the telegraph increased, and electric lighting, the telephone, steam heat, matches, elevators, and paved streets appeared or had wider use. On the other hand, when scientific studies challenged and apparently undermined long-received views, the acceptance of their conclusions was not so immediate or enthusiastic. Some of the implications suggested by the study of biology and geology which had a direct bearing upon human origins and destiny caused considerable perturbation. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which conflicted with orthodoxy, was read hesitantly and rejected or feared by many because of its implied attitude toward the traditional teachings of the church. Herbert Spencer applied the Darwinian theory of evolution to the study of sociology and psychology. Through his interpretations of various aspects, John Fiske, 1842–1901, philosopher and historian, presented a confident optimism grounded upon a new view of man's biological past and an expanding vision of his future, an optimism yielding later to a more pessimistic outlook. These two men and Edward Youmans, 1821–1887, who was the chief promoter of Spencer's publications in the United States, and who secured the establishment of the *Popular Science Monthly* in 1872, were largely instrumental in making the American mind science-conscious.[1]

The Gilded Age was not marked by high artistic or aesthetic taste. Domestic architecture implied lavish expenditure and sought impressiveness through size and ornamentation. A house built on massive proportions was looked on as a sign of financial stability, if not as a guarantee of social respectability. In many instances expenditure was carried to the point of absurdity. Exterior ornamentations, sometimes of wood, sometimes of metal, often of intricate pattern and design and exhibiting a multiplicity of pointless detail, deserved the name given them of "gingerbread decoration." In contrast with the beauty of simplicity and orderliness which characterized early American architecture and which has been to some extent restored in our day although on different lines, these creations of the Gilded Age are masterpieces of ill-advised complexity and disorder.

Not all its achievements were accepted without protest. Such books as Mark Twain's *The Gilded Age* (1873) and W. D. Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), read in the light of later perspective, are not mere representations of life

[1] See B. J. Loewenberg, "The Controversy over Evolution in New England, 1859–1873," *New England Quarterly*, VIII, 232–257; "Reaction of American Scientists to Darwinism," *American Historical Review*, XXXVIII, 687–701.

but are as well rather pointed criticism of some of its tendencies. Henry George, 1839–1897, and Henry Adams, 1838–1918, were the professed critics of the period and the philosophy of life which characterized it. In his *Progress and Poverty* (1879–1880) George attacked it from the economic side. The tendency in American life as he viewed it made inevitable an ever-widening gap between wealth and poverty, as civilization advances. His contention was that land with all that it provides for the well-being of man belonged to the people as a gift of nature and that every human being has a right to as much of this gift as is necessary for his happiness and well-being. Henry Adams, writing somewhat later, felt keenly the smothering influence of the time upon the cultural and intellectual life of the nation. Scion of a renowned New England family, an intellectual by heritage and preference, he found the atmosphere of his age hostile to his ideals. In his bewilderment he sought to find a satisfying philosophy of history and of life in various ways, such as the study of American history and biography, and the interpretation of mediaeval French mysticism as represented in *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*.

Two other trends deserve mention. Education gained in importance in the later century. Schools and colleges existed no longer merely for the clerical and learned professions but became more scientific and sought to give more emphasis to the practical, if not yet to the vocational. Education gained acceptance for women also. Oberlin opened its doors to women in 1835 and to coeducation on the college level in 1837, and it was the first institution to do so. Its example was followed in time by the state universities, and distinctive colleges for women, such as Vassar (1865) and Wellesley (1870), were founded.[1] By the end of the century the principle of feminine education was well established. Newspapers and popular magazines for home reading, for which this was a flourishing period, sprang into existence. *Harper's Magazine* (1850), the *Atlantic Monthly* (1857), *Scribner's Monthly* (1870), the *Century* (1881), these devoted to articles, essays, fiction, and travel sketches, competed in popularity and influence. The higher forms of literature became somewhat subordinated to science, popular interests, and the dissemination of news. The influence of the editorial, however, waned.

In the wake of great economic changes it was inevitable that the spirit of the people should change as well. Gone were the spacious idealistic pre-war days. The national mind tended as a whole toward continued and re-emphasized practicality. The measurement of industrial achievement in terms of profit focused attention on things rather than man. As interest in things became more pronounced, from romantic idealism with its confident optimism the pendulum slowly swung in the direction of artistic earthliness.

[1] See E. P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States* (1919, 1934), and Thomas Woody, *History of Women's Education in the United States* (1929).

## VI

The new age was to be chiefly an age of prose; the age-old ascendancy of poetry was broken at last. It was marked by the entrance of unconventional, sometimes unliterary new work, much of it humorous. Changes in social and agricultural conditions were accompanied by literary changes and shifts of emphasis. New patterns of thought and new moods appeared and new topics displaced the old. After 1870 fiction became a more and more important form of literary art as it groped toward new subjects and a new technique. The literary frontier was extended beyond the Alleghenies over the Middle Border to the Pacific,[1] with Mark Twain and Bret Harte as leading pioneers in regional writing, local color, and the frontier spirit. The realistic movement got consciously under way in the 1880's, with W. D. Howells its avowed champion, though his proved to be the mild realism of the commonplace rather than the stern brand of European novelists like Zola, Flaubert, Turgenev, or Tolstoi. Later came naturalism, with Stephen Crane as its first exponent. Humanitarianism continued to have emphasis, and more attention was given to sociological problems and externalities. New political and other novels dealt with the phenomena of cities and with economic realism and psychology. A literature of protest[2] made its appearance, mirroring disillusionment and skepticism and exhibiting a new sense of political injustice, coercive regimentation, and class division. The passion for individual liberty dimmed. Romantic optimism, which had been a dominant trend from about 1850 to the Civil War, became outdated. Though the old authors continued to write, for the most part they merely echoed their earlier work. Culture still meant Europe and the past, but a new national culture struggled upward.[3] Preoccupation with fact, reality, things as they are, assumed the lead over sentimentality and the extravagant. The new realism was to influence all types of writing, fiction, drama, poetry, criticism, history.

The romanticism persisting in poetry was a paling romanticism of convention, its subject matter outworn. A group of younger poets, R. H. Stoddard, Bayard Taylor, E. R. Sill, E. C. Stedman, T. B. Aldrich who came to maturity after the war, continued the declining tradition. Reared as they were in pre-war days, they did not realize the changed order and left unsung the beginnings of the new life. The bulk of the poetry continuing the Genteel Tradition is intellectually thin and devoid of ideas, emotionally somewhat forced and colorless, seeming at times artificial and insincere. Exotic old-world themes were preferred by these writers to native subject matter and some of their best work dealt with foreign material. Keats and Tennyson strongly influenced several members of the group during

[1] See Dorothy Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America* (1926).

[2] See C. C. Regier, *The Era of the Muckrakers* (1932).

[3] Consult H. H. Clark, "Nationalism in American Literature," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, II, 492–519 (July, 1933), and B. T. Spencer, "A National Literature, 1837–1855," *American Literature*, VIII (May, 1936), for discussions of growing nationalism.

their formative years, notably Taylor and Aldrich. Mere aestheticism, the striving for effects that are pretty and sentimental rather than beautiful or moving, almost assumed the proportions of a cult. Lanier, a romantic, though he was conscious of economic change, mainly continued to treat old themes. Post-war romanticism could not thrive long, however, in the new spiritual climate. The genteel tradition of sentimental cultured conformity to European models, a tradition often resulting in a false refinement,[1] was to end with Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson.

The major poetic figure of the after-war period is Whitman, who broke loose from convention in both matter and form. Neither departure proved acceptable to his contemporaries, but both were to inspire later literature. Whitman realized that new form was necessary for the new indigenous democratic material he aspired to treat. He wished to be the laureate of democracy and to teach equality and comradeship. He was impressed, too, by the vast American scene, stretching from coast to coast and from Canada to Florida; and he left a sort of general canvas of its wide spaces and varied life. Whitman was a child of the transcendentalists, especially Emerson, to whom he owed the suggestion of the need of a newer, freer verse form. He had their optimism and their self-confidence. In common with the romanticists of the earlier period he had faith in the goodness and perfectibility of the people, in idealistic philosophy, and in the worship of a beautiful and edifying pre-Darwinian nature permeated with divinity; although, unlike them, he did not profess to prefer solitude to society but felt drawn to crowds. Whitman belonged with the realists, on the other hand, in his sympathy with laborers, artisans, pioneers, with the life of the farm and the life of the city, in his realistic treatment of sex, and when picturing American harbors, ferryboats, and the American countryside. Through identifying himself in his peculiar manner with persons and objects, and through his mannerism of addressing his readers as though face to face with them, he achieved extraordinary effects of intensity and reality. Whitman's democracy now seems more of the past than of the roseate future he prophesied; but such was the originality and force of his work that he will remain an outstanding literary personality of his day. His contribution to the growth of realism should not be minimized or overlooked.

The second salient poetic figure of the period is Emily Dickinson. Her work was preserved to us more or less by accident; only a few of her pieces were published in her lifetime, and not till the twentieth century did her recognition come. Her poetic ideas and comments belong, in any case, to no special era but are independent of time. She too rejected conventions, cared for no set technique, no formulas of versification, no fastidious rhyming. She was free from conventions of matter as well. There is no European imitation in her work, no consciousness of Keats or

[1] See, however, W. F. Taylor, "The Gilded Age," *Sewanee Review*, January–March, 1937, who points out aspects of this age that modify the usual interpretations and criticisms of it.

Tennyson. Nor did she need outside experience to inspire her. Her recluse life with its narrow opportunities seemed to be enough. She found her themes in her household duties, her flowers, the weather, and in her inner life. She concerned herself with abstractions regarding the age-old subjects: life, death, love, nature, eternity. She must be read for her thought, for audacious daring bits spontaneously presented, comments on life, flights of the imagination, and sudden transcendental glimpses. The usual conception of her as a blighted soul, shunning human contacts because of some thwarted love affair, is probably mistaken. Rather does her poetry leave an effect of gayety, joy, and utter independence.

## VII

Much the same shifts of emphasis appear in the field of fiction as in the field of poetry. No one came forward to carry on the tradition of Cooper, Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne. In fiction, too, the romantic temper had lost its freshness and power and seemed to linger as a static aftermath. Even before Hawthorne's death in 1864 the stream of the novel began to thin. *The Lamplighter* (1854), by Maria S. Cummins, outsold *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), but is now forgotten. The so-called "domestic sentimentalists," Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, Mary J. Holmes, Augusta Evans Wilson, produced a flood of lachrymose classics. The "evangelical sentimentalists," Dr. J. G. Holland, the first editor of *Scribner's Magazine*, and the Reverend E. P. Roe, one-time army chaplain, composed moralizing tales which conformed to the popular conception of poetic justice. Since the novel was forced to vindicate itself against popular prejudice by its emphasis on moral and religious sentiment[1] it is not hard to understand why Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* (1880), a well-written story of the time of Christ, became one of the most widely read novels of the post-war period. In reality these writers represented the transition from the older romance to a new type of novel, the nature of which was yet undetermined. As romances, many were pallid reflections of a type that is past, love stories bathed in sweetness and sentimentalism and conveying moral lessons, but seldom penetrating beneath the surface of life and hence throwing little light upon its meaning and significance. Aside from touches of realism here and there, they were indifferent and unprophetic as omens of the novel that was to come.

Two definite phases of post-war literary development are mainly traceable to the western migration. One is the emergence of humor, culminating in Mark Twain; the other is the rise of local color, involving faithful details of region and scene, the "here and now," under the influence of Bret Harte.

Humor[2] has always been regarded as one of America's peculiar contributions to

[1] See A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936), and F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923).

[2] See Constance M. Rourke, *American Humor* (1931), and Walter Blair, *Native American Humor* (1937). The latter has representative selections, with an extensive introduction and bibliography.

literature. It is essentially the product of the frontier—of the frontier after it moved far enough west to escape the inhibiting hand of the Puritan tradition. New England had produced genuine native Yankee humor, seen in such works as Samuel Peters's "lying history" of Connecticut (1781), Royall Tyler's *The Contrast* (1787), and at a much later date Lowell's *The Biglow Papers;* but the fact should be emphasized that the humor which has persisted and which is in the direct line of development sprang largely from the colorful westward-moving frontier. The eastern frontier was relatively homogeneous, the settlers being largely of Anglo-Saxon stock and showing a limited variety of human types. When different racial stocks were thrown together, as Dutch and English were in New York, Irving could write his humorous *Knickerbocker History* (1809). As the frontier moved westward it became more and more picturesque. Contrasts became sharper and sharper, and humor thrives on contrasts. It is not surprising therefore that Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, and Petroleum V. Nasby, natives of the East, sought contact with the moving frontier, Ward traveling all the way to the Pacific coast, Billings and Nasby visiting the Mississippi valley. They brought to their writings freshness and freedom, a release from convention and restraint, and considerable democratic irreverence, qualities which a more settled state of culture could hardly have inspired or stimulated. In fact, the humor of an eastern writer like Seba Smith, whose *Letters of Major Jack Downing* (1839) were very popular in their day, seems thin and pale beside that of the more virile writers who drew material and inspiration from the West.

Mark Twain is in the direct line of development of this western humor, and became its most famous exponent. Born in Missouri he moved as a young man to the Pacific coast where he was in turn prospector, miner, and newspaper man, and emerged as a professional humorist, making use of the contrasts, exaggeration, and burlesque suggested to him by frontier life. But Mark Twain was more than a humorist and professional laughter-smith. He was a critic and satirist as well. The failure of his generation to recognize his serious purposes became in later life a real tragedy to him. As a document in social history, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) is an accurate and vivid record of the steamboat era. *The Gilded Age* (1873) is a rather sharp attack against the crass materialism of the get-rich-quick variety of money-makers who dominated the seventies and eighties. *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882) is a venture into English history, with an anti-monarchical slant. *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (1889) is not merely a burlesque staged in the Middle Ages but a pitiless exposure of what the author regarded as a highly inferior civilization, and incidentally an implied defense of American democratic institutions. *The Mysterious Stranger* (1916), published after his death, deals cynically with the problem of man's origin and destiny. Mark Twain's life seems to have been an unfolding disillusionment, leading to unmitigated pessimism, both of

which find in this posthumous book pointed and bitter expression. His fame has rested hitherto on such more purely humorous books as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) rather than upon the more serious books just mentioned. Upon which it will ultimately rest it is too early to conjecture. Recent studies, however, indicate that many of his writings once superficially regarded as humorous only are now seen to carry a purpose beyond the mere provocation of laughter, and that the admittedly critical aspect of his thought is at the moment of paramount interest. He looms as one of the great figures in our literature, from whatever angle he is approached.

Bret Harte, who had coached Mark Twain, was one of the original "Argonauts" to journey from the East to the shores of the Pacific. Here he found employment in a variety of occupations and finally established himself as a writer of a new type of prose. He took the western scene as subject matter for his work and endeavored to represent it with meticulous regard to immediate local conditions, such as character, dialect, and setting. These he overlaid with something of the sentimentalism of Dickens, of whose novels he was a lifelong sympathetic reader. In "The Luck of Roaring Camp" (1868) and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" and "Tennessee's Partner" (1869), he is generally credited with beginning the local-color school of American fiction. As over against his fiction, Harte's verse is mediocre and at times descends to doggerel. He achieved great vogue during his lifetime, but he did not seem to be able to maintain the pace he had set for himself in his earlier writings and his work gradually lost favor. During his later years he lived in Europe, in lonely isolation from family, friends, home, and country.

Western poetry of this period is represented further by the work and colorful personality of Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, who later adopted the name of Joaquin. Born in Indiana, he was taken as a child to Oregon where he grew up. The influence of Byron, whose works he read eagerly, is noticeable in his personality as well as in his poetry. Discouraged by the neglect of his own people, he went to London and found himself lionized by London society. His poetry, uneven in quality, rises on occasion to lyrical heights. The themes are largely western and the best passages are mainly inspired by the poet's love of the western scene.

The two realists who dominated American fiction until the end of the century are William Dean Howells and Henry James. Howells grew up in Ohio but lived for the greater part of his life in Boston and New York. In his *Criticism and Fiction* (1891) and other critical writings he assailed the practices of the romanticists and extolled the virtues of realism; as a novelist he put his critical theories into practice. Because of very definite religious convictions and a high sense of ethical responsibility he closed his eyes to much that seeing life steadily and seeing it whole would naturally have prompted him to notice, and which later novelists saw and reported. He was careful not to offend popular taste or the moral sensitivity of his readers.

He aimed to portray life as it unfolded itself in ordinary routine experiences, and avoided for the most part themes that are unpleasant and problematical. This does not mean that Howells was a man of timid or lackluster thought. He treated socialistic ideals in fictionized form in *A Traveller from Altruria* (1894), really a tract, and *Through the Eye of the Needle* (1907). He dulled the controversial edge of his liberal thought by his mild-mannered treatment and thus escaped many of the dangers which befell some of the later realists. In *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889) he not merely sets changing social conditions in contrast but is at the same time definitely critical of them. He was influenced by some of the continental realists, notably Tolstoi, Turgenev, and Zola, whose general attitude he shared but whose extremes he avoided with zealous care. To such persons as enjoy the calm unfolding of the panorama of life in its quieter phases, some of Howells's novels are still vitally interesting. For the moment, however, his reputation is dimmed by the work of his more audacious successors.

Henry James, the internationalist, is pre-eminently a psychologist. Educated mostly abroad, he came to look upon his native land as essentially crude and uncultured. The mellow atmosphere of old-world centers of culture was more conducive to his spiritual development and peace of mind than that of America with its multiplicity of enterprises, most of which were culturally undirected and therefore, it seemed to him, largely wasted. The scenes of many of his novels are laid, in whole or in part, in foreign lands. In many of them American and foreign characters are confronted, and the contrasts do not always reflect credit upon his fellow countrymen. James probes deep into the spiritual experiences and motives of his characters and reveals with extraordinary meticulousness their mental processes.

The essay did not play a very conspicuous or important role in the after-war period. Perhaps the nature writers,[1] John Burroughs and John Muir, deserve leading mention. Nor was the drama very distinctive. The leaders in stage literature were Augustin Daly, James A. Herne, Bronson Howard, William Gillette, Augustus Thomas, Clyde Fitch, none of these of salient importance.

In general the decades from the 1830's till the Civil War have remained the Golden Age of American literature. In the last part of the century the literary product bulked large and the level of execution was high. Printing presses turned out masses of reading matter and more persons wrote than ever before. Nevertheless the more significant names came, as in England, in the first half of the century. Except for a few poets and fiction writers, the work of the later authors was less distinctive and original and achieved less recognition in other countries.

[1] Consult P. M. Hicks, *Development of the Natural History Essay in American Literature* (1924).

# 1804 ~ *Nathaniel Hawthorne* ~ 1864

HAWTHORNE brought depth and, like Poe, intensity to American fiction, and he freed it from sentimentality. As an artist he far outranks his predecessors. He was concerned with the inner life and the effects of sin and evil on the conscience and character. C. B. Brown had preceded him in emphasis on the psychological, and he owes something to Irving's essays, but he found a new field in the borderland between the colonial and the modern. In his day, seventeenth-century Puritanism had receded far enough to be available as literary material. He knew its spirit, ideas, psychology, and superstitions, and he became its best interpreter, without definitely aligning himself either as a defender or condemner of Puritanism. No other author illustrates as clearly as does Hawthorne the complexity and subtlety of that motivating force in American literature that we call Puritanism. Ethical considerations loom larger than happenings in his stories. It is the human soul that he studied. So distinctive were his gifts that his works will remain landmarks in the history of American fiction.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (the name was spelled Hathorne until the author inserted the *w*) was born at Salem, Massachusetts, July 4, 1804. The history of Salem, once a leading New England port, dates far back, and various legends clustered about it. Many staunch puritan characters were associated with it. It was the scene of Quaker persecutions and witchcraft tragedies. The Hawthornes belonged to a prominent old puritan family that had lived at Salem a long time. The Reverend Major William Hathorne had come to Massachusetts in 1630. He was an Indian fighter, a persecutor of Quakers, and a speaker in the legislature. Another of the author's ancestors was a magistrate, soldier, and statesman, and another, on whose head tradition said that a curse had been called down, was a judge in the witchcraft trials. The author's grandfather was an officer and a sea captain. His father, also a sea captain, died at Surinam when Nathaniel was four years old. By this time the family had outgrown its puritan severity, but had kept the puritan conscience.

Hawthorne's uncle provided for his education. He was fitted for college by Joseph Worcester, the author of Worcester's *Dictionary*, which was perhaps auspicious for the boy's vocabulary. At fourteen he spent many months in seclusion in the Maine woods on a half-developed tract of land that belonged to the family. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821 at the age of seventeen. He was in the same class (1825) with Longfellow. Franklin Pierce, who was to become President of the United States and who proved a good friend to Hawthorne, was a member of the class of 1824. Hawthorne's college life on the whole was uneventful. He was rather

shy, given to pondering and dreaming, and did not rank especially high in scholarship, though he did good work in English composition.

After graduation, although without means, for his family was not well-to-do, Hawthorne seems to have had no impulse to adopt a profession. Temperamentally a recluse, he could never enter whole-heartedly into the life about him. He had grown up in solitary habits, for the Hawthorne family had a peculiar home life. They were rarely together even at meals, for after the death of the father, the mother had withdrawn entirely from the world and lived in "perpetual widowhood" in her room, mourning "on principle." During the years 1825–33, Hawthorne remained at Salem, reading and writing but making few acquaintances. His residence there was broken by journeys to different parts of New England and New York, but his type of life left him rather provincial. In these years at Salem, he drifted into the determination to be a writer and served his apprenticeship in romance. He wrote much and burned much. A number of tales and sketches appeared in obscure periodicals and newspapers. Many were later collected and published in 1837 under the title *Twice Told Tales*, i.e., tales that had already been printed once. But although his home was at Salem, he never wrote a romance of the sea or of sea life.

For two years, 1836–1838, Hawthorne served as editor of a juvenile periodical in Boston. In 1838 he became engaged to Sophia Peabody of Salem. From 1839 to 1841 he acted as weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom House. He lost his position through a political change and invested his savings in the Brook Farm experiment. He was not enthusiastic, however, over his experiences with community life. The next year he married Miss Peabody and went to Concord, where he lived happily at the Old Manse for four years. His *Mosses from an Old Manse* was published in 1846.

From 1846 to 1849 he was a surveyer at the Salem Custom House, a position obtained for him by Pierce. He was paid fairly well and worked but three or four hours daily; but though he had much leisure, he was not productive as a writer. In 1849 he was removed from office through the political spoils system and gave his energies to the shaping of a romance, *The Scarlet Letter*, his first long work. It at once had extraordinary success. He was indignant at all of Salem for his removal from office and lampooned his associates there in the introductions to *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. From 1850 to 1853 he lived successively at Lenox, West Newton, and Concord, where he purchased The Wayside in 1852. This remained his home. In this period he wrote *The House of the Seven Gables*, in which Judge Pyncheon was made to suggest the politician instrumental in his loss of office. He also wrote here *The Blithedale Romance* and *Tanglewood Tales*.

In 1853 he was appointed consul at Liverpool by his old college friend, President Pierce. This was one of the highest salaried posts open to award. Hawthorne held

this office for four years and resigned in 1856. He spent the next three years in foreign travel in Italy and England. In 1860, *The Marble Faun* was published in London. Unlike Irving and Lowell, Hawthorne did not enjoy his stay in England, for he shared his countrymen's anti-English prejudice and he had a sense of banishment and aloofness while he was there. His residence abroad had little influence on his work. Perhaps his European experiences came too late in life. His remaining years were passed at The Wayside in Concord. He died at Plymouth, N.H., while setting out with President Pierce on a tour to the White Mountains, May 18, 1864.

Hawthorne was of impressive appearance and physique, tall, straight, and slender. He had, perhaps, rather low vitality, for he showed a constitutional lassitude about work. His family was not affluent, but he tried only once for a systematic literary appointment. His positions were political. Yet although he lacked somewhat in energy and a sense of independence, he kept the admiration of his friends.

Hawthorne never found inspiration in externals. He was not concerned with the abolitionist movement, or with economics, humanitarian tendencies, books, or systems of thought. He showed little interest in philosophy and scholarship, and none in adventure and crime. He turned constantly to the shadowy world within, especially to the theme of solitude arising from egotism, self-isolation, or pride of intellect, and he brooded over the sinister problems of destiny. A sure sense of artistry marks his work. His style is rich in suggestion and symbolism, graceful, flowing, and lucid. The phrasing is literary yet suffused with emotion. He wrote carefully, striving for good technique and for unity of tone as in a poem. He liked the half-light or mirage, and suggestions and hints rather than direct treatment. Atmosphere appealed to him more than solid reality, but he never took his reader quite away from the actual world. The element of the extravagant and improbable so often present in his work is subordinated, never the leading theme. He introduced few characters, often making much of symbols that he associated with them, such as the scarlet letter and the minister's black veil, and he often endowed his characters with tricks of manner. He made much, too, of small scenes and single figures. A rich fancy and imagination play over materials often thin in themselves. The short story was his characteristic form of writing. In it he dealt with New England legends, allegories, parables, and moralistic themes. His longer works are like his short stories, only built on larger dimensions.

Among the authors Hawthorne read were Homer, Aesop, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes, Milton, Rousseau, Byron, Coleridge. He had a good reading knowledge of French and drew many French classics from the library of the Salem Athenaeum. He was especially attracted to Spenser and Bunyan (from whom derives probably his allegorical bent) and to Walter Scott and William Godwin. Among American writers he knew the early annalists, the Mathers, Freneau, C. B. Brown, the Connecticut Wits, Irving, and Cooper, and after 1850 he knew and admired Melville.

Hawthorne termed himself no critic; indeed he expressed doubt of the value of "review articles on the old established model." He leaned if anything to impressionism. "I know well enough what I like but am always at a loss to render a reason." He thought "sensibility" and "deep appreciation" essential in criticism of art. He believed, too, that more attention should be given to writers' opinions of their own work. In prefaces like those to *Twice-Told Tales* and *The Scarlet Letter* he left a record of his fictional views. Apropos of Simms, whose writings he did not rank very high, he remarked in 1846 that it was time to break away from historical novels of "the same worn out mould that has been in use these thirty years." He admired Longfellow's *Evangeline* unreservedly, and admitted to a liking for Whittier's *The Supernaturalism of New England.* Though his own themes and his handling of them do not show it, he seems really to have admired and perhaps preferred stern realism. H. H. Clark says summarizingly of him: "What were Hawthorne's aims and ideals as a creator of fiction? . . . Just as in the ethical realm Hawthorne's thought was a somewhat unstable compound of the differing doctrines of Puritanism and Romanticism, so his literary doctrines represent an unstable compound of stern ethicism based on the moral law and capricious, fantastic romance. Devoted as he is to the sternest problems of the universal moral world, such as the psychological effects of wrongdoing, his treatment of these problems, and his artistic elaboration, are often . . . removed from the normal, the representative, and the probable. Indeed, a just appraisal of Hawthorne as a creator of literature depends in large measure upon a full understanding of his double aspect as at once a romancer and a moralist."

The authorized and standard edition of Hawthorne's works is *The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, with introductory notes by George Parsons Lathrop (Riverside Edition, 12 vols., 1883). The Little Classics Edition (23 vols., 1875–1876) preceded it, and the Lenox (14 vols., 1902) is a good later edition. *Hawthorne's First Diary* (1897) was edited by S. T. Pickard. Its authenticity was rejected by Hawthorne's son, Julian, but G. P. Lathrop, his son-in-law, and later writers have accepted it as genuine. His letters to Sophia Peabody, 1839–63, with a preface by Roswell Field, were printed at Chicago (2 vols., 1907), and his letters to W. D. Ticknor, 1851–64, were printed at Newark, N.J. (2 vols., 1910). Most of the latter were reprinted in C. Ticknor's *Hawthorne and His Publisher* (1913). *The Heart of Hawthorne's Journals* was edited by N. Arvin (1929). "Hawthorne's 'Spectator,'" edited by Elizabeth L. Chandler, appeared in the *New England Quarterly*, April, 1931. Randall Stewart edited *The American Notebooks* (1932), based on the original manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, prefixing introductory essays and annotations. Dr. Stewart also edited "Hawthorne and Politics: Unpublished Letters to William B. Pike" for the *New England Quarterly*, April, 1932.

Leading biographical works on Hawthorne are James T. Field, *Yesterdays with Authors* (1871); H. A. Page (Alexander Japp), *Memoir of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1872); George Parsons Lathrop, *A Study of Hawthorne* (1876); Henry James, *Hawthorne*, in English Men of Letters Series (1879); Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (2 vols., 1884); Moncure D. Conway, *Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, in Great Writers Series (1890); Horatio Bridge, *Personal*

*Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, which includes Hawthorne's letters to the author (1893); George E. Woodberry, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, in American Men of Letters Series (1902), an excellent approach to Hawthorne; L. Dhaleine, *N. Hawthorne, sa Vie et son Œuvre* (1905), a critical work of importance; Herbert Gorman, *Hawthorne: A Study in Solitude* (1927); Lloyd Morris, *The Rebellious Puritan: Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne* (1927); Newton Arvin, *Hawthorne* (1929); Carl Van Doren in *DAB*, VIII.

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## SIGHTS FROM A STEEPLE

Published in *The Token*, an annual for 1831. The monologue of an observer at Salem who views from above the contemporary scene. He looks at the skies, the life of the town, its streets, shores, wharves, vessels, citizens, and the horizon. Hawthorne suggests, in a string of meditations and descriptions, both the outer and the inner life of the place. He liked the role of a detached observer, and wrote several other sketches or tales centering around single spots.

So! I have climbed high, and my reward is small. Here I stand, with wearied knees, earth, indeed, at a dizzy depth below, but heaven far, far beyond me still. O, that I could soar up into the very zenith, where man never breathed, nor eagle ever flew, and where the ethereal azure melts away from the eye, and appears only a deepened shade of nothingness! And yet I shiver at that cold and solitary thought. What clouds are gathering in the golden west, with direful intent against the brightness and warmth of this summer afternoon! They are ponderous air ships, black as death, and freighted with the tempest; and at intervals their thunder, the signal guns of that unearthly squadron, rolls distant along the deep of heaven. These nearer heaps of fleecy vapor—methinks I could roll and toss upon them the whole day long!—seem scattered here and there for the repose of tired pilgrims through the sky. Perhaps—for who can tell?—beautiful spirits are disporting themselves there, and will bless my mortal eye with the brief appearance of their curly locks of golden light, and laughing faces, fair and faint as the people of a rosy dream. Or, where the floating mass so imperfectly obstructs the color of the firmament, a slender foot and fairy limb, resting too heavily upon the frail support, may be thrust through, and suddenly withdrawn, while longing fancy follows them in vain. Yonder again is an airy archipelago, where the sunbeams love to linger in their journeyings through space. Every one of those little clouds has been dipped and steeped in radiance, which the slightest pressure might disengage in silvery profusion, like water wrung from a seamaid's hair. Bright they are as a young man's visions, and, like them, would be realized in chilliness, obscurity, and tears. I will look on them no more.

In three parts of the visible circle, whose center is this spire, I discern cultivated fields, villages, white countryseats, the waving lines of rivulets, little placid lakes, and here and there a rising ground, that would fain be

termed a hill. On the fourth side is the sea, stretching away towards a viewless boundary, blue and calm, except where the passing anger of a shadow flits across its surface, and is gone. Hitherward, a broad inlet penetrates far into the land; on the verge of the harbor, formed by its extremity, is a town; and over it am I, a watchman, all-heeding and unheeded. O, that the multitude of chimneys could speak, like those of Madrid, and betray, in smoky whispers, the secrets of all who, since their first foundation, have assembled at the hearths within! O, that the Limping Devil[1] of Le Sage would perch beside me here, extend his wand over this contiguity of roofs, uncover every chamber, and make me familiar with their inhabitants! The most desirable mode of existence might be that of a spiritual Paul Pry,[2] hovering invisible round man and woman, witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself. But none of these things are possible; and if I would know the interior of brick walls, or the mystery of human bosoms, I can but guess.

Yonder is a fair street, extending north and south. The stately mansions are placed each on its carpet of verdant grass, and a long flight of steps extends from every door to the pavement. Ornamental trees—the broad-leafed horse-chestnut, the elm so lofty and bending, the graceful but infrequent willow, and others whereof I know not the names—grow thrivingly among brick and stone. The oblique rays of the sun are intercepted by these green citizens, and by the houses, so that one side of the street is a shaded and pleasant walk. On its whole extent there is now but a single passenger, advancing from the upper end; and he, unless distance and the medium of a pocket spyglass do him more than justice, is a fine young man of twenty. He saunters slowly forward, slapping his left hand with his folded gloves, bending his eyes upon the pavement, and sometimes raising them to throw a glance before him. Certainly, he has a pensive air. Is he in doubt, or in debt? Is he, if the question be allowable, in love? Does he strive to be melancholy and gentleman-like? Or, is he merely overcome by the heat? But I bid him farewell for the present. The door of one of the houses—an aristocratic edifice, with curtains of purple and gold waving from the windows, is now opened, and down the steps come two ladies, swinging their parasols, and lightly arrayed for a summer ramble. Both are young, both are pretty, but methinks the left-hand lass is the fairer of the twain; and, though she be so serious at this moment, I could swear that there is a treasure of gentle fun within her. They stand talking a little while upon the steps, and finally proceed up the street. Meantime, as their faces are now turned from me, I may look elsewhere.

Upon that wharf, and down the corresponding street, is a busy contrast to the quiet scene which I have just noticed. Business evidently has its center there, and many a man is wasting the summer afternoon in labor and anxiety, in losing riches or in gaining them, when he would be wiser to flee away to some pleasant country village, or shaded lake in the forest, or wild and cool sea-beach. I see vessels unloading at the wharf, and precious merchandise strewn upon the ground, abundantly as at the bottom of the sea, the market whence no goods return, and where there is no captain nor supercargo to render an account of sales. Here the clerks are diligent with their paper and pencils, and sailors ply the block and tackle that hang over the hold, accompanying their toil with cries, long drawn and roughly melodious, till the bales and puncheons ascend to upper air. At a little distance a group of gentlemen are assembled round the door of a warehouse. Grave seniors be they, and I would wager—if it were safe in these times to be responsible for any one—that the least eminent among them might vie with the old Vicentio,[1] that incomparable trafficker of Pisa. I can even select the wealthiest of the company. It is the elderly personage, in somewhat rusty black, with powdered hair, the superfluous whiteness of which is visible upon the cape of his coat. His twenty ships are wafted on some of their many courses by every breeze that blows, and his name—I

[1] a reference to Le Sage's *Le diable boiteux* ("The Devil on Two Sticks") [2] the meddlesome title character in one of John Poole's English comedies

[1] Vincentio, in *The Taming of the Shrew*

will venture to say, though I know it not—is a familiar sound among the far separated merchants of Europe and the Indies.

But I bestow too much of my attention in this quarter. On looking again to the long and shady walk, I perceive that the two fair girls have encountered the young man. After a sort of shyness in the recognition, he turns back with them. Moreover, he has sanctioned my taste in regard to his companions by placing himself on the inner side of the pavement, nearest the Venus to whom I—enacting, on a steeple-top, the part of Paris on the top of Ida—adjudged the golden apple.[1]

In two streets, converging at right angles towards my watchtower, I distinguish three different processions. One is a proud array of voluntary soldiers, in bright uniform, resembling, from the height whence I look down, the painted veterans that garrison the windows of a toyshop. And yet, it stirs my heart; their regular advance, their nodding plumes, the sun-flash on their bayonets and musket barrels, the roll of their drums ascending past me, and the fife ever and anon piercing through—these things have wakened a warlike fire, peaceful though I be. Close to their rear marches a battalion of schoolboys, ranged in crooked and irregular platoons, shouldering sticks, thumping a harsh and unripe clatter from an instrument of tin, and ridiculously aping the intricate maneuvers of the foremost band. Nevertheless, as slight differences are scarcely perceptible from a church spire, one might be tempted to ask, "Which are the boys?"—or rather, "Which the men?" But, leaving these, let us turn to the third procession, which, though sadder in outward show, may excite identical reflections in the thoughtful mind. It is a funeral. A hearse, drawn by a black and bony steed, and covered by a dusty pall; two or three coaches rumbling over the stones, their drivers half asleep; a dozen couple of careless mourners in their everyday attire; such was not the fashion of our fathers, when they carried a friend to his grave. There is now no doleful clang of the bell to proclaim sorrow to the town. Was the King of Terrors more awful in those days than in our own, that wisdom and philosophy have been able to produce this change? Not so. Here is a proof that he retains his proper majesty. The military men and the military boys are wheeling round the corner, and meet the funeral full in the face. Immediately the drum is silent, all but the tap that regulates each simultaneous footfall. The soldiers yield the path to the dusty hearse and unpretending train, and the children quit their ranks, and cluster on the sidewalks, with timorous and instinctive curiosity. The mourners enter the churchyard at the base of the steeple, and pause by an open grave among the burial stones; the lightning glimmers on them as they lower down the coffin, and the thunder rattles heavily while they throw the earth upon its lid. Verily, the shower is near, and I tremble for the young man and the girls, who have now disappeared from the long and shady street.

How various are the situations of the people covered by the roofs beneath me, and how diversified are the events at this moment befalling them! The newborn, the aged, the dying, the strong in life, and the recent dead are in the chambers of these many mansions. The full of hope, the happy, the miserable, and the desperate dwell together within the circle of my glance. In some of the houses over which my eyes roam so coldly, guilt is entering into hearts that are still tenanted by a debased and trodden virtue,—guilt is on the very edge of commission, and the impending deed might be averted; guilt is done, and the criminal wonders if it be irrevocable. There are broad thoughts struggling in my mind, and, were I able to give them distinctness, they would make their way in eloquence. Lo! the raindrops are descending.

The clouds, within a little time, have gathered over all the sky, hanging heavily, as if about to drop in one unbroken mass upon the earth. At intervals, the lightning flashes from their brooding hearts, quivers, disappears, and then comes the thunder, traveling slowly after its twinborn flame. A strong wind has sprung up, howls through the darkened streets, and raises the dust in dense bodies, to rebel against the approaching storm. The dis-

[1] In classic story, the Apple of Discord, labeled to the fairest, was tossed among the guests at a wedding. Paris, on Mt. Ida, awarded it to Venus.

banded soldiers fly, the funeral has already vanished like its dead, and all people hurry homeward—all that have a home; while a few lounge by the corners, or trudge on desperately, at their leisure. In a narrow lane, which communicates with the shady street, I discern the rich old merchant, putting himself to the top of his speed, lest the rain should convert his hair powder to a paste. Unhappy gentleman! By the slow vehemence and painful moderation wherewith he journeys, it is but too evident that Podagra[1] has left its thrilling tenderness in his great toe. But yonder, at a far more rapid pace, come three other of my acquaintance, the two pretty girls and the young man, unseasonably interrupted in their walk. Their footsteps are supported by the risen dust,—the wind lends them its velocity, —they fly like three sea-birds driven landward by the tempestuous breeze. The ladies would not thus rival Atalanta,[2] if they but knew that anyone were at leisure to observe them. Ah! as they hasten onward, laughing in the angry face of nature, a sudden catastrophe has chanced. At the corner where the narrow lane enters the street, they come plump against the old merchant, whose tortoise motion has just brought him to that point. He likes not the sweet encounter; the darkness of the whole air gathers speedily upon his visage, and there is a pause on both sides. Finally, he thrusts aside the youth with little courtesy, seizes an arm of each of the two girls, and plods onward, like a magician with a prize of captive fairies. All this is easy to be understood. How disconsolate the poor lover stands! regardless of the rain that threatens an exceeding damage to his well-fashioned habiliments, till he catches a backward glance of mirth from a bright eye, and turns away with whatever comfort it conveys.

The old man and his daughters are safely housed, and now the storm lets loose its fury. In every dwelling I perceive the faces of the chambermaids as they shut down the windows, excluding the impetuous shower, and shrinking away from the quick, fiery glare. The large drops descend with force upon the slated roofs, and rise again in smoke. There is a rush and roar, as of a river through the air, and muddy streams bubble majestically along the pavement, whirl their dusky foam into the kennel, and disappear beneath iron grates. Thus did Arethusa[1] sink. I love not my station here aloft, in the midst of the tumult which I am powerless to direct or quell, with the blue lightning wrinkling on my brow, and the thunder muttering its first awful syllables in my ear. I will descend. Yet let me give another glance to the sea, where the foam breaks out in long white lines upon a broad expanse of blackness, or boils up in far distant points, like snowy mountaintops in the eddies of a flood; and let me look once more at the green plain and little hills of the country, over which the giant of the storm is striding in robes of mist, and at the town, whose obscured and desolate streets might beseem a city of the dead; and turning a single moment to the sky, now gloomy as an author's prospects, I prepare to resume my station on lower earth. But stay! A little speck of azure has widened in the western heavens; the sunbeams find a passage, and go rejoicing through the tempest; and on yonder darkest cloud, born, like hallowed hopes, of the glory of another world and the troubles and tears of this, brightens forth the Rainbow!

1831

[1] the gout [2] a maiden swift of foot and winner of many races in classic story

## THE GRAY CHAMPION

First published in the *New England Magazine*, January, 1835, then in *Twice-Told Tales* (1837). Another of Hawthorne's sketches that recreates the atmosphere of the past. It is a dramatic scene or tableau rather than a story; to some it seems allegorical of Truth resisting Tyranny. The Gray Champion is one of the regicides emerging from his hiding place to defend liberty. Hawthorne seems to have derived his striking incident from the story of the "Angel of Hadley" (Stiles, *A History of Three of the Judges of Charles I*, 1794), telling of a congregation of colonists who, in 1675, were surprised and thrown into consternation by Indians. Suddenly there appeared a man of venerable aspect who rallied them and took command, and under his direction they repelled the Indians and saved the

[1] In Greek myth, a woodland nymph, turned by Diana into an underground stream so that she might escape from a river god. The stream rose again as a fountain in Sicily

town. He then vanished and the inhabitants supposed him to be an angel sent from God. The mystery was explained after 1688, when it was less dangerous to have it known that a regicide judge (Col. William Goffe, 1605–1679) was a fugitive in Hadley at that time. Goffe fled to America in 1660, lived in concealment in New Haven, 1661–1664, then went to Hadley, Massachusetts.

THERE was once a time when New England groaned under the actual pressure of heavier wrongs than those threatened ones which brought on the Revolution. James II, the bigoted successor of Charles the Voluptuous, had annulled the charters of all the colonies, and sent a harsh and unprincipled soldier to take away our liberties and endanger our religion. The administration of Sir Edmund Andros[1] lacked scarcely a single characteristic of tyranny: a Governor and Council, holding office from the King, and wholly independent of the country; laws made and taxes levied without concurrence of the people, immediate or by their representatives; the rights of private citizens violated, and the titles of all landed property declared void; the voice of complaint stifled by restrictions on the press; and, finally, disaffection overawed by the first band of mercenary troops that ever marched on our free soil. For two years our ancestors were kept in sullen submission by that filial love which had invariably secured their allegiance to the mother country, whether its head chanced to be a Parliament, Protector, or Popish Monarch. Till these evil times, however, such allegiance had been merely nominal, and the colonists had ruled themselves, enjoying far more freedom than is even yet the privilege of the native subjects of Great Britain.

At length a rumor reached our shores that the Prince of Orange[2] had ventured on an enterprise, the success of which would be the triumph of civil and religious rights and the salvation of New England. It was but a doubtful whisper; it might be false, or the attempt might fail; and, in either case, the man that stirred against King James would lose his head. Still the intelligence produced a marked effect. The people smiled mysteriously in the streets, and threw bold glances at their oppressors; while far and wide there was a subdued and silent agitation, as if the slightest signal would rouse the whole land from its sluggish despondency. Aware of their danger, the rulers resolved to avert it by an imposing display of strength, and perhaps to confirm their despotism by yet harsher measures. One afternoon in April, 1689, Sir Edmund Andros and his favorite councillors, being warm with wine, assembled the redcoats of the Governor's Guard, and made their appearance in the streets of Boston. The sun was near setting when the march commenced.

The roll of the drum at that unquiet crisis seemed to go through the streets, less as the martial music of the soldiers, than as a muster-call to the inhabitants themselves. A multitude, by various avenues, assembled in King Street, which was destined to be the scene, nearly a century afterwards, of another encounter[1] between the troops of Britain and a people struggling against her tyranny. Though more than sixty years had elapsed since the Pilgrims came, this crowd of their descendants still showed the strong and somber features of their character perhaps more strikingly in such a stern emergency than on happier occasions. There were the sober garb, the general severity of mien, the gloomy but undismayed expression, the scriptural forms of speech, and the confidence in Heaven's blessing on a righteous cause, which would have marked a band of the original Puritans, when threatened by some peril of the wilderness. Indeed, it was not yet time for the old spirit to be extinct; since there were men in the streets that day who had worshipped there beneath the trees, before a house was reared to the God for whom they had become exiles. Old soldiers of the Parliament were here, too, smiling grimly at the thought that their aged arms might strike another blow against the house of Stuart. Here, also, were the veterans of King Philip's war,[2] who had burned villages and slaughtered young and old, with pious fierceness, while the godly souls throughout

[1] appointed governor of the northern colonies in 1686 [2] became joint sovereign of England with Queen Mary in 1689

[1] the "Boston Massacre," March 5, 1770 [2] Last of the New England Indian wars, 1676. King Philip (Metacomet) was sachem of Pokanoket.

the land were helping them with prayer. Several ministers were scattered among the crowd, which, unlike all other mobs, regarded them with such reverence, as if there were sanctity in their very garments. These holy men exerted their influence to quiet the people, but not to disperse them. Meantime, the purpose of the Governor, in disturbing the peace of the town at a period when the slightest commotion might throw the country into a ferment, was almost the universal subject of inquiry, and variously explained.

"Satan will strike his master-stroke presently," cried some, "because he knoweth that his time is short. All our godly pastors are to be dragged to prison! We shall see them at a Smithfield[1] fire in King Street!"

Hereupon the people of each parish gathered closer round their minister, who looked calmly upwards and assumed a more apostolic dignity, as well befitted a candidate for the highest honor of his profession, the crown of martyrdom. It was actually fancied, at that period, that New England might have a John Rogers of her own to take the place of that worthy in the Primer.

"The Pope of Rome has given orders for a new St. Bartholomew!"[2] cried others. "We are to be massacred, man and male child!"

Neither was this rumor wholly discredited, although the wiser class believed the Governor's object somewhat less atrocious. His predecessor under the old charter, Bradstreet, a venerable companion of the first settlers, was known to be in town. There were grounds for conjecturing that Sir Edmund Andros intended at once to strike terror by a parade of military force, and to confound the opposite faction by possessing himself of their chief.

"Stand firm for the old charter Governor!" shouted the crowd, seizing upon the idea. "The good old Governor Bradstreet!"

While this cry was at the loudest, the people were surprised by the well-known figure of Governor Bradstreet himself, a patriarch of nearly ninety, who appeared on the elevated steps of a door, and, with characteristic mildness, besought them to submit to the constituted authorities.

"My children," concluded this venerable person, "do nothing rashly. Cry not aloud, but pray for the welfare of New England, and expect[1] patiently what the Lord will do in this matter!"

The event was soon to be decided. All this time, the roll of the drum had been approaching through Cornhill, louder and deeper, till with reverberations from house to house, and the regular tramp of martial footsteps, it burst into the street. A double rank of soldiers made their appearance, occupying the whole breadth of the passage, with shouldered matchlocks, and matches burning, so as to present a row of fires in the dusk. Their steady march was like the progress of a machine, that would roll irresistibly over everything in its way. Next, moving slowly, with a confused clatter of hoofs on the pavement, rode a party of mounted gentlemen, the central figure being Sir Edmund Andros, elderly, but erect and soldier-like. Those around him were his favorite councillors, and the bitterest foes of New England. At his right hand rode Edward Randolph, our arch-enemy, that "blasted wretch," as Cotton Mather calls him, who achieved the downfall of our ancient government, and was followed with a sensible curse, through life and to his grave. On the other side was Bullivant, scattering jests and mockery as he rode along. Dudley came behind, with a downcast look, dreading, as well he might, to meet the indignant gaze of the people, who beheld him, their only countryman by birth, among the oppressors of his native land. The captain of a frigate in the harbor, and two or three civil officers under the Crown, were also there. But the figure which most attracted the public eye, and stirred up the deepest feeling, was the Episcopal clergyman of King's Chapel, riding haughtily among the magistrates in his priestly vestments, the fitting representative of prelacy and persecution, the union of church and state, and all those abominations which had driven the Puritans to the wilderness. Another guard of soldiers, in double rank, brought up the rear.

[1] Formerly a place of execution, outside the walls of London. John Rogers, mentioned in the next paragraph, was burnt at the stake there in 1555. [2] a reference to the massacre of several thousand Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572

[1] await

The whole scene was a picture of the condition of New England, and its moral, the deformity of any government that does not grow out of the nature of things and the character of the people. On one side the religious multitude, with their sad visages and dark attire, and on the other, the group of despotic rulers, with the high churchman in the midst, and here and there a crucifix at their bosoms, all magnificently clad, flushed with wine, proud of unjust authority, and scoffing at the universal groan. And the mercenary soldiers, waiting but the word to deluge the street with blood, showed the only means by which obedience could be secured.

"O. Lord of Hosts," cried a voice among the crowd, "provide a Champion for thy people!"

This ejaculation was loudly uttered, and served as a herald's cry, to introduce a remarkable personage. The crowd had rolled back, and were now huddled together nearly at the extremity of the street, while the soldiers had advanced no more than a third of its length. The intervening space was empty —a paved solitude, between lofty edifices, which threw almost a twilight shadow over it. Suddenly, there was seen the figure of an ancient man, who seemed to have emerged from among the people, and was walking by himself along the centre of the street, to confront the armed band. He wore the old Puritan dress, a dark cloak and a steeple-crowned hat, in the fashion of at least fifty years before, with a heavy sword upon his thigh, but a staff in his hand to assist the tremulous gait of age.

When at some distance from the multitude, the old man turned slowly round, displaying a face of antique majesty, rendered doubly venerable by the hoary beard that descended on his breast. He made a gesture at once of encouragement and warning, then turned again, and resumed his way.

"Who is this gray patriarch?" asked the young men of their sires.

"Who is this venerable brother?" asked the old men among themselves.

But none could make reply. The fathers of the people, those of fourscore years and upwards, were disturbed, deeming it strange that they should forget one of such evident authority, whom they must have known in their early days, the associate of Winthrop, and all the old councillors, giving laws, and making prayers, and leading them against the savage. The elderly men ought to have remembered him, too, with locks as gray in their youth, as their own were now. And the young! How could he have passed so utterly from their memories—that hoary sire, the relic of long-departed times, whose awful benediction had surely been bestowed on their uncovered heads, in childhood?

"Whence did he come? What is his purpose? Who can this old man be?" whispered the wondering crowd.

Meanwhile, the venerable stranger, staff in hand, was pursuing his solitary walk along the centre of the street. As he drew near the advancing soldiers, and as the roll of their drum came full upon his ear, the old man raised himself to a loftier mien, while the decrepitude of age seemed to fall from his shoulders, leaving him in gray but unbroken dignity. Now, he marched onward with a warrior's step, keeping time to the military music. Thus the aged form advanced on one side, and the whole parade of soldiers and magistrates on the other, till, when scarcely twenty yards remained between, the old man grasped his staff by the middle, and held it before him like a leader's truncheon.[1]

"Stand!" cried he.

The eye, the face, and attitude of command; the solemn, yet warlike peal of that voice, fit either to rule a host in the battlefield or be raised to God in prayer, were irresistible. At the old man's word and outstretched arm, the roll of the drum was hushed at once, and the advancing line stood still. A tremulous enthusiasm seized upon the multitude. That stately form, combining the leader and the saint, so gray, so dimly seen, in such an ancient garb, could only belong to some old champion of the righteous cause, whom the oppressor's drum had summoned from his grave. They raised a shout of awe and exultation, and looked for the deliverance of New England.

The Governor, and the gentlemen of his party, perceiving themselves brought to an

[1] a sign of authority

unexpected stand, rode hastily forward, as if they would have pressed their snorting and affrighted horses right against the hoary apparition. He, however, blenched not a step, but glancing his severe eye round the group, which half encompassed him, at last bent it sternly on Sir Edmund Andros. One would have thought that the dark old man was chief ruler there, and that the Governor and Council, with soldiers at their back, representing the whole power and authority of the Crown, had no alternative but obedience.

"What does this old fellow here?" cried Edward Randolph, fiercely. "On, Sir Edmund! Bid the soldiers forward, and give the dotard the same choice that you give all his countrymen—to stand aside or be trampled on!"

"Nay, nay, let us show respect to the good grandsire," said Bullivant, laughing. "See you not, he is some old round-headed dignitary, who hath lain asleep these thirty years, and knows nothing of the change of times? Doubtless, he thinks to put us down with a proclamation in Old Noll's[1] name!"

"Are you mad, old man?" demanded Sir Edmund Andros, in loud and harsh tones. "How dare you stay the march of King James's Governor?"

"I have stayed the march of a King himself, ere now," replied the gray figure, with stern composure. "I am here, Sir Governor, because the cry of an oppressed people hath disturbed me in my secret place; and beseeching this favor earnestly of the Lord, it was vouchsafed me to appear once again on earth, in the good old cause of his saints. And what speak ye of James? There is no longer a Popish tyrant on the throne of England, and by tomorrow noon, his name shall be a byword in this very street, where ye would make it a word of terror. Back, thou that wast a Governor, back! With this night thy power is ended—tomorrow, the prison!—back, lest I foretell the scaffold!"

The people had been drawing nearer and nearer, and drinking in the words of their champion, who spoke in accents long disused, like one unaccustomed to converse, except with the dead of many years ago. But his voice stirred their souls. They confronted the soldiers, not wholly without arms, and ready to convert the very stones of the street into deadly weapons. Sir Edmund Andros looked at the old man; then he cast his hard and cruel eye over the multitude, and beheld them burning with that lurid wrath, so difficult to kindle or to quench; and again he fixed his gaze on the aged form, which stood obscurely in an open space, where neither friend nor foe had thrust himself. What were his thoughts, he uttered no word which might discover. But whether the oppressor were overawed by the Gray Champion's look, or perceived his peril in the threatening attitude of the people, it is certain that he gave back, and ordered his soldiers to commence a slow and guarded retreat. Before another sunset, the Governor, and all that rode so proudly with him, were prisoners, and long ere it was known that James had abdicated, King William was proclaimed throughout New England.

But where was the Gray Champion? Some reported that, when the troops had gone from King Street, and the people were thronging tumultuously in their rear, Bradstreet, the aged Governor, was seen to embrace a form more aged than his own. Others soberly affirmed, that while they marvelled at the venerable grandeur of his aspect, the old man had faded from their eyes, melting slowly into the hues of twilight, till, where he stood, there was an empty space. But all agreed that the hoary shape was gone. The men of that generation watched for his reappearance, in sunshine and in twilight, but never saw him more, nor knew when his funeral passed, nor where his gravestone was.

And who was the Gray Champion? Perhaps his name might be found in the records of that stern Court of Justice, which passed a sentence, too mighty for the age, but glorious in all aftertimes, for its humbling lesson to the monarch and its high example to the subject. I have heard, that whenever the descendants of the Puritans are to show the spirit of their sires, the old man appears again. When eighty years had passed, he walked once more in King Street. Five years later, in the twilight of an April morning, he stood on the green

[1] a nickname applied contemptuously to Oliver Cromwell by his enemies

beside the meetinghouse, at Lexington, where now the obelisk of granite, with a slab of slate inlaid, commemorates the first fallen of the Revolution. And when our fathers were toiling at the breastwork on Bunker's Hill, all through that night the old warrior walked his rounds. Long, long may it be, ere he comes again! His hour is one of darkness, and adversity, and peril. But should domestic tyranny oppress us, or the invader's step pollute our soil, still may the Gray Champion come, for he is the type of New England's hereditary spirit; and his shadowy march, on the eve of danger, must ever be the pledge that New England's sons will vindicate their ancestry.

1835

## YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN

Published in the *New England Magazine*, April, 1835. Reprinted in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). When Hawthorne was in the Salem Custom House, his interest as a writer of fiction was in brooding over the past of the historic old place. He turned not to the active sea life of the town but to the Salem of witchcraft days. He re-created, with a psychologist's interest, the hysterical condition of a community when anybody and everybody, even the elect, might come under suspicion. Hawthorne does not say whether Young Goodman Brown had fallen asleep and dreamed what is narrated, or whether it had actuality. For the materials of the tale he is indebted to Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*.

YOUNG Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

"Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed tonight. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afeard of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year."

"My love and my Faith," replied young Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?"

"Then God bless you!" said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back."

"Amen!" cried Goodman Brown. "Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee."

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meetinghouse, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

"Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him. "What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight. But no, no; 'twould kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven."

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveler knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

"There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree," said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!"

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He

arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him.

"You are late, Goodman Brown," said he. "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes agone."

"Faith kept me back a while," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveler was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveler, "this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary."

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of."

"Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet."

"Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept"—

"Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake."

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveler with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court[1] are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too—but these are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

Thus far the elder traveler had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snakelike staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

[1] the colonial lawmaking body

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse[1] should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall," said he. "But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow-traveler. "Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path."

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words—a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveler put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveler, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhanged witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane—"[1]

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a newborn babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion tonight. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveler alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveler exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

[1] Goody Cloyse, Goody Cory, and Martha Carrier, all mentioned in this story, were women sentenced to death for witchcraft in 1692 by one of Hawthorne's remote ancestors.

[1] The more familiar names of the plants mentioned are wild celery, five-finger, and monkshood.

"Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travelers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than tonight's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of townspeople of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a

stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice, of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given."

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveler, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him. "Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you."

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meetinghouse. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

"A grave and dark-clad company," quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and

splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their special sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

"But where is Faith?" thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

"Bring forth the converts!" cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

"Welcome, my children," said the dark figure, "to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!"

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

"There," resumed the sable form, "are all whom ye have reverenced from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds; how hoary-bearded elders of the church

have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows' weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest, to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost—can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other."

They did so; and by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

"Lo, there ye stand, my children," said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race."

"Welcome," repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband, "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one."

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to?" quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meetinghouse, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were sing-

ing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

1835

## THE MAYPOLE OF MERRY MOUNT

Published in *The Token*, 1836. Colonial material has now become literary material. Morton's own account of the revels in *New English Canaan* may be found reprinted in part in Vol. I, p. 22. Captain Wollaston founded a colony near Plymouth village in 1625. When he went to Virginia, Thomas Morton, a seller of firearms and spirits to the Indians, succeeded him as director of Merry Mount. John Endicott and men from Salem visited the colony in Morton's absence, cut down the "idoll Maypole," admonished the colonists to become more sober in behavior, and renamed the place Mount Dagon. For a discussion of the sources of this tale, a dramatic pageant presenting the Merry-mounters as the expression of the happy acceptance of life and the Puritans as the sober rejection of it, see G. H. Orians, *Modern Language Notes*, LIII, 159–167 (March, 1938). The incident was made the subject of an opera by Howard Hanson, given at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, February, 1934, with Lawrence Tibbett, baritone, in the leading role.

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There is an admirable foundation for a philosophic romance in the curious history of the early settlement of Mount Wollaston, or Merry Mount. In the slight sketch here attempted, the facts, recorded on the grave pages of our New England annalists, have wrought themselves, almost spontaneously, into a sort of allegory. The masques, mummeries, and festive customs, described in the text, are in accordance with the manners of the age. Authority on these points may be found in Strutt's *Book of English Sports and Pastimes*.

[*Hawthorne's note.*]

BRIGHT were the days at Merry Mount, when the Maypole was the banner staff of that gay colony! They who reared it, should their banner be triumphant, were to pour sunshine over New England's rugged hills, and scatter flower seeds throughout the soil. Jollity and gloom were contending for an empire. Midsummer eve[1] had come, bringing deep verdure to the forest, and roses in her lap, of a more vivid hue than the tender buds of Spring. But May, or her mirthful spirit, dwelt all the year round at Merry Mount, sporting with the Summer months, and revelling with Autumn, and basking in the glow of Winter's fireside. Through a world of toil and care she flitted with a dreamlike smile, and came hither to find a home among the lightsome hearts of Merry Mount.

Never had the Maypole been so gayly decked as at sunset on midsummer eve. This venerated emblem was a pine-tree, which had preserved the slender grace of youth, while it equalled the loftiest height of the old wood monarchs. From its top streamed a silken banner, colored like the rainbow. Down nearly to the ground the pole was dressed with birchen boughs, and others of the liveliest green, and some with silvery leaves, fastened by ribbons that fluttered in fantastic knots of twenty different colors, but no sad ones. Garden flowers, and blossoms of the wilderness, laughed gladly forth amid the verdure, so fresh and dewy that they must have grown by magic on that happy pine-tree. Where this green and flowery splendor terminated, the shaft of the Maypole was stained with the seven brilliant hues of the banner at its top. On the lowest green bough hung an abundant wreath of roses, some that had been gathered

[1] June 23, same date as St. John's Eve, referred to later in the story

in the sunniest spots of the forest, and others, of still richer blush, which the colonists had reared from English seed. O, people of the Golden Age, the chief of your husbandry was to raise flowers!

But what was the wild throng that stood hand in hand about the Maypole? It could not be that the fauns and nymphs, when driven from their classic groves and homes of ancient fable, had sought refuge, as all the persecuted did, in the fresh woods of the West. These were Gothic monsters, though perhaps of Grecian ancestry. On the shoulders of a comely youth uprose the head and branching antlers of a stag; a second, human in all other points, had the grim visage of a wolf; a third, still with the trunk and limbs of a mortal man, showed the beard and horns of a venerable he-goat. There was the likeness of a bear erect, brute in all but his hind legs, which were adorned with pink silk stockings. And here again, almost as wondrous, stood a real bear of the dark forest, lending each of his forepaws to the grasp of a human hand, and as ready for the dance as any in that circle. His inferior nature rose halfway, to meet his companions as they stooped. Other faces wore the similitude of man or woman, but distorted or extravagant, with red noses pendulous before their mouths, which seemed of awful depth, and stretched from ear to ear in an eternal fit of laughter. Here might be seen the Salvage Man, well known in heraldry, hairy as a baboon, and girdled with green leaves. By his side, a noble figure, but still a counterfeit, appeared an Indian hunter, with feathery crest and wampum belt. Many of this strange company wore fools-caps, and had little bells appended to their garments, tinkling with a silvery sound, responsive to the inaudible music of their gleesome spirits. Some youths and maidens were of soberer garb, yet well maintained their places in the irregular throng by the expression of wild revelry upon their features. Such were the colonists of Merry Mount, as they stood in the broad smile of sunset round their venerated Maypole.

Had a wanderer, bewildered in the melancholy forest, heard their mirth, and stolen a half-affrighted glance, he might have fancied them the crew of Comus,[1] some already transformed to brutes, some midway between man and beast, and the others rioting in the flow of tipsy jollity that foreran the change. But a band of Puritans, who watched the scene, invisible themselves, compared the masques to those devils and ruined souls with whom their superstition peopled the black wilderness.

Within the ring of monsters appeared the two airiest forms that had ever trodden on any more solid footing than a purple and golden cloud. One was a youth in glistening apparel, with a scarf of the rainbow pattern crosswise on his breast. His right hand held a gilded staff, the ensign of high dignity among the revellers, and his left grasped the slender fingers of a fair maiden, not less gayly decorated than himself. Bright roses glowed in contrast with the dark and glossy curls of each, and were scattered round their feet, or had sprung up spontaneously there. Behind this lightsome couple, so close to the Maypole that its boughs shaded his jovial face, stood the figure of an English priest, canonically dressed, yet decked with flowers, in heathen fashion, and wearing a chaplet of the native vine leaves. By the riot of his rolling eye, and the pagan decorations of his holy garb, he seemed the wildest monster there, and the very Comus of the crew.

"Votaries of the Maypole," cried the flower-decked priest, "merrily, all day long, have the woods echoed to your mirth. But be this your merriest hour, my hearts! Lo, here stand the Lord and Lady of the May, whom I, a clerk of Oxford, and high priest of Merry Mount, am presently to join in holy matrimony. Up with your nimble spirits, ye morris-dancers, green men, and glee maidens, bears and wolves, and horned gentlemen! Come; a chorus now, rich with the old mirth of Merry England, and the wilder glee of this fresh forest; and then a dance, to show the youthful pair what life is made of, and how airily they should go through it! All ye that love the Maypole, lend your voices to the nuptial song of the Lord and Lady of the May!"

[1] The god of festive joy and mirth in Milton's *Comus* (lines 92 ff.) is represented as the son of Circe and Bacchus.

This wedlock was more serious than most affairs of Merry Mount, where jest and delusion, trick and fantasy, kept up a continual carnival. The Lord and Lady of the May, though their titles must be laid down at sunset, were really and truly to be partners for the dance of life, beginning the measure that same bright eve. The wreath of roses, that hung from the lowest green bough of the Maypole, had been twined for them, and would be thrown over both their heads, in symbol of their flowery union. When the priest had spoken, therefore, a riotous uproar burst from the rout of monstrous figures.

"Begin you the stave, reverend Sir," cried they all; "and never did the woods ring to such a merry peal as we of the Maypole shall send up!"

Immediately a prelude of pipe, cithern, and viol, touched with practiced minstrelsy, began to play from a neighboring thicket, in such a mirthful cadence that the boughs of the Maypole quivered to the sound. But the May Lord, he of the gilded staff, chancing to look into his Lady's eyes, was wonder struck at the almost pensive glance that met his own.

"Edith, sweet Lady of the May," whispered he reproachfully, "is yon wreath of roses a garland to hang above our graves, that you look so sad? O, Edith, this is our golden time! Tarnish it not by any pensive shadow of the mind; for it may be that nothing of futurity will be brighter than the mere remembrance of what is now passing."

"That was the very thought that saddened me! How came it in your mind too?" said Edith, in a still lower tone than he, for it was high treason to be sad at Merry Mount. "Therefore do I sigh amid this festive music. And besides, dear Edgar, I struggle as with a dream, and fancy that these shapes of our jovial friends are visionary, and their mirth unreal, and that we are no true Lord and Lady of the May. What is the mystery in my heart?"

Just then, as if a spell had loosened them, down came a little shower of withering rose leaves from the Maypole. Alas, for the young lovers! No sooner had their hearts glowed with real passion than they were sensible of something vague and unsubstantial in their former pleasures, and felt a dreary presentiment of inevitable change. From the moment that they truly loved, they had subjected themselves to earth's doom of care and sorrow, and troubled joy, and had no more a home at Merry Mount. That was Edith's mystery. Now leave we the priest to marry them, and the masquers to sport round the Maypole, till the last sunbeam be withdrawn from its summit, and the shadows of the forest mingle gloomily in the dance. Meanwhile, we may discover who these gay people were.

Two hundred years ago, and more, the old world and its inhabitants became mutually weary of each other. Men voyaged by thousands to the West: some to barter glass beads, and such like jewels, for the furs of the Indian hunter; some to conquer virgin empires; and one stern band to pray. But none of these motives had much weight with the colonists of Merry Mount. Their leaders were men who had sported so long with life, that when Thought and Wisdom came, even these unwelcome guests were led astray by the crowd of vanities which they should have put to flight. Erring Thought and perverted Wisdom were made to put on masques, and play the fool. The men of whom we speak, after losing the heart's fresh gayety, imagined a wild philosophy of pleasure, and came hither to act out their latest daydream. They gathered followers from all that giddy tribe whose whole life is like the festal days of soberer men. In their train were minstrels, not unknown in London streets: wandering players, whose theaters had been the halls of noblemen; mummers, rope-dancers, and mountebanks, who would long be missed at wakes, church ales,[1] and fairs; in a word, mirth makers of every sort, such as abounded in that age, but now began to be discountenanced by the rapid growth of Puritanism. Light had their footsteps been on land, and as lightly they came across the sea. Many had been maddened by their previous troubles into a gay despair; others were as madly gay in the flush of youth, like the May Lord and his Lady; but whatever might be the quality of their

[1] festivals, named from the liquor drunk on such occasions

mirth, old and young were gay at Merry Mount. The young deemed themselves happy. The elder spirits, if they knew that mirth was but the counterfeit of happiness, yet followed the false shadow wilfully, because at least her garments glittered brightest. Sworn triflers of a lifetime, they would not venture among the sober truths of life not even to be truly blest.

All the hereditary pastimes of Old England were transplanted hither. The King of Christmas was duly crowned, and the Lord of Misrule[1] bore potent sway. On the Eve of St. John, they felled whole acres of the forest to make bonfires, and danced by the blaze all night, crowned with garlands, and throwing flowers into the flame. At harvest time, though their crop was of the smallest, they made an image with the sheaves of Indian corn, and wreathed it with autumnal garlands, and bore it home triumphantly. But what chiefly characterized the colonists of Merry Mount was their veneration for the Maypole. It has made their true history a poet's tale. Spring decked the hallowed emblem with young blossoms and fresh green boughs; Summer brought roses of the deepest blush, and the perfected foliage of the forest; Autumn enriched it with that red and yellow gorgeousness which converts each wildwood leaf into a painted flower; and Winter silvered it with sleet, and hung it round with icicles, till it flashed in the cold sunshine, itself a frozen sunbeam. Thus each alternate season did homage to the Maypole, and paid it a tribute of its own richest splendor. Its votaries danced round it, once, at least, in every month; sometimes they called it their religion, or their altar; but always, it was the banner staff of Merry Mount.

Unfortunately, there were men in the new world of a sterner faith than these Maypole worshippers. Not far from Merry Mount was a settlement of Puritans, most dismal wretches, who said their prayers before daylight, and then wrought in the forest or the cornfield till evening made it prayer time again. Their weapons were always at hand to shoot down the straggling savage. When they met in conclave, it was never to keep up the old English mirth, but to hear sermons three hours long, or to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves and the scalps of Indians. Their festivals were fast days, and their chief pastime the singing of psalms. Woe to the youth or maiden who did but dream of a dance! The selectman nodded to the constable; and there sat the light-heeled reprobate in the stocks; or if he danced, it was round the whipping-post, which might be termed the Puritan Maypole.

A party of these grim Puritans, toiling through the difficult woods, each with a horseload of iron armor to burden his footsteps, would sometimes draw near the sunny precincts of Merry Mount. There were the silken colonists, sporting round their Maypole; perhaps teaching a bear to dance, or striving to communicate their mirth to the grave Indian; or masquerading in the skins of deer and wolves, which they had hunted for that especial purpose. Often, the whole colony were playing at blindman's buff, magistrates and all, with their eyes bandaged, except a single scapegoat, whom the blinded sinners pursued by the tinkling of the bells at his garments. Once, it is said, they were seen following a flower-decked corpse, with merriment and festive music, to his grave. But did the dead man laugh? In their quietest times, they sang ballads and told tales, for the edification of their pious visitors; or perplexed them with juggling tricks; or grinned at them through horse collars; and when sport itself grew wearisome, they made game of their own stupidity, and began a yawning match. At the very least of these enormities, the men of iron shook their heads and frowned so darkly that the revellers looked up, imagining that a momentary cloud had overcast the sunshine, which was to be perpetual there. On the other hand, the Puritans affirmed that, when a psalm was pealing from their place of worship, the echo which the forest sent them back seemed often like the chorus of a jolly catch, closing with a roar of laughter. Who but the fiend, and his bond slaves, the crew of Merry Mount, had thus disturbed them? In due time, a feud arose, stern and bitter on one side, and as serious on the other as anything could be among such light spirits as had sworn allegiance to the Maypole. The future com-

[1] the master of the Christmas revels

plexion of New England was involved in this important quarrel. Should the grizzly saints establish their jurisdiction over the gay sinners, then would their spirits darken all the clime and make it a land of clouded visages, of hard toil, of sermon and psalm forever. But should the banner staff of Merry Mount be fortunate, sunshine would break upon the hills, and flowers would beautify the forest, and late posterity do homage to the Maypole.

After these authentic passages from history, we return to the nuptials of the Lord and Lady of the May. Alas! we have delayed too long, and must darken our tale too suddenly. As we glance again at the Maypole, a solitary sunbeam is fading from the summit, and leaves only a faint, golden tinge blended with the hues of the rainbow banner. Even that dim light is now withdrawn, relinquishing the whole domain of Merry Mount to the evening gloom, which has rushed so instantaneously from the black surrounding woods. But some of these black shadows have rushed forth in human shape.

Yes, with the setting sun, the last day of mirth had passed from Merry Mount. The ring of gay masquers was disordered and broken; the stag lowered his antlers in dismay; the wolf grew weaker than a lamb; the bells of the morris-dancers tinkled with tremulous affright. The Puritans had played a characteristic part in the Maypole mummeries. Their darksome figures were intermixed with the wild shapes of their foes, and made the scene a picture of the moment, when waking thoughts start up amid the scattered fantasies of a dream. The leader of the hostile party stood in the center of the circle, while the rout of monsters cowered around him, like evil spirits in the presence of a dread magician. No fantastic foolery could look him in the face. So stern was the energy of his aspect, that the whole man, visage, frame, and soul, seemed wrought of iron, gifted with life and thought, yet all of one substance with his headpiece and breastplate. It was the Puritan of Puritans; it was Endicott himself!

"Stand off, priest of Baal!" said he, with a grim frown, and laying no reverent hand upon the surplice. "I know thee, Blackstone![1] Thou art the man who couldst not abide the rule even of thine own corrupted church, and hast come hither to preach iniquity, and to give example of it in thy life. But now shall it be seen that the Lord hath sanctified this wilderness for his peculiar people. Woe unto them that would defile it! And first, for this flower-decked abomination, the altar of thy worship!"

And with his keen sword Endicott assaulted the hallowed Maypole. Nor long did it resist his arm. It groaned with a dismal sound; it showered leaves and rosebuds upon the remorseless enthusiast; and finally, with all its green boughs and ribbons and flowers, symbolic of departed pleasures, down fell the banner staff of Merry Mount. As it sank, tradition says, the evening sky grew darker, and the woods threw forth a more somber shadow.

"There," cried Endicott, looking triumphantly on his work, "there lies the only Maypole in New England! The thought is strong within me that, by its fall, is shadowed forth the fate of light and idle mirth makers, amongst us and our posterity. Amen, saith John Endicott."

"Amen!" echoed his followers.

But the votaries of the Maypole gave one groan for their idol. At the sound, the Puritan leader glanced at the crew of Comus, each a figure of broad mirth, yet, at this moment, strangely expressive of sorrow and dismay.

"Valiant captain," quoth Peter Palfrey, the Ancient[1] of the band, "what order shall be taken with the prisoners?"

"I thought not to repent me of cutting down a Maypole," replied Endicott, "yet now I could find in my heart to plant it again, and give each of these bestial pagans one other dance round their idol. It would have served rarely for a whipping-post!"

"But there are pine-trees enow," suggested the lieutenant.

"True, good Ancient," said the leader. "Wherefore, bind the heathen crew, and be-

[1] Did Governor Endicott speak less positively, we should suspect a mistake here. The Rev. Mr. Blackstone, though an eccentric, is not known to have been an immoral man. We rather doubt his identity with the priest of Merry Mount. [*Hawthorne's note.*]

[1] standard-bearer

stow on them a small matter of stripes apiece, as earnest of our future justice. Set some of the rogues in the stocks to rest themselves, so soon as Providence shall bring us to one of our own well-ordered settlements, where such accommodations may be found. Further penalties, such as branding and cropping of ears, shall be thought of hereafter."

"How many stripes for the priest?" inquired Ancient Palfrey.

"None as yet," answered Endicott, bending his iron frown upon the culprit. "It must be for the Great and General Court to determine, whether stripes and long imprisonment, and other grievous penalty, may atone for his transgressions. Let him look to himself! For such as violate our civil order, it may be permitted us to show mercy. But woe to the wretch that troubleth our religion!"

"And this dancing bear," resumed the officer. "Must he share the stripes of his fellows?"

"Shoot him through the head!" said the energetic Puritan. "I suspect witchcraft in the beast."

"Here be a couple of shining ones," continued Peter Palfrey, pointing his weapon at the Lord and Lady of the May. "They seem to be of high station among these misdoers. Methinks their dignity will not be fitted with less than a double share of stripes."

Endicott rested on his sword, and closely surveyed the dress and aspect of the hapless pair. There they stood, pale, downcast, and apprehensive. Yet there was an air of mutual support, and of pure affection, seeking aid and giving it, that showed them to be man and wife, with the sanction of priest upon their love. The youth, in the peril of the moment, had dropped his gilded staff, and thrown his arm about the Lady of the May, who leaned against his breast, too lightly to burden him, but with weight enough to express that their destinies were linked together, for good or evil. They looked first at each other, and then into the grim captain's face. There they stood, in the first hour of wedlock, while the idle pleasures, of which their companions were the emblems, had given place to the sternest cares of life, personified by the dark Puritans. But never had their youthful beauty seemed so pure and high as when its glow was chastened by adversity.

"Youth," said Endicott, "ye stand in an evil case, thou and thy maiden wife. Make ready presently, for I am minded that ye shall both have a token to remember your wedding day!"

"Stern man," cried the May Lord, "how can I move thee? Were the means at hand, I would resist to the death. Being powerless, I entreat! Do with me as thou wilt, but let Edith go untouched!"

"Not so," replied the immitigable zealot. "We are not wont to show an idle courtesy to that sex which requireth the stricter discipline. What sayest thou, maid? Shall thy silken bridegroom suffer thy share of the penalty, besides his own?"

"Be it death," said Edith, "and lay it all on me!"

Truly, as Endicott had said, the poor lovers stood in a woeful case. Their foes were triumphant, their friends captive and abased, their home desolate, the benighted wilderness around them, and a rigorous destiny, in the shape of the Puritan leader, their only guide. Yet the deepening twilight could not altogether conceal that the iron man was softened; he smiled at the fair spectacle of early love; he almost sighed for the inevitable blight of early hopes.

"The troubles of life have come hastily on this young couple," observed Endicott. "We will see how they comport themselves under their present trials ere we burden them with greater. If, among the spoil, there be any garments of a more decent fashion, let them be put upon this May Lord and his Lady, instead of their glistening vanities. Look to it, some of you."

"And shall not the youth's hair be cut?" asked Peter Palfrey, looking with abhorrence at the lovelock and long glossy curls of the young man.

"Crop it forthwith, and that in the true pumpkin-shell fashion," answered the captain. "Then bring them along with us, but more gently than their fellows. There be qualities in the youth, which may make him valiant to fight, and sober to toil, and pious to pray; and in the maiden, that may fit her to become a

mother in our Israel, bringing up babes in better nurture than her own hath been. Nor think ye, young ones, that they are the happiest, even in our lifetime of a moment, who misspend it in dancing round a Maypole!"

And Endicott, the severest Puritan of all who laid the rock foundation of New England, lifted the wreath of roses from the ruin of the Maypole, and threw it, with his own gauntleted hand, over the heads of the Lord and Lady of the May. It was a deed of prophecy. As the moral gloom of the world overpowers all systematic gayety, even so was their home of wild mirth made desolate amid the sad forest. They returned to it no more. But as their flowery garland was wreathed of the brightest roses that had grown there, so, in the tie that united them, were intertwined all the purest and best of their early joys. They went heavenward, supporting each other along the difficult path which it was their lot to tread, and never wasted one regretful thought on the vanities of Merry Mount.

1836

## DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT

Called "The Fountain of Youth" in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, January, 1837. Renamed when reprinted in *Twice-Told Tales*. Its leading idea is the restoration of youth and its effect on the actions of four old persons who temporarily regain it, yet show no betterment of character. The moral it suggests is the futility of endeavor to escape from the common lot. The drinking of an elixir bringing immortal youth, which he had perhaps from William Godwin's *St. Leon*, is a favorite subject with Hawthorne. There are entries on the subject in the *Notebooks* and it plays a part in "A Virtuoso's Collection" (1842), "The Birthmark" (1843), and in *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret* which he left unfinished at his death.

THAT very singular man, old Dr. Heidegger, once invited four venerable friends to meet him in his study. There were three white-bearded gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, and a withered gentlewoman, whose name was the Widow Wycherly. They were all melancholy old creatures, who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was that they were not long ago in their graves. Mr. Medbourne, in the vigor of his age, had been a prosperous merchant, but had lost his all by a frantic speculation, and was now little better than a mendicant. Colonel Killigrew had wasted his best years, and his health and substance, in the pursuit of sinful pleasures which had given birth to a brood of pains, such as the gout, and divers other torments of soul and body. Mr. Gascoigne was a ruined politician, a man of evil fame, or at least had been so, till time had buried him from the knowledge of the present generation, and made him obscure instead of infamous. As for the Widow Wycherly, tradition tells us that she was a great beauty in her day; but, for a long while past, she had lived in deep seclusion, on account of certain scandalous stories which had prejudiced the gentry of the town against her. It is a circumstance worth mentioning, that each of these three old gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew, and Mr. Gascoigne, were early lovers of the Widow Wycherly, and had once been on the point of cutting each other's throats for her sake. And, before proceeding farther, I will merely hint that Dr. Heidegger and all his four guests were sometimes thought to be a little beside themselves; as is not unfrequently the case with old people, when worried either by present troubles or woeful recollections.

"My dear old friends," said Dr. Heidegger, motioning them to be seated, "I am desirous of your assistance in one of those little experiments with which I amuse myself here in my study."

If all stories were true, Dr. Heidegger's study must have been a very curious place. It was a dim, old-fashioned chamber, festooned with cobwebs, and besprinkled with antique dust. Around the walls stood several oaken bookcases, the lower shelves of which were filled with rows of gigantic folios and black-letter quartos, and the upper with little parchment-covered duodecimos. Over the central bookcase was a bronze bust of Hippocrates, with which, according to some authorities, Dr. Heidegger was accustomed to hold consultations in all difficult cases of his practice. In the obscurest corner of the room stood a tall and narrow oaken closet, with its door ajar, within which doubtfully appeared

a skeleton. Between two of the bookcases hung a looking-glass, presenting its high and dusty plate within a tarnished gilt frame. Among many wonderful stories related of this mirror, it was fabled that the spirits of all the doctor's deceased patients dwelt within its verge, and would stare him in the face whenever he looked thitherward. The opposite side of the chamber was ornamented with the full-length portrait of a young lady, arrayed in the faded magnificence of silk, satin, and brocade, and with a visage as faded as her dress. Above half a century ago, Dr. Heidegger had been on the point of marriage with this young lady; but, being affected with some slight disorder, she had swallowed one of her lover's prescriptions, and died on the bridal evening. The greatest curiosity of the study remains to be mentioned; it was a ponderous folio volume, bound in black leather, with massive silver clasps. There were no letters on the back, and nobody could tell the title of the book. But it was well known to be a book of magic; and once, when a chambermaid had lifted it, merely to brush away the dust, the skeleton had rattled in its closet, the picture of the young lady had stepped one foot upon the floor, and several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror; while the brazen head of Hippocrates frowned, and said,—"Forbear."

Such was Dr. Heidegger's study. On the summer afternoon of our tale, a small round table, as black as ebony, stood in the center of the room, sustaining a cut-glass vase of beautiful form and elaborate workmanship. The sunshine came through the window, between the heavy festoons of two faded damask curtains, and fell directly across this vase; so that a mild splendor was reflected from it on the ashen visages of the five old people who sat around. Four champagne glasses were also on the table.

"My dear old friends," repeated Dr. Heidegger, "may I reckon on your aid in performing an exceedingly curious experiment?"

Now Dr. Heidegger was a very strange old gentleman, whose eccentricity had become the nucleus for a thousand fantastic stories. Some of these fables, to my shame be it spoken, might possibly be traced back to mine own veracious self; and if any passages of the present tale should startle the reader's faith, I must be content to bear the stigma of a fictionmonger.

When the doctor's four guests heard him talk of his proposed experiment, they anticipated nothing more wonderful than the murder of a mouse in an air pump, or the examination of a cobweb by the microscope, or some similar nonsense, with which he was constantly in the habit of pestering his intimates. But without waiting for a reply, Dr. Heidegger hobbled across the chamber, and returned with the same ponderous folio, bound in black leather, which common report affirmed to be a book of magic. Undoing the silver clasps, he opened the volume, and took from among its black-letter pages a rose, or what was once a rose, though now the green leaves and crimson petals had assumed one brownish hue, and the ancient flower seemed ready to crumble to dust in the doctor's hands.

"This rose," said Dr. Heidegger, with a sigh, "this same withered and crumbling flower, blossomed five-and-fifty years ago. It was given me by Sylvia Ward, whose portrait hangs yonder; and I meant to wear it in my bosom at our wedding. Five-and-fifty years it has been treasured between the leaves of this old volume. Now, would you deem it possible that this rose of half a century could ever bloom again?"

"Nonsense!" said the Widow Wycherly, with a peevish toss of her head. "You might as well ask whether an old woman's wrinkled face could ever bloom again."

"See!" answered Dr. Heidegger.

He uncovered the vase, and threw the faded rose into the water which it contained. At first, it lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon, however, a singular change began to be visible. The crushed and dried petals stirred, and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a deathlike slumber; the slender stalk and twigs of foliage became green; and there was the rose of half a century, looking as fresh as when Sylvia Ward had first given it

to her lover. It was scarcely full blown; for some of its delicate red leaves curled modestly around its moist bosom, within which two or three dewdrops were sparkling.

"That is certainly a very pretty deception," said the doctor's friends; carelessly, however, for they had witnessed greater miracles at a conjurer's show; "pray how was it effected?"

"Did you never hear of the 'Fountain of Youth?'" asked Dr. Heidegger, "which Ponce De Leon, the Spanish adventurer, went in search of two or three centures ago?"

"But did Ponce De Leon ever find it?" said the Widow Wycherly.

"No," answered Dr. Heidegger, "for he never sought it in the right place. The famous Fountain of Youth, if I am rightly informed, is situated in the southern part of the Floridian peninsula, not far from Lake Macaco. Its source is overshadowed by several gigantic magnolias, which, though numberless centuries old, have been kept as fresh as violets by the virtues of this wonderful water. An acquaintance of mine, knowing my curiosity in such matters, has sent me what you see in the vase."

"Ahem!" said Colonel Killigrew, who believed not a word of the doctor's story; "and what may be the effect of this fluid on the human frame?"

"You shall judge for yourself, my dear Colonel," replied Dr. Heidegger; "and all of you, my respected friends, are welcome to so much of this admirable fluid as may restore to you the bloom of youth. For my own part, having had much trouble in growing old, I am in no hurry to grow young again. With your permission, therefore, I will merely watch the progress of the experiment."

While he spoke, Dr. Heidegger had been filling the four champagne glasses with the water of the Fountain of Youth. It was apparently impregnated with an effervescent gas, for little bubbles were continually ascending from the depths of the glasses, and bursting in silvery spray at the surface. As the liquor diffused a pleasant perfume, the old people doubted not that it possessed cordial and comfortable properties; and, though utter skeptics as to its rejuvenescent power, they were inclined to swallow it at once. But Dr. Heidegger besought them to stay a moment.

"Before you drink, my respectable old friends," said he, "it would be well that, with the experience of a lifetime to direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for your guidance, in passing a second time through the perils of youth. Think what a sin and a shame it would be, if with your peculiar advantages, you should not become patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of the age!"

The doctor's four venerable friends made him no answer, except by a feeble and tremulous laugh; so very ridiculous was the idea, that, knowing how closely repentance treads behind the steps of error, they should ever go astray again.

"Drink, then," said the doctor, bowing: "I rejoice that I have so well selected the subjects of my experiment."

With palsied hands, they raised the glasses to their lips. The liquor, if it really possessed such virtues as Dr. Heidegger imputed to it, could not have been bestowed on four human beings who needed it more wofully. They looked as if they had never known what youth or pleasure was, but had been the offspring of Nature's dotage, and always the gray, decrepit, sapless, miserable creatures, who now sat stooping round the doctor's table, without life enough in their souls or bodies to be animated even by the prospect of growing young again. They drank off the water, and replaced their glasses on the table.

Assuredly there was an almost immediate improvement in the aspect of the party, not unlike what might have been produced by a glass of generous wine, together with a sudden glow of cheerful sunshine brightening over all their visages at once. There was a healthful suffusion on their cheeks, instead of the ashen hue that had made them look so corpse-like. They gazed at one another, and fancied that some magic power had really begun to smooth away the deep and sad inscriptions which Father Time had been so long engraving on their brows. The Widow Wycherly adjusted her cap, for she felt almost like a woman again.

"Give us more of this wondrous water!"

cried they, eagerly. "We are younger—but we are still too old! Quick—give us more!"

"Patience, patience!" quoth Dr. Heidegger, who sat watching the experiment with philosophic coolness. "You have been a long time growing old. Surely, you might be content to grow young in half an hour! But the water is at your service."

Again he filled their glasses with the liquor of youth, enough of which still remained in the vase to turn half the old people in the city to the age of their own grandchildren. While the bubbles were yet sparkling on the brim, the doctor's four guests snatched their glasses from the table, and swallowed the contents at a single gulp. Was it delusion? Even while the draught was passing down their throats, it seemed to have wrought a change on their whole systems. Their eyes grew clear and bright; a dark shade deepened among their silvery locks, they sat around the table, three gentlemen of middle age, and a woman hardly beyond her buxom prime.

"My dear widow, you are charming!" cried Colonel Killigrew, whose eyes had been fixed upon her face, while the shadows of age were flitting from it like darkness from the crimson daybreak.

The fair widow knew, of old, that Colonel Killigrew's compliments were not always measured by sober truth; so she started up and ran to the mirror, still dreading that the ugly visage of an old woman would meet her gaze. Meanwhile, the three gentlemen behaved in such a manner as proved that the water of the Fountain of Youth possessed some intoxicating qualities; unless, indeed, their exhilaration of spirits were merely a lightsome dizziness caused by the sudden removal of the weight of years. Mr. Gascoigne's mind seemed to run on political topics, but whether relating to the past, present, or future, could not easily be determined, since the same ideas and phrases have been in vogue these fifty years. Now he rattled forth full-throated sentences about patriotism, national glory, and the people's right; now he muttered some perilous stuff or other, in a sly and doubtful whisper, so cautiously that even his own conscience could scarcely catch the secret; and now again he spoke in measured accents, and a deeply deferential tone, as if a royal ear were listening to his well-turned periods. Colonel Killigrew all this time had been trolling forth a jolly bottle-song, and ringing his glass in symphony with the chorus, while his eyes wandered towards the buxom figure of the Widow Wycherly. On the other side of the table, Mr. Medbourne was involved in a calculation of dollars and cents, with which was strangely intermingled a project for supplying the East Indies with ice, by harnessing a team of whales to the polar icebergs.

As for the Widow Wycherly, she stood before the mirror curtsying and simpering to her own image, and greeting it as the friend whom she loved better than all the world beside. She thrust her face close to the glass, to see whether some long-remembered wrinkle or crow's-foot had indeed vanished. She examined whether the snow had so entirely melted from her hair, that the venerable cap could be safely thrown aside. At last, turning briskly away, she came with a sort of dancing step to the table.

"My dear old doctor," cried she, "pray favor me with another glass!"

"Certainly, my dear madam, certainly!" replied the complaisant doctor; "see! I have already filled the glasses."

There, in fact, stood the four glasses, brimful of this wonderful water, the delicate spray of which, as it effervesced from the surface, resembled the tremulous glitter of diamonds. It was now so nearly sunset that the chamber had grown duskier than ever; but a mild and moonlike splendor gleamed from within the vase, and rested alike on the four guests, and on the doctor's venerable figure. He sat in a high-backed, elaborately carved, oaken armchair, with a gray dignity of aspect that might have well befitted that very Father Time whose power had never been disputed save by this fortunate company. Even while quaffing the third draught of the Fountain of Youth, they were almost awed by the expression of his mysterious visage.

But, the next moment, the exhilarating gush of young life shot through their veins. They were now in the happy prime of youth. Age, with its miserable train of cares, and sorrows, and diseases, was remembered only as the

trouble of a dream from which they had joyously awoke. The fresh gloss of the soul, so early lost, and without which the world's successive scenes had been but a gallery of faded pictures, again threw its enchantment over all their prospects. They felt like new-created beings in a new-created universe.

"We are young! We are young!" they cried exultingly.

Youth, like the extremity of age, had effaced the strongly-marked characteristics of middle life, and mutually assimilated them all. They were a group of merry youngsters, almost maddened with the exuberant frolicsomeness of their years. The most singular effect of their gayety was an impulse to mock the infirmity and decrepitude of which they had so lately been the victims. They laughed loudly at their old-fashioned attire, the wide-skirted coats and flapped waistcoats of the young men, and the ancient cap and gown of the blooming girl. One limped across the floor like a gouty grandfather; one set a pair of spectacles astride of his nose, and pretended to pore over the black-letter pages of the book of magic; a third seated himself in an arm-chair, and strove to imitate the venerable dignity of Dr. Heidegger. Then all shouted mirthfully, and leaped about the room. The Widow Wycherly—if so fresh a damsel could be called a widow—tripped up to the doctor's chair, with a mischievous merriment in her rosy face.

"Doctor, you dear old soul," cried she, "get up and dance with me!" And then the four young people laughed louder than ever, to think what a queer figure the poor old doctor would cut.

"Pray excuse me," answered the doctor quietly. "I am old and rheumatic, and my dancing days were over long ago. But either of these gay young gentlemen will be glad of so pretty a partner."

"Dance with me, Clara!" cried Colonel Killigrew.

"No, no, I will be her partner!" shouted Mr. Gascoigne.

"She promised me her hand, fifty years ago!" exclaimed Mr. Medbourne.

They all gathered round her. One caught both her hands in his passionate grasp—another threw his arm about her waist—the third buried his hand among the glossy curls that clustered beneath the widow's cap. Blushing, panting, struggling, chiding, laughing, her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns, she strove to disengage herself, yet still remained in their triple embrace. Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalship, with bewitching beauty for the prize. Yet, by a strange deception, owing to the duskiness of the chamber, and the antique dresses which they still wore, the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grandsires, ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shriveled grandam.

But they were young: their burning passions proved them so. Inflamed to madness by the coquetry of the girl-widow, who neither granted nor quite withheld her favors, the three rivals began to interchange threatening glances. Still keeping hold of the fair prize, they grappled fiercely at one another's throats. As they struggled to and fro, the table was overturned, and the vase dashed into a thousand fragments. The precious Water of Youth flowed in a bright stream across the floor, moistening the wings of a butterfly, which, grown old in the decline of summer, had alighted there to die. The insect fluttered lightly through the chamber, and settled on the snowy head of Dr. Heidegger.

"Come, come, gentlemen!—come, Madame Wycherly," exclaimed the doctor, "I really must protest against this riot."

They stood still, and shivered; for it seemed as if gray Time were calling them back from their sunny youth, far down into the chill and darksome vale of years. They looked at old Dr. Heidegger, who sat in his carved arm-chair, holding the rose of half a century, which he had rescued from among the fragments of the shattered vase. At the motion of his hand, the four rioters resumed their seats; the more readily, because their violent exertions had wearied them, youthful though they were.

"My poor Sylvia's rose!" ejaculated Dr. Heidegger, holding it in the light of the sunset clouds; "it appears to be fading again."

And so it was. Even while the party were looking at it, the flower continued to shrivel up, till it became as dry and fragile as when

the doctor had first thrown it into the vase. He shook off the few drops of moisture which clung to its petals.

"I love it as well thus as in its dewy freshness," observed he, pressing the withered rose to his withered lips. While he spoke, the butterfly fluttered down from the doctor's snowy head, and fell upon the floor.

His guests shivered again. A strange chilliness, whether of the body or spirit they could not tell, was creeping gradually over them all. They gazed at one another, and fancied that each fleeting moment snatched away a charm, and left a deepening furrow where none had been before. Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a lifetime been crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four aged people, sitting with their old friend, Dr. Heidegger?

"Are we grown old again, so soon?" cried they, dolefully.

In truth they had. The Water of Youth possessed merely a virtue more transient than that of wine. The delirium which it created had effervesced away. Yes! they were old again. With a shuddering impulse, that showed her a woman still, the widow clasped her skinny hands before her face, and wished that the coffin lid were over it, since it could be no longer beautiful.

"Yes, friends, ye are old again," said Dr. Heidegger, "and lo! the Water of Youth is all lavished on the ground. Well—I bemoan it not; for if the fountain gushed at my very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it—no, though its delirium were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!"

But the doctor's four friends had taught no such lesson to themselves. They resolved forthwith to make a pilgrimage to Florida, and quaff at morning, noon, and night, from the Fountain of Youth.

1837

## DAVID SWAN

### A FANTASY

**First published in *The Token*, 1837. This sketch, centering about a single spot, like "Sights from a Steeple" or "A Rill from the Town Pump," concerns a sleeper who nearly has adventures. It is allegorical of the various fates that hover about human beings but may pass them by.**

We can be but partially acquainted even with the events which actually influence our course through life, and our final destiny. There are innumerable other events—if such they may be called—which come close upon us, yet pass away without actual results, or even betraying their near approach, by the reflection of any light or shadow across our minds. Could we know all the vicissitudes of our fortunes, life would be too full of hope and fear, exultation or disappointment, to afford us a single hour of true serenity. This idea may be illustrated by a page from the secret history of David Swan.

We have nothing to do with David until we find him, at the age of twenty, on the high road from his native place to the city of Boston, where his uncle, a small dealer in the grocery line, was to take him behind the counter. Be it enough to say that he was a native of New Hampshire, born of respectable parents, and had received an ordinary school education, with a classic finish by a year at Gilmanton Academy. After journeying on foot from sunrise till nearly noon of a summer's day, his weariness and the increasing heat determined him to sit down in the first convenient shade, and await the coming up of the stagecoach. As if planted on purpose for him, there soon appeared a little tuft of maples, with a delightful recess in the midst, and such a fresh, bubbling spring that it seemed never to have sparkled for any wayfarer but David Swan. Virgin or not, he kissed it with his thirsty lips, and then flung himself along the brink, pillowing his head upon some shirts and a pair of pantaloons, tied up in a striped cotton handkerchief. The sunbeams could not reach him; the dust did not yet arise from the road after the heavy rain of yesterday; and his grassy lair suited the young man better than a bed of down. The spring murmured drowsily beside him; the branches waved dreamily across the blue sky overhead; and a deep sleep, perchance hiding dreams within its depths, fell upon David Swan. But we are to relate events which he did not dream of.

While he lay sound asleep in the shade, other people were wide awake, and passed

to and fro, afoot, or horseback, and in all sorts of vehicles, along the sunny road by his bedchamber. Some looked neither to the right hand nor the left, and knew not that he was there; some merely glanced that way, without admitting the slumberer among their busy thoughts; some laughed to see how soundly he slept; and several, whose hearts were brimming full of scorn, ejected their venomous superfluity on David Swan. A middle-aged widow, when nobody else was near, thrust her head a little way into the recess, and vowed that the young fellow looked charming in his sleep. A temperance lecturer saw him, and wrought poor David into the texture of his evening's discourse, as an awful instance of dead drunkenness by the roadside. But censure, praise, merriment, scorn, and indifference were all one, or rather all nothing, to David Swan.

He had slept only a few moments when a brown carriage, drawn by a handsome pair of horses, bowled easily along, and was brought to a standstill nearly in front of David's resting place. A linchpin had fallen out, and permitted one of the wheels to slide off. The damage was slight, and occasioned merely a momentary alarm to an elderly merchant and his wife, who were returning to Boston in the carriage. While the coachman and a servant were replacing the wheel, the lady and gentleman sheltered themselves beneath the maple-trees, and there espied the bubbling fountain, and David Swan asleep beside it. Impressed with the awe which the humblest sleeper usually sheds around him, the merchant trod as lightly as the gout would allow; and his spouse took heed not to rustle her silk gown, lest David should start up all of a sudden.

"How soundly he sleeps!" whispered the old gentleman. "From what a depth he draws that easy breath! Such sleep as that, brought on without an opiate, would be worth more to me than half my income; for it would suppose health and an untroubled mind."

"And youth, besides," said the lady. "Healthy and quiet age does not sleep thus. Our slumber is no more like his than our wakefulness."

The longer they looked, the more did this elderly couple feel interested in the unknown youth, to whom the wayside and the maple shade were as a secret chamber, with the rich gloom of damask curtains brooding over him. Perceiving that a stray sunbeam glimmered down upon his face, the lady contrived to twist a branch aside, so as to intercept it. And having done this little act of kindness, she began to feel like a mother to him.

"Providence seems to have laid him here," whispered she to her husband, "and to have brought us hither to find him, after our disappointment in our cousin's son. Methinks I can see a likeness to our departed Henry. Shall we waken him?"

"To what purpose?" said the merchant, hesitating. "We know nothing of the youth's character."

"That open countenance!" replied his wife in the same hushed voice, yet earnestly. "This innocent sleep!"

While these whispers were passing, the sleeper's heart did not throb, nor his breath become agitated, nor his features betray the least token of interest. Yet Fortune was bending over him, just ready to let fall a burden of gold. The old merchant had lost his only son, and had no heir to his wealth except a distant relative, with whose conduct he was dissatisfied. In such cases people sometimes do stranger things than to act the magician, and awaken a young man to splendor who fell asleep in poverty.

"Shall we not waken him?" repeated the lady persuasively.

"The coach is ready, sir," said the servant, behind.

The old couple started, reddened, and hurried away, mutually wondering that they should ever have dreamed of doing anything so very ridiculous. The merchant threw himself back in the carriage, and occupied his mind with the plan of a magnificent asylum for unfortunate men of business. Meanwhile, David Swan enjoyed his nap.

The carriage could not have gone above a mile or two, when a pretty young girl came along with a tripping pace, which showed precisely how her little heart was dancing in her bosom. Perhaps it was this merry kind of motion that caused—is there any harm in saying it?—her garter to slip its knot. Conscious that the silken girth—if silk it were—

was relaxing its hold, she turned aside into the shelter of the maple-trees, and there found a young man asleep by the spring! Blushing as red as any rose that she should have intruded into a gentleman's bedchamber, and for such a purpose, too, she was about to make her escape on tiptoe. But there was peril near the sleeper. A monster of a bee had been wandering overhead—buzz, buzz, buzz—now among the leaves, now flashing through the strips of sunshine, and now lost in the dark shade, till finally he appeared to be settling on the eyelid of David Swan. The sting of a bee is sometimes deadly. As freehearted as she was innocent, the girl attacked the intruder with her handkerchief, brushed him soundly, and drove him from beneath the maple shade. How sweet a picture! This good deed accomplished, with quickened breath, and a deeper blush, she stole a glance at the youthful stranger for whom she had been battling with a dragon in the air.

"He is handsome!" thought she, and blushed redder yet.

How could it be that no dream of bliss grew so strong within him, that, shattered by its very strength, it should part asunder, and allow him to perceive the girl among its phantoms? Why, at least, did no smile of welcome brighten upon his face? She was come, the maid whose soul, according to the old and beautiful idea, had been severed from his own, and whom, in all his vague but passionate desires, he yearned to meet. Her, only, could he love with a perfect love; him, only, could she receive into the depths of her heart; and now her image was faintly blushing in the fountain by his side; should it pass away, its happy luster would never gleam upon his life again.

"How sound he sleeps!" murmured the girl.

She departed, but did not trip along the road so lightly as when she came.

Now, this girl's father was a thriving country merchant in the neighborhood, and happened, at that identical time, to be looking out for just such a young man as David Swan. Had David formed a wayside acquaintance with the daughter, he would have become the father's clerk, and all else in natural succession. So here, again, had good fortune—the best of fortunes—stolen so near that her garments brushed against him; and he knew nothing of the matter.

The girl was hardly out of sight when two men turned aside beneath the maple shade. Both had dark faces, set off by cloth caps, which were drawn down aslant over their brows. Their dresses were shabby, yet had a certain smartness. These were a couple of rascals who got their living by whatever the devil sent them, and now, in the interim of other business, had staked the joint profits of their next piece of villany on a game of cards, which was to have been decided here under the trees. But, finding David asleep by the spring, one of the rogues whispered to his fellow,—

"Hist!—Do you see that bundle under his head?"

The other villain nodded, winked, and leered.

"I'll bet you a horn of brandy," said the first, "that the chap has either a pocket-book, or a snug little hoard of small change, stowed away amongst his shirts. And if not there, we shall find it in his pantaloons pocket."

"But how if he wakes?" said the other.

His companion thrust aside his waistcoat, pointed to the handle of a dirk, and nodded.

"So be it!" muttered the second villain.

They approached the unconscious David, and, while one pointed the dagger towards his heart, the other began to search the bundle beneath his head. Their two faces, grim, wrinkled, and ghastly with guilt and fear, bent over their victim, looking horrible enough to be mistaken for fiends, should he suddenly awake. Nay, had the villains glanced aside into the spring, even they would hardly have known themselves as reflected there. But David Swan had never worn a more tranquil aspect, even when asleep on his mother's breast.

"I must take away the bundle," whispered one.

"If he stirs, I'll strike," muttered the other.

But, at this moment, a dog, scenting along the ground, came in beneath the maple-trees, and gazed alternately at each of these wicked men, then at the quiet sleeper. He then lapped out of the fountain.

"Pshaw!" said one villain. "We can do nothing now. The dog's master must be close behind."

"Let's take a drink and be off," said the other.

The man with the dagger thrust back the weapon into his bosom, and drew forth a pocket pistol, but not of that kind which kills by a single discharge. It was a flask of liquor, with a block-tin tumbler screwed upon the mouth. Each drank a comfortable dram, and left the spot, with so many jests, and such laughter at their unaccomplished wickedness, that they might be said to have gone on their way rejoicing. In a few hours they had forgotten the whole affair, nor once imagined that the recording angel had written down the crime of murder against their souls, in letters as durable as eternity. As for David Swan, he still slept quietly, neither conscious of the shadow of death when it hung over him, nor of the glow of renewed life when that shadow was withdrawn.

He slept, but no longer so quietly as at first. An hour's repose had snatched from his elastic frame the weariness with which many hours of toil had burdened it. Now, he stirred —now, moved his lips, without a sound— now, talked, in an inward tone, to the noonday specters of his dream. But a noise of wheels came rattling louder and louder along the road, until it dashed through the dispersing mist of David's slumber—and there was the stagecoach. He started up with all his ideas about him.

"Halloo, driver!—take a passenger?" shouted he.

"Room on top!" answered the driver.

Up mounted David, and bowled away merrily towards Boston, without so much as a parting glance at that fountain of dreamlike vicissitude. He knew not that a phantom of Wealth had thrown a golden hue upon its waters—nor that one of Love had sighed softly to their murmur—nor that one of Death had threatened to crimson them with his blood—all, in the brief hour since he lay down to sleep. Sleeping or waking, we hear not the airy footsteps of the strange things that almost happen. Does it not argue a superintending Providence that, while viewless and unexpected events thrust themselves continually athwart our path, there should still be regularity enough in mortal life to render foresight even partially available?

1837

## LADY ELEANORE'S MANTLE

Published in the *Democratic Review*, December, 1838. The old Province House, a three-story brick building which stood nearly opposite the Old South Church on Washington Street, in Boston, is the setting for the first four tales of the second series of *Twice-Told Tales*. It was bought in 1716 to be the home of the royal governor of Massachusetts. In Hawthorne's day it was used as an inn. The fate of the overproud soul which isolates itself from common social ties and the common lot was a favorite theme in the earlier nineteenth century. The affliction with which the proud Lady Eleanore is visited is at once retributive and symbolic. Note the tableaux in the first part of the narrative, and the masterly suggestion of symbolism throughout the whole. Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" and Longfellow's "King Robert of Sicily" tell of other instances of self-isolation or pride.

NOT long after Colonel Shute had assumed the government of Massachusetts Bay, now nearly a hundred and twenty years ago, a young lady of rank and fortune arrived from England, to claim his protection as her guardian. He was her distant relative, but the nearest who had survived the gradual extinction of her family; so that no more eligible shelter could be found for the rich and high-born Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe than within the Province House of a transatlantic colony. The consort of Governor Shute, moreover, had been as a mother to her childhood, and was now anxious to receive her, in the hope that a beautiful young woman would be exposed to infinitely less peril from the primitive society of New England than amid the artifices and corruptions of a court. If either the Governor or his lady had especially consulted their own comfort, they would probably have sought to devolve the responsibility on other hands; since, with some noble and splendid traits of character, Lady Eleanore was remarkable for a harsh, unyielding pride, a haughty consciousness of her hereditary and personal advantages, which made her almost incapable of control.

Judging from many traditionary anecdotes, this peculiar temper was hardly less than a monomania; or, if the acts which it inspired were those of a sane person, it seemed due from Providence that pride so sinful should be followed by as severe a retribution. That tinge of the marvelous, which is thrown over so many of these half-forgotten legends, has probably imparted an additional wildness to the strange story of Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe.

The ship in which she came passenger had arrived at Newport, whence Lady Eleanore was conveyed to Boston in the Governor's coach, attended by a small escort of gentlemen on horseback. The ponderous equipage, with its four black horses, attracted much notice as it rumbled through Cornhill, surrounded by the prancing steeds of half a dozen cavaliers, with swords dangling to their stirrups and pistols at their holsters. Through the large glass windows of the coach, as it rolled along, the people could discern the figure of Lady Eleanore, strangely combining an almost queenly stateliness with the grace and beauty of a maiden in her teens. A singular tale had gone abroad among the ladies of the province, that their fair rival was indebted for much of the irresistible charm of her appearance to a certain article of dress—an embroidered mantle—which had been wrought by the most skilful artist in London, and possessed even magical properties of adornment. On the present occasion, however, she owed nothing to the witchery of dress, being clad in a riding habit of velvet, which would have appeared stiff and ungraceful on any other form.

The coachman reined in his four black steeds, and the whole cavalcade came to a pause in front of the contorted iron balustrade that fenced the Province House from the public street. It was an awkward coincidence that the bell of the Old South was just then tolling for a funeral; so that, instead of a gladsome peal with which it was customary to announce the arrival of distinguished strangers, Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe was ushered by a doleful clang, as if calamity had come embodied in her beautiful person.

"A very great disrespect!" exclaimed Captain Langford, an English officer, who had recently brought despatches to Governor Shute. "The funeral should have been deferred, lest Lady Eleanore's spirits be affected by such a dismal welcome."

"With your pardon, sir," replied Doctor Clarke, a physician, and a famous champion of the popular party, "whatever the heralds may pretend, a dead beggar must have precedence of a living queen. King Death confers high privileges."

These remarks were interchanged while the speakers waited a passage through the crowd, which had gathered on each side of the gateway, leaving an open avenue to the portal of the Province House. A black slave in livery now leaped from behind the coach, and threw open the door; while at the same moment, Governor Shute descended the flight of steps from his mansion, to assist Lady Eleanore in alighting. But the Governor's stately approach was anticipated in a manner that excited general astonishment. A pale young man, with his black hair all in disorder, rushed from the throng, and prostrated himself beside the coach, thus offering his person as a footstool for Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe to tread upon. She held back an instant, yet with an expression as if doubting whether the young man were worthy to bear the weight of her footstep, rather than dissatisfied to receive such awful reverence from a fellow-mortal.

"Up, sir," said the Governor, sternly, at the same time lifting his cane over the intruder. "What means the bedlamite by this freak?"

"Nay," answered Lady Eleanore playfully, but with more scorn than pity in her tone, "Your Excellency shall not strike him. When men seek only to be trampled upon, it were a pity to deny them a favor so easily granted—and so well deserved!"

Then, though as lightly as a sunbeam on a cloud, she placed her foot upon the cowering form, and extended her hand to meet that of the Governor. There was a brief interval, during which Lady Eleanore retained this attitude; and never, surely, was there an apter emblem of aristocracy and hereditary pride, trampling on human sympathies and the kindred of nature, than these two figures presented at that moment. Yet the spectators were so smitten with her beauty, and so

essential did pride seem to the existence of such a creature, that they gave a simultaneous exclamation of applause.

"Who is this insolent young fellow?" inquired Captain Langford, who still remained beside Doctor Clarke. "If he be in his senses, his impertinence demands the bastinado. If mad, Lady Eleanore should be secured from further inconvenience by his confinement."

"His name is Jervase Helwyse," answered the doctor; "a youth of no birth or fortune, or other advantages, save the mind and soul that nature gave him; and being secretary to our colonial agent in London, it was his misfortune to meet this Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe. He loved her—and her scorn has driven him mad."

"He was mad so to aspire," observed the English officer.

"It may be so," said Doctor Clarke, frowning as he spoke. "But I tell you, sir, I could well-nigh doubt the justice of the Heaven above us, if no signal humiliation overtake this lady, who now treads so haughtily into yonder mansion. She seeks to place herself above the sympathies of our common nature, which envelops all human souls. See if that nature do not assert its claim over her in some mode that shall bring her level with the lowest!"

"Never!" cried Captain Langford, indignantly; "neither in life, nor when they lay her with her ancestors."

Not many days afterward the Governor gave a ball in honor of Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe. The principal gentry of the colony received invitations, which were distributed to their residences, far and near, by messengers on horseback, bearing missives sealed with all the formality of official dispatches. In obedience to the summons, there was a general gathering of rank, wealth, and beauty; and the wide door of the Province House had seldom given admittance to more numerous and honorable guests than on the evening of Lady Eleanore's ball. Without much extravagance of eulogy, the spectacle might even be termed splendid; for, according to the fashion of the times, the ladies shone in rich silks and satins, outspread over wide projecting hoops; and the gentlemen glittered in gold embroidery, laid unsparingly upon the purple, or scarlet, or sky-blue velvet, which was the material of their coats and waistcoats. The latter article of dress was of great importance, since it enveloped the wearer's body nearly to the knees, and was perhaps bedizened with the amount of his whole year's income, in golden flowers and foliage. The altered taste of the present day—a taste symbolic of a deep change in the whole system of society—would look upon almost any of those gorgeous figures as ridiculous; although that evening the guests sought their reflections in the pier-glasses, and rejoiced to catch their own glitter amid the glittering crowd. What a pity that one of the stately mirrors has not preserved a picture of the scene, which, by the very traits that were so transitory, might have taught us much that would be worth knowing and remembering!

Would, at least, that either painter or mirror could convey to us some faint idea of a garment, already noticed in this legend,—the Lady Eleanore's embroidered mantle,—which the gossips whispered was invested with magic properties, so as to lend a new and untried grace to her figure each time that she put it on! Idle fancy as it is, this mysterious mantle has thrown an awe around my image of her, partly from its fabled virtues, and partly because it was the handiwork of a dying woman, and, perchance, owed the fantastic grace of its conception to the delirium of approaching death.

After the ceremonial greetings had been paid, Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe stood apart from the mob of guests, insulating herself within a small and distinguished circle, to whom she accorded a more cordial favor than to the general throng. The waxen torches threw their radiance vividly over the scene, bringing out its brilliant points in strong relief; but she gazed carelessly, and with now and then an expression of weariness or scorn, tempered with such feminine grace that her auditors scarcely perceived the moral deformity of which it was the utterance. She beheld the spectacle not with vulgar ridicule, as disdaining to be pleased with the provincial mockery of a court festival, but with the deeper scorn of one whose spirit held itself

too high to participate in the enjoyment of other human souls. Whether or no the recollections of those who saw her that evening were influenced by the strange events with which she was subsequently connected, so it was that her figure ever after recurred to them as marked by something wild and unnatural, although at the time the general whisper was of her exceeding beauty, and of the indescribable charm which her mantle threw around her. Some close observers, indeed, detected a feverish flush and alternate paleness of countenance, with a corresponding flow and revulsion of spirits, and once or twice, a painful and helpless betrayal of lassitude, as if she were on the point of sinking to the ground. Then, with a nervous shudder, she seemed to arouse her energies, and threw some bright and playful, yet half-wicked sarcasm, into the conversation. There was so strange a characteristic in her manners and sentiments, that it astonished every right-minded listener; till looking in her face, a lurking and incomprehensible glance and smile perplexed them with doubts both as to her seriousness and sanity. Gradually, Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe's circle grew smaller, till only four gentlemen remained in it. These were Captain Langford, the English officer before mentioned; a Virginian planter, who had come to Massachusetts on some political errand; a young Episcopal clergyman, the grandson of a British earl; and, lastly, the private secretary of Governor Shute, whose obsequiousness had won a sort of tolerance from Lady Eleanore.

At different periods of the evening the liveried servants of the Province House passed among the guests, bearing huge trays of refreshments, and French and Spanish wines. Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe, who refused to wet her beautiful lips even with a bubble of champagne, had sunk back into a large damask chair, apparently overwearied either with the excitement of the scene or its tedium; and while, for an instant, she was unconscious of voices, laughter, and music, a young man stole forward, and knelt down at her feet. He bore a salver in his hand, on which was a chased silver goblet, filled to the brim with wine, which he offered as reverentially as to a crowned queen, or rather with the awful devotion of a priest doing sacrifice to his idol. Conscious that some one touched her robe, Lady Eleanore started, and unclosed her eyes upon the pale, wild features and disheveled hair of Jervase Helwyse.

"Why do you haunt me thus?" said she, in a languid tone, but with a kindlier feeling than she ordinarily permitted herself to express. "They tell me that I have done you harm."

"Heaven knows if that be so," replied the young man, solemnly. "But, Lady Eleanore, in requital of that harm, if such there be, and for your own earthly and heavenly welfare, I pray you to take one sip of this holy wine, and then to pass the goblet round among the guests. And this shall be a symbol that you have not sought to withdraw yourself from the chain of human sympathies—which whoso would shake off must keep company with fallen angels."

"Where has this mad fellow stolen that sacramental vessel?" exclaimed the Episcopal clergyman.

This question drew the notice of the guests to the silver cup, which was recognized as appertaining to the communion plate of the Old South Church; and, for aught that could be known, it was brimming over with the consecrated wine.

"Perhaps it is poisoned," half whispered the Governor's secretary.

"Pour it down the villain's throat!" cried the Virginian, fiercely.

"Turn him out of the house!" cried Captain Langford, seizing Jervase Helwyse so roughly by the shoulder that the sacramental cup was overturned, and its contents sprinkled upon Lady Eleanore's mantle. "Whether knave, fool, or bedlamite, it is intolerable that the fellow should go at large."

"Pray, gentlemen, do my poor admirer no harm," said Lady Eleanore, with a faint and weary smile. "Take him out of my sight, if such be your pleasure; for I can find in my heart to do nothing but laugh at him; whereas, in all decency and conscience, it would become me to weep for the mischief I have wrought!"

But while the bystanders were attempting to lead away the unfortunate young man, he

broke from them, and with a wild, impassioned earnestness, offered a new and equally strange petition to Lady Eleanore. It was no other than that she should throw off the mantle, which, while he pressed the silver cup of wine upon her, she had drawn more closely around her form, so as almost to shroud herself within it.

"Cast it from you!" exclaimed Jervase Helwyse, clasping his hands in an agony of entreaty. "It may not yet be too late! Give the accursed garment to the flames!"

But Lady Eleanore, with a laugh of scorn, drew the rich folds of the embroidered mantle over her head in such a fashion as to give a completely new aspect to her beautiful face, which—half-hidden, half-revealed—seemed to belong to some being of mysterious character and purposes.

"Farewell, Jervase Helwyse!" said she. "Keep my image in your remembrance as you behold it now."

"Alas, lady!" he replied, in a tone no longer wild, but sad as a funeral bell. "We must meet shortly, when your face may wear another aspect—and that shall be the image that must abide within me."

He made no more resistance to the violent efforts of the gentlemen and servants, who almost dragged him out of the apartment, and dismissed him roughly from the iron gate of the Province House. Captain Langford, who had been very active in this affair, was returning to the presence of Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe, when he encountered the physician, Doctor Clarke, with whom he had held some casual talk on the day of her arrival. The Doctor stood apart, separated from Lady Eleanore by the width of the room, but eyeing her with such keen sagacity that Captain Langford involuntarily gave him credit for the discovery of some deep secret.

"You appear to be smitten, after all, with the charms of this queenly maiden," said he, hoping thus to draw forth the physician's hidden knowledge.

"God forbid!" answered Doctor Clarke, with a grave smile; "and if you be wise, you will put up the same prayer for yourself. Woe to those who shall be smitten by this beautiful Lady Eleanore! But yonder stands the Governor—and I have a word or two for his private ear. Good night!"

He accordingly advanced to Governor Shute, and addressed him in so low a tone that none of the bystanders could catch a word of what he said; although the sudden change of His Excellency's hitherto cheerful visage betokened that the communication could be of no agreeable import. A very few moments afterwards, it was announced to the guests that an unforeseen circumstance rendered it necessary to put a premature close to the festival.

The ball at the Province House supplied a topic of conversation for the colonial metropolis for some days after its occurrence, and might still longer have been the general theme, only that a subject of all-engrossing interest thrust it, for a time, from the public recollection. This was the appearance of a dreadful epidemic, which, in that age, and long before and afterwards, was wont to slay its hundreds and thousands on both sides of the Atlantic. On the occasion of which we speak it was distinguished by a peculiar virulence, insomuch that it has left its traces—its pitmarks, to use an appropriate figure—on the history of the country, the affairs of which were thrown into confusion by its ravages. At first, unlike its ordinary course, the disease seemed to confine itself to the higher circles of society, selecting its victims from among the proud, the wellborn, and the wealthy, entering unabashed into stately chambers, and lying down with the slumberers in silken beds. Some of the most distinguished guests of the Province House—even those whom the haughty Lady Eleanore Rochcliffe had deemed not unworthy of her favor—were stricken by this fatal scourge. It was noticed, with an ungenerous bitterness of feeling, that the four gentlemen—the Virginian, the British officer, the young clergyman, and the Governor's secretary—who had been her most devoted attendants on the evening of the ball were the foremost on whom the plague-stroke fell. But the disease, pursuing its onward progress, soon ceased to be exclusively a prerogative of aristocracy. Its red brand was no longer conferred like a noble's star, or an order of knighthood. It threaded its way through the

narrow and crooked streets, and entered the low, mean, darksome dwellings, and laid its hand of death upon the artisans and laboring classes of the town. It compelled rich and poor to feel themselves brethren then; and stalking to and fro across the Three Hills, with a fierceness which made it almost a new pestilence, there was that mighty conqueror —that scourge and horror of our forefathers —the Smallpox!

We cannot estimate the affright which this plague inspired of yore, by contemplating it as the fangless monster of the present day. We must remember, rather, with what awe we watched the gigantic footsteps of the Asiatic cholera striding from shore to shore of the Atlantic, and marching like destiny upon cities far remote, which flight had already half depopulated. There is no other fear so horrible and unhumanizing as that which makes man dread to breathe heaven's vital air, lest it be poison, or to grasp the hand of a brother or friend, lest the gripe of the pestilence should clutch him. Such was the dismay that now followed in the track of the disease, or ran before it throughout the town. Graves were hastily dug, and the pestilential relics as hastily covered, because the dead were enemies of the living, and strove to draw them headlong, as it were, into their own dismal pit. The public councils were suspended, as if mortal wisdom might relinquish its devices now that an unearthly usurper had found his way into the ruler's mansion. Had an enemy's fleet been hovering on the coast, or his armies trampling on our soil, the people would probably have committed their defense to that same direful conqueror who had wrought their own calamity, and would permit no interference with his sway. This conqueror had a symbol of his triumphs. It was a blood-red flag, that fluttered in the tainted air over the door of every dwelling into which the smallpox had entered.

Such a banner was long since waving over the portal of Province House; for thence, as was proved by tracking its footsteps back, had all this dreadful mischief issued. It had been traced back to a lady's luxurious chamber—to the proudest of the proud—to her that was so delicate, and hardly owned herself of earthly mold—to the haughty one who took her stand above human sympathies—to Lady Eleanore! There remained no room for doubt that the contagion had lurked in that gorgeous mantle, which threw so strange a grace around her at the festival. Its fantastic splendor had been conceived in the delirious brain of a woman on her deathbed, and was the last toil of her stiffening fingers, which had interwoven fate and misery with its golden threads. This dark tale, whispered at first, was now bruited far and wide. The people raved against the Lady Eleanore, and cried out that her pride and scorn had evoked a fiend, and that between them both this monstrous evil had been born. At times their rage and despair took the semblance of grinning mirth; and whenever the red flag of the pestilence was hoisted over another, and yet another door, they clapped their hands and shouted through the streets, in bitter mockery: "Behold a new triumph for the Lady Eleanore!"

One day, in the midst of these dismal times, a wild figure approached the portal of the Province House, and folding his arms, stood contemplating the scarlet banner, which a passing breeze shook fitfully as if to fling abroad the contagion that it typified. At length, climbing one of the pillars by means of the iron balustrade, he took down the flag and entered the mansion, waving it above his head. At the foot of the staircase he met the Governor, booted and spurred, with his cloak drawn around him, evidently on the point of setting forth upon a journey.

"Wretched lunatic, what do you seek here?" exclaimed Shute, extending his cane to guard himself from contact. "There is nothing here but Death. Back—or you will meet him!"

"Death will not touch me, the banner-bearer of the pestilence!" cried Jervase Helwyse, shaking the red flag aloft. "Death and the Pestilence, who wears the aspect of the Lady Eleanore, will walk through the streets tonight, and I must march before them with this banner!"

"Why do I waste words on the fellow?" muttered the Governor, drawing his cloak across his mouth. "What matters his miserable life, when none of us are sure of

twelve hours' breath? On, fool, to your own destruction!"

He made way for Jervase Helwyse, who immediately ascended the staircase, but on the first landing-place was arrested by the firm grasp of a hand upon his shoulder. Looking fiercely up, with a madman's impulse to struggle with and rend asunder his opponent, he found himself powerless beneath a calm, stern eye, which possessed the mysterious property of quelling frenzy at its height. The person whom he had now encountered was the physician, Doctor Clarke, the duties of whose sad profession had led him to the Province House, where he was an infrequent guest in more prosperous times.

"Young man, what is your purpose?" demanded he.

"I seek the Lady Eleanore," answered Jervase Helwyse, submissively.

"All have fled from her," said the physician. "Why do you seek her now? I tell you, youth, her nurse fell death-stricken on the threshold of that fatal chamber. Know ye not that never came such a curse to our shores as this lovely Lady Eleanore?—that her breath has filled the air with poison?—that she has shaken pestilence and death upon the land from the folds of her accursed mantle?"

"Let me look upon her!" rejoined the mad youth, more wildly. "Let me behold her, in her awful beauty, clad in the regal garments of the pestilence! She and Death sit on a throne together. Let me kneel down before them!"

"Poor youth!" said Doctor Clarke; and, moved by a deep sense of human weakness, a smile of caustic humor curled his lip even then. "Wilt thou still worship the destroyer, and surround her image with fantasies the more magnificent the more evil she has wrought? Thus man doth ever to his tyrants. Approach, then! Madness, as I have noted, has that good efficacy that it will guard you from contagion—and perchance its own cure may be found in yonder chamber."

Ascending another flight of stairs, he threw open a door and signed to Jervase Helwyse that he should enter. The poor lunatic, it seems probable, had cherished a delusion that his haughty mistress sat in state, unharmed herself by the pestilential influence which, as by enchantment, she scattered round about her. He dreamed, no doubt, that her beauty was not dimmed, but brightened into superhuman splendor. With such anticipations he stole reverentially to the door at which the physician stood, but paused upon the threshold, gazing fearfully into the gloom of the darkened chamber.

"Where is the Lady Eleanore?" whispered he.

"Call her," replied the physician.

"Lady Eleanore!—Princess!—Queen of Death!" cried Jervase Helwyse, advancing three steps into the chamber. "She is not here! There, on yonder table, I behold the sparkle of a diamond which once she wore upon her bosom. There"—and he shuddered—"there hangs her mantle, on which a dead woman embroidered a spell of dreadful potency. But where is the Lady Eleanore?"

Something stirred within the silken curtains of a canopied bed; and a low moan was uttered, which, listening intently, Jervase Helwyse began to distinguish as a woman's voice, complaining dolefully of thirst. He fancied even that he recognized its tones.

"My throat!—my throat is scorched," murmured the voice. "A drop of water!"

"What thing art thou?" said the brain-stricken youth, drawing near the bed and tearing asunder its curtains. "Whose voice hast thou stolen for thy murmurs and miserable petitions, as if Lady Eleanore could be conscious of mortal infirmity? Fie! Heap of diseased mortality, why lurkest thou in my lady's chamber?"

"Oh, Jervase Helwyse," said the voice—and as it spoke the figure contorted itself, struggling to hide its blasted face—"look not now on the woman you once loved! The curse of Heaven hath stricken me, because I would not call man my brother, nor woman sister. I wrapt myself in PRIDE as in a MANTLE, and scorned the sympathies of nature; and therefore has nature made this wretched body the medium of a dreadful sympathy. You are avenged—they are all avenged—nature is avenged—for I am Eleanore Rochcliffe!"

The malice of his mental disease, the bitterness lurking at the bottom of his heart, mad as he was, for a blighted and ruined life,

and love that had been paid with cruel scorn, awoke within the breast of Jervase Helwyse. He shook his finger at the wretched girl, and the chamber echoed, the curtains of the bed were shaken, with his outburst of insane merriment.

"Another triumph for the Lady Eleanore!" he cried. "All have been her victims! Who so worthy to be the final victim as herself?"

Impelled by some new fantasy of his crazed intellect, he snatched the fatal mantle, and rushed from the chamber and the house. That night a procession passed by torchlight through the streets, bearing in the midst the figure of a woman enveloped with a richly embroidered mantle; while in advance stalked Jervase Helwyse, waving the red flag of the pestilence. Arriving opposite the Province House, the mob burned the effigy, and a strong wind came and swept away the ashes. It was said that from that very hour the pestilence abated, as if its sway had some mysterious connection, from the first plague-stroke to the last, with Lady Eleanore's mantle. A remarkable uncertainty broods over that unhappy lady's fate. There is a belief, however, that, in a certain chamber of this mansion, a female form may sometimes be duskily discerned, shrinking into the darkest corner, and muffling her face within an embroidered mantle. Supposing the legend true, can this be other than the once proud Lady Eleanore?

1838

## ETHAN BRAND

### A CHAPTER FROM AN ABORTIVE ROMANCE

Written probably in 1848. Published in the *Boston Museum*, January 5, 1850, and in the *Dollar Magazine*, May, 1851, then in *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales*, 1851. One of the most powerful and most perfectly executed of Hawthorne's tales. Its germ may be found in passages in the *American Notebooks*. In an entry of 1844 Hawthorne wrote, "The search of an investigator for the Unpardonable Sin — he at last finds it in his own heart." Hawthorne spent the weeks from July 29 to Sept. 9, 1838, at North Adams, Mass. In unrelated entries in his notebooks may be found the description of Graylock, and mention of the limekiln, the lime burner, the one-armed soapmaker, the diorama, and the incident of the dog. The descriptions in the story, drawn from reality, help to make it convincing despite its supernatural touches. Noteworthy in its structure is the observance of all three of the so-called dramatic unities, with their limitations of time and place and action.

BARTRAM the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln, at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hillside below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest.

"Father, what is that?" asked the little boy, leaving his play, and pressing betwixt his father's knees.

"O, some drunken man, I suppose," answered the lime-burner; "some merry fellow from the barroom in the village, who dared not laugh loud enough within doors lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock."

"But, father," said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, "he does not laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!"

"Don't be a fool, child!" cried his father, gruffly. "You will never make a man, I do believe; there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf startle you. Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him."

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same limekiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed, since that portentous night when the IDEA was first developed. The kiln, however, on the mountainside, stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life. It was a rude, round, tower-like structure, about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference; so

that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cartloads, and thrown in at the top. There was an opening at the bottom of the tower, like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hillside, it resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions, which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such limekilns in that tract of country, for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the hills. Some of them, built years ago, and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wild-flowers rooting themselves into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of antiquity, and may yet be overspread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his daily and nightlong fire, afford points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble, to hold a chat with the solitary man. It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose, in days gone by, while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals, he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak, or stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames, and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat; while without, the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child, shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when again the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and, in the upper sky, there was a flitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset, though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago.

The little boy now crept still closer to his father, as footsteps were heard ascending the hillside, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees.

"Halloo! who is it?" cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son's timidity, yet half infected by it. "Come forward, and show yourself, like a man, or I'll fling this chunk of marble at your head!"

"You offer me a rough welcome," said a gloomy voice, as the unknown man drew nigh. "Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fireside."

To obtain a distincter view, Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light, that smote full upon the stranger's face and figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse, brown, country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced, he fixed his eyes—which were very bright—intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if he beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note within it.

"Good evening, stranger," said the lime-burner; "whence come you, so late in the day?"

"I come from my search," answered the wayfarer; "for, at last, it is finished."

"Drunk!—or crazy!" muttered Bartram to himself. "I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away, the better."

The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father, and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light; for that there was something in the man's face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even

the lime-burner's dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed like fires within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But, as he closed the door, the stranger turned towards him, and spoke in a quiet, familiar way, that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man, after all.

"Your task draws to an end, I see," said he. "This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours more will convert the stone to lime."

"Why, who are you?" exclaimed the lime-burner. "You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself."

"And well I may be," said the stranger; "for I followed the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a newcomer in these parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?"

"The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?" asked Bartram, with a laugh.

"The same," answered the stranger. "He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again."

"What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?" cried the lime-burner, in amazement. "I am a newcomer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand, in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his limekiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?"

"Even so!" said the stranger, calmly.

"If the question is a fair one," proceeded Bartram, "Where might it be?"

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart. "Here!" replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart, save his own, for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach.

The solitary mountainside was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,—the madman's laugh,—the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,—are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

"Joe," said he to his little son, "scamper down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back, and that he has found the Unpardonable Sin!"

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadfastly at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow's presence had been a barrier between his guest and himself, and that he must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner's own sins rose up within him, and made his memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man's corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand's, and carried dark greetings from one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man, who had come upon him

like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place, after so long absence that the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home, in any familiar spot, than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search, he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the limekiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin; the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And, with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top, the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire, until again summoned forth to share in the dreadful task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts, Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind, that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth, red-hot from the raging furnace.

"Hold! hold!" cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh; for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. "Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your Devil now!"

"Man!" sternly replied Ethan Brand, "what need have I of the Devil? I have left him behind me, on my track. It is with such halfway sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not, because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner, as I was once."

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire, regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected his strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames, and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln.

"I have looked," said he, "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!"

"What is the Unpardonable Sin?" asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

"It is a sin that grew within my own breast," replied Ethan Brand, standing erect, with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. "A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!"

"The man's head is turned," muttered the lime-burner to himself. "He may be a sinner, like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is a madman too."

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation, alone with Ethan Brand on the wild mountainside, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues, and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party, stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the barroom fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk, they now burst into the moonshine and narrow streaks of firelight that illuminated the open space before the limekiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of every thriving village through-

out the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly cut, brown, bobtailed coat, with brass buttons, who, for a length of time unknown, had kept his desk and corner in the barroom, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco-smoke, which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered though strangely altered face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in courtesy; an elderly ragamuffin, in his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney, in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip, and sling, and toddy, and cocktails, imbibed at all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till, at last, to adopt his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-boiler, in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was; but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asked nothing in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng too, came another personage, who, with certain points of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor; a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude, and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk, and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a wild beast, and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonderful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him, and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse, and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward, and greeted Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind, which has wrought itself by intense and solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm, can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Unpardonable Sin and found it within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

"Leave me," he said bitterly, "ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shrivelling up your souls with fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts, and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!"

"Why, you uncivil scoundrel," cried the fierce doctor, "is that the way you respond to

the kindness of your best friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow,—I told you so twenty years ago,—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey, here!"

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travelers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers; and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horseback in the ring, or performed marvelous feats on the tightrope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his face.

"They tell me you have been all over the earth," said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. "You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process.

"Yes," murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer; "it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!"

While these things were passing, a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light, beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hillside, impelled by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood. Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect,—nothing but a sunburnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire, as if he fancied pictures among the coals,—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was other amusement at hand. An old German Jew, traveling with a diorama on his back, was passing down the mountain-road towards the village just as the party turned aside from it, and, in hopes of eking out the profits of the day, the showman had kept them company to the limekiln.

"Come, old Dutchman," cried one of the young men, "let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at!"

"O yes, Captain," answered the Jew,—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody Captain,—"I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures!"

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings, as specimens of the fine arts, that ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand,—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though in truth, it was only the showman's,—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merriment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying-glasses, the boy's round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however, that merry face turned pale, and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.

"You make the little man to be afraid, Captain," said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage, from his stooping posture. "But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!"

Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently; for a curious youth, who had peeped in almost at the same moment, beheld only a vacant space of canvas.

"I remember you now," muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

"Ah, Captain," whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, "I find it to be a heavy matter in my showbox,—this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain."

"Peace," answered Ethan Brand, sternly, "or get thee into the furnace yonder!"

The Jew's exhibition had scarcely concluded, when a great, elderly dog—who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him—saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping,—as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster, round about went the cur; and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail; and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity; until, utterly exhausted, and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment, as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company.

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally unable to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators.

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late,—that the moon was almost down,—that the August night was growing chill,—they hurried homewards, leaving the lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hillside was a solitude, set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that darksome verge, the firelight glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath, until some fearful thing should happen.

Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire, and closed the door of the kiln; then looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade, rather than advised, them to retire to rest.

"For myself, I cannot sleep," said he. "I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time."

"And call the Devil out of the furnace to

keep you company, I suppose," muttered Bartram who had been making intimate acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. "But watch, if you like, and call as many devils as you like! For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze. Come, Joel"

As the boy followed his father into the hut, he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition of the bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

When they had gone, Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood, and looking at the little spirts of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he was reviewing the gradual but marvelous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him,—how the dark forest had whispered to him,—how the stars had gleamed upon him,—a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. He remembered with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe, he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterwards became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the success of his pursuit, and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him. Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered,—had contracted,—had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers of the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development,—as the bright and gorgeous flower, and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor,—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

"What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?" said Ethan Brand to himself. "My task is done, and well done!"

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the limekiln, he thus reached the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across, from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire, sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly, as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again, with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire, the blasting heat smote up against his person with a breath that, it might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect, and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

"O Mother Earth," cried he, "who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this

frame shall never be resolved! O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! O stars of heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever. Come, deadly element of Fire,—henceforth my familiar frame! Embrace me, as I do thee!"

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel, when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

"Up, boy, up!" cried the lime-burner, staring about him. "Thank Heaven, the night is gone, at last; and rather than pass such another, I would watch my limekiln, wide awake, for a twelvemonth. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor, in taking my place!"

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father's hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops; and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills, which swelled away gently about it, looked as if it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upwards, and caught a fore-glimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weathercocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains, there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others, of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a daydream to look at it.

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stagecoach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

"Dear father," cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!"

"Yes," growled the lime-burner, with an oath, "but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace!"

With his long pole in his hand, he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause, he called to his son.

"Come up here, Joe!" said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock, and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle,—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime,—lay a human skeleton, in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the ribs—strange to say—was the shape of a human heart.

"Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. "At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him."

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

1850, 1851

## *From* THE SCARLET LETTER

The theme of this book is the effect of sin on the soul committing it. Hester Prynne, the young, vital, and beautiful wife of an old and wealthy scholar, in his absence has proved untrue to her marriage vows. She is publicly punished for her transgression but keeps the secret of her partner in sin. An old statute (1658) of Plymouth colony that Hawthorne may have read enacted that persons found guilty of adultery should be whipped twice and should wear two capital letters "AD" sewed on their uppermost garments. Hawthorne tells in his introduction that he found in an attic in the Salem Custom House a parchment roll containing an embroidered scarlet letter and an account of its history. His tale "Endicott and the Red Cross" (1838) contains an earlier reference to a beautiful young woman, condemned to wear the fatal letter, who had embroidered it on scarlet cloth with golden thread. The opening scene here given shows the skill of a master. There is a picturesque stage mob, through whose talk the situation is presented, a dramatic incident, and the three leading characters are introduced. Hawthorne's artistry of structure and expression, his power to re-create the past, his interest in psychological analysis, and his poetic touch are at their best in *The Scarlet Letter*.

### I

### *The Prison-Door*

A THRONG of bearded men, in sad-colored garments, and gray, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes.

The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison. In accordance with this rule, it may safely be assumed that the forefathers of Boston had built the first prison-house somewhere in the vicinity of Cornhill, almost as seasonably as they marked out the first burial-ground, on Isaac Johnson's lot, and round about his grave, which subsequently became the nucleus of all the congregated sepulchers in the old churchyard of King's Chapel. Certain it is, that, some fifteen or twenty years after the settlement of the town, the wooden jail was already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the ponderous ironwork of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era. Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grassplot, much overgrown with burdock, pigweed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison. But, on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rosebush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him.

This rosebush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in history; but whether it had merely survived out of the stern old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that originally overshadowed it,—or whether, as there is fair authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison-door,—we shall not take upon us to determine. Finding it so directly on the threshold of our narrative, which is now about to issue from that inauspicious portal, we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers, and present it to the reader. It may serve, let us hope, to symbolize some sweet moral blossom, that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow.

### II

### *The Market-Place*

The grassplot before the jail, in Prison Lane, on a certain summer morning, not less than two centuries ago, was occupied by a

pretty large number of the inhabitants of Boston; all with their eyes intently fastened on the iron-clamped oaken door. Amongst any other population, or at a later period in the history of New England, the grim rigidity that petrified the bearded physiognomies of these good people would have augured some awful business in hand. It could have betokened nothing short of the anticipated execution of some noted culprit, on whom the sentence of a legal tribunal had but confirmed the verdict of public sentiment. But, in that early severity of the Puritan character, an inference of this kind could not so indubitably be drawn. It might be that a sluggish bond-servant, or an undutiful child, whom his parents had given over to the civil authority, was to be corrected at the whipping-post. It might be that an Antinomian, a Quaker, or other heterodox religionist, was to be scourged out of the town, or an idle and vagrant Indian, whom the white man's firewater had made riotous about the streets, was to be driven with stripes into the shadow of the forest. It might be, too, that a witch, like old Mistress Hibbins, the bitter-tempered widow of the magistrate, was to die upon the gallows. In either case, there was very much the same solemnity of demeanor on the part of the spectators, as befitted a people amongst whom religion and law were almost identical, and in whose character both were so thoroughly interfused, that the mildest and severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful. Meager, indeed, and cold, was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such bystanders, at the scaffold. On the other hand, a penalty which, in our days, would infer a degree of mocking infamy and ridicule, might then be invested with almost as stern a dignity as the punishment of death itself.

It was a circumstance to be noted on the summer morning when our story begins its course, that the women, of whom there were several in the crowd, appeared to take a peculiar interest in whatever penal infliction might be expected to ensue. The age had not so much refinement, that any sense of impropriety restrained the wearers of petticoat and farthingale from stepping forth into the public ways, and wedging their not unsubstantial persons, if occasion were, into the throng nearest to the scaffold at an execution. Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fiber in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding than in their fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations; for, throughout that chain of ancestry, every successive mother had transmitted to her child a fainter bloom, a more delicate and briefer beauty, and a slighter physical frame, if not a character of less force and solidity than her own. The women who were now standing about the prison-door stood within less than half a century of the period when the manlike Elizabeth had been the not altogether unsuitable representative of the sex. They were her countrywomen; and the beef and ale of their native land, with a moral diet not a whit more refined, entered largely into their composition. The bright morning sun, therefore, shone on broad shoulders and well-developed busts, and on round and ruddy cheeks, that had ripened in the far-off island, and had hardly yet grown paler or thinner in the atmosphere of New England. There was, moreover, a boldness and rotundity of speech among these matrons, as most of them seemed to be, that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its volume of tone.

"Goodwives," said a hard-featured dame of fifty, "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne. What think ye, gossips? If the hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now here in a knot together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I trow not!"

"People say," said another, "that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation."

"The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch,—that is a truth," added a third autumnal matron. "At the very

least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead. Madam Hester would have winced at that, I warrant me. But she,—the naughty baggage,—little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch, or such like heathenish adornment, and so walk the streets as brave as ever!"

"Ah, but," interposed more softly a young wife, holding a child by the hand, "let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in her heart."

"What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown or the flesh of her forehead?" cried another female, the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges. "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly, there is, both in the Scripture and the statute-book. Then let the magistrates, who have made it of no effect, thank themselves if their own wives and daughters go astray!"

"Mercy on us, goodwife," exclaimed a man in the crowd, "is there no virtue in woman, save what springs from a wholesome fear of the gallows? That is the hardest word yet! Hush, now, gossips! for the lock is turning in the prison-door, and here comes Mistress Prynne herself."

The door of the jail being flung open from within, there appeared, in the first place, like a black shadow emerging into sunshine, the grim and grisly presence of the town-beadle, with a sword by his side, and his staff of office in his hand. This personage prefigured and represented in his aspect the whole dismal severity of the Puritanic code of law, which it was his business to administer in its final and closest application to the offender. Stretching forth the official staff in his left hand, he laid his right upon the shoulder of a young woman, whom he thus drew forward; until, on the threshold of the prison-door, she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air, as if by her own free will. She bore in her arms a child, a baby of some three months old, who winked and turned aside its little face from the too vivid light of day; because its existence, heretofore, had brought it acquaintance only with the gray twilight of a dungeon, or other darksome apartment of the prison.

When the young woman—the mother of this child—stood fully revealed before the crowd, it seemed to be her first impulse to clasp the infant closely to her bosom; not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress. In a moment, however, wisely judging that one token of her shame would but poorly serve to hide another, she took the baby on her arm, and, with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed, looked around at her townspeople and neighbors. On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold-thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and which was of a splendor in accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony.

The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was ladylike, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterized by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent, and indescribable grace, which is now recognized as its indication. And never had Hester Prynne appeared more ladylike, in the antique interpretation of the term, than as she issued from the prison. Those who had before known her, and had expected to behold her dimmed and obscured by a disastrous cloud, were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped. It may be true, that, to a sensitive observer, there was something exquisitely painful in it. Her attire, which, indeed, she

had wrought for the occasion, in prison, and had modeled much after her own fancy, seemed to express the attitude of her spirit, the desperate recklessness of her mood, by its wild and picturesque peculiarity. But the point which drew all eyes, and, as it were, transfigured the wearer,—so that both men and women, who had been familiarly acquainted with Hester Prynne, were now impressed as if they beheld her for the first time, —was that SCARLET LETTER,[1] so fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom. It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself.

"She hath good skill at her needle, that's certain," remarked one of her female spectators; "but did ever a woman, before this brazen hussy, contrive such a way of showing it! Why, gossips, what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?"

"It were well," muttered the most iron-visaged of the old dames, "if we stripped Madam Hester's rich gown off her dainty shoulders; and as for the red letter which she hath stitched so curiously, I'll bestow a rag of mine own rheumatic flannel to make a fitter one!"

"Oh, peace, neighbors, peace!" whispered their youngest companion; "do not let her hear you! Not a stitch in that embroidered letter but she has felt it in her heart."

The grim beadle now made a gesture with his staff.

"Make way, good people, make way, in the King's name!" cried he. "Open a passage; and, I promise ye, Mistress Prynne shall be set where man, woman, and child may have a fair sight of her brave apparel from this time till an hour past meridian. A blessing on the righteous colony of the Massachusetts, where iniquity is dragged out into the sunshine! Come along, Madam Hester, and show your scarlet letter in the market-place!"

A lane was forthwith opened through the crowd of spectators. Preceded by the beadle, and attended by an irregular procession of stern-browed men and unkindly visaged women, Hester Prynne set forth towards the place appointed for her punishment. A crowd of eager and curious schoolboys, understanding little of the matter in hand, except that it gave them a half-holiday, ran before her progress, turning their heads continually to stare into her face and at the winking baby in her arms, and at the ignominious letter on her breast. It was no great distance, in those days, from the prison-door to the market-place. Measured by the prisoner's experience, however, it might be reckoned a journey of some length; for haughty as her demeanor was, she perchance underwent an agony from every footstep of those that thronged to see her, as if her heart had been flung into the street for them all to spurn and trample upon. In our nature, however, there is a provision, alike marvelous and merciful, that the sufferer should never know the intensity of what he endures by its present torture, but chiefly by the pang that rankles after it. With almost a serene deportment, therefore, Hester Prynne passed through this portion of her ordeal, and came to a sort of scaffold, at the western extremity of the market-place. It stood nearly beneath the eaves of Boston's earliest church, and appeared to be a fixture there.

In fact, this scaffold constituted a portion of a penal machine, which now, for two or three generations past, has been merely historical and traditionary among us, but was held, in the old time, to be as effectual an agent, in the promotion of good citizenship, as ever was the guillotine among the terrorists of France. It was, in short, the platform of the pillory; and above it rose the framework of that instrument of discipline, so fashioned as to confine the human head in its tight grasp, and thus hold it up to the public gaze. The very ideal of ignominy was embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron. There can be no outrage, methinks, against our common nature,—whatever be the delinquencies of the individual,—no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame; as it was the essence

[1] Hawthorne's imagination habitually starts with some physical object which becomes the symbolic center around which a story is built. The "fantastically embroidered" letter multiplies itself as the tale progresses, "the brand of sin on life."

of this punishment to do. In Hester Prynne's instance, however, as not unfrequently in other cases, her sentence bore that she should stand a certain time upon the platform, but without undergoing that gripe about the neck and confinement of the head, the proneness to which was the most devilish characteristic of this ugly engine. Knowing well her part, she ascended a flight of wooden steps, and was thus displayed to the surrounding multitude, at about the height of a man's shoulders above the street.

Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans, he might have seen in this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of Divine Maternity, which so many illustrious painters have vied with one another to represent; something which should remind him, indeed, but only by contrast, of that sacred image of sinless motherhood, whose infant was to redeem the world. Here, there was the taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effect, that the world was only the darker for this woman's beauty, and the more lost for the infant that she had borne.

The scene was not without a mixture of awe, such as must always invest the spectacle of guilt and shame in a fellow-creature, before society shall have grown corrupt enough to smile, instead of shuddering, at it. The witnesses of Hester Prynne's disgrace had not yet passed beyond their simplicity. They were stern enough to look upon her death, had that been the sentence, without a murmur at its severity, but had none of the heartlessness of another social state, which would find only a theme for jest in an exhibition like the present. Even had there been a disposition to turn the matter into ridicule, it must have been repressed and overpowered by the solemn presence of men no less dignified than the Governor, and several of his counselors, a judge, a general, and the ministers of the town; all of whom sat or stood in a balcony of the meetinghouse, looking down upon the platform. When such personages could constitute a part of the spectacle, without risking the majesty or reverence of rank and office, it was safely to be inferred that the infliction of a legal sentence would have an earnest and effectual meaning. Accordingly, the crowd was somber and grave. The unhappy culprit sustained herself as best a woman might, under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom. It was almost intolerable to be borne. Of an impulsive and passionate nature, she had fortified herself to encounter the stings and venomous stabs of public contumely, wreaking itself in every variety of insult; but there was a quality so much more terrible in the solemn mood of the popular mind, that she longed rather to behold all those rigid countenances contorted with scornful merriment, and herself the object. Had a roar of laughter burst from the multitude,—each man, each woman, each little shrill-voiced child, contributing their individual parts,—Hester Prynne might have repaid them all with a bitter and disdainful smile. But, under the leaden infliction which it was her doom to endure, she felt, at moments, as if she must needs shriek out with the full power of her lungs, and cast herself from the scaffold down upon the ground, or else go mad at once.

Yet there were intervals when the whole scene, in which she was the most conspicuous object, seemed to vanish from her eyes, or, at least, glimmered indistinctly before them, like a mass of imperfectly shaped and spectral images. Her mind, and especially her memory, was preternaturally active, and kept bringing up other scenes than this roughly hewn street of a little town, on the edge of the Western wilderness; other faces than were lowering upon her from beneath the brims of those steeple-crowned hats. Reminiscences the most trifling and immaterial, passages of infancy and school-days, sports, childish quarrels, and the little domestic traits of her maiden years, came swarming back upon her, intermingled with recollections of whatever was gravest in her subsequent life; one picture precisely as vivid as another; as if all were of similar importance, or all alike a play. Possibly it was an instinctive device of her spirit, to relieve itself, by the exhibition of these phantasmagoric forms, from the cruel weight and hardness of the reality.

Be that as it might, the scaffold of the pillory was a point of view that revealed to Hester Prynne the entire track along which she had been treading since her happy infancy. Standing on that miserable eminence, she saw again her native village, in Old England, and her paternal home; a decayed house of gray stone, with a poverty-stricken aspect, but retaining a half-obliterated shield of arms over the portal, in token of antique gentility. She saw her father's face, with its bald brow, and reverend white beard, that flowed over the old-fashioned Elizabethan ruff; her mother's, too, with the look of heedful and anxious love which it always wore in her remembrance, and which, even since her death, had so often laid the impediment of a gentle remonstrance in her daughter's pathway. She saw her own face, glowing with girlish beauty, and illuminating all the interior of the dusky mirror in which she had been wont to gaze at it. There she beheld another countenance, of a man well stricken in years, a pale, thin, scholar-like visage, with eyes dim and bleared by the lamplight that had served them to pore over many ponderous books. Yet those same bleared optics had a strange, penetrating power, when it was their owner's purpose to read the human soul. This figure of the study and the cloister, as Hester Prynne's womanly fancy failed not to recall, was slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right. Next rose before her, in memory's picture-gallery, the intricate and narrow thoroughfares, the tall, gray houses, the huge cathedrals, and the public edifices, ancient in date and quaint in architecture, of a Continental city; where new life had awaited her, still in connection with the misshapen scholar: a new life, but feeding itself on time-worn materials, like a tuft of green moss on a crumbling wall. Lastly, in lieu of these shifting scenes, came back the rude market-place of the Puritan settlement, with all the townspeople assembled, and leveling their stern regards at Hester Prynne,—yes, at herself,—who stood on the scaffold of the pillory, an infant on her arm, and the letter A, in scarlet, fantastically embroidered with gold thread, upon her bosom!

Could it be true? She clutched the child so fiercely to her breast that it sent forth a cry; she turned her eyes downward at the scarlet letter, and even touched it with her finger, to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real. Yes!—these were her realities—all else had vanished!

## III

## *The Recognition*

From this intense consciousness of being the object of severe and universal observation, the wearer of the scarlet letter was at length relieved, by discerning, on the outskirts of the crowd, a figure which irresistibly took possession of her thoughts. An Indian in his native garb was standing there; but the red men were not so infrequent visitors of the English settlements that one of them would have attracted any notice from Hester Prynne at such a time; much less would he have excluded all other objects and ideas from her mind. By the Indian's side, and evidently sustaining a companionship with him, stood a white man, clad in a strange disarray of civilized and savage costume.

He was small in stature, with a furrowed visage, which as yet could hardly be termed aged. There was a remarkable intelligence in his features, as of a person who had so cultivated his mental part that it could not fail to mold the physical to itself, and become manifest by unmistakable tokens. Although, by a seemingly careless arrangement of his heterogeneous garb, he had endeavored to conceal or abate the peculiarity, it was sufficiently evident to Hester Prynne that one of this man's shoulders rose higher than the other. Again, at the first instant of perceiving that thin visage, and the slight deformity of the figure, she pressed her infant to her bosom with so convulsive a force that the poor babe uttered another cry of pain. But the mother did not seem to hear it.

At his arrival in the market-place, and some time before she saw him, the stranger had bent his eyes on Hester Prynne. It was carelessly at first, like a man chiefly accustomed to look inward, and to whom external matters are of little value and import, unless they bear relation to something within his mind. Very soon, however, his look became keen and

penetrative. A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding swiftly over them, and making one little pause, with all its wreathed intervolutions in open sight. His face darkened with some powerful emotion, which, nevertheless, he so instantaneously controlled by an effort of his will, that, save at a single moment, its expression might have passed for calmness. After a brief space, the convulsion grew almost imperceptible, and finally subsided into the depths of his nature. When he found the eyes of Hester Prynne fastened on his own, and saw that she appeared to recognize him, he slowly and calmly raised his finger, made a gesture with it in the air, and laid it on his lips.

Then touching the shoulder of a townsman who stood next to him, he addressed him in a formal and courteous manner.

"I pray you, good Sir," said he, "who is this woman?—and wherefore is she here set up to public shame?"

"You must needs be a stranger in this region, friend," answered the townsman, looking curiously at the questioner and his savage companion, "else you would surely have heard of Mistress Hester Prynne and her evil doings. She hath raised a great scandal, I promise you, in godly Master Dimmesdale's church."

"You say truly," replied the other. "I am a stranger, and have been a wanderer, sorely against my will. I have met with grievous mishaps by sea and land, and have been long held in bonds among the heathen-folk to the southward; and am now brought hither by this Indian to be redeemed out of my captivity. Will it please you, therefore, to tell me of Hester Prynne's,—have I her name rightly?—of this woman's offenses, and what has brought her to yonder scaffold?"

"Truly, friend; and methinks it must gladden your heart, after your troubles and sojourn in the wilderness," said the townsman, "to find yourself, at length, in a land where iniquity is searched out, and punished in the sight of rulers and people; as here in our godly New England. Yonder woman, Sir, you must know, was the wife of a certain learned man, English by birth, but who had long dwelt in Amsterdam, whence, some good time agone, he was minded to cross over and cast in his lot with us of the Massachusetts. To this purpose, he sent his wife before him, remaining himself to look after some necessary affairs. Marry, good Sir, in some two years, or less, that the woman has been a dweller here in Boston, no tidings have come of this learned gentleman, Master Prynne; and his young wife, look you, being left to her own misguidance—"

"Ah!—aha!—I conceive you," said the stranger, with a bitter smile. "So learned a man as you speak of should have learned this too in his books. And who, by your favor, Sir, may be the father of yonder babe—it is some three or four months old, I should judge—which Mistress Prynne is holding in her arms?"

"Of a truth, friend, that matter remaineth a riddle; and the Daniel who shall expound it is yet a-wanting," answered the townsman. "Madam Hester absolutely refuseth to speak, and the magistrates have laid their heads together in vain. Peradventure the guilty one stands looking on at this sad spectacle, unknown of man, and forgetting that God sees him."

"The learned man," observed the stranger, with another smile, "should come himself, to look into the mystery."

"It behooves him well, if he be still in life," responded the townsman. "Now, good Sir, our Massachusetts magistracy, bethinking themselves that this woman is youthful and fair, and doubtless was strongly tempted to her fall,—and that, moreover, as is most likely, her husband may be at the bottom of the sea,—they have not been bold to put in force the extremity of our righteous law against her. The penalty thereof is death. But in their great mercy and tenderness of heart, they have doomed Mistress Prynne to stand only a space of three hours on the platform of the pillory, and then and thereafter, for the remainder of her natural life, to wear a mark of shame upon her bosom."

"A wise sentence!" remarked the stranger, gravely bowing his head. "Thus she will be a living sermon against sin, until the ignominious letter be engraved upon her tombstone. It irks me, nevertheless, that the partner of her iniquity should not, at least, stand on the

scaffold by her side. But he will be known!—he will be known!—he will be known!"

He bowed courteously to the communicative townsman, and, whispering a few words to his Indian attendant, they both made their way through the crowd.

While this passed, Hester Prynne had been standing on her pedestal, still with a fixed gaze towards the stranger; so fixed a gaze, that, at moments of intense absorption, all other objects in the visible world seemed to vanish, leaving only him and her. Such an interview, perhaps, would have been more terrible than even to meet him as she now did, with the hot, midday sun burning down upon her face, and lighting up its shame; with the scarlet token of infamy on her breast; with the sin-born infant in her arms; with a whole people, drawn forth as to a festival, staring at the features that should have been seen only in the quiet gleam of the fireside, in the happy shadow of a home, or beneath a matronly veil, at church. Dreadful as it was, she was conscious of a shelter in the presence of these thousand witnesses. It was better to stand thus, with so many betwixt him and her, than to greet him, face to face, they two alone. She fled for refuge, as it were, to the public exposure, and dreaded the moment when its protection should be withdrawn from her. Involved in these thoughts, she scarcely heard a voice behind her, until it had repeated her name more than once, in a loud and solemn tone, audible to the whole multitude.

"Harken unto me, Hester Prynne!" said the voice.

It has already been noticed, that directly over the platform on which Hester Prynne stood was a kind of balcony, or open gallery, appended to the meetinghouse. It was the place whence proclamations were wont to be made, amidst an assemblage of the magistracy, with all the ceremonial that attended such public observances in those days. Here, to witness the scene which we are describing, sat Governor Bellingham himself with four sergeants about his chair, bearing halberds, as a guard of honor. He wore a dark feather in his hat, a border of embroidery on his cloak, and a black velvet tunic beneath; a gentleman advanced in years, with a hard experience written in his wrinkles. He was not ill fitted to be the head and representative of a community which owed its origin and progress, and its present state of development, not to the impulses of youth, but to the stern and tempered energies of manhood and the somber sagacity of age; accomplishing so much, precisely because it imagined and hoped so little. The other eminent characters by whom the chief ruler was surrounded were distinguished by a dignity of mien, belonging to a period when the forms of authority were felt to possess the sacredness of divine institutions. They were, doubtless, good men, just and sage. But, out of the whole human family, it would not have been easy to select the same number of wise and virtuous persons, who should be less capable of sitting in judgment on an erring woman's heart, and disentangling its mesh of good and evil, than the sages of rigid aspect towards whom Hester Prynne now turned her face. She seemed conscious, indeed, that whatever sympathy she might expect lay in the larger and warmer heart of the multitude; for, as she lifted her eyes towards the balcony, the unhappy woman grew pale, and trembled.

The voice which had called her attention was that of the reverend and famous John Wilson, the eldest clergyman of Boston, a great scholar, like most of his contemporaries in the profession, and withal a man of kind and genial spirit. This last attribute, however, had been less carefully developed than his intellectual gifts, and was, in truth, rather a matter of shame than self-congratulation with him. There he stood, with a border of grizzled locks beneath his skullcap; while his gray eyes, accustomed to the shaded light of his study, were winking, like those of Hester's infant, in the unadulterated sunshine. He looked like the darkly engraved portraits which we see prefixed to old volumes of sermons, and had no more right than one of those portraits would have to step forth, as he now did, and meddle with a question of human guilt, passion, and anguish.

"Hester Prynne," said the clergyman, "I have striven with my young brother here, under whose preaching of the Word you have been privileged to sit"—here Mr. Wilson laid

his hand on the shoulder of a pale young man beside him—"I have sought, I say, to persuade this godly youth, that he should deal with you, here in the face of Heaven, and before these wise and upright rulers, and in hearing of all the people, as touching the vileness and blackness of your sin. Knowing your natural temper better than I, he could the better judge what arguments to use, whether of tenderness or terror, such as might prevail over your hardness and obstinacy; insomuch that you should no longer hide the name of him who tempted you to this grievous fall. But he opposes to me (with a young man's over-softness, albeit wise beyond his years), that it were wronging the very nature of woman to force her to lay open her heart's secrets in such broad daylight, and in presence of so great a multitude. Truly, as I sought to convince him, the shame lay in the commission of the sin, and not in the showing of it forth. What say you to it, once again, Brother Dimmesdale? Must it be thou, or I, that shall deal with this poor sinner's soul?"

There was a murmur among the dignified and reverend occupants of the balcony; and Governor Bellingham gave expression to its purport, speaking in an authoritative voice, although tempered with respect towards the youthful clergyman whom he addressed.

"Good Master Dimmesdale," said he, "the responsibility of this woman's soul lies greatly with you. It behooves you, therefore, to exhort her to repentance and to confession, as a proof and consequence thereof."

The directness of this appeal drew the eyes of the whole crowd upon the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale—a young clergyman, who had come from one of the great English universities, bringing all the learning of the age into our wild forest land. His eloquence and religious fervor had already given the earnest of high eminence in his profession. He was a person of very striking aspect, with a white, lofty, and impending brow, large, brown, melancholy eyes, and a mouth which, unless when he forcibly compressed it, was apt to be tremulous, expressing both nervous sensibility and a vast power of self-restraint. Notwithstanding his high native gifts and scholar-like attainments, there was an air about this young minister,—an apprehensive, a startled, a half-frightened look,—as of a being who felt himself quite astray and at a loss in the pathway of human existence, and could only be at ease in some seclusion of his own. Therefore, so far as his duties would permit, he trod in the shadowy bypaths, and thus kept himself simple and childlike; coming forth, when occasion was, with a freshness, and fragrance, and dewy purity of thought, which, as many people said, affected them like the speech of an angel.

Such was the young man whom the Reverend Mr. Wilson and the Governor had introduced so openly to the public notice, bidding him speak, in the hearing of all men, to that mystery of a woman's soul, so sacred even in its pollution. The trying nature of his position drove the blood from his cheek, and made his lips tremulous.

"Speak to the woman, my brother," said Mr. Wilson. "It is of moment to her soul, and therefore, as the worshipful Governor says, momentous to thine own, in whose charge hers is. Exhort her to confess the truth!"

The Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale bent his head, in silent prayer, as it seemed, and then came forward.

"Hester Prynne," said he, leaning over the balcony and looking down steadfastly into her eyes, "thou hearest what this good man says, and seest the accountability under which I labor. If thou feelest it to be for thy soul's peace, and that thy earthly punishment will thereby be made more effectual to salvation, I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so, than to hide a guilty heart through life. What can thy silence do for him, except it tempt him—yea, compel him, as it were—to add hypocrisy to sin? Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open triumph over the evil within thee, and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou

deniest to him—who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself—the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips!"

The young pastor's voice was tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken. The feeling that it so evidently manifested, rather than the direct purport of the words, caused it to vibrate within all hearts, and brought the listeners into one accord of sympathy. Even the poor baby, at Hester's bosom, was affected by the same influence; for it directed its hitherto vacant gaze towards Mr. Dimmesdale, and held up its little arms, with a half-pleased, half-plaintive murmur. So powerful seemed the minister's appeal, that the people could not believe but that Hester Prynne would speak out the guilty name; or else that the guilty one himself, in whatever high or lowly place he stood, would be drawn forth by an inward and inevitable necessity, and compelled to ascend the scaffold.

Hester shook her head.

"Woman, transgress not beyond the limits of Heaven's mercy!" cried the Reverend Mr. Wilson, more harshly than before. "That little babe hath been gifted with a voice, to second and confirm the counsel which thou hast heard. Speak out the name! That, and thy repentance, may avail to take the scarlet letter off thy breast."

"Never!" replied Hester Prynne, looking, not at Mr. Wilson, but into the deep and troubled eyes of the younger clergyman. "It is too deeply branded. Ye cannot take it off. And would that I might endure his agony, as well as mine!"

"Speak, woman!" said another voice, coldly and sternly, proceeding from the crowd about the scaffold. "Speak; and give your child a father!"

"I will not speak!" answered Hester, turning pale as death, but responding to this voice, which she too surely recognized. "And my child must seek a heavenly Father; she shall never know an earthly one!"

"She will not speak!" murmured Mr. Dimmesdale, who, leaning over the balcony, with his hand upon his heart, had awaited the result of his appeal. He now drew back, with a long respiration. "Wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart! She will not speak!"

Discerning the impracticable state of the poor culprit's mind, the elder clergyman, who had carefully prepared himself for the occasion, addressed to the multitude a discourse on sin, in all its branches, but with continual reference to the ignominious letter. So forcibly did he dwell upon this symbol, for the hour or more during which his periods were rolling over the people's heads, that it assumed new terrors in their imagination, and seemed to derive its scarlet hue from the flames of the infernal pit. Hester Prynne, meanwhile, kept her place upon the pedestal of shame, with glazed eyes, and an air of weary indifference. She had borne that morning all that nature could endure; and as her temperament was not of the order that escapes from too intense suffering by a swoon, her spirit could only shelter itself beneath a stony crust of insensibility, while the faculties of animal life remained entire. In this state, the voice of the preacher thundered remorselessly, but unavailingly, upon her ears. The infant, during the latter portion of her ordeal, pierced the air with its wailings and screams; she strove to hush it, mechanically, but seemed scarcely to sympathize with its trouble. With the same hard demeanor, she was led back to prison, and vanished from the public gaze within its iron-clamped portal. It was whispered by those who peered after her, that the scarlet letter threw a lurid gleam along the dark passageway of the interior.

*1849–1850* 1850

## PREFACE TO *TWICE-TOLD TALES*

In this preface, prefixed to the edition of 1851, Hawthorne comments on his own writing of fiction. The preface has autobiographical interest also.

THE Author of *Twice-Told Tales* has a claim to one distinction, which, as none of his literary brethren will care about disputing it with him, he need not be afraid to mention. He was, for a good many years, the obscurest man of letters in America.

These stories were published in magazines

and annuals, extending over a period of ten or twelve years, and comprising the whole of the writer's young manhood, without making (so far as he has ever been aware) the slightest impression on the public. One or two among them, the "Rill from the Town Pump," in perhaps a greater degree than any other, had a pretty wide newspaper circulation; as for the rest, he had no grounds for supposing that, on their first appearance, they met with the good or evil fortune to be read by anybody. Throughout the time above specified, he had no incitement to literary effort in a reasonable prospect of reputation or profit, nothing but the pleasure itself of composition —an enjoyment not at all amiss in its way, and perhaps essential to the merit of the work in hand, but which, in the long run, will hardly keep the chill out of a writer's heart, or the numbness out of his fingers. To this total lack of sympathy, at the age when his mind would naturally have been most effervescent, the public owe it (and it is certainly an effect not to be regretted on either part) that the Author can show nothing for the thought and industry of that portion of his life, save the forty sketches, or thereabouts, included in these volumes.

Much more, indeed, he wrote; and some very small part of it might yet be rummaged out (but it would not be worth the trouble) among the dingy pages of fifteen-or-twenty-year-old periodicals, or within the shabby morocco covers of faded souvenirs. The remainder of the works alluded to had a very brief existence, but, on the score of brilliancy, enjoyed a fate vastly superior to that of their brotherhood, which succeeded in getting through the press. In a word, the Author burned them without mercy or remorse, and, moreover, without any subsequent regret, and had more than one occasion to marvel that such very dull stuff, as he knew his condemned manuscripts to be, should yet have possessed inflammability enough to set the chimney on fire!

After a long while the first collected volume of the *Tales* was published. By this time, if the Author had ever been greatly tormented by literary ambition (which he does not remember or believe to have been the case), it must have perished, beyond resuscitation, in the dearth of nutriment. This was fortunate; for the success of the volume was not such as would have gratified a craving desire for notoriety. A moderate edition was "got rid of" (to use the publisher's very significant phrase) within a reasonable time, but apparently without rendering the writer or his productions much more generally known than before. The great bulk of the reading public probably ignored the book altogether. A few persons read it, and liked it better than it deserved. At an interval of three or four years, the second volume was published, and encountered much the same sort of kindly, but calm, and very limited reception. The circulation of the two volumes was chiefly confined to New England; nor was it until long after this period, if it even yet be the case, that the Author could regard himself as addressing the American public, or, indeed, any public at all. He was merely writing to his known or unknown friends.

As he glances over these long-forgotten pages, and considers his way of life while composing them, the Author can very clearly discern why all this was so. After so many sober years, he would have reason to be ashamed if he could not criticize his own work as fairly as another man's; and, though it is little his business, and perhaps still less his interest, he can hardly resist a temptation to achieve something of the sort. If writers were allowed to do so, and would perform the task with perfect sincerity and unreserve, their opinions of their own productions would often be more valuable and instructive than the works themselves.

At all events, there can be no harm in the Author's remarking that he rather wonders how the *Twice-Told Tales* should have gained what vogue they did than that it was so little and so gradual. They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade,—the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion there is sentiment; and, even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken

into the reader's mind without a shiver. Whether from lack of power, or an unconquerable reserve, the Author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humor; the tenderest woman, one would suppose, will hardly shed warm tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages.

With the foregoing characteristics, proper to the production of a person in retirement (which happened to be the Author's category at the time), the book is devoid of others that we should quite as naturally look for. The sketches are not, it is hardly necessary to say, profound; but it is rather more remarkable that they so seldom, if ever, show any design on the writer's part to make them so. They have none of the abstruseness of idea, or obscurity of expression, which mark the written communications of a solitary mind with itself. They never need translation. It is, in fact, the style of a man of society. Every sentence, so far as it embodies thought or sensibility, may be understood and felt by anybody who will give himself the trouble to read it, and will take up the book in a proper mood.

This statement of apparently opposite peculiarities leads us to a perception of what the sketches truly are. They are not the talk of a secluded man with his own mind and heart (had it been so, they could hardly have failed to be more deeply and permanently valuable), but his attempts, and very imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse with the world.

The Author would regret to be understood as speaking sourly or querulously of the slight mark made by his earlier literary efforts on the Public at large. It is so far the contrary, that he has been moved to write this Preface chiefly as affording him an opportunity to express how much enjoyment he has owed to these volumes, both before and since their publication. They are the memorials of very tranquil and not unhappy years. They failed, it is true,—nor could it have been otherwise,—in winning an extensive popularity. Occasionally, however, when he deemed them entirely forgotten, a paragraph or an article, from a native or foreign critic, would gratify his instincts of authorship with unexpected praise,—too generous praise, indeed, and too little alloyed with censure, which, therefore, he learned the better to inflict upon himself. And, by the bye, it is a very suspicious symptom of a deficiency of the popular element in a book when it calls forth no harsh criticism. This has been particularly the fortune of the *Twice-Told Tales*. They made no enemies, and were so little known and talked about that those who read, and chanced to like them, were apt to conceive the sort of kindness for the book which a person naturally feels for a discovery of his own.

This kindly feeling (in some cases, at least) extended to the Author, who, on the internal evidence of his sketches, came to be regarded as a mild, shy, gentle, melancholic, exceedingly sensitive, and not very forcible man, hiding his blushes under an assumed name, the quaintness of which was supposed, somehow or other, to symbolize his personal and literary traits. He is by no means certain that some of his subsequent productions have not been influenced and modified by a natural desire to fill up so amiable an outline, and to act in consonance with the character assigned to him; nor, even now, could he forfeit it without a few tears of tender sensibility. To conclude, however: these volumes have opened the way to most agreeable associations, and to the formation of imperishable friendships; and there are many golden threads interwoven with his present happiness, which he can follow up more or less directly, until he finds their commencement here; so that his pleasant pathway among realities seems to proceed out of the Dreamland of his youth, and to be bordered with just enough of its shadowy foliage to shelter him from the heat of the day. He is therefore satisfied with what the *Twice-Told Tales* have done for him, and feels it to be far better than fame.

LENOX, *January 11, 1851*

## PREFACE TO *THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES*

**Of interest as presenting Hawthorne's views on the distinction between a romance and a novel, on the use of the marvelous in fiction, and on a definite moral purpose in its composition.**

WHEN a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former—while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he thinks fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights, and deepen and enrich the shadows, of the picture. He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvelous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavor, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public. He can hardly be said, however, to commit a literary crime, even if he disregard this caution.

In the present work the author has proposed to himself—but with what success, fortunately, it is not for him to judge—to keep undeviatingly within his immunities. The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend, prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance down into our own broad daylight, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard or allow it to float almost imperceptibly about the characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect. The narrative, it may be, is woven of so humble a texture as to require this advantage, and, at the same time, to render it the more difficult of attainment.

Many writers lay very great stress upon some definite moral purpose, at which they profess to aim their works. Not to be deficient in this particular, the author has provided himself with a moral;—the truth, namely, that the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief;—and he would feel it a singular gratification, if this romance might effectually convince mankind—or, indeed, any one man—of the folly of tumbling down an avalanche of ill-gotten gold, or real estate, on the heads of an unfortunate posterity, thereby to maim and crush them, until the accumulated mass shall be scattered abroad in its original atoms. In good faith, however, he is not sufficiently imaginative to flatter himself with the slightest hope of this kind. When romances do really teach anything, or produce any effective operation, it is usually through a far more subtle process than the ostensible one. The author has considered it hardly worth his while, therefore, relentlessly to impale the story with its moral, as with an iron rod,—or, rather, as by sticking a pin through a butterfly,—thus at once depriving it of life, and causing it to stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude. A high truth, indeed, fairly, finely, and skilfully wrought out, brightening at every step, and crowning the final development of a work of fiction, may add an artistic glory, but is never any truer, and seldom any more evident, at the last page than at the first.

The reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative. If permitted by the historical connection,—which, though slight, was essential to his plan,—the author would very willingly have avoided anything of this nature. Not to speak of other objections, it exposes the romance to an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism, by bringing his fancy-pictures almost into positive contact with the realities of the moment. It has been no part of his object, however, to describe local manners, nor in any way to

meddle with the characteristics of a community for whom he cherishes a proper respect and a natural regard. He trusts not to be considered as unpardonably offending, by laying out a street that infringes upon nobody's private rights, and appropriating a lot of land which had no visible owner, and building a house, of materials long in use for constructing castles in the air. The personages of the tale—though they give themselves out to be of ancient stability and considerable prominence—are really of the author's own making, or, at all events, of his own mixing; their virtues can shed no luster, nor their defects redound, in the remotest degree, to the discredit of the venerable town of which they profess to be inhabitants. He would be glad, therefore, if—especially in the quarter to which he alludes—the book may be read strictly as a romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex.

LENOX, *January 27, 1851*

## *From* THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

A slow-moving story concerned with a far-off wrong, an ancestral curse, and final retribution. It illustrates one of Hawthorne's favorite ideas, the evil influence of the past. A Colonel Pyncheon, in 1660, claimed unlawfully and confiscated a piece of land belonging to Matthew Maule. When Maule, perhaps through the Colonel's incitement, was hanged as a wizard, he pointed from the scaffold at the Colonel and said, "God will give him blood to drink." A similar curse had been pronounced over Hawthorne's own ancestors. The Colonel was found dead at the housewarming of the seven-gabled mansion built on the site of Maule's humble dwelling. The curse fell on successive generations of Pyncheons. As the story opens, the surviving members of the family are the Judge, his cousin Hepzibah who is the impoverished owner of the House, her weak-minded brother Clifford broken by thirty years of imprisonment following an accusation of murder, another cousin, the orphaned Phoebe who is allowed to live in the House, and the Judge's son who is traveling abroad. At the outset of the book Judge Pyncheon tells Hepzibah that he must learn from Clifford the hiding place of the legal documents conveying the vast estates he coveted. Clifford must either reveal this or go to an asylum. Hepzibah denies her brother's knowledge of the documents but at last goes to seek him. When she finally comes upon him at the door of the parlor of the House, they are dismayed by what they see within and flee. In the chapter here given Hawthorne's play of fancy over a single situation and his remarkable ability to make all possible of meager materials, are well illustrated. Although nothing happens in it, yet the chapter brings the whole life of the Judge before the reader. The account of the gradual coming of twilight in the old House deserves especial attention.

### XVIII

### *Governor Pyncheon*

JUDGE PYNCHEON, while his two relatives have fled away with such ill-considered haste, still sits in the old parlor, keeping house, as the familiar phrase is, in the absence of its ordinary occupants. To him, and to the venerable House of the Seven Gables, does our story now betake itself, like an owl, bewildered in the daylight, and hastening back to his hollow tree.

The Judge has not shifted his position for a long while now. He has not stirred hand or foot, nor withdrawn his eyes so much as a hair's breadth from their fixed gaze towards the corner of the room, since the footsteps of Hepzibah and Clifford creaked along the passage, and the outer door was closed cautiously behind their exit. He holds his watch in his left hand, but clutched in such a manner that you cannot see the dial-plate. How profound a fit of meditation! Or, supposing him asleep, how infantile a quietude of conscience, and what wholesome order in the gastric region, are betokened by slumber so entirely undisturbed with starts, cramp, twitches, muttered dream-talk, trumpet-blasts through the nasal organ, or any the slightest irregularity of breath! You must hold your own breath, to satisfy yourself whether he breathes at all. It is quite inaudible. You hear the ticking of his watch; his breath you do not hear. A most refreshing slumber, doubtless! And yet, the Judge cannot be asleep. His eyes are open! A veteran politician, such as he, would never fall asleep with wide-open eyes, lest some

enemy or mischief-maker, taking him thus at unawares, should peep through these windows into his consciousness, and make strange discoveries among the reminiscences, projects, hopes, apprehensions, weaknesses, and strong points, which he has heretofore shared with nobody. A cautious man is proverbially said to sleep with one eye open. That may be wisdom. But not with both; for this were heedlessness! No, no! Judge Pyncheon cannot be asleep.

It is odd, however, that a gentleman so burdened with engagements—and noted, too, for punctuality—should linger thus in an old lonely mansion, which he has never seemed very fond of visiting. The oaken chair, to be sure, may tempt him with its roominess. It is, indeed, a spacious, and, allowing for the rude age that fashioned it, a moderately easy seat, with capacity enough, at all events, and offering no restraint to the Judge's breadth of beam. A bigger man might find ample accommodation in it. His ancestor, now pictured upon the wall, with all his English beef about him, used hardly to present a front extending from elbow to elbow of this chair, or a base that would cover its whole cushion. But there are better chairs than this,—mahogany, black walnut, rosewood, spring-seated and damask-cushioned, with varied slopes, and innumerable artifices to make them easy, and obviate the irksomeness of too tame an ease,—a score of such might be at Judge Pyncheon's service. Yes! in a score of drawing-rooms he would be more than welcome. Mamma would advance to meet him, with outstretched hand; the virgin daughter, elderly as he has now got to be,—an old widower, as he smilingly describes himself,—would shake up the cushion for the Judge, and do her pretty little utmost to make him comfortable. For the Judge is a prosperous man. He cherishes his schemes, moreover, like other people, and reasonably brighter than most others; or did so, at least, as he lay abed, this morning, in an agreeable half-drowse, planning the business of the day, and speculating on the probabilities of the next fifteen years. With his firm health, and the little inroad that age has made upon him, fifteen years or twenty—yes, or perhaps five-and-twenty!—are no more than he may fairly call his own. Five-and-twenty years for the enjoyment of his real estate in town and country, his railroad, bank, and insurance shares, his United States stock,—his wealth, in short, however invested, now in possession, or soon to be acquired; together with the public honors that have fallen upon him, and the weightier ones that are yet to fall! It is good! It is excellent! It is enough!

Still lingering in the old chair! If the Judge has a little time to throw away, why does not he visit the insurance office, as is his frequent custom, and sit awhile in one of their leathern-cushioned arm-chairs, listening to the gossip of the day, and dropping some deeply designed chance-word, which will be certain to become the gossip of tomorrow! And have not the bank directors a meeting, at which it was the Judge's purpose to be present, and his office to preside? Indeed they have; and the hour is noted on a card, which is, or ought to be, in Judge Pyncheon's right vest-pocket. Let him go thither, and loll at ease upon his moneybags! He has lounged long enough in the old chair!

This was to have been such a busy day! In the first place, the interview with Clifford. Half an hour, by the Judge's reckoning, was to suffice for that; it would probably be less, but,—taking into consideration that Hepzibah was first to be dealt with, and that these women are apt to make many words where a few would do much better—it might be safest to allow half an hour. Half an hour? Why, Judge, it is already two hours, by your own undeviatingly accurate chronometer! Glance your eye down at it, and see! Ah! he will not give himself the trouble either to bend his head, or elevate his hand, so as to bring the faithful timekeeper within his range of vision! Time, all at once, appears to have become a matter of no moment with the Judge!

And has he forgotten all the other items of his memoranda? Clifford's affair arranged, he was to meet a State Street broker, who has undertaken to procure a heavy percentage, and the best of paper, for a few loose thousands which the Judge happens to have by him uninvested. The wrinkled note-shaver will have taken his railroad trip in vain. Half an hour later, in the street next to this, there was to be

an auction of real estate, including a portion of the old Pyncheon property, originally belonging to Maule's garden-ground. It has been alienated from the Pyncheons these fourscore years; but the Judge had kept it in his eye, and had set his heart on reannexing it to the small demesne still left around the Seven Gables; and now, during this odd fit of oblivion, the fatal hammer must have fallen, and transferred our ancient patrimony to some alien possessor! Possibly, indeed, the sale may have been postponed till fairer weather. If so, will the Judge make it convenient to be present, and favor the auctioneer with his bid, on the proximate occasion?

The next affair was to buy a horse for his own driving. The one heretofore his favorite stumbled, this very morning, on the road to town, and must be at once discarded. Judge Pyncheon's neck is too precious to be risked on such a contingency as a stumbling steed. Should all the above business be seasonably got through with, he might attend the meeting of a charitable society; the very name of which, however, in the multiplicity of his benevolence, is quite forgotten; so that this engagement may pass unfulfilled, and no great harm done. And if he have time, amid the press of more urgent matters, he must take measures for the renewal of Mrs. Pyncheon's tombstone, which, the sexton tells him, has fallen on its marble face, and is cracked quite in twain. She was a praiseworthy woman enough, thinks the Judge, in spite of her nervousness, and the tears that she was so oozy with, and her foolish behavior about the coffee; and as she took her departure so seasonably, he will not grudge the second tombstone. It is better, at least, than if she had never needed any! The next item on his list was to give orders for some fruit-trees, of a rare variety, to be deliverable at his countryseat in the ensuing autumn. Yes, buy them, by all means; and may the peaches be luscious in your mouth, Judge Pyncheon! After this comes something more important. A committee of his political party has besought him for a hundred or two of dollars, in addition to his previous disbursements, towards carrying on the fall campaign. The Judge is a patriot; the fate of the country is staked on the November election; and besides, as will be shadowed forth in another paragraph, he has no trifling stake of his own in the same great game. He will do what the committee asks; nay, he will be liberal beyond their expectations; they shall have a check for five hundred dollars, and more anon, if it be needed. What next? A decayed widow, whose husband was Judge Pyncheon's early friend, has laid her case of destitution before him, in a very moving letter. She and her fair daughter have scarcely bread to eat. He partly intends to call on her, today,—perhaps so—perhaps not,—accordingly as he may happen to have leisure, and a small bank note.

Another business, which, however, he puts no great weight on (it is well, you know, to be heedful, but not overanxious, as respects one's personal health)—another business, then, was to consult his family physician. About what, for Heaven's sake? Why, it is rather difficult to describe the symptoms. A mere dimness of sight and dizziness of brain, was it?—or a disagreeable choking, or stifling, or gurgling, or bubbling, in the region of the thorax, as the anatomists say?—or was it a pretty severe throbbing and kicking of the heart, rather creditable to him than otherwise, as showing that the organ had not been left out of the Judge's physical contrivance? No matter what it was. The doctor, probably, would smile at the statement of such trifles to his professional ear; the Judge would smile, in his turn; and meeting one another's eyes, they would enjoy a hearty laugh together! But a fig for medical advice! The Judge will never need it!

Pray, pray, Judge Pyncheon, look at your watch, now! What—not a glance! It is within ten minutes of the dinner-hour! It surely cannot have slipped your memory that the dinner of today is to be the most important, in its consequences, of all the dinners you ever ate. Yes, precisely the most important; although, in the course of your somewhat eminent career, you have been placed high towards the head of the table, at splendid banquets, and have poured out your festive eloquence to ears yet echoing with Webster's mighty organ-tones. No public dinner this, however. It is merely a gathering of some dozen or so

of friends from several districts of the state; men of distinguished character and influence, assembling, almost casually, at the house of a common friend, likewise distinguished, who will make them welcome to a little better than his ordinary fare. Nothing in the way of French cookery, but an excellent dinner nevertheless. Real turtle, we understand, and salmon, tautog, canvas-backs, pig, English mutton, good roast beef, or dainties of that serious kind, fit for substantial country gentlemen, as these honorable persons mostly are. The delicacies of the season, in short, and flavored by a brand of old Madeira which has been the pride of many seasons. It is the Juno brand; a glorious wine, fragrant, and full of gentle might; a bottled-up happiness, put by for use; a golden liquid, worth more than liquid gold; so rare and admirable, that veteran winebibbers count it among their epochs to have tasted it! It drives away the heartache, and substitutes no headache! Could the Judge but quaff a glass, it might enable him to shake off the unaccountable lethargy which (for the ten intervening minutes, and five to boot, are already past) has made him such a laggard at this momentous dinner. It would all but revive a dead man! Would you like to sip it now, Judge Pyncheon?

Alas, this dinner! Have you really forgotten its true object? Then let us whisper it, that you may start at once out of the oaken chair, which really seems to be enchanted, like the one in *Comus*, or that in which Moll Pitcher imprisoned your own grandfather.[1] But ambition is a talisman more powerful than witchcraft. Start up, then, and hurrying through the streets, burst in upon the company, that they may begin before the fish is spoiled! They wait for you; and it is little for your interest that they should wait. These gentlemen—need you be told it?—have assembled, not without purpose, from every quarter of the state. They are practiced politicians, every man of them, and skilled to adjust those preliminary measures which steal from the people, without its knowledge, the power of choosing its own rulers. The popular voice, at the next gubernatorial election, though loud as thunder, will be really but an echo of what these gentlemen shall speak, under their breath, at your friend's festive board. They meet to decide upon their candidate. This little knot of subtle schemers will control the convention, and, through it, dictate to the party. And what worthier candidate—more wise and learned, more noted for philanthropic liberality, truer to safe principles, tried oftener by public trusts, more spotless in private character, with a larger stake in the common welfare, and deeper grounded, by hereditary descent, in the faith and practice of the Puritans,—what man can be presented for the suffrage of the people, so eminently combining all these claims to the chief-rulership as Judge Pyncheon here before us?

Make haste, then! Do your part! The meed for which you have toiled, and fought, and climbed, and crept, is ready for your grasp! Be present at this dinner!—drink a glass or two of that noble wine!—make your pledges in as low a whisper as you will!—and you rise up from table virtually governor of the glorious old state! Governor Pyncheon of Massachusetts!

And is there no potent and exhilarating cordial in a certainty like this? It has been the grand purpose of half your lifetime to obtain it. Now, when there needs little more than to signify your acceptance, why do you sit so lumpishly in your great-great-grandfather's oaken chair, as if preferring it to the gubernatorial one? We have all heard of King Log; but, in these jostling times, one of that royal kindred will hardly win the race for an elective chief-magistracy.

Well! it is absolutely too late for dinner! Turtle, salmon, tautog, woodcock, boiled turkey, South-Down mutton, pig, roast beef, have vanished, or exist only in fragments, with lukewarm potatoes, and gravies crusted over with cold fat. The Judge, had he done nothing else, would have achieved wonders with his knife and fork. It was he, you know, of whom it used to be said, in reference to his ogre-like appetite, that his Creator made him

[1] In Milton's masque, the evil spirit Comus causes the Lady to be placed in an enchanted chair (lines 659 ff.). Moll Pitcher was a famous fortune-teller of Lynn, Massachusetts, who was popularly supposed to have remarkable power. One of Whittier's early poems dealt with the Moll Pitcher story, but he kept only a fragment from it in his collected works.

a great animal, but that the dinner hour made him a great beast. Persons of his large sensual endowments must claim indulgence, at their feeding-time. But, for once, the Judge is entirely too late for dinner! Too late, we fear, even to join the party at their wine! The guests are warm and merry; they have given up the Judge; and, concluding that the Free-Soilers have him, they will fix upon another candidate. Were our friend now to stalk in among them, with that wide-open stare, at once wild and stolid, his ungenial presence would be apt to change their cheer. Neither would it be seemly in Judge Pyncheon, generally so scrupulous in his attire, to show himself at a dinner-table with that crimson stain upon his shirt-bosom. By the bye, how came it there? It is an ugly sight, at any rate; and the wisest way for the Judge is to button his coat closely over his breast, and, taking his horse and chaise from the livery-stable, to make all speed to his own house. There, after a glass of brandy and water, and a mutton chop, a beef steak, a broiled fowl, or some such hasty little dinner and supper all in one, he had better spend the evening by the fireside. He must toast his slippers a long while, in order to get rid of the chilliness which the air of this vile old house has sent curdling through his veins.

Up, therefore, Judge Pyncheon, up! You have lost a day. But tomorrow will be here anon. Will you rise, betimes, and make the most of it? Tomorrow! Tomorrow! Tomorrow! We, that are alive, may rise betimes tomorrow. As for him that has died today, his morrow will be the resurrection morn.

Meanwhile the twilight is glooming upward out of the corners of the room. The shadows of the tall furniture grow deeper, and at first become more definite; then, spreading wider, they lose their distinctness of outline in the dark gray tide of oblivion, as it were, that creeps slowly over the various objects, and the one human figure sitting in the midst of them. The gloom has not entered from without; it has brooded here all day, and now, taking its own inevitable time, will possess itself of everything. The Judge's face, indeed, rigid, and singularly white, refuses to melt into this universal solvent. Fainter and fainter grows the light. It is as if another double handful of darkness had been scattered through the air. Now it is no longer gray, but sable. There is still a faint appearance at the window; neither a glow, nor a gleam, nor a glimmer,—any phase of light would express something far brighter than this doubtful perception, or sense, rather, that there is a window there. Has it yet vanished? No!—yes!—not quite! And there is still the swarthy whiteness,—we shall venture to marry these ill-agreeing words,—the swarthy whiteness of Judge Pyncheon's face. The features are all gone: there is only the paleness of them left. And how looks it now? There is no window! There is no face! An infinite, inscrutable blackness has annihilated sight! Where is our universe? All crumbled away from us; and we, adrift in chaos, may hearken to the gusts of homeless wind, that go sighing and murmuring about, in quest of what was once a world!

Is there no other sound? One other, and a fearful one. It is the ticking of the Judge's watch, which, ever since Hepzibah left the room in search of Clifford, he has been holding in his hand. Be the cause what it may, this little, quiet, never-ceasing throb of Time's pulse, repeating its small strokes with such busy regularity, in Judge Pyncheon's motionless hand, has an effect of terror, which we do not find in any other accompaniment of the scene.

But, listen! That puff of the breeze was louder; it had a tone unlike the dreary and sullen one which has bemoaned itself, and afflicted all mankind with miserable sympathy, for five days past. The wind has veered about! It now comes boisterously from the northwest, and, taking hold of the aged framework of the Seven Gables, gives it a shake, like a wrestler that would try strength with his antagonist. Another and another sturdy tussle with the blast! The old house creaks again, and makes a vociferous but somewhat unintelligible bellowing in its sooty throat (the big flue, we mean, of its wide chimney), partly in complaint at the rude wind, but rather, as befits their century and a half of hostile intimacy, in tough defiance. A rumbling kind of a bluster roars behind the fireboard. A door

has slammed above-stairs. A window, perhaps, has been left open, or else is driven in by an unruly gust. It is not to be conceived, beforehand, what wonderful wind-instruments are these old timber mansions, and how haunted with the strangest noises, which immediately begin to sing, and sigh, and sob, and shriek,—and to smite with sledge-hammers, airy, but ponderous, in some distant chamber,—and to tread along the entries as with stately footsteps, and rustle up and down the staircase, as with silks miraculously stiff,—whenever the gale catches the house with a window open, and gets fairly into it. Would that we were not an attendant spirit here! It is too awful! This clamor of the wind through the lonely house; the Judge's quietude, as he sits invisible; and that pertinacious ticking of his watch!

As regards Judge Pyncheon's invisibility, however, that matter will soon be remedied. The northwest wind has swept the sky clear. The window is distinctly seen. Through its panes, moreover, we dimly catch the sweep of the dark, clustering foliage, outside, fluttering with a constant irregularity of movement, and letting in a peep of starlight, now here, now there. Oftener than any other object, these glimpses illuminate the Judge's face. But here comes more effectual light. Observe that silvery dance upon the upper branches of the pear tree, and now a little lower, and now on the whole mass of boughs, while, through their shifting intricacies, the moonbeams fall aslant into the room. They play over the Judge's figure, and show that he has not stirred throughout the hours of darkness. They follow the shadows, in changeful sport, across his unchanging features. They gleam upon his watch. His grasp conceals the dial-plate; but we know that the faithful hands have met; for one of the city clocks tells midnight.

A man of sturdy understanding, like Judge Pyncheon, cares no more for twelve o'clock at night than for the corresponding hour of noon. However just the parallel drawn, in some of the preceding pages, between his Puritan ancestor and himself, it fails in this point. The Pyncheon of two centuries ago, in common with most of his contemporaries, professed his full belief in spiritual ministrations, although reckoning them chiefly of a malignant character. The Pyncheon of to-night, who sits in yonder arm-chair, believes in no such nonsense. Such, at least, was his creed, some few hours since. His hair will not bristle, therefore, at the stories which—in times when chimney-corners had benches in them, where old people sat poking into the ashes of the past, and raking out traditions like live coals—used to be told about this very room of his ancestral house. In fact, these tales are too absurd to bristle even childhood's hair. What sense, meaning, or moral, for example, such as even ghost-stories should be susceptible of, can be traced in the ridiculous legend, that, at midnight, all the dead Pyncheons are bound to assemble in this parlor? And, pray, for what? Why, to see whether the portrait of their ancestor still keeps its place upon the wall, in compliance with his testamentary directions! Is it worth while to come out of their graves for that?

We are tempted to make a little sport with the idea. Ghost-stories are hardly to be treated seriously, any longer. The family-party of the defunct Pyncheons, we presume, goes off in this wise.

First comes the ancestor himself, in his black cloak, steeple-hat, and trunk-breeches, girt about the waist with a leathern belt, in which hangs his steel-hilted sword; he has a long staff in his hand, such as gentlemen in advanced life used to carry, as much for the dignity of the thing as for the support to be derived from it. He looks up at the portrait; a thing of no substance, gazing at its own painted image! All is safe. The picture is still there. The purpose of his brain has been kept sacred thus long after the man himself has sprouted up in graveyard grass. See! he lifts his ineffectual hand, and tries the frame. All safe! But is that a smile?—is it not, rather, a frown of deadly import, that darkens over the shadow of his features? The stout Colonel is dissatisfied! So decided is his look of discontent as to impart additional distinctness to his features; through which, nevertheless, the moonlight passes, and flickers on the wall beyond. Something has strangely vexed the ancestor! With a grim shake of the head, he

turns away. Here come other Puncheons, the whole tribe, in their half a dozen generations, jostling and elbowing one another, to reach the picture. We behold aged men and grandames, a clergyman with the Puritanic stiffness still in his garb and mien, and a red-coated officer of the old French war; and there comes the shopkeeping Puncheon of a century ago, with the ruffles turned back from his wrists; and there the periwigged and brocaded gentleman of the artist's legend,[1] with the beautiful and pensive Alice, who brings no pride out of her virgin grave. All try the picture frame. What do these ghostly people seek? A mother lifts her child, that his little hands may touch it! There is evidently a mystery about the picture, that perplexes these poor Puncheons when they ought to be at rest. In a corner, meanwhile, stands the figure of an elderly man,[2] in a leather jerkin and breeches, with a carpenter's rule sticking out of his side pocket; he points his finger at the bearded Colonel and his descendants, nodding, jeering, mocking, and finally bursting into obstreperous, though inaudible laughter.

Indulging our fancy in this freak, we have partly lost the power of restraint and guidance. We distinguish an unlooked-for figure in our visionary scene. Among those ancestral people there is a young man, dressed in the very fashion of today: he wears a dark frock-coat, almost destitute of skirts, gray pantaloons, gaiter boots of patent leather, and has a finely wrought gold chain across his breast, and a little silver-headed whalebone stick in his hand. Were we to meet this figure at noonday, we should greet him as young Jaffrey Puncheon, the Judge's only surviving child, who has been spending the last two years in foreign travel. If still in life, how comes his shadow hither? If dead, what a misfortune! The old Puncheon property, together with the great estate acquired by the young man's father, would devolve on whom? On poor, foolish Clifford, gaunt Hepzibah, and rustic little Phoebe! But another and a greater marvel greets us! Can we believe our eyes? A stout, elderly gentleman has made his appearance; he has an aspect of eminent respectability, wears a black coat and pantaloons, of roomy width, and might be pronounced scrupulously neat in his attire, but for a broad crimson stain across his snowy neckcloth and down his shirt-bosom. Is it the Judge, or no? How can it be Judge Puncheon? We discern his figure, as plainly as the flickering moonbeams can show us anything, still seated in the oaken chair! Be the apparition whose it may, it advances to the picture, seems to seize the frame, tries to peep behind it, and turns away, with a frown as black as the ancestral one.

The fantastic scene just hinted at must by no means be considered as forming an actual portion of our story. We were betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of the moonbeams; they dance hand-in-hand with shadows, and are reflected in the looking-glass, which, you are aware, is always a kind of window or doorway into the spiritual world. We needed relief, moreover, from our too long and exclusive contemplation of that figure in the chair. This wild wind, too, has tossed our thoughts into strange confusion, but without tearing them away from their one determined center. Yonder leaden Judge sits immovably upon our soul. Will he never stir again? We shall go mad, unless he stirs! You may the better estimate his quietude by the fearlessness of a little mouse, which sits on its hind legs, in a streak of moonlight, close by Judge Puncheon's foot, and seems to meditate a journey of exploration over this great black bulk. Ha! what has startled the nimble little mouse? It is the visage of grimalkin, outside of the window, where he appears to have posted himself for a deliberate watch. This grimalkin has a very ugly look. Is it a cat watching for a mouse, or the devil for a human soul? Would we could scare him from the window!

Thank Heaven, the night is well-nigh past! The moonbeams have no longer so silvery a gleam, nor contrast so strongly with the blackness of the shadows among which they fall. They are paler, now; the shadows look gray, not black. The boisterous wind is hushed. What is the hour? Ah! the watch has at last ceased to tick; for the Judge's forgetful fingers neglected to wind it up, as usual, at

[1] This legend is related in Chapter XIII of the story. [2] Matthew Maule, when he built the house, had hidden away the deed in a recess behind the picture of Colonel Puncheon.

ten o'clock, being half an hour or so before his ordinary bedtime,—and it has run down, for the first time in five years. But the great world-clock of Time still keeps its beat. The dreary night—for, oh, how dreary seems its haunted waste, behind us!—gives place to a fresh, transparent, cloudless morn. Blessed, blessed radiance! The daybeam—even what little of it finds its way into this always dusky parlor—seems part of the universal benediction, annulling evil, and rendering all goodness possible, and happiness attainable. Will Judge Pyncheon now rise up from his chair? Will he go forth, and receive the early sunbeams on his brow? Will he begin this new day,—which God has smiled upon, and blessed, and given to mankind,—will he begin it with better purposes than the many that have been spent amiss? Or are all the deep-laid schemes of yesterday as stubborn in his heart, and as busy in his brain, as ever?

In this latter case, there is much to do. Will the Judge still insist with Hepzibah on the interview with Clifford? Will he buy a safe, elderly gentleman's horse? Will he persuade the purchaser of the old Pyncheon property to relinquish the bargain in his favor? Will he see his family physician, and obtain a medicine that shall preserve him, to be an honor and blessing to his race, until the utmost term of patriarchal longevity? Will Judge Pyncheon, above all, make due apologies to that company of honorable friends, and satisfy them that his absence from the festive board was unavoidable, and so fully retrieve himself in their good opinion that he shall yet be Governor of Massachusetts? And, all these great purposes accomplished, will he walk the streets again, with that dog-day smile of elaborate benevolence, sultry enough to tempt flies to come and buzz in it? Or will he, after the tomb-like seclusion of the past day and night, go forth a humbled and repentant man, sorrowful, gentle, seeking no profit, shrinking from worldly honor, hardly daring to love God, but bold to love his fellow-man, and to do him what good he may? Will he bear about with him,—no odious grin of feigned benignity, insolent in its pretence, and loathsome in its falsehood, —but the tender sadness of a contrite heart, broken, at last, beneath its own weight of sin? For it is our belief, whatever show of honor he may have piled upon it, that there was heavy sin at the base of this man's being.

Rise up, Judge Pyncheon! The morning sunshine glimmers through the foliage, and, beautiful and holy as it is, shuns not to kindle up your face. Rise up, thou subtle, worldly, selfish, iron-hearted hypocrite, and make thy choice whether still to be subtle, worldly, selfish, iron-hearted, and hypocritical, or to tear these sins out of thy nature, though they bring the lifeblood with them! The Avenger is upon thee! Rise up, before it be too late!

What! Thou art not stirred by this last appeal? No, not a jot! And there we see a fly,—one of your common houseflies, such as are always buzzing on the windowpane,—which has smelt out Governor Pyncheon, and alights, now on his forehead, now on his chin, and now, Heaven help us! is creeping over the bridge of his nose, towards the would-be chief-magistrate's wide-open eyes! Canst thou not brush the fly away? Art thou too sluggish? Thou man, that hadst so many busy projects, yesterday! Art thou too weak, that wast so powerful? Not brush away a fly? Nay, then, we give thee up!

And hark! the shop-bell rings. After hours like these latter ones, through which we have borne our heavy tale, it is good to be made sensible that there is a living world, and that even this old, lonely mansion retains some manner of connection with it. We breathe more freely, emerging from Judge Pyncheon's presence into the street before the Seven Gables.

*1850–1851* 1851

## *From* AMERICAN NOTEBOOKS

The *American Notebooks* of Hawthorne were revised by Mrs. Hawthorne when she published passages from them in 1868, after his death. Dr. Randall Stewart's completer edition (1932), was made from the original manuscript in the J. Pierpont Morgan Library. The notebooks show Hawthorne to have been a very keen observer. They contain journalistic records of his life, and they show, too, that he was conscious of what lay behind the facts observed. Apparently he often

started from some germinal idea entered in his notebooks and elaborated it into a story.

## [*The Diorama and the Limekiln*]

August 31, 1838.

. . . We left our horse in the shed, and, entering the little unpainted barroom, we heard a voice, in a strange, outlandish accent, exclaiming "Diorama." It was an old man, with a full, gray-bearded countenance, and Mr. Leach exclaimed, "Ah, here's the old Dutchman again!" And he answered, "Yes, Captain, here's the old Dutchman,"—though, by the way, he is a German, and travels the country with this diorama in a wagon, and had recently been at South Adams, and was now returning from Saratoga Springs. We looked through the glass orifice of his machine, while he exhibited a succession of the very worst scratches and daubings that can be imagined,—worn out, too, and full of cracks and wrinkles, dimmed with tobacco-smoke, and every other wise dilapidated. There were none in a later fashion than thirty years since, except some figures that had been cut from tailor's showbills. There were views of cities and edifices in Europe, of Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights, in the midst of which would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand (the Hand of Destiny) pointing at the principal points of the conflict, while the old Dutchman explained. He gave a good deal of dramatic effect to his descriptions, but his accent and intonation cannot be written. He seemed to take interest and pride in his exhibition; yet when the utter and ludicrous miserability thereof made us laugh, he joined in the joke very readily. When the last picture had been shown, he caused a country boor, who stood gaping beside the machine, to put his head within it, and thrust out his tongue. The head becoming gigantic, a singular effect was produced.

The old Dutchman's exhibition being over, a great dog, apparently an elderly dog, suddenly made himself the object of notice, evidently in rivalship of the Dutchman. He had seemed to be a good-natured, quiet kind of dog, offering his head to be patted by those who were kindly disposed toward him. This great, old dog, unexpectedly, and of his own motion, began to run round after his not very long tail with the utmost eagerness; and, catching hold of it, he growled furiously at it, and still continued to circle round, growling and snarling with increasing rage, as if one half of his body were at deadly enmity with the other. Faster and faster went he, round and round-about, growing still fiercer, till at last he ceased in a state of utter exhaustion; but no sooner had his exhibition finished than he became the same mild, quiet, sensible old dog as before; and no one could have suspected him of such nonsense as getting enraged with his own tail. He was first taught this trick by attaching a bell to the end of his tail; but he now commences entirely of his own accord, and I really believe he feels vain at the attention he excites.

September 7, 1838.

Mr. Leach and I took a walk by moonlight, last evening, on the road that leads over the mountain. Remote from houses, far up on the hillside, we found a limekiln, burning near the road; and, approaching it, a watcher started from the ground, where he had been lying at his length. There are several of these limekilns in this vicinity. They are circular built with stones, like a round tower, eighteen or twenty feet high, having a hillock heaped around a great portion of their circumference, so that the marble may be brought and thrown in by cartloads at the top. At the bottom there is a doorway large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture. Thus an edifice of great solidity is composed, which will endure for centuries, unless needless pains are taken to tear it down. There is one on the hillside close to the village, wherein weeds grow at the bottom, and grass and shrubs too are rooted in the interstices of the stones, and its low doorway has a dungeonlike aspect; and we look down from the top as into a roofless tower. It apparently has not been used for many years; and the lime and weatherstained fragments of marble are scattered about.

But in the one we saw last night, a hardwood fire was burning merrily beneath the superincumbent marble—the kiln being heaped full; and shortly after we came, the man (a dark, black-bearded figure in shirt-sleeves) opened the iron door, through the chinks of

which the fire was gleaming, and thrust in huge logs of wood, and stirred the immense coals with a long pole, and showed us the glowing limestone,—the lower layer of it. The heat of the fire was powerful, at the distance of several yards from the open door. He talked very sensibly with us,—being doubtless glad to have two visitors to vary his solitary night-watch; for it would not do for him to fall asleep; since the fire should be refreshed as often as every twenty minutes. We ascended the hillock to the top of the kiln; and the marble was red-hot, and burning with a bluish lambent flame, quivering up, sometimes nearly a yard high, and resembling the flame of anthracite coal—only, the marble being in larger fragments, the flame was higher. The kiln was perhaps six or eight feet across. Four hundred bushels of marble were then in a state of combustion. The expense of converting this quantity into lime is about fifty dollars; and it sells for twenty-five cents per bushel at the kiln. We asked the man whether he would run across the top of the intensely burning kiln, barefooted, for a thousand dollars; and he said he would for ten. He told us that the lime had been burning forty-eight hours, and would be finished in thirty-six more. He liked the business of watching it better by night than by day; because the days were often hot; but such a mild and beautiful night as the last was just right. Here a poet might make verses with moonlight in them, and a gleam of fierce firelight flickering through. It is a shame to use this brilliant, white, almost transparent marble in this way. A man said of it, the other day, that into some pieces of it, when polished, one could see a considerable distance; and he instanced a certain gravestone.

## [*Hints for Stories*]

On the road to Northampton, we passed a tame crow, which was sitting on the peak of a barn. This crow flew down from its perch, and followed us a great distance, hopping along the road, and flying with its large, black, flapping wings, from post to post of the fence, or from tree to tree. At last, he gave up the pursuit with a croak of disappointment. The driver said, perhaps correctly, that the crow had scented some salmon which was in a basket under the seat, and that this was the secret of his pursuing us. This would be a terrific incident, if it were a dead body that the crow scented, instead of a basket of salmon. Suppose, for instance, in a coach traveling along, that one of the passengers suddenly should die, and that one of the indications of his death would be this deportment of the crow.

A sketch to be given of a modern reformer,—a type of the extreme doctrines on the subject of slaves, cold water, and other such topics. He goes about the streets haranguing most eloquently, and is on the point of making many converts, when his labors are suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the keeper of a madhouse, whence he has escaped.

A change from a gay young girl to an old woman; the melancholy events, the effects of which have clustered around her character, and gradually imbued it with their influence, till she becomes a lover of sick-chambers, taking pleasure in receiving dying breaths and in laying out the dead; also having her mind full of funeral reminiscences, and possessing more acquaintances beneath the burial turf than above it.

The scene of a story or sketch to be laid within the light of a street-lantern; the time, when the lamp is near going out; and the catastrophe to be simultaneous with the last flickering gleam.

A fellow without money, having a hundred and seventy miles to go, fastened a chain and padlock to his legs, and lay down to sleep in a field. He was apprehended, and carried gratis to a jail in the town whither he desired to go.

It is a singular thing, that, at the distance, say, of five feet, the work of the greatest dunce looks just as well as that of the greatest genius,—that little space being all the distance between genius and stupidity.

A series of strange, mysterious, dreadful events to occur, wholly destructive of a person's happiness. He to impute them to various persons and causes, but ultimately finds that

he is himself the sole agent. Moral, that our welfare depends on ourselves.

A perception, for a moment, of one's eventual and moral self, as if it were another person,—the observant faculty being separated, and looking intently at the qualities of the character. There is a surprise when this happens,—this getting out of one's self,—and then the observer sees how queer a fellow he is.

Character of a man who, in himself and his external circumstances, shall be equally and totally false: his fortune resting on baseless credit,—his patriotism assumed,—his domestic affections, his honor and honesty, all a sham. His own misery in the midst of it,—it making the whole universe, heaven and earth alike, an unsubstantial mockery to him.

The semblance of a human face to be formed on the side of a mountain, or in the fracture of a small stone, by a *lusus naturae*. The face is an object of curiosity for years or centuries, and by and by a boy is born, whose features gradually assume the aspect of that portrait. At some critical juncture, the resemblance is found to be perfect. A prophecy may be connected.

Some man of powerful character to command a person, morally subjected to him, to perform some act. The commanding person to suddenly die; and, for all the rest of his life, the subjected one continues to perform that act.

To trace out the influence of a frightful and disgraceful crime in debasing and destroying a character naturally high and noble—the guilty person being alone conscious of the crime.

A man, virtuous in his general conduct, but committing habitually some monstrous crime —as murder—and doing this without the sense of guilt, but with a peaceful conscience—habit, probably, reconciling him to it; but something (for instance, discovery) occurs to make him sensible of his enormity. His horror then.

A Father Confessor—his reflections on character and the contrast of the inward man with the outward, as he looks round on his congregation—all whose secret sins are known to him.

A person with an ice-cold hand—his right hand; which people ever afterwards remember when once they have grasped it.

To make a story out of a scarecrow, giving it odd attributes. From different points of view, it should appear to change,—now an old man, now an old woman,—a gunner, a farmer, or the Old Nick.

## [*Thoreau*]

September 1, 1842.

Mr. Thoreau dined with us yesterday.... He is a keen and delicate observer of nature—a genuine observer—which, I suspect, is almost as rare a character as even an original poet; and Nature, in return for his love, seems to adopt him as her especial child, and shows him secrets which few others are allowed to witness. He is familiar with beast, fish, fowl, and reptile, and has strange stories to tell of adventures, and friendly passages with these lower brethren of mortality. Herb and flower, likewise, wherever they grow, whether in garden or wildwood, are his familiar friends. He is also on intimate terms with the clouds, and can tell the portents of storms. It is a characteristic trait, that he has a great regard for the memory of the Indian tribes, whose wild life would have suited him so well; and strange to say, he seldom walks over a ploughed field without picking up an arrow-point, a spear-head, or other relic of the red men—as if their spirits willed him to be the inheritor of their simple wealth.

With all this he has more than a tincture of literature,—a deep and true taste for poetry, especially for the elder poets, and he is a good writer,—at least he has written a good article, a rambling disquisition on Natural History, in the last *Dial*, which, he says, was chiefly made up from journals of his own observations. Methinks this article gives a very fair image of his mind and character,—so true, innate, and literal in observation, yet giving the spirit as well as letter of what he sees, even as a lake reflects its wooded banks, showing every leaf, yet giving the wild beauty

whole scene. Then there are in the article passages of cloudy and dreamy metaphysics, and also passages where his thoughts seem to measure and attune themselves into spontaneous verse, as they rightfully may, since there is real poetry in them. There is a basis of good sense and of moral truth, too, throughout the article, which also is a reflection of his character; for he is not unwise to think and feel, and I find him a healthy and wholesome man to know.

After dinner (at which we cut the first watermelon and muskmelon that our garden has ripened) Mr. Thoreau and I walked up the bank of the river; and, at a certain point, he shouted for his boat. Forthwith, a young man paddled it across the river, and Mr. Thoreau and I voyaged farther up the stream, which soon became more beautiful than any picture, with its dark and quiet sheet of water, half shaded, half sunny, between high and wooded banks. The late rains have swollen the stream so much that many trees are standing up to their knees, as it were, in the water; and boughs, which lately swung high in air, now dip and drink deep of the passing wave. As to the poor cardinals which glowed upon the bank a few days since, I could see only a few of their scarlet hats, peeping above the tide. Mr. Thoreau managed the boat so perfectly, either with two paddles or with one, that it seemed instinct with his own will, and to require no physical effort to guide it. He said that, when some Indians visited Concord a few years since, he found that he had acquired, without a teacher, their precise method of propelling and steering a canoe. Nevertheless he was desirous of selling the boat of which he is so fit a pilot, and which was built by his own hands; so I agreed to take it, and accordingly became possessor of the Musketaquid. I wish I could acquire the aquatic skill of the original owner.

## [*The Haunted Chamber*]

Salem, October 4, 1840. Union Street [Family Mansion].

. . . Here I sit in my old accustomed chamber, where I used to sit in days gone by. . . . Here I have written many tales,—many that have been burned to ashes, many that doubtless deserved the same fate. This claims to be called a haunted chamber, for thousands upon thousands of visions have appeared to me in it; and some few of them have become visible to the world. If ever I should have a biographer, he ought to make great mention of this chamber in my memoirs, because so much of my lonely youth was wasted here, and here my mind and character were formed; and here I have been glad and hopeful, and here I have been despondent. And here I sat a long, long time, waiting patiently for the world to know me, and sometimes wondering why it did not know me sooner, or whether it would ever know me at all,—at least, till I were in my grave. And sometimes it seemed as if I were already in the grave, with only life enough to be chilled and benumbed. But oftener I was happy,—at least, as happy as I then knew how to be, or was aware of the possibility of being. By and by, the world found me out in my lonely chamber, and called me forth,—not, indeed, with a voice,—and forth I went, but found nothing in the world that I thought preferable to my old solitude till now. . . . And now I begin to understand why I was imprisoned so many years in this lonely chamber, and why I could never break through the viewless bolts and bars; for if I had sooner made my escape into the world, I should have grown hard and rough, and been covered with earthly dust, and my heart might have become callous by rude encounters with the multitude. . . . But living in solitude till the fulness of time was come, I still kept the dew of my youth and the freshness of my heart. . . . I used to think I could imagine all passions, all feelings, and states of the heart and mind; but how little did I know! . . . Indeed, we are but shadows; we are not endowed with real life, and all that seems most real about us is but the thinnest substance of a dream,—till the heart be touched. That touch creates us,—then we begin to be,—thereby we are beings of reality and inheritors of eternity. . . .

1868

# 1819 ~ *Herman Melville* ~ 1891

IT WAS not until the twentieth century that Melville found acknowledgment as a major writer. His significance was suddenly recognized in the wake of a rising interest in the South Seas, fostered by Robert Louis Stevenson's residence in Samoa and Tahiti. It was Melville who first pointed out the romance of the islands of the South Pacific. He was an independent genius, owing little to the writers of New England or to the Knickerbocker school. Neither Hawthorne nor Poe had his vigor, breadth, and prodigality as a writer of fiction. His *Moby Dick* now ranks as one of our great works of fiction.

Herman Melville, a grandson of the old man of Holmes's "The Last Leaf," took pride in his New England ancestry. His family had been one of distinction in Scotland and had taken a prominent part in the Revolutionary War. He was born in New York on August 1, 1819. His father was a well-to-do merchant who traveled extensively. He died when Melville was still very young but not before the boy had developed a strong interest in foreign places and peoples. The family had reverses before his father died, and his mother was left with little or no support for herself and her small children. Melville was educated at the public schools and attended the Albany Academy until he was fifteen. He then tried clerking in a bank and teaching school, but he did not like teaching. In 1837 he ran off to sea and shipped on a boat that sailed to England. He tried once more to teach school but again gave it up. This was the age of fast sailing vessels, "clipper ships," and the spirit of the sea was strong within him.

The next years of his life were years of romance and adventure. In 1841, when he was twenty-one, he took ship for the South Pacific on the whaler *Acushnet* and remained on it for eighteen months. Because of the hardships of the life, he deserted, and with a comrade lived for four months among friendly cannibals, the Typees of the Marquesas Islands. He was rescued by an Australian whaler and put ashore at Tahiti, where he hired out for some time. He escaped once more and returned in an American ship to Boston. His "travel romances" or "sketch books of the South Seas" record these experiences. *Typee* (1846) gives an idyllic picture, probably influenced by Rousseau, of life in the Pacific Isles; and *Omoo* (1847) has its scenes laid in Tahiti and the Marquesas. In these tales of sea adventures, and in the later *Moby Dick*, both reality and imagination are relied upon as a basis for the incidents. *Redburn* (1849) and *White Jacket* (1850), books which belong to our naval history, are more or less autobiographical and tell of his life as a seaman on board a United States frigate. These early books brought him both celebrity and condemnation;

for he was censured for his arraignment of missionaries and soldiers, and his account of the ill effects that the bringing of the white man's civilization had upon the islands.

Once more in America, Melville was conspicuous as the "man who had escaped from the cannibals." In 1847, he married the daughter of the chief justice of Massachusetts. He lived for a while in New York and continued to write. In 1849 he traveled in London and Paris; and *Mardi*, a medley of travel sketches, philosophy, and satire, was published. After his return to America, he moved to Arrowhead Farm at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Here he came to know Hawthorne at Lenox and in 1851 dedicated *Moby Dick* to him. After the publication of *Pierre* (1852) his work declined in interest and power, and his later books, such as *Israel Potter* (1855) and *Piazza Tales* (1856) are little known. He printed some poetry and tried lecturing; but as he grew older, he withdrew more and more from society. In 1866 he was made customs inspector at New York City and held the post for nineteen years. He died on September 29, 1891, an almost forgotten author.

*Moby Dick*, an amazing prose-epic masterpiece, did not succeed when it first appeared. This sea classic, then termed "Bedlam literature," enshrines the bygone life of the whaling ship with its technicalities and dangers, doing for it what Cooper had done for the frontier and what Mark Twain was to do for the steamboat age of the Mississippi. It contains two memorable characters: the monomaniac Captain Ahab, who ruled over a grim, wild crew, and the gigantic, malevolent white whale, Moby Dick. The struggle between them has been termed an allegory, for the fierce pursuit of the white whale seems symbolic of the unremitting hatred and hunting down of the vast moral evil of the world; but the author said that no allegory had been intended. Writing to Hawthorne, he also hinted quite broadly just the opposite. His depiction of sea life and its exciting action has never been surpassed. For Melville, the sea too is terrific and tremendous, and he treats it with the mystical, intense, and bitter quality that is seen in all his writings. The book is emotional and pictorial, not logical, and its style is extravagant. But its gusto and strength are unmistakable.

Melville read much as a youth in his father's carefully selected library and he continued to read, with the zest of a booklover, in later life. Some of the authors influencing him were Sir Thomas Browne, whom he greatly admired, Robert Burton, and Carlyle. On his return voyage from the South Seas he read the Elizabethan dramatists, Marlowe of the "mighty line," and Ben Jonson. Others he mentions are Beaumont and Fletcher, Milton, Rousseau, Chesterfield, Byron, Moore, Scott, and he was interested in the German metaphysicians. Cooper he knew among American writers. Dana's *Two Years before the Mast*, which appeared in 1840, may have given him the urge to sea adventure. Before his first books were written he read everything he could lay his hands on about the South Seas, accounts of voy-

ages, missionaries' reports, and travelers' descriptions. For *Moby Dick* he read everything available to him about whales and whaling, making notes and collecting allusions. If much in his books comes from his personal experience, much too comes from his reading, especially in his earlier ones. Professor C. R. Anderson (*Melville in the South Seas*, 1939) cites from Melville's *Redburn*, ". . . for materials they use odds and ends of old rigging called *junk*, the yarns of which are picked to pieces and then twisted into new combinations," adding that this is something like the manner in which "most books are manufactured." Professor Anderson believes that Melville's books about the South Seas were put together in much this way. In these his style is simple and direct. In *Moby Dick* and elsewhere his unique manner of expression comes to its own. It is not an orderly or disciplined style. It has vehemence, emotional quality, is of prodigal richness, and often rises to great power. There is realism of detail, and, since Melville has an ear for rhythm, there are frequent passages of beautiful lavish music.

Melville was more conscious of his artistic powers and problems than has been believed of one who wrote so copiously and so easily. This is clear from a reading of his *Pierre*. He wanted complete freedom in fiction writing, to be frank and truthful and to cut athwart accepted conventions of composition. He cared little for conforming to the orthodox in themes, or handling, or in his characters. He was no advocate of consistency in every character in fiction. Distinctive of him was his liking for lone mighty figures, such as Ahab or Pierre, "originals" of striking stature. He seems to have wished to select a "mighty theme," and to produce a "mighty book." This he did in *Moby Dick*.

There is a collected edition, *The Works of Herman Melville*, 16 vols., London, 1922–24. Many separate editions of *Moby Dick*, *Typee*, *Pierre*, etc., are available. V. G. Paltsits edited *The Family Correspondence of Herman Melville, 1830–1904*, in *Bulletin of the N. Y. Public Library*, XXXIII, July and August, 1929; and M. Minnegerode, *Some Personal Letters of Herman Melville, and a Bibliography* (1922). Chief references for Melville are Raymond Weaver, *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic* (1921); John Freeman, *Herman Melville*, in English Men of Letters Series (1926); and Lewis Mumford, *Herman Melville* (1929). Van Wyck Brooks wrote of Melville in the *DAB*, 1933. Some of the more important critical discussions of Melville are those by Carl Van Doren, in *CHAL*, I (1917); Henry S. Canby, in *Definitions, First Series* (1922); P. H. Boynton, in *More Contemporary Americans* (1927); V. L. Parrington, in *Main Currents of American Thought*, I (1927); Van Wyck Brooks, in *Emerson and Others* (1927); Raymond Weaver, in Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931); K. H. Sundermann, in *Herman Melvilles Gedankengut* (1937); Willard Thorp, introduction to his *Melville* in American Writers Series (1938); and C. R. Anderson, in *Melville in the South Seas* (1939). Among periodical articles are F. J. Mather, Jr., "Herman Melville," *Review*, I (August 9 and 16, 1919); E. L. G. Watson, "Moby Dick," *London Mercury*, III (Dec., 1920); F. L. Pattee, "Herman Melville," *American Mercury*, X (Jan., 1927); René Galland, "Herman Melville and 'Moby Dick,'" in *Revue Anglo-Américaine*, V (Oct., 1927); and G. C. Homans, "The Dark Angel: The Tragedy of Herman Melville," *New England Quarterly*, V (Oct., 1932).

## *From* MOBY DICK

Melville's masterpiece, one of the great sea tales of the world, and the world's greatest whaling story. It may be read as a treatise telling everything to be known of whales and the whaling of the period, or it may be read as an adventure story of the sea. To critics it suggests the allegory of man's pursuit of evil in the world, although Melville once said that he did not see the allegory in the book till it was pointed out to him. There are three leading *dramatis personae*. The monomaniac Captain Ahab, in command of a strange, sinister crew, sets forth on his last voyage, ostensibly on an ordinary whaling expedition, but really to track down and destroy the gigantic malevolent White Whale that in an earlier encounter had mutilated him. He pursues the whale with avenging energy, pouring on it rage and hate, until he and his ship are finally destroyed by it. The last chapters tell of the terrible three-days chase in which these two well-matched characters are involved. The third character is the Sea, which is far more than mere setting or background. "In that wild beautiful romance," says Masefield in an often quoted passage, "Melville seems to have spoken the very secret of the sea, and to have drawn into his tale all the magic, all the wild joy of many waters." It too can be ferocious and violent in its malign moments, like Captain Ahab and the White Whale. In structure the book is more carefully planned than at first appears. It abounds in interruptions, digressions, rhapsodies, and denunciations; but, if it is prodigal in its wealth of material, it is also singularly original and powerful.

### CHAPTER XLI

### *Moby Dick*

I, ISHMAEL, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge.

For some time past, though at intervals only, the unaccompanied, secluded White Whale had haunted those uncivilized seas mostly frequented by the Sperm Whale fishermen; but not all of them knew of his existence; only a few of them, comparatively, had knowingly seen him; while the number who as yet had actually and knowingly given battle to him, was small indeed. For, owing to the large number of whale-cruisers; the disorderly way they were sprinkled over the entire watery circumference, many of them adventurously pushing their quest along solitary latitudes, so as seldom or never for a whole twelvemonth or more on a stretch, to encounter a single news-telling sail of any sort; the inordinate length of each separate voyage; the irregularity of the times of sailing from home; all these, with other circumstances, direct and indirect, long obstructed the spread through the whole world-wide whaling fleet of the special individualizing tidings concerning Moby Dick. It was hardly to be doubted, that several vessels reported to have encountered, at such or such a time, or on such or such a meridian, a Sperm Whale of uncommon magnitude and malignity, which whale, after doing great mischief to his assailants, had completely escaped them; to some minds it was not an unfair presumption, I say, that the whale in question must have been no other than Moby Dick. Yet as of late the Sperm Whale fishery had been marked by various and not unfrequent instances of great ferocity, cunning, and malice in the monster attacked; therefore it was, that those who by accident ignorantly gave battle to Moby Dick; such hunters, perhaps, for the most part, were content to ascribe the peculiar terror he bred, more, as it were, to the perils of the Sperm Whale fishery at large, than to the individual cause. In that way, mostly, the disastrous encounter between Ahab and the whale had hitherto been popularly regarded.

And as for those who, previously hearing of the White Whale, by chance caught sight of him; in the beginning of the thing they had every one of them, almost, as boldly and fearlessly lowered for him, as for any other whale of that species. But at length, such calamities did ensue in these assaults—not restricted to sprained wrists and ankles, broken limbs, or devouring amputations—but fatal to the last degree of fatality; those

repeated disastrous repulses, all accumulating and piling their terrors upon Moby Dick; those things had gone far to shake the fortitude of many brave hunters, to whom the story of the White Whale had eventually come.

Nor did wild rumors of all sorts fail to exaggerate, and still the more horrify the true histories of these deadly encounters. For not only do fabulous rumors naturally grow out of the very body of all surprising terrible events,—as the smitten tree gives birth to its fungi; but, in maritime life, far more than in that of *terra firma*, wild rumors abound, wherever there is any adequate reality for them to cling to. And as the sea surpasses the land in this matter, so the whale-fishery surpasses every other sort of maritime life, in the wonderfulness and fearfulness of the rumors which sometimes circulate there. For not only are whalemen as a body unexempt from that ignorance and superstitiousness hereditary to all sailors; but of all sailors, they are by all odds the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but, hand to jaw, give battle to them. Alone, in such remotest waters, that though you sailed a thousand miles, and passed a thousand shores, you would not come to any chiseled hearthstone, or aught hospitable beneath that part of the sun; in such latitudes and longitudes, pursuing too such a calling as he does, the whaleman is wrapped by influences all tending to make his fancy pregnant with many a mighty birth.

No wonder, then, that ever gathering volume from the mere transit over the wildest watery spaces, the outblown rumors of the White Whale did in the end incorporate with themselves all manner of morbid hints, and half-formed foetal suggestions of supernatural agencies, which eventually invested Moby Dick with new terrors unborrowed from anything that visibly appears. So that in many cases such a panic did he finally strike, that few who by those rumors, at least, had heard of the White Whale, few of those hunters were willing to encounter the perils of his jaw.

But there were still other and more vital practical influences at work. Not even at the present day has the original prestige of the Sperm Whale, as fearfully distinguished from all other species of the leviathan, died out of the minds of the whalemen as a body. There are those this day among them, who, though intelligent and courageous enough in offering battle to the Greenland or Right Whale, would perhaps—either from professional inexperience, or incompetency, or timidity, decline a contest with the Sperm Whale. At any rate, there are plenty of whalemen, especially among those whaling nations not sailing under the American flag, who have never hostilely encountered the Sperm Whale, but whose sole knowledge of the leviathan is restricted to the ignoble monster primitively pursued in the North. Seated on their hatches, these men will harken with a childish fireside interest and awe, to the wild, strange tales or Southern whaling. Nor is the pre-eminent tremendousness of the great Sperm Whale anywhere more feelingly comprehended, than on board of those prows which stem[1] him.

And as if the now tested reality of his might had in former legendary times thrown its shadow before it; we find some book naturalists—Olassen and Povelson—declaring the Sperm Whale not only to be a consternation to every other creature in the sea, but also to be so incredibly ferocious as continually to be athirst for human blood. Nor even down to so late a time as Cuvier's, were these or almost similar impressions effaced. For in his Natural History, the Baron himself affirms that at sight of the Sperm Whale, all fish (sharks included) are "struck with the most lively terrors," and "often in the precipitancy of their flight dash themselves against the rocks with such violence as to cause instantaneous death." And however the general experiences in the fishery may amend such reports as these; yet in their full terribleness, even to the bloodthirsty item of Povelson, the superstitious belief in them is, in some vicissitudes of their vocation, revived in the minds of the hunters.

So that overawed by the rumors and portents concerning him, not a few of the fisher-

[1] make headway against

men recalled, in reference to Moby Dick, the earlier days of the Sperm Whale fishery, when it was oftentimes hard to induce long practiced Right whalemen to embark in the perils of this new and daring warfare; such men protesting that although other leviathans might be hopefully pursued, yet to chase and point lances at such an apparition as the Sperm Whale was not for mortal man—that to attempt it, would be inevitably to be torn into a quick eternity. On this head, there are some remarkable documents that may be consulted.

Nevertheless, some there were, who even in the face of these things were ready to give chase to Moby Dick; and a still greater number who, chancing only to hear of him distantly and vaguely, without the specific details of any certain calamity, and without superstitious accompaniments, were sufficiently hardy not to flee from the battle if offered.

One of the wild suggestions referred to, as at last coming to be linked with the White Whale in the minds of the superstitiously inclined, was the unearthly conceit that Moby Dick was ubiquitous; that he had actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time.

Nor, credulous as such minds must have been, was this conceit altogether without some faint show of superstitious probability. For as the secrets of the currents in the seas have never yet been divulged, even to the most erudite research; so the hidden ways of the Sperm Whale when beneath the surface remain, in great part, unaccountable to his pursuers; and from time to time have originated the most curious and contradictory speculations regarding them, especially concerning the mystic modes whereby, after sounding to a great depth, he transports himself with such vast swiftness to the most widely distant points.

It is a thing well known to both American and English whale ships, and as well a thing placed upon authoritative record years ago by Scoresby, that some whales have been captured far north in the Pacific, in whose bodies have been found the barbs of harpoons darted in the Greenland seas. Nor is it to be gainsaid, that in some of these instances it has been declared that the interval of time between the two assaults could not have exceeded very many days. Hence, by inference, it has been believed by some whalemen, that the Nor'-West Passage, so long a problem to man, was never a problem to the whale. So that here, in the real living experience of living men, the prodigies related in old times of the inland Strello mountain in Portugal (near whose top there was said to be a lake in which the wrecks of ships floated up to the surface); and that still more wonderful story of the Arethusa fountain near Syracuse (whose waters were believed to have come from the Holy Land by an underground passage); these fabulous narrations are almost fully equaled by the realities of the whalemen.

Forced into familiarity, then, with such prodigies as these; and knowing that after repeated, intrepid assaults, the White Whale had escaped alive; it cannot be much matter of surprise that some whalemen should go still further in their superstitions; declaring Moby Dick not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time); that though groves of spears should be planted in his flanks, he would still swim away unharmed; or if indeed he should ever be made to spout thick blood, such a sight would be but a ghastly deception; for again in unensanguined billows hundreds of leagues away, his unsullied jet would once more be seen.

But even stripped of these supernatural surmisings, there was enough in the earthly make and incontestable character of the monster to strike the imagination with unwonted power. For, it was not so much his uncommon bulk that so much distinguished him from other sperm whales, but, as was elsewhere thrown out—a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidical white hump. These were his prominent features; the tokens whereby, even in the limitless, uncharted seas, he revealed his identity, at a long distance, to those who knew him.

The rest of his body was so streaked, and spotted, and marbled with the same shrouded hue, that, in the end, he had gained his distinctive appellation of the White Whale; a name, indeed, literally justified by his vivid aspect, when seen gliding at high noon

through a dark blue sea, leaving a milky-way wake of creamy foam, all spangled with golden gleaming. Nor was it his unwonted magnitude, nor his remarkable hue, nor yet his deformed lower jaw, that so much invested the whale with natural terror, as that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults. More than all, his treacherous retreats struck more of dismay than perhaps aught else. For, when swimming before his exulting pursuers, with every apparent symptom of alarm, he had several times been known to turn round suddenly, and, bearing down upon them, either stave their boats to splinters, or drive them back in consternation to their ship.

Already several fatalities had attended his chase. But though similar disasters, however little bruited[1] ashore, were by no means unusual in the fishery, yet in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's infernal forethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent.

Judge, then, to what pitches of inflamed, distracted fury the minds of his more desperate hunters were impelled, when amid the chips of chewed boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades, they swam out of the white curds of the whale's direful wrath into the serene, exasperating sunlight, that smiled on, as if at a birth or a bridal.

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both whirling in the eddies, one captain, seizing the line-knife from his broken prow, had dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duelist at his foe, blindly seeking with a six-inch blade to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale. That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No turbaned Turk, no hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with more seeing malice. Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell, for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; which the ancient Ophites[1] of the east reverenced in their statue devil;—Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its ideas to the abhorred White Whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.

It is not probable that this monomania in him took its instant rise at the precise time of his bodily dismemberment. Then, in darting at the monster, knife in hand, he had but given loose to a sudden, passionate, corporal animosity; and when he received the stroke that tore him, he probably felt the agonising bodily laceration, but nothing more. Yet, when by this collision forced to turn towards home, and for long months of days and weeks, Ahab and anguish lay stretched together in one hammock, rounding in midwinter that dreary, howling Patagonian Cape; then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad. That it was only then, on the homeward voyage, after the encounter, that the final monomania seized him, seems all but certain from the fact that, at intervals during the passage, he was a raving lunatic; and, though unlimbed of a leg, yet such vital strength yet

[1] talked about

[1] Group of sects who revered the serpent (Ophia) by which Eve was tempted as the embodiment of divine wisdom. They were especially prominent in the second century and existed into the sixth.

lurked in his Egyptian chest, and was moreover intensified by his delirium, that his mates were forced to lace him fast, even there, as he sailed, raving in his hammock. In a strait-jacket, he swung to the mad rockings of the gales. And, when running into more sufferable latitudes, the ship, with mild stunsails spread, floated across the tranquil tropics, and, to all appearances, the old man's delirium seemed left behind him with the Cape Horn swells, and he came forth from his dark den into the blessed light and air; even then, when he bore that firm, collected front, however pale, and issued his calm orders once again; and his mates thanked God the direful madness was now gone; even then, Ahab, in his hidden self, raved on. Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing. When you think it fled, it may have but become transfigured into some still subtler form. Ahab's full lunacy subsided not, but deepeningly contracted; like the unabated Hudson, when that noble Northman flows narrowly, but unfathomably through the Highland gorge. But, as in his narrow-flowing monomania, not one jot of Ahab's broad madness had been left behind; so in that broad madness, not one jot of his great natural intellect had perished. That before living agent, now became the living instrument. If such a furious trope may stand, his special lunacy stormed his general sanity, and carried it, and turned all its concentered cannon upon its own mad mark; so that far from having lost his strength, Ahab, to that one end, did now possess a thousand-fold more potency than ever he had sanely brought to bear upon any one reasonable object.

This is much; yet Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part remains unhinted. But vain to popularize profundities, and all truth is profound. Winding far down from within the very heart of this spiked Hotel de Cluny where we here stand—however grand and wonderful, now quit it;—and take your way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes;[1] where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsos! So with a broken throne, the great gods mock that captive king; so like a Caryatid,[1] he patient sits, upholding on his frozen brow the piled entablatures of ages. Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls! question that proud, sad king! A family likeness! aye, he did beget ye, ye young exiled royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come.

Now, in his heart, Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely, all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad. Yet without power to kill, or change, or shun the fact; he likewise knew that to mankind he did long dissemble; in some sort, did still. But that thing of his dissembling was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate. Nevertheless, so well did he succeed in that dissembling, that when with ivory leg he stepped ashore at last, no Nantucketer thought him otherwise than but naturally grieved, and that to the quick, with the terrible casualty which had overtaken him.

The report of his undeniable delirium at sea was likewise popularly ascribed to a kindred cause. And so too, all the added moodiness which always afterwards, to the very day of sailing in the *Pequod* on the present voyage, sat brooding on his brow. Nor is it so very unlikely, that far from distrusting his fitness for another whaling voyage, on account of such dark symptoms, the calculating people of that prudent isle were inclined to harbor the conceit, that for those very reasons he was all the better qualified and set on edge, for a pursuit so full of rage and wildness as the bloody hunt of whales. Gnawed within and scorched without, with the infixed, unrelenting fangs of some incurable idea; such an one, could he be found, would seem the very man to dart his iron and lift his lance against the most appalling of all brutes. Or, if for any reason thought to be corporeally incapacitated for that, yet such an one would seem superlatively competent to cheer and howl on his underlings to the attack. But be all this as it may, certain it is, that with the mad secret of his unabated rage bolted up and keyed in him, Ahab had pur-

[1] a reference to the ruins of Roman baths, above which the Cluny Museum in Paris now stands

[1] a supporting column in architecture in the form of a draped female figure

posely sailed upon the present voyage with the one only and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale. Had any one of his old acquaintances on shore but half dreamed of what was lurking in him then, how soon would their aghast and righteous souls have wrenched the ship from such a fiendish man! They were bent on profitable cruises, the profit to be counted down in dollars from the mint. He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge.

Here, then, was this gray-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale[1] round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made up of mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals—morally enfeebled also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue of right-mindedness in Starbuck, the invulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask. Such a crew, so officered, seemed specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality to help him to his monomaniac revenge. How it was that they so aboundingly responded to the old man's ire—by what evil magic their souls were possessed, that at times his hate seemed almost theirs; the White Whale as much their insufferable foe as his; how all this came to be—what the White Whale was to them, or how to their unconscious understandings, also, in some dim, unsuspected way, he might have seemed the gliding great demon of the seas of life,—all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than Ishmael can go. The subterranean miner that works in us all, how can one tell whither leads his shaft by the ever shifting, muffled sound of his pick? Who does not feel the irresistible arm drag? What skiff in tow of a seventy-four can stand still? For one, I gave myself up to the abandonment of the time and the place; but while yet all a-rush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill.

CHAPTER CXXXIII

## *The Chase—First Day*

That night, in the mid-watch, when the old man—as his wont at intervals—stepped forth from the scuttle in which he leaned, and went to his pivot-hole,[1] he suddenly thrust out his face fiercely, snuffing up the sea air as a sagacious ship's dog will, in drawing nigh to some barbarous isle. He declared that a whale must be near. Soon that peculiar odor, sometimes to a great distance given forth by the living Sperm Whale, was palpable to all the watch; nor was any mariner surprised when, after inspecting the compass, and then the dog-vane, and then ascertaining the precise bearing of the odor as nearly as possible, Ahab rapidly ordered the ship's course to be slightly altered, and the sail to be shortened.

The acute policy dictating these movements was sufficiently vindicated at daybreak by the sight of a long sleek on the sea directly and lengthwise ahead, smooth as oil, and resembling in the pleated watery wrinkles bordering it, the polished metallic-like marks of some swift tide-rip, at the mouth of a deep, rapid stream.

"Man the mastheads! Call all hands!"

Thundering with the butts of three clubbed handspikes on the forecastle deck, Daggoo roused the sleepers with such judgment claps that they seemed to exhale from the scuttle, so instantaneously did they appear with their clothes in their hands.

"What d'ye see?" cried Ahab, flattening his face to the sky.

"Nothing, nothing, sir!" was the sound hailing down in reply.

"T'gallant-sails! stunsails alow and aloft, and on both sides!"

All sail being set, he now cast loose the life-line, reserved for swaying him to the mainroyal masthead; and in a few moments they were hoisting him thither, when, while but two-thirds of the way aloft, and while peering ahead through the horizontal vacancy between the maintopsail and topgallant-sail, he raised a gull-like cry in the air, "There she blows!—there she blows! A hump like a snowhill! It is Moby Dick!"

Fired by the cry which seemed simultaneously taken up by the three lookouts, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous whale they had so long been

[1] Job 41

[1] where Ahab's ivory leg stood when not in use

pursuing. Ahab had now gained his final perch, some feet above the other lookouts, Tashtego standing just beneath him on the cap of the topgallant-mast, so that the Indian's head was almost on a level with Ahab's heel. From this height the whale was now seen some mile or so ahead, at every roll of the sea revealing his high sparkling hump, and regularly jetting his silent spout into the air. To the credulous mariners it seemed the same silent spout they had so long ago beheld in the moonlit Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

"And did none of ye see it before?" cried Ahab, hailing the perched men all around him.

"I saw him almost that same instant, sir, that Captain Ahab did, and I cried out," said Tashtego.

"Not the same instant; not the same—no, the doubloon[1] is mine. Fate reserved the doubloon for me. *I* only; none of ye could have raised the White Whale first. There she blows! there she blows!—there she blows! There again!—there again!" he cried, in long-drawn, lingering, methodic tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the whale's visible jets. "He's going to sound! In stunsails! Down topgallant-sails! Stand by three boats. Mr. Starbuck, remember, stay on board, and keep the ship. Helm there! Luff, luff a point! So; steady, man, steady! There go flukes! No, no; only black water! All ready the boats there? Stand by, stand by! Lower me, Mr. Starbuck; lower, lower,—quick, quicker!" and he slid through the air to the deck.

"He is heading straight to leeward, sir," cried Stubb; "right away from us; cannot have seen the ship yet."

"Be dumb, man! Stand by the braces! Hard down the helm!—brace up! Shiver her!—shiver her! So; well that! Boats, boats!"

Soon all the boats but Starbuck's were dropped; all the boat-sails set—all the paddles plying; with rippling swiftness, shooting to leeward; and Ahab heading the onset. A pale, death-glimmer lit up Fedallah's sunken eyes; a hideous motion gnawed his mouth.

Like noiseless nautilus shells, their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe. As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth; seemed drawing a carpet over its waves; seemed a noon-meadow, so serenely it spread. At length the breathless hunter came so nigh his seemingly unsuspecting prey, that his entire dazzling hump was distinctly visible, sliding along the sea as if an isolated thing, and continually set in a revolving ring of finest, fleecy, greenish foam. He saw the vast involved wrinkles of the slightly projecting head beyond. Before it, far out on the soft Turkish-rugged waters, went the glistening white shadow from his broad, milky forehead, a musical rippling playfully accompanying the shade; and behind, the blue waters interchangeably flowed over into the moving valley of his steady wake; and on either hand bright bubbles arose and danced by his side. But these were broken again by the light toes of hundreds of gay fowls softly feathering the sea, alternate with their fitful flight; and like to some flagstaff rising from the painted hull of an argosy, the tall but shattered pole of a recent lance projected from the White Whale's back; and at intervals one of the cloud of soft-toed fowls hovering, and to and fro skimming like a canopy over the fish, silently perched and rocked on this pole, the long tail feathers streaming like pennons.

A gentle joyousness—a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa[1] clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam.

On each soft side—coincident with the parted swell, that but once laving him, then flowed so wide away—on each bright side, the whale shed off enticings. No wonder there had been some among the hunters who,

[1] the account of the doubloon is in Chapter XLVI of *Moby Dick*

[1] The story of how the maiden Europa was carried away to Crete by Jupiter, who had taken the form of a white bull, was told by the poet Moschus of about the second century, and may be found retold in Gayley's *Classic Myths* and other books of classic mythology.

namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee, no matter how many in that same way thou may'st have bejuggled and destroyed before.

And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant his whole marbleized body formed a high arch, like Virginia's Natural Bridge, and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself, sounded, and went out of sight. Hoveringly halting, and dipping on the wing, the white sea-fowls longingly lingered over the agitated pool that he left.

With oars apeak, and paddles down, the sheets of their sails adrift, the three boats now stilly floated, awaiting Moby Dick's reappearance.

"An hour," said Ahab, standing rooted in his boat's stern; and he gazed beyond the whale's place, towards the dim blue spaces and wide wooing vacancies to leeward. It was only an instant; for again his eyes seemed whirling round in his head as he swept the watery circle. The breeze now freshened; the sea began to swell.

"The birds!—the birds!" cried Tashtego.

In long Indian file, as when herons take wing, the white birds were now all flying towards Ahab's boat; and when within a few yards began fluttering over the water there, wheeling round and round, with joyous, expectant cries. Their vision was keener than man's; Ahab could discover no sign in the sea. But suddenly as he peered down and down into its depths, he profoundly saw a white living spot no bigger than a white weasel, with wonderful celerity uprising, and magnifying as it rose, till it turned, and then there were plainly revealed two long crooked rows of white, glistening teeth, floating up from the undiscoverable bottom. It was Moby Dick's open mouth and scrolled jaw; his vast, shadowed bulk still half blending with the blue of the sea. The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb; and giving one sidelong sweep with his steering oar, Ahab whirled the craft aside from this tremendous apparition. Then, calling upon Fedallah to change places with him, went forward to the bows, and seizing Perth's harpoon, commanded his crew to grasp their oars and stand by to stern.

Now, by reason of this timely spinning round the boat upon its axis, its bow, by anticipation, was made to face the whale's head while yet under water. But as if perceiving this stratagem, Moby Dick, with that malicious intelligence ascribed to him, sidelingly transplanted himself, as it were, in an instant, shooting his pleated head lengthwise beneath the boat.

Through and through; through every plank and each rib, it thrilled for an instant, the whale obliquely lying on his back, in the manner of a biting shark, slowly and feelingly taking its bows full within his mouth, so that the long, narrow, scrolled lower jaw curled high up into the open air, and one of the teeth caught in a rowlock. The bluish pearl-white of the inside of the jaw was within six inches of Ahab's head, and reached higher than that. In this attitude the White Whale now shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse. With unastonished eyes Fedallah gazed, and crossed his arms; but the tiger-yellow crew were tumbling over each other's heads to gain the uttermost stern.

And now, while both elastic gunwales were springing in and out, as the whale dallied with the doomed craft in this devilish way; and from his body being submerged beneath the boat, he could not be darted at from the bows, for the bows were almost inside of him, as it were; and while the other boats involuntarily paused, as before a quick crisis impossible to withstand, then it was that monomaniac Ahab, furious with this tantalizing vicinity of his foe, which placed him all alive and helpless in the very jaws he hated; frenzied with all this, he seized the long bone with his naked hands, and wildly strove to wrench it

from its gripe. As now he thus vainly strove, the jaw slipped from him; the frail gunwales bent in, collapsed, and snapped, as both jaws, like an enormous shears, sliding further aft, bit the craft completely in twain, and locked themselves fast again in the sea, midway between the two floating wrecks. These floated aside, the broken ends drooping, the crew at the stern-wreck clinging to the gunwales, and striving to hold fast to the oars to lash them across.

At that preluding moment, ere the boat was yet snapped, Ahab, the first to perceive the whale's intent, by the crafty upraising of his head, a movement that loosed his hold for the time; at that moment his hand had made one final effort to push the boat out of the bite. But only slipping further into the whale's mouth, and tilting over sideways as it slipped, the boat had shaken off his hold on the jaw; spilled him out of it, as he leaned to the push; and so he fell flat-faced upon the sea.

Ripplingly withdrawing from his prey, Moby Dick now lay at a little distance, vertically thrusting his oblong white head up and down in the billows; and at the same time slowly revolving his whole spindled body; so that when his vast wrinkled forehead rose—some twenty or more feet out of the water—the now rising swells, with all their confluent waves, dazzlingly broke against it; vindictively tossing their shivered spray still higher into the air. So, in a gale, the but half-baffled Channel billows only recoil from the base of the Eddystone, triumphantly to overleap its summit with their scud.

But soon resuming his horizontal attitude, Moby Dick swam swiftly round and round the wrecked crew; sideways churning the water in his vengeful wake, as if lashing himself up to still another and more deadly assault. The sight of the splintered boat seemed to madden him, as the blood of grapes and mulberries cast before Antiochus's elephants in the book of Maccabees.[1] Meanwhile Ahab half smothered in the foam of the whale's insolent tail and too much of a cripple to swim,—though he could still keep afloat, even in the heart of such a whirlpool as that; helpless Ahab's head was seen, like a tossed bubble which the least chance shock might burst. From the boat's fragmentary stern, Fedallah incuriously and mildly eyed him; the clinging crew, at the other drifting end, could not succor him; more than enough was it for them to look to themselves. For so revoltingly appalling was the White Whale's aspect, and so planetarily swift the ever-contracting circles he made, that he seemed horizontally swooping upon them. And though the other boats, unharmed, still hovered hard by, still they dared not pull into the eddy to strike, lest that should be the signal for the instant destruction of the jeopardized castaways, Ahab and all; nor in that case could they themselves hope to escape. With straining eyes, then, they remained on the outer edge of the direful zone, whose center had now become the old man's head.

Meantime, from the beginning all this had been descried from the ship's mastheads; and squaring her yards, she had borne down upon the scene; and was now so nigh, that Ahab in the water hailed her:—"Sail on the"—but that moment a breaking sea dashed on him from Moby Dick, and whelmed him for the time. But struggling out of it again, and chancing to rise on a towering crest, he shouted,—"Sail on the whale!—Drive him off!"

The *Pequod's* prows were pointed; and breaking up the charmed circle, she effectually parted the White Whale from his victim. As he sullenly swam off, the boats flew to the rescue.

Dragged into Stubb's boat with bloodshot, blinded eyes, the white brine caking in his wrinkles; the long tension of Ahab's bodily strength did crack, and helplessly he yielded to his body's doom for a time, lying all crushed in the bottom of Stubb's boat, like one trodden under foot of herds of elephants. Far inland, nameless wails came from him, as desolate sounds from out ravines.

But this intensity of his physical prostration did but so much the more abbreviate it. In an instant's compass, great hearts sometimes condense to one deep pang, the sum total of those shallow pains kindly diffused through feebler men's whole lives. And so, such hearts, though summary in each one

[1] See First Maccabees vi : 34.

suffering; still, if the gods decree it, in their lifetime aggregate a whole age of woe, wholly made up of instantaneous intensities; for even in their pointless centers, those noble natures contain the entire circumferences of inferior souls.

"The harpoon," said Ahab, halfway rising, and draggingly leaning on one bended arm —"is it safe?"

"Aye, sir, for it was not darted; this is it," said Stubb, showing it.

"Lay it before me;—any missing men?"

"One, two, three, four, five;—there were five oars, sir, and here are five men."

"That's good.—Help me, man; I wish to stand. So, so, I see him! there! there! going to leeward still; what a leaping spout!—Hands off from me! The eternal sap runs up in Ahab's bones again! Set the sail; out oars; the helm!"

It is often the case that when a boat is stove, its crew, being picked up by another boat, help to work that second boat; and the chase is thus continued with what is called double-banked oars. It was thus now. But the added power of the boat did not equal the added power of the whale, for he seemed to have treble-banked his every fin; swimming with a velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances, pushed on, the chase would prove an indefinitely prolonged, if not a hopeless one; nor could any crew endure for so long a period, such an uninterrmitted, intense straining at the oar; a thing barely tolerable only in some one brief vicissitude. The ship itself, then, as it sometimes happens, offered the most promising intermediate means of overtaking the chase. Accordingly, the boats now made for her, and were soon swayed up to their cranes—the two parts of the wrecked boat having been previously secured by her—and then hoisting everything to her side, and stacking her canvas high up, and sideways outstretching it with stunsails, like the double-jointed wings of an albatross; the *Pequod* bore down in the leeward wake of Moby Dick. At the well-known, methodic intervals, the whale's glittering spout was regularly announced from the manned mastheads; and when he would be reported as just gone down, Ahab would take the time, and then pacing the deck, binnacle-watch in hand, so soon as the last second of the allotted hour expired, his voice was heard.—"Whose is the doubloon now? D'ye see him?" and if the reply was, "No, sir!" straightway he commanded them to lift him to his perch. In this way the day wore on; Ahab, now aloft and motionless; anon, unrestingly pacing the planks.

As he was thus walking, uttering no sound, except to hail the men aloft, or to bid them hoist a sail still higher, or to spread one to a still greater breadth—thus to and fro pacing, beneath his slouched hat, at every turn he passed his own wrecked boat, which had been dropped upon the quarter-deck, and lay there reversed; broken bow to shattered stern. At last he paused before it; and as in an already over-clouded sky fresh troops of clouds will sometimes sail across, so over the old man's face there now stole some such added gloom as this.

Stubb saw him pause; and perhaps intending, not vainly, though, to evince his own unabated fortitude, and thus keep up a valiant place in his Captain's mind, he advanced, and eyeing the wreck exclaimed—"The thistle the ass refused; it pricked his mouth too keenly, sir; ha! ha!"

"What soulless thing is this that laughs before a wreck? Man, man! did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon. Groan nor laugh should be heard before a wreck."

"Aye, sir," said Starbuck, drawing near, " 'tis a solemn sight; an omen, and an ill one."

"Omen? omen?—the dictionary! If the gods think to speak outright to man, they will honorably speak outright; not shake their heads, and give an old wives' darkling hint.—Begone! Ye two are the opposite poles of one thing; Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind; and Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods nor men his neighbors! Cold, cold—I shiver!—How now? Aloft there! D'ye see him? Sing out for every spout, though he spout ten times a second!"

The day was nearly done; only the hem of his golden robe was rustling. Soon, it was almost dark, but the lookout men still remained unset.

"Can't see the spout now, sir;—too dark" —cried a voice from the air.

"How heading when last seen?"

"As before, sir,—straight to leeward."

"Good! he will travel slower now 'tis night. Down royals and topgallant stunsails, Mr. Starbuck. We must not run over him before morning; he's making a passage now, and may heave-to a while. Helm there! Keep her full before the wind!—Aloft! come down!— Mr. Stubb, send a fresh hand to the foremast head, and see it manned till morning."— Then advancing towards the doubloon in the mainmast—"Men, this gold is mine, for I earned it; but I shall let it abide here till the White Whale is dead; and then, whosoever of ye first raises him, upon the day he shall be killed, this gold is that man's; and if on that day I shall again raise him, then, ten times its sum shall be divided among all of ye! Away now!—the deck is thine, sir."

And so saying, he placed himself halfway within the scuttle, and slouching his hat, stood there till dawn, except when at intervals rousing himself to see how the night wore on.

### CHAPTER CXXXIV

## *The Chase—Second Day*

At daybreak, the three mastheads were punctually manned afresh.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab, after allowing a little space for the light to spread.

"See nothing, sir."

"Turn up all hands and make sail! he travels faster than I thought for;—the topgallant-sails!—aye, they should have been kept on her all night. But no matter—'tis but resting for the rush."

Here be it said, that this pertinacious pursuit of one particular whale, continued through day into night, and through night into day, is a thing by no means unprecedented in the South Sea fishery. For such is the wonderful skill, prescience of experience, and invincible confidence acquired by some great natural geniuses among the Nantucket commanders, that from the simple observation of a whale when last descried, they will, under certain given circumstances, pretty accurately foretell both the direction in which he will continue to swim for a time, while out of sight, as well as his probable rate of progression during that period. And in these cases, somewhat as a pilot, when about losing sight of a coast, whose general trending he well knows, and which he desires shortly to return to again, but at some further point; like as this pilot stands by his compass, and takes the precise bearing of the cape at present visible, in order the more certainly to hit aright the remote, unseen headland, eventually to be visited: so does the fisherman, at his compass, with the whale; for after being chased, and diligently marked, through several hours of delight, then, when night obscures the fish, the creature's future wake through the darkness is almost as established to the sagacious mind of the hunter, as the pilot's coast is to him. So that to this hunter's wondrous skill, the proverbial evanescence of a thing writ in water, a wake, is to all desired purposes well-nigh as reliable as the steadfast land. And as the mighty iron Leviathan of the modern railway is so familiarly known in its every pace, that, with watches in their hands, men time his rate as doctors that of a baby's pulse; and lightly say of it, "the up train or the down train will reach such or such a spot, at such or such an hour," even so, almost, there are occasions when these Nantucketers time that other Leviathan of the deep, according to the observed humor of his speed; and say to themselves, "so many hours hence this whale will have gone two hundred miles, will have about reached this or that degree of latitude or longitude." But to render this acuteness at all successful in the end, the wind and the sea must be the whaleman's allies; for of what present avail to the becalmed or windbound mariner is the skill that assures him he is exactly ninety-three leagues and a quarter from his port? Inferable from these statements are many collateral subtile matters touching the chase of whales.

The ship tore on; leaving such a furrow in the sea as when a cannon-ball, missent, becomes a ploughshare and turns up the level field.

"By salt and hemp!" cried Stubb, "but this swift motion of the deck creeps up one's legs and tingles at the heart. This ship and I

are two brave fellows!—Ha! ha! Some one take me up, and launch me, spine-wise, on the sea,—for by live-oaks! my spine's a keel. Ha, ha! we go the gait that leaves no dust behind!"

"There she blows—she blows!—she blows! —right ahead!" was now the masthead cry.

"Aye, aye!" cried Stubb; "I knew it—ye can't escape—blow on and split your spout, O whale! the mad fiend himself is after ye! blow your trump—blister your lungs!— Ahab will dam off your blood, as a miller shuts his water-gate upon the stream!"

And Stubb did but speak out for well-nigh all that crew. The frenzies of the chase had by this time worked them bubblingly up, like old wine worked anew. Whatever pale fears and forebodings some of them might have felt before; these were not only now kept out of sight through the growing awe of Ahab, but they were broken up, and on all sides routed, as timid prairie hares that scatter before the bounding bison. The hand of Fate had snatched all their souls; and by the stirring perils of the previous day; the rack of the past night's suspense; the fixed, unfearing, blind, reckless way in which their wild craft went plunging towards its flying mark; by all these things, their hearts were bowled along. The wind that made great bellies of their sails, and rushed the vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of that unseen agency which so enslaved them to the race.

They were one man, not thirty. For as the one ship that held them all; though it was put together of all contrasting things—oak, and maple, and pine wood; iron, and pitch, and hemp—yet all these ran into each other in the one concrete hull, which shot on its way, both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and guiltiness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to.

The rigging lived. The mastheads, like the tops of tall palms, were outspreadingly tufted with arms and legs. Clinging to a spar with one hand, some reached forth the other with impatient wavings; others, shading their eyes from the vivid sunlight, sat far out on the rocking yards; all the spars in full bearing of mortals, ready and ripe for their fate. Ah! how they still strove through that infinite blueness to seek out the thing that might destroy them!

"Why sing ye not out for him, if ye see him?" cried Ahab, when, after the lapse of some minutes since the first cry, no more had been heard. "Sway me up, men; ye have been deceived; not Moby Dick casts one odd jet that way, and then disappears."

It was even so; in their headlong eagerness, the men had mistaken some other thing for the whale-spout, as the event itself soon proved; for hardly had Ahab reached his perch; hardly was the rope belayed to its pin on deck, when he struck the keynote to an orchestra, that made the air vibrate as with the combined discharges of rifles. The triumphant halloo of thirty buckskin lungs was heard, as—much nearer to the ship than the place of the imaginary jet, less than a mile ahead—Moby Dick bodily burst into view! For not by any calm and indolent spoutings; not by the peaceable gush of that mystic fountain in his head, did the White Whale now reveal his vicinity; but by the far more wondrous phenomenon of breaching. Rising with his utmost velocity from the furthest depths, the Sperm Whale thus booms his entire bulk into the pure element of air, and piling up a mountain of dazzling foam, shows his place to the distance of seven miles and more. In those moments, the torn, enraged waves he shakes off seem his mane; in some cases this breaching is his act of defiance.

"There she breaches! there she breaches!" was the cry, as in his immeasurable brava- does the White Whale tossed himself salmon-like to Heaven. So suddenly seen in the blue plain of the sea, and relieved against the still bluer margin of the sky, the spray that he raised, for the moment, intolerably glittered and glared like a glacier; and stood there gradually fading and fading away from its first sparkling intensity, to the dim mistiness of an advancing shower in a vale.

"Aye, breach your last to the sun, Moby Dick!" cried Ahab, "thy hour and thy harpoon are at hand!—Down! down all of ye,

but one man at the fore. The boats!—stand by!"

Unmindful of the tedious rope-ladders of the shrouds, the men, like shooting stars, slid to the deck, by the isolated backstays and halyards, while Ahab, less dartingly, but still rapidly, was dropped from his perch.

"Lower away," he cried, so soon as he had reached his boat—a spare one, rigged the afternoon previous. "Mr. Starbuck, the ship is thine—keep away from the boats, but keep near them. Lower, all!"

As if to strike a quick terror into them, by this time being the first assailant himself, Moby Dick had turned, and was now coming for the three crews. Ahab's boat was central; and cheering his men, he told them he would take the whale head-and-head,—that is, pull straight up to his forehead,—a not uncommon thing; for when within a certain limit, such a course excludes the coming onset from the whale's sidelong vision. But ere that close limit was gained, and while yet all three boats were plain as the ship's three masts to his eye; the White Whale churning himself into furious speed, almost in an instant as it were, rushing among the boats with open jaws, and a lashing tail, offered appalling battle on every side; and heedless of the irons darted at him from every boat, seemed only intent on annihilating each separate plank of which those boats were made. But skillfully maneuvered, incessantly wheeling like trained chargers in the field; the boats for a while eluded him; though, at times, but by a plank's breadth; while all the time, Ahab's unearthly slogan tore every other cry but his to shreds.

But at last in his untraceable evolutions, the White Whale so crossed and recrossed, and in a thousand ways entangled the slack of the three lines now fast to him, that they foreshortened, and, of themselves, warped the devoted boats towards the planted irons in him; though now for a moment the whale drew aside a little, as if to rally for a more tremendous charge. Seizing that opportunity, Ahab first paid out more line; and then was rapidly hauling and jerking in upon it again—hoping that way to disencumber it of some snarls—when lo!—a sight more savage than the embattled teeth of sharks!

Caught and twisted—corkscrewed in the mazes of the line—loose harpoons and lances, with all their bristling barbs and points, came flashing and dripping up to the chocks in the bows of Ahab's boat. Only one thing could be done. Seizing the boat-knife, he critically reached within—through—and then, without—the rays of steel; dragged in the line beyond, passed it, inboard, to the bowsman, and then, twice sundering the rope near the chocks—dropped the intercepted fagot of steel into the sea; and was all fast again. That instant, the White Whale made a sudden rush among the remaining tangles of the other lines; by so doing, irresistibly dragged the more involved boats of Stubb and Flask towards his flukes; dashed them together like two rolling husks on a surf-beaten beach, and then, diving down into the sea, disappeared in a boiling maelstrom, in which, for a space, the odorous cedar chips of the wrecks danced round and round, like the grated nutmeg in a swiftly stirred bowl of punch.

While the two crews were yet circling in the waters, reaching out after the revolving line-tubs, oars, and other floating furniture, while aslope little Flask bobbed up and down like an empty vial, twitching his legs upwards to escape the dreaded jaws of sharks; and Stubb was lustily singing out for some one to ladle him up; and while the old man's line—now parting—admitted of his pulling into the creamy pool to rescue whom he could;—in that wild simultaneousness of a thousand concerted perils,—Ahab's yet unstricken boat seemed drawn up towards Heaven by invisible wires,—as, arrow-like, shooting perpendicularly from the sea, the White Whale dashed his broad forehead against its bottom, and sent it, turning over and over, into the air; till it fell again—gunwale downwards—and Ahab and his men struggled out from under it, like seals from a seaside cave.

The first uprising momentum of the whale—modifying its direction as he struck the surface—involuntarily launched him along it, to a little distance from the center of the destruction he had made; and with his back to it, he now lay for a moment slowly feeling with his flukes from side to side; and whenever a stray oar, bit of plank, the least chip or crumb of

the boats touched his skin, his tail swiftly drew back, and came sideways, smiting the sea. But soon, as if satisfied that his work for that time was done, he pushed his pleated forehead through the ocean, and trailing after him the intertangled lines, continued his leeward way at a traveler's methodic pace.

As before, the attentive ship having descried the whole fight, again came bearing down to the rescue, and dropping a boat, picked up the floating mariners, tubs, oars, and whatever else could be caught at, and safely landed them on her decks. Some sprained shoulders, wrists, and ankles; livid contusions; wrenched harpoons and lances; inextricable intricacies of rope; shattered oars and planks; all these were there; but no fatal or even serious ill seemed to have befallen any one. As with Fedallah the day before, so Ahab was now found grimly clinging to his boat's broken half, which afforded a comparatively easy float; nor did it so exhaust him as the previous day's mishap.

But when he was helped to the deck, all eyes were fastened upon him; as instead of standing by himself he still half-hung upon the shoulder of Starbuck, who had thus far been the foremost to assist him. His ivory leg had been snapped off, leaving but one short sharp splinter.

"Aye, aye, Starbuck, 'tis sweet to lean sometimes, be the leaner who he will; and would old Ahab had leaned oftener than he has."

"The ferrule has not stood, sir," said the carpenter, now coming up; "I put good work into that leg."

"But no bones broken, sir, I hope," said Stubb with true concern.

"Aye! and all splintered to pieces, Stubb!—d'ye see it.—But even with a broken bone, old Ahab is untouched; and I account no living bone of mine one jot more me, than this dead one that's lost; Nor White Whale, nor man, nor fiend, can so much as graze old Ahab in his own proper and inaccessible being. Can any lead touch yonder floor, any mast scrape yonder roof?—Aloft there! which way?"

"Dead to leeward, sir."

"Up helm, then; pile on the sail again, shipkeepers! down the rest of the spare boats and rig them—Mr. Starbuck, away, and muster the boats' crews."

"Let me first help thee towards the bulwarks, sir."

"Oh, oh, oh! how this splinter gores me now! Accursed fate! that the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate!"

"Sir?"

"My body, man, not thee. Give me something for a cane—there, that shivered lance will do. Muster the men. Surely I have not seen him yet. By heaven, it cannot be!—missing?—quick! call them all."

The old man's hinted thought was true. Upon mustering the company, the Parsee[1] was not there.

"The Parsee!" cried Stubb—"he must have been caught in——"

"The black vomit wrench thee!—run all of ye above, alow, cabin, forecastle—find him—not gone—not gone!"

But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found.

"Aye, sir," said Stubb—"caught among the tangles of your line—I thought I saw him dragging under."

"*My* line? *my* line? Gone?—gone?—What means that little word?—What deathknell rings in it, that old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry. The harpoon, too!—toss over the litter there,—d'ye see it?—the forged iron, men, the White Whale's—no, no, no,—blistered fool! this hand did dart it!—'tis in the fish!—Aloft there! Keep him nailed—Quick!—all hands to the rigging of the boats—collect the oars—harpooners! the irons, the irons!—hoist the royals higher—a pull on all the sheets!—helm there! steady, steady

[1] "The mysterious Fedallah whom Ahab had stowed away to be a member of his own boat-crew. He exercised a strange power over his master. A secret, potent spell seemed to join them. 'At times, for longest hours, without a single hail, they stood far parted in the starlight; Ahab in his scuttle, the Parsee by the mainmast; but still fixedly gazing upon each other; as if in the Parsee Ahab saw his forethrown shadow, in Ahab the Parsee his abandoned substance' (Chapter CXXX)." [*Note quoted from Thorp's Melville.*]

A parsee is a member of the fire-worshippers of India, descendants of the old Persian Zoroastrians.

for your life! I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe; yea and dive straight through it, but I'll slay him yet!"

"Great God! but for one single instant show thyself," cried Starbuck; "never, never wilt thou capture him, old man.—In Jesus' name no more of this, that's worse than devil's madness. Two days chased; twice stove to splinters; thy very leg once more snatched from under thee; thy evil shadow gone—all good angels mobbing thee with warnings:—what more wouldst thou have?—Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man? Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea? Shall we be towed by him to the infernal world? Oh, oh!—Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!"

"Starbuck, of late I've felt strangely moved to thee; ever since that hour we both saw—thou know'st what, in one another's eyes. But in this matter of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this hand—a lipless, unfeatured blank. Ahab is for ever Ahab, man. This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders. Look thou, underling! that thou obeyest mine.—Stand round me, men. Ye see an old man cut down to the stump; leaning on a shivered lance; propped up on a lonely foot. 'Tis Ahab—his body's part; but Ahab's soul's a centipede, that moves upon a hundred legs. I feel strained, half stranded, as ropes that tow dismasted frigates in a gale; and I may look so. But ere I break, ye'll hear me crack; and till ye hear *that*, know that Ahab's hawser tows his purpose yet. Believe ye, men, in the things called omens? Then laugh aloud, and cry encore! For ere they drown, drowning things will twice rise to the surface; then rise again, to sink for evermore. So with Moby Dick—two days he's floated—to-morrow will be the third. Aye, men, he'll rise once more—but only to spout his last! D'ye feel brave men, brave?"

"As fearless fire," cried Stubb.

"And as mechanical," muttered Ahab. Then as the men went forward, he muttered on:—"The things called omens! And yesterday I talked the same to Starbuck there, concerning my broken boat. Oh! how valiantly I seek to drive out of others' hearts what's clinched so fast in mine!—The Parsee—the Parsee!—gone, gone? and he was to go before:—but still was to be seen again ere I could perish—How's that?—There's a riddle now might baffle all the lawyers backed by the ghosts of the whole line of judges:—like a hawk's beak it pecks my brain. *I'll, I'll* solve it, though!"

When dusk descended, the whale was still in sight to leeward.

So once more the sail was shortened, and everything passed nearly as on the previous night; only, the sound of hammers, and the hum of the grindstone was heard till nearly daylight, as the men toiled by lanterns in the complete and careful rigging of the spare boats and sharpening their fresh weapons for the morrow. Meantime, of the broken keel of Ahab's wrecked craft the carpenter made him another leg; while still as on the night before, slouched Ahab stood fixed within his scuttle; his hid heliotrope glance anticipatingly gone backward on its dial; set due eastward for the earliest sun.

### CHAPTER CXXXV

## *The Chase—Third Day*

The morning of the third day dawned fair and fresh, and once more the solitary night-man at the fore-masthead was relieved by crowds of the daylight lookouts, who dotted every mast and almost every spar.

"D'ye see him?" cried Ahab; but the whale was not yet in sight.

"In his infallible wake, though; but follow that wake, that's all. Helm there; steady, as thou goest, and hast been going. What a lovely day again! were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a fairer day could not dawn upon that world. Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels, *that's* tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor

brains beat too much for that. And yet, I've sometimes thought my brain was very calm—frozen calm, this old skull cracks so, like a glass in which the contents turn to ice, and shiver it. And still this hair is growing now; this moment growing, and heat must breed it; but no, it's like that sort of common grass that will grow anywhere, between the earthly clefts of Greenland ice or in Vesuvius lava. How the wild winds blow it; they whip it about me as the torn shreds of split sails lash the tossed ship they cling to. A vile wind that has no doubt blown ere this through prison corridors and cells, and wards of hospitals, and ventilated them, and now comes blowing hither as innocent as fleeces. Out upon it!—it's tainted. Were I the wind, I'd blow no more on such a wicked, miserable world. I'd crawl somewhere to a cave, and slink there. And yet, 'tis a noble and heroic thing, the wind! who ever conquered it? In every fight it has the last and bitterest blow. Run tilting at it, and you but run through it. Ha! a coward wind that strikes stark naked men, but will not stand to receive a single blow. Even Ahab is a braver thing—a nobler thing than *that*. Would now the wind but had a body; but all the things that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents. There's a most special, a most cunning, oh, a most malicious difference! And yet, I say again, and swear it now, that there's something all glorious and gracious in the wind. These warm Trade Winds, at least, that in the clear heavens blow straight on, in strong and steadfast, vigorous mildness; and veer not from their mark, however the baser currents of the sea may turn and tack, and mightiest Mississippis of the land shift and swerve about, uncertain where to go at last. And by the eternal Poles! these same Trades that so directly blow my good ship on; these Trades, or something like them—something so unchangeable, and full as strong, blow my keeled soul along! To it! Aloft there! What d'ye see?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! and noon at hand! The doubloon goes a-begging! See the sun! Aye, aye, it must be so. I've oversailed him. How, got the start? Aye, he's chasing *me* now; not I, *him*—that's bad; I might have known it, too. Fool! the lines—the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular lookouts! Man the braces!"

Steering as she had done, the wind had been somewhat on the *Pequod's* quarter, so that now being pointed in the reverse direction, the braced ship sailed hard upon the breeze as she rechurned the cream in her now white wake.

"Against the wind he now steers for the open jaw," murmured Starbuck to himself, as he coiled the new-hauled main-brace upon the rail. "God keep us, but already my bones feel damp within me, and from the inside wet my flesh. I misdoubt me that I disobey my God in obeying him!"

"Stand by to sway me up!" cried Ahab, advancing to the hempen basket. "We should meet him soon."

"Aye, aye, sir," and straightway Starbuck did Ahab's bidding, and once more Ahab swung on high.

A whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held long breaths with keen suspense. But at last, some three points off the weather-bow, Ahab descried the spout again, and instantly from the three mastheads three shrieks went up as if the tongues of fire had voiced it.

"Forehead to forehead I meet thee, this third time, Moby Dick! On deck there!—brace sharper up; crowd her into the wind's eye. He's too far off to lower yet, Mr. Starbuck. The sails shake! Stand over that helmsman with a topmaul! So, so; he travels fast, and I must down. But let me have one more good round look aloft here at the sea; there's time for that. An old, old sight, and yet somehow so young; aye, and not changed a wink since I first saw it, a boy, from the sandhills of Nantucket! The same!—the same!—the same to Noah as to me. There's a soft shower to leeward. Such lovely leewardings! They must lead somewhere—to something else than common land, more palmy than the palms. Leeward! the white whale goes that way; look to windward, then; the better if the bitterer quarter. But good-bye, good-bye, old mast-

head! What's this?—green? ay, tiny mosses in these warped cracks. No such green weather stains on Ahab's head! There's the difference now between man's old age and matter's. But aye, old mast, we both grow old together; sound in our hulls, though, are we not, my ship? Aye, minus a leg, that's all. By heaven! this dead wood has the better of my live flesh every way. I can't compare with it; and I've known some ships made of dead trees outlast the lives of men made of the most vital stuff of vital fathers. What's that he said? he should still go before me, my pilot; and yet to be seen again? But where? Shall I have eyes at the bottom of the sea, supposing I descend those endless stairs? and all night I've been sailing from him, wherever he did sink to. Aye, aye, like many more thou told'st direful truth as touching thyself, O Parsee; but, Ahab, there thy shot fell short. Good-bye, masthead—keep a good eye upon the whale, the while I'm gone. We'll talk tomorrow, nay, tonight, when the White Whale lies down there, tied by head and tail."

He gave the word; and still gazing round him, was steadily lowered through the cloven blue air to the deck.

In due time the boats were lowered; but as standing in his shallop's stern, Ahab just hovered upon the point of the descent, he waved to the mate,—who held one of the tackle-ropes on deck—and bade him pause.

"Starbuck!"

"Sir?"

"For the third time my soul's ship starts upon this voyage, Starbuck."

"Aye, sir, thou wilt have it so."

"Some ships sail from their ports, and ever afterwards are missing, Starbuck!"

"Truth, sir: saddest truth."

"Some men die at ebb tide; some at low water; some at the full of the flood;—and I feel now like a billow that's all one crested comb, Starbuck. I am old;—shake hands with me, man."

Their hands met; their eyes fastened; Starbuck's tears the glue.

"Oh, my captain, my captain!—noble heart—go not—go not!—see, it's a brave man that weeps; how great the agony of the persuasion then!"

"Lower away!"—cried Ahab, tossing the mate's arm from him. "Stand by the crew!"

In an instant the boat was pulling round close under the stern.

"The sharks! the sharks!" cried a voice from the low cabin-window there; "O master, my master, come back!"

But Ahab heard nothing; for his own voice was high-lifted then; and the boat leaped on.

Yet the voice spake true; for scarce had he pushed from the ship, when numbers of sharks, seemingly rising from out the dark waters beneath the hull, maliciously snapped at the blades of the oars, every time they dipped in the water; and in this way accompanied the boat with their bites. It is a thing not uncommonly happening to the whale-boats in those swarming seas; the sharks at times apparently following them in the same prescient way that vultures hover over the banners of marching regiments in the east. But these were the first sharks that had been observed by the *Pequod* since the White Whale had been first descried; and whether it was that Ahab's crew were all such tiger-yellow barbarians, and therefore their flesh more musky to the senses of the sharks—a matter sometimes well known to affect them, —however it was, they seemed to follow that one boat without molesting the others.

"Heart of wrought steel!" murmured Starbuck, gazing over the side, and following with his eyes the receding boat—"canst thou yet ring boldly to that sight?—lowering thy keel among ravening sharks, and followed by them, open-mouthed, to the chase; and this the critical third day?—For when three days flow together in one continuous intense pursuit; be sure the first is the morning, the second the noon, and the third the evening and the end of that thing—be that end what it may. Oh! my God! what is this that shoots through me, and leaves me so deadly calm, yet expectant,—fixed at the top of a shudder! Future things swim before me, as in empty outlines and skeletons; all the past is somehow grown dim. Mary, girl! thou fadest in pale glories behind me; boy! I seem to see but thy eyes grown wondrous blue. Strangest problems of life seem clearing; but clouds sweep between—Is my journey's end coming?

My legs feel faint; like his who has footed it all day. Feel thy heart,—beats it yet?—Stir thyself, Starbuck!—stave it off—move, move, speak aloud!—Masthead there! See ye my boy's hand on the hill?—Crazed;—aloft there!—keep thy keenest eye upon the boats: —mark well the whale!—Ho! again!—drive off that hawk! see! he pecks—he tears the vane"—pointing to the red flag flying at the main-truck—"Ha! he soars away with it!— Where's the old man now? sees't thou that sight, oh Ahab!—shudder, shudder!"

The boats had not gone very far, when by a signal from the mastheads—a downward pointed arm, Ahab knew that the whale had sounded; but intending to be near him at the next rising, he held on his way a little sideways from the vessel; the becharmed crew maintaining the profoundest silence, as the headbeat waves hammered and hammered against the opposing bow.

"Drive, drive in your nails, oh ye waves! to their uttermost heads drive them in! ye but strike a thing without a lid; and no coffin and no hearse can be mine;—and hemp only can kill me! Ha! ha!"

Suddenly the waters around them slowly swelled in broad circles; then quickly upheaved, as if sideways sliding from a submerged berg of ice, swiftly rising to the surface. A low rumbling sound was heard; a subterraneous hum; and then all held their breaths; as bedraggled with trailing ropes, and harpoons, and lances, a vast form shot lengthwise, but obliquely from the sea. Shrouded in a thin drooping veil of mist, it hovered for a moment in the rainbowed air; and then fell swamping back into the deep. Crushed thirty feet upwards, the waters flashed for an instant like heaps of fountains, then brokenly sank in a shower of flakes, leaving the circling surface creamed like new milk round the marble trunk of the whale.

"Give way!" cried Ahab to the oarsmen, and the boats darted forward to the attack; but maddened by yesterday's fresh irons that corroded in him, Moby Dick seemed combinedly possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven. The wide tiers of welded tendons overspreading his broad white forehead, beneath the transparent skin, looked knitted together; as head on, he came churning his tail among the boats; and once more flailed them apart; spilling out the irons and lances from the two mates' boats, and dashing in one side of the upper part of their bows, but leaving Ahab's almost without a scar.

While Daggoo and Queequeg were stopping the strained planks; and as the whale swimming out from them, turned, and showed one entire flank as he shot by them again; at that moment a quick cry went up. Lashed round and round to the fish's back; pinioned in the turns upon turns in which, during the past night, the whale had reeled the involutions of the lines around him, the half torn body of the Parsee was seen; his sable raiment frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon old Ahab.

The harpoon dropped from his hand.

"Befooled, befooled!"—drawing in a long lean breath—"Aye, Parsee! I see thee again.— Aye, and thou goest before; and this, *this* then is the hearse that thou didst promise. But I hold thee to the last letter of thy word. Where is the second hearse? Away, mates, to the ship! those boats are useless now; repair them if ye can in time, and return to me; if not, Ahab is enough to die—Down, men! the first thing that but offers to jump from this boat I stand in, that thing I harpoon. Ye are not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me.— Where's the whale? gone down again?"

But he looked too nigh the boat; for as if bent upon escaping with the corpse he bore, and as if the particular place of the last encounter had been but a stage in his leeward voyage, Moby Dick was now again steadily swimming forward; and had almost passed the ship,—which thus far had been sailing in the contrary direction to him, though for the present her headway had been stopped. He seemed swimming with his utmost velocity, and now only intent upon pursuing his own straight path in the sea.

"Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!"

Setting sail to the rising wind, the lonely boat was swiftly impelled to leeward, by both oars and canvas. And at last when Ahab was

sliding by the vessel, so near as plainly to distinguish Starbuck's face as he leaned over the rail, he hailed him to turn the vessel about, and follow him, not too swiftly, at a judicious interval. Glancing upwards, he saw Tashtego, Queequeg, and Daggoo, eagerly mounting to the three mastheads; while the oarsmen were rocking in the two staved boats which had just been hoisted to the side, and were busily at work in repairing them. One after the other, through the port-holes, as he sped, he also caught flying glimpses of Stubb and Flask, busying themselves on deck among bundles of new irons and lances. As he saw all this; as he heard the hammers in the broken boats; far other hammers seemed driving a nail into his heart. But he rallied. And now marking that the vane or flag was gone from the main masthead, he shouted to Tashtego, who had just gained that perch, to descend again for another flag, and a hammer and nails, and so nail it to the mast.

Whether fagged by the three days' running chase, and the resistance to his swimming in the knotted hamper he bore; or whether it was some latent deceitfulness and malice in him: whichever was true, the White Whale's way now began to abate, as it seemed, from the boat so rapidly nearing him once more; though indeed the whale's last start had not been so long a one as before. And still as Ahab glided over the waves the unpitying sharks accompanied him; and so pertinaciously stuck to the boat; and so continually bit at the plying oars, that the blades became jagged and crunched, and left small splinters in the sea, at almost every dip.

"Heed them not! those teeth but give new rowlocks to your oars. Pull on! 'tis the better rest, the shark's jaw than the yielding water."

"But at every bite, sir, the thin blades grow smaller and smaller!"

"They will last long enough! pull on!—But who can tell"—he muttered—"whether these sharks swim to feast on the whale or on Ahab?—But pull on! Aye, all alive, now—we near him. The helm! take the helm; let me pass,"—and so saying, two of the oarsmen helped him forward to the bows of the still flying boat.

At length as the craft was cast to one side, and ran ranging along with the White Whale's flank, he seemed strangely oblivious of its advance—as the whale sometimes will—and Ahab was fairly within the smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled round his great Monadnock hump. He was even thus close to him; when, with body arched back, and both arms lengthwise high-lifted to the poise, he darted his fierce iron, and his far fiercer curse into the hated whale. As both steel and curse sank to the socket, as if sucked into a morass, Moby Dick sideways writhed; spasmodically rolled his nigh flank against the bow, and, without staving a hole in it, so suddenly canted the boat over, that had it not been for the elevated part of the gunwale to which he then clung, Ahab would once more have been tossed into the sea. As it was, three of the oarsmen—who foreknew not the precise instant of the dart, and were therefore unprepared for its effects—these were flung out; but so fell, that, in an instant two of them clutched the gunwale again, and rising to its level on a combing wave, hurled themselves bodily inboard again; the third man helplessly dropping astern, but still afloat and swimming.

Almost simultaneously, with a mighty volition of ungraduated, instantaneous swiftness, the White Whale darted through the weltering sea. But when Ahab cried out to the steersman to take new turns with the line, and hold it so; and commanded the crew to turn round on their seats, and tow the boat up to the mark; the moment the treacherous line felt that double strain and tug, it snapped in the empty air!

"What breaks in me? Some sinew cracks!—'tis whole again; oars! oars! Burst in upon him!"

Hearing the tremendous rush of the sea-crashing boat, the whale wheeled round to present his blank forehead at bay; but in that evolution, catching sight of the nearing black hull of the ship; seemingly seeing in it the source of all his persecutions; bethinking it—it may be—a larger and nobler foe; of a sudden, he bore down upon its advancing prow, smiting his jaws amid fiery showers of foam.

Ahab staggered; his hand smote his forehead. "I grow blind; hands! stretch out before me that I may yet grope my way. Is't night?"

"The whale! The ship!" cried the cringing oarsmen.

"Oars! oars! Slope downwards to thy depths, O sea, that ere it be for ever too late, Ahab may slide this last, last time upon his mark! I see: the ship! the ship! Dash on, my men! Will ye not save my ship?"

But as the oarsmen violently forced their boat through the sledge-hammering seas, the before whale-smitten bow-ends of two planks burst through, and in an instant almost, the temporarily disabled boat lay nearly level with the waves; its half-wading, splashing crew, trying hard to stop the gap and bale out the pouring water.

Meantime, for that one beholding instant, Tashtego's masthead hammer remained suspended in his hand; and the red flag, half-wrapping him as with a plaid, then streamed itself straight out from him, as his own forward-flowing heart; while Starbuck and Stubb, standing upon the bowsprit beneath, caught sight of the down-coming monster just as soon as he.

"The whale, the whale! Up helm, up helm! Oh, all ye sweet powers of air, now hug me close! Let not Starbuck die, if die he must, in a woman's fainting fit. Up helm, I say—ye fools, the jaw! the jaw! Is this the end of all my bursting prayers? All my life-long fidelities? Oh, Ahab, Ahab, lo, they work. Steady! helmsman, steady. Nay, nay! Up helm again! He turns to meet us! Oh, his unappeasable brow drives on towards one, whose duty tells him he cannot depart. My God, stand by me now!

"Stand not by me, but stand under me, whoever you are that will now help Stubb; for Stubb, too, sticks here. I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Whoever helped Stubb, or kept Stubb awake, but Stubb's own unwinking eye? And now poor Stubb goes to bed upon a mattress that is all too soft; would it were stuffed with brushwood! I grin at thee, thou grinning whale! Look ye, sun, moon, and stars! I call ye assassins of as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost. For all that, I would yet ring glasses with ye, would ye but hand the cup! Oh, oh, oh, oh! thou grinning whale, but there'll be plenty of gulping soon! Why fly ye not, O Ahab? For me, off shoes and jacket to it; let Stubb die in his drawers! A most mouldy and over-salted death, though;—cherries! cherries! cherries! Oh, Flask, for one red cherry ere we die!"

"Cherries? I only wish that we were where they grow. Oh, Stubb, I hope my poor mother's drawn my part-pay ere this; if not, a few coppers will come to her now, for the voyage is up."

From the ship's bows, nearly all the seamen now hung inactive; hammers, bits of plank, lances, and harpoons, mechanically retained in their hands, just as they had darted from their various employments; all their enchanted eyes intent upon the whale, which from side to side strangely vibrating his predestinating head, sent a broad band of overspreading semicircular foam before him as he rushed. Retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect, and spite of all that mortal man could do, the solid white buttress of his forehead smote the ship's starboard bow, till men and timbers reeled. Some fell flat upon their faces. Like dislodged trucks, the heads of the harpooneers aloft shook on their bull-like necks. Through the breach, they heard the waters pour, as mountain torrents down a flume.

"The ship! The hearse!—the second hearse!" cried Ahab from the boat; "its wood could only be American!"

Diving beneath the settling ship, the whale ran quivering along its keel; but turning under water, swiftly shot to the surface again, far off the other bow, but within a few yards of Ahab's boat, where, for a time, he lay quiescent.

"I turn my body from the sun. What ho, Tashtego! let me hear thy hammer. Oh! ye three unsurrendered spires of mine; thou uncracked keel; the only god-bullied hull; thou firm deck, and haughty helm, and Pole-pointed prow,—death-glorious ship! must ye then perish, and without me? Am I cut off from the last fond pride of meanest shipwrecked captains? Oh, lonely death on lonely life! Oh, now I feel my topmost greatness lies in my topmost grief. Ho, ho! from all your

furthest bounds, pour ye now in, ye bold billows of my whole foregone life, and top this one piled comber[1] of my death! Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. Sink all coffins and all hearses to one common pool! and since neither can be mine let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! *Thus*, I give up the spear!"

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the groove; ran foul. Ahab stooped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck and, voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the heavy eyesplice in the rope's final end flew out of the stark-empty tub, knocked down an oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths.

For an instant, the tranced boat's crew stood still; then turned. "The ship? Great God, where is the ship?" Soon they through dim, bewildering mediums saw her sidelong fading phantom, as in the gaseous Fata Morgana,[2] only the uppermost masts out of water; while fixed by infatuation, or fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty perches, the pagan harpooners still maintained their sinking lookouts on the sea. And now, concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the *Pequod* out of sight.

But as the last whelmings intermixingly poured themselves over the sunken head of the Indian at the mainmast, leaving a few inches of the erect spar yet visible, together with long streaming yards of the flag, which calmly undulated, with ironical coincidings, over the destroying billows they almost touched;—at that instant, a red arm and a hammer hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that ethereal thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-gasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.

Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago. 1851

[1] long curling wave [2] mirage, so-called because once thought the work of the fairy Morgan le Fay, sister of King Arthur in medieval romance

# 1807 ~ *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* ~ 1882

LONGFELLOW was influential in widening the American outlook and taste. He has been termed an inaugurator of the so-called "New England Renaissance of arts and letters." He did much to domesticate foreign literature and the cosmopolitan spirit, following Irving in popularizing antique legend and in interpreting to the New World the mellow twilight of the European past. He also deserves credit for

popularizing American themes in poetry, from his boyish verses on "The Battle of Lovell's Pond" to *The New England Tragedies* of his later life. Beyond question, he was the best loved American man of letters of his day, partly because he was the interpreter of the life and emotions of the average man. No other poet has contributed so many favorite pieces to our literature, and no other has been translated into so many foreign languages. His range and variety as a narrative poet, his moral idealism and sentiment, and his gentle didacticism may not appeal to critics today, but they appealed to the generation of readers he addressed, the generation emerging from Calvinism. Longfellow is often called the "most national of our poets," not because he is the best interpreter of our national life, for he is not, but because he was and remains our leading household poet and because of the world-wide acceptance of his verse. His life was a fortunate one, for he enjoyed every advantage of culture, leisure, travel, social intercourse, and contemporary recognition.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, February 27, 1807. His mother came from an army and navy family and on her side he was of Mayflower stock, descending from John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. His father was a leading citizen, a Harvard graduate, a judge, a man of affairs, a member of Congress. The youth grew up in a home atmosphere of refinement. His father's library contained many books. He knew Dante early and Cowper and Ossian. The appearance of Irving's *Sketch Book* and Bryant's "Thanatopsis" influenced him to write *Outre-Mer* and verses. His first poem was published when he was thirteen in the Portland *Gazette*. He was educated in private schools, especially at Portland Academy, and he had parental encouragement to attend college. At fifteen he entered Bowdoin, of which his father was a trustee, attending it from 1822 till he was graduated in 1825. Hawthorne was a classmate. While at Bowdoin he became confirmed in his wish to become a man of letters. He is described as a modest boy, well-balanced and amiable, without self-righteousness, and with excellent manners. Along with these virtues he made an exceptional record as a scholar, especially in language and literature.

His father wished him to study law and he did so half-heartedly for a year. Then at twenty he was offered and accepted a newly founded chair of modern languages at his Alma Mater, on the condition that he visit Europe. The college paid him $600 a year to do so, and he was gone three years, 1826–29, for study in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, winning a reading knowledge of their languages. He was also in England. Returning to Bowdoin he occupied the chair of Professor of Modern Languages and Librarian. In September, 1831, he married Miss Mary Potter. In the six years that he remained at Bowdoin his interest turned to prose rather than verse. He published textbooks and magazine articles on European lands and literatures. In the fourth year of his professorship, 1833, he issued his first volume, *Outre-Mer*, a book of sketches and travel first written for the *New England Magazine*. This book

was not of a new type, and it was not on native themes. His early residence abroad, his professorial duties, and his later trips, though excellent for his teaching, made his mind run along traditional lines. Throughout his life his work was to rely on literary inspiration and to have a bookish flavor.

A year later, when he was twenty-seven, Longfellow was called to succeed George Ticknor as Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard. He spent another year and a half in Europe, 1835–36, visiting England, Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, France. After the death of his wife at Rotterdam, in 1835, he proceeded to Heidelberg and stayed there seven or eight months, absorbed in the European past and yielding to German romanticism, with its love of sadness, night, and susceptibility to sentiment and dreams. On his return to America he took up his residence in Cambridge, in the days when it was the chief center of culture for the country. He lived at Craigie House, once Washington's headquarters, which was to be his home for the rest of his life. He remained in the Harvard faculty teaching foreign languages for the eighteen years, 1836–54. In his thirty-second year, 1839, Longfellow published *Hyperion*, a prose romance of travel. He next gave increasing attention to poetry, issuing in the same year his first volume of verse, *Voices of the Night*. It appealed to the mood of his time and made its way at once to popularity. Two years later he published *Ballads and Other Poems* containing many of his successful pieces.

At thirty-five, in 1842, Longfellow went again to Europe, visiting during his leave of absence Belgium, the Rhine, and England. He wrote his *Poems of Slavery* on the return voyage, poems that seemed rather bookish and perfunctory when compared with Whittier's. Shortly afterwards he married Miss Frances Appleton and her father bought Craigie House for them. His salary as a professor, the profits from his work, and her property made them well-to-do. His first play, *The Spanish Student*, not intended for the stage, was published in 1843, the year of his marriage. During 1845–47 he edited several collections of verse, and in 1845 published his *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems*, a volume including many of his best-liked poems. When the poet was forty-seven he composed, from a tale told to Hawthorne, *Evangeline*, which became at once popular for its story, its background of American natural scenery, and its meter, adapted from the classic hexameter. Henceforth he was recognized as a national figure. He published *Kavanagh, a Tale*, a dreamy, not very successful prose work, in 1849, and soon after *The Seaside and the Fireside*, a collection of poems which included "The Building of the Ship." In 1854, at the age of forty-seven, Longfellow resigned his professorship, believing that teaching hampered his poetic inspiration. James Russell Lowell was appointed to succeed him. The rest of his life is mainly a record of successive books and continuing popularity.

After he resigned from Harvard he published *Hiawatha* (1855), expressed in the

rhythm of an old Finnish epic; *Drift Wood*, a volume of essays, in 1857; and the next year his third long poem upon an American theme, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, narrating the wooing of his Puritan ancestors. In 1859 Harvard gave him an LL.D. In 1861 his second wife died accidentally from being burned. For consolation he turned to translation, completing his version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which was published 1865–67. During and after these years he issued along with other poems the three parts of the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, including some of his best-known poems such as "Paul Revere's Ride." The larger part of his sixty-first and sixty-second years, 1868–69, the poet spent with his daughter traveling in Italy, France, and England, everywhere receiving an admiring welcome. Cambridge and Oxford gave him honorary degrees. After his return he finished *Christus, a Mystery* (1872), his largest and most ambitious work, made up of *The Golden Legend* of 1851, to which he added for completion two long pieces, *The New England Tragedies* (1868) and *The Divine Tragedy* (1871). Also in dramatic form were *Judas Maccabaeus* (1871), *The Masque of Pandora* (1875), and *Michael Angelo*, left unfinished at his death and printed in 1883. No one of his dramas attained the popularity of his narratives and lyrics. His later poems showed no flagging of his powers. Among them were "Aftermath" (1873); "The Hanging of the Crane" (1874); "Morituri Salutamus" (1875), written for the fiftieth anniversary of his college class; and "Kéramos" (1877). His last volume, *Ultima Thule*, appeared in 1880. A rough grouping of his works shows five chief classes, of which the first and second were the most successful: ballads and lyrics of moral inspiration or sentiment; long narrative pieces; dramas; prose; translations.

Longfellow died March 24, 1882, shortly after his seventy-fifth birthday. Longfellow and Lowell are the only American men of letters who are commemorated in Westminster Abbey. His bust was placed there not because English critical opinion thinks him our greatest poet but rather as an expression of the feeling that he had entered into the general stream of life abroad and had become more widely influential than any other American author.

Longfellow's reading was wide and discursive. He knew Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Carlyle, Ruskin, but these authors had no deep influence on him. His debt was greater to Chaucer, Gray, Burns, the German romantic poets, and the works of essayists and travelers. His teaching of foreign languages familiarized him with French, German, Italian, and Spanish classics, especially with Dante, whom he translated. A lay acquaintance with science such as Emerson's, or Whittier's concern with the living issues of his own time, he does not exhibit. He thought of the poet as standing apart from the outer world of toil and action, preferring pleasantly remote themes; he liked the effect of romantic distance. His primary wish, however, was to be fundamentally ethical, to inspire faith in an ideal, to soothe, to edify, and to instruct.

"Art is the gift of God and must be used
Unto his glory. That art is highest
Which aims at this."

His own religious faith was simple and unquestioning, without incertitude or struggle. Longfellow early remarked that he was "better pleased with those pieces which touch the feelings and improve the heart." In 1832 he wished our poets to be "more original and national." He praised Hawthorne in 1837 for dealing with the American romantic past. By 1849 he did not care whether the past was American or European. "Nationality is a good thing to a certain extent, but universality is better." Ultimately he turned to "the conflict between good and evil" in the spirit of the individual man as his preferred theme. Though it is lacking in his own poetry, he thought "the tragic element in poetry" its fundamental. He remained the poet of reverie, of sentiment, and of preference for the bygone; but he gave America what it needed, more respect for the past, for tradition, for the artist, and for the beautiful.

Part of Longfellow's success was owing to the simple sincere feeling of his poetry. He was the poet of the masses in their better moods, the laureate of the common aspirations and sorrows of life. He was also the poet of good manners, dignity, and culture. A fluent craftsman, he tried a great variety of verse forms, exhibiting considerable skill and grace and a sense of melody. He was at his best as a narrator in verse, and he was an excellent sonneteer. Among his limitations were his lack of dramatic vigor, of profound notes, of intensity and ardor. His poems rarely need a second or third reading. His morality often seems stock and his thought and moods restricted. There is no essential Americanism in his verse. He was somewhat aloof from the forces working in his own time, religious, political, economic, or social. He never liked to cross public opinion but rather to fall in with it. He shrank from controversy as he shrank from violence.

Like Tennyson, Longfellow has suffered from reaction and the growing popularity of verse of other types than his. He has been attacked for sentimentality, bookishness, leaning on European models, lack of originality, commonplace moralizing, and didacticism. He is now dealt with more fairly, however. It is recognized that, though he is indebted to foreign models he never followed them slavishly. It is recognized, too, that he stimulated the popular taste for poetry, stimulated culture, and was an American poet who could reach the world.

The poetry, prose, and translations of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow may be found in his *Complete Works*, Riverside Edition (11 vols., 1886). This collection, with the addition of the *Life* by Samuel Longfellow, was re-issued in 1891 in 14 vols. and is the standard edition. A separate collection of the poetry, *Complete Poetical Works*, Riverside Edition, 6 vols., appeared in 1886. The best one-volume collection of the poetry was edited by H. E. Scudder, *Complete Poetical Works*, Cambridge Edition (1893). A more recent collection, *Longfellow's Boyhood Poems* (1925),

edited by R. W. Pettengill, makes available some early poems not included in preceding collections.

There are various biographies of Longfellow. W. M. Rossetti's "Longfellow," in *Lives of Famous Poets* (1878), is among the earlier ones. Samuel Longfellow, a brother of the poet, published *The Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (2 vols., 1885–86). A third volume, *Final Memorials*, was added in 1887, concerning the poet's last fifteen years. Among other biographies are E. S. Robertson's *The Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, in the Great Writers Series (1887), a dependable and discerning piece of work; G. R. Carpenter's *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, in the Beacon Biography Series (1901), a good succinct account; T. W. Higginson's *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, in American Men of Letters Series (1902); C. E. Norton's *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, A Sketch of His Life* (1907); and H. S. Gorman's *A Victorian American, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (1926), which is somewhat disparaging but dependable as to facts. W. C. Bronson wrote of him in *DAB*, XI. Lawrance Thompson has given an interesting account of Longfellow's earlier years in *Young Longfellow* (1938).

Criticism concerning Longfellow is readily available. Some of it takes a deprecatory tone, although two more recent writers, G. R. Elliott and H. M. Jones, defend the poet. Among the earlier critics are Edgar Allan Poe, "Longfellow's Ballads," *Graham's Magazine* (March–April, 1842); E. C. Stedman, "Longfellow," in *Poets of America* (1885); and C. F. Johnson, "Longfellow," in *Three Americans and Three Englishmen* (1886). Twentieth-century commentators include Barrett Wendell, "Longfellow," in *A Literary History of America* (1900); Paul Elmer More, "The Centenary of Longfellow," in *Shelburne Essays, Fifth Series* (1908); Bliss Perry, "The Centenary of Longfellow," in *Park Street Papers* (1908); W. P. Trent, *Longfellow and Other Essays* (1908), who also has the section on Longfellow in *CHAL*, II (1917); Alfred Noyes, "Longfellow and Modern Critics," in *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry* (1924); and G. R. Elliott, "The Gentle Shades of Longfellow," in *The Cycle of Modern Poetry* (1929). Some more recent criticisms are H. M. Jones's "Longfellow," in *American Writers on American Literature*, edited by John Macy (1931); James T. Hatfield's valuable *New Light on Longfellow, with Special Reference to His Relations to Germany* (1933); Odell Shepherd's sound introduction to his *Longfellow*, in American Writers Series (1934); and Gay W. Allen's study of Longfellow's verse form, in *American Prosody*, Chap. VI (1935).

Bibliographies for Longfellow may be found in *CHAL*, II (1917), by H. W. L. Dana; in L. S. Livingston's *A Bibliography of the First Editions in Book Form of the Writings of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (1908); and in W. F. Taylor's *A History of American Letters* (1936).

## THE SPIRIT OF POETRY

This early piece in blank verse, showing the influence of Bryant or Wordsworth, was composed by Longfellow soon after he left college, in the autumn of 1825. It was published in the *Atlantic Souvenir* for 1828.

THERE is a quiet spirit in these woods,
That dwells where'er the gentle south-wind blows;
Where, underneath the white-thorn in the glade,
The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,
The leaves above their sunny palms outspread.
With what a tender and impassioned voice
It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,
When the fast ushering star of morning comes
O'er-riding the gray hills with golden scarf;
Or when the cowled and dusky-sandalled Eve,
In mourning weeds, from out the western gate,
Departs with silent pace! That spirit moves
In the green valley, where the silver brook,
From its full laver, pours the white cascade;

And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,
Slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter.
And frequent, on the everlasting hills,
Its feet go forth, when it doth wrap itself
In all the dark embroidery of the storm,
And shouts the stern, strong wind. And here, amid
The silent majesty of these deep woods,
Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,
As to the sunshine and the pure, bright air
Their tops the green trees lift. Hence gifted bards
Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades.
For them there was an eloquent voice in all
The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun,
The flowers, the leaves, the river on its way,
Blue skies, and silver clouds, and gentle winds,
The swelling upland, where the sidelong sun
Aslant the wooded slope, at evening, goes,
Groves, through whose broken roof the sky looks in,
Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny vale,
The distant lake, fountains, and mighty trees,
In many a lazy syllable, repeating
Their old poetic legends to the wind.

And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill
The world; and, in these wayward days of youth,
My busy fancy oft embodies it,
As a bright image of the light and beauty
That dwell in nature; of the heavenly forms
We worship in our dreams, and the soft hues
That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush the clouds
When the sun sets. Within her tender eye
The heaven of April, with its changing light,
And when it wears the blue of May, is hung,
And on her lip the rich, red rose. Her hair
Is like the summer tresses of the trees,
When twilight makes them brown, and on her cheek
Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,
With ever-shifting beauty. Then her breath,
It is so like the gentle air of Spring,
As, from the morning's dewy flowers, it comes
Full of their fragrance, that it is a joy
To have it round us, and her silver voice
Is the rich music of a summer bird,
Heard in the still night, with its passionate cadence.

*1825* 1828

## A PSALM OF LIFE

### WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO THE PSALMIST

Written July 26, 1838; published anonymously in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, October, 1838; included in *Voices of the Night* (1839). The poet read it to his class of Harvard students at the close of an hour given to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Its leading doctrine is that of the German novel. Longfellow said of it, "I kept it some time in manuscript, unwilling to show it to any one, it being a voice from my inmost heart, at a time when I was rallying from depression." He thought of it as a call to reality from his own nature, answering and refuting his despondency. In 1929 a poll of many thousands of newspaper readers over the United States was made to determine "America's favorite poem." It resulted, according to an announcement made on March 20, in the selection of "The Psalm of Life." Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and two other poems by Longfellow, "Evangeline" and "The Village Blacksmith," ranked high.

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

1838

## HYMN TO THE NIGHT

'Ασπασίη, τρίλλιστος [1]

First published in *Voices of the Night* (1839). Composed according to Longfellow in the summer of 1839, "while sitting at my chamber window, on one of the balmiest nights of the year. I endeavored to reproduce the impression of the hour and the scene." Poe said of it in his early review of *Voices of the Night* (*Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1840), "No poem ever opened with a beauty more august."

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like [1] I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!

1839

## THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS

THERE is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

"Shall I have naught that is fair?" saith he;
"Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again."

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,"
The Reaper said, and smiled;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

"They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear."

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

*1838* 1839

[1] "Welcome, thrice prayed for." Notice that Longfellow uses the translation of the Greek words in line 23.

[1] Orestes prayed for respite from the Furies, pursuing him for slaying his mother, in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus.

## THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Written in 1839. Published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, November, 1840. Included in *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841). Longfellow wrote to his father that he could consider it as a song in praise of his ancestor, the first Stephen Longfellow of Cambridge, who was a blacksmith. It was suggested by a smithy which stood beneath a horse chestnut tree on Brattle Street near Longfellow's home in Cambridge. The tree was cut down in 1876 for the widening of the street, despite the poet's protest. Three years later the school children of Cambridge, on Longfellow's seventy-second birthday, gave him a chair made from the wood of the tree. See his poem, "From My Arm Chair."

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

*1839* 1840

## ENDYMION[1]

THE rising moon has hid the stars;
Her level rays, like golden bars,
Lie on the landscape green,
With shadows brown between.

And silver white the river gleams,
As if Diana, in her dreams,
Had dropt her silver bow
Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this,
She woke Endymion with a kiss,
When, sleeping in the grove,
He dreamed not of her love.

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself, but is not bought;
Nor voice, nor sound betrays
Its deep, impassioned gaze.

It comes,—the beautiful, the free,
The crown of all humanity,—
In silence and alone
To seek the elected one.

[1] fabled Greek youth beloved by Diana (the moon)

It lifts the boughs, whose shadows deep,
Are Life's oblivion, the soul's sleep,
And kisses the closed eyes
Of him who slumbering lies.

O weary hearts! O slumbering eyes!
O drooping souls, whose destinies
Are fraught with fear and pain,
Ye shall be loved again!

No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own.

Responds,—as if with unseen wings,
An angel touched its quivering strings;
And whispers, in its song,
"Where hast thou stayed so long?"

1841

## THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

Originally published in Park Benjamin's *The New World*. Longfellow wrote his narrative in the form of the English and Scottish traditional ballads, reproducing from them such characteristics of their technique as the light accent on the last syllables of "daughter," "sailor," their handling of narrative and dialogue, and a stock manner of closing, as well as the staple four-line ballad stanza. The fourth and fifth stanzas echo a passage in a text of "Sir Patrick Spens." In all but its ostensible localization the ballad is more an Old World than an American piece. Longfellow entered in his journal, December 30, 1839, "I wrote last evening a notice of Allston's poems. After which I sat till twelve o'clock by my fire smoking, when suddenly it came into my mind to write 'The Ballad of the Schooner Hesperus,' which I accordingly did. Then I went to bed but could not sleep. New thoughts were running in my mind, and I got up to add them to the ballad. . . . I feel pleased with the ballad. It hardly cost me an effort. It did not come into my mind by lines, but by stanzas." He had written in his journal for December 17, "News of shipwrecks horrible on the coast. Twenty bodies washed ashore near Gloucester, one lashed to a piece of the wreck. There is a reef called Norman's Woe where many of these took place; among others the schooner *Hesperus*. Also the *Sea-flower* on Black Rock. I must write a ballad upon this." There are more striking projections than Norman's Woe, a rock not more than 200 feet long, jutting out into the sea off Gloucester harbor.

H. Beston wrote of "The Real Wreck of the Hesperus" in the *Bookman*, 1925.

It was the schooner *Hesperus*,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughtèr,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,[1]
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

[1] the northern coast of South America, or the adjoining waters

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
Oh say, what may it be?"
"'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!"—
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,
Oh say, what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the *Hesperus*,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

*1839* 1841

## THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

First published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, January, 1841. Reprinted in *Ballads and Other Poems*, 1841. The stanza form and meter are derived from Michael Drayton's poem on the battle of Agincourt. Longfellow wrote, December, 1840, to his father, "Have . . . prepared for the press another original ballad, which has been lying by me for some time. It is called 'The Skeleton in Armor,' and is connected with the old Round Tower at Newport. The skeleton in armor really exists. It was dug up near Fall River, where I saw it some two years ago. I suppose it to be the remains of one of the old Northern sea-rovers, who came to this country in the tenth century. Of course I make the tradition myself; and I think I have succeeded in giving the whole a Northern air." It was believed in 1840 that the Vikings under Leif Ericsson had visited the New World, a belief later given up and now held again. Probably it was southern Nova Scotia that Ericsson might have visited, hardly a region farther south. Longfellow had the idea of connecting the old round stone tower at Newport, generally known as the Old Windmill, with the skeleton bearing a breastplate of brass in Massachusetts. The skeleton was buried in an upright position and it is now believed that it was that of an Indian. Poe praised this poem highly in his review of Longfellow in *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1842.

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast,
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me!

Wrapt not in Eastern balms,[1]
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
  Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
  Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
  From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
  No Saga taught thee!
Take heed that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
  For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
  Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
  Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
  Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
  Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
  With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
  By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long winter out;
Often our midnight shout
  Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail
  Filled to o'erflowing.

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
  Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
  Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
  Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
  By the hawk frighted.

"Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
  Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
  To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
  The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
  Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
  I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight?
Why did they leave that night
  Her nest unguarded?

[1] a reference to the ancient methods of preserving the dead, particularly in Egypt.

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,
Fairest of all was she
  Among the Norsemen!
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armèd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
  With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
  When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,[1]
So that our foe we saw
  Laugh as he hailed us.

"And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
'Death!' was the helmsman's hail,
  'Death without quarter!'
Midships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
  Through the black water!

"As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
  With his prey laden,—
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
  Bore I the maiden.

"Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
  Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
  Stands looking seaward.

"There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
  She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes;
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
  On such another!

"Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
  The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
  Oh, death was grateful!

"Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars
Up to its native stars
  My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
*Skoal!*[1] to the Northland! *skoal!*"
  Thus the tale ended.

*1840* 1841

[1] English name for Cape Skagen, the northern tip of Jutland in Denmark

## EXCELSIOR

Written September 28, 1841. The poem is said to have been suggested to Longfellow by the motto on the seal of New York State, a shield with a rising sun and the motto "Excelsior." Some time afterwards Longfellow explained to a friend his intention in writing it. "This was no more than to display, in a series of pictures, the life of a man of genius, resisting all temptations, laying aside all fears, heedless of all warnings, and pressing right on to accomplish his purpose. His motto is Excelsior—'higher.' He passes through the Alpine village—through the rough, cold paths of the world—where the peasants cannot understand him, and where his watchword is in an 'unknown tongue.' He disregards the happiness of domestic peace and sees the glaciers—his fate—before him. He disregards the warning of the old man's wisdom and the fascinations of woman's love. He answers to all, 'Higher yet!' The monks of St. Bernard are the representatives of religious forms and ceremonies, and with their oft-repeated prayer mingles the sound of his voice, telling them there is something higher yet than forms

[1] "In Scandinavia this is the customary salutation when drinking a health. I have slightly changed the orthography of the word, in order to preserve the correct pronunciation." [*Longfellow's note.*]

and ceremonies. Filled with these aspirations, he perishes; without having reached the perfection he longed for; and the voice heard in the air is the promise of immortality and progress ever upward. You will perceive that *Excelsior*, an adjective of the comparative degree, is used adverbially; a use justified by the best Latin writers." When the poet found this was erroneous, that he should have used the adverb *excelsius*, he explained the title as the last word of the phrase *Scopus meus est excelsior*.

THE shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

"O stay," the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last Good-night;
A voice replied far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveler, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!

1841

## THE SLAVE'S DREAM

When Longfellow was returning from Germany in 1842 the voyage was stormy and he was confined to his berth for fifteen days. He wrote to a friend that during this time he composed seven poems on slavery. They were published in the same year, receiving praise or criticism according to the anti- or pro-slavery sentiments of his readers. They lack Whittier's intensity, but show that Longfellow was willing to take a stand on a burning question.

BESIDE the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!—
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's band;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

1842

## THE WARNING

BEWARE! The Israelite of old, who tore
The lion in his path,—when, poor and blind,
He saw the blessed light of heaven no more,
Shorn of his noble strength and forced to grind
In prison, and at last led forth to be
A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the temple laid
His desperate hands, and in its overthrow
Destroyed himself, and with him those who made
A cruel mockery of his sightless woe;
The poor blind Slave, the scoff and jest of all,
Expired, and thousands perished in the fall!

There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
Till the vast Temple of our liberties
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

1842

## MEZZO CAMMIN

WRITTEN AT BOPPARD ON THE RHINE AUGUST 25, 1842, JUST BEFORE LEAVING FOR HOME

Suggested by the first line of Dante's *Inferno: Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita* ("In midway of the road of our life").

HALF of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
Of restless passions that would not be stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;
Though, halfway up the hill, I see the Past
Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights,—
A city in the twilight dim and vast,
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights,—
And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights.

*1842* 1886

## NUREMBERG

Written in the spring of 1844. Published in *Graham's Magazine*, June, 1844. Included in the *Belfry of Bruges* volume, 1845. Longfellow visited Nuremberg, a romantic old city in Bavaria, in 1842, and his poem for American readers emerged from his memories of it. He wrote from the town (*Life*, I, 436) to Freiligrath, telling of his enthusiasm for the place.

IN the valley of the Pegnitz, where across
broad meadow-lands
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nuremberg, the ancient, stands.

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old
town of art and song,
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the
rooks that round them throng:

Memories of the Middle Ages, when the emperors, rough and bold,
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time-defying, centuries old;

And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted, in their uncouth rhyme,
That their great imperial city stretched its hand through every clime.

In the courtyard of the castle, bound with many an iron band,
Stands the mighty linden planted by Queen Cunigunde's hand;

On the square the oriel window, where in old heroic days
Sat the poet Melchior singing Kaiser Maximilian's praise.[1]

Everywhere I see around me rise the wondrous world of Art:
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture standing in the common mart;

And above cathedral doorways saints and bishops carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned as apostles to our own.

In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps enshrined his holy dust,[2]
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from age to age their trust;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a pix of sculpture rare,[3]
Like the foamy sheaf of fountains, rising through the painted air.

Here, when Art was still religion, with a simple, reverent heart,
Lived and labored Albrecht Dürer, the Evangelist of Art;

Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with busy hand,
Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for the Better Land.

*Emigravit* is the inscription on the tombstone where he lies;
Dead he is not, but departed,—for the artist never dies.

Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sunshine seems more fair,
That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed its air!

Through these streets so broad and stately, these obscure and dismal lanes,
Walked of yore the Mastersingers, chanting rude poetic strains.

From remote and sunless suburbs came they to the friendly guild,
Building nests in Fame's great temple, as in spouts the swallows build.

As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he too the mystic rhyme,
And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's chime;

Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters,[1] in huge folios sang and laughed.

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[1] "Melchior Pfinzing was one of the most celebrated German poets of the sixteenth century. The hero of his *Teuerdank* was the reigning Emperor, Maximilian; and the poem was to the Germans of that day what the *Orlando Furioso* was to the Italians." [*Longfellow's note.*]

[2] "The tomb of Saint Sebald, in the church which bears his name, is one of the richest works of art in Nuremberg. It is of bronze, and was cast by Peter Vischer and his sons, who labored upon it thirteen years. It is adorned with nearly one hundred figures, among which those of the Twelve Apostles are conspicuous for size and beauty." [*Longfellow's note.*]

[3] "This pix, or tabernacle for the vessels of the sacrament, is by the hand of Adam Kraft. It is an exquisite piece of sculpture in white stone, and rises to the height of sixty-four feet. It stands in the choir, whose richly painted windows cover it with varied colors." [*Longfellow's note.*]

[1] "The Twelve Wise Masters was the title of the original corporation of the Mastersingers. Hans Sachs, the cobbler of Nuremberg, though not one of the original twelve, was the most renowned of the Mastersingers, as well as the most voluminous. He flourished in the sixteenth century; and left behind him thirty-four folio volumes of manuscript, containing two

But his house is now an alehouse, with a nicely sanded floor,
And a garland in the window, and his face above the door;

Painted by some humble artist, as in Adam Puschman's song,
As the old man gray and dove-like, with his great beard white and long.

And at night the swart mechanic comes to drown his cark and care,
Quaffing ale from pewter tankards, in the master's antique chair.

Vanished is the ancient splendor, and before my dreamy eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures, like a faded tapestry.

Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard;
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs thy cobbler bard.

Thus, O Nuremberg, a wanderer from a region far away,
As he paced thy streets and courtyards, sang in thought his careless lay:

Gathering from the pavement's crevice, as a floweret of the soil,
The nobility of labor,—the long pedigree of toil.

1844

## THE DAY IS DONE

Composed as a proem to a volume of selected minor poems (*The Waif*) assembled and edited by Longfellow in 1845.

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

1844

## THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD

Published in *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1844. Reprinted in *The Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems* (1845). In the summer of 1843, accompanied by his close friend Charles Sumner, Longfellow and his wife visited the United States Arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts. Samuel

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hundred and eight plays, one thousand and seven hundred comic tales, and between four and five thousand lyric poems." [*Longfellow's note.*]

Longfellow, the biographer of his brother, relates that "While Mr. Sumner was endeavoring to impress upon the attendant that the money expended upon these weapons of war would have been much better spent upon a great library, Mrs. Longfellow pleased her husband by remarking how like an organ looked the ranged and shining gun-barrels which covered the walls from floor to ceiling, and suggesting what mournful music Death would bring from them. 'We grew quite warlike against war,' she wrote, 'and I urged H. to write a peace poem.'" The poem was written some months later.

THIS is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,
Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing
Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
When the death-angel touches those swift keys!
What loud lament and dismal Miserere
Will mingle with their awful symphonies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
The cries of agony, the endless groan,
Which, through the ages that have gone before us,
In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer,
Through Cimbric forest roars the Norseman's song,
And loud, amid the universal clamor,
O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace
Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful din,
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis[1]
Beat the wild war-drum made of serpent's skin;

The tumult of each sacked and burning village;
The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns;
The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage;
The wail of famine in beleaguered towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder,
The rattling musketry, the clashing blade;
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,
The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
With such accursed instruments as these,
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power, that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth, bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts:

The warrior's name would be a name abhorrèd!
And every nation, that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain!

Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies!
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

*1844* 1845

[1] mounds of pyramid shape on which temples were built

## *From* THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

### CARILLON

Composed in 1842, and included in *The Belfry of Bruges* volume (1845) as a prelude. An entry in Longfellow's diary for May 30, 1842, notes that he stopped at La Fleur de Blé, attracted by the name, and an entry for the next day describes the carillon. In a letter to the German poet, Ferdinand Freiligrath, Longfellow tells of his pleasure in this old city. His interest in bells is shown in many poems in which they figure, "The Bells of Lynn" (1859), "Christmas Bells" (1864), "The Bell of Atri" (1870), "The Chimes" (1879), "The Bells of San Blas" (1882).

In the ancient town of Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city,
As the evening shades descended,
Low and loud and sweetly blended,
Low at times and loud at times,
And changing like a poet's rhymes,
Rang the beautiful wild chimes
From the Belfry in the market
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

Then, with deep sonorous clangor
Calmly answering their sweet anger,
When the wrangling bells had ended,
Slowly struck the clock eleven,
And, from out the silent heaven,
Silence on the town descended.
Silence, silence everywhere,
On the earth and in the air,
Save the footsteps here and there
Of some burgher home returning,
By the street lamps faintly burning,
For a moment woke the echoes
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

But amid my broken slumbers
Still I heard those magic numbers,
As they loud proclaimed the flight
And stolen marches of the night;
Till their chimes in sweet collision
Mingled with each wandering vision,
Mingled with the fortune-telling
Gypsy-bands of dreams and fancies,
Which amid the waste expanses
Of the silent land of trances
Have their solitary dwelling;
All else seemed asleep in Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city.

And I thought how like these chimes
Are the poet's airy rhymes,
All his rhymes and roundelays,
His conceits, and songs, and ditties,
From the belfry of his brain,
Scattered downward, though in vain,
On the roofs and stones of cities!
For by night the drowsy ear
Under its curtains cannot hear,
And by day men go their ways,
Hearing the music as they pass,
But deeming it no more, alas!
Than the hollow sound of brass.

Yet perchance a sleepless wight,
Lodging at some humble inn
In the narrow lanes of life,
When the dusk and hush of night
Shut out the incessant din
Of daylight and its toil and strife,
May listen with a calm delight
To the poet's melodies,
Till he hears, or dreams he hears,
Intermingled with the song,
Thoughts that he has cherished long;
Hears amid the chime and singing
The bells of his own village ringing,
And wakes, and finds his slumberous eyes
Wet with most delicious tears.

Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay
In Bruges, at the Fleur-de-Blé,[1]
Listening with a wild delight
To the chimes that, through the night,
Rang their changes from the Belfry
Of that quaint old Flemish city.

*1842* 1845

## SEAWEED

The first four stanzas of this poem have had very high praise. The later stanzas may have appealed to readers of the poet's time, but today the analogy they elaborate seems forced and the expression commonplace.

When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

[1] "Flower-of-Grain," the name of an inn

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main;
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.

So when storms of wild emotion
Strike the ocean
Of the poet's soul, erelong
From each cave and rocky fastness,
In its vastness,
Floats some fragment of a song:

From the far-off isles enchanted,
Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth;
From the flashing surf, whose vision
Gleams Elysian
In the tropic clime of Youth;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor
That forever
Wrestle with the tides of Fate;
From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
Tempest-shattered,
Floating waste and desolate;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart;
Till at length in books recorded,
They, like hoarded
Household words, no more depart.

1845

## THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS

An entry in Longfellow's journal for November 12, 1845, reads, "Began a poem on a clock with the words 'forever, never' as the burden; suggested by the words of Bridaine, the old French missionary, who said of eternity, 'It is a clock whose pendulum utters and repeats without ceasing these two words only, in the silence of the tomb—Forever, never! Never, forever!'" Jacques Bridaine, a noted Catholic preacher, lived 1710–1767.

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L'éternité est une pendule, dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement, dans le silence des tombeaux, "Toujours, jamais! Jamais, toujours!"

JACQUES BRIDAINE

SOMEWHAT back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw,
And from its station in the hall
An ancient timepiece says to all,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Half-way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk, who, under his cloak,
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall
It echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say, at each chamber-door,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed.
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

All are scattered now and fled,
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
"Ah! when shall they all meet again?"
As in the days long since gone by,
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time, shall disappear,—
Forever there, but never here!
The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,—
"Forever—never!
Never—forever!"

1845

## THE BRIDGE

**First entitled "The Bridge over the Charles River." The Charles River runs between Boston and Cambridge. Published in *The Belfry of Bruges* volume. Longfellow wrote in a journal entry for March 15, 1838, that when walking from Boston to Cambridge "I always stop on the bridge; tide-waters are beautiful. From the ocean up into the land they go, like messengers, to ask why tribute has not been paid."**

I stood on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city,
Behind the dark church-tower.

I saw her bright reflection
In the waters under me,
Like a golden goblet falling
And sinking into the sea.

And far in the hazy distance
Of that lovely night in June,
The blaze of the flaming furnace
Gleamed redder than the moon.

Among the long, black rafters
The wavering shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean
Seemed to lift and bear them away;

As, sweeping and eddying through them,
Rose the belated tide,
And, streaming into the moonlight,
The seaweed floated wide.

And like those waters rushing
Among the wooden piers,
A flood of thoughts came o'er me
That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, oh how often,
In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight
And gazed on that wave and sky!

How often, oh how often,
I had wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide!

For my heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
It is buried in the sea;
And only the sorrow of others
Throws its shadow over me.

Yet whenever I cross the river
On its bridge with wooden piers,
Like the odor of brine from the ocean
Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands
Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
Still passing to and fro,
The young heart hot and restless,
And the old subdued and slow!

And forever and forever,
As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes;

The moon and its broken reflection
And its shadows shall appear,
As the symbol of love in heaven,
And its wavering image here.

1845

## KING WITLAF'S DRINKING-HORN

Written September 30, 1848. Longfellow quoted in his diary the part of the charter granted by King Witlaf (Wichtlaf) of Mercia to the Abbey of Croyland relating to his drinking horn, cited in Maitland's *The Dark Ages* (1844): "I also offer to the refectory at Croyland the horn of my table, that the elders of the monastery may drink out of it on the festivals of the Saints, and may sometimes amid their benedictions remember the soul of the donor, Witlaf."

Witlaf, a king of the Saxons,
Ere yet his last he breathed,
To the merry monks of Croyland
His drinking-horn bequeathed,—

That, whenever they sat at their revels
And drank from the golden bowl,
They might remember the donor,
And breathe a prayer for his soul.

So sat they once at Christmas,
And bade the goblet pass;
In their beards the red wine glistened
Like dewdrops in the grass.

They drank to the soul of Witlaf,
They drank to Christ the Lord,
And to each of the Twelve Apostles,
Who had preached his holy word.

They drank to the Saints and Martyrs
Of the dismal days of yore,
And as soon as the horn was empty
They remembered one Saint more.

And the reader droned from the pulpit,
Like the murmur of many bees,
The legend of good Saint Guthlac,
And Saint Basil's homilies;

Till the great bells of the convent,
From their prison in the tower,
Guthlac and Bartholomaeus,
Proclaimed the midnight hour.

And the Yule-log cracked in the chimney,
And the Abbot bowed his head,
And the flamelets flapped and flickered,
But the Abbot was stark and dead.

Yet still in his pallid fingers
He clutched the golden bowl,
In which, like a pearl dissolving,
Had sunk and dissolved his soul.

But not for this their revels
The jovial monks forbore,
For they cried, "Fill high the goblet!
We must drink to one Saint more!"

1848

## RESIGNATION

There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel for her children crying,[1]
Will not be comforted!

[1] Jeremiah 31:15

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors;
Amid these earthly damps
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,[1]
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,[2]
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

*1848* 1849

[1] pertaining to Elysium, the dwelling place, in classic myth, of happy souls after death [2] John 14:2

## THE SECRET OF THE SEA

This poem relies heavily on a Spanish ballad, "Romance del Conde Arnaldo," as translated in Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads* (Edinburgh, 1843).

Ah! what pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams, come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sandal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore;
And the singing of the sailors,
And the answer from the shore!

Most of all, the Spanish ballad
Haunts me oft, and tarries long,
Of the noble Count Arnaldos
And the sailor's mystic song.

Like the long waves on a sea-beach,
Where the sand as silver shines,
With a soft, monotonous cadence,
Flow its unrhymed lyric lines;—

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,
With his hawk upon his hand,
Saw a fair and stately galley,
Steering onward to the land;—

How he heard the ancient helmsman
Chant a song so wild and clear,
That the sailing sea-bird slowly
Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,
And he cried, with impulse strong,—
"Helmsman! for the love of heaven,
Teach me, too, that wondrous song!"

"Wouldst thou,"—so the helmsman answered,
"Learn the secret of the sea?
Only those who brave its dangers
Comprehend its mystery!"

In each sail that skims the horizon,
In each landward-blowing breeze,
I behold that stately galley,
Hear those mournful melodies;

Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

*1848*

## *From* EVANGELINE

### A Tale of Acadie

Written 1845–47; published October 30, 1847. Many think the poem Longfellow's masterpiece. The story it develops was told at the poet's dinner table by the Reverend H. L. Conolly of Boston, who had it in turn from a French Canadian. Conolly offered it to Hawthorne. When the latter did not adopt it for a tale, Longfellow asked if he might not have it for a poem. Many criticized the verse form of the narrative, an American experiment in hexameter, as unlike the Greek; but it proved to be a popular and successful venture. Longfellow's chief source for the setting and events of the first part was T. C. Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829), which in turn relied heavily upon the Abbé Raynal's biased account, from the French side, of the deportation. Acadie, called Nova Scotia after 1621, was colonized in 1604 and ceded to Britain in 1713 by the treaty of Utrecht, and the cession was later confirmed by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Yet the settlement remained the seat of plots and raids by the French and the Indians. History somewhat vindicates the British. The inhabitants had the choice of taking an oath of allegiance or of expatriation. The embarkation of 1755 was not a wild scramble but really occupied two weeks. The British commander tried hard to carry out his painful task humanely, especially to place members of the same family on the same transport. Some 6000 French inhabitants were deported.

Longfellow never visited Nova Scotia or the Mississippi or Louisiana. For his scenes and descriptions he relied on Banvard's diorama of the Mississippi, which he saw in Boston, December 17 and 19, 1846, and on such guidebooks as Darby's *Guide to Louisiana* and Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia*. His chief literary model for the poem, in general character and form, was Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* (1798), a story of expulsion and wandering told in hexameter lines.

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,—
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest;
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.

PART THE FIRST

I

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas,
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labor incessant,
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.
West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains
Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty Atlantic
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station descended.
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the Acadian village.
Strongly built were the houses, with frames of oak and of hemlock,
Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the reign of the Henries.
Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows; and gables projecting
Over the basement below protected and shaded the doorway.
There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when brightly the sunset
Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes on the chimneys,
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and in kirtles
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spinning the golden
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles within doors
Mingled their sound with the whir of the wheels and the songs of the maidens.
Solemnly down the street came the parish priest, and the children
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended to bless them.
Reverend walked he among them; and up rose matrons and maidens,
Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome.
Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of incense ascending,
Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.
Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,—
Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from
Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.
Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows;
But their dwellings were open as day and the hearts of the owners;
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer the Basin of Minas,
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand-Pré,
Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him, directing his household,
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride of the village.
Stalwart and stately in form was the man of seventy winters;
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered with snow-flakes;
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.
Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers;
Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the wayside,
Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of her tresses!
Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.

When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noontide
Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the maiden.
Fairer was she when on Sunday morn, while the bell from its turret
Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his hyssop
Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,
Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of beads and her missal,
Wearing her Norman cap and her kirtle of blue, and the earrings
Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations.
But a celestial brightness—a more ethereal beauty—
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when, after confession,
Homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her.
When she had passed. it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of the farmer
Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea; and a shady
Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine wreathing around it.
Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath; and a footpath
Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the meadow.
Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by a penthouse,
Such as the traveler sees in regions remote by the roadside,
Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of Mary.
Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the well with its moss-grown
Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the horses.
Shielding the house from storms, on the north, were the barns and the farmyard.
There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the antique plows and the harrows;
There were the folds for the sheep; and there, in his feathered seraglio,
Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock, with the selfsame
Voice that in ages of old had startled the penitent Peter.[1]
Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a village. In each one
Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch; and a staircase,
Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous corn-loft.
There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek and innocent inmates
Murmuring ever of love; while above in the variant breezes
Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the farmer of Grand-Pré
Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed his household.
Many a youth, as he knelt in the church and opened his missal,
Fixed his eyes upon her as the saint of his deepest devotion;
Happy was he who might touch her hand or the hem of her garment!
Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness befriended,
And, as he knocked and waited to hear the sound of her footsteps,
Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the knocker of iron;
Or, at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the village,
Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as he whispered
Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the music.
But among all who came young Gabriel only was welcome;
Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the blacksmith,
Who was a mighty man in the village, and honored of all men;
For, since the birth of time, throughout all ages and nations,

[1] Matthew 26:74–75

Has the craft of the smith been held in repute by the people.
Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children from earliest childhood
Grew up together as brother and sister; and Father Felician,
Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had taught them their letters
Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns of the church and the plain-song.
But when the hymn was sung, and the daily lesson completed,
Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil the blacksmith.
There at the door they stood, with wondering eyes to behold him
Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as a plaything,
Nailing the shoe in its place; while near him the tire of the cart-wheel
Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle of cinders.
Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gathering darkness
Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through every cranny and crevice,
Warm by the forge within they watched the laboring bellows,
And as its panting ceased, and the sparks expired in the ashes,
Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going into the chapel.
Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop of the eagle,
Down the hillside bounding, they glided away o'er the meadow.
Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous nests on the rafters,
Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone, which the swallow
Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the sight of its fledglings;[1]
Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest of the swallow!
Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer were children.
He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of the morning,
Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought into action.
She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes of a woman.
"Sunshine of Saint Eulalie,"[1] was she called; for that was the sunshine
Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards with apples;
She too would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance,
Filling it with love and the ruddy faces of children.

II

Now had the season returned, when the nights grow colder and longer,
And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion enters.
Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air, from the ice-bound,
Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical islands.
Harvests were gathered in; and wild with the winds of September
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel.[2]
All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.
Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded their honey
Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters asserted
Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the foxes.
Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that beautiful season,
Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints!
Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape
Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.

[1] French folklore belief that if the eyes of a fledgling swallow be put out the mother bird will bring from the seashore a little stone that will restore the sight. When found in the swallow's nest such stones were supposed to work wonderful cures. Longfellow had his French folklore from the citations from Pluquet's *Contes Populaires* included in Thomas Wright's *Essays on Subjects Connected with the Literature, Popular Superstitions, and History of England in the Middle Ages* (1846).

[1] an allusion to the folk-saying that if the sun shone on Saint Eulalie's Day (February 12) there would be apples and cider in abundance [2] Genesis 32:24–30

Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in harmony blended.
Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the farm-yards,
Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pigeons,
All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapors around him;
While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and yellow,
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree of the forest
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with mantles and jewels.[1]

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness.
Day with its burden and heat had departed, and twilight descending
Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the herds to the homestead.
Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other,
And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening.
Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer,
Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,
Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.
Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the seaside,
Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them followed the watchdog,
Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,
Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly
Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers;
Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,
When from the forest at night, through the starry silence, the wolves howled.
Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes,
Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odor.
Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks,
While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles,
Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson,
Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy with blossoms.
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded their udders
Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud and in regular cadence
Into the sounding pails the foaming streamlets descended.
Lowing of cattle and peals of laughter were heard in the farmyard,
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into stillness;
Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the valves of the barn-doors,
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season was silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace, idly the farmer
Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how the flames and the smoke-wreaths
Struggled together like foes in a burning city. Behind him,
Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,
Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.
Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair
Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates on the dresser
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.
Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.

[1] Herodotus (VII, 31) tells that Xerxes so admired a plane tree that he gave it golden ornaments and left a soldier to guard it.

Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated,
Spinning flax for the loom that stood in the corner behind her.
Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle,
While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like the drone of a bagpipe,
Followed the old man's song, and united the fragments together.
As in a church, when the chant of the choir at intervals ceases,
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the priest at the altar,
So, in each pause of the song, with measured motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard, and, suddenly lifted,
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung back on its hinges.
Benedict knew by the hobnailed shoes it was Basil the blacksmith,
And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who was with him.
"Welcome!" the farmer exclaimed, as their footsteps paused on the threshold,
"Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take thy place on the settle
Close by the chimney-side, which is always empty without thee;
Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the box of tobacco;
Never so much thyself art thou as when, through the curling
Smoke of the pipe or the forge, thy friendly and jovial face gleams
Round and red as the harvest moon through the mist of the marshes."
Then, with a smile of content, thus answered Basil the blacksmith,
Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the fireside:—
"Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest and thy ballad!
Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when others are filled with
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin before them.
Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst picked up a horseshoe."
Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evangeline brought him,
And with a coal from the embers had lighted, he slowly continued:—
"Four days now are passed since the English ships at their anchors
Ride in the Gaspereau's mouth, with their cannon pointed against us.
What their design may be is unknown; but all are commanded
On the morrow to meet in the church, where his Majesty's mandate
Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas! in the mean time
Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the people."
Then made answer the farmer:—"Perhaps some friendlier purpose
Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the harvests in England
By untimely rains or untimelier heat have been blighted,
And from our bursting barns they would feed their cattle and children."
"Not so thinketh the folk in the village," said warmly the blacksmith,
Shaking his head as in doubt; then, heaving a sigh, he continued:—
"Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour, nor Port Royal.
Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on its outskirts,
Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of tomorrow.
Arms have been taken from us, and warlike weapons of all kinds;
Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge and the scythe of the mower."
Then with a pleasant smile made answer the jovial farmer:—
"Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our flocks and our cornfields,
Safer within these peaceful dikes besieged by the ocean,
Than our fathers in forts, besieged by the enemy's cannon.
Fear no evil, my friend, and tonight may no shadow of sorrow
Fall on this house and hearth; for this is the night of the contract.

Built are the house and the barn. The merry lads of the village
Strongly have built them and well; and, breaking the glebe round about them,
Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food for a twelvemonth.
René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers and inkhorn.
Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy of our children?"
As apart by the window she stood, with her hand in her lover's,
Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her father had spoken,
And, as they died on his lips, the worthy notary entered.

III

Bent like a laboring oar, that toils in the surf of the ocean,
Bent, but not broken, by age was the form of the notary public;
Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the maize, hung
Over his shoulders; his forehead was high; and glasses with horn bows
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom supernal.
Father of twenty children was he, and more than a hundred
Children's children rode on his knee, and heard his great watch tick.
Four long years in the times of the war had he languished a captive,
Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of the English.
Now, though warier grown, without all guile or suspicion,
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple, and childlike.
He was beloved by all, and most of all by the children;
For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the forest,
And of the goblin that came in the night to water the horses,
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child who unchristened
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers of children;
And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in the stable,
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut up in a nutshell,
And of the marvelous powers of four-leaved clover and horseshoes,
With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the village.
Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil the blacksmith,
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly extending his right hand,
"Father Leblanc," he exclaimed, "thou hast heard the talk in the village,
And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these ships and their errand."
Then with modest demeanor made answer the notary public,—
"Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am never the wiser;
And what their errand may be I know not better than others.
Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil intention
Brings them here, for we are at peace; and why then molest us?"
"God's name!" shouted the hasty and somewhat irascible blacksmith;
"Must we in all things look for the how, and the why, and the wherefore?
Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of the strongest!"
But, without heeding his warmth, continued the notary public,—
"Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally justice
Triumphs; and well I remember a story that often consoled me,
When as a captive I lay in the old French fort at Port Royal."
This was the old man's favorite tale, and he loved to repeat it
When his neighbors complained that any injustice was done them.
"Once in an ancient city, whose name I no longer remember,
Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of Justice
Stood in the public square, upholding the scales in its left hand,

And in its right a sword, as an emblem that justice presided
Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and homes of the people.
Even the birds had built their nests in the scales of the balance,
Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the sunshine above them.
But in the course of time the laws of the land were corrupted;
Might took the place of right, and the weak were oppressed, and the mighty
Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in a nobleman's palace
That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long a suspicion
Fell on an orphan girl who lived as maid in the household.
She, after form of trial condemned to die on the scaffold,
Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue of Justice.
As to her Father in heaven her innocent spirit ascended,
Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the bolts of the thunder
Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath from its left hand
Down on the pavement below the clattering scales of the balance,
And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of a magpie,
Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls was inwoven."
Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was ended, the blacksmith
Stood like a man who fain would speak, but findeth no language;
All his thoughts were congealed into lines on his face, as the vapors
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on the table,
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with home-brewed
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in the village of Grand-Pré;
While from his pocket the notary drew his papers and inkhorn,
Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age of the parties,
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep and in cattle.
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well were completed,
And the great seal of the law was set like a sun on the margin.
Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw on the table
Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of silver;
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and the bridegroom,
Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their welfare.
Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly bowed and departed,
While in silence the others sat and mused by the fireside,
Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out of its corner.
Soon was the game begun. In friendly contention the old men
Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful maneuver,
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach was made in the king-row.
Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a window's embrasure,
Sat the lovers and whispered together, beholding the moon rise
Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist of the meadows.
Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Thus was the evening passed. Anon the bell from the belfry
Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and straightway
Rose the guests and departed; and silence reigned in the household.
Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on the doorstep
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it with gladness.
Carefully then were covered the embers that glowed on the hearthstone,

And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of the farmer.
Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evangeline followed.
Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the darkness,
Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of the maiden.
Silent she passed the hall, and entered the door of her chamber.
Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white, and its clothespress
Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were carefully folded
Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline woven.
This was the precious dower she would bring to her husband in marriage,
Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her skill as a housewife.
Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mellow and radiant moonlight
Streamed through the windows, and lighted the room, till the heart of the maiden
Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous tides of the ocean.
Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as she stood with
Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of her chamber!
Little she dreamed that below, among the trees of the orchard,
Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of her lamp, and her shadow.
Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a feeling of sadness
Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of clouds in the moonlight
Flitted across the floor and darkened the room for a moment.
And, as she gazed from the window, she saw serenely the moon pass
Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow her footsteps,
As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered with Hagar![1]

[1] Genesis 21:14–22

IV

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun on the village of Grand-Pré.
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of Minas,
Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were riding at anchor.
Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous labor
Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates of the morning.
Now from the country around, from the farms and neighboring hamlets,
Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peasants.
Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from the young folk
Made the bright air brighter, as up from the numerous meadows,
Where no path could be seen but the track of wheels in the greensward,
Group after group appeared, and joined, or passed on the highway.
Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labor were silenced.
Thronged were the streets with people; and noisy groups at the house-doors
Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gossiped together.
Every house was an inn, where all were welcomed and feasted;
For with this simple people, who lived like brothers together,
All things were held in common, and what one had was another's.
Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed more abundant:
For Evangeline stood among the guests of her father;
Bright was her face with smiles, and words of welcome and gladness
Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the orchard,
Stript of its golden fruit, was spread the feast of betrothal.
There in the shade of the porch were the priest and the notary seated;

There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the blacksmith.
Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press and the beehives,
Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.
Shadow and light from the leaves alternately played on his snow-white
Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the jolly face of the fiddler
Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are blown from the embers.
Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant sound of his fiddle,
*Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres*, and *Le Carillon de Dunkerque*.[1]
And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the music.
Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzying dances
Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the meadows;
Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.
Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's daughter!
Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the blacksmith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a summons sonorous
Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows a drum beat.
Thronged ere long was the church with men. Without, in the churchyard,
Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and hung on the headstones
Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from the forest.
Then came the guard from the ships, and marching proudly among them
Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dissonant clangor
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from ceiling and casement,—
Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponderous portal
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will of the soldiers.

Then uprose their commander, and spake from the steps of the altar,
Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the royal commission.
"You are convened this day," he said, "by His Majesty's orders.
Clement and kind has he been; but how you have answered his kindness
Let your own hearts reply! To my natural make and my temper
Painful the task is I do, which to you I know must be grievous.
Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will of our monarch:
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and cattle of all kinds
Forfeited be to the crown; and that you yourselves from this province
Be transported to other lands. God grant you may dwell there
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable people!
Prisoners now I declare you, for such is His Majesty's pleasure!"
As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of summer,
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the hailstones
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field, and shatters his windows,
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch from the house-roofs,
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their enclosures;
So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the speaker.
Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and then rose
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,
And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the doorway.
Vain was the hope of escape; and cries and fierce imprecations
Rang through the house of prayer; and high o'er the heads of the others
Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,
As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.

[1] "All the Citizens of Chartres" and "The Chimes of Dunkirk" are the names of two very popular French tunes.

Flushed was his face and distorted with passion; and wildly he shouted,—
"Down with the tyrants of England! we never have sworn them allegiance!
Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and our harvests!"
More he fain would have said, but the merciless hand of a soldier
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry contention,
Lo! the door of the chancel opened, and Father Felician
Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the steps of the altar.
Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed into silence
All that clamorous throng; and thus he spake to his people;
Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents measured and mournful
Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum, distinctly the clock strikes.
"What is this that ye do, my children? what madness has seized you?
Forty years of my life have I labored among you, and taught you,
Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one another!
Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and prayers and privations?
Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love and forgiveness?
This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and would you profane it
Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing with hatred?
Lo! where the crucified Christ from his cross is gazing upon you!
See! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and holy compassion!
Hark! how those lips still repeat the prayer, 'O Father, forgive them!'
Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the wicked assail us,
Let us repeat it now, and say, 'O Father, forgive them!' "
Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the hearts of his people
Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded the passionate outbreak,
While they repeated his prayer, and said, "O Father, forgive them!"

Then came the evening service. The tapers gleamed from the altar;
Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the people responded,
Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave Maria
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls, with devotion translated,
Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah ascending to heaven.[1]

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings of ill, and on all sides
Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women and children.
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with her right hand
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that, descending,
Lighted the village street with mysterious splendor, and roofed each
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and emblazoned its windows.
Long within had been spread the snow-white cloth on the table;
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey fragrant with wild flowers;
There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese fresh brought from the dairy;
And, at the head of the board, the great armchair of the farmer.
Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door, as the sunset
Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad ambrosial meadows.
Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had fallen,
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance celestial ascended,—
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgiveness, and patience!
Then, all forgetful of self, she wandered into the village,
Cheering with looks and words the mournful hearts of the women,

[1] II Kings 2:11

As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps they departed,
Urged by their household cares, and the weary feet of their children.
Down sank the great red sun, and in golden, glimmering vapors
Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet descending from Sinai.[1]
Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile amid the gloom, by the church Evangeline lingered.
All was silent within; and in vain at the door and the windows
Stood she, and listened and looked, until, overcome by emotion,
"Gabriel!" cried she aloud with tremulous voice; but no answer
Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier grave of the living.
Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of her father.
Smoldered the fire on the hearth, on the board was the supper untasted.
Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with phantoms of terror.
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her chamber.
In the dead of the night she heard the disconsolate rain fall
Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the window.
Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice of the echoing thunder
Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the world he created!
Then she remembered the tale she had heard of the justice of Heaven;
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peacefully slumbered till morning.

V

Four times the sun had risen and set; and now on the fifth day
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the farmhouse.
Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful procession,
Came from the neighboring hamlets and farms the Acadian women,
Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to the seashore,
Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their dwellings,
Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and the woodland.
Close at their sides their children ran, and urged on the oxen,
While in their little hands they clasped some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried; and there on the sea-beach
Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the peasants.
All day long between the shore and the ships did the boats ply;
All day long the wains came laboring down from the village.
Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to his setting,
Echoed far o'er the fields came the roll of drums from the churchyard.
Thither the women and children thronged. On a sudden the church-doors
Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching in gloomy procession
Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient, Acadian farmers.
Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their homes and their country,
Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are weary and wayworn,
So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants descended
Down from the church to the shore, amid their wives and their daughters.
Foremost the young men came; and, raising together their voices,
Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the Catholic Missions:—
"Sacred heart of the Savior! O inexhaustible fountain!
Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission and patience!"
Then the old men, as they marched, and the women that stood by the wayside
Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the sunshine above them
Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of spirits departed.

[1] Exodus 34:29–35

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited in silence,
Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour of affliction,—
Calmly and sadly she waited, until the procession approached her,
And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.
Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running to meet him,
Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his shoulder, and whispered,—
"Gabriel, be of good cheer! for if we love one another,
Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mischances may happen!"
Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly paused, for her father
Saw she, slowly advancing. Alas! how changed was his aspect!
Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire from his eye, and his footstep
Heavier seemed with the weight of the heavy heart in his bosom.
But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck and embraced him,
Speaking words of endearment where words of comfort availed not.
Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth moved on that mournful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking.
Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too late, saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest entreaties.
So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.
Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight
Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the refluent ocean
Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach
Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slippery seaweed.
Farther back in the midst of the household goods and the wagons,
Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them,
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.
Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing ocean,
Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving
Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the sailors.
Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from their pastures;
Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of milk from their udders;
Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known bars of the farmyard,—
Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand of the milkmaid.
Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus sounded,
Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had been kindled,
Built of the driftwood thrown on the sands from wrecks in the tempest.
Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were gathered,
Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the crying of children.
Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in his parish,
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing and cheering,
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate seashore.
Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her father,
And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old man,
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either thought or emotion,
E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have been taken.
Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer him,

Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he looked not, he spake not,
But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering firelight.
"*Benedicite!*" murmured the priest, in tones of compassion.
More he fain would have said, but his heart was full, and his accents
Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child on a threshold,
Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence of sorrow.
Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head of the maiden,
Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them
Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.
Then sat he down at her side, and they wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn the blood-red
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and o'er the horizon
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon mountain and meadow,
Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge shadows together.
Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs of the village,
Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships that lay in the roadstead.
Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quivering hands of a martyr.
Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning thatch, and, uplifting,
Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hundred housetops
Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the shore and on shipboard.
Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their anguish,
"We shall behold no more our homes in the village of Grand-Pré!"
Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the farmyards,
Thinking the day had dawned; and anon the lowing of cattle
Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of dogs interrupted.
Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the sleeping encampments
Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt the Nebraska,
When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with the speed of the whirlwind,
Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to the river.
Such was the sound that arose on the night, as the herds and the horses
Broke through their folds and fences, and madly rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless, the priest and the maiden
Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and widened before them;
And as they turned at length to speak to their silent companion,
Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched abroad on the seashore
Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had departed.
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and the maiden
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her terror.
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head on his bosom.
Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious slumber;
And when she woke from the trance, she beheld a multitude near her.
Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully gazing upon her,
Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest compassion.
Still the blaze of the burning village illumined the landscape,
Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the faces around her,
And like the day of doom it seemed to her wavering senses.
Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the people,—
"Let us bury him here by the sea. When a happier season

Brings us again to our homes from the unknown land of our exile,
Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the churchyard."
Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste by the seaside,
Having the glare of the burning village for funeral torches,
But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of Grand-Pré.
And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,
Lo! with a mournful sound like the voice of a vast congregation,
Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges.
'Twas the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,
With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying landward.
Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking;
And with the ebb of the tide the ships sailed out of the harbor,
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and the village in ruins.

[End of Part the First] 1847

## THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

Composed June–September, 1849, twelve years before the Civil War; published as the leading poem in the *Seaside and Fireside* volume, 1849. Although it is a thoroughly American poem in content, it owes much in pattern and handling to Schiller's *Das Lied von der Glocke* (1799), in which the poet follows with technical details the casting of the bell and the hanging of it in a tower, and so treats it that it becomes a symbol of humanity. Longfellow's technical interest in shipbuilding came no doubt from his boyhood in Portland. The poem had no little influence in arousing support of the Union. The conclusion that Longfellow substituted for the originally weaker ending was recited and quoted far and wide. Longfellow records, February 12, 1850, hearing the famous actress Fanny Kemble read the poem "before the Mercantile Library Association, to an audience of more than three thousand . . . standing out upon the platform, book in hand, trembling, palpitating, and weeping, and giving every word its true weight and emphasis." Noah Brooks tells (in *Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1879) of reading the poem to President Lincoln. "He did not speak for some minutes, but finally said, 'It is a wonderful gift to be able to stir men like that.' "

"Build me straight, O worthy Master!
Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!"

The merchant's word
Delighted the Master heard;
For his heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every Art.
A quiet smile played round his lips,
As the eddies and dimples of the tide
Play round the bows of ships
That steadily at anchor ride.
And with a voice that was full of glee,
He answered, "Erelong we will launch
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and stanch,
As ever weathered a wintry sea!"
And first with nicest skill and art,
Perfect and finished in every part,
A little model the Master wrought,
Which should be to the larger plan
What the child is to the man,
Its counterpart in miniature;
That with a hand more swift and sure
The greater labor might be brought
To answer to his inward thought.
And as he labored, his mind ran o'er
The various ships that were built of yore,
And above them all, and strangest of all
Towered the Great Harry,[1] crank and tall,
Whose picture was hanging on the wall,
With bows and stern raised high in air,
And balconies hanging here and there,
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,
And eight round towers, like those that frown
From some old castle, looking down
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.
And he said with a smile, "Our ship, I wis,
Shall be of another form than this!"
It was of another form, indeed;
Built for freight, and yet for speed,

[1] A famous three-masted, two-decked warship ordered for the English navy by Henry VII in 1488, but not completed until 1509 at the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. The word "crank" as applied to a ship usually means top-heavy, or easily inclined by the force of wind or wave, but Longfellow may use the word in its archaic sense of sturdy or vigorous.

A beautiful and gallant craft;
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,
Pressing down upon sail and mast,
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft
With graceful curve and slow degrees,
That she might be docile to the helm,
And that the currents of parted seas,
Closing behind, with mighty force,
Might aid and not impede her course.

In the shipyard stood the Master,
With the model of the vessel,
That should laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around;
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees;
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke!
Ah! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in motion!
There's not a ship that sails the ocean,
But every climate, every soil,
Must bring its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall![1]

The sun was rising o'er the sea,
And long the level shadows lay,
As if they, too, the beams would be
Of some great, airy argosy,
Framed and launched in a single day.
That silent architect, the sun,
Had hewn and laid them every one,
Ere the work of man was yet begun.
Beside the Master, when he spoke,
A youth, against an anchor leaning,
Listened, to catch his slightest meaning,
Only the long waves, as they broke
In ripples on the pebbly beach,
Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,
The old man and the fiery youth!
The old man, in whose busy brain
Many a ship that sailed the main
Was modelled o'er and o'er again;
The fiery youth, who was to be
The heir of his dexterity,
The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,
When he had built and launched from land
What the elder head had planned.

"Thus," said he, "will we build this ship!
Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
And follow well this plan of mine.
Choose the timbers with greatest care;
Of all that is unsound beware;
For only what is sound and strong
To this vessel shall belong.
Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine
Here together shall combine.
A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,
And the UNION be her name!
For the day that gives her to the sea
Shall give my daughter unto thee!"

The Master's word
Enraptured the young man heard;
And as he turned his face aside,
With a look of joy and a thrill of pride
Standing before
Her father's door,
He saw the form of his promised bride.
The sun shone on her golden hair,
And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,
With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.
Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach;
But he
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea!
Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love's command!
It is the heart, and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest!

[1] The "wooden wall" metaphor of the ship is an echo of a famous utterance of the Delphic oracle in reply to the question of the Greeks as to how they might best defend themselves against the invading Persians under Xerxes. The reply was:

" Zeus the sire of all
Hath safety promised in a wooden wall."

The Greeks interpreted this to mean that they should depend upon their ships, and by doing so they completely defeated the Persians in the sea battle of Salamis.

Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the shipyard's bounds
Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, plied
With vigorous arms on every side;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along
The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy, every one
Who sees his labor well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied,
By idly waiting for time and tide!

And when the hot, long day was o'er,
The young man at the Master's door
Sat with the maiden calm and still,
And within the porch, a little more
Removed beyond the evening chill,
The father sat, and told them tales
Of wrecks in the great September gales,
Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,
And ships that never came back again,
The chance and change of a sailor's life,
Want and plenty, rest and strife,
His roving fancy, like the wind,
That nothing can stay and nothing can bind,
And the magic charm of foreign lands,
With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
Where the tumbling surf,
O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,
Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,[1]
As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.
And the trembling maiden held her breath
At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,
With all its terror and mystery,
The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,
That divides and yet unites mankind!
And whenever the old man paused, a gleam
From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illume
The silent group in the twilight gloom,
And thoughtful faces, as in a dream;
And for a moment one might mark
What had been hidden by the dark,
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
Tenderly, on the young man's breast!

[1] an East Indian sailor

Day by day the vessel grew,
With timbers fashioned strong and true,
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,
Till, framed with perfect symmetry,
A skeleton ship rose up to view!
And around the bows and along the side
The heavy hammers and mallets plied,
Till after many a week, at length,
Wonderful for form and strength,
Sublime in its enormous bulk,
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk!
And around it columns of smoke, upwreathing,
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething
Caldron, that glowed,
And overflowed
With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.
And amid the clamors
Of clattering hammers,
He who listened heard now and then
The song of the Master and his men:—

"Build me straight, O worthy Master,
Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle!"

With oaken brace and copper band,
Lay the rudder on the sand,
That, like a thought, should have control
Over the movement of the whole;
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand
Would reach down and grapple with the land,
And immovable and fast
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast!
And at the bows an image stood,
By a cunning artist carved in wood,
With robes of white, that far behind
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
It was not shaped in a classic mould,
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
Or Naiad rising from the water,
But modelled from the Master's daughter!
On many a dreary and misty night,
'Twill be seen by the rays of the signal light,
Speeding along through the rain and the dark,
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,
The pilot of some phantom bark,
Guiding the vessel, in its flight,
By a path none other knows aright!

Behold, at last,
Each tall and tapering mast
Is swung into its place;[1]
Shrouds and stays
Holding it firm and fast!

Long ago,
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
When upon mountain and plain
Lay the snow,
They fell,—those lordly pines!
Those grand, majestic pines!
'Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall,
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And naked and bare,
To feel the stress and the strain
Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them forevermore
Of their native forests they should not see again.

And everywhere
The slender, graceful spars
Poise aloft in the air,
And at the mast-head,
White, blue, and red,
A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.
Ah! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,
In foreign harbors shall behold
That flag unrolled,
'Twill be as a friendly hand
Stretched out from his native land,
Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless!

All is finished! and at length
Has come the bridal day
Of beauty and of strength.
Today the vessel shall be launched!
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
And o'er the bay,
Slowly, in all his splendors dight,
The great sun rises to behold the sight.
The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro,
Up and down the sands of gold.
His beating heart is not at rest;
And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
There she stands,
With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers gay,
In honor of her marriage day,
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride
Is standing by her lover's side.
Shadows from the flags and shrouds,
Like the shadows cast by clouds,
Broken by many a sudden fleck,
Fall around them on the deck.

The prayer is said,
The service read,
The joyous bridegroom bows his head;
And in tears the good old Master
Shakes the brown hand of his son,
Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek
In silence, for he cannot speak,
And ever faster
Down his own the tears begin to run.
The worthy pastor—
The shepherd of that wandering flock,
That has the ocean for its wold,
That has the vessel for its fold,
Leaping ever from rock to rock—
Spake, with accents mild and clear,
Words of warning, words of cheer,
But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.

[1] "I wish to anticipate a criticism on this passage, by stating that sometimes, though not usually, vessels are launched fully sparred and rigged. I have availed myself of the exception as better suited to my purposes than the general rule; but the reader will see that it is neither a blunder nor a poetic license. On this subject a friend in Portland, Maine, writes me thus: 'In this state, and also, I am told, in New York, ships are sometimes rigged upon the stocks, in order to save time, or to make a show. There was a fine large ship launched last summer at Ellsworth, fully sparred and rigged. Some years ago a ship was launched here, with her rigging, spars, sails, and cargo aboard. She sailed the next day and—was never heard of again! I hope this will not be the fate of your poem!' " [*Longfellow's note.*]

He knew the chart
Of the sailor's heart,
All its pleasures and its griefs,
All its shallows and rocky reefs,
All those secret currents, that flow
With such resistless undertow,
And lift and drift, with terrible force,
The will from its moorings and its course.
Therefore he spake, and thus said he:—
"Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear!"

Then the Master,
With a gesture of command,
Waved his hand;
And at the word,
Loud and sudden there was heard,
All around them and below,
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs.
And see! she stirs!
She starts,—she moves,—she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel,
And, spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting, joyous bound,
She leaps into the ocean's arms!

And lo! from the assembled crowd
There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,
That to the ocean seemed to say,
"Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,
Take her to thy protecting arms,
With all her youth and all her charms!"

How beautiful she is! How fair
She lies within those arms, that press
Her form with many a soft caress
Of tenderness and watchful care!
Sail forth into the sea, O ship!
Through wind and wave, right onward steer!
The moistened eye, the trembling lip,
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,
And safe from all adversity
Upon the bosom of that sea
Thy comings and thy goings be!
For gentleness and love and trust
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;
And in the wreck of noble lives
Something immortal still survives!

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

1849

## MY LOST YOUTH

Written in 1855; published in *Putnam's Monthly*, August, 1855; reprinted in the *Courtship of Miles Standish and Other Poems* (1858). Highly

praised by Alfred Noyes, *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry*, pp. 256–257. The ultimate source of the refrain is *Lapponia* (1673), a Latin treatise on Finland by Johannes Scheffer, Professor at Upsala. Longfellow, however, took his refrain from the translation of the Lapland song made by Herder and included in his *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1778–1779) of which Longfellow owned a copy. The American poet literally translates—

> "*Knabenwille ist Windeswille,*
> *Jünglingsgedanken lange Gedanken.*"

See J. T. Hatfield's "Longfellow's Lapland Song," in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, XLV, 1188–92, and his "Longfellow a Transmitter of German Culture," in *German Culture in the United States* (1936).

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town[1]
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides[2]
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

[1] Portland, Maine, the poet's birthplace [2] island home of the mythological Hesperides, the nymphs who guarded the garden of the golden apples

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drumbeat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight[1] far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.

[1] between the British brig *Boxer* and the American *Enterprise* off the harbor of Portland in 1813

And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet,
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
Sings on, and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

*1855* 1855, 1858

## *From* THE SONG OF HIAWATHA

Begun June 25, 1854, and finished March 29, 1855; published November 10, 1855, in twenty-two parts with an introduction. It was popular at once and has remained so, although its romantic anthropology is not admired by the learned. Children like it for its vividness and simplicity of expression, and the mature like it for its ethnic significance as preserving, however idealized, some of the traditions of a vanishing race.

One of Longfellow's notes accompanying the poem reads: "This Indian Edda—if I may so call it—is founded on a tradition, prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. He was known among different tribes by the several names of Michabou, Chiabo, Manabozho, Tarenyawagon and Hiawatha. Mr. Schoolcraft gives an account of him in his *Algic Researches*, Vol. I, p. 134; and in his *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, Part III, p. 314, may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal narrations of an Onondaga chief. Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends, drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians. The scene of the poem is among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the region between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable."

In addition to the works of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1794–1863), Longfellow relied, like Cooper, on that of the Rev. John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder (1743–1825), Moravian missionary among the Delaware Indians, whose book he read in his college days; on *The Narrative of the Adventures of John Tanner* (1830); on Mary Eastman's *Dakotah, or Life and Legends of the Sioux around Fort Snelling* (1847), and other works Following a blunder of Schoolcraft, he confused the historic Hiawatha of the Iroquois tribe and Manabozho, an Algonquin or Chippewa deity. See A. Keiser, *The Indian in Literature* (1933), pp. 189–208; also Stith Thompson, "The Indian Legend of Hiawatha," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XXXVII (1922). Longfellow acknowledged that the metrical form of the poem (unrhymed trochaic tetrameter) was suggested to him by the Finnish *Kalevala*, a collection of heroic poetry, the originals dating from the Middle Ages, which was organized into a national epic by Elias Lönnrot, and published in 1849.

IV

### *Hiawatha and Mudjekeewis*

Out of childhood into manhood
Now had grown my Hiawatha,
Skilled in all the craft of hunters,
Learned in all the lore of old men,
In all youthful sports and pastimes,
In all manly arts and labors.
Swift of foot was Hiawatha;
He could shoot an arrow from him,
And run forward with such fleetness,
That the arrow fell behind him!
Strong of arm was Hiawatha;
He could shoot ten arrows upward,
Shoot them with such strength and swiftness,
That the tenth had left the bow-string
Ere the first to earth had fallen!
He had mittens, Minjekahwun,
Magic mittens made of deerskin;

When upon his hands he wore them,
He could smite the rocks asunder,
He could grind them into powder.
He had moccasins enchanted,
Magic moccasins of deerskin;
When he bound them round his ankles,
When upon his feet he tied them,
At each stride a mile he measured!
  Much he questioned old Nokomis
Of his father Mudjekeewis;
Learned from her the fatal secret
Of the beauty of his mother,
Of the falsehood of his father;
And his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.
  Then he said to old Nokomis,
"I will go to Mudjekeewis,
See how fares it with my father,
At the doorways of the West-Wind,
At the portals of the Sunset!"
  From his lodge went Hiawatha,
Dressed for travel, armed for hunting;
Dressed in deerskin shirt and leggins,
Richly wrought with quills and wampum;
On his head his eagle-feathers,
Round his waist his belt of wampum,
In his hand his bow of ash-wood,
Strung with sinews of the reindeer;
In his quiver oaken arrows,
Tipped with jasper, winged with feathers;
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
With his moccasins enchanted.
  Warning said the old Nokomis,
"Go not forth, O Hiawatha!
To the kingdom of the West-Wind,
To the realms of Mudjekeewis,
Lest he harm you with his magic,
Lest he kill you with his cunning!"
  But the fearless Hiawatha
Heeded not her woman's warning;
Forth he strode into the forest,
At each stride a mile he measured;
Lurid seemed the sky above him,
Lurid seemed the earth beneath him,
Hot and close the air around him,
Filled with smoke and fiery vapors,
As of burning woods and prairies,
For his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.
  So he journeyed westward, westward,
Left the fleetest deer behind him,
Left the antelope and bison;
Crossed the rushing Esconaba,
Crossed the mighty Mississippi,
Passed the Mountains of the Prairie,
Passed the land of Crows and Foxes,
Passed the dwellings of the Blackfeet,
Came unto the Rocky Mountains,
To the kingdom of the West-Wind,
Where upon the gusty summits
Sat the ancient Mudjekeewis,
Ruler of the winds of heaven.
  Filled with awe was Hiawatha
At the aspect of his father.
On the air about him wildly
Tossed and streamed his cloudy tresses,
Gleamed like drifting snow his tresses,
Glared like Ishkoodah, the comet,
Like the star with fiery tresses.
  Filled with joy was Mudjekeewis
When he looked on Hiawatha,
Saw his youth rise up before him
In the face of Hiawatha,
Saw the beauty of Wenonah
From the grave rise up before him.
  "Welcome!" said he, "Hiawatha,
To the kingdom of the West-Wind!
Long have I been waiting for you!
Youth is lovely, age is lonely,
Youth is fiery, age is frosty;
You bring back the days departed,
You bring back my youth of passion,
And the beautiful Wenonah!"
  Many days they talked together,
Questioned, listened, waited, answered;
Much the mighty Mudjekeewis
Boasted of his ancient prowess,
Of his perilous adventures,
His indomitable courage,
His invulnerable body.
  Patiently sat Hiawatha,
Listening to his father's boasting;
With a smile he sat and listened,
Uttered neither threat nor menace,
Neither word nor look betrayed him,
But his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.
  Then he said, "O Mudjekeewis,
Is there nothing that can harm you?
Nothing that you are afraid of?"
And the mighty Mudjekeewis,
Grand and gracious in his boasting,

Answered, saying, "There is nothing,
Nothing but the black rock yonder,
Nothing but the fatal Wawbeek!"
And he looked at Hiawatha
With a wise look and benignant,
With a countenance paternal,
Looked with pride upon the beauty
Of his tall and graceful figure,
Saying, "O my Hiawatha!
Is there anything can harm you?
Anything you are afraid of?"
But the wary Hiawatha
Paused awhile, as if uncertain,
Held his peace, as if resolving,
And then answered, "There is nothing,
Nothing but the bulrush yonder,
Nothing but the great Apukwa!"
And as Mudjekeewis, rising,
Stretched his hand to pluck the bulrush,
Hiawatha cried in terror,
Cried in well-dissembled terror,
"Kago! kago! do not touch it!"
"Ah, kaween!" said Mudjekeewis,
"No indeed, I will not touch it!"
Then they talked of other matters;
First of Hiawatha's brothers,
First of Wabun, of the East-Wind,
Of the South-Wind, Shawondasee,
Of the North, Kabibonokka;
Then of Hiawatha's mother,
Of the beautiful Wenonah,
Of her birth upon the meadow,
Of her death, as old Nokomis
Had remembered and related.
And he cried, "O Mudjekeewis,
It was you who killed Wenonah,
Took her young life and her beauty,
Broke the Lily of the Prairie,
Trampled it beneath your footsteps;
You confess it! you confess it!"
And the mighty Mudjekeewis
Tossed upon the wind his tresses,
Bowed his hoary head in anguish,
With a silent nod assented.
Then up started Hiawatha,
And with threatening look and gesture
Laid his hand upon the black rock,
On the fatal Wawbeek laid it,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Rent the jutting crag asunder,
Smote and crushed it into fragments,
Hurled them madly at his father,
The remorseful Mudjekeewis,
For his heart was hot within him,
Like a living coal his heart was.
But the ruler of the West-Wind
Blew the fragments backward from him,
With the breathing of his nostrils,
With the tempest of his anger,
Blew them back at his assailant;
Seized the bulrush, the Apukwa,
Dragged it with its roots and fibres
From the margin of the meadow,
From its ooze the giant bulrush;
Long and loud laughed Hiawatha!
Then began the deadly conflict,
Hand to hand among the mountains;
From his eyry screamed the eagle,
The Keneu, the great war-eagle,
Sat upon the crags around them,
Wheeling flapped his wings above them.
Like a tall tree in the tempest
Bent and lashed the giant bulrush;
And in masses huge and heavy
Crashing fell the fatal Wawbeek;
Till the earth shook with the tumult
And confusion of the battle,
And the air was full of shoutings,
And the thunder of the mountains,
Starting, answered, "Baim-wawa!"
Back retreated Mudjekeewis,
Rushing westward o'er the mountains,
Stumbling westward down the mountains,
Three whole days retreated fighting,
Still pursued by Hiawatha
To the doorways of the West-Wind,
To the portals of the Sunset,
To the earth's remotest border,
Where into the empty spaces
Sinks the sun, as a flamingo
Drops into her nest at nightfall
In the melancholy marshes.
"Hold!" at length cried Mudjekeewis,
"Hold, my son, my Hiawatha!
'Tis impossible to kill me,
For you cannot kill the immortal.
I have put you to this trial,
But to know and prove your courage;
Now receive the prize of valor!
"Go back to your home and people,
Live among them, toil among them,
Cleanse the earth from all that harms it,

Clear the fishing-grounds and rivers,
Slay all monsters and magicians,
All the Wendigoes, the giants,
All the serpents, the Kenabeeks,
As I slew the Mishe-Mokwa,
Slew the Great Bear of the mountains.
"And at last when Death draws near you,
When the awful eyes of Pauguk
Glare upon you in the darkness
I will share my kingdom with you,
Ruler shall you be thenceforward
Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin,
Of the home-wind, the Keewaydin."
Thus was fought that famous battle
In the dreadful days of Shah-shah,
In the days long since departed,
In the kingdom of the West-Wind.
Still the hunter sees its traces
Scattered far o'er hill and valley;
Sees the giant bulrush growing
By the ponds and watercourses,
Sees the masses of the Wawbeek
Lying still in every valley.
Homeward now went Hiawatha;
Pleasant was the landscape round him,
Pleasant was the air above him,
For the bitterness of anger
Had departed wholly from him,
From his brain the thought of vengeance,
From his heart the burning fever.
Only once his pace he slackened,
Only once he paused or halted,
Paused to purchase heads of arrows
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Where the Falls of Minnehaha
Flash and gleam among the oak-trees,
Laugh and leap into the valley.
There the ancient Arrow-maker
Made his arrowheads of sandstone,
Arrowheads of chalcedony,
Arrowheads of flint and jasper,
Smoothed and sharpened at the edges,
Hard and polished, keen and costly.
With him dwelt his dark-eyed daughter,
Wayward as the Minnehaha,
With her moods of shade and sunshine,
Eyes that smiled and frowned alternate,
Feet as rapid as the river,
Tresses flowing like the water,
And as musical a laughter:
And he named her from the river,
From the waterfall he named her,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water.
Was it then for heads of arrows,
Arrowheads of chalcedony,
Arrowheads of flint and jasper,
That my Hiawatha halted
In the lands of the Dacotahs?
Was it not to see the maiden,
See the face of Laughing Water
Peeping from behind the curtain,
As one sees the Minnehaha
Gleaming, glancing through the branches,
As one hears the Laughing Water
From behind its screen of branches?
Who shall say what thoughts and visions
Fill the fiery brains of young men?
Who shall say what dreams of beauty
Filled the heart of Hiawatha?
All he told to old Nokomis,
When he reached the lodge at sunset,
Was the meeting with his father,
Was his fight with Mudjekeewis;
Not a word he said of arrows,
Not a word of Laughing Water.

XVI

## *Pau-Puk-Keewis*

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,
He, the handsome Yenadizze,
Whom the people called the Storm-Fool,
Vexed the village with disturbance;
You shall hear of all his mischief,
And his flight from Hiawatha,
And his wondrous transmigrations,
And the end of his adventures.
On the shores of Gitche Gumee,
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water
Stood the lodge of Pau-Puk-Keewis.
It was he who in his frenzy
Whirled these drifting sands together,
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo,
When, among the guests assembled,
He so merrily and madly
Danced at Hiawatha's wedding,
Danced the Beggar's Dance to please them.
Now, in search of new adventures,
From his lodge went Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Came with speed into the village,

Found the young men all assembled
In the lodge of old Iagoo,
Listening to his monstrous stories,
To his wonderful adventures.
He was telling them the story
Of Ojeeg, the Summer-Maker,
How he made a hole in heaven,
How he climbed up into heaven,
And let out the summer-weather,
The perpetual, pleasant Summer;
How the Otter first essayed it;
How the Beaver, Lynx, and Badger
Tried in turn the great achievement,
From the summit of the mountain
Smote their fists against the heavens,
Smote against the sky their foreheads,
Cracked the sky, but could not break it;
How the Wolverine, uprising,
Made him ready for the encounter,
Bent his knees down, like a squirrel,
Drew his arms back, like a cricket.
"Once he leaped," said old Iagoo,
"Once he leaped, and lo! above him
Bent the sky, as ice in rivers
When the waters rise beneath it;
Twice he leaped, and lo! above him
Broke the shattered sky asunder,
And he disappeared within it,
And Ojeeg, the Fisher Weasel,
With a bound went in behind him!"
"Hark you!" shouted Pau-Puk-Keewis
As he entered at the doorway;
"I am tired of all this talking,
Tired of old Iagoo's stories,
Tired of Hiawatha's wisdom.
Here is something to amuse you,
Better than this endless talking."
Then from out his pouch of wolfskin
Forth he drew, with solemn manner,
All the game of Bowl and Counters,[1]
Pugasaing, with thirteen pieces.
White on one side were they painted,
And vermilion on the other;
Two Kenabeeks or great serpents,
Two Ininewug or wedge-men,
One great war-club, Pugamaugun,
And one slender fish, the Keego,
Four round pieces, Ozawabeeks,
And three Sheshebwug or ducklings.

[1] the principal game of hazard among the northern Indians, according to Schoolcraft

All were made of bone and painted,
All except the Ozawabeeks;
These were brass, on one side burnished,
And were black upon the other.
In a wooden bowl he placed them,
Shook and jostled them together,
Threw them on the ground before him,
Thus exclaiming and explaining:
"Red side up are all the pieces,
And one great Kenabeek standing
On the bright side of a brass piece,
On a burnished Ozawabeek;
Thirteen tens and eight are counted."
Then again he shook the pieces,
Shook and jostled them together,
Threw them on the ground before him,
Still exclaiming and explaining:
"White are both the great Kenabeeks,
White the Ininewug, the wedge-men,
Red are all the other pieces;
Five tens and an eight are counted."
Thus he taught the game of hazard,
Thus displayed it and explained it,
Running through its various chances,
Various changes, various meanings:
Twenty curious eyes stared at him,
Full of eagerness stared at him.
"Many games," said old Iagoo,
"Many games of skill and hazard
Have I seen in different nations,
Have I played in different countries.
He who plays with old Iagoo
Must have very nimble fingers;
Though you think yourself so skilful,
I can beat you, Pau-Puk-Keewis,
I can even give you lessons
In your game of Bowl and Counters!"
So they sat and played together,
All the old men and the young men,
Played for dresses, weapons, wampum,
Played till midnight, played till morning,
Played until the Yenadizze,
Till the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Of their treasures had despoiled them,
Of the best of all their dresses,
Shirts of deerskin, robes of ermine,
Belts of wampum, crests of feathers,
Warlike weapons, pipes and pouches.
Twenty eyes glared wildly at him,
Like the eyes of wolves glared at him.
Said the lucky Pau-Puk-Keewis:

"In my wigwam I am lonely,
In my wanderings and adventures
I have need of a companion,
Fain would have a Meshinauwa,
An attendant and pipe-bearer.
I will venture all these winnings,
All these garments heaped about me,
All this wampum, all these feathers,
On a single throw will venture
All against the young man yonder!"
'Twas a youth of sixteen summers,
'Twas a nephew of Iagoo;
Face-in-a-Mist, the people called him.
As the fire burns in a pipe-head
Dusky red beneath the ashes,
So beneath his shaggy eyebrows
Glowed the eyes of old Iagoo.
"Ugh!" he answered very fiercely;
"Ugh!" they answered all and each one.
Seized the wooden bowl the old man,
Closely in his bony fingers
Clutched the fatal bowl, Onagon,
Shook it fiercely and with fury,
Made the pieces ring together
As he threw them down before him.
Red were both the great Kenabeeks,
Red the Ininewug, the wedge-men,
Red the Sheshebwug, the ducklings,
Black the four brass Ozawabeeks,
White alone the fish, the Keego;
Only five the pieces counted!
Then the smiling Pau-Puk-Keewis
Shook the bowl and threw the pieces;
Lightly in the air he tossed them,
And they fell about him scattered;
Dark and bright the Ozawabeeks,
Red and white the other pieces,
And upright among the others
One Ininewug was standing,
Even as crafty Pau-Puk-Keewis
Stood alone among the players,
Saying, "Five tens! mine the game is!"
Twenty eyes glared at him fiercely,
Like the eyes of wolves glared at him,
As he turned and left the wigwam,
Followed by his Meshinauwa,
By the nephew of Iagoo,
By the tall and graceful stripling,
Bearing in his arms the winnings,
Shirts of deerskin, robes of ermine,
Belts of wampum, pipes and weapons.

"Carry them," said Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Pointing with his fan of feathers,
"To my wigwam far to eastward,
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo!"
Hot and red with smoke and gambling
Were the eyes of Pau-Puk-Keewis
As he came forth to the freshness
Of the pleasant Summer morning.
All the birds were singing gayly,
All the streamlets flowing swiftly,
And the heart of Pau-Puk-Keewis
Sang with pleasure as the birds sing,
Beat with triumph like the streamlets,
As he wandered through the village,
In the early gray of morning,
With his fan of turkey-feathers,
With his plumes and tufts of swan's down,
Till he reached the farthest wigwam,
Reached the lodge of Hiawatha.
Silent was it and deserted;
No one met him at the doorway,
No one came to bid him welcome;
But the birds were singing round it,
In and out and round the doorway,
Hopping, singing, fluttering, feeding,
And aloft upon the ridgepole
Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens,
Sat with fiery eyes, and, screaming,
Flapped his wings at Pau-Puk-Keewis.
"All are gone! the lodge is empty!"
Thus it was spake Pau-Puk-Keewis,
In his heart resolving mischief;—
"Gone is wary Hiawatha,
Gone the silly Laughing Water,
Gone Nokomis, the old woman,
And the lodge is left unguarded!"
By the neck he seized the raven,
Whirled it round him like a rattle,
Like a medicine-pouch he shook it,
Strangled Kahgahgee, the raven,
From the ridgepole of the wigwam
Left its lifeless body hanging,
As an insult to its master,
As a taunt to Hiawatha.
With a stealthy step he entered,
Round the lodge in wild disorder
Threw the household things about him,
Piled together in confusion
Bowls of wood and earthen kettles,
Robes of buffalo and beaver,
Skins of otter, lynx, and ermine,

As an insult to Nokomis,
As a taunt to Minnehaha.
Then departed Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Whistling, singing through the forest,
Whistling gayly to the squirrels,
Who from hollow boughs above him
Dropped their acorn-shells upon him,
Singing gayly to the wood birds,
Who from out the leafy darkness
Answered with a song as merry.
Then he climbed the rocky headlands,
Looking o'er the Gitche Gumee,
Perched himself upon their summit,
Waiting full of mirth and mischief
The return of Hiawatha.
Stretched upon his back he lay there;
Far below him plashed the waters,
Plashed and washed the dreamy waters;
Far above him swam the heavens,
Swam the dizzy, dreamy heavens;
Round him hovered, fluttered, rustled
Hiawatha's mountain chickens,
Flock-wise swept and wheeled about him,
Almost brushed him with their pinions.
And he killed them as he lay there,
Slaughtered them by tens and twenties,
Threw their bodies down the headland,
Threw them on the beach below him,
Till at length Kayoshk, the sea-gull,
Perched upon a crag above them,
Shouted: "It is Pau-Puk-Keewis!
He is slaying us by hundreds!
Send a message to our brother,
Tidings send to Hiawatha!"

XVII

## *The Hunting of Pau-Puk-Keewis*

Full of wrath was Hiawatha
When he came into the village,
Found the people in confusion,
Heard of all the misdemeanors,
All the malice and the mischief,
Of the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis.
Hard his breath came through his nostrils,
Through his teeth he buzzed and muttered
Words of anger and resentment,
Hot and humming, like a hornet.
"I will slay this Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Slay this mischief-maker!" said he.
"Not so long and wide the world is,
Not so rude and rough the way is,
That my wrath shall not attain him,
That my vengeance shall not reach him!"
Then in swift pursuit departed
Hiawatha and the hunters
On the trail of Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Through the forest, where he passed it,
To the headlands where he rested;
But they found not Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Only in the trampled grasses,
In the whortleberry-bushes,
Found the couch where he had rested,
Found the impress of his body.
From the lowlands far beneath them,
From the Muskoday, the meadow,
Pau-Puk-Keewis, turning backward,
Made a gesture of defiance,
Made a gesture of derision;
And aloud cried Hiawatha,
From the summit of the mountains:
"Not so long and wide the world is,
Not so rude and rough the way is,
But my wrath shall overtake you,
And my vengeance shall attain you!"
Over rock and over river,
Thorough bush, and brake, and forest,
Ran the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis;
Like an antelope he bounded,
Till he came unto a streamlet
In the middle of the forest,
To a streamlet still and tranquil,
That had overflowed its margin,
To a dam made by the beavers,
To a pond of quiet water,
Where knee-deep the trees were standing,
Where the water-lilies floated,
Where the rushes waved and whispered.
On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,
On the dam of trunks and branches,
Through whose chinks the water spouted,
O'er whose summit flowed the streamlet.
From the bottom rose the beaver,
Looked with two great eyes of wonder,
Eyes that seemed to ask a question,
At the stranger, Pau-Puk-Keewis.
On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,
O'er his ankles flowed the streamlet,
Flowed the bright and silvery water,
And he spake unto the beaver,
With a smile he spake in this wise:
"O my friend Ahmeek, the beaver,

Cool and pleasant is the water;
Let me dive into the water,
Let me rest there in your lodges;
Change me, too, into a beaver!"
Cautiously replied the beaver,
With reserve he thus made answer:
"Let me first consult the others,
Let me ask the other beavers."
Down he sank into the water,
Heavily sank he, as a stone sinks,
Down among the leaves and branches,
Brown and matted at the bottom.
On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,
O'er his ankles flowed the streamlet,
Spouted through the chinks below him,
Dashed upon the stones beneath him,
Spread serene and calm before him,
And the sunshine and the shadows
Fell in flecks and gleams upon him,
Fell in little shining patches,
Through the waving, rustling branches.
From the bottom rose the beavers,
Silently above the surface
Rose one head and then another,
Till the pond seemed full of beavers,
Full of black and shining faces.
To the beavers Pau-Puk-Keewis
Spake entreating, said in this wise:
"Very pleasant is your dwelling,
O my friends! and safe from danger;
Can you not, with all your cunning,
All your wisdom and contrivance,
Change me, too, into a beaver?"
"Yes!" replied Ahmeek, the beaver,
He the King of all the beavers,
"Let yourself slide down among us,
Down into the tranquil water."
Down into the pond among them
Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis;
Black became his shirt of deerskin,
Black his moccasins and leggings,
In a broad black tail behind him
Spread his foxtails and his fringes;
He was changed into a beaver.
"Make me large," said Pau-Puk-Keewis,
"Make me large and make me larger,
Larger than the other beavers."
"Yes," the beaver chief responded,
"When our lodge below you enter,
In our wigwam we will make you
Ten times larger than the others."

Thus into the clear, brown water
Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis:
Found the bottom covered over
With the trunks of trees and branches,
Hoards of food against the winter,
Piles and heaps against the famine;
Found the lodge with arching doorway,
Leading into spacious chambers.
Here they made him large and larger,
Made him largest of the beavers,
Ten times larger than the others.
"You shall be our ruler," said they;
"Chief and King of all the beavers."
But not long had Pau-Puk-Keewis
Sat in state among the beavers,
When there came a voice of warning
From the watchman at his station
In the water-flags and lilies,
Saying, "Here is Hiawatha!
Hiawatha with his hunters!"
Then they heard a cry above them,
Heard a shouting and a tramping,
Heard a crashing and a rushing,
And the water round and o'er them
Sank and sucked away in eddies,
And they knew their dam was broken.
On the lodge's roof the hunters
Leaped, and broke it all asunder;
Streamed the sunshine through the crevice,
Sprang the beavers through the doorway,
Hid themselves in deeper water,
In the channel of the streamlet;
But the mighty Pau-Puk-Keewis
Could not pass beneath the doorway;
He was puffed with pride and feeding,
He was swollen like a bladder.
Through the roof looked Hiawatha,
Cried aloud, "O Pau-Puk-Keewis!
Vain are all your craft and cunning,
Vain your manifold disguises!
Well I know you, Pau-Puk-Keewis!"
With their clubs they beat and bruised him,
Beat to death poor Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Pounded him as maize is pounded,
Till his skull was crushed to pieces.
Six tall hunters, lithe and limber,
Bore him home on poles and branches,
Bore the body of the beaver;
But the ghost, the Jeebi in him,
Thought and felt as Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Still lived on as Pau-Puk-Keewis.

And it fluttered, strove, and struggled,
Waving hither, waving thither,
As the curtains of a wigwam
Struggle with their thongs of deerskin,
When the wintry wind is blowing;
Till it drew itself together,
Till it rose up from the body,
Till it took the form and features
Of the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis
Vanishing into the forest.
But the wary Hiawatha
Saw the figure ere it vanished,
Saw the form of Pau-Puk-Keewis
Glide into the soft blue shadow
Of the pine-trees of the forest;
Toward the squares of white beyond it,
Toward an opening in the forest,
Like a wind it rushed and panted,
Bending all the boughs before it,
And behind it, as the rain comes,
Came the steps of Hiawatha.
To a lake with many islands
Came the breathless Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Where among the water-lilies
Pishnekuh, the brant, were sailing;
Through the tufts of rushes floating,
Steering through the reedy islands.
Now their broad black beaks they lifted,
Now they plunged beneath the water,
Now they darkened in the shadow,
Now they brightened in the sunshine.
"Pishnekuh!" cried Pau-Puk-Keewis,
"Pishnekuh! my brothers!" said he,
"Change me to a brant with plumage,
With a shining neck and feathers,
Make me large, and make me larger,
Ten times larger than the others."
Straightway to a brant they changed him,
With two huge and dusky pinions,
With a bosom smooth and rounded,
With a bill like two great paddles,
Made him larger than the others,
Ten times larger than the largest,
Just as, shouting from the forest,
On the shore stood Hiawatha.
Up they rose with cry and clamor,
With a whir and beat of pinions,
Rose up from the reedy islands,
From the water-flags and lilies.
And they said to Pau-Puk-Keewis:
"In your flying, look not downward,
Take good heed and look not downward,
Lest some strange mischance should happen,
Lest some great mishap befall you!"
Fast and far they fled to northward,
Fast and far through mist and sunshine,
Fled among the moors and fen-lands,
Slept among the reeds and rushes.
On the morrow as they journeyed,
Buoyed and lifted by the South-wind,
Wafted onward by the South-wind,
Blowing fresh and strong behind them,
Rose a sound of human voices,
Rose a clamor from beneath them,
From the lodges of a village,
From the people miles beneath them.
For the people of the village
Saw the flock of brant with wonder,
Saw the wings of Pau-Puk-Keewis
Flapping far up in the ether,
Broader than two doorway curtains.
Pau-Puk-Keewis heard the shouting,
Knew the voice of Hiawatha,
Knew the outcry of Iagoo,
And, forgetful of the warning,
Drew his neck in, and looked downward,
And the wind that blew behind him
Caught his mighty fan of feathers,
Sent him wheeling, whirling downward!
All in vain did Pau-Puk-Keewis
Struggle to regain his balance!
Whirling round and round and downward,
He beheld in turn the village
And in turn the flock above him,
Saw the village coming nearer,
And the flock receding farther,
Heard the voices growing louder,
Heard the shouting and the laughter;
Saw no more the flocks above him,
Only saw the earth beneath him;
Dead out of the empty heaven,
Dead among the shouting people,
With a heavy soul and sullen,
Fell the brant with broken pinions.
But his soul, his ghost, his shadow,
Still survived as Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Took again the form and features
Of the handsome Yenadizze,
And again went rushing onward,
Followed fast by Hiawatha,
Crying: "Not so wide the world is,
Not so long and rough the way is,

But my wrath shall overtake you,
But my vengeance shall attain you!"
  And so near he came, so near him,
That his hand was stretched to seize him,
His right hand to seize and hold him,
When the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis
Whirled and spun about in circles,
Fanned the air into a whirlwind,
Danced the dust and leaves about him,
And amid the whirling eddies
Sprang into a hollow oak-tree,
Changed himself into a serpent,
Gliding out through root and rubbish.
  With his right hand Hiawatha
Smote amain the hollow oak-tree,
Rent it into shreds and splinters,
Left it lying there in fragments.
But in vain; for Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Once again in human figure,
Full in sight ran on before him,
Sped away in gust and whirlwind,
On the shores of Gitche Gumee,
Westward by the Big-Sea-Water,
Came unto the rocky headlands,
To the Pictured Rocks of sandstone,
Looking over lake and landscape.
  And the Old Man of the Mountain,
He the Manito of Mountains,
Opened wide his rocky doorways,
Opened wide his deep abysses,
Giving Pau-Puk-Keewis shelter
In his caverns dark and dreary,
Bidding Pau-Puk-Keewis welcome
To his gloomy lodge of sandstone.
  There without stood Hiawatha,
Found the doorways closed against him,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Smote great caverns in the sandstone,
Cried aloud in tones of thunder,
"Open! I am Hiawatha!"
But the Old Man of the Mountain
Opened not, and made no answer
From the silent crags of sandstone,
From the gloomy rock abysses.
  Then he raised his hands to heaven,
Called imploring on the tempest,
Called Waywassimo, the lightning,
And the thunder, Annemeekee;
And they came with night and darkness,
Sweeping down the Big-Sea-Water
From the distant Thunder Mountains;
And the trembling Pau-Puk-Keewis
Heard the footsteps of the thunder,
Saw the red eyes of the lightning,
Was afraid, and crouched and trembled.
  Then Waywassimo, the lightning,
Smote the doorways of the caverns,
With his war-club smote the doorways,
Smote the jutting crags of sandstone,
And the thunder, Annemeekee,
Shouted down into the caverns,
Saying, "Where is Pau-Puk-Keewis!"
And the crags fell, and beneath them
Dead among the rocky ruins
Lay the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Lay the handsome Yenadizze,
Slain in his own human figure.
  Ended were his wild adventures,
Ended were his tricks and gambols,
Ended all his craft and cunning,
Ended all his mischief-making,
All his gambling and his dancing,
All his wooing of the maidens.
  Then the noble Hiawatha
Took his soul, his ghost, his shadow,
Spake and said: "O Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Never more in human figure
Shall you search for new adventures;
Never more with jest and laughter
Dance the dust and leaves in whirlwinds;
But above there in the heavens
You shall soar and sail in circles;
I will change you to an eagle,
To Keneu, the great war-eagle,
Chief of all the fowls with feathers,
Chief of Hiawatha's chickens."
  And the name of Pau-Puk-Keewis
Lingers still among the people,
Lingers still among the singers,
And among the storytellers;
And in Winter, when the snowflakes
Whirl in eddies round the lodges,
When the wind in gusty tumult
O'er the smoke-flue pipes and whistles,
"There," they cry, "comes Pau-Puk-Keewis;
He is dancing through the village,
He is gathering in his harvest!"

*1854–1855* 1855

## SANDALPHON

Longfellow marked certain passages in *The Traditions of the Jews*, by J. P. Stehelin, and they obviously furnished the material for most of this poem: "There is an Angel who standeth on earth and reacheth with his head to the door of Heaven. . . . He is called Sandalphon." "There are three [angels] who weave or make garlands out of the prayers of the Israelites . . . the third is Sandalphon." "There be Angels which are of Wind and there be Angels which are of Fire." "The holy and blessed God creates every day a multitude of angels in heaven, who, after they have sung a hymn before him do perish. . . . Except Michael and Gabriel . . . and Sandalphon and their equals, who remain in their glory wherewith they were invested in the six days' creation." Longfellow wrote in his journal for November 2, 1857, "In the evening Scherb read to me some curious Talmudic legends from Corrodi's *Chiliasmus*,—of the great angel Sandalphon, and the feast of the Leviathan; at which feast this great fish is to be served up."

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
  Of the limitless realms of the air,
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
  Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
  With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered[1]
  Alone in the desert at night?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
  With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
  By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
  With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
  To sounds that ascend from below;—
From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
  In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
  Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
  Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
  Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—
A fable, a phantom, a show,
  Of the ancient Rabbinical lore;
Yet the old mediaeval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
  But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
  All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
  His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
  The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
  To quiet its fever and pain.

1858

[1] Genesis 28:11 ff.

## THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

First published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1860. Though it is a poem of Longfellow's own home in Cambridge, the imagery from the fifth stanza onward takes the reader to the feudal past. The poet perhaps had in mind, in the seventh stanza, Southey's poem "God's Judgment on a Wicked Bishop"; he knew, however, from his stay in Germany, the legend of Archbishop Hatto of the 10th century, who built a high tower on the Rhine for protection against mice, yet was eaten by them as a punishment for his cruelty to the common people who stole grain during a famine.

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
  When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
  That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And molder in dust away.

*1859* 1860

## *From* TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

First entitled "The Sudbury Tales." The Wayside Inn was the old Red Horse Inn at Sudbury, Massachusetts, about twenty miles from Boston. Members of the Howe family, from England, had kept the inn for a hundred and seventy-five years. After the death of Lyman Howe, a personal friend of Longfellow, the inn was closed until 1897, when E. R. Lemon restored and reopened it. It was bought in 1923 by Henry Ford to preserve it as a memorial. The *Tales* are in three parts, the first published, November 25, 1863. The second part appeared in *Three Books of Song* (1872), and the last series in *Aftermath* (1873). The collection of tales and the manner of their telling is modeled somewhat upon Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The poet gathered together at the Red Horse Inn a group of friends, much as Chaucer gathered his pilgrims at the Tabard Inn. The musician was Ole Bull, the Norwegian violinist; the student, Henry Ware Wales; the Sicilian, Luigi Monti; the Spanish Jew, Israel Edrehi, a Boston merchant; the theologian, Professor Daniel Treadwell of Harvard; the poet, T. W. Parsons.

PRELUDE

### *The Wayside Inn*

One autumn night, in Sudbury town,
Across the meadows bare and brown,
The windows of the wayside inn
Gleamed red with firelight through the leaves
Of woodbine, hanging from the eaves
Their crimson curtains rent and thin.

As ancient is this hostelry
As any in the land may be,
Built in the old Colonial day,
When men lived in a grander way,
With ampler hospitality;
A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,
Now somewhat fallen to decay,
With weather-stains upon the wall,
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,
And creaking and uneven floors,
And chimneys huge, and tiled and tall.

A region of repose it seems,
A place of slumber and of dreams,
Remote among the wooded hills!
For there no noisy railway speeds,
Its torch-race scattering smoke and gleeds;
But noon and night, the panting teams
Stop under the great oaks, that throw
Tangles of light and shade below,
On roofs and doors and window-sills.
Across the road the barns display
Their lines of stalls, their mows of hay,

Through the wide doors the breezes blow,
The wattled cocks strut to and fro,
And, half effaced by rain and shine,
The Red Horse prances on the sign.
Round this old-fashioned, quaint abode
Deep silence reigned, save when a gust
Went rushing down the county road,
And skeletons of leaves, and dust,
A moment quickened by its breath,
Shuddered and danced their dance of death,
And through the ancient oaks o'erhead
Mysterious voices moaned and fled.

But from the parlor of the inn
A pleasant murmur smote the ear,
Like water rushing through a weir:
Oft interrupted by the din
Of laughter and of loud applause,
And, in each intervening pause,
The music of a violin.
The firelight, shedding over all
The splendor of its ruddy glow,
Filled the whole parlor large and low;
It gleamed on wainscot and on wall,
It touched with more than wonted grace
Fair Princess Mary's pictured face;
It bronzed the rafters overhead,
On the old spinet's ivory keys
It played inaudible melodies,
It crowned the somber clock with flame,
The hands, the hours, the maker's name,
And painted with a livelier red
The Landlord's coat-of-arms again;
And, flashing on the window-pane,
Emblazoned with its light and shade
The jovial rhymes, that still remain,
Writ near a century ago
By the great Major Molineaux,
Whom Hawthorne has immortal made.[1]

Before the blazing fire of wood
Erect the rapt musician stood;
And ever and anon he bent
His head upon his instrument,
And seemed to listen, till he caught
Confessions of its secret thought,—
The joy, the triumph, the lament,
The exultation and the pain;
Then, by the magic of his art,
He soothed the throbbings of its heart,
And lulled it into peace again.

Around the fireside at their ease
There sat a group of friends, entranced
With the delicious melodies;
Who from the far-off noisy town
Had to the wayside inn come down,
To rest beneath its old oak trees.
The firelight on their faces glanced,
Their shadows on the wainscot danced,
And, though of different lands and speech,
Each had his tale to tell, and each
Was anxious to be pleased and please.
And while the sweet musician plays,
Let me in outline sketch them all,
Perchance uncouthly as the blaze
With its uncertain touch portrays
Their shadowy semblance on the wall.

But first the Landlord will I trace;
Grave in his aspect and attire;
A man of ancient pedigree,
A Justice of the Peace was he,
Known in all Sudbury as "The Squire."
Proud was he of his name and race,
Of old Sir William and Sir Hugh,
And in the parlor, full in view,
His coat-of-arms, well framed and glazed,
Upon the wall in colors blazed;
He beareth gules upon his shield,[1]
A chevron argent in the field,
With three wolf's heads, and for the crest
A Wyvern part-per-pale addressed
Upon a helmet barred; below
The scroll reads, "By the name of Howe."
And over this, no longer bright,
Though glimmering with a latent light,
Was hung the sword his grandsire bore
In the rebellious days of yore,
Down there at Concord in the fight.

A youth was there, of quiet ways,
A Student of old books and days,
To whom all tongues and lands were known,
And yet a lover of his own;

[1] in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," in *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1851)

[1] For an account of the details of the science of Heraldry, see the illustrated articles on the subject in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* or in the *New International Encyclopædia.*

With many a social virtue graced,
And yet a friend of solitude;
A man of such a genial mood
The heart of all things he embraced,
And yet of such fastidious taste,
He never found the best too good.
Books were his passion and delight,
And in his upper room at home
Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,
In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
Great volumes garmented in white,
Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.
He loved the twilight that surrounds
The borderland of old romance;
Where glitter hauberk, helm, and lance,
And banner waves, and trumpet sounds,
And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
And mighty warriors sweep along,
Magnified by the purple mist,
The dusk of centuries and of song.
The chronicles of Charlemagne,
Of Merlin and the Mort d'Arthure,[1]
Mingled together in his brain
With tales of Flores and Blanchefleur,
Sir Ferumbras, Sir Eglamour,
Sir Launcelot, Sir Morgadour,
Sir Guy, Sir Bevis, Sir Gawain.

A young Sicilian, too, was there;
In sight of Etna born and bred,
Some breath of its volcanic air
Was glowing in his heart and brain,
And, being rebellious to his liege,
After Palermo's fatal siege,
Across the western seas he fled,
In good King Bomba's[2] happy reign.
His face was like a summer night,
All flooded with a dusky light;
His hands were small; his teeth shone white
As sea-shells, when he smiled or spoke;
His sinews supple and strong as oak;
Clean shaven was he as a priest,
Who at the mass on Sunday sings,
Save that upon his upper lip
His beard, a good palm's length at least,
Level and pointed at the tip,
Shot sideways, like a swallow's wings.
The poets read he o'er and o'er,
And most of all the Immortal Four
Of Italy; and next to those,
The story-telling bard of prose,
Who wrote the joyous Tuscan tales
Of the *Decameron*, that make
Fiesole's green hills and vales
Remembered for Boccaccio's sake.
Much too of music was his thought;
The melodies and measures fraught
With sunshine and the open air,
Of vineyards and the singing sea
Of his beloved Sicily;
And much it pleased him to peruse
The songs of the Sicilian muse,—
Bucolic songs by Meli sung
In the familiar peasant tongue,
That made men say, "Behold! once more
The pitying gods to earth restore
Theocritus of Syracuse!"

A Spanish Jew from Alicant
With aspect grand and grave was there;
Vender of silks and fabrics rare,
And attar of rose from the Levant.
Like an old Patriarch he appeared,
Abraham or Isaac, or at least
Some later Prophet or High-Priest;
With lustrous eyes, and olive skin,
And, wildly tossed from cheeks and chin,
The tumbling cataract of his beard.
His garments breathed a spicy scent
Of cinnamon and sandal blent,
Like the soft aromatic gales
That meet the mariner, who sails
Through the Moluccas and the seas
That wash the shores of Celebes.
All stories that recorded are
By Pierre Alphonse he knew by heart,
And it was rumored he could say
The Parables of Sandabar,
And all the Fables of Pilpay,
Or if not all, the greater part!
Well versed was he in Hebrew books
Talmud and Targum, and the lore
Of Kabala; and evermore
There was a mystery in his looks;
His eyes seemed gazing far away,
As if in vision or in trance
He heard the solemn sackbut play,
And saw the Jewish maidens dance.

A Theologian, from the school
Of Cambridge, on the Charles was there;

[1] "the Death of Arthur" [2] familiar name of Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies

Skilful alike with tongue and pen,
He preached to all men everywhere
The Gospel of the Golden Rule,
The New Commandment given to men,
Thinking the deed, and not the creed,
Would help us in our utmost need.
With reverent feet the earth he trod,
Nor banished nature from his plan,
But studied still with deep research
To build the Universal Church,
Lofty as in the love of God,
And ample as the wants of man.

A Poet, too, was there, whose verse
Was tender, musical, and terse;
The inspiration, the delight,
The gleam, the glory, the swift flight,
Of thoughts so sudden, that they seem
The revelations of a dream,
All these were his; but with them came
No envy of another's fame;
He did not find his sleep less sweet
For music in some neighboring street,
Nor rustling hear in every breeze
The laurels of Miltiades.[1]
Honor and blessings on his head
While living, good report when dead,
Who, not too eager for renown,
Accepts, but does not clutch, the crown!

Last the Musician, as he stood
Illumined by that fire of wood;
Fair-haired, blue-eyed, his aspect blithe,
His figure tall and straight and lithe,
And every feature of his face
Revealing his Norwegian race;
A radiance, streaming from within,
Around his eyes and forehead beamed,
The Angel with the violin,
Painted by Raphael, he seemed.
He lived in that ideal world
Whose language is not speech, but song;
Around him evermore the throng
Of elves and sprites their dances whirled;
The Strömkarl[2] sang, the cataract hurled
Its headlong waters from the height;
And mingled in the wild delight
The scream of sea-birds in their flight,
The rumor of the forest trees,
The plunge of the implacable seas,
The tumult of the wind at night,
Voices of eld, like trumpets blowing,
Old ballads, and wild melodies
Through mist and darkness pouring forth,
Like Elivagar's river flowing
Out of the glaciers of the North.

The instrument on which he played
Was in Cremona's workshops made,
By a great master of the past,
Ere yet was lost the art divine;
Fashioned of maple and of pine,
That in Tyrolian forests vast
Had rocked and wrestled with the blast:
Exquisite was it in design,
Perfect in each minutest part,
A marvel of the lutist's art;
And in its hollow chamber, thus,
The maker from whose hands it came
Had written his unrivaled name,—
"Antonius Stradivarius."

And when he played, the atmosphere
Was filled with magic, and the ear
Caught echoes of that Harp of Gold,
Whose music had so weird a sound,
The hunted stag forgot to bound,
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,
The birds came down from bush and tree,
The dead came from beneath the sea,
The maiden to the harper's knee!

The music ceased; the applause was loud,
The pleased musician smiled and bowed;
The wood-fire clapped its hands of flame,
The shadows on the wainscot stirred,
And from the harpsichord there came
A ghostly murmur of acclaim,
A sound like that sent down at night
By birds of passage in their flight,
From the remotest distance heard.

Then silence followed; then began
A clamor for the Landlord's tale,—
The story promised them of old,
They said, but always left untold;
And he, although a bashful man,
And all his courage seemed to fail,
Finding excuse of no avail,
Yielded; and thus the story ran.

*1862* 1863

[1] According to Plutarch, the Athenian general Themistocles was envious of the successes of Miltiades, the famous commander of the Greeks at the Battle of Marathon. [2] river spirit

THE LANDLORD'S TALE

## *Paul Revere's Ride*

"Paul Revere's Ride" stands first in the series of *Tales*. Its source may be Revere's own account in a letter to Dr. Jeremy Belknap (*Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, V). Revere rode from Boston to Lexington in Middlesex County on the night of April 18, 1775, to summon the militia. There is some question concerning the church from which the lanterns were hung, signals that the British had left Boston for Concord, and concerning the identity of the "friend." Longfellow believed the church to be the Old North Church. The signals may rather have been hung in the North Meeting House, in North Square, which was destroyed in the siege of Boston, 1775–76. According to his diary Longfellow climbed the tower of the Old North Church, April 5, 1860.

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town tonight,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The *Somerset*, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the somber rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and somber and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:

That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meetinghouse windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed[1]
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

*1860* 1861

[1] Captain Isaac Davis of Acton

THE SICILIAN'S TALE

## *King Robert of Sicily*

Probably Longfellow's source for this story of the humbling of pride and arrogance was Leigh Hunt's "Legend of King Robert" in *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* (1847). The tale, which dates far back, may be found among Hindu myths and, in medieval times, in the *Gesta Romanorum*. William Morris retold it, a few years after Longfellow, in *The Earthly Paradise*.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Appareled in magnificent attire,
With retinue of many a knight and squire,
On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat
And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.
And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
He caught the words, "*Deposuit potentes*
*De sede, et exaltavit humiles*";[1]
And slowly lifting up his kingly head
He to a learned clerk beside him said,
"What mean these words?" The clerk made answer meet,
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree."

[1] "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." See Luke 1:46–55.

Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
"'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!"
And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds reëchoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls!

At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"
Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
"Open: 'tis I, the King! Art thou afraid?"
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!"
Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a specter from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognize.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his looks of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?"
To which King Robert answered with a sneer,
"I am the King, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"
And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
"Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou
Henceforth shalt wear the bells and scalloped cape,
And for thy counselor shalt lead an ape;
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;

A group of tittering pages ran before,
And as they opened wide the folding-door,
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
He said within himself, "It was a dream!"
But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
There were the cap and bells beside his bed,
Around him rose the bare, discolored walls,
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
And in the corner, a revolting shape,
Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape.
It was no dream; the world he loved so much
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;
Under the Angel's governance benign
The happy island danced with corn and wine,
And deep within the mountain's burning breast
Enceladus,[1] the giant, was at rest.

Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,
With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,
His only friend the ape, his only food
What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
And when the Angel met him on his way,
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,
Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
"Art thou the King?" the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, "I am, I am the King!"

Almost three years were ended; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jeweled bridle and of golden spur.
And lo! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of foxtails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp, and blare
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
"I am the King! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a King's disguise.
Do you not know me? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?"
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;

[1] One of the hundred-armed giants, buried under Mt. Aetna. His movements are said to have caused earthquakes.

The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!"
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky;
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervor filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendor saw,
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from there by sea.
And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
He heard the Angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture bade the rest retire;
And when they were alone, the Angel said,
"Art thou the King?" Then bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!"

The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street:
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!"
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string:
"I am an Angel, and thou art the King!"

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
But all appareled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

*1862*

## HAWTHORNE

MAY 23, 1864

How beautiful it was, that one bright day
In the long week of rain!
Though all its splendor could not chase away
The omnipresent pain.

The lovely town was white with apple-blooms,
And the great elms o'erhead
Dark shadows wove on their aërial looms,
Shot through with golden thread.

Across the meadows, by the gray old manse,
The historic river flowed:
I was as one who wanders in a trance,
Unconscious of his road.

The faces of familiar friends seemed strange;
Their voices I could hear,
And yet the words they uttered seemed to change
Their meaning to my ear.

For the one face I looked for was not there,
The one low voice was mute;
Only an unseen presence filled the air,
And baffled my pursuit.

Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and stream
Dimly my thought defines;
I only see—a dream within a dream—
The hilltop hearsed with pines.

I only hear above his place of rest
Their tender undertone,
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,
The voice so like his own.

There in seclusion and remote from men
The wizard hand lies cold,
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,
And left the tale half told.[1]

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower[2]
Unfinished must remain!

*1864*

## DANTE

Tuscan, that wanderest through the realms of gloom,
With thoughtful pace, and sad, majestic eyes,
Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul arise,
Like Farinata from his fiery tomb.[3]
Thy sacred song is like the trump of doom;
Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,
What soft compassion glows; as in the skies
The tender stars their clouded lamps relume!
Methinks I see thee stand with pallid cheeks
By Fra Hilario in his diocese,
As up the convent-walls, in golden streaks,
The ascending sunbeams mark the day's decrease;
And, as he asks what there the stranger seeks,
Thy voice along the cloister whispers, "Peace!"

*1843* 1845

[1] Two romances, *Septimius Felton* and *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*, were left unfinished by Hawthorne.
[2] One of the windows was left unfinished in the tower built by magic by Aladdin in *The Arabian Nights*.
[3] See *Inferno*, X.

## DIVINA COMMEDIA

These six sonnets were written during the time that Longfellow was making his translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. They were first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* at various times from December, 1864, to November, 1866. The first and second sonnets were then used to preface the *Inferno*, the third and fourth to preface the *Purgatorio*, and the fifth and sixth to preface the *Paradiso*.

I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

1864

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis[1] and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,

[1] courtyard before a church

What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

*1864* 1866

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

*1865* 1866

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë [1]—the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

1867

[1] the rivers of forgetfulness and remembrance

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose [1] upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the housetops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

1866

VI

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear the wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

1866

## GIOTTO'S TOWER

How many lives, made beautiful and sweet
By self-devotion and by self-restraint,
Whose pleasure is to run without complaint
On unknown errands of the Paraclete,[2]

[1] See the mystic celestial rose in *Paradiso*, XXX–XXXI. A conventionalized stained glass rose design was often placed in Gothic churches. [2] comforter or intercessor

Wanting the reverence of unshodden feet,
Fail of the nimbus which the artists paint
Around the shining forehead of the saint,
And are in their completeness incomplete!
In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's tower,
The lily of Florence blossoming in stone,—
A vision, a delight, and a desire,—
The builder's perfect and centennial flower,
That in the night of ages bloomed alone,
But wanting still the glory of the spire.[1]

1866

## THE THREE SILENCES OF MOLINOS

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

THREE Silences there are: the first of speech,
The second of desire, the third of thought;
This is the lore a Spanish monk, distraught
With dreams and visions, was the first to teach.
These Silences, commingling each with each,
Made up the perfect Silence that he sought
And prayed for, and wherein at times he caught
Mysterious sounds from realms beyond our reach.
O thou, whose daily life anticipates
The life to come, and in whose thought and word
The spiritual world preponderates,
Hermit of Amesbury! thou too hast heard
Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,
And speakest only when thy soul is stirred!

*1877* 1878

## MORITURI SALUTAMUS

Written in 1874, when the poet was sixty-seven, for the fiftieth anniversary of the class of 1825 of Bowdoin College, the reunion to be held the next summer. The idea and name of the poem came from a famous picture, "Gladiators Saluting Caesar," 1859, by the noted French artist, Jean Léon Gérôme (1824–1904). The gladiators, about to enter mortal combat, salute the emperor. Below it the artist placed their legendary words: *Ave, Caesar Imperator, Morituri Te Salutant* ("Hail, imperial Caesar, they who are about to die salute thee").

"O CAESAR, we who are about to die
Salute you!" was the gladiators' cry
In the arena, standing face to face
With death and with the Roman populace.

O ye familiar scenes,—ye groves of pine,
That once were mine and are no longer mine,—
Thou river, widening through the meadows green
To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen,—
Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose
Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose
And vanished,—we who are about to die,
Salute you; earth and air and sea and sky,
And the Imperial Sun that scatters down
His sovereign splendors upon grove and town.

Ye do not answer us! ye do not hear!
We are forgotten; and in your austere
And calm indifference, ye little care
Whether we come or go, or whence or where.
What passing generations fill these halls,
What passing voices echo from these walls,
Ye heed not; we are only as the blast,
A moment heard, and then forever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days
Led our bewildered feet through learning's maze;
They answer us—alas! what have I said?
What greetings come there from the voiceless dead?
What salutation, welcome, or reply?
What pressure from the hands that lifeless lie?
They are no longer here; they all are gone
Into the land of shadows,—all save one.
Honor and reverence, and the good repute
That follows faithful service as its fruit,
Be unto him, whom living we salute.[1]

The great Italian poet, when he made
His dreadful journey to the realms of shade,
Met there the old instructor of his youth,
And cried in tone of pity and of ruth:[2]

[1] The tower was to have a 100-foot spire, but when the structure was completed after Giotto's death, the spire was not added.

[1] Professor A. S. Packard, who died a few years afterward [2] Dante, to his friend and teacher Brunetto Latini. Lines 38–43 are a free translation of the *Inferno*, I, 82–87.

"Oh, never from the memory of my heart
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,
Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised,
Taught me how mortals are immortalized;
How grateful am I for that patient care
All my life long my language shall declare."

Today we make the poet's words our own,
And utter them in plaintive undertone;
Nor to the living only be they said,
But to the other living called the dead,
Whose dear, paternal images appear
Not wrapped in gloom, but roped in sunshine here;
Whose simple lives, complete and without flaw,
Were part and parcel of great Nature's law;
Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,
"Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,"
But labored in their sphere, as men who live
In the delight that work alone can give.
Peace be to them; eternal peace and rest,
And the fulfilment of the great behest:
"Ye have been faithful over a few things,
Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings."

And ye who fill the places we once filled,
And follow in the furrows that we tilled,
Young men, whose generous hearts are beating high,
We who are old, and are about to die,
Salute you; hail you; take your hands in ours,
And crown you with our welcome as with flowers!

How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend!
Aladdin's Lamp, and Fortunatus' Purse,[1]
That holds the treasures of the universe!
All possibilities are in its hands,
No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands;
In its sublime audacity of faith,
"Be thou removed," it to the mountain saith,
And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud!

As ancient Priam at the Scæan gate[1]
Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state
With the old men, too old and weak to fight,
Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight
To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,
Of Trojans and Achaians in the field;
So from the snowy summits of our years
We see you in the plain, as each appears,
And question of you; asking, "Who is he
That towers above the others? Which may be
Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,
Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus?"

Let him not boast who puts his armor on
As he who puts it off, the battle done.
Study yourselves; and most of all note well
Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.
Not every blossom ripens into fruit;
Minerva, the inventress of the flute,
Flung it aside, when she her face surveyed
Distorted in a fountain as she played;
The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his fate[2]
Was one to make the bravest hesitate.
Write on your doors the saying wise and old,
"Be bold! be bold!" and everywhere, "Be bold;
Be not too bold!" Yet better the excess
Than the defect; better the more than less;
Better like Hector in the field to die,
Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

And now, my classmates; ye remaining few
That number not the half of those we knew,
Ye, against whose familiar names not yet
The fatal asterisk of death is set,[3]
Ye I salute! The horologe of Time
Strikes the half-century with a solemn chime,
And summons us together once again,
The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others? Voices from the deep
Caverns of darkness answer me: "They sleep!"
I name no names; instinctively I feel
Each at some well-remembered grave will kneel,

[1] In a popular European tale, Fortunatus received from Fortune an inexhaustible purse, and from the Sultan a magic wishing cap.

[1] This incident is in Homer's *Iliad*, III. [2] Marsyas was flayed alive for his presumption in daring to compete with Apollo in a musical contest. [3] allusion to the custom of marking with an asterisk the names of deceased persons on a membership roll

And from the inscription wipe the weeds and moss,
For every heart best knoweth its own loss.
I see their scattered gravestones gleaming white
Through the pale dusk of the impending night;
O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws
Its golden lilies mingled with the rose;
We give to each a tender thought, and pass
Out of the graveyards with their tangled grass,
Unto these scenes frequented by our feet
When we were young, and life was fresh and sweet.

What shall I say to you? What can I say
Better than silence is? When I survey
This throng of faces turned to meet my own,
Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,
Transformed the very landscape seems to be;
It is the same, yet not the same to me.
So many memories crowd upon my brain,
So many ghosts are in the wooded plain,
I fain would steal away, with noiseless tread,
As from a house where some one lieth dead.
I cannot go;—I pause;—I hesitate;
My feet reluctant linger at the gate;
As one who struggles in a troubled dream
To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream! Vanish the idle fears!
Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years!
Whatever time or space may intervene,
I will not be a stranger in this scene.
Here every doubt, all indecision, ends;
Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends!

Ah me! the fifty years since last we met
Seem to me fifty folios bound and set
By Time, the great transcriber, on his shelves,
Wherein are written the histories of ourselves.
What tragedies, what comedies, are there;
What joy and grief, what rapture and despair!
What chronicles of triumph and defeat,
Of struggle, and temptation, and retreat!
What records of regrets, and doubts, and fears!
What pages blotted, blistered by our tears!
What lovely landscapes on the margin shine,
What sweet, angelic faces, what divine
And holy images of love and trust,
Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or dust!

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore
These volumes, closed and clasped forevermore?
Not mine. With reverential feet I pass;
I hear a voice that cries, "Alas! alas!
Whatever hath been written shall remain,
Nor be erased nor written o'er again;
The unwritten only still belongs to thee:
Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be."

As children frightened by a thunder-cloud
Are reassured if some one reads aloud
A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,
Or wild adventure, that diverts their thought,
Let me endeavor with a tale to chase
The gathering shadows of the time and place,
And banish what we all too deeply feel
Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediaeval Rome, I know not where,[1]
There stood an image with its arm in air,
And on its lifted finger, shining clear,
A golden ring with the device, "Strike here!"
Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed
The meaning that these words but half expressed,
Until a learned clerk, who at noonday
With downcast eyes was passing on his way,
Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,
Whereon the shadow of the finger fell;
And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found
A secret stairway leading underground.
Down this he passed into a spacious hall,
Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall;
And opposite, in threatening attitude,
With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.
Upon its forehead, like a coronet,
Were these mysterious words of menace set:
"That which I am, I am; my fatal aim
None can escape, not even yon luminous flame!"

[1] The source of this story is the famous medieval collection of short tales in Latin, the *Gesta Romanorum* (CVII, "Of Remembering Death and Forgetting Things Temporal").

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,
With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased
With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold,
And gold the bread and viands manifold.
Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,
Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,
And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,
But they were stone, their hearts within were stone;
And the vast hall was filled in every part
With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,
The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed;
Then from the table, by his greed made bold,
He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,
And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,
The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors rang,
The archer sped his arrow, at their call,
Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall,
And all was dark around and overhead;—
Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay dead.

The writer of this legend then records
Its ghostly application in these words:
The image is the Adversary old,
Whose beckoning finger points to realms of gold;
Our lusts and passions are the downward stair
That leads the soul from a diviner air;
The archer, Death; the flaming jewel, Life;
Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife;
The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and bone
By avarice have been hardened into stone;
The clerk, the scholar whom the love of pelf
Tempts from his books and from his nobler self.

The scholar and the world! The endless strife,
The discord in the harmonies of life!
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
And all the sweet serenity of books;
The market-place, the eager love of gain,
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is pain!

But why, you ask me, should this tale be told
To men grown old, or who are growing old?
It is too late! Ah, nothing is too late
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles
Wrote his grand Œdipus, and Simonides
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,
When each had numbered more than four-score years,
And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
Had but begun his "Characters of Men."
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,
At sixty wrote the Canterbury Tales;
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,
Completed Faust when eighty years were past.
These are indeed exceptions; but they show
How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow
Into the arctic regions of our lives,
Where little else than life itself survives.

As the barometer foretells the storm
While still the skies are clear, the weather warm,
So something in us, as old age draws near,
Betrays the pressure of the atmosphere.
The nimble mercury, ere we are aware,
Descends the elastic ladder of the air;
The telltale blood in artery and vein
Sinks from its higher levels in the brain;
Whatever poet, orator, or sage
May say of it, old age is still old age.
It is the waning, not the crescent moon;
The dusk of evening, not the blaze of noon;
It is not strength, but weakness; not desire,
But its surcease; not the fierce heat of fire,
The burning and consuming element,
But that of ashes and of embers spent,
In which some living sparks we still discern,
Enough to warm, but not enough to burn.

What then? Shall we sit idly down and say
The night hath come; it is no longer day?
The night hath not yet come; we are not quite
Cut off from labor by the failing light;
Something remains for us to do or dare;
Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;
Not Œdipus Coloneus, or Greek Ode,
Or tales of pilgrims that one morning rode

Out of the gateway of the Tabard Inn,
But other something, would we but begin;
For age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress,
And as the evening twilight fades away
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.

*1874* 1875

## VICTOR AND VANQUISHED

As one who long hath fled with panting breath
Before his foe, bleeding and near to fall,
I turn and set my back against the wall,
And look thee in the face, triumphant Death.
I call for aid, and no one answereth;
I am alone with thee, who conquerest all;
Yet me thy threatening form doth not appall,
For thou art but a phantom and a wraith.
Wounded and weak, sword broken at the hilt,
With armor shattered, and without a shield,
I stand unmoved; do with me what thou wilt;
I can resist no more, but will not yield.
This is no tournament where cowards tilt;
The vanquished here is victor of the field.

1876

## NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

1877

## THE CROSS OF SNOW

In the long, sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West,[1]
That, sun-defying, in its steep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.[2]

*1879* 1886

## JUGURTHA

Composed in 1879; published in the *Ultima Thule* volume, 1880 The poet's source was Plutarch's life of Marius. Jugurtha, a captive king of Numidia, after a triumphal procession, was thrown into a Roman prison and died there of starvation, B.C. 104. Longfellow changed Hercules, addressed in Plutarch's story, to Apollo, as more suitable.

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
Cried the African monarch, the splendid,
As down to his death in the hollow
Dark dungeons of Rome he descended,
Uncrowned, unthroned, unattended;
How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!
Cried the Poet, unknown, unbefriended,
As the vision that lured him to follow
With the mist and the darkness blended,
And the dream of his life was ended;
How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

1880

[1] probably the Mount of the Holy Cross in the Rocky Mountains, near Red Cliff, Eagle County, Colorado [2] reference to the tragic death of the second Mrs. Longfellow in 1861

# 1809 — *Oliver Wendell Holmes* — 1894

HOLMES was, even more unmistakably than Longfellow or Bryant or Hawthorne, the son and laureate of New England, and his and Lowell's were the last of its noted literary names. After them the dominance of that region declined. Holmes was conscious of his distinguished ancestry and his connection with families prominent in colonial and Revolutionary days. He was a lineal descendant of Anne Bradstreet, and was related to the Phillips family and to the Wendells, an old Dutch family that came to America about the middle of the seventeenth century. Wendell Phillips was his cousin. Holmes was named for his maternal grandfather, the Hon. Oliver Wendell. Among his other relatives were the Quincys and the Hancocks, one of whom married Dorothy Quincy, the daughter of "Dorothy Q," of whom Holmes was the great-grandson. His paternal ancestor, John Holmes, of Puritan stock, settled in Connecticut in the seventeenth century. His grandfather, David Holmes, supposed to be the original of the deacon who built the "one-hoss shay," served in the Revolutionary army. His father, the Rev. Abiel Holmes, a Yale graduate, had a good library and was the author of both verse and prose. A man of the strict Edwardian Calvinistic faith, pastor for forty years of the first church, Cambridge, he brought up his son in a religious, bookish atmosphere.

Holmes had a happy, successful life, without handicaps or tragedies. He was born in Cambridge, August 29, 1809, in the "house with the gambrel roof" near the Harvard gymnasium, the house in which the Bunker Hill fight was planned. He was fond of remarking that Lincoln, Gladstone, Darwin, Tennyson, Poe, Chopin, and Mendelssohn were born in the same year. After youthful schooling at Cambridge he attended for one year the orthodox Phillips Academy at Andover, where he made a translation in heroic couplets of the first book of Virgil's *Æneid*. He described himself as a boy who liked to think and read, though he did not often read a book through. Among his early friends were Richard H. Dana and Margaret Fuller.

At the age of sixteen Holmes entered Harvard and four years later was graduated with the famous class of 1829, for the anniversary of which he wrote many poems, the last in 1888. Besides his own classmates who later became illustrious, James Freeman Clark, writer and clergyman, and Samuel F. Smith, author of "America," he knew in college Charles Sumner of the class of 1830 and J. L. Motley of the class of 1831. At Harvard he came under Unitarian influence and belonged to a rather gay dramatic club, the Hasty Pudding. He made a good record, and like Emerson and Lowell was class poet. He remained a skipping reader, trying many books but rarely going through them as wholes. He showed his tendency toward literary expression

by his connection with a college periodical and by the conscious literary form of his early letters. He liked especially the English classics, Pope's Homer, and the Encyclopaedia, then a comparative novelty.

After graduation he spent a year in the Law School, but disliking law gave it up to study medicine. It was while he was studying law, in 1830, that he wrote "Old Ironsides," as well as some twenty other poems, humorous and sentimental, for the *Harvard Collegian.* After studying medicine in a private school in Boston, he went abroad in April, 1833, and studied for a year in Paris, traveling a little also in England, Germany, and Italy. Holmes's stay in Paris is thought to have increased the natural vivacity of his disposition and to have enhanced his "sparkle."

The next year he began the practice of medicine in Boston and published some creditable medical essays and presented discoveries of some importance. He was not of imposing presence, did not have the professional look or manner, and seemed too literary, or perhaps too given to levity, to acquire a large practice. Appointed professor of anatomy and physiology at Dartmouth College, he did not remain there but soon returned to Boston. In 1840 he married Amelia Lee Jackson. He became Parkman professor of anatomy and physiology in the medical school of Harvard in 1847, a post that he held for thirty-five years, delivering four lectures a week. He could enliven any subject he treated and even had a successful course at five in the afternoon. A considerable part of his time was devoted to lecturing about the country, for which he was in demand. Holmes achieved his literary reputation late, his place as a writer being established after 1857. In that year he began a series in the *Atlantic Monthly* through the influence of James Russell Lowell, who assumed the editorship on the condition that Holmes contribute. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* appeared in 1857–58 in that periodical and *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* appeared in 1859–60. *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table* came next, in 1872, and *Over the Teacups* was published in 1891, when the poet was over eighty. Many of his best poems appeared in these series. His series of class poems, more than forty, were written from 1851 onward. At the age of seventy-seven he visited England and Europe, and honorary degrees were conferred on him by Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh. He remained at Harvard as professor and professor emeritus for forty-seven years.

Holmes's three novels are concerned with problems of moral responsibility, especially with accountability for crime. They deal with inherited tendencies. *Elsie Venner* was published in 1861, *The Guardian Angel* in 1867, and *A Mortal Antipathy* in 1885. His friends called these books "medicated novels," and Holmes conceded the epithet. They impress their readers as thought out by a physician and written by an essayist. They lack close-knit structure and often plausibility. Holmes also wrote two biographies, a life of Motley in 1879, and a life of Emerson,

in 1885. As his life went on, his time went more and more to literary pursuits and less to medicine. He died October 7, 1894.

Holmes's ideas concerning prosody may be found in his essay, "The Physiology of Versification," in *Pages from an Old Volume of Life* (1892). He finds a physiological connection between the laws of versification and the respiration and the pulse. Holmes believed the octosyllabic couplet singularly easy to read aloud because "it follows more exactly than any other measure the natural rhythm of expiration." His views of poetry may be found here and there in his verse ("The Voiceless," "At the Saturday Club," "Poetry: a Metrical Essay," and pieces concerning various poets) and in stray passages from the volumes of the *Autocrat* series. He believed in the association of sentiment and humor in a poem, and insisted on the distinction between scientific truth and imaginative truth, the latter the province of the poet. He dealt with his own thoughts and emotions, but felt that the true poet should try to penetrate through his subjectivity to "the bedrock of human nature which he has." H. H. Clark writes of him (*Major American Poets*, p. 892): "As a scientist and religious thinker, Holmes was radically hostile toward European traditionalisms and radiantly optimistic about the possibilities of the New World and of Boston. . . . As a literary theorist, however, he held that, 'aesthetically speaking, America is after all a penal colony,' that our writers can profit not only by our 'couple of centuries of half-starved civilization' but also by the rich literary tradition of Europe extending back to the ancients such as his favorite Horace, a tradition that he likened to 'a still lakelet, a mountain tarn, fed by springs that never fail.' Ultimately, then, although Holmes's literary theory is touched by some of the current romantic doctrines, it has an interesting kinship with that of such neoclassicists as Pope and the Augustans, of whose urbanity and cheer Holmes is our most eminent spokesman."

Holmes was almost as versatile as Lowell. He was a man of science, a physician, poet, professor, essayist, and novelist, had many social interests, and was personally very popular. He experimented with the microscope before this was held necessary in the study of anatomy, and he liked amateur photography. He was hardly a genuine investigator, yet he invented several useful instruments. Theology was another of his especial interests. His favorite subject was moral responsibility for sin, in the light of determining influences of environment and heredity. In all but religion he was a conservative. Here he was a militant Unitarian, in reaction from the strictness of his father. Boston he thought of as the home of free thought and speech and the intellectual center of the America of his day, and he had the highest confidence in his own caste, the "Brahmins." He expected Boston to retain its dominating position in the future.

Holmes's best prose appears in the Breakfast-Table series. He wrote light prose with facility and finish and made his papers both entertaining and instructive. The

advantage of the method he employed, that of the monologuist, enabled him to treat topics briefly and informally and from the point of view of both the literary man and the scientist. Gifted in delivery, bubbling with vivacity, and accounted the chief wit of Boston, he preserved in his series the talk of his city's stellar conversationalist. He treats a variety of subjects whimsically and discursively, and his topics have been little touched by time. If he left followers, they are the newspaper columnists of today, writing verse and prose for daily entertainment.

Much of his verse was made to order for occasions; for his muse was very facile and it was available for inaugurations, commemorative services, dedications of public buildings, anniversary meetings, dinners, the arrivals and departures of celebrities, birthdays, elegies, and tributes. His favorite forms are the couplet and the quatrain. Unlike other poets of his time, he did not write of the Old World or the past or of nature or contemporary public topics. He was less an admirer of the romantic themes that attracted Longfellow and Lowell than he was of eighteenth-century wit and satire. His was chiefly rationalistic verse coming from observation and experience: serious lyrical poems, serio-comic and comic poems, narrative poems, and occasional poems. Those that began gravely might end in jest, and those that began in jest might end in pathos. Holmes's speeches or recitals are said to have been almost a dramatic entertainment in which his whole personality expressed and interpreted what he presented. Read, instead of heard as he delivered them, his verses seem thinner and less vital; but many of them have lasting popular appeal and he has won himself a secure niche in American literature.

The standard collected edition of Holmes's works is the Riverside (13 vols., 1891–1892). The addition of J. T. Morse's *Life and Letters* increased it to 15 vols. in 1896. There are reissues of the standard texts edition in a varying number of volumes. Horace E. Scudder edited Holmes's *Complete Poetical Works*, Cambridge Edition (1895).

Early biographies are James Ball's *Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and His Works* (1878), and Emma E. Brown's *Life* (1884). Among articles may be mentioned E. E. Hale's "Some Personal Recollections of Oliver Wendell Holmes," in the *Arena*, XV (Dec., 1895), and J. T. Trowbridge's "Recollections," in the *Atlantic*, XCI (May, 1903). M. A. De Wolfe Howe wrote of Holmes in the *DAB*, IX (1932).

For critical discussion see E. C. Stedman, in *Poets of America* (1885); Edmund Gosse, "An English View of the Autocrat," in *Critic*, XXII (Dec. 1, 1894); G. W. Curtis, in *Literary and Social Essays* (1895); Sir Leslie Stephen, in *National Review* (July, 1895), and also his "The Life and Works of Holmes," in *Studies of a Biographer*, II (1898); W. D. Howells, in *Harper's Magazine*, XCIV (Dec., 1896); W. G. Ballantine, "O. W. Holmes as a Poet and as a Man," in *North American Review*, CXC (August, 1909); Samuel M. Crothers, "The Autocrat and His Fellow Boarders," in *Atlantic*, CIV (August, 1909); John Macy, in *The Spirit of American Literature* (1913); A. H. Strong, in *American Poets and Their Theology* (1916); E. J. Bailey, in *Religious Thought in the Greater American Poets* (1922); Brander Matthews, in *CHAL*, II (1918); C. H. Grattan, in *American Mercury*, IV (Jan., 1925); V. L. Parrington, in *Main Currents in American Thought*, II (1927); Alfred Kreymborg, in *Our Singing Strength* (1929); H. S. Canby, *Classic Americans* (1931);

R. Brenner, in *Twelve American Poets before 1900* (1933); H. H. Clark, "Dr. Holmes: a Re-interpretation," in *New England Quarterly*, XII (March, 1939); and S. I. Hayakawa and H. M. Jones, *Holmes*, in American Writers Series (1939).

George B. Ives published *A Bibliography of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (1907), listing his contributions to periodicals.

## OLD IRONSIDES

When the secretary of the navy proposed, in September, 1830, that the naval ship *Constitution*, popularly called *Old Ironsides*, which had done remarkable historic service, be broken up and sold, Holmes, then a student in law school, wrote this impromptu outburst. Feeling was aroused and the ship was saved. As late as 1931, rebuilt by the pennies of school-children, the old ship (it was begun in 1794 and launched in 1797) revisited many American ports.

AYE, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;—
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;—
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

O better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,—
The lightning and the gale!

1830

## THE LAST LEAF

The old man of this poem was Major Thomas Melville, called the "last of the cocked hats," who was a participant in the "Boston Tea Party." He was the grandfather of Herman Melville. In old age he still wore the colonial costume described in the poem, and was a well-known figure about the streets of Boston. President Lincoln greatly liked this poem, especially the fourth stanza.

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said,—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago,—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
  At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
  Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
  In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
  Where I cling.

1831

## MY AUNT

First printed in the *New England Magazine*, October, 1831. Light is thrown in this poem on the educational methods, fortunately now long outdated, in the girls' "finishing schools" of Holmes's day.

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
  Long years have o'er her flown,
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
  That binds her virgin zone;
I know it hurts her, though she looks
  As cheerful as she can;
Her waist is ampler than her life,
  For life is but a span.

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!
  Her hair is almost gray;
Why will she train that winter curl
  In such a spring-like way?
How can she lay her glasses down
  And say she reads as well,
When through a double convex lens
  She just makes out to spell?

Her father—grandpapa! forgive
  This erring lip its smiles—
Vowed she should make the finest girl
  Within a hundred miles;
He sent her to a stylish school—
  'Twas in her thirteenth June—
And with her, as the rules required,
  "Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,
  To make her straight and tall;
They laced her up, they starved her down,
  To make her light and small;
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
  They screwed it up with pins;—
Oh, never mortal suffered more
  In penance for her sins.

So when my precious aunt was done,
  My grandsire brought her back
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth
  Might follow on the track).
"Ah!" said my grandsire as he shook
  Some powder in his pan,
"What could this lovely creature do
  Against a desperate man?"

Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,
  Nor bandit cavalcade,
Tore from the trembling father's arms
  His all-accomplished maid.
For her how happy had it been!
  And Heaven had spared to me
To see one sad, ungathered rose
  On my ancestral tree.

1831

## ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL

"This 'punch-bowl' was, according to old family tradition, a *caudle-cup*. It is a massive piece of silver, its cherubs and other ornaments of coarse repoussé work, and has two handles like a loving-cup, by which it was held, or passed from guest to guest." [*Holmes's note.*]

This ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of
  good old times,
Of joyous days, and jolly nights, and merry
  Christmas chimes;
They were a free and jovial race, but honest,
  brave, and true,
That dipped their ladle in the punch when this
  old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar,—so runs
  the ancient tale;
'Twas hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose
  arm was like a flail;
And now and then between the strokes, for
  fear his strength should fail,
He wiped his brow, and quaffed a cup of good
  old Flemish ale.

'Twas purchased by an English squire to
  please his loving dame,
Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing
  for the same;

And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was found,
'Twas filled with caudle spiced and hot, and handed smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan divine,
Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little wine,
But hated punch and prelacy; and so it was, perhaps,
He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles and schnapps.

And then, of course, you know what's next,—it left the Dutchman's shore
With those that in the *Mayflower* came,—a hundred souls and more,—
Along with all the furniture, to fill their new abodes,—
To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hundred loads.

'Twas on a dreary winter's eve, the night was closing dim,
When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled it to the brim;
The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with his sword,
And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in,—the man that never feared,—
He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his yellow beard;
And one by one the musketeers—the men that fought and prayed—
All drank as 'twere their mother's milk, and not a man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming eagle flew,
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's wild halloo;
And there the sachem learned the rule he taught to kith and kin,
"Run from the white man when you find he smells of Hollands gin!"

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their leaves and snows,
A thousand rubs had flattened down each little cherub's nose;
When once again the bowl was filled, but not in mirth or joy,—
'Twas mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her parting boy.

"Drink, John," she said, "'twill do you good,—poor child, you'll never bear
This working in the dismal trench, out in the midnight air;
And if—God bless me!—you were hurt, 'twould keep away the chill";
So John *did* drink,—and well he wrought that night at Bunker's Hill!

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old English cheer;
I tell you, 'twas a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here.
'Tis but the fool that loves excess; hast thou a drunken soul?
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl!

I love the memory of the past,—its pressed yet fragrant flowers,—
The moss that clothes its broken walls,—the ivy on its towers;—
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed,—my eyes grow moist and dim,
To think of all the vanished joys that danced around its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it straight to me;
The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er the liquid be;
And may the cherubs on its face protect me from the sin,
That dooms one to those dreadful words,—
"My dear, where *have* you been?"

*1848* 1849

## THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE;

### OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY."

### A LOGICAL STORY

From the *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, No. XI, printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1858. Professor Barrett Wendell interpreted the poem as a satirical allegory of Calvinism and its breakdown, an explanation that would be much clearer to hearers when Holmes recited it than to readers now. All that logic could compass went

**into the making of the "wonderful one-hoss shay"; yet finally, all of a sudden, it went to pieces.**

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits,—
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
*Georgius Secundus* was then alive,—
Snuffy old drone from the German hive!
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot,—
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace,—lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will,—
Above or below, or within or without,—
And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
—"Fur," said the Deacon, "'t's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke,—
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees;
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
Last of its timber,—they couldn't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through."
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren—where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED;—it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten;—
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came;—
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER,—the Earthquake-day.—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be,—for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,

And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whippletree neither less nor more,
And the back crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson.—Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text,—
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the—Moses—was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
—First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
—What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once,—
All at once and nothing first,—
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

1858

## THE VOICELESS

In an introductory paragraph to this poem in the *Autocrat*, Holmes said, "Read what the singing-women—one to ten thousand of the suffering women—tell us, and think of the griefs that die unspoken! Nature is in earnest when she makes a woman; and there are women enough lying in the next churchyard with very commonplace blue slate-stones at their head and feet, for whom it was just as true that 'all sounds of life assumed one tone of love,' as for Letitia Landon, of whom Elizabeth Browning said it; but she could give words to her grief, and they could not."

We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them:—
Alas for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their hearts' sad story,—
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes[1] sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses,—
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

1858

## THE BOYS

Read by Holmes at the thirtieth reunion of the class of 1829 of Harvard, held January 6, 1859. Published as part of *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1859. Some of the classmates alluded to were George T. Davis (the member of Congress), James Freeman Clarke (the "Reverend"), B. R. Curtis (the "Judge"), George T. Bigelow (the "Justice"), Benjamin Peirce (the Harvard mathematician), the Reverend S. F. Smith (the author of "America"), and the Reverend Samuel May (the abolitionist). For a complete roll call of this distinguished class at Harvard, see the Cambridge edition of Holmes's poems, p. 340.

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.

[1] According to legend, the Greek poet Sappho (about B.C. 600) threw herself into the sea from a cliff in Leucadia, one of the Ionian Islands.

Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty tonight!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?"—Yes! *white* if we please;
Where the snowflakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake;
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—
And these are white roses in place of the red!

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old:—
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge";
It's a neat little fiction,—of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker,"—the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you tonight?
That's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;
There's the "Reverend" What's his name? —don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true!*
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing?—You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen,—
And I sometimes have asked,—Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful and laughing and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

1859

## BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE

Occasioned by the secession of South Carolina, December 20, 1860. Compare Lowell's "Jonathan to John" in the *Biglow Papers*. Holmes dated his poem March 25, 1861; it was written shortly before the bombardment of Fort Sumter.

SHE has gone,—she has left us in passion and pride.—
Our stormy-browed sister, so long at our side!
She has torn her own star from our firmament's glow,
And turned on her brother the face of a foe!

Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
We can never forget that our hearts have been one,—
Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's name,
From the fountain of blood with the finger of flame!

You were always too ready to fire at a touch;
But we said, "She is hasty,—she does not mean much."
We have scowled, when you uttered some turbulent threat;
But Friendship still whispered, "Forgive and forget!"

Has our love all died out? Have its altars grown cold?
Has the curse come at last which the fathers foretold?
Then Nature must teach us the strength of the chain
That her petulant children would sever in vain.

They may fight till the buzzards are gorged with their spoil,
Till the harvest grows black as it rots in the soil,
Till the wolves and the catamounts troop from their caves,
And the shark tracks the pirate, the lord of the waves:

In vain is the strife! When its fury is past,
Their fortunes must flow in one channel at last,
As the torrents that rush from the mountains of snow
Roll mingled in peace through the valleys below.

Our Union is river, lake, ocean, and sky:
Man breaks not the medal, when God cuts the die!
Though darkened with sulphur, though cloven with steel,
The blue arch will brighten, the waters will heal!

Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
There are battles with Fate that can never be won!
The star-flowering banner must never be furled,
For its blossoms of light are the hope of the world!

Go, then, our rash sister! afar and aloof,
Run wild in the sunshine away from our roof;
But when your heart aches and your feet have grown sore,
Remember the pathway that leads to our door!

*March 25, 1861*

## DOROTHY Q.

### A FAMILY PORTRAIT

Holmes's great-grandmother was a niece of Josiah Quincy Jr., father of the statesman, orator, and historian, Josiah Quincy of the Post-Revolutionary period. Holmes is concerned in this poem with the question, "What should I have been if one of my great-grandmothers had married another man?"

GRANDMOTHER'S mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;
Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view,—
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell,—
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn,—
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring,—
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear today in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover,—and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,—
Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,—
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago!—
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

*1871* 1871

## HOW THE OLD HORSE WON THE BET

DEDICATED BY A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE COLLEGIAN, 1830, TO THE EDITORS OF THE HARVARD ADVOCATE, 1876

'TWAS on the famous trotting-ground,
The betting men were gathered round
From far and near; the "cracks" were there
Whose deeds the sporting prints declare:
The swift g. m.,[1] Old Hiram's nag,
The fleet s. h.,[2] Dan Pfeiffer's brag,
With these a third—and who is he
That stands beside his fast b. g.[3]?
Budd Doble, whose catarrhal name
So fills the nasal trump of fame.
There too stood many a noted steed
Of Messenger and Morgan breed;
Green horses also, not a few;
Unknown as yet what they could do;
And all the hacks that know so well
The scourgings of the Sunday swell.

Blue are the skies of opening day;
The bordering turf is green with May;
The sunshine's golden gleam is thrown
On sorrel, chestnut, bay, and roan;
The horses paw and prance and neigh,
Fillies and colts like kittens play,
And dance and toss their rippled manes
Shining and soft as silken skeins;
Wagons and gigs are ranged about,
And fashion flaunts her gay turn-out;
Here stands—each youthful Jehu's dream—
The jointed tandem, ticklish team!
And there in ampler breadth expand
The splendors of the four-in-hand;
On faultless ties and glossy tiles
The lovely bonnets beam their smiles;
(The style's the man, so books avow;
The style's the woman, anyhow);
From flounces frothed with creamy lace
Peeps out the pug-dog's smutty face,
Or spaniel rolls his liquid eye,
Or stares the wiry pet of Skye,—

[1] gray mare [2] sorrel horse [3] bay gelding

O woman, in your hours of ease
So shy with us, so free with these!

"Come on! I'll bet you two to one
I'll make him do it!" "Will you? Done!"

What was it who was bound to do?
I did not hear and can't tell you,—
Pray listen till my story's through.
Scarce noticed, back behind the rest,
By cart and wagon rudely prest,
The parson's lean and bony bay
Stood harnessed in his one-horse shay—
Lent to his sexton for the day;
(A funeral—so the sexton said;
His mother's uncle's wife was dead).

Like Lazarus bid to Dives' feast,
So looked the poor forlorn old beast;
His coat was rough, his tail was bare,
The gray was sprinkled in his hair;
Sportsmen and jockeys knew him not
And yet they say he once could trot
Among the fleetest of the town,
Till something cracked and broke him down,—
The steed's, the statesman's, common lot!
"And are we then so soon forgot?"
Ah me! I doubt if one of you
Has ever heard the name "Old Blue,"
Whose fame through all this region rung
In those old days when I was young!

"Bring forth the horse!" Alas! he showed
Not like the one Mazeppa rode;
Scant-maned, sharp-backed, and shaky-kneed,
The wreck of what was once a steed,
Lips thin, eyes hollow, stiff in joints;
Yet not without his knowing points.
The sexton laughing in his sleeve,
As if 'twere all a make-believe,
Led forth the horse, and as he laughed
Unhitched the breeching from a shaft,
Unclasped the rusty belt beneath,
Drew forth the snaffle from his teeth,
Slipped off his headstall, set him free
From strap and rein,—a sight to see!

So worn, so lean in every limb,
It can't be they are saddling him!
It is! his back the pigskin strides
And flaps his lank, rheumatic sides;
With look of mingled scorn and mirth
They buckle round the saddle-girth;
With horsy wink and saucy toss
A youngster throws his leg across,
And so, his rider on his back,
They lead him, limping, to the track,
Far up behind the starting-point,
To limber out each stiffened joint.

As through the jeering crowd he past,
One pitying look old Hiram cast;
"Go it, ye cripple, while ye can!"
Cried out unsentimental Dan;
"A Fast-Day dinner for the crows!"
Budd Doble's scoffing shout arose.

Slowly, as when the walking-beam
First feels the gathering head of steam,
With warning cough and threatening wheeze
The stiff old charger crooks his knees;
At first with cautious step sedate,
As if he dragged a coach of state;
He's not a colt; he knows full well
That time is weight and sure to tell;
No horse so sturdy but he fears
The handicap of twenty years.

As through the throng on either hand
The old horse nears the judges' stand,
Beneath his jockey's feather-weight
He warms a little to his gait,
And now and then a step is tried
That hints of something like a stride.

"Go!"—Through his ear the summons stung
As if a battle-trump had rung;
The slumbering instincts long unstirred
Start at the old familiar word;
It thrills like flame through every limb—
What mean his twenty years to him?
The savage blow his rider dealt
Fell on his hollow flanks unfelt;
The spur that pricked his staring hide
Unheeded tore his bleeding side;
Alike to him are spur and rein,—
He steps a five-year-old again!

Before the quarter pole was past,
Old Hiram said, "He's going fast."
Long ere the quarter was a half,
The chuckling crowd had ceased to laugh;

Tighter his frightened jockey clung
As in a mighty stride he swung,
The gravel flying in his track,
His neck stretched out, his ears laid back,
His tail extended all the while
Behind him like a rattail file!
Off went a shoe,—away it spun,
Shot like a bullet from a gun;
The quaking jockey shapes a prayer
From scraps of oaths he used to swear;
He drops his whip, he drops his rein,
He clutches fiercely for a mane;
He'll lose his hold—he sways and reels—
He'll slide beneath those trampling heels!
The knees of many a horseman quake,
The flowers on many a bonnet shake,
And shouts arise from left and right,
"Stick on! Stick on!" "Hould tight! Hould tight!"
"Cling round his neck and don't let go—
That pace can't hold—there! steady! whoa!"
But like the sable steed that bore
The spectral lover of Lenore,
His nostrils snorting foam and fire,
No stretch his bony limbs can tire;
And now the stand he rushes by,
And "Stop him!—stop him!" is the cry.
Stand back! he's only just begun—
He's having out three heats in one!

"Don't rush in front! he'll smash your brains;
But follow up and grab the reins!"
Old Hiram spoke. Dan Pfeiffer heard,
And sprang impatient at the word;
Budd Doble started on his bay,
Old Hiram followed on his gray,
And off they spring, and round they go,
The fast ones doing "all they know."
Look! twice they follow at his heels,
As round the circling course he wheels,
And whirls with him that clinging boy
Like Hector round the walls of Troy;
Still on, and on, the third time round!
They're tailing off! they're losing ground!
Budd Doble's nag begins to fail!
Dan Pfeiffer's sorrel whisks his tail!
And see! in spite of whip and shout,
Old Hiram's mare is giving out!
Now for the finish! at the turn,
The old horse—all the rest astern—
Comes swinging in, with easy trot;
By Jove! he's distanced all the lot!

That trot no mortal could explain;
Some said, "Old Dutchman come again!"
Some took his time,—at least they tried,
But what it was could none decide;
One said he couldn't understand
What happened to his second hand;
One said 2:10; *that* couldn't be—
More like two twenty-two or -three;
Old Hiram settled it at last;
"The time was two—too dee-vel-ish fast!"

The parson's horse had won the bet;
It cost him something of a sweat;
Back in the one-horse shay he went;
The parson wondered what it meant,
And murmured, with a mild surprise
And pleasant twinkle of the eyes,
"That funeral must have been a trick,
Or corpses drive at double-quick;
I shouldn't wonder, I declare,
If brother—Jehu—made the prayer!"

And this is all I have to say
About that tough old trotting bay,
Huddup! Huddup! G'lang! Good day!

Moral for which this tale is told:
A horse *can* trot, for all he's old.

1876

## AT THE SATURDAY CLUB

The Saturday Club came to life in the late 1850's. Its members dined together once a month at the Parker House. Holmes was deeply attached to it and attended it regularly. He wrote of it: "The Saturday Club was founded, or rather found itself in existence without any organization, almost without parentage. It was natural enough that such men as Emerson, Longfellow, Agassiz, Peirce, with Hawthorne, Motley, Sumner when within reach, and others who would be good company for them, should meet and dine together once in a while, as they did, in point of fact. . . . The club deserves being remembered for having no constitution, or by-laws, for making no speeches, reading no papers, observing no ceremonies, coming and going at will without remark, and acting out, though it did not proclaim the motto, 'Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?' "

THIS is our place of meeting: opposite
That towered and pillared building: look at it;
*King's* Chapel in the Second George's day,
Rebellion stole its regal name away,—
*Stone* Chapel sounded better; but at last
The poisoned name of our provincial past
Had lost its ancient venom; then once more
Stone Chapel was King's Chapel as before.
(So let rechristened North Street, when it can,
Bring back the days of Marlborough and Queen Anne!)
Next the old church your wandering eye will meet—
A granite pile that stares upon the street—
Our civic temple; slanderous tongues have said
Its shape was modelled from St. Botolph's head,
Lofty, but narrow; jealous passers-by
Say Boston always held her head too high.
Turn halfway round, and let your look survey
The white façade that gleams across the way,—
The many-windowed building, tall and wide,
The palace-inn that shows its northern side
In grateful shadow when the sunbeams beat
The granite wall in summer's scorching heat.
This is the place; whether its name you spell
Tavern, or caravansera, or hotel.
Would I could steal its echoes! you should find
Such store of vanished pleasures brought to mind:
Such feasts! the laughs of many a jocund hour
That shook the mortar from King George's tower;
Such guests! What famous names its record boasts,
Whose owners wander in the mob of ghosts!
Such stories! Every beam and plank is filled
With juicy wit the joyous talkers spilled,
Ready to ooze, as once the mountain pine
The floors are laid with oozed its turpentine!

A month had flitted since The Club had met;
The day came round; I found the table set,
The waiters lounging round the marble stairs,
Empty as yet the double row of chairs.
I was a full half hour before the rest,
Alone, the banquet-chamber's single guest.
So from the table's side a chair I took,
And having neither company nor book
To keep me waking, by degrees there crept
A torpor over me,—in short, I slept.
Loosed from its chain, along the wreck-strown track
Of the dead years my soul goes travelling back;
My ghosts take on their robes of flesh; it seems
Dreaming is life; nay, life less life than dreams,
So real are the shapes that meet my eyes.
They bring no sense of wonder, no surprise,
No hint of other than an earth-born source;
All seems plain daylight, everything of course.
How dim the colors are, how poor and faint
This palette of weak words with which I paint!
Here sit my friends; if I could fix them so
As to my eyes they seem, my page would glow
Like a queen's missal, warm as if the brush
Of Titian or Velasquez brought the flush
Of life into their features. *Ay de mi!*[1]
If syllables were pigments, you should see
Such breathing portraitures as never man
Found in the Pitti or the Vatican.

Here sits our POET, Laureate, if you will.
Long has he worn the wreath, and wears it still.
*Dead?* Nay, not so; and yet they say his bust
Looks down on marbles covering royal dust,
Kings by the Grace of God, or Nature's grace;
*Dead?* No! Alive! I see him in his place,
Full-featured, with the bloom that heaven denies
Her children, pinched by cold New England skies,
Too often, while the nursery's happier few
Win from a summer cloud its roseate hue.
Kind, soft-voiced, gentle, in his eye there shines
The ray serene that filled Evangeline's.
Modest he seems, not shy; content to wait
Amid the noisy clamor of debate
The looked-for moment when a peaceful word
Smooths the rough ripples louder tongues have stirred.

[1] Spanish for "Alas, poor me!"

In every tone I mark his tender grace
And all his poems hinted in his face;
What tranquil joy his friendly presence gives!
How could I think him dead? He lives! He lives!

There, at the table's further end I see
In his old place our Poet's *vis-à-vis*,
The great PROFESSOR, strong, broad-shouldered, square,
In life's rich noontide, joyous, debonair.
His social hour no leaden care alloys,
His laugh rings loud and mirthful as a boy's,—
That lusty laugh the Puritan forgot,—
What ear has heard it and remembers not?
How often, halting at some wide crevasse
Amid the windings of his Alpine pass,
High up the cliffs, the climbing mountaineer,
Listening the far-off avalanche to hear,
Silent, and leaning on his steel-shod staff,
Has heard that cheery voice, that ringing laugh,
From the rude cabin whose nomadic walls
Creep with the moving glacier as it crawls!
How does vast Nature lead her living train
In ordered sequence through that spacious brain,
As in the primal hour when Adam named
The new-born tribes that young creation claimed!—
How will her realm be darkened, losing thee,
Her darling, whom we call *our* AGASSIZ!

But who is he whose massive frame belies
The maiden shyness of his downcast eyes?
Who broods in silence till, by questions pressed,
Some answer struggles from his laboring breast?
An artist Nature meant to dwell apart,
Locked in his studio with a human heart,
Tracking its caverned passions to their lair,
And all its throbbing mysteries laying bare.
Count it no marvel that he broods alone
Over the heart he studies,—'tis his own;
So in his page, whatever shape it wear,
The Essex wizard's shadowed self is there,—
The great ROMANCER, hid beneath his veil
Like the stern preacher of his somber tale;
Virile in strength, yet bashful as a girl,
Prouder than Hester, sensitive as Pearl.

From his mild throng of worshippers released,
Our Concord Delphi sends its chosen priest,
Prophet or poet, mystic, sage, or seer,
By every title always welcome here.
Why that ethereal spirit's frame describe?
You know the race-marks of the Brahmin tribe,—
The spare, slight form, the sloping shoulders' droop,
The calm, scholastic mien, the clerkly stoop,
The lines of thought the sharpened features wear,
Carved by the edge of keen New England air.
List! for he speaks! As when a king would choose
The jewels for his bride, he might refuse
This diamond for its flaw,—find that less bright
Than those, its fellows, and a pearl less white
Than fits her snowy neck, and yet at last,
The fairest gems are chosen, and made fast
In golden fetters; so, with light delays
He seeks the fittest word to fill his phrase;
Nor vain nor idle his fastidious quest,
His chosen word is sure to prove the best.
Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?
He seems a wingèd Franklin, sweetly wise,
Born to unlock the secrets of the skies;
And which the nobler calling,—if 'tis fair
Terrestrial with celestial to compare,—
To guide the storm-cloud's elemental flame,
Or walk the chambers whence the lightning came,
Amidst the sources of its subtile fire,
And steal their effluence for his lips and lyre?
If lost at times in vague aerial flights,
None treads with firmer footstep when he lights;
A soaring nature, ballasted with sense,
Wisdom without her wrinkles or pretence,
In every Bible he has faith to read,
And every altar helps to shape his creed.
Ask you what name this prisoned spirit bears
While with ourselves this fleeting breath it shares?
Till angels greet him with a sweeter one
In heaven, on earth we call him EMERSON.

I start; I wake; the vision is withdrawn;
Its figures fading like the stars at dawn;
Crossed from the roll of life their cherished names,
And memory's pictures fading in their frames;
Yet life is lovelier for these transient gleams
Of buried friendships; blest is he who dreams!

1884

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## *From* THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

### EVERY MAN HIS OWN BOSWELL

The first number of the *Autocrat* series appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1857. Holmes had published two essays under this title in the *New England Magazine* in 1831 and 1832, and reverted to these as he opened his series. The "table talk" of the Autocrat, a monologue with the occasional effect of a dialogue, is supposed to take place in a Boston boardinghouse, where boarders representing a diversity of interests gather. This enables a miscellany of topics to be brought up for brief treatment, and any method of approach.

I

I WAS just going to say, when I was interrupted, that one of the many ways of classifying minds is under the heads of arithmetical and algebraical intellects. All economical and practical wisdom is an extension or variation of the following arithmetical formula: $2 + 2 = 4$. Every philosophical proposition has the more general character of the expression $a + b = c$. We are mere operatives, empirics, and egotists, until we learn to think in letters instead of figures.

They all stared. There is a divinity student lately come among us to whom I commonly address remarks like the above, allowing him to take a certain share in the conversation, so far as assent or pertinent questions are involved. He abused his liberty on this occasion by presuming to say that Leibnitz had the same observation.—No, sir, I replied, he has not. But he said a mighty good thing about mathematics, that sounds something like it, and you found it, *not in the original*, but quoted by Dr. Thomas Reid. I will tell the company what he did say, one of these days.

—If I belong to a Society of Mutual Admiration?—I blush to say that I do not at this present moment. I once did, however. It was the first association to which I ever heard the term applied; a body of scientific young men in a great foreign city who admired their teacher, and to some extent each other. Many of them deserved it; they have become famous since. It amuses me to hear the talk of one of those beings described by Thackeray—

"Letters four do form his name"—

about a social development which belongs to the very noblest stage of civilization. All generous companies of artists, authors, philanthropists, men of science, are, or ought to be, Societies of Mutual Admiration. A man of genius, or any kind of superiority, is not debarred from admiring the same quality in another, nor the other from returning his admiration. They may even associate together and continue to think highly of each other. And so of a dozen such men, if any one place is fortunate enough to hold so many. The being referred to above assumes several false premises. First, that men of talent necessarily hate each other. Secondly, that intimate knowledge or habitual association destroys our admiration of persons whom we esteemed highly at a distance. Thirdly, that a circle of clever fellows, who meet together to dine and have a good time, have signed a constitutional compact to glorify themselves and to put down him and the fraction of the human race not belonging to their number. Fourthly, that it is an outrage that he is not asked to join them.

Here the company laughed a good deal, and the old gentleman who sits opposite said: "That's it! that's it!"

I continued, for I was in the talking vein. As to clever people's hating each other, I think *a little* extra talent does sometimes make people jealous. They become irritated by perpetual attempts and failures, and it hurts their tempers and dispositions. Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but a weak flavor of genius in an essentially common person is detestable. It spoils the grand neutrality of a commonplace character, as the

rinsings of an unwashed wineglass spoil a draught of fair water. No wonder the poor fellow we spoke of, who always belongs to this class of slightly flavored mediocrities, is puzzled and vexed by the strange sight of a dozen men of capacity working and playing together in harmony. He and his fellows are always fighting. With them familiarity naturally breeds contempt. If they ever praise each other's bad drawings, or broken-winded novels, or spavined verses, nobody ever supposed it was from admiration; it was simply a contract between themselves and a publisher or dealer.

If the Mutuals have really nothing among them worth admiring, that alters the question. But if they are men with noble powers and qualities, let me tell you, that, next to youthful love and family affections, there is no human sentiment better than that which unites the Societies of Mutual Admiration. And what would literature or art be without such associations? Who can tell what we owe to the Mutual Admiration Society of which Shakspere, and Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher were members?[1] Or to that of which Addison and Steele formed the center,[2] and which gave us the Spectator? Or to that where Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Burke, and Reynolds, and Beauclerk, and Boswell,[3] most admiring among all admirers, met together? Was there any great harm in the fact that the Irvings and Paulding wrote in company[4]? or any unpardonable cabal in the literary union of Verplanck and Bryant and Sands,[5] and as many more as they chose to associate with them?

The poor creature does not know what he is talking about when he abuses this noblest of institutions. Let him inspect its mysteries through the knot-hole he has secured, but not use that orifice as a medium for his popgun. Such a society is the crown of a literary metropolis; if a town has not material for it, and spirit and good feeling enough to organize it, it is a mere caravansary, fit for a man of genius to lodge in, but not to live in. Foolish people hate and dread and envy such an association of men of varied powers and influence, because it is lofty, serene, impregnable, and, by the necessity of the case, exclusive. Wise ones are prouder of the title M.S.M.A. than of all their other honors put together.

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II

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—Have I ever acted in private theatricals? Often. I have played the part of the "Poor Gentleman," before a great many audiences, —more, I trust, than I shall ever face again. I did not wear a stage-costume, nor a wig, nor mustaches of burnt cork; but I was placarded and announced as a public performer, and at the proper hour I came forward with the ballet-dancer's smile upon my countenance, and made my bow and acted my part. I have seen my name stuck up in letters so big that I was ashamed to show myself in the place by daylight. I have gone to a town with a sober literary essay in my pocket, and seen myself everywhere announced as the most desperate of *buffos*,[1]—one who was obliged to restrain himself in the full exercise of his powers, from prudential considerations. I have been through as many hardships as Ulysses, in the pursuit of my histrionic vocation.[2] I have traveled in cars until the conductors all knew me like a brother. I have run off the rails, and stuck all night in snowdrifts, and sat behind females that would have the window open when one could not wink without his eyelids freezing together. Perhaps I shall give you some of my experiences one of these days;—I will not now, for I have something else for you.

Private theatricals, as I have figured in them in country lyceum-halls, are one thing,—and private theatricals, as they may be seen in certain gilded and frescoed saloons of our metropolis, are another. Yes, it is pleasant to see real gentlemen and ladies, who do not think it necessary to mouth, and rant, and

[1] The Elizabethan dramatists met at the Mermaid, a London tavern. [2] This group met at a coffee house (Button's). [3] This group formed the famous Literary Club. [4] They were the authors of *Salmagundi*. [5] These three produced *The Talisman*, an annual of which three volumes were published, 1828–1830.

[1] comic actors in Italian opera [2] Holmes was a very popular lecturer in the Lyceums of his day and (like Ulysses in his twenty years of wandering) knew the inconveniences of travel.

stride, like most of our stage heroes and heroines, in the characters which show off their graces and talents; most of all to see a fresh, unrouged, unspoiled, highbred young maiden, with a lithe figure, and a pleasant voice, acting in those love-dramas which make us young again to look upon, when real youth and beauty will play them for us.

—Of course I wrote the prologue I was asked to write. I did not see the play, though. I knew there was a young lady in it, and that somebody was in love with her, and she was in love with him, and somebody (an old tutor, I believe) wanted to interfere, and, very naturally, the young lady was too sharp for him. The play of course ends charmingly; there is a general reconciliation, and all concerned form a line and take each other's hands, as people always do after they have made up their quarrels,—and then the curtain falls,— if it does not stick, as it commonly does at private theatrical exhibitions, in which case a boy is detailed to pull it down, which he does, blushing violently.

Now, then, for my prologue. I am not going to change my cæsuras and cadences for anybody; so if you do not like the heroic, or iambic trimeter brachycatalectic,[1] you had better not wait to hear it.

### This Is It

A Prologue? Well, of course the ladies know;—
I have my doubts. No matter,—here we go!
What is a Prologue? Let our Tutor teach:
*Pro* means beforehand; *logos* stands for speech.
'Tis like the harper's prelude on the strings,
The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings;—
Prologues in meter are to other *pros*
As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.

"The world's a stage,"—as Shakespeare said, one day;
The stage a world—was what he meant to say.
The outside world's a blunder, that is clear;
The real world that Nature meant is here.
Here every foundling finds its lost mamma;
Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa;
Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,
The cheats are taken in the traps they laid;
One after one the troubles all are past
Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,
When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,
Join hands, *so* happy at the curtain's fall.
—Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
And black-browed ruffians always come to grief,
—When the lorn damsel, with a frantic speech,
And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
Cries, "Help, kyind Heaven!" and drops upon her knees
On the green—baize,—beneath the (canvas) trees,—
See to her side avenging Valor fly:—
"Ha! Villain! Draw! Now, Terraitorr, yield or die!"
—When the poor hero flounders in despair,
Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,—
Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
Sobs on his neck, "*My boy!* My boy!! MY BOY!!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world tonight
Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
Ladies, attend! While woful cares and doubt
Wrong the soft passion in the world without,
Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
One thing is certain: Love will triumph here!

Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule,—
The world's great masters, when you're out of school,—
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will,—but woman has her way!
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,
Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire,—
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves
Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel,—woman's wilful heart.
All foes you master; but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you're hit.
So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade.
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.

[1] a technical description of blank verse

Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,
Rudolph the headsman rose above the crowd.
His falchion lightened with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armor flashes in the stream.
He sheathed his blade; he turned as if to go;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
"Why strikest not? Perform thy murderous act,"
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
"Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied;
"Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."

He held his snuff box,—"Now then, if you please!"
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,
Off his head tumbled,—bowled along the floor,—
Bounced down the steps;—the prisoner said no more!

Woman! thy falchion is a glittering eye;
If death lurks in it, oh, how sweet to die!
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head;
We die with love, and never dream we're dead!

The prologue went off very well, as I hear. No alterations were suggested by the lady to whom it was sent, so far as I know. Sometimes people criticize the poems one sends them, and suggest all sorts of improvements. Who was that silly body that wanted Burns to alter "Scots wha hae," so as to lengthen the last line, thus?—

"*Edward!*" Chains and slavery!

Here is a little poem I sent a short time since to a committee for a certain celebration. I understood that it was to be a festive and convivial occasion, and ordered myself accordingly. It seems the president of the day was what is called a "teetotaller." I received a note from him in the following words, containing the copy subjoined, with the emendations annexed to it.

"Dear Sir,—Your poem gives good satisfaction to the committee. The sentiments expressed with reference to liquor are not, however, those generally entertained by this community. I have therefore consulted the clergyman of this place, who has made some slight changes, which he thinks will remove all objections, and keep the valuable portions of the poem. Please to inform me of your charge for said poem. Our means are limited, etc., etc., etc.

"Yours with respect."

Here it is,—with the slight alterations.

Come! fill a fresh bumper,—for why should we go
While the ~~nectar~~ logwood still reddens our cups as they flow!
Pour out the ~~rich juices~~ decoction still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the ~~rubies~~ dye-stuff shall run.

The ~~purple globed clusters~~ half-ripened apples their life-dews have bled;
How sweet is the ~~breath~~ taste of the ~~fragrance they shed!~~ sugar of lead
For summer's ~~last roses~~ rank poisons lie hid in the ~~wines~~ *wines !!!*
That were garnered by ~~maidens who laughed through the vines.~~ stable-boys smoking long-nines.

Then a ~~smile~~ scowl, and a ~~glass~~ howl, and a ~~toast~~ scoff, and a ~~cheer~~ sneer,
For ~~all the good wine, and we've some of it here~~ strychnine and whisky, and ratsbane and beer
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
~~Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!~~ Down, down, with the tyrant that masters us all!
~~all!~~

The company said I had been shabbily treated, and advised me to charge the committee double,—which I did. But as I never got my pay, I don't know that it made much difference. I am a very particular person about having all I write printed as I write it. I require to see a proof, a revise, a re-revise, and a

double re-revise, or fourth-proof rectified impression of all my productions, especially verse. A misprint kills a sensitive author. An intentional change of his text murders him. No wonder so many poets die young!

I have nothing more to report at this time, except two pieces of advice I gave to the young women at table. One relates to a vulgarism of language, which I grieve to say is sometimes heard even from female lips. The other is of more serious purport, and applies to such as contemplate a change of condition,—matrimony, in fact.

—The woman who "calc'lates" is lost.

—Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust.

III

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—You need not get up a rebellion against what I say, if you find everything in my sayings is not exactly new. You can't possibly mistake a man who means to be honest for a literary pickpocket. I once read an introductory lecture that looked to me too learned for its latitude. On examination, I found all its erudition was taken ready-made from D'Israeli. If I had been ill-natured, I should have shown up the little great man, who had once belabored me in his feeble way. But one can generally tell these wholesale thieves easily enough, and they are not worth the trouble of putting them in the pillory. I doubt the entire novelty of my remarks just made on telling unpleasant truths, yet I am not conscious of any larceny.

Neither make too much of flaws and occasional overstatements. Some persons seem to think that absolute truth, in the form of rigidly stated propositions, is all that conversation admits. This is precisely as if a musician should insist on having nothing but perfect chords and simple melodies,—no diminished fifths, no flat sevenths, no flourishes, on any account. Now it is fair to say, that, just as music must have all these, so conversation must have its partial truths, its embellished truths, its exaggerated truths. It is in its higher forms an artistic product, and admits the ideal element as much as pictures or statues. One man who is a little too literal can spoil the talk of a whole tableful of men of *esprit*.—"Yes," you say, "but who wants to hear fanciful people's nonsense? Put the facts to it, and then see where it is!"—Certainly, if a man is too fond of paradox,—if he is flighty and empty,—if instead of striking those fifths and sevenths, those harmonious discords, often so much better than the twinned octaves, in the music of thought,—if, instead of striking these, he jangles the chords, stick a fact into him like a stiletto. But remember that talking is one of the fine arts,—the noblest, the most important, and the most difficult,—and that its fluent harmonies may be spoiled by the intrusion of a single harsh note. Therefore conversation which is suggestive rather than argumentative, which lets out the most of each talker's results of thought, is commonly the pleasantest and the most profitable. It is not easy, at the best, for two persons talking together to make the most of each other's thoughts, there are so many of them.

[The company looked as if they wanted an explanation.]

When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together, it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension.

[Our landlady turned pale;—no doubt she thought there was a screw loose in my intellects,—and that involved the probable loss of a boarder. A severe-looking person, who wears a Spanish cloak and a sad cheek, fluted by the passions of the melodrama, whom I understand to be the professional ruffian of the neighboring theater, alluded, with a certain lifting of the brow, drawing down of the corners of the mouth, and somewhat rasping *voce di petto*,[1] to Falstaff's nine men in buckram.[2] Everybody looked up. I believe the old gentleman opposite was afraid I should seize the carving-knife; at any rate, he slid it to one side, as it were carelessly.]

I think, I said, I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin here, that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognized as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

[1] Italian for "chest tone" [2] For the Falstaff story, see I Henry IV, II, IV.

Three Johns
1. The real John; known only to his Maker.
2. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him.
3. Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.

Three Thomases
1. The real Thomas.
2. Thomas's ideal Thomas.
3. John's ideal Thomas.

Only one of the three Johns is taxed; only one can be weighed on a platform-balance; but the other two are just as important in the conversation. Let us suppose the real John to be old, dull, and ill-looking. But as the Higher Powers have not conferred on men the gift of seeing themselves in the true light, John very possibly conceives himself to be youthful, witty, and fascinating, and talks from the point of view of this ideal. Thomas, again, believes him to be an artful rogue, we will say; therefore he *is*, so far as Thomas's attitude in the conversation is concerned, an artful rogue, though really simple and stupid. The same conditions apply to the three Thomases. It follows, that, until a man can be found who knows himself as his Maker knows him, or who sees himself as others see him, there must be at least six persons engaged in every dialogue between two. Of these, the least important, philosophically speaking, is the one that we have called the real person. No wonder two disputants often get angry, when there are six of them talking and listening all at the same time.

[A very unphilosophical application of the above remarks was made by a young fellow answering to the name of John, who sits near me at table. A certain basket of peaches, a rare vegetable, little known to boarding-houses, was on its way to me *viâ* this unlettered Johannes. He appropriated the three that remained in the basket, remarking that there was just one apiece for him. I convinced him that his practical inference was hasty and illogical, but in the meantime he had eaten the peaches.]

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IV

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So you will not think I mean to speak lightly of old friendships, because we cannot help instituting comparisons between our present and former selves by the aid of those who were what we were, but are not what we are. Nothing strikes one more, in the race of life, than to see how many give out in the first half of the course. "Commencement day" always reminds me of the start for the "Derby," when the beautiful highbred three-year-olds of the season are brought up for trial. That day is the start, and life is the race. Here we are at Cambridge, and a class is just "graduating." Poor Harry! he was to have been there too, but he has paid forfeit; step out here into the grass back of the church; ah! there it is:—

"HUNC LAPIDEM POSUERUNT
SOCII MŒRENTES."[1]

But this is the start, and here they are,—coats bright as silk, and manes as smooth as *eau lustrale*[2] can make them. Some of the best of the colts are pranced round, a few minutes each, to show their paces. What is that old gentleman crying about? and the old lady by him, and the three girls, what are they all covering their eyes for? Oh, that is *their* colt which has just been trotted up on the stage. Do they really think those little thin legs can do anything in such a slashing sweepstakes as is coming off in these next forty years? Oh, this terrible gift of second-sight that comes to some of us when we begin to look through the silvered rings of the *arcus senilis!*[3]

*Ten years gone.* First turn in the race. A few broken down; two or three bolted. Several show in advance of the ruck. *Cassock*, a black colt, seems to be ahead of the rest; those black colts commonly get the start, I have noticed, of the others, in the first quarter. *Meteor* has pulled up.

*Twenty years.* Second corner turned. *Cassock* has dropped from the front, and *Judex*, an iron-gray, has the lead. But look! how they have thinned out? Down flat—five,—six,—how many? They lie still enough! they will

[1] "His mourning comrades placed this stone."
[2] water for purification [3] a whitish ring in the cornea of the eye which comes with old age

not get up again in this race, be very sure! And the rest of them, what a "tailing off!" Anybody can see who is going to win,—perhaps.

*Thirty years.* Third corner turned. *Dives*, bright sorrel, ridden by the fellow in a yellow jacket, begins to make play fast; is getting to be the favorite, with many. But who is that other one that has been lengthening his stride from the first, and now shows close up to the front? Don't you remember the quiet brown colt *Asteroid*, with the star in his forehead? That is he; he is one of the sort that lasts; look out for him! The black "colt," as we used to call him, is in the background, taking it easily in a gentle trot. There is one they used to call *the Filly*, on account of a certain feminine air he had; well up, you see; the Filly is not to be despised, my boy!

*Forty years.* More dropping off,—but places much as before.

*Fifty years.* Race over. All that are on the course are coming in at a walk; no more running. Who is ahead? Ahead? What! and the winning-post a slab of white or gray stone standing out from that turf where there is no more jockeying or straining for victory! Well, the world marks their places in its betting-book; but be sure that these matter very little, if they have run as well as they knew how!

—Did I not say to you a little while ago that the universe swam in an ocean of similitudes and analogies? I will not quote Cowley, or Burns, or Wordsworth, just now, to show you what thoughts were suggested to them by the simplest natural objects, such as a flower or a leaf; but I will read you a few lines, if you do not object, suggested by looking at a section of one of those chambered shells to which is given the name of Pearly Nautilus. We need not trouble ourselves about the distinction between this and the Paper Nautilus, the *Argonauta*[1] of the ancients. The name applied to both shows that each has long been compared to a ship, as you may see more fully in Webster's Dictionary, or the "Encyclopædia," to which he refers. If you will look into Roget's Bridgewater Treatise, you will find a figure of one of these shells and a section of it. The last will show you the series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral. Can you find no lesson in this?

[1] I have now and then found a naturalist who still worried over the distinction between the Pearly Nautilus and the Paper Nautilus, or Argonauta. As the stories both are mere fables, attaching to the Physalia, or Portuguese man-of-war, as well as to these two molluscs, it seems over-nice to quarrel with the poetical handling of a fiction sufficiently justified by the name commonly applied to the ship of pearl as well as the ship of paper. [*Holmes's note.*]

### THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,

Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

VI

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—Every person's feelings have a front-door and a side-door by which they may be entered. The front-door is on the street. Some keep it always open; some keep it latched; some, locked; some, bolted,—with a chain that will let you peep in, but not get in; and some nail it up, so that nothing can pass its threshold. This front-door leads into a passage which opens into an anteroom and this into the interior apartments. The side-door opens at once into the sacred chambers.

There is almost always at least one key to this side-door. This is carried for years hidden in a mother's bosom. Fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends, often, but by no means so universally, have duplicates of it. The wedding-ring conveys a right to one; alas, if none is given with it!

If nature or accident has put one of these keys into the hands of a person who has the torturing instinct, I can only solemnly pronounce the words that Justice utters over its doomed victim—*The Lord have mercy on your soul!* You will probably go mad within a reasonable time,—or, if you are a man, run off and die with your head on a curb-stone, in Melbourne or San Francisco,—or, if you are a woman, quarrel and break your heart, or turn into a pale, jointed petrifaction that moves about as if it were alive, or play some real life-tragedy or other.

Be very careful to whom you trust one of these keys of the side-door. The fact of possessing one renders those even who are dear to you very terrible at times. You can keep the world out from your front-door, or receive visitors only when you are ready for them; but those of your own flesh and blood, or of certain grades of intimacy, can come in at the side-door, if they will, at any hour and in any mood. Some of them have a scale of your whole nervous system, and can play all the gamut of your sensibilities in semitones,—touching the naked nerve-pulps as a pianist strikes the keys of his instrument. I am satisfied that there are as great masters of this nerve-playing as Vieuxtemps[1] or Thalberg[2] in their lines of performance. Married life is the school in which the most accomplished artists in this department are found. A delicate woman is the best instrument; she has such a magnificent compass of sensibilities! From the deep inward moan which follows pressure on the great nerves of right, to the sharp cry as the filaments of taste are struck with a crashing sweep, is a range which no other instrument possesses. A few exercises on it daily at home fit a man wonderfully for his habitual labors, and refresh him immensely as he returns from them. No stranger can get a great many notes of torture out of a human soul; it takes one that knows it well,—parent, child, brother, sister, intimate. Be very careful to whom you give a side-door key; too many have them already.

## *From* ELSIE VENNER

*Elsie Venner* was written, Holmes said, "to test the doctrine of 'original sin' and human responsibility." It was published as *The Professor's Story* in the *Atlantic Monthly*, beginning January, 1860. When it was republished it was given its present title. Elsie's mother was bitten by a rattlesnake before the birth of her daughter, and Elsie had serpent-woman characteristics, against which she struggled and was humanized; but the struggle was too much for her and she died. She stands, then, for those who "receive a moral poison from a remote ancestor, and should be objects of pity."

The first chapter, given here, is an essay on New England aristocracy. Brahmins are members of the highest sacerdotal caste among the Hindus. Originally they were individuals distinguished for wisdom and sanctity but ultimately they became a strictly hereditary caste. At the present time "Brahmin" is used satirically of highly cultured or intellectual persons, with an implication of exclusiveness and perhaps of superciliousness. The second chapter "introduces a youth belonging to the Brahmin caste of New England," who is to be a leading character.

I

### *The Brahmin Caste of New England*

THERE is nothing in New England corresponding at all to the feudal aristocracies of the

[1] a Belgian violinist [2] a Swiss pianist

Old World. Whether it be owing to the stock from which we were derived, or to the practical working of our institutions, or to the abrogation of the technical "law of honor," which draws a sharp line between the personally responsible class of "gentlemen" and the unnamed multitude of those who are not expected to risk their lives for an abstraction, —whatever be the cause, we have no such aristocracy here as that which grew up out of the military systems of the Middle Ages.

What our people mean by "aristocracy" is merely the richer part of the community, that live in the tallest houses, drive real carriages (not "kerridges"), kid-glove their hands, and French-bonnet their ladies' heads, give parties where the persons who call them by the above title are not invited, and have a provokingly easy way of dressing, walking, talking, and nodding to people, as if they felt entirely at home, and would not be embarrassed in the least, if they met the Governor, or even the President of the United States, face to face. Some of these great folks are really well-bred, some of them are only purse-proud and assuming,—but they form a class, and are named as above in the common speech.

It is in the nature of large fortunes to diminish rapidly, when subdivided and distributed. A million is the unit of wealth, now and here in America. It splits into four handsome properties; each of these into four good inheritances; these, again, into scanty competences for four ancient maidens,—with whom it is best the family should die out, unless it can begin again as its great-grandfather did. Now a million is a kind of golden cheese, which represents in a compendious form the summer's growth of a fat meadow of craft or commerce; and as this kind of meadow rarely bears more than one crop, it is pretty certain that sons and grandsons will not get another golden cheese out of it, whether they milk the same cows or turn in new ones. In other words, the millionocracy, considered in a large way, is not at all an affair of persons and families, but a perpetual fact of money with a variable human element, which a philosopher might leave out of consideration without falling into serious error. Of course, this trivial and fugitive fact of personal wealth does not create a permanent class, unless some special means are taken to arrest the process of disintegration in the third generation. This is so rarely done, at least successfully, that one need not live a very long life to see most of the rich families he knew in childhood more or less reduced, and the millions shifted into the hands of the country-boys who were sweeping stores and carrying parcels when the now decayed gentry were driving their chariots, eating their venison over silver chafing-dishes, drinking Madeira chilled in embossed coolers, wearing their hair in powder, and casing their legs in white-topped boots with silken tassels.

There is, however, in New England, an aristocracy, if you choose to call it so, which has a far greater character of permanence. It has grown to be a *caste*,—not in any odious sense,—but, by the repetition of the same influences, generation after generation, it has acquired a distinct organization and physiognomy, which not to recognize is sheer stupidity, and not to be willing to describe would show a distrust of the good-nature and intelligence of our readers, who like to have us see all we can and tell all we see.

If you will look carefully at any class of students in one of our colleges, you will have no difficulty in selecting specimens of two different aspects of youthful manhood. Of course I shall choose extreme cases to illustrate the contrast between them. In the first, the figure is perhaps robust, but often otherwise,—inelegant, partly from careless attitudes, partly from ill-dressing,—the face is uncouth in feature, or at least common,—the mouth coarse and unformed,—the eye unsympathetic, even if bright,—the movements of the face are clumsy, like those of the limbs, —the voice unmusical,—and the enunciation as if the words were coarse castings, instead of fine carvings. The youth of the other aspect is commonly slender,—his face is smooth, and apt to be pallid,—his features are regular and of a certain delicacy,—his eye is bright and quick,—his lips play over the thought he utters as a pianist's fingers dance over their music,—and his whole air, though it may be timid, and even awkward, has nothing clownish. If you are a teacher, you know what to expect from each of these young men. With

equal willingness, the first will be slow at learning; the second will take to his books as a pointer or a setter to his field-work.

The first youth is the common country-boy, whose race has been bred to bodily labor. Nature has adapted the family organization to the kind of life it has lived. The hands and feet by constant use have got more than their share of development,—the organs of thought and expression less than their share. The finer instincts are latent and must be developed. A youth of this kind is raw material in its first stage of elaboration. You must not expect too much of any such. Many of them have force of will and character, and become distinguished in practical life; but very few of them ever become great scholars. A scholar is, almost always, the son of scholars or scholarly persons.

That is exactly what the other young man is. He comes of the *Brahmin caste of New England.* This is the harmless, inoffensive, untitled aristocracy to which I have referred, and which I am sure you will at once acknowledge. There are races of scholars among us, in which aptitude for learning, and all these marks of it I have spoken of, are congenital and hereditary. Their names are always on some college catalogue or other. They break out every generation or two in some learned labor which calls them up after they seem to have died out. At last some newer name takes their place, it may be,—but you inquire a little and you find it is the blood of the Edwardses or the Chaunceys or the Ellerys or some of the old historic scholars, disguised under the altered name of a female descendant.

I suppose there is not an experienced instructor anywhere in our Northern States who will not recognize at once the truth of this general distinction. But the reader who has never been a teacher will very probably object, that some of our most illustrious public men have come direct from the homespun-clad class of the people,—and he may, perhaps, even find a noted scholar or two whose parents were masters of the English alphabet, but of no other.

It is not fair to pit a few chosen families against the great multitude of those who are continually working their way up into the intellectual classes. The results which are habitually reached by hereditary training are occasionally brought about without it. There are natural filters as well as artificial ones; and though the great rivers are commonly more or less turbid, if you will look long enough, you may find a spring that sparkles as no water does which drips through your apparatus of sands and sponges. So there are families which refine themselves into intellectual aptitude without having had much opportunity for intellectual acquirements. A series of felicitous crosses develops an improved strain of blood, and reaches its maximum perfection at last in the large uncombed youth who goes to college and startles the hereditary class-leaders by striding past them all. That is Nature's republicanism; thank God for it, but do not let it make you illogical. The race of the hereditary scholar has exchanged a certain portion of its animal vigor for its new instincts, and it is hard to lead men without a good deal of animal vigor. The scholar who comes by Nature's special grace from an unworn stock of broad-chested sires and deep-bosomed mothers must always overmatch an equal intelligence with a compromised and lowered vitality. A man's breathing and digestive apparatus (one is tempted to add *muscular*) are just as important to him on the floor of the Senate as his thinking organs. You broke down in your great speech, did you? Yes, your grandfather had an attack of dyspepsia in '82, after working too hard on his famous Election Sermon. All this does not touch the main fact: our scholars come chiefly from a privileged order, just as our best fruits come from well-known grafts,—though now and then a seedling apple, like the Northern Spy, or a seedling pear, like the Seckel, springs from a nameless ancestry and grows to be the pride of all the gardens in the land.

1860

## *From* CRIME AND AUTOMATISM

The following is the concluding passage in the essay, which, as a whole, seems to have grown out of Holmes's interest in Despine's *Psychologie Naturelle* (1868).

In looking over this whole subject we must remember that anthropology is in its infancy, in spite of the heaven-descended precept of antiquity and the copybook pentameter line of Pope.[1] Instinct still moves in us as it did in Cain and those relatives of his who he was afraid would lynch him. Law comes to us from a set of marauders who cased themselves in iron, and the possessions they had won by conquest in edicts as little human in their features as the barred visors that covered their faces. Poor fantastic Dr. Robert Knox was still groaning in 1850 over the battle of Hastings; not quite ineptly, it may be. Our most widely accepted theologies owe their dogmas to a few majority votes passed by men who would have hanged our grandmothers as witches and burned our ministers as heretics.

Insanity was *possession* in times well remembered. Malformed births, "monsters," as they were called, frightened our New England fathers almost as much as comets, the legitimate origin and harmless character of which eccentric but well-meaning citizens of the universe had to be defended against learned and excellent John Prince, the minister of the Old South, by Professor Pierce's predecessor at the fifth remove in the Chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy of Harvard University. Abbas (probably Haly Abbas, the great physician), says Haller, came very near being thrown away, at his birth, as a monster. By and by came the nineteenth century, and Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire's treatise on "teratology,"[2] which did for malformations what Cuvier's "Ossemens Fossiles"[3] did for the *lusus naturae*,[4] as fossil organic remains were called by the old observers of curious natural phenomena.

Just in the same way moral anomalies must be studied. "Psychology," says M. Ribot ("Heredity," translation, London, 1875), "like physiology, has its rare cases, but unfortunately not so much trouble has been taken to note and describe them.—There are some purely moral states which are met with in a certain class of criminals—murderers, robbers, and incendiaries—which, if we renounce all prejudices and preconceived opinions, can only be regarded as physiological accidents, more painful and not less incurable than those of deaf-muteness and blindness.—These creatures, as Dr. Lucas says, partake only of the form of man; there is in their blood somewhat of the tiger and of the brute: they are innocently criminal, and sometimes are capable of every crime." The writer of this article may perhaps be pardoned for saying that he published in the year 1860 a tale which he has never forgiven one of his still cherished and charming friends for calling "a medicated novel," the aim of which was to illustrate this same innocently criminal automatism with the irresponsibility it implies, by the supposed mechanical introduction before birth of an ophidian element into the blood of a human being.

How different are the views brought before the reader in this paper, as regards the range of the human will and the degree of human accountability, from those taught by the larger number of the persons to whom we are expected to look for guidance, is plain enough. They may dispute the dogma "*omnis peccans est ignorans*,"[1] if they will, but they cannot efface the prayer "forgive them, for they know not what they do," which recognizes moral infirmity. Moral psychology does no more for the criminal than to furnish a comprehensive commentary on these two texts. If we cannot help feeling more and more that it is God who worketh in us to will and to do, by the blood we inherit and the nurture we receive; nay, even if the destructive analysis of our new schoolmen threatens to distil away all we once called self-determination and free-will, leaving only a *caput mortuum* of animal substance and "strongest motive," we need not be greatly alarmed.

For the *belief* in a power of self-determination, and the idea of possible future remorse connected with it, will still remain with all but the moral incapables,—and the metaphysicians,—and this belief can be effectively appealed to and will furnish a "strongest

[1] "Know first thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is men."
*Essay on Man*, II, 1–2

[2] the study of monstrosities [3] fossil bones [4] freak of nature

[1] "All sin is ignorance."

motive" readily enough in a great proportion of cases. In practice we must borrow a lesson from martial law. A sentry does not go to sleep at his post, because he knows he will be shot if he does. Society must present such motives of fear to the criminally disposed as are most effective in the long run for its protection. Its next duty is to the offender, who has his rights, were these only to be hanged with a rope strong enough to hold his weight, by an artist who understands his business. A criminal, as we now contemplate him, may deserve our deepest pity and tenderest care as much as if he were the tenant of a hospital or an asylum instead of a prison. And in the infliction of the gravest penalties it must not be taken for granted that while we are punishing "crime" we are punishing *sin*, for if this last were in court the prisoner might not rarely sit in judgment on the magistrate.

1875

## *From* JONATHAN EDWARDS

Appeared in the *International Review* for July, 1880, and later included in *Pages from an Old Volume of Life* (1883).

In order to get an idea of what the theological system is of which he was the great New England exponent, we will take up briefly some of its leading features. It is hardly necessary to say that Edwards's main doctrines agree with those of the Westminster Assembly's two catechisms. These same doctrines almost assumed the character of a state religion when the "Confession of Faith" of the Synod assembled in Boston, May 12, 1680, was printed by an Order of the General Court of Massachusetts, passed May 19 of the same year. But we are to look at these doctrines as Edwards accepted and interpreted them.

The God of Edwards is not a Trinity, but a Quaternity. The fourth Person is an embodied abstraction, to which he gave the name of *Justice*. As Jupiter was governed by Fate, so Jehovah is governed by Justice. This takes precedence of all other elements in the composite Divinity. Its province is to demand *satisfaction*, though as its demand is infinite, it can never be satiated. This satisfaction is derived from the infliction of misery on sensitive beings, who, by the fact of coming into existence under conditions provided or permitted by their Creator, have incurred his wrath and received his curse as their patrimony. Its work, as in the theology of Dante, is seen in the construction and perpetual maintenance of an *Inferno*, which Edwards mentions to ears polite and impolite[1] with an unsparing plainness, emphasis, and frequency such as would have contented the satirical Cowper. The familiar quotation,—

"Quantum vertice ad auras
Ætherias, tantum radice ad Tartara tendit,"—

is eminently applicable to Edwards's theology; it flowers in heaven, but its roots, from which it draws its life and strength, reach down to the deepest depths of hell.[2]

The omnipotence of Justice is needed in his system, for it is dealing, as was said above, with infinite demands, which nothing short of it could begin to meet. The proof of this is a very simple mathematical one, and can be made plain to the most limited intelligence.

*Sin*, which is the subject of Justice, gets its measure by comparing it with the excellence of the Being whose law it violates. As the Being is infinite in perfections, every sin against him acquires the character of infinite magnitude. "Justice" demands a punishment commensurate with its infinite dimensions. This is the ground upon which the eternity of future punishment is an imperative condition prescribed by "Justice" to the alleged omnipotence of the Creator. Who and what is the being made subject to this infinite penalty?

*Man*, as Edwards looks at him, is placed in a very singular condition. He has innumerable duties and not the smallest right, or the least claim on his Maker. In this doctrine Edwards differs from the finer and freer thinker with whom I have compared him. "There is a re-

[1] An allusion to the line:

"Who never mentions hell to ears polite."

The line is found in Pope's *Moral Essays*, Epistle IV, 150. [2] The Latin passage (from Virgil's *Georgics*, II, 291–292) has been translated, "As far as it reaches upward to the air of heaven, so far it stretches downward to Tartarus."

ciprocal duty between God and man," is one of Pascal's noblest sayings. No such relation exists for Edwards; and if at any time there seems a balance in favor of the creature, the sovereignty of the Creator is a sponge which wipes out all and costs nothing,—nothing but the misery of a human being; and after all, in the view of the saints, which must be correct, we are assured by Edwards that it will all be right, for "the glory of God will in their estimate be of greater consequence than the welfare of thousands and millions of souls." Man, since Adam's fall, is born in a state of moral inability,—a kind of spiritual hemiplegia.[1] He is competent, as we have seen, to commit an infinite amount of sin, but he cannot of himself perform the least good action. He is hateful to his Maker, *ex officio*, as a human being. It is no wonder that Edwards uses hard words about such a being. This is a specimen from one of those sermons to which the long-suffering people of Northampton listened for twenty-four years: "You have never loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under *obligations* to love you, who are all over deformed and loathsome as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper?" And on the very next page he returns to his epithets and comparisons, paying his respects to his fellow-creatures in the following words: "Seeing you thus disregard so great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you, a little wretched, despicable creature; a worm, a mere nothing and less than nothing; a vile insect that has risen up in contempt against the Majesty of heaven and earth?" We can hardly help remarking just here that this kind of language will seem to most persons an unwholesome sort of rhetoric for a preacher to indulge in; not favorable to the sweetness of his own thoughts, and not unlikely to produce irritation in some of his more excitable hearers. But he was led, as it will soon appear, into the use of expressions still more fitted to disturb the feelings of all persons of common sensibility, and especially of the fathers and mothers who listened to him. Such was Edwards's estimate of humanity.

His opinion of the *Devil* is hardly more respectful than that which he entertains of man. "Though the Devil be exceedingly crafty and subtle," he says, "yet he is one of the greatest fools and blockheads in the world, as the subtlest of wicked men are." But for all he was such a fool, he has played a very important part, Edwards thinks, in the great events of the world's history. He was in a dreadful rage just before the flood. He brought about the peopling of America by leading men and women there so as to get them out of the way of the gospel. Thus he was, according to Edwards, the true Pilgrim Father of the New World. He himself had seen the Devil prevail against two revivals of religion in this country. The personal presence of the great enemy of mankind was as real to Edwards as the spectral demons in the woods about Gloucester, which the soldiers fired at but could not hit, were to Cotton Mather and his reverend correspondent. How the specialty of the archfiend differed from that of Edwards's "Justice" is not perfectly clear, except that one executes what the other orders, the Evil Angel finding pleasure in inflicting torture, and "Justice" attaining the end known to theologians as "satisfaction" in seeing it inflicted. And as Edwards couples his supreme principle with an epithet corresponding to a well-known human passion,—speaking of it as "revenging justice,"—we can have some idea of what "satisfaction" means in the light of the common saying that "revenge is sweet"; but the explanation does not leave the soul in seraphic harmony with the music of the spheres or the keynote of its own being.

It will be enough for our present purpose to refer briefly to the leading doctrines of several of Edwards's special works.

In his treatise, "The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended," he teaches that "God, in his constitution with Adam, dealt with him as a *public* person,—as the head of the human species,—and had respect to his posterity, as included in him." Again: "God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity (as has been shown) and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having *all sinned in him.*" There was always a difficulty in dealing with the relation of infants to the divine government. It is doubtful

[1] partial paralysis

whether Edwards would have approved of the leniency of their sentence in Michael Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom," in which the comparatively comfortable quarters of

"The easiest room in hell"

are assigned to the little creatures. Edwards argues against the charitable supposition that, though sin is truly imputed to infants, so that they are as a consequence exposed to a proper punishment, yet that *all* Adam's guilt not being imputed to them, they might be let off with only temporal death or annihilation. He maintains, on the contrary, "that none can, in good consistence with themselves, own a real *imputation* of the guilt of Adam's first sin to his posterity, without owning that they are *justly* treated as sinners, truly guilty, and *children of wrath*, on that account; nor unless they allow a just imputation of the *whole* of the *evil* of that transgression, at least all that pertains to that act, as a full and complete violation of the *covenant* which God had established; even as much as if each one of mankind had the like covenant established with him singly, and had, by the like direct and full act of rebellion, violated it himself." The little albuminous automaton is not sent into the world without an inheritance. Every infant of the human race is entitled to one undivided share of the guilt and consequent responsibility of the Trustee to whom the Sovereign had committed its future, and who invested it in a fraudulent concern.

By the "Work of Redemption," of which Edwards wrote an elaborate history, a few of the human race have been exempted from the infinite penalties consequent upon being born upon this planet, the atmosphere of which is a slow poison, killing everybody after a few score of years. But "the bulk of mankind" go eventually to the place prepared for them by "Justice," of which place and its conditions Edwards has given full and detailed descriptions.

The essay on "God's Chief End in Creation" reaches these two grand results: "God aims at satisfying justice in the eternal damnation of sinners, which will be satisfied with their damnation considered no otherwise than with regard to its eternal duration. God aims to satisfy his infinite grace or benevolence by the bestowment of a good infinitely valuable because eternal."

His idea of the "Nature of True Virtue," as expressed in his treatise with that title, is broad enough for the το καλον[1] of the most ancient or the most modern philosophy. A principle of virtue is, according to Edwards, "union of heart to being, simply considered; which implies a disposition to benevolence to being, in general." This definition has been variously estimated by philosophical critics. There is something in it which reminds one of the "ether" of the physicists. This is a conceivable if not a necessary medium, but no living thing that we know anything about can live in it, can fly or breathe in it, and we must leave it to the angels, with whose physiology we are not acquainted.

The full title of the work on which Edwards's reputation as a thinker mainly rests is, "A careful and strict Inquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be essential to moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, praise and blame."

*1880* 1883

[1] "the beautiful"; the theory of aesthetics

# 1809 ~ *Abraham Lincoln* ~ 1865

A FEW supplementary details will complete the account of Lincoln's life sketched below in his "Autobiography." In 1860 the Republicans nominated him for President and he was elected in November. He passed the next four difficult years in the White House, giving his best efforts to the preservation of the Union. He was re-elected to the Presidency in 1864, and a little more than a month after his second inauguration he was shot by John Wilkes Booth, during a performance in a Washington theater. His successful leadership of the country in its time of crisis and the tragic circumstances of his death combined to make him a heroic figure in American history.

Although, like Franklin, Lincoln had no formal education or stimulus to learn, he early had a zest for reading and study. He amassed from books a body of exact general information. He knew Shakespeare, and he had favorite authors and poems. The humor of P. V. Nasby and Artemus Ward attracted him and doubtless influenced him. He could think clearly and express himself clearly, organize his material logically, and adapt his style to those he addressed, whether a bereaved mother, his townsfolk in Springfield, or the cultivated audiences of the east. His grasp of a situation was sure and he was rich in ideas. He wrote and spoke in direct and vigorous idiom, often the homely idiom of farm life, and sometimes he relied on shrewd anecdote; but he could rise to dignity, sometimes to poetry of expression. His style had terseness, emotional appeal, and strength. The matter was more important to him than the manner, but his manner was effective. Time has awarded him a permanent place among the great writers of American prose.

The best collected edition of Lincoln's works is the *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by J. G. Nicolay and John Hay (12 vols., 1905). G. A. Tracy edited the *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln* (1930); P. M. Angle edited *New Letters and Papers of Abraham Lincoln* (1930); and N. W. Stephenson, *An Autobiography of Abraham Lincoln* (1926). There are innumerable studies and reminiscences of special phases of his career. Some leading biographies are *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, by J. G. Nicolay and John Hay (10 vols., 1890); and *Herndon's Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life*, by W. H. Herndon and J. W. Weik, edited by P. M. Angle (1930). Other biographical works are Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (2 vols., 1900, 1917); Brand Whitlock, *Abraham Lincoln* (1909, 1916); Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln* (1917); J. W. Weik, *The Real Lincoln* (1922); N. W. Stephenson, *Lincoln; an Account of His Personal Life* (1924); C. Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (2 vols., 1926), and *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (2 vols., 1939), a somewhat pictorial and imaginative account; L. A. Warren, *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood* (1926); Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809–1858* (2 vols., 1928); and E. L. Masters, *Lincoln the Man* (1931), one of few ad-

verse, disparaging treatments of Lincoln. N. W. Stephenson treated Lincoln as an author in *CHAL*, III (1921), and J. G. Randall wrote the account in *DAB* (1933). L. E. Robinson wrote *Abraham Lincoln as a Man of Letters* (1923), and D. K. Dodge, *Lincoln, Master of Words* (1924). Daniel Fish made a *Lincoln Bibliography* (1906), included in *Complete Works*, XI.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I WAS born February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families —second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Macon County, Illinois. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky about 1781 or 1782, where a year or two later he was killed by the Indians, not in battle but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and he grew up literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the state came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond "readin', writin', and cipherin'," to the rule of three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education, I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

I was raised to farm work, which I continued till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, Macon County. Then I got to New Salem, at that time in Sangamon, now in Menard County, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk War; and I was elected a captain of volunteers, a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went the campaign, was elated, ran for the legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten—the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next and three succeeding biennial elections I was elected to the legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During this legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was once elected to the lower House of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics; and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since that is pretty well known.

If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am, in height, six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.

## ADDRESS IN INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA

FEBRUARY 22, 1861

MR. CUYLER: I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live. You have kindly suggested to me that in

my hands is the task of restoring peace to our distracted country. I can say in return, sir, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated in and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that Declaration. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it. Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed and war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it is forced upon the government. The government will not use force, unless force is used against it.

My friends, this is wholly an unprepared speech. I did not expect to be called on to say a word when I came here. I supposed I was merely to do something toward raising a flag. I may, therefore, have said something indiscreet. But I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by.

## FAREWELL ADDRESS AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

FEBRUARY 11, 1861

MY FRIENDS: No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

## THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

FOUR score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining

before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

1863

## LETTER TO MRS. BIXBY

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 21, 1864

MRS. BIXBY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

DEAR MADAM: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## THE SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued

through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

*1865*

## 1811 ~ *Harriet Beecher Stowe* ~ 1896

HARRIET BEECHER, born in Litchfield, Connecticut, was the daughter of the Reverend Lyman Beecher, a man of rigid Calvinistic faith. She was reared in an atmosphere of theological controversy with six preacher brothers, the most noted of whom was the famous pulpit orator, Henry Ward Beecher. She received a rather narrow education in private schools, and at fourteen she began to teach. The pivotal event in her life came in 1832, when her father was made the first president of Lane Theological Seminary and moved the family west to Cincinnati. Lane Seminary was a station on the underground railway for slaves escaping across the Ohio River from Kentucky into the free state of Ohio. Her firsthand experience with the slavery system came in this way and in a short visit to a plantation in Kentucky. She taught two years in the Seminary, then married Calvin Stowe of its faculty, who was called to be professor of Greek at Bowdoin in 1850, and later to Andover.

Her first and best-known book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written as propagandist literature, appeared serially in *The National Era*, an abolitionist journal, and was published in book form in 1852. Mrs. Stowe had taken up literature to increase the meager family income. She was the mother of six children, and she wrote her classic amid heavy household duties and in genuine emotional fervor. Brought on by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, the book was keyed to the times, and attained immediate celebrity. Its author was gifted with imaginative power, could create dramatic situations, and knew how to enlist popular sympathy. It aroused heated controversy, Southerners terming it maudlin, sentimental, partisan, prejudiced, and melodramatic, and abolitionists greeting it as an important document for their cause.

This it proved to be. It achieved more in a short time than Whittier's efforts throughout the years, and it is said to have hastened the Civil War. It soon made the author internationally famous, was translated into many languages, and was made into a play of perennial popular appeal. It made slavery real to Northern readers, so real that its characters have had curious vitality. That it has elements of greatness is shown by its success in countries little interested in American slavery. Its main function was humanitarian. Its dramatic power and passion for social righteousness give it a permanent place as the most important social novel of its period, despite its lack of subtlety and its haze of sentiment. In 1853 Mrs. Stowe published the *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and in 1856, *Dred*, another novel dealing with Negro life. Her later novels, better balanced in structure and more even in artistry, give some excellent pictures of Calvinistic New England. They had not the popularity of her landmark novel in the history of reform, but they influenced such later New England women writers as Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Alice Brown.

The strongest influences on Mrs. Stowe's writing were her Puritan heritage and her environment. The daughter, sister, wife, and mother of a minister, she was steeped from childhood in the spiritual life of New England. Her great hero was Jonathan Edwards. As a juvenile she was stimulated by Bunyan and delighted in Mather's *Magnalia* and the *Arabian Nights*, and she knew Milton and something of Shakespeare's plays. Though novel reading was then low in status, her father allowed his children to read Scott's historical novels. Perhaps the "gothic" element in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (associated with the character Cassie) reflects this early reading. Mrs. Stowe was never trained in craftsmanship. She remained throughout her life primarily a moralist, rather than an artist. Her latest tales, such as *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), *Oldtown Folks* (1869), *Poganuc People* (1878), with their New England settings and pervading concern with theology, have attracted little interest. Yet since they prove to be, after Hawthorne's, our best picture of the ways of old New England and its intellectual and spiritual life, as time passes they may well come into the foreground, as Lowell predicted.

There is a collected edition of *The Writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (16 vols., 1896). For biography consult C. E. Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1889); A. Fields, *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1897); C. E. and L. B. Stowe, *Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1911); M. F. Crow, *Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1913); L. B. Stowe, in *Saints, Sinners, and Beechers* (1934); Catherine Gilbertson, *Harriet Beecher Stowe* (1937). Katharine Anthony wrote of her in *DAB*, XVIII (1936). See also John Erskine, in *Leading American Novelists* (1910); G. Bradford, in *Portraits of American Women* (1919); Constance M. Rourke, in *Trumpets of Jubilee* (1927); and V. L. Parrington, in *Main Currents in American Thought*, II (1927).

Her writings before 1860 were listed by Joseph Sabin and others in *Bibliotheca Americana*, XXIV (1933–1934).

## *From* UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

Mrs. Stowe meant her book to be a protest at the separation of slave families by sale, and against the hunting of fugitive slaves. It was not directed against the South, but against the institution of slavery. She is said to have expressed surprise at the harsh condemnation of the book by Southerners. She expected criticism rather from ardent abolitionists who might think it "too temperate." She made her best characters, St. Clare and the Shelbys, Southern, and her worst, Legree, a Northerner. Her precise New Englander, Miss Ophelia, she paints as not very adaptable in her practical philanthropy. Mrs. Stowe's great service was that she made the situation living, not abstract, and brought home the realization that slaves were in the absolute power of their masters. Three thousand copies of her book were sold the first day it was on sale and three hundred thousand during the year. It was translated into twenty-three languages. The world took to itself Uncle Tom, unconvincing though he is in his extraordinary patience, piety, and his suffering; Little Eva, whose death scene appealed to an older generation but seems mawkish now; and the incorrigible Topsy. And the name of Simon Legree has become synonymous with brutality.

### CHAPTER XX

### *Topsy*

[Augustine St. Clare is the owner of a large plantation. Miss Ophelia, a New Englander, has gone to live at his home. This chapter brings together the prim Northerner and the unmanageable Topsy.]

ONE morning, while Miss Ophelia was busy in some of her domestic cares, St. Clare's voice was heard, calling her at the foot of the stairs.

"Come down here, cousin; I've something to show you."

"What is it?" said Miss Ophelia, coming down, with her sewing in her hand.

"I've made a purchase for your department —see here," said St. Clare; and, with the word, he pulled along a little Negro girl, about eight or nine years of age.

She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round, shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the new Mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction. The expression of her face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy, ragged garment, made of bagging; and stood with her hands demurely folded before her. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like about her appearance—something, as Miss Ophelia afterward said, "so heathenish," as to inspire that good lady with utter dismay; and, turning to St. Clare, she said:

"Augustine, what in the world have you brought that thing here for?"

"For you to educate, to be sure, and train in the way she should go. I thought she was rather a funny specimen in the Jim Crow line. Here, Topsy," he added, giving a whistle, as a man would to call the attention of a dog, "give us a song, now, and show us some of your dancing."

The black, glassy eyes glittered with a kind of wicked drollery, and the thing struck up, in a clear shrill voice, an old Negro melody, to which she kept time with her hands and feet, spinning round, clapping her hands, knocking her knees together, in a wild, fantastic sort of time, and producing in her throat all those odd guttural sounds which distinguish the native music of her race; and finally, turning a somersault or two, and giving a prolonged closing note, as odd and unearthly as that of a steam-whistle, she came suddenly down on the carpet, and stood with her hands folded, and a most sanctimonious expression of meekness and solemnity over her face, only broken by the cunning glances which she shot askance from the corners of her eyes.

Miss Ophelia stood silent, perfectly paralysed with amazement.

St. Clare, like a mischievous fellow as he was, appeared to enjoy her astonishment; and, addressing the child again, said:

"Topsy, this is your new mistress. I am going to give you up to her; see now that you behave yourself."

"Yes, Mas'r," said Topsy, with sanctimonious gravity, her wicked eyes twinkling as she spoke.

"You're going to be good, Topsy; you understand," said St. Clare.

"O, yes, Mas'r," said Topsy, with another twinkle, her hands still devoutly folded.

"Now, Augustine, what upon earth is this for?" said Miss Ophelia. "Your house is so full of these little plagues, now, that a body can't set down their foot without treading on 'em. I get up in the morning, and find one asleep behind the door, and see one black head poking out from under the table, one lying on the doormat—and they are mopping and mowing and grinning between all the railings, and tumbling over the kitchen floor! What on earth did you want to bring this one for?"

"For you to educate—didn't I tell you? You are always preaching about educating. I thought I would make you a present of a fresh-caught specimen, and let you try your hand on her, and bring her up in the way she should go."

"*I* don't want her, I am sure; I have more to do with 'em now than I want to."

"That's you Christians, all over! You'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathen. But let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labor of their conversion on yourselves! No; when it comes to that, they are dirty and disagreeable, and it's too much care, and so on."

"Augustine, you know I didn't think of it in that light," said Miss Ophelia, evidently softening. "Well, it might be a real missionary work," she said, looking rather more favorably on the child.

St. Clare had touched the right string. Miss Ophelia's conscientiousness was ever on the alert. "But," she added, "I really didn't see the need of buying this one; there are enough now, in your house, to take up all my time and skill."

"Well, then, cousin," said St. Clare, drawing her aside, "I ought to beg your pardon for my good-for-nothing speeches. You are so good, after all, that there's no sense in them. Why, the fact is, this concern belonged to a couple of drunken creatures that keep a low restaurant that I have to pass by every day, and I was tired of hearing her screaming, and them beating and swearing at her. She looked bright and funny, too, as if something might be made of her; so I bought her, and I'll give her to you. Try, now, and give her a good orthodox New England bringing up, and see what it'll make of her. You know I haven't any gift that way; but I'd like you to try."

"Well, I'll do what I can," said Miss Ophelia; and she approached her new subject very much as a person might be supposed to approach a black spider, supposing him to have benevolent designs toward it.

"She's dreadfully dirty, and half naked," she said.

"Well, take her down stairs, and make some of them clean and clothe her up."

Miss Ophelia carried her to the kitchen regions.

"Don't see what Mas'r St. Clare wants of 'nother nigger!" said Dinah, surveying the new arrival with no friendly air. "Won't have her round under *my* feet, *I* know!"

"Pah!" said Rosa and Jane, with supreme disgust; "let her keep out of our way! What in the world mas'r wants another of these low niggers for, I can't see!"

"You go long! No more nigger dan you be, Miss Rosa," said Dinah, who felt this last remark a reflection on herself. "You seem to tink yourself white folks. You ain't nerry one, black *nor* white. I'd like to be one or turrer."

Miss Ophelia saw that there was nobody in the camp that would undertake to oversee the cleansing and dressing of the new arrival; and so she was forced to do it herself, with some very ungracious and reluctant assistance from Jane.

It is not for ears polite to hear the particulars of the first toilet of a neglected, abused child. In fact, in this world, multitudes must live and die in a state that would be too great a shock to the nerves of their fellow-mortals even to hear described. Miss Ophelia had a good, strong, practical deal of resolution; and she went through all the disgusting details with heroic thoroughness, though, it must be confessed, with no very gracious air—for endurance was the utmost to which her principles could bring her. When she saw, on the back and shoulders of the child, great welts and calloused spots, ineffaceable marks of the

system under which she had grown up thus far, her heart became pitiful within her.

"See there!" said Jane, pointing to the marks, "don't that show she's a limb? We'll have fine works with her, I reckon. I hate these nigger young uns! so disgusting! I wonder that mas'r would buy her!"

The "young un" alluded to heard all these comments with the subdued and doleful air which seemed habitual to her, only scanning, with a keen and furtive glance of her flickering eyes, the ornaments which Jane wore in her ears. When arrayed at last in a suit of decent and whole clothing, her hair cropped short to her head, Miss Ophelia, with some satisfaction, said she looked more Christian-like than she did, and in her own mind began to mature some plans for her instruction.

Sitting down before her, she began to question her.

"How old are you, Topsy?"

"Dun no, missis," said the image, with a grin that showed all her teeth.

"Don't know how old you are? Didn't anybody ever tell you? Who was your mother?"

"Never had none!" said the child, with another grin.

"Never had any mother? What do you mean? Where were you born?"

"Never was born!" persisted Topsy, with another grin, that looked so goblin-like, that, if Miss Ophelia had been at all nervous, she might have fancied that she had got hold of some sooty gnome from the land of Diablerie; but Miss Ophelia was not nervous, but plain and business-like, and she said, with some sternness:

"You mustn't answer me in that way, child; I'm not playing with you. Tell me where you were born, and who your father and mother were."

"Never was born," reiterated the creature, more emphatically; "never had no father nor mother, nor nothin'. I was raised by a speculator, with lots of others. Old Aunt Sue used to take care on us."

The child was evidently sincere; and Jane breaking into a short laugh, said:

"Laws, missis, there's heaps of 'em. Speculators buys 'em up cheap, when they's little, and gets 'em raised for market."

"How long have you lived with your master and mistress?"

"Dun no, missis."

"Is it a year, or more, or less?"

"Dun no, missis."

"Laws, missis, those low Negroes—they can't tell; they don't know anything about time," said Jane, "they don't know what a year is; they don't know their own ages."

"Have you ever heard anything about God, Topsy?"

The child looked bewildered, but grinned as usual.

"Do you know who made you?"

"Nobody, as I knows on," said the child, with a short laugh.

The idea appeared to amuse her considerably; for her eyes twinkled, and she added:

"I s'pect I grow'd. Don't think nobody never made me."

"Do you know how to sew?" said Miss Ophelia, who thought she would turn her inquiries to something more tangible.

"No, missis."

"What can you do?—what did you do for your master and mistress?"

"Fetch water, and wash dishes, and rub knives, and wait on folks."

"Were they good to you?"

"'Spect they was," said the child, scanning Miss Ophelia cunningly.

Miss Ophelia rose from this encouraging colloquy; St. Clare was leaning over the back of her chair.

"You'll find virgin soil there, cousin; put in your own ideas—you won't find many to pull up."

Miss Ophelia's ideas of education, like all her other ideas, were very set and definite; and of the kind that prevailed in New England a century ago, and which are still preserved in some very retired and unsophisticated parts, where there are no railroads. As nearly as could be expressed, they could be comprised in very few words; to teach them to mind when they were spoken to; to teach them the catechism, sewing, and reading; and to whip them if they told lies. And though, of course, in the flood of light that is now poured on education, these are left far away in the rear, yet it is an undisputed fact that our

grandmothers raised some tolerably fair men and women under this régime, as many of us can remember and testify. At all events Miss Ophelia knew of nothing else to do; and, therefore, applied her mind to her heathen with the best diligence she could command.

The child was announced, and considered in the family as Miss Ophelia's girl; and, as she was looked upon with no gracious eye in the kitchen, Miss Ophelia resolved to confine her sphere of operation and instruction chiefly to her own chamber. With a self-sacrifice which some of our readers will appreciate, she resolved, instead of comfortably making her own bed, sweeping and dusting her own chamber, which she had hitherto done, in utter scorn of all offers of help from the chambermaid of the establishment—to condemn herself to the martyrdom of instructing Topsy to perform these operations —ah, woe the day! Did any of our readers ever do the same, they will appreciate the amount of her self-sacrifice.

Miss Ophelia began with Topsy by taking her into her chamber, the first morning, and solemnly commencing a course of instruction in the art and mystery of bedmaking. Behold, then, Topsy, washed and shorn of all the little braided tails wherein her heart had delighted, arrayed in a clean gown, with well-starched apron, standing reverently before Miss Ophelia, with an expression of solemnity well befitting a funeral.

"Now, Topsy, I'm going to show you just how my bed is to be made. I am very particular about my bed. You must learn exactly how to do it."

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with a deep sigh, and a face of woeful earnestness.

"Now, Topsy, look here; this is the hem of the sheet—this is the right side of the sheet, and this is the wrong; will you remember?"

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with another sigh.

"Well, now, the under sheet you must bring over the bolster—so—and tuck it clear down under the mattress nice and smooth—so —do you see?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, with profound attention.

"But the upper sheet," said Miss Ophelia, "must be brought down in this way, and tucked under firm and smooth at the foot—so —the narrow hem at the foot."

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, as before; but we will add, what Miss Ophelia did not see, that, during the time when the good lady's back was turned, in the zeal of her manipulations, the young disciple had contrived to snatch a pair of gloves, and a ribbon, which she had adroitly slipped into her sleeves, and stood with her hands dutifully folded as before.

"Now, Topsy, let's see *you* do this," said Miss Ophelia, pulling off the clothes, and seating herself.

Topsy, with great gravity and adroitness, went through the exercise completely to Miss Ophelia's satisfaction; smoothing the sheets, patting out every wrinkle, and exhibiting, through the whole process, a gravity and seriousness with which her instructress was greatly edified. By an unlucky slip, however, a fluttering fragment of the ribbon hung out of one of her sleeves, just as she was finishing, and caught Miss Ophelia's attention. Instantly she pounced upon it. "What's this? You naughty, wicked child—you've been stealing this!"

The ribbon was pulled out of Topsy's own sleeve, yet was she not in the least disconcerted; she only looked at it with an air of the most surprised and unconscious innocence.

"Laws! why, that ar's Miss Feely's ribbon, ain't it? How could it a got caught in my sleeve?"

"Topsy, you naughty girl, don't you tell me a lie—you stole that ribbon!"

"Missis, I declar for't, I didn't; never seed it till dis yer blessed minnit."

"Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "don't you know it's wicked to tell lies?"

"I never tells no lies, Miss Feely," said Topsy, with virtuous gravity; "it's jist the truth I've been a tellin' now, and ain't nothin' else."

"Topsy, I shall have to whip you, if you tell lies so."

"Laws, missis, if you's to whip all day, couldn't say no other way," said Topsy, beginning to blubber. "I never seed dat ar— it must a got caught in my sleeve. Miss Feely

must have left it on the bed, and it got caught in the clothes, and so got in my sleeve."

Miss Ophelia was so indignant at this barefaced lie, that she caught the child and shook her.

"Don't you tell me that again!"

The shake brought the gloves on to the floor, from the other sleeve.

"There, you!" said Miss Ophelia, "will you tell me now, you didn't steal the ribbon?"

Topsy now confessed to the gloves, but still persisted in denying the ribbon.

"Now, Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "if you'll confess all about it, I won't whip you this time." Thus adjured, Topsy confessed to the ribbon and the gloves, with woeful protestations of penitence.

"Well, now, tell me. I know you must have taken other things since you have been in the house, for I let you run about all day yesterday. Now, tell me if you took anything, and I sha'n't whip you."

"Laws, missis! I took Miss Eva's red thing she wars on her neck."

"You did, you naughty child! Well, what else?"

"I took Rosa's yer-rings—them red ones."

"Go bring them to me this minute, both of 'em."

"Laws, missis! I can't—they's burnt up!"

"Burnt up—what a story! Go get 'em, or I'll whip you."

Topsy, with loud protestations, and tears, and groans, declared that she *could* not. "They's burnt up—they was."

"What did you burn 'em up for?" said Miss Ophelia.

"'Cause I's wicked—I is. I's mighty wicked, anyhow. I can't help it."

Just at this moment, Eva came innocently into the room, with the identical coral necklace on her neck.

"Why, Eva, where did you get your necklace?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Get it? Why, I've had it on all day," said Eva.

"Did you have it on yesterday?"

"Yes; and what is funny, aunty, I had it on all night. I forgot to take it off when I went to bed."

Miss Ophelia looked perfectly bewildered; the more so, as Rosa, at that instant, came into the room, with a basket of newly-ironed linen poised on her head, and the coral eardrops shaking in her ears!

"I'm sure I can't tell anything what to do with such a child!" she said, in despair. "What in the world did you tell me you took those things for, Topsy?"

"Why, missis said I must 'fess and I couldn't think of nothin' else to 'fess," said Topsy, rubbing her eyes.

"But of course, I did not want you to confess things you didn't do," said Miss Ophelia; "that's telling a lie, just as much as the other."

"Laws, now, is it?" said Topsy, with an air of innocent wonder.

"La, there ain't any such thing as truth in that limb," said Rosa, looking indignantly at Topsy. "If I was Mas'r St. Clare, I'd whip her till the blood run. I would—I'd let her catch it!"

"No, no, Rosa," said Eva, with an air of command, which the child could assume at times; "you mustn't talk so, Rosa, I can't bear to hear it."

"La sakes! Miss Eva, you's so good, you don't know nothing how to get along with niggers. There's no way but to cut 'em well up, I tell ye."

"Rosa!" said Eva, "hush! Don't you say another word of that sort!" and the eye of the child flashed, and her cheek deepened its color.

Rosa was cowed in a moment.

"Miss Eva has got the St. Clare blood in her, that's plain. She can speak, for all the world, just like her papa," she said, as she passed out of the room.

Eva stood looking at Topsy.

There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child, with her golden head, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble brow, and prince-like movements; and her black, keen, subtle, cringing, yet acute neighbor. They stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the African, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil, and vice!

Something, perhaps, of such thoughts

struggled through Eva's mind. But a child's thoughts are rather dim, undefined instincts; and in Eva's noble nature many such were yearning and working, for which she had no power of utterance. When Miss Ophelia expatiated on Topsy's naughty, wicked conduct, the child looked perplexed and sorrowful, but said, sweetly:

"Poor Topsy, why need you steal? You're going to be taken good care of, now. I'm sure I'd rather give you anything of mine than have you steal it."

It was the first word of kindness the child had ever heard in her life; and the sweet tone and manner struck strangely on the wild, rude heart, and a sparkle of something like a tear shone in the keen, round, glittering eye; but it was followed by the short laugh and habitual grin. No! the ear that has never heard anything but abuse is strangely incredulous of anything so heavenly as kindness; and Topsy only thought Eva's speech something funny and inexplicable—she did not believe it.

But what was to be done with Topsy? Miss Ophelia found the case a puzzler; her rules for bringing up didn't seem to apply. She thought she would take time to think of it; and, by the way of gaining time, and in hopes of some indefinite moral virtues supposed to be inherent in dark closets, Miss Ophelia shut Topsy up in one till she had arranged her ideas further on the subject.

"I don't see," said Miss Ophelia to St. Clare, "how I'm going to manage that child, without whipping her."

"Well, whip her, then, to your heart's content; I'll give you full power to do what you like."

"Children always have to be whipped," said Miss Ophelia; "I never heard of bringing them up without."

"O, well, certainly," said St. Clare; "do as you think best. Only I'll make one suggestion: I've seen this child whipped with a poker, knocked down with the shovel or tongs, whichever came handiest; and, seeing that she is used to that style of operation, I think your whippings will have to be pretty energetic, to make much impression."

"What is to be done with her, then?" said Miss Ophelia.

"You have started a serious question," said St. Clare; "I wish you'd answer it. What is to be done with a human being that can be governed only by the lash—*that* fails—it's a very common state of things down here."

"I'm sure I don't know; I never saw such a child as this."

"Such children are very common among us, and such men and women, too. How are they to be governed?" said St. Clare.

"I'm sure it's more than I can say," said Miss Ophelia.

"Or I either," said St. Clare. "The horrid cruelties and outrages that once in a while find their way into the papers—such cases as Prue's, for example—what do they come from? In many cases, it is a gradual hardening process on both sides—the owner growing more and more cruel, as the servant more and more callous. Whipping and abuse are like laudanum: you have to double the dose as the sensibilities decline. I saw this very early when I became an owner; and I resolved never to begin, because I did not know when I should stop—and I resolved, at least, to protect my own moral nature. The consequence is, that my servants act like spoiled children; but I think that better than for us both to be brutalized together. You have talked a great deal about our responsibilities in educating, cousin. I really wanted you to *try* with one child, who is a specimen of thousands among us."

"It is your system makes such children," said Miss Ophelia.

"I know it; but they are *made*—they exist—and what *is* to be done with them?"

"Well, I can't say I thank you for the experiment. But, then, as it appears to be a duty, I shall persevere and try, and do the best I can," said Miss Ophelia; and Miss Ophelia, after this, did labor, with a commendable degree of zeal and energy, on her new subject. She instituted regular hours and employments for her, and undertook to teach her to read and to sew.

In the former art, the child was quick enough. She learned her letters as if by magic, and was very soon able to read plain reading; but the sewing was a more difficult matter. The creature was as lithe as a cat, and as active

as a monkey, and the confinement of sewing was her abomination; so she broke her needles, threw them slyly out of the windows, or down in chinks of the walls; she tangled, broke, and dirtied her thread, or, with a sly movement, would throw a spool away altogether. Her motions were almost as quick as those of a practised conjurer, and her command of her face quite as great; and though Miss Ophelia could not help feeling that so many accidents could not possibly happen in succession, yet she could not, without a watchfulness which would leave her no time for anything else, detect her.

Topsy was soon a noted character in the establishment. Her talent for every species of drollery, grimace, and mimicry—for dancing, tumbling, climbing, singing, whistling, imitating every sound that hit her fancy—seemed inexhaustible. In her play hours, she invariably had every child in the establishment at her heels, open-mouthed with admiration and wonder—not excepting Miss Eva, who appeared to be fascinated by her wild diablerie, as a dove is sometimes charmed by a glittering serpent. Miss Ophelia was uneasy that Eva should fancy Topsy's society so much, and implored St. Clare to forbid it.

"Poh! let the child alone," said St. Clare. "Topsy will do her good."

"But so depraved a child—are you not afraid she will teach her some mischief?"

"She can't teach her mischief; she might teach it to some children, but evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage-leaf—not a drop sinks in."

"Don't be too sure," said Miss Ophelia. "I know I'd never let a child of mine play with Topsy."

"Well, your children needn't," said St. Clare, "but mine may; if Eva could have been spoiled, it would have been done years ago."

Topsy was at first despised and condemned by the upper servants. They soon found reason to alter their opinion. It was very soon discovered that whoever cast an indignity on Topsy was sure to meet with some inconvenient accident shortly after—either a pair of earrings or some cherished trinket would be missing, or an article of dress would be suddenly found utterly ruined, or the person would stumble accidentally into a pail of hot water, or a libation of dirty slop would unaccountably deluge them from above when in full gala dress—and on all these occasions, when investigation was made, there was nobody found to stand sponsor for the indignity. Topsy was cited, and had up before all the domestic judicatories, time and again; but always sustained her examinations with most edifying innocence and gravity of appearance. Nobody in the world ever doubted who did the things; but not a scrap of any direct evidence could be found to establish the suppositions, and Miss Ophelia was too just to feel at liberty to proceed to any lengths without it.

The mischiefs done were always so nicely timed, also, as further to shelter the aggressor. Thus, the times for revenge on Rosa and Jane, the two chambermaids, were always chosen in those seasons when (as not unfrequently happened) they were in disgrace with their mistress, when any complaint from them would of course meet with no sympathy. In short, Topsy soon made the household understand the propriety of letting her alone; and she was let alone, accordingly.

Topsy was smart and energetic in all manual operations, learning everything that was taught her with surprising quickness. With a few lessons, she had learned to do the proprieties of Miss Ophelia's chamber in a way with which even that particular lady could find no fault. Mortal hands could not lay spread smoother, adjust pillows more accurately, sweep and dust and arrange more perfectly, than Topsy, when she chose—but she didn't very often choose. If Miss Ophelia, after three or four days of careful and patient supervision, was so sanguine as to suppose that Topsy had at last fallen into her way, could do without overlooking, and so go off and busy herself about something else, Topsy would hold a perfect carnival of confusion, for some one or two hours. Instead of making the bed, she would amuse herself with pulling off the pillowcases, butting her woolly head among the pillows, till it would sometimes be grotesquely ornamented with feathers sticking out in various directions; she would climb the posts, and hang head downward from the tops; flourish the sheets and spreads all over

the apartment; dress the bolster up in Miss Ophelia's night-clothes, and enact various scenic performances with that—singing and whistling, and making grimaces at herself in the looking-glass; in short, as Miss Ophelia phrased it, 'raising Cain' generally.

On one occasion, Miss Ophelia found Topsy with her very best scarlet India Canton crape shawl wound round her head for a turban, going on with her rehearsals before the glass in great style—Miss Ophelia having, with carelessness most unheard-of in her, left the key for once in her drawer.

"Topsy!" she would say, when at the end of all patience. "What does make you act so?"

"Dun no, missis—I 'spects cause I's so wicked!"

"I don't know anything what I shall do with you, Topsy."

"Law, missis, you must whip me; my old missis allers whipped me. I ain't used to workin' unless I gets whipped."

"Why, Topsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well, if you've a mind to; what is the reason you won't?"

"Laws, missis, I's used to whippin'; I 'spects it's good for me."

Miss Ophelia tried the recipe, and Topsy invariably made a terrible commotion, screaming, groaning, and imploring, though half an hour afterward, when roosted on some projection of the balcony, and surrounded by a flock of admiring "young uns," she would express the utmost contempt of the whole affair.

"Law, Miss Feely whip!—wouldn't kill a skeeter, her whippin's. Oughter see how old mas'r made the flesh fly; old mas'r know'd how!"

Topsy always made great capital of her own sins and enormities, evidently considering them as something peculiarly distinguishing.

"Law, you niggers," she would say to some of her auditors, "does you know you's all sinners? Well, you is—everybody is. White folks is sinners too—Miss Feely says so; but I 'spects niggers is the biggest ones; but lor! ye ain't any on ye up to me. I's so awful wicked there can't nobody do nothin' with me. I used to keep old missis a' swarin' at me half de time. I 'spects I's the wickedest critter in the world"; and Topsy would cut a summerset and come up brisk and shining on to a higher perch, and evidently plume herself on the distinction.

Miss Ophelia busied herself very earnestly on Sundays, teaching Topsy the catechism. Topsy had an uncommon verbal memory, and committed with a fluency that greatly encouraged her instructress.

"What good do you expect it is going to do her?" said St. Clare.

"Why, it always has done children good. It's what children always have to learn, you know," said Miss Ophelia.

"Understand it or not," said St. Clare.

"O, children never understand it at the time; but, after they are grown up, it'll come to them."

"Mine hasn't come to me yet," said St. Clare, "though I'll bear testimony that you put it into me pretty thoroughly when I was a boy."

"Ah, you were always good at learning, Augustine. I used to have great hopes of you," said Miss Ophelia.

"Well, haven't you now?" said St. Clare.

"I wish you were as good as you were when you were a boy, Augustine."

"So do I, that's a fact, cousin," said St. Clare. "Well, go ahead and catechize Topsy; may be you'll make out something yet."

Topsy, who had stood like a black statue during this discussion, with hands decently folded, now, at a signal from Miss Ophelia, went on:

"Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created."

Topsy's eyes twinkled, and she looked inquiringly.

"What is it, Topsy?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Please, missis, was dat ar State Kintuck?"

"What state, Topsy?"

"Dat state dey fell out of. I used to hear mas'r tell how we come down from Kintuck."

St. Clare laughed.

"You'll have to give her a meaning, or she'll make one," said he. "There seems to be a theory of emigration suggested there."

"O! Augustine, be still," said Miss Ophelia; "how can I do anything, if you will be laughing?"

"Well, I won't disturb the exercises again, on my honor"; and St. Clare took his paper into the parlor, and sat down, till Topsy had finished her recitations. They were all very well, only that now and then she would oddly transpose some important words, and persist in the mistake, in spite of every effort to the contrary; and St. Clare, after all his promises of goodness, took a wicked pleasure in these mistakes, calling Topsy to him whenever he had a mind to amuse himself, and getting her to repeat the offending passages, in spite of Miss Ophelia's remonstrances.

"How do you think I can do anything with the child, if you will go on so, Augustine?" she would say.

"Well, it is too bad—I won't again; but I do like to hear the droll little image stumble over those big words!"

"But you confirm her in the wrong way."

"What's the odds? One word is as good as another to her."

"You wanted me to bring her up right; and you ought to remember she is a reasonable creature, and be careful of your influence over her."

"O, dismal! so I ought; but, as Topsy herself says, 'I's so wicked!'"

In very much this way Topsy's training proceeded, for a year or two—Miss Ophelia worrying herself, from day to day, with her, as a kind of chronic plague, to whose inflictions she became, in time, as accustomed as persons sometimes do to the neuralgia or sick-headache.

CHAPTER XXX

## *The Slave Warehouse*

[The scene referred to at the beginning was an account of a noisy discussion among some of the men who were taunting their more sensitive fellow slaves—an uproar that was quieted by a keeper who "distributed a few kicks and cuffs without much inquiry."]

While this scene was going on in the men's sleeping-room, the reader may be curious to take a peep at the corresponding apartment allotted to the women. Stretched out in various attitudes over the floor, he may see numberless sleeping forms of every shade of complexion, from the purest ebony to white, and of all years, from childhood to old age, lying now asleep. Here is a fine bright girl, of ten years, whose mother was sold out yesterday, and who tonight cried herself to sleep when nobody was looking at her. Here, a worn old negress, whose thin arms and callous fingers tell of hard toil, waiting to be sold tomorrow as a cast-off article, for what can be got for her; and some forty or fifty others, with heads variously enveloped in blankets or articles of clothing, lie stretched around them. But, in a corner, sitting apart from the rest, are two females of a more interesting appearance than common. One of these is a respectably dressed mulatto woman between forty and fifty, with soft eyes and a gentle and pleasing physiognomy. She has on her head a high-raised turban, made of a gay red Madras handkerchief, of the first quality, and her dress is neatly fitted, and of good material, showing that she has been provided for with a careful hand. By her side, and nestling closely to her, is a young girl of fifteen,—her daughter. She is a quadroon as may be seen from her fairer complexion, though her likeness to her mother is quite discernible. She has the same soft, dark eye, with longer lashes, and her curling hair is of a luxuriant brown. She also is dressed with great neatness, and her white, delicate hands betray very little acquaintance with servile toil. These two are to be sold tomorrow, in the same lot with the St. Clare servants; and the gentleman to whom they belong, and to whom the money for their sale is to be transmitted, is a member of a Christian church in New York, who will receive the money, and go thereafter to the sacrament of his Lord and theirs, and think no more of it.

These two, whom we shall call Susan and Emmeline, had been the personal attendants of an amiable and pious lady of New Orleans, by whom they had been carefully and piously instructed and trained. They had been taught to read and write, diligently instructed in the truths of religion, and their lot had been as happy a one as in their condition it was possible to be. But the only son of their protectress had the management of her property; and, by carelessness and extravagance, involved it to a large amount, and at last failed. One of the largest creditors was the respectable firm of

B. & Co., in New York. B. & Co., wrote to their lawyer in New Orleans, who attached the real estate (these two articles and a lot of plantation hands formed the most valuable part of it), and wrote word to that effect to New York. Brother B., being as we have said a Christian man, and a resident in a free state, felt some uneasiness on the subject. He didn't like trading in slaves and souls of men,—of course he didn't; but, then, there were thirty thousand dollars in the case, and that was rather too much money to be lost for a principle; and so, after much considering and asking advice from those that he knew would advise to suit him, Brother B. wrote to his lawyer to dispose of the business in the way that seemed to him the most suitable and remit the proceeds.

The day after the letter arrived in New Orleans, Susan and Emmeline were attached, and sent to the depot to await a general auction on the following morning; and as they glimmer faintly upon us in the moonlight which steals through the grated window, we may listen to their conversation. Both are weeping, but each quietly, that the other may not hear.

"Mother, just lay your head on my lap, and see if you can't sleep a little," says the girl, trying to appear calm.

"I haven't any heart to sleep, Em: I can't; it's the last night we may be together!"

"O, mother, don't say so! perhaps we shall get sold together,—who knows?"

"If't was anybody's else case, I should say so, too, Em," said the woman; "but I'm so 'feard of losin' you that I don't see anything but danger."

"Why, mother, the man said we were both likely, and would sell well."

Susan remembered the man's looks and words. With a deadly sickness at her heart, she remembered how he had looked at Emmeline's hands, and lifted up her curly hair, and pronounced her a first-rate article. Susan had been trained as a Christian, brought up in the daily reading of the Bible, and had the same horror of her child's being sold to a life of shame that any other Christian mother might have; but she had no hope,—no protection.

"Mother, I think we might do first-rate, if you could get a place as cook, and I as chambermaid or seamstress, in some family. I dare say we shall. Let's both look as bright and lively as we can, and tell all we can do, and perhaps we shall," said Emmeline.

"I want you to brush your hair all back straight, tomorrow," said Susan.

"What for, mother? I don't look near so well that way."

"Yes, but you'll sell better so."

"I don't see why!" said the child.

"Respectable families would be more apt to buy you, if they saw you looked plain and decent, as if you wasn't trying to look handsome. I know their ways better'n you do," said Susan.

"Well, mother, I will."

"And Emmeline, if we shouldn't ever see each other again after tomorrow,—if I'm sold way up on a plantation somewhere, and you somewhere else,—always remember how you've been brought up, and all Missis has told you; take your Bible with you, and your hymnbook; and if you're faithful to the Lord, he'll be faithful to you."

So speaks the poor soul in sore discouragement; for she knows that tomorrow any man, however vile and brutal, however godless and merciless, if he only has money to pay for her, may become owner of her daughter, body and soul; and then how is the child to be faithful? She thinks of all this, as she holds her daughter in her arms, and wishes that she were not handsome and attractive. It seems almost an aggravation to her to remember how purely and how piously, how much above the ordinary lot, she has been brought up. But she has no resort but to *pray;* and many such prayers to God have gone up from those same trim, neatly arranged, respectable slave-prisons,—prayers which God has not forgotten, as a coming day shall show; for it is written, "Whoso causeth one of these little ones to offend, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

The soft, earnest, quiet moonbeam looks in fixedly, marking the bars of the grated windows on the prostrate, sleeping forms.

The motner and daughter are singing together a wild and melancholy dirge, common as a funeral hymn among the slaves:

"O, where is weeping Mary?
O, where is weeping Mary?
'Rived in the goodly land.
She is dead and gone to Heaven;
She is dead and gone to Heaven;
'Rived in the goodly land."

These words, sung by voices of a peculiar and melancholy sweetness, in an air which seemed like the sighing of earthly despair after heavenly hope, floated through the dark prison-rooms with a pathetic cadence, as verse after verse was breathed out:

"O, where are Paul and Silas?
O, where are Paul and Silas?
Gone to the goodly land.
They are dead and gone to Heaven;
They are dead and gone to Heaven;
'Rived in the goodly land."

Sing on, poor souls! The night is short, and the morning will part you forever!

But now it is morning, and everybody is astir; and the worthy Mr. Skeegs is busy and bright, for a lot of goods is to be fitted out for auction. There is a brisk lookout on the toilet; injunctions passed around to every one to put on their best face and be spry; and now all are arranged in a circle for a last review, before they are marched up to the Bourse.

Mr. Skeegs, with his palmetto on and his cigar in his mouth, walks around to put farewell touches on his wares.

"How's this?" he said, stepping in front of Susan and Emmeline. "Where's your curls, gal?"

The girl looked timidly at her mother, who, with the smooth adroitness common among her class, answers,

"I was telling her, last night, to put up her hair smooth and neat, and not havin' it flying about in curls; looks more respectable so."

"Bother!" said the man peremptorily, turning to the girl; "you go right along, and curl yourself real smart!" He added, giving a crack to a rattan he held in his hand, "And be back in quick time, too!"

"You go and help her," he added to the mother. "Them curls may make a hundred dollars difference in the sale of her."

* * *

A little before the sale commenced, a short, broad, muscular man, in a checked shirt considerably open at the bosom, and pantaloons much the worse for dirt and wear, elbowed his way through the crowd, like one who is going actively into business; and, coming up to the group, began to examine them systematically. From the moment that Tom saw him approaching, he felt an immediate and revolting horror at him, that increased as he came near. He was evidently, though short, of gigantic strength. His round, bullet head, large, light-gray eyes, with their shaggy, sandy eyebrows, and stiff, wiry, sunburned hair, were rather unprepossessing items, it is to be confessed; his large, coarse mouth was distended with tobacco, the juice of which, from time to time, he ejected from him with great decision and explosive force; his hands were immensely large, hairy, sunburned, freckled, and very dirty, and garnished with long nails, in a very foul condition. This man now proceeded to a very free personal examination of the whole lot. He seized Tom by the jaw, and pulled open his mouth to inspect his teeth; made him strip up his sleeve, to show his muscle; turned him round, made him jump and spring, to show his paces.

"Where was you raised?" he added, briefly, to these investigations.

"In Kintuck, Mas'r," said Tom, looking about as if for deliverance.

"What have you done?"

"Had care of Mas'r's farm," said Tom.

"Likely story!" said the other, shortly, as he passed on. He paused a moment before Dolph; then spitting a discharge of tobacco juice on his well-blacked boots, and giving a contemptuous umph, he walked on. Again he stopped before Susan and Emmeline. He put out his heavy, dirty hand, and drew the girl toward him; passed it over her neck and bust, felt her arms, and then pushed her back against her mother, whose patient face showed the suffering she had been going through at every motion of the hideous stranger.

The girl was frightened, and began to cry.

"Stop that, you minx!" said the salesman; "no whimpering here,—the sale is going to begin." And accordingly the sale began.

Adolph was knocked off, at a good sum, to the young gentleman who had previously stated his intention of buying him; and the other servants of the St. Clare lot went to various bidders.

"Now, up with you, boy! d'ye hear?" said the auctioneer to Tom.

Tom stepped upon the block, gave a few anxious looks round; all seemed mingled in a common indistinct noise,—the clatter of the salesman crying off his qualifications in French and English, the quick fire of French and English bids; and almost in a moment came the final thump of the hammer, and the clear ring on the last syllable of the word "*dollars*," as the auctioneer announced his price, and Tom was made over.—He had a master.

He was pushed from the block—the short, bullet-headed man, seizing him roughly by the shoulder, pushed him to one side, saying, in a harsh voice, "Stand there, *you!*"

Tom hardly realized anything; but still the bidding went on,—rattling, clattering, now French, now English. Down goes the hammer again,—Susan is sold! She goes down from the block, stops, looks wistfully back,—her daughter stretches out her hands towards her. She looks with agony in the face of the man who has bought her,—a respectable, middle-aged man, of benevolent countenance.

"O Mas'r, please do buy my daughter!"

"I'd like to, but I'm afraid I can't afford it!" said the gentleman, looking with painful interest, as the young girl mounted the block, and looked around her with a frightened and timid glance.

The blood flushes painfully in her otherwise colorless cheeks, her eye has a feverish fire, and her mother groans to see that she looks more beautiful than she ever saw her before. The auctioneer sees his advantage, and expatiates volubly in mingled French and English, and bids rise in rapid succession.

"I'll do anything in reason," said the benevolent-looking gentleman, pressing in and joining with the bids. In a few moments they have run beyond his purse. He is silent; the auctioneer grows warmer; but bids gradually drop off. It lies now between an aristocratic old citizen and our bullet-headed acquaintance. The citizen bids for a few turns, contemptuously measuring his opponent; but the bullet-head has the advantage over him, both in obstinacy and concealed length of purse, and the controversy lasts but a moment; the hammer falls,—he has got the girl, body and soul, unless God helps her.

Her master is Mr. Legree, who owns a cotton plantation on the Red River. She is pushed along into the same lot with Tom and two other men, and goes off, weeping as she goes.

The benevolent gentleman is sorry; but, then, the thing happens every day! One sees girls and mothers crying at these sales, *always;* it can't be helped, etc.; and he walks off with his acquisition, in another direction.

# *Civil War Songs and Lyrics*

MANY LITERARY lyrics and popular songs emerged from the long, intense struggle of the Civil War period. There were more of them, and they were of better literary quality than those of the Revolution and most of those of World War days, with which it is of interest to compare them. They were published in magazines and newspapers, and were circulated as broadsides and in paper-covered "songsters." Many were sung by the soldiers, comic songs as well as serious pieces, and entered widely into popular tradition.

Theodore O'Hara (1820–1867), lawyer, journalist, and soldier, was a Kentuckian by birth. He took part in the Mexican War as captain and assistant quartermaster of the Kentucky volunteers, and he was a colonel in the Civil War. His later life was spent in Georgia. He wrote only a few poems and is remembered almost entirely for "The Bivouac of the Dead." Of the two versions of this poem, the older is the longer and the superior.

Stephen Collins Foster (1826–1864), a Pennsylvanian, was the most gifted song writer of his period. He wrote for Christy's Minstrels and other troupes in the days when Negro minstrels were in vogue as entertainers, and his songs were more widely sung than those of any other composer. He was addicted to drink, and, despite his popularity and his unceasing composition, he died in poverty and obscurity. Mainly his songs are of Negro life, some humorous but the majority touched with melancholy. The best known are "O Susanna" (1848), "The Old Folks at Home" (1851), "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground" (1852), "My Old Kentucky Home" (1853), and "Old Black Joe" (1860).

James Ryder Randall (1839–1908), a native of Baltimore, when a teacher of literature in a college in Louisiana, composed "My Maryland" at white heat, on reading the news of the attack upon Massachusetts troops passing through Baltimore. The Cary sisters, Jennie and Hetty, of Baltimore, adapted the words to the music of the German college tune "Lauriger Horatius," which was itself based on the older "Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum." It was so effective when sung that the South adopted it as its war song. Randall tried to enlist in the Civil War but his health was not adequate. Later he was a successful journalist and remained in newspaper work till the end of his life.

Henry Timrod (1828–1867) of Charleston, South Carolina, was the ablest Southern poet of the time between Poe and Lanier. With his friend Paul Hamilton Hayne, he joined the group of young writers who gathered about William Gilmore Simms, wrote verses, and contributed to magazines. A small collection of his poems appeared in 1860. Reduced to dire straits when his property was swept away in the war, he continued to fight poverty and illness till his death. His early pieces were conventional, mostly love poems marked by sentimentalism. His "Spring" and "The Cotton Boll" were nature pieces, and in 1861 he wrote the ode "Ethnogenesis." These were followed by a series of war poems which are his best. "A Cry to Arms" and "Charleston" show fire and force as well as clear thought. Timrod left but a small body of work, restricted in range, but of fine taste, delicacy of feeling, and often of lyrical power. His poems were collected and published by P. H. Hayne in 1873.

Julia Ward Howe (1819–1910), author, reformer, and lecturer of distinction, was a native of New York City who lived mostly in Boston. She was of distinguished colonial family and well educated. She early allied herself with the abo-

litionists, afterwards supported woman's suffrage and other reform movements, and showed herself to be a gifted organizer. She composed "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" to furnish more worthy words to the melody of "John Brown's Body." It appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1862. Her first volume of lyrics was published in 1854, and her *Poems Old and New* in 1898. She wrote many volumes of prose essays, travel sketches, and addresses.

George Frederick Root (1820–1895) had success as an instructor in music in Boston and New York City, and later became a leading composer and publisher of music. He moved to Chicago, where he was interested in the musical firm of Root and Cady until it was broken up by the Chicago fire of 1871. Some of his conspicuous successes were "The Flower Queen" (a cantata), "Hazel Dell," and "Rosalie, the Prairie Flower." He composed more than 200 songs, of which the Civil War songs, "The Battle Cry of Freedom," written after Lincoln's second call for troops, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching," and "Just Before the Battle, Mother," were the most popular.

Ethelinda Elliot Beers (1827–1879), whose pen name was Ethel Lynn Beers, published "The Picket Guard" on November 30, 1861, in *Harper's Weekly*, and it was reprinted later anonymously in a Southern newspaper. The authorship has been attributed to Lamar Fontaine and to Thaddeus Oliver, both Southerners, but without real proof. Of the three claimants, only Mrs. Beers wrote other poems of any note, and she is now generally conceded to be the author of the lyric. She died the day after the publication of her collected poems, *All Quiet along the Potomac and Other Poems* (1879).

General Albert Pike (1809–1891), author of the best version of "Dixie," was a New Englander who went west to Saint Louis and Santa Fé and thence to Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was a successful lawyer and editor. He became a captain of cavalry in the Mexican War, and during the Civil War he was a brigadier general in the Confederate army. Later he edited and practiced law in Memphis and Washington, and added to his reputation as a poet. Volumes of his verse appeared in 1854 and 1872, and three volumes of selections have appeared since his death. The original "Dixie" was composed by Daniel Decatur Emmett in New York in 1859, in response to a demand for a new "walk-round" for Bryant's Minstrels. Pike wished to write a more literary "Dixie."

Francis Orray Ticknor (1822–1874) was a country physician and poet in Georgia. He contributed verse to newspapers and minor periodicals. "Little Giffen" was composed during his supervision of Confederate hospital work at Columbus, Georgia. It was based on the true story of a lad he and his wife nursed back to life. His collected verse, *Poems of Frank O. Ticknor, M.D.*, was not published in book form till 1879. An appreciative sketch by Paul Hamilton Hayne was prefixed.

Walter Kittredge (1834–1905) owed much of the popularity of his "Tenting on

the Old Camp Ground" to its taking and memorable melody. It was a favorite with the soldiers and it is still heard now and then on the programs of singers.

The minor lyric poet Paul Hamilton Hayne (1830–1886) was a native of Charleston and came from an old Southern family. He was graduated at the University of South Carolina, and like Timrod he drifted into the group about William Gilmore Simms. He tried law and then gave himself to journalism and poetry. He published three volumes of verse before the War. During the War period he served as a newspaper writer and wrote patriotic wartime pieces. When Charleston was burned and his property swept away, he retired to a cottage in the pine barrens of Georgia, depending on poetry for his meager income. His best volume, *Legends and Lyrics*, appeared in 1872. His *Collected Poems* was published in 1882. Hayne edited Timrod's poems before he collected his own. His carefully polished pieces show grace of craftsmanship and a lyric sweetness that sometimes becomes sentimentalism, but they display no marked originality. His reputation rests on a few poems.

The popular song writer Henry Clay Work (1832–1884) was born in Connecticut, coming from a family of Irish descent and abolitionist sympathies. His father assisted in the escape of slaves by the "underground railway" in Illinois and Missouri. Work had success with a few early songs, and G. F. Root persuaded him to try Civil War pieces. Some of his noteworthy successes were "Kingdom Comin'" (1861), "Wake, Nicodemus" (1864), and "Marching Through Georgia" (1865). He left Chicago after the great fire of 1871 but returned there when the firm of Root and Cady was re-established in 1875.

Thomas Buchanan Read (1822–1872), painter, poet, and lecturer, was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. After 1846 he lived in Philadelphia. Alongside his career as a painter he wrote many volumes of verse. These he gathered into three volumes in 1866. He wrote with facility, but imitatively and uncritically. His most popular poem, almost the only one that has lasted, was "Sheridan's Ride." Read was a major in the Union army during the War.

Abram Frederick Ryan (1838–1886), Catholic priest and poet of the Confederacy, was ordained to his calling in 1856, taught awhile, and in 1862 joined the Confederate army as a chaplain. He wrote "The Conquered Banner" after the war to the measures of a Gregorian hymn. In later life he engaged in religious and newspaper work in Louisiana and Georgia. His collection, *Poems, Patriotic, Religious, and Miscellaneous*, was published in 1880, and went through many editions.

George Henry Boker (1823–1890) published his *Poems of the War* in 1864. For a summary of his career, see Vol. I, p. 929.

Francis Miles Finch (1827–1907) was a native of Ithaca, New York, of New England stock. He was educated at Yale and became associate judge of the New York Court of Appeals. He was active in founding Cornell University, was a trustee, a non-resident lecturer in the Law School, and later dean of the Law School.

He composed "The Blue and the Gray," published in the *Atlantic* for September, 1867, on hearing that the women of Columbus, Mississippi, had "strewn flowers alike on the graves of the Confederate and the National soldiers." The poem is said to have done much to allay partisan feeling and bring reconciliation. At the end of his life he collected his verse, and it was published after his death as *The Blue and the Gray and Other Verses* (1909).

For collections of lyrics and songs of the Civil War period, see the four books edited by Frank Moore, *Songs of the Soldiers*, *Lyrics of Loyalty*, *Personal and Political Ballads* (all 1864), and *Songs and Ballads of the Southern People, 1861–1865* (1886); R. G. White, *Poetry, Lyrical, Narrative, and Satirical of the Civil War* (1866); William Gilmore Simms, *War Poetry of the South* (1867); F. F. Browne, *Bugle Echoes, a Collection of Poems of the Civil War, Northern and Southern* (1886); G. E. Eggleston, *American War Ballads and Lyrics* (2 vols., 1889); Esther P. Ellinger, *Southern Poetry of the Civil War* (1918). The music as well as the texts may be found in "*Sound Off*": *Soldier Songs*, by E. A. Dolph (1929), pp. 226–367.

Sketches of most of the lyrists and song writers of the period may be found in *DAB*. Theodore O'Hara is treated in Lewis and R. H. Collins's *History of Kentucky*, I (1874); in G. W. Ranck's *O'Hara and His Elegies* (1875), reissued as *The Bivouac of the Dead and Its Author* (1898); in J. W. Townsend's *Kentucky in American Letters* (1913); and in R. B. Wilson's "Theodore O'Hara," *Century Magazine*, XVIII (May, 1890). For Stephen C. Foster, consult Morrison Foster's *Biography, Songs, and Musical Compositions of Stephen C. Foster* (1896), and H. V. Milligan's *Stephen Collins Foster* (1920). G. C. Perine treated James Ryder Randall in *The Poets and Verse-Writers of Maryland* (1898), and M. P. Andrews edited *The Poems of James Ryder Randall* (1910); see also Brander Matthews, "The Songs of the Civil War," in *Pen and Ink* (1888), pp. 172 ff. For Timrod, see H. T. Thompson, *Henry Timrod, Laureate of the Confederacy* (1928), which has a bibliography; and G. A. Wauchope, *Henry Timrod: Man and Poet* (1915). For Julia Ward Howe consult L. E. Richards and M. H. Elliott, *Julia Ward Howe* (2 vols., 1915). George Frederick Root left an autobiography, *The Story of a Musical Life* (1891); see also W. S. B. Matthews, *A Hundred Years of Music in America* (1889), and Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, American Supplement (1928). On the authorship of "The Picket Guard," the chief reference is James Wood Davidson, *The Living Writers of the South* (1869), pages 194–201. W. L. Boyden listed the works of General Albert Pike in *A Bibliography of the Writings of Albert Pike* (1921), and F. W. Allsopp's *Albert Pike* appeared in 1928. There is no good biography of Paul Hamilton Hayne; material concerning him may be found in S. A. Link's *Pioneers of Southern Literature* (1903), in C. W. Hubner's *Representative Southern Poets* (1906), and in *The Library of Southern Literature* (1909). For Henry Clay Work, see B. Q. Work, *Songs of Henry Clay Work* (n.d.). For Thomas Buchanan Read, see H. C. Townsend and Others, *A Memoir of T. Buchanan Read* (1889); and R. H. Stoddard, *Recollections, Personal and Literary* (1903), Chapter XIV. For Father Ryan, consult M. L. Rutherford, *The South in History and Literature* (1906), and C. W. Hubner, *Representative Southern Poets* (1906). For George Henry Boker, see E. S. Bradley, *George Henry Boker, Poet and Patriot* (1927). There is an account of Francis Miles Finch in A. P. Stokes's *Memorials of Eminent Yale Men* (2 vols., 1914). *Southern Poets* (1936), edited by E. W. Parks, contains selections from Southern poets of the Civil War period, with an introduction and bibliography.

Old John Brown lies a-moldering in the grave,
Old John Brown lies slumbering in the grave—
But John Brown's soul is marching with the brave,
His soul is marching on.

Glory, Glory hallelujah,
Glory, Glory hallelujah,
Glory, Glory hallelujah,
His soul goes marching on.

He has gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord,
He has sworn as a private in the ranks of the Lord—
He shall stand at Armageddon with his brave old sword,
When Heaven is marching on.

He shall fife in front when the lines of battle form,
He shall face to front when the squares of battle form,
With the column, and charge in the storm,
When men are marching on.

Ah, foul tyrants, do you hear him when he comes?
Ah, black traitors, do ye know him as he comes?
In thunder of the cannon and roll of the drums,
As we go marching on.

Men may die and molder in the dust—
Men may die and rise again from dust,
Shoulder to shoulder, in the ranks of the just,
When God is marching on.

1861

## MY MARYLAND

By James Ryder Randall

The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle queen of yore,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland!
My Mother State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's [1] sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust.
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,
Maryland!
Come with thy panoplied array,
Maryland!
With Ringgold's [2] spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Dear Mother, burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain,—
"*Sic semper!*" [3] 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back amain,
Maryland!
Arise in majesty again,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Come! for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!

[1] Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. John Eager Howard was a prominent military leader in the Revolution, and afterwards U.S. Senator and Federalist candidate for the vice-presidency. [2] The four names mentioned in this stanza are those of Marylanders who were soldiers in the Mexican War. [3] the first words of the motto of Virginia's coat of arms, *Sic semper tyrannis* ("Thus always to tyrants")

Come to thine own heroic throng,
Stalking with Liberty along,
And chant thy dauntless slogan-song,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder-hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;
Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! she burns! she'll come! she'll come!
Maryland, my Maryland!

1861

## CHARLESTON [1]

By Henry Timrod

CALM as that second summer which precedes
The first fall of the snow,
In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds,
The city bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts, stern and proud,
Her bolted thunders sleep,—
Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,
Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe [2] frowns from lofty cliff or scar
To guard the holy strand;
But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war
Above the level sand.

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched,
Unseen, beside the flood—
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched
That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with trade,
Walk grave and thoughtful men,
Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's blade
As lightly as the pen.

And maidens, with such eyes as would grow dim
Over a bleeding hound,
Seem each one to have caught the strength of him
Whose sword she sadly bound.

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home,
Day patient following day,
Old Charleston looks from roof and spire and dome,
Across her tranquil bay.

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon lands
And spicy Indian ports,
Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands,
And summer to her courts.

But still, along yon dim Atlantic line,
The only hostile smoke
Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine,
From some frail floating oak.

Shall the spring dawn, and she, still clad in smiles,
And with an unscathed brow,
Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned isles,
As fair and free as now?

We know not; in the temple of the Fates
God has inscribed her doom;
And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits
The triumph or the tomb.

*1861–1862?* 1863

[1] Here began the Civil War, April 12, 1861. Forts Sumter and Moultrie are in Charleston harbor. [2] old name for the rock of Gibraltar

## A CRY TO ARMS

By Henry Timrod

Ho! woodsmen of the mountainside!
  Ho! dwellers in the vales!
Ho! ye who by the chafing tide
  Have roughened in the gales!
Leave barn and byre, leave kin and cot,
  Lay by the bloodless spade;
Let desk, and case, and counter rot,
  And burn your books of trade!

The despot roves your fairest lands;
  And till he flies or fears,
Your fields must grow but armed bands,
  Your sheaves be sheaves of spears!
Give up to mildew and to rust
  The useless tools of gain;
And feed your country's sacred dust
  With floods of crimson rain!

Come, with the weapons at your call—
  With musket, pike, or knife;
He wields the deadliest blade of all
  Who lightest holds his life.
The arm that drives its unbought blows
  With all a patriot's scorn,
Might brain a tyrant with a rose,
  Or stab him with a thorn.

Does any falter? let him turn
  To some brave maiden's eyes,
And catch the holy fires that burn
  In those sublunar skies.
Oh! could you like your women feel,
  And in their spirit march,
A day might see your lines of steel
  Beneath the victor's arch.

What hope, O God! would not grow warm
  When thoughts like these give cheer?
The Lily calmly braves the storm,
  And shall the Palm-tree fear?
No! rather let its branches court
  The rack that sweeps the plain;
And from the Lily's regal port
  Learn how to breast the strain!

Ho! woodsmen of the mountainside!
  Ho! dwellers in the vales!
Ho! ye who by the roaring tide
  Have roughened in the gales!
Come! flocking gaily to the fight,
  From forest, hill, and lake;
We battle for our Country's right,
  And for the Lily's sake!

## ODE

SUNG AT THE OCCASION OF DECORATING THE GRAVES OF THE CONFEDERATE DEAD, AT MAGNOLIA CEMETERY, CHARLESTON, S. C., 1867

By Henry Timrod

Sleep, sweetly in your humble graves,
  Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;
Though yet no marble column craves
  The pilgrim here to pause.

In seeds of laurel in the earth
  The blossom of your fame is blown,
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
  The shaft is in the stone!

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years
  Which keep in trust your storied tombs,
Behold! your sisters bring their tears.
  And these memorial blooms.

Small tributes! but your shades will smile
  More proudly on these wreaths to-day,
Than when some cannon-molded pile
  Shall overlook this bay.

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
  There is no holier spot of ground
Than where defeated valor lies,
  By mourning beauty crowned!

1867

## BATTLE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

By Julia Ward Howe

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred
circling camps;
They have builded him an altar in the evening
dews and damps;
I can read his righteous sentence by the dim
and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished
rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you
my grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the
serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall
never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his
judgment-seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him! be
jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born
across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures
you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to
make men free,
While God is marching on.

*1861* 1862

## THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM

By George F. Root

YES, we'll rally round the flag, boys, we'll
rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom,
We'll rally from the hillside, we'll gather from
the plain,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom!

The Union forever, hurrah! boys, hurrah!
Down with the traitor, up with the star,
While we rally round the flag, boys, rally
once again,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom!

We are springing to the call of our brothers
gone before,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom;
And we'll fill the vacant ranks with a million
freemen more,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom!

We will welcome to our numbers the loyal,
true, and brave,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom;
And although they may be poor, not a man
shall be a slave,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom!

So we're springing to the call from the East
and from the West,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom;
And we'll hurl the rebel crew from the land
we love the best,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom!

1861

## THE PICKET GUARD

By Ethel Lynn Beers

"ALL quiet along the Potomac," they say,
"Except now and then a stray picket
Is shot, as he walks on his beat to and fro,
By a rifleman hid in the thicket.
'Tis nothing: a private or two, now and then
Will not count in the news of the battle;
Not an officer lost—only one of the men,
Moaning out, all alone, the death rattle."

All quiet along the Potomac tonight,
Where the soldiers lie peacefully dreaming;
Their tents in the rays of the clear autumn
moon,
Or the light of the watch-fire, are gleaming.
A tremulous sigh of the gentle night-wind
Through the forest leaves softly is creeping,
While the stars up above, with their glittering
eyes,
Keep guard, for the army is sleeping.

There's only the sound of the lone sentry's
tread
As he tramps from the rock to the fountain,
And thinks of the two in the low trundle-bed
Far away in the cot on the mountain.

His musket falls slack; his face, dark and grim,
  Grows gentle with memories tender,
As he mutters a prayer for the children asleep—
  For their mother—may Heaven defend her!

The moon seems to shine just as brightly as then,
  That night, when the love yet unspoken
Leaped up to his lips—when low-murmured vows
  Were pledged to be ever unbroken.
Then drawing his sleeve roughly over his eyes,
  He dashes off tears that are welling,
And gathers his gun closer up to its place
  As if to keep down the heart-swelling.

He passes the fountain, the blasted pine-tree;
  The footstep is lagging and weary;
Yet onward he goes, through the broad belt of light,
  Toward the shade of the forest so dreary.
Hark! was it the night-wind that rustled the leaves?
  Was it moonlight so wondrously flashing?
It looked like a rifle.... "Ha! Mary, good-by!"
  The red lifeblood is ebbing and plashing.

All quiet along the Potomac tonight—
  No sound save the rush of the river,
While soft falls the dew on the face of the dead—
  The picket's off duty forever!

1861

## DIXIE

By General Albert Pike

Southrons, hear your Country call you!
Up, lest worst than death befall you!
  To arms! To arms! To arms, in Dixie!
Lo! all the beacon fires are lighted—
Let all hearts be now united!
  To arms! To arms! To arms, in Dixie!
    Advance the flag of Dixie!

    Hurrah! Hurrah!
    For Dixie's land we take our stand,
    And live or die for Dixie!
      To arms! To arms!
    And conquer peace for Dixie!
      To arms! To arms!
    And conquer peace for Dixie!

Hear the Northern thunders mutter!
Northern flags in South winds flutter!
      To arms!
Send them back your fierce defiance!
Stamp upon the accursed alliance!
      To arms!
    Advance the flag of Dixie!

Fear no danger! Shun no labor!
Lift up rifle, pike, and saber!
      To arms!
Shoulder pressing close to shoulder,
Let the odds make each heart bolder!
      To arms!
    Advance the flag of Dixie!

How the South's great heart rejoices,
At your cannons' ringing voices!
      To arms!
For faith betrayed, and pledges broken,
Wrongs inflicted, insults spoken,
      To arms!
    Advance the flag of Dixie!

Strong as lions, swift as eagles,
Back to their kennels hunt these beagles!
      To arms!
Cut the unequal bonds asunder!
Let them hence each other plunder!
      To arms!
    Advance the flag of Dixie!

Swear upon your country's altar
Never to submit or falter!
      To arms!
Till the spoilers are defeated,
Till the Lord's work is completed.
      To arms!
    Advance the flag of Dixie!

Halt not till our Federation,
Secures among earth's powers its station!
      To arms!
Then at peace and crowned with glory,
Hear your children tell the story!
      To arms!
Advance the flag of Dixie!

If the loved ones weep in sadness,
Victory soon shall bring them gladness.
To arms!
Exultant pride soon banish sorrow;
Smiles chase tears away tomorrow,
To arms! To arms! To arms, in Dixie!

1863

## LITTLE GIFFEN

By Francis Orray Ticknor

Out of the focal and foremost fire,
Out of the hospital walls as dire;
Smitten of grape-shot and gangrene,
(Eighteenth battle, and *he* sixteen!)
Specter! such as you seldom see,
Little Giffen, of Tennessee!

"Take him and welcome!" the surgeons said;
Little the doctor can help the dead!
So we took him; and brought him where
The balm was sweet in the summer air;
And we laid him down on a wholesome bed,—
Utter Lazarus, heel to head!

And we watched the war with bated breath,—
Skeleton Boy against skeleton Death.
Months of torture, how many such?
Weary weeks of the stick and crutch;
And still a glint of the steel-blue eye
Told of a spirit that wouldn't die,

And didn't. Nay, more! in death's despite
The crippled skeleton "learned to write."
"Dear mother," at first, of course; and then
"Dear captain," inquiring about the men.
Captain's answer: "Of eighty-and-five,
Giffen and I are left alive."

Word of gloom from the war, one day;
Johnston pressed at the front, they say.
Little Giffen was up and away;
A tear—his first—as he bade good-by.
Dimmed the glint of his steel-blue eye.
"I'll write, if spared!" There was news of the fight;
But none of Giffen.—He did not write.

I sometimes fancy that, were I king
Of the princely Knights of the Golden Ring,[1]
With the songs of the minstrel in mine ear,
And the tender legend that trembles here,
I'd give the best on his bended knee,
The whitest soul of my chivalry,
For "Little Giffen," of Tennessee.

1863

[1] evidently alluding to King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table

## TENTING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUND

By Walter Kittredge

We're tenting tonight on the old camp ground;
Give us a song to cheer
Our weary hearts, a song of home,
And friends we love so dear.

Many are the hearts that are weary tonight,
Wishing for the war to cease,
Many are the hearts, looking for the right,
To see the dawn of peace.
Tenting tonight, tenting tonight,
Tenting on the old camp ground.

We've been tenting tonight on the old camp ground,
Thinking of days gone by,
Of the loved ones at home, that gave us the hand,
And the tear that said "Good-by!"

We are tired of war on the old camp ground,
Many are dead and gone,
Of the brave and true who've left their homes
Others been wounded long.

We've been fighting today on the old camp ground,
Many are lying near;
Some are dead, and some are dying,
Many are in tears.

1863

## VICKSBURG

By Paul Hamilton Hayne

For sixty days and upwards,
A storm of shell and shot
Rained round us in a flaming shower,
But still we faltered not.
"If the noble city perish,"
Our grand young leader said,
"Let the only walls the foe shall scale
Be ramparts of the dead!"

For sixty days and upwards,
The eye of heaven waxed dim;
And even throughout God's holy morn,
O'er Christian prayer and hymn,
Arose a hissing tumult,
As if the fiends in air
Strove to engulf the voice of faith
In the shrieks of their despair.

There was wailing in the houses,
There was trembling on the marts,
While the tempest raged and thundered,
'Mid the silent thrill of hearts;
But the Lord, our shield, was with us,
And ere a month had sped,
Our very women walked the streets
With scarce one throb of dread.

And the little children gamboled,
Their faces purely raised,
Just for a wondering moment,
As the huge bombs whirled and blazed;
Then turned with silvery laughter
To the sports which children love,
Thrice-mailed in the sweet, instinctive thought
That the good God watched above.

Yet the hailing bolts fell faster,
From scores of flame-clad ships,
And about us, denser, darker,
Grew the conflict's wild eclipse,
Till a solid cloud closed o'er us,
Like a type of doom and ire,
Whence shot a thousand quivering tongues
Of forked and vengeful fire.

But the unseen hands of angels
Those death-shafts warned aside,
And the dove of heavenly mercy
Ruled o'er the battle tide;
In the houses ceased the wailing,
And through the war-scarred marts
The people strode, with step of hope,
To the music in their hearts.

## SOUTH CAROLINA TO THE STATES OF THE NORTH

ESPECIALLY TO THOSE THAT FORMED A PART OF THE ORIGINAL THIRTEEN

By Paul Hamilton Hayne

This poem of the Reconstruction era was dedicated to Wade Hampton (1818–1902), Confederate lieutenant-general, governor of South Carolina, and United States senator—the "*him*" of line 40. Hayne wrote: "This poem was composed at a period when it seemed as if all the horrors of misgovernment. . . would be perpetuated in South Carolina. It was a significant and terrible epoch. . . ."

I LIFT these hands with iron fetters banded:
Beneath the scornful sunlight and cold stars
I rear my once imperial forehead branded
By alien shame's immedicable scars;
Like some pale captive, shunned by all the nations,
I crouch unpitied, quivering and apart—
Laden with countless woes and desolations.
The lifeblood freezing round a broken heart!

About my feet, splashed red with blood of slaughters,
My children gathering in wild, mournful throngs;
Despairing sons, frail infants, stricken daughters,
Rehearse the awful burden of their wrongs;
Vain is their cry, and worse than vain their pleading:
I turn from stormy breasts, from yearning eyes,
To mark where Freedom's outraged form receding,
Wanes in chill shadow down the midnight skies!

I wooed her once in wild tempestuous places,
The purple vintage of my soul outpoured,
To win and keep her unrestrained embraces,
What time the olive-crown o'ertopped the sword;
O! northmen, with your gallant heroes blending,
Mine in old years, for this sweet goddess died;
But now—ah! shame, all other shame transcending!
*Your* pitiless hands have torn her from my side.

*What! 'tis a tyrant-party's treacherous action—*
*Your hand is clean, your conscience clear, ye sigh;*

Ay! but ere now your sires had throttled faction,
Or, pealed o'er half the world their battle-cry;
Its voice outrung from solemn mountain passes
Swept by wild storm-winds of the Atlantic strand,
To where the swart Sierra's sullen grasses,
Droop in low languors of the sunset-land!

Never, since earthly States began their story,
Hath any suffered, bided, borne like me:
At last, recalling all mine ancient glory,
I vowed my fettered commonwealth to free:
Even at the thought, besides the prostrate column
Of chartered rights, which blasted lay and dim—
Uprose my noblest son with purpose solemn,
While, host on host, his brethren followed *him.*

*Wrong*, grasped by *truth*, arraigned by *law*, (whose sober
Majestic mandates rule o'er change and time)—
Smit by the *ballot*, like some flushed October,
Reeled in the autumn rankness of his crime;
Struck, tortured, pierced—but not a blow returning,
The steadfast phalanx of my honored braves
Planted their bloodless flag where sunrise burning,
Flashed a new splendor o'er our martyrs' graves.

What then? O, sister States! what welcome omen
Of love and concord crossed our brightening blue,
The foes we vanquished, are they not *your* foemen,
Our laws upheld, your sacred safeguards, too?
Yet scarce had victory crowned our grand endeavor,
And peace crept out from shadowy glooms remote—
Than—as if bared to blast all hope forever,
Your tyrant's sword shone glittering at my throat.

Once more my bursting chains were reunited,
Once more barbarian plaudits wildly rung
O'er the last promise of deliverance blighted,
The prostrate purpose, and the palsied tongue:
Ah! faithless sisters, 'neath my swift undoing,
Peers the black presage of your wrath to come:
Above your heads are signal clouds of ruin,
Whose lightnings flash, whose thunders are not dumb!

There towers a judgment-seat beyond our seeing;
There lives a Judge, whom none can bribe or blind;
Before whose dread decree, your spirit fleeing,
May reap the whirlwind, having sown the wind:
I, in that day of justice, fierce and torrid,
When blood—*your* blood—outpours like poisoned wine,
*Pointing to these chained limbs, this blasted forehead,*
*May mock your ruin, as ye mocked at mine!*

1882

## MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA

By Henry Clay Work

BRING the good old bugle, boys, we'll sing another song,
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along,
Sing it as we used to sing it fifty thousand strong,
While we were marching through Georgia.

Hurrah! hurrah! We bring the jubilee!
Hurrah! hurrah! The flag that makes you free!
So we sang the chorus from Atlantic to the sea,
While we were marching through Georgia.

How the darkies shouted when they heard the joyful sound!
How the turkeys gobbled which our commissary found!

How the sweet potatoes even started from the ground,
While we were marching through Georgia.

Yes, and there were Union men who wept with joyful tears,
When they saw the honored flag they had not seen for years,
Hardly could they be restrained from breaking forth in cheers,
While we were marching through Georgia.

"Sherman's dashing Yankee boys will never reach that coast!"
So the saucy rebels said, and 'twas a handsome boast,
Had they not forgot, alas! to reckon with the host,
While we were marching through Georgia.

So we made a thoroughfare for Freedom and her train,
Sixty miles in latitude; three hundred to the main;
Treason fled before us, for resistance was in vain,
While we were marching through Georgia.

1864

## SHERIDAN'S RIDE

By Thomas Buchanan Read

Up from the South at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war,
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And louder yet into Winchester rolled
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good broad highway leading down;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night,
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need;
He stretched away with his utmost speed;
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering south,
The dust, like the smoke from the cannon's mouth;
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.
The heart of the steed, and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,
Impatient to be where the battlefield calls;
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet the road
Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind;
And the steed, like a bark fed with furnace ire,
Swept on, with his wild eye full of fire.
But lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;
He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops,
What was done? What to do? A glance told him both,
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line, 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.
With foam and with dust, the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,

He seemed to the whole great army to say,
"I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester, down to save the day!"

Hurrah, hurrah, for Sheridan!
Hurrah, hurrah, for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky
(The American soldiers' Temple of Fame),
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
"Here is the steed that saved the day
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!"

1865

## THE CONQUERED BANNER

By Abram Frederick Ryan

FURL that Banner, for 'tis weary;
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary:
Furl it, fold it,—it is best;
For there's not a man to wave it,
And there's not a sword to save it,
And there's not one left to lave it
In the blood which heroes gave it,
And its foes now scorn and brave it:
Furl it, hide it,—let it rest!

Take that Banner down! 'tis tattered;
Broken is its staff and shattered;
And the valiant hosts are scattered,
Over whom it floated high.
Oh, 'tis hard for us to fold it,
Hard to think there's none to hold it,
Hard that those who once unrolled it
Now must furl it with a sigh!

Furl that Banner—furl it sadly!
Once ten thousands hailed it gladly,
And ten thousands wildly, madly,
Swore it should forever wave;
Swore that foeman's sword should never
Hearts like theirs entwined dissever,
Till that flag should float forever
O'er their freedom or their grave!

Furl it! for the hands that grasped it,
And the hearts that fondly clasped it,
Cold and dead are lying low;
And that Banner—it is trailing,
While around it sounds the wailing
Of its people in their woe.

For, though conquered, they adore it,—
Love the cold, dead hands that bore it,
Weep for those who fell before it,
Pardon those who trailed and tore it;
And oh, wildly they deplore it,
Now to furl and fold it so!

Furl that Banner! True, 'tis gory,
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,
And 'twill live in song and story
Though its folds are in the dust!
For its fame on brightest pages,
Penned by poets and by sages,
Shall go sounding down the ages—
Furl its folds though now we must.

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly!
Treat it gently—it is holy,
For it droops above the dead.
Touch it not—unfold it never;
Let it droop there, furled forever,—
For its people's hopes are fled!

1865

## DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER

IN MEMORY OF GENERAL PHILIP KEARNY, KILLED SEPTEMBER 1, 1862

By George Henry Boker

CLOSE his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? he cannot know:
Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
  Roll the drum and fire the volley!
What to him are all our wars,
  What but death bemocking folly?
    Lay him low, lay him low,
    In the clover or the snow!
    What cares he? he cannot know:
      Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye,
  Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by:
  God alone has power to aid him.
    Lay him low, lay him low,
    In the clover or the snow!
    What cares he? he cannot know:
      Lay him low!

1864

## THE BLUE AND THE GRAY

By Francis Miles Finch

By the flow of the inland river,
  Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave grass quiver,
  Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day;
    Under the one, the Blue,
      Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
  Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
  In the dusk of eternity meet:
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day;
    Under the laurel, the Blue,
      Under the willow, the Gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
  The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
  Alike for the friend and the foe:
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day;
    Under the roses, the Blue,
      Under the lilies, the Gray.

So with an equal splendor,
  The morning sun rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
  On the blossoms blooming for all:
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day;
    Broidered with gold, the Blue,
      Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
  On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
  The cooling drip of the rain:
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day;
    Wet with the rain, the Blue,
      Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
  The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
  No braver battle was won:
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day;
    Under the blossoms, the Blue,
      Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
  Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever
  When they laurel the graves of our dead!
    Under the sod and the dew,
      Waiting the judgment day:
    Love and tears for the Blue,
      Tears and love for the Gray.

1867

# 1819 — *Walt Whitman* — 1892

WHITMAN thought his chief mission was to be the spokesman and champion of democratic nationalism. He was a contemporary of Lowell but contrasted strongly with Lowell in temperament, in ideals, and in his attitude toward the past. America seemed to him a new and free place with boundless opportunities for development, and he had optimistic faith in the new race to emerge from its equalitarian conditions. An apostle of American cultural independence, he strove to give expression to the collective attainments, institutions, and destiny of the new democracy.

Whitman was born May 31, 1819, at the hamlet of West Hills, Huntington, Long Island, of English and Dutch ancestry. He was early called "Walt" to distinguish him from his father Walter, a farmer, carpenter, and builder. His parents had Quaker leanings, and were somewhat under the influence of the unorthodox Quaker preacher Elias Hicks. The family moved to Brooklyn when Walt was about five years of age. He had only a few years of formal schooling, worked as office boy for a lawyer, then for a doctor, and when about thirteen began work as a printer. For several years he worked here and there in newspaper offices as typesetter and occasional contributor, and taught several brief terms in country schools.

Whitman engaged in journalism as reporter and editor in New York and Brooklyn from 1842 to 1851. His most important position was as editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle* from 1846 to 1848. On losing this position, partly for political reasons, he was appointed by chance to an editorial job on the recently founded New Orleans *Daily Crescent* and made the long journey there by rail, stage, and steamboat. The next year he was back in Brooklyn, still in newspaper work and writing for periodicals, 1850–51. Metropolitan life fascinated him, and he took deep interest in the stage, in concerts, in operatic and orchestral music, and in the human life of the streets and the ferries. In 1852 he followed his father's occupation of building and selling houses in Brooklyn. He must have had in mind for some years the composition of *Leaves of Grass*, which he published in 1855 when he was thirty-six, setting up the type for it himself. It had no sale, but a gift copy sent to Emerson brought a personal letter recognizing it as a revolutionary book. "I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of *Leaves of Grass*. I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed . . . I greet you at the beginning of a great career"—a statement that Whitman printed across the back of the next edition, somewhat perhaps to Emerson's embarrassment.

The decade from 1863 to 1873 Whitman spent mostly in Washington. On

hearing that his brother George, who had enlisted in the Union army, had been wounded in Virginia, he went South to him. Next he served as a volunteer nurse to the wounded and ill in the Washington hospitals. He made hundreds of visits trying to help the soldiers. His personal experiences are set forth in *Specimen Days* (1882), the oftenest reprinted of his prose works. At the close of the War he had a clerkship in the Department of the Interior, but lost it when his superior officer came upon a copy of *Leaves of Grass* which he was revising, and thought it an objectionable book. His friends came to his defence and obtained for him another position in the office of the Attorney General, but for a long time his reputation was clouded by this happening.

His volume of poems on the Civil War, *Drum Taps*, appeared in 1866, and the fourth edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1867. Publication of selections from his poetry by William Rossetti aroused interest in him in England. His prose work, *Democratic Vistas*, setting forth his main theses of democracy and individualism, appeared in 1871.

The twenty years from 1872 to 1892 he spent mainly as an invalid or semi-invalid with his brother George at Camden, New Jersey, at first nearly in poverty. Though Europe had welcomed him with appreciation and fame, in his own country recognition of him as one of the most original and stimulating of poets came mainly after the 1880's, when his books began to bring him an income and the number of his friends and admirers increased. His influence was not striking till after 1900, and was at its height in the World War period. He made a leisurely excursion to Denver and the Rocky Mountains in 1877, went to Canada to visit his friend Dr. R. M. Bucke in 1880, revisited Long Island and New York City, and went to Boston in 1881. He died in Camden in 1892 at the age of seventy-three. The last of successively enlarged editions of *Leaves of Grass* was published in 1891–92 and the *Complete Prose Works* in 1892.

Whitman was the last of the major poets emerging from the period of romantic idealism in America. Many of its doctrines—as faith in the goodness of man, worship of nature as a benign influence, belief in the leadership of the poet—and something of its mysticism appear in his pages. But in much he broke away from European models and existing literary forms and vogues. He thought our literature too imitative and discarded elegance and sentiment, themes of love and war, and legends of old heroes. Some of the ideas he reiterates are that the poet who glorifies himself glorifies everybody; that there is divinity in all created things, hence everything is suitable material for poetry, the body as well as the soul; and that death is to be welcomed as leading to a new and more spiritual existence. To fit the matter of his verse, he sought to create a new kind of poetical manner, rejecting metrical form and rhyme and conventional stanzaic structure. The succeeding age was to follow him in many ways. It imitated his loose form, free verse,

linguistic audacities, and long catalogues and detailed lists, and it went further than he in the cult of informality and the free admission to poetry of all topics, ugly as well as beautiful, physical as well as spiritual.

Whitman's poetical expression seems to have been influenced by his love of music, especially his intense devotion to Italian opera. He thought of poetry as a kind of musical utterance. He describes it as "vocalism" and "recitatif." He speaks of "uttering" his verse, of "caroling," "warbling," "trilling" his "songs," and he refers to himself as a "chansonnier." He seems to have wished to reach his readers with his voice, like singers at the opera, or like actors or orators. His pages are sprinkled with Italian, French, and Spanish terms. There is even some resemblance between the look of his verse on a page and operatic librettos.

Whitman's prose is not wide in range but it serves as a key to his poetry and supplements it. *Specimen Days*, made up of notebook jottings, reads quickly and easily. *Democratic Vistas*, his most ambitious prose work, because of its more abstract subject matter and loose structure and its long repetitional and parenthetical periods, is less easy to follow.

Although Whitman thought himself the poet of the common people and tried to live out his doctrines of equality, sympathy, and comradeship with all human beings, he was first recognized by the sophisticated and it is to them that he still has the strongest appeal. The position of popular poet was retained by Longfellow. Whitman's verse has been translated into many languages, and European recognition of American poets has gone chiefly to him and to Poe. He proved to be an original and vital force, a major dominating influence in the decades that succeeded him, and he will endure probably as the best poetic interpreter of the American nineteenth-century democratic dream.

Whitman had an unexpectedly extensive and various background of reading. Homer and Shakespeare were his favorites in youth. He had some knowledge of the major classics of Greece and Rome, and of Dante, the *Arabian Nights*, and Cervantes. In German literature he knew Goethe and was interested in the idealistic philosophers of the eighteenth century, especially Hegel. Among French authors he showed acquaintance with Rousseau and Voltaire, and he praised Dumas and George Sand. To the latter he seems to have owed some of his democratic ideas, his pose as a workingman's poet, and his borrowings of vocabulary from the French language. Among English writers he singled out for special discussion Shakespeare, Tennyson, Scott, Dickens, Carlyle, and Burns, and among American writers Emerson, Bryant, Longfellow, and Whittier. He expressed distaste for Poe and Henry James, and strangely enough left no references to Mark Twain. Of Whitman as a critic, M. O. Johnson says: "In every piece of literature Whitman looked for artistic excellence, but he also looked for democratic purpose. If he found a combination of the two, as he almost never did, then the work deserved praise with reservation.

For great literature Whitman prescribed restraint, originality, purpose, optimism, universality, concern with nature, concern with contemporary life, and emphasis upon democracy. In the main, they are the essentials of literature of which Whitman spoke in his preface and elsewhere." Whitman held the literary belief that all literature of the past was the expression of "feudalism" and "superstition." He expected the literature of the dawning new day to be the greatest because emerging from the forces of Democracy, or faith in the self-reliant spirituality of the individual, and of science, with its exaltation of the physical. For such a literature he thought new forms of expression necessary and inevitable.

The standard edition of the complete writings of Whitman is the Camden (10 vols., 1902), issued under the editorial supervision of R. M. Bucke, H. L. Traubel, and O. L. Triggs. The last edition of *Leaves of Grass* supervised by Whitman himself was published in 1891–92. In 1892 appeared, also supervised by him, his *Complete Prose Works* (not, however, complete). Emory Holloway edited *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman* (2 vols., 1921), and a few years later an inclusive edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1924), the best edition so far. Other Whitman material may be found in *The Gathering of the Forces* (2 vols., 1920), edited by Cleveland Rodgers and John Black; in *Walt Whitman's Workshop, A Collection of Unpublished Manuscripts* (1928), edited by C. J. Furness; and in *Walt Whitman and the Civil War* (1933), by C. I. Glicksberg. A valuable and convenient edition is *Walt Whitman's Complete Poetry and Selected Prose and Letters* (1938), edited by Emory Holloway. The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* has been edited for the Facsimile Text Society (1939) by C. J. Furness.

Biographies of Whitman are numerous. An intimate account of the poet's later years, presented in diary form, was published by his friend and disciple, Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (3 vols., 1906–14). His friend, R. M. Bucke, with the help of Whitman himself, published a life, *Walt Whitman* (1883). Two other biographies are by H. B. Binns, *A Life of Walt Whitman* (1905), and by Bliss Perry, *Walt Whitman, His Life and Work*, in the American Men of Letters Series (1906). The English Men of Letters Series devotes two volumes to Whitman, the first by G. R. Carpenter (1909), and the second by John Bailey (1926). A French life by Léon Balzagette, *Walt Whitman and His Work*, was abridged and translated into English by Ellen Fitzgerald in 1920. E. Holloway's *Whitman, an Interpretative Narrative* received the Pulitzer prize for biography in 1926. Floyd Stovall's *Whitman* (revised, 1939), in American Writers Series, has an admirable introduction.

Of the immense number of critical books and articles concerning Whitman, only a few may be mentioned. J. A. Symonds's laudatory *Walt Whitman: a Study* (1893) did much to arouse interest in the poet, as did the critical study, *Whitman: a Study* (1896), written by his friend, John Burroughs. In contrast to these complimentary views is George Santayana's hostile "The Poetry of Barbarism," in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900). P. E. More wrote of Whitman in the *Shelburne Essays*, 4th series (1906). Other commentators are John Macy, in *The Spirit of American Literature* (1908); Basil De Sélincourt, in *Walt Whitman: a Critical Study* (1914); E. Holloway, in his chapter on Whitman in *CHAL*, II (1918); and Stuart Pratt Sherman, in *Americans* (1922). Norman Foerster treated Whitman in both his *Nature in American Literature* (1923), and in *American Criticism* (1928). A discussion of Whitman by V. L. Parrington is included in his *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1927). A recent treatment is by Louise Pound in the introduction to Whitman's *Specimen Days, Democratic Vistas and Other Prose*

(1935). Edgar Lee Masters published a study of Whitman (1937), of especial interest as relating Whitman to American history. Esther Shepherd, in *Walt Whitman's Pose* (1938), indicates his indebtedness to George Sand. Maurice O. Johnson treats Whitman's critical views in *Walt Whitman as a Critic* (1938). Newton Arvin's *Whitman* (1938) is concerned with the social implications of his poetry. G. W. Allen deals with Whitman's verse technique in *American Prosody* (1935). Bibliographies of Walt Whitman are by E. Holloway, in *CHAL*, II; Frank Shay, *The Bibliography of Walt Whitman* (1920), which includes no criticism but lists only the works of Whitman himself; O. L. Triggs, in *The Complete Writings of Walt Whitman*, X; and Carolyn Wells and A. F. Goldsmith, *A Concise Bibliography of Walt Whitman* (1922).

## *From* SONG OF MYSELF

Carl F. Strauch ("The Structure of Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself,'" *English Journal*, XXVII, September, 1938) finds organization and carefully directed structure in this long poem, which takes all life as its theme. Its abundance of material and the apparent absence of selection in its large catalogues obscure the poet's conscious art. Strauch attempts to show "how very much Whitman was in command of his materials, how orderly was his march from climax to climax, how effectually he secured the unimpeded progress forward and upward in his ideas by well-placed transitional passages and even single words which gather into themselves the whole meaning of large sections of the poem." Five major divisions of the "Song" are distinguished by Strauch: (1) The Self; mystical interpenetration of Self with all life and experience (paragraphs 1–18); (2) definition of the Self; identification with the degraded, and transfiguration of it; final merit of Self withheld; silence; end of first half (paragraphs 19–25); (3) life flowing in upon the Self; then evolutionary interpenetration of life (paragraphs 26–38); (4) the Superman (paragraphs 39–41); (5) larger questions of life—religion, faith, God, death; immortality and happiness mystically affirmed (paragraphs 42–52).

1

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,
Nature without check with original energy.

10

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee,
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night,
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game,
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with my dog and gun by my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud,
My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me,
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time;
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west, the bride was a red girl,
Her father and his friends sat near cross-legged and dumbly smoking, they had moccasins to their feet and large thick blankets hanging from their shoulders,
On a bank lounged the trapper, he was drest mostly in skins, his luxuriant beard and curls protected his neck, he held his bride by the hand,
She had long eyelashes, her head was bare, her coarse straight locks descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside,
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy [1] and weak,
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him,
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and bruis'd feet,
And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness,
And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;
He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and pass'd north,
I had him sit next me at table, my fire-lock lean'd in the corner.

*16*

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff that is fine,
One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and the largest the same,
A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable down by the Oconee I live,
A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade, my joints the limberest joints on earth and the sternest joints on earth,
A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deer-skin leggings, a Louisianian or Georgian,
A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye;
At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with fishermen off Newfoundland,
At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and tacking.
At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texan ranch,
Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners, (loving their big proportions,)
Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands and welcome to drink and meat,
A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfullest,
A novice beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons,
Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,
A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.
I resist any thing better than my own diversity,
Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

[1] dialectal or colloquial for the adjective "limp"

(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place,
The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in their place,
The palpable is in its place and the impalpable is in its place.)

21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night—press close magnetic nourishing night!
Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of the departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!
O unspeakable passionate love.

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss, fruits, grains, esculent roots,
And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over,
And have distanced what is behind me for all good reasons,
But call any thing back again when I desire it.

In vain the speeding or shyness,
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against my approach,
In vain the mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd bones,
In vain objects stand leagues off and assume manifold shapes,
In vain the ocean settling in hollows and the great monsters lying low,
In vain the buzzard houses herself with the sky,
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs,
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods,
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador,
I follow quickly, I ascend to the next in the fissure of the cliff.

33

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at,
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with lumbermen,
Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet bed,
Weeding my onion-patch or hoeing rows of carrots and parsnips, crossing savannas, trailing in forests,
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down the shallow river,
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where the buck turns furiously at the hunter,
Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock, where the otter is feeding on fish,
Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou,
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where the beaver pats the mud with his paddle-shaped tail;
Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its low moist field,
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd scum and slender shoots from the gutters,
Over the western persimmon, over the long-leav'd corn, over the delicate blue-flower flax,
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer there with the rest,
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the breeze;
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low scragged limbs,
Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush,
Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheat-lot,
Where the bat flies in the Seventh-mohth eve, where the great gold-bug drops through the dark,
Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree and flows to the meadow,
Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous shuddering of their hides,
Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen, where andirons straddle the hearth-slab, where cobwebs fall in festoons from the rafters;
Where trip-hammers crash, where the press is whirling its cylinders,
Wherever the human heart beats with terrible throes under its ribs,

Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft, (floating in it myself and looking composedly down,)
Where the life-car [1] is drawn on the slip-noose, where the heat hatches pale-green eggs in the dented sand,
Where the she-whale swims with her calf and never forsakes it,
Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke,
Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water,
Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents,
Where shells grow to her slimy deck, where the dead are corrupting below;
Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regiments,
Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island,
Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance,
Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside,
Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game of base-ball,
At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances, drinking, laughter,
At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice through a straw,
At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find,
At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings, house-raisings;
Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles, cackles, screams, weeps,
Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard, where the dry-stalks are scatter'd, where the brood-cow waits in the hovel,
Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where the stud to the mare, where the cock is treading the hen,
Where the heifers browse, where geese nip their food with short jerks,
Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lonesome prairie,
Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles far and near,
Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-lived swan is curving and winding,
Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs her near-human laugh,
Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in the garden half hid by the high weeds,
Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the ground with their heads out,
Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery,
Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icicled trees,
Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of the marsh at night and feeds upon small crabs,
Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm noon,
Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree over the well,
Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired leaves,
Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical firs,
Through the gymnasium, through the curtain'd saloon, through the office or public hall;
Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the foreign, pleas'd with the new and old,
Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome,
Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously,
Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the whitewash'd church,
Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist preacher, impress'd seriously at the camp-meeting;
Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the whole forenoon, flatting the flesh of my nose on the thick plate-glass,
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a lane or along the beach,

[1] watertight boat or chamber traveling on a rope

My right and left arms round the sides of two friends, and I in the middle;
Coming home with the silent and dark-cheek'd bush-boy, (behind me he rides at the drape of the day,)
Far from the settlements studying the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin print,
By the cot in the hospital reaching lemonade to a feverish patient,
Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining with a candle;
Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure,
Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any,
Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife him,
Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone from me a long while,
Walking the old hills of Judæa with the beautiful gentle God by my side,
Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars,
Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring, and the diameter of eighty thousand miles,
Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest,
Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly,
Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning,
Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing,
I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the product,
And look at quintillions ripen'd and look at quintillions green.

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul,
My course runs below the soundings of plummets.

I help myself to material and immaterial,
No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only,
My messengers continually cruise away or bring their returns to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping chasms with a pike-pointed staff, clinging to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck,
I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest,
We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light enough,
Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the wonderful beauty,
The enormous masses of ice pass me and I pass them, the scenery is plain in all directions,
The white-topt mountains show in the distance, I fling out my fancies toward them,
We are approaching some great battle-field in which we are soon to be engaged,
We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we pass with still feet and caution,
Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd city,
The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities of the globe.

I am a free companion, I bivouac by invading watchfires,
I turn the bridegroom out of bed and stay with the bride myself,
I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs,
They fetch my man's body up dripping and drown'd.

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times,
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steam-ship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm,
How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of days and faithful of nights,
And chalk'd in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you;*
How he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days and would not give it up,
How he saved the drifting company at last,
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of their prepared graves,
How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd unshaven men;
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs,
The mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her children gazing on,
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing, cover'd with sweat,
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous buckshot and the bullets,
All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen,
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin,
I fall on the weeds and stones,
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris,
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my comrades,
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels,
They have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me forth.

I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for my sake,
Painless after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are bared of their fire-caps,
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

Distant and dead resuscitate,
They show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the clock myself.

I am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment,
I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,
Again the attacking cannon, mortars,
Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole,
The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,

The ambulanza [1] slowly passing trailing its red drip,
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs,
The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion,
The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously waves with his hand,
He gasps through the clot *Mind me not—mind—the entrenchments.*

35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he,)
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be;
Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd,
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water,
On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of water reported,
The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the afterhold to give them a chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,
The other asks if we demand quarter?
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,
*We have not struck*, he composedly cries, *we have just begun our part of the fighting.*

Only three guns are in use,
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's mainmast,
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top,
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are sinking.
Serene stands the little captain,
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

[1] ambulance, an example of Whitman's fondness for Italian forms

36

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one we have conquer'd,
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a countenance white as a sheet,
Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd whiskers,
The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below,
The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty,
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon the masts and spars,
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of waves,
Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,
A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,
Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore, death-messages given in charge to survivors,
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull, tapering groan,
These so, these irretrievable.

43

I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over,
My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient and modern,
Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years,
Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the gods, saluting the sun,
Making a fetich of the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks in the circle of obis,
Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols,
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and austere in the woods a gymnosophist,
Drinking mead from the skull-cup, to Shastas and Vedas admirant, minding the Koran,
Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone and knife, beating the serpent-skin drum,
Accepting the Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing assuredly that he is divine,
To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting patiently in a pew,
Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like till my spirit arouses me,
Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement and land,
Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like a man leaving charges before a journey.

Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded,
Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd, atheistical,
I know every one of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt, despair and unbelief.

How the flukes splash!
How they contort rapid as lightning, with spasms and spouts of blood!

Be at peace bloody flukes of doubters and sullen mopers,
I take my place among you as much as among any,
The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same,
And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all, precisely the same.

I do not know what is untried and afterward,
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.
Each who passes is consider'd, each who stops is consider'd; not a single one can it fail.

It cannot fail the young man who died and was buried,
Nor the young woman who died and was put by his side,
Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back and was never seen again,
Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with bitterness worse than gall,
Nor him in the poor-house tubercled by rum and the bad disorder,
Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd, nor the brutish koboo call'd the ordure of humanity,
Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in,
Nor any thing in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth,
Nor any thing in the myriads of spheres, nor the myriads of myriads that inhabit them,
Nor the present, nor the least whisp that is known.

47

I am the teacher of athletes,
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own,
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived power, but in his own right,
Wicked rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than sharp steel cuts,
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song or play on the banjo,
Preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with small-pox over all latherers,
And those well-tann'd to those that keep out of the sun.

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour,
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while I wait for a boat,
(It is you talking just as much as myself, I act as the tongue of you,
Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd.)

I swear I will never again mention love or death inside a house,
And I swear I will never translate myself at all, only to him or her who privately stays with me in the open air.

If you would understand me go to the heights or water-shore,
The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or motion of waves a key,
The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.

No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,
But roughs and little children better than they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he knows me well,
The woodman that takes his axe and jug with him shall take me with him all day,
The farm-boy ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of my voice,
In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with fishermen and seamen and love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is mine,
On the night ere the pending battle many seek me, and I do not fail them,
On that solemn night (it may be their last) those that know me seek me.

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his blanket,
The driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his wagon,
The young mother and old mother comprehend me,
The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where they are,
They and all would resume what I have told them.

48

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud,
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes.

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know wheresoe'er I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health of you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

1855, 1881

## MIRACLES

WHY, who makes much of a miracle?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed at night with any one I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;
These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.
To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion of the waves—the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?

1856

## CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY

1

FLOOD-TIDE below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose,
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high,
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.
I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest in strong shadow,
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head in the sunlit water,
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine pennants,
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-houses,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and glistening,
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the granite storehouses by the docks,
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flank'd on each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning high and glaringly into the night,
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,
The men and women I saw were all near to me,

Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them,
(The time will come, though I stop here today and tonight.)

5

What is it then between us?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not,
I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,
I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters around it,
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,
In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me,
In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me,
I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution,
I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of my body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meager?
Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,
The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting,
Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest,
Was call'd by my nighest name by clear loud voices of young men as they saw me approaching or passing,
Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning of their flesh against me as I sat,
Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never told them a word,
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,
Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like,
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7

Closer yet I approach you,
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I laid in my stores in advance,
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-hemm'd Manhattan?
River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated lighter?

What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as I approach?

What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my face?
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?
What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish is accomplish'd, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!
Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one makes it!
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all downcast eyes have time to take it from you!
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the sunlit water!
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd schooners, sloops, lighters!
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest aromas,
Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us,
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us,
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also,
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

1856

## THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH

THERE was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the light-yellow corn, and the esculent roots of the garden,
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms and the fruit afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern whence he had lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and the barefoot Negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country wherever he went.

His own parents, he that had father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They gave this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the sense of what is real, the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time, the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets, if they are not flashes and specks what are they?
The streets themselves and the façades of houses, and goods in the windows,
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves, the huge crossing at the ferries,
The village on the highland seen from afar at sunset, the river between,
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs and gables of white or brown two miles off,
The schooner near by sleepily dropping down the tide, the little boat slack-tow'd astern,
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint away solitary by itself, the spread of purity it lies motionless in,
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance of salt marsh and shore mud,
These became part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.

1855

## OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

A man's reverie over a boy's experience. A new kind of elegy discarding preceding patterns, and making older bird poetry with its usual assumption of the unalloyed happiness of birds compared with the tragedies of human beings seem hollow make-believe and convention. (See L. Pound, "Whitman and Bird Poetry," *English Journal*, XIX, January, 1930.) Interwoven are a trio of themes, the bird's lament (one of the most poignant songs of loss ever written), the accompanying surge of the sea "endlessly rocking," and the boy's questioning soul, bringing him a realization of death and starting his poetic spirit. The bird is his genius of song. The poem is mannered in form, marked especially by incessant dangling present participles and suspended, or periodic, sentences.

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,[1]
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

*Shine! shine! shine!*
*Pour down your warmth, great sun!*
*While we bask, we two together,*

*Two together!*
*Winds blow south, or winds blow north,*
*Day come white, or night come black,*

[1] the Indian name for Long Island

*Home, or rivers and mountains from home,*
*Singing all time, minding no time,*
*While we two keep together.*

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

*Blow! blow! blow!*
*Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;*
*I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.*

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.
He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

*Soothe! soothe! soothe!*
*Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,*
*And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,*
*But my love soothes not me, not me.*

*Low hangs the moon, it rose late,*
*It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.*

*O madly the sea pushes upon the land,*
*With love, with love.*

*O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?*
*What is that little black thing I see there in the white?*

*Loud! loud! loud!*
*Loud I call to you, my love!*
*High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,*
*Surely you must know who is here, is here,*
*You must know who I am, my love.*

*Low-hanging moon!*
*What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?*
*O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!*
*O moon do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land! land! O land!*
*Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,*
*For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

*O rising stars!*
*Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.*

*O throat! O trembling throat!*
*Sound clearer through the atmosphere!*
*Pierce the woods, the earth,*
*Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.*

*Shake out carols!*
*Solitary here, the night's carols!*
*Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!*
*Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!*
*O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!*
*O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft! sink low!*
*Soft! let me just murmur,*
*And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,*
*For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,*
*So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,*
*But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.*

*Hither my love!*
*Here I am! here!*
*With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,*
*This gentle call is for you my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,*
*That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,*
*That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,*
*Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness! O in vain!*
*O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!*
*O troubled reflection in the sea!*
*O throat! O throbbing heart!*
*And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

*O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!*
*In the air, in the woods, over fields,*
*Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!*
*But my mate no more, no more with me!*
*We two together no more.*

The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird (said the boy's soul,)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,

Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside,)
The sea whisper'd me.

1859

## ME IMPERTURBE

Me imperturbe,[1] standing at ease in Nature,
Master of all or mistress of all, aplomb in the midst of irrational things,
Imbued as they, passive, receptive, silent as they,
Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes, less important than I thought,
Me toward the Mexican sea, or in the Mannahatta or the Tennessee, or far north or inland,
A river man, or a man of the woods or of any farm-life of these States or of the coast, or the lakes or Kanada,
Me wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for contingencies,
To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, rebuffs, as the trees and animals do.

1860

## FOR YOU O DEMOCRACY

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks,
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you *ma femme!*
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

1860

## I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE-OAK GROWING

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches,
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,

[1] undisturbed, calm—one of Whitman's coinages

And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near, for I knew I could not,
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them,)
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend, a lover near,
I know very well I could not.

1860

## I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the plowboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

1860

## POETS TO COME

POETS to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
Not today is to justify me and answer what I am for,
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater than before known,
Arouse! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,
I but advance a moment only to wheel and hurry back in the darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you and then averts his face,
Leaving it to you to prove and define it,
Expecting the main things from you.

1860

## FROM PAUMANOK STARTING I FLY LIKE A BIRD

FROM Paumanok starting I fly like a bird,
Around and around to soar to sing the idea of all,
To the north betaking myself to sing there arctic songs,

To Kanada till I absorb Kanada in myself, to Michigan then,
To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing their songs (they are inimitable);
Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs, to Missouri and Kansas and Arkansas to sing theirs,
To Tennessee and Kentucky, to the Carolinas and Georgia to sing theirs,
To Texas and so along up toward California, to roam accepted everywhere;
To sing first (to the tap of the war-drum if need be),
The idea of all, of the Western world one and inseparable,
And then the song of each member of these States.

1865

## BIVOUAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE

I SEE before me now a traveling army halting,
Below a fertile valley spread, with barns and the orchards of summer,
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt, in places rising high,
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall shapes dingily seen,
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some away up on the mountain,
The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-sized, flickering,
And over all the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach, studded, breaking out, the eternal stars.

1865

## AN ARMY CORPS ON THE MARCH

WITH its cloud of skirmishers in advance,
With now the sound of a single shot snapping like a whip, and now an irregular volley,
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on,
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd men,
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the horses sweat,
As the army corps advances.

1865–1866

## LOOK DOWN, FAIR MOON

LOOK down, fair moon, and bathe this scene,
Pour softly down night's nimbus floods on faces ghastly, swollen, purple,
On the dead on their backs with arms toss'd wide,
Pour down your unstinted nimbus sacred moon.

1865

## RECONCILIATION

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

1865

## CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

A LINE in long array where they wind betwixt green islands,
They take a serpentine course, their arms flash in the sun—hark to the musical clank,
Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing horses loitering stop to drink,
Behold the brown-faced men, each group, each person a picture, the negligent rest on the saddles,
Some emerge on the opposite bank, others are just entering the ford—while,
Scarlet and blue and snowy white,
The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

1865

## COME UP FROM THE FIELDS FATHER

COME up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well.

Down in the fields all prospers well,
But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call,
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the main words only,
Sentence broken, *gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,*
*At present low, but will soon be better.*

Ah now the single figure to me,
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,
By the jamb of a door leans.

*Grieve not so, dear mother* (the just-grown daughter speaks through her sobs,
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd),
*See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.*

Alas poor boy, he will never be better (nor may-be needs to be better, that brave and simple soul),
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouched, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

1865

## PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

Come my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the sea?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountain steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high plateaus,
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental blood intervein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the Northern,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress (bend your heads all),
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd mistress,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked,
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions pressing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets,
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo wait behind,
We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!
(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your work,)
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? Have they lock'd and bolted doors?
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?
Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged nodding on our way?
Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind,
Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

1865

## TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN

Did you ask dulcet rimes from me?
Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing rimes?
Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard to follow?
Why I was not singing erewhile for you to follow, to understand—nor am I now;
(I have been born of the same as the war was born,
The drum-corps' rattle is ever to me sweet music, I love well the martial dirge,
With slow wail and convulsive throb leading the officer's funeral;)
What to such as you anyhow such a poet as I? therefore leave my works,
And go lull yourself with what you can understand, and with piano tunes,
For I lull nobody, and you will never understand me.

1865

## BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, plowing his field or gathering his grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

1865

## THE WOUND-DRESSER

1

An old man bending I come among new faces,
Years looking backward resuming in answer to children,
Come tell us old man, as from young men and maidens that love me,
(Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the alarum, and urge relentless war,
But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd and I resign'd myself,
To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch the dead;)
Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions, these chances,
Of unsurpass'd heroes, (was one side so brave? the other was equally brave;)
Now be witness again, paint the mightiest armies of earth,
Of those armies so rapid so wondrous what saw you to tell us?
What stays with you latest and deepest? of curious panics,
Of hard-fought engagements or sieges tremendous what deepest remains?

2

O maidens and young men I love and that love me,
What you ask of my days those the strangest and sudden your talking recalls,
Soldier alert I arrive after a long march cover'd with sweat and dust,
In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly shout in the rush of successful charge,
Enter the captur'd works—yet lo, like a swift-running river they fade,
Pass and are gone, they fade—I dwell not on soldiers' perils or soldiers' joys,
(Both I remember well—many the hardships, few the joys, yet I was content.)

But in silence, in dreams' projections,
While the world of gain and appearance and mirth goes on,
So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the imprints off the sand,
With hinged knees returning I enter the doors, (while for you up there,
Whoever you are, follow without noise and be of strong heart.)

Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,
Straight and swift to my wounded I go,
Where they lie on the ground after the battle brought in,
Where their priceless blood reddens the grass the ground,

Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd hospital,
To the long rows of cots up and down each side I return,
To each and all one after another I draw near, not one do I miss,
An attendant follows holding a tray, he carries a refuse pail,
Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied, and fill'd again.

I onward go, I stop,
With hinged knees and steady hand to dress wounds,
I am firm with each, the pangs are sharp yet unavoidable,
One turns to me his appealing eyes—poor boy! I never knew you,
Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for you, if that would save you.

3

On, on I go, (open doors of time! open hospital doors!)
The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand tear not the bandage away,)
The neck of the cavalry-man with the bullet through and through I examine,
Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye, yet life struggles hard,
(Come sweet death! be persuaded O beautiful death!
In mercy come quickly.)

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter and blood,
Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side-falling head,
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the bloody stump,
And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep,
But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and sinking,
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so offensive,
While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the tray and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out,
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen,
These and more I dress with impassive hand, (yet deep in my breast a fire, a burning flame).

4

Thus in silence in dreams' projections,
Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the hospitals,
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,
I sit by the restless all the dark night, some are so young,
Some suffer so much, I recall the experience sweet and sad,
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have cross'd and rested,
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips).

1865

## GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

1

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows,

Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape,
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching content,
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk undisturb'd,
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should never tire,
Give me a perfect child, give me away aside from the noise of the world a rural domestic life,
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only,
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your primal sanities!

These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement, and rack'd by the war-strife,)
These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets,
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me up,
Yet giving to make me glutted, enrich'd of soul, you give me forever faces;
(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

2

Keep your splendid silent sun,
Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-fields, and orchards,
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month bees hum;
Give me faces and streets—give me these phantoms incessant and endless along the trottoirs! [1]
Give me interminable eyes—give me women—give me comrades and lovers by the thousand!
Let me see new ones every day—let me hold new ones by the hand every day!
Give me such shows—give me the streets of Manhattan!
Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give me the sound of the trumpets and drums!
(The soldiers in companies or regiments—some starting away, flush'd and reckless,
Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd ranks, young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing nothing;)
Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!
O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!
The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!
The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torchlight procession!
The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military wagons following;
People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,
Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now,
The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets, (even the sight of the wounded,)
Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

1865

## O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

[1] pavements, sidewalks

But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

1865–1866

## WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

An elegy, or burial hymn, composed in a manner independent of all earlier models, this ranks as our best poem on President Lincoln. Some, indeed, have termed it "the high-water mark of American poetry." It lacks clear structure and finish, but is perhaps the more powerful emotionally because of this, as though the poet's grief was too intense for concern with expression. As in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," there are interwoven motives. Three accidental experiences, the scent of the lilac, the solitary night song of the wood thrush, and the symbolical falling star, seem to Whitman to associate themselves with the time of Lincoln's death. Other striking features of the poem are the account of the progress of the funeral train, the unique apostrophe to death, and the sense conveyed of the grief of the whole nation.

1

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush, tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,

With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die).

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray débris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass;
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the somber faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring.
For fresh as the morning, thus would I carol a song to you O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes.
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side (while the other stars all look'd on),
As we wander'd together the solemn night (for something I know not what kept me from sleep),
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cold transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where you sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea till there on the prairies meeting:
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there;
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows;
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light—Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.
Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,

The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes;
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages;
And the streets how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail;
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night;
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,*
*Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,*
*In the day, in the night, to all, to each,*
*Sooner or later delicate death.*

*Prais'd be the fathomless universe,*
*For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,*
*And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!*
*For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.*

*Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,*
*Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?*
*Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,*
*I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.*

*Approach strong deliveress,*
*When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,*
*Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,*
*Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.*

*From me to thee glad serenades,*
*Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,*
*And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,*
*And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.*

*The night in silence under many a star,*
*The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,*
*And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,*
*And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,*
*Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,*
*Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,*
*I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death!*

15

To the tally of my soul.
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure, deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.

While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

I saw askant the armies;
And I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the débris and débris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the dooryard blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each I keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
The tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand hearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake;
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

1865–1866

## VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night;
When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side that day,
One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with a look I shall never forget,
One touch of your hand to mine O boy, reach'd up as you lay on the ground,
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle,
Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I made my way,
Found you in death so cold dear comrade, found your body son of responding kisses, (never again on earth responding,)
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew the moderate night-wind,
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battle-field spreading,
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant silent night,
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh, long, long I gazed,
Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side leaning my chin in my hands,
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you dearest comrade—not a tear, not a word,

Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you my son and my soldier,
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole,
Vigil final for you brave boy, (I could not save you, swift was your death,
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall surely meet again,)
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appear'd,
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form,
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and carefully under feet,
And there and then and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited,
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and battle-field dim,
Vigil for boy of responding kisses, (never again on earth responding,)
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how as day brighten'd,
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his blanket,
And buried him where he fell.

1865

## ONE'S-SELF I SING

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

1867

## TEARS

Tears! tears! tears!
In the night, in solitude, tears,
On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the sand,
Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate,
Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;
O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?
What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?
Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild cries;
O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along the beach!
O wild and dismal night storm, with wind—O belching and desperate!
O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm countenance and regulated pace,
But away at night as you fly, none looking—O then the unloosen'd ocean,
Of tears! tears! tears!

*1867* 1871

## DAREST THOU NOW O SOUL

Darest thou now O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen,
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfil O soul.

1870

## A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

A NOISELESS patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

1870

## JOY, SHIPMATE, JOY!

JOY, shipmate, joy!
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)
Our life is closed, our life begins,
The long, long anchorage we leave,
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore,
Joy, shipmate, joy!

1870

## NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES

NIGHT on the prairies,
The supper is over, the fire on the ground burns low,
The wearied emigrants sleep, wrapt in their blankets;
I walk by myself—I stand and look at the stars, which I think now I never realized before.

Now I absorb immortality and peace,
I admire death and test propositions.

How plenteous! how spiritual; how resumé!
The same old man and soul—the same old aspirations, and the same content.

I was thinking the day most splendid till I saw what the not-day exhibited,
I was thinking this globe enough till there sprang out so noiseless around me myriads of other globes.

Now while the great thoughts of space and eternity fill me I will measure myself by them,
And now touch'd with the lives of other globes arrived as far along as those of the earth,
Or waiting to arrive, or pass'd on farther than those of the earth,
I henceforth no more ignore them than I ignore my own life,
Or the lives of the earth arrived as far as mine, or waiting to arrive.

O I see now that life cannot exhibit all to me, as the day cannot,
I see that I am to wait for what will be exhibited by death.

1860

## PASSAGE TO INDIA

The Atlantic cable was laid in 1866, in 1869 the Suez Canal was completed, and also in 1869 the tracks of the Union Pacific extending westward from Omaha were connected with the Central Pacific built eastward from San Francisco. Whitman thought of the crossing of the American continent as completing a world circuit, starting eastward from India, and this brought him a vision of world unity. Bret Harte curtly rejected this poem when it was submitted to the *Overland Monthly*.

1

Singing my days,
Singing the great achievements of the present,
Singing the strong, light works of engineers,
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven outvied,)
In the Old World, the east, the Suez canal,
The New by its mighty railroad spann'd,
The seas inlaid with eloquent, gentle wires,
I sound, to commence, the cry, with thee, O soul,
The Past! the Past! the Past!

The Past! the dark, unfathom'd retrospect!
The teeming gulf! the sleepers and the shadows!
The past! the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present, after all, but a growth out of the past?
(As a projectile, form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps on,
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

2

Passage, O soul, to India!
Eclaircise [1] the myths Asiatic—the primitive fables.

Not you alone, proud truths of the world!
Nor you alone, ye facts of modern science!
But myths and fables of eld—Asia's, Africa's fables!
The far-darting beams of the spirit!—the unloos'd dreams!
The deep diving bibles and legends;
The daring plots of the poets—the elder religions;
—O you temples fairer than lilies, pour'd over by the rising sun!
O you fables, spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known, mounting to heaven!

[1] Make clear. Whitman likes to borrow or to manipulate French words.

You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish'd with gold!
Towers of fables immortal, fashion'd from mortal dreams!
You too I welcome, and fully, the same as the rest;
You too with joy I sing.

3

Passage to India!
Lo, soul! seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
The earth to be spann'd, connected by net-work,
The people to become brothers and sisters,
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
The lands to be welded together.

(A worship new, I sing;
You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours!
You engineers! you architects, machinists, yours!
You, not for trade or transportation only,
But in God's name, and for thy sake, O soul.)

4

Passage to India!
Lo, soul, for thee, of tableaus twain,
I see, in one, the Suez canal initiated, open'd,
I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Eugenie's leading the van;
I mark, from on deck, the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand in the distance;
I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather'd,
The gigantic dredging machines.

In one, again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul, the same,)
I see over my own continent the Pacific Railroad, surmounting every barrier;
I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte, carrying freight and passengers;
I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the shrill steam-whistle,
I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest scenery in the world;
I cross the Laramie plains—I note the rocks in grotesque shapes—the buttes;
I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions—the barren, colorless, sage-deserts;
I see in glimpses afar, or towering immediately above me, the great mountains—I see the Wind River and the Wahsatch mountains;
I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle's Nest—I pass the Promontory—I ascend the Nevadas;
I scan the noble Elk mountain, and wind around its base;
I see the Humboldt range—I thread the valley and cross the river,
I see the clear waters of Lake Tahoe—I see forests of majestic pines,
Or, crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I behold enchanting mirages of waters and meadows;
Marking through these, and after all, in duplicate slender lines,
Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel,
Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,
The road between Europe and Asia.

(Ah Genoese, thy dream! thy dream!
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream!)

5

Passage to India!
Struggles of many a captain—tales of many a sailor dead!
Over my mood, stealing and spreading they come,
Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky.

Along all history, down the slopes,
As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to the surface rising,
A ceaseless thought, a varied train—Lo, soul! to thee, thy sight, they rise,
The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions:
Again Vasco da Gama sails forth;
Again the knowledge gain'd, the mariner's compass,
Lands found, and nations born—thou born, America, (a hemisphere unborn,)
For purpose vast, man's long probation fill'd,
Thou, rondure of the world, at last accomplish'd.

6

O, vast Rondure, swimming in space!
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty!
Alternate light and day, and teeming, spiritual darkness;
Unspeakable, high processions of sun and moon, and countless stars, above;
Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, mountains, trees;
With inscrutable purpose—some hidden, prophetic intention;
Now, first, it seems, my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia, descending, radiating,
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,
Wandering, yearning, curious—with restless explorations,
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish—with never-happy hearts,
With that sad, incessant refrain, *Wherefore, unsatisfied Soul?* and *Whither, O mocking Life?*

Ah, who shall soothe these feverish children?
Who justify these restless explorations?
Who speak the secret of impassive Earth?
Who bind it to us? What is this separate Nature, so unnatural?
What is this Earth, to our affections? (unloving earth, without a throb to answer ours;
Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet, soul, be sure the first intent remains—and shall be carried out;
(Perhaps even now the time has arrived.)

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors—after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the Poet, worthy that name;
The true Son of God shall come, singing his songs.

Then, not your deeds only, O voyagers, O scientists and inventors, shall be justified,
All these hearts, as of fretted children, shall be sooth'd,
All affection shall be fully responded to—the secret shall be told;
All these separations and gaps shall be taken up, and hook'd and link'd together;
The whole Earth—this cold, impassive, voiceless Earth, shall be completely justified;

Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish'd and compacted by the true Son of God, the poet,
(He shall indeed pass the straits and conquer the mountains,
He shall double the Cape of Good Hope to some purpose;)
Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more,
The true Son of God shall absolutely fuse them.

7

Year at whose open'd, wide-flung door I sing!
Year of the purpose accomplish'd!
Year of the marriage of continents, climates and oceans!
(No mere Doge of Venice now, wedding the Adriatic;) [1]
I see, O year, in you, the vast terraqueous globe, given, and giving all,
Europe to Asia, Africa join'd, and they to the New World;
The lands, geographies, dancing before you, holding a festival garland,
As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

8

Passage to India!
Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of man,
The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

Lo, soul, the retrospect, brought forward;
The old, most populous, wealthiest of Earth's lands,
The streams of the Indus and the Ganges, and their many affluents;
(I, my shores of America walking to-day, behold, resuming all,)
The tale of Alexander, on his warlike marches, suddenly dying,
On one side China, and on the other side Persia and Arabia,
To the south the great seas, and the Bay of Bengal;
The flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions, castes,
Old occult Brahma, interminably far back—the tender and junior Buddha,
Central and southern empires, and all their belongings, possessors,
The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Aurungzebe,
The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems, Venetians, Byzantium, the Arabs, Portuguese,
The first travelers, famous yet, Marco Polo, Batouta the Moor,
Doubts to be solv'd, the map incognita, blanks to be fill'd,
The foot of man unstay'd, the hands never at rest,
Thyself, O soul, that will not brook a challenge.

9

The medieval navigators rise before me,
The world of 1492, with its awaken'd enterprise;
Something swelling in humanity now like the sap of the earth in spring,
The sunset splendor of chivalry declining,

And who art thou, sad shade?
Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary,
With majestic limbs, and pious, beaming eyes,
Spreading around, with every look of thine, a golden world,
Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

[1] In the great days of Venice, it was the custom for the Doge, or chief magistrate, to throw a golden ring yearly into the Adriatic to symbolise the wedding of Venice to the sea that had enriched it.

As the chief histrion,
Down to the footlights walks, in some great scena,
Dominating the rest, I see the Admiral himself,
(History's type of courage, action, faith;)
Behold him sail from Palos, leading his little fleet;
His voyage behold—his return—his great fame,
His misfortunes, calumniators—behold him a prisoner, chain'd,
Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

(Curious, in time, I stand, noting the efforts of heroes;
Is the deferment long? bitter the slander, poverty, death?
Lies the seed unreck'd for centuries in the ground? Lo! to God's due occasion,
Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms.
And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

10

Passage indeed, O soul, to primal thought!
Not lands and seas alone—thy own clear freshness,
The young maturity of brood and bloom;
To realms of budding bibles.

O soul, repressless, I with thee, and thou with me,
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin;
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,
To reason's early paradise,
Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
Again with fair Creation.

11

O we can wait no longer!
We too take ship, O soul!
Joyous, we too launch out on trackless seas!
Fearless, for unknown shores, on waves of ecstasy to sail,
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O soul,)
Caroling free—singing our song of God,
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

With laugh, and many a kiss,
(Let others deprecate—let others weep for sin, remorse, humiliation;)
O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee.

Ah, more than any priest, O soul, we too believe in God;
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee;
Sailing these seas, or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time, and Space, and Death, like waters flowing,
Bear me, indeed, as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear—lave me all over;
Bathe me, O God, in thee—mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendent!
Nameless—the fibre and the breath!
Light of the light—shedding forth universes—thou centre of them!
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving!
Thou moral, spiritual fountain! affection's source! thou reservoir!
(O pensive soul of me! O thirst unsatisfied! waitest not there?
Waitest not haply for us, somewhere there, the Comrade perfect?)
Thou pulse! thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space!
How should I think—how breathe a single breath—how speak—if, out of myself,
I could not launch, to those, superior universes?

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee, O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo! thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full, the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding, O soul, thou journeyest forth;
—What love, than thine and ours could wider amplify?
What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and ours, O soul?
What dreams of the ideal? what plans of purity, perfection, strength?
What cheerful willingness, for others' sake, to give up all?
For others' sake to suffer all?

Reckoning ahead, O soul, when thou, the time achiev'd,
(The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage done,)
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attain'd,
As, fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found,
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.

12

Passage to more than India!
Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?
O Soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like these?
Disportest thou on waters such as these?
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?
Then have thy bent unleash'd.

Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce enigmas!
Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye strangling problems!
You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons, that, living, never reach'd you.

13

Passage to more than India!
O secret of the earth and sky!
Of you, O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and rivers!
Of you, O woods and fields! Of you, strong mountains of my land!
Of you, O prairies! Of you, gray rocks!

O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!
O day and night, passage to you!

O sun and moon, and all you stars! Sirius and Jupiter!
Passage to you!

Passage—immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!
Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!
Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?
Have we not grovell'd here long enough, eating and drinking like mere brutes?
Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long enough?

Sail forth! steer for the deep waters only!
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me;

For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail!

1871

## THOU MOTHER WITH THY EQUAL BROOD

1

THOU Mother with thy equal brood,
Thou varied chain of different States, yet one identity only,
A special song before I go I'd sing o'er all the rest,
For thee, the future.
I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality,
I'd fashion thy ensemble including body and soul,
I'd show away ahead thy real Union, and how it may be accomplish'd.

The paths to the house I seek to make,
But leave to those to come the house itself.
Belief I sing, and preparation;
As Life and Nature are not great with reference to the present only,
But greater still from what is yet to come,
Out of that formula for thee I sing.

2

As a strong bird on pinions free,
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving,
Such be the thought I'd think of thee, America,
Such be the recitative I'd bring for thee.

The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd bring thee not,
Nor the compliments that have served their turn so long,
Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume of foreign court or indoor library;
But an odor I'd bring as from forests of pine in Maine, or breath of an Illinois prairie,

With open airs of Virginia or Georgia or Tennessee, or from Texas uplands, or Florida's glades,
Or the Saguenay's black stream, or the wide blue spread of the Huron,
With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes, or Yosemite,
And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd bring the rustling sea-sound,
That endlessly sounds from the two Great Seas of the world.

And for thy subtler sense subtler refrains dread Mother,
Preludes of intellect tallying these and thee, mind-formulas for thee, real and sane and large as these and thee,
Thou! mounting higher, diving deeper than we knew, thou transcendental Union!
By thee fact to be justified, blended with thought,
Thought of man justified, blended with God,
Through thy idea, lo, the immortal reality!
Through thy reality, lo, the immortal ideal!

3

Brain of the New World, what a task is thine,
To formulate the Modern—out of the peerless grandeur of the modern,
Out of thyself, comprising science, to recast poems, churches, art,
(Recast, may-be discard them, end them—may-be their work is done, who knows?)
By vision, hand, conception, on the background of the mighty past, the dead,
To limn with absolute faith the mighty living present.

And yet thou living present brain, heir of the dead, the Old World brain,
Thou that lay folded like an unborn babe within its folds so long,
Thou carefully prepared by it so long—haply thou but unfoldest it, only maturest it,
It to eventuate in thee—the essence of the by-gone time contain'd in thee,
Its poems, churches, arts, unwitting to themselves, destined with reference to thee;
Thou but the apples, long, long, long a-growing,
The fruit of all the Old ripening to-day in thee.

4

Sail, sail thy best, ship of Democracy,
Of value is thy freight, 'tis not the Present only,
The Past is also stored in thee,
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone, not of the Western continent alone,
Earth's *résumé* entire floats on thy keel O ship, is steadied by thy spars,
With thee Time voyages in trust, the antecedent nations sink or swim with thee,
With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes, epics, wars, thou bear'st the other continents,
Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-port triumphant;
Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye O helmsman, thou carriest great companions,
Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee,
And royal feudal Europe sails with thee.

5

Beautiful world of new superber birth that rises to my eyes,
Like a limitless golden cloud filling the western sky,
Emblem of general maternity lifted above all,
Sacred shape of the bearer of daughters and sons,
Out of thy teeming womb thy giant babes in ceaseless procession issuing,
Acceding from such gestation, taking and giving continual strength and life,
World of the real—world of the twain in one,
World of the soul, born by the world of the real alone, led to identity, body, by it alone;

Yet in beginning only, incalculable masses of composite precious materials,
By history's cycles forwarded, by every nation, language, hither sent,
Ready, collected here, a freer, vast, electric world, to be constructed here,
(The true New World, the world of orbic science, morals, literatures to come,)
Thou wonder world yet undefined, unform'd, neither do I define thee,
How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the future?
I feel thy ominous greatness evil as well as good,
I watch thee advancing, absorbing the present, transcending the past,
I see thy light lightning, and thy shadow shadowing, as if the entire globe,
But I do not undertake to define thee, hardly to comprehend thee,
I but thee name, thee prophesy, as now,
I merely thee ejaculate!
Thee in thy future,
Thee in thy only permanent life, career, thy own unloosen'd mind, thy soaring spirit,
Thee as another equally needed sun, radiant, ablaze, swift-moving, fructifying all,
Thee risen in potent cheerfulness and joy, in endless great hilarity,
Scattering for good the cloud that hung so long, that weigh'd so long upon the mind of man,
The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual, certain decadence of man;
Thee in thy larger, saner brood of female, male—thee in thy athletes, moral, spiritual, South, North, West, East,
(To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All, thy ever daughter, son, endear'd alike, forever equal,)
Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists, unborn yet, but certain,
Thee in thy moral wealth and civilization, (until which thy proudest material civilization must remain in vain,)
Thee in thy all-supplying, all-enclosing worship—thee in no single bible, saviour, merely,
Thy saviours countless, latent within thyself, thy bibles incessant within thyself, equal to any, divine as any,
(Thy soaring course thee formulating, not in thy two great wars, nor in thy century's visible growth,
But far more in these leaves and chants; thy chants, great Mother!)
Thee in an education grown of thee, in teachers, studies, students, born of thee,
Thee in thy democratic fêtes en-masse, thy high original festivals, operas, lecturers, preachers,
Thee in thy ultimata, (the preparations only now completed, the edifice on sure foundations tied,)
Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought, thy topmost rational joys, thy love and godlike aspiration,
In thy resplendent coming literati, thy full-lung'd orators, thy sacerdotal bards, kosmic savans,
These! these in thee, (certain to come,) to-day I prophesy.

6

Land tolerating all, accepting all, not for good alone, all good for thee,
Land in the realms of God to be a realm unto thyself,
Under the rule of God to be a rule unto thyself.

(Lo, where arise three peerless stars,
To be thy natal stars my country, Ensemble, Evolution, Freedom,
Set in the sky of Law.)

Land of unprecedented faith, God's faith,
Thy soil, thy very subsoil, all upheav'd,
The general inner earth so long so sedulously draped over, now hence for what it is boldly laid bare,
Open'd by thee to heaven's light for benefit or bale.

Not for success alone,
Not to fair-sail unintermitted always,
The storm shall dash thy face, the murk of war and worse than war shall cover thee all over,
(Wert capable of war, its tug and trials? be capable of peace its trials,
For the tug and mortal strain of nations come at last in prosperous peace, not war;)
In many a smiling mask death shall approach beguiling thee, thou in disease shalt swelter,
The livid cancer spread its hideous claws, clinging upon thy breasts, seeking to strike thee deep within,
Consumption of the worst, moral consumption, shall rouge thy face with hectic,
But thou shalt face thy fortunes, thy diseases, and surmount them all,
Whatever they are to-day and whatever through time they may be,
They each and all shall lift and pass away and cease from thee,
While thou, Time's spirals rounding, out of thyself, thyself still extricating, fusing,
Equable, natural, mystical Union thou, (the mortal with immortal blent,)
Shalt soar toward the fulfilment of the future, the spirit of the body and the mind,
The soul, its destinies.

The soul, its destinies, the real real,
(Purport of all these apparitions of the real;)
In thee America, the soul, its destinies,
Thou globe of globes! thou wonder nebulous!
By many a throe of heat and cold convuls'd, (by these thyself solidifying,)
Thou mental, moral orb—thou New, indeed new, Spiritual World!
The Present holds thee not—for such vast growth is thine,
For such unparallel'd flight as thine, such brood as thine,
The FUTURE only holds thee and can hold thee.

1872

## ITALIAN MUSIC IN DAKOTA

["*The Seventeenth—the finest Regimental Band I ever heard.*"]

THROUGH the soft evening air enwinding all,
Rocks, woods, fort, cannon, pacing sentries, endless wilds,
In dulcet streams, in flutes' and cornets' notes,
Electric, pensive, turbulent, artificial,
(Yet strangely fitting even here, meanings unknown before,
Subtler than ever, more harmony, as if born here, related here,
Not to the city's fresco'd rooms, not to the audience of the opera house,
Sounds, echoes, wandering strains, as really here at home,
*Sonnambula's* innocent love, trios with *Norma's* anguish,
And thy ecstatic chorus *Poliuto*);[1]
Ray'd in the limpid yellow slanting sundown,
Music, Italian music in Dakota.

While Nature, sovereign of this gnarl'd realm,
Lurking in hidden barbaric grim recesses,
Acknowledging rapport however far remov'd,
(As some old root or soil of earth its last-born flower or fruit,)
Listens well pleas'd.

1881

[1] Of the three operas named in lines 9 and 10, the first two were composed by Bellini and the third by Donizetti.

## WHEN THE FULL-GROWN POET CAME

When the full-grown poet came,
Out spake pleased Nature (the round impassive globe, with all its shows of day and night), saying, *He is mine;*
But out spake too the Soul of man, proud, jealous and unreconciled, *Nay, he is mine alone;*
—Then the full-grown poet stood between the two, and took each by the hand;
And to-day and ever so stands, as blender, uniter, tightly holding hands,
Which he will never release until he reconciles the two,
And wholly and joyously blends them.

1876

## A PRAIRIE SUNSET

Shot gold, maroon and violet, dazzling silver, emerald, fawn,
The earth's whole amplitude and Nature's multiform power consign'd for once to colors;
The light, the general air possess'd by them—colors till now unknown,
No limit, confine—not the Western sky alone—the high meridian—North, South, all,
Pure luminous color fighting the silent shadows to the last.

1888

## THE FIRST DANDELION

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging,
As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been,
Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd grass—innocent, golden, calm as the dawn,
The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

1888

## GOOD-BYE MY FANCY!

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment;
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.
Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended into one;
Then if we die we die together (yes, we'll remain one),
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.

1891

## PREFACE TO *LEAVES OF GRASS*

**This text of the preface is that of the revision of 1882. The original preface to *Leaves of Grass* (1855), not afterward reprinted by Whitman, was much longer. There was a second version in 1876.**

AMERICA does not repel the past, or what the past has produced under its forms, or amid other politics, or the idea of castes, or the old religions—accepts the lesson with calmness—is not impatient because the slough still sticks to opinions and manners and literature, while the life which served its requirements has passed into the new life of the new forms—perceives that the corpse is slowly borne from the eating and sleeping rooms of the house—perceives that it waits a little while in the door—that it was fittest for its days—that its action has descended to the stalwart and well-shaped heir who approaches —and that he shall be fittest for his days.

The Americans, of all nations at any time upon the earth, have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem. In the history of the earth hitherto, the largest and most stirring appear tame and orderly to their ampler largeness and stir. Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night. Here is action untied from strings, necessarily blind to particulars and details, magnificently moving in masses. Here is the hospitality which for ever indicates heroes. Here the performance, disdaining the trivial, unapproached in the tremendous audacity of its crowds and groupings, and the push of its perspective, spreads with crampless and flowing breadth, and showers its prolific and splendid extravagance. One sees it must indeed own the riches of the summer and winter, and need never be bankrupt while corn grows from the ground, or the orchards drop apples, or the bays contain fish, or men beget children upon women.

Other states indicate themselves in their deputies—but the genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislatures, nor in its ambassadors or authors, or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors—but always most in the common people, south, north, west, east, in all its States, through all its mighty amplitude. The largeness of the nation, however, were monstrous without a corresponding largeness and generosity of the spirit of the citizen. Not swarming states, nor streets and steamships, nor prosperous business, nor farms, nor capital, nor learning, may suffice for the ideal of man—nor suffice the poet. No reminiscences may suffice either. A live nation can always cut a deep mark, and can have the best authority the cheapest—namely, from its own soul. This is the sum of the profitable uses of individuals or states, and of present action and grandeur, and of the subjects of poets. (As if it were necessary to trot back generation after generation to the eastern records! As if the beauty and sacredness of the demonstrable must fall behind that of the mythical! As if men do not make their mark out of any times! As if the opening of the western continent by discovery, and what has transpired in North and South America, were less than the small theater of the antique, or the aimless sleep-walking of the middle ages!) The pride of the United States leaves the wealth and finesse of the cities, and all returns of commerce and agriculture, and all the magnitude of geography or shows of exterior victory, to enjoy the sight and realization of full-sized men, or one full-sized man unconquerable and simple.

The American poets are to enclose old and new, for America is the race of races. The expression of the American poet is to be transcendent and new. It is to be indirect, and not direct or descriptive or epic. Its quality goes through these to much more. Let the age and wars of other nations be chanted, and their eras and characters be illustrated, and that finish the verse. Not so the great psalm of the republic. Here the theme is creative, and has vista. Whatever stagnates in the flat of custom or obedience or legislation, the great poet never stagnates. Obedience does not master him, he masters it. High up out of reach he stands, turning a concentrated light—he turns the pivot with his finger—he baffles the swiftest runners as he stands, and easily overtakes and envelops them. The time straying

toward infidelity and confections and persiflage he withholds by steady faith. Faith is the antiseptic of the soul—it pervades the common people and preserves them—they never give up believing and expecting and trusting. There is that indescribable freshness and unconsciousness about an illiterate person, that humbles and mocks the power of the noblest expressive genius. The poet sees for a certainty how one not a great artist may be just as sacred and perfect as the greatest artist.

The power to destroy or remold is freely used by the greatest poet, but seldom the power of attack. What is past is past. If he does not expose superior models, and prove himself by every step he takes, he is not what is wanted. The presence of the great poet conquers—not parleying, or struggling, or any prepared attempts. Now he has passed that way, see after him! There is not left any vestige of despair, or misanthropy, or cunning, or exclusiveness, or the ignominy of a nativity or color, or delusion of hell or the necessity of hell—and no man thenceforward shall be degraded for ignorance or weakness or sin. The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into anything that was before thought small, it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe. He is a seer—he is individual—he is complete in himself—the others are as good as he, only he sees it, and they do not. He is not one of the chorus—he does not stop for any regulation—he is the president of regulation. What the eyesight does to the rest, he does to the rest. Who knows the curious mystery of the eyesight? The other senses corroborate themselves, but this is removed from any proof but its own, and foreruns the identities of the spiritual world. A single glance of it mocks all the investigations of man, and all the instruments and books of the earth, and all reasoning. What is marvelous? what is unlikely? what is impossible or baseless or vague—after you have once just opened the space of a peach-pit, and given audience to far and near, and to the sunset, and had all things enter with electric swiftness, softly and duly, without confusion or jostling or jam?

The land and sea, the animals, fishes and birds, the sky of heaven and the orbs, the forests, mountains and rivers, are not small themes—but folks expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb real objects—they expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls. Men and women perceive the beauty well enough—probably as well as he. The passionate tenacity of hunters, woodmen, early risers, cultivators of gardens and orchards and fields, the love of healthy women for the manly form, seafaring persons, drivers of horses, the passion for light and the open air, all is an old varied sign of the unfailing perception of beauty, and of a residence of the poetic in out-door people. They can never be assisted by poets to perceive—some may, but they never can. The poetic quality is not marshaled in rhyme or uniformity, or abstract addresses to things, nor in melancholy complaints or good precepts, but is the life of these and much else, and is in the soul. The profit of rhyme is that it drops seeds of a sweeter and more luxuriant rhyme, and of uniformity that it conveys itself into its own roots in the ground out of sight. The rhyme and uniformity of perfect poems show the free growth of metrical laws, and bud from them as unerringly and loosely as lilacs and roses on a bush, and take shapes as compact as the shapes of chestnuts and oranges, and melons and pears, and shed the perfume impalpable to form. The fluency and ornaments of the finest poems or music or orations or recitations, are not independent but dependent. All beauty comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain. If the greatnesses are in conjunction in a man or woman, it is enough—the fact will prevail through the universe; but the gaggery and gilt of a million years will not prevail. Who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost. This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men—go freely with powerful

uneducated persons, and with the young, and with the mothers of families—re-examine all you have been told in school or church or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body. The poet shall not spend his time in unneeded work. He shall know that the ground is already ploughed and manured; others may not know it, but he shall. He shall go directly to the creation. His trust shall master the trust of everything he touches—and shall master all attachment.

The known universe has one complete lover, and that is the greatest poet. He consumes an eternal passion, and is indifferent which chance happens, and which possible contingency of fortune or misfortune, and persuades daily and hourly his delicious pay. What balks or breaks others is fuel for his burning progress to contact and amorous joy. Other proportions of the reception of pleasure dwindle to nothing to his proportions. All expected from heaven or from the highest, he is rapport with in the sight of the daybreak, or the scenes of the winter woods, or the presence of children playing, or with his arm round the neck of a man or woman. His love above all love has leisure and expanse—he leaves room ahead of himself. He is no irresolute or suspicious lover—he is sure—he scorns intervals. His experience and the showers and thrills are not for nothing. Nothing can jar him—suffering and darkness cannot—death and fear cannot. To him complaint and jealousy and envy are corpses buried and rotten in the earth—he saw them buried. The sea is not surer of the shore, or the shore of the sea, than he is of the fruition of his love, and of all perfection and beauty.

The fruition of beauty is no chance of miss or hit—it is as inevitable as life—it is exact and plumb as gravitation. From the eyesight proceeds another eyesight, and from the hearing proceeds another hearing, and from the voice proceeds another voice, eternally curious of the harmony of things with man. These understand the law of perfection in masses and floods—that it is profuse and impartial—that there is not a minute of the light or dark, nor an acre of the earth and sea, without it—nor any direction of the sky, nor any trade or employment, nor any turn of events. This is the reason that about the proper expression of beauty there is precision and balance. One part does not need to be thrust above another. The best singer is not the one who has the most lithe and powerful organ. The pleasure of poems is not in them that take the handsomest measure and sound.

Without effort, and without exposing in the least how it is done, the greatest poet brings the spirit of any or all events and passions and scenes and persons, some more and some less, to bear on your individual character as you hear or read. To do this well is to compete with the laws that pursue and follow Time. What is the purpose must surely be there, and the clue of it must be there—and the faintest indication is the indication of the best, and then becomes the clearest indication. Past and present and future are not disjoined but joined. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be, from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet. He says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you. He learns the lesson—he places himself where the future becomes present. The greatest poet does not only dazzle his rays over character and scenes and passions—he finally ascends, and finishes all—he exhibits the pinnacles that no man can tell what they are for, or what is beyond—he glows a moment on the extremest verge. He is most wonderful in his last half-hidden smile or frown; by that flash of the moment of parting the one that sees it shall be encouraged or terrified afterward for many years. The greatest poet does not moralize or make applications of morals—he knows the soul. The soul has that measureless pride which consists in never acknowledging any lessons or deductions but its own. But it has sympathy as measureless as its pride, and the one balances the other, and neither can stretch too far while it stretches in company with the other. The inmost secrets of art sleep with the twain. The greatest poet has lain close

betwixt both, and they are vital in his style and thoughts.

The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity—nothing can make up for excess, or for the lack of definiteness. To carry on the heave of impulse and pierce intellectual depths and give all subjects their articulations, are powers neither common nor very uncommon. But to speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals, and the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the roadside, is the flawless triumph of art. If you have looked on him who has achieved it you have looked on one of the masters of the artists of all nations and times. You shall not contemplate the flight of the gray gull over the bay, or the mettlesome action of the blood horse, or the tall leaning of sun-flowers on their stalk, or the appearance of the sun journeying through heaven, or the appearance of the moon afterward, with any more satisfaction than you shall contemplate him. The great poet has less a marked style, and is more the channel of thoughts and things without increase or diminution, and is the free channel of himself. He swears to his art, I will not be meddlesome, I will not have in my writing any elegance, or effect, or originality, to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains. I will have nothing hang in the way, not the richest curtains. What I tell I tell for precisely what it is. Let who may exalt or startle or fascinate or soothe, I will have purposes as health or heat or snow has, and be as regardless of observation. What I experience or portray shall go from my composition without a shred of my composition. You shall stand by my side and look in the mirror with me.

The old red blood and stainless gentility of great poets will be proved by their unconstraint. A heroic person walks at his ease through and out of that custom or precedent or authority that suits him not. Of the traits of the brotherhood of first-class writers, savans, musicians, inventors and artists, nothing is finer than silent defiance advancing from new free forms. In the need of poems, philosophy, politics, mechanism, science, behavior, the craft of art, an appropriate native grand opera, shipcraft, or any craft, he is greatest for ever and ever who contributes the greatest original practical example. The cleanest expression is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself, and makes one.

The messages of great poems to each man and woman are, Come to us on equal terms, only then can you understand us. We are no better than you, what we inclose you inclose, what we enjoy you may enjoy. Did you suppose there could be only one Supreme? We affirm there can be unnumbered Supremes, and that one does not countervail another any more than one eyesight countervails another—and that men can be good or grand only of the consciousness of their supremacy within them. What do you think is the grandeur of storms and dismemberments, and the deadliest battles and wrecks, and the wildest fury of the elements, and the power of the sea, and the motion of nature, and the throes of human desires, and dignity and hate and love? It is that something in the soul which says, Rage on, whirl on, I tread master here and everywhere—Master of the spasms of the sky and of the shatter of the sea, Master of nature and passion and death, and of all terror and all pain.

The American bards shall be marked for generosity and affection, and for encouraging competitors. They shall be Kosmos, without monopoly or secrecy, glad to pass anything to any one—hungry for equals night and day. They shall not be careful of riches and privilege—they shall be riches and privilege—they shall perceive who the most affluent man is. The most affluent man is he that confronts all the shows he sees by equivalents out of the stronger wealth of himself. The American bard shall delineate no class of persons, nor one or two out of the strata of interests, nor love most nor truth most, nor the soul most, nor the body most—and not be for the Eastern states more than the Western, or the Northern states more than the Southern.

Exact science and its practical movements are no checks on the greatest poet, but always his encouragement and support. The

outset and remembrance are there—there the arms that lifted him first, and braced him best—there he returns after all his goings and comings. The sailor and traveler—the anatomist, chemist, astronomer, geologist, phrenologist, spiritualist, mathematician, historian, and lexicographer, are not poets, but they are the lawgivers of poets, and their construction underlies the structure of every perfect poem. No matter what rises or is uttered, they sent the seed of the conception of it—of them and by them stand the visible proofs of souls. If there shall be love and content between the father and the son, and if the greatness of the son is the exuding of the greatness of the father, there shall be love between the poet and the man of demonstrable science. In the beauty of poems are henceforth the tuft and final applause of science.

Great is the faith of the flush of knowledge, and of the investigation of the depths of qualities and things. Cleaving and circling here swells the soul of the poet, yet is president of itself always. The depths are fathomless, and therefore calm. The innocence and nakedness are resumed—they are neither modest nor immodest. The whole theory of the supernatural, and all that was twined with it or educed out of it, departs as a dream. What has ever happened—what happens, and whatever may or shall happen, the vital laws inclose all. They are sufficient for any case and for all cases—none to be hurried or retarded—any special miracle of affairs or persons inadmissible in the vast clear scheme where every motion and every spear of grass, and the frames and spirits of men and women and all that concerns them, are unspeakably perfect miracles, all referring to all, and each distinct and in its place. It is also not consistent with the reality of the soul to admit that there is anything in the known universe more divine than men and women.

Men and women, and the earth and all upon it, are to be taken as they are, and the investigation of their past and present and future shall be unintermitted, and shall be done with perfect candor. Upon this basis philosophy speculates, ever looking toward the poet, ever regarding the eternal tendencies of all toward happiness, never inconsistent with what is clear to the senses and to the soul. For the eternal tendencies of all toward happiness make the only point of sane philosophy. Whatever comprehends less than that—whatever is less than the laws of light and of astronomical motion—or less than the laws that follow the thief, the liar, the glutton and the drunkard, through this life and doubtless afterward—or less than vast stretches of time, or the slow formation of density, or the patient upheaving of strata—is of no account. Whatever would put God in a poem or system of philosophy as contending against some being or influence, is also of no account. Sanity and ensemble characterize the great master—spoilt in one principle, all is spoilt. The great master has nothing to do with miracles. He sees health for himself in being one of the mass—he sees the hiatus in singular eminence. To the perfect shape comes common ground. To be under the general law is great, for that is to correspond with it. The master knows that he is unspeakably great, and that all are unspeakably great—that nothing, for instance, is greater than to conceive children, and bring them up well—that to *be* is just as great as to perceive or tell.

In the make of the great masters the idea of political liberty is indispensable. Liberty takes the adherence of heroes wherever man and woman exist—but never takes any adherence or welcome from the rest more than from poets. They are the voice and exposition of liberty. They out of ages are worthy the grand idea—to them it is confided, and they must sustain it. Nothing has precedence of it, and nothing can warp or degrade it.

As the attributes of the poets of the kosmos concenter in the real body, and in the pleasure of things, they possess the superiority of genuineness over all fiction and romance. As they emit themselves, facts are showered over with light—the daylight is lit with more volatile light—the deep between the setting and rising sun goes deeper many fold. Each precise object or condition or combination or process exhibits a beauty—the multiplication table its—old age its—the carpenter's trade its—the grand opera its—the huge-hulled clean-shaped New York clipper at sea under steam or full sail gleams with unmatched

beauty—the American circles and large harmonies of government gleam with theirs—and the commonest definite intentions and actions with theirs. The poets of the kosmos advance through all interpositions and coverings and turmoils and stratagems to first principles. They are of use—they dissolve poverty from its need, and riches from its conceit. You large proprietor, they say, shall not realize or perceive more than any one else. The owner of the library is not he who holds a legal title to it, having bought and paid for it. Any one and every one is owner of the library (indeed he or she alone is owner), who can read the same through all the varieties of tongues and subjects and styles, and in whom they enter with ease, and make supple and powerful and rich and large.

These American States, strong and healthy and accomplished, shall receive no pleasure from violations of natural models, and must not permit them. In paintings or moldings or carvings in mineral or wood, or in the illustrations of books or newspapers, or in the patterns of woven stuffs, or anything to beautify rooms or furniture or costumes, or to put upon cornices or monuments, or on the prows or sterns of ships, or to put anywhere before the human eye indoors or out, that which distorts honest shapes, or which creates unearthly beings or places or contingencies, is a nuisance and revolt. Of the human form especially, it is so great it must never be made ridiculous. Of ornaments to a work nothing outré can be allowed—but those ornaments can be allowed that conform to the perfect facts of the open air, and that flow out of the nature of the work, and come irrepressibly from it, and are necessary to the completion of the work. Most works are most beautiful without ornament. Exaggerations will be revenged in human physiology. Clean and vigorous children are jetted and conceived only in those communities where the models of natural forms are public every day. Great genius and the people of these States must never be demeaned to romances. As soon as histories are properly told, no more need of romances.

The great poets are to be known by the absence in them of tricks, and by the justification of perfect personal candor. All faults may be forgiven of him who has perfect candor. Henceforth let no man of us lie, for we have seen that openness wins the inner and outer world, and that there is no single exception, and that never since our earth gathered itself in a mass have deceit or subterfuge or prevarication attracted its smallest particle or the faintest tinge of a shade—and that through the enveloping wealth and rank of a state, or the whole republic of states, a sneak or sly person shall be discovered and despised—and that the soul has never once been fooled and never can be fooled—and thrift without the loving nod of the soul is only a fetid puff—and there never grew up in any of the continents of the globe, nor upon any planet or satellite, nor in that condition which precedes the birth of babes, nor at any time during the changes of life, nor in any stretch of abeyance or action of vitality, nor in any process of formation or reformation anywhere, a being whose instinct hated the truth.

Extreme caution or prudence, the soundest organic health, large hope and comparison and fondness for women and children, large alimentiveness and destructiveness and causality, with a perfect sense of the oneness of nature, and the propriety of the same spirit applied to human affairs, are called up of the float of the brain of the world to be parts of the greatest poet from his birth out of his mother's womb, and from her birth out of her mother's. Caution seldom goes far enough. It has been thought that the prudent citizen was the citizen who applied himself to solid gains, and did well for himself and for his family, and completed a lawful life without debt or crime. The greatest poet sees and admits these economies as he sees the economies of food and sleep, but has higher notions of prudence than to think he gives much when he gives a few slight attentions at the latch of the gate. The premises of the prudence of life are not the hospitality of it, or the ripeness and harvest of it. Beyond the independence of a little sum laid aside for burial-money, and of a few clap-boards around and shingles overhead on a lot of American soil owned, and the easy dollars that supply the year's plain clothing and meals, the melan-

choly prudence of the abandonment of such a great being as a man is, to the toss and pallor of years of money-making, with all their scorching days and icy nights, and all their stifling deceits and underhand dodgings, or infinitesimals of parlors, or shameless stuffing while others starve, and all the loss of the bloom and odor of the earth, and of the flowers and atmosphere, and of the sea, and of the true taste of the women and men you pass or have to do with in youth or middle age, and the issuing sickness and desperate revolt at the close of a life without elevation or naïveté (even if you have achieved a secure 10,000 a year, or election to Congress or the Governorship), and the ghastly chatter of a death without serenity or majesty, is the great fraud upon modern civilization and forethought, blotching the surface and system which civilization undeniably drafts, and moistening with tears the immense features it spreads and spreads with such velocity before the reached kisses of the soul.

Ever the right explanation remains to be made about prudence. The prudence of the mere wealth and respectability of the most esteemed life appears too faint for the eye to observe at all, when little and large alike drop quietly aside at the thought of the prudence suitable for immortality. What is the wisdom that fills the thinness of a year, or seventy or eighty years—to the wisdom spaced out by ages, and coming back at a certain time with strong reinforcements and rich presents, and the clear faces of wedding-guests as far as you can look, in every direction, running gayly toward you? Only the soul is of itself—all else has reference to what ensues. All that a person does or thinks is of consequence. Nor can the push of charity or personal force ever be anything else than the profoundest reason, whether it brings argument to hand or no. No specification is necessary—to add or subtract or divide is in vain. Little or big, learned or unlearned, white or black, legal or illegal, sick or well, from the first inspiration down the windpipe to the last expiration out of it, all that a male or female does that is vigorous and benevolent and clean is so much sure profit to him or her in the unshakable order of the universe, and through the whole scope of it forever. The prudence of the greatest poet answers at last the craving and glut of the soul, puts off nothing, permits no let-up for its own case or any case, has no particular sabbath or judgment day, divides not the living from the dead, or the righteous from the unrighteous, is satisfied with the present, matches every thought or act by its correlative, and knows no possible forgiveness or deputed atonement.

The direct trial of him who would be the greatest poet is to-day. If he does not flood himself with the immediate age as with vast oceanic tides—if he be not himself the age transfigured, and if to him is not opened the eternity which gives similitude to all periods and locations and processes, and animate and inanimate forms, and which is the bond of time, and rises up from its inconceivable vagueness and infiniteness in the swimming shapes of to-day, and is held by the ductile anchors of life, and makes the present spot the passage from what was to what shall be, and commits itself to the representation of this wave of an hour, and this one of the sixty beautiful children of the wave—let him merge in the general run, and wait his development.

Still the final test of poems, or any character or work, remains. The prescient poet projects himself centuries ahead, and judges performer or performance after the changes of time. Does it live through them? Does it still hold on untired? Will the same style, and the direction of genius to similar points, be satisfactory now? Have the marches of tens and hundreds and thousands of years made willing detours to the right hand and the left hand for his sake? Is he beloved long and long after he is buried? Does the young man think often of him? and the young woman think often of him? and do the middle-aged and the old think of him?

A great poem is for ages and ages in common, and for all degrees and complexions, and all departments and sects, and for a woman as much as a man, and a man as much as a woman. A great poem is no finish to a man or woman, but rather a beginning. Has any one fancied he could sit at last under some due authority, and rest satisfied with explana-

tions, and realize, and be content and full? To no such terminus does the greatest poet bring —he brings neither cessation nor sheltered fatness and ease. The touch of him, like Nature, tells in action. Whom he takes he takes with firm sure grasp into live regions previously unattained—thenceforward is no rest—they see the space and ineffable sheen that turn the old spots and lights into dead vacuums. Now there shall be a man cohered out of tumult and chaos—the elder encourages the younger and shows him how—they two shall launch off fearlessly together till the new world fits an orbit for itself, and looks unabashed on the lesser orbits of the stars, and sweeps through the ceaseless rings, and shall never be quiet again.

There will soon be no more priests. Their work is done. A new order shall arise, and they shall be the priests of man, and every man shall be his own priest. They shall find their inspiration in real objects to-day, symptoms of the past and future. They shall not deign to defend immortality or God, or the perfection of things, or liberty, or the exquisite beauty and reality of the soul. They shall arise in America, and be responded to from the remainder of the earth.

The English language befriends the grand American expression—it is brawny enough, and limber and full enough. On the tough stock of a race who through all change of circumstance was never without the idea of political liberty, which is the animus of all liberty, it has attracted the terms of daintier and gayer and subtler and more elegant tongues. It is the powerful language of resistance—it is the dialect of common sense. It is the speech of the proud and melancholy races, and of all who aspire. It is the chosen tongue to express growth, faith, self-esteem, freedom, justice, equality, friendliness, amplitude, prudence, decision, and courage. It is the medium that shall well-nigh express the inexpressible.

No great literature, nor any like style of behavior or oratory, or social intercourse or household arrangements, or public institutions, or the treatment by bosses of employed people, nor executive detail, or detail of the army and navy, nor spirit of legislation or courts, or police or tuition or architecture, or songs or amusements, can long elude the jealous and passionate instinct of American standards. Whether or no the sign appears from the mouths of the people, it throbs a live interrogation in every freeman's and free-woman's heart, after that which passes by, or this built to remain. Is it uniform with my country? Are its disposals without ignominious distinctions? Is it for the ever-growing communes of brothers and lovers, large, well united, proud, beyond the old models, generous beyond all models? Is it something grown fresh out of the fields, or drawn from the sea for use to me to-day here? I know that what answers for me, an American, in Texas, Ohio, Canada, must answer for any individual or nation that serves for a part of my materials. Does this answer? Is it for the nursing of the young of the republic? Does it solve readily with the sweet milk of the nipples of the breasts of the Mother of Many Children?

America prepares with composure and good-will for the visitors that have sent word. It is not intellect that is to be their warrant and welcome. The talented, the artist, the ingenious, the editor, the statesman, the erudite, are not unappreciated—they fall in their place and do their work. The soul of the nation also does its work. It rejects none, it permits all. Only toward the like of itself will it advance half-way. An individual is as superb as a nation when he has the qualities which make a superb nation. The soul of the largest and wealthiest and proudest nation may well go half-way to meet that of its poets.

## *From* DEMOCRATIC VISTAS

I SAY that democracy can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it founds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of art, poems, schools, theology, displacing all that exists, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences. It is curious to me that while so many voices, pens, minds, in the press, lecture-rooms, in our Congress, &c., are discussing intellectual topics, pecuniary dangers, legislative problems, the suffrage, tariff and labor questions, and the various

business and benevolent needs of America, with propositions, remedies, often worth deep attention, there is one need, a hiatus the profoundest, that no eye seems to perceive, no voice to state. Our fundamental want to-day in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors, literatuses, far different, far higher in grade than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, affecting politics far more than the popular superficial suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of Presidents or Congresses—radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and, as its grandest result, accomplishing, (what neither the schools nor the churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplish'd, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without a substratum,) a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States. For know you not, dear, earnest reader, that the people of our land may all read and write, and may all possess the right to vote—and yet the main things may be entirely lacking?—(and this to suggest them.)

View'd, to-day, from a point of view sufficiently over-arching, the problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature. The priest departs, the divine literatus comes. Never was anything more wanted than, to-day, and here in the States, the poet of the modern is wanted, or the great literatus of the modern. At all times, perhaps, the central point in any nation, and that whence it is itself really sway'd the most, and whence it sways others, is its national literature, especially its archetypal poems. Above all previous lands, a great original literature is surely to become the justification and reliance, (in some respects the sole reliance,) of American democracy.

Few are aware how the great literature penetrates all, gives hue to all, shapes aggregates and individuals, and, after subtle ways, with irresistible power, constructs, sustains, demolishes at will. Why tower, in reminiscence, above all the nations of the earth, two special lands, petty in themselves, yet unexpressibly gigantic, beautiful, columnar? Immortal Judah lives, and Greece immortal lives, in a couple of poems.

Nearer than this. It is not generally realized, but it is true, as the genius of Greece, and all the sociology, personality, politics and religion of those wonderful states, resided in their literature or esthetics, that what was afterwards the main support of European chivalry, the feudal, ecclesiastical, dynastic world over there—forming its osseous structure, holding it together for hundreds, thousands of years, preserving its flesh and bloom, giving it form, decision, rounding it out, and so saturating it in the conscious and unconscious blood, breed, belief, and intuitions of men, that it still prevails powerful to this day, in defiance of the mighty changes of time—was its literature, permeating to the very marrow, especially that major part, its enchanting songs, ballads, and poems.

To the ostent[1] of the senses and eyes, I know, the influences which stamp the world's history are wars, uprisings or downfalls of dynasties, changeful movements of trade, important inventions, navigation, military or civil governments, advent of powerful personalities, conquerors, &c. These of course play their part; yet, it may be, a single new thought, imagination, abstract principle, even literary style, fit for the time, put in shape by some great literatus, and projected among mankind, may duly cause changes, growths, removals, greater than the longest and bloodiest war, or the most stupendous merely political, dynastic, or commercial overturn.

In short, as, though it may not be realized, it is strictly true, that a few first-class poets, philosophs,[2] and authors, have substantially settled and given status to the entire religion, education, law, sociology, &c., of the hitherto civilized world, by tinging and often creating the atmospheres out of which they have arisen, such also must stamp, and more than ever stamp, the interior and real democratic

[1] manifestation, appearance [2] Whitman's variant of "philosophers"

construction of this American continent, to-day, and days to come. Remember also this fact of difference, that, while through the antique and through the mediæval ages, highest thoughts and ideals realized themselves, and their expression made its way by other arts, as much as, or even more than by, technical literature, (not open to the mass of persons, or even to the majority of eminent persons,) such literature in our day and for current purposes, is not only more eligible than all the other arts put together, but has become the only general means of morally influencing the world. Painting, sculpture, and the dramatic theatre, it would seem, no longer play an indispensable or even important part in the workings and mediumship of intellect, utility, or even high esthetics. Architecture remains, doubtless with capacities, and a real future. Then music, the combiner, nothing more spiritual, nothing more sensuous, a god, yet completely human, advances, prevails, holds highest place; supplying in certain wants and quarters what nothing else could supply. Yet in the civilization of to-day it is undeniable that, over all the arts, literature dominates, serves beyond all—shapes the character of church and school—or, at any rate, is capable of doing so. Including the literature of science, its scope is indeed unparallel'd.

Before proceeding further, it were perhaps well to discriminate on certain points. Literature tills its crops in many fields, and some may flourish, while others lag. What I say in these Vistas has its main bearing on imaginative literature, especially poetry, the stock of all. In the department of science, and the specialty of journalism, there appear, in these States, promises, perhaps fulfilments, of highest earnestness, reality, and life. These, of course, are modern. But in the region of imaginative, spinal and essential attributes, something equivalent to creation is, for our age and lands, imperatively demanded. For not only is it not enough that the new blood, new frame of democracy shall be vivified and held together merely by political means, superficial suffrage, legislation, &c., but it is clear to me that, unless it goes deeper, gets at least as firm and as warm a hold in men's hearts, emotions and belief, as, in their days, feudalism or ecclesiasticism, and inaugurates its own perennial sources, welling from the centre forever, its strength will be defective, its growth doubtful, and its main charm wanting. I suggest, therefore, the possibility, should some two or three really original American poets, (perhaps artists or lecturers,) arise, mounting the horizon like planets, stars of the first magnitude, that, from their eminence, fusing contributions, races, far localities, &c., together, they would give more compaction and more moral identity, (the quality to-day most needed,) to these States, than all its Constitutions, legislative and judicial ties, and all its hitherto political, warlike, or materialistic experiences. As, for instance, there could hardly happen anything that would more serve the States, with all their variety of origins, their diverse climes, cities, standards, &c., than possessing an aggregate of heroes, characters, exploits, sufferings, prosperity or misfortune, glory or disgrace, common to all, typical of all—no less, but even greater would it be to possess the aggregation of a cluster of mighty poets, artists, teachers, fit for us, national expressers, comprehending and effusing for the men and women of the States, what is universal, native, common to all, inland and seaboard, northern and southern. The historians say of ancient Greece, with her ever-jealous autonomies, cities, and states, that the only positive unity she ever own'd or receiv'd, was the sad unity of a common subjection, at the last, to foreign conquerors. Subjection, aggregation of that sort, is impossible to America; but the fear of conflicting and irreconcilable interiors, and the lack of a common skeleton, knitting all close, continually haunts me. Or, if it does not, nothing is plainer than the need, a long period to come, of a fusion of the States into the only reliable identity, the moral and artistic one. For, I say, the true nationality of the States, the genuine union, when we come to a mortal crisis, is, and is to be, after all, neither the written law, nor, (as is generally supposed,) either self-interest, or common pecuniary or material objects—but the fervid and tremendous IDEA, melting everything else with resistless heat, and solving all lesser and defi-

nite distinctions in vast, indefinite, spiritual, emotional power.

It may be claim'd, (and I admit the weight of the claim,) that common and general worldly prosperity, and a populace well-to-do, and with all life's material comforts, is the main thing, and is enough. It may be argued that our republic is, in performance, really enacting to-day the grandest arts, poems, &c., by beating up the wilderness into fertile farms, and in her railroads, ships, machinery, &c. And it may be ask'd, Are these not better, indeed, for America, than any utterances even of greatest rhapsode,[1] artist, or literatus?

I too hail those achievements with pride and joy: then answer that the soul of man will not with such only—nay, not with such at all—be finally satisfied; but needs what, (standing on these and on all things, as the feet stand on the ground,) is address'd to the loftiest, to itself alone.

1871

## *From* SPECIMEN DAYS

### *Paumanok, and My Life on It as a Child and Young Man*

WORTH fully and particularly investigating, indeed, this Paumanok (to give the spot its aboriginal name,) stretching east through Kings, Queens and Suffolk counties, 120 miles altogether—on the north Long Island sound, a beautiful, varied and picturesque series of inlets, "necks" and sea-like expansions, for a hundred miles to Orient point. On the ocean side the great south bay, dotted with countless hummocks, mostly small, some quite large, occasionally long bars of sand out two hundred rods to a mile and a half from the shore. While now and then, as at Rockaway and far east along the Hamptons, the beach makes right on the island, the sea dashing up without intervention. Several lighthouses on the shores east; a long history of wrecks' tragedies, some even of late years. As a youngster, I was in the atmosphere and traditions of many of these wrecks—of one or two almost an observer. Off Hempstead beach, for example, was the loss of the ship *Mexico* in 1840, (alluded to in *The Sleepers* in *L. of G.*). And at Hampton, some years later, the destruction of the brig *Elizabeth*, a fearful affair, in one of the worst winter gales, where Margaret Fuller went down, with her husband and child.

Inside the outer bars or beach this south bay is everywhere comparatively shallow; of cold winters all thick ice on the surface. As a boy I often went forth with a chum or two, on those frozen fields, with hand-sled, axe and eel-spear, after messes of eels. We would cut holes in the ice, sometimes striking quite an eel-bonanza, and filling our baskets with great, fat, sweet, white-meated fellows. The scenes, the ice, drawing the hand-sled, cutting holes, spearing the eels, etc., were of course just such fun as is dearest to boyhood. The shores of this bay, winter and summer, and my doings there in early life, are woven all through *L. of G.* One sport I was very fond of was to go on a bay-party in summer to gather sea-gulls' eggs. (The gulls lay two or three eggs, more than half the size of hens' eggs, right on the sand, and leave the sun's heat to hatch them.)

The eastern end of Long Island, the Peconic bay region, I knew quite well too—sail'd more than once round Shelter island, and down to Montauk—spent many an hour on Turtle hill by the old lighthouse, on the extreme point, looking out over the ceaseless roll of the Atlantic. I used to like to go down there and fraternize with the blue-fishers, or the annual squads of sea-bass takers. Sometimes, along Montauk peninsula, (it is some 15 miles long, and good grazing,) met the strange, unkempt, half-barbarous herdsmen, at that time living there entirely aloof from society or civilization, in charge, on those rich pasturages, of vast droves of horses, kine or sheep, own'd by farmers of the eastern towns. Sometimes, too, the few remaining Indians, or half-breeds, at that period left on Montauk peninsula, but now I believe altogether extinct.

More in the middle of the island were the spreading Hempstead plains, then (1830–'40) quite prairie-like, open, uninhabited, rather sterile, cover'd with kill-calf and huckleberry bushes, yet plenty of fair pasture for the cattle, mostly milch-cows, which fed there by hundreds, even thousands, and at evening,

[1] professional reciter of poetry in ancient Greece

(the plains too were own'd by the towns, and this was the use of them in common,) might be seen taking their way home, branching off regularly in the right places. I have often been out on the edges of these plains toward sundown, and can yet recall in fancy the interminable cow-processions, and hear the music of the tin or copper bells, clanking far or near, and breathe the cool of the sweet and slightly aromatic evening air, and note the sunset.

Through the same region of the island, but farther east, extended wide central tracts of pine and scrub-oak, (charcoal was largely made here,) monotonous and sterile. But many a good day or half-day did I have, wandering through those solitary cross-roads, inhaling the peculiar and wild aroma. Here, and all along the island and its shores, I spent intervals many years, all seasons, sometimes riding, sometimes boating, but generally afoot, (I was always then a good walker,) absorbing fields, shores, marine incidents, characters, the bay-men, farmers, pilots—always had a plentiful acquaintance with the latter, and with fishermen—went every summer on sailing trips—always liked the bare sea-beach, south side, and have some of my happiest hours on it to this day.

As I write, the whole experience comes back to me after the lapse of forty and more years —the soothing rustle of the waves, and the saline smell—boyhood's times, the clam-digging, barefoot, and with trowsers roll'd up —hauling down the creek—the perfume of the sedge-meadows—the hay-boat, and the chowder and fishing excursions;—or, of later years, little voyages down and out New York bay, in the pilot boats. Those same later years, also, while living in Brooklyn, (1836–'50,) I went regularly every week in the mild seasons down to Coney Island, at that time a long, bare, unfrequented shore, which I had all to myself, and where I loved, after bathing, to race up and down the hard sand, and declaim Homer or Shakspere to the surf and sea-gulls by the hour. But I am getting ahead too rapidly, and must keep more in my traces.

## *My Passion for Ferries*

Living in Brooklyn or New York city from this time forward, my life, then, and still more the following years, was curiously identified with Fulton ferry, already becoming the greatest of its sort in the world for general importance, volume, variety, rapidity, and picturesqueness. Almost daily, later, ('50 to '60,) I cross'd on the boats, often up in the pilot-houses where I could get a full sweep, absorbing shows, accompaniments, surroundings. What oceanic currents, eddies, underneath—the great tides of humanity also, with ever-shifting movements. Indeed, I have always had a passion for ferries; to me they afford inimitable streaming, never-failing, living poems. The river and bay scenery, all about New York Island, any time of a fine day—the hurrying, splashing sea-tides—the changing panorama of steamers, all sizes, often a string of big ones outward bound to distant ports—the myriads of white-sail'd schooners, sloops, skiffs, and the marvellously beautiful yachts—the majestic sound boats as they rounded the Battery and came along towards five, afternoon, eastward bound —the prospect off towards Staten island, or down the Narrows, or the other way up the Hudson—what refreshment of spirit such sights and experiences gave me years ago (and many a time since.) My old pilot friends, the Balsirs, Johnny Cole, Ira Smith, William White, and my young ferry friend, Tom Gere—how well I remember them all.

## *Broadway Sights*

Besides Fulton ferry, off and on for years, I knew and frequented Broadway—that noted avenue of New York's crowded and mixed humanity, and of so many notables. Here I saw, during those times, Andrew Jackson, Webster, Clay, Seward, Martin Van Buren, filibuster Walker, Kossuth, Fitz Greene Halleck, Bryant, the Prince of Wales, Charles Dickens, the first Japanese ambassadors, and lots of other celebrities of the time. Always something novel or inspiriting; yet mostly to me the hurrying and vast amplitude of those never-ending human currents. I remember seeing James Fenimore Cooper in a court-room in Chambers street, back of the city hall, where he was carrying on a law case (I think it was a charge of libel he had brought

against some one). I also remember seeing Edgar A. Poe, and having a short interview with him, (it must have been in 1845 or '6,) in his office, second storey of a corner building, (Duane or Pearl street.) He was editor and owner or part owner of *The Broadway Journal*. The visit was about a piece of mine he had publish'd. Poe was very cordial, in a quiet way, appear'd well in person, dress, etc. I have a distinct and pleasing remembrance of his looks, voice, manner and matter; very kindly and human but subdued, perhaps a little jaded.

For another of my reminiscences, here on the west side, just below Houston street, I once saw (it must have been about 1832, of a sharp bright January day) a bent, feeble but stout-built very old man, bearded, swathed in rich furs, with a great ermine cap on his head, led and assisted, almost carried down the steps of his high front stoop (a dozen friends and servants, emulous, carefully holding, guiding him) and then lifted and tuck'd in a gorgeous sleigh, envelop'd in other furs, for a ride. The sleigh was drawn by as fine a team of horses as I ever saw. (You needn't think all the best animals are brought up nowadays; never was such horseflesh as fifty years ago on Long Island, or south, or in New York City; folks look'd for spirit and mettle in a nag, not tame speed merely.) Well, I, a boy of perhaps thirteen or fourteen, stopp'd and gazed long at the spectacle of that fur-swathed old man, surrounded by friends and servants, and the careful seating of him in a sleigh. I remember the spirited, champing horses, the driver with his whip, and a fellow-driver by his side, for extra prudence. The old man, the subject of so much attention, I can almost see now. It was John Jacob Astor.

The years 1846, '47, and there along, see me still in New York city, working as writer and printer, having my usual good health, and a good time generally.

## *Omnibus Jaunts and Drivers*

One phase of those days must by no means go unrecorded—namely, the Broadway omnibuses, with their drivers. The vehicles still (I write this paragraph in 1881) give a portion of the character of Broadway—the Fifth avenue, Madison avenue, and Twenty-third street lines yet running. But the flush days of the old Broadway stages, characteristic and copious, are over. The Yellow-birds, the Red-birds, the original Broadway, the Fourth avenue, the Knickerbocker, and a dozen others of twenty or thirty years ago, are all gone. And the men specially identified with them, and giving vitality and meaning to them—the drivers—a strange, natural, quick-eyed and wondrous race—(not only Rabelais and Cervantes would have gloated upon them, but Homer and Shakspere would)—how well I remember them, and must here give a word about them. How many hours, forenoons and afternoons—how many exhilarating night-times I have had—perhaps June or July, in cooler air—riding the whole length of Broadway, listening to some yarn, (and the most vivid yarns ever spun, and the rarest mimicry) —or perhaps I declaiming some stormy passage from Julius Cæsar or Richard, (you could roar as loudly as you chose in that heavy, dense, uninterrupted street-bass.) Yes, I knew all the drivers then, Broadway Jack, Dressmaker, Balky Bill, George Storms, Old Elephant, his brother Young Elephant, (who came afterward,) Tippy, Pop Rice, Big Frank, Yellow Joe, Pete Callahan, Patsy Dee, and dozens more; for there were hundreds. They had immense qualities, largely animal—eating, drinking, women—great personal pride, in their way—perhaps a few slouches here and there, but I should have trusted the general run of them, in their simple good-will and honor, under all circumstances. Not only for comradeship, and sometimes affection—great studies I found them also. (I suppose the critics will laugh heartily, but the influence of those Broadway omnibus jaunts and drivers and declamations and escapades undoubtedly enter'd into the gestation of *Leaves of Grass*.)

## *Fifty Hours Left Wounded on the Field*

Here is a case of a soldier I found among the crowded cots in the Patent-office. He likes to have some one to talk to, and we will listen to him. He got badly hit in his leg and side at

Fredericksburgh that eventful Saturday, 13th of December. He lay the succeeding two days and nights helpless on the field, between the city and those grim terraces of batteries; his company and regiment had been compell'd to leave him to his fate. To make matters worse, it happen'd he lay with his head slightly down hill, and could not help himself. At the end of some fifty hours he was brought off, with other wounded, under a flag of truce. I ask him how the rebels treated him as he lay during those two days and nights within reach of them—whether they came to him—whether they abused him? He answers that several of the rebels, soldiers and others, came to him at one time and another. A couple of them, who were together, spoke roughly and sarcastically, but nothing worse. One middle-aged man, however, who seem'd to be moving around the field, among the dead and wounded, for benevolent purposes, came to him in a way he will never forget; treated our soldier kindly, bound up his wounds, cheer'd him, gave him a couple of biscuits and a drink of whisky and water; asked him if he could eat some beef. This good secesh, however, did not change our soldier's position, for it might have caused the blood to burst from the wounds, clotted and stagnated. Our soldier is from Pennsylvania; has had a pretty severe time; the wounds proved to be bad ones. But he retains a good heart, and is at present on the gain. (It is not uncommon for the men to remain on the field this way, one, two, or even four or five days.)

## *Patent-office Hospital*

*February 23.* I must not let the great hospital at the Patent-office pass away without some mention. A few weeks ago the vast area of the second storey of that noblest of Washington buildings was crowded close with rows of sick, badly wounded and dying soldiers. They were placed in three very large apartments. I went there many times. It was a strange, solemn, and, with all its features of suffering and death, a sort of fascinating sight. I go sometimes at night to soothe and relieve particular cases. Two of the immense apartments are fill'd with high and ponderous glass cases, crowded with models in miniature of every kind of utensil, machine or invention it ever enter'd into the mind of man to conceive; and with curiosities and foreign presents. Between these cases are lateral openings, perhaps eight feet wide and quite deep, and in these were placed the sick, besides a great long double row of them up and down through the middle of the hall. Many of them were very bad cases, wounds and amputations. Then there was a gallery running above the hall in which there were beds also. It was, indeed, a curious scene, especially at night when lit up. The glass cases, the beds, the forms lying there, the gallery above, and the marble pavement under foot—the suffering, and the fortitude to bear it in various degrees—occasionally, from some, the groan that could not be repress'd —sometimes a poor fellow dying, with emaciated face and glassy eye, the nurse by his side, the doctor also there, but no friend, no relative—such were the sights but lately in the Patent-office. (The wounded have since been removed from there, and it is now vacant again.)

## *Some Specimen Cases*

*June 18.* In one of the hospitals I find Thomas Haley, company M, 4th New York cavalry—a regular Irish boy, a fine specimen of youthful physical manliness—shot through the lungs—inevitably dying—came over to this country from Ireland to enlist—has not a single friend or acquaintance here—is sleeping soundly at this moment, (but it is the sleep of death)—has a bullet-hole straight through the lung. I saw Tom when first brought here, three days since, and didn't suppose he could live twelve hours—(yet he looks well enough in the face to a casual observer). He lies there with his frame exposed above the waist, all naked, for coolness—a fine built man, the tan not yet bleach'd from his cheeks and neck. It is useless to talk to him, as with his sad hurt, and the stimulants they give him, and the utter strangeness of every object, face, furniture, etc., the poor fellow, even when awake, is like some frighten'd, shy animal. Much of the time he sleeps, or half sleeps. (Sometimes I thought he knew more than he show'd.) I often come and sit

by him in perfect silence; he will breathe for ten minutes as softly and evenly as a young babe asleep. Poor youth, so handsome, athletic, with profuse beautiful shining hair. One time as I sat looking at him while he lay asleep, he suddenly, without the least start, awaken'd, open'd his eyes, gave me a long steady look, turning his face very slightly to gaze easier—one long, clear, silent look—a slight sigh—then turn'd back and went into his doze again. Little he knew, poor death-stricken boy, the heart of the stranger that hover'd near.

*W. H. E., Co. F., 2nd N. J.* His disease is pneumonia. He lay sick at the wretched hospital below Aquia creek, for seven or eight days before brought here. He was detail'd from his regiment to go there and help as nurse, but was soon taken down himself. Is an elderly, sallow-faced, rather gaunt, grey-hair'd man, a widower, with children. He express'd a great desire for good, strong green tea. An excellent lady, Mrs. W., of Washington, soon sent him a package; also a small sum of money. The doctor said give him the tea at pleasure; it lay on the table by his side, and he used it every day. He slept a great deal; could not talk much, as he grew deaf. Occupied bed 15, ward I, Armory. (The same lady above, Mrs. W., sent the men a large package of tobacco.)

J. G. lies in bed 52, ward I; is of company B, 7th Pennsylvania. I gave him a small sum of money, some tobacco, and envelopes. To a man adjoining also gave twenty-five cents; he flush'd in the face when I offer'd it—refused at first, but as I found he had not a cent, and was very fond of having the daily papers to read, I pressed it on him. He was evidently very grateful, but said little.

J. T. L., of company F., 9th New Hampshire, lies in bed 37, ward I. Is very fond of tobacco. I furnish him some; also with a little money. Has gangrene of the feet; a pretty bad case; will surely have to lose three toes. Is a regular specimen of an old-fashion'd, rude, hearty, New England countryman, impressing me with his likeness to that celebrated singed cat, who was better than she look'd.

Bed 3, ward E, Armory, has a great hankering for pickles, something pungent. After consulting the doctor, I gave him a small bottle of horse-radish; also some apples; also a book. Some of the nurses are excellent. The woman-nurse in this ward I like very much. (Mrs. Wright—a year afterwards I found her in Mansion house hospital, Alexandria—she is a perfect nurse.)

In one bed a young man, Marcus Small, company K, 7th Maine—sick with dysentery and typhoid fever—pretty critical case—I talk with him often—he thinks he will die—looks like it indeed. I write a letter for him home to East Livermore, Maine—I let him talk to me a little, but not much; advise him to keep very quiet—do most of the talking myself—stay quite a while with him, as he holds on to my hand—talk to him in a cheering, but slow, low and measured manner—talk about his furlough, and going home as soon as he is able to travel.

Thomas Lindly, 1st Pennsylvania cavalry, shot very badly through the foot—poor young man he suffers horribly, has to be constantly dosed with morphine, his face ashy and glazed, bright young eyes—I give him a large handsome apple, lay it in sight, tell him to have it roasted in the morning, as he generally feels easier then, and can eat a little breakfast. I write two letters for him.

Opposite, an old Quaker lady is sitting by the side of her son, Amer Moore, 2nd U.S. artillery—shot in the head two weeks since, very low, quite rational—from hips down paralyzed—he will surely die. I speak a very few words to him every day and evening—he answers pleasantly—wants nothing—(he told me soon after he came about his home affairs: his mother had been an invalid, and he fear'd to let her know his condition). He died soon after she came.

## *Abraham Lincoln*

*August 12.* I see the President almost every day, as I happen to live where he passes to or from his lodgings out of town. He never sleeps at the White House during the hot season, but has quarters at a healthy location some three miles north of the city, the Soldiers' Home, a United States military establishment. I saw him this morning about

8½ coming in to business, riding on Vermont avenue, near L street. He always has a company of twenty-five or thirty cavalry, with sabres drawn and held upright over their shoulders. They say this guard was against his personal wish, but he let his counsellors have their way. The party makes no great show in uniform or horses. Mr. Lincoln on the saddle generally rides a good-sized, easy-going grey horse, is dress'd in plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty, wears a black stiff hat, and looks about as ordinary in attire, etc., as the commonest man. A lieutenant, with yellow straps, rides at his left, and following behind, two by two, come the cavalry men, in their yellow-striped jackets. They are generally going at a slow trot, as that is the pace set them by the one they wait upon. The sabres and accoutrements clank, and the entirely unornamental *cortège* as it trots towards Lafayette square arouses no sensation, only some curious stranger stops and gazes. I see very plainly ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes, always to me with a deep latent sadness in the expression. We have got so that we exchange bows, and very cordial ones. Sometimes the President goes and comes in an open barouche. The cavalry always accompany him, with drawn sabres. Often I notice as he goes out evenings—and sometimes in the mornings, when he returns early—he turns off and halts at the large and handsome residence of the Secretary of War, on K street, and holds conference there. If in his barouche, I can see from my window he does not alight, but sits in his vehicle, and Mr. Stanton comes out to attend him. Sometimes one of his sons, a boy of ten or twelve, accompanies him, riding at his right on a pony. Earlier in the summer I occasionally saw the President and his wife, toward the latter part of the afternoon, out in a barouche, on a pleasure ride through the city. Mrs. Lincoln was dress'd in complete black, with a long crape veil. The equipage is of the plainest kind, only two horses, and they nothing extra. They pass'd me once very close, and I saw the President in the face fully, as they were moving slowly, and his look, though abstracted, happen'd to be directed steadily in my eye. He bow'd and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed well the expression I have alluded to. None of the artists or pictures has caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago is needed.

## *The Real War Will Never Get in the Books*

And so good-bye to the war. I know not how it may have been, or may be, to others—to me the main interest I found, (and still, on recollection, find,) in the rank and file of the armies, both sides, and in those specimens amid the hospitals, and even the dead on the field. To me the points illustrating the latent personal character and eligibilities of these States, in the two or three millions of American young and middle-aged men, North and South, embodied in those armies—and especially the one-third or one-fourth of their number, stricken by wounds or disease at some time in the course of the contest—were of more significance even than the political interests involved. (As so much of a race depends on how it faces death, and how it stands personal anguish and sickness. As, in the glints of emotions under emergencies, and the indirect trait and asides in Plutarch, we get far profounder clues to the antique world than all its more formal history.)

Future years will never know the seething hell and the black infernal background of countless minor scenes and interiors, (not the official surface-courteousness of the Generals, not the few great battles) of the Secession war; and it is best they should not—the real war will never get in the books. In the mushy influences of current times, too, the fervid atmosphere and typical events of those years are in danger of being totally forgotten. I have at night watch'd by the side of a sick man in the hospital, one who could not live many hours. I have seen his eyes flash and burn as he raised himself and recurr'd to the cruelties on his surrender'd brother, and mutilations of the corpse afterward. (See, in the preceding pages, the incident at Upperville—

the seventeen kill'd as in the description, were left there on the ground. After they dropt dead, no one touch'd them—all were made sure of, however. The carcasses were left for the citizens to bury or not, as they chose.)

Such was the war. It was not a quadrille in a ballroom. Its interior history will not only never be written—its practicality, minutiæ of deeds and passions will never be even suggested. The actual soldier of 1862–'65, North and South, with all his ways, his incredible dauntlessness, habits, practices, tastes, language, his fierce friendship, his appetite, rankness, his superb strength and animality, lawless gait, and a hundred unnamed lights and shades of camp, I say, will never be written—perhaps must not and should not be.

The preceding notes may furnish a few stray glimpses into that life, and into those lurid interiors, never to be fully convey'd to the future. The hospital part of the drama from '61 to '65, deserves indeed to be recorded. Of that many-threaded drama, with its sudden and strange surprises, its confounding of prophecies, its moments of despair, the dread of foreign interference, the interminable campaigns, the bloody battles, the mighty and cumbrous and green armies, the drafts and bounties—the immense money expenditure, like a heavy-pouring constant rain—with, over the whole land, the last three years of the struggle an unending, universal mourning-wail of women, parents, orphans—the marrow of the tragedy concentrated in those army hospitals—(it seem'd sometimes as if the whole interest of the land, North and South, was one vast central hospital, and all the rest of the affair but flanges)—those forming the untold and unwritten history of the war—infinitely greater (like life's) than the few scraps and distortions that are ever told or written. Think how much, and of importance, will be—how much, civic and military, has already been—buried in the grave in eternal darkness.

## *An Egotistical "Find"*

"I have found the law of my own poems," was the unspoken but more-and-more decided feeling that came to me as I pass'd hour after hour, amid all this grim yet joyous elemental abandon—this plenitude of material, entire absence of art, untrammell'd play of primitive Nature—the chasm, the gorge, the crystal mountain stream, repeated scores, hundreds of miles—the broad handling and absolute uncrampedness—the fantastic forms, bathed in transparent browns, faint reds and greys, towering sometimes a thousand, sometimes two or three thousand feet high—at their tops now and then huge masses pois'd, and mixing with the clouds, with only their outlines hazed in misty lilac, visible. ("In Nature's grandest shows," says an old Dutch writer, an ecclesiastic, "amid the ocean's depth, if so might be, or countless worlds rolling above at night, a man thinks of them, weighs all, not for themselves or the abstract, but with reference to his own personality, and how they may affect him or colour his destinies.")

## *A Visit, at the Last, to R. W. Emerson*

*Concord, Mass.* Out here on a visit—elastic, mellow, Indian-summery weather. Came today from Boston, (a pleasant ride of 40 minutes by steam, through Somerville, Belmont, Waltham, Stony Brook, and other lively towns,) convoy'd by my friend F. B. Sanborn, and to his ample house, and the kindness and hospitality of Mrs. S. and their fine family. Am writing this under the shade of some old hickories and elms, just after 4 P.M., on the porch, within a stone's throw of the Concord river. Off against me, across stream, on a meadow and side-hill, haymakers are gathering and wagoning-in probably their second or third crop. The spread of emerald-green and brown, the knolls, the score or two of little hay-cocks dotting the meadow, the loaded-up wagons, the patient horses, the slow-strong action of the men and pitchforks—all in the just-waning afternoon, with patches of yellow sun-sheen, mottled by long shadows—a cricket shrilly chirping, herald of the dusk—a boat with two figures noiselessly gliding along the little river, passing under the stone bridge-arch—the slight settling haze of aërial moisture, the sky and the peacefulness expanding in all directions and overhead—fill and soothe me.

*Same evening.* Never had I a better piece of luck befall me: a long and blessed evening with Emerson, in a way I couldn't have wish'd better or different. For nearly two hours he has been placidly sitting where I could see his face in the best light, near me. Mrs. S.'s back-parlour well fill'd with people, neighbours, many fresh and charming faces, women, mostly young, but some old. My friend A. B. Alcott and his daughter Louisa were there early. A good deal of talk, the subject Henry Thoreau—some new glints of his life and fortunes, with letters to and from him—one of the best by Margaret Fuller, others by Horace Greeley, Channing, etc.—one from Thoreau himself, most quaint and interesting. (No doubt I seem'd very stupid to the roomful of company, taking hardly any part in the conversation; but I had "my own pail to milk in," as the Swiss proverb puts it.) My seat and the relative arrangement were such that, without being rude, or anything of the kind, I could just look squarely at E., which I did a good part of the two hours. On entering, he had spoken very briefly and politely to several of the company, then settled himself in his chair, a trifle push'd back, and though a listener and apparently an alert one, remain'd silent through the whole talk and discussion. A lady friend quietly took a seat next him, to give special attention. A good colour in his face, eyes clear, with the well-known expression of sweetness, and the old clear-peering aspect quite the same.

*Next Day.* Several hours at E.'s house, and dinner there. An old familiar house, (he has been in it thirty-five years,) with surroundings, furnishment, roominess, and plain elegance and fullness, signifying democratic ease, sufficient opulence, and an admirable old-fashioned simplicity—modern luxury, with its mere sumptuousness and affectation, either touch'd lightly upon or ignored altogether. Dinner the same. Of course the best of the occasion (Sunday, September 18, '81) was the sight of E. himself. As just said, a healthy colour in the cheeks, and good light in the eyes, cheery expression, and just the amount of talking that best suited, namely, a word or short phrase only where needed, and almost always with a smile. Besides Emerson himself, Mrs. E., with their daughter Ellen, the son Edward and his wife, with my friend F. S. and Mrs. S., and others, relatives and intimates. Mrs. Emerson, resuming the subject of the evening before, (I sat next to her,) gave me further and fuller information about Thoreau, who, years ago, during Mr. E.'s absence in Europe, had lived for some time in the family, by invitation.

1882–1883

# 1842 ~ *Sidney Lanier* ~ 1881

THE LITERARY life of Sidney Lanier is associated with Baltimore, but by birth and bringing up he belongs to Georgia. He takes a leading rank among the distinguished writers of the South after the Civil War, and next to Whitman and Emily Dickinson, is the most important poet of the seventies.

Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, in 1842. The Lanier family descended from musicians of Huguenot stock. The earliest Lanier of whom there is record, a possible but not very probable ancestor of the poet, was attached to the court of Queen Elizabeth. His son and grandson were directors of music under the Stuart kings, and members of the Lanier family helped to found the Society of Musicians under Charles II. The first American Lanier came to this country early in the eighteenth century and settled in Virginia. The poet's branch of the family

removed to Alabama and Georgia, where his father practiced law in Macon. His mother had come to Georgia from Virginia. As a child Lanier is said to have been able to learn readily any musical instrument. He could play the flute, violin, organ, piano, and guitar, as early as he could read. He cared most for the violin, but was persuaded by his father to devote himself chiefly to the flute, since "the tones of the violin brought over-excitement to his sensitive, responsive nature."

At the age of fourteen Lanier entered the sophomore class of Oglethorpe University, a small sectarian institution at Midway, Georgia. After spending a year in outside work he was graduated at eighteen, standing highest, with one of his classmates, in scholarship. In 1860, the year of his graduation, he was made tutor. He was ambitious to study in Germany and become a professor, as had Longfellow and Lowell, but was swerved from his normal development by the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1861 he gave up his profession to enlist at the first call as a private in the Confederate army. His younger brother also volunteered, and to remain together they both refused promotions, serving in the line as scouts and then in the signal service. Lanier was finally captured with his vessel in blockade-running and was imprisoned at Point Lookout. He was released in 1865 and returned to Georgia, weakened from a dangerous illness of six weeks. His mother had died shortly before of consumption, and the beginning of that disease was already upon Lanier.

Now, at twenty-three, he served as clerk in a hotel, and finished a novel, *Tiger Lilies*, begun while he was in the army. After its failure he taught school, becoming principal of an academy. In 1867 he was married to Mary Day of Macon, and from 1868 to 1872 he was an assistant in his father's law office. During these years he wrote verse but no great quantity of it. In the winter of 1872–73 he decided to give up the law, especially since he wished to devote himself to music and literature and to live in an atmosphere of culture. He went to New York but finally settled in Baltimore in December, 1873, having attained the position of first flute in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. Music was his most dependable means of support and he was in great demand for extra local engagements. At Baltimore he had the opportunity he craved to hear good music and to have access to large libraries—the Peabody library and that of the newly-organized Johns Hopkins University. "Corn" was written in 1874 and published in 1875. Soon after, he began and finished "The Symphony," published, as was "Corn," in *Lippincott's Magazine*. It was a poem of "real harmonic structure" and better sustained than "Corn." Through Bayard Taylor he received the invitation to write the words of the cantata for the opening of the Centennial Exposition in 1876, the music for which was composed by Dudley Buck. In this year he wrote also his "Evening Song" and in 1878 "The Revenge of Hamish," an excellent narrative poem produced at a time when there was little of this type of verse.

Meantime he was struggling against illness, and was forced to interrupt his work to seek health in Florida or Pennsylvania or the mountains of North Carolina, and to do hack work for a living. He was also lecturing for schools and for private classes of ladies. In 1879 he was appointed lecturer in English literature in Johns Hopkins University. This brought him the assurance of a fixed though small income. He planned more scholarly works, of which but one, *The Science of English Verse* (1880), was issued. Unripe and hastily written, it is nonetheless one of the most suggestive books yet published on the subject. Its main thesis—that English verse has strict quantity like music and may be scanned on the basis of time, not accent—is, however, probably not sound. Lanier died in 1881, his final years being a race with death to see how much he could produce before the end came. The poem "Sunrise" was penciled at a fever temperature of 104. Lanier was an author who could not complete his work. He was fundamentally an artist, endowed with an artist's imagination and ambition. His talent was growing when he died.

Lanier was especially concerned with commercialism, with religion, and with the worth of human aspiration. He had wide interests and sympathies, and he responded to contemporary influences, such as that of scientific thought, then not strong in American verse. As a nature poet he was original and a regionalist. Nature was, for him, bound up with a feeling of lofty pantheism; it was not merely a pretty background but a passion. He made much of the Southern scene, the corn, the cotton, the marshes, the Georgia hills. Trees especially were his delight; the forest inspired him to rhapsodies.

Poetry, to Lanier, was invested with the sacredness of religion. His passion for music, stronger even than his passion for books, inspired him to give us verse richer in music than that of any other poet except Poe. Lanier was an investigator of artistic technique and the author of a treatise on prosody in which he tried to explain English versification by the principles of musical composition. He thought that music and poetry were closely related, that they follow the same general laws, and that poetry appeals chiefly to the emotional nature, depending on sound rather than sense for its impression. His work is intricate, full of ingenious devices, literary allusions, and archaic forms. He experimented with "tone color," rhythm, alliteration, and phrasing. In trying to obtain effects belonging to music, he did not sharply sever these arts, and he sacrificed lucidity and ease. Yet, though he deliberately sought effects of sound in his poetry, he held that "wherever there is a contest as between artistic and moral beauty, unless the moral side prevail, all is lost." In 1880 he wished "the sharpest distinction . . . between Technique and Inspiration." In theory he was devoted to the "beauty of holiness" and the traditional unity of beauty, truth, and goodness. His most cherished aim was to be a thinker, moralist, and social reformer.

Although Lanier had great ethical earnestness and fervor, he was not a guiding influence in his own time. Fired with the romantic spirit, he came late, in a post-war, unromantic age. He achieved a distinctive manner; but his technique was too refined, his verse somehow lacked vitality, and the more virile Whitman, not Lanier, was to sway and inspire a generation. Yet an unusual interest attaches to him. His letters reveal a pleasing personality and his last years testify to his ambition and fortitude. A recent biographer described him as fastidious, dreamlike, and high-minded, and makes much of his manliness, his charm, his antagonism to all that he thought despicable, and his courage in the face of poverty.

The inclusive edition of Lanier's poems is that edited by his wife, with a brief memorial by W. H. Ward (1884; later edition, 1916). M. Callaway, Jr. edited *Select Poems of Sidney Lanier* (1895), and M. E. Burt edited *The Lanier Book* (1904). *The Letters of Sidney Lanier: Selections from His Correspondence, 1866–1881* was edited by H. W. Lanier (1899). D. C. Gilman published "Sidney Lanier: Reminiscences and Letters" in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, IV, April, 1905; M. H. Northup, "Sidney Lanier: Recollections and Letters" in *Lippincott's Magazine*, LXXV, March, 1905; and G. H. Clarke, *Some Reminiscences and Early Letters of Sidney Lanier* (pamphlet, 1907).

The best biography of Lanier is that by A. H. Starke, *Sidney Lanier: A Biography and Critical Study* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1933). W. P. Woolf contributed "Sidney Lanier as Revealed in His Letters" to the *Sewanee Review*, VIII, July, 1900. Edwin Mims's *Sidney Lanier*, in the American Men of Letters Series (1905), was the best biography before Starke's; Mims also wrote of Lanier in *DAB*, X (1933). L. Lorenz issued a sympathetic *Life of Sidney Lanier* (1935).

Among critical articles may be noted: C. W. Kent, "A Study of Lanier's Poems," in *PMLA*, VII, April–June, 1892; C. Furst, "Concerning Sidney Lanier," in *Modern Language Notes*, XIV, Nov., 1899; P. Graham, "Lanier's Reading," in *University of Texas Studies in English*, No. 11, 1931; W. M. Baskervill, in *Southern Writers: Biographical and Critical Studies*, I (1896–97); J. Macy, in *The Spirit of American Literature* (1913); F. W. Cady, "Sidney Lanier," in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, III, April, 1914; H. E. Harman, "Sidney Lanier: a Study," *ibid.*, XIV, October, 1915; A. H. Strong, in *American Poets and Their Theology* (1916); Evander Miles, in *CHAL*, III (1918); Norman Foerster, in *Nature in American Literature* (1923); H. C. Thorpe, "Sidney Lanier—a Poet for Musicians," in *Musical Quarterly*, X, July, 1925; Alfred Kreymborg, in *Our Singing Strength* (1929); V. L. Parrington in *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); S. T. Williams, in Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931); N. B. Fagin, "Sidney Lanier: Poet of the South," in *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*, XX, March, 1932; R. Brenner, in *Twelve American Poets before 1900* (1933); G. W. Allen, in *American Prosody* (1935).

The best bibliographies of Lanier may be found in A. H. Starke's *Life*, and by H. Hartwick in W. F. Taylor's *A History of American Letters* (1936). G. S. Wills had an early bibliography in the *Publications of the Southern Historical Association*, III, July, 1899.

## THAR'S MORE IN THE MAN THAN THAR IS IN THE LAND

**Composed in 1866, and said to have been printed first in a Georgia newspaper. The first of Lanier's dialect poems, it teaches that it is the efforts of the individual, not external conditions, that bring success or failure. Lanier was much concerned about the overproduction of cotton in the South and the consequent bankruptcy of the farmers. He wished them to cultivate the land more intelligently.**

I KNOWED a man, which he lived in Jones,
Which Jones is a country of red hills and stones,
And he lived pretty much by gittin' of loans,
And his mules was nuthin' but skin and bones,
And his hogs was flat as his corn-bread pones,
And he had 'bout a thousand acres o' land.

This man—which his name it was also Jones—
He swore that he'd leave them old red hills and stones,
Fur he couldn't make nuthin' but yallerish cotton,
And little o' *that*, and his fences was rotten,
And what little corn he had, *hit* was boughten
And dinged ef a livin' was in the land.

And the longer he swore the madder he got,
And he riz and he walked to the stable lot,
And he hollered to Tom to come thar and hitch
Fur to emigrate somewhar whar land was rich,
And to quit raisin' cock-burrs, thistles and sich,
And a wastin' ther time on the cussed land.

So him and Tom they hitched up the mules,
Pertestin' that folks was mighty big fools
That 'ud stay in Georgy ther lifetime out,
Jest scratchin' a livin' when all of 'em mought
Git places in Texas whar cotton would sprout
By the time you could plant it in the land.

And he driv by a house whar a man named Brown
Was a livin', not fur from the edge o' town,
And he bantered Brown fur to buy his place,
And said that bein' as money was skace,
And bein' as sheriffs was hard to face,
Two dollars an acre would git the land.

They closed at a dollar and fifty cents,
And Jones he bought him a waggin and tents,
And loaded his corn, and his wimmin, and truck,
And moved to Texas, which it tuck
His entire pile, with the best of luck,
To git thar and git him a little land.

But Brown moved out on the old Jones farm,
And he rolled up his breeches and bared his arm,
And he picked all the rocks from off'n the groun',
And he rooted it up and he plowed it down,
Then he sowed his corn and his wheat in the land.

Five years glid by, and Brown, one day,
(Which he's got so fat that he wouldn't weigh),
Was a settin' down, sorter lazily,
To the bulliest dinner you ever see,
When one of the children jumped on his knee
And says, "Yan's Jones, which you bought his land."

And thar was Jones, standin' out at the fence,
And he hadn't no waggin, nor mules, nor tents,
For he had left Texas afoot and cum
To Georgy to see if he couldn't git sum
Employment, and said he was lookin' as hum-
Ble as ef he had never owned any land.

But Brown he axed him in, and he sot
Him down to his vittles smokin' hot,
And when he had filled hisself and the floor
Brown looked at him sharp and riz and swore
That, "whether men's land was rich or poor
Thar was more in the *man* than thar was in the *land*."

*1866* 1869?, 1884

## CORN

Published in *Lippincott's Magazine*, February, 1875. A succession of pictures, it opens with a forest rhapsody, touched with the mystical ("faint bridal-sighs of brown and green," "vague purports sweet") and expressing Lanier's strong, ecstatic love of trees. There follows the description of corn, with two elaborated analogies, that of the poet who, following the romantic tradition, is viewed as the prophet and leader of his day, and that of the "home-fond heart." The third picture is that of the worn-out hill, associated with the story of the unthrifty cotton-grower who spent his money before his crop was raised and borrowed at heavy interest. The poem ends as a sermon on Georgia agriculture. W. D. Howells did not accept "Corn" for the *Atlantic Monthly*, remarking that there was no "connection between the apostrophe at the beginning and the bit of narrative

at the close," and adding that "neither was striking enough to stand alone." Yet it was "Corn" that brought Lanier recognition as a poet, and it has held its popularity well.

TODAY the woods are trembling through and through
With shimmering forms, that flash before my view,
Then melt in green as dawn-stars melt in blue.
The leaves that wave against my cheek caress
Like women's hands; the embracing boughs express
A subtlety of mighty tenderness;
The copse-depths into little noises start,
That sound anon like beatings of a heart,
Anon like talk 'twixt lips not far apart.
The beech dreams balm, as a dreamer hums a song;
Through that vague wafture, expirations strong
Throb from young hickories breathing deep and long
With stress and urgence bold of prisoned spring
And ecstasy of burgeoning.
Now, since the dew-plashed road of morn is dry,
Forth venture odors of more quality
And heavenlier giving. Like Jove's locks awry,
Long muscadines
Rich-wreathe the spacious foreheads of great pines,
And breathe ambrosial passion from their vines.
I pray with mosses, ferns and flowers shy
That hide like gentle nuns from human eye
To lift adoring perfumes to the sky.
I hear faint bridal-sighs of brown and green
Dying to silent hints of kisses keen
As far lights fringe into a pleasant sheen.
I start at fragmentary whispers, blown
From undertalks of leafy souls unknown,
Vague purports sweet, of inarticulate tone.

Dreaming of gods, men, nuns and brides, between
Old companies of oaks that inward lean
To join their radiant amplitudes of green
I slowly move, with ranging looks that pass
Up from the matted miracles of grass
Into yon veined complex of space,
Where sky and leafage interlace
So close, the heaven of blue is seen
Inwoven with a heaven of green.

I wander to the zigzag-cornered fence
Where sassafras, intrenched in brambles dense,
Contests with stolid vehemence
The march of culture, setting limb and thorn
As pikes against the army of the corn.

There, while I pause, my fieldward-faring eyes
Take harvests, where the stately corn-ranks rise
Of inward dignities
And large benignities and insights wise,
Graces and modest majesties.
Thus, without theft, I reap another's field;
Thus, without tilth, I house a wondrous yield,
And heap my heart with quintuple crops concealed.

Look, out of line one tall corn-captain stands
Advanced beyond the foremost of his bands,
And waves his blades upon the very edge
And hottest thicket of the battling hedge.
Thou lustrous stalk, that ne'er mayst walk nor talk,
Still shalt thou type the poet-soul sublime
That leads the vanward of his timid time
And sings up cowards with commanding rhyme—
Soul calm, like thee, yet fain, like thee, to grow
By double increment, above, below;
Soul homely, as thou art, yet rich in grace like thee,
Teaching the yeomen selfless chivalry
That moves in gentle curves of courtesy;
Soul filled like thy long veins with sweetness tense,
By every godlike sense
Transmuted from the four wild elements.
Drawn to high plans,
Thou lift'st more stature than a mortal man's,

Yet ever piercest downward in the mold
And keepest hold
Upon the reverend and steadfast earth
That gave thee birth;
Yea, standest smiling in thy future grave,
Serene and brave,
With unremitting breath
Inhaling life from death,
Thine epitaph writ fair in fruitage eloquent,
Thyself thy monument.

As poets should
Thou hast built up thy hardihood
With universal food,
Drawn in select proportion fair
From honest mold and vagabond air;
From darkness of the dreadful night,
And joyful light;
From antique ashes, whose departed flame
In thee has finer life and longer fame;
From wounds and balms,
From storms and calms,
From potsherds and dry bones
And ruin-stones.
Into thy vigorous substance thou hast wrought
Whate'er the hand of Circumstance hath brought;
Yea, into cool solacing green hast spun
White radiance hot from out the sun.
So thou dost mutually leaven
Strength of earth with grace of heaven;
So thou dost marry new and old
Into a one of higher mold;
So thou dost reconcile the hot and cold,
The dark and bright,
And many a heart-perplexing opposite:
And so,
Akin by blood to high and low,
Fitly thou playest out thy poet's part,
Richly expending thy much-bruisèd heart
In equal care to nourish lord in hall
Or beast in stall:
Thou took'st from all that thou might'st give to all.

O steadfast dweller on the selfsame spot
Where thou wast born, that still repinest not—
Type of the home-fond heart, the happy lot!—
Deeply thy mild content rebukes the land
Whose flimsy homes, built on the shifting sand
Of trade, forever rise and fall
With alternation whimsical,
Enduring scarce a day,
Then swept away
By swift engulfments of incalculable tides
Whereon capricious Commerce rides.
Look, thou substantial spirit of content!
Across this little vale, thy continent,
To where, beyond the moldering mill,
Yon old deserted Georgian hill
Bares to the sun his piteous aged crest
And seamy breast,
By restless-hearted children left to lie
Untended there beneath the heedless sky,
As barbarous folk expose their old to die.
Upon that generous-rounding side,
With gullies scarified
Where keen Neglect his lash hath plied,
Dwelt one I knew of old, who played at toil,
And gave to coquette Cotton soul and soil.
Scorning the slow reward of patient grain,
He sowed his heart with hopes of swifter gain,
Then sat him down and waited for the rain.
He sailed in borrowed ships of usury—
A foolish Jason on a treacherous sea,
Seeking the Fleece and finding misery.
Lulled by smooth-rippling loans, in idle trance
He lay, content that unthrift Circumstance
Should plow for him the stony field of Chance.
Yea, gathering crops whose worth no man might tell,
He staked his life on games of Buy-and-Sell,
And turned each field into a gambler's hell.
Aye, as each year began,
My farmer to the neighboring city ran;
Passed with a mournful anxious face
Into the banker's inner place;
Parleyed, excused, pleaded for longer grace;
Railed at the drought, the worm, the rust, the grass;
Protested ne'er again 'twould come to pass;
With many an *oh* and *if* and *but alas*
Parried or swallowed searching questions rude,
And kissed the dust to soften Dives's mood.
At last, small loans by pledges great renewed,
He issues smiling from the fatal door,

And buys with lavish hand his yearly store
Till his small borrowings will yield no more.
Aye, as each year declined,
With bitter heart and ever-brooding mind
He mourned his fate unkind.
In dust, in rain, with might and main,
He nursed his cotton, cursed his grain,
Fretted for news that made him fret again,
Snatched at each telegram of Future Sale,
And thrilled with Bulls' or Bears' alternate wail—
In hope or fear alike forever pale.
And thus from year to year, through hope and fear,
With many a curse and many a secret tear,
Striving in vain his cloud of debt to clear,
At last
He woke to find his foolish dreaming past,
And all his best-of-life the easy prey
Of squandering scamps and quacks that lined his way
With vile array,
From rascal statesman down to petty knave;
Himself, at best, for all his bragging brave,
A gamester's catspaw and a banker's slave.
Then, worn and gray, and sick with deep unrest,
He fled away into the oblivious West,
Unmourned, unblest.

Old hill! old hill! thou gashed and hairy Lear
Whom the divine Cordelia of the year,
E'en pitying Spring, will vainly strive to cheer—
King, that no subject man nor beast may own,
Discrowned, undaughtered and alone—
Yet shall the great God turn thy fate,
And bring thee back into thy monarch state
And majesty immaculate.
Lo, through hot waverings of the August morn,
Thou givest from thy vasty sides forlorn
Visions of golden treasuries of corn—
Ripe largesse lingering for some bolder heart
That manfully shall take thy part,
And tend thee,
And defend thee,
With antique sinew and with modern art.

*1874* 1875

## THE SYMPHONY

**In this poem Lanier turns again to social questions. He arraigns Trade, i.e., commercialism and industrialism, and praises the Music Master Love. He voices his condemnation and encomium through the personified musical instruments of an orchestra: the violins (ll. 15 ff.); the flute (ll. 86 ff.); the clarionet (ll. 216 ff.); the horn (ll. 253 ff.), the hautboy (ll. 325 ff.). The last line has been widely quoted.**

"O TRADE! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The Time needs heart—'tis tired of head:
We're all for love," the violins said.
"Of what avail the rigorous tale
Of bill for coin and box for bale?
Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope:
Level red gold with blue sky-slope,
And base it deep as devils grope:
When all's done, what hast thou won
Of the only sweet that's under the sun?
Ay, canst thou buy a single sigh
Of true love's least, least ecstasy?"
Then, with a bridegroom's heart-beats trembling,
All the mightier strings assembling
Ranged them on the violins' side
As when the bridegroom leads the bride,
And, heart in voice, together cried:
"Yea, what avail the endless tale
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?
Look up the land, look down the land,
The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand
Wedged by the pressing of Trade's hand
Against an inward-opening door
That pressure tightens evermore:
They sigh a monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside leagues of liberty,
Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky
Into a heavenly melody.
'Each day, all day' (these poor folks say),
'In the same old year-long, drear-long way,
We weave in the mills and heave in the kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thieve much gold from the Devil's bank tills,
To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?—
The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;
And so do we, and the world's a sty;
Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and cry?
*Swinehood hath no remedy*

Say many men, and hasten by,
Clamping the nose and blinking the eye.
But who said once, in the lordly tone,
*Man shall not live by bread alone*
*But all that cometh from the Throne?*
Hath God said so?
But Trade saith *No:*
And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills say
*Go!*
*There's plenty that can, if you can't: we know.*
*Move out, if you think you're underpaid.*
*The poor are prolific; we're not afraid;*
*Trade is trade.'"*
Thereat this passionate protesting
Meekly changed, and softened till
It sank to sad requesting
And suggesting sadder still:
"And oh, if men might some time see
How piteous-false the poor decree
That trade no more than trade must be!
Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I?*
Then 'Trade is trade' but sings a lie:
'Tis only war grown miserly.
If business is battle, name it so:
War-crimes less will shame it so,
And widows less will blame it so.
Alas, for the poor to have some part
In yon sweet living lands of Art,
Makes problem not for head, but heart.
Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it."

And then, as when from words that seem but rude
We pass to silent pain that sits abrood
Back in our heart's great dark and solitude,
So sank the strings to gentle throbbing
Of long chords change-marked with sobbing—
Motherly sobbing, not distinctlier heard
Than half wing-openings of the sleeping bird,
Some dream of danger to her young hath stirred.
Then stirring and demurring ceased, and lo!
Every least ripple of the strings' song-flow
Died to a level with each level bow
And made a great chord tranquil-surfaced so,
As a brook beneath his curving bank doth go
To linger in the sacred dark and green
Where many boughs the still pool overlean
And many leaves make shadow with their sheen.
But presently
A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly
Upon the bosom of that harmony,
And sailed and sailed incessantly,
As if a petal from a wild-rose blown
Had fluttered down upon that pool of tone
And boatwise dropped o' the convex side
And floated down the glassy tide
And clarified and glorified
The solemn spaces where the shadows bide.
From the warm concave of that fluted note
Somewhat, half song, half odor, forth did float,
As if a rose might somehow be a throat:
"When Nature from her far-off glen
Flutes her soft messages to men,
The flute can say them o'er again;
Yea, Nature, singing sweet and lone,
Breathes through life's strident polyphone
The flute-voice in the world of tone.
Sweet friends,
Man's love ascends
To finer and diviner ends
Than man's mere thought e'er comprehends:
For I, e'en I,
As here I lie,
A petal on a harmony,
Demand of Science whence and why
Man's tender pain, man's inward cry,
When he doth gaze on earth and sky?
I am not overbold:
I hold
Full powers from Nature manifold.
I speak for each no-tongued tree
That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,
And dumbly and most wistfully
His mighty prayerful arms outspreads
Above men's oft-unheeding heads,
And his big blessing downward sheds.
I speak for all-shaped blooms and leaves,
Lichens on stones and moss on eaves,
Grasses and grains in ranks and sheaves;
Broad-fronded ferns and keen-leaved canes,
And briery mazes bounding lanes,
And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for rains,
And milky stems and sugary veins;
For every long-armed woman-vine
That round a piteous tree doth twine;

For passionate odors, and divine
Pistils, and petals crystalline;
All purities of shady springs,
All shynesses of film-winged things
That fly from tree-trunks and bark-rings;
All modesties of mountain-fawns
That leap to covert from wild lawns,
And tremble if the day but dawns;
All sparklings of small beady eyes
Of birds, and sidelong glances wise
Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;
All piquancies of prickly burs,
And smoothnesses of downs and furs
Of eiders and of minevers;
All limpid honeys that do lie
At stamen-bases, nor deny
The humming-birds' fine roguery,
Bee-thighs, nor any butterfly;
All gracious curves of slender wings,
Bark-mottlings, fiber-spiralings,
Fern-wavings and leaf-flickerings;
Each dial-marked leaf and flower-bell
Wherewith in every lonesome dell
Time to himself his hours doth tell;
All tree-sounds, rustlings of pine-cones,
Wind-sighings, doves' melodious moans,
And night's unearthly under-tones;
All placid lakes and waveless deeps,
All cool reposing mountain-steeps,
Vale-calms and tranquil lotos-sleeps;—
Yea, all fair forms, and sounds, and lights,
And warmths, and mysteries, and mights,
Of Nature's utmost depths and heights,
—These doth my timid tongue present,
Their mouthpiece and leal instrument
And servant, all love-eloquent.
I heard, when '*All for love*' the violins cried:
So, Nature calls through all her system wide,
*Give me thy love, O man, so long denied.*
Much time is run, and man hath changed his ways,
Since Nature, in the antique fable-days,
Was hid from man's true love by proxy fays,
False fauns and rascal gods that stole her praise.
The nymphs, cold creatures of man's colder brain,
Chilled Nature's streams till man's warm heart was fain
Never to lave its love in them again.
Later, a sweet Voice *Love thy neighbor* said;
Then first the bounds of neighborhood outspread
Beyond all confines of old ethnic dread.
Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant head:
'*All men are neighbors*,' so the sweet Voice said.
So, when man's arms had circled all man's race,
The liberal compass of his warm embrace
Stretched bigger yet in the dark bounds of space;
With hands a-grope he felt smooth Nature's grace,
Drew her to breast and kissed her sweetheart face:
Yea, man found neighbors in great hills and trees
And streams and clouds and suns and birds and bees,
And throbbed with neighbor-loves in loving these.
But oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!
That stand by the inward-opening door
Trade's hand doth tighten ever more,
And sigh their monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside hills of liberty,
Where Nature spreads her wild blue sky
For Art to make into melody!
Thou Trade! thou king of the modern days!
Change thy ways,
Change thy ways;
Let the sweaty laborers file
A little while,
A little while,
Where Art and Nature sing and smile.
Trade! is thy heart all dead, all dead?
And hast thou nothing but a head?
I'm all for heart," the flute-voice said,
And into sudden silence fled,
Like as a blush that while 'tis red
Dies to a still, still white instead.

Thereto a thrilling calm succeeds,
Till presently the silence breeds
A little breeze among the reeds
That seems to blow by sea-marsh weeds:
Then from the gentle stir and fret
Sings out the melting clarionet,
Like as a lady sings while yet
Her eyes with salty tears are wet.
"O Trade! O Trade!" the Lady said,
"I too will wish thee utterly dead
If all thy heart is in thy head.

For O my God! and O my God!
What shameful ways have women trod
At beckoning of Trade's golden rod!
Alas when sighs are traders' lies,
And heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes
Are merchandise!
O purchased lips that kiss with pain!
O cheeks coin-spotted with smirch and stain!
O trafficked hearts that break in twain!
—And yet what wonder at my sisters' crime?
So hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy prime,
Men love not women as in olden time.
Ah, not in these cold merchantable days
Deem men their life an opal gray, where plays
The one red Sweet of gracious ladies'-praise.
Now, comes a suitor with sharp prying eye—
Says, *Here, you Lady, if you'll sell, I'll buy:*
*Come, heart for heart—a trade? What! weeping? why?*
Shame on such wooers' dapper mercery!
I would my lover kneeling at my feet
In humble manliness should cry, *O sweet!*
*I know not if thy heart my heart will greet:*
*I ask not if thy love my love can meet:*
*Whate'er thy worshipful soft tongue shall say,*
*I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay:*
*I do but know I love thee, and I pray*
*To be thy knight until my dying day.*
Woe him that cunning trades in hearts contrives!
Base love good women to base loving drives.
If men loved larger, larger were our lives;
And wooed they nobler, won they nobler wives."

There thrust the bold straightforward horn
To battle for that lady lorn,
With heartsome voice of mellow scorn,
Like any knight in knighthood's morn.
"Now comfort thee," said he,
"Fair Lady.
For God shall right thy grievous wrong,
And man shall sing thee a true-love song,
Voiced in act his whole life long,
Yea, all thy sweet life long,
Fair Lady.
Where's he that craftily hath said,
The day of chivalry is dead?
I'll prove that lie upon his head,
Or I will die instead,
Fair Lady.
Is Honor gone into his grave?
Hath Faith become a caitiff knave,
And Selfhood turned into a slave
To work in Mammon's cave,
Fair Lady?
Will Truth's long blade ne'er gleam again?
Hath Giant Trade in dungeons slain
All great contempts of mean-got gain
And hates of inward stain,
Fair Lady?
For aye shall name and fame be sold,
And place be hugged for the sake of gold,
And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold
At Crime all money-bold,
Fair Lady?
Shall self-wrapt husbands aye forget
Kiss-pardons for the daily fret
Wherewith sweet wifely eyes are wet—
Blind to lips kiss-wise set—
Fair Lady?
Shall lovers higgle, heart for heart,
Till wooing grows a trading mart
Where much for little, and all for part,
Make love a cheapening art,
Fair Lady?
Shall woman scorch for a single sin
That her betrayer may revel in,
And she be burnt, and he but grin
When that the flames begin,
Fair Lady?
Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,
*We maids would far, far whiter be*
*If that our eyes might sometimes see*
*Men maids in purity,*
Fair Lady?
Shall Trade aye salve his conscience-aches
With jibes at Chivalry's old mistakes—
The wars that o'erhot knighthood makes
For Christ's and ladies' sakes,
Fair Lady?
Now by each knight that e'er hath prayed
To fight like a man and love like a maid,
Since Pembroke's life, as Pembroke's blade,
I' the scabbard, death, was laid,
Fair Lady,
I dare avouch my faith is bright
That God doth right and God hath might.
Nor time hath changed His hair to white,
Nor His dear love to spite,
Fair Lady.

I doubt no doubts: I strive, and shrive my clay,
And fight my fight in the patient modern way
For true love and for thee! ah me! and pray
To be thy knight until my dying day,
Fair Lady."
Made end that knightly horn, and spurred away
Into the thick of the melodious fray.

And then the hautboy played and smiled,
And sang like any large-eyed child,
Cool-hearted and all undefiled.
"Huge Trade!" he said,
"Would thou wouldst lift me on thy head
And run where'er my finger led!
Once said a Man—and wise was He—
*Never shalt thou the heavens see,*
*Save as a little child thou be.*"
Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling tunes
The ancient wise bassoons,
Like weird
Gray-beard
Old harpers sitting on the high sea-dunes,
Chanted runes:
"Bright-waved gain, gray-waved loss,
The sea of all doth lash and toss,
One wave forward and one across:
But now 'twas trough, now 'tis crest,
And worst doth foam and flash to best,
And curst to blest.

"Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from east to west,
Love, Love alone can pore
On thy dissolving score
Of harsh half-phrasings,
Blotted ere writ,
And double erasings
Of chords most fit.
Yea, Love, sole music-master blest,
May read thy weltering palimpsest.
To follow Time's dying melodies through,
And never to lose the old in the new,
And ever to solve the discords true—
Love alone can do.
And ever Love hears the poor-folks' crying,
And ever Love hears the women's sighing,
And ever sweet knighthood's death-defying,
And ever wise childhood's deep implying,
But never a trader's glozing and lying.

"And yet shall Love himself be heard,
Though long deferred, though long deferred:
O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirred:
Music is Love in search of a word."

1875

## FROM THE FLATS

WHAT heartache—ne'er a hill!
Inexorable, vapid, vague and chill
The drear sand-levels drain my spirit low.
With one poor word they tell me all they know;
Whereat their stupid tongues, to ease my pain,
Do drawl it o'er again and o'er again.
They hurt my heart with griefs I cannot name:
Always the same, the same.

Nature hath no surprise,
No ambuscade of beauty 'gainst mine eyes
From brake or lurking dell or deep defile;
No humors, frolic forms—this mile, that mile;
No rich reserves or happy-valley hopes
Beyond the bend of roads, the distant slopes.
Her fancy fails, her wild is all run tame:
Ever the same, the same.

Oh might I through these tears
But glimpse some hill my Georgia high uprears,
Where white the quartz and pink the pebble shine,
The hickory heavenward strives, the muscadine
Swings o'er the slope, the oak's far-falling shade
Darkens the dogwood in the bottom-glade,
And down the hollow from a ferny nook
Bright leaps a living brook!

*1876* 1877

## EVENING SONG

LOOK off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else-unlighted sands.
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart
Never our lips, our hands.

*1876* 1877

## THE STIRRUP-CUP

This poem was written in Florida, where Lanier had gone for his health. A stirrup-cup is a drink taken by a rider before his departure; hence a farewell or parting cup.

DEATH, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:
Look how compounded, with what care!
Time got his wrinkles reaping thee
Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distilling went,
Keats and Gotama excellent,
Omar Khayyám, and Chaucer bright,
And Shakespere for a king-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;
'Tis thy rich stirrup-cup to me;
I'll drink it down right smilingly.

1877

## THE REVENGE OF HAMISH

Lanier's most ambitious narrative poem. It is told with dramatic intensity and effectiveness. Professor Morgan Callaway, Jr., pointed out sources for the poem. One is an inserted tale, nearly identical in incident, in the third chapter of William Black's *McLeod of Dare*. There is much greater indebtedness, however, to Charles Mackay's dramatic ballad in quatrain form, "Maclaine's Child, a Legend of Lochbuy-Mull," included in his *Egeria and Other Poems* (1850). Lanier's Hamish corresponds to Mackay's Evan.

IT was three slim does and a ten-tined buck in the bracken lay;
And all of a sudden the sinister smell of a man,
Awaft on a wind-shift, wavered and ran
Down the hill-side, and sifted along through the bracken and passed that way.

Then Nan got a-tremble at nostril; she was the daintiest doe;
In the print of her velvet flank on the velvet fern
She reared, and rounded her ears in turn.
Then the buck leaped up, and his head as a king's to a crown did go

Full high in a breeze, and he stood as if Death had the form of a deer;
And the two slim does long lazily stretching arose,
For their day-dream slowlier came to a close,
Till they woke and were still, breath-bound with waiting and wonder and fear.

Then Alan the huntsman sprang over the hillock, the hounds shot by,
The does and the ten-tined buck made a marvelous bound,
The hounds swept after with never a sound,
But Alan loud winded his horn in sign that the quarry was nigh.

For at dawn of that day proud Maclean of Lochbuy to the hunt had waxed wild,
And he cursed at old Alan till Alan fared off with the hounds
For to drive him the deer to the lower glen-grounds:
"I will kill a red deer," quoth Maclean, "in the sight of the wife and the child."

So gayly he paced with the wife and the child to his chosen stand;
But he hurried tall Hamish the henchman ahead: "Go turn,"—
Cried Maclean—"if the deer seek to cross to the burn,
Do thou turn them to me: nor fail, lest thy back be red as thy hand!"

Now hard-fortuned Hamish, half blown of his breath with the height of the hill,
Was white in the face when the ten-tined buck and the does
Drew leaping to burn-ward; huskily rose
His shouts, and his nether lip twitched, and his legs were o'er-weak for his will.

So the deer darted lightly by Hamish and bounded away to the burn.
But Maclean never bating his watch tarried waiting below.
Still Hamish hung heavy with fear for to go
All the space of an hour; then he went, and his face was greenish and stern,

And his eye sat back in the socket, and shrunken the eyeballs shone,
As withdrawn from a vision of deeds it were shame to see.
"Now, now, grim henchman, what is't with thee?"
Brake Maclean, and his wrath rose red as a beacon the wind hath upblown.

"Three does and a ten-tined buck made out," spoke Hamish, full mild,
"And I ran for to turn, but my breath it was blown, and they passed;
I was weak, for ye called ere I broke me my fast."
Cried Maclean: "Now a ten-tined buck in the sight of the wife and the child

I had killed if the gluttonous kern had not wrought me a snail's own wrong!"
Then he sounded, and down came kinsmen and clansmen all:
"Ten blows, for ten tine, on his back let fall,
And reckon no stroke if the blood follow not at the bite of the thong!"

So Hamish made bare, and took him his strokes; at the last he smiled.
"Now I'll to the burn," quoth Maclean, "for it still may be
If a slimmer-paunched henchman will hurry with me,
I shall kill me the ten-tined buck for a gift to the wife and the child!"

Then the clansmen departed, by this path and that; and over the hill
Sped Maclean with an outward wrath for an inward shame;
And that place of the lashing full quiet became;
And the wife and the child stood sad; and bloody-backed Hamish sat still.

But look! red Hamish has risen; quick about and about turns he.
"There is none betwixt me and the crag-top!" he screams under breath,
Then, livid as Lazarus lately from death,
He snatches the child from the mother, and clambers the crag toward the sea.

Now the mother drops breath; she is dumb, and her heart goes dead for a space,
Till the motherhood, mistress of death, shrieks, shrieks through the glen,
And that place of the lashing is live with men,
And Maclean, and the gillie that told him, dash up in a desperate race.

Not a breath's time for asking; an eye-glance reveals all the tale untold.
They follow mad Hamish afar up the crag toward the sea,
And the lady cries: "Clansmen, run for a fee!—
Yon castle and lands to the two first hands that shall hook him and hold

Fast Hamish back from the brink!"—and ever she flies up the steep,
And the clansmen pant, and they sweat, and they jostle and strain.
But, mother, 'tis vain; but, father, 'tis vain;
Stern Hamish stands bold on the brink, and dangles the child o'er the deep.

Now a faintness falls on the men that run, and they all stand still.
And the wife prays Hamish as if he were God, on her knees,
Crying: "Hamish! O Hamish! but please, but please
For to spare him!" and Hamish still dangles the child, with a wavering will.

On a sudden he turns; with a sea-hawk scream, and a gibe, and a song,
Cries: "So; I will spare ye the child if, in sight of ye all,
Ten blows on Maclean's bare back shall fall,
And ye reckon no stroke if the blood follow not at the bite of the thong!"

Then Maclean he set hardly his tooth to his lip that his tooth was red,
Breathed short for a space, said: "Nay, but it never shall be!
Let me hurl off the damnable hound in the sea!"
But the wife: "Can Hamish go fish us the child from the sea, if dead?

Say yea!—Let them lash *me*, Hamish?"—"Nay!"—"Husband, the lashing will heal;
But, oh, who will heal me the bonny sweet bairn in his grave?
Could ye cure me my heart with the death of a knave?
Quick! Love! I will bare thee—so—kneel!" Then Maclean 'gan slowly to kneel

With never a word, till presently downward he jerked to the earth.
Then the henchman—he that smote Hamish—would tremble and lag;
"Strike, hard!" quoth Hamish, full stern, from the crag;
Then he struck him, and "One!" sang Hamish, and danced with the child in his mirth.

And no man spake beside Hamish; he counted each stroke with a song.
When the last stroke fell, then he moved him a pace down the height,
And he held forth the child in the heart-aching sight
Of the mother, and looked all pitiful grave, as repenting a wrong.

And there as the motherly arms stretched out with the thanksgiving prayer—
And there as the mother crept up with a fearful swift pace,
Till her finger nigh felt of the bairnie's face—
In a flash fierce Hamish turned round and lifted the child in the air,

And sprang with the child in his arms from the horrible height in the sea,
Shrill screeching, "Revenge!" in the wind-rush; and pallid Maclean,
Age-feeble with anger and impotent pain,
Crawled up on the crag, and lay flat, and locked hold of dead roots of a tree—

And gazed hungrily o'er, and the blood from his back drip-dripped in the brine,
And a sea-hawk flung down a skeleton fish as he flew,
And the mother stared white on the waste of blue,
And the wind drove a cloud to seaward, and the sun began to shine.

1878

## SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

The best known of Lanier's poems. Its successful onomatopœia, or echoism, recalls Tennyson's "The Brook" of more than twenty years before (1855). The Chattahoochee passes through Habersham and Hall counties of Georgia. The second stanza is notable for its ingenious effects of rhyme, meter, changing length of line, alliteration, assonance, and skilful use of vowels and liquids and of stop consonants. The last stanza, stressing the River's response to the call of duty, shows the poem to be one of conscience and purpose.

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The wilful water weeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
*Here in the hills of Habersham,*
*Here in the valleys of Hall.*

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,

The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
*Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,*
*These glades in the valleys of Hall.*

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet, and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

1877

## THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

**The theme is the influence of the marshes on the spirit. Lanier's overwrought feeling for trees appears in the first fifty lines, celebrating the live-oak woods. Towards sunset he leaves their "green colonnades" for the marshes, and from these he derives a sense of freedom and faith.**

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
Emerald twilights,—
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—
Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—
O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the moon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,—
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain,—

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark:—
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,—
Thus—with your favor—soft, with a reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whir;

Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease
to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the
waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that
creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth
below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the mar-
velous marshes of Glynn.

1878

## A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods he came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him
last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods he came.

1880

## MARSH SONG—AT SUNSET

Over the monstrous shambling sea,
Over the Caliban sea,
Bright Ariel-cloud, thou lingerest:
Oh wait, oh wait, in the warm red West,—
Thy Prospero I'll be.

Over the humped and fishy sea,
Over the Caliban sea
O cloud in the West, like a thought in the
heart
Of pardon, loose thy wing, and start,
And do a grace for me.

Over the huge and huddling sea,
Over the Caliban sea
Bring hither my brother Antonio,—
Man,—
My injurer: night breaks the ban:
Brother, I pardon thee.

*1879–1880* 1882

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## *From* THE SCIENCE OF ENGLISH VERSE

### CHAPTER I

Perhaps no one will find difficulty in accepting the assertion that when formal poetry, or verse,—two terms which will be always used here as convertible,—is repeated aloud, it impresses itself upon the ear as verse only by means of certain relations existing among its component words, considered purely as sounds, without reference to their associated ideas. If the least doubt upon this point should be entertained, it may be dispelled by observing that all ideas may be abolished out of a poem without disturbing its effect upon the ear as verse. This may be practically demonstrated by the simple experiment of substituting for the words of a formal poem any other words which preserve the accentuation, alliteration, and rhyme, but which convey no ideas to the mind,—words of some foreign language not understood by the experimenter being the most effective for this purpose. Upon repeating aloud the poem thus treated it will be found that the verse-structure has not been impaired. If, therefore, the ear accepts as perfect verse a series of words from which ideas are wholly absent,—that is to say, a series of sounds,—it is clear

that what we call "verse" is a set of specially related sounds, at least in the case of a formal poem repeated aloud.

But a much more sweeping proposition is true. If we advance from the case of formal poetry repeated aloud to that of formal poetry silently perused by the eye of a reader, a slight examination will show the proposition good that here, as before, verse is still a set of specially related sounds. For, in this instance, the characters of print or writing in which the words are embodied are simply signs of sounds; and although originally received by the eye, they are handed over to the ear, are interpreted by the auditory sense, and take their final lodgement, not at all as conceptions of sight, but as conceptions of hearing. The function of the eye is now purely ministerial: it merely purveys for the ear. An analogous process is indicated in the Arabian saw which affirms that "that is the best description which makes the ear an eye." In general, the reader will do well to recall that each sense has not only what is ordinarily called its physical province, but also its corresponding imaginative province; the eye has its imagination, the ear its imagination; and when the term "imagination of the ear" is hereinafter used it must be understood to suggest those perceptions of sound which come to exist in the mind, not by virtue of actual vibratory impact upon the tympanum immediately preceding the perception, but by virtue of indirect causes (such as the characters of print and writing) which in any way amount to practical equivalents of such impact. Now these signs convey, along with their corresponding sounds, the same relations between those sounds which are suggested to the ear when the sounds themselves fall upon the tympanum. It is therefore strictly true that, although the great majority of formal poems in modern times are perceived by the mind through the original agency of the eye, the relations indicated by the term "verse" are still relations between sounds.

Nor—to call the briefest attention to the only other case in which this fundamental proposition could seem at all doubtful—is this connection of verse with sound less essential when the formal poem is merely conceived in the thought of its author without ever reaching either visible or audible embodiment. For the formal poem is necessarily conceived in words, and in the imagination of the sounds (words) is necessarily involved the imagination of the relations between the sounds, that is, of verse.

In short, when we hear verse, we *hear* a set of relations between sounds; when we silently read verse, we *see* that which brings to us a set of relations between sounds; when we imagine verse, we *imagine* a set of relations between sounds.

Approached in this way, the proposition given below will probably not seem difficult of acceptance; indeed it is possible many will be surprised that the ideas leading to it have been dwelt upon so long. In point of fact, however, it is the very failure to recognize verse as in all respects a phenomenon of sound and to appreciate the necessary consequences thereof which has caused the nonexistence of a science of formal poetry. Occasion will presently arise to show how this happened, with some detail; meantime, we are now prepared to formulate a proposition which will serve as the basis of a science of verse.

The term "verse" denotes a set of specially related sounds.

It is clear that if we can now ascertain all the possible relations between sounds we will have discovered all the possible determinants of verse, and will have secured physical principles for the classification of all verse-effects from which there can be no appeal. This investigation can fortunately be carried on with the confidence attaching to the methods of physical science. For it involves mainly the observation of sensible appearances; and these are, furthermore, in the present instance not complex.

The study of verse must therefore begin with the study of sounds.

Sounds may be studied with reference to four and only four, particulars. We may observe—

(1) How long a sound lasts (*duration*);

(2) How loud a sound is (*intensity*);

(3) How shrill—that is, how high, as to bass or treble—a sound is (*pitch*);

(*g*) Of what sounds a given sound is composed—for, as in studying colors we find purple composed of red and violet, and the like, so many sounds have been discovered to be made up of other sounds (*tone-color*).

These differences in sounds, although really so distinct from each other as to be the origin of some of the most striking and widely-separated phenomena both in art and in our daily life, are so confused by most persons who have had no special occasion to examine them that there are no terms of ordinary use in which they can be expressed with scientific precision. The reader, however, will not only advance with ease, but will win a whole new world of possible delight, by acquiring at the outset such a familiarity with the sound-relations above termed duration, intensity, pitch, and tone-color, that the ear will immediately and intelligently refer every sound heard to the preceding or succeeding sound in terms of them. The remarkable powers which the human ear possesses of making perfectly accurate comparisons of sound with sound in three of these particulars will presently be detailed.

The scale of music omits many possible tones between its limits, selecting only certain tones according to a definitely arranged order of intervals: the scale of verse embraces all the tones possible within the limits of the human speaking-voice.

The foregoing proposition aims only to state the distinctions between music and verse: it will not be found complete for other purposes. For example, it would not serve to discriminate verse and prose. Prose has its rhythms, its tunes, and its tone-colors, like verse; and, while the extreme forms of prose and verse are sufficiently unlike each other, there are such near grades of intermediate forms that they may be said to run into each other, and any line claiming to be distinctive must necessarily be more or less arbitrary. The art of sound must always be regarded the genus, and music and verse its two species. Prose, scientifically considered, is a wild variety of verse.

The science of verse, then, observes and classifies all the phenomena of rhythm, of tune, and of tone-color, so far as they can be exhibited to the ear directly by spoken words, —or to the ear, through the eye, by written or printed signs of spoken words,—or to the mind by the conception of spoken words; and,

The science of *English* verse observes and classifies these phenomena so far as they can be indicated through the medium of spoken English words.

And this sketch of the colors of English verse may now be closed with the statement, already partly anticipated in several other connections, that the matters herein treated are only in the nature of hints leading to the widest possible views of poetic form, and by no means laws. For the artist in verse there is no law: the perception and love of beauty constitute the whole outfit; and what is herein set forth is to be taken merely as enlarging that perception and exalting that love. In all cases, the appeal is to the ear; but the ear should, for that purpose, be educated up to the highest possible plane of culture. With this sort of ear understood, one may say that King James has summed up the whole matter in his homely Scotch words: "Zour eare maun be the onely iudge, as of all the other parts of *Flowing*," (that is, of rhythmic *movement*) "the verie twichestane quhairof is musique."[1]

[1] "Your ear must be the only judge of rhythmic movement; the very touchstone whereof is music." [*Lanier's note.*]

# 1830 ~ *Emily Dickinson* ~ 1886

EMILY DICKINSON, the chief woman poet of America, was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830. The belated publication of her poems—until 1914 less than half of her work was available to the public—has tended to obscure the facts that she was sixteen when Emerson's first volume of poems was published; that her poetry was written during the same period with Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Whittier's *Snow-Bound*, Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*, Holmes's *Breakfast-Table* series and Whitman's successive editions of *Leaves of Grass;* and that all of these writers except Longfellow survived her. She was thus a slightly younger contemporary of these men, and any estimate of nineteenth-century New England literature must take her and her work into consideration.

Her geographical background was the same Massachusetts county of Hampshire in which Bryant had spent his youth and young manhood; and her family background was colored by a Calvinism somewhat less liberal and more genteel than his. If her father, the Honorable Edward Dickinson, treasurer of Amherst College and once Member of Congress, dominated the household with his austere dignity, Emily was clearly its chief ornament. As a girl she was rather vivacious and not averse to social life, with talents which early aroused the interest and encouragement of her teacher at Amherst Academy and other young men friends. The early deaths of two of these in 1851 intensified in her a sense of tragedy in life and a preoccupation with the subject of death that recur throughout her work. After a year at the rather severely religious South Hadley Female Seminary, near by, she spent the spring of 1854 with her father in Washington. On a visit to Philadelphia at this time she met a young Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, for whom she conceived a devoted affection which according to her closest contemporaries was mutual and which was to be a dominating motive in much of her poetry. He probably called on her at least twice at Amherst but in 1862 removed with his family to remote California. The general trend of her emotional experience seems to be reflected in the concluding series of verses in the volume of *Further Poems* (1929). The remainder of her life was spent in increasing seclusion at her home in Amherst, with the exception of a few months in Boston for treatments for her eyes. During the latter years, shadowed by the deaths of close relatives and friends and the long illness of her mother, she kept herself to her house and garden, but maintained a correspondence with neighbors and young kinsfolk by little gifts of flowers or preserves, accompanied by verses. Though a dozen or so of her poems have been identified as written before 1860, the great bulk of her work belongs to

the 1860's. Some of her verses were scribbled as notes for relatives and friends, but no such casual origin can account for those which reflect most poignantly her mind and experiences. Though her life was outwardly devoid of exciting incident, it is clear that in the comradeship of her flowers, the day's weather, and her round of household duties, she was constantly encountering adventures which filled her moments with wonder, delight, or a sense of tragedy, reflected in her verses. "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off," she wrote, "I know this is poetry." This emotional intensity, perhaps, is responsible for the fact that only three of her poems were printed, without her consent or knowledge, during her lifetime. For understanding and criticism as a poet, she turned to her brother's wife, Susan Gilbert Dickinson, to whom her verses were usually sent as soon as written; to her girlhood friend Helen Hunt Jackson; and to three appreciative critics, Samuel Bowles of the *Springfield Republican*, Josiah G. Holland, poet and novelist, and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, whose advice and judgment she courted and disregarded. Her letters to these and other friends are a delightful compound of quizzical whimsy, hyperbole, and self-revelation, unreliable for factual biography but invaluable for an understanding of her personality. She was a semi-invalid from 1884 to her death, May 16, 1886.

Her literary reputation has been a posthumous one, a circumstance which has produced the strange impression that her own time neglected or failed to appreciate her verse. As a matter of fact the first fragmentary selection of her poetry, published in 1890, called for six reprintings and for two further selections in 1891 and 1896. These, however, and a volume of her *Letters*, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, in 1894, were too slight a basis for permanent fame, and by 1912 the *Forum* could refer to her as "a forgotten poet." The release of a large body of new poems as *The Single Hound* in 1914, at the height of the "New Poetry" movement, followed by the *Further Poems* (1929) and *Unpublished Poems* (1936), gave to our generation the first opportunity to know her full output. In the meantime, also, her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, through her biographical works named below, and especially the more than one hundred and fifty additional letters and notes made available in *Emily Dickinson Face to Face* (1932), has presented an adequate basis for study and appreciation.

The chief literary influences upon her seem to have been those of Emerson, Shakespeare, and Robert and Elizabeth Browning. In the lives and novels of the Brontë sisters she also felt certain parallels to her own experiences and thoughts. Emerson she resembles in ecstatic love of nature, electric sharpness of phrase, effective use of homely metaphor, and oracular brevity. Like Browning's, her thinking leaps from idea to idea—

> . . . I only said the syntax,
> And left the verb and the pronoun out,

—leaving slow readers perplexedly fumbling for omitted connections. Essentially her own, however, are her whimsical, almost perverse play of fancy and humor, the inevitableness of her descriptive terms—*e.g.*, "the distance on the look of death,"—the femininenes of her point of view, her jestingly reverent intimacy with God and the universe, and the poignancy, intensified by innate reserve, of her personal feelings.

Certain critics who have not understood the technique which she consciously or unconsciously evolved have been annoyed by her "carelessness of rhyme" and "lapses of grammar." With Emily Dickinson, rhyming is the gesture of a magnanimous spirit acknowledging an indebtedness which she has no intention of actually paying. What she found in Emerson as an occasional impatience or fault of ear became with her often an obvious technique of eye-rhyme or assonance, as in "I Like to See It Lap the Miles," whose eight "rhymes" are *up–step*, *peer–pare*, *while–hill*, and *star–door*— not one of them a genuine rhyme. No allowance for fault or carelessness can account for such totality of irregularity. Moreover, easily nine-tenths of her supposed lapses of grammar are to be accounted for by a stenographic terseness of expression which eliminates customary connectives and suffixes, as in her poem about a secret,

> Better of it
> Continual be afraid
> Than it and whom
> You told it to, beside.

(note the carefully grammatical accuracy of *whom*); and by a habitual subjunctive or optative use of the verb in oblique or concessive senses no longer common in our speech. Thus in her self-revealing quatrain

> Publication is the auction
> Of the mind of man,
> Poverty be justifying
> For so foul a thing,

the sensitive reader will naturally expand the third line to the full interpretation which a Henry James might express as "Let the pressure of poverty, to be sure, in some instances be allowed as a sort of justification."

Such preliminary explanations are perhaps necessary to the appreciation of a poet the full wealth of whose thought is not to be gained by a superficial reading. Let the reader, however, remember that, as she herself wrote,

> The thought beneath so slight a film
> Is more distinctly seen,—
> As laces just reveal the surge
> Or mists the Apennine.

All the successive editions of Miss Dickinson's published poems are included in *The Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1937), edited by the poet's niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, and Alfred Leete Hampson; six "Unfinished Poems" were printed in the *New England Quarterly*, IV, 217–220. The letters may best be studied in Martha Dickinson Bianchi's *Emily Dickinson Face to Face*, with a Foreword by Alfred Leete Hampson (1932), and her *Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* (new revised and expanded edition, in preparation); see also Mabel Loomis Todd's *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (revised edition, 1931). Biographical studies include Martha Dickinson Bianchi's indispensable *Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1924), *Emily Dickinson Face to Face* (1932), and preface to *The Single Hound* (1914); Alfred Leete Hampson's introduction to the *Collected Poems* (1937); Josephine Pollitt's *Emily Dickinson: The Human Background of Her Poetry;* Genevieve Taggard's *The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson;* George F. Whicher's *This Was a Poet* (1938); and MacGregor Jenkins's *Emily Dickinson, Friend and Neighbor* (revised edition, 1939, with Introductory Note by Alfred Leete Hampson). Separate bibliographies are those of Alfred Leete Hampson (1930) and G. F. Whicher (revised edition, 1931), both entitled *Emily Dickinson: a Bibliography.* Helpful brief articles of biography or criticism are Conrad Aiken, preface to *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1924); G. W. Allen, *American Prosody* (1935), 307–320; P. H. Boynton, *Literature and American Life* (1936), 690–691; Katherine Brégy, "Emily Dickinson: a New England Anchoress," *Catholic World*, December, 1924; Gamaliel Bradford, *Portraits of American Women* (1919), 229–257; R. W. Brown, *Lonely Americans* (1929), 235–257; H. H. Clark, *Major American Poets* (1936), 893–902; T. W Higginson, *Carlyle's Laugh and Other Surprises* (1900), 249–283; W. D. Howells, "Poems of Emily Dickinson," *Harper's*, January, 1891 (important contemporary criticism); Ludwig Lewisohn, *Expression in America* (1932), 356–363; Sydney R. McLean, "Emily Dickinson at Mount Holyoke," *New England Quarterly*, VII, 25–42; Grace B. Sherrer, "Unusual Verb Constructions in the Poems of Emily Dickinson," *American Literature*, VII, 37–46; Louis Untermeyer, "Colossal Substance," *Saturday Review of Literature*, March 16, 1929; Carl van Doren, *American Literature, An Introduction* (1933), 67–70; and Anna M. Wells, "Early Criticism of Emily Dickinson," *American Literature*, I, 243–259.

## *From* THE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON

### [*Success*]

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag today
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of victory,

As he, defeated, dying,
On whose forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonized and clear.

1866

### [*The Snake*]

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him,—did you not?
His notice sudden is.

The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen;
And then it closes at your feet
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,
A floor too cool for corn.
Yet when a child, and barefoot,
I more than once, at morn,

Have passed, I thought, a whiplash
Unbraiding in the sun,—
When, stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me;
I feel for them a transport
Of cordiality;

But never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone. 1878

## [*Much Madness Is Divinest Sense*][1]

MUCH madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye;
Much sense the starkest madness.
'Tis the majority
In this, as all, prevails.
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur,—you're straightway dangerous,
And handled with a chain.

## [*The Soul Selects Her Own Society*]

THE soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

## [*To Fight Aloud Is Very Brave*]

To fight aloud is very brave,
But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom,
The cavalry of woe.

Who win, and nations do not see,
Who fall, and none observe,
Whose dying eyes no country
Regards with patriot love.

We trust, in plumed procession,
For such the angels go,
Rank after rank, with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

## [*The Show Is Not the Show*]

THE show is not the show,
But they that go.
Menagerie to me
My neighbor be.
Fair play—
Both went to see.

## [*Inebriate of Air*]

I TASTE a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

## [*The Brain*]

THE brain within its groove
Runs evenly and true;
But let a splinter swerve,
'Twere easier for you
To put the water back
When floods have slit the hills,
And scooped a turnpike for themselves,
And blotted out the mills!

## [*The Locomotive*]

I LIKE to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

[1] This and all the following poems from Emily Dickinson are reprinted from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Centenary Edition (1930), edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson, by permission of Little, Brown & Company, publishers.

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;[1]
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

## [*A Thought Went Up My Mind Today*]

This is Emily Dickinson's characteristic treatment of the same experience that forms the basis for Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality."

A THOUGHT went up my mind today
That I have had before,
But did not finish,—some way back,
I could not fix the year,

Nor where it went, nor why it came
The second time to me,
Nor definitely what it was,
Have I the art to say.

But somewhere in my soul, I know
I've met the thing before;
It just reminded me—'twas all—
And came my way no more.

## [*Hunger*]

I HAD been hungry all the years;
My noon had come, to dine;
I, trembling, drew the table near,
And touched the curious wine.

'Twas this on tables I had seen,
When turning, hungry, lone,
I looked in windows, for the wealth
I could not hope to own.

I did not know the ample bread,
'Twas so unlike the crumb
The birds and I had often shared
In Nature's dining-room.

The plenty hurt me, 'twas so new,—
Myself felt ill and odd,
As berry of a mountain bush
Transplanted to the road.

Nor was I hungry; so I found
That hunger was a way
Of persons outside windows,
The entering takes away.

## [*Just Lost When I Was Saved*]

JUST lost when I was saved!
Just felt the world go by!
Just girt me for the onset with eternity,
When breath blew back,
And on the other side
I heard recede the disappointed tide!

Therefore, as one returned, I feel,
Odd secrets of the Line to tell!
Some sailor, skirting foreign shores
Some pale reporter from the awful doors
Before the seal!

Next time, to stay!
Next time, the things to see
By ear unheard,
Unscrutinized by eye.

Next time, to tarry,
While the ages steal,—
Slow tramp the centuries,
And the cycles wheel.

## [*There Is No Frigate Like a Book*]

THERE is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.

This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

[1] literally "sons of thunder," a nickname applied by Jesus to two vociferous preachers among his followers

## [*Self-Reliance*]

We never know how high we are
Till we are called to rise;
And then, if we are true to plan,
Our statures touch the skies.

The heroism we recite
Would be a daily thing,
Did not ourselves the cubits warp
For fear to be a king.

## [*Disillusioned*]

It dropped so low in my regard
I heard it hit the ground,
And go to pieces on the stones
At bottom of my mind;

Yet blamed the fate that fractured, less
Than I reviled myself
For entertaining plated wares
Upon my silver shelf.

## [*What Soft, Cherubic Creatures*]

What soft, cherubic creatures
These gentlewomen are!
One would as soon assault a plush
Or violate a star.

Such dimity convictions,
A horror so refined
Of freckled human nature,
Of Deity ashamed,—

It's such a common glory,
A fisherman's degree!
Redemption, brittle lady,
Be so ashamed of thee.

## [*To Hear an Oriole Sing*]

To hear an oriole sing
May be a common thing,
Or only a divine.

It is not of the bird
Who sings the same, unheard,
As unto crowd.
The fashion of the ear
Attireth that it hear
In dun or fair.

So whether it be rune,
Or whether it be none,
Is of within;

The "tune is in the tree,"
The sceptic showeth me;
"No, sir! In thee!"

## [*The Hummingbird*]

A route of evanescence
With a revolving wheel;
A resonance of emerald,
A rush of cochineal;
And every blossom on the bush
Adjusts its tumbled head,—
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy morning's ride.

## [*A Bird Came Down the Walk*]

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,—
They looked like frightened beads, I thought
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim.

### [*Keeping the Sabbath*]

SOME keep the Sabbath going to church;
I keep it staying at home,
With a bobolink for a chorister,
And an orchard for a dome.

Some keep the Sabbath in surplice;
I just wear my wings,
And instead of tolling the bell for church,
Our little sexton sings.

God preaches,—a noted clergyman,—
And the sermon is never long;
So instead of getting to heaven at last,
I'm going all along!

### [*The Frost*]

APPARENTLY with no surprise
To any happy flower,
The frost beheads it at its play
In accidental power.

The blond assassin passes on,
The sun proceeds unmoved
To measure off another day
For an approving God.

### [*Indian Summer*]

THESE are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,
Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

### [*The Sky Is Low*]

THE sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

### [*To Make a Prairie*]

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,—
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few.

### [*Elysium Is as Far*]

ELYSIUM is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door!

### [*Going to Him! Happy Letter!*]

"GOING to him! Happy letter! Tell him—
Tell him the page I didn't write;
Tell him I only said the syntax,
And left the verb and the pronoun out.
Tell him just how the fingers hurried,
Then how they waded, slow, slow, slow;
And then you wished you had eyes in your pages,
So you could see what moved them so.

"Tell him it wasn't a practised writer,
You guessed, from the way the sentence toiled;
You could hear the bodice tug, behind you,
As if it held but the might of a child;

You almost pitied it, you, it worked so.
Tell him—No, you may quibble there,
For it would split his heart to know it,
And then you and I were silenter.

"Tell him night finished before we finished,
And the old clock kept neighing 'Day!'
And you got sleepy and begged to be ended—
What could it hinder so, to say?
Tell him just how she sealed you, cautious,
But if he ask where you are hid
Until to-morrow,—happy letter!
Gesture, coquette, and shake your head!"

## [*A Letter Received*]

The way I read a letter's this:
'Tis first I lock the door,
And push it with my fingers next,
For transport it be sure.

And then I go the furthest off
To counteract a knock;
Then draw my little letter forth
And softly pick its lock.

Then, glancing narrow at the wall,
And narrow at the floor,
For firm conviction of a mouse
Not exorcised before,

Peruse how infinite I am
To—no one that you know!
And sigh for lack of heaven,—but not
The heaven the creeds bestow.

## [*Exultation Is the Going*]

Exultation is the going
Of an inland soul to sea,—
Past the houses, past the headlands,
Into deep eternity!

Bred as we, among the mountains,
Can the sailor understand
The divine intoxication
Of the first league out from land?

## [*I Never Saw a Moor*]

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

## [*The Last Night That She Lived*]

The last night that she lived,
It was a common night,
Except the dying; this to us
Made nature different.

We noticed smallest things,—
Things overlooked before,
By this great light upon our minds
Italicized, as 'twere.

That others could exist
While she must finish quite,
A jealousy for her arose
So nearly infinite.

We waited while she passed;
It was a narrow time,
Too jostled were our souls to speak,
At length the notice came.

She mentioned, and forgot;
Then lightly as a reed
Bent to the water, shivered scarce,
Consented, and was dead.

And we, we placed the hair,
And drew the head erect;
And then an awful leisure was,
Our faith to regulate.

## [*The Bustle in a House*]

The bustle in a house
The morning after death
Is solemnest of industries
Enacted upon earth,—

The sweeping up the heart,
And putting love away
We shall not want to use again
Until eternity.

### [*If I Shouldn't Be Alive*]

If I shouldn't be alive
When the robins come,
Give the one in red cravat
A memorial crumb.

If I couldn't thank you,
Being just asleep,
You will know I'm trying
With my granite lip!

### [*I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died*]

I heard a fly buzz when I died;
The stillness round my form
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heaves of storm.

The eyes beside had wrung them dry,
And breaths were gathering sure
For that last onset, when the king
Be witnessed in his power.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
What portion of me I
Could make assignable,—and then
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
Between the light and me;
And then the windows failed, and then
I could not see to see.

### [*For Charlotte Brontë*]

All overgrown by cunning moss,
All interspersed with weed,
The little cage of "Currer Bell,"
In quiet Haworth laid.

This bird, observing others,
When frosts too sharp became,
Retire to other latitudes,
Quietly did the same.

But differed in returning;
Since Yorkshire hills are green,
Yet not in all the nests I meet
Can nightingale be seen.

Gathered from any wanderings,
Gethsemane can tell
Through what transporting anguish
She reached the asphodel!

Soft fall the sounds of Eden
Upon her puzzled ear;
Oh, what an afternoon for heaven,
When Brontë entered there!

### [*Publication Is the Auction*]

This poem gives her reason for not allowing her verses to be printed. See also the letter to T. W. Higginson dated April 26, 1862, below.

Publication is the auction
Of the mind of man,
Poverty be justifying
For so foul a thing.

Possibly,—but we would rather
From our garret go
White unto the White Creator,
Than invest our snow.

Thought belongs to Him who gave it—
Then to him who bear
Its corporeal illustration.
Sell the royal air

In the parcel,—be the merchant
Of the Heavenly Grace,
But reduce no human spirit
To disgrace of price!

### [*A Secret*]

A secret told
Ceases to be a secret then.
A secret kept—
That can appal but one.

Better of it
Continual be afraid
Than it and whom
You told it to, beside.

### [*Revolution*]

Revolution is the pod
Systems rattle from
When the winds of Will are stirred.
Excellent is bloom,

But except its russet base,
Every summer be
The entomber of itself.
So of Liberty:

Left inactive on the stalk,
All its purple fled,
Revolution shakes it
For test if it be dead.

## [*The Tint I Cannot Take Is Best*]

THE tint I cannot take is best,
The color too remote
That I could show it in bazaar
A guinea at a sight—

The fine impalpable array
That swaggers on the eye
Like Cleopatra's company
Repeated in the sky—

The moments of dominion
That happen on the Soul
And leave it with a discontent
Too exquisite to tell—

The eager look in the landscapes
As if they just repressed
Some secret that was pushing,
Like chariots, in the breast—

The pleasing of the Summer,
That other prank of snow
That covers mystery with tulle
For fear the squirrels know—

Their graspless manners mock us,
Until the cheated eye
Shuts arrogantly in the grave,
Another way to see.

## [*I Took One Draught of Life*]

**The remaining poems, mostly taken from *Further Poems* (1929), form a unit, dealing with the central and motivating experience in Emily Dickinson's life.**

I TOOK one draught of life,
I'll tell you what I paid,
Precisely an existence—
The market price, they said.

They weighed me, dust by dust,
They balanced film with film,
Then handed me my being's worth—
A single dram of Heaven.

## [*So the Eyes Accost and Sunder*]

So the eyes accost and sunder
In an audience,
Stamped in instances forever,
So may countenance
Entertain without addressing
Countenance of One
In a neighboring horizon,
Gone as soon as known.

## [*It Was a Quiet Way*]

IT was a quiet way
He asked if I was his.
I made no answer of the tongue
But answer of the eyes.

And then he bore me high
Before this mortal noise,
With swiftness as of chariots
And distance as of wheels.

The world did drop away
As countries from the feet
Of him that leaneth in the balloon
Upon an ether street.

The gulf behind was not—
The continents were new.
Eternity it was—before
Eternity was due.

No seasons were to us—
It was not night nor noon,
For sunrise stopped upon the place
And fastened it in dawn.

## [*I Make His Crescent Fill or Lack*]

I MAKE his crescent fill or lack,
His nature is at full
Or quarter—as I signify,
His tides do I control.

He holds superior in the sky
Or gropes at my command
Behind inferior clouds,
Or round a mist's slow colonnade.

But since we hold a mutual disc
And front a mutual day,
Which is the despot neither knows—
Nor whose the tyranny.

## [*Forever at His Side to Walk*]

FOREVER at his side to walk,
The smaller of the two,
Brain of his brain, blood of his blood,
Two lives, one Being, now.

Forever of his fate to taste,
If grief, the largest part—
If joy, to put my piece away
For that beloved heart.

All life to know each other—
Whom we can never learn,
And by and by a change called "Heaven"—
Rapt neighborhood of men,
Just finding out what puzzled us
Without the lexicon.

## [*Why Do I Love Thee?*]

WHY do I love thee, Sir?
Because—
The wind does not
Require the grass
To answer wherefore, when
He pass,
She cannot keep her place.

The lightning never asked
An eye
Wherefore she shut
When he was by—
Because he knows
She cannot speak,
And reasons not contained
Of talk
There be—preferred by daintier folk.

## [*Separation*]

I CANNOT live with you,
It would be life,
And life is over there
Behind the shelf

The sexton keeps the key to,
Putting up
Our life, his porcelain,
Like a cup

Discarded of the housewife,
Quaint or broken;
A newer Sèvres pleases,
Old ones crack.

I could not die with you,
For one must wait
To shut the other's gaze down,—
You could not.

And I, could I stand by
And see you freeze,
Without my right of frost,
Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise with you,
Because your face
Would put out Jesus',
That new grace

Glow plain and foreign
On my homesick eye,
Except that you, than he
Shone closer by.

They'd judge us—how?
For you served Heaven, you know,
Or sought to;
I could not,

Because you saturated sight,
And I had no more eyes
For sordid excellence
As Paradise.

And were you lost, I would be,
Though my name
Rang loudest
On the heavenly fame.

And were you saved,
And I condemned to be
Where you were not,
That self were hell to me.

So we must keep apart,
You there, I here,
With just the door ajar
That oceans are,
And prayer,
And that pale sustenance,
Despair!

## [*Although I Put Away His Life*]

Although I put away his life,
An ornament too grand
For forehead low as mine to wear,
This might have been the hand

That sowed the flowers he preferred,
Or smoothed a homely pain—
Or pushed the pebble from his path,
Or played his chosen tune

On lute the lêast, the latest,
But just his ear could know
That what soe'er delighted it
I never would let go.

The foot to bear his errand,
A little boot I know
Would leap abroad like antelope
With just the grant to do.

His weariest commandment
A sweeter to obey
Than "Hide and Seek," or skip to flutes,
Or all day chase the bee.

Your servant, Sir, will weary,
The surgeon will not come,
The world will have its own to do,
The dust will vex your fame.

The cold will force your tightest door
Some February day,
But say my apron bring the sticks
To make your cottage gay,
That I may take that promise
To Paradise with me—
To teach the angels avarice
Your kiss taught to me.

## [*So Well That I Can Live Without*]

So well that I can live without—
I love Thee;
Then how well is that?
As well as Jesus?
Prove it me
That He loved men
As I love Thee.

## [*Bereaved*]

If he were living—dare I ask?
And how if he were dead?
And so around the words I went,
Of meeting them afraid.

I hinted changes, lapse of time;
The surfaces of years
I touched with caution, lest they slit
And show me to my fears;

Reverted to adjoining lives,
Adroitly turning out
Wherever I suspected graves—
'Twas prudenter, I thought.

And He—I rushed with sudden force
In face of the suspense—
"Was buried"—"Buried!" He!
My life just holds the trench.

## [*After Great Pain a Formal Feeling Comes*]

After great pain a formal feeling comes—
The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
The stiff Heart questions—was it He that bore?
And yesterday—or centuries before?

The feet mechanical
Go round a wooden way
Of ground or air or Ought, regardless grown,
A quartz contentment like a stone.

This is the hour of lead
Remembered if outlived,
As freezing persons recollect the snow—
First chill, then stupor, then the letting go.

## [*I Got So I Could Hear His Name*]

I GOT so I could hear his name
Without—
Tremendous gain!—
That stop-sensation in my soul,
And thunder in the room.

I got so I could walk across
That angle in the floor
Where he turned—so—and I turned how—
And all our sinew tore.

I got so I could stir the box
In which his letters grew—
Without that forcing in my breath
As staples driven through.

Could dimly recollect a Grace—
I think they called it "God,"
Renowned to ease extremity
When formula had failed—

And shape my hands petition's way—
Tho' ignorant of word
That Ordination utters—
My business with the cloud.

If any Power behind it be
Not subject to despair,
To care in some remoter way
For so minute affair
As misery—
*Itself* too vast for interrupting more,
Supremer than—
Superior to—

## ["*Till Death*" *Is Narrow Loving*]

"TILL death" is narrow loving;
The scantiest heart extant
Will hold you, till your privilege
Of finiteness be spent.

But he whose loss procures you
Such destination that
Your life, too abject for itself,
Thenceforward imitate—
Until, resemblance perfect,
Yourself for his pursuit
Delight of nature abdicate,
Exibit love somewhat.

## [*Savior! I've No One Else to Tell*]

SAVIOR! I've no one else to tell
And so I trouble Thee,
I am the one forgot Thee so.
Dost Thou remember me?

Not for myself I came so far,
That were the little load—
I brought Thee the imperial heart
I had not strength to hold—

The heart I carried in my own,
Till mine too heavy be,
Yet strangest—*heavier* since it went—
Is it too large for Thee?

## [*A Wife at Daybreak I Shall Be*]

This poem will repay comparison and contrast in theme and imagery with Browning's "Prospice."

A WIFE at daybreak I shall be;
Sunrise, hast thou a flag for me?
At midnight I am yet a maid—
How short it takes to make it bride!
Then, Midnight, I have passed from thee
Unto the East and Victory.

Midnight, "Good night!"
I hear them call.
The Angels bustle in the hall,
Softly my Future climbs the stair,
I fumble at my childhood's prayer—
So soon to be a child no more!
Eternity, I'm coming, Sir,—
Master, I've seen that face before.

## [*Not What We Did Shall Be the Test*]

NOT what we did shall be the test
When act and will are done,
But what our Lord infers we *would*—
Had we diviner been.

## LETTERS TO T. W. HIGGINSON

[APRIL 16, 1862]

MR. HIGGINSON,—Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?[1]

The mind is so near itself it cannot see distinctly, and I have none to ask.

Should you think it breathed, and had you the leisure to tell me, I should feel quick gratitude.

If I make the mistake, that you dared to tell me would give me sincerer honor toward you.

I enclose my name, asking you, if you please, sir, to tell me what is true?

That you will not betray me it is needless to ask, since honor is its own pawn.

[APRIL 26, 1862]

MR. HIGGINSON,—Your kindness claimed earlier gratitude, but I was ill, and write today from my pillow.

Thank you for the surgery; it was not so painful as I supposed. I bring you others, as you ask, though they might not differ. While my thought is undressed, I can make the distinction; but when I put them in the gown, they look alike and numb.

You asked how old I was? I made no verse, but one or two, until this winter, sir.

I had a terror since September, I could tell to none; and so I sing, as the boy does of the burying ground, because I am afraid.

You inquire my books. For poets, I have Keats, and Mr. and Mrs. Browning. For prose, Mr. Ruskin, Sir Thomas Browne, and the *Revelations*. I went to school, but in your manner of the phrase, had no education. When a little girl, I had a friend who taught me Immortality; but venturing too near, himself, he never returned. Soon after my tutor died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land.

You ask of my companions. Hills, sir, and the sundown, and a dog large as myself, that my father bought me. They are better than beings because they know, but do not tell; and the noise in the pool at noon excels my piano.

I have a brother and sister; my mother does not care for thought, and father, too busy with his briefs to notice what we do. He buys me many books, but begs me not to read them, because he fears they joggle the mind. They are religious, except me, and address an eclipse, every morning, whom they call their "Father."

But I fear my story fatigues you. I would like to learn. Could you tell me how to grow, or is it unconveyed, like melody or witchcraft?

You speak of Mr. Whitman. I never read his book, but was told that it was disgraceful.

I read Miss Prescott's *Circumstance*, but it followed me in the dark, so I avoided her.

Two editors of journals came to my father's house this winter, and asked me for my mind, and when I asked them "why" they said I was penurious, and they would use it for the world.

I could not weigh myself, myself. My size felt small to me. I read your chapters in the *Atlantic*, and experienced honor for you. I was sure you would not reject a confiding question.

Is this, sir, what you asked me to tell you?

Your friend,
E. Dickinson

[JULY, 1862]

Could you believe me without? I had no portrait, now, but am small like the wren; and my hair is bold, like the chestnut burr; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass that the guest leaves. Would this do just as well?

It oftens alarms father. He says death might occur, and he has moulds of all the rest, but has no mould of me; but I noticed the quick wore off those things in a few days, and forestall the dishonor. You will think no caprice of me.

You said "dark." I know the butterfly, and the lizard, and the orchis. Are not those *your* countrymen?

I am happy to be your scholar, and will deserve the kindness I cannot repay.

If you truly consent, I recite now. Will you tell me my fault, frankly, as to yourself, for I had rather wince than die. Men do not call the surgeon to commend the bone, but to set it,

[1] Emily's first request for Higginson's criticism of her poetry

sir, and fracture within is more critical. And for this, preceptor, I shall bring you obedience, the blossom from my garden, and every gratitude I know.

Perhaps you smile at me. I could not stop for that. My business is circumference. An ignorance, not of customs, but if caught with the dawn, or the sunset see me, myself the only kangaroo among the beauty, sir, if you please, it afflicts me, and I thought that instruction would take it away.

Because you have much business, beside the growth of me, you will appoint, yourself, how often I shall come without your inconvenience.

And if at any time you regret you received me, or I prove a different fabric to that you supposed, you must banish me.

When I state myself, as the representative of the verse, it does not mean me, but a supposed person.

You are true about the "perfection." Today makes yesterday mean.

You spoke of *Pippa Passes*. I never heard anybody speak of *Pippa Passes* before. You see my posture is benighted.

To thank you baffles me. Are you perfectly powerful? Had I a pleasure you had not, I could delight to bring it.

YOUR SCHOLAR

# 1825 ~ *Bayard Taylor* ~ 1878

BAYARD TAYLOR was born at Kennett Square, Chester County, Pennsylvania, the son of Joseph Taylor and Rebecca Way, of mingled English and German blood. Although his formal education was concluded at Unionville Academy in 1840, the educational process was continued through life, as a result of his passion for books and a driving intellectual energy. The desire for ideas was supplemented by a romantic passion for travel, and he became the most widely traveled man of his time, having roamed over the greater part of Europe from Norway to Greece, into the Orient and Egypt. Between tours abroad he engaged in editorial and journalistic work. As a member of the *New York Tribune* staff he was sent to California in 1849 to report the gold rush. In 1878 President Hayes appointed him Minister to Germany where he died in December of the same year.

Taylor was a man of acknowledged talent and versatility. During his lifetime he won a reputation as reporter, lecturer, novelist, poet, scholar, and translator. The quality of his work suffered because of the artistic and intellectual aridity of his time, and the incessant, grinding labor necessary to earn a living. The reports of his travels, once widely and eagerly read, have lost their vogue; as lecturer he is practically forgotten; while novels like *Hannah Thurston* (1863) and *The Story of Kennett* (1866) are read mostly by literary historians and antiquarians.

His permanent fame rests upon a comparatively few poems and his translation of Goethe's *Faust* (1870–71). As poet he followed in the footsteps of Keats and Tennyson. Many of his themes were gathered in foreign lands. In his *Poems of the Orient* (1854), which includes the incomparable "Bedouin Song," he achieved a high level

of sensuousness and passion which are lacking in his local and national poems. "Lars" and "The Poet's Journal" (1862) still find readers, while such occasional poems as "Goethe" and "The National Ode" are slowly going the way of all flesh.

*The Poetical Works of Bayard Taylor* (Household Edition), published shortly after his death, contains the poems which he wished to retain. There is a companion volume, *The Dramatic Works of Bayard Taylor* (Household Edition). Among his novels are *Hannah Thurston* (1863), *The Story of Kennett* (1866), and *Joseph and His Friends* (1870). *Views Afoot* (1846), *Eldorado, or Adventures in the Path of Empire* (1850), and *Northern Travel* (1858), are books of travel. The biographies are R. H. Conwell, *The Life, Travels, and Literary Career of Bayard Taylor* (1881); M. Hansen-Taylor and H. E. Scudder, *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor* (2 vols., 1884); A. H. Smyth, *Bayard Taylor*, in American Men of Letters (1899); R. C. Beatty, *Bayard Taylor, Laureate of the Golden Age* (1936). A group of his letters appears in H. W. Lanier, "Letters Between Two Poets: the Correspondence of Bayard Taylor and Sidney Lanier," *Atlantic*, June, 1899. For critical discussion see E. C. Stedman, *Poets of America* (1885); H. W. Mabie, "Bayard Taylor: Adventurer," *Bookman*, March, 1916; L. H. Vincent, *American Literary Masters* (1906); J. G. Wilson, *Bryant and His Friends* (1886). See also R. Warnock, "Unpublished Lectures of Bayard Taylor," *American Literature*, May, 1933.

## BEDOUIN SONG

This is one of the *Poems of the Orient* written when Taylor was a young man. It is an excellent illustration of the practice followed by some romanticists of seeking for their choicest subject-matter in unknown, far-away lands. The poem is characterized by a strong emotional urge, at the same time that it is marked by an admirable restraint. One critic speaks of it as belonging to the "imperishable things" in American literature.

From the Desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
*Till the sun grows cold,*
*And the stars are old,*
*And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!*

Look from thy window and see
My passion and my pain;
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.
Let the night-winds touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
*Till the sun grows cold,*
*And the stars are old,*
*And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!*

My steps are nightly driven,
By the fever in my breast,
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.
Open the door of thy heart,
And open thy chamber door,
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
The love that shall fade no more
*Till the sun grows cold,*
*And the stars are old,*
*And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!*

*1853* 1854

## SQUANDERED LIVES

The fisherman wades in the surges;
The sailor sails over the sea;
The soldier steps bravely to battle;
The woodman lays axe to the tree.

They are each of the breed of the heroes,
  The manhood attempered in strife:
Strong hands, that go lightly to labor,
  True hearts, that take comfort in life.

In each is the seed to replenish
  The world with the vigor it needs,—
The center of honest affections,
  The impulse to generous deeds.

But the shark drinks the blood of the fisher;
  The sailor is dropped in the sea;
The soldier lies cold by his cannon;
  The woodman is crushed by his tree.

Each prodigal life that is wasted
  In manly achievement unseen,
But lengthens the days of the coward,
  And strengthens the crafty and mean.

The blood of the noblest is lavished
  That the selfish a profit may find;
But God sees the lives that are squandered,
  And we to His wisdom are blind.

*1860* 1862

## *From* THE PICTURE OF ST. JOHN

Taylor was deeply interested in the lineal arts. This interest found literary expression in "The Picture of St. John," a long narrative poem which engaged his attention from time to time for fifteen years (1850–1865). The hero of the poem is an artist whose development is marked by his capacity for sympathy with joy and suffering. "Proem" is dedicated to some of Taylor's artist friends whom he calls Opal, Bloodstone, Topaz, and Paros. In the concluding lines there is an interesting reference to the theory of the unity of the arts which was held by many of the romanticists.

### *Proem: To the Artists*

I

Because no other dream my childhood knew
Than your bright Goddess sends,—that earliest
Her face I saw, and from her bounteous breast,
All others dry, the earliest nurture drew;
And since the hope, so lovely, was not true,
To write my life in colors,—win a place
Among your ranks, though humble, yet with grace
That might accord me brotherhood with you:

II

Because the dream, thus cherished, gave my life
Its first faint sense of beauty, and became,
Even when the growing years to other strife
Led forth my feet, a shy, secluded flame:
And ye received me, when our pathways met,
As one long parted, but of kindred fate;
And in one heaven our kindred stars are set;
To you, my Brethren, this be dedicate!

III

And though some sportive nymph the channel turned,
And led to other fields mine infant rill,
The sense of fancied destination still
Leaps in its waves, and will not be unlearned.
I charge not Fate with having done me wrong;
Much hath she granted, though so much was spurned;
But leave the keys of Color, silent long,
And pour my being through the stops of Song!

IV

Even as one breath the organ-pipe compels
To yield that note which through the minster swells
In chorded thunder, and the hollow lyre
Beneath its gentler touches to awake
The airy monotones that fan desire,
And thrills the fife with blood of battle,—so
Our natures from one source their music take,
And side by side to one far Beauty flow!

V

And I have measured, in fraternal pride,
Your reverence, your faith, your patient power
Of stern self-abnegation; and have tried
The range between your brightest, darkest hour,
The path of chill neglect, and that so fair
With praise upspringing like a wind-sown flower;
But, whether thorns or amaranths ye wear,
Your speech is mine, your sacrifice, your prayer!

VI

Permit me, therefore, ye who nearest stand,
Among the worthiest, and kindliest known
In contact of our lives, to take the hand
Whose grasp assures me I am not alone;
For thus companioned, I shall find the tone
Of flowing song, and all my breath command.
Your names I veil from those who should not see,
Not from yourselves, my Friends, and not from me!

VII

You, underneath whose brush the autumn day
Draws near the sunset which it never finds,—
Whose art the smoke of Indian Summer binds
Beyond the west-wind's power to breathe away:
Who fix the breakers in their gifted grace
And stretch the sea-horizon, dim and gray,
I'll call you OPAL,—so your tints enchase
The pearly atmospheres wherein they play.

VIII

And you, who love the brown October field,
The lingering leaves that flutter as they cling,
And each forlorn but ever-lovely thing,—
To whom elegiac Autumn hath revealed
Her sweetest dirges, BLOODSTONE: for the hue
Of sombre meadows to your palette cleaves,
And lowering skies, with sunlight breaking through,
And flecks of crimson on the scattered leaves!

IX

You, TOPAZ, clasp the full-blown opulence
Of Summer: many a misty mountain-range
Or smoky valley, specked with warrior-tents,
Basks on your canvas: then, with grander change,
We climb to where your mountain twilight gleams
In spectral pomp, or nurse the easeful sense
Which through your Golden Day forever dreams
By lakes and sunny hills, and falling streams.

X

You banish color from your cheerful cell,
O PAROS! but a stern imperial form
Stands in the marble moonlight where you dwell,
A Poet's head, with grand Ionian beard,
And Phidian dreams, that shine against the storm
Of toilful life, the white robe o'er them cast
Of breathless Beauty: yours the art, endeared
To men and gods, first born, enduring last.

XI

You, too, whom how to name I may not guess,
Except the jacinth and the ruby, blent,
The native warmth of life might represent,
Which, drawn from barns and homesteads, you express,
Or vintage revels, round the maple-tree;
Or when the dusky race you quaintly dress
In art that gives them finer liberty,—
Made by your pencil, ere by battle, free!

XII

Where'er my feet have strayed, whatever shore
I visit, there your venturous footprints cling.
From Chimborazo unto Labrador
One sweeps the Continent with eagle wing,
To dip his brush in tropic noon, or fires
Of Arctic night; one sets his seal upon
Far Colorado's cleft, colossal spires,
And lone, snow-kindled cones of Oregon!

XIII

Another through the mystic moonlight floats
That silvers Venice; and another sees
The blazoned galleys and the gilded boats
Bring home her Doges: Andalusian leas,
Gray olive-slopes, and mountains sun-embrowned
Entice another, and from ruder ground
Of old Westphalian homes another brings
Enchanted memories of the meanest things.

XIV

To each and all, the hand of fellowship!
A poet's homage (should that title fall
From other lips than mine) to each and all!
For, whether this pale star of Song shall dip
To swift forgetfulness, or burn beside
Accepted lamps of Art's high festival,
Its flame was kindled at our shrines allied,
In double faith, and from a twofold call!

*1865* 1866

### SONNET

WHERE should the Poet's home and household be?
Beneath what skies, in what untroubled air
Sings he for very joy of songs so fair
That in their steadfast laws he most is free?
In woods remote, where darkly tree on tree
Let fall their curtained shadows, to ensnare
His dreams, or hid in Fancy's happiest lair,—
Some laughing island of the stormless sea?
Ah, never such to him their welcome gave!
But, flattered by the gods in finer scorn,
He drifts upon the world's unresting wave,
As drifts a seaflower, by the tempest torn
From sheltered porches of the coral cave
Where it expands, of calm and silence born.

1880

### WILL AND LAW

WILL, in his lawless mirth,
Cried: "Mine be the sphere of Earth!
Mine be the hills and seas,
Night calm and morning breeze,
Shadowed and sunlit hours,
Passions, delights, and powers,
Each in its turn to choose,
All to reject or use—
Thus myself to fulfil,
For I am Will!"

Nature, with myriad mouth,
Answered from North and South:
"Back to the nest again,
Dream of thy idle brain!
Eyes shall open, and see
Power attained through me:
Mine the increasing days,
Mine the delight that stays,
Service from each to draw—
For I am Law!"

1880

## 1825 ~ *Richard Henry Stoddard* ~ 1903

ALTHOUGH he was a mature man by the time the Civil War broke out, Stoddard's work belongs to the postwar period. He was the oldest of a group of poets who fell upon the evil ways of the Gilded Age only to go down in the tragic toll which its suffocating aridity took of its poetic spirits. Nor was Stoddard's training sufficient to counteract the shortcomings of the times, for he was essentially a self-made man. Born in Hingham, Massachusetts, of seafaring ancestry, he spent the greater part of his life in New York. He engaged in a variety of odd jobs, errand boy, legal copyist, bookkeeper, blacksmith, and for three years worked as a moulder in an iron-foundry. His small savings were spent for books, mostly poetry, which he read assiduously. By this self-chosen course of lifelong reading he made amends for his deficient formal education. There wasn't a time, he tells us in his *Recollections*, that he did not read and write. He received an appointment in the New York Custom House which he held until 1870. During the later years of his life he was the literary editor of the New York *Mail and Express*.

In contrast with his poetic aims and theory, his work is disappointing. To him poetry was "the revelation of ideal truth and beauty." We must not pull the ideal down to us, but rise to the ideal. The achievement of a poet is determined by the

degree with which it compares with that ideal of poetry. Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley fulfilled the requirements. Stoddard undoubtedly did not.

His romantic aspirings did not thrive in his native air. Like the other poets of the group he sought material in remote lands, but the romance of distance alone could not guarantee artistic greatness. Much of his poetry is a pale reflection of Keats, his professed master. In such a realistic poem as "On the Town," and in "Lincoln, an Horatian Ode," both of which show a certain amount of power, one feels a lack of depth and warmth. Like his contemporaries, he was concerned about polish and melody, and he paid the inevitable price of shallowness.

There is a complete edition of *The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard* (1880). *Poet's Homes* (1877) and *Under the Evening Lamp* (1892) represent his critical work. No biography has appeared, and one must consult his autobiographical *Recollections, Personal and Literary* (1903), ed. Ripley Hitchcock, for information. Other studies are H. C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-day* (1894), 275–287; J. L. and J. B. Gilder, eds., *Authors at Home* (1889), 293–312; E. C. Stedman, *Genius and Other Essays* (1911), 141–153; F. W. Halsey, *American Authors and Their Homes* (1901).

## HYMN TO THE BEAUTIFUL

My heart is full of tenderness and tears,
And tears are in my eyes, I know not why,
With all my grief content to live for years,
Or even this hour to die.
My youth is gone, but that I heed not now,
My love is dead, or worse than dead can be,
My friends drop off, like blossoms from a bough,
But nothing troubles me,—
Only the golden flush of sunset lies
Within my heart like fire, like dew within my eyes.

Spirit of Beauty! whatsoe'er thou art,
I see thy skirt afar, and feel thy power;
It is thy presence fills this charmèd hour,
And fills my charmèd heart:
Nor mine alone, but myriads feel thee now,
That know not what they feel, nor why they bow.
Thou canst not be forgot,
For all men worship thee, and know it not;
Nor men alone, but babes with wondrous eyes,
Newcomers from the skies.

We hold the keys of Heaven within our hands,
The heirloom of a higher, happier state,
And lie in infancy at Heaven's gate,
Transfigured in the light that streams along the lands.
Around our pillows golden ladders rise,
And up and down the skies,
With wingèd sandals shod,
The angels come and go, the Messengers of God.
Nor, though they fade from us, do they depart—
It is the childly heart:
We walk as heretofore,
Adown their shining ranks, but see them nevermore.
Heaven is not gone, but we are blind with tears,
Groping our way along the downward slope of Years!

From earliest infancy my heart was thine,
With childish feet I trod thy temple aisles;
Not knowing tears, I worshipped thee with smiles,
Or if I wept it was with joy divine.
By day, and night, on land, and sea, and air,
I saw thee everywhere.

A voice of greeting from the wind was sent,
The mists enfolded me with soft white arms,
The birds did sing to lap me in content,
The rivers wove their charms,
And every little daisy in the grass
Did look up in my face, and smile to see me pass.

Not long can Nature satisfy the mind,
Nor outward fancies feed its inner flame;
We feel a growing want we cannot name,
And long for something sweet, but undefined.
The wants of Beauty other wants create,
Which overflow on others, soon or late;
For all that worship thee must ease the heart,
By Love, or Song, or Art.
Divinest Melancholy walks with thee,
And Music with her sister Poesy;
But on thy breast Love lies, immortal child,
Begot of thine own longings, deep and wild;
The more we worship him the more we grow
Into thy perfect image here below;
For here below, as in the spheres above,
All Love is Beauty, and all Beauty—Love!
Not from the things around us do we draw
The love within, within the love is born,
Remembered light of some forgotten morn,
Recovered canons of eternal law.
The painter's picture, the rapt poet's song,
The sculptor's statue, never saw the Day—
Were never in colors, sounds, or shapes of clay,
Whose crowning work still does its spirit wrong.
Hue after hue divinest pictures grow,
Line after line immortal songs arise,
And limb by limb, out-starting stern and slow,
The statue wakes with wonder in its eyes:
And in the Master's mind
Sound after sound is born, and dies like wind,
That echoes through a range of ocean caves,
And straight is gone to weave its spell upon the waves.
The mystery is thine,
For thine the more mysterious human heart,
The Temple of all Wisdom, Beauty's Shrine,
The Oracle of Art!

Earth in thine outer court, and Life a breath,
Why should we fear to die, and leave the Earth?
Not thine alone the lesser key of Birth,
But all the keys of Death.
And all the worlds, with all that they contain
Of Life, and Death, and Time, are thine alone;
The Universe is girdled with a chain,
And hung below the Throne
Where Thou dost sit, the Universe to bless,
Thou sovereign Smile of God, Eternal Loveliness!

1852

## A SERENADE

The moon is muffled in a cloud,
That folds the lover's star,
But still beneath thy balcony
I touch my soft guitar.

If thou art waking, Lady dear,
The fairest in the land,
Unbar thy wreathèd lattice now,
And wave thy snowy hand.

She hears me not, her spirit lies
In trances mute and deep;
But Music has a golden key
That opes the gate of Sleep.

Then let her sleep, and if I fail
To set her spirit free,
My song will mingle in her dream,
And she will dream of me.

1852

## "THE YELLOW MOON LOOKS SLANTLY DOWN"

The yellow Moon looks slantly down,
Through seaward mists, upon the town;
And ghost-like there the moonshine falls
Between the dim and shadowy walls.

I see a crowd in every street,
But cannot hear their falling feet;
They float like clouds through shade and light,
And seem a portion of the Night.

The ships have lain for ages fled
Along the waters, dark and dead;
The dying waters wash no more
The long, black line of spectral shore.

There is no life on land or sea,
Save in the quiet Moon and me;
Nor ours is true, but only seems,
Within some dead old World of Dreams.

1852

## "ALONG THE GRASSY SLOPE I SIT"

ALONG the grassy slope I sit,
And dream of other years;
My heart is full of soft regrets,
My eyes of tender tears.

The wild bees hummed about the spot,
The sheep-bells tinkled far,
Last year when Alice sat with me,
Beneath the evening star.

The same sweet star is o'er me now,
Around the same soft hours,
But Alice moulders in the dust
With all the last year's flowers.

I sit alone, and only hear
The wild bees on the steep,
And distant bells that seem to float
From out the folds of Sleep.

1852

## PERSIA

WE parted in the streets of Ispahan.
I stopped my camel at the city gate;
Why did I stop? I left my heart behind.

I heard the sighing of thy garden palms,
I saw the roses burning up with love,
I saw thee not: thou wert no longer there.

We parted in the streets of Ispahan.
A moon has passed since that unhappy day;
It seems an age: the days are long as years.

I send thee gifts by every caravan,
I send thee flasks of attar, spices, pearls,
I write thee loving songs on golden scrolls.

I meet the caravans when they return.
"What news?" I ask. The drivers shake their heads.
We parted in the streets of Ispahan.

1857

## OUT TO SEA

THE wind is blowing east,
And the waves are running free;
Let's hoist the sail at once,
And stand out to sea,
(You and me.)
I am growing more and more
A-weary of the shore;
It was never so before—
Out to sea!

The wind is blowing east,
How it swells the straining sail!
A little further out
We shall have a jolly gale.
(Cling to me.)
The waves are running high,
And the gulls, how they fly!
We shall only see the sky
Out to sea!

The wind is blowing east
From the dark and bloody shore,
Where flash a million swords,
And the dreadful cannon roar.
(Woe is me!)
There's a curse upon the land,
(Is that blood upon my hand?)
What *can* we do but stand
Out to sea?

1871

## SONGS UNSUNG

LET no poet, great or small,
Say that he will sing a song;
For Song cometh, if at all,
Not because we woo it long,
But because it suits its will,
Tired at last of being still.

Every song that has been sung
  Was before it took a voice,
Waiting since the world was young
  For the poet of its choice.
O, if any waiting be,
May they come to-day to me!

I am ready to repeat
  Whatsoever they impart;
Sorrows sent by them are sweet,
  They know how to heal the heart:
Ay, and in the lightest strain
Something serious doth remain.

What are my white hairs, forsooth,
  And the wrinkles on my brow?
I have still the soul of youth,
  Try me, merry Muses, now.
I can still with numbers fleet
Fill the world with dancing feet.

No, I am no longer young,
  Old am I this many a year;
But my songs will yet be sung,
  Though I shall not live to hear.
O my son that is to be,
Sing my songs, and think of me!

1880

## A ROSE SONG

WHY are red roses red?
  For roses once were white.
Because the loving nightingales
  Sang on their thorns all night,
Sang till the blood they shed
Had dyed the roses red.

Why are white roses white?
  For roses once were red.
Because the sorrowing nightingales
  Wept when the night was fled,
Wept till their tears of light
Had washed the roses white.

Why are the roses sweet?
  For once they had no scent.
Because one day the Queen of Love
  Who to Adonis went
Brushed them with heavenly feet—
*That* made the roses sweet!

1880

## BRAHMA'S ANSWER[1]

ONCE when the days were ages,
  And the old Earth was young,
The high gods and the sages
From Nature's golden pages
  Her open secrets wrung.
  Each questioned each to know
Whence came the Heavens above, and whence the Earth below.

Indra,[2] the endless giver
  Of every gracious thing
The gods to him deliver,
Whose bounty is the river
  Of which they are the spring,
  Indra, with anxious heart,
Ventures with Vivochuno where Brahma is apart.

"Brahma! Supremest Being![3]
  By whom the worlds are made,
Where we are blind, all-seeing,
Stable, where we are fleeing,
  Of Life and Death afraid,
  Instruct us, for mankind,
What is the body, Brahma! O Brahma, what the mind?"

Hearing as though he heard not,
  So perfect was his rest,
So vast the Soul that erred not,
So wise the lips that stirred not,
  His hand upon his breast
  He laid, whereat his face
Was mirrored in the river that girt that holy Place.

They questioned each the other
  What Brahma's answer meant.
Said Vivochuno, "Brother,
Through Brahma the great Mother
  Hath spoken her intent,
  Man ends as he began—
The shadow on the water is all there is of Man."

[1] See Emerson's "Brahma." [2] a god in Vedic theology [3] The Sanskrit neuter noun *Brâhma* signified the universal soul; the masculine *Brahmâ*, the supreme God.

"The Earth with woe is cumbered,
And no man understands:
They see their days are numbered
By one that never slumbered,
Nor stayed his dreadful hands,
*I* see with Brahma's eyes,
The body is the shadow that on the water lies."

Thus Indra, looking deeper,
With Brahma's self possessed.
So dry thine eyes, thou weeper,
And rise again, thou sleeper!
The hand on Brahma's breast
Is his divine assent,
Covering the soul that dies not. This is what Brahma meant.

1880

## 1841 ~ *Edward Rowland Sill* ~ 1887

OUTWARDLY Sill's life was uneventful. Born in Connecticut, of a family whose forebears belonged to the professional class, he was educated at Yale, engaged in business in California, and later studied at the Harvard Divinity School. For a year he was literary critic on the staff of a New York newspaper. In 1868 he became a teacher, first in a district school in Ohio, later in the Oakland, California, High School, and still later in the University of California. Ill health compelled him to resign his position in 1882, and he returned to Ohio to spend the remainder of his life.

On the surface it seems as though poetry had been a secondary interest with Sill, for he speaks of himself as "a teacher who occasionally wrote verses." But it does not follow that he was for that reason a careless, indifferent, or apologetic artist. A collection of the essays, published after his death, in which he stated his critical principles, is indisputable evidence that he thought seriously about the problems of art and literature. The most important items may be summarized briefly. Art does not merely reproduce human experience; along with its representative function it must also communicate the author's thought and feeling in such a way that the art product satisfies the craving for a more abundant life. Its greatness is measured by its "life-giving" power: that is, the power to awaken vital thoughts and emotions which in themselves stimulate man to higher being and achievement. Of all the arts poetry is the greatest, because it contains the elements of what he called the lower arts, and is besides the most expressive. Beauty, which must characterize all art, is that quality or capacity which arouses "increased activity" of mind and feelings. Indeed, the very core and essence of beauty is this power to stimulate, the direct antithesis of the soothing and soporific quality so frequently associated with it. Art must be vigorous and vital.

Sill's poetry shows its rootage in New England tradition as well as the influence of the youthful West. It bears the flavor of Transcendentalism, and also remotely

anticipates Robinson and Frost. It falls into three stages, characterized respectively by sensuous quality, irony and ethics, and a fuller, surer art. "The Fool's Prayer" is most widely known, while "Opportunity" is scarcely less notable. The poems create an optimism which drives its roots deep into high-minded courage, faith, hope, and work.

Sill's poetry is available in *The Poems of Edward Rowland Sill*, Household Edition (1906). *The Prose of Edward Rowland Sill* was published in 1900. W. B. Parker's *Edward Rowland Sill: His Life and Work* (1915) is the standard biography. For shorter studies see "Why Not a Masterpiece," *Atlantic*, June, 1909; N. Arvin, "The Failure of E. R. Sill," *Bookman*, LXXII, 581–589 (Feb., 1931); E. L. Baker, "Edward Rowland Sill, Poet-Teacher," *Overland Monthly*, LXXXIII, 154–155, 175–176 (April, 1925); *DAB*, XVII; A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929), 183–192; E. S. Phelps, "Edward Rowland Sill," *Century*, Sept., 1888; and "The Late Prof. Sill," *Critic*, May 30, 1891.

## THE FOOL'S PRAYER

First published in the *Atlantic*, April, 1879. Josiah Royce (*The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, 1892) points out that in this poem Sill shows how the willfulness of men and fortune, accident and stupidity, are responsible for life's tragedies and the frequent threats to its ideals and deeper spirituality.

The royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heartstrings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

1879

## FIVE LIVES

Five mites of monads dwelt in a round drop
That twinkled on a leaf by a pool in the sun.
To the naked eye they lived invisible;
Specks, for a world of whom the empty shell
Of a mustard-seed had been a hollow sky.

One was a meditative monad, called a sage;
And, shrinking all his mind within, he thought:
"Tradition, handed down for hours and hours,
Tells that our globe, this quivering crystal world,
Is slowly dying. What if, seconds hence,

When I am very old, yon shimmering dome
Come drawing down and down, till all things end?"
Then with a weazen smirk he proudly felt
No other mote of God had ever gained
Such giant grasp of universal truth.

One was a transcendental monad; thin
And long and slim in the mind; and thus he mused:
"Oh, vast, unfathomable monad-souls!
Made in the image"—a hoarse frog croaks from the pool—
"Hark! 'twas some god, voicing his glorious thought
In thunder music! Yea, we hear their voice,
And we may guess their minds from ours, their work.
Some taste they have like ours, some tendency
To wriggle about, and munch a trace of scum."
He floated up on a pin-point bubble of gas
That burst, pricked by the air, and he was gone.

One was a barren-minded monad, called
A positivist; and he knew positively:
"There is no world beyond this certain drop.
Prove me another! Let the dreamers dream
Of their faint dreams, and noises from without,
And higher and lower; life is life enough."
Then swaggering half a hair's breadth, hungrily
He seized upon an atom of bug, and fed.

One was a tattered monad, called a poet;
And with shrill voice ecstatic thus he sang:
"Oh, the little female monad's lips!
Oh, the little female monad's eyes:
Ah, the little, little, female, female monad!"

The last was a strong-minded monadess,
Who dashed amid the infusoria,
Danced high and low, and wildly spun and dove
Till the dizzy others held their breath to see.

But while they led their wondrous little lives
Æonian moments had gone wheeling by.
The burning drop had shrunk with fearful speed;
A glistening film—'twas gone; the leaf was dry.
The little ghost of an inaudible squeak
Was lost to the frog that goggled from his stone;
Who, at the huge, slow tread of a thoughtful ox
Coming to drink, stirred sideways fatly, plunged,
Launched backward twice, and all the pool was still.

1883

## 1833 ~ *Edmund Clarence Stedman* ~ 1908

STEDMAN was a direct descendant of Isaac Stedman, who settled in Scituate, Massachusetts, in 1636. A grandson emigrated to Connecticut and became the founder of the "Connecticut line," to which the poet belonged. After his father's early death Edmund prepared for college at the local academy, entered Yale in 1859, where he excelled in composition. For some high-spirited pranks he was rusticated and withdrew from the university at the end of his sophomore year. He engaged in journalistic work, undertook several business ventures, and in 1860, the year which saw the publication of his first volume of poetry, he joined the staff of the *Evening World*. For a year he served as war correspondent, and later as clerk in the office of the Attorney General in Washington. In 1863 he returned to New York, engaged in the

brokerage business, and entered the Stock Exchange in order to accumulate sufficient competence to enable him to pursue his literary interests. Because of reverses and periods of lagging health he never succeeded in freeing himself completely from the drudgery of business, and was compelled to do most of his writing in moments snatched from its driving demands.

To be sure, literature was his primary passion. In his work he held himself to the highest ideals and standards of which he was capable. By the time he was twenty-four he had formulated a definite theory of poetry which he elaborated in a long letter to his mother. The poet, he maintains, must be an eclectic and a universalist; he belongs to no school, is neither "spasmodic," nor "introspective," nor "philosophical," but indeed must be all three of them. The chief qualities of poetry are music, sensuousness, and artistry. His definition of poetry as "rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention, task, thoughts, passion and insight of the human soul," derives in a measure from Poe.

The same eclecticism guided him in his critical work. He followed the Manzoni–Goethe–Carlyle practices of asking whether the artist succeeded in carrying out his purpose. The answer spelled success or failure. A given piece of art is to be judged solely on the merit of its kind as a whole, and not on the basis of analysis or comparison with work outside its kind. The same principle holds in evaluating a given author. Art is to be enjoyed, and is to be condemned only after it falls short of the ideals set for it.

Although Stedman was virtually a literary dictator in his day, his reputation was doubtless greater than his merit. As a poet he belonged, with Stoddard, Taylor, and Aldrich, to that group of thin lyricists which flourished after the Civil War. They had very little to say, and said it with the most conscientious art, their chief aim and concern being to achieve beauty and perfection of form. In such poems as "Pan in Wall Street" and "Alice of Monmouth" Stedman rose above the general level of his group. His workmanship is for the most part impeccable, but this is scarcely sufficient recompense to balance the general lack of warmth and real vitality in his poetry. Although he wrote on contemporary themes, the tumultuous events and issues of the Civil War seldom stirred him to a pitch of passion.

Stedman was regarded as the leading critic of his time. His most important critical works were widely read and accepted. And this in spite of the fact that he spoke with no weighty authority, possessed no unusual gift of insight and no rare intellectual acumen. In fact, one wonders whether he had any equipment to mark him as a great critic. But he was representative of the "genteel" taste of his day, a quality which undoubtedly did much to counterbalance his shortcomings, and which to a large degree explains his reputation.

As a critic he was rather soft-spoken. He read poetry widely and wisely, and could communicate his enjoyment and appreciation in an infectious manner, but in

the discussion of the underlying intellectual and philosophical tendencies he seemed to be at sea. Nor does his diffuse style make for pointed critical discussion. He did, however, in spite of his limitations, free literature from puritanical restraints, and lifted criticism from the moral to the aesthetic realm. The chapter on Whitman in *Poets of America* illustrates Stedman's criticism at its best.

The New Household Edition is a complete collection of his poems. The prose works include *Victorian Poets* (1876); *Poets of America* (1885); *The Nature and Elements of Poetry* (1892); *Genius and Other Essays* (1911). With Ellen M. Hutchinson he edited *A Library of American Literature from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (11 vols., 1889–90); with G. E. Woodberry, *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (10 vols., 1894–95); *A Victorian Anthology* (1895); *An American Anthology* (1900). For biography consult L. Stedman and G. M. Gould, *Life and Letters of Edmund Clarence Stedman* (2 vols., 1910). "Selections from the Literary Correspondence of Edmund Clarence Stedman" appeared in *Magazine of History*, Sept.–Oct., 1917. Shorter studies, biographical and critical: *DAB*, XVII; F. W. Halsey, *American Authors and Their Homes* (1901); H. W. Boynton, "Presiding Genius of American Letters," *Putnam's Magazine*, June, 1908; E. L. Masters, "Poetry Revival of 1914 in the Light of Stedman's Earlier Judgments," *American Mercury*, July, 1932; C. B. Tinker, "Pan in Wall Street," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dec. 23, 1933; M. Fuller, *A New England Childhood* (1916); G. E. DeMille, *Literary Criticism in America* (1931); T. Dreiser, "Edmund Clarence Stedman at Home," *Munsey's*, Nov., 1899; T. W. Higginson, *Carlyle's Laugh and Other Surprises* (1909); J. P. Pritchard, "Stedman and Horatian Criticism," *American Literature*, May, 1933; C. Ticknor, *Glimpses of Authors* (1922); W. C. Wilkinson, *Some New Literary Valuations* (1909); H. C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-Day* (1894); J. J. Pratt, "Mr. Stedman's Poetry," *Atlantic*, March, 1878; J. L. and J. B. Gilder, eds., *Authors at Home* (1889).

## WANTED—A MAN

The North, early in the Civil War, was clamoring for military victories. General McClellan was censured and displaced for slow and methodical preparations, and most of his successors were incompetent. Stedman here gives voice to the popular impatience and criticism which greatly harassed Lincoln.

BACK from the trebly crimsoned field
Terrible words are thunder-tost;
Full of the wrath that will not yield,
Full of revenge for battles lost!
Hark to their echo, as it crost
The Capital, making faces wan:
"End this murderous holocaust;
Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN!

"Give us a man of God's own mould,
Born to marshal his fellow-men;
One whose fame is not bought and sold
At the stroke of a politician's pen;
Give us the man of thousands ten,
Fit to do as well as to plan;
Give us a rallying-cry, and then,
Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN!

"No leader to shirk the boasting foe,
And to march and countermarch our brave,
Till they fall like ghosts in the marshes low,
And swamp-grass covers each nameless grave;
Nor another, whose fatal banners wave
Aye in Disaster's shameful van;
Nor another, to bluster, and lie, and rave;—
Abraham Lincoln give us a MAN!

"Hearts are mourning in the North,
While the sister rivers seek the main,
Red with our lifeblood flowing forth,—
Who shall gather it up again?
Though we march to the battle-plain
Firmly as when the strife began,
Shall all our offering be in vain?—
Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN!

"Is there never one in all the land,
  One on whose might the Cause may lean?
Are all the common ones so grand,
  And all the titled ones so mean?
  What if your failure may have been
In trying to make good bread from bran,
  From worthless metal a weapon keen?—
Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN!

"O, we will follow him to the death,
  Where the foeman's fiercest columns are!
O, we will use our latest breath,
  Cheering for every sacred star!
  His to marshal us high and far;
Ours to battle, as patriots can
  When a Hero leads the Holy War!—
Abraham Lincoln, give us a MAN!"

1862

## "THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY"

COULD we but know
The land that ends our dark, uncertain travel,
  Where lie those happier hills and meadows low,—
Ah, if beyond the spirit's inmost cavil,
  Aught of that country could we surely know,
    Who would not go?

  Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
  Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear,
One radiant vista of the realm before us,—
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
    Ah, who would fear?

  Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
  Or there, by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were lovelit only,—
  This weary mortal coil, were we quite sure,
    Who would endure?

*1865* 1866

## PAN IN WALL STREET

A.D. 1867

**First published in the *Atlantic*, January, 1867. The author speaks of the poem as a rhapsody. It is interesting to note the contrast between the old-world and the new-world atmospheres.**

JUST where the Treasury's marble front
  Looks over Wall Street's mingled nations;
Where Jews and Gentiles most are wont
  To throng for trade and last quotations;
Where, hour by hour, the rates of gold
  Outrival, in the ears of people,
The quarter-chimes, serenely tolled
  From Trinity's undaunted steeple,—

Even there I heard a strange, wild strain
  Sound high above the modern clamor,
Above the cries of greed and gain,
  The curbstone war, the auction's hammer;
And swift, on Music's misty ways,
  It led, from all this strife for millions,
To ancient, sweet-do-nothing days
  Among the kirtle-robed Sicilians.

And as it stilled the multitude,
  And yet more joyous rose, and shriller,
I saw the minstrel, where he stood
  At ease against a Doric pillar:
One hand a droning organ played,
  The other held a Pan's-pipe (fashioned
Like those of old) to lips that made
  The reeds give out that strain impassioned.

'Twas Pan himself had wandered here
  A-strolling through this sordid city,
And piping to the civic ear
  The prelude of some pastoral ditty!
The demigod had crossed the seas,—
  From haunts of shepherd, nymph, and satyr,
And Syracusan times,—to these
  Far shores and twenty centuries later.

A ragged cap was on his head;
  But—hidden thus—there was no doubting
That, all with crispy locks o'erspread,
  His gnarlèd horns were somewhere sprouting;
His club-feet, cased in rusty shoes,
  Were crossed, as on some frieze you see them,
And trousers, patched of divers hues,
  Concealed his crooked shanks beneath them.

He filled the quivering reeds with sound;
  And o'er his mouth their changes shifted,
And with his goat's-eyes looked around
  Where'er the passing current drifted;

And soon, as on Trinacrian hills
The nymphs and herdsmen ran to hear him,
Even now the tradesmen from their tills,
With clerks and porters, crowded near him.

The bulls and bears together drew
From Jauncey Court and New Street Alley,
As erst, if pastorals be true,
Came beasts from every wooded valley;
The random passers stayed to list,—
A boxer Ægon, rough and merry,
A Broadway Daphnis, on his tryst
With Nais at the Brooklyn Ferry.

A one-eyed Cyclops halted long
In tattered cloak of army pattern,
And Galatea joined the throng,—
A blowsy, apple-vending slattern;
While old Silenus staggered out
From some new-fangled lunch-house handy,
And bade the piper, with a shout,
To strike up Yankee Doodle Dandy!

A newsboy and a peanut-girl
Like little Fauns began to caper:
His hair was all in tangled curl,
Her tawny legs were bare and taper;
And still the gathering larger grew,
And gave its pence and crowded nigher,
While aye the shepherd-minstrel blew
His pipe, and struck the gamut higher.

O heart of Nature, beating still
With throbs her vernal passion taught her,—
Even here, as on the vine-clad hill,
Or by the Arethusan water!
New forms may fold the speech, new lands
Arise within these ocean-portals,
But Music waves eternal wands,—
Enchantress of the souls of mortals!

So thought I,—but among us trod
A man in blue, with legal baton,
And scoffed the vagrant demigod,
And pushed him from the step I sat on.
Doubting I mused upon the cry,
"Great Pan is dead!"—and all the people
Went on their ways:—and clear and high
The quarter sounded from the steeple.

1866 1867

## LIBERTY ENLIGHTENING THE WORLD

WARDER at ocean's gate,
Thy feet on sea and shore,
Like one the skies await
When time shall be no more!
What splendors crown thy brow?
What bright dread angel Thou,
Dazzling the waves before
Thy station great?

"My name is Liberty!
From out a mighty land
I face the ancient sea,
I lift to God my hand;
By day in Heaven's light,
A pillar of fire by night,
At ocean's gate I stand
Nor bend the knee.

"The dark Earth lay in sleep,
Her children crouched forlorn,
Ere on the western steep
I sprang to height, reborn:
Then what a joyous shout
The quickened lands gave out,
And all the choir of morn
Sang anthems deep.

"Beneath yon firmament,
The New World to the Old
My sword and summons sent,
My azure flag unrolled:
The Old World's hands renew
Their strength; the form ye view
Came from a living mould
In glory bent.

"O ye, whose broken spars
Tell of the storms ye met,
Enter! fear not the bars
Across your pathway set;
Enter at Freedom's porch,
For you I lift my torch,
For you my coronet
Is rayed with stars.

"But ye that hither draw
To desecrate my fee,
Nor yet have held in awe
The justice that makes free,—

Avaunt, ye darkling brood!
By Right my house hath stood:
My name is Liberty,
My throne is Law."

O wonderful and bright,
Immortal Freedom, hail!
Front, in thy fiery might,
The midnight and the gale;
Undaunted on this base
Guard well thy dwelling-place:
Till the last sun grow pale
Let there be light!

1886

## HYMN OF THE WEST

Written as the official hymn for the World's Fair at St. Louis in 1904. The music was composed by John Knowles Paine.

O THOU, whose glorious orbs on high
Engird the earth with splendor round,
From out thy secret place draw nigh
The courts and temples of this ground;
Eternal Light,
Fill with thy might
These domes that in thy purpose grew,
And lift a nation's heart anew!

Illumine Thou each pathway here,
To show the marvels God hath wrought!
Since first thy people's chief and seer
Looked up with that prophetic thought,
Bade Time unroll
The fateful scroll,
And empire unto Freedom gave
From cloudland height to tropic wave.

Poured through the gateways of the North
Thy mighty rivers join their tide,
And, on the wings of morn sent forth,
Their mists the far-off peaks divide.
By Thee unsealed,
The mountains yield
Ores that the wealth of Ophir shame,
And gems enwrought of seven-hued flame.

Lo, through what years the soil hath lain
At thine own time to give increase—
The greater and the lesser grain,
The ripening boll, the myriad fleece!
Thy creatures graze
Appointed ways;
League after league across the land
The ceaseless herds obey thy hand.

Thou, whose high archways shine most clear
Above the plenteous Western plain,
Thine ancient tribes from round the sphere
To breathe its quickening air are fain:
And smiles the sun
To see made one
Their brood throughout Earth's greenest space,
Land of the new and lordlier race!

1904

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## *From* POETS OF AMERICA

### *Early and Recent Conditions*

*Poets of America* is one of Stedman's most important critical works. The selections (sections I and II of Chapter I) throw light on his critical and artistic theory.

I

IT is my design to trace the current of poesy, deepening and widening in common with our streams of riches, knowledge, and power; to show an influence upon the national sentiment no less potent, if less obvious, than that derived from the historic records of our past; to watch the first dawning upon an eager people of "the happy, heavenly vision men call Art"; to observe closely and to set down with an honest hand our foremost illustrations of the Rise of Poetry in America. Such is my purpose, and I deem it not a mean one. We think of power and wealth as things in themselves, but they are strong and rich only in their relations to the life of man. The essential part of that life is in his spirit, of which imagination is the king,—and the sister arts, with poetry at their front, are to be accounted its highest forms of expression.

The song of a nation is accepted as an ultimate test of the popular spirit; as the earliest form of speech and the ripest,—whether the

utterance of feelings common to all, or of the fine and daring speculations of the noblest minds. Examine it, and form opinions of the country's general literature, of the hold upon art and action and scientific achievement. If we have seen a true poetic movement in America, we may be sure that we have had marches in other fields of progress. The inquiry concerning the genuineness and value of such a movement affords a title to this work, and a review of the conditions that have helped or hindered it must be included. Upon the method chosen for a study of the recent period in England, my present researches are devoted chiefly to the careers and productions of leading poets whose reputations are long-established, and who, upon the whole, fairly represent the various tendencies of American song. And thus, incidentally and with fresh opportunities, we may extend our knowledge of "the aim and province of the art of Poetry," and obtain under a new atmosphere further illustrations of the poetic temperament and life.

The subject cannot be lightly entered upon, and as if for entertainment merely. Properly considered, there is no more suggestive undertaking than to review the first displays of lyrical genius in a land as notable as any upon earth. These may seem crude and familiar to ourselves, and possibly are not fully estimated by older nations whose very age and glory make them self-contained. But, if the future is to have a greatness of its own, a study of New World poetry is of equal importance with that devoted to the earlier or contemporary verse of the mother-land. The reader, then, will do well to bear with the details of a prefatory analysis, though they lack that interest which adheres to the lives and works of the various poets to whom his attention will be invited. The points which I shall make will not be wholly novel, but by grouping them newly, and in a logical manner, we may get some notion of the real quality of the first genuine awakening of our home-song.

For that there has been such an awakening is the very cause and foundation of these essays, and if I did not perceive this fact I should have no excuse for their general endeavor. It is true that a nation's literature will not appear out of season. Poetry, its most spontaneous form, is a growth rather than an artifice, or it does not come to strengthen and to stay. Let me acknowledge, as heretofore, the bearing of the conditions under which it is produced, and that a poet must be viewed in the light and shadow of his environment; furthermore, that when a time is ripe there are found both idealists and men of action to represent it,—springing up as when, in the physical world, the pines and fir-trees of a virgin forest have been cleared away, and a novel flora suddenly appears, whose germs have been hidden in the undermould, awaiting their own season of room and light and air. But let me also, and at present no less than in our foreign excursions, include a factor which the new criticism often overlooks. Too little allowance is made for the surprises of genius. We forget that now and then some personage comes without a summons, like a stray leader from the skies; that works appear under adverse circumstances, so new, so strong, so revolutionary, as to seem inspired creations,—men and works that overleap the stages of development, that demand the spiritual factor, the personal equation, the allowance for exception, in the problem of national growth. In the absence of a sunlit atmosphere, they shine by inward light, and communicate heat and lustre to their surroundings. When a link in the chain of evolution is missing, such are the forces that make up for it. But there are other forces, and certain modes of intellectual effort, which assist growth and somewhat forestall the ordinary process. Even criticism may do a share, and often by penetrative study of the leaders that reflect or stimulate the various tendencies of a people's ideality. Of course a poet must represent his age and habitat; a Grecian temple beside an Alleghanian troutbrook might be lovely, but surely would be out of place and date. It is now my province to discover what special aids the poets of America have experienced, and what hindrances. In no modern country has ideality been more retarded than in our own; and I think that certain restrictions have peculiarly limited production in the field of Poetry,—the chief or imaginative arts. Yet I see that, in spite of these, the ultimate rise of an American school of poetry was swift and strong, and that its chiefs have had their aids no less than their ob-

stacles, and have bravely confronted the latter. And thus we are brought directly to the preliminary issue.

II

Much has been written of late upon the topic of our native literature. Is there a distinctly American school? If not, when and where shall we look for one? What are, or should be, its special characteristics? These and similar questions are frequently and somewhat vaguely discussed.

Now, it is first to be observed that the radical quality of any national school, in any country or period, does not wholly depend upon the types, personages, localities, and other materials utilized by its artists and men of letters; and this is especially true with regard to the work of a poet, in distinction from that of a painter. The specific tone of the former artist is not derived from the images which his genius informs with life, and from the plots that serve his expression of the thought, passion, imagination, of his people and time. Mere reliance upon these will not suffice. Even a painter might devote his life to copying the groups he finds in his own streets, the streets themselves, and the fields and woods beyond them, yet not produce an original art, nor execute it in a fresh and native way. The mere dialect and legends of a province or section are powerless to convey their essential quality to the song of a poet who calls them to his aid. Mr. Grant White, therefore, was perfectly right when he suggested, for these and other reasons, that it is the spirit, not the letter, which giveth life; that we must pay regard to the flavor, rather than to the form and color, of the fruit,—to the distinctive character, not the speech and aspect, of the personage. Unless the feeling of our home-poet be novel, his vision a fresh and distinctive vision,—unless these are radically different from the French, or German, or even the English feeling and vision,—they are not American, and our time has not yet come.

But I am not with this distinguished writer in his further claim that we still are essentially English, and shall be so for a long series of years to come; that our literature, like the language we inherit, is wholly English, and must remain so for centuries, until "Anglo-Saxon and Hollander and German and Irishman and Negro and Chinese shall have so blended their blood . . . that from the fusion a new race shall have sprung." What I first call to mind is that there are few Americans, even those of but one remove, who are not instantly recognized abroad as being very different from Englishmen, not only with respect to feature, mould, and speech,—which vary according to the sections from which they come,—but in their sentiment, modes of thought and feeling, and way of looking at things. In both outward and inward traits they are pronounced distinctively un-English and "American," however divided among themselves. Again, by so much as the style is the man, I believe that the literary product of this new people differs from the literary product of the English, or any other people of the Old World, and I hope to make that difference clear in the course of these chapters. And I will remark, in passing, that "The Scarlet Letter," a romance which Mr. White cited in illustration, to me appears thoroughly un-English in its mystical temper, and its undertone and atmosphere; if not broadly American, it is locally so,—the fruit and outgiving of the New England sentiment that brooded in its author's spirit, and of which it is a soul-wrought witness and dramatic chronicle.

In fine, recognizing the error of those who, by a forced effort, would anticipate creations that will commonly of themselves, or through the natural impulse of foreordained artists, I also perceive that already, in various walks of art, and in none more than in that to which our present study is devoted, we have exhibited the new and broad results, both of acclimation and of a blending process, to which the ruling divisions of our population thus far have been subjected. Equally obvious are the minor distinctive phases, which, on the other hand, arise from the differentiation of the American people by influences that, in widely separated districts, have acted upon their inhabitants from the early settlements to the present time. The first-named phenomena are national, while those of the latter class may be termed sectional; but all are American, whether they appertain to the whole, or to the subdivisions, of our intellectual yield.

The type first suggested, that of a broadly national character, is plainly incomplete, and has wide room for maturer development. Let us measure it only at its worth. A restless and ill-adjusted spirit still pervades the heterogeneous elements of our nationality. Here is a country as large as all Europe, embracing zones as far apart, in physical attributes, as those of Norway and Sicily. Here are the emigrants or descendants of every people in Europe,—to go no farther,—and all their languages, and customs, and traditions, and modes of feeling, at one time or another, have come with them. Hence our unconscious habitude of variety, the disinclination to cling to one way of life or thought until its perfect conclusion. There is a ferment in new blood. The American travels, and at first is delighted with the color and flavor of the region to which he has come, but soon wearies of them, and pushes on to some new place where novel characteristics can be enjoyed. This is observable of all Anglo-Saxons, capricious yet steadfast as they are, but more so among ourselves than with respect to our British kinsmen. America has absorbed the traits of many lands and people; the currents still set this way; our modern intercourse with the world at large is close and unintermitting, so that the raw ingredients of our national admixture are supplied quite as rapidly as the whirl and stir of the popular system can triturate and commingle them. It is too much, then, to expect that our art or song, from whatever section either may come, will exhibit a quality specifically American in the sense that the product of Italy is Italian, or that of France is French. At this distance, we who watch others as we are watched ourselves can readily see that the same causes which make our civilization assume the composite type are blending the politics, manners, dress, art, and letters of the several European countries,—and this, however distinct their nationalities, in proportion to the growth of travel and interculture. But the United States are homogeneous in what pertains to the language and methods of their master-race, and to this extent their homogeneity is definitely assured. Concerning the primal influences that affect the general tone of art and literature, mutual communication and understanding are so perfect that any changes or advances are almost simultaneous throughout our territory. This being the situation, foreign critics are not far wrong in requiring that our home-product shall differ from their own; that it shall be, at least, un-European,—manifestly of the New World, and not of the Old. Return to a consideration of the family likeness, physical and mental, which instantly is apparent to others as we visit the motherland. If we ourselves are unconscious of it, or wonted to it; if the air and fashion that we display seem to us imperceptible or of small account, they are not so regarded by our kinsmen, or by the guest who lands upon these shores. The stranger quickly perceives, and holds at its value, the general, the national, type. Material and psychological changes are correlative, and almost equally sure of external recognition.

So far, therefore, from demanding absolute novelty in structure, language, or theme, of our home-poet, it is the duty of the critic to value the Americanism which great and small have displayed in quality of tone, and in faithful expression of the dominant popular moods. Thus considered, it will be found they have not fallen short. Those arbiters of foreign taste who do not acknowledge this may be suspected of some unconscious insincerity. Not every mother as fair and ripe as England, however affectionate, can look with perfect complacence upon a daughter growing to her own height and beauty before the world. To her eyes the maiden is still a child, and she owns with reluctance and very slowly that child's attractiveness and the claims of her suitors. One by one the points of youth and inferiority, brought against America, have worn away, and now, when so many of us grant England this last defence of her supremacy, it is with the respect due a mother, and with a courtesy perchance no less insincere than her avowal. The new Americanism is not so modest as to surrender any freehold or to be unconscious of its smallest advantages.

The less essential novelties of structure, theme, and dialect already are discernible in the yield that represents our territorial subdivision. The local flavor of our *genre* and provincial literature has long been unquestioned, but our conceit was not overfed by

an acknowledgment almost wholly due to grotesque and humorous exploits,—a welcome such as a prince in his breathing-hour might give to a new-found jester or clown. American poetry, however, has not represented the popular life of our continental slopes and corners merely in their coarser traits. These sections are not so isolated as the Scottish highlands, or as those mountain nooks in Italy, where peasant women contentedly whirl the spindle, and never visit the plains that glisten below; yet some of them are long-settled and have an abiding population, with habits more or less confirmed. Where there is the least of change and interruption, and the colonial blood is most unmixed, the national *ennui* does not prevail; the sentiment and instinct of the people, if limited, are clearly understood, and have been fairly expressed in poetry and prose romance.

In a certain sense, it is natural for the citizen of so vast and various a country to find his patriotism and his gift of expression respond most easily to the appeals of his own locality. There is still a lagging behind full nationality, just as Federal supremacy, in the hearts of a great multitude, gives precedence to "state rights." Yet there are signs of growth toward an imagination in keeping with our political enlargement. The new Americanism, with relation to literature and the arts of beauty and construction, is seen in the very search for it, in the closer inspection of our own ground, in our more realistic method, in the genuine quality of our modern poetry and creative prose, so much more indigenous than the work of the Neo-Romantic English school, and presenting so fresh a contrast to the poetry and prose of our early periods; finally, in the greater value set upon our homeworkers, upon our ventures for ourselves. It is curious to note the minor symptoms of this change. As time has lessened our yearning for the mother-country, native Americans less fondly cling to the old words and traditions. The landlords who cater to foreign or provincial guests still give English and French names to their hotels, and a fresh English colony, after the manner of our ancestors, calls its village Rugby; but the reproach of this barrenness of nomenclature is fast passing away, and the time has come when the declaration of our independence may be made to include the fields of literature and art.

And indeed, if art, under the free system of a democracy, does not show in time as proud a result—whether in the product of its disciples or in the wealth of its libraries and museums—as in countries where it is fed by governmental patronage and subsidies, then our republicanism, upon its aesthetic side, is itself a failure. So far as poetry is concerned, I see that we have already had the first period of what may be called, for want of a better term, a true American school. I see that this school was slow to rise, until suddenly a number of its leaders appeared at once; that its first tuneful season has been completed, so that, in the temporary pause, we now, for the first time, may honestly recount its triumphs. But that our lyrical product has not been so obvious as our material grandeur, that it has put on a national type less complete than the types of various sections, that it has been but a delightful promise of what a new song will create for us when poetry comes in vogue again throughout the world,—this, too, is not to be gainsaid. Before examining what we have done, let us see what we have not been able to do until recently, and what not at all. It is time to indicate the early and later restrictions that have hemmed in the poets, and limited the poetry, of the Western world.

1885

# 1836 ~ *Thomas Bailey Aldrich* ~ 1907

ALTHOUGH of New England birth and parentage, Aldrich really belongs to the group of Middle States poets of which Stedman, Gilder, and Bayard Taylor were prominent members. Born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the boy was taken to New Orleans where his father was engaged in business. Because of inadequate school facilities he was sent to his native Portsmouth to fit himself for Harvard. Straitened financial circumstances, however, made a college course impossible. Instead he took a position in his uncle's counting house in New York. In 1861 he served for a brief period as a war correspondent. During the next twenty years he wrote incessantly, published numerous volumes of prose and verse, and was on the editorial staff of the *Home Journal* and *Saturday Press* in New York, and the *Illustrated News* and *Every Saturday* in Boston. From 1881 to 1890 he was editor-in-chief of the *Atlantic Monthly*, then owned by the veteran publisher, J. R. Osgood. The remaining years were spent in extensive travel, and occasional writing,—years in all ways happy, but for the death of his son. This tragedy seemed to paralyze his creative power, and although he tried to recover his emotional poise he manifested little further interest in literary endeavor.

Aldrich reached the height of his powers during the barren poetic period following the Civil War, when "our old singers have pretty much lost their voices, and the new singers are so few." It might be added that the voices of the latter were thin and piping. In his early career, especially, he was more concerned about style than about thought. "Many a light fancy is immortal because of its perfect wording." Holmes called him an "epicure in words," and warned him against the danger of becoming "a verbal voluptuary." He strove for clearness, regarded obscurity as a kind of stupidity, and cultivated an impersonal attitude which helped him to guard against mere "fine writing," a fault to which he confessed he was inclined. It is quite clear that he was out of sympathy with the new realistic movement of his later years, for he said of his dog, "If he had written realistic novels and 'poems' I could understand 'the deep damnation of his taking off.'" In his novels the guiding principle was that characters should be allowed to develop themselves by what they say, instead of being analyzed endlessly, a principle to which he adhered consistently.

Like some of his contemporaries Aldrich began by imitating other poets. Tennyson, Longfellow, and Poe were among his masters. Even after he cut the towing cables and launched out into the deep independently, he did not entirely overcome the habits and ideas of his youth. He achieved an impressionistic effect of beauty, which at times dwindled to mere prettiness, frequently thin and shallow, but sen-

suously vivid and memorable. Much of his verse seems bodiless and superficial, and it was only after he became interested in some of the pressing social problems that it began to acquire a somewhat tougher texture. Interested in polished and "delicate phrasing," indifferent to profound, or metaphysical, thought, "he immortalized," as Greenslet says, "the moment's exquisite pang of memory or joy or foreboding."

As a prose writer the fame of Aldrich has undergone a noticeable decline. His novels are seldom read. Of his short stories *Marjorie Daw* (1873) finds occasional favor. But in *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1870) he has written a juvenile classic of undoubted merit. Some of his critical essays, including the essay on Herrick, are collected in *Ponkapog Papers* (1903).

The prose and poetry of Aldrich are available in the uniform Riverside Edition (9 vols., 1907); the poetry is also published in the Household Edition. Among his prose works are *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1870); *Marjorie Daw and Other People* (1873), a volume of short stories; *Prudence Palfrey* (1874); *The Queen of Sheba* (1877); *The Stillwater Tragedy* (1880); *Ponkapog Papers* (1903). For biography, see Ferris Greenslet, *Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich* (1908); Mrs. T. B. Aldrich, *Crowding Memories* (1920); T. B. Aldrich, *An Old Town by the Sea* (1893). For criticism and appreciation consult B. Perry, *Park Street Papers* (1908); P. E. More, *Shelburne Essays*, Seventh Series (1910); C. H. Grattan, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich," *American Mercury*, May, 1925; H. C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-Day* (1894); *DAB*, I; H. W. Boynton, "The Literary Work of Aldrich," *Putnam's Magazine*, June, 1907; F. W. Halsey, *American Authors and Their Homes* (1901); J. L. and J. B. Gilder, eds., *Authors at Home* (1889); E. W. Bowen, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich, A Decade After," *Methodist Review*, May, 1917; H. M. Alden, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich, 1836–1907," *Harper's Weekly*, April 6, 1907; A. Phelps, "The Value of Aldrich's Verse," *Atlantic*, August, 1907.

## HESPERIDES

If thy soul, Herrick,[1] dwelt with me,
This is what my songs would be:
Hints of our sea-breezes, blent
With odors from the Orient;
Indian vessels deep with spice;
Star-showers from the Norland ice;
Wine-red jewels that seem to hold
Fire, but only burn with cold;
Antique goblets, strangely wrought,
Filled with the wine of happy thought,
Bridal measures, vain regrets,
Laburnum buds and violets;
Hopeful as the break of day;
Clear as crystal; new as May;
Musical as brooks that run
O'er yellow shallows in the sun;
Soft as the satin fringe that shades
The eyelids of thy Devon maids;
Brief as thy lyrics, Herrick, are,
And polished as the bosom of a star.

1861

[1] Robert Herrick, English lyric poet of the seventeenth century, called his best-known collection of poems *Hesperides* (1648). Aldrich's poem suggests the appealing qualities of Herrick's work.

## BEFORE THE RAIN

We knew it would rain, for all the morn,
A spirit on slender ropes of mist
Was lowering its golden buckets down
Into the vapory amethyst

Of marshes and swamps and dismal fens—
Scooping the dew that lay in the flowers,
Dipping the jewels out of the sea,
To scatter them over the land in showers.

We knew it would rain, for the poplars showed
The white of their leaves, the amber grain
Shrunk in the wind—and the lightning now
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain!

1863

## ENAMORED ARCHITECT OF AIRY RHYME

ENAMORED architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says:
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O Wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

1876

## PRESCIENCE

THE new moon hung in the sky,
The sun was low in the west,
And my betrothed and I
In the churchyard passed to rest—
Happy maiden and lover,
Dreaming the old dream over:
The light winds wandered by,
And robins chirped from the nest.

And lo! in the meadow sweet
Was the grace of a little child,
With a crumbling stone at the feet,
And the ivy running wild—
Tangled ivy and clover
Folding it over and over:
Close to my sweetheart's feet
Was the little mound up-piled.

Stricken with nameless fears,
She shrank and clung to me,
And her eyes were filled with tears
For a sorrow I did not see:
Lightly the winds were blowing,
Softly her tears were flowing—
Tears for the innocent years
And a sorrow that was to be!

1883

## HEREDITY

A SOLDIER of the Cromwell stamp,
With sword and psalm-book by his side,
At home alike in church and camp:
Austere he lived, and smileless died.

But she, a creature soft and fine—
From Spain, some say, some say from France;
Within her veins leapt blood like wine—
She led her Roundhead lord a dance!

In Grantham church they lie asleep;
Just where, the verger may not know.
Strange that two hundred years should keep
The old ancestral fires aglow!

In me these two have met again:
To each my nature owes a part:
To one, the cool and reasoning brain,
To one, the quick unreasoning heart.

1883

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## *From* PONKAPOG PAPERS

### *Leaves from a Notebook*

AMERICAN humor is nearly as ephemeral as the flowers that bloom in the spring. Each generation has its own crop, and, as a rule, insists on cultivating a new kind. That of 1860, if it were to break into blossom at the present moment, would probably be left to fade upon the stem. Humor is a delicate shrub, with the passing hectic flush of its time. The current-topic variety is especially subject to very early frosts, as is also the dialectic species. Mark Twain's humor is not to be classed with the fragile plants; it has a serious root striking deep down into rich earth, and I think it will go on flowering indefinitely.

I have been imagining an ideal critical journal, whose plan should involve the dis-

charge of the chief literary critic and the installment of a fresh censor on the completion of each issue. To place a man in permanent absolute control of a certain number of pages, in which to express his opinions, is to place him in a position of great personal danger. It is almost inevitable that he should come to overrate the importance of those opinions, to take himself with far too much seriousness, and in the end adopt the dogma of his own infallibility. The liberty to summon this or that man-of-letters to a supposititious bar of justice is apt to beget in the self-appointed judge an exaggerated sense of superiority. He becomes impatient of any rulings not his, and says in effect, if not in so many words: "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark." When the critic reaches this exalted frame of mind his slight usefulness is gone.

I like to have a thing suggested rather than told in full. When every detail is given, the mind rests satisfied, and the imagination loses the desire to use its own wings. The partly draped statue has a charm which the nude lacks. Who would have those marble folds slip from the raised knee of the Venus of Melos? Hawthorne knew how to make his lovely thought lovelier by sometimes half veiling it.

Every living author has a projection of himself, a sort of eidolon, that goes about in near and remote places making friends or enemies for him among persons who never lay eyes upon the writer in the flesh. When he dies, this phantasmal personality fades away, and the author lives only in the impression created by his own literature. It is only then that the world begins to perceive what manner of man the poet, the novelist, or the historian really was. Not until he is dead, and perhaps some long time dead, is it possible for the public to take his exact measure. Up to that point contemporary criticism has either overrated him or underrated him, or ignored him altogether, having been misled by the eidolon, which always plays fantastic tricks with the writer temporarily under its dominion. It invariably represents him as either a greater or a smaller personage than he actually is. Presently the simulacrum works no more spells, good or evil, and the deception is unveiled. The hitherto disregarded author is recognized, and the idol of yesterday, which seemed so important, is taken down from his too large pedestal and carted off to the dumping-ground of inadequate things. To be sure, if he chances to have been not entirely unworthy, and on cool examination is found to possess some appreciable degree of merit, then he is set up on a new slab of appropriate dimensions. The late colossal statue shrinks to a modest bas-relief. On the other hand, some scarcely noticed bust may suddenly become a revered full-length figure. Between the reputation of the author living and the reputation of the same author dead there is ever a wide discrepancy.

## *Plot and Character*

Henry James, in his paper on Anthony Trollope, says that if Trollope "had taken sides on the rather superficial opposition between novels of character and novels of plot, I can imagine him to have said (except that he never expressed himself in epigram) that he preferred the former class, inasmuch as character in itself is plot, while plot is by no means character." So neat an antithesis would surely never have found itself between Mr. Trollope's lips if Mr. James had not cunningly lent it to him. Whatever theory of novel-writing Mr. Trollope may have preached, his almost invariable practice was to have a plot. He always had a *story* to tell, and a story involves beginning, middle, and end—in short, a framework of some description.

There have been delightful books filled wholly with character-drawing, but they have not been great novels. The great novel deals with human action as well as with mental portraiture and analysis. That "character in itself is plot" is true only in a limited sense. A plan, a motive with a logical conclusion, is as necessary to a novel or a romance as it is to a drama. A group of skillfully made-up men and women lounging in the green room or at the wings is not the play. It is not enough to say that this is Romeo and that Lady Macbeth. It is not enough to inform us that cer-

tain passions are supposed to be embodied in such and such persons: these persons should be placed in situations developing those passions. A series of unrelated scenes and dialogues leading to nothing is inadequate.

Mr. James's engaging epigram seems to me vulnerable at both ends—unlike Achilles. "Plot is by no means character." Strictly speaking, it is not. It appears to me, however, that plot approaches nearer to being character than character does to being plot. Plot necessitates action, and it is impossible to describe a man's actions, under whatever conditions, without revealing something of his character, his way of looking at things, his moral and mental pose. What a hero of fiction *does* paints him better than what he *says*, and vastly better than anything his creator may say of him. Mr. James asserts that "we care what happens to people only in proportion as we know what people are." I think we care very little what people are (in fiction) when we do not know what happens to them.

### *Writers and Talkers*

As a class, literary men do not shine in conversation. The scintillating and playful essayist whom you pictured to yourself as the most genial and entertaining of companions, turns out to be a shy and untalkable individual, who chills you with his reticence when you chance to meet him. The poet whose fascinating volume you always drop into your gripsack on your summer vacation—the poet whom you have so long desired to know personally —is a moody and abstracted middle-aged gentleman, who fails to catch your name on introduction, and seems the avatar of the commonplace. The witty and ferocious critic whom your fancy had painted as a literary cannibal with a morbid appetite for tender young poets—the writer of those caustic and scholarly reviews which you never neglect to read—destroys the un-lifelike portrait you had drawn by appearing before you as a personage of slender limb and deprecating glance, who stammers and makes a painful spectacle of himself when you ask him his opinion of "The Glees of the Gulches," by Popocatepetl Jones. The slender, dark-haired novelist of your imagination, with epigrammatic points to his mustache, suddenly takes the shape of a short, smoothly-shaven blond man, whose conversation does not sparkle at all, and you were on the lookout for the most brilliant of verbal fireworks. Perhaps it is a dramatist you have idealized. Fresh from witnessing his delightful comedy of manners, you meet him face to face only to discover that his own manners are anything but delightful. The play and the playwright are two very distinct entities. You grow skeptical touching the truth of Buffon's assertion that the style is the man himself. Who that has encountered his favorite author in the flesh has not sometimes been a little, if not wholly, disappointed?

After all, is it not expecting too much to expect a novelist to talk as cleverly as the clever characters in his novels? Must a dramatist necessarily go about armed to the teeth with crisp dialogue? May not a poet be allowed to lay aside his singing-robes and put on a conventional dress-suit when he dines out? Why is it not permissible in him to be as prosaic and tiresome as the rest of the company? He usually is.

1903

## 1844 ~ *Richard Watson Gilder* ~ 1909

THE GILDERS were originally men of Kent who came to America by way of the Barbados. The poet's grandfather lived in Philadelphia where he was regarded as one of the foremost citizens because of his spirited interest in public affairs. At the time of the poet's birth his father was a minister in Bordentown, New Jersey.

On the mother's side he came of a line of prosperous farmers. His father conducted a school for girls on Long Island, in which the young Richard was the only boy pupil. Here as a boy of fourteen he published a newspaper. In another school venture at Yonkers, New York, he assisted on the teaching staff. Both father and son saw service in the Civil War, the former as chaplain, the latter as a volunteer for a brief period during which he helped to break the spearhead of Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania. After his discharge he held a clerical position with a railroad company, leaving it to join the Newark *Advertiser*. After occupying a number of minor editorial positions, he became editor-in-chief of the *Century* in 1881, a post which he held to the end of his life.

Gilder had three chief interests throughout his life: his professional work as editor of newspapers and periodicals; social problems and public welfare; art and poetry. As an editor he was conservative and exacting, and has been criticized for retarding literary development by his insistence upon traditional observances. He took a prominent part in the movements for clean politics, civil service reform, kindergartens, international copyright, and tenement legislation, activities in themselves sufficient to occupy the time and energy of an ordinary man. In view of his busy and active life, his poetry might be regarded as an avocational exercise, yet the output is so large as hardly to warrant the supposition. He himself wished to be remembered as a poet.

In a department of the old *Scribner's Monthly* which Gilder conducted under the title of "Old Cabinet," he chatted informally, at times somewhat caustically, on a variety of problems and ideas, especially art, literature, and criticism. He did not believe, for instance, in the romantic oneness of all the arts, but insisted upon their differentiation on the basis of the medium in which they found expression. Poetry at its best he described as a "blending of the understanding and the imagination in the white heat of passion," communicated by means of words. Form in art is not paramount, yet he will not tolerate indifference and carelessness. The permanence of a piece of art is dependent upon the typical quality in it, by virtue of which it continues for all time to stand for precisely that which the artist aimed to represent. Art is not an imitative process, and for that reason he maintained that American literature is not an imitation of British literature, and consequently resented the condescending attitude of some British critics. The typical quality in art is both personal and national.

As a poet Gilder was very popular in his day, possibly over-rated because of his prominence as a civic leader, but in the changing literary fashions since his death his work, along with that of many other poets, has suffered a declining reputation. He belongs to an older and at least temporarily out-moded school. The campaign by the younger writers and critics against the old-fashioned moralizing, indeed for the complete divorce of art and morals, has been responsible for the undeserved

neglect of much of his work which is poetically good. Many of his poems deal with moral, ethical, philosophical, and religious themes, which for the moment have lost their hold. Nor are his patriotic poems regarded more highly. Even his thought, on which he more or less prided himself, has been condemned by his tough-minded young successors as essentially conventional, timid and flabby, and circumscribed by what has become traditional, and therefore not responsive to new currents and movements. It must be remembered, however, that by the time the new currents and movements were gaining momentum, Gilder had reached the height of his development, and at his age could scarcely be expected to make such abrupt readjustments. Both as man and poet he stands for the traditional virtues in life and poetry, and his work will undoubtedly remain as one of the last conservative strongholds carried by the onrush of the young knights-errant of poetry. Because of its sincerity, careful workmanship, and fine poetic feeling, it deserves a better fate.

His poetical works are collected in *Complete Poems* (1910). *Grover Cleveland, A Record of Friendship* (1910) is one of his best prose works. There is no formal biography of Gilder; his daughter, Rosamond, edited *Letters of Richard Watson Gilder* (1916). The following may be consulted for further information and criticism: *DAB*, VII; G. E. Woodberry, "Gilder as a Poet," *Century*, Feb., 1910; B. Matthews, "Richard Watson Gilder," *North American Review*, Jan., 1910; M. H. Lansdale, "Life-Work and Homes of Richard Watson Gilder," *Century*, March, 1911; G. S. Viereck, "Reminiscences of Gilder," *Forum*, Jan., 1910; "Mr. Gilder's Public Activities," *Century*, Feb., 1910; H. W. Mabie, "Richard Watson Gilder. An Appreciation," *Bookman*, Jan., 1910; Mrs. S. Van Rensselaer, "Richard Watson Gilder: Personal Memories," *Outlook*, March 8, 1922.

## THE WOODS THAT BRING THE SUNSET NEAR

The wind from out the west is blowing;
The homeward-wandering cows are lowing;
Dark grow the pine-woods, dark and drear—
The woods that bring the sunset near.

When o'er wide seas the sun declines,
Far off its fading glory shines,—
Far off, sublime, and full of fear,—
The pine-woods bring the sunset near.

This house that looks to east, to west,
This, dear one, is our home, our rest;
Yonder the stormy sea, and here
The woods that bring the sunset near.

1885

## ART AND LIFE

One of a group of poems published under the title of "The Celestial Passion." It gives expression to a phase of Gilder's theory of poetry.

Said the Poet unto the Seer:
How shall I learn to tell
What I know of Heaven and Hell?
I speak, but to ashes turn
The passions that in me burn.
I shout to the skies, but I hear
No answer from man or God.
Shall I cast my lyre to the sod,
Rest, and give over the strife,
And sink in a voiceless life?
  Said the Seer to the Poet: Arise
And give to the seas and the skies
The message that in thee burns.
Thrice speak, tho' the blue sky turns
Deaf ears, and the ocean spurns
Thy call. Tho' men despise
The word that from out thy heart
Flameth; do thou thy part.
Thrice speak it, aloud, I say,
Then go, released, on thy way;
Live thou deeply and wise;
Suffer as never before;
Know joy, till it cuts to the quick;
Eat the apple, Life, to the core.

Be thou curst
By them thou hast blest, by the sick
Whom thou in thy weakness nursed.
With thy strength the faint endue;
Be praised when 'twere better to blame;
In the home of thy spirit be true,
Tho' the voice of the street cry shame.
Be silent till all is done,
Then return, in the light of the sun,
And once more sing.

O, then fling
Into music thy soul! Tell the seas
Again all thy thought; O, be strong
Thy voice as the voice of the waves,
As the voice of the trees!
Tell the blast,
That shall shudder as onward it flies
With thy word, with thy song;
Tell the skies,
And the world, that shall listen at last!

1887

## 1836 — *Bret Harte* — 1902

BRET HARTE is best remembered as the author of stories of the Far West and the Gold Rush era. He broke away from the literature of the Atlantic coast and helped to bring the transition from the legendary material of the stories of Irving and Hawthorne to the more realistic matter to come and to such story writers as O. Henry. A pioneer in "local-color" fiction, he started the "Wild West" vogue which has persisted in cheap popular fiction and in the "westerns" of the films.

Francis Brett Harte (later he signed himself Bret), though writing of California most of his life, was born in 1836 at Albany, New York, of English, Dutch, and Hebrew ancestry. His father tried teaching, lecturing, and translating, but was never prosperous, and died leaving a widow and four children in 1845. He had a large library, however, and the young Harte, described as a studious, precocious boy, had a cultivated background and early literary interests. He read Froissart, Shakespeare, Fielding, Cervantes, Irving, and Dickens, who was his favorite. The family was provided for by relatives for a while, but at the age of thirteen Harte entered a lawyer's office and helped a merchant, so that before he was seventeen he supported himself. In 1853 his mother married, going to Oakland, California, and in 1854 Harte and a sister followed her there. He remained in California from 1854 till 1871, and most of his literary work is based on these years. Much of his earlier life there is obscure. He seems to have drifted into several employments, teaching or tutoring, like his father, perhaps trying placer mining, serving as a clerk in a drug store, and as an express messenger. He set type on the *Golden Era* of San Francisco, and later wrote articles for that periodical. In 1863 he was given a secretarial post in the branch mint, a position with few duties, that left him time for writing. He next became a contributor to the *Californian*, established in 1864,

and wrote for it an amusing series of parodies of the narratives and the styles of such fiction writers as Cooper, Dickens, Hugo, Dumas. These he published in 1867 under the title *Condensed Novels*. In 1868 he became the first editor of the newly established *Overland Monthly*, and his best stories are associated with this publication. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" was printed in the second issue, "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" in 1869; and these and "Plain Language from Truthful James" ("The Heathen Chinee") of 1870 brought him immediate fame. They were not approved by some Californians, who thought they were "likely to discourage immigration" by their reflections on the region and its morals; but they were received with zest in the East. The author was made professor of recent literature at the University of California. The *Atlantic Monthly* offered him ten thousand dollars for twelve contributions, his output for the coming year. He went east in 1871 and the rest of his work was written on the Atlantic coast or abroad. His later life has little literary significance. He continued to write of California but had exhausted the freshness of his material, and his many later volumes are relatively unimportant. He attempted a novel, *Gabriel Conroy* (1876), and several dramas, and did much work as a hack writer for magazines. He lived expensively, made debts, and tried lecturing, but he had done his best work. In 1878 he was appointed consul to Crefeld in Rhenish Prussia and went abroad, discouraged, leaving his family in America. Though he continued to send back money, he never returned. He became consul at Glasgow (1880–1885), but was supplanted there by a change in administration. The next years he lived chiefly in London until his death in 1902 of cancer of the throat. He is described as of slender, stylish appearance, unlike the frontiersmen that he painted.

Harte wrote in the days of the vogue of Dickens and in a weak period for American fiction. The Dickens strand in his work is strong. Like the English novelist he blends theatrically human sentiment, pathos, and humor, and he likes to depict human oddities in situations of emotional appeal. He brings together a strange medley of characters often speaking in a dialect of provincialisms, and displays them like a showman, with an eye to drama. In technique he is the finished artist, striving for a unique effect and writing fastidiously. He owes something to Poe and to the French school of story writers. Perhaps most effective in his work is the California background he establishes, with its human diversity, incongruities, and strong contrasts—Spaniards, native Indians, Chinese, miners, and adventurers, good and bad, cultivated and ignorant. He writes of them with realism, yet creates an atmosphere of romance. If fiction depicting the westward movement began with Cooper, it reached its final goal with Harte.

Harte wrote a few short essays on literary figures, none very important. He praised Artemus Ward for the "Americanism" of his type of humor, that is, for its "audacious exaggeration," and he mentioned with approval that its real strength

did not lie merely in grotesque spellings. In an essay on "American Humor" he expressed the view that characteristic American humor did not derive from "Sam Slick" or from Lowell's *Biglow Papers* but arose in the South and West. Mark Twain he termed "the most original humorist that America has yet produced." Of Dickens he said that "no other writer, living or dead, ever transfused fiction with so much vitality." He admired Dickens's "sense of fun," his "wonderful spontaneity," his portrayal of social wrong, and his tenderness in writing of childhood. When, however, he was asked to write an article on "My Favorite Author and His Best Book," he named not Dickens but the elder Alexander Dumas and *The Count of Monte Cristo.* He stated that "the primary function of the novel is to interest the reader in its story—in the progress of some well-developed plot to a well-defined climax. . . . *Monte Cristo* is *romance*, and, as I am told, of a very antiquated type." The main thing, he thought, is for readers to be lifted "temporarily out of their commonplace surroundings and limited horizon by some specious tale of heroism, endeavor, wrongs redressed and faith rewarded." From youth onward romance was his preference.

The standard edition of Harte's works is *The Writings of Bret Harte* (19 vols., 1896–1903). His *Novels and Stories* (10 vols.) were published in 1910. There is a one-volume Household Edition of his *Poems* (1902). *Letters of Bret Harte* was edited by Geoffrey Bret Harte (1926). Of value also are C. M. Kozlay's *Lectures of Bret Harte* (1909), and *Stories and Poems and Other Uncollected Writings of Bret Harte* (1914). *Sketches of the Sixties*, by Bret Harte and Mark Twain, was published in San Francisco, 1927.

Biographies of Harte include those of T. E. Pemberton (1903), H. W. Boynton (1903), and H. C. Merwin (1911). Noah Brooks wrote of "Bret Harte in California," *Century Magazine*, LVIII, July, 1899. Of especial importance is *Bret Harte, Argonaut and Exile* (1931), by G. R. Stewart, Jr., who also wrote of Harte in *DAB*, VIII (1932). See also Hamlin Garland, in *Roadside Meetings* (1930), and in *Companions on the Trail* (1931).

For criticism consult H. C. Vedder, in *American Writers Today* (1894); G. K. Chesterton, in *Varied Types* (1903); John Erskine, in *Leading American Novelists* (1910); E. W. Bowen, "Francis Bret Harte," in *Sewanee Review*, XXIV, July, 1916; F. L. Pattee, in *CHAL*, II (1918), and in *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923).

There is a bibliography by G. R. Stewart, Jr. in his *Bret Harte*, and also by Stewart, "A Bibliography of the Writings of Francis Bret Harte in the Magazines and Newspapers of California," in *University of California Publications in English*, III, 1933.

## PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(Table Mountain, 1870)

Printed first in September, 1870; popularly known as "The Heathen Chinee." "Truthful James," whose experiences with a Chinese card player are related, was the narrator in Harte's poem "The Society upon the Stanislaus." Curiously, Harte modeled the verse of "Plain Language" on the antiphonal dirge at the end of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*. The poem had unparalleled success and circulated everywhere. Harte himself never liked it and could not understand its enthusiastic reception.

WHICH I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,

The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
  Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
  And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
  What the name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
  As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
  And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
  That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
  And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
  And Ah Sin took a hand;
It was Euchre. The same
  He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
  With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
  In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
  At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
  And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
  By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
  Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
  Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,
  And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
  And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,"—
  And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
  I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
  Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
  In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves which were long,
  He had twenty-four jacks,—
Which was coming it strong,
  Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
  What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
  And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
  And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
  Which the same I am free to maintain.

1870

## HER LETTER

I'm sitting alone by the fire,
  Dressed just as I came from the dance,
In a robe even *you* would admire,—
  It cost a cool thousand in France;
I'm be-diamonded out of all reason,
  My hair is done up in a cue:
In short, sir, "the belle of the season"
  Is wasting an hour upon you.

A dozen engagements I've broken;
  I left in the midst of a set;
Likewise a proposal, half spoken,
  That waits—on the stairs—for me yet.
They say he'll be rich,—when he grows up,—
  And then he adores me indeed;
And you, sir, are turning your nose up,
  Three thousand miles off as you read.

"And how do I like my position?"
  "And what do I think of New York?"
"And now, in my higher ambition,
  With whom do I waltz, flirt, or talk?"
"And isn't it nice to have riches,
  And diamonds and silks, and all that?"
"And aren't they a change to the ditches
  And tunnels of Poverty Flat?"

Well, yes,—if you saw us out driving
  Each day in the Park, four-in-hand,—
If you saw poor dear mamma contriving
  To look supernaturally grand,—
If you saw papa's picture, as taken
  By Brady, and tinted at that,—
You'd never suspect he sold bacon
  And flour at Poverty Flat.

And yet, just this moment, when sitting
In the glare of the grand chandelier,—
In the bustle and glitter befitting
The "finest *soirée* of the year,"
In the mists of a *gaze de Chambéry*,
And the hum of the smallest of talk,—
Somehow, Joe, I thought of the "Ferry,"
And the dance that we had on "The Fork";

Of Harrison's barn, with its muster
Of flags festooned over the wall;
Of the candles that shed their soft luster
And tallow on head-dress and shawl;
Of the steps that we took to one fiddle;
Of the dress of my queer *vis-à-vis;*
And how I once went down the middle
With the man that shot Sandy McGee;

Of the moon that was quietly sleeping
On the hill, when the time came to go;
Of the few baby peaks that were peeping
From under their bedclothes of snow;
Of that ride,—that to me was the rarest;
Of—the something you said at the gate.
Ah, Joe, then I wasn't an heiress
To "the best-paying lead in the State."

Well, well, it's all past; yet it's funny
To think, as I stood in the glare
Of fashion and beauty and money,
That I should be thinking, right there,
Of some one who breasted high water,
And swam the North Fork, and all that,
Just to dance with old Folinsbee's daughter,
The Lily of Poverty Flat.

But goodness! what nonsense I'm writing!
(Mamma says my taste still is low),
Instead of my triumphs reciting,
I'm spooning on Joseph,—heigh-ho!
And I'm to be "finished" by travel,—
Whatever's the meaning of that.
Oh! why did papa strike pay gravel
In drifting on Poverty Flat?

Good night!—here's the end of my paper;
Good night!—if the longitude please,—
For may be, while wasting my taper,
*Your* sun's climbing over the trees.
But know, if you haven't got riches,
And are poor, dearest Joe, and all that,
That my heart's somewhere there in the ditches,
And you've struck it,—on Poverty Flat.

1871

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## THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP

Published anonymously in the *Overland Monthly* for August, 1868. This sentimental story of an abandoned baby and its influence on rough miners of the early days of California mining camps was fresh and original and opened up a new vein in short fiction. It barely reached print, however, for the proofreader was shocked by it and the printer doubtful; but Harte insisted on its appearance and it had at once extraordinary success.

THERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—"Cherokee Sal."

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse, and it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin, that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the

spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen, also, that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio*. Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed upon the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blond hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley, between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it"; even, that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd, who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on

which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex officio* complacency —"Gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible,—criticisms addressed, perhaps, rather to Stumpy, in the character of showman,—"Is that him?" "Mighty small specimen"; "Hasn't more'n got the color"; "Ain't bigger nor a derringer." The contributions were as characteristic: A silver tobacco box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin, a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he "saw that pin and went two diamonds better"); a slung shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's); a pair of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for £5; and about $200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left—a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly-born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d—d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with, perhaps, more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the newcomer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river, and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch, past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large redwood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Halfway down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All serene," replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it,—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprung up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog—a distance of forty miles—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained.

"Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety—the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got—lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills,—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills—that air pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial, at once bracing and exhilarating, he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted asses' milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "the Kid," "Stumpy's boy," "the Cayote" (an allusion to his vocal powers) and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "the d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory; and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine, who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly, eyeing the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't goin' to understand. And ef there's going to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists be it said that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist, thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly, following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been uttered otherwise but profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived; but strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Then it was boarded, clothed and papered. The rosewood cradle—packed eighty miles by mule—had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how The Luck got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self-defense, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself, and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding "The Luck." It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt, and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its felicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers, or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquilizing quality, and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English sailor from Her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the *Arethusa*, Seventy-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-o-o-o-ard of the *Arethusa*." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'evingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days The Luck was usually carried to the gulch, from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly, there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally some one would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas, or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for "The Luck." It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be serenely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral"—a hedge of tessellated pine boughs, which surrounded his bed—he dropped over the bank

on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a talking to a jaybird as was a-sittin on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a-jawin at each other just like two cherrybums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back, blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gums; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumblebees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times"—and the Luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring,' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of "The Luck," who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely skeptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of '51 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and débris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy; "it's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks, and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crashing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy nearest the riverbank was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride—the hope—the joy—the Luck—of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts, when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding The Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." A

smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying!" he repeated, "he's a-taking me with him—tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.

1868

## THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT

As Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat on the morning of the 23d of November, 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere since the preceding night. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbath influences, looked ominous.

Mr. Oakhurst's calm, handsome face betrayed small concern in these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause was another question. "I reckon they're after somebody," he reflected; "likely it's me." He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been whipping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly discharged his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was "after somebody." It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done permanently in regard of two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such easily established standards of evil that Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgment.

Mr. Oakhurst was right in supposing that he was included in this category. A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example and a sure method of reimbursing themselves from his pockets of the sums he had won from them. "It's agin justice," said Jim Wheeler, "to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp—an entire stranger—carry away our money." But a crude sentiment of equity residing in the breasts of those who had been fortunate enough to win from Mr. Oakhurst overruled this narrower local prejudice.

Mr. Oakhurst received his sentence with philosophic calmness, none the less coolly that he was aware of the hesitation of his judges. He was too much of a gambler not to accept fate. With him life was at best an uncertain game, and he recognized the usual percentage in favor of the dealer.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to be a coolly desperate man, and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as "The Duchess"; another who had won the title of "Mother Shipton"; and "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluice-robber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade provoked no comments from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the uttermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return at the peril of their lives.

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian volley of expletives from Uncle Billy, The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good humor characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding-horse, "Five-Spot," for the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympa-

thy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of "Five-Spot" with malevolence, and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema.

The road to Sandy Bar—a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants—lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foothills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheatre, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently towards the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had camping been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This fact he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of "throwing up their hand before the game was played out." But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest, and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy passed rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton snored. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly surveying them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness, and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he "couldn't afford it." As he gazed at his recumbent fellow exiles, the loneliness begotten of his pariah trade, his habits of life, his very vices, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts characteristic of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his annoyance. The thought of deserting his weaker and more pitiable companions never perhaps occurred to him. Yet he could not help feeling the want of that excitement which, singularly enough, was most conducive to that calm equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet sheer above the circling pines around him, at the sky ominously clouded, at the valley below, already deepening into shadows; and, doing so, suddenly he heard his own name called.

A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh, open face of the newcomer Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as "The Innocent," of Sandy Bar. He had met him some months before over a "little game," and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune—amounting to some forty dollars—of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door and thus addressed him: "Tommy, you're a good little man, but you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again." He then handed him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. "Alone?" No, not exactly alone; in fact (a giggle), he had run away with Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She that used to wait on the table at the Temperance House? They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were tired out, and how lucky it was they had found a place to camp, and company. All this the Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney, a stout, comely damsel of fifteen, emerged from behind the pine-tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with

sentiment, still less with propriety; but he had a vague idea that the situation was not fortunate. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognize in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavored to dissuade Tom Simson from delaying further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision, nor means of making a camp. But, unluckily, the Innocent met this objection by assuring the party that he was provided with an extra mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a log house near the trail. "Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst," said the Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, "and I can shift for myself."

Nothing but Mr. Oakhurst's admonishing foot saved Uncle Billy from bursting into a roar of laughter. As it was, he felt compelled to retire up the cañon until he could recover his gravity. There he confided the joke to the tall pine-trees, with many slaps of his leg, contortions of his face, and the usual profanity. But when he returned to the party, he found them seated by a fire—for the air had grown strangely chill and the sky overcast—in apparently amicable conversation. Piney was actually talking in an impulsive girlish fashion to the Duchess, who was listening with an interest and animation she had not shown for many days. The Innocent was holding forth, apparently with equal effect, to Mr. Oakhurst and Mother Shipton, who was actually relaxing into amiability. "Is this yer a d—d picnic?" said Uncle Billy, with inward scorn, as he surveyed the sylvan group, the glancing firelight, and the tethered animals in the foreground. Suddenly an idea mingled with the alcoholic fumes that disturbed his brain. It was apparently of a jocular nature, for he felt impelled to slap his leg again and cram his fist into his mouth.

As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine-trees and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles The ruined cabin, patched and covered with pine boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly exchanged a kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard above the swaying pines. The frail Duchess and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned without a word to the hut. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it,—snow!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain, and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered—they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The Innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humored, freckled face; the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by celestial guardians; and Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustaches and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snowflakes that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words, "Snowed in!"

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. "That is," said Mr. Oakhurst *sotto voce* to the Innocent, "if you're willing to board us. If you ain't—and perhaps you'd better not—you can wait till Uncle Billy gets back with provisions." For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not bring himself to disclose Uncle Billy's rascality, and so offered the hypothesis that he had wandered

from the camp and had accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and Mother Shipton, who of course knew the facts of their associate's defection. "They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out anything," he added significantly, "and there's no good frightening them now."

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together." The cheerful gayety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine boughs, extemporized a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through their professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to "chatter." But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whiskey, which he had prudently cachéd. "And yet it don't somehow sound like whiskey," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blinding storm, and the group around it, that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had cachéd his cards with the whiskey as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he "didn't say 'cards' once" during that evening. Haply the time was beguiled by an accordion, produced somewhat ostentatiously by Tom Simson from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instrument, Piney Woods managed to pluck several reluctant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by the Innocent on a pair of bone castanets. But the crowning festivity of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and vociferation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanter's swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it speedily to infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain:

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army."

The pines rocked, the storm eddied and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered keenly above the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst, whose professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He excused himself to the Innocent by saying that he had "often been a week without sleep." "Doing what?" asked Tom. "Poker!" replied Oakhurst sententiously. "When a man gets a streak of luck, —nigger-luck,—he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued the gambler reflectively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat,—you come along, and slap you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For," added the gambler with cheerful irrelevance—

"'I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
And I'm bound to die in His army.'"

The third day came, and the sun, looking through the white-curtained valley, saw the outcasts divide their slowly decreasing store of provisions for the morning meal. It was one of the peculiarities of that mountain climate that its rays diffused a kindly warmth over the wintry landscape, as if in regretful commiseration of the past. But it revealed drift on drift of snow piled high around the hut,—a hopeless, uncharted, trackless sea of white lying below the rocky shores to which the castaways still clung. Through the marvel-

ously clear air the smoke of the pastoral village of Poker Flat rose miles away. Mother Shipton saw it, and from a remote pinnacle of her rocky fastness hurled in that direction a final malediction. It was her last vituperative attempt, and perhaps for that reason was invested with a certain degree of sublimity. It did her good, she privately informed the Duchess. "Just you go out there and cuss, and see." She then set herself to the task of amusing "the child," as she and the Duchess were pleased to call Piney. Piney was no chicken, but it was a soothing and original theory of the pair thus to account for the fact that she didn't swear and wasn't improper.

When night crept up again through the gorges, the reedy notes of the accordion rose and fell in fitful spasms and long-drawn gasps by the flickering campfire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney,—story-telling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions caring to relate their personal experiences, this plan would have failed too, but for the Innocent. Some months before he had chanced upon a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the Iliad. He now proposed to narrate the principal incidents of that poem—having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words—in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric demigods again walked the earth. Trojan bully and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the cañon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst listened with quiet satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of "Ash-heels" as the Innocent persisted in denominating the "swift-footed Achilles."

So, with small food and much of Homer and the accordion, a week passed over the heads of the outcasts. The sun again forsook them, and again from leaden skies the snowflakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fires, even from the fallen trees beside them, now half hidden in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes, and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself coolly to the losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton—once the strongest of the party—seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight on the tenth day she called Oakhurst to her side. "I'm going," she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, "but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head, and open it." Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's rations for the last week, untouched. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. "You've starved yourself," said the gambler. "That's what they call it," said the woman querulously, as she lay down again, and, turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordion and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside, and showed him a pair of snowshoes, which he had fashioned from the old pack-saddle. "There's one chance in a hundred to save her yet," he said, pointing to Piney; "but it's there," he added, pointing toward Poker Flat. "If you can reach there in two days she's safe." "And you?" asked Tom Simson. "I'll stay here," was the curt reply.

The lovers parted with a long embrace. "You are not going, too?" said the Duchess, as she saw Mr. Oakhurst apparently waiting to accompany him. "As far as the cañon," he replied. He turned suddenly and kissed the Duchess, leaving her pallid face aflame, and her trembling limbs rigid with amazement.

Night came, but not Mr. Oakhurst. It brought the storm again and the whirling snow. Then the Duchess, feeding the fire, found that some one had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer. The tears rose to her eyes, but she hid them from Piney.

The women slept but little. In the morning, looking into each other's faces, they read their fate. Neither spoke, but Piney, accepting the

position of the stronger, drew near and placed her arm around the Duchess's waist. They kept this attitude for the rest of the day. That night the storm reached its greatest fury, and, rending asunder the protecting vines, invaded the very hut.

Toward morning they found themselves unable to feed the fire, which gradually died away. As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours: "Piney, can you pray?" "No, dear," said Piney simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head upon Piney's shoulder, spoke no more. And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep.

The wind lulled as if it feared to waken them. Feathery drifts of snow, shaken from the long pine boughs, flew like white-winged birds, and settled about them as they slept. The moon through the rifted clouds looked down upon what had been the camp. But all human stain, all trace of earthly travail, was hidden beneath the spotless mantle mercifully flung from above.

They slept all that day and the next, nor did they waken when voices and footsteps broke the silence of the camp. And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told from the equal peace that dwelt upon them which was she that had sinned. Even the law of Poker Flat recognized this, and turned away, leaving them still locked in each other's arms.

But at the head of the gulch, on one of the largest pine-trees, they found the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with a bowie-knife. It bore the following, written in pencil in a firm hand:

†

BENEATH THIS TREE
LIES THE BODY
OF
JOHN OAKHURST,
WHO STRUCK A STREAK OF BAD LUCK
ON THE 23D OF NOVEMBER 1850,
AND
HANDED IN HIS CHECKS
ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 1850.

†

And pulseless and cold, with a Derringer by his side and a bullet in his heart, though still calm as in life, beneath the snow lay he who at once was the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.

*1868* 1869

## TENNESSEE'S PARTNER

I DO not think that we ever knew his real name. Our ignorance of it certainly never gave us any social inconvenience, for at Sandy Bar in 1854 most men were christened anew. Sometimes these appellatives were derived from some distinctiveness of dress, as in the case of "Dungaree Jack"; or from some peculiarity of habit, as shown in "Saleratus Bill," so called from an undue proportion of that chemical in his daily bread; or from some unlucky slip, as exhibited in "The Iron Pirate," a mild, inoffensive man, who earned that baleful title by his unfortunate mispronunciation of the term "iron pyrites." Perhaps this may have been the beginning of a rude heraldry; but I am constrained to think that it was because a man's real name in that day rested solely upon his own unsupported statement. "Call yourself Clifford, do you?" said Boston, addressing a timid newcomer with infinite scorn; "hell is full of such Cliffords!" He then introduced the unfortunate man, whose name happened to be really Clifford, as "Jaybird Charley,"—an unhallowed inspiration of the moment, that clung to him ever after.

But to return to Tennessee's Partner, whom we never knew by any other than this relative title; that he had ever existed as a separate and distinct individuality we only learned later. It seems that in 1853 he left Poker Flat to go to San Francisco, ostensibly to procure a wife. He never got any farther than Stockton. At that place he was attracted by a young person who waited upon the table at the hotel where he took his meals. One morning he said something to her which caused her to smile not unkindly, to somewhat coquettishly break a plate of toast over his upturned, serious, simple face, and to retreat to the kitchen. He followed her, and emerged a few moments later, covered with more toast and victory. That day week they were married by a Justice of the Peace

and returned to Poker Flat. I am aware that more might be made of this episode, but I prefer to tell it as it was current at Sandy Bar,—in the gulches and barrooms,—where all sentiment was modified by a strong sense of humor.

Of their married felicity but little is known, perhaps for the reason that Tennessee, then living with his partner, one day took occasion to say something to the bride on his own account, at which, it is said, she smiled not unkindly, and chastely retreated,—this time as far as Marysville, where Tennessee followed her, and where they went to housekeeping without the aid of a Justice of the Peace. Tennessee's Partner took the loss of his wife simply and seriously, as was his fashion. But to everybody's surprise, when Tennessee one day returned from Marysville, without his partner's wife,—she having smiled and retreated with somebody else,—Tennessee's Partner was the first man to shake his hand and greet him with affection. The boys who had gathered in the cañon to see the shooting were naturally indignant. Their indignation might have found vent in sarcasm but for a certain look in Tennessee's Partner's eye that indicated a lack of humorous appreciation. In fact, he was a grave man, with a steady application to practical detail which was unpleasant in a difficulty.

Meanwhile a popular feeling against Tennessee had grown up on the Bar. He was known to be a gambler; he was suspected to be a thief. In these suspicions Tennessee's Partner was equally compromised; his continued intimacy with Tennessee after the affair above quoted could only be accounted for on the hypothesis of a copartnership of crime. At last Tennessee's guilt became flagrant. One day he overtook a stranger on his way to Red Dog. The stranger afterward related that Tennessee beguiled the time with interesting anecdote and reminiscence, but illogically concluded the interview in the following words: "And now, young man, I'll trouble you for your knife, your pistols, and your money. You see your weppings might get you into trouble at Red Dog, and your money's a temptation to the evilly disposed. I think you said your address was San Francisco. I shall endeavor to call." It may be stated here that Tennessee had a fine flow of humor, which no business preoccupation could wholly subdue.

This exploit was his last. Red Dog and Sandy Bar made common cause against the highwayman. Tennessee was hunted in very much the same fashion as his prototype, the grizzly. As the toils closed around him; he made a desperate dash through the Bar, emptying his revolver at the crowd before the Arcade Saloon, and so on up Grizzly Cañon; but at its farther extremity he was stopped by a small man on a gray horse. The men looked at each other a moment in silence. Both were fearless, both self-possessed and independent; and both types of a civilization that in the seventeenth century would have been called heroic, but, in the nineteenth, simply "reckless." "What have you got there?—I call," said Tennessee, quietly. "Two bowers and an ace," said the stranger, as quietly, showing two revolvers and a bowie-knife. "That takes me," returned Tennessee; and with this gambler's epigram, he threw away his useless pistol, and rode back with his captor.

It was a warm night. The cool breeze which usually sprang up with the going down of the sun behind the chaparral-crested mountain was that evening withheld from Sandy Bar. The little cañon was stifling with heated, resinous odors, and the decaying driftwood on the Bar sent forth faint, sickening exhalations. The feverishness of day, and its fierce passions, still filled the camp. Lights moved restlessly along the bank of the river, striking no answering reflection from its tawny current. Against the blackness of the pines the windows of the old loft above the express office stood out staringly bright; and through their curtainless panes the loungers below could see the forms of those who were even then deciding the fate of Tennessee. And above all this, etched on the dark firmament, rose the Sierra, remote and passionless, crowned with remoter, passionless stars.

The trial of Tennessee was conducted as fairly as was consistent with a judge and jury who felt themselves to some extent obliged to justify, in their verdict, the previous irregularities of arrest and indictment. The law of Sandy Bar was implacable, but not vengeful. The excitement and personal feeling of the chase were over; with Tennessee safe in their

hands they were ready to listen patiently to any defense, which they were already satisfied was insufficient. There being no doubt in their own minds, they were willing to give the prisoner the benefit of any that might exist. Secure in the hypothesis that he ought to be hanged, on general principles, they indulged him with more latitude of defense than his reckless hardihood seemed to ask. The Judge appeared to be more anxious than the prisoner, who, otherwise unconcerned, evidently took a grim pleasure in the responsibility he had created. "I don't take any hand in this yer game," had been his invariable, but good-humored reply to all questions. The Judge—who was also his captor—for a moment vaguely regretted that he had not shot him "on sight," that morning, but presently dismissed this human weakness as unworthy of the judicial mind. Nevertheless, when there was a tap at the door, and it was said that Tennessee's Partner was there on behalf of the prisoner, he was admitted at once without question. Perhaps the younger members of the jury, to whom the proceedings were becoming irksomely thoughtful, hailed him as a relief.

For he was not, certainly, an imposing figure. Short and stout, with a square face, sunburned into a preternatural redness, clad in a loose duck "jumper," and trousers streaked and splashed with red soil, his aspect under any circumstances would have been quaint, and was now even ridiculous. As he stooped to deposit at his feet a heavy carpetbag he was carrying, it became obvious, from partially developed legends and inscriptions, that the material with which his trousers had been patched had been originally intended for a less ambitious covering. Yet he advanced with great gravity, and after having shaken the hand of each person in the room with labored cordiality, he wiped his serious, perplexed face on a red bandanna handkerchief, a shade lighter than his complexion, laid his powerful hand upon the table to steady himself, and thus addressed the Judge:—

"I was passin' by," he began, by way of apology, "and I thought I'd just step in and see how things was gittin' on with Tennessee thar,—my pardner. It's a hot night. I disremember any sich weather before on the Bar."

He paused a moment, but nobody volunteering any other meteorological recollection, he again had recourse to his pocket handkerchief, and for some moments mopped his face diligently.

"Have you anything to say in behalf of the prisoner?" said the Judge, finally.

"Thet's it," said Tennessee's Partner, in a tone of relief. "I come yar as Tennessee's pardner,—knowing him nigh on four year, off and on, wet and dry, in luck and out o' luck. His ways ain't allers my ways, but thar ain't any p'ints in thet young man, thar ain't any liveliness as he's been up to, as I don't know. And you sez to me, sez you—confidential-like, and between man and man,—sez you, 'Do you know anything in his behalf?' and I sez to you, sez I,—confidential-like, as between man and man,—'What should a man know of his pardner?'"

"Is this all you have to say?" asked the Judge, impatiently, feeling, perhaps, that a dangerous sympathy of humor was beginning to humanize the Court.

"Thet's so," continued Tennessee's Partner. "It ain't for me to say anything agin' him. And now, what's the case? Here's Tennessee wants money, wants it bad, and doesn't like to ask it of his old pardner. Well, what does Tennessee do? He lays for a stranger, and he fetches that stranger. And you lays for *him*, and you fetches *him;* and the honors is easy. And I put it to you, bein' a far-minded man, and to you, gentlemen, all, as far-minded men, ef this isn't so."

"Prisoner," said the Judge, interrupting, "have you any questions to ask this man?"

"No! no!" continued Tennessee's Partner, hastily. "I play this yer hand alone. To come down to the bed rock, it's just this: Tennessee, thar, has played it pretty rough and expensive-like on a stranger, and on this yer camp. And now, what's the fair thing? Some would say more; some would say less. Here's seventeen hundred dollars in coarse gold and a watch, it's about all my pile,—and call it square!" And before a hand could be raised to prevent him, he had emptied the contents of the carpetbag upon the table.

For a moment his life was in jeopardy. One or two men sprang to their feet, several hands

groped for hidden weapons, and a suggestion to "throw him from the window" was only overridden by a gesture from the Judge. Tennessee laughed. And apparently oblivious of the excitement, Tennessee's Partner improved the opportunity to mop his face again with his handkerchief.

When order was restored, and the man was made to understand, by the use of forcible figures and rhetoric, that Tennessee's offense could not be condoned by money, his face took a more serious and sanguinary hue, and those who were nearest to him noticed that his rough hand trembled slightly on the table. He hesitated a moment as he slowly returned the gold to the carpetbag, as if he had not yet entirely caught the elevated sense of justice which swayed the tribunal, and was perplexed with the belief that he had not offered enough. Then he turned to the Judge, and saying, "This yer is a lone hand, played alone, and without my pardner," he bowed to the jury and was about to withdraw, when the Judge called him back. "If you have anything to say to Tennessee, you had better say it now." For the first time that evening the eyes of the prisoner and his strange advocate met. Tennessee smiled, showed his white teeth, and, saying, "Euchred, old man!" held out his hand. Tennessee's Partner took it in his own, and saying, "I just dropped in as I was passin' to see how things was gettin' on," let the hand passively fall, and adding that "it was a warm night," again mopped his face with his handkerchief, and without another word withdrew.

The two men never again met each other alive. For the unparalleled insult of a bribe offered to Judge Lynch—who, whether bigoted, weak, or narrow, was at least incorruptible—firmly fixed in the mind of that mythical personage any wavering determination of Tennessee's fate; and at the break of day he was marched, closely guarded, to meet it at the top of Marley's Hill.

How he met it, how cool he was, how he refused to say anything, how perfect were the arrangements of the committee, were all duly reported, with the addition of a warning moral and example to all future evildoers, in the Red Dog *Clarion*, by its editor, who was present, and to whose vigorous English I cheerfully refer the reader. But the beauty of that midsummer morning, the blessed amity of earth and air and sky, the awakened life of the free woods and hills, the joyous renewal and promise of Nature, and above all, the infinite serenity that thrilled each, was not reported, as not being a part of the social lesson. And yet, when the weak and foolish deed was done, and a life, with its possibilities and responsibilities, had passed out of the misshapen thing that dangled between earth and sky, the birds sang, the flowers bloomed, the sun shone, as cheerily as before; and possibly the Red Dog *Clarion* was right.

Tennessee's Partner was not in the group that surrounded the ominous tree. But as they turned to disperse, attention was drawn to the singular appearance of a motionless donkey cart halted at the side of the road. As they approached, they at once recognized the venerable "Jenny" and the two-wheeled cart as the property of Tennessee's Partner,—used by him in carrying dirt from his claim; and a few paces distant the owner of the equipage himself, sitting under a buckeye tree, wiping the perspiration from his glowing face. In answer to an inquiry, he said he had come for the body of the "diseased," "if it was all the same to the committee." He didn't wish to "hurry anything"; he could "wait." He was not working that day; and when the gentlemen were done with the "diseased," he would take him. "Ef thar is any present," he added, in his simple, serious way, "as would care to jine in the fun'l, they kin come." Perhaps it was from a sense of humor, which I have already intimated was a feature of Sandy Bar,—perhaps it was from something even better than that; but two-thirds of the loungers accepted the invitation at once.

It was noon when the body of Tennessee was delivered into the hands of his partner. As the cart drew up to the fatal tree, we noticed that it contained a rough, oblong box,—apparently made from a section of sluicing,—and half filled with bark and the tassels of pine. The cart was further decorated with slips of willow, and made fragrant with buckeye blossoms. When the body was deposited in the box, Tennessee's Partner drew over it a piece of tarred canvas, and gravely mounting the

narrow seat in front, with his feet upon the shafts, urged the little donkey forward. The equipage moved slowly on, at that decorous pace which was habitual with "Jenny" even under less solemn circumstances. The men—half curiously, half jestingly, but all good-humoredly—strolled along beside the cart, some in advance, some a little in the rear of the homely catafalque. But, whether from the narrowing of the road or some present sense of decorum, as the cart passed on, the company fell to the rear in couples, keeping step, and otherwise assuming the external show of a formal procession. Jack Folinsbee, who had at the outset played a funeral march in dumb show upon an imaginary trombone, desisted, from a lack of sympathy and appreciation,—not having, perhaps, your true humorist's capacity to be content with the enjoyment of his own fun.

The way led through Grizzly Cañon,—by this time clothed in funereal drapery and shadows. The redwoods, burying their moccasined feet in the red soil, stood in Indian file along the track, trailing an uncouth benediction from their bending boughs upon the passing bier. A hare, surprised into helpless inactivity, sat upright and pulsating in the ferns by the roadside, as the *cortège* went by. Squirrels hastened to gain a secure outlook from higher boughs; and the blue jays, spreading their wings, fluttered before them like outriders, until the outskirts of Sandy Bar were reached, and the solitary cabin of Tennessee's Partner.

Viewed under more favorable circumstances, it would not have been a cheerful place. The unpicturesque site, the rude and unlovely outlines, the unsavory details, which distinguish the nest-building of the California miner, were all here, with the dreariness of decay superadded. A few paces from the cabin there was a rough inclosure, which, in the brief days of Tennessee's Partner's matrimonial felicity, had been used as a garden, but was now overgrown with fern. As we approached it we were surprised to find what we had taken for a recent attempt at cultivation was the broken soil about an open grave.

The cart was halted before the inclosure; and rejecting the offers of assistance with the same air of simple self-reliance he had displayed throughout, Tennessee's Partner lifted the rough coffin on his back, and deposited it, unaided, within the shallow grave. He then nailed down the board which served as a lid; and mounting the little mound of earth beside it, took off his hat, and slowly mopped his face with his handkerchief. This the crowd felt was a preliminary to speech; and they disposed themselves variously on stumps and boulders, and sat expectant.

"When a man," began Tennessee's Partner, slowly, "has been running free all day, what's the natural thing for him to do? Why, to come home. And if he ain't in a condition to go home, what can his best friend do? Why, bring him home! And here's Tennessee has been running free, and we brings him home from his wandering." He paused, and picked up a fragment of quartz, rubbed it thoughtfully on his sleeve, and went on: "It ain't the first time that I've packed him on my back, as you see'd me now. It ain't the first time that I brought him to this yer cabin when he couldn't help himself; it ain't the first time that I and 'Jinny' have waited for him on yon hill, and picked him up and so fetched him home, when he couldn't speak, and didn't know me. And now that it's the last time, why,"—he paused, and rubbed the quartz gently on his sleeve,—"you see it's sort of rough on his pardner. And now, gentlemen," he added, abruptly, picking up his long-handled shovel, "the fun'l's over; and my thanks, and Tennessee's thanks, to you for your trouble."

Resisting any proffers of assistance, he began to fill in the grave, turning his back upon the crowd, that after a few moments' hesitation gradually withdrew. As they crossed the little ridge that hid Sandy Bar from view, some, looking back, thought they could see Tennessee's Partner, his work done, sitting upon the grave, his shovel between his knees, and his face buried in his red bandanna handkerchief. But it was argued by others that you couldn't tell his face from his handkerchief at that distance; and this point remained undecided.

In the reaction that followed the feverish excitement of that day, Tennessee's Partner was not forgotten. A secret investigation had

cleared him of any complicity in Tennessee's guilt, and left only a suspicion of his general sanity. Sandy Bar made a point of calling on him and proffering various uncouth but well-meant kindnesses. But from that day his rude health and great strength seemed visibly to decline; and when the rainy season fairly set in, and the tiny grass-blades were beginning to peep from the rocky mound above Tennessee's grave, he took to his bed.

One night, when the pines beside the cabin were swaying in the storm, and trailing their slender fingers over the roof, and the roar and rush of the swollen river were heard below, Tennessee's Partner lifted his head from the pillow, saying, "It is time to go for Tennessee; I must put 'Jinny' in the cart"; and would have risen from his bed but for the restraint of his attendant. Struggling, he still pursued his singular fancy: "There, now, steady, 'Jinny,' —steady, old girl. How dark it is! Look out for the ruts,—and look out for him, too, old gal. Sometimes, you know, when he's blind drunk, he drops down right in the trail. Keep on straight up to the pine on the top of the hill. Thar—I told you so!—thar he is,—and coming this way, too,—all by himself, sober, and his face a-shining. Tennessee! Pardner!"

And so they met.

1869

## 1839 — *Joaquin Miller* — 1913

CINCINNATUS HINER MILLER was a poet of the western movement in its heroic period, a regionalist in poetry as Harte in prose. He celebrated its freedom, outlawry, and adventure, and its beautiful scenes, much of which had changed or vanished at the time of his death in 1913. His work is uneven. He is often turgid, bombastic, and mystical, although at times he writes with genuine feeling. Some of his verse is like that of Whitman; some shows the influence of the lyrics and oriental tales of Byron, whom he admired intensely. Occasionally he echoed Swinburne's measures and moods, though not very successfully and with resultant diffuseness. Other of his indebtednesses are to Browning and, in less degree, to Rossetti and Tennyson.

Miller was born on March 10, 1839, at Liberty, Indiana. His father was a Quaker schoolmaster who steadily migrated westward. He had come to Indiana from Ohio, and thence he followed the Oregon trail, in an oxen-drawn wagon, ultimately settling in Oregon, in 1852. Miller's early years were spent in this region. He ran away from home at seventeen and became a cook in a mining camp. He was befriended by a gambler, lived with an Indian tribe, and married an Indian woman. Later, he returned to the life of the whites and entered an academy in Eugene, Oregon. He taught a little, studied law, established a pony express, and acted as editor. He adopted the pen name, Joaquin, from a Mexican bandit, Joaquin Murietta, in whose defense he had written a letter. In 1866 he became a judge. In two years more he published a volume of poetry, *Specimens* (1868), and *Joaquin et al.* followed in 1869. In 1870 he went to San Francisco. Thence he proceeded to New York, and later

to London, where he was welcomed by the Pre-Raphaelite group. Here he printed *Pacific Poems* (1871) at his own expense, and republished them that same year as *Songs of the Sierras*. These poems and his striking appearance as he went about in fringed buckskin chaps, sombrero, and high boots, looking as a Westerner should, made him the literary sensation of the season in London and brought him sudden fame. The Far West, however, never accepted his romantic portrayals of western life as representative. British enthusiasm also cooled as, the novelty gone, he did not develop better technique or gain in subject matter.

Joaquin Miller visited Europe, the Orient, South America, and the Klondike during the gold rush. He took up residence in many American cities, New York, Boston, Washington, but in 1886 he finally made his home on an estate which he called "The Hights" (his spelling) that was situated above Oakland facing the Golden Gate. He continued to write many volumes of poems, several dramas, a history of the State of Montana, and a novel, most of which were mediocre, until his death on February 17, 1913.

Miller's literary theories are expressed in his Preface to his *Complete Poetical Works* (San Francisco, 1904). "Exalt your theme," he urges: "there cannot be a great literature without first a deep, broad, devout, and loving religion," devoted to furthering peace. He advocated the use of new and local materials: "a true seer will see that which is before him, and about him, in and of his own land and life." And he glorified simplicity and the use of "the briefest little bits of baby words."

Stuart P. Sherman edited *The Poetical Works of Joaquin Miller* (1923), with introduction, omitting unimportant material. There are many earlier editions, as the *Complete Poetical Works* (1897; 1902); the *Poetical Works Collected and Edited by the Author* (5 vols., 1908); the De Luxe Edition (1909); the Bear Edition, edited by H. Wagner (1909; 1910; 1917); and a 7-vol. edition (1917).

Miller's autobiographical writings include *Life among the Modocs* (1873); *Memorie and Rime* (1884), an autobiographical miscellany; "The Literary Autobiography of Joaquin Miller," *Lippincott's Magazine*, July, 1886; and *Overland in a Covered Wagon: an Autobiography by Joaquin Miller*, edited by S. G. Firman (1930). These are helpful but not dependable. M. P. Allen published a popular account in fictionized handling, *Joaquin Miller, Frontier Poet* (1932); B. B. Beebe issued "Letters of Joaquin Miller" in the *Frontier*, XII, Jan., March, May, 1932; and E. S. Bates wrote of Miller in *DAB*, XII (1933).

In addition to Sherman's critical introduction mentioned above, see the "Joaquin Miller Number," *Overland Monthly*, Feb., 1920; G. Sterling, "Joaquin Miller," *American Mercury*, VII, Feb., 1926; H. Wagner, *Joaquin Miller and His Other Self* (1929); Hamlin Garland, "The Poet of the Sierras," *Sunset*, XXX, June, 1913, and *Roadside Meetings* (1930); and A. Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature* (1933). Of especial importance is Martin S. Peterson's *Joaquin Miller: Literary Frontiersman* (1937).

### *From* BYRON

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

1871

### *From* EVEN SO

Sierras, and eternal tents
Of snow that flash o'er battlements
Of mountains! My land of the sun,
Am I not true? have I not done
All things for thine, for thee alone,
O sun-land, sea-land, thou mine own?
Be my reward some little place
To pitch my tent, some tree and vine
Where I may sit with lifted face,
And drink the sun as drinking wine:
Where sweeps the Oregon, and where
White storms carouse on perfumed air.

1871

### KIT CARSON'S RIDE

This poem owes its "spirit and measure" to Browning's *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*. The English poet is said to have consented when Miller, during his stay in London, asked permission for the borrowing. The text given here is revised from the original of 1871. Miller later shortened his poem somewhat and rewrote the close.

*Room! room to turn round in, to breathe and be free,*
*To grow to be giant, to sail as to sea*
*With the speed of the wind on a steed with his mane*
*To the wind, without pathway or route or a rein.*
*Room! room to be free where the white-border'd sea*
*Blows a kiss to a brother as boundless as he;*
*Where the buffalo come like a cloud on the plain,*
*Pouring on like the tide of a storm-driven main,*
*And the lodge of the hunter to friend or to foe*
*Offers rest; and unquestion'd you come or you go.*
*My plains of America! Seas of wild lands!*
*From a land in the sea in a raiment of foam,*
*That has reached to a stranger the welcome of home,*
*I turn to you, lean to you, lift you my hands!*

Run? Run? See this flank, sir, and I do love him so!
But he's blind, badger blind. Whoa, Pache, boy, whoa.
No, you wouldn't believe it to look at his eyes,
But he's blind, badger blind, and it happen'd this wise.

"We lay in the grass and the sunburnt clover
That spread on the ground like a great brown cover
Northward and southward, and west and away
To the Brazos, where our lodges lay,
One broad and unbroken level of brown.
We were waiting the curtains of night to come down
To cover us trio and conceal our flight
With my brown bride, won from an Indian town
That lay to the rear the full ride of a night.

"We lounged in the grass—her eyes were in mine,
And her hands on my knee, and her hair was as wine
In its wealth and its flood, pouring on and all over
Her bosom wine red, and press'd never by one.
Her touch was as warm as the tinge of the clover
Burnt brown as it reach'd to the kiss of the sun.
Her words they were low as the lute-throated dove,
And as laden with love as the heart when it beats
In its hot, eager answer to earliest love,
Or the bee hurried home by its burthen of sweets.

"We lay low in the grass on the broad plain levels,
Old Revels and I, and my stolen brown bride;
'Forty full miles if a foot to ride!
Forty full miles if a foot, and the devils
Of red Comanches are hot on the track

When once they strike it. Let the sun go down
Soon, very soon,' muttered bearded old Revels
As he peer'd at the sun, lying low on his back,
Holding fast to his lasso. Then he jerk'd at his steed
And he sprang to his feet, and glanced swiftly around,
And then dropp'd as if shot, with an ear to the ground;
Then again to his feet, and to me, to my bride,
While his eyes were like fire, his face like a shroud,
His form like a king, and his beard like a cloud,
And his voice loud and shrill, as both trumpet and reed,—
'Pull, pull in your lassoes, and bridle to steed,
And speed you if ever for life you would speed.
Yea, ride for your lives, for your lives you must ride!
For the plain is aflame, the prairie on fire,
And feet of wild horses hard flying before
I hear like a sea breaking high on the shore,
While the buffalo come like a surge of the sea,
Driven far by the flame, driving fast on us three
As a hurricane comes, crushing palms in his ire.'

"We drew in the lassoes, seized saddle and rein,
Threw them on, cinched them on, cinched them over again,
And again drew the girth; and spring we to horse,
With head to the Brazos, with a sound in the air
Like the surge of a sea, with a flash in the eye,
From that red wall of flame reaching up to the sky,
A red wall of flame and a black rolling sea
Rushing fast upon us, as the wind sweeping free
And afar from the desert blown hollow and hoarse.

"Not a word, not a wail from a lip was let fall,
We broke not a whisper, we breathed not a prayer,
There was work to be done, there was death in the air,
And the chance was as one to a thousand for all.

"Twenty miles! .... thirty miles! ... a dim distant speck ...
Then a long reaching line, and the Brazos in sight!
And I rose in my seat with a shout of delight.
I stood in my stirrup and look'd to my right—
But Revels was gone; I glanced by my shoulder
And saw his horse stagger; I saw his head drooping
Hard down in his breast, and his naked breast stooping
Low down to the mane, as so swifter and bolder
Ran reaching out for us the red-footed fire.
He rode neck to neck with a buffalo bull,
That made the earth shake where he came in his course,
The monarch of millions, with shaggy mane full
Of smoke and of dust, and it shook with desire
Of battle, with rage and with bellowings hoarse.
His keen crooked horns, through the storm of his mane,
Like black lances lifted and lifted again;
And I looked but this once, for the fire licked through
And Revels was gone, as we rode two and two.

"I look'd to my left then—and nose, neck, and shoulder
Sank slowly, sank surely, till back to my thighs,
And up through the black blowing veil of her hair
Did beam full in mine her two marvelous eyes,
With a longing and love yet a look of despair
And of pity for me, as she felt the smoke fold her,
And flames reaching far for her glorious hair.
Her sinking steed falter'd, plunged, fell and was gone
As I reached through the flame and I bore her still on.

On! into the Brazos, she, Pache and I—
Poor, burnt, blinded Pache. I love him . . .
That's why."

1871

## EXODUS FOR OREGON

A TALE half told and hardly understood;
The talk of bearded men that chanced to meet,
That lean'd on long quaint rifles in the wood,
That look'd in fellow faces, spoke discreet
And low, as half in doubt and in defeat
Of hope; a tale it was of lands of gold
That lay below the sun. Wild-wing'd and fleet
It spread among the swift Missouri's bold
Unbridled men, and reach'd to where Ohio roll'd.

Then long chain'd lines of yoked and patient steers;
Then long white trains that pointed to the west,
Beyond the savage west; the hopes and fears
Of blunt, untutor'd men, who hardly guess'd
Their course; the brave and silent women, dress'd
In homely spun attire, the boys in bands,
The cheery babes that laugh'd at all, and bless'd
The doubting hearts, with laughing lifted hands! . . .
What exodus for far untraversed lands!

The Plains! The shouting drivers at the wheel;
The crash of leather whips; the crush and roll
Of wheels; the groan of yokes and grinding steel
And iron chain, and lo! at last the whole
Vast line, that reach'd as if to touch the goal,
Began to stretch and stream away and wind
Toward the west as if with one control;
Then hope loom'd fair, and home lay far behind;
Before, the boundless plain, and fiercest of their kind.

At first the way lay green and fresh as seas,
And far away as any reach of wave;
The sunny streams went by in belt of trees;
And here and there the tassell'd tawny brave
Swept by on horse, look'd back, stretch'd forth and gave
A yell of warn, and then did wheel away and rein
Awhile, and point away, dark-brow'd and grave,
Into the far and dim and distant plain
With signs and prophecies, and then plung'd on again.

Some hills at last began to lift and break;
Some streams began to fail of wood and tide,
The somber plain began betime to take
A hue of weary brown, and wild and wide
It stretch'd its naked breast on every side.
A babe was heard at last to cry for bread
Amid the deserts; cattle low'd and died,
And dying men went by with broken tread,
And left a long black serpent line of wreck and dead.

Strange hunger'd birds, black-wing'd and still as death,
And crown'd of red with hooked beaks, blew low
And close about, till we could touch their breath—
Strange unnamed birds, that seem'd to come and go
In circles now, and now direct and slow
Continual, yet never touch the earth;
Slim foxes slid and shuttled to and fro
At times across the dusty weary dearth
Of life, look'd back, then sank like crickets in a hearth.

Then dust arose, a long dim line like smoke
From out of riven earth. The wheels went groaning by,
Ten thousand feet in harness and in yoke,
They tore the ways of ashen alkali,
And desert winds blew sudden, swift and dry.
The dust! it sat upon and fill'd the train!
It seem'd to fret and fill the very sky.
Lo! dust upon the beasts, the tent, the plain,
And dust, alas! on breasts that rose not up again.

They sat in desolation and in dust
By dried-up desert streams; the mother's hands
Hid all her bended face; the cattle thrust
Their tongues and faintly call'd across the lands.

The babes, that knew not what this way through sands
Could mean, did ask if it would end today . . .
The panting wolves slid by, red-eyed, in bands
To pools beyond. The men look'd far away,
And silent, saw that all a boundless desert lay.

They rose by night; they struggled on and on
As thin and still as ghosts; then here and there
Beside the dusty way before the dawn,
Men silent laid them down in their despair,
And died. But woman! Woman, frail as fair,
May man have strength to give to you your due;
You falter'd not, nor murmured anywhere,
You held your babes, held to your course, and you
Bore on through burning hell your double burdens through.

Men stood at last, the decimated few,
Above a land of running streams, and they?
They push'd aside the boughs, and peering through
Beheld the cool, refreshing bay;
Then some did curse, and some bend hands to pray;
But some look'd back upon the desert, wide
And desolate with death, then all the day
They mourned. But one, with nothing left beside
His dog to love crept down among the ferns and died.

1873

## COLUMBUS

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores;
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone,
Brave Adm'r'l speak; what shall I say?"
"Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly, wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day:
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l, speak and say—"
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
He lifts his teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then pale and worn, he paced his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night.
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! A light! At last a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
He gained a world; he gave that world
Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

1896

## GOOD BYE, BRET HARTE

Yon yellow sun melts in the sea;
A somber ship sweeps silently
Past Alcatraz tow'rd Orient skies—
A mist is rising to the eyes—
Good bye, Bret Harte, good night, good night!

Your sea bank booms far funeral guns!—
What secrets of His central suns,
Companions of the peak and pine,
What secrets of the spheres are thine?
Good bye, Bret Harte, good night, good night!

You loved the lowly, laughed at pride,
We mocked, we mocked and pierced your side;
And yet for all harsh scoffings heard,
You answered not one unkind word,
But went your way, as now: good night!

How stately tall your ship, how vast,
With night nailed to your leaning mast
With mighty stars of hammered gold
And moon-wrought cordage manifold!
Good bye, Bret Harte, good night, good night!

1902

## 1834 — *Artemus Ward* — 1867

CHARLES FARRAR BROWNE, popularly known as Artemus Ward, the first American humorist to be acclaimed in England, was born in Waterford, Maine. He learned the printer's trade as a boy, attended a private academy for a brief period, and held positions on several newspapers, including Shillaber's *Carpet Bag* in Boston. Having caught the migrating fever, he made his way as far west as Cleveland, where he joined the staff of the *Plain Dealer*. To this paper he contributed a series of humorous stories about a traveling showman over the name of "A. Ward." In 1861 he became managing editor of *Vanity Fair*. As a lecturer-humorist he completed a successful tour which took him to California, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. After continued success in the East and South he went to England in 1866, where, as lecturer and contributor to *Punch*, he won almost universal recognition. He died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-three.

As a writer he held to no theory and followed no specific method. In his earlier years he did keep a notebook in which he wrote down suggestions for future use, and many of these reappeared in his books and lectures. For the most part, however, he "really had no method at all beyond responding to the devil's call for copy." He was an adept in misspellings, delivered his lectures with disarming gravity and "an air of plaintive good faith," his lanky figure and solemn countenance adding to the humorous contrast.

His humor was broad and homely, yet it never descended to the level of the vulgar and the questionable. It was outspoken and to the point, mildly incisive at times, and on occasion dealt savage blows against human frailty. He was a showman and entertainer, but preferred to be known as a "moral lecturer." The reformer in him went hand in hand with the entertainer. "Humorous writers," he says, "have always done the most toward helping virtue on its pilgrimage, and the truth has found more aid from them than from all the grave polemists and solid writers that have ever spoken or written."

Browne's works are *Artemus Ward: His Book* (1862) and *Artemus Ward: His Travels* (1865). An English firm issued the *Complete Works of Artemus Ward* in one volume; a recent publication is *Selected Works of Artemus Ward*, with an introduction by A. J. Nock (1924). D. C. Seitz's

*Artemus Ward: A Biography and Bibliography* (1919) is definitive. For further study the following are recommended: *DAB*, III; A. J. Nock, "Artemus Ward's America," *Atlantic*, Sept., 1934; J. F. Ryder, "Recollections of Artemus Ward," *Century*, Nov., 1901; A. B. Maurice, "An Historic American Humorist," *Bookman*, Jan., 1920; C. Johnson, "Recollections of Artemus Ward," *Overland Monthly*, N.S., Jan., 1916; C. M. Rourke, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (1931); J. R. Tandy, *Crackerbox Philosophers in American Humor and Satire* (1925); and W. Blair, *Native American Humor* (1937).

## *From* ARTEMUS WARD: HIS BOOK

### *Interview with President Lincoln*

Like most humorists, Browne was essentially a serious man. He criticized society by laying bare its soul in good-natured satire. As a critic he has become a writer for the cultured minority.

I HAV no politics. Nary a one. I'm not in the bizness. If I was I spose I should holler versiffrusly in the streets at nite and go home to Betsy Jane smellin of coal ile and gin in the mornin. I should go to the Poles arly. I should stay there all day. I should see to it that my nabers was thar. I should git carriges to take the kripples, the infirm, and the indignant thar. I should be on guard agin frauds and sich. I should be on the look out for the infamus lise of the enemy, got up jest be4 elecshun for perlitical effeck. When all was over, and my candydate was elected, I should move heving & arth—so to speak—until I got orfice, which if I didn't git a orfice I should turn round and abooze the Administration with all my mite and maine. But I'm not in the bizniss. I'm in a far more respectful bizniss nor what pollertics is. I wouldn't give two cents to be a Congresser. The wus insult I ever received was when sertin citizens of Baldinsville axed me to run fur the Legislater. Sez I, "My frends, dostest think I'd stoop to that there?" They turned as white as a sheet. I spoke in my most orfullest tones & they knowed I wasn't to be trifled with. They slunked out of site to onct.

There4, having no politics, I made bold to visit Old Abe at his humstid in Springfield. I found the old feller in his parler, surrounded by a perfeck swarm of orfice seekers. Knowin he had been capting of a flat boat on the roarin Mississippy I thought I'd address him in sailor lingo, so sez I, "Old Abe, ahoy! Let out yer main-suls, reef hum the forecastle & throw yer jibpoop over-board! Shiver my timbers, my harty!" (N.B. This is ginuine mariner langwidge. I know, becawz I've seen sailor plays acted out by them New York theater fellers.) Old Abe lookt up quite cross & sez, "Send in yer petition by & by. I can't possibly look at it now. Indeed I can't. It's onpossible, sir!"

"Mr. Linkin, who do you spect I air?" sed I.

"A orfice-seeker, to be sure!" sed he.

"Wall, sir," sed I, "you's never more mistaken in your life. You hain't gut a orfiss I'd take under no circumstances. I'm A. Ward. Wax figgers is my perfeshun. I'm the father of Twins, and they look like me—both of them. I cum to pay a frendly visit to the President eleck of the United States. If so be you wants to see me, say so—if not, say so, & I'm orf like a jug handle."

"Mr. Ward, sit down. I am glad to see you, sir."

"Repose in Abraham's Buzzum!" sed one of the orfice seekers, his idee bein to git orf a goak at my expense.

"Wall," sez I, "ef all you fellers repose in that there Buzzum thar'll be mity poor nussin for sum of you!" Whereupon Old Abe buttoned his weskit clear up and blusht like a maidin of sweet 16. Jest at this pint of the conversation another swarm of orfice-seekers arrove & cum pilin into the parler. Sum wanted post-orfices, sum wanted collectorships, sum wantid furrin missions, and all wanted sumthin. I thought Old Abe would go crazy. He hadn't more than had time to shake hands with 'em, before another tremenjis crowd cum porein onto his premises. His house and dooryard was now perfeckly overflowed with orfice-seekers, all clameruss for a immejit interview with Old Abe. One man from Ohio, who had about seven inches of corn whiskey

into him, mistook me for Old Abe, and addrest me as "The Prahayrie Flower of the West!" Thinks I, *you* want a orfiss putty bad. Another man with a gold heded cane and a red nose, told Old Abe he was "a seckind Washington & the Pride of the Boundliss West."

Sez I, "Square, you wouldn't take a small post-offiss if you could git it, would you?"

Sez he, "A patrit is abuv them things, sir!"

"There's a putty big crop of patrits this season, ain't there, Square?" sez I, when *another* crowd of offiss-seekers pored in. The house, dooryard, barn, & woodshed was now all full, and when *another* crowd cum I told 'em not to go away for want of room, as the hog-pen was still empty. One patrit from a small town in Michygan went up on top the house, got into the chimney and slid down into the parlor where Old Abe was endeverin to keep the hungry pack of orfice-seekers from chawin him up alive without benefit of clergy. The minit he reached the fireplace he jumpt up, brusht the soot out of his eyes, and yelled: "Don't make eny pintment at the Spunkville post-offiss till you've read my papers. All the respectful men in our town is signers to that there dockyment!"

"Good God!" cried Old Abe, "they cum upon me from the skize—down the chimneys, and from the bowels of the yearth!" He hadn't more'n got them words out of his delikit mouth before two fat offiss-seekers from Wisconsin, in endeverin to crawl atween his legs for the purpuss of applyin for the tollgateship at Milwawky, upsot the President eleck, & he would hev gone sprawlin into the fire-place if I hadn't caught him in these arms. But I hadn't more'n stood him up strate, before another man cum crashing down the chimney, his head strikin me vilently agin the inards and prostratin my voluptoous form onto the floor. "Mr. Linkin," shoutid the infatooated being, "my papers is signed by every clergyman in our town, and likewise the skoolmaster!"

Sez I, "You egrejis ass," gittin up & brushin the dust from my eyes, "I'll sign your papers with this bunch of bones, if you don't be a little more keerful how you make my breadbasket a depot in the futur. How do you like that air perfumery?" sez I, shuving my fist under his nose. "Them's the kind of papers I'll giv you! Them's the papers *you* want!"

"But I workt hard for the ticket; I toiled night and day! The patrit should be rewarded!"

"Virtoo," sed I, holdin' the infatooated man by the coat-collar, "virtoo, sir, is its own reward. Look at me!" He did look at me, and qualed be4 my gase. "The fact is," I continued, lookin' round on the hungry crowd, "there is scacely a offiss for every ile lamp carried round durin' this campane. I wish thare was. I wish thare was furrin missions to be filled on varis lonely Islands where eppydemics rage incesantly, and if I was in Old Abe's place I'd send every mother's son of you to them. What air you here for?" I continnered, warmin up considerable, "can't you give Abe a minit's peace? Don't you see he's worrid most to death? Go home, you miserable men, go home & till the sile! Go to peddlin tinware —go to choppin wood—go to bilin sope—stuff sassengers—black boots—git a clerkship on sum respectable manure cart—go round as original Swiss Bell Ringers—becum 'origenal and only' Campbell Minstrels—if to lecturin at 50 dollars a nite—imbark in the peanut bizniss—*write for the Ledger*—saw off your legs and go round givin concerts, with techin appeals to a charitable public, printed on your handbills—anything for a honest living, but don't come round here drivin Old Abe crazy by your outrajis cuttings up! Go home. 'Stand not upon the order of your goin,' but go to onct! Ef in five minits from this time," sez I, pullin out my new sixteen dollar huntin cased watch, and brandishin' it before their eyes,—"Ef in five minits from this time a single sole of you remains on these here premises, I'll go out to my cage near by, and let my Boy Constructor loose! & ef he gits amung you, you'll think old Solferino has cum again and no mistake!" You ought to hev seen them scamper, Mr. Fair. They run orf as tho Satun hisself was arter them with a red hot ten pronged pitchfork. In five minits the premises was clear.

"How kin I ever repay you, Mr. Ward, for your kindness?" sed Old Abe, advancin and shakin me warmly by the hand. "How kin I ever repay you, sir?"

"By givin the whole country a good, sound

administration. By poerin ile upon the troubled waturs, North and South. By pursooin' a patriotic, firm, and just course, and then, if any State wants to secede, let 'em Sesesh!"

"How 'bout my Cabinit, Mister Ward?" sed Abe.

"Fill it up with Showmen, sir! Showmen is devoid of politics. They hain't got any principles! They know how to cater for the public. They know what the public wants, North & South. Showmen, sir, is honest men. Ef you doubt their literary ability, look at their posters, and see small bills! Ef you want a Cabinit as is a Cabinit, fill it up with showmen, but don't call on me. The moral wax figger perfeshun mustn't be permitted to go down while there's a drop of blood in these vains! A. Linkin, I wish you well! Ef Powers' or Walcutt wus to pick out a model for a beautiful man, I scacely think they'd sculp you; but ef you do the fair thing by your country, you'll make as putty a angel as any of us! A. Linkin, use the talents which Nature has put into you judishusly and firmly, and all will be well! A. Linkin, adoo!"

He shook me cordyully by the hand—we exchanged picters, so we could gaze upon each others' liniments when far away from one another—he at the hellum of the ship of State, and I at the hellum of the show bizness—admittance only 15 cents.

1862

*From* ARTEMUS WARD: HIS TRAVELS

## *California*

We reach San Francisco one Sunday afternoon. I am driven to the Occidental Hotel by a kind-hearted hackman, who states that inasmuch as I have come out there to amuse people, he will only charge me five dollars. I pay it in gold, of course, because greenbacks are not current on the Pacific coast.

Many of the citizens of San Francisco remember the Sabbath-day to keep it jolly; and the theatres, the circus, the minstrels, and the music halls are all in full blast to-night.

I "compromise" and go to the Chinese theatre, thinking perhaps, there can be no great harm in listening to worldly sentiments when expressed in a language I don't understand.

The Chinaman at the door takes my ticket with the remark, "Ki hi-hi ki! Shoolah!"

And I tell him that on the whole I think he is right.

The Chinese play is "continued," like a Ledger story, from night to night. It commences with the birth of the hero or heroine, which interesting event occurs publicly on the stage; and then follows him or her down to the grave, where it cheerfully ends.

Sometimes a Chinese play lasts six months. The play I am speaking of had been going on for about two months. The heroine had grown up into womanhood, and was on the point, as I inferred, of being married to a young Chinaman in spangled pantaloons and a long black tail. The bride's father comes in with his arms full of tea chests, and bestows them, with his blessing, upon the happy couple. As this play is to run four months longer, however, and as my time is limited, I go away at the close of the second act, while the orchestra is performing an overture on gongs and one-stringed fiddles.

The door-keeper again says, "Ki hi-hi ki! Shoolah!" adding this time, however, "Chow-wow." I agree with him in regard to the ki hi and hi ki, but tell him I don't feel altogether certain about the chow-wow.

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To Stockton from San Francisco.

Stockton is a beautiful town, that has ceased to think of becoming a very large place, and has quietly settled down into a state of serene prosperity. I have my boots repaired here by an artist who informs me that he studied in the penitentiary; and I visit the lunatic asylum, where I encounter a vivacious maniac who invites me to ride in a chariot drawn by eight lions and a rhinoceros.

John Phoenix was once stationed at Stockton, and put his mother aboard the San Francisco boat one morning with the sparkling remark, "Dear mother, be virtuous and you will be happy!"

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Forward to Sacramento—which is the capital of the State, and a very nice old town.

They had a flood here some years ago,

during which several blocks of buildings sailed out of town and have never been heard from since. A Chinaman concluded to leave in a wash-tub, and actually set sail in one of those fragile barks. A drowning man hailed him piteously, thus: "Throw me a rope, oh, throw me a rope!" To which the Chinaman excitedly cried, "No have got—how can do?" and went on, on with the howling current. He was never seen more; but a few weeks after his tail was found by some Sabbath-school children in the north part of the State.

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I go to the mountain towns. The sensational mining days are over, but I find the people jolly and hospitable nevertheless.

At Nevada I am called upon, shortly after my arrival, by an athletic scarlet-faced man, who politely says his name is Blaze.

"I have a little bill against you, sir," he observes.

"A bill—what for?"

"For drinks."

"Drinks?"

"Yes, sir—at my bar, I keep the well-known and highly-respected coffee-house down street."

"But, my dear sir, there is a mistake—I never drank at your bar in my life."

"I know it, sir. That isn't the point. The point is this: I pay out money for good liquors, and it is people's own fault if they don't drink them. There are the liquors—do as you please about drinking them, *but you must pay for them!* Isn't that fair?"

His enormous body (which Puck wouldn't put a girdle round for forty dollars) shook gleefully while I read this eminently original bill.

Years ago Mr. Blaze was an agent of the California Stage Company. There was a formidable and well-organized opposition to the California Stage Company at that time, and Mr. Blaze rendered them such signal service in his capacity of agent that they were very sorry when he tendered his resignation.

"You are some sixteen hundred dollars behind in your accounts, Mr. Blaze," said the President, "but in view of your faithful and efficient services, we shall throw off eight hundred dollars of that amount."

Mr. Blaze seemed touched by this generosity. A tear stood in his eye, and his bosom throbbed audibly.

"You will throw off eight hundred dollars —you *will?*" he at last cried, seizing the President's hand, and pressing it passionately to his lips.

"I will," returned the President.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Blaze, "I'm a gentleman, I *am*, you bet! And I won't allow no Stage Company to surpass me in politeness. *I'll throw off the other eight hundred dollars, and we'll call it square!* No gratitude, sir—no thanks; it is my duty."

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I get back to San Francisco in a few weeks, and am to start home Overland from here.

The distance from Sacramento to Atchison, Kansas, by the Overland stage route, is twenty-two hundred miles, but you can happily accomplish a part of the journey by railroad. The Pacific railroad is completed twelve miles to Folsom, leaving only two thousand and one hundred and eighty-eight miles to go by stage. This breaks the monotony; but as it is mid-winter, and as there are well substantiated reports of Overland passengers freezing to death, and of the Piute savages being in one of their sprightly moods when they scalp people, I do not—I may say that I do not leave the capital of California in a light-hearted and joyous manner. But "leaves have their time to fall," and I have my time to leave, which is now.

We ride all day and all night, and ascend and descend some of the most frightful hills I ever saw. We make Johnson's Pass, which is 6,752 feet high, about two o'clock in the morning, and go down the great Kingsbury grade with locked wheels. The driver, with whom I sit outside, informs me, as we slowly roll down this fearful mountain road, which looks down on either side into an appalling ravine, that he has met accidents in his time, and cost the California Stage Company a great deal of money; "because," he says, "juries is agin us on principle, and every man who sues us is sure to recover. But it will never be so agin, not with *me*, you bet."

"How is that?" I said.

It was frightfully dark. It was snowing

withal, and notwithstanding the brakes were kept hard down, the coach slewed wildly, often fairly touching the brink of the black precipice.

"How is that?" I said.

"Why, you see," he replied, "that corpses never sue for damages, but maimed people do. And the next time I have an overturn I shall go round and keerfully examine the passengers. Them as is dead, I shall let alone; but them as is mutilated I shall finish with the king-bolt! Dead folks don't sue. They ain't on it."

Thus with anecdote did this driver cheer me up.

## *Washoe*

We reach Carson City about nine o'clock in the morning. It is the capital of the silver-producing territory of Nevada.

They shoot folks here somewhat, and the law is rather partial than otherwise to first-class murderers.

I visit the territorial Prison, and the Warden points out the prominent convicts to me, thus:

"This man's crime was horse-stealing. He is here for life."

"This man is in for murder. He is here for three years."

But shooting isn't as popular in Nevada as it once was. A few years since they used to have a dead man for breakfast every morning. A reformed desperado told me that he supposed he had killed men enough to stock a graveyard. "A feeling of remorse," he said, "sometimes comes over me! But I's an altered man now. I hain't killed a man for over two weeks! What'll yer poison yourself with?" he added, dealing a resonant blow on the bar.

There used to live near Carson City a notorious desperado, who never visited town without killing somebody. He would call for liquor at some drinking-house, and if anybody declined joining him he would at once commence shooting. But one day he shot a man too many. Going into the St. Nicholas drinking-house, he asked the company present to join him in a North American drink. One individual was rash enough to refuse. With a look of sorrow rather than of anger, the desperado revealed his revolver, and said, "Good God! *Must* I kill a man every time I come to Carson?" and so saying he fired and killed the individual on the spot. But this was the last murder the bloodthirsty miscreant ever committed, for the aroused citizens pursued him with rifles and shot him down in his own door-yard.

## *Horace Greeley's Ride to Placerville*

When Mr. Greeley was in California, ovations awaited him at every town. He had written powerful leaders in the *Tribune* in favor of the Pacific Railroad, which had greatly endeared him to the citizens of the Golden State. And therefore they made much of him when he went to see them.

At one town the enthusiastic populace tore his celebrated white coat to pieces, and carried the pieces home to remember him by.

The citizens of Placerville prepared to fête the great journalist, and an extra coach, with extra relays of horses, was chartered of the California Stage Company to carry him from Folsom to Placerville—distance, forty miles. The extra was in some way delayed, and did not leave Folsom until late in the afternoon. Mr. Greeley was to be fêted at 7 o'clock that evening by the citizens of Placerville, and it was altogether necessary that he should be there by that hour. So the Stage Company said to Henry Monk, the driver of the extra, "Henry, this great man must be there by 7 to-night." And Henry answered, "The great man shall be there."

The roads were in an awful state, and during the first few miles out of Folsom slow progress was made.

"Sir," said Mr. Greeley, "are you aware that I *must* be at Placerville at 7 o'clock to-night?"

"I've got my orders!" laconically returned Henry Monk.

Still the coach dragged slowly forward.

"Sir," said Mr. Greeley, "this is not a trifling matter. I *must* be there at 7!"

Again came the answer, "I've got my orders!"

But the speed was not increased, and Mr. Greeley chafed away another half hour; when, as he was again about to remonstrate with the driver, the horses suddenly started into a furious run, and all sorts of encouraging yells filled the air from the throat of Henry Monk.

"That is right, my good fellow!" cried Mr.

Greeley. "I'll give you ten dollars when we get to Placerville. Now we *are* going!"

They were indeed, and at a terrible speed.

Crack, crack! went the whip, and again "that voice" split the air. "Git up! Hi yi! G'long! Yip-yip!"

And on they tore, over stones and ruts, up hill and down, at a rate of speed never before achieved by stage horses.

Mr. Greeley, who had been bouncing from one end of the coach to the other like an india-rubber ball, managed to get his head out of the window, when he said:

"Do-on't-on't-on't you-u-u think we-e-e-e shall get there by seven if we do-on't-on't go so fast?"

"I've got my orders!" That was all Henry Monk said. And on tore the coach.

It was becoming serious. Already the journalist was extremely sore from the terrible jolting, and again his head "might have been seen" at the window.

"Sir," he said, "I don't care-care-*air*, if we *don't* get there at seven!"

"I have got my orders!" Fresh horses. Forward again, faster than before. Over rocks and stumps, on one of which the coach narrowly escaped turning a summerset.

"See here!" shrieked Mr. Greeley, "I don't care if we don't get there at all!"

"I've got my orders! I work for the Californy Stage Company, *I* do. That's wot I *work* for. They said, 'git this man through by seving.' An' this man's goin' through. You bet! Ger-long! Whoo-ep!"

Another frightful jolt, and Mr. Greeley's bald head suddenly found its way through the roof of the coach, amidst the crash of small timbers and the ripping of strong canvas.

"Stop, you——maniac!" he roared.

Again answered Henry Monk:

"I've got my orders! *Keep your seat, Horace!*"

At Mud Springs, a village a few miles from Placerville, they met a large delegation of the citizens of Placerville, who had come out to meet the celebrated editor, and escort him into town. There was a military company, a brass band, and a six-horse wagon-load of beautiful damsels in milk-white dresses, representing all the States in the Union. It was nearly dark now, but the delegation was amply provided with torches, and bonfires blazed all along the road to Placerville.

The citizens met the coach in the outskirts of Mud Springs, and Mr. Monk reined in his foam-covered steeds.

"Is Mr. Greeley on board?" asked the chairman of the committee.

"*He was, a few miles back!*" said Mr. Monk; "yes," he added, after looking down through the hole which the fearful jolting had made in the coach-roof—"yes, I can see him! He is there!"

"Mr. Greeley," said the Chairman of the Committee, presenting himself at the window of the coach, "Mr. Greeley, sir! We are come to most cordially welcome you, sir—why, God bless me, sir, you are bleeding at the nose!"

"I've got my orders!" cried Mr. Monk. "My orders is as follers: Git him there by seving! It wants a quarter to seving. Stand out of the way!"

"But, sir" exclaimed the Committee-man, seizing the off leader by the reins—"Mr. Monk, we are come to escort him into town! Look at the procession, sir, and the brass band, and the people, and the young women, sir!"

"*I've got my orders!*" screamed Mr. Monk. "My orders don't say nothin' about no brass bands and young women. My orders says, 'git him there by seving!' Let go them lines! Clear the way there! Whoo-ep! KEEP YOUR SEAT, HORACE!" and the coach dashed wildly through the procession, upsetting a portion of the brass band, and violently grazing the wagon which contained the beautiful young women in white.

Years hence grey-haired men, who were little boys in this procession, will tell their grandchildren how this stage tore through Mud Springs, and how Horace Greeley's bald head ever and anon showed itself, like a wild apparition, above the coach-roof.

Mr. Monk was on time. There is a tradition that Mr. Greeley was very indignant for awhile; then he laughed, and finally presented Mr. Monk with a bran-new suit of clothes.

Mr. Monk himself is still in the employ of the California Stage Company, and is rather fond of relating a story that has made him famous

all over the Pacific coast. But he says he yields to no man in his admiration for Horace Greeley.

### *The Mountain Fever*

I go back to my hotel and go to bed, and I do not get up again for two weary weeks. I have the mountain fever (so called in Utah, though it closely resembles the old-style typhus), and my case is pronounced dangerous. I don't regard it so. I don't, in fact, regard anything. I am all right, *myself.* My poor Hingston shakes his head sadly, and Dr. Williamson, from Camp Douglas, pours all kinds of bitter stuff down my throat. I drink his health in a dose of the cheerful beverage known as jalap, and thresh the sheets with my hot hands. I address large assemblages, who have somehow got into my room, and I charge Dr. Williamson with the murder of Luce, and Mr. Irwin, the actor, with the murder of Shakespeare. I have a lucid spell now and then, in one of which James Townsend, the landlord, enters. He whispers, but I hear what he says far too distinctly: "This man can have anything and everything he wants; but I'm no hand for a sick room. *I never could see anybody die.*"

That was cheering, I thought. The noble Californian, Jerome Davis—he of the celebrated ranch—sticks by me like a twin brother, although I fear that in my hot frenzy I more than once anathematized his kindly eyes. Nurses and watchers, Gentile and Mormon, volunteer their services in hoops, and rare wines are sent to me from all over the city, which, if I can't drink, the venerable and excellent Thomas can, easy.

I lay there in this wild, broiling way for nearly two weeks, when one morning I woke up with my head clear and an immense plaster on my stomach. The plaster had *operated.* I was so raw that I could by no means say to Dr. Williamson, *Well done*, thou good and faithful servant. I wished he had lathered me before he plastered me. I was fearfully weak. I was frightfully thin. With either one of my legs you could have cleaned the stem of a meerschaum pipe. My backbone had the appearance of a clothes-line with a quantity of English walnuts strung upon it. My face was almost gone. My nose was so sharp that I didn't dare stick it into other people's business for fear it would stay there. But by borrowing my agent's overcoat I succeeded in producing a shadow.

### *Hurrah for the Road!*

Time, Wednesday afternoon, February 10. —The Overland Stage, Mr. William Glover on the box, stands before the veranda of the Salt Lake House. The genial Nat Stein is arranging the way-bill. Our baggage (the overland passenger is only allowed twenty-five pounds) is being put aboard, and we are shaking hands, at a rate altogether furious, with Mormon and Gentile. Among the former are brothers Stenhouse, Caine, Clawson, and Townsend; and among the latter are Harry Riccard, the big-hearted English mountaineer (though once he wore white kids and swallow-tails in Regent street, and in his boyhood went to school to Miss Edgeworth, the novelist); the daring explorer Rood, from Wisconsin; the Rev. James McCormick, missionary, who distributes pasteboard tracts among the Bannock miners; and the pleasing child of gore, Capt. D. B. Stover, of the Commissary department.

We go away on wheels, but the deep snow compels us to substitute runners twelve miles out.

There are four passengers of us. We pierce the Wahsatch mountains by Parley's Cañon.

A snow storm overtakes us as the night thickens, and the wind shrieks like a brigade of strong-lunged maniacs. Never mind. We are well covered up—our cigars are good. I have on deerskin pantaloons, a deerskin overcoat, a beaver cap and buffalo overshoes; and so, as I tersely observed before, Never mind. Let us laugh the winds to scorn, brave boys! But why is William Glover, driver, lying flat on his back by the road-side; and why am I turning a handspring in the road; and why are the horses tearing wildly down the Wahsatch mountains? It is because William Glover has been thrown from his seat, & the horses are running away. I see him fall off, and it occurs to me that I had better get out. In doing so, such is the velocity of the sleigh, I turn a handspring.

Far ahead I hear the runners clash with the rocks, and I see Dr. Hingston's lantern (he

always *would* have a lantern) bobbing about like the binnacle light of an oyster sloop, very loose in a chopping sea. Therefore I do not laugh the winds to scorn as much as I did, brave boys.

William G. is not hurt, and together we trudge on after the runaways in the hope of overtaking them, which we do some two miles off. They are in a snowbank, and "nobody hurt."

We are soon on the road again, all serene; though I believe the doctor did observe that such a thing could not have occurred under a monarchical form of government.

We reach Weber station, thirty miles from Salt Lake City, and wildly situated at the foot of the Grand Echo Cañon, at 3 o'clock the following morning. We remain over a day here with James Bromley, agent of the Overland Stage line, and who is better known on the plains than Shakespeare is; although Shakespeare has done a good deal for the stage. James Bromley has seen the Overland line grow up from its ponyicy; and as Fritz-Green Halleck happily observes, none know him but to like his style. He was intended for an agent. In his infancy he used to lisp the refrain,

> "I want to be an agent,
> And with the agents stand."

I part with this kind-hearted gentleman, to whose industry and ability the Overland line owes much of its success, with sincere regret; and I hope he will soon get rich enough to transplant his charming wife from the Desert to the "White Settlements."

Forward to Fort Bridger, in an open sleigh. Night clear, cold, and moonlit. Driver Mr. Samuel Smart. Through Echo Cañon to Hanging Rock Station. The snow is very deep, there is no path, and we literally shovel our way to Robert Pollock's station, which we achieve in the Course of Time. Mr. P. gets up and kindles a fire, and a snowy nightcap and a pair of very bright black eyes beam upon us from the bed. That is Mrs. Robert Pollock. The log cabin is a comfortable one. I make coffee in my French coffee-pot, and let loose some of the roast chickens in my basket. (Tired of fried bacon and saleratus bread—the principal bill of fare at the stations—we had supplied ourselves with chicken, boiled ham, onions, sausages, sea-bread, canned butter, cheese, honey, &c. &c., an example all Overland traders would do well to follow.) Mrs. Pollock tells me where I can find cream for the coffee, and cups and saucers for the same, and appears so kind, that I regret our stay is so limited that we can't see more of her.

On to Yellow Creek Station. Then Needle Rock—a desolate hut on the Desert, house and barn in one building. The station-keeper is a miserable, toothless wretch with shaggy yellow hair, but says he's going to get married. I think I see him.

To Bear River. A pleasant Mormon named Myers keeps this station, and he gives us a first-rate breakfast. Robert Curtis takes the reins from Mr. Smart here, and we get on to wheels again. Begin to see groups of trees—a new sight to us.

Pass Quaking Asp Springs and Muddy to Fort Bridger. Here are a group of white buildings, built round a plaza, across the middle of which runs a creek. There are a few hundred troops here under the command of Major Gallagher, a gallant officer and a gentleman, well worth knowing. We stay here for two days.

We are on the road again, Sunday the 14th, with a driver of the highly floral name of Primrose. At 7 the next morning we reach Green River Station, and enter Idaho territory. This is the Bitter Creek division of the Overland route, of which we had heard so many unfavorable stories. The division is really well managed by Mr. Stewart, though the country through which it stretches is the most wretched I ever saw. The water is liquid alkali, and the roads are soft sand. The snow is gone now, and the dust is thick and blinding. So drearily, wearily we drag onward.

We reach the summit of the Rocky Mountains at midnight on the 17th. The climate changes suddenly, and the cold is intense. We resume runners, have a break-down, and are forced to walk four miles.

I remember that one of the numerous reasons urged in favor of General Frémont's election to the Presidency in 1856, was his finding the path across the Rocky Mountains. Credit is certainly due that gallant explorer

in this regard; but it occurred to me, as I wrung my frost-bitten hands on that dreadful night, that for me to deliberately go over that path in mid-winter was a sufficient reason for my election to any lunatic asylum, by an overwhelming vote. Dr. Hingston made a similar remark, and wondered if he should ever clink glasses with his friend Lord Palmerston again.

Another sensation. Not comic this time. One of our passengers, a fair-haired German boy, whose sweet ways had quite won us all, sank on the snow, and said, "Let me sleep." We knew only too well what that meant, and tried hard to rouse him. It was in vain. "Let me sleep," he said. And so in the cold starlight he died. We took him up tenderly from the snow, and bore him to the sleigh that awaited us by the roadside, some two miles away. The new moon was shining now, and the smile on the sweet white face told how painlessly the poor boy had died. No one knew him. He was from the Bannock mines, was ill clad, had no baggage or money, and his fare was paid to Denver. He had said that he was going back to Germany. That was all we knew. So at sunrise the next morning we buried him at the foot of the grand mountains that are snow-covered and icy all the year round, far away from the Faderland, where, it may be, some poor mother is crying for her darling who will not come.

1865

## 1818 ~ *Josh Billings* ~ 1885

HENRY WHEELER SHAW, who wrote under the pseudonym of Josh Billings, was born in Lanesboro, Massachusetts, a small village in the Berkshire region, and educated in a district school and Lenox Academy, where one of his masters was John Hotchin, who besides teaching him Latin and Greek, impressed upon his mind the ungrammatical and unforgettable maxim, "Whatever you get, get it got." His course at Hamilton College was brought to an end by enforced withdrawal for some sophomoric prank. Restless and desirous to travel, he wandered west as far as St. Louis. After several years of uncertain occupation he settled in Poughkeepsie as auctioneer and real estate agent. After his literary reputation was established he moved to New York City where he spent the remaining years of his life.

Like his contemporary, C. F. Browne, Shaw achieved fame as a humorous writer and lecturer. He was born with the gift of the gods, and wrote and lectured as the spontaneous expression of an inner, uncontrollable urge. His first efforts were published in local papers. His first book, *Josh Billings: His Sayings* (1865), was very successful. The most successful literary venture, however, was *Josh Billings' Farmer's Allminax*, which he published for many years, beginning in 1870. Other titles are *Every Boddy's Friend* (1876), *Josh Billings' Trump Cards* (1877), and *Josh Billings' Spice Box* (1881). His popularity as a writer, together with the lyceum epidemic of the last century, swept him inevitably onto the platform and called him on itineraries which covered the eastern half of the country from the coast to Wisconsin, and from Wisconsin to Texas.

Like Ward, Billings belonged to the misspellers. Probably that device, once so popular, was instrumental in helping to outmode his humor. And yet it is difficult to comprehend why his books should be hopelessly out of print, for there is about his humor a freshness, modernity, and deep human appeal which ought to guarantee permanence. He continued the tradition of Benjamin Franklin as a homely philosopher in epigram, a form of expression well suited to the fast tempo of American life. He could express himself most effectively in the form of isolated sentences and brief paragraphs, having no gift of narrative as Ward and Mark Twain had. Epigrams, compounded of humor and homely common sense, together with a positive genius for poor spelling, constitute his claim to distinction. Fashions have changed since his time, but human nature has not, and for that reason his comments are as pertinent today as they were yesterday. Historically he bridges the gap between the early humorists and Mark Twain.

Shaw's best-known books are *Josh Billings: His Sayings* (1865) and *Josh Billings' Farmer's Allminax* (1870–80). The collected writings are available in *Josh Billings: His Works, Complete* (1880), with biographical introduction. The only biography is Cyril Clemens, *Josh Billings, Yankee Humorist* (1932). Further references are J. R. Tandy, *Crackerbox Philosophers in American Humor and Satire* (1925); C. M. Rourke, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (1931); E. P. Thompson, "The Home of Josh Billings," *New England Magazine*, Feb., 1899; *DAB*, XVII; J. Mudge, "A Philosophical Humorist," *Methodist Review*, March, 1918; W. P. Trent, "A Retrospect of American Humor," *Century*, Nov., 1901; J. B. Pond, *Eccentricities of Genius* (1900); and W. Blair, *Native American Humor* (1937).

## MUDTURKLES

MUDTURKLES liv in a shell, which tha git verry mutch attached to. Tha are not fond ov company, and seldom receive visitors in their houses. Their food consists prinsipally of what they eat, which tha find wharever tha kan git it. Their style iz haf land, and haf water, and tha are at home on the banks or at the bottom ov a kanal. Tha hav sum eggs, which tha lay in sum warm sand, and ginerally hav them hatched out tew the halves. Tha belong tew the class known az "close korporashuns," and are a hard animil tew whip, bekause tha alwus fite under cover. The mudturkle kant climb very well, and therefore seldum iz found up a tree. Tha are verry tuff ov life, and will outlive an injun rubber shoe, and don't seem tew gro old enny faster than a paving stone duz. Tha kan be domestikated without enny trubble; awl yu hav tew dew, iz tew put them into a barrel, and tha aint ap tew stray off far. Mudturkles hav their faults, but tha won't lie, nor drink rum, nor chaw terbacker, and tho tha cant trot as fast az sum hosses kan, thare sure tew git tew whare tha go tew, and never brake down on the rode. I take a deep interest in moste awl the animils, and particularly in mudturkles, and i dew hope that the Legislature in their wisdom won't pass a law "prohibiting enny more mudturkles." I regret tew hear, that in sum parts ov the kuntry, the people are in the habit of using mudturkles tew pitch quoits with, but I think this wants an affidavy with a revenew stamp onto it.

## THE CURSID MUSKETO

DEAR ——:—Yure letter kame safe unto hand last nite bi mail, and i hurry tew repli.

The best musketers now in market are raised near Bergen point, in the dominion ov Nu Jersey.

They gro thare verry spontaneous, and the

market for them iz verry unstiddy—the grate supply injures the demand.

Two hundred and fifty to the square inch iz konsidered a paying krop, altho they often beat that.

They don't require enny nussing, and the poorer the land the bigger the yield.

If it want for musketers i dont know what sum people would do thare tew git a living, for thare iz a grate deal ov kultivated land thare that wont raise ennything else at a proffit.

The musketer iz a short lived bug, but don't waste enny time; they are alwuss az reddy for bizzness az pepper sass iz, and kan bight 10 minnitts after they are born just az fluently az ever.

Thare iz people in this world so kontrary at heart, and so ignorant, that they wont see enny wisdum in having musketers around; i alwus pitty sutch pholks—their edukashun haz been sorely neglekted and aint level.

Wisdum iz like duks eggs—if yu git them, you hav got tew sarch for them—thare aint no duks in theze benighted days that will cum and la eggs in yure hand—not a duk, Mr. ——, not a duk.

The musketo is a soshul insex; they liv verry thick amungst each other, and luv the sosiety ov man also, but don't kontrakt enny ov hiz vices.

Yu never see a musketer that was a defaulter; they never fail to cum to time, altho thousands looze their lives in the effort.

The philosophers tell us that the muskeeters who can't sing won't bight; this information may be ov grate use to science, but ain't worth mutch to a phellow in a hot nite whare muskeeters are plenty.

If thare ain't but one musketer out ov ten that kan bight good, that iz enuff to sustain their reputashun.

The philosophers are alwus a telling us sumthing that iz right smart, but the only plan they kan offer us tew git rid ov our sorrows iz to grin and bear them.

They kant rob one single musketer ov hiz stingger by argument. I say bully for the muskeeter!

The muskeeter iz the child ov circumstansis in one respekt—he can be born, or not, and liv, and die a square deth in a lonesum marsh, 1600 miles from the nearest nabor, without ever tasting blood, and be happy all the time; or he kan git into sumboddy's bed-room thru the keyhole, and take hiz rashuns reglar, and sing sams ov praze and glorificashun.

It don't kost a muskeeter mutch for hiz board in this world; if he kant find enny boddy to eat he kan set on a blade ov swamp meadow gras and liv himself to deth on the damp fog.

The musketo is a gray bug and haz 6 leggs, a bright eye, a fine busst, a sharp tooth and a reddy wit.

He dont waste enny time hunting up hiz customers, and alwus lights onto a baby fust if thare iz one on the premises.

I positively fear a musketo.

In the dark, still nite, when every thing iz az noizeless az a pair ov empty slippers, to hear one at the further end ov the room slowly but surely working hiz way up to yu, singing that same hot old sissing tune ov theirs, and harking to feel the exackt spot on yure face whare they intend tew lokate, iz simply premeditated sorrow tew me; i had rather look forward to the time when an elephant waz going tew step onto me.

The musketo haz no friends, and but phew associates; even a mule dispizes them.

But i hav seen human beings who want aktually afraid ov them; i hav seen pholks who had rather hav a muskeeter lite onto them than to have a trakt peddler lite onto them; i have seen pholks who were so tuff aginst anguish that a muskeeter mite lite onto them enny whare and plunge their dagger in up tew the hilt in vain.

I envy these people their moral stamina, for next tew being virtewous i would like tew be tuff.

This life iz phull ov pesky muskeetos, who are alwus a looking for a job, alwus reddy tew stik a thissell into yu sum whare, and sing while they are doing it.

Dear Mr.——, pardon me for saying so mutch about the cursid muskeeto, but ov all things on this arth that travel, or set still, for deviltry, thare aint enny bug, enny beast, or enny beastess, that i dred more, and luv less, than i do this same little gray wretch, called cursid muskeeter.

## GOOD REZOLUSHUNS FOR 1872, 1873 & 1874

THAT i wont smoke enny more cigars, only at sum body else's ezpense.

That i wont borry nor lend—espeshily lend.

That i will liv within mi inkum, if i hav tew git trusted tew do it.

That i will be polite tew evry boddy, except muskeeters and bed-bugs.

That i wont advise enny boddy, until i know the kind ov advise they are anxious tew follow.

That i wont wear enny more tite boots, if i hav tew go bare-foot tew do it.

That i wont eat enny more chicken soup with a one-tined fork.

That i wont swop dogs with no man, unless i kan swop two for one.

That i wont objekt tew enny man on ackount ov hiz color, unless he happens tew be blue.

That i wont sware enny, unless i am put under oath.

That i wont beleave in total depravity, only in gin at 4 shillings a gallon.

That poverty may be a blessing, but if it iz, it iz a blessing in disguise.

That i will take mi whisky hereafter straight —straight tew the gutter.

That the world owes me a living—provided i earn it.

That i will stick tew mi taylor az long az he will stick tew me.

That i wont swop enny hosses with a deakon.

That no man shall beat me in politeness, not so long az politeness kontinues tew be az cheap az it iz now.

That i wont hav enny religious kreed miself, but will respekt every boddy else's.

That if lovely woman smaks me on one cheek, i will turn her the other also.

That if a man kalls me a phool, i wont ask him to prove it.

That i will lead a moral life, even if i lose a good deal ov phun by it. That if a man tells me a mule wont kik, i will beleave what he sez without trieing it.

That if enny boddy loozes even a goose i will weep with him, for it iz a tuff bizness tew looze a goose.

That if i ever do git a hen that kan lay 2 eggs a day, i shall insist upon her keeping one ov the eggs on hand for a sinking phund.

That it iz no disgrace tew be bit bi a dog unless he duz it the seckond time.

That it iz just az natral tew be born ritch az poor, but it iz seldum so convenient.

That one ov the riskyest things tew straddle iz the bak ov a 60 day note.

That the best time tew repent ov a blunder iz just before the blunder is made.

That i will try hard tew be honest, but it will be just mi darn luk tew miss it.

That i won't grow enny kats. Spontaneous kats hav killed the bissness.

That i will love my mother-in-law if it takes all the money i kan earn tew do it.

That i beleave real good lies are gitting skarser and skarser every day.

That i will respeckt publik opinyun just az long az i kan respekt myself in doing it.

That when i hear a man bragging on hiz ansestors i won't envy him, but i will pity the ansestors.

That i wont beleave in enny ghost or ghostesses unless they weigh about 140 pounds and can eat a good square meal.

That i won't bet on nothing, for things that require betting on, lak sumthing.

That i will brag on mi wife all the time, but i will do it silently.

That i won't be suprised at ennything, not even tew be told that Ben Franklin waz a spendthrift, or that Lazarus died ritch.

That i will dispize most things that i see, not out ov malice, but out ov wisdum.

That i won't hanker for happiness, but if i see enny that i think iz a bargin i will shut up one eye and go for it.

That i won't wish I waz az pure as King David, but that i was purer than i am.

That i won't kovet enny man's wife, nor hiz oxen, nor hiz kornstalks, nor the color ov hiz mustash.

That i will laff every good chance i kan git, whether it makes me gro phatt or not.

Finally, i will sarch for things that are little, for things that are lonesum, avoiding all torch lite proseshuns, bands ov brass music, Wimmins' rights convenshuns and grass widders generally.

# 1833 ~ *Petroleum V. Nasby* ~ 1888

DAVID ROSS LOCKE was by birth an up-state New Yorker. On both sides of the family he was descended from ancestors of strong convictions who served their country during the Revolution and the War of 1812. He left school at the age of ten, and promptly apprenticed himself to the Cortland *Democrat* in order to learn the printer's trade. After the apprenticeship was completed he earned his living as a wandering printer. With James G. Robinson he founded the *Advertiser* in Plymouth, Ohio. While he was on the staff of the Findlay *Jeffersonian*, he published the first of his famous letters under the pseudonym of Petroleum V. Nasby, letters which appeared at almost regular intervals until the time of his death. In 1865 he became the publisher of the Toledo *Blade*, and toward the end of his life had newspaper interests in New York. President Lincoln was one of his most ardent admirers, and it is said that both he and, later, President Grant offered Locke government positions which were declined. Like the other humorists of his time he achieved fame as a lecturer.

It cannot be said of him, however, that he was primarily a humorist. He was essentially a reformer and propagandist, especially against the South in general, and slavery in particular. To carry forward his purpose he invented "Nasby," the presumable writer of the letters, a Copperhead Democrat and reprobate minister of a country parish in the "Church uv the Noo Dispensashun." (He followed the fashion of resorting to perverted spelling.) He had been drafted into the Confederate Army, but the cause he apparently advocated was not strong enough to stir his martial spirit. One of his highest ambitions was to obtain a postmastership to help eke out a rather precarious living. Under the guise of a Southern sympathizer he very adroitly heaped bitter condemnation upon the very institutions in whose support he professed to be writing. To the South he was occasionally downright insulting. The malice, coarseness, and near-vulgarity to which he resorted in his insistent attacks were very inadequately diluted by the caricaturist humor of which he was somewhat of a master.

The "Nasby" letters brought fame to their author and a measure of prosperity to his newspapers. Numerous collections of his writings were published in book form under such titles as *The Nasby Papers* (1864), *Ekkoes from Kentucky* (1867), and *The Struggles—Social, Financial, and Political—of Petroleum V. Nasby* (1872). He was also the author of *The Demagogue* (1891), a novel of political life. His popularity has declined to such an extent that today Locke is probably the least read of the humorists of his day. This decline is due in part to the extreme "localness" of many of the

papers and in part to the lack of good-humor which is present in Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and Nasby's Southern contemporary, "Bill Arp." They grew out of the burning passion of the moment, the causes of which have since disappeared. Many of the allusions are so obscure that the present-day reader requires notes and explanations to make them intelligible. Under such conditions humor at its best could hardly be expected to continue to be popular. As humorist and satirist, nevertheless, he occupies an important place in this crucial period in American history.

There is no full-length biography. Consult *DAB*, XI; R. Ford, *American Humorists, Recent and Living* (1897); J. B. Pond, *Eccentricities of Genius* (1900); J. R. Tandy, *Crackerbox Philosophers in American Humor and Satire* (1925); C. M. Rourke, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (1931); W. Blair, *Native American Humor* (1937); and Cyril Clemens, *Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby* (1936).

## *From* THE STRUGGLES OF PETROLEUM V. NASBY

**Locke performed invaluable service to the Federal cause during the Civil War by his satiric and ironic treatment of southern conditions and personalities.**

### *Mr. Nasby at Last Loses His Post Office*

On a Farm, Three Miles from
Confedrit X Roads
(which is in the Stait uv
Kentucky).

June 29, 1869

THE die is cast! The guilloteen hez fallen! I am no longer Postmaster at Confedrit X Roads, wich is in the State uv Kentucky. The place wich knowd me wunst will know me no more forever; the paper wich Deekin Pogram takes will be handed out by a nigger; a nigger will hev the openin uv letters addressed to parties residin hereabouts, containin remittances; a nigger will hev the letters addrest to lottry managers, and extractin the sweets therefrom; a nigger will be.—But I can't dwell upon the disgustin theme no longer.

I hed bin in Washington two weeks assistin the Caucashens uv that city to put their foot upon the heads uv the cussid niggers who ain't content to accept the situashen and remain ez they alluz hev bin, inferior beins. To say I hed succeeded, is a week expreshen. I organized a raid onto em so effectooally ez to drive no less than thirty uv em out uv employment, twenty-seven uv wich wuz compelled to steel their bread, wich give us a splendid opportoonity to show up the nateral cussidness uv the Afrikin race, wich we improved.

On my arrival at the Corners, I knew towunst that suthin wuz wrong. The bottles behind the bar wuz draped in black; the barrels wuz festooned gloomily (wich is our yoosual method of expressin grief at public calamities), and the premises generally wore a funeral aspeck.

"Wat is it?" gasped I.

Bascom returned not a word, but waved his hand towards the Post Offis.

Rushin thither, I bustid open the door, and reeled almost agin the wall. AT THE GENERAL DELIVERY WUZ THE GRINNIN FACE UV A NIGGER and settin in my chair wuz Joe Bigler, with Pollock beside him, smokin pipes, and laffin over suthin in a noosepaper.

Bigler caught site of me, and dartin out, pulled me inside them hitherto sacred precinks.

"Permit me," sed he, jeeringly, "to interdoose you to yoor successor, Mr. Ceezer Lubby."

"MY SUCCESSOR! Wat does this mean?"

"Show him, Ceezer!"

And the nigger, every tooth in his head shinin, handed me a commishun dooly made out and signed. I saw it all at a glance. I hed left my biznis in the hands uv a depetty. It arrived the day after I left, and Isaker Gavitt, who distribbited the mail, gave it to the cuss. Pollock made out the bonds and went onto em himself, and in ten days the commishun come all regler, whereupon Bigler backt the nigger and took forcible possession uv the office. While I wuz absent they hed hed a perceshun in honor uv the joyful event, sed perceshun consistin uv Pollock, Bigler, and the new Postmaster, who marched through the streets with the stars and stripes, banners and sich. Bigler remarkt that the perceshun wuzn't large, but it wuz talented, eminently respectable, and extremely versateel. He (Bigler) carried the flag and played the fife; Pollock carried a banner with an inscripshen onto it, "Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea," and played the bass drum; while the nigger bore aloft a banner, inscribed, "Where Afric's sunny fountins roll down the golden sands," with his commissun pinned onto it, playin in addishen a pair uv anshent cymbals. Bigler remarkt further that the perceshun created a positive sensashun at the Corners, wich I shood think it wood. "It wuzn't," sed the tormentin cuss, "very much like the grand percession wich took place when yoo received yoor commishun. Then the whites at the Corners wuz elated, for they spectid to git wat yoo owed em in doo time, and the niggers wuz correspondinly deprest. They slunk into by-ways and side-ways; they didn't hold up their heads, and they dusted out ez fast ez they cood git. At this percession there wuz a change. The niggers lined the streets ez we passed, grinnin exultinly, and the whites wuz deprest correspondinly. Its singler that at the Corners the two races can't feel good both at the same time."

My arrival hevin become known, by the time I got back to Bascom's all my friends hed gathered there. There wuzn't a dry eye among em; and ez I thot uv the joys once tastid, but now forever fled, mine moistened likewise. There wuz a visible change in their manner towards me. They regarded me with sólisitood, but I cood discern that the solisitood wuz not so much for me ez for themselves.

"Wat shel I do?" I askt. "Suthin must be devised, for I can't starve."

"Pay me wat yoo owe me!" ejakelatid Bascom.

"Pay me wat yoo owe me!" ejakelatid Deekin Pogram, and the same remark wuz made by all uv em with wonderful yoonanimity. Watever differences uv opinyun ther mite be on other topics, on this they wuz all agreed.

"Gentlemen!" I commenced, backin out into a corner, "is this generous? Is this the treatment I hev a right to expect? Is this——"

I shood hev gone on at length, but jist at that minnit Pollock, Joe Bigler, and the new Postmaster entered.

"I hev biznis!" sed the Postmaster; "not agreeable biznis, but it's my offishel dooty to perform it."

At the word "offishel," comin from his lips, I groaned, wich wuz ekkoed by those present.

"I hev in my hand," continyood he, "de bond giben by my predecessor, onto wich is de names uv George W. Bascom, Elkanah Pogram, Hugh McPelter, and Seth Pennibacker, ez sureties. In dis oder hand I hold a skedool ob de property belongin to de 'partment wich wuz turned ober to him by his predecessor, consistin of table, chairs, boxes, locks, bags, et settry, wid sundry dollars worf of stamps, paper, twine, &c. None ob dis post offis property, turned ober to my predecessor by his predecessor, is to be found in de offis, and de objick ob dis visit is to notify yoo dat onless immejit payment be made uv the amount thereof, I am directed by de 'partment to bring soot to-wunst against the sed sureties."

Never before did I so appreciate A. Johnson, and his Postmaster-General Randall. Under their administrashen wat Postmaster wuz ever pulled up for steelin anthin? Eko ansers. This wuz the feather that broke the camel's back.

"Wat!" exclaimed Bascom, "shel I lose wat yoo owe me, and then pay for wat yoo've stole?"

"Shel I lose the money," sed Pogram, "wich I lent yoo, and in addishen pay a

Ablishen government for property yoo've confiscated?"

"But the property is here," I remarkt to Bascom; "yoo've got it all. Why not return it, and save all this trouble?"

"Wat wood I hev then for the whiskey yoo've consoomed?" he ejakelated vishusly. "It's all I've ever got from you; and I've bin keepin yoo four years."

"Didn't that property pay yoo for the likker?" I asked; but Bascom wuz in no humor for figgers, and he pitched into me, at wich pleasant pastime they all follered soot. But for Joe Bigler, they wood hev killed me. Ez it wuz they blackt both my eyes, and rolled me out onto the sidewalk, shuttin the door agin me.

Ez I heard the door slam to, I felt that all wuz lost. No offis! no money! and Bascom's closed agin me! Kin there be a harder fate? I passed the nite with a farmer three miles out, who, bein sick, hedn't bin to the Corners, and consekently knowd nothin uv the changes.

I heard the next day the result uv the ruckshun. Bascom returned sich uv the property ez hedn't been sold and consoomed, wich consisted uv the boxes. The chairs hed bin broken up in the frekent shindies wich occur at his place; the locks hed bin sold to farmers who yoozed em on their smoke houses; the bags hed bin sold for wheat, and so on. The stamps, paper, twine, and sich, figgered up three hundred and forty-six dollars, wich was three hundred more dollars than there wuz in the Corners. Bascom advanced the forty-six dollars and three hundred wuz borrowed uv a banker at Secessionville, who took mortgages on the farms uv the imprudent bondsmen for sekoority. Uv course I can't go back to the Corners under eggsistin circumstances. It wood be uncomfortable for me to live there ez matters hev terminated. I shel make my way to Washington, and shel see if I can't git myself electid ez Manager of a Labor Assosiation, and so make a livin till there comes a change in the Administrashen. I wood fasten myself on A. Johnson, but unforchnitly there ain't enuff in him to tie to. I would ez soon think uv tyin myself to a car wheel in a storm at sea.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY,
(wich wuz Post Master).

## *An Autobiographical Sketch*

Confedrit X Roads
(Wich is in the Stait uv Kentucky).
Jan. 29, 1872

To the Publisher:

Enclosed find photograff uv myself, ez you desired. To make a strikin picter, I flung myself into the attitood, and assoomed the expreshun wich mite hev bin observed onto my classikle countenance when in the act uv deliverin my just celebrated sermon, "The wages uv Sin is Death." The $2.00 wich yoo remitted to kiver the cost uv the picter wuz, I regret to say, insuffishent. The picter cost 75 cents, and it took $1.50 worth uv Bascom's newest whisky to stiddy my nerves to the pint uv undergoin the agony uv sittin three minits in front uv the photograffer. I need not say that he is a incendiary from Massochoosets. Ez the deceased Elder Gavitt's son, Issaker, hez expressed a burnin desire to possess his apparatus, it is probable that public safety will very shortly require his expulsion. But I hed my revenge—in his pocket is none uv my postal currency. Sekoorin the picter, I told him I wood take it home, and ef my intimit friends, those who knowd me, shood decide it wuz a portrait, I wood call and pay for it afore he left the Corners. Will I do it? Will this picter-takin Ablishnist ever more behold me? Ekko ansers.

Yoo may remit the odd twenty-five cents, either by draft on Noo York, or money order, at my resk.

I wuz born in the year 1806, at—I will not say where. I hev reasons for conceelin my birthplace. I don't want to set any town in that State up in biznis. That town hez gone loonatic, and gives Ablishn majorities friteful to contemplate, and I don't want to benefit it by givin it a nashnel reputashen. I don't want to double the price uv its property—to be the means uv erectin a dozen, or sich a matter, uv fust class hotels to accommodate the crowds ez wood make pilgimages thither to visit my birthplace. The present owner uv the house into which I first opened my eyes onto a world uv sin, is a Ablishnist of the darkest dye, and I hev no desire to enrich him. Never, by word uv mine, shel he cut

that house up into walkin sticks and buzzum pins.

My boyhood wuz spent in the pursoot uv knollege and muskrats, mostly the latter. I wuz a promisin child. My parence wuz Democrats uv the strictest kind, my mother in partikeler. She hatid eny one that wuzn't Dimocratic with a hatred that I never saw ekalled. When I say that she woodent borrer tea and sugar and sich uv Whig nabers, the length, and breadth, and depth of her Dimocrisy will be understood.

From sheer cussidnis I shood hev probably hev bin a Whig, hed not a insident occurred in my boyhood days, wich satisfied me that the Dimocrisy wuz my approprit and nateral abidinplace. It wuz in this wise:

In a playful mood, wun nite, I bustid open a grosery, and appropriatid, ez a jest, what loose change ther wuz in the drawer (alars! in these degenerit days uv paper currency, the enterprisin theef hez to steel 10 per cent. discount), and sich other notions ez struck my boyish fancy. I indoost a nigger boy, sumwhat younger than myself, to aid me, and when we hed bagged the game, I, feelin in my pride ez wun hevin the proud Anglo-Sacksun blood a coursin toomulchusly thro his vanes, what Cheef-Justis Taney hez since made law, to-wit: that the nigger hez no rites which the white man is bound to respeck, whaled him till he resined the entire proceeds uv the spekulashen to me. The degraded wretch, devoid uv every prinsiple uv honor, blowed on me, and we wuz both arrested.

*The Justis uv the Pease wuz a Whig!* and after a hurried eggsaminashen, he sentenst ME! wun uv his own race! uv his own blood! uv his own parentige! to impriznment for THIRTY DAYS! on bred and water, and the nigger to only ten, on the ground that I wuz the cheef offender!

My mother beggd and prayd, with teers a stremin down her venrable cheeks faster than she cood wipe em up with her gingum apern, that the arrangement mite be reverst—the nigger the 30 and I the 10—but no! Cold ez a stun, inflexible ez iron, bludlis ez a turnip, I wuz inkarseratid, and stayed my time.

Suddenly I emerged from them walls, on the evenin uv the 30th day, a changed indivijooel. Liftin my hands to heven, I vowd three vows to-wit:

1. That I wood devote my life to the work uv redoosin the Afrikin to his normal speer.

2. That I wood adopt a perfeshn into wich I cood steel without bein hauled up fer it.

3. That the water I hed consoomed while in doorance vile, wuz the last that wood ever find its way, undilootid, into my stumick.

Hentz, I jined the Dimocrisy, and whoever eggsamines my record, will find that I hev kep my oaths!

Uv my childhood, I know but little. My father wuz a leadin man in the humble speer in which he moved, holdin, at different times, the various offices in the town up to constable, the successive steps bein road supervisor and pound master. He wuz elected constable, and mite probably hev gone higher, but for an accident that occurred to him the first month. He collected a judgment for $18, and the money wuz paid to him. The good man wuz a talented collector, but wuz singlerly careless in paying over what he collected. Ez showin the pekoolier bent uv genius uv the old man, I repeet a conversashen I wunst heerd. A man who hed an account to collect, wuz consultin one who knowd my father well, ez to the safety uv puttin a claim into his hands.

"Is he a good collector?" askt the man.

"Splendid!" sed the naber.

"Is he a man uv responsibility?" askt the man.

"Sir!" sed the naber, "he hez the ability, but yoo'll find, when yoo try to git yoor money out uv his hands, that he lacks the response."

Cood ther hev bin a more tetchin triboot?

He wuz like all men uv genius, unbalanced. His ability was all on one side. The grovelin plaintiff, who didn't admire sich erratic flites, raised a ruckshen about the paltry sum, and my father

> "Folded his tent like the Arabs,
> And ez silently stole away."

From that time out, the old gentleman migrated—in fact, he live mostly on the road. He adopted movin ez a perfeshun, and a very profitable one he made uv it. When his hoss died, the nabors, rather than not hev him move, wood chip in and raise him another. Appre-

shiatin the compliment thay pade him, he alluz went. I menshun these pekooliarities uv my ancestor becoz

"The lives uv all grate men remind us
We may make our lives sublime,
And, departin, leave behind us—"

ef our talent runs in that direckshun, ez many debts es he did, though it does require talents.

This hed its inflooence upon my youthful mind. I saw not only a great deal uv the country, but much uv mankind, and I acquired that adaptability to circumstances wich hez ever distinguished me. Even to this day, ef I can't git gin I take whiskey without a murmur and without repinin.

My politicks hez ever bin Dimocratic, and I may say, without egotism, I hev been a yooseful member uv that party. I voted for Jackson seven times, and for every succeedin Dimocratic candidate ez many times ez possible.

My Dimocrisy wuzn't partikerly confirmed until I arrived at the age uv twenty-four. My father wuz intimately acquainted with me, and knowd all my carakteristics ez well ez tho he hed bin the friend uv my buzzum. One day, ez I wuz layin on my back under a tree, contemplatin the beauties uv nacher, my parent, sez he,—

"Pete" (which is short for my name), "ef yoo ever marry, marry a milliner!"

"Why, father uv mine?" replied I, openin my eyes.

"Becoz, my son," sed he, "she'll hev a trade wich'll support yoo, otherwise you'll die uv starvashen when I'm gone."

I thot the idea wuz a good one. Thro woman a cuss come into the world, wich cuss wuz labor; and I wuz determined that ez women hed bin the coz uv requirin somebody to sweat for the bread I eat, woman should do that sweating for me. That nite I perposed to a milliner in the village, and she rejectid my soot. I offered myself, in rapid succeshun, to a widder, who wuz a washerwoman, and to a woman who hed boys old enuff to work, with the same result, when feelin that suthin was nessary to be done to sekoor a pervision for life, I married a nigger washerwoman wich didn't feel above me. Wood you blieve it? Within an hour after the ceremony wuz pronounst, she sold her persnel property, consistin uv a wash-tub and board, an a assortment of soap, and investin the proceeds in a red calico dress and a pair of earrings, insisted on my going to work to support her! and the township authorities not only maintained her in her loonacy, but refused to extend releef to me, on the ground that I wuz able-bodied.

Ez I left that nigger, I agin vowed to devote my life to the work of gettin uv em down where to they wood hev to support us, and that vow I hev relijusly fulfilled. I hev never felt good, ceptin when they wuz put down a peg; I hev never wept, save when they wuz bein elevated.

The offices I hev held hev not been many. I hed signers to a petishun for a post-office in Jackson's time, but I killed my chances by presenting it in person. The old hero looked at me, and remarked that it wuzn't worth while throwin away post-offices on sich—that when he wanted em, he cood buy em at a dollar a dozen. Bookana wuz agoin to appoint me, but somehow my antecedents got to his ears, and he wuz afeerd uv his respecktability; and I never suceeded till Androo Johnson returned to his first love and embraced us.

I hed bin drafted into the Federal army at the beginnin uv the war, and hed deserted to the Confederacy. Procoorin a certifikit to that effeck, I applied for a pardon and a place. He didn't like to give me the offis, but he wanted a party, and, ez his appintments everywhere show, he coodn't be very pertikeler. I succeeded! I bore with me to Kentucky a commishun ez Post Master, and I wuz livin in the full enjoyment uv that posishun, till ousted, and I may say, I wuz happy.

The society was conjenial. Ther is four groceries, onto wich I could gaze from the winder uv my offis, and jest beyond, enlivenin what wood otherwise be a dull landscape, is a distillery, from wich the smoke uv the torment ascendeth forever. I hed associates who reverenced me, and friends who loved me. There wuz nuthin monotonous there. I hev knowed ez many ez eight fites per day, though three or four is considered enuff to break the tedium. And in those deliteful pursoots, havin left behind me the ambishens

uv wat mite be called public life, with my daily bread sekoored, with my other sustenance ashoored, with a frend alluz to share my bottle, or, to speek with a greater degree uv akkooracy, frends alluz willin to share ther bottles with me, I wuz glidin peacefly down the stream uv time, dodgin the troubles, and takin ez much uv the good uv life ez I could.

The twenty-five cents menshuned in the beginnin of my letter, you may, ez I remarked, remit either in postal order or currency.

PETROLEUM V. NASBY, P. M.
(Which wuz Postmaster).

P.S.—Don't remit the twenty-five cents menshund in postage stamps. I hev enuff to last me, ez they ain't in demand here. Send it in currency.

P. V. N.

# 1835 ~ *Mark Twain* ~ 1910

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS (Mark Twain), who now ranks among our major writers, brought humor, realism, and western local color to American fiction. The first author to emerge from beyond the Mississippi, he discarded eastern backgrounds and wrote of the West intimately and authentically. He was, indeed, the man that Whitman prophesied and awaited, and his picturesque personality and individual manner of writing gave him world-wide popularity.

Clemens led an interesting and varied life. He was born on the west bank of the Mississippi River at Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835. His boyhood was spent in Hannibal, a little slaveholding town about 100 miles above St. Louis. His father, a lawyer and storekeeper, had moved westward from Virginia to Tennessee, and thence to Missouri. His mother was a Kentuckian. Young Clemens had little schooling. On the death of his father in 1847, he was apprenticed to his brother Orion to learn printing. His principal service, however, was running errands and delivering papers. He grew tired of Hannibal, and in 1853 went to St. Louis, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, working at the printing trade, and then back to Keokuk. He took passage at Cincinnati in 1857 and went by steamboat down the Mississippi to New Orleans. On this trip he met the pilot, Horace Bixby, and for fifteen months he tried the life of a "cub pilot" in the Golden Age of steamboat navigation. He committed to memory all the turns and all the shallows and shoals for the 1200 miles from St. Louis to New Orleans, along one of the greatest of American waterways. The romantic spell of the river and the pride and responsibilities of the pilots are reflected in some of his best books. He made a fine record, but the pilot's life ended for him when, at the outbreak of the Civil War, the river was closed to navigation. He enlisted as a Confederate soldier, but his company was disbanded in a few weeks and he did not re-enlist.

In 1861, Clemens' brother Orion was made private secretary to the governor of the Territory of Nevada. Samuel followed him there, and for six years entered

into the life of the frontier region. He later recorded his experiences as a prospector and journalist in camps and boom towns in *Roughing It* (1872). When the Comstock lode excitement was at its height, he was at Virginia City on a newspaper. Here he met Artemus Ward, one of the journalistic group of humorists who were his nearest predecessors in his field. By 1863 he had discovered that he could write and began to use the pen name of Mark Twain, a term employed in his piloting experience to register depths of water. In another year he had given up mining for journalism, although he remained in the West. He worked for a while on a newspaper in San Francisco. It was here that he came to know Bret Harte. In 1865 he published "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" in the New York *Saturday Press*. The following year he visited the Sandwich Islands as a news correspondent, and upon his return he convulsed a San Francisco audience with an account of his experiences, in the first of his many popular humorous lectures. In 1867 he left San Francisco and went to New York, where he published his first book, *The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches. Innocents Abroad* (1869) was the result of a commission given him by a California newspaper to join a European tour to the Holy Land and send home letters concerning it. The accounts were written from the standpoint of how a Westerner might see Europe. It was a new kind of travel book and it made him a national figure. In 1870 he married Olivia Langdon of Elmira, New York, who exerted a strong and lasting influence over him. The following year he moved from Elmira to Hartford, Connecticut, which he made his permanent home. For most of the next forty years he lived there, a noted man of letters, the center of a literary group. In 1873 he published *The Gilded Age*, written in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner.

*Tom Sawyer*, another landmark in American literature, was published in 1876. It was Clemens's desire to picture a real boy instead of another youthful model of all virtue as described by the Sunday School stories for juveniles. In it he blends romantic and realistic material. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) has much the same quality as *Tom Sawyer*. It is something of a social study of the midwestern frontier; it deals again with the romance of steamboat days on the river and touches on the problem of slavery. In 1889 came his famous travesty of chivalric romances, the mock-heroic *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

Successful though Clemens was as a man of letters, he twice found himself in serious financial straits because of bad speculative investments. In 1895 his publishing house failed and he lost the fortune he had made from lecturing and writing. Like Sir Walter Scott, he assumed all legal and moral obligations incurred by this failure and wrote copiously in order to pay the indebtedness. He also made a triumphal lecture tour over the world. He not only paid all debts, but retained, in the main, his health. He became a familiar and popular figure with his white clothes, white hair, and rolling gait. His life was not without tragedy, however; his wife died

in 1904 and three of his children had also died. In 1907 he was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Oxford. His death occurred three years later, on April 21, 1910, at Redding, Connecticut.

While Mark Twain was strongly influenced by his own wide experience and the American frontier scene, recent studies of his reading have made it apparent that he was also strongly influenced by literary tradition and that he had sharply-defined literary theories. These are to be found chiefly in his essays on "How to Tell a Story," "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences," "In Defence of Harriet Shelley," "Howells," "Is Shakespeare Dead?" "English as She Is Taught," "What Paul Bourget Thinks of Us," and in passages throughout his works, notably in Chapter XLVI of *Life on the Mississippi* where he compares Scott unfavorably with his idol Cervantes. As a determinist, Mark Twain sought to rely on "the slow accumulation of *un*conscious observation—absorption," on "years and years of intercourse with the life concerned"; he sought not to present characters in a vacuum but rather to show the inter-penetration of character and environment, of ideals and the physical history of the race. Revolting against the uniformity of book-English of earlier novelists such as Scott, Cooper, and Hawthorne, he stressed the need for fidelity to the rich varieties of the speech of different levels of societies, of different races, and of the same people under different emotional influences. As DeVoto says, he made "the vernacular a perfect instrument for all the necessities of fiction." After the Transcendental idealism, we find Mark Twain seeking everywhere a simple and intimate recording of the life of the senses; he deplored the vogue of "a sad, false delicacy" as making literature insipid and untrue to life. He once insisted that "to simply amuse" the masses "would have satisfied my dearest ambition at any time," and in "How to Tell a Story" he shows that he was a highly conscious craftsman in writing the humorous story and in testing the psychological effectiveness of his literary *manner* directly on countless audiences simply by watching their faces and their reactions. "To string incongruities and absurdities together in a wandering and sometimes purposeless way, and seem innocently unaware that they are absurdities, is the basis of the American art." Yet elsewhere he sought, as a believer in rationalism and humanitarian democracy, to pry "up to a higher level of manhood" those Europeans addicted to a feudalistic caste system; this didactic purpose is illustrated, of course, in *A Connecticut Yankee* and in *The Prince and the Pauper*. He attacked Scott not only for his "chivalry-silliness" but for his bookish style, urging as his own ideal "a strong, compact, direct, unflowery style [which] wastes no words, and does not gush." He also attacked Dowden's style as "a literary cake-walk," full of "bowings and smirkings" and distortions of fact. He thought his friend Howells unexcelled "in the sustained exhibition of certain great qualities—clearness, compression, verbal exactness, and unforced and seemingly unconscious felicity of phrasing," as well as for his mastery of "the right word," "cadenced and

undulating rhythm," and "architectural felicities of construction." Mark Twain summarized his "nineteen rules governing literary art in the domain of romantic fiction" in the beginning of his satiric essay on Cooper, whom he finds violating all of them. It is instructive to approach the study of Mark Twain's own fiction by ascertaining to what extent he himself succeeded in practicing each of his own "rules."

Mark Twain is one of few writers who have made the world laugh. His humor lies largely in his burlesque exaggeration and his skilful use of anticlimaxes, hoax passages, and humorous incidents. But he had a serious side also. A moralist at heart, he was a man of thought as well as laughter. He protested against sham and hypocrisy, insincerity and sentimentality, and he had a keen sense of the tragic incongruities of life. He wrote with colloquial ease and vigor. His faculty of description and his skilful use of words made him an excellent narrator and a romancer of distinction. His works are genuinely American and the best of them have the flavor of the Mississippi.

The best edition of Clemens's work is the Definitive (35 vols., 1922). *The Writings of Mark Twain*, Collected Edition (25 vols., 1899–1910), does not include "The Mysterious Stranger" (1916) and "What Is Man?" (1917), or the *Autobiography*, which was edited by Albert Bigelow Paine (2 vols., 1924). Paine also edited *Mark Twain's Letters* (2 vols., 1917) and *Mark Twain's Notebook* (1935). A translation from the German by Clemens of *Struwelpeter* (Slovenly Peter) was first printed in 1935.

The authorized biography is by Paine (2 vols., 1912). It is now included in the Definitive Edition. *My Mark Twain*, by W. D. Howells, a personal friend, appeared in 1910. *The Life and Letters of W. D. Howells* (2 vols., 1928), edited by Mildred Howells, contains Clemens material. Other accounts are Van Wyck Brooks's *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920; revised edition, 1933), which leans heavily on Freudian psychology; Mary Lawton's *A Life-Time with Mark Twain* (1925); Carl Van Doren in *DAB*, IV (1930); Bernard De Voto's *Mark Twain's America* (1932); Minnie M. Brashear's excellent *Mark Twain, Son of Missouri* (1934); Edward Wagenknecht's sane and useful *Mark Twain: The Man and His Work* (1935); and Ivan Benson's *Western Years* (1939).

F. G. Meine's *Tall Tales from the Southwest* (1930) affords a good background for Clemens's humor. For general critical discussion of Clemens, see P. Carus, "Mark Twain's Philosophy," in the *Monist*, XXIII, April, 1913; John Macy, in *The Spirit of American Literature* (1913); S. P. Sherman, in *CHAL*, III (1921); Brander Matthews, "Mark Twain and the Art of Writing," in *Essays on English* (1921); Carl Van Doren, in *The American Novel* (1921); Friedrich Schönemann, *Mark Twain als literarische Persönlichkeit* (Jena, 1925); Lucy Hazard, in *The Frontier in American Literature* (1927); many papers in the *Missouri Historical Review*, 1927–30; V. L. Parrington in *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); V. R. West, *Folklore in the Works of Mark Twain*, in *University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism*, No. 10 (1930); C. H. Grattan, in Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931); Constance Rourke, in *American Humor* (1931); L. Lewisohn, in *Expression in America* (1932); F. G. Emberson, *Mark Twain's Vocabulary*, in *University of Missouri Studies*, June, 1935. Robert L. Ramsay and Frances G. Emberson have published *A Mark Twain Lexicon* (1938).

There is a bibliography of Mark Twain in A. B. Paine's biography, and one by Clarissa Rinaker in *CHAL*, III (1921). See also Brashear's and De Voto's works. M. DeV. Johnson issued *A Bibliography of the Works of Mark Twain* (1910; 1935), and J. K. Potter, *Samuel L. Clemens: First Editions and Values* (1932).

## THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

Originally entitled "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" in the New York *Saturday Press*, Nov. 18, 1865. Clemens retells in this story an older "tall tale," possibly Negro lore, known along the Mississippi.

In compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, *Leonidas W.* Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that *Leonidas W.* Smiley is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that, if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous *Jim* Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me nearly to death with some infernal reminiscence of him as long and tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design, it certainly succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the old, dilapidated tavern in the ancient mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good-day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named *Leonidas W.* Smiley—*Rev. Leonidas W.* Smiley—a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that, if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat me down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned the initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in *finesse*. To me, the spectacle of a man drifting serenely along through such a queer yarn without ever smiling, was exquisitely absurd. As I said before, I asked him to tell me what he knew of Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and he replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once:

There was a feller here once by the name of *Jim* Smiley, in the winter of '49—or may be it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume wasn't finished when he first came to the camp; but any way, he was the curiosest man about always betting on any thing that turned up you ever see, if he could get any body to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't, he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit him—any way just so's he got a bet, *he* was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solitary thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take any side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush, or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there reg'lar, to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about there, and so he was, too, and a good man. If he even seen a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he

would bet you how long it would take him to get wherever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would follow that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to *him*—he would bet on *any* thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley asked how she was, and he said she was considerable better—thank the Lord for his inf'nit mercy—and coming on so smart that, with the blessing of Prov'dence, she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, "Well, I'll risk two-and-a-half that she won't, any way."

Thish-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because, of course, she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag-end of the race she'd get excited and desperate-like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side amongst the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust, and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and always fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cypher it down.

And he had a little small bull pup, that to look at him you'd think he wa'n't worth a cent, but to set around and look ornery, and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him, he was a different dog; his under-jaw'd begin to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover, and shine savage like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him, and bully-rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what *he* was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only jest grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off by a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he saw in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him, and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't had no opportunity to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances, if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'klated to edercate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summerset, or may be a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of catching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time

as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor —Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog— and sing out, "Flies, Dan'l, flies!" and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres, all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

Well Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come across him with his box, and says:

"What might it be that you've got in the box?"

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, may be, but it ain't—it's only just a frog."

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, "H'm—so 'tis. Well, what's *he* good for?"

"Well," Smiley says, easy and careless, "he's good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump ary frog in Calaveras county."

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, "Well, I don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

"May be you don't," Smiley says. "May be you understand frogs, and may be you don't understand 'em; may be you've had experience, and may be you an't only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I've got *my* opinion, and I'll risk forty dollars he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county."

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I an't got no frog, but if I had a frog, I'd bet you."

And then Smiley says, "That's all right—that's all right—if you'll hold my box a minute, I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

"Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan'l, and I'll give the word." Then he says, "one—two—three—jump!" and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it want no use—couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as an anvil, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out of the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulders—this way—at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, "Well, *I* don' see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, "I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow." And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up and says, "Why, blame my cats, if he don't weigh five pound!" and turned him upside down, and he belched out a double

handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And—

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: "Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy—I an't going to be gone a second."

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond *Jim* Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. *Leonidas W.* Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he buttonholed me and recommenced:

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, and—"

"Oh! hang Smiley and his afflicted cow!" I muttered, good-naturedly, and bidding the old gentleman good-day, I departed.

1865

## *From* THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

### CHAPTER XXVII

### *Rome*

So far, good. If any man has a right to feel proud of himself, and satisfied, surely it is I. For I have written about the Coliseum and the gladiators, the martyrs and the lions, and yet have never once used the phrase "butchered to make a Roman holiday." I am the only free white man of mature age who has accomplished this since Byron originated the expression.

Butchered to make a Roman holiday sounds well for the first seventeen or eighteen hundred thousand times one sees it in print, but after that it begins to grow tiresome. I find it in all the books concerning Rome—and here latterly it reminds me of Judge Oliver. Oliver was a young lawyer, fresh from the schools, who had gone out to the deserts of Nevada to begin life. He found that country, and our ways of life there, in those early days, different from life in New England or Paris. But he put on a woolen shirt and strapped a navy revolver to his person, took to the bacon and beans of the country, and determined to do in Nevada as Nevada did. Oliver accepted the situation so completely that, although he must have sorrowed over many of his trials, he never complained—that is, he never complained but once. He, two others, and myself, started to the new silver-mines in the Humboldt Mountains—he to be Probate Judge of Humboldt County, and we to mine. The distance was two hundred miles. It was dead of winter. We bought a two-horse wagon and put eighteen hundred pounds of bacon, flour, beans, blasting-powder, picks, and shovels in it; we bought two sorry-looking Mexican "plugs," with the hair turned the wrong way and more corners on their bodies than there are on the mosque of Omar; we hitched up and started. It was a dreadful trip. But Oliver did not complain. The horses dragged the wagon two miles from town and then gave out. Then we three pushed the wagon seven miles, and Oliver moved ahead and pulled the horses after him by the bits. We complained, but Oliver did not. The ground was frozen, and it froze our backs while we slept; the wind swept across our faces and froze our noses. Oliver did not complain. Five days of pushing the wagon by day and freezing by night brought us to the bad part of the journey—the Forty Mile Desert, or the Great American Desert, if you please. Still, this mildest-mannered man that ever was had not complained. We started across at eight in the morning, pushing through sand that had no bottom; toiling all day long by the wrecks of a thousand wagons, the skeletons of ten thousand oxen; by wagon-tires enough to hoop the Washington Monument to the top, and ox-chains enough to girdle Long Island; by human graves; with our throats parched always with thirst; lips bleeding from the alkali dust; hungry, perspiring, and very, very weary—so weary that when we dropped in the sand every fifty yards to rest the horses, we could hardly keep from going to sleep—no complaints from Oliver; none the next morning at three o'clock, when we got across, tired to death. Awakened two or three nights

afterward at midnight, in a narrow canyon, by the snow falling on our faces, and appalled at the imminent danger of being "snowed in," we harnessed up and pushed on till eight in the morning, passed the "Divide" and knew we were saved. No complaints. Fifteen days of hardship and fatigue brought us to the end of the two hundred miles, and the judge had not complained. We wondered if anything *could* exasperate him. We built a Humboldt house. It is done in this way. You dig a square in the steep base of the mountain, and set up two uprights and top them with two joists. Then you stretch a great sheet of "cotton domestic" from the point where the joists join the hillside down over the joists to the ground; this makes the roof and the front of the mansion; the sides and back are the dirt walls your digging has left. A chimney is easily made by turning up one corner of the roof. Oliver was sitting alone in this dismal den, one night, by a sagebrush fire, writing poetry; he was very fond of digging poetry out of himself—or blasting it out when it came hard. He heard an animal's footsteps close to the roof; a stone or two and some dirt came through and fell by him. He grew uneasy and said: "Hi!—clear out from there, can't you!"—from time to time. But by and by he fell asleep where he sat, and pretty soon a mule fell down the chimney! The fire flew in every direction, and Oliver went over backward. About ten nights after that he recovered confidence enough to go to writing poetry again. Again he dozed off to sleep, and again a mule fell down the chimney. This time, about half of that side of the house came in with the mule. Struggling to get up, the mule kicked the candle out and smashed most of the kitchen furniture, and raised considerable dust. These violent awakenings must have been annoying to Oliver, but he never complained. He moved to a mansion on the opposite side of the canyon, because he had noticed the mules did not go there. One night about eight o'clock he was endeavoring to finish his poem, when a stone rolled in—then a hoof appeared below the canvas—then part of a cow—the after part. He leaned back in dread, and shouted "Hooy! hooy! get out of this!" and the cow struggled manfully—lost ground steadily—dirt and dust streamed down, and before Oliver could get well away, the entire cow crashed through on to the table and made a shapeless wreck of everything!

Then, for the first time in his life, I think, Oliver complained. He said:

"*This thing is growing monotonous!*"

Then he resigned his judgeship and left Humboldt County. "Butchered to make a Roman holiday" has grown monotonous to me.

In this connection I wish to say one word about Michael Angelo Buonarotti. I used to worship the mighty genius of Michael Angelo—that man who was great in poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture—great in everything he undertook. But I do not want Michael Angelo for breakfast—for luncheon—for dinner—for tea—for supper—for between meals. I like a change, occasionally. In Genoa, he designed everything; in Milan he or his pupils designed everything; he designed the Lake of Como; in Padua, Verona, Venice, Bologna, who did we ever hear of, from guides, but Michael Angelo? In Florence, he painted everything, designed everything, nearly, and what he did not design he used to sit on a favorite stone and look at, and they showed us the stone. In Pisa he designed everything but the old shot-tower, and they would have attributed that to him if it had not been so awfully out of the perpendicular. He designed the piers of Leghorn and the custom-house regulations of Civita Vecchia. But, here—here it is frightful. He designed St. Peter's; he designed the Pope; he designed the Pantheon, the uniform of the Pope's soldiers, the Tiber, the Vatican, the Coliseum, the Capitol, the Tarpeian Rock, the Barberini Palace, St. John Lateran, the Campagna, the Appian Way, the Seven Hills, the Baths of Caracalla, the Claudian Aqueduct, the Cloaca Maxima—the eternal bore designed the Eternal City, and unless all men and books do lie, he painted everything in it! Dan said the other day to the guide, "Enough, enough, enough! Say no more! Lump the whole thing! say that the Creator made Italy from designs by Michael Angelo!"

I never felt so fervently thankful, so

soothed, so tranquil, so filled with a blessed peace, as I did yesterday when I learned that Michael Angelo was dead.

But we have taken it out of this guide. He has marched us through miles of pictures and sculpture in the vast corridors of the Vatican; and through miles of pictures and sculpture in twenty other palaces; he has shown us the great picture in the Sistine Chapel, and frescoes enough to fresco the heavens— pretty much all done by Michael Angelo. So with him we have played that game which has vanquished so many guides for us—imbecility and idiotic questions. These creatures never suspect—they have no idea of a sarcasm.

He shows us a figure and says: "Statoo brunzo." (Bronze statue.)

We look at it indifferently and the doctor asks: "By Michael Angelo?"

"No—not know who."

Then he shows us the ancient Roman Forum. The doctor asks: "Michael Angelo?"

A stare from the guide. "No—a thousan' year before he is born."

Then an Egyptian obelisk. Again: "Michael Angelo?"

"Oh, *mon dieu*, genteelmen! Zis is *two* thousan' year before he is born!"

He grows so tired of that unceasing question sometimes, that he dreads to show us anything at all. The wretch has tried all the ways he can think of to make us comprehend that Michael Angelo is only responsible for the creation of a *part* of the world, but somehow he has not succeeded yet. Relief for overtasked eyes and brain from study and sightseeing is necessary, or we shall become idiotic sure enough. Therefore this guide must continue to suffer. If he does not enjoy it, so much the worse for him. We do.

In this place I may as well jot down a chapter concerning those necessary nuisances, European guides. Many a man has wished in his heart he could do without his guide; but knowing he could not, has wished he could get some amusement out of him as a remuneration for the affliction of his society. We accomplished this latter matter, and if our experience can be made useful to others they are welcome to it.

Guides know about enough English to tangle everything up so that a man can make neither head nor tail of it. They know their story by heart—the history of every statue, painting, cathedral, or other wonder they show you. They know it and tell it as a parrot would—and if you interrupt, and throw them off the track, they have to go back and begin over again. All their lives long, they are employed in showing strange things to foreigners and listening to their bursts of admiration. It is human nature to take delight in exciting admiration. It is what prompts children to say "smart" things, and do absurd ones, and in other ways "show off" when company is present. It is what makes gossips turn out in rain and storm to go and be the first to tell a startling bit of news. Think, then, what a passion it becomes with a guide, whose privilege it is, every day, to show to strangers wonders that throw them into perfect ecstasies of admiration! He gets so that he could not by any possibility live in a soberer atmosphere. After we discovered this, we *never* went into ecstasies any more—we never admired anything—we never showed any but impassible faces and stupid indifference in the presence of the sublimest wonders a guide had to display. We had found their weak point. We have made good use of it ever since. We have made some of those people savage, at times, but we have never lost our own serenity.

The doctor asks the questions, generally, because he can keep his countenance, and look more like an inspired idiot, and throw more imbecility into the tone of his voice than any man that lives. It comes natural to him.

The guides in Genoa are delighted to secure an American party, because Americans so much wonder, and deal so much in sentiment and emotion before any relic of Columbus. Our guide there fidgeted about as if he had swallowed a spring mattress. He was full of animation—full of impatience. He said:

"Come wis me, genteelmen!—come! I show you ze letter-writing by Christopher Colombo!—write it himself!—write it wis his own hand!—come!"

He took us to the municipal palace. After much impressive fumbling of keys and open-

ing of locks, the stained and aged document was spread before us. The guide's eyes sparkled. He danced about us and tapped the parchment with his finger:

"What I tell you, genteelmen! Is it not so? See! handwriting Christopher Colombo!—write it himself!"

We looked indifferent—unconcerned. The doctor examined the document very deliberately, during a painful pause. Then he said, without any show of interest:

"Ah—Ferguson—what—what did you say was the name of the party who wrote this?"

"Christopher Colombo! ze great Christopher Colombo!"

Another deliberate examination.

"Ah—did he write it himself, or—or how?"

"He write it himself!—Christopher Colombo! he's own handwriting, write by himself!"

Then the doctor laid the document down and said:

"Why, I have seen boys in America only fourteen years old that could write better than that."

"But zis is ze great Christo—"

"I don't care who it is! It's the worst writing I ever saw. Now you musn't think you can impose on us because we are strangers. We are not fools, by a good deal. If you have got any specimens of penmanship of real merit, trot them out!—and if you haven't, drive on!"

We drove on. The guide was considerably shaken up, but he made one more venture. He had something which he thought would overcome us. He said:

"Ah, genteelmen, you come wis me! I show you beautiful, oh, magnificent, bust Christopher Colombo!—splendid, grand, magnificent!"

He brought us before the beautiful bust—for it *was* beautiful—and sprang back and struck an attitude:

"Ah, look, genteelmen!—beautiful, grand,—bust Christopher Colombo!—beautiful bust, beautiful pedestal!"

The doctor put up his eyeglass—procured for such occasions:

"Ah—what did you say this gentleman's name was?"

"Christopher Colombo!—*ze* great Christopher Colombo!"

"'Christopher Colombo! ze great Christopher Colombo!' Well, what did *he* do?"

"Discover America!—discover America, oh, ze devil!"

"Discover America. No—that statement will hardly wash. We are just from America ourselves. We heard nothing about it. Christopher Colombo—pleasant name—is—is he dead?"

"Oh, *corpo di Baccho!*—three hundred years!"

"What did he die of?"

"I do not know!—I cannot tell."

"Smallpox, think?"

"I do not know, genteelmen!—I do not know *what* he die of!"

"Measles, likely?"

"Maybe—maybe—I do *not* know—I think he die of somethings."

"Parents living?"

"Im-posseeble!"

"Ah—which is the bust and which is the pedestal?"

"Santa Maria!—*zis* ze bust!—*zis* ze pedestal!"

"Ah, I see, I see—happy combination—very happy combination, indeed. Is—is this the first time this gentleman was ever on a bust?"

That joke was lost on the foreigner—guides cannot master the subtleties of the American joke.

We have made it interesting for this Roman guide. Yesterday we spent three or four hours in the Vatican again, that wonderful world of curiosities. We came very near expressing interest, sometimes—even admiration—it was very hard to keep from it. We succeeded though. Nobody else ever did, in the Vatican museums. The guide was bewildered—nonplussed. He walked his legs off, nearly, hunting up extraordinary things, and exhausted all his ingenuity on us, but it was a failure; we never showed any interest in anything. He had reserved what he considered to be his greatest wonder till the last—a royal Egyptian mummy, the best-preserved in the world, perhaps. He took us there. He felt so sure, this time, that some of his old enthusiasm came back to him:

"See, genteelmen!—Mummy! Mummy!"

The eyeglasses came up as calmly, as deliberately as ever.

"Ah,—Ferguson—what did I understand you to say the gentleman's name was?"

"Name?—he got no name!—Mummy!—'Gyptian mummy!"

"Yes, yes. Born here?"

"No! '*Gyptian* mummy!"

"Ah, just so. Frenchman, I presume?"

"No!—*not* Frenchman, not Roman!—born in Egypta!"

"Born in Egypta. Never heard of Egypta before. Foreign locality, likely. Mummy—mummy. How calm he is—how self-possessed. Is, ah—is he dead?"

"Oh, *sacré bleu*, been dead three thousan' yeai!"

The doctor turned on him savagely:

"Here, now, what do you mean by such conduct as this! Playing us for Chinamen because we are strangers and trying to learn! Trying to impose your vile second-hand carcasses on *us!*—thunder and lightning, I've a notion to—to—if you've got a nice *fresh* corpse, fetch him out!—or, by George, we'll brain you!"

We make it exceedingly interesting for this Frenchman. However, he has paid us back, partly, without knowing it. He came to the hotel this morning to ask if we were up, and he endeavored as well as he could to describe us, so that the landlord would know which persons he meant. He finished with the casual remark that we were lunatics. The observation was so innocent and so honest that it amounted to a very good thing for a guide to say.

There is one remark (already mentioned) which never yet has failed to disgust these guides. We use it always, when we can think of nothing else to say. After they have exhausted their enthusiasm pointing out to us and praising the beauties of some ancient bronze image or broken-legged statue, we look at it stupidly and in silence for five, ten, fifteen minutes—as long as we can hold out, in fact—and then ask:

"Is—is he dead?"

That conquers the serenest of them. It is not what they are looking for—especially a new guide. Our Roman Ferguson is the most patient, unsuspecting, long-suffering subject we have had yet. We shall be sorry to part with him. We have enjoyed his society very much. We trust he has enjoyed ours, but we are harassed with doubts.

We have been in the catacombs. It was like going down into a very deep cellar, only it was a cellar which had no end to it. The narrow passages are roughly hewn in the rock, and on each hand, as you pass along, the hollowed shelves are carved out, from three to fourteen deep; each held a corpse once. There are names, and Christian symbols, and prayers, or sentences expressive of Christian hopes, carved upon nearly every sarcophagus. The dates belong away back in the dawn of the Christian era, of course. Here, in these holes in the ground, the first Christians sometimes burrowed to escape persecution. They crawled out at night to get food, but remained under cover in the daytime. The priest told us that St. Sebastian lived underground for some time while he was being hunted; he went out one day, and the soldiery discovered and shot him to death with arrows. Five or six of the early Popes—those who reigned about sixteen hundred years ago—held their papal courts and advised with their clergy in the bowels of the earth. During seventeen years—from A.D. 235 to A.D. 252—the Popes did not appear above ground. Four were raised to the great office during that period. Four years apiece, or thereabouts. It is very suggestive of the unhealthiness of underground graveyards as places of residence. One Pope afterward spent his entire pontificate in the catacombs—eight years. Another was discovered in them and murdered in the episcopal chair. There was no satisfaction in being a Pope in those days. There were too many annoyances. There are one hundred and sixty catacombs under Rome, each with its maze of narrow passages crossing and recrossing each other and each passage walled to the top with scooped graves its entire length. A careful estimate makes the length of the passages of all the catacombs combined foot up nine hundred miles, and their graves number seven millions. We did not go through all the passages of all the cata-

combs. We were very anxious to do it, and made the necessary arrangements, but our too limited time obliged us to give up the idea. So we only groped through the dismal labyrinth of St. Calixtus, under the Church of St. Sebastian. In the various catacombs are small chapels rudely hewn in the stones, and here the early Christians often held their religious services by dim, ghostly lights. Think of mass and a sermon away down in those tangled caverns under ground!

In the catacombs were buried St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, and several other of the most celebrated of the saints. In the catacomb of St. Calixtus, St. Bridget used to remain long hours in holy contemplation, and St. Charles Borromeo was wont to spend whole nights in prayer there. It was also the scene of a very marvelous thing.

Here the heart of St. Philip Neri was so inflamed with divine love as to burst his ribs.

I find that grave statement in a book published in New York, in 1858, and written by "Rev. William H. Neligan, LL.D., M.A., Trinity College, Dublin; Member of the Archaeological Society of Great Britain." Therefore, I believe it. Otherwise, I could not. Under other circumstances I should have felt a curiosity to know what Philip had for dinner.

This author puts my credulity on its mettle every now and then. He tells of one St. Joseph Calasanctius whose house in Rome he visited; he visited only the house—the priest has been dead two hundred years. He says the Virgin Mary appeared to this saint. Then he continues:

His tongue and his heart, which were found after nearly a century to be whole, when the body was disinterred before his canonization, are still preserved in a glass case, and after two centuries the heart is still whole. When the French troops came to Rome, and when Pius VII was carried away prisoner, blood dropped from it.

To read that in a book written by a monk far back in the Middle Ages, would surprise no one; it would sound natural and proper; but when it is seriously stated in the middle of the nineteenth century, by a man of finished education, an LL.D., M.A., and an archaeological magnate, it sounds strangely enough. Still, I would gladly change my unbelief for Neligan's faith, and let him make the conditions as hard as he pleased.

The old gentleman's undoubting, unquestioning simplicity has a rare freshness about it in these matter-of-fact railroading and telegraphing days. Hear him, concerning the Church of Ara Coeli:

In the roof of the church, directly above the high altar, is engraved, "*Regina Coeli laetare Alleluia.*" In the sixth century Rome was visited by a fearful pestilence. Gregory the Great urged the people to do penance, and a general procession was formed. It was to proceed from Ara Coeli to St. Peter's. As it passed before the mole of Adrian, now the Castle of St. Angelo, the sound of heavenly voices was heard singing (it was Easter morn) —"*Regina Coeli, laetare! alleluia! quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia! resurrexit sicut dixit; alleluia!*" The Pontiff, carrying in his hands the portrait of the Virgin (which is over the high altar and is said to have been painted by St. Luke), answered, with the astonished people, "*Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia!*" At the same time an angel was seen to put up a sword in a scabbard, and the pestilence ceased on the same day. There are four circumstances which *confirm* this miracle: the annual procession which takes place in the western church on the feast of St. Mark; the statue of St. Michael, placed on the mole of Adrian, which has since that time been called the Castle of St. Angelo; the antiphon Regina Coeli, which the Catholic church sings during paschal time; and the inscription in the church.

1870

## *From* ROUGHING IT

### CHAPTER LXXVIII

### [*Mark Twain's First Lecture*]

AFTER half a year's luxurious vagrancy in the Islands, I took shipping in a sailing vessel, and regretfully returned to San Francisco—a voyage in every way delightful, but without an incident; unless lying two long weeks in a dead calm, eighteen hundred miles from the nearest land, may rank as an incident. Schools of whales grew so tame that day after day they

played about the ship among the porpoises and the sharks without the least apparent fear of us, and we pelted them with empty bottles for lack of better sport. Twenty-four hours afterward these bottles would be still lying on the glassy water under our noses, showing that the ship had not moved out of her place in all that time. The calm was absolutely breathless, and the surface of the sea absolutely without a wrinkle. For a whole day and part of a night we lay so close to another ship that had drifted to our vicinity, that we carried on conversations with her passengers, introduced each other by name, and became pretty intimately acquainted with people we had never heard of before, and have never heard of since. This was the only vessel we saw during the whole lonely voyage. We had fifteen passengers, and to show how hard pressed they were at last for occupation and amusement, I will mention that the gentlemen gave a good part of their time every day, during the calm, to trying to sit on an empty champagne bottle (lying on its side) and thread a needle without touching their heels to the deck, or falling over; and the ladies sat in the shade of the mainsail, and watched the enterprise with absorbing interest. We were at sea five Sundays; and yet, but for the almanac, we never would have known but that all the other days were Sundays too.

I was home again, in San Francisco, without means and without employment. I tortured my brain for a saving scheme of some kind, and at last a public lecture occurred to me! I sat down and wrote one, in a fever of hopeful anticipation. I showed it to several friends, but they all shook their heads. They said nobody would come to hear me, and I would make a humiliating failure of it. They said that as I had never spoken in public, I would break down in the delivery, anyhow. I was disconsolate now. But at last an editor slapped me on the back and told me to "go ahead." He said, "Take the largest house in town, and charge a dollar a ticket." The audacity of the proposition was charming; it seemed fraught with practical worldly wisdom, however. The proprietor of the several theaters endorsed the advice, and said I might have his handsome new opera house at half price—fifty dollars. In sheer desperation I took it—on credit, for sufficient reasons. In three days I did a hundred and fifty dollars' worth of printing and advertising, and was the most distressed and frightened creature on the Pacific coast. I could not sleep—who could, under such circumstances? For other people there was facetiousness in the last line of my posters, but to me it was plaintive with a pang when I wrote it:

"Doors open at 7½. The trouble will begin at 8."

That line has done good service since. Showmen have borrowed it frequently. I have even seen it appended to a newspaper advertisement reminding school pupils in vacation what time next term would begin. As those three days of suspense dragged by, I grew more and more unhappy. I had sold two hundred tickets among my personal friends, but I feared they might not come. My lecture, which had seemed "humorous" to me, at first, grew steadily more and more dreary, till not a vestige of fun seemed left, and I grieved that I could not bring a coffin on the stage and turn the thing into a funeral. I was so panic-stricken, at last, that I went to three old friends, giants in stature, cordial by nature, and stormy-voiced, and said:

"This thing is going to be a failure; the jokes in it are so dim that nobody will ever see them; I would like to have you sit in the parquette, and help me through."

They said they would. Then I went to the wife of a popular citizen, and said that if she was willing to do me a very great kindness, I would be glad if she and her husband would sit prominently in the left-hand stage-box, where the whole house could see them. I explained that I should need help, and would turn toward her and smile, as a signal, when I had been delivered of an obscure joke—"and then," I added, "don't wait to investigate, but *respond!*"

She promised. Down the street I met a man I never had seen before. He had been drinking, and was beaming with smiles and good nature. He said:

"My name's Sawyer. You don't know me, but that don't matter. I haven't got a cent, but if you knew how bad I wanted to laugh, you'd give me a ticket. Come, now, what do you say?"

"Is your laugh hung on a hair-trigger?—that is, is it critical, or can you get it off *easy*?"

My drawling infirmity of speech so affected him that he laughed a specimen or two that struck me as being about the article I wanted, and I gave him a ticket, and appointed him to sit in the second circle, in the center, and be responsible for that division of the house. I gave him minute instructions about how to detect indistinct jokes, and then went away, and left him chuckling placidly over the novelty of the idea.

I ate nothing on the last of the three eventful days—I only suffered. I had advertised that on this third day the box-office would be opened for the sale of reserved seats. I crept down to the theater at four in the afternoon to see if any sales had been made. The ticket-seller was gone, the box-office was locked up. I had to swallow suddenly, or my heart would have got out. "No sales," I said to myself; "I might have known it." I thought of suicide, pretended illness, flight. I thought of these things in earnest, for I was very miserable and scared. But of course I had to drive them away, and prepare to meet my fate. I could not wait for half-past seven—I wanted to face the horror, and end it—the feeling of many a man doomed to hang, no doubt. I went down back streets at six o'clock, and entered the theater by the back door. I stumbled my way in the dark among the ranks of canvas scenery, and stood on the stage. The house was gloomy and silent, and its emptiness depressing. I went into the dark among the scenes again, and for an hour and a half gave myself up to the horrors, wholly unconscious of everything else. Then I heard a murmur; it rose higher and higher, and ended in a crash, mingled with cheers. It made my hair raise, it was so close to me, and so loud. There was a pause, and then another; presently came a third, and before I well knew what I was about, I was in the middle of the stage, staring at a sea of faces, bewildered by the fierce glare of the lights, and quaking in every limb with a terror that seemed like to take my life away. The house was full, aisles and all!

The tumult in my heart and brain and legs continued a full minute before I could gain any command over myself. Then I recognized the charity and the friendliness in the faces before me, and little by little my fright melted away, and I began to talk. Within three or four minutes I was comfortable, and even content. My three chief allies, with three auxiliaries, were on hand, in the parquette, all sitting together, all armed with bludgeons, and all ready to make an onslaught upon the feeblest joke that might show its head. And whenever a joke did fall, their bludgeons came down and their faces seemed to split from ear to ear; Sawyer, whose hearty countenance was seen looming redly in the center of the second circle, took it up, and the house was carried handsomely. Inferior jokes never fared so royally before. Presently, I delivered a bit of serious matter with impressive unction (it was my pet), and the audience listened with an absorbed hush that gratified me more than any applause; and as I dropped the last word of the clause, I happened to turn and catch Mrs. ——'s intent and waiting eye; my conversation with her flashed upon me and in spite of all I could do I smiled. She took it for the signal, and promptly delivered a mellow laugh that touched off the whole audience; and the explosion that followed was the triumph of the evening. I thought that that honest man Sawyer would choke himself; and as for the bludgeons, they performed like pile-drivers. But my poor little morsel of pathos was ruined. It was taken in good faith as an intentional joke, and the prize one of the entertainment, and I wisely let it go at that.

All the papers were kind in the morning; my appetite returned; I had abundance of money. All's well that ends well.

1872

## *From* THE GILDED AGE

Mark Twain said (*Autobiography*, I, 89–92) that Colonel Mulberry Sellers, the visionary Southern speculator, was not modeled on his father, as many thought, but was his mother's favorite cousin, James Lampton. "I merely put him on paper; he was not a person who could be exaggerated." The novel was dramatized in 1876, and the play had great success, with John T. Raymond in the role of Colonel Sellers.

CHAPTER VIII

## [*Colonel Sellers, Financial Wizard*]

THE supper at Col. Sellers's was not sumptuous, in the beginning, but it improved on acquaintance. That is to say, that what Washington regarded at first sight as mere lowly potatoes, presently became awe-inspiring agricultural productions that had been reared in some ducal garden beyond the sea, under the sacred eye of the duke himself, who had sent them to Sellers; the bread was from corn which could be grown in only one favored locality in the earth and only a favored few could get it; the Rio coffee, which at first seemed execrable to the taste, took to itself an improved flavor when Washington was told to drink it slowly and not hurry what should be a lingering luxury in order to be fully appreciated—it was from the private stores of a Brazilian nobleman with an unrememberable name. The Colonel's tongue was a magician's wand that turned dried apples into figs and water into wine as easily as it could change a hovel into a palace and present poverty into imminent future riches.

Washington slept in a cold bed in a carpetless room and woke up in a palace in the morning; at least the palace lingered during the moment that he was rubbing his eyes and getting his bearings—and then it disappeared and he recognized that the Colonel's inspiring talk had been influencing his dreams. Fatigue had made him sleep late; when he entered the sitting room he noticed that the old haircloth sofa was absent; when he sat down to breakfast the Colonel tossed six or seven dollars in bills on the table, counted them over, said he was a little short and must call upon his banker; then returned the bills to his wallet with the indifferent air of a man who is used to money. The breakfast was not an improvement upon the supper, but the Colonel talked it up and transformed it into an oriental feast. Bye and bye, he said:

"I intend to look out for you, Washington, my boy. I hunted up a place for you yesterday, but I am not referring to that, now—that is a mere livelihood—mere bread and butter; but when I say I mean to look out for you I mean something very different. I mean to put things in your way that will make a mere livelihood a trifling thing. I'll put you in a way to make more money than you'll ever know what to do with. You'll be right here where I can put my hand on you when anything turns up. I've got some prodigious operations on foot; but I'm keeping quiet; mum's the word; your old hand don't go around powwowing and letting everybody see his k'yards and find out his little game. But all in good time, Washington, all in good time. You'll see. Now there's an operation in corn that looks well. Some New York men are trying to get me to go into it—buy up all the growing crops and just boss the market when they mature—ah I tell you it's a great thing. And it only costs a trifle; two millions or two and a half will do it. I haven't exactly promised yet—there's no hurry—the more indifferent I seem, you know, the more anxious those fellows will get. And then there is the hog speculation—that's bigger still. We've got quiet men at work," [he was very impressive here,] "mousing around, to get propositions out of all the farmers in the whole west and northwest for the hog crop, and other agents quietly getting propositions and terms out of all the manufactories—and don't you see, if we can get all the hogs and all the slaughter houses into our hands on the dead quiet—whew! it would take three ships to carry the money.—I've looked into the thing—calculated all the chances for and all the chances against, and though I shake my head and hesitate and keep on thinking, apparently, I've got my mind made up that if the thing can be done on a capital of six millions, that's the horse to put up money on! Why Washington—but what's the use of talking about it—any man can see that there's whole Atlantic oceans of cash in it, gulfs and bays thrown in. But there's a bigger thing than that, yet—a bigger———"

"Why Colonel, you can't want anything bigger!" said Washington, his eyes blazing. "Oh, I wish I could go into either of those speculations—I only wish I had money—I wish I wasn't cramped and kept down and fettered with poverty, and such prodigious chances lying right here in sight! Oh, it is a fearful thing to be poor. But don't throw away those things—they are so splendid and

I can see how sure they are. Don't throw them away for something still better and maybe fail in it! I wouldn't, Colonel. I would stick to these. I wish father were here and were his old self again—Oh, he never in his life had such chances as these are. Colonel, you *can't* improve on these—no man can improve on them!"

A sweet, compassionate smile played about the Colonel's features, and he leaned over the table with the air of a man who is "going to show you" and do it without the least trouble:

"Why Washington, my boy, these things are nothing. They *look* large—of course they look large to a novice, but to a man who has been all his life accustomed to large operations —shaw! They're well enough to while away an idle hour with, or furnish a bit of employment that will give a trifle of idle capital a chance to earn its bread while it is waiting for something to *do*, but—now just listen a moment—just let me give you an idea of what we old veterans of commerce call 'business.' Here's the Rothschild's proposition—this is between you and me, you understand———"

Washington nodded three or four times impatiently, and his glowing eyes said, "Yes, yes—hurry—I understand———"

———"for I wouldn't have it get out for a fortune. They want me to go in with them on the sly—agent was here two weeks ago about it—go in on the sly" [voice down to an impressive whisper, now,] "and buy up a hundred and thirteen wild-cat banks in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri—notes of these banks are at all sorts of discount now—average discount of the hundred and thirteen is forty-four per cent—buy them all up, you see, and then all of a sudden let the cat out of the bag! Whiz! the stock of every one of those wild-cats would spin up to a tremendous premium before you could turn a handspring—profit on the speculation not a dollar less than forty millions!" [An eloquent pause, while the marvelous vision settled into W.'s focus.] "Where's your hogs now! Why my dear innocent boy, we would just sit down on the front doorsteps and peddle banks like lucifer matches!"

Washington finally got his breath and said: "Oh, it is perfectly wonderful! Why couldn't these things have happened in father's day? And I—it's of no use—they simply lie before my face and mock me. There is nothing for me but to stand helpless and see other people reap the astonishing harvest."

"Never mind, Washington, don't you worry. I'll fix you. There's plenty of chances. How much money have you got?"

In the presence of so many millions, Washington could not keep from blushing when he had to confess that he had but eighteen dollars in the world.

"Well, all right—don't despair. Other people have been obliged to begin with less. I have a small idea that may develop into something for us both, all in good time. Keep your money close and add to it. I'll make it breed. I've been experimenting (to pass away the time,) on a little preparation for curing sore eyes—a kind of decoction nine-tenths water and the other tenth drugs that don't cost more than a dollar a barrel; I'm still experimenting; there's one ingredient wanted yet to perfect the thing, and somehow I can't just manage to hit upon the thing that's necessary, and I don't dare talk with a chemist, of course. But I'm progressing, and before many weeks I wager the country will ring with the fame of Beriah Sellers' Infallible Imperial Oriental Optic Liniment and Salvation for Sore Eyes—the Medical Wonder of the Age! Small bottles fifty cents, large ones a dollar. Average cost, five and seven cents for the two sizes. The first year sell, say, ten thousand bottles in Missouri, seven thousand in Iowa, three thousand in Arkansas, four thousand in Kentucky, six thousand in Illinois, and say twenty-five thousand in the rest of the country. Total, fifty-five thousand bottles; profit clear of all expenses, twenty thousand dollars at the very lowest calculation. All the capital needed is to manufacture the first two thousand bottles—say a hundred and fifty dollars—then the money would begin to flow in. The second year, sales would reach 200,000 bottles—clear profit, say, $75,000—and in the meantime the great factory would be building in St. Louis, to cost, say, $100,000. The third year we could easily sell 1,000,000 bottles in the United States and———"

"O, splendid!" said Washington. "Let's commence right away—let's———"

"———1,000,000 bottles in the United States—profit at least $350,000—and *then* it would begin to be time to turn our attention toward the *real* idea of the business."

"The *real* idea of it! Ain't $350,000 a year a pretty real——"

"Stuff! Why what an infant you are, Washington—what a guileless, short-sighted, easily-contented innocent you are, my poor little country-bred know-nothing! Would I go to all that trouble and bother for the poor crumbs a body might pick up in *this* country? Now do I look like a man who—does my history suggest that I am a man who deals in trifles, contents himself with the narrow horizon that hems in the common herd, sees no further than the end of his nose? Now *you* know that that is not me—couldn't *be* me. *You* ought to know that if I throw my time and abilities into a patent medicine, it's a patent medicine whose field of operations is the solid earth! its clients the swarming nations that inhabit it! Why what is the republic of America for an eye-water country? Lord bless you, it is nothing but a barren highway that you've got to cross to get *to* the true eye-water market! Why, Washington, in the Oriental countries people swarm like the sands of the desert; every square mile of ground upholds its thousands upon thousands of struggling human creatures—and every separate and individual devil of them's got the ophthalmia! It's as natural to them as noses are—and sin. It's born with them, it stays with them, it's all that some of them have left when they die. Three years of introductory trade in the Orient and what will be the result? Why, our headquarters would be in Constantinople and our hindquarters in Further India! Factories and warehouses in Cairo, Ispahan, Bagdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Yedo, Peking, Bangkok, Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta! Annual income—well, God only knows how many millions and millions apiece!"

Washington was so dazed, so bewildered—his heart and his eyes had wandered so far away among the strange lands beyond the seas, and such avalanches of coin and currency had fluttered and jingled confusedly down before him, that he was now as one who has been whirling round and round for a time, and, stopping all at once, finds his surroundings still whirling and all objects a dancing chaos. However, little by little the Sellers family cooled down and crystallized into shape, and the poor room lost its glitter and resumed its poverty. Then the youth found his voice and begged Sellers to drop everything and hurry up the eye-water; and he got his eighteen dollars and tried to force it upon the Colonel—pleaded with him to take it—implored him to do it. But the Colonel would not; said he would not need the capital (in his native magnificent way he called that eighteen dollars Capital) till the eye-water was an accomplished fact. He made Washington easy in his mind, though, by promising that he would call for it just as soon as the invention was finished, and he added the glad tidings that nobody but just they two should be admitted to a share in the speculation.

When Washington left the breakfast table he could have worshiped that man. Washington was one of that kind of people whose hopes are in the very clouds one day and in the gutter the next. He walked on air, now. The Colonel was ready to take him around and introduce him to the employment he had found for him, but Washington begged for a few moments in which to write home; with his kind of people, to ride today's new interest to death and put off yesterday's till another time, is nature itself. He ran up stairs and wrote glowingly, enthusiastically, to his mother about the hogs and the corn, the banks and the eye-water—and added a few inconsequential millions to each project. And he said that people little dreamed what a man Col. Sellers was, and that the world would open its eyes when it found out. And he closed his letter thus:

"So make yourself perfectly easy, mother—in a little while you shall have everything you want, and more. I am not likely to stint *you* in anything, I fancy. This money will not be for me, alone, but for all of us. I want all to share alike; and there is going to be far more for each than one person can spend. Break it to father cautiously—you understand the need of that—break it to him cautiously, for he has had such cruel hard fortune, and is so stricken by it that great good news might prostrate him more surely than even bad, for he is used to the bad but is grown sadly unaccustomed to the other. Tell Laura—tell all the children.

And write to Clay about it if he is not with you yet; You may tell Clay that whatever I get he can freely share in—freely. He knows that that is true—there will be no need that I should swear to that to make him believe it. Good-bye—and mind what I say: Rest perfectly easy, one and all of you, for our troubles are nearly at an end."

Poor lad, he could not know that his mother would cry some loving, compassionate tears over his letter and put off the family with a synopsis of its contents which conveyed a deal of love to them but not much idea of his prospects or projects. And he never dreamed that such a joyful letter could sadden her and fill her night with sighs, and troubled thoughts, and bodings of the future, instead of filling it with peace and blessing it with restful sleep.

When the letter was done, Washington and the Colonel sallied forth, and as they walked along Washington learned what he was to be. He was to be a clerk in a real estate office. Instantly the fickle youth's dreams forsook the magic eye-water and flew back to the Tennessee Land. And the gorgeous possibilities of that great domain straightway began to occupy his imagination to such a degree that he could scarcely manage to keep even enough of his attention upon the Colonel's talk to retain the general run of what he was saying. He was glad it was a real estate office—he was a made man now, sure.

The Colonel said that General Boswell was a rich man and had a good and growing business; and that Washington's work would be light and he would get forty dollars a month and be boarded and lodged in the General's family—which was as good as ten dollars more; and even better, for he could not live as well even at the "City Hotel" as he would there, and yet the hotel charged fifteen dollars a month where a man had a good room.

General Boswell was in his office; a comfortable looking place, with plenty of outline maps hanging about the walls and in the windows, and a spectacled man was marking out another one on a long table. The office was in the principal street. The General received Washington with a kindly but reserved politeness. Washington rather liked his looks. He was about fifty years old, dignified, well preserved and well dressed. After the Colonel took his leave, the General talked a while with Washington—his talk consisting chiefly of instructions about the clerical duties of the place. He seemed satisfied as to Washington's ability to take care of the books, he was evidently a pretty fair theoretical bookkeeper, and experience would soon harden theory into practice. By and by dinnertime came, and the two walked to the General's house; and now Washington noticed an instinct in himself that moved him to keep not in the General's rear, exactly, but yet not at his side—somehow the old gentleman's dignity and reserve did not inspire familiarity.

1873

## *From* LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

### CHAPTER VI

### *A Cub-Pilot's Experience*

WHAT with lying on the rocks four days at Louisville, and some other delays, the poor old *Paul Jones* fooled away about two weeks in making the voyage from Cincinnati to New Orleans. This gave me a chance to get acquainted with one of the pilots, and he taught me how to steer the boat, and thus made the fascination of river life more potent than ever for me.

It also gave me a chance to get acquainted with a youth who had taken deck passage—more's the pity; for he easily borrowed six dollars of me on a promise to return to the boat and pay it back to me the day after we should arrive. But he probably died or forgot, for he never came. It was doubtless the former, since he had said his parents were wealthy, and he only traveled deck passage because it was cooler.

I soon discovered two things. One was that a vessel would not be likely to sail for the mouth of the Amazon under ten or twelve years; and the other was that the nine or ten dollars still left in my pocket would not suffice for so impossible an exploration as I had planned, even if I could afford to wait for a ship. Therefore it followed that I must contrive a new career. The *Paul Jones* was now bound for St. Louis. I planned a siege

against my pilot, and at the end of three hard days he surrendered. He agreed to teach me the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis for five hundred dollars, payable out of the first wages I should receive after graduating. I entered upon the small enterprise of "learning" twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi River with the easy confidence of my time of life. If I had really known what I was about to require of my faculties, I should not have had the courage to begin. I supposed that all a pilot had to do was to keep his boat in the river, and I did not consider that that could be much of a trick, since it was so wide.

The boat backed out from New Orleans at four in the afternoon, and it was "our watch" until eight. Mr. Bixby, my chief, "straightened her up," plowed her along past the sterns of the other boats that lay at the Levee, and then said, "Here, take her; shave those steamships as close as you'd peel an apple." I took the wheel, and my heartbeat fluttered up into the hundreds; for it seemed to me that we were about to scrape the side off every ship in the line, we were so close. I held my breath and began to claw the boat away from the danger; and I had my own opinion of the pilot who had known no better than to get us into such peril, but I was too wise to express it. In half a minute I had a wide margin of safety intervening between the *Paul Jones* and the ships; and within ten seconds more I was set aside in disgrace, and Mr. Bixby was going into danger again and flaying me alive with abuse of my cowardice. I was stung, but I was obliged to admire the easy confidence with which my chief loafed from side to side of his wheel, and trimmed the ships so closely that disaster seemed ceaselessly imminent. When he had cooled a little he told me that the easy water was close ashore and the current outside, and therefore we must hug the bank, upstream, to get the benefit of the former, and stay well out, downstream, to take advantage of the latter. In my own mind I resolved to be a downstream pilot and leave the upstreaming to people dead to prudence.

Now and then Mr. Bixby called my attention to certain things. Said he, "This is Six-Mile Point." I assented. It was pleasant enough information, but I could not see the bearing of it. I was not conscious that it was a matter of any interest to me. Another time he said, "This is Nine-Mile Point." Later he said, "This is Twelve-Mile Point." They were all about level with the water's edge; they all looked about alike to me; they were monotonously unpicturesque. I hoped Mr. Bixby would change the subject. But no; he would crowd up around a point, hugging the shore with affection, and then say: "The slack water ends here, abreast this bunch of China trees; now we cross over." So he crossed over. He gave me the wheel once or twice, but I had no luck. I either came near chipping off the edge of a sugar-plantation, or I yawed too far from shore, and so dropped back into disgrace again and got abused.

The watch was ended at last, and we took supper and went to bed. At midnight the glare of a lantern shone in my eyes, and the night watchman said:

"Come, turn out!"

And then he left. I could not understand this extraordinary procedure; so I presently gave up trying to, and dozed off to sleep. Pretty soon the watchman was back again, and this time he was gruff. I was annoyed. I said:

"What do you want to come bothering around here in the middle of the night for? Now, as like as not, I'll not get to sleep again tonight."

The watchman said:

"Well, if this ain't good, I'm blessed."

The "off-watch" was just turning in, and I heard some brutal laughter from them, and such remarks as "Hello, watchman! ain't the new cub turned out yet? He's delicate, likely. Give him some sugar in a rag, and send for the chambermaid to sing 'Rock-a-by Baby,' to him."

About this time Mr. Bixby appeared on the scene. Something like a minute later I was climbing the pilot-house steps with some of my clothes on and the rest in my arms. Mr. Bixby was close behind, commenting. Here was something fresh—this thing of getting up in the middle of the night to go to work. It was a detail in piloting that had never oc-

curred to me at all. I knew that boats ran all night, but somehow I had never happened to reflect that somebody had to get out of a warm bed to run them. I began to fear that piloting was not quite so romantic as I had imagined it was; there was something very real and worklike about this new phase of it.

It was a rather dingy night, although a fair number of stars were out. The big mate was at the wheel, and he had the old tub pointed at a star and was holding her straight up the middle of the river. The shores on either hand were not much more than half a mile apart, but they seemed wonderfully far away and ever so vague and indistinct. The mate said:

"We've got to land at Jones's plantation, sir."

The vengeful spirit in me exulted. I said to myself, "I wish you joy of your job, Mr. Bixby; you'll have a good time finding Mr. Jones's plantation such a night as this; and I hope you never *will* find it as long as you live."

Mr. Bixby said to the mate:

"Upper end of the plantation, or the lower?"

"Upper."

"I can't do it. The stumps there are out of water at this stage. It's no great distance to the lower, and you'll have to get along with that."

"All right, sir. If Jones don't like it, he'll have to lump it, I reckon."

And then the mate left. My exultation began to cool and my wonder to come up. Here was a man who not only proposed to find this plantation on such a night, but to find either end of it you preferred. I dreadfully wanted to ask a question, but I was carrying about as many short answers as my cargo-room would admit of, so I held my peace. All I desired to ask Mr. Bixby was the simple question whether he was ass enough to really imagine he was going to find that plantation on a night when all plantations were exactly alike and all of the same color. But I held in. I used to have fine inspirations of prudence in those days.

Mr. Bixby made for the shore and soon was scraping it, just the same as if it had been daylight. And not only that, but singing:

"Father in heaven, the day is declining," etc. It seemed to me that I had put my life in the keeping of a peculiarly reckless outcast. Presently he turned on me and said:

"What's the name of the first point above New Orleans?"

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know.

"Don't *know?*"

This manner jolted me. I was down at the foot again, in a moment. But I had to say just what I had said before.

"Well, you're a smart one!" said Mr. Bixby. "What's the name of the *next* point?"

Once more I didn't know.

"Well, this beats anything. Tell me the name of *any* point or place I told you."

I studied awhile and decided that I couldn't.

"Look here! What do you start out from, above Twelve-Mile Point, to cross over?"

"I—I—don't know."

"You—you—don't know?" mimicking my drawling manner of speech. "What *do* you know?"

"I—I—nothing, for certain."

"By the great Caesar's ghost, I believe you! You're the stupidest dunderhead I ever saw or ever heard of, so help me Moses! The idea of *you* being a pilot—*you!* Why, you don't know enough to pilot a cow down a lane."

Oh, but his wrath was up! He was a nervous man, and he shuffled from one side of his wheel to the other as if the floor was hot. He would boil awhile to himself, and then overflow and scald me again.

"Look here! What do you suppose I told you the names of those points for?"

I tremblingly considered a moment, and then the devil of temptation provoked me to say:

"Well to—to—be entertaining, I thought."

This was a red rag to the bull. He raged and stormed so (he was crossing the river at the time) that I judged it made him blind, because he ran over the steering-oar of a trading scow. Of course the traders sent up a volley of red-hot profanity. Never was a man so grateful as Mr. Bixby was; because he was brimful, and here were subjects who could *talk back*. He threw open a window, thrust

his head out, and such an irruption followed as I never had heard before. The fainter and farther away the scowmen's curses drifted, the higher Mr. Bixby lifted his voice and the weightier his adjectives grew. When he closed the window he was empty. You could have drawn a seine through his system and not caught curses enough to disturb your mother with. Presently he said to me in the gentlest way:

"My boy, you must get a little memorandum-book; and every time I tell you a thing, put it down right away. There's only one way to be a pilot, and that is to get this entire river by heart. You have to know it just like A B C."

That was a dismal revelation to me; for my memory was never loaded with anything but blank cartridges. However, I did not feel discouraged long. I judged that it was best to make some allowances, for doubtless Mr. Bixby was "stretching." Presently he pulled a rope and struck a few strokes on the big bell. The stars were all gone now, and the night was as black as ink. I could hear the wheels churn along the bank, but I was not entirely certain that I could see the shore. The voice of the invisible watchman called up from the hurricane-deck:

"What's this, sir?"

"Jones's plantation."

I said to myself, "I wish I might venture to offer a small bet that it isn't." But I did not chirp. I only waited to see. Mr. Bixby handled the engine-bells, and in due time the boat's nose came to the land, a torch glowed from the forecastle, a man skipped ashore, a darky's voice on the bank said: "Gimme de k'yarpet-bag, Mass' Jones," and the next moment we were standing up the river again, all serene. I reflected deeply awhile, and then said—but not aloud—"Well, the find of that plantation was the luckiest accident that ever happened; but it couldn't happen again in a hundred years." And I fully believed it *was* an accident, too.

By the time we had gone seven or eight hundred miles up the river, I had learned to be a tolerably plucky upstream steersman, in daylight; and before we reached St. Louis I had made a trifle of progress in night work, but only a trifle. I had a notebook that fairly bristled with the names of towns, "points," bars, islands, bends, reaches, etc.; but the information was to be found only in the notebook—none of it was in my head. It made my heart ache to think I had only got half of the river set down; for as our watch was four hours off and four hours on, day and night, there was a long four-hour gap in my book for every time I had slept since the voyage began.

My chief was presently hired to go on a big New Orleans boat, and I packed my satchel and went with him. She was a grand affair. When I stood in her pilot-house I was so far above the water that I seemed perched on a mountain; and her decks stretched so far away, fore and aft, below me, that I wondered how I could ever have considered the little *Paul Jones* a large craft. There were other differences, too. The *Paul Jones's* pilot-house was a cheap, dingy, battered rattletrap, cramped for room; but here was a sumptuous glass temple; room enough to have a dance in; showy red and gold window-curtains; an imposing sofa; leather cushions and a back to the high bench where visiting pilots sit, to spin yarns and "look at the river"; bright, fanciful "cuspidores," instead of a broad wooden box filled with sawdust; nice new oilcloth on the floor; a hospitable big stove for winter; a wheel as high as my head, costly with inlaid work; a wire tiller-rope; bright brass knobs for the bells; and a tidy, white-aproned, black "texas-tender," to bring up tarts and ices and coffee during mid-watch, day and night. Now this was "something like"; and so I began to take heart once more to believe that piloting was a romantic sort of occupation after all. The moment we were under way I began to prowl about the great steamer and fill myself with joy. She was as clean and as dainty as a drawing-room; when I looked down her long, gilded saloon, it was like gazing through a splendid tunnel; she had an oil-picture, by some gifted sign-painter, on every stateroom door; she glittered with no end of prism-fringed chandeliers; the clerk's office was elegant, the bar was marvelous, and the barkeeper had been barbered and upholstered at incredible cost.

The boiler-deck (*i.e.*, the second story of the boat, so to speak) was as spacious as a church, it seemed to me; so with the forecastle; and there was no pitiful handful of deck-hands, firemen, and roustabouts down there, but a whole battalion of men. The fires were fiercely glaring from a long row of furnaces, and over them were eight huge boilers! This was unutterable pomp. The mighty engines —but enough of this. I had never felt so fine before. And when I found that the regiment of natty servants respectfully "sir'd" me, my satisfaction was complete.

CHAPTER VII

## *A Daring Deed*

WHEN I returned to the pilot-house St. Louis was gone, and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it; you understand, it was turned around: I had seen it when coming upstream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river both ways.

The pilot-house was full of pilots, going down to "look at the river." What is called the "upper river" (the two hundred miles between St. Louis and Cairo, where the Ohio comes in) was low; and the Mississippi changes its channel so constantly that the pilots used to always find it necessary to run down to Cairo to take a fresh look, when their boats were to lie in port a week; that is, when the water was at a low stage. A deal of this "looking at the river" was done by poor fellows who seldom had a berth, and whose only hope of getting one lay in their being always freshly posted and therefore ready to drop into the shoes of some reputable pilot, for a single trip, on account of such pilot's sudden illness, or some other necessity. And a good many of them constantly ran up and down inspecting the river, not because they ever really hoped to get a berth, but because (they being guests of the boat) it was cheaper to "look at the river" than stay ashore and pay board. In time these fellows grew dainty in their tastes, and only infested boats that had an established reputation for setting good tables. All visiting pilots were useful, for they were always ready and willing, winter or summer, night or day, to go out in the yawl and help buoy the channel or assist the boat's pilot in any way they could. They were likewise welcome because all pilots are tireless talkers, when gathered together, and as they talk only about the river they are always understood and are always interesting. Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings.

We had a fine company of these river inspectors along this trip. There were eight or ten, and there was abundance of room for them in our great pilot-house. Two or three of them wore polished silk hats, elaborate shirt-fronts, diamond breastpins, kid gloves, and patent-leather boots. They were choice in their English, and bore themselves with a dignity proper to men of solid means and prodigious reputation as pilots. The others were more or less loosely clad, and wore upon their heads tall felt cones that were suggestive of the days of the Commonwealth.

I was a cipher in this august company, and felt subdued, not to say torpid. I was not even of sufficient consequence to assist at the wheel when it was necessary to put the tiller hard down in a hurry; the guest that stood nearest did that when occasion required—and this was pretty much all the time, because of the crookedness of the channel and the scant water. I stood in a corner; and the talk I listened to took the hope all out of me. One visitor said to another:

"Jim, how did you run Plum Point, coming up?"

"It was in the night, there, and I ran it the way one of the boys on the *Diana* told me; started out about fifty yards above the woodpile on the false point, and held on the cabin under Plum Point till I raised the reef—quarter less twain—then straightened up for the middle bar till I got well abreast the old one-limbed cottonwood in the bend, then got my stern on the cottonwood, and head on the low place above the point, and came through a-booming—nine and a half."

"Pretty square crossing, ain't it?"

"Yes, but the upper bar's working down fast."

Another pilot spoke up and said:

"I had better water than that, and ran it lower down; started out from the false point —mark twain—raised the second reef abreast the big snag in the bend, and had quarter less twain."

One of the gorgeous ones remarked:

"I don't want to find fault with your leadsmen, but that's a good deal of water for Plum Point, it seems to me."

There was an approving nod all around as this quiet snub dropped on the boaster and "settled" him. And so they went on talk-talk-talking. Meantime, the thing that was running in my mind was, "Now, if my ears hear aright, I have not only to get the names of all the towns and islands and bends, and so on, by heart, but I must even get up a personal acquaintanceship with every old snag and one-limbed cottonwood and obscure woodpile that ornaments the banks of this river for twelve hundred miles; and more than that, I must actually know where these things are in the dark, unless these guests are gifted with eyes that can pierce through two miles of solid blackness. I wish the piloting business was in Jericho and I had never thought of it."

At dusk, Mr. Bixby tapped the big bell three times (the signal to land), and the captain emerged from his drawing-room in the forward end of the "texas," and looked up inquiringly. Mr. Bixby said:

"We will lay up here all night, captain."

"Very well, sir."

That was all. The boat came to shore and was tied up for the night. It seemed to me a fine thing that the pilot could do as he pleased, without asking so grand a captain's permission. I took my supper and went immediately to bed, discouraged by my day's observations and experiences. My late voyage's note-booking was but a confusion of meaningless names. It had tangled me all up in a knot every time I had looked at it in the daytime. I now hoped for respite in sleep; but no, it reveled all through my head till sunrise again, a frantic and tireless nightmare.

Next morning I felt pretty rusty and low-spirited. We went booming along, taking a good many chances, for we were anxious to "get out of the river" (as getting on to Cairo was called) before night should overtake us. But Mr. Bixby's partner, the other pilot, presently grounded the boat, and we lost so much time getting her off that it was plain the darkness would overtake us a good long way above the mouth. This was a great misfortune, especially to certain of our visiting pilots, whose boats would have to wait for their return, no matter how long that might be. It sobered the pilot-house talk a good deal. Coming upstream, pilots did not mind low water or any kind of darkness; nothing stopped them but fog. But downstream work was different; a boat was too nearly helpless, with a stiff current pushing behind her; so it was not customary to run downstream at night in low water.

There seemed to be one small hope, however. If we could get through the intricate and dangerous Hat Island crossing before night, we could venture the rest, for we would have plainer sailing and better water. But it would be insanity to attempt Hat Island at night. So there was a good deal of looking at watches all the rest of the day, and a constant ciphering upon the speed we were making; Hat Island was the eternal subject; sometimes hope was high and sometimes we were delayed in a bad crossing, and down it went again. For hours all hands lay under the burden of this suppressed excitement; it was even communicated to me, and I got to feeling so solicitous about Hat Island, and under such an awful pressure of responsibility, that I wished I might have five minutes on shore to draw a good, full, relieving breath, and start over again. We were standing no regular watches. Each of our pilots ran such portions of the river as he had run when coming upstream, because of his greater familiarity with it; but both remained in the pilot-house constantly.

An hour before sunset Mr. Bixby took the wheel, and Mr. W. stepped aside. For the next thirty minutes every man held his watch in his hand and was restless, silent, and uneasy. At last somebody said, with a doomful sigh:

"Well, yonder's Hat Island—and we can't make it."

All the watches closed with a snap, every-

body sighed and muttered something about its being "too bad, too bad—ah, if we could only have got here half an hour sooner!" and the place was thick with the atmosphere of disappointment. Some started to go out, but loitered, hearing no bell-tap to land. The sun dipped behind the horizon, the boat went on. Inquiring looks passed from one guest to another; and one who had his hand on the door-knob and had turned it, waited, then presently took away his hand and let the knob turn back again. We bore steadily down the bend. More looks were exchanged, and nods of surprised admiration—but no words. Insensibly the men drew together behind Mr. Bixby, as the sky darkened and one or two dim stars came out. The dead silence and sense of waiting became oppressive. Mr. Bixby pulled the cord, and two deep, mellow notes from the big bell floated off on the night. The watchman's voice followed, from the hurricane deck:

"Labboard lead, there! Stabboard lead!"

The cries of the leadsmen began to rise out of the distance, and were gruffly repeated by the word-passers on the hurricane deck.

"M-a-r-k three! M-a-r-k three! Quarter-less-three! Half twain! Quarter twain! M-a-r-k twain! Quarter-les——"

Mr. Bixby pulled two bell-ropes, and was answered by faint jinglings far below in the engine-room, and our speed slackened. The steam began to whistle through the gauge-cocks. The cries of the leadsmen went on—and it is a weird sound, always, in the night. Every pilot in the lot was watching now, with fixed eyes, and talking under his breath. Nobody was calm and easy but Mr. Bixby. He would put his wheel down and stand on a spoke, and as the steamer swung into her (to me) utterly invisible marks—for we seemed to be in the midst of a wide and gloomy sea—he would meet and fasten her there. Out of the murmur of half-audible talk, one caught a coherent sentence now and then—such as:

"There; she's over the first reef all right!"

After a pause, another subdued voice:

"Her stern's coming down just exactly right, by George!"

"Now she's in the marks; over she goes!"

Somebody else muttered:

"Oh, it was done beautiful—beautiful!"

Now the engines were stopped altogether, and we drifted with the current. Not that I could see the boat drift, for I could not, the stars being all gone by this time. The drifting was the dismalest work; it held one's heart still. Presently I discovered a blacker gloom than that which surrounded us. It was the head of the island. We were closing right down upon it. We entered its deeper shadow, and so imminent seemed the peril that I was likely to suffocate; and I had the strongest impulse to do something, anything, to save the vessel. But still Mr. Bixby stood by his wheel, silent, intent as a cat, and all the pilots stood shoulder to shoulder at his back.

"She'll not make it!" somebody whispered.

The water grew shoaler and shoaler, by the leadsmen's cries, till it was down to:

"Eight-and-a-half! E-i-g-h-t feet! E-i-g-h-t feet!"

"Seven-and——"

Mr. Bixby said warningly through his speaking tube to the engineer:

"Stand by, now!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Seven-and-a-half! Seven feet! Six-and——"

We touched bottom! Instantly Mr. Bixby set a lot of bells ringing, shouted through the tube, "Now, let her have it—every ounce you've got!" Then to his partner, "Put her hard down! snatch her! snatch her!" The boat rasped and ground her way through the sand, hung upon the apex of disaster a single tremendous instant, and then over she went! And such a shout as went up at Mr. Bixby's back never loosened the roof of a pilot-house before!

There was no more trouble after that. Mr. Bixby was a hero that night; and it was some little time, too, before his exploit ceased to be talked about by the river men.

Fully to realize the marvelous precision required in laying the great steamer in her marks in that murky waste of water, one should know that not only must she pick her intricate way through snags and blind reefs, and then shave the head of the island so closely as to brush the overhanging foliage with her stern, but at one place she must pass almost within arm's reach of a sunken and invisible wreck that would snatch the hull timbers from under her if she

should strike it, and destroy a quarter million dollars' worth of steamboat and cargo in five minutes, and maybe a hundred and fifty human lives into the bargain.

The last remark I heard that night was a compliment to Mr. Bixby uttered in soliloquy and with unction by one of our guests. He said:

"By the Shadow of Death, but he's a lightning pilot!"

1875

### CHAPTER VIII

## *Perplexing Lessons*

At the end of what seemed a tedious while, I had managed to pack my head full of islands, towns, bars, "points," and bends; and a curiously inanimate mass of lumber it was, too. However, inasmuch as I could shut my eyes and reel off a good long string of these names without leaving out more than ten miles of river in every fifty, I began to feel that I could take a boat down to New Orleans if I could make her skip those little gaps. But of course my complacency could hardly get start enough to lift my nose a trifle into the air, before Mr. Bixby would think of something to fetch it down again. One day he turned on me suddenly with this settler:

"What is the shape of Walnut Bend?"

He might as well have asked me my grandmother's opinion of protoplasm. I reflected respectfully, and then said I didn't know it had any particular shape. My gun-powdery chief went off with a bang, of course, and then went on loading and firing until he was out of adjectives.

I had learned long ago that he only carried just so many rounds of ammunition, and was sure to subside into a very placable and even remorseful old smoothbore as soon as they were all gone. That word "old" is merely affectionate; he was not more than thirty-four. I waited. By and by he said:

"My boy, you've got to know the *shape* of the river perfectly. It is all there is left to steer by on a very dark night. Everything else is blotted out and gone. But mind you, it hasn't the same shape in the night that it has in the daytime."

"How on earth am I ever going to learn it, then?"

"How do you follow a hall at home in the dark? Because you know the shape of it. You can't see it."

"Do you mean to say that I've got to know all the million trifling variations of shape in the banks of this interminable river as well as I know the shape of the front hall at home?"

"On my honor, you've got to know them *better* than any man ever did know the shapes of the halls in his own house."

"I wish I was dead!"

"Now I don't want to discourage you, but—"

"Well, pile it on me; I might as well have it now as another time."

"You see, this has got to be learned; there isn't any getting around it. A clear starlight night throws such heavy shadows that, if you didn't know the shape of a shore perfectly, you would claw away from every bunch of timber, because you would take the black shadow of it for a solid cape; and you see you would be getting scared to death every fifteen minutes by the watch. You would be fifty yards from shore all the time when you ought to be within fifty feet of it. You can't see a snag in one of those shadows, but you know exactly where it is, and the shape of the river tells you when you are coming to it. Then there's your pitch-dark night; the river is a very different shape on a pitch-dark night from what it is on a starlight night. All shores seem to be straight lines, then, and mighty dim ones, too; and you'd *run* them for straight lines, only you know better. You boldly drive your boat right into what seems to be a solid, straight wall (you knowing very well that in reality there is a curve there), and that wall falls back and makes way for you. Then there's your gray mist. You take a night when there's one of these grisly, drizzly, gray mists, and then there isn't *any* particular shape to a shore. A gray mist would tangle the head of the oldest man that ever lived. Well, then, different kinds of *moonlight* change the shape of the river in different ways. You see——"

"Oh, don't say any more, please! Have I got to learn the shape of the river according to all these five hundred thousand different ways? If I tried to carry all that cargo in my head it would make me stoop-shouldered."

"*No!* you only learn *the* shape of the river; and you learn it with such absolute certainty that you can always steer by the shape that's *in your head*, and never mind the one that's before your eyes."

"Very well, I'll try it; but, after I have learned it, can I depend on it? Will it keep the same form and not go fooling around?"

Before Mr. Bixby could answer, Mr. W. came in to take the watch, and he said:

"Bixby, you'll have to look out for President's Island, and all that country clear away up above the Old Hen and Chickens. The banks are caving and the shape of the shores changing like everything. Why, you wouldn't know the point above 40. You can go up inside the old sycamore snag, now."

So that question was answered. Here were leagues of shore changing shape. My spirits were down in the mud again. Two things seemed pretty apparent to me. One was, that in order to be a pilot a man had got to learn more than any one man ought to be allowed to know; and the other was, that he must learn it all over again in a different way every twenty-four hours.

That night we had the watch until twelve. Now it was an ancient river custom for the two pilots to chat a bit when the watch changed. While the relieving pilot put on his gloves and lit his cigar, his partner, the retiring pilot, would say something like this:

"I judge the upper bar is making down a little at Hale's Point; had quarter twain with the lower lead and mark twain with the other."

"Yes, I thought it was making down a little, last trip. Meet any boats?"

"Met one abreast the head of 21, but she was away over hugging the bar, and I couldn't make her out entirely. I took her for the *Sunny South*—hadn't any skylights forward of the chimneys."

And so on. And as the relieving pilot took the wheel his partner would mention that we were in such-and-such a bend, and say we were abreast of such-and-such a man's woodyard or plantation. This was courtesy; I supposed it was *necessity*. But Mr. W. came on watch full twelve minutes late on this particular night—a tremendous breach of etiquette; in fact, it is the unpardonable sin among pilots. So Mr. Bixby gave him no greeting whatever, but simply surrendered the wheel and marched out of the pilot-house without a word. I was appalled; it was a villainous night for blackness, we were in a particularly wide and blind part of the river, where there was no shape or substance to anything, and it seemed incredible that Mr. Bixby should have left that poor fellow to kill the boat, trying to find out where he was. But I resolved that I would stand by him anyway. He should find that he was not wholly friendless. So I stood around, and waited to be asked where we were. But Mr. W. plunged on serenely through the solid firmament of black cats that stood for an atmosphere, and never opened his mouth. "Here is a proud devil!" thought I; "here is a limb of Satan that would rather send us all to destruction than put himself under obligations to me, because I am not yet one of the salt of the earth and privileged to snub captains and lord it over everything dead and alive in a steamboat." I presently climbed up on the bench; I did not think it was safe to go to sleep while this lunatic was on watch.

However, I must have gone to sleep in the course of time, because the next thing I was aware of was the fact that day was breaking, Mr. W. gone, and Mr. Bixby at the wheel again. So it was four o'clock and all well—but me; I felt like a skinful of dry bones, and all of them trying to ache at once.

Mr. Bixby asked me what I had stayed up there for. I confessed that it was to do Mr. W. a benevolence—tell him where he was. It took five minutes for the entire preposterousness of the thing to filter into Mr. Bixby's system, and then I judge it filled him nearly up to the chin; because he paid me a compliment—and not much of a one either. He said:

"Well, taking you by and large, you do seem to be more different kinds of an ass than any creature I ever saw before. What did you suppose he wanted to know for?"

I said I thought it might be a convenience to him.

"Convenience! D——nation! Didn't I tell you that a man's got to know the river in the night the same as he'd know his own front hall?"

"Well, I can follow the front hall in the dark

if I know it *is* the front hall; but suppose you set me down in the middle of it in the dark and not tell me which hall it is; how am *I* to know?"

"Well, you've *got* to, on the river!"

"All right. Then I'm glad I never said anything to Mr. W."

"I should say so! Why, he'd have slammed you through the window and utterly ruined a hundred dollars' worth of window-sash and stuff."

I was glad this damage had been saved, for it would have made me unpopular with the owners. They always hated anybody who had the name of being careless and injuring things.

I went to work now to learn the shape of the river; and of all the eluding and ungraspable objects that ever I tried to get mind or hands on, that was the chief. I would fasten my eyes upon a sharp, wooded point that projected far into the river some miles ahead of me, and go to laboriously photographing its shape upon my brain; and just as I was beginning to succeed to my satisfaction, we would draw up toward it and the exasperating thing would begin to melt away and fold back into the bank! If there had been a conspicuous dead tree standing upon the very point of the cape, I would find that tree inconspicuously merged into the general forest, and occupying the middle of a straight shore, when I got abreast of it! No prominent hill would stick to its shape long enough for me to make up my mind what its form really was, but it was as dissolving and changeful as if it had been a mountain of butter in the hottest corner of the tropics. Nothing ever had the same shape when I was coming downstream that it had borne when I went up. I mentioned these little difficulties to Mr. Bixby. He said:

"That's the very main virtue of the thing. If the shapes didn't change every three seconds they wouldn't be of any use. Take this place where we are now, for instance. As long as that hill over yonder is only one hill, I can boom right along the way I'm going; but the moment it splits at the top and forms a V, I know I've got to scratch to starboard in a hurry, or I'll bang this boat's brains out against a rock; and then the moment one of the prongs of the V swings behind the other, I've got to waltz to larboard again, or I'll have a misunderstanding with a snag that would snatch the keelson out of this steamboat as neatly as if it were a sliver in your hand. If that hill didn't change its shape on bad nights there would be an awful steamboat graveyard around here inside of a year."

It was plain that I had got to learn the shape of the river in all the different ways that could be thought of—upside down, wrong end first, inside out, fore-and-aft, and "thortships"—and then know what to do on gray nights when it hadn't any shape at all. So I set about it. In the course of time I began to get the best of this knotty lesson, and my self-complacency moved to the front once more. Mr. Bixby was all fixed, and ready to start it to the rear again. He opened on me after this fashion:

"How much water did we have in the middle crossing at Hole-in-the-Wall, trip before last?"

I considered this an outrage. I said:

"Every trip, down and up, the leadsmen are singing through that tangled place for three-quarters of an hour on a stretch. How do you reckon I can remember such a mess as that?"

"My boy, you've got to remember it. You've got to remember the exact spot and the exact marks the boat lay in when we had the shoalest water, in every one of the five hundred shoal places between St. Louis and New Orleans; and you mustn't get the shoal soundings and marks of one trip mixed up with the shoal soundings and marks of another, either, for they're not often twice alike. You must keep them separate."

When I came to myself again, I said:

"When I get so that I can do that, I'll be able to raise the dead, and then I won't have to pilot a steamboat to make a living. I want to retire from this business. I want a slush-bucket and a brush; I'm only fit for a roustabout. I haven't got brains enough to be a pilot; and if I had I wouldn't have strength enough to carry them around, unless I went on crutches."

"Now drop that! When I say I'll learn a man the river, I mean it. And you can depend on it, I'll learn him or kill him."

1883

# 1837 ~ *William Dean Howells* ~ 1920

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS was a leader in championing realism during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Like Jane Austen, whom he greatly admired, he preferred the realism of the commonplace and believed that fiction should deal with ordinary persons, everyday happenings, and well-known scenes. He disapproved of the romantic, the sensational, and the exaggerated, and desired the actual rather than an idealized presentation of life.

Howells was born on March 1, 1837, at Martin's Ferry, Ohio. His grandfather on his paternal side was of Welsh-Quaker strain and his mother of Pennsylvania-German and Irish. His father, a country printer and druggist and a follower of Swedenborg, had tried with no great success to make a living in various places. The family moved to Hamilton, Ohio, in 1840, and later to Dayton. Periods of residence in Columbus, Ashtabula, and Jefferson followed. At one time the family lived in a log cabin on the Little Miami River. At the age of nine, Howells began to set type for his father. He had little of the conventional schooling, and no college experience, but was largely self-educated. This was not an insurmountable handicap for him, however, for, as he tells in *My Literary Passions* (1895), he read extensively in the classics and knew Chaucer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Pope, Goldsmith, Macaulay, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Hawthorne. He also, in his lifetime, mastered a number of languages, Latin, Greek, Spanish, French, Italian, and German.

In 1851 Howells was a compositor and reporter in Columbus. The next year he worked on a Cincinnati newspaper, but left it to return to Columbus as the editor of the *Ohio State Journal.* In these years he won recognition for his literary promise. Poetry was his first ambition and he wrote it in the eighteenth-century tradition of Pope. He contributed verse to the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1860 and with J. J. Piatt published *Poems of Two Friends.* That same year he made a trip to Boston, where he became acquainted with Lowell, Emerson, Holmes, and Hawthorne. His real success lay in prose. As a journalist in Columbus he was called upon to write a campaign life of Lincoln, published in 1860. It was so well received that he was given the political appointment of Consul to Venice, 1861–65. In Venice he studied the Italian language and read European literature extensively. He still wrote verses for the Boston newspapers.

In 1862 Howells married Elinor Mead of Brattleboro, Vermont, whom he had met in Columbus. For a few months in 1865, he acted as editorial assistant on the *Nation* and then went to the *Atlantic* under James T. Fields. His experiences in Europe

furnished him the material for *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*, published in 1866 and 1867. At thirty-five he was made editor-in-chief of the *Atlantic*, a connection he retained until 1881. Among the contributors he enlisted as editor were the contrasting literary figures, Mark Twain and Henry James. He wrote many essays for the magazine himself, and in these was apparent a growing tendency toward realism. His book, *Their Wedding Journey*, partly fiction and partly a travel book, was published in 1872. Thenceforward many novels, essays, and a few farces followed, such as *A Foregone Conclusion* (1875), *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879), *Dr. Breen's Practice* (1881), *A Modern Instance* (1881). The last-named, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1884), and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) are usually thought to be his strongest novels.

In May, 1885, he moved to New York City, where he was at first on the staff of the *Century Magazine* and then of *Harper's*, for which he conducted "The Editor's Study," 1886–91. He was editor of the *Cosmopolitan* for about half a year, 1891–92. He renewed his connection with *Harper's* in 1900 and for twenty years conducted "The Editor's Easy Chair." A keen sense of political injustice, enhanced by the reading of Tolstoi and a realization of the failings of democracy, developed within him. His growing socialism is apparent in such books as *The Quality of Mercy* (1892), *The World of Chance* (1893), and *A Traveler in Altruria* (1894), a romance depicting an Utopian age of social equality and happiness. *The Eye of the Needle*, a sequel to the latter book, appeared in 1907. Howells was made president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was given honorary degrees by Yale, Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, and Oxford. He died, May 11, 1920, but not before he had seen realism triumph far beyond his conception of it.

Howells's long series of works reflect with meticulous accuracy phases of American life during the years from 1870 to 1920. His was a very gentle realism, however, for he omitted the rougher aspects of existence. There is neither misery nor despair in his books, and he turned away from the sordid and neurotic that have so attracted a later generation. There are no breaches of decorum, no crimes or violence in his pages, for though he was regarded as a radical, he was fastidious about the material he used. A democrat in provenience and socialistic in his sympathies, he was an aristocrat in matters of taste. He wrote for parlor reading in a light, friendly manner, and with a steady flow that sometimes has a sparkle or touch of humor. Today his part in the socialistic literature of the nineties and appreciation of his contributions to technique have restored to him something of his old recognition. As a critic he was even-tempered and discriminating, never self-assertive or Olympian. The general function of criticism, he held, should be to "place a book in such a light that the reader should know its class, its function, its character." Many present-day literary historians think that he did his finest work as a critic, and that his best and most lasting book is *Criticism and Fiction*.

Though Howells wrote several works of a critical nature, it was chiefly in *Criticism and Fiction* (1891) that he dealt with literary theories and abstractions. His creed as a novelist was simple. He believed in the supremacy of truth in fiction. The characters and the settings should be from actuality. They must be true to the author's day and place and true to normal conditions, and the events must be such as might happen to an average person. He stood for an exact depiction of conduct and motive; he observed the life of his time and tried to transfer it to his pages. The everyday and commonplace is not, he thought, either trivial or insignificant. The charge that realism sacrifices distinction and heroism irked him. He engaged in considerable ethical discussion here and there in his works; but his position was that though fiction must be moral, the author must not moralize. He was little influenced by the French realists, for whose subject-matter he had an intense dislike. Romanticism he steadily denounced.

Howells left mainly a detailed record of the surface externals of his time, although in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* he does approach an inward conflict. It is partly because of his abundant description that his narratives move slowly. Some think his particularizing excessive. The story element in his earlier books became less prominent in the later, and scientific purpose loomed larger. And as time passed, he became more impatient of conscious art and style. The mechanics of fiction, the construction, the point of view, and problems of expression, did not much interest him. Nor did he care greatly for the plot itself, though his books show rounded structure, for he felt, as did Henry James, that "plot does not characterize." He preferred to "portray human nature" rather than to "warm up old stories." There is more characterization, more analysis, more talk in his maturer books. Howells's handling of dialogue shows great technical skill. Through it he develops his characters and carries on his story. Indeed, though this was contrary to his literary tenets, the talk of his characters is on a higher level than would be true of such persons in real life. Mainly, Howells wished his books to rely on fidelity alone, and through this fidelity to serve as socializing instruments. He had extensive influence in his day, both as a writer of fiction and as an editor. Among the young realists he sponsored were Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Hamlin Garland.

There is no complete collected edition of Howells's works. His daughter Mildred Howells edited his *Life in Letters* (2 vols., 1928). Many of his works contain autobiographic material: *A Boy's Town* (1890), *My Year in a Log Cabin* (1893), *Impressions and Experiences* (1896), *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900), *New Leaf Mills* (1913), *The Leatherwood God* (1916), and *Years of My Youth* (1916). O. W. Firkins wrote of Howells in *DAB*, IX (1932). See also Hamlin Garland, *Roadside Meetings* (1930) and *Friendly Contemporaries* (1932). For valuable discussions consult Henry James, "W. D. Howells," *Harper's Weekly*, XXX, June 19, 1886; J. M. Robertson, *Essays toward a Critical Method* (1889); J. Macy, *The Spirit of American Literature* (1913); A. Harvey, *W. D. Howells* (1917); H. T. and W. Follett, *Some Modern Novelists* (1919); W. L. Phelps,

"W. D. Howells," *Yale Review*, X, Oct., 1920; Carl Van Doren, *The American Novel* (1921); D. G. Cooke, *W. D. Howells: a Critical Study* (1922); O. W. Firkins, *W. D. Howells, a Study* (1924); V. L. Parrington in *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); H. Garland, in Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931); G. E. De Mille, *Literary Criticism in America* (1931). There are various important articles on Howells in *American Literature*, Vols. II–IV. Bibliographies are included in the *CHAL*, III (1921), and in the books by D. G. Cooke and O. W. Firkins. The most recent bibliography is by Harry Hartwick, in W. F. Taylor's *A History of American Letters* (1936).

## *From* THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM

Silas Lapham is a self-made paint manufacturer, and the new-rich Lapham family is ambitious socially. The novel deals with the contrast between the two social worlds, that of the rather rustic Laphams and that of the Coreys, Boston aristocrats, whose only son Tom is supposed to be interested in Irene, the beautiful younger daughter of the Laphams, but who is really in love with the older daughter, Penelope. Ultimately Lapham has business difficulties and loses his fortune; but in the meantime he develops moral strength and proves himself to be a man of sterling integrity.

XIV

### *A Dinner Party*

... The Coreys were one of the few old families who lingered in Bellingham Place, the handsome, quiet old street which the sympathetic observer must grieve to see abandoned to boardinghouses. The dwellings are stately and tall, and the whole place wears an air of aristocratic seclusion, which Mrs. Corey's father might well have thought assured when he left her his house there at his death. It is one of two evidently designed by the same architect who built some houses in a characteristic taste on Beacon Street opposite the Common. It has a wooden portico, with slender fluted columns, which have always been painted white, and which, with the delicate mouldings of the cornice, form the sole and sufficient decoration of the street front; nothing could be simpler, and nothing could be better. Within, the architect has again indulged his preference for the classic; the roof of the vestibule, wide and low, rests on marble columns, slim and fluted like the wooden columns without, and an ample staircase climbs in a graceful, easy curve from the tessellated pavement. Some carved Venetian *scrigni* stretched along the wall; a rug lay at the foot of the stairs; but otherwise the simple adequacy of the architectural intention had been respected, and the place looked bare to the eyes of the Laphams when they entered. The Coreys had once kept a man, but when young Corey began his retrenchments the man had yielded to the neat maid who showed the Colonel into the reception-room and asked the ladies to walk up two flights.

He had his charges from Irene not to enter the drawing-room without her mother, and he spent five minutes in getting on his gloves, for he had desperately resolved to wear them at last. When he had them on, and let his large fists hang down on either side, they looked, in the saffron tint which the shopgirl said his gloves should be of, like canvased hams. He perspired with doubt as he climbed the stairs, and while he waited on the landing for Mrs. Lapham and Irene to come down from above before going into the drawing-room, he stood staring at his hands, now open and now shut, and breathing hard. He heard quiet talking beyond the *portière* within, and presently Tom Corey came out.

"Ah, Colonel Lapham! Very glad to see you."

Lapham shook hands with him and gasped, "Waiting for Mis' Lapham," to account for his presence. He had not been able to button his right glove, and he now began, with as much indifference as he could assume, to pull them both off, for he saw that Corey wore none. By the time he had stuffed them into the pocket of his coat-skirt his wife and daughter descended.

Corey welcomed them very cordially too, but looked a little mystified. Mrs. Lapham knew that he was silently inquiring for Penelope, and she did not know whether she ought

to excuse her to him first or not. She said nothing, and after a glance toward the regions where Penelope might conjecturably be lingering, he held aside the *portière* for the Laphams to pass, and entered the room with them.

Mrs. Lapham had decided against low-necks on her own responsibility, and had entrenched herself in the safety of a black silk, in which she looked very handsome. Irene wore a dress of one of those shades which only a woman or an artist can decide to be green or blue, and which to other eyes looks both or neither, according to their degrees of ignorance. If it was more like a ball dress than a dinner dress, that might be excused to the exquisite effect. She trailed, a delicate splendor, across the carpet in her mother's somber wake, and the consciousness of success brought a vivid smile to her face. Lapham, pallid with anxiety lest he should somehow disgrace himself, giving thanks to God that he should have been spared the shame of wearing gloves where no one else did, but at the same time despairing that Corey should have seen him in them, had an unwonted aspect of almost pathetic refinement.

Mrs. Corey exchanged a quick glance of surprise and relief with her husband as she started across the room to meet her guests, and in her gratitude to them for being so irreproachable, she threw into her manner a warmth that people did not always find there. "General Lapham?" she said, shaking hands in quick succession with Mrs. Lapham and Irene, and now addressing herself to him.

"No, ma'am, only Colonel," said the honest man, but the lady did not hear him. She was introducing her husband to Lapham's wife and daughter, and Bromfield Corey was already shaking his hand and saying he was very glad to see him again, while he kept his artistic eye on Irene, and apparently could not take it off. Lily Corey gave the Lapham ladies a greeting which was physically rather than socially cold, and Nanny stood holding Irene's hand in both of hers a moment, and taking in her beauty and her style with a generous admiration which she could afford, for she was herself faultlessly dressed in the quiet taste of her city, and looking very pretty. The interval was long enough to let every man present confide his sense of Irene's beauty to every other; and then, as the party was small, Mrs. Corey made everybody acquainted. When Lapham had not quite understood, he held the person's hand, and leaning urbanely forward, inquired, "What name?" He did that because a great man to whom he had been presented on the platform at a public meeting had done so to him, and he knew it must be right.

A little lull ensued upon the introductions, and Mrs. Corey said quietly to Mrs. Lapham, "Can I send any one to be of use to Miss Lapham?" as if Penelope must be in the dressing-room.

Mrs. Lapham turned fire-red, and the graceful forms in which she had been intending to excuse her daughter's absence went out of her head. "She isn't upstairs," she said, at her bluntest, as country people are when embarrassed. "She didn't feel just like coming to-night. I don't know as she's feeling very well."

Mrs. Corey emitted a very small "O!"—very small, very cold,—which began to grow larger and hotter and to burn into Mrs. Lapham's soul before Mrs. Corey could add, "I'm very sorry. It's nothing serious, I hope?"

Robert Chase, the painter, had not come, and Mrs. James Bellingham was not there, so that the table really balanced better without Penelope; but Mrs. Lapham could not know this, and did not deserve to know it. Mrs. Corey glanced round the room, as if to take account of her guests, and said to her husband, "I think we are all here, then," and he came forward and gave his arm to Mrs. Lapham. She perceived then that in their determination not to be the first to come they had been the last, and must have kept the others waiting for them.

Lapham had never seen people go down to dinner arm-in-arm before, but he knew that his wife was distinguished in being taken out by the host, and he waited in jealous impatience to see if Tom Corey would offer his arm to Irene. He gave it to that big girl they called Miss Kingsbury, and the handsome old fellow whom Mrs. Corey had introduced as her cousin took Irene out. Lapham was startled from the misgiving in which this left him by Mrs. Corey's passing her hand through his

arm, and he made a sudden movement forward, but felt himself gently restrained. They went out the last of all; he did not know why, but he submitted, and when they sat down he saw that Irene, although she had come in with that Mr. Bellingham, was seated beside young Corey, after all.

He fetched a long sigh of relief when he sank into his chair and felt himself safe from error if he kept a sharp lookout and did only what the others did. Bellingham had certain habits which he permitted himself, and one of these was tucking the corner of his napkin into his collar; he confessed himself an uncertain shot with a spoon, and defended his practice on the ground of neatness and commonsense. Lapham put his napkin into his collar too, and then, seeing that no one but Bellingham did it, became alarmed and took it out again slyly. He never had wine on his table at home, and on principle he was a prohibitionist; but now he did not know just what to do about the glasses at the right of his plate. He had a notion to turn them all down, as he had read of a well-known politician's doing at a public dinner, to show that he did not take wine; but, after twiddling with one of them a moment, he let them be, for it seemed to him that would be a little too conspicuous, and he felt that everyone was looking. He let the servant fill them all, and he drank out of each, not to appear odd. Later, he observed that the young ladies were not taking wine, and he was glad to see that Irene had refused it, and that Mrs. Lapham was letting it stand untasted. He did not know but he ought to decline some of the dishes, or at least leave most of some on his plate, but he was not able to decide; he took everything and ate everything.

He noticed that Mrs. Corey seemed to take no more trouble about the dinner than anybody, and Mr. Corey rather less; he was talking busily to Mrs. Lapham, and Lapham caught a word here and there that convinced him she was holding her own. He was getting on famously himself with Mrs. Corey, who had begun with him about his new house; he was telling her all about it, and giving her his ideas. Their conversation naturally included his architect across the table; Lapham had been delighted and secretly surprised to find the fellow there; and at something Seymour said the talk spread suddenly, and the pretty house he was building for Colonel Lapham became the general theme. Young Corey testified to its loveliness, and the architect said laughingly that if he had been able to make a nice thing of it, he owed it to the practical sympathy of his client.

"Practical sympathy is good," said Bromfield Corey; and, slanting his head confidentially to Mrs. Lapham, he added, "Does he bleed your husband, Mrs. Lapham? He's a terrible fellow for appropriations!"

Mrs. Lapham laughed, reddening consciously, and said she guessed the Colonel knew how to take care of himself. This struck Lapham, then draining his glass of sauterne, as wonderfully discreet in his wife.

Bromfield Corey leaned back in his chair a moment. "Well, after all, you can't say, with all your modern fuss about it, that you do much better now than the old fellows who built such houses as this."

"Ah," said the architect, "nobody can do better than well. Your house is in perfect taste; you know I've always admired it; and I don't think it's at all the worse for being old-fashioned. What we've done is largely to go back of the hideous style that raged after they forgot how to make this sort of house. But I think we may claim a better feeling for structure. We use better material, and more wisely; and by and by we shall work out something more characteristic and original."

"With your chocolates and olives, and your clutter of bric-à-brac?"

"All that's bad, of course, but I don't mean that. I don't wish to make you envious of Colonel Lapham, and modesty prevents my saying that his house is prettier,—though I may have my convictions,—but it's better built. All the new houses are better built. Now, your house—"

"Mrs. Corey's house," interrupted the host, with a burlesque haste in disclaiming responsibility for it that made them all laugh. "*My* ancestral halls are in Salem, and I'm told you couldn't drive a nail into their timbers; in fact, I don't know that you would want to do it."

"I should consider it a species of sacrilege,"

answered Seymour, "and I shall be far from pressing the point I was going to make against a house of Mrs. Corey's."

This won Seymour the easy laugh, and Lapham silently wondered that the fellow never got off any of those things to him.

"Well," said Corey, "you architects and the musicians are the true and only artistic creators. All the rest of us, sculptors, painters, novelists, and tailors, deal with forms that we have before us; we try to imitate, we try to represent. But you two sorts of artists create form. If you represent, you fail. Somehow or other you do evolve the camel out of your inner consciousness."

"I will not deny the soft impeachment," said the architect, with a modest air.

"I dare say. And you'll own that it's very handsome of me to say this, after your unjustifiable attack on Mrs. Corey's property."

Bromfield Corey addressed himself again to Mrs. Lapham, and the talk subdivided itself as before. It lapsed so entirely away from the subject just in hand, that Lapham was left with rather a good idea, as he thought it, to perish in his mind, for want of a chance to express it. The only thing like a recurrence to what they had been saying was Bromfield Corey's warning Mrs. Lapham, in some connection that Lapham lost, against Miss Kingsbury. "She's worse," he was saying, "when it comes to appropriations than Seymour himself. Depend upon it, Mrs. Lapham, she will give you no peace of your mind, now she's met you, from this out. Her tender mercies are cruel; and I leave you to supply the context from your own scriptural knowledge. Beware of her, and all her works. She calls them works of charity, but heaven knows whether they are. It don't stand to reason that she gives the poor *all* the money she gets out of people. I have my own belief"—he gave it in a whisper for the whole table to hear—"that she spends it for champagne and cigars."

Lapham did not know about that kind of talking; but Miss Kingsbury seemed to enjoy the fun as much as anybody, and he laughed with the rest.

"You shall be asked to the very next debauch of the committee, Mr. Corey; then you won't dare expose us," said Miss Kingsbury.

"I wonder you haven't been down upon Corey to go to the Chardon Street home and talk with your indigent Italians in their native tongue," said Charles Bellingham. "I saw in the *Transcript* the other night that you wanted some one for the work."

"We did think of Mr. Corey," replied Miss Kingsbury; "but we reflected that he probably wouldn't talk with them at all; he would make them keep still to be sketched, and forget all about their wants."

Upon the theory that this was a fair return for Corey's pleasantry, the others laughed again.

"There is one charity," said Corey, pretending superiority to Miss Kingsbury's point, "that is so difficult, I wonder it hasn't occurred to a lady of your courageous invention."

"Yes?" said Miss Kingsbury. "What is that?"

"The occupation, by deserving poor of neat habits, of all the beautiful, airy, wholesome houses that stand empty the whole summer long, while their owners are away in their lowly cots beside the sea."

"Yes, that is terrible," replied Miss Kingsbury, with quick earnestness, while her eyes grew moist. "I have often thought of our great, cool houses standing useless here, and the thousands of poor creatures stifling in their holes and dens, and the little children dying for wholesome shelter. How cruelly selfish we are!"

"That is a very comfortable sentiment, Miss Kingsbury," said Corey, "and must make you feel almost as if you had thrown open No. 31 to the whole North End. But I am serious about this matter. I spend my summers in town, and I occupy my own house, so that I can speak impartially and intelligently; and I tell you that in some of my walks on the Hill and down on the Back Bay, nothing but the surveillance of the local policeman prevents my offering personal violence to those long rows of close-shuttered, handsome, brutally insensible houses. If I were a poor man, with a sick child pining in some garret or cellar at the North End, I should break into one of them, and camp out on the grand piano."

"Surely, Bromfield," said his wife, "you don't consider what havoc such people would make with the furniture of a nice house!"

"That is true," answered Corey, with meek conviction. "I never thought of that."

"And if you were a poor man with a sick child, I doubt if you'd have so much heart for burglary as you have now," said James Bellingham.

"It's wonderful how patient they are," said the minister. "The spectacle of the hopeless comfort the hard-working poor man sees must be hard to bear."

Lapham wanted to speak up and say that he had been there himself, and knew how such a man felt. He wanted to tell them that generally a poor man was satisfied if he could make both ends meet; that he didn't envy any one his good luck, if he had earned it, so long as he wasn't running under himself. But before he could get the courage to address the whole table, Sewell added, "I suppose he don't always think of it."

"But some day he *will* think about it," said Corey. "In fact, we rather invite him to think about it, in this country."

"My brother-in-law," said Charles Bellingham, with the pride a man feels in a mentionably remarkable brother-in-law, "has no end of fellows at work under him out there at Omaha, and he says it's the fellows from countries where they've been kept from thinking about it that are discontented. The Americans never make any trouble. They seem to understand that so long as we give unlimited opportunity, nobody has a right to complain."

"What do you hear from Leslie?" asked Mrs. Corey, turning from these profitless abstractions to Mrs. Bellingham.

"You know," said that lady in a lower tone, "that there is another baby?"

"No! I hadn't heard of it!"

"Yes; a boy. They have named him after his uncle."

"Yes," said Charles Bellingham, joining in. "He is said to be a noble boy, and to resemble me."

"All boys of that tender age are noble," said Corey, "and look like anybody you wish them to resemble. Is Leslie still homesick for the bean-pots of her native Boston?"

"She is getting over it, I fancy," replied Mrs. Bellingham. "She's very much taken up with Mrs. Blake's enterprises, and leads a very exciting life. She says she's like people who have been home from Europe three years; she's past the most poignant stage of regret, and hasn't reached the second, when they feel that they *must* go again."

Lapham leaned a little toward Mrs. Corey, and said of a picture which he saw on the wall opposite, "Picture of your daughter, I presume?"

"No; my daughter's grandmother. It's a Stewart Newton; he painted a great many Salem beauties. She was a Miss Polly Burroughs. My daughter *is* like her, don't you think?" They both looked at Nanny Corey and then at the portrait. "Those pretty old-fashioned dresses are coming in again. I'm not surprised you took it for her. The others" —she referred to the other portraits more or less darkling on the walls—"are my people; mostly Copleys."

These names, unknown to Lapham, went to his head like the wine he was drinking; they seemed to carry light for the moment, but a film of deeper darkness followed. He heard Charles Bellingham telling funny stories to Irene and trying to amuse the girl; she was laughing, and seemed very happy. From time to time Bellingham took part in the general talk between the host and James Bellingham and Miss Kingsbury and the minister, Mr. Sewell. They talked of people mostly; it astonished Lapham to hear with what freedom they talked. They discussed these persons unsparingly; James Bellingham spoke of a man known to Lapham for his business success and great wealth as not a gentleman; his cousin Charles said he was surprised that the fellow had kept from being governor so long.

When the latter turned from Irene to make one of these excursions into the general talk, young Corey talked to her; and Lapham caught some words from which it seemed that they were speaking of Penelope. It vexed him to think she had not come; she could have talked as well as any of them; she was just as bright; and Lapham was aware that Irene was not as bright, though when he looked at her face, triumphant in its young beauty and fondness, he said to himself that it did not make any difference. He felt that he was not holding up his end of the line, however. When some one

spoke to him he could only summon a few words of reply, that seemed to lead to nothing; things often came into his mind appropriate to what they were saying, but before he could get them out they were off on something else; they jumped about so, he could not keep up; but he felt, all the same, that he was not doing himself justice.

At one time the talk ran off upon a subject that Lapham had never heard talked of before; but again he was vexed that Penelope was not there, to have her say; he believed that her say would have been worth hearing.

Miss Kingsbury leaned forward and asked Charles Bellingham if he had read *Tears, Idle Tears*, the novel that was making such a sensation; and when he said no, she said she wondered at him. "It's perfectly heartbreaking, as you'll imagine from the name; but there's such a dear old-fashioned hero and heroine in it, who keep dying for each other all the way through, and making the most wildly satisfactory and unnecessary sacrifices for each other. You feel as if you'd done them yourself."

"Ah, that's the secret of its success," said Bromfield Corey. "It flatters the reader by painting the characters colossal, but with his limp and stoop, so that he feels himself of their supernatural proportions. You've read it, Nanny?"

"Yes," said his daughter. "It ought to have been called *Slop, Silly Slop.*"

"Oh, not quite *slop*, Nanny," pleaded Miss Kingsbury.

"It's astonishing," said Charles Bellingham, "how we do like the books that go for our heartstrings. And I really suppose that you can't put a more popular thing than self-sacrifice into a novel. We do like to see people suffering sublimely."

"There was talk some years ago," said James Bellingham, "about novels going out."

"They're just coming in!" cried Miss Kingsbury.

"Yes," said Mr. Sewell, the minister. "And I don't think there ever was a time when they formed the whole intellectual experience of more people. They do greater mischief than ever."

"Don't be envious, parson," said the host.

"No," answered Sewell. "I should be glad of their help. But those novels with old-fashioned heroes and heroines in them—excuse me, Miss Kingsbury—are ruinous!"

"Don't you feel like a moral wreck, Miss Kingsbury?" asked the host.

But Sewell went on: "The novelists might be the greatest possible help to us if they painted life as it is, and human feelings in their true proportion and relation, but for the most part they have been and are altogether noxious."

This seemed sense to Lapham; but Bromfield Corey asked: "But what if life as it is isn't amusing? Aren't we to be amused?"

"Not to our hurt," sturdily answered the minister. "And the self-sacrifice painted in most novels like this—"

"*Slop, Silly Slop?*" suggested the proud father of the inventor of the phrase.

"Yes—is nothing but psychical suicide, and is as wholly immoral as the spectacle of a man falling upon his sword."

"Well, I don't know but you're right, parson," said the host; and the minister, who had apparently got upon a battle-horse of his, careered onward in spite of some tacit attempts of his wife to seize the bridle.

"Right? To be sure I am right. The whole business of love, and love-making and marrying, is painted by the novelists in a monstrous disproportion to the other relations of life. Love is very sweet, very pretty—"

"Oh, *thank* you, Mr. Sewell," said Nanny Corey, in a way that set them all laughing.

"But it's the affair, commonly, of very young people, who have not yet character and experience enough to make them interesting. In novels it's treated, not only as if it were the chief interest of life, but the sole interest of the lives of two ridiculous young persons; and it is taught that love is perpetual, that the glow of a true passion lasts for ever; and that it is sacrilege to think or act otherwise."

"Well, but isn't that true, Mr. Sewell?" pleaded Miss Kingsbury.

"I have known some most estimable people who had married a second time," said the minister, and then he had the applause with him. Lapham wanted to make some open recognition of his good sense, but could not.

"I suppose the passion itself has been a good

deal changed," said Bromfield Corey, "since the poets began to idealize it in the days of chivalry."

"Yes; and it ought to be changed again," said Mr. Sewell.

"What! Back?"

"I don't say that. But it ought to be recognized as something natural and mortal, and divine honors, which belong to righteousness alone, ought not to be paid it."

"Oh, you ask too much, parson," laughed his host, and the talk wandered away to something else.

It was not an elaborate dinner; but Lapham was used to having everything on the table at once, and this succession of dishes bewildered him; he was afraid perhaps he was eating too much. He now no longer made any pretence of not drinking his wine, for he was thirsty, and there was no more water, and he hated to ask for any. The ice-cream came, and then the fruit. Suddenly Mrs. Corey rose, and said across the table to her husband, "I suppose you will want your coffee here." And he replied, "Yes; we'll join you at tea."

The ladies all rose, and the gentlemen got up with them. Lapham started to follow Mrs. Corey, but the other men merely stood in their places, except young Corey, who ran and opened the door for his mother. Lapham thought with shame that it was he who ought to have done that; but no one seemed to notice, and he sat down again gladly, after kicking out one of his legs which had gone to sleep.

They brought in cigars with coffee, and Bromfield Corey advised Lapham to take one that he chose for him. Lapham confessed that he liked a good cigar about as well as anybody, and Corey said: "These are new. I had an Englishman here the other day who was smoking old cigars in the superstition that tobacco improved with age, like wine."

"Ah," said Lapham, "anybody who had ever lived off a tobacco country could tell him better than that." With the fuming cigar between his lips he felt more at home than he had before. He turned sidewise in his chair and, resting one arm on the back, intertwined the fingers of both hands, and smoked at large ease.

James Bellingham came and sat down by him. "Colonel Lapham, weren't you with the 96th Vermont when they charged across the river in front of Pickensburg, and the rebel battery opened fire on them in the water?"

Lapham slowly shut his eyes and slowly dropped his head for assent, letting out a white volume of smoke from the corner of his mouth.

"I thought so," said Bellingham. "I was with the 85th Massachusetts, and I sha'n't forget that slaughter. We were all new to it still. Perhaps that's why it made such an impression."

"I don't know," suggested Charles Bellingham. "Was there anything much more impressive afterward? I read of it out in Missouri, where I was stationed at the time, and I recollect the talk of some old army men about it. They said that death-rate couldn't be beaten. I don't know that it ever was."

"About one in five of us got out safe," said Lapham, breaking his cigar-ash off on the edge of a plate. James Bellingham reached him a bottle of Apollinaris. He drank a glass, and then went on smoking.

They all waited, as if expecting him to speak, and then Corey said: "How incredible those things seem already! You gentlemen *know* that they happened; but are you still able to believe it?"

"Ah, nobody *feels* that anything happened," said Charles Bellingham. "The past of one's experience doesn't differ a great deal from the past of one's knowledge. It isn't much more probable; it's really a great deal less vivid than some scenes in a novel that one read when a boy."

"I'm not sure of that," said James Bellingham.

"Well, James, neither am I," consented his cousin, helping himself from Lapham's Apollinaris bottle. "There would be very little talking at dinner if one only said the things that one was sure of."

The others laughed, and Bromfield Corey remarked thoughtfully, "What astonishes the craven civilian in all these things is the abundance—the superabundance—of heroism. The cowards were the exception; the men that were ready to die, the rule."

"The woods were full of them," said Lapham, without taking his cigar from his mouth.

"That's a nice little touch in *School*," interposed Charles Bellingham, "where the girl says to the fellow who was at Inkerman, 'I should think you would be so proud of it,' and he reflects a while, and says, 'Well, the fact is, you know, there were so many of us.'"

"Yes, I remember that," said James Bellingham, smiling for pleasure in it. "But I don't see why you claim the credit of being a craven civilian, Bromfield," he added, with a friendly glance at his brother-in-law, and with the willingness Boston men often show to turn one another's good points to the light in company; bred so intimately together at school and college and in society, they all know these points. "A man who was out with Garibaldi in '48," continued James Bellingham.

"Oh, a little amateur red-shirting," Corey interrupted in deprecation. "But even if you choose to dispute my claim, what has become of all the heroism? Tom, how many club men do you know who would think it sweet and fitting to die for their country?"

"I can't think of a great many at the moment, sir," replied the son, with the modesty of his generation.

"And I couldn't in '61," said his uncle. "Nevertheless they were there."

"Then your theory is that it's the occasion that is wanting," said Bromfield Corey. "But why shouldn't civil service reform, and the resumption of specie payment, and a tariff for revenue only, inspire heroes? They are all good causes."

"It's the occasion that's wanting," said James Bellingham, ignoring the *persiflage*. "And I'm very glad of it."

"So am I," said Lapham, with a depth of feeling that expressed itself in spite of the haze in which his brain seemed to float. There was a great deal of the talk that he could not follow; it was too quick for him; but here was something he was clear of. "I don't want to see any more men killed in my time." Something serious, something somber must lurk behind these words, and they waited for Lapham to say more; but the haze closed round him again, and he remained silent, drinking Apollinaris.

"We noncombatants were notoriously reluctant to give up fighting," said Mr. Sewell, the minister; "but I incline to think Colonel Lapham and Mr. Bellingham may be right. I dare say we shall have the heroism again if we have the occasion. Till it comes, we must content ourselves with the everyday generosities and sacrifices. They make up in quantity what they lack in quality, perhaps."

"They're not so picturesque," said Bromfield Corey. "You can paint a man dying for his country, but you can't express on canvas a man fulfilling the duties of a good citizen."

"Perhaps the novelists will get at him by and by," suggested Charles Bellingham. "If I were one of these fellows, I shouldn't propose to myself anything short of that."

"What? the commonplace?" asked his cousin.

"Commonplace? The commonplace is just that light, impalpable, aërial essence which they've never got into their confounded books yet. The novelist who could interpret the common feelings of commonplace people would have the answer to 'the riddle of the painful earth' on his tongue."

"Oh, not so bad as that, I hope," said the host; and Lapham looked from one to the other, trying to make out what they were at. He had never been so up a tree before.

"I suppose it isn't well for us to see human nature at white heat habitually," continued Bromfield Corey, after a while. "It would make us vain of our species. Many a poor fellow in that war and in many another has gone into battle simply and purely for his country's sake, not knowing whether, if he laid down his life, he should ever find it again, or whether, if he took it up hereafter, he should take it up in heaven or hell. Come, parson!" he said, turning to the minister, "what has ever been conceived of omnipotence, of omniscience, so sublime, so divine as that?"

"Nothing," answered the minister quietly. "God has never been imagined at all. But if you suppose such a man as that was Authorized, I think it will help you to imagine what God must be."

"There's sense in that," said Lapham. He took his cigar out of his mouth, and pulled his chair a little toward the table, on which he placed his ponderous forearms. "I want to tell you about a fellow I had in my own company when we first went out. We were all privates

to begin with; after a while they elected me captain—I'd had the tavern stand, and most of 'em knew me. But Jim Millon never got to be anything more than corporal; corporal when he was killed." The others arrested themselves in various attitudes of attention, and remained listening to Lapham with an interest that profoundly flattered him. Now, at last, he felt that he was holding up his end of the rope. "I can't say he went into the thing from the highest motives, altogether; our motives are always pretty badly mixed, and when there's such a hurrah-boys as there was then, you can't tell which is which. I suppose Jim Millon's wife was enough to account for his going, herself. She was a pretty bad assortment," said Lapham, lowering his voice and glancing round at the door to make sure that it was shut, "and she used to lead Jim *one* kind of life. Well, sir," continued Lapham, synthetizing his auditors in that form of address, "that fellow used to save every cent of his pay and send it to that woman. Used to get me to do it for him. I tried to stop him. 'Why, Jim,' said I, 'you know what she'll do with it.' 'That's so, Cap,' says he, 'but I don't know what she'll do without it.' And it did keep her straight—straight as a string—as long as Jim lasted. Seemed as if there was something mysterious about it. They had a little girl,—about as old as my oldest girl,—and Jim used to talk to me about her. Guess he done it as much for her as for the mother; and he said to me before the last action we went into, 'I should like to turn tail and run, Cap. I ain't comin' out o' this one. But I don't suppose it would do.' 'Well, not for you, Jim,' said I. 'I want to live,' he says; and he bust out crying right there in my tent. 'I want to live for poor Molly and Zerilla'—that's what they called the little one; I dunno where they got the name. 'I ain't ever had half a chance; and now she's doing better, and I believe we should get along after this.' He set there cryin' like a baby. But he wan't no baby when he went into action. I hated to look at him after it was over, not so much because he'd got a ball that was meant for me by a sharpshooter—he saw the devil takin' aim, and he jumped to warn me—as because he didn't look like Jim; he looked like—fun; all desperate and savage. I guess he died hard."

The story made its impression, and Lapham saw it. "Now I say," he resumed, as if he felt that he was going to do himself justice, and say something to heighten the effect his story had produced. At the same time he was aware of a certain want of clearness. He had the idea, but it floated vague, elusive, in his brain. He looked about as if for something to precipitate it in tangible shape.

"Apollinaris?" asked Charles Bellingham, handing the bottle from the other side. He had drawn his chair closer than the rest to Lapham's, and was listening with great interest. When Mrs. Corey asked him to meet Lapham, he accepted gladly. "You know I go in for that sort of thing, Anna. Since Leslie's affair we're rather bound to do it. And I think we meet these practical fellows too little. There's always something original about them." He might naturally have believed that the reward of his faith was coming.

"Thanks, I will take some of this wine," said Lapham, pouring himself a glass of Madeira from a black and dusty bottle caressed by a label bearing the date of the vintage. He tossed off the wine, unconscious of its preciousness, and waited for the result. That cloudiness in his brain disappeared before it, but a mere blank remained. He not only could not remember what he was going to say, but he could not recall what they had been talking about. They waited, looking at him, and he stared at them in return. After a while he heard the host saying, "Shall we join the ladies?"

Lapham went, trying to think what had happened. It seemed to him a long time since he had drunk that wine.

Miss Corey gave him a cup of tea, where he stood aloof from his wife, who was talking with Miss Kingsbury and Mrs. Sewell; Irene was with Miss Nanny Corey. He could not hear what they were talking about; but if Penelope had come, he knew that she would have done them all credit. He meant to let her know how he felt about her behavior when he got home. It was a shame for her to miss such a chance. Irene was looking beautiful, as pretty as all the rest of them put together, but she was not talking, and Lapham perceived that at a dinner-party you ought to talk. He was himself conscious of having talked very

well. He now wore an air of great dignity, and, in conversing with the other gentlemen, he used a grave and weighty deliberation. Some of them wanted him to go into the library. There he gave his ideas of books. He said he had not much time for anything but the papers; but he was going to have a complete library in his new place. He made an elaborate acknowledgment to Bromfield Corey of his son's kindness in suggesting books for his library; he said that he had ordered them all, and that he meant to have pictures. He asked Mr. Corey who was about the best American painter going now. "I don't set up to be a judge of pictures, but I know what I like," he said. He lost the reserve which he had maintained earlier, and began to boast. He himself introduced the subject of his paint, in a natural transition from pictures; he said Mr. Corey must take a run up to Lapham with him some day, and see the Works; they would interest him, and he would drive him round the country; he kept most of his horses up there, and he could show Mr. Corey some of the finest Jersey grades in the country. He told about his brother William, the judge at Dubuque; and a farm he had out there that paid for itself every year in wheat. As he cast off all fear, his voice rose, and he hammered his arm-chair with the thick of his hand for emphasis. Mr. Corey seemed impressed; he sat perfectly quiet, listening, and Lapham saw the other gentlemen stop in their talk every now and then to listen. After this proof of his ability to interest them, he would have liked to have Mrs. Lapham suggest again that he was unequal to their society, or to the society of anybody else. He surprised himself by his ease among men whose names had hitherto overawed him. He got to calling Bromfield Corey by his surname alone. He did not understand why young Corey seemed so preoccupied, and he took occasion to tell the company how he had said to his wife the first time he saw that fellow that he could make a man of him if he had him in the business; and he guessed he was not mistaken. He began to tell stories of the different young men he had had in his employ. At last he had the talk altogether to himself; no one else talked, and he talked unceasingly. It was a great time; it was a triumph.

He was in this successful mood when word came to him that Mrs. Lapham was going; Tom Corey seemed to have brought it, but he was not sure. Anyway, he was not going to hurry. He made cordial invitations to each of the gentlemen to drop in and see him at his office, and would not be satisfied till he had exacted a promise from each. He told Charles Bellingham that he liked him, and assured James Bellingham that it had always been his ambition to know him, and that if any one had said when he first came to Boston that in less than ten years he should be hobnobbing with Jim Bellingham, he should have told that person he lied. He would have told anybody he lied that had told him ten years ago that a son of Bromfield Corey would have come and asked him to take him into the business. Ten years ago he, Silas Lapham, had come to Boston a little worse off than nothing at all, for he was in debt for half the money that he had bought out his partner with, and here he was now worth a million, and meeting you gentlemen like one of you. And every cent of that was honest money,—no speculation,—every copper of it for value received. And here, only the other day, his old partner, who had been going to the dogs ever since he went out of the business, came and borrowed twenty thousand dollars of him! Lapham lent it because his wife wanted him to: she had always felt bad about the fellow's having to go out of the business.

He took leave of Mr. Sewell with patronizing affection, and bade him come to him if he ever got into a tight place with his parish work; he would let him have all the money he wanted; he had more money than he knew what to do with. "Why, when your wife sent to mine last fall," he said, turning to Mr. Corey, "I drew my cheque for five hundred dollars, but my wife wouldn't take more than one hundred; said she wasn't going to show off before Mrs. Corey. I call that a pretty good joke on Mrs. Corey. I must tell her how Mrs. Lapham done her out of a cool four hundred dollars."

He started toward the door of the drawing-room to take leave of the ladies; but Tom Corey was at his elbow, saying, "I think Mrs. Lapham is waiting for you below, sir," and in obeying the direction Corey gave him

toward another door he forgot all about his purpose, and came away without saying good-night to his hostess.

Mrs. Lapham had not known how soon she ought to go, and had no idea that in her quality of chief guest she was keeping the others. She stayed till eleven o'clock, and was a little frightened when she found what time it was; but Mrs. Corey, without pressing her to stay longer, had said it was not at all late. She and Irene had had a perfect time. Everybody had been very polite; on the way home they celebrated the amiability of both the Miss Coreys and of Miss Kingsbury. Mrs. Lapham thought that Mrs. Bellingham was about the pleasantest person she ever saw; she had told her all about her daughter who had married an inventor and gone to live in Omaha—a Mrs. Blake.

"If it's that car-wheel Blake," said Lapham proudly, "I know all about him. I've sold him tons of the paint."

"Pooh, papa! How you do smell of smoking!" cried Irene.

"Pretty strong, eh?" laughed Lapham, letting down a window of the carriage. His heart was throbbing wildly in the close air, and he was glad of the rush of cold that came in, though it stopped his tongue, and he listened more and more drowsily to the rejoicings that his wife and daughter exchanged. He meant to have them wake Penelope up and tell her what she had lost; but when he reached home he was too sleepy to suggest it. He fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, full of supreme triumph.

But in the morning his skull was sore with the unconscious, nightlong ache; and he rose cross and taciturn. They had a silent breakfast. In the cold grey light of the morning the glories of the night before showed poorer. Here and there a painful doubt obtruded itself and marred them with its awkward shadow. Penelope sent down word that she was not well, and was not coming to breakfast, and Lapham was glad to go to his office without seeing her.

He was severe and silent all day with his clerks and peremptory with customers. Of Corey he was slyly observant, and as the day wore away he grew more restively conscious. He sent out word by his office-boy that he would like to see Mr. Corey for a few minutes after closing. The typewriter girl had lingered too, as if she wished to speak with him, and Corey stood in abeyance as she went toward Lapham's door.

"Can't see you tonight, Zerilla," he said bluffly, but not unkindly. "Perhaps I'll call at the house, if it's important."

"It is," said the girl, with a spoiled air of insistence.

"Well," said Lapham, and, nodding to Corey to enter, he closed the door upon her. Then he turned to the young man and demanded: "Was I drunk last night?" 1885

## *From* CRITICISM AND FICTION[1]

### XV

### [*Jane Austen*]

WHICH brings us again, after this long way about, to the divine Jane and her novels, and that troublesome question about them. She was great and they were beautiful, because she and they were honest, and dealt with nature nearly a hundred years ago as realism deals with it today. Realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material, and Jane Austen was the first and the last of the English novelists to treat material with entire truthfulness. Because she did this, she remains the most artistic of the English novelists, and alone worthy to be matched with the great Scandinavian and Slavic and Latin artists. It is not a question of intellect, or not wholly that. The English have mind enough; but they have not taste enough; or, rather, their taste has been perverted by their false criticism, which is based upon personal preference, and not upon principle; which instructs a man to think that what he likes is good, instead of teaching him first to distinguish what is good before he likes it. The art of fiction, as Jane Austen knew it, declined from her through Scott, and Bulwer, and Dickens, and Charlotte Brontë, and Thackeray, and even George Eliot, because the mania of romanticism had seized upon all Europe, and these great writers could not escape the taint of their time; but it has shown few signs of

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recovery in England, because English criticism, in the presence of the Continental masterpieces, has continued provincial and special and personal, and has expressed a love and a hate which had to do with the quality of the artist rather than the character of his work. It was inevitable that in their time the English romanticists should treat, as Señor Valdés says, "the barbarous customs of the Middle Ages, softening and disfiguring them, as Walter Scott and his kind did"; that they should "devote themselves to falsifying nature, refining and subtilizing sentiment, and modifying psychology after their own fancy," like Bulwer and Dickens, as well as like Rousseau and Madame de Staël, not to mention Balzac, the worst of all that sort at his worst. This was the natural course of the disease; but it really seems as if it were their criticism that was to blame for the rest: not, indeed, for the performance of this writer or that, for criticism can never affect the actual doing of a thing; but for the esteem in which this writer or that is held through the perpetuation of false ideals. The only observer of English middle-class life since Jane Austen worthy to be named with her was not George Eliot, who was first ethical and then artistic, who transcended her in everything but the form and method most essential to art, and there fell hopelessly below her. It was Anthony Trollope who was most like her in simple honesty and instinctive truth, as unphilosophized as the light of common day; but he was so warped from a wholesome ideal as to wish at times to be like the caricaturist Thackeray, and to stand about in his scene, talking it over with his hands in his pockets, interrupting the action, and spoiling the illusion in which alone the truth of art resides. Mainly, his instinct was too much for his ideal, and with a low view of life in its civic relations and a thoroughly bourgeois soul, he yet produced works whose beauty is surpassed only by the effect of a more poetic writer in the novels of Thomas Hardy. Yet if a vote of English criticism even at this late day, when all continental Europe has the light of aesthetic truth, could be taken, the majority against these artists would be overwhelming in favor of a writer who had so little artistic sensibility, that he never hesitated on any occasion, great or small, to make a foray among his characters, and catch them up to show them to the reader and tell him how beautiful or ugly they were; and cry out over their amazing properties.

Doubtless the ideal of those poor islanders will be finally changed. If the truth could become a fad it would be accepted by all their "smart people," but truth is something rather too large for that; and we must await the gradual advance of civilization among them. Then they will see that their criticism had misled them; and that it is to this false guide they owe, not precisely the decline of fiction among them, but its continued debasement as an art.

XVIII

## [*The Reading of Fiction*]

In General Grant's confession of novel-reading there is a sort of inference that he had wasted his time, or else the guilty conscience of the novelist in me imagines such an inference. But however this may be, there is certainly no question concerning the intention of a correspondent who once wrote to me after reading some rather bragging claims I had made for fiction as a mental and moral means. "I have very grave doubts," he said, "as to the whole list of magnificent things that you seem to think novels have done for the race, and can witness in myself many evil things which they have done for me. Whatever in my mental make-up is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious, I can trace to the perusal of some work of fiction. Worse than that, they beget such high-strung and supersensitive ideas of life that plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised, and matter-of-fact poverty, or every-day, commonplace distress, meets with no sympathy, if indeed noticed at all, by one who has wept over the impossibly accumulated sufferings of some gaudy hero or heroine."

I am not sure that I had the controversy with this correspondent that he seemed to suppose; but novels are now so fully accepted by every one pretending to cultivated taste—and they really form the whole intellectual life of such immense numbers of people, without question of their influence, good or bad, upon the mind—that it is refreshing to have them

frankly denounced, and to be invited to revise one's ideas and feelings in regard to them. A little honesty, or a great deal of honesty, in this quest will do the novel, as we hope yet to have it, and as we have already begun to have it, no harm; and for my own part I will confess that I believe fiction in the past to have been largely injurious, as I believe the stage play to be still almost wholly injurious, through its falsehood, its folly, its wantonness, and its aimlessness. It may be safely assumed that most of the novel-reading which people fancy an intellectual pastime is the emptiest dissipation, hardly more related to thought or the wholesome exercise of the mental faculties than opium-eating; in either case the brain is drugged, and left weaker and crazier for the debauch. If this may be called the negative result of the fiction habit, the positive injury that most novels work is by no means so easily to be measured in the case of young men whose character they help so much to form or deform, and the women of all ages whom they keep so much in ignorance of the world they misrepresent. Grown men have little harm from them, but in the other cases, which are the vast majority, they hurt because they are not true—not because they are malevolent, but because they are idle lies about human nature and the social fabric, which it behooves us to know and to understand, that we may deal justly with ourselves and with one another. One need not go so far as our correspondent, and trace to the fiction habit "whatever is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious," in one's life; bad as the fiction habit is it is probably not responsible for the whole sum of evil in its victims, and I believe that if the reader will use care in choosing from this fungus-growth with which the fields of literature teem every day, he may nourish himself as with the true mushroom, at no risk from the poisonous species.

The tests are very plain and simple, and they are perfectly infallible. If a novel flatters the passions, and exalts them above the principles, it is poisonous; it may not kill, but it will certainly injure; and this test will alone exclude an entire class of fiction, of which eminent examples will occur to all. Then the whole spawn of so-called unmoral romances, which imagine a world where the sins of sense are unvisited by the penalties following, swift or slow, but inexorably sure, in the real world, are deadly poison: these do kill. The novels that merely tickle our prejudices and lull our judgment, or that coddle our sensibilities or pamper our gross appetite for the marvellous are not so fatal, but they are innutritious, and clog the soul with unwholesome vapors of all kinds. No doubt they too help to weaken the moral fiber, and make their readers indifferent to "plodding perseverance and plain industry," and to "matter-of-fact poverty and commonplace distress."

Without taking them too seriously, it still must be owned that the "gaudy hero and heroine" are to blame for a great deal of harm in the world. That heroine long taught by example, if not precept, that Love, or the passion or fancy she mistook for it, was the chief interest of a life, which is really concerned with a great many other things; that it was lasting in the way she knew it; that it was worthy of every sacrifice, and was altogether a finer thing than prudence, obedience, reason; that love alone was glorious and beautiful, and these were mean and ugly in comparison with it. More lately she has begun to idolize and illustrate Duty, and she is hardly less mischievous in this new role, opposing duty, as she did love, to prudence, obedience, and reason. The stock hero, whom, if we met him, we could not fail to see was a most deplorable person, has undoubtedly imposed himself upon the victims of the fiction habit as admirable. With him, too, love was and is the great affair, whether in its old romantic phase of chivalrous achievement or manifold suffering for love's sake, or its more recent development of the "virile," the bullying, and the brutal, or its still more recent agonies of self-sacrifice, as idle and useless as the moral experiences of the insane asylums. With his vain posturings and his ridiculous splendor he is really a painted barbarian, the prey of his passions and his delusions, full of obsolete ideals, and the motives and ethics of a savage, which the guilty author of his being does his best—or his worst—in spite of his own light and knowledge, to foist upon the reader as something generous and noble. I am not merely bringing this charge

against that sort of fiction which is beneath literature and outside of it, "the shoreless lakes of ditch-water," whose miasms fill the air below the empyrean where the great ones sit; but I am accusing the work of some of the most famous, who have, in this instance or in that, sinned against the truth, which can alone exalt and purify men. I do not say that they have constantly done so, or even commonly done so; but that they have done so at all marks them as of the past, to be read with the due historical allowance for their epoch and their conditions. For I believe that, while inferior writers will and must continue to imitate them in their foibles and their errors, no one hereafter will be able to achieve greatness who is false to humanity, either in its facts or its duties. The light of civilization has already broken even upon the novel, and no conscientious man can now set about painting an image of life without perpetual question of the verity of his work, and without feeling bound to distinguish so clearly that no reader of his may be misled, between what is right and what is wrong, what is noble and what is base, what is health and what is perdition, in the actions and the characters he portrays.

The fiction that aims merely to entertain—the fiction that is to serious fiction as the opera-bouffe, the ballet, and the pantomime are to the true drama—need not feel the burden of this obligation so deeply; but even such fiction will not be gay or trivial to any reader's hurt, and criticism will hold it to account if it passes from painting to teaching folly.

More and more not only the criticism which prints its opinions, but the infinitely vaster and powerfuler criticism which thinks and feels them merely, will make this demand. I confess that I do not care to judge any work of the imagination without first of all applying this test to it. We must ask ourselves before we ask anything else, Is it true?—true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women? This truth, which necessarily includes the highest morality and the highest artistry—this truth given, the book cannot be wicked and cannot be weak; and without it all graces of style and feats of invention and cunning of construction are so many superfluities of naughtiness. It is well for the truth to have all these, and shine in them, but for falsehood they are merely meretricious, the bedizenment of the wanton; they atone for nothing, they count for nothing. But in fact they come naturally of truth, and grace it without solicitation; they are added unto it. In the whole range of fiction we know of no true picture of life—that is, of human nature—which is not also a masterpiece of literature, full of divine and natural beauty. It may have no touch or tint of this special civilization or of that; it had better have this local color well ascertained but the truth is deeper and finer than aspects, and if the book is true to what men and women know of one another's souls it will be true enough, and it will be great and beautiful. It is the conception of literature as something apart from life, superfinely aloof, which makes it really unimportant to the great mass of mankind, without a message or a meaning for them; and it is the notion that a novel may be false in its portrayal of causes and effects that makes literary art contemptible even to those whom it amuses, that forbids them to regard the novelist as a serious or right-minded person. If they do not in some moment of indignation cry out against all novels, as my correspondent does, they remain besotted in the fume of the delusions purveyed to them, with no higher feeling for the author than such maudlin affection as the habitué of an opium-joint perhaps knows for the attendant who fills his pipe with the drug.

Or, as in the case of another correspondent who writes me that in his youth he "read a great many novels, but always regarded it as an amusement, like horse-racing and card-playing," for which he had no time when he entered upon the serious business of life, it renders them merely contemptuous. His view of the matter may be commended to the brotherhood and sisterhood of novelists as full of wholesome if bitter suggestion; and we urge them not to dismiss it with high literary scorn as that of some Boeotian dull to the beauty of art. Refuse it as we may, it is still the feeling of the vast majority of people for whom life is earnest, and who find only a distorted and misleading likeness of it in our books. We may fold ourselves in our scholars' gowns, and close the doors of our studies, and affect to

despise this rude voice; but we cannot shut it out. It comes to us from wherever men are at work, from wherever they are truly living, and accuses us of unfaithfulness, of triviality, of mere stage-play; and none of us can escape conviction except he prove himself worthy of his time—a time in which the great masters have brought literature back to life, and filled its ebbing veins with the red tides of reality. We cannot all equal them; we need not copy them; but we can all go to the sources of their inspiration and their power; and to draw from these no one need go far—no one need really go out of himself.

Fifty years ago, Carlyle, in whom the truth was always alive, but in whom it was then unperverted by suffering, by celebrity, and by despair, wrote in his study of Diderot: "Were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel-writers and such like must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things: either must retire into the nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake themselves with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is true, of which surely there is, and will forever be, a whole infinitude unknown to us of infinite importance to us? Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons), Reality."

If, after half a century, fiction still mainly works for "children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes," it is nevertheless one of the hopefulest signs of the world's progress that it has begun to work for "grown persons," and if not exactly in the way that Carlyle might have solely intended in urging its writers to compile memoirs instead of building the "novel-fabric," still it has, in the highest and widest sense, already made Reality its Romance. I cannot judge it, I do not even care for it, except as it has done this; and I can hardly conceive of a literary self-respect in these days compatible with the old trade of make-believe, with the production of the kind of fiction which is too much honored by classification with card-playing and horse-racing. But let fiction cease to lie about life; let it portray men and women as they are, actuated by the motives and the passions in the measure we all know; let it leave off painting dolls and working them by springs and wires; let it show the different interests in their true proportions; let it forbear to preach pride and revenge, folly and insanity, egotism and prejudice, but frankly own these for what they are, in whatever figures and occasions they appear; let it speak the dialect, the language, that most Americans know—the language of unaffected people everywhere—and there can be no doubt of an unlimited future, not only of delightfulness but of usefulness, for it.

XXIV

## [*Decency in American Fiction*]

One of the great newspapers the other day invited the prominent American authors to speak their minds upon a point in the theory and practice of fiction which had already vexed some of them. It was the question of how much or how little the American novel ought to deal with certain facts of life which are not usually talked of before young people, and especially young ladies. Of course the question was not decided, and I forget just how far the balance inclined in favor of a larger freedom in the matter. But it certainly inclined that way; one or two writers of the sex which is somehow supposed to have purity in its keeping (as if purity were a thing that did not practically concern the other sex, preoccupied with serious affairs) gave it a rather vigorous tilt to that side. In view of this fact it would not be the part of prudence to make an effort to dress the balance; and indeed I do not know that I was going to make any such effort. But there are some things to say, around and about the subject, which I should like to have some one else say, and which I may myself possibly be safe in suggesting.

One of the first of these is the fact, generally lost sight of by those who censure the Anglo-Saxon novel for its prudishness, that it is really not such a prude after all; and that if it is sometimes apparently anxious to avoid those experiences of life not spoken of before young people, this may be an appearance only. Some-

times a novel which has this shuffling air, this effect of truckling to propriety, might defend itself, if it could speak for itself, by saying that such experiences happened not to come within its scheme, and that, so far from maiming or mutilating itself in ignoring them, it was all the more faithfully representative of the tone of modern life in dealing with love that was chaste, and with passion so honest that it could be openly spoken of before the tenderest society bud at dinner. It might say that the guilty intrigue, the betrayal, the extreme flirtation even, was the exceptional thing in life, and unless the scheme of the story necessarily involved it, that it would be bad art to lug it in, and as bad taste as to introduce such topics in a mixed company. It could say very justly that the novel in our civilization now always addresses a mixed company, and that the vast majority of the company are ladies, and that very many, if not most, of these ladies are young girls. If the novel were written for men and for married women alone, as in continental Europe, it might be altogether different. But the simple fact is that it is not written for them alone among us, and it is a question of writing, under cover of our universal acceptance, things for young girls to read which you would be put out-of-doors for saying to them, or of frankly giving notice of your intention, and so cutting yourself off from the pleasure—and it is a very high and sweet one—of appealing to these vivid, responsive intelligences, which are none the less brilliant and admirable because they are innocent.

One day a novelist who liked, after the manner of other men, to repine at his hard fate, complained to his friend, a critic, that he was tired of the restriction he had put upon himself in this regard; for it is a mistake, as can be readily shown, to suppose that others impose it. "See how free those French fellows are!" he rebelled. "Shall we always be shut up to our tradition of decency?"

"Do you think it's much worse than being shut up to their tradition of indecency?" said his friend.

Then that novelist began to reflect, and he remembered how sick the invariable motive of the French novel made him. He perceived finally that, convention for convention, ours was not only more tolerable, but on the whole was truer to life, not only to its complexion, but also to its texture. No one will pretend that there is not vicious love beneath the surface of our society; if he did, the fetid explosions of the divorce trials would refute him; but if he pretended that it was in any just sense characteristic of our society, he could be still more easily refuted. Yet it exists, and it is unquestionably the material of tragedy, the stuff from which intense effects are wrought. The question, after owning this fact, is whether these intense effects are not rather cheap effects. I incline to think they are, and I will try to say why I think so, if I may do so without offense. The material itself, the mere mention of it, has an instant fascination; it arrests, it detains, till the last word is said, and while there is anything to be hinted. This is what makes a love intrigue of some sort all but essential to the popularity of any fiction. Without such an intrigue the intellectual equipment of the author must be of the highest, and then he will succeed only with the highest class of readers. But any author who will deal with a guilty love intrigue holds all readers in his hand, the highest with the lowest, as long as he hints the slightest hope of the smallest potential naughtiness. He need not at all be a great author; he may be a very shabby wretch, if he has but the courage or the trick of that sort of thing. The critics will call him "virile" and "passionate"; decent people will be ashamed to have been limed by him; but the low average will only ask another chance of flocking into his net. If he happens to be an able writer, his really fine and costly work will be unheeded, and the lure to the appetite will be chiefly remembered. There may be other qualities which make reputations for other men, but in his case they will count for nothing. He pays this penalty for his success in that kind; and every one pays some such penalty who deals with some such material. It attaches in like manner to the triumphs of the writers who now almost form a school among us, and who may be said to have established themselves in an easy popularity simply by the study of erotic shivers and fervors. They may find their account in the popularity, or they may not; there is no question of the popularity.

But I do not mean to imply that their case covers the whole ground. So far as it goes, though, it ought to stop the mouths of those who complain that fiction is enslaved to propriety among us. It appears that of a certain kind of impropriety it is free to give us all it will, and more. But this is not what serious men and women writing fiction mean when they rebel against the limitations of their art in our civilization. They have no desire to deal with nakedness, as painters and sculptors freely do in the worship of beauty; or with certain facts of life, as the stage does, in the service of sensation. But they ask why, when the conventions of the plastic and histrionic arts liberate their followers to the portrayal of almost any phase of the physical or of the emotional nature, an American novelist may not write a story on the lines of *Anna Karenina* or *Madame Bovary*. Sappho they put aside, and from Zola's work they avert their eyes. They do not condemn him or Daudet, necessarily, or accuse their motives; they leave them out of the question; they do not want to do that kind of thing. But they do sometimes wish to do another kind, to touch one of the most serious and sorrowful problems of life in the spirit of Tolstoi and Flaubert, and they ask us why they may not. At one time, they remind us, the Anglo-Saxon novelist did deal with such problems—De Foe in his spirit, Richardson in his, Goldsmith in his. At what moment did our fiction lose this privilege? In what fatal hour did the Young Girl arise and seal the lips of Fiction, with a touch of her finger, to some of the most vital interests of life?

Whether I wished to oppose them in their aspiration for greater freedom, or whether I wished to encourage them, I should begin to answer them by saying that the Young Girl had never done anything of the kind. The manners of the novel have been improving with those of its readers; that is all. Gentlemen no longer swear or fall drunk under the table, or abduct young ladies and shut them up in lonely country-houses, or so habitually set about the ruin of their neighbors' wives, as they once did. Generally, people now call a spade an agricultural implement; they have not grown decent without having also grown a little squeamish, but they have grown comparatively decent; there is no doubt about that. They require of a novelist whom they respect unquestionable proof of his seriousness, if he proposes to deal with certain phases of life; they require a sort of scientific decorum. He can no longer expect to be received on the ground of entertainment only; he assumes a higher function, something like that of a physician or a priest, and they expect him to be bound by laws as sacred as those of such professions; they hold him solemnly pledged not to betray them or abuse their confidence. If he will accept the conditions, they give him their confidence, and he may then treat to his greater honor, and not at all to his disadvantage, of such experiences, such relations of men and women as George Eliot treats in *Adam Bede*, in *Daniel Deronda*, in *Romola*, in almost all her books; such as Hawthorne treats in *The Scarlet Letter;* such as Dickens treats in *David Copperfield;* such as Thackeray treats in *Pendennis*, and glances at in every one of his fictions; such as most of the masters of English fiction have at some time treated more or less openly. It is quite false or quite mistaken to suppose that our novels have left untouched these most important realities of life. They have only not made them their stock in trade; they have kept a true perspective in regard to them; they have relegated them in their pictures of life to the space and place they occupy in life itself, as we know it in England and America. They have kept a correct proportion, knowing perfectly well that unless the novel is to be a map, with everything scrupulously laid down in it, a faithful record of life in far the greater extent could be made to the exclusion of guilty love and all its circumstances and consequences.

I justify them in this view not only because I hate what is cheap and meretricious, and hold in peculiar loathing the cant of critics who require "passion" as something in itself admirable and desirable in a novel, but because I prize fidelity in the historian of feeling and character. Most of these critics who demand "passion" would seem to have no conception of any passion but one. Yet there are several other passions: the passion of grief, the passion of avarice, the passion of pity, the passion of ambition, the passion of hate, the passion of

envy, the passion of devotion, the passion of friendship; and all these have a greater part in the drama of life than the passion of love, and infinitely greater than the passion of guilty love. Wittingly or unwittingly, English fiction and American fiction have recognized this truth, not fully, not in the measure it merits, but in greater degree than most other fiction.

1891

## *From* LITERATURE AND LIFE[1]

### *American Literature in Exile*

A RECENTLY lecturing Englishman is reported to have noted the unenviable primacy of the United States among countries where the struggle for material prosperity has been disastrous to the pursuit of literature. He said, or is said to have said (one cannot be too careful in attributing to a public man the thoughts that may be really due to an imaginative frame in the reporter), that among us, "the old race of writers of distinction, such as Longfellow, Bryant, Holmes, and Washington Irving, have (*sic*) died out, and the Americans who are most prominent in cultivated European opinion in art or literature, like Sargent, Henry James, or Marion Crawford, live habitually out of America, and draw their inspiration from England, France, and Italy."

I

If this were true, I confess that I am so indifferent to what many Americans glory in that it would not distress me, or wound me in the sort of self-love which calls itself patriotism. If it would help to put an end to that struggle for material prosperity which has eventuated with us in so many millionaires and so many tramps, I should be glad to believe that it was driving our literary men out of the country. This would be a tremendous object-lesson, and might be a warning to the millionaires and the tramps. But I am afraid it would not have this effect, for neither our very rich nor our very poor care at all for the state of polite learning among us; though for the matter of that, I believe that economic conditions have little to do with it; and that if a general mediocrity of fortune prevailed and there were no haste to be rich and to get poor, the state of polite learning would not be considerably affected. As matters stand, I think we may reasonably ask whether the Americans "most prominent in cultivated European opinion," the Americans who "live habitually out of America," are not less exiles than advance agents of the expansion now advertising itself to the world. They may be the vanguard of the great army of adventurers destined to overrun the earth from these shores, and exploit all foreign countries to our advantage. They probably themselves do not know it, but in the act of "drawing their inspiration" from alien scenes, or taking their own where they find it, are not they simply transporting to Europe "the struggle for material prosperity" which Sir Lepel supposes to be fatal to them here?

There is a question, however, which comes before this, and that is the question whether they have quitted us in such numbers as justly to alarm our patriotism. Qualitatively, in the authors named and in the late Mr. Bret Harte, Mr. Harry Harland, and the late Mr. Harold Frederic, as well as in Mark Twain, once temporarily resident abroad, the defection is very great; but quantitatively it is not such as to leave us without a fair measure of home-keeping authorship. Our destitution is not nearly so great now in the absence of Mr. James and Mr. Crawford as it was in the times before the "struggle for material prosperity" when Washington Irving went and lived in England and on the European continent well-nigh half his life.

Sir Lepel Griffin—or Sir Lepel Griffin's reporter—seems to forget the fact of Irving's long absenteeism when he classes him with "the old race" of eminent American authors who stayed at home. But really none of those he names were so constant to our air as he seems—or his reporter seems—to think. Longfellow sojourned three or four years in Germany, Spain, and Italy; Holmes spent as great time in Paris; Bryant was a frequent traveler, and each of them "drew his inspiration" now and then from alien sources. Lowell was many years in Italy, Spain, and England; Motley

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spent more than half his life abroad; Hawthorne was away from us nearly a decade.

II

If I seem to be proving too much in one way, I do not feel that I am proving too much in another. My facts go to show that the literary spirit is the true world-citizen, and is at home everywhere. If any good American were distressed by the absenteeism of our authors, I should first advise him that American literature was not derived from the folklore of the red Indians, but was, as I have said once before, a condition of English literature, and was independent even of our independence. Then I should entreat him to consider the case of foreign authors who had found it more comfortable or more profitable to live out of their respective countries than in them. I should allege for his consolation the case of Byron, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt, and more latterly that of the Brownings and Walter Savage Landor, who preferred an Italian to an English sojourn; and yet more recently that of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who voluntarily lived several years in Vermont, and has "drawn his inspiration" in notable instances from the life of these States. It will serve him also to consider that the two greatest Norwegian authors, Björnsen and Ibsen, have both lived long in France and Italy. Heinrich Heine loved to live in Paris much better than in Düsseldorf, or even in Hamburg; and Tourguénief himself, who said that any man's country could get on without him, but no man could get on without his country, managed to dispense with his own in the French capital, and died there after he was quite free to go back to St. Petersburg. In the last century Rousseau lived in France rather than in Switzerland; Voltaire at least tried to live in Prussia, and was obliged to a long exile elsewhere; Goldoni left fame and friends in Venice for the favor of princes in Paris.

Literary absenteeism, it seems to me, is not peculiarly an American vice or an American virtue. It is an expression and a proof of the modern sense which enlarges one's country to the bounds of civilization. I cannot think it justly a reproach in the eyes of the world, and if any American feels it a grievance, I suggest that he do what he can to have embodied in the platform of his party a plank affirming the right of American authors to a public provision that will enable them to live as agreeably at home as they can abroad on the same money. In the meantime, their absenteeism is not a consequence of "the struggle for material prosperity," not a high disdain of the strife which goes on not less in Europe than in America, and must, of course, go on everywhere as long as competitive conditions endure, but is the result of chances and preferences which mean nothing nationally calamitous or discreditable.

1902

## 1843 ~ *Henry James* ~ 1916

IT IS NOT certain that Henry James really belongs to American literature, for he was critical of America and admired Europe. But it is also doubtful whether he should be termed British, although he became a British citizen. James won distinction as a psychological novelist of fine artistry. He was interested in the leisurely analysis of character and fastidious craftsmanship rather than in incident and action. He concerned himself with spiritual values, aesthetic and intellectual problems, and fine instincts.

The life of Henry James shows no striking outer events. He lived as a spectator who observed but who did not enter into active life. He was not forced to earn his

own living, for he was financially independent and had leisure and advantages that other writers were not able to enjoy. He was free to give to the world his best. James's grandfather was an Albany merchant of Irish stock who became a millionaire and could bequeath a fortune to his descendants. His father, Henry James, Sr., was a philosopher and writer and a close friend of Emerson. The older brother, William James, became professor of philosophy and psychology at Harvard.

At the age of twelve, the future novelist went to Europe, where he studied under private tutors at Geneva, London, Paris. Later he was at Bonn. This cosmopolitan education served to make him European in temperament. In 1860, the family removed to Newport, and in 1862–63, James attended the Harvard Law School, although he did not intend to practice law. His health kept him out of the Civil War. Influenced by friends, he became interested in literary pursuits and writing. He had early been an admirer of Hawthorne, of George Eliot, who, followed by George Meredith, inaugurated the psychological novel, and of Balzac; and these writers left their imprint upon him. From 1864 to 1868 he lived at Cambridge and Boston and contributed stories and reviews to several periodicals. His first volume of fiction, *A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales*, appeared in 1871, and his first long novel, *Roderick Hudson*, which had been issued serially in the *Atlantic*, was reprinted in book form in 1876.

The years between 1876 and 1881 were prolific. While living in Massachusetts, James had made several trips to Europe, and in 1876 he resolved to establish his residence abroad. He was an aristocrat by temperament, and he thought American life thin and crude. It was poor in history, its civilization new, and its culture derivative. He was fond of intellectual society and he seemed to find that society only in Europe. He settled first in Paris, where he met Turgenev and Flaubert, but later gave it up for London. His books of this period deal especially with transplanted Americans and their conduct in the trying situation of finding themselves in an older and more sophisticated society. This was the beginning of the International Novel, a field in which he pioneered, its scenes London, Paris, Rome, New York. To this group belong *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), *Daisy Miller*, his only genuine "hit" (1879), *The International Episode* (1879), and *Portrait of a Lady* (1881). Later James lost interest in depicting contrasting cultures and the types they foster. His later novels were hardly successful either in the United States or in England, and he gave up expectation of popularity and began to compose in his own way. The last two decades of his life, 1896–1916, were spent at Rye, on the southeast coast of England, where he lived happily a life of considerable seclusion, although he kept his apartment in London. He had by this time changed his manner of writing from one of direct treatment to an involved style that the public found baffling. He gave much thought to intricacies of method and craftsmanship. His sentences were so filled with parenthetical explanations and qualifications that they

became tedious and stultifying. Yet fiction writers abroad and in his own country acknowledge that his ideas of structure have had an unmistakable influence on certain groups of writers. Edith Wharton in this country and Marcel Proust in France have been termed his disciples. He remained prolific in his output, for he was able to dictate his involved sentences. The three later books that he thought his best were *Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904).

After 1914, his work was affected by the World War. He had been virtually a British citizen for many years, and when America did not enter the war following the sinking of the *Lusitania*, he took out his naturalization papers in England. He was awarded the high honor of the Order of Merit by King George early in 1916. He died that same year, February 28, in his apartment in London.

James wrote travel books and was a keen and urbane critic, but he is better remembered as a novelist and story writer, whose method is that of the psychological clinic. He sets forth in minute shades the intangible qualities of the soul. His books contain little action or violence and because of the absence of dramatic happenings in them are often said to lack virility. A recurrent theme is that of renunciation. He deals with a restricted area of life. His characters are of one class, well-bred occupationless men and women who lead a sheltered life of leisure and fashion, and who are concerned with the fine art of living, its decorum and problems of taste. To many it seems that the fastidious culture and subtle mental powers of certain European circles he paints existed only in his imagination. James was perhaps the last embodiment of the genteel tradition. The world of which he wrote, a prewar world, has now passed, if it ever existed, in both the Old World and the New.

The literary theories of Henry James deserve attention, partly because of the care with which he recorded them and partly because of the influence he hoped they might have. He developed very definite ideas concerning fiction, and these he set forth in various self-explanatory prefaces which he prepared for the New York Edition of his works. They tell what he was trying to do, and taken together with his essay on "The Art of Fiction," they present a complete exposition of his views. We learn how painstakingly he came to build his novels. His earlier stories were commonplace in method, told in bald, straightforward manner by a narrator. Some were realistic American and some had European backgrounds. The novels of his middle period, *Roderick Hudson*, *The American*, *the Portrait of a Lady*, *The Princess Cassamassima*, and *The Tragic Muse*, show great growth. For a time he wished to "dramatize" his themes, and relied on abundance of dialogue, with his characters in confrontation. He reached his distinctive method with *The Spoils of Poynton* (1896), in which are to be found nearly all the characteristic marks of his procedure. He wished a "central subject" and tried to bring out his basic "idea" by focussing on some intelligent, sensitive, and "aware" central person interposed between the reader

and the story, who plays the part of a conscious interpreter for the reader. The "central idea" may be the opposition of new and old world ways of living, an abstraction, a situation, a psychological predicament, a single person or an aspect of a person, or a human relationship. His novels are concerned with pivotal facts or episodes in the lives of his characters, and the action is confined to the consciousness of these characters. The novelist does not tell as an author what he wishes his readers to see. The character or situation is set forth within the story itself, through the mind of someone watching the characters, or through the central character. The reader is on the inside. Who is to see and tell the story, who is to be the "center" or dramatic focus, whose is to be the "point of view," are among the questions James asked himself first. A few critics see in this method the beginning of the subjective "stream of consciousness" movement. James prided himself on the "economy" and "elimination" of his mode of presentation, and he believed that it promoted intensity. In *What Maisie Knew* he registers the impressions of a child. He conveys the whole story, his subject and his personages, through her juvenile intelligence, supplying no other information. Occasionally he makes use of an observer who is only slightly involved in the story, and often a confidant is needed. He never shifts carelessly from the point of view of one person to that of another, in the usual fashion of novelists. Sometimes, however, instead of the restricted point of view of a single character, there are given in contrast the views of other characters in alternation. These he terms a series of "centers," "mirrors," "lighters," "reflectors," or "lamps," each of which sets forth one of the main aspects of the central character or situation.

James often uses the word "picture" when speaking of his fiction, meaning thereby the restricted area through which his idea is developed. He likes a "scene" method of presentation. He relies on dialogue, but it is never to depart from what is "immediately to the purpose." He sought "unity or pictorial fusion." He speaks of "foreshortening" and the desirability of achieving "balance" between the halves of either side of the "center of structure." There is elimination not only of all official explanation and formal introduction of characters but usually too of description of scenes and other settings. Since the "picture" is there from the start, and there is often no incident, the story seems to make little progress. His process is rather that of unfolding by bits, by gradual revelation, and from a consistent point of view. Indeed, he does not tell a story at all but gives the subjective concomitants of it. The emphasis is on interior states, and the sense of a rounded narrative with a clear ending is slight. He found "no endings in life" and some of his stories seem not to end at all.

James's critical essays have been collected in some six volumes. As a critic he was chiefly influenced by Sainte Beuve, and in maturity he developed a method of subtle and sensitive impressionism resembling to some extent that of Walter Pater.

His critical principles are set forth in his essay called "Criticism" in his volume *Essays in London and Elsewhere* (1893).

The best edition of James's works is the New York Edition (26 vols., 1907–17). In this he included his prefaces and critical theories. P. Lubbock edited the *Letters of Henry James* (2 vols., 1920). No standard life has yet appeared. Autobiographical works by James are *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914), and *The Middle Years* (1917, unfinished). See Edith Wharton, "Henry James in His Letters," *Quarterly Review*, CCXXXIV, July, 1920; and Hamlin Garland in *Roadside Meetings* (1930) and *Companions on the Trail* (1931).

For critical articles and studies see H. C. Vedder, in *American Writers of To-Day* (1894); E. L. Cary, *The Novels of Henry James* (1905); W. C. Brownell, in *American Prose Masters* (1909); Oliver Elton, in *Modern Studies* (1907); J. Macy, in *The Spirit of American Literature* (1913); F. M. Hueffer, *Henry James, a Critical Study* (1915); Rebecca West, *Henry James* (1916); S. P. Sherman, in *On Contemporary Literature* (1917); J. W. Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (1918), also in *The Twentieth Century Novel* (1932), and an article in *CHAL*, III (1921); W. B. Cairns, *Character-Portrayal in the Works of Henry James*, in *University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature*, No. 2, September, 1918; H. T. and W. Follett, in *Some Modern Artists* (1919); Carl Van Doren, in *The American Novel* (1921), and in *DAB;* T. Bosanquet, *Henry James at Work* (1924); H. L. Hughes, *Theory and Practice in Henry James* (1926); P. Edgar, *Henry James, Man and Author* (1927); Marie-Reine Garnier, *Henry James et la France* (1927); M. Roberts, *Henry James's Criticism* (1929); V. L. Parrington in *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); C. P. Kelley, *The Early Development of Henry James*, in *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* (1930); Robert Herrick, in Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931); G. E. De Mille, in *Literary Criticism in America* (1931); C. H. Grattan, in *The Three Jameses* (1932); H. Hartwick, in *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1932).

L. R. Phillips published *A Bibliography of the Writings of Henry James* (enlarged edition 1930). See also that by Hartwick in W. F. Taylor's *A History of American Letters* (1935).

## GREVILLE FANE

James wrote a number of tales dealing with writers of fiction, among them "The Death of the Lion," "The Figure in the Carpet," "The Coxon Fund," and "The Author of Beltraffio." The latter, a novelette, is an excellent example of James's skill and subtlety in this special field. In most of these tales, the authors are presented as men of talents, somehow frustrated in the quality of their work, or in its reception, or in their life experiences.

COMING in to dress for dinner, I found a telegram: "Mrs. Stormer dying; can you give us half a column for tomorrow evening? Let her off easy, but not too easy." I was late; I was in a hurry; I had very little time to think, but at a venture I dispatched a reply: "Will do what I can." It was not till I had dressed and was rolling away to dinner that, in the hansom, I bethought myself of the difficulty of the condition attached. The difficulty was not of course in letting her off easy but in qualifying that indulgence. "I simply won't qualify it," I said to myself. I didn't admire her, but I liked her, and I had known her so long that I almost felt heartless in sitting down at such an hour to a feast of indifference. I must have seemed abstracted, for the early years of my acquaintance with her came back to me. I spoke of her to the lady I had taken down, but the lady I had taken down had never heard of Greville Fane. I tried my other neighbor, who pronounced her books "too vile." I had never thought them very good, but I should let her off easier than that.

I came away early, for the express purpose of driving to ask about her. The journey took time, for she lived in the northwest district, in the neighborhood of Primrose Hill. My apprehension that I should be too late was

justified in a fuller sense than I had attached to it—I had only feared that the house would be shut up. There were lights in the windows, and the temperate tinkle of my bell brought a servant immediately to the door, but poor Mrs. Stormer had passed into a state in which the resonance of no earthly knocker was to be feared. A lady, in the hall, hovering behind the servant, came forward when she heard my voice. I recognized Lady Luard, but she had mistaken me for the doctor.

"Excuse my appearing at such an hour," I said; "it was the first possible moment after I heard."

"It's all over," Lady Luard replied. "Dearest mamma!"

She stood there under the lamp with her eyes on me; she was very tall, very stiff, very cold, and always looked as if these things, and some others beside, in her dress, her manner and even her name, were an implication that she was very admirable. I had never been able to follow the argument, but that is a detail. I expressed briefly and frankly what I felt, while the little mottled maidservant flattened herself against the wall of the narrow passage and tried to look detached without looking indifferent. It was not a moment to make a visit, and I was on the point of retreating when Lady Luard arrested me with a queer, casual, drawling "Would you—a—would you, perhaps, be *writing* something?" I felt for the instant like an interviewer, which I was not. But I pleaded guilty to this intention, on which she rejoined: "I'm so very glad—but I think my brother would like to see you." I detested her brother, but it wasn't an occasion to act this out; so I suffered myself to be inducted, to my surprise, into a small back room which I immediately recognized as the scene, during the later years, of Mrs. Stormer's imperturbable industry. Her table was there, the battered and blotted accessory to innumerable literary lapses, with its contracted space for the arms (she wrote only from the elbow down) and the confusion of scrappy, scribbled sheets which had already become literary remains. Leolin was also there, smoking a cigarette before the fire and looking impudent even in his grief, sincere as it well might have been.

To meet him, to greet him, I had to make a sharp effort; for the air that he wore to me as he stood before me was quite that of his mother's murderer. She lay silent forever upstairs—as dead as an unsuccessful book, and his swaggering erectness was a kind of symbol of his having killed her. I wondered if he had already, with his sister, been calculating what they could get for the poor papers on the table; but I had not long to wait to learn, for in reply to the scanty words of sympathy I addressed him he puffed out: "It's miserable, miserable, yes; but she has left three books complete." His words had the oddest effect; they converted the cramped little room into a seat of trade and made the "book" wonderfully feasible. He would certainly get all that could be got for the three. Lady Luard explained to me that her husband had been with them but had had to go down to the House. To her brother she explained that I was going to write something, and to me again she made it clear that she hoped I would "do mamma justice." She added that she didn't think this had ever been done. She said to her brother: "Don't you think there are some things he ought thoroughly to understand?" and on his instantly exclaiming "Oh, thoroughly—thoroughly!" she went on, rather austerely: "I mean about mamma's birth."

"Yes, and her connections," Leolin added.

I professed every willingness, and for five minutes I listened, but it would be too much to say that I understood. I don't even now, but it is not important. My vision was of other matters than those they put before me, and while they desired there should be no mistake about their ancestors I became more and more lucid about themselves. I got away as soon as possible, and walked home through the great dusky, empty London—the best of all conditions for thought. By the time I reached my door my little article was practically composed—ready to be transferred on the morrow from the polished plate of fancy. I believe it attracted some notice, was thought "graceful" and was said to be by someone else. I had to be pointed without being lively, and it took some tact. But what I said was much less interesting than what I thought—especially during the half-hour I spent in my arm-chair by the fire, smoking the cigar I always light before

going to bed. I went to sleep there, I believe; but I continued to moralize about Greville Fane. I am reluctant to lose that retrospect altogether, and this is a dim little memory of it, a document not to "serve." The dear woman had written a hundred stories, but none so curious as her own.

When first I knew her she had published half-a-dozen fictions, and I believe I had also perpetrated a novel. She was more than a dozen years older than I, but she was a person who always acknowledged her relativity. It was not so very long ago, but in London, amid the big waves of the present, even a near horizon gets hidden. I met her at some dinner and took her down, rather flattered at offering my arm to a celebrity. She didn't look like one, with her matronly, mild, inanimate face, but I supposed her greatness would come out in her conversation. I gave it all the opportunities I could, but I was not disappointed when I found her only a dull, kind woman. This was why I liked her—she rested me so from literature. To myself literature was an irritation, a torment; but Greville Fane slumbered in the intellectual part of it like a Creole in a hammock. She was not a woman of genius, but her faculty was so special, so much a gift out of hand, that I have often wondered why she fell below that distinction. This was doubtless because the transaction, in her case, had remained incomplete; genius always pays for the gift, feels the debt, and she was placidly unconscious of obligation. She could invent stories by the yard, but she couldn't write a page of English. She went down to her grave without suspecting that though she had contributed volumes to the diversion of her contemporaries she had not contributed a sentence to the language. This had not prevented bushels of criticism from being heaped upon her head; she was worth a couple of columns any day to the weekly papers, in which it was shown that her pictures of life were dreadful but her style really charming. She asked me to come and see her, and I went. She lived then in Montpellier Square; which helped me to see how dissociated her imagination was from her character.

An industrious widow, devoted to her daily stint, to meeting the butcher and baker and making a home for her son and daughter, from the moment she took her pen in her hand she became a creature of passion. She thought the English novel deplorably wanting in that element, and the task she had cut out for herself was to supply the deficiency. Passion in high life was the general formula of this work, for her imagination was at home only in the most exalted circles. She adored, in truth, the aristocracy, and they constituted for her the romance of the world or, what is more to the point, the prime material of fiction. Their beauty and luxury, their loves and revenges, their temptations and surrenders, their immoralities and diamonds were as familiar to her as the blots on her writing-table. She was not a belated producer of the old fashionable novel, she had a cleverness and a modernness of her own, she had freshened up the fly-blown tinsel. She turned off plots by the hundred and—so far as her flying quill could convey her—was perpetually going abroad. Her types, her illustrations, her tone were nothing if not cosmopolitan. She recognized nothing less provincial than European society, and her fine folk knew each other and made love to each other from Doncaster to Bucharest. She had an idea that she resembled Balzac, and her favorite historical characters were Lucien de Rubempré and the Vidame de Pamiers. I must add that when I once asked her who the latter personage was she was unable to tell me. She was very brave and healthy and cheerful, very abundant and innocent and wicked. She was clever and vulgar and snobbish, and never so intensely British as when she was particularly foreign.

This combination of qualities had brought her early success, and I remember having heard with wonder and envy of what she "got," in those days, for a novel. The revelation gave me a pang: it was such a proof that, practicing a totally different style, I should never make my fortune. And yet when, as I knew her better she told me her real tariff and I saw how rumor had quadrupled it, I liked her enough to be sorry. After a while I discovered too that if she got less it was not that *I* was to get any more. My failure never had what Mrs. Stormer would have called the banality of being relative—it was always admirably absolute. She lived at ease however in those days —ease is exactly the word, though she pro-

duced three novels a year. She scorned me when I spoke of difficulty—it was the only thing that made her angry. If I hinted that a work of art required a tremendous licking into shape she thought it a pretension and a *pose*. She never recognized the "torment of form"; the furthest she went was to introduce into one of her books (in satire her hand was heavy) a young poet who was always talking about it. I couldn't quite understand her irritation on this score, for she had nothing at stake in the matter. She had a shrewd perception that form, in prose at least, never recommended anyone to the public we were condemned to address, and therefore she lost nothing (putting her private humiliation aside) by not having any. She made no pretense of producing works of art, but had comfortable tea-drinking hours in which she freely confessed herself a common pastrycook, dealing in such tarts and puddings as would bring customers to the shop. She put in plenty of sugar and of cochineal, or whatever it is that gives these articles a rich and attractive color. She had a serene superiority to observation and opportunity which constituted an inexpugnable strength and would enable her to go on indefinitely. It is only real success that wanes, it is only solid things that melt. Greville Fane's ignorance of life was a resource still more unfailing than the most approved receipt. On her saying once that the day would come when she should have written herself out I answered: "Ah, you look into fairyland, and the fairies love you, and *they* never change. Fairyland is always there; it always was from the beginning of time, and it always will be to the end. They've given you the key and you can always open the door. With me it's different; I try, in my clumsy way, to be in some direct relation to life." "Oh, bother your direct relation to life!" she used to reply, for she was always annoyed by the phrase—which would not in the least prevent her from using it when she wished to try for style. With no more prejudices than an old sausage-mill, she would give forth again with patient punctuality any poor verbal scrap that had been dropped into her. I cheered her with saying that the dark day, at the end, would be for the like of *me;* inasmuch as, going in our small way by experience and observation, we depended not on a revelation, but on a little tiresome process. Observation depended on opportunity, and where should we be when opportunity failed?

One day she told me that as the novelist's life was so delightful and during the good years at least such a comfortable support (she had these staggering optimisms) she meant to train up her boy to follow it. She took the ingenious view that it was a profession like another and that therefore everything was to be gained by beginning young and serving an apprenticeship. Moreover the education would be less expensive than any other special course, inasmuch as she could administer it herself. She didn't profess to keep a school, but she could at least teach her own child. It was not that she was so very clever, but (she confessed to me as if she were afraid I would laugh at her) that *he* was. I didn't laugh at her for that, for I thought the boy sharp—I had seen him at sundry times. He was well grown and good-looking and unabashed, and both he and his sister made me wonder about their defunct papa, concerning whom the little I knew was that he had been a clergyman. I explained them to myself by suppositions and imputations possibly unjust to the departed; so little were they—superficially at least—the children of their mother. There used to be, on the easel in her drawing-room, an enlarged photograph of her husband, done by some horrible posthumous "process" and draped, as to its florid frame, with a silken scarf, which testified to the candor of Greville Fane's bad taste. It made him look like an unsuccessful tragedian; but it was not a thing to trust. He may have been a successful comedian. Of the two children the girl was the elder, and struck me in all her younger years as singularly colorless. She was only very long, like an undecipherable letter. It was not till Mrs. Stormer came back from a protracted residence abroad that Ethel (which was this young lady's name) began to produce the effect, which was afterwards remarkable in her, of a certain kind of high resolution. She made one apprehend that she meant to do something for herself. She was long-necked and near-sighted and striking, and I thought I had never seen sweet

seventeen in a form so hard and high and dry. She was cold and affected and ambitious, and she carried an eyeglass with a long handle, which she put up whenever she wanted not to see. She had come out, as the phrase is, immensely; and yet I felt as if she were surrounded with a spiked iron railing. What she meant to do for herself was to marry, and it was the only thing, I think, that she meant to do for anyone else; yet who would be inspired to clamber over that bristling barrier? What flower of tenderness or of intimacy would such an adventurer conceive as his reward?

This was for Sir Baldwin Luard to say; but he naturally never confided to me the secret. He was a joyless, jokeless young man, with the air of having other secrets as well, and a determination to get on politically that was indicated by his never having been known to commit himself—as regards any proposition whatever—beyond an exclamatory "Oh!" His wife and he must have conversed mainly in prim ejaculations, but they understood sufficiently that they were kindred spirits. I remember being angry with Greville Fane when she announced these nuptials to me as magnificent; I remember asking her what splendor there was in the union of the daughter of a woman of genius with an irredeemable mediocrity. "Oh! he's awfully clever," she said; but she blushed for the maternal fib. What she meant was that though Sir Baldwin's estates were not vast (he had a dreary house in South Kensington and a still drearier "Hall" somewhere in Essex, which was let), the connection was a "smarter" one than a child of hers could have aspired to form. In spite of the social bravery of her novels she took a very humble and dingy view of herself, so that of all her productions "my daughter Lady Luard" was quite the one she was proudest of. That personage thought her mother very vulgar and was distressed and perplexed by the occasional license of her pen, but had a complicated attitude in regard to this indirect connection with literature. So far as it was lucrative her ladyship approved of it, and could compound with the inferiority of the pursuit by doing practical justice to some of its advantages. I had reason to know (my reason was simply that poor Mrs. Stormer told me) that she suffered the inky fingers to press an occasional bank-note into her palm. On the other hand she deplored the "peculiar style" to which Greville Fane had devoted herself, and wondered where an author who had the convenience of so ladylike a daughter could have picked up such views about the best society. "She might know better, with Leolin and me," Lady Luard had been known to remark; but it appeared that some of Greville Fane's superstitions were incurable. She didn't live in Lady Luard's society, and the best was not good enough for her—she must make it still better.

I could see that this necessity grew upon her during the years she spent abroad, when I had glimpses of her in the shifting sojourns that lay in the path of my annual ramble. She betook herself from Germany to Switzerland and from Switzerland to Italy; she favored cheap places and set up her desk in the smaller capitals. I took a look at her whenever I could, and I always asked how Leolin was getting on. She gave me beautiful accounts of him, and whenever it was possible the boy was produced for my edification. I had entered from the first into the joke of his career—I pretended to regard him as a consecrated child. It had been a joke for Mrs. Stormer at first, but the boy himself had been shrewd enough to make the matter serious. If his mother accepted the principle that the intending novelist cannot begin too early to see life, Leolin was not interested in hanging back from the application of it. He was eager to qualify himself, and took to cigarettes at ten, on the highest literary grounds. His poor mother gazed at him with extravagant envy and, like Desdemona, wished heaven had made *her* such a man. She explained to me more than once that in her profession she had found her sex a dreadful drawback. She loved the story of Madame George Sand's early rebellion against this hindrance, and believed that if she had worn trousers she could have written as well as that lady. Leolin had for the career at least the qualification of trousers, and as he grew older he recognized its importance by laying in an immense assortment. He grew up in gorgeous apparel, which was his way of interpreting his mother's system. Whenever I met her I found

her still under the impression that she was carrying this system out and that Leolin's training was bearing fruit. She was giving him experience, she was giving him impressions, she was putting a *gagne-pain* into his hand. It was another name for spoiling him with the best conscience in the world. The queerest pictures come back to me of this period of the good lady's life and of the extraordinarily virtuous, muddled, bewildering tenor of it. She had an idea that she was seeing foreign manners as well as her petticoats would allow; but, in reality she was not seeing anything, least of all fortunately how much she was laughed at. She drove her whimsical pen at Dresden and at Florence, and produced in all places and at all times the same romantic and ridiculous fictions. She carried about her box of properties and fished out promptly the familiar, tarnished old puppets. She believed in them when others couldn't, and as they were like nothing that was to be seen under the sun it was impossible to prove by comparison that they were wrong. You can't compare birds and fishes; you could only feel that, as Greville Fane's characters had the fine plumage of the former species, human beings must be of the latter.

It would have been droll if it had not been so exemplary to see her tracing the loves of the duchesses beside the innocent cribs of her children. The immoral and the maternal lived together in her diligent days on the most comfortable terms, and she stopped curling the mustaches of her Guardsmen to pat the heads of her babes. She was haunted by solemn spinsters who came to tea from continental *pensions*, and by unsophisticated Americans who told her she was just loved in *their* country. "I had rather be just paid there," she usually replied; for this tribute of transatlantic opinion was the only thing that galled her. The Americans went away thinking her coarse; though as the author of so many beautiful love-stories she was disappointing to most of these pilgrims, who had not expected to find a shy, stout, ruddy lady in a cap like a crumbled pyramid. She wrote about the affections and the impossibility of controlling them, but she talked of the price of *pension* and the convenience of an English chemist. She devoted much thought and many thousands of francs to the education of her daughter, who spent three years at a very superior school at Dresden, receiving wonderful instruction in sciences, arts and tongues, and who, taking a different line from Leolin, was to be brought up wholly as a *femme du monde*. The girl was musical and philological; she made a specialty of languages and learned enough about them to be inspired with a great contempt for her mother's artless accents. Greville Fane's French and Italian were droll; the imitative faculty had been denied her, and she had an unequaled gift, especially pen in hand, of squeezing big mistakes into small opportunities. She knew it, but she didn't care; correctness was the virtue in the world that, like her heroes and heroines, she valued least. Ethel, who had perceived in her pages some remarkable lapses, undertook at one time to revise her proofs; but I remember her telling me a year after the girl had left school that this function had been very briefly exercised. "She can't read me," said Mrs. Stormer; "I offend her taste. She tells me that at Dresden—at school—I was never allowed." The good lady seemed surprised at this, having the best conscience in the world about her lucubrations. She had never meant to fly in the face of anything, and considered that she groveled before the Rhadamanthus of the English literary tribunal, the celebrated and awful Young Person. I assured her, as a joke, that she was frightfully indecent (she hadn't in fact that reality any more than any other) my purpose being solely to prevent her from guessing that her daughter had dropped her not because she was immoral but because she was vulgar. I used to figure her children closeted together and asking each other while they exchanged a gaze of dismay: "Why should she *be* so—and so *fearfully* so—when she has the advantage of our society? Shouldn't *we* have taught her better?" Then I imagined their recognizing with a blush and a shrug that she was unteachable, irreformable. Indeed she was, poor lady; but it is never fair to read by the light of taste things that were not written by it. Greville Fane had, in the topsy-turvy, a serene good faith that ought to have been safe from allusion, like a stutter or a *faux pas*.

She didn't make her son ashamed of the profession to which he was destined, however;

she only made him ashamed of the way she herself exercised it. But he bore his humiliation much better than his sister, for he was ready to take for granted that he should one day restore the balance. He was a canny and far-seeing youth, with appetites and aspirations, and he had not a scruple in his composition. His mother's theory of the happy knack he could pick up deprived him of the wholesome discipline required to prevent young idlers from becoming cads. He had, abroad, a casual tutor and a snatch or two of a Swiss school, but no consecutive study, no prospect of a university or a degree. It may be imagined with what zeal, as the years went on, he entered into the pleasantry of there being no manual so important to him as the massive book of life. It was an expensive volume to peruse, but Mrs. Stormer was willing to lay out a sum in what she would have called her *premiers frais*. Ethel disapproved—she thought this education far too unconventional for an English gentleman. Her voice was for Eton and Oxford, or for any public school (she would have resigned herself) with the army to follow. But Leolin never was afraid of his sister, and they visibly disliked, though they sometimes agreed to assist, each other. They could combine to work the oracle—to keep their mother at her desk.

When she came back to England, telling me she had got all the continent could give her, Leolin was a broad-shouldered, red-faced young man, with an immense wardrobe and an extraordinary assurance of manner. She was fondly obstinate about her having taken the right course with him, and proud of all that he knew and had seen. He was now quite ready to begin, and a little while later she told me he *had* begun. He had written something tremendously clever, and it was coming out in the *Cheapside*. I believe it came out; I had no time to look for it; I never heard anything about it. I took for granted that if this contribution had passed through his mother's hands it had practically become a specimen of her own genius, and it was interesting to consider Mrs. Stormer's future in the light of her having to write her son's novels as well as her own. This was not the way she looked at it herself; she took the charming ground that he would help her to write hers. She used to tell me that he supplied passages of the greatest value to her own work—all sorts of technical things, about hunting and yachting and wine—that she couldn't be expected to get very straight. It was all so much practice for him and so much alleviation for her. I was unable to identify these pages, for I had long since ceased to "keep up" with Greville Fane; but I was quite able to believe that the wine-question had been put, by Leolin's good offices, on a better footing, for the dear lady used to mix her drinks (she was perpetually serving the most splendid suppers) in the queerest fashion. I could see that he was willing enough to accept a commission to look after that department. It occurred to me indeed, when Mrs. Stormer settled in England again, that by making a shrewd use of both her children she might be able to rejuvenate her style. Ethel had come back to gratify her young ambition, and if she couldn't take her mother into society she would at least go into it herself. Silently, stiffly, almost grimly, this young lady held up her head, clenched her long teeth, squared her lean elbows and made her way up the staircases she had elected. The only communication she ever made to me, the only effusion of confidence with which she ever honored me, was when she said: "I don't want to know the people mamma knows; I mean to know others." I took due note of the remark, for I was not one of the "others." I couldn't trace therefore the steps of her process; I could only admire it at a distance and congratulate her mother on the results. The results were that Ethel went to "big" parties and got people to take her. Some of them were people she had met abroad, and others were people whom the people she had met abroad had met. They ministered alike to Miss Ethel's convenience, and I wondered how she extracted so many favors without the expenditure of a smile. Her smile was the dimmest thing in the world, diluted lemonade, without sugar, and she had arrived precociously at social wisdom, recognizing that if she was neither pretty enough nor rich enough nor clever enough, she could at least in her muscular youth be rude enough. Therefore if she was able to tell her mother what really took place in the mansions of the great, give her notes to work from,

the quill could be driven at home to better purpose and precisely at a moment when it would have to be more active than ever. But if she did tell, it would appear that poor Mrs. Stormer didn't believe. As regards many points this was not a wonder; at any rate I heard nothing of Greville Fane's having developed a new manner. She had only one manner from start to finish, as Leolin would have said.

She was tired at last, but she mentioned to me that she couldn't afford to pause. She continued to speak of Leolin's work as the great hope of their future (she had saved no money) though the young man wore to my sense an aspect more and more professional if you like, but less and less literary. At the end of a couple of years there was something monstrous in the impudence with which he played his part in the comedy. When I wondered how she could play *her* part I had to perceive that her good faith was complete and that what kept it so was simply her extravagant fondness. She loved the young imposter with a simple, blind, benighted love, and of all the heroes of romance who had passed before her eyes he was by far the most brilliant. He was at any rate the most real—she could touch him, pay for him, suffer for him, worship him. He made her think of her princes and dukes, and when she wished to fix these figures in her mind's eye she thought of her boy. She had often told me she was carried away by her own creations, and she was certainly carried away by Leolin. He vivified, by potentialities at least, the whole question of youth and passion. She held, not unjustly, that the sincere novelist should feel the whole flood of life; she acknowledged with regret that she had not had time to feel it herself, and it was a joy to her that the deficiency might be supplied by the sight of the way it was rushing through this magnificent young man. She exhorted him, I suppose, to let it rush; she wrung her own flaccid little sponge into the torrent. I knew not what passed between them in her hours of tuition, but I gathered that she mainly impressed on him that the great thing was to live, because that gave you material. He asked nothing better; he collected material, and the formula served as a universal pretext. You had only to look at him to see that, with his rings and breastpins, his cross-barred jackets, his early *embonpoint*, his eyes that looked like imitation jewels, his various indications of a dense, full-blown temperament, his idea of life was singularly vulgar; but he was not so far wrong as that his response to his mother's expectations was not in a high degree practical. If she had imposed a profession on him from his tenderest years it was exactly a profession that he followed. The two were not quite the same, inasmuch as *his* was simply to live at her expense; but at least she couldn't say that he hadn't taken a line. If she insisted on believing in him he offered himself to the sacrifice. My impression is that her secret dream was that he should have a *liaison* with a countess, and he persuaded her without difficulty that he had one. I don't know what countesses are capable of, but I have a clear notion of what Leolin was.

He didn't persuade his sister, who despised him—she wished to work her mother in her own way, and I asked myself why the girl's judgment of him didn't make me like her better. It was because it didn't save her after all from a mute agreement with him to go halves. There were moments when I couldn't help looking hard into his atrocious young eyes, challenging him to confess his fantastic fraud and give it up. Not a little tacit conversation passed between us in this way, but he had always the best of it. If I said: "Oh, come now, with *me* you needn't keep it up; plead guilty, and I'll let you off," he wore the most ingenuous, the most candid expression, in the depths of which I could read: "Oh, yes, I know it exasperates you—that's just why I do it." He took the line of earnest inquiry, talked about Balzac and Flaubert, asked me if I thought Dickens *did* exaggerate and Thackeray *ought* to be called a pessimist. Once he came to see me, at his mother's suggestion he declared, on purpose to ask me how far, in my opinion, in the English novel, one really might venture to "go." He was not resigned to the usual pruderies—he suffered under them already. He struck out the brilliant idea that nobody knew how far we might go, for nobody had ever tried. Did I think *he* might safely try —would it injure his mother if he did? He would rather disgrace himself by his timidities than injure his mother, but certainly someone

ought to try. Wouldn't *I* try—couldn't I be prevailed upon to look at it as a duty? Surely the ultimate point ought to be fixed—he was worried, haunted by the question. He patronized me unblushingly, made me feel like a foolish amateur, a helpless novice, inquired into my habits of work and conveyed to me that I was utterly *vieux jeu* and had not had the advantage of an early training. I had not been brought up from the germ, I knew nothing of life—didn't go at it on *his* system. He had dipped into French feuilletons and picked up plenty of phrases, and he made a much better show in talk than his poor mother, who never had time to read anything and could only be vivid with her pen. If I didn't kick him downstairs it was because he would have alighted on her at the bottom.

When she went to live at Primrose Hill I called upon her and found her weary and wasted. It had waned a good deal, the elation caused the year before by Ethel's marriage; the foam on the cup had subsided and there was a bitterness in the draught. She had had to take a cheaper house and she had to work still harder to pay even for that. Sir Baldwin was obliged to be close; his charges were fearful, and the dream of her living with her daughter (a vision she had never mentioned to me) must be renounced. "I would have helped with things, and I could have lived perfectly in one room," she said; "I would have paid for everything, and—after all—I'm someone, ain't I? But I don't fit in, and Ethel tells me there are tiresome people she *must* receive. I can help them from here, no doubt, better than from there. She told me once, you know, what she thinks of my picture of life. 'Mamma, your picture of life is preposterous!' No doubt it is, but she's vexed with me for letting my prices go down; and I had to write three novels to pay for all her marriage cost me. I did it very well —I mean the outfit and the wedding; but that's why I'm here. At any rate she doesn't want a dingy old woman in her house. I should give it an atmosphere of literary glory, but literary glory is only the eminence of nobodies. Besides, she doubts my glory—she knows I'm glorious only at Peckham and Hackney. She doesn't want her friends to ask if I've never known nice people. She can't tell them I've never been in society. She tried to teach me better once, but I couldn't learn. It would seem too as if Peckham and Hackney had had enough of me; for (don't tell anyone!) I've had to take less for my last than I ever took for anything." I asked her how little this had been, not from curiosity, but in order to upbraid her, more disinterestedly than Lady Luard had done, for such concessions. She answered "I'm ashamed to tell you," and then she began to cry.

I had never seen her break down, and I was proportionately moved; she sobbed, like a frightened child, over the extinction of her vogue and the exhaustion of her vein. Her little workroom seemed indeed a barren place to grow flowers, and I wondered, in the after years (for she continued to produce and publish) by what desperate and heroic process she dragged them out of the soil. I remember asking her on that occasion what had become of Leolin, and how much longer she intended to allow him to amuse himself at her cost. She rejoined with spirit, wiping her eyes, that he was down at Brighton hard at work—he was in the midst of a novel—and that he *felt* life so, in all its misery and mystery, that it was cruel to speak of such experiences as a pleasure. "He goes beneath the surface," she said, "and he *forces* himself to look at things from which he would rather turn away. Do you call that amusing yourself? You should see his face sometimes! And he does it for me as much as for himself. He tells me everything—he comes home to me with his *trouvailles*. We are artists together, and to the artist all things are pure. I've often heard you say so yourself." The novel that Leolin was engaged in at Brighton was never published, but a friend of mine and of Mrs. Stormer's who was staying there happened to mention to me later that he had seen the young apprentice to fiction driving, in a dogcart, a young lady with a very pink face. When I suggested that she was perhaps a woman of title with whom he was conscientiously flirting my informant replied: "She is indeed, but do you know what her title is?" He pronounced it—it was familiar and descriptive—but I won't reproduce it here. I don't know whether Leolin mentioned it to his mother: she would have needed all the

purity of the artist to forgive him. I hated so to come across him that in the very last years I went rarely to see her, though I knew that she had come pretty well to the end of her rope. I didn't want her to tell me that she had fairly to give her books away—I didn't want to see her cry. She kept it up amazingly, and every few months, at my club, I saw three new volumes, in green, in crimson, in blue, on the book-table that groaned with light literature. Once I met her at the Academy soirée, where you meet people you thought were dead, and she vouchsafed the information, as if she owed it to me in candor, that Leolin had been obliged to recognize insuperable difficulties in the question of *form*, he was so fastidious; so that she had now arrived at a definite understanding with him (it was such a comfort) that *she* would do the form if he would bring home the substance. That was now his position—he foraged for her in the great world at a salary. "He's my 'devil,' don't you see? as if I were a great lawyer: he gets up the case and I argue it." She mentioned further that in addition to his salary he was paid by the piece: he got so much for a striking character, so much for a pretty name, so much for a plot, so much for an incident, and had so much promised him if he would invent a new crime.

"He *has* invented one," I said, "and he's paid every day of his life."

"What is it?" she asked, looking hard at the picture of the year, "Baby's Tub," near which we happened to be standing.

I hesitated a moment. "I myself will write a little story about it, and then you'll see."

But she never saw; she had never seen anything, and she passed away with her fine blindness unimpaired. Her son published every scrap of scribbled paper that could be extracted from her table-drawers, and his sister quarreled with him mortally about the proceeds, which showed that she only wanted a pretext, for they cannot have been great. I don't know what Leolin lives upon, unless it be on a queer lady many years older than himself, whom he lately married. The last time I met him he said to me with his infuriating smile: "Don't you think we can go a little further still—just a little?" *He* really goes too far.

1893

## MISS GUNTON OF POUGHKEEPSIE

**This story well illustrates the author's use of an international theme, a theme peculiarly characteristic of James. Often he places an American, a simple candid person endowed with fine traits, against a European background; and a contrast is involved between old- and new-world ways of life. *Daisy Miller* is an early instance of James's liking for this theme. Other instances are *An International Episode, The Wings of a Dove, The Ambassadors*, and *The Golden Bowl.***

"It's astonishing what you take for granted!" Lady Champer had exclaimed to her young friend at an early stage; and this might have served as a sign that even then the little plot had begun to thicken. The reflection was uttered at the time the outlook of the charming American girl in whom she found herself so interested was still much in the rough. They had often met, with pleasure to each, during a winter spent in Rome; and Lily had come to her in London towards the end of May with further news of a situation the dawn of which, in March and April, by the Tiber, the Arno, and the Seine, had considerably engaged her attention. The Prince had followed Miss Gunton to Florence and then with almost equal promptitude to Paris, where it was both clear and comical for Lady Champer that the rigor of his uncertainty as to parental commands and remittances now detained him. This shrewd woman promised herself not a little amusement from her view of the possibilities of the case. Lily was on the whole showing a wonder; therefore the drama would lose nothing from her character, her temper, her tone. She was waiting—this was the truth she had imparted to her clever protectress—to see if her Roman captive would find himself drawn to London. Should he really turn up there she would the next thing start for America, putting him to the test of that wider range and declining to place her confidence till he should have arrived in New York at her heels. If he remained in Paris or returned to Rome she would stay in London and, as she phrased it, have a good time by herself. Did he expect her to go back to Paris for him? Why not in that case just as well go back to Rome at once? The first thing for her, Lily intimated to her London adviser,

was to show what, in her position, *she* expected.

Her position meanwhile was one that Lady Champer, try as she would, had as yet succeeded neither in understanding nor in resigning herself not to understand. It was that of being extraordinarily pretty, amazingly free, and perplexingly good, and of presenting these advantages in a positively golden light. How was one to estimate a girl whose nearest approach to a drawback—that is to an encumbrance—appeared to be a grandfather carrying on a business in an American city her ladyship had never otherwise heard of, with whom communication was all by cable and on the subject of "drawing"? Expression was on the old man's part moreover as concise as it was expensive, consisting as it inveterately did of but the single word "Draw." Lily drew, on every occasion in life, and it at least could not be said of the pair—when the "family idea," as embodied in America, was exposed to criticism—that they were not in touch. Mr. Gunton had given her further Mrs. Brine, to come out with her, and with this provision and the perpetual pecuniary he plainly figured—to Lily's own mind—as solicitous to the point of anxiety. Mrs. Brine's scheme of relations seemed in truth to be simpler still. There was a transatlantic "Mr. Brine," of whom she often spoke —and never in any other way; but she wrote for newspapers; she prowled in catacombs, visiting more than once even those of Paris; she haunted hotels; she picked up compatriots; she spoke above all a language that often baffled comprehension. She mattered, however, but little; she was mainly so occupied in having what Lily had likewise independently glanced at—a good time by herself. It was difficult enough indeed to Lady Champer to see the wonderful girl reduced to that, yet she was a little person who kept one somehow in presence of the incalculable. Old measures and familiar rules were of no use at all with her—she had so broken the moulds and so mixed the marks. What was confounding was her disparities—the juxtaposition in her of beautiful sun-flushed heights and deep dark holes. She had none of the things that the other things implied. She dangled in the air in a manner that made one dizzy; though one took comfort, at the worst, in feeling that one was there to catch her if she fell. Falling, at the same time, appeared scarce one of her properties, and it was positive for Lady Champer at moments that if one held out one's arms one might be, after all, much more likely to be pulled up. That was really a part of the excitement of the acquaintance.

"Well," said this friend and critic on one of the first of the London days, "say he does, on your return to your own country, go after you: how do you read, on that occurrence, the course of events?"

"Why, if he comes after me I'll have him."

"And do you think it so easy to 'have' him?"

Lily appeared, lovely and candid,— and it was an air and a way she often had,—to wonder what she thought. "I don't know that I think it any easier than he seems to think it to have *me*. I know moreover that, though he wants awfully to see the country, he wouldn't just now come to America unless to marry me; and if I take him at all," she pursued, "I want first to be able to show him to the girls."

"Why 'first'?" Lady Champer asked. "Wouldn't it do as well last?"

"Oh, I should want them to see me in Rome, too," said Lily. "But, dear me, I'm afraid I want a good many things! What I most want of course is that he should show me unmistakably what *he* wants. Unless he wants me more than anything else in the world, I don't want him. Besides, I hope he doesn't think I'm going to be married anywhere but in my own place."

"I see," said Lady Champer. "It's for your wedding you want the girls. And it's for the girls you want the Prince."

"Well, we're all bound by that promise. And of course *you*'ll come!"

"Ah, my dear child——!" Lady Champer gasped.

"You can come with the old Princess. You'll be just the right company for her."

The elder friend considered afresh, with depth, the younger's beauty and serenity. "You *are*, love, beyond everything!"

The beauty and serenity took on for a moment a graver cast. "Why do you so often say that to me?"

"Because you so often make it the only thing to say. But you'll some day find out why," Lady Champer added with an intention of encouragement.

Lily Gunton, however, was a young person to whom encouragement looked queer; she had grown up without need of it, and it seemed indeed scarce required in her situation. "Do you mean you believe his mother won't come?"

"Over mountains and seas to see you married?—and to be seen also of the girls? If she does, *I* will. But we had perhaps better," Lady Champer wound up, "not count our chickens before they're hatched." To which, with one of the easy returns of gaiety that were irresistible in her, Lily made answer that neither of the ladies in question struck her quite as chickens.

The Prince at all events presented himself in London with a promptitude that contributed to make the warning gratuitous. Nothing could have exceeded, by this time, Lady Champer's appreciation of her young friend, whose merits "town" at the beginning of June threw into renewed relief; but she had the imagination of greatness and, though she believed she tactfully kept it to herself, she thought what the young man had thus done a great deal for a Roman prince to do. Take him as he was, with the circumstances—and they were certainly peculiar, and he was charming—it was a far cry for him from Piazza Colonna to Clarges Street. If Lady Champer had the imagination of greatness, which the Prince in all sorts of ways gratified, Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie—it was vain to pretend the contrary—was not great in any particular save one. She was great when she "drew." It was true that at the beginning of June she did draw with unprecedented energy and in a manner that, though Mrs. Brine's remarkable nerve apparently could stand it, fairly made a poor baronet's widow, little as it was her business, hold her breath. It was none of her business at all, yet she talked of it even with the Prince himself—to whom it was indeed a favorite subject and whose greatness, oddly enough, never appeared to shrink in the effect it produced upon him. The line they took together was that of wondering if the scale of Lily's drafts made really most for the presumption that the capital at her disposal was rapidly dwindling, or for that of its being practically infinite. "Many a fellow," the young man smiled, "would marry her to pull her up." He was in any case of the opinion that it was an occasion for deciding—one way or the other—quickly. Well, he did decide—so quickly that, within the week, Lily communicated to her friend that he had offered her his hand, his heart, his fortune, and all his titles, grandeurs, and appurtenances. She had given him his answer, and he was in bliss; though nothing, as yet, was settled but that.

Tall, fair, active, educated, amiable, simple, carrying so naturally his great name and pronouncing so kindly Lily's small one, the happy youth, if he was one of the most ancient of princes, was one of the most modern of Romans. This second character it was his special aim and pride to cultivate. He would have been pained at feeling himself an hour behind his age; and he had a way—both touching and amusing to some observers—of constantly comparing his watch with the dial of the day's news. It was in fact easy to see that in deciding to ally himself with a young alien of vague origin, whose striking beauty was reinforced only by her presumptive money, he had even put forward a little the fine hands of his timepiece. No one else, however,—not even Lady Champer, and least of all Lily herself,—had quite taken the measure, in this connection, of his merit. The quick decision he had spoken of was really a flying leap. He desired incontestably to rescue Miss Gunton's remainder; but to rescue it he had to take it for granted, and taking it for granted was nothing less than—at whatever angle considered—a risk. He never, naturally, used the word to her, but he distinctly faced a peril. The sense of what he had staked on a vague return gave him, at the height of the London season, bad nights, or rather bad mornings—for he danced with his intended, as a usual thing, conspicuously, till dawn—besides obliging him to take, in the form of long explanatory, argumentative, and persuasive letters to his mother and sisters, his uncles, aunts, cousins, and preferred confidants, large measures of justification at home. The family sense

was strong in his huge old house, just as the family array was numerous; he was dutifully conscious of the trust reposed in him, and moved from morning till night, he perfectly knew, as the observed of a phalanx of observers; whereby he the more admired himself for his passion, precipitation, and courage. He had only a probability to go upon, but he was—and by the romantic tradition of his race—so in love that he should surely not be taken in.

His private agitation of course deepened when, to do honor to her engagement and as if she would have been ashamed to do less, Lily "drew" again most gloriously; but he managed to smile beautifully on her asking him if he didn't want her to be splendid, and at his worst hours he went no further than to wish that he might be married on the morrow. Unless it were the next day, or at most the next month, it really at moments seemed best that it should never be at all. On the most favorable view—with the solidity of the residuum fully assumed—there were still minor questions and dangers. A vast America, arching over his nuptials, bristling with expectant bridesmaids and underlaying their feet with expensive flowers, stared him in the face and prompted him to the reflection that if she dipped so deep into the mere remote overflow her dive into the fount itself would verily be a header. If she drew at such a rate in London how wouldn't she draw at Poughkeepsie? he asked himself, and practically asked Lady Champer; yet bore the strain of the question, without an answer, so nobly that when, with small delay, Poughkeepsie seemed simply to heave with reassurances, he regarded the ground as firm and his tact as rewarded. "And now at last, dearest," he said, "since everything's so satisfactory, you *will* write?" He put it appealingly, endearingly, yet as if he could scarce doubt.

"Write, love? Why," she replied, "I've done nothing *but* write! I've written ninety letters."

"But not to mamma," he smiled.

"Mamma?"—she stared. "My dear boy, I've not at this time of day to remind you that I've the misfortune to have no mother. I lost mamma, you know, as you lost your father, in childhood. You may be sure," said Lily Gunton, "that I wouldn't otherwise have waited for you to prompt me."

There came into his face a kind of amiable convulsion. "Of course, darling, I remember—your beautiful mother (she *must* have been beautiful!) whom I should have been so glad to know. I was thinking of my mamma—who'll be so delighted to hear from you." The Prince spoke English in perfection—had lived in it from the cradle and appeared, particularly when alluding to his home and family, to matters familiar and of fact, or to those of dress and sport, of general recreation, to draw such a comfort from it as made the girl think of him as scarce more a foreigner than a pleasant, auburn, slightly awkward, slightly slangy, and extremely well-tailored young Briton would have been. He sounded "mamma" like a rosy English schoolboy; yet just then, for the first time, the things with which he was connected struck her as in a manner strange and far-off. Everything in him, none the less—face and voice and tact, above all his deep desire—labored to bring them near and made them natural. This was intensely the case as he went on: "Such a little letter as you *might* send would really be awfully jolly."

"My dear child," Lily replied on quick reflection, "I'll write to her with joy the minute I hear from her. Won't she write to *me?*"

The Prince just visibly flushed. "In a moment if you'll only——"

"Write to her first?"

"Just pay her a little—no matter how little—your respects."

His attenuation of the degree showed perhaps a sense of a weakness of position; yet it was no perception of this that made the girl immediately say: "Oh, *caro*, I don't think I can begin. If you feel that *she* won't—as you evidently do—is it because you've asked her and she has refused?" The next moment, "I see you *have!*" she exclaimed. His rejoinder to this was to catch her in his arms, to press his cheek to hers, to murmur a flood of tender words in which contradiction, confession, supplication, and remonstrance were oddly confounded; but after he had sufficiently disengaged her to allow her to speak again, his

effusion was checked by what came. "Do you really mean you can't induce her?" It renewed itself on the first return of ease; or it, more correctly perhaps, in order to renew itself, took this return—a trifle too soon—for granted. Singular, for the hour, was the quickness with which ease could leave them—so blissfully at one as they were; and, to be brief, it had not come back even when Lily spoke of the matter to Lady Champer. It is true that she waited but little to do so. She then went straight to the point. "What would you do if his mother doesn't write?"

"The old Princess—to *you!*" Her ladyship had not had time to mount guard in advance over the tone of this, which was doubtless (as she instantly, for that matter, herself became aware) a little too much of "Have you really expected she would?" What Lily had expected found itself therefore not unassisted to come out—and came out indeed to such a tune that with all kindness, but with a melancholy deeper than any she had ever yet in the general connection used, Lady Champer was moved to remark that the situation might have been found more possible had a little more historic sense been brought to it. "You're the dearest thing in the world, and I can't imagine a girl's carrying herself in any way, in a difficult position, better than you do; only I'm bound to say I think you ought to remember that you're entering a very great house, of tremendous antiquity, fairly groaning under the weight of ancient honors, the heads of which—through the tradition of the great part they've played in the world—are accustomed to a great deal of deference. The old Princess, my dear, you see"—her ladyship gathered confidence a little as she went—"is a most prodigious personage."

"Why, Lady Champer, of course she is, and that's just what I like her for!" said Lily Gunton.

"She has never in her whole life made an advance, any more than anyone has ever dreamed of expecting it of her. It's a pity that while you were there you didn't see her, for I think it would have helped you to understand. However, as you did see his sisters, the two Duchesses and dear little Donna Claudia, you know how charming they all *can* be. They only want to be nice, I know, and I dare say that on the smallest opportunity you'll hear from the Duchesses."

The plural had a sound of splendor, but Lily quite kept her head. "What do you call an opportunity? Am I not giving them, by accepting their son and brother, the best—and in fact the only—opportunity they could desire?"

"I like the way, darling," Lady Champer smiled, "you talk about 'accepting'!"

Lily thought of this—she thought of everything. "Well, say it would have been a better one still for them if I had refused him."

Her friend caught her up. "But you haven't."

"Then they must make the most of the occasion as it is." Lily was very sweet, but very lucid. "The Duchesses may write or not, as they like; but I'm afraid the Princess simply *must*." She hesitated, but after a moment went on: "He oughtn't to be willing moreover that I shouldn't expect to be welcomed."

"He isn't!" Lady Champer blurted out.

Lily jumped at it. "Then he had told you? It's her attitude?"

She had spoken without passion, but her friend was scarce the less frightened. "My poor child, what can he do?"

Lily saw perfectly. "He can make her."

Lady Champer turned it over, but her fears were what was clearest. "And if he doesn't?"

"If he 'doesn't'?" The girl ambiguously echoed it.

"I mean if he can't."

Well, Lily, more cheerfully, declined, for the hour, to consider this. He would certainly do for her what was right; so that after all, though she had herself put the question, she disclaimed the idea that an answer was urgent. There was time, she conveyed—which Lady Champer only desired to believe; a faith moreover somewhat shaken in the latter when the Prince entered her room the next day with the information that there was none—none at least to leave everything in the air. Lady Champer had not yet made up her mind as to which of these young persons she liked most to draw into confidence, nor as to whether she most inclined to take the Roman side with the American or the American side with the Roman. But now in truth she was settled; she

gave proof of it in the increased lucidity with which she spoke for Lily.

"Wouldn't the Princess depart—a—from her usual attitude for such a great occasion?"

The difficulty was a little that the young man so well understood his mother. "The devil of it is, you see, that it's for Lily herself, so much more, she thinks the occasion great."

Lady Champer mused. "If you hadn't her consent I could understand it. But from the moment she thinks the girl good enough for you to marry——"

"Ah, she doesn't!" the Prince gloomily interposed. "However," he explained, "she accepts her because there are reasons—my own feeling, now so my very life, don't you see? But it isn't quite open arms. All the same, as I tell Lily, the arms *would* open."

"If she'd make the first step? Hum!" said Lady Champer, not without the note of grimness. "She'll be obstinate."

The young man, with a melancholy eye, quite coincided. "She'll be obstinate."

"So that I strongly recommend you to manage it," his friend went on after a pause. "It strikes me that if the Princess can't do it for Lily she might at least do it for you. Any girl you marry becomes thereby somebody."

"Of course—doesn't she? She certainly ought to do it for *me*. I'm after all the head of the house."

"Well, then, make her!" said Lady Champer a little impatiently.

"I will. Mamma adores me, and I adore *her*."

"And you adore Lily, and Lily adores you—therefore everybody adores everybody, especially as I adore you both. With so much adoration all round, therefore, things ought to march."

"They shall!" the young man declared with spirit. "I adore you, too—you don't mention that; for you help me immensely. But what do you suppose she'll do if she doesn't?"

The agitation already visible in him ministered a little to vagueness; but his friend after an instant disembroiled it. "What do I suppose Lily will do if your mother remains stiff?" Lady Champer faltered, but she let him have it. "She'll break."

His wondering eyes became strange. "Just for that?"

"You may certainly say it isn't much—when people love as you do."

"Ah, I'm afraid then Lily doesn't!"—and he turned away in his trouble.

She watched him while he moved, not speaking for a minute. "My dear young man, are you afraid of your mamma?"

He faced short about again. "I'm afraid of this—that if she does do it she won't forgive her. She *will* do it—yes. But Lily will be for her, in consequence, ever after, the person who has made her submit herself. She'll hate her for that—and then she'll hate me for being concerned in it." The Prince presented it all with clearness—almost with charm. "What do you say to that?"

His friend had to think. "Well, only, I fear, that we belong, Lily and I, to a race unaccustomed to counting with such passions. Let her hate!" she, however, a trifle inconsistently wound up.

"But I love her so!"

"Which?" Lady Champer asked it almost ungraciously; in such a tone at any rate that, seated on the sofa with his elbows on his knees, his much-ringed hands nervously locked together and his eyes of distress wide open, he met her with visible surprise. What she met *him* with is perhaps best noted by the fact that after a minute of it his hands covered his bent face and she became aware she had drawn tears. This produced such regret in her that before they parted she did what she could to attenuate and explain—making a great point, at all events, of her rule, with Lily, of putting only his own side of the case. "I insist awfully, you know, on your greatness!"

He jumped up, wincing. "Oh, that's horrid."

"I don't know. Whose fault is it, then, at any rate, if trying to help you may have that side?" This was a question that, with the tangle he had already to unwind, only added a twist; yet she went on as if positively to add another. "Why on earth don't you, all of you, leave them alone?"

"Leave them——?"

"All your Americans."

"Don't you like them then—the women?"

She hesitated. "No. Yes. They're an interest. But they're a nuisance. It's a question, very

certainly, if they're worth the trouble they give."

This at least it seemed he could take in. "You mean that one should be quite sure first what they *are* worth?"

He made her laugh now. "It would appear that you never *can* be. But also really that you can't keep your hands off."

He fixed the social scene an instant with his heavy eye. "Yes. Doesn't it?"

"However," she pursued as if he again a little irritated her, "Lily's position is quite simple."

"Quite. She just loves me."

"I mean simple for herself. She really makes no differences. It's only we—you and I—who make them all."

The Prince wondered. "But she tells me she delights in us; had, that is, such a sense of what we are supposed to 'represent.'"

"Oh, she *thinks* she has. Americans think they have all sorts of things; but they haven't. That's just *it*"—Lady Champer was philosophic. "Nothing but their Americanism. If you marry anything, you marry that; and if your mother accepts anything that's what she accepts." Then, though the young man followed the demonstration with an apprehension almost pathetic, she gave him without mercy the whole of it. "Lily's rigidly logical. A girl—as *she* knows girls—is 'welcomed,' on her engagement, before anything else can happen, by the family of her young man; and the motherless girl, alone in the world, more punctually than any other. His mother—if she's a 'lady'—takes it upon herself. Then the girl goes and stays with them. But she does nothing before. *Tirez-vous de là.*"

The young man sought on the spot to obey this last injunction, and his effort presently produced a flash. "Oh, if she'll come and *stay* with us"—all would, easily, be well! The flash went out, however, when Lady Champer returned: "Then let the Princess invite her."

Lily a fortnight later simply said to her, from one hour to the other, "I'm going home," and took her breath away by sailing on the morrow with the Bransbys. The tense cord had somehow snapped; the proof was in the fact that the Prince, dashing off to his good friend at this crisis an obscure, an ambiguous note, started the same night for Rome. Lady Champer, for the time, sat in darkness, but during the summer many things occurred; and one day in the autumn, quite unheralded and with the signs of some of them in his face, the Prince appeared again before her. He was not long in telling her his story, which was simply that he had come to her, all the way from Rome, for news of Lily and to talk of Lily. She was prepared, as it happened, to meet his impatience; yet her preparation was but little older than his arrival and was deficient moreover in an important particular. She was not prepared to knock him down, and she made him talk to gain time. She had however, to understand, put a primary question: "She never wrote, then?"

"Mamma? Oh yes—when she at last got frightened at Miss Gunton's having become so silent. She wrote in August; but Lily's own decisive letter—letter to me, I mean—crossed with it. It was too late—that put an end."

"A *real* end?"

Everything in the young man showed how real. "On the ground of her being willing no longer to keep up, by the stand she had taken, such a relation between mamma and *me*. But her rupture," he wailed, "keeps it up more than anything else."

"And is it very bad?"

"Awful, I assure you. I've become for my mother a person who has made her make, all for nothing, an unprecedented advance, a humble submission; and she's so disgusted, all round, that it's no longer the same old charming thing for us to be together. It makes it worse for her that I'm still madly in love."

"Well," said Lady Champer after a moment, "if you're still madly in love I can only be sorry for you."

"You can *do* nothing for me?—don't advise me to go over?"

She had to take a longer pause. "You don't at all know then what has happened?—that old Mr. Gunton has died and left her everything?"

All his vacancy and curiosity came out in a wild echo. "'Everything?'"

"She writes me that it's a great deal of money."

"You've just heard from her, then?"

"This morning. I seem to make out," said Lady Champer, "an extraordinary number of dollars."

"Oh, I was sure it was!" the young man moaned.

"And she's engaged," his friend went on, "to Mr. Bransby."

He bounded, rising before her. "Mr. Bransby?"

"'Adam P.'—the gentleman with whose mother and sisters she went home. *They*, she writes, have beautifully welcomed her."

"*Dio mio!*" The Prince stared; he had flushed with the blow, and the tears had come into his eyes. "And I believed she loved me!"

"*I* didn't!" said Lady Champer with some curtness.

He gazed about; he almost rocked; and, unconscious of her words, he appealed, inarticulate and stricken. At last, however, he found his voice. "What on earth then shall I do? I can less than ever go back to mamma!"

She got up for him, she thought for him, pushing a better chair into her circle. "Stay here with me, and I'll ring for tea. Sit there nearer the fire—you're cold."

"Awfully!" he confessed as he sank. "And I believed she loved me!" he repeated as he stared at the fire.

"*I* didn't!" Lady Champer once more declared. This time, visibly, he heard her, and she immediately met his wonder. "No—it was all the rest; your great historic position, the glamour of your name, and your past. Otherwise what she stood out for wouldn't be excusable. But she has the sense of such things, and *they* were what she loved." So, by the fire, his hostess explained it, while he wondered the more.

"I thought that last summer you told me just the contrary."

It seemed, to do her justice, to strike her. "Did I? Oh, well, how does one know? With Americans one is lost!"

1900

## THE ART OF FICTION

I SHOULD not have affixed so comprehensive a title to these few remarks, necessarily wanting in any completeness upon a subject the full consideration of which would carry us far, did I not seem to discover a pretext for my temerity in the interesting pamphlet lately published under this name by Mr. Walter Besant. Mr. Besant's lecture at the Royal Institution—the original form of his pamphlet—appears to indicate that many persons are interested in the art of fiction, and are not indifferent to such remarks, as those who practice it may attempt to make about it. I am therefore anxious not to lose the benefit of this favorable association, and to edge in a few words under cover of the attention which Mr. Besant is sure to have excited. There is something very encouraging in his having put into form certain of his ideas on the mystery of storytelling.

It is a proof of life and curiosity—curiosity on the part of the brotherhood of novelists as well as on the part of their readers. Only a short time ago it might have been supposed that the English novel was not what the French call *discutable*. It had no air of having a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it—of being the expression of an artistic faith, the result of choice and comparison. I do not say it was necessarily the worse for that: it would take much more courage than I possess to intimate that the form of the novel as Dickens and Thackeray (for instance) saw it had any taint of incompleteness. It was, however, *naïf* (if I may help myself out with another French word); and evidently if it be destined to suffer in any way for having lost its *naïveté* it has now an idea of making sure of the corresponding advantages. During the period I have alluded to there was a comfortable, good-humored feeling abroad that a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding, and that our only business with it could be to swallow it. But within a year or two, for some reason or other, there have been signs of returning animation—the era of discussion would appear to have been to a certain extent opened. Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety of attempt, upon the exchange of views and the comparison of standpoints; and there is a presumption that those times when no one has anything particular to say about it, and has no reason to give for practice or preference, though they may be times of honor, are not times of develop-

ment—are times, possibly even, a little of dulness. The successful application of any art is a delightful spectacle, but the theory too is interesting; and though there is a great deal of the latter without the former I suspect there has never been a genuine success that has not had a latent core of conviction. Discussion, suggestion, formulation, these things are fertilizing when they are frank and sincere. Mr. Besant has set an excellent example in saying what he thinks, for his part, about the way in which fiction should be written, as well as about the way in which it should be published; for his view of the "art," carried on into an appendix, covers that too. Other laborers in the same field will doubtless take up the argument, they will give it the light of their experience, and the effect will surely be to make our interest in the novel a little more what it had for some time threatened to fail to be—a serious, active, inquiring interest, under protection of which this delightful study may, in moments of confidence, venture to say a little more what it thinks of itself.

It must take itself seriously for the public to take it so. The old superstition about fiction being "wicked" has doubtless died out in England; but the spirit of it lingers in a certain oblique regard directed toward any story which does not more or less admit that it is only a joke. Even the most jocular novel feels in some degree the weight of the proscription that was formerly directed against literary levity: the jocularity does not always succeed in passing for orthodoxy. It is still expected, though perhaps people are ashamed to say it, that a production which is after all only a "make-believe" (for what else is a "story"?) shall be in some degree apologetic—shall renounce the pretension of attempting really to represent life. This, of course, any sensible, wide-awake story declines to do, for it quickly perceives that the tolerance granted to it on such a condition is only an attempt to stifle it disguised in the form of generosity. The old evangelical hostility to the novel, which was as explicit as it was narrow, and which regarded it as little less favorable to our immortal part than a stage-play, was in reality far less insulting. The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life. When it relinquishes this attempt, the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter, it will have arrived at a very strange pass. It is not expected of the picture that it will make itself humble in order to be forgiven; and the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete. Their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the different quality of the vehicle) is the same, their success is the same. They may learn from each other, they may explain and sustain each other. Their cause is the same, and the honor of one is the honor of another. The Mahometans think a picture an unholy thing, but it is a long time since any Christian did, and it is therefore the more odd that in the Christian mind the traces (dissimulated though they may be) of a suspicion of the sister art should linger to this day. The only effectual way to lay it to rest is to emphasize the analogy to which I just alluded—to insist on the fact that as the picture is reality, so the novel is history. That is the only general description (which does it justice) that we may give of the novel. But history also is allowed to represent life; it is not, any more than painting, expected to apologize. The subject-matter of fiction is stored up likewise in documents and records, and if it will not give itself away, as they say in California, it must speak with assurance, with the tone of the historian. Certain accomplished novelists have a habit of giving themselves away which must often bring tears to the eyes of people who take their fiction seriously. I was lately struck, in reading over many pages of Anthony Trollope, with his want of discretion in this particular. In a digression, a parenthesis or an aside, he concedes to the reader that he and this trusting friend are only "making believe." He admits that the events he narrates have not really happened, and that he can give his narrative any turn the reader may like best. Such a betrayal of a sacred office seems to me, I confess, a terrible crime; it is what I mean by the attitude of apology, and it shocks me every whit as much in Trollope as it would have shocked me in Gibbon or Macaulay. It implies that the novelist is less occupied in looking for the truth (the truth, of course I mean, that he assumes, the premises that we must grant

him, whatever they may be), than the historian, and in doing so it deprives him at a stroke of all his standing-room. To represent and illustrate the past, the actions of men, is the task of either writer, and the only difference that I can see is, in proportion as he succeeds, to the honor of the novelist, consisting as it does in his having more difficulty in collecting his evidence, which is so far from being purely literary. It seems to me to give him a great character, the fact that he has at once so much in common with the philosopher and the painter; this double analogy is a magnificent heritage.

It is of all this evidently that Mr. Besant is full when he insists upon the fact that fiction is one of the *fine* arts, deserving in its turn of all the honors and emoluments that have hitherto been reserved for the successful profession of music, poetry, painting, architecture. It is impossible to insist too much on so important a truth, and the place that Mr. Besant demands for the work of the novelist may be represented, a trifle less abstractly, by saying that he demands not only that it shall be reputed artistic, but that it shall be reputed very artistic indeed. It is excellent that he should have struck this note, for his doing so indicates that there was need of it, that his proposition may be to many people a novelty. One rubs one's eyes at the thought; but the rest of Mr. Besant's essay confirms the revelation. I suspect in truth that it would be possible to confirm it still further, and that one would not be far wrong in saying that in addition to the people to whom it has never occurred that a novel ought to be artistic, there are a great many others who, if this principle were urged upon them, would be filled with an indefinable mistrust. They would find it difficult to explain their repugnance, but it would operate strongly to put them on their guard. "Art," in our Protestant communities, where so many things have got so strangely twisted about, is supposed in certain circles to have some vaguely injurious effect upon those who make it an important consideration, who let it weigh in the balance. It is assumed to be opposed in some mysterious manner to morality, to amusement, to instruction. When it is embodied in the work of the painter (the sculptor is another affair!) you know what it is: it stands there before you, in the honesty of pink and green and a gilt frame; you can see the worst of it at a glance, and you can be on your guard. But when it is introduced into literature it becomes more insidious—there is danger of its hurting you before you know it. Literature should be either instructive or amusing, and there is in many minds an impression that these artistic preoccupations, the search for form, contribute to neither end, interfere indeed with both. They are too frivolous to be edifying, and too serious to be diverting; and they are moreover priggish and paradoxical and superfluous. That, I think, represents the manner in which the latent thought of many people who read novels as an exercise in skipping would explain itself if it were to become articulate. They would argue, of course, that a novel ought to be "good," but they would interpret this term in a fashion of their own, which indeed would vary considerably from one critic to another. One would say that being good means representing virtuous and aspiring characters, placed in prominent positions; another would say that it depends on a "happy ending," on a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks. Another still would say that it means being full of incident and movement, so that we shall wish to jump ahead, to see who was the mysterious stranger, and if the stolen will was ever found, and shall not be distracted from this pleasure by any tiresome analysis or "description." But they would all agree that the "artistic" idea would spoil some of their fun. One would hold it accountable for all the description, another would see it revealed in the absence of sympathy. Its hostility to a happy ending would be evident, and it might even in some cases render any ending at all impossible. The "ending" of a novel is, for many persons, like that of a good dinner, a course of dessert and ices, and the artist in fiction is regarded as a sort of meddlesome doctor who forbids agreeable aftertastes. It is therefore true that this conception of Mr. Besant's of the novel as a superior form encounters not only a negative but a positive indifference. It matters little that as a work of art it should,

really be as little or as much of its essence to supply happy endings, sympathetic characters, and an objective tone, as if it were a work of mechanics: the association of ideas, however incongruous, might easily be too much for it if an eloquent voice were not sometimes raised to call attention to the fact that it is at once as free and as serious a branch of literature as any other.

Certainly this might sometimes be doubted in presence of the enormous number of works of fiction that appeal to the credulity of our generation, for it might easily seem that there could be no great character in a commodity so quickly and easily produced. It must be admitted that good novels are much compromised by bad ones, and that the field at large suffers discredit from over-crowding. I think, however, that this injury is only superficial, and that the superabundance of written fiction proves nothing against the principle itself. It has been vulgarized, like all other kinds of literature, like everything else today, and it has proved more than some kinds accessible to vulgarization. But there is as much difference as there ever was between a good novel and a bad one: the bad is swept with all the daubed canvases and spoiled marble into some unvisited limbo, or infinite rubbish-yard beneath the back-windows of the world, and the good subsists and emits its light and stimulates our desire for perfection. As I shall take the liberty of making but a single criticism of Mr. Besant, whose tone is so full of the love of his art, I may as well have done with it at once. He seems to me to mistake in attempting to say so definitely beforehand what sort of an affair the good novel will be. To indicate the danger of such an error as that has been the purpose of these few pages; to suggest that certain traditions on the subject, applied *a priori*, have already had much to answer for, and that the good health of an art which undertakes so immediately to reproduce life must demand that it be perfectly free. It lives upon exercise, and the very meaning of exercise is freedom. The only obligation to which in advance we may hold a novel, without incurring the accusation of being arbitrary, is that it be interesting. That general responsibility rests upon it, but it is the only one I can think of. The ways in which it is at liberty to accomplish this result (of interesting us) strike me as innumerable, and such as can only suffer from being marked out or fenced in by prescription. They are as various as the temperament of man, and they are successful in proportion as they reveal a particular mind, different from others. A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say. The tracing of a line to be followed, of a tone to be taken, of a form to be filled out, is a limitation of that freedom and a suppression of the very thing that we are most curious about. The form, it seems to me, is to be appreciated after the fact: then the author's choice has been made, his standard has been indicated; then we can follow lines and directions and compare tones and resemblances. Then in a word we can enjoy one of the most charming of pleasures, we can estimate quality, we can apply the test of execution. The execution belongs to the author alone; it is what is most personal to him, and we measure him by that. The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist, is that there is no limit to what he may attempt as an executant—no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries, successes. Here it is especially that he works, step by step, like his brother of the brush, of whom we may always say that he has painted his picture in a manner best known to himself. His manner is his secret, not necessarily a jealous one. He cannot disclose it as a general thing if he would; he would be at a loss to teach it to others. I say this with a due recollection of having insisted on the community of method of the artist who paints a picture and the artist who writes a novel. The painter *is* able to teach the rudiments of his practice, and it is possible, from the study of good work (granted the aptitude), both to learn how to paint and to learn how to write. Yet it remains true, without injury to the *rapprochement*, that the literary artist would be obliged to say to his pupil much more than the other, "Ah, well, you

must do it as you can!" It is a question of degree, a matter of delicacy. If there are exact sciences, there are also exact arts, and the grammar of painting is so much more definite that it makes the difference.

I ought to add, however, that if Mr. Besant says at the beginning of his essay that the "laws of fiction may be laid down and taught with as much precision and exactness as the laws of harmony, perspective, and proportion," he mitigates what might appear to be an extravagance by applying his remark to "general" laws, and by expressing most of these rules in a manner with which it would certainly be unaccommodating to disagree. That the novelist must write from his experience, that his "characters must be real and such as might be met with in actual life"; that "a young lady brought up in a quiet country village should avoid descriptions of garrison life," and "a writer whose friends and personal experiences belong to the lower middle-class should carefully avoid introducing his characters into society"; that one should enter one's notes in a commonplace book; that one's figures should be clear in outline; that making them clear by some trick of speech or of carriage is a bad method, and "describing them at length" is a worse one; that English Fiction should have a "conscious moral purpose"; that "it is almost impossible to estimate too highly the value of careful workmanship—that is, of style"; that "the most important point of all is the story," that "the story is everything": these are principles with most of which it is surely impossible not to sympathize. That remark about the lower middle-class writer and his knowing his place is perhaps rather chilling; but for the rest I should find it difficult to dissent from any one of these recommendations. At the same time, I should find it difficult positively to assent to them, with the exception, perhaps, of the injunction as to entering one's notes in a commonplace book. They scarcely seem to me to have the quality that Mr. Besant attributes to the rules of the novelist—the "precision and exactness" of "the laws of harmony, perspective, and proportion." They are suggestive, they are even inspiring, but they are not exact, though they are doubtless as much so as the case admits of: which is a proof of that liberty of interpretation for which I just contended. For the value of these different injunctions—so beautiful and so vague—is wholly in the meaning one attaches to them. The characters, the situation, which strike one as real will be those that touch and interest one most, but the measure of reality is very difficult to fix. The reality of Don Quixote or of Mr. Micawber is a very delicate shade; it is a reality so colored by the author's vision that, vivid as it may be, one would hesitate to propose it as a model: one would expose one's self to some very embarrassing questions on the part of a pupil. It goes without saying that you will not write a good novel unless you possess the sense of reality; but it will be difficult to give you a recipe for calling that sense into being. Humanity is immense, and reality has myriad forms; the most one can affirm is that some of the flowers of fiction have the odor of it, and others have not; as for telling you in advance how your nosegay should be composed, that is another affair. It is equally excellent and inconclusive to say that one must write from experience; to our supposititious aspirant such a declaration might savor of mockery. What kind of experience is intended, and where does it begin and end? Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative —much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. The young lady living in a village has only to be a damsel upon whom nothing is lost to make it quite unfair (as it seems to me) to declare to her that she shall have nothing to say about the military. Greater miracles have been seen than that, imagination assisting, she should speak the truth about some of these gentlemen. I remember an English novelist, a woman of genius, telling me that she was much commended for the impression she had managed to give in one of her tales of the nature and way of life of the French Protestant youth. She had been asked where

she learned so much about this recondite being, she had been congratulated on her peculiar opportunities. These opportunities consisted in her having once, in Paris, as she ascended a staircase, passed an open door where, in the household of a *pasteur*, some of the young Protestants were seated at table round a finished meal. The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience. She had got her direct personal impression, and she turned out her type. She knew what youth was, and what Protestantism; she also had the advantage of having seen what it was to be French, so that she converted these ideas into a concrete image and produced a reality. Above all, however, she was blessed with the faculty which when you give it an inch takes an ell, and which for the artist is a much greater source of strength than any accident of residence or of place in the social scale. The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it—this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience, and they occur in country and in town, and in the most differing stages of education. If experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions *are* experience, just as (have we not seen it?) they are the very air we breathe. Therefore, if I should certainly say to a novice, "Write from experience and experience only," I should feel that this was rather a tantalizing monition if I were not careful immediately to add, "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!"

I am far from intending by this to minimize the importance of exactness—of truth of detail. One can speak best from one's own taste, and I may therefore venture to say that the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel—the merit on which all its other merits (including that conscious moral purpose of which Mr. Besant speaks) helplessly and submissively depend. If it be not there they are all as nothing, and if these be there, they owe their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life. The cultivation of this success, the study of this exquisite process, form, to my taste, the beginning and the end of the art of the novelist. They are his inspiration, his despair, his reward, his torment, his delight. It is here in very truth that he competes with his brother the painter in *his* attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the color, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle. It is in regard to this that Mr. Besant is well inspired when he bids him take notes. He cannot possibly take too many, he cannot possibly take enough. All life solicits him, and to "render" the simplest surface, to produce the most momentary illusion, is a very complicated business. His case would be easier, and the rule would be more exact, if Mr. Besant had been able to tell him what notes to take. But this, I fear, he can never learn in any manual; it is the business of his life. He has to take a great many in order to select a few, he has to work them up as he can, and even the guides and philosophers who might have most to say to him must leave him alone when it comes to the application of precepts, as we leave the painter in communion with his palette. That his characters "must be clear in outline," as Mr. Besant says—he feels that down to his boots; but how he shall make them so is a secret between his good angel and himself. It would be absurdly simple if he could be taught that a great deal of "description" would make them so, or that on the contrary the absence of description and the cultivation of dialogue, or the absence of dialogue and the multiplication of "incident," would rescue him from his difficulties. Nothing, for instance, is more possible than that he be of a turn of mind for which this odd, literal opposition of description and dialogue, incident and description, has little meaning and light. People often talk of these things as if they had a kind of internecine distinctness, instead of melting into each other at every breath, and being intimately associated parts of one general effort of expression. I cannot imagine composition existing in a series of blocks, nor conceive, in any novel worth discussing at all, of a passage of description that is not in its intention narrative, a passage of dialogue that is not in its

intention descriptive, a touch of truth of any sort that does not partake of the nature of incident, or an incident that derives its interest from any other source than the general and only source of the success of a work of art—that of being illustrative. A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts. The critic who over the close texture of a finished work shall pretend to trace a geography of items will mark some frontiers as artificial, I fear, as any that have been known to history. There is an old-fashioned distinction between the novel of character and the novel of incident which must have cost many a smile to the intending fabulist who was keen about his work. It appears to me as little to the point as the equally celebrated distinction between the novel and the romance—to answer as little to any reality. There are bad novels and good novels, as there are bad pictures and good pictures; but that is the only distinction in which I see any meaning, and I can as little imagine speaking of a novel of character as I can imagine speaking of a picture of character. When one says picture one says of character, when one says novel one says of incident, and the terms may be transposed at will. What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is *not* of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it? It is an incident for a woman to stand up with her hand resting on a table and look out at you in a certain way; or if it be not an incident I think it will be hard to say what it is. At the same time it is an expression of character. If you say you don't see it (character is *that—allons donc!*), this is exactly what the artist who has reasons of his own for thinking he *does* see it undertakes to show you. When a young man makes up his mind that he has not faith enough after all to enter the church as he intended, that is an incident, though you may not hurry to the end of the chapter to see whether perhaps he doesn't change once more. I do not say that these are extraordinary or startling incidents. I do not pretend to estimate the degree of interest proceeding from them, for this will depend upon the skill of the painter. It sounds almost puerile to say that some incidents are intrinsically much more important than others, and I need not take this precaution after having professed my sympathy for the major ones in remarking that the only classification of the novel that I can understand is into that which has life and that which has it not.

The novel and the romance, the novel of incident and that of character—these clumsy separations appear to me to have been made by critics and readers for their own convenience, and to help them out of some of their occasional queer predicaments, but to have little reality or interest for the producer, from whose point of view it is of course that we are attempting to consider the art of fiction. The case is the same with another shadowy category which Mr. Besant apparently is disposed to set up—that of the "modern English novel"; unless indeed it be that in this matter he has fallen into an accidental confusion of standpoints. It is not quite clear whether he intends the remarks in which he alludes to it to be didactic or historical. It is as difficult to suppose a person intending to write a modern English as to suppose him writing an ancient English novel: that is a label which begs the question. One writes the novel, one paints the picture, of one's language and of one's time, and calling it modern English will not, alas! make the difficult task any easier. No more, unfortunately, will calling this or that work of one's fellow-artist a romance—unless it be, of course, simply for the pleasantness of the thing, as for instance when Hawthorne gave this heading to his story of *Blithedale*. The French, who have brought the theory of fiction to remarkable completeness, have but one name for the novel, and have not attempted smaller things in it, that I can see, for that. I can think of no obligation to which the "romancer" would not be held equally with the novelist; the standard of execution is equally high for each. Of course it is of execution that we are talking—that being the only point of a novel that is open to contention. This is perhaps too often lost sight of, only to produce interminable confusions and cross-purposes. We must grant the artist his subject,

his idea, his *donnée:* our criticism is applied only to what he makes of it. Naturally I do not mean that we are bound to like or find it interesting: in case we do not our course is perfectly simple—to let it alone. We may believe that of a certain idea even the most sincere novelist can make nothing at all, and the event may perfectly justify our belief; but the failure will have been a failure to execute, and it is in the execution that the fatal weakness is recorded. If we pretend to respect the artist at all, we must allow him his freedom of choice, in the face, in particular cases, of innumerable presumptions that the choice will not fructify. Art derives a considerable part of its beneficial exercise from flying in the face of presumptions, and some of the most interesting experiments of which it is capable are hidden in the bosom of common things. Gustave Flaubert has written a story about the devotion of a servant-girl to a parrot, and the production, highly finished as it is, cannot on the whole be called a success. We are perfectly free to find it flat, but I think it might have been interesting; and I, for my part, am extremely glad he should have written it; it is a contribution to our knowledge of what can be done—or what cannot. Ivan Turgénieff has written a tale about a deaf and dumb serf and a lap-dog, and the thing is touching, loving, a little masterpiece. He struck the note of life where Gustave Flaubert missed it—he flew into the face of a presumption and achieved a victory.

Nothing, of course, will ever take the place of the good old fashion of "liking" a work of art or not liking it: the most improved criticism will not abolish that primitive, that ultimate test. I mention this to guard myself from the accusation of intimating that the idea, the subject, of a novel or a picture, does not matter. It matters, by my sense, in the highest degree, and if I might put up a prayer it would be that artists should select none but the richest. Some, as I have already hastened to admit, are much more remunerative than others, and it would be a world happily arranged in which persons intending to treat them should be exempt from confusions and mistakes. This fortunate condition will arrive only, I fear, on the same day that critics become purged from error. Meanwhile, I repeat, we do not judge the artist with fairness unless we say to him, "Oh, I grant you your starting-point, because if I did not I should seem to prescribe to you, and heaven forbid I should take that responsibility. If I pretend to tell you what you must not take, you will call upon me to tell you then what you must take; in which case I shall be prettily caught. Moreover, it isn't till I have accepted your data that I can begin to measure you. I have the standard, the pitch; I have no right to tamper with your flute and then criticize your music. Of course I may not care for your idea at all; I may think it silly, or stale, or unclean; in which case I wash my hands of you altogether. I may content myself with believing that you will not have succeeded in being interesting, but I shall, of course, not attempt to demonstrate it, and you will be as indifferent to me as I am to you. I needn't remind you that there are all sorts of taste: who can know it better? Some people, for excellent reasons, don't like to read about carpenters; others, for reasons even better, don't like to read about courtesans. Many object to Americans. Others (I believe they are mainly editors and publishers) won't look at Italians. Some readers don't like quiet subjects; others don't like bustling ones. Some enjoy a complete illusion, others the consciousness of large concessions. They choose their novels accordingly, and if they don't care about your idea they won't, *a fortiori*, care about your treatment."

So that it comes back very quickly, as I have said, to the liking: in spite of M. Zola, who reasons less powerfully than he represents, and who will not reconcile himself to this absoluteness of taste, thinking that there are certain things that people ought to like, and that they can be made to like. I am quite at a loss to imagine anything (at any rate in this matter of fiction) that people *ought* to like or dislike. Selection will be sure to take care of itself, for it has a constant motive behind it. That motive is simply experience. As people feel life, so they will feel the art that is most closely related to it. This closeness of relation is what we should never forget in talking of the effort of the novel. Many people speak of it as a factitious, artificial form, a product of ingenuity, the business of which is to alter

and arrange the things that surround us, to translate them into conventional, traditional moulds. This, however, is a view of the matter which carries us but a very short way, condemns the art to an eternal repetition of a few familiar *clichés*, cuts short its development, and leads us straight up to a dead wall. Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet. In proportion as in what she offers us we see life *without* rearrangement do we feel that we are touching the truth; in proportion as we see it *with* rearrangement do we feel that we are being put off with a substitute, a compromise and convention. It is not uncommon to hear an extraordinary assurance of remark in regard to this matter of rearranging, which is often spoken of as if it were the last word of art. Mr. Besant seems to me in danger of falling into the great error with his rather unguarded talk about "selection." Art is essentially selection, but it is a selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive. For many people art means rose-colored window-panes, and selection means picking a bouquet for Mrs. Grundy. They will tell you glibly that artistic considerations have nothing to do with the disagreeable, with the ugly; they will rattle off shallow commonplaces about the province of art and the limits of art till you are moved to some wonder in return as to the province and the limits of ignorance. It appears to me that no one can ever have made a seriously artistic attempt without becoming conscious of an immense increase—a kind of revelation—of freedom. One perceives in that case—by the light of a heavenly ray—that the province of art is all life, all feeling, all observation, all vision. As Mr. Besant so justly intimates, it is all experience. That is a sufficient answer to those who maintain that it must not touch the sad things of life, who stick into its divine unconscious bosom little prohibitory inscriptions on the end of sticks, such as we see in public gardens—"It is forbidden to walk on the grass; it is forbidden to touch the flowers; it is not allowed to introduce dogs or to remain after dark; it is requested to keep to the right." The young aspirant in the line of fiction whom we continue to imagine will do nothing without taste, for in that case his freedom would be of little use to him; but the first advantage of his taste will be to reveal to him the absurdity of the little sticks and tickets. If he have taste, I must add, of course he will have ingenuity, and my disrespectful reference to that quality just now was not meant to imply that it is useless in fiction. But it is only a secondary aid; the first is a capacity for receiving straight impressions.

Mr. Besant has some remarks on the question of "the story" which I shall not attempt to criticize, though they seem to me to contain a singular ambiguity, because I do not think I understand them. I cannot see what is meant by talking as if there were a part of a novel which is the story and part of it which for mystical reasons is not—unless indeed the distinction be made in a sense in which it is difficult to suppose that any one should attempt to convey anything. "The story," if it represents anything, represents the subject, the idea, the *donnée* of the novel; and there is surely no "school"—Mr. Besant speaks of a school—which urges that a novel should be all treatment and no subject. There must assuredly be something to treat; every school is intimately conscious of that. This sense of the story being the idea, the starting-point, of the novel, is the only one that I see in which it can be spoken of as something different from its organic whole; and since in proportion as the work is successful the idea permeates and penetrates it, informs and animates it, so that every word and every punctuation-point contribute directly to the expression, in that proportion do we lose our sense of the story being a blade which may be drawn more or less out of its sheath. The story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle, or the needle without the thread. Mr. Besant is not the only critic who may be observed to have spoken as if there were certain things in life which constitute stories, and certain others which do not. I find the same odd implication in an entertaining article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, devoted, as it happens, to Mr. Besant's lecture. "The story is the thing!" says this graceful writer, as if with a

tone of opposition to some other idea. I should think it was, as every painter who, as the time for "sending in" his picture looms in the distance, finds himself still in quest of a subject—as every belated artist not fixed about his theme will heartily agree. There are some subjects which speak to us and others which do not, but he would be a clever man who should undertake to give a rule—an index expurgatorius—by which the story and the no-story should be known apart. It is impossible (to me at least) to imagine any such rule which shall not be altogether arbitrary. The writer in the *Pall Mall* opposes the delightful (as I suppose) novel of *Margot la Balafrée* to certain tales in which "Bostonian nymphs" appear to have "rejected English dukes for psychological reasons." I am not acquainted with the romance just designated, and can scarcely forgive the *Pall Mall* critic for not mentioning the name of the author, but the title appears to refer to a lady who may have received a scar in some heroic adventure. I am inconsolable at not being acquainted with this episode, but am utterly at a loss to see why it is a story when the rejection (or acceptance) of a duke is not, and why a reason, psychological or other, is not a subject when a cicatrix is. They are all particles of the multitudinous life with which the novel deals, and surely no dogma which pretends to make it lawful to touch the one and unlawful to touch the other will stand for a moment on its feet. It is the special picture that must stand or fall, according as it seem to possess truth or to lack it. Mr. Besant does not, to my sense, light up the subject by intimating that a story must, under penalty of not being a story, consist of "adventures." Why adventures more than of green spectacles? He mentions a category of impossible things, and among them he places "fiction without adventure." Why without adventure, more than without matrimony, or celibacy, or parturition, or cholera, or hydropathy, or Jansenism? This seems to me to bring the novel back to the hapless little *rôle* of being an artificial, ingenious thing—bring it down from its large, free character of an immense and exquisite correspondence with life. And what *is* adventure, when it comes to that, and by what sign is the listening pupil to recognize it? It is an adventure—an immense one—for me to write this little article; and for a Bostonian nymph to reject an English duke is an adventure only less stirring, I should say, than for an English duke to be rejected by a Bostonian nymph. I see dramas within dramas in that, and innumerable points of view. A psychological reason is, to my imagination, an object adorably pictorial; to catch the tint of its complexion—I feel as if that idea might inspire one to Titianesque efforts. There are few things more exciting to me, in short, than a psychological reason, and yet, I protest, the novel seems to me the most magnificent form of art. I have just been reading, at the same time, the delightful story of *Treasure Island*, by Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson and, in a manner less consecutive, the last tale from M. Edmond de Goncourt, which is entitled *Chérie*. One of these works treats of murders, mysteries, islands of dreadful renown, hairbreadth escapes, miraculous coincidences and buried doubloons. The other treats of a little French girl who lived in a fine house in Paris, and died of wounded sensibility because no one would marry her. I call *Treasure Island* delightful, because it appears to me to have succeeded wonderfully in what it attempts; and I venture to bestow no epithet upon *Chérie*, which strikes me as having failed deplorably in what it attempts—that is in tracing the development of the moral consciousness of a child. But one of these productions strikes me as exactly as much of a novel as the other, and as having a "story" quite as much. The moral consciousness of a child is as much a part of life as the islands of the Spanish Main, and the one sort of geography seems to me to have those "surprises" of which Mr. Besant speaks quite as much as the other. For myself (since it comes back in the last resort, as I say, to the preference of the individual), the picture of the child's experience has the advantage that I can at successive steps (an immense luxury, near to the "sensual pleasure" of which Mr. Besant's critic in the *Pall Mall* speaks) say Yes or No, as it may be, to what the artist puts before me. I have been a child in fact, but I have been on a quest for a buried treasure only in supposition, and it is a simple accident that with M. de Goncourt I should have for the most part to

say No. With George Eliot, when she painted that country with a far other intelligence, I always said Yes.

The most interesting part of Mr. Besant's lecture is unfortunately the briefest passage—his very cursory allusion to the "conscious moral purpose" of the novel. Here again it is not very clear whether he be recording a fact or laying down a principle; it is a great pity that in the latter case he should not have developed his idea. This branch of the subject is of immense importance, and Mr. Besant's few words point to considerations of the widest reach, not to be lightly disposed of. He will have treated the art of fiction but superficially who is not prepared to go every inch of the way that these considerations will carry him. It is for this reason that at the beginning of these remarks I was careful to notify the reader that my reflections on so large a theme have no pretension to be exhaustive. Like Mr. Besant, I have left the question of the morality of the novel till the last, and at the last I find I have used up my space. It is a question surrounded with difficulties, as witness the very first that meets us, in the form of a definite question, on the threshold. Vagueness, in such a discussion, is fatal, and what is the meaning of your morality and your conscious moral purpose? Will you not define your terms and explain how (a novel being a picture) a picture can be either moral or immoral? You wish to paint a moral picture or carve a moral statue: will you not tell us how you would set about it? We are discussing the Art of Fiction; questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution; questions of morality are quite another affair, and will you not let us see how it is that you find it so easy to mix them up? These things are so clear to Mr. Besant that he has deduced from them a law which he sees embodied in English Fiction, and which is "a truly admirable thing and a great cause for congratulation." It is a great cause for congratulation indeed when such thorny problems become as smooth as silk. I may add that in so far as Mr. Besant perceives that in point of fact English Fiction has addressed itself preponderantly to these delicate questions he will appear to many people to have made a vain discovery. They will have been positively struck, on the contrary, with the moral timidity of the usual English novelist; with his (or with her) aversion to face the difficulties with which on every side the treatment of reality bristles. He is apt to be extremely shy (whereas the picture that Mr. Besant draws is a picture of boldness), and the sign of his work, for the most part, is a cautious silence on certain subjects. In the English novel (by which of course I mean the American as well), more than in any other, there is a traditional difference between that which people know and that which they agree to admit that they know, that which they see and that which they speak of, that which they feel to be a part of life and that which they allow to enter into literature. There is the great difference, in short, between what they talk of in conversation and what they talk of in print. The essence of moral energy is to survey the whole field, and I should directly reverse Mr. Besant's remark and say not that the English novel has a purpose, but that it has a diffidence. To what degree a purpose in a work of art is a source of corruption I shall not attempt to inquire; the one that seems to me least dangerous is the purpose of making a perfect work. As for our novel, I may say lastly on this score that as we find it in England today it strikes me as addressed in a large degree to "young people," and that this in itself constitutes a presumption that it will be rather shy. There are certain things which it is generally agreed not to discuss, not even to mention, before young people. That is very well, but the absence of discussion is not a symptom of the moral passion. The purpose of the English novel—"a truly admirable thing, and a great cause for congratulation"—strikes me therefore as rather negative.

There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that intelligence is fine will the novel, the picture, the statue partake of the substance of beauty and truth. To be constituted of such elements is, to my vision, to have purpose enough. No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind; that

seems to me an axiom which, for the artist in fiction, will cover all needful moral ground: if the youthful aspirant take it to heart it will illuminate for him many of the mysteries of "purpose." There are many other useful things that might be said to him, but I have come to the end of my article, and can only touch them as I pass. The critic in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, whom I have already quoted, draws attention to the danger, in speaking of the art of fiction, of generalizing. The danger that he has in mind is rather, I imagine, that of particularizing, for there are some comprehensive remarks which, in addition to those embodied in Mr. Besant's suggestive lecture, might without fear of misleading him be addressed to the ingenuous student. I should remind him first of the magnificence of the form that is open to him, which offers to sight so few restrictions and such innumerable opportunities. The other arts, in comparison, appear confined and hampered; the various conditions under which they are exercised are so rigid and definite. But the only condition that I can think of attaching to the composition of the novel is, as I have already said, that it be sincere. This freedom is a splendid privilege, and the first lesson of the young novelist is to learn to be worthy of it. "Enjoy it as it deserves," I should say to him; "take possession of it, explore it to its utmost extent, publish it, rejoice in it. All life belongs to you, and do not listen either to those who would shut you up into corners of it and tell you that it is only here and there that art inhabits, or to those who would persuade you that this heavenly messenger wings her way outside of life altogether, breathing a superfine air, and turning away her head from the truth of things. There is no impression of life, no manner of seeing it and feeling it, to which the plan of the novelist may not offer a place; you have only to remember that talents so dissimilar as those of Alexandre Dumas and Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Gustave Flaubert, have worked in this field with equal glory. Do not think too much about optimism and pessimism; try and catch the color of life itself. In France today we see a prodigious effort (that of Émile Zola, to whose solid and serious work no explorer of the capacity of the novel can allude without respect), we see an extraordinary effort, vitiated by a spirit of pessimism on a narrow basis. M. Zola is magnificent, but he strikes an English reader as ignorant; he has an air of working in the dark; if he had as much light as energy, his results would be of the highest value. As for the aberrations of a shallow optimism, the ground (of English fiction especially) is strewn with their brittle particles as with broken glass. If you must indulge in conclusions, let them have the taste of a wide knowledge. Remember that your first duty is to be as complete as possible—to make as perfect a work. Be generous and delicate and pursue the prize."

1884

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# *The Age of Science and the Machine: Some Contemporary Trends*

# The Age of Science and the Machine: Some Contemporary Trends

## I

Side by side with the gradual decline of the romantic tradition, which had not only colored but determined the nature and quality of American literature until after the middle of the nineteenth century, a new tendency which was to change the literary scene completely became clearly evident. The romantic procedure was rooted in idealism, usually expressed in terms of a glorified past or a promising future; the new tendency was to accept and render things as they are. Instead of depicting life as it might have been, the newer writers endeavored to depict it in its uncolored reality. Among the factors which helped to bring about this change three may be cited as being of major importance: the continuing influence of science, the effects of the Civil War, and a growing sense of democracy.

While grave problems regarding man's place in the universal scheme of things, his origin, history, destiny, and the changing conception of God, were being discussed, often with more heat than wisdom, the scientific method as such quietly and slowly found its way into practically all phases of intellectual and cultural activity. This method rested essentially upon painstaking observation of phenomena, an almost worshipful regard for the sanctity of facts, and the deduction of truth based on the evidence of collected data. In the search for truth all phenomena and experience yield valuable material. Phases of life which artists had hitherto overlooked or ignored became respectable in the changed alignment. The traditional romanticist had been careful what he would see, hear, and report; the younger generation, stirred by the new spirit, while still somewhat hesitant to see, hear, and report everything, were nevertheless determined to report more than their romantic forerunners had reported. William Dean Howells was justified in saying that science helped to blaze the trail for the coming realist.

The industrial expansion after the Civil War put a new stamp upon national life. When the end finally came, the first responsibility was to restore the economic activities to meet the demands of peacetime well-being, both personal and national. A goal as practical as this could only be achieved by facing and accepting things as they are, that is, realistically. While men of industry and business shunned the apparent evasiveness of the idealists, and often approached the problems and tasks of economic rehabilitation and development with what seemed to be a fine disregard of ethical responsibility, the new generation of writers, too, felt the realistic impulse, and followed in the footsteps of their economic brethren in accepting and rendering life as they actually found it. Gradually literature became more and

more a thing of earth.[1] In the light of Darwinian science man is to be regarded as an animal struggling for existence and surviving only if he be the fittest.

The third and final factor was the spread of democratic ideals. Such democratic ideas as expressed in Burns's "A Man's a Man for A' That" and the doctrine of equality as incorporated in the Declaration of Independence came to be taken seriously, and men began to look forward to their full realization. Man's essential wants and rights were thrust into the foreground of social thinking, as over against the privilege of blood and place. Brahmin and aristocrat had fought side by side with boys from the farms and frontier, and found them not only courageous, but heroic; a onetime rail splitter, as President of the United States, had guided the destinies of the nation during the supreme crisis; a son of pioneer Illinois had commanded the Northern armies in the final triumphant campaigns. There was no more magic in high hats than in Kentucky jeans, no more virtue in the magnate than in his humblest laborer. The changed conditions, the war and its aftermath, brought about a leveling effect; the lower strata were elevated toward the heights of respect and dignity. Democracy penetrated society and changed the standard of values. And while it is true that class feeling persisted, and in the industrial cities became intensified, stimulated by the influence of Marx and his concept of class struggle and social justice, it is also true that the rights of the lower classes approached the level of a more democratic common denominator.

Another significant phenomenon which exerted a lasting influence upon the changing social currents was the rise of the older immigrant stocks, especially German and Irish, to social, economic, and political equality with the native stock. This was especially true in the North. The foreign-born rubbed shoulders with native-born, and enjoyed the same privileges that those of longer native lineage enjoyed. America was still the land of opportunity, and America recognized the achievements of those to whom it had opened its doors. The hordes of Mediterranean and Central European immigrants who flocked to this country between 1890 and 1914, and who of necessity had to be assimilated into school and society, raised the task of absorption to an enterprise of national proportions. The challenge they presented was met with vigor and sympathy. The nation gradually became conscious that the immigrant could make some cultural contributions to the civilization of his adopted country at the same time that he was learning the ways of his chosen land. The result was a wider realization of the essential worth of the immigrant and a more wholehearted, democratic inclusion in the broader life of the nation.[2]

[1] It is true that, after Wordsworth, Emerson urged devotion to "the common, the low" and found the miraculous in the common; that Thoreau busied himself with the minutest study and observation of nature; and that Whittier was interested in the details of commonplace rural experience. Yet these men were essentially romantic at heart, and their treatment gave the material an idealistic lift. Their hopeful attitude is a far cry from the melancholy of the later realists.

[2] See Carter Davidson, "The Immigrant Strain in Contemporary American Literature," *English Journal*, December, 1936.

The works of Edward Eggleston and Ed Howe are among the first to illustrate the new tendency. It should be noted that the scenes of their novels are laid for the most part in the Middle West, and are therefore projected against the background of the western migration. Eggleston explained that in his work "the individual characters are here treated to a greater degree than elsewhere as parts of a study of a society—as in some sense the logical result of the environment." Moreover, it should be added that he was under the influence of the French literary historian Taine. In the preface to *A Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871) he says that the idea of realism, implying here the use of local setting and dialect, was first suggested to him by Taine's deterministic theory of literature, as the product of time, place, and race. Howe aimed to portray life in a pioneer Kansas community, Eggleston in similar communities of Indiana and Minnesota, wherever his wanderings led him. Both professed to report what they saw, as they saw it; they did not evade what was unpleasant and disagreeable; for effectiveness they relied on matter-of-fact statement rather than on the dramatic intensity of plotted tale. Neither wrote a masterpiece, but both wrote readable tales which pointed a new literary way.

## II

Along with the realistic movement, represented by Howe, Eggleston, Howells, and James, regional or local-color fiction[1] became very popular before 1890. It had its chief origin in the Western stories of Bret Harte. Although the Civil War was supposed to have eliminated sectional consciousness, literary developments seem to indicate that writers were more conscious of sections than before. Besides the West, the South and New England also received special attention. In their best works George W. Cable and Lafcadio Hearn pictured the old Creole civilization with fidelity and color; Joel Chandler Harris retold the Negro folk tales he had heard as a boy on Georgia plantations; Constance Fenimore Woolson and Mary Noailles Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock") portrayed phases of Southern life before, during, and after the war; Thomas Nelson Page restored ante-bellum life in Virginia with a romantic nostalgia that only a Southerner could feel after witnessing the wreck of the civilization he loved.

In New England the chief representatives of the school were Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman. To the Civil War and the western migration this section had contributed much of its best blood. Trade and shipping had moved elsewhere, and with it prosperity. Although the era of summer boarders was well started by the seventies, it was a mere beginning of the later tourist era. At the moment these women looked upon a people caught, as it were, in the trough between two wave-crests of economic well-being, rendered forth their suppressed gloom

[1] For selections and considerable bibliography of regional stories, consult R. L. Ramsay, *Short Stories of America* (1921).

and hopelessness, their oddities and eccentricities, and their ethical steadfastness, in many instances spicing the renderings with delicate and delicious humor.

Individually, the writers in this group differed widely. They are in reality a battleground of conflicting tendencies. Some of them are romantic with a longing for the past; others are realistic with the emphasis upon the present. One quality, however, is characteristic of all of them. They insist upon what is local and immediate. Speech, especially dialect, character, setting, tone, and atmosphere are employed to restore phases of life as they obtained in the various sections.

In poetry Hay and Riley followed the same ideal and demonstrated that verse written in Pike County and Hoosier dialects, and dealing with local themes, was for that reason no less effective than verse written in the traditional manner and style. In fact, these poets injected new and more vigorous blood into the otherwise pale and anemic body of poetry.

## III

The decade of the nineties, sometimes derisively referred to as the yellow nineties, the gay nineties, or the Mauve Decade, was a period of literary ferment, stimulated for the most part by a thorough discontent with the prevailing fiction. Under the leadership of Henry Blake Fuller and Hamlin Garland it witnessed the beginning of veritism, a modified form of realism, the principles of which Garland elaborated in his *Crumbling Idols* (1894). Garland, after spending several years in Boston, where he subjected himself to a rigorous program of self-education, was on his return to his Middle West home deeply stirred by the hardships and sufferings of the pioneer farmers and the ultimate futility of their labors, a phase of pioneer life which had hitherto escaped writers of fiction. He pointed out the inadequacy of the fiction of the past, proposed the "local novel" as a way of remedying its shortcomings, and wrote *Main-Travelled Roads* (1890), a collection of unforgettable tales about the rigors of Middle West farm life. They picture the losing struggle waged by the farmer against the forces and odds of nature, as well as against the economic evils described by Henry George, whose doctrine of the single tax as a relief measure Garland accepted. Garland's work represents a distinct step in bringing the realistic farther from the realm of the ideal and closer to the realm of earth.

Another significant phenomenon of this decade is the sudden outburst of an epidemic of Waverley romances. It has already been pointed out that, although the romantic spirit had been declining since 1870, it had never been entirely removed from the literary scene. During the nineties it came to fresh life with new and startling vigor, and brought in its wake a veritable flood of romantic novels. Professor Pattee lists upward of thirty writers who participated in this renaissance of romance. Among the most widely read were Weir Mitchell's *Hugh Wynne* (1897),

Charles Major's *When Knighthood Was in Flower* (1898), Mary Johnston's *Prisoners of Hope* (1898) and *To Have and To Hold* (1899), Winston Churchill's *Richard Carvel* (1899) and *The Crisis* (1901), P. L. Ford's *Janice Meredith* (1899), Maurice Thompson's *Alice of Old Vincennes* (1900), G. B. McCutcheon's *Graustark* (1901), and Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902). As in the days of Sir Walter Scott, historical romance became the fashion, and phases of the national past from colonial days through the Civil War were treated in the deluge of fiction. Readers devoured avidly the innumerable romances of war and adventure, never without the ubiquitous element of love, which frequently declined into a rather musty sentimentalism. This revival of romance came as a reaction against the growing realism of such writers as Stephen Crane and Frank Norris, but was stimulated by non-literary causes as well. The triumphant issue of the war with Spain, fought ostensibly for humanitarian motives and in the spirit of the crusaders, aroused the country to a high pitch of patriotic pride. Cuba was freed, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were added to the national domain, and America took its place among the powers of the world. Americans everywhere were enthusiastic in their belief that they were citizens of a great country with a high mission, and rooted in a glorious past. One of the chief concerns of the romantic novelists was to restore and portray this glorious past.

In the hands of such a capable craftsman as Winston Churchill this type of novel achieved dignity and opulence which compare favorably with the work of Scott himself. However, Churchill soon turned for subject matter to sociological problems, which became more and more persistent, and in such novels as *The Inside of the Cup* (1913), *A Far Country* (1915), and *The Dwelling-Place of Light* (1917) launched a vigorous criticism against the capitalistic order.[1]

To this period likewise belong some of the earlier works of Booth Tarkington, a versatile writer ever watchful of changing literary fashions, and always ready and able to give the public what it wants.

O. Henry, too, belongs to the prosperous era of industrial expansion and big business. His work was mainly descriptive and representative, although in tales like "An Unfinished Story" he portrayed the evils of the capitalistic system. His early death in 1910 removed him from the scene in time to escape war and industrial calamity. He lived a varied life as ranchman, journalist, banker, beachcomber, prison drug clerk, fugitive from justice, and finally as the most lionized literary figure in the modern Bagdad. All life was grist for his mill, but those aspects of it which characterized the prosperous days before the war were turned into the finest meal. He is a master of the short story, in which he developed an original technique. His reputation has suffered because a generation which has passed

[1] Consult M. E. Speare, *The Political Novel; Its Development in England and America* (1924), and J. C. Underwood, *Literature and Insurgency* (1914).

through fire and sword seems to demand stouter fare. He was the victim of personal ill fortune and the journalization of the short story which prevented him from achieving his best.

Even more important than Garland's local novel and the romantic revival is the work of Stephen Crane and Frank Norris. Like Garland they were dissatisfied[1] with prevailing fiction because they felt that neither in romantic nor realistic practice did it penetrate to the roots of life. Writers did not see the physical truth in the light of an ideal of social justice. Encouraged by Garland's audacity in daring to expose the sordid aspects of farm life, and stimulated by the technique of the French Zola, Crane and Norris ventured into hitherto unexplored fields and revealed their discoveries pointedly and fearlessly. In their eager reaction against what they regarded as the superficiality of current fiction, they may have erred in overstressing the unpleasant and the sordid; but it must be admitted that they opened a productive vein of raw material for fiction.

Both Crane's *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets* (1892) and Norris's *McTeague* (1899) are stories of ultimate degradation. In *Maggie* it is brought about by the inexorable environment of East Side New York; in *McTeague* by the growing hostility between a good-natured husband and an increasingly miserly wife. The themes in themselves are not unusual or extraordinary; the technique of the treatment stamps these books as a new type of fiction. The name applied to this technique is naturalism. Essentially and fundamentally it consists in creating a very distinct *milieu*, and by the careful, almost scientific selection of detail, representing characters as inevitably under the domination of environment and forces over which they have no control.[2]

In a modified form the same method was employed in Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), a starkly realistic treatment of war, and in Norris's *The Octopus* (1901) and *The Pit* (1903), the former a powerful attack on the railroad injustice to farmers, the latter a study of the distribution of wheat by the Chicago Board of Trade. These writers attracted many followers who, in the new century, developed and expanded the technique.

## IV

After the turn of the century, forces which had been released during the previous generation, as well as new forces arising from the increasing complexity of modern

[1] For discussion of the anti-traditional literary ideals see Hamlin Garland, *Crumbling Idols* (1894); Frank Norris, *The Responsibilities of the Novelist* (1903); and H. H. Boyesen, *Literary and Social Silhouettes* (New York, 1894). The new literary aims and theories were strongly conditioned by the vogue and influence of Darwinian science. See the many articles in the issue of *The Psychological Review* for May, 1909, devoted to all phases of Darwin's influence; John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (1910); James M. Baldwin, *Darwin and the Humanities* (1909); William M. Payne, "American Literary Criticism and the Doctrine of Evolution," *International Monthly*, II, 26–46, 127–153; and J. P. Hoskins, "Biological Analogy in Literary Criticism," *Modern Philology*, April and July, 1909.

[2] H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934).

society, continued to give direction to American literature. Among the older forces must be reckoned the unparalleled advance of science with its increasing influence on the thought and temper of the people, and the mounting industrialism, with its use of more and more machines, which conspired to transform life in the new century into a machine civilization. The literary concomitant was the continued vogue of naturalism, and the temporary disappearance of romance which had resurrected itself so flamboyantly during the nineties.

Among the newer forces which exerted a shaping influence upon American life and letters are the Great War and its aftermath, the prominence of Freudian psychology, the growing influence of foreign writers, notably Russian and Scandinavian, and the development of a more critical attitude toward America, American achievements, and American institutions, all of which are reflected in the writings of the period. American society was fluid; changes took place rapidly and unsuspectedly; the American temper was in a process of transformation.

The election of William McKinley just before the turn of the century marked the final triumph of industrialism as against agriculture. His administration set the pace for years to come. It put its seal upon big business and added fresh impetus to expanding industry, which in turn stimulated the invention of new machinery, leading to mass output and standardized production. Monopolies and mergers which accompanied this colossal expansion had the tendency to confine productive activity largely to a few giant centers, and to concentrate more and more wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Large scale business became a kind of national god, the cult of whose worship, immediate and remote, grew to almost national proportions.

Nor did the new century bring any improvement in the relation between capital and labor. The old chattel conception of labor persisted, and capital was not disposed to manifest any startling benevolence toward laborers and employees. Strikes and lockouts became more numerous and more frequent. Between 1901 and 1905 there were 13,964 strikes and 541 lockouts; between 1916 and 1920 there were 17,806 strikes. Among the more serious disturbances were the strikes of the Pennsylvania and Colorado coal miners in 1902 and 1922 respectively. Similar outbreaks also occurred in transportation, the metal trades, and the building, textile, and clothing industries.[1] Instead of regarding themselves as natural collaborators in a vast enterprise, capital and labor looked upon one another with suspicion, almost as natural enemies; hostilities were ready to flare up at any moment. Nor was the general status of labor improved by the use of machinery. Originally intended to ease the burdens of toil, mechanical devices gradually displaced human labor, throwing men out of employment, thereby causing economic uncertainty, in many instances acute distress, until the laborers could be re-absorbed in other

[1] W. W. Jennings, *A History of Economic Progress in the United States* (1926), 663.

forms of employment. The problem of wages, too, remained a perennial one, its gravity not having been perceptibly lessened in the staggering complexity of industrial life.

Another heritage from the industrial development of the previous century was the continued urbanizing of the population. From an industrial point of view this movement took place in the interests of business efficiency and was to that extent advantageous. From a purely human point of view the picture is not so pleasing. City and country still occupied opposite ends of the social pole. The lines of demarcation were drawn as sharply as ever, except that the dwellers in small towns and the country, aided by the ease and convenience of auto-transportation, could look in upon their city cousins and during brief visits perhaps absorb a bit of city polish and culture. The small town was steadily declining; its one-time business independence and prosperity yielded to city trade, and the inhabitants left behind looked longingly in the direction of the city. The small town has not been able to rid itself of the insinuations that it continues to be a center of provincialism, narrow-mindedness, even ignorance. Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* (1920) and Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), though perhaps somewhat myopic in their outlook, indicate the precarious cultural estate to which village life had fallen.

There can be no denying that the Machine Age, with its standardized and mass production, is an industrial and economic asset. About its cultural and social effects there is no such universal agreement. Man still has not proved himself master of the machine, and meanwhile the uncertainty remains whether it is a blessing or a curse. The strict division of labor which the use of machinery entails, and which frequently limits the daily task of a given man to the endless repetition of a given operation cannot but have a blighting effect upon the intellectual temper of individuals and of groups. Such monotony within a very limited scope is dwarfing and deadening. Instead of being in control of the machine, which was supposedly called to man's aid, he is bound to conform to the rhythm of the machine, and is therefore under its control.

The standardizing tendency in industry has found a counterpart in the field of education. Instead of individualizing the training on the basis of native ability and ultimate objectives, the members of the group are subjected indiscriminately to the same strait-jacket process. Many institutions of learning have tended to become standardized academic factories with mass output. On the other hand, efforts have been launched and are being carried forward to offset this tendency, largely by emphasizing the ability and needs of the individual, and by adapting the educational process to the growing sense of social responsibility. Indeed, it must be said that education in America has never been totally divorced from social problems and ideals. The schools have been used to advance or retard, as the case may be,

social ideals which were in themselves divergent and contradictory. Jeffersonian democracy and Hamiltonian aristocracy are a case in point. In later years the schools became a sort of bulwark against threatening radicalism. At the moment the social emphasis seems to be placed upon democratic co-operation, to a large degree the result of John Dewey's vigorous leadership. At the same time the "scientific experimentation," advocated and developed by Thorndike, continues to bear upon man's personal and social destiny.[1] To the credit of American education it must also be said that it encourages academic freedom, refuses to be dogmatic in the spread of ideas, is keenly alert in the search for truth and ready to follow where it leads, and aims to stimulate vigorous thinking on all problems.

It is evident, then, that a machine civilization is to a large extent a leveling process; it reduces man's physical and spiritual natures to the least common denominator; it has a tendency to discount individual differences which would lend strength, color, and variety to the social fabric; in a word, there is real danger that it is building up a scheme of regimentation far more relentless than any with which statesmen are coping. Men deeply concerned about the future are looking for diversifying antidotes to overcome the leveling and standardizing tendencies.

The influence of science continues to make itself felt more widely as well as more deeply. Aside from the ease, comforts, and conveniences which it has provided for man, it is also changing his intellectual and spiritual outlook, and modifying the fundamental conception of his relation to his fellows and to the universe in general. This is in a measure true of all the sciences, but in a more special sense of biology. The principles of heredity and environment, as the determining factors in the nature and development of human personality, have not only won universal acceptance within the purely scientific realm, but by implication have become a significant influence outside the scientific realm. Because they are principles which have been elevated to the dignity of laws, their operation is regarded as inexorable, and man is inclined to submit to them because of the feeling that efforts to counteract them would be futile. The result has been to breed an attitude of indifference and irresponsibility, which opens the way to a reckless and unthinking submission to instinct, and the substitution of mere impulse for reasoned choice as a motive in human behavior. Science has undermined the spiritual heritage of the past which provided a directed course of action, supplemented by an abiding hope. So far it has offered nothing to take the place of this ancient heritage and hope, and has left man in a haze of uncertainty in which he is still struggling to find a ray of light that shines beyond the next moment's impulse or the next day's meals. With all that science has revealed about the mysterious universe, all the practical and usable information it has made available, and the wonder it has conjured up in the mind of man, it has hardly elevated his ideals or heightened his hopes.

[1] M. Curti, *The Social Ideals of American Educators* (1935). Cf. especially pp. 194–203 and 581–593.

As far back as the Spanish-American War in 1898 the United States committed itself to participation in the affairs of the larger world of nations. The days of isolation, so eloquently extolled by Washington as a national virtue for the young state, were apparently over, and the country not only looked beyond its boundaries, but stepped across them, if necessary, to carry forward its policies. The occupation of the Philippines and the seizure of territory for the Panama Canal are illustrations.

As a result of this policy as well as of forces which at the moment seemed beyond national control, the United States was inevitably drawn into the whirlpool of the Great War. The fact of participation as such is not necessarily of any particular consequence to American letters. Nor is the flood of war books, poems, narratives of personal experience, and propaganda, which followed directly from the conflict, of any primary significance. By far the most important result of American participation in the conflict is the effect it had upon the American spirit.

War is commonly measured in terms of life and property. The destruction of them can be justified only, if at all, as a sacrifice for the realization of desirable ideals and objectives. When this realization is frustrated and debauched a negative effect upon the human spirit is inescapable.

American soldiers, as they left for the front, were assured that they were crusaders, fighting and dying, if need be, to make the world safe for democracy, to guarantee the integrity of small nations, and to defend certain political and human ideals which they embraced with almost religious fervor. When they returned, and learned that men who had remained securely behind the lines of combat had fattened their purses at the cost of blood, they began to suspect that profession and deed are not necessarily synonymous. Furthermore, the failure of President Wilson's efforts to translate the idealism which prompted America to enter the war into permanent reality in Europe contributed in no small measure to their bitter disillusionment. They developed a cynicism which made them feel almost ashamed to admit their participation in the struggle. The world for which they had fought was not a whit better, and they felt that it had broken faith with them to boot.

Nor was this feeling confined to the men who had seen active service. After riding to victory on the crest of a high wave of real or fancied moral idealism, the inevitable reaction set in, which threatened the breakdown of the moral structure. The younger generation seemed to be most rebellious, although their elders were far from guiltless. The traditional standards of conduct and behavior had apparently collapsed under the impact of a great crisis, and there was much searching for a code that might give promise of future stability. The partial relinquishment of old standards, with an uncertain groping for new, was accompanied by a state of moral bewilderment which in turn led to conduct and behavior equally

bewildering. This aspect of post-war conditions finds expression in the work of Ernest Hemingway. It was this phase of the war and its aftermath which impressed itself upon the national spirit, and which is directly and indirectly reflected in the literature of the period.

The sum total of the effects of these forces was an atmosphere of gloom and frequently false gaiety. Changing conditions and uncertainties lent a peculiar gravity to many of the emergent problems, with which the younger writers grappled in a grave and serious manner. Many of them were concerned with finding a way out, some of them almost despairing because of the apparent hopelessness. Science, the economic situation, and war seemed to have entered into a gigantic conspiracy to bring about a period of national dusk.

## V

Yet one must not conclude that the first third of the century was a period of unmitigated hopelessness. The very fact that writers were sensitive to the changing currents, responded to them, and endeavored to interpret life in terms of them is an unfailing sign of an implicit faith that the end need not necessarily be ultimate disillusion and despair.

This is true particularly of the three poets whose best work falls near the turn of the century, Markham, Moody, and Hovey. The plight of the laboring man into which he was thrust during and after the McKinley administration stirred deeply the humanitarian passion of Edwin Markham, which he rendered unforgettably in "The Man With the Hoe." Moody, painfully aware of the thinness of most current poetry, found in contemporary events and developments, such as the Philippine problem and its implications, evolution, the changing attitude toward religion and human destiny, both material and inspiration for a body of verse which is rich in content, thoughtful in treatment, and beautifully expressed against a spiritual background steeped in the finest lore of old-world civilizations. Hovey was a vagabond who turned his vagabondage into outdoor verse characterized by a sensitive response to the many-mooded world of nature. Nor was he indifferent to current conditions, as a poem like "Unmanifest Destiny" indicates. Together, Moody and Hovey stand as transition poets, Moody's freer and more flexible treatment of verse forms anticipating in a sense the poetic revolution to come.

The new imperialism on which America had embarked as a result of the war with Spain, the consequent necessity of seeking a parity of force with other international powers, the rapid expansion of industry and business with the continuing clamor for increased production, and the prospect of rich economic reward lay at the root of Theodore Roosevelt's doctrine of the "strenuous life." Himself a man of versatile ability and never-flagging energy, and dominating the American scene during his terms as President, he not only advocated national preparedness

but preached the social ideal of unremitting work. Labor had not been thus glorified as a sacred responsibility since the days of Thomas Carlyle. Inspired by Roosevelt's infectious enthusiasm, men vied with each other in the race of endless activity, endurance, and ultimate achievement. The twin doctrines of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, integral factors in the Darwinian theory of organic evolution, as well as the philosophical implication, the cult of the superman, also played a determining part in this literary trend. The tendency is well illustrated in the red-blooded heroes of fiction who, in the face of forbidding obstacles, were practically able to achieve the impossible. Owen Wister's Virginian met every emergency with grace and uncanny resourcefulness; Stewart Edward White's heroes fought single-handed against marauding lumber companies and baffled them in their efforts; Jack London's heroes did what they set out to do, whether in the San Francisco fish patrol or in the frozen North.

The naturalistic movement in fiction, begun by Crane and Norris in the preceding century, was continued by Theodore Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson. In their work several of the current forces in American economic and cultural life already mentioned were dominating factors. Dreiser disclaimed social responsibility, while Anderson was impressed by the devastating effects of the machine age. Both of them fell under the spell of Freudian psychology, which maintained that sex is the controlling force in human character and behavior. Dreiser may be called an instinctivist. He represented man as acting in response to instinctive impulses without accepting any responsibility for his acts. In fact, man cannot be held accountable for his behavior which in the final analysis, Dreiser maintains, is the result of a principle over which man has no control. This principle he called "chemism." According to it, man's behavior springs from certain affinities inherent in his physical organization. Against its directive and determining urge man is helpless; his conduct cannot result from volitional choice, and he cannot therefore be expected to assume any responsibility for it. All his novels, more particularly *The Titan* (1914) and *The "Genius"* (1915), as well as some of the shorter tales, are built upon this principle. His voluminous autobiographical writings, frank and daring in ultimate revelations, illustrate the same tendency.

Anderson, on the other hand, is inclined to be a mystic. Like Dreiser he becomes entangled in Freudianism, but he shows genuine concern for future culture and civilization in America, and thus imposes upon man a certain measure of responsibility for his behavior. His abiding concern is the effect which an industrialized machine civilization will have on man. To him the process is the source of unspeakable ills, present and to come. He has even gone so far as to suggest the abandonment of the machine, and the return to the medieval handicraft method of production as the only sure means of remedying the current evils, and thereby saving the race from destruction in the end. Like Dreiser, he has been taken to task

severely for his emphasis on sex, but when one reads between the lines of such books as *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) and *Marching Men* (1917), and considers the forthright sincerity of *A Story Teller's Story* (1924), one feels a genuine striving for higher human values in the hope of restoring national life and culture to a saner and more wholesome condition.

The gentle realism of Howells and James was continued in the new century by a group of notable women writers, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and Ellen Glasgow. Although they are aware of changing conditions and circumstances, respond to them in a measure, and are for that reason not entirely detached from the period, they view the changes calmly, and report what they see and feel with an artistic control hardly possible for some of the more ardent spirits. They avoid extremes of position and expression, their styles being for the most part rich, dignified, and substantial.

Their work represents, therefore, the continuation of the Howells-James tradition, as the work of Dreiser and Anderson followed in the mode of Crane and Norris. They are not imitators, and Mrs. Wharton's admitted discipleship of Henry James is probably the most significant evidence of direct influence. Nor do they constitute a definite school of fiction; they examine the various aspects of the changing scene of their time with critical scrutiny, and portray them with a fidelity to truth which avoids the saccharine quality of the Waverley romances as well as the rebellious audacity of the naturalists. It is this middle-of-the-road course which links them to Howells and James.

The sociological interest which changed the career of Winston Churchill is likewise noticeable. Although Mrs. Wharton, like James, lived abroad, and laid the scenes of some of her novels in Europe, the major part of her work deals with American themes and conditions. In *The House of Mirth* (1905) she reveals the tragedy which lurks in the ultra social set; in *Ethan Frome* (1911), her greatest novel, she portrays the tragic aspects of the eternal triangle with grim and stark austerity; in later novels she treats of divorce, its evils and consequences, with dignity and conviction. Dorothy Canfield Fisher does not enter the controversy over village life which was launched by Sinclair Lewis's attack in *Main Street*. That is, she does not consciously write in defense of the village. But she does for the most part represent life as she views it from the vantage point of her semi-rural home in Vermont, and conveys the impression very definitely that as a cultural center the small town is not necessarily inferior to metropolitan cities. Miss Glasgow is interested primarily in the emergent life of her native Virginia since the Civil War, and has rendered its progressive unfolding with a realistic fidelity which challenges northern realists both as to primacy and method. In such novels as *The Deliverance* (1904) and *The Miller of Old Church* (1911) she contrasts the old and new orders of the South, inclining now toward the gentility of the former, now

toward the cruder power of the latter. The theme that life demands grim sacrifice and accepts it without reward, and frequently blesses without warrant of desert, occurs again and again. Miss Cather's interest centers about the immigrant in pioneer surroundings. With an art stripped of all unessentials, she paints memorable pictures of this life, whether on a Mississippi Valley farm, in early missions of the Southwest, or in Quebec. She is a historical realist.

The low ebb to which poetry had fallen in the late nineteenth century was followed in the early twentieth by a poetic revival which was hailed by many as a real renaissance. Not only was much poetry published, but the quality of much of it was surprisingly fresh and vigorous, representing in its originality radical departures from the conventional practices of the past, both in choice of subject matter and in treatment. The younger poets were alert to changing conditions and sensitive to the forces and impulses of the day; they drew to a large extent, though not entirely, upon present-day life for material and inspiration. In line with the general tendencies, poetry was brought down from the rarefied atmosphere of Parnassus into the valley of everyday life. The poets, like the novelists, would see and represent life as it is, and in a form that would make the representation impressive and memorable.[1]

As far as form is concerned, the break with the past came rather gradually. E. A. Robinson, whose *The Torrent and the Night Before* was privately printed as early as 1896, wrote for the most part in the conventional meters, but with a certain hardness that seemed to anticipate the Imagists. Moody took liberties with the accepted forms, and while he followed in the main the principles of past practice, showed that poetry could be effective even when the stereotyped patterns were partly broken down. Behind the scenes during this fumbling pursuit after strange gods of form lurked the haunting shade of Walt Whitman, in whose irregular lines the young poets sensed a power which they felt was lacking in the more conventional patterns. A new type of poetry, presently to be known as free verse or *vers libre*, emerged full-fledged in the nineties in the arresting short poems of Stephen Crane. The underlying principle of free verse is the disregard of regular metrical stress, and the substitution for regular rhythm of a series of cadences, expressed in lines of irregular length. By 1912 this was recognized as a genuine poetic form, and was employed by an increasing number of poets, with varying degrees of success. In Carl Sandburg's poetry this revolt against the stereotyped patterns found especially effective expression.

By 1914 a new movement, known as Imagism, began to make itself felt. Under the leadership and organizing genius of Amy Lowell, a group of young English and American poets, calling themselves Imagists, grouped themselves together for the purpose of making their work more impressive. Their main principle is

[1] For a complete discussion see J. L. Lowes, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* (1919).

that poetry should be stripped of all superfluous ornament, expressed with the most rigid economy of style; in short, poetry is to be reduced to an image or series of images with the clear-cut sharpness of a cameo. As far as form is concerned, they employed the mechanism of free verse rather than the conventional patterns.[1]

But it was not form alone that entered into the variegated picture of this experimental period. The widely differing personalities of the poets themselves, and the color these gave to the treatment of unique and original themes added to the diversity. To be sure, most of them followed the realistic vogue, but aside from that there is little uniformity.

Although Robinson's career coincided with the era of the "new poetry," he had little in common with its daring innovations. He was an artist of rare emotional control; he rendered his thought and emotion in a style that often seems devoid of emotion and with an economy that borders on austerity. Toward the end of his career he re-read the Arthurian story in terms of contemporary life, and wrote a number of narrative poems remarkable for their psychological insight into human motives and character. Masters achieved distinction with his naturalistic treatment of pioneer life and conditions in *Spoon River Anthology* (1915). Carl Sandburg is *par excellence* the poet of the Middle West, and sings with equal vigor the industrialism of Chicago, the plight of the prairie farmer, and the ill-starred fate of the hand-to-mouth laborer. Miss Lowell is both Imagist and writer of free verse. Her subjects cover a wide span, ranging from translations of Chinese poetry to contemporary events. Frost has pre-empted present-day New England as his special field, and describes its scenes and characters with a subdued artistic glow. Vachel Lindsay came perhaps closer to the heart of contemporary America than any other poet. He caught the spirit of its intense energy, the drift of its mechanization, its noise, its idealism and social aspiration, the significance of its historical background. He was steeped in the spirit of Lincoln. He believed that poetry must come from the people, and he strove to bring poetry back to the people. In public readings of his poems he did more than merely read; he chanted them, invariably inviting his audiences to join him as a chanting chorus. Among the more recent women poets, Edna St. Vincent Millay sings about the eternal verities of love and death with deep sincerity and haunting poignancy. "Justice Denied in Massachusetts" voices her intense feeling about social justice. Sara Teasdale wrote love poems so sincere that they seem to spring from the very roots of experience. Elinor Wylie's poetry is finely wrought, but in spots seems to lack immediacy of touch and warmth.

Whether any of these poets will in the end, when reputations are appraised in the perspective of time, be numbered with the titans or near-titans, cannot be even conjectured. All of them have received high praise from contemporaries. No

[1] Cf. G. Hughes, *Imagism and the Imagists* (1931).

literary reputation, however, carries a permanent guarantee. But their vigor and originality, as compared with the conventionalities and shallowness of their immediate predecessors, and their infusion of artistic red blood into the veins of a declining art, seem to give promise of more than a merely ephemeral reputation. They have written a distinct and original chapter in the history of American poetry.

## VI

Near the turn of the century the leading figures in the field of literary criticism were George Edward Woodberry and William Crary Brownell. In his day Woodberry was a genial and sound interpreter of literature, exerting a wide influence through his Columbia lecture-room and the printed book. To him art was not merely an expression of the beautiful but a vital force in the life of people who come in contact with it. For that reason it must accept a social, as well as an aesthetic, responsibility. Brownell, by many regarded as the most acutely critical mind of the time, subjected some of the accepted masters of prose to a thorough re-examination and reached conclusions which at times caused considerable discussion in academic circles. But he was too astute for popular appreciation; perhaps his style was too compact and too academic. Whatever his merits and faults may be, he left a body of criticism which for painstaking analysis and incisive evaluation is almost in a class by itself.

The second and third decades of the new century, however, witnessed a great variety of agitated and stimulating critical thinking. This revival of interest in criticism may be said to date from a lecture by J. E. Spingarn delivered at Columbia University in 1910. In it he asserted that American criticism in the past had been in league with ethics and demanded of literature that it conform to the dual standard of ethics and aesthetics. Instead, he proposed to the critics that they regard art as expression and judge it as expression alone, apart from all other phases of human interest. This challenge, together with the appearance of such books as Crane's *Maggie* and Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (first published in 1900), which apparently could not be justified according to the critical standards of the past, made imperative a re-examination of critical theory and practice. During the years immediately following the Great War, criticism became one of the major intellectual interests, and its variety and intensity seemed to portend a real critical awakening. Stuart Pratt Sherman was one of the first to enter the field with his *On Contemporary Literature* (1917), a forceful attack on some of the younger writers. Although Sherman did not regard the past as inviolably sacred, he was nevertheless a traditionalist, maintaining that since the vital literature of the past had justified itself through the years, the ideals and principles underlying it should be applied to contemporary literature. In other words, he saw no reason for breaking with

tradition as so many of the younger writers were doing. He was countered by the Baltimore free lance, H. L. Mencken, a writer of vigorous intellect and thunderous, iconoclastic style, to whom nothing was sacred, and who felt under no obligations to replace with new statues the idols he was demolishing. The thrust and parry of the blows that passed between them were followed with eager interest, though divided enthusiasm.

James Gibbons Huneker, critic and musician, a man of brilliant intellect and prolific pen, poured out in ceaseless flow his adventures in art, literary and otherwise, native and foreign, on the assumption that the business of the critic is to record his reactions to the contacts with art and artists. His scholarly instinct saved him from becoming a mere impressionistic adventurer.

Toward the end of the twenties the controversy over the New Humanism broke out in the critical and intellectual world with the force of an explosion. The center of the stage was held by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, men of keen intellect, deep insight, and wide learning, who had built up a bulwark of humanistic theory and practice of criticism. Humanism, to be sure, is as old as Athenian civilization, and it is not necessary to enter here into a discussion of the changing conceptions of the term in the course of history. It is sufficient to say that both Babbitt and More maintained that the standard of excellence must be the achievement of man at his best, not at his second best, or his worst. Man has the free will and power to choose his conduct in accordance with abiding ethical values. As a result of repeated choices he has succeeded in improving and bettering his estate. By virtue of that fact man is committed to an upward journey and must not permit himself to retrograde in thought or action. Humanistic criticism, some of the opponents argued, would exclude a large body of the world's literature which already has won a permanent place, would confine critical activity to too narrow a field, and would in time result in a sort of standardized measurement.

In the field of the essay aside from literary criticism one meets a great variety of subjects treated in a great variety of methods and tempers. Some idea of the range is indicated by Theodore Roosevelt's forthright discussion of "Realizable Ideals," the plea for learning in Woodrow Wilson's well-known polished style, and the wise and witty pieces of Miss Repplier and Dr. Crothers.

## VII

The negative effect of contemporary conditions upon writers is well illustrated in the work of Joseph Hergesheimer and James Branch Cabell. Neither one has written directly about the war, or about the social and economic phenomena which have caused so many besetting problems. Yet both of them are profoundly aware of the decline of American ideals, accompanied by a growing materialism. They

are impressed by the uncertainty and futility of life under existing conditions. Their writings are a protest against contemporary tendencies, but they contain no constructive suggestions for improvement. To them life has become a phenomenon to be endured, rather than prized and cherished. As they view it, the only possibility of making it endurable is by evasion and escape, refusing to accept it realistically, and by erecting a universe of make-believe into which they could retire. Hergesheimer lives in a made-over Pennsylvania mansion furnished in richly colored tapestries and luxurious furniture, from which he issues his costume novels, abounding in memorable phrases and superficial prettiness. Cabell, on the other hand, maintains his actual residence in Richmond, Virginia, but in reality lives in the imaginary Poictesme, where he follows the fortunes and misfortunes of Dom Manuel and his descendants, and records them with zest and beauty. Both are essentially romanticists, though Hergesheimer is not consistent in his methods of treatment. Cabell's theory of art and life, as elaborated in *Beyond Life* (1919), rests upon two convictions: that actual life is futile and unsatisfying, and that the only way to achieve satisfaction is through romantic dreaming. This theory has been his unfailing guide in practice. Both Hergesheimer and Cabell are experts in the art of escape.

Ernest Hemingway, with Robinson Jeffers, belongs to the group that were left confused, bewildered, and disillusioned by the Great War and its results. As novelist and short-story writer Hemingway has given voice to the lost generation, the youth of both sexes caught in the crash of a collapsing civilization, as they sought to adjust themselves to a new world, to extract some sense and continuity from experience, and to find a philosophy of life in a new order rising from the wreck of a futile civilization. The picture which he draws is not a pleasant one, while the shallow aims and often silly conduct of his characters do not always add to the weight of seriousness. Yet he is serious. As he stands between a world that is hopelessly wrecked and a new one whose nature he cannot divine, he remembers the sham and futility of the past, and looks eagerly for a sign of the indistinct future. Jeffers is a poet of desperate despair, regarding man as the victim of passion, and as drifting helplessly in a world which has renounced the ancient ethical certitude. Nor must one overlook the stark naturalistic decadence portrayed in the work of William Faulkner. In such a novel as *Sanctuary* (1931) he has dropped to the very depths of cynical disillusionment, representing man as a vile creature groping his uncertain way in a brutalizing environment.

Although Eugene O'Neill cannot be explained entirely in terms of the Great War, the burdens of its aftermath have rested heavily upon his shoulders. The greater part of his work has been done since the Armistice, but in his contemplation of life he probes deeper than the mere outward effects of the war. He found a society literally sick. He has endeavored to diagnose its ills, and like a surgeon he

has exposed the diseased parts to view. He deals with some of the malignant sore spots, treats them decisively, often brutally, but for the sole purpose of giving the healthy tissue a chance to survive and develop. O'Neill is essentially a poet, with insight, understanding and a suppressed vision verging on prophecy.[1]

Although immigrants of various nationalities had earlier found their way into fiction, none was treated with deeper insight and finer understanding than the Norwegians in the Northwest by the late O. E. Rølvaag. Having himself experienced the hardships of the pioneer in a strange land, he realized very keenly the tragedy which ever lurked behind the heroic conflict with untamed nature, and the grim toll that was exacted in subduing the prairies. This tragic aspect he rendered forth vividly and impressively, in a style that combined stark realism with delicate romantic coloring.

Because of the limited perspective, it is obviously impossible to express any definite judgment on the ultimate value of contemporary literature, or to forecast the future fame of the individual writers. However, it may be said that the sheer daring in the experimentation with new forms, the fearless probing into aspects of life which earlier writers had ignored, the capable response to new and changing conditions, and the critical attitude toward American institutions and achievements stamp the first three decades of the twentieth century as one of the most vigorous periods in American literature. It is a matter of profound gratitude that in America literary activity is free and unhampered by dictates, restrictions, or decrees.

[1] For detailed discussions of the significance of his work, consult S. K. Winther, *Eugene O'Neill: A Critical Study* (1934) and R. D. Skinner, *Eugene O'Neill* (1935).

# 1839 ~ *Henry George* ~ 1897

HENRY GEORGE came of middle-class stock of English and Scotch blood. He was born in Philadelphia, the second child and oldest son in the family. From his deeply religious parents he inherited an intensity and forthrightness of nature which characterized him throughout his life. His formal education was limited, for after five months he left high school, never to return. In 1855 he shipped before the mast on a voyage that took him to Melbourne and Calcutta. On his return he learned typesetting and went to California where he engaged in newspaper work. The hardships and poverty which he endured, the extremes of wealth and poverty which he saw about him, led him to an intense study of economics and the writing of articles as preliminary studies which were later elaborated in *Progress and Poverty*, his most celebrated work, privately printed in 1879. The following year he moved to New York. He lectured extensively on his economic theory and the single tax, founded the *Standard*, a weekly journal, and was twice a candidate for the mayoralty of New York. Entering his second campaign in 1897 against the advice of his physicians, he succumbed to the strain because of a weakened heart, and died five days before election.

George was a savage critic of the Gilded Age with its rapid industrial expansion, wasteful exploitation of resources, and inordinate pursuit of wealth. On a visit to New York, a cosmopolitan city and the height of our urbanized civilization, he was struck by the great extremes of poverty and riches which prosperity had apparently made inevitable. A comparatively small per cent of the population owned most of the wealth, the vast majority remained poor. In the earlier frontier society of California he had noticed a more equable distribution, at any rate as far as wages were concerned. With the coming of the railroad, however, the consequent speculation in land, and the increase in population, wages declined and a few individuals became very wealthy. He was forced to the conclusion that increase of wealth was accompanied by a corresponding increase of poverty, and that civilization actually worked a hardship on the great mass of people.

Deeply stirred by the injustice of this unequal distribution of wealth, and stimulated by Herbert Spencer, in whose *Social Statics* (1850) he had found both suggestions and confirmation, George dedicated his life to the righting of the wrong inherent in this situation. The crux of the problem he found in the rising value of land and the increased rent as population grows. In a pamphlet entitled *Our Land and Land Policy*, published in 1871, he argued against land monopoly, maintained that rent is a form of robbery, and that taxes should be imposed upon land values

only. These ideas, which constitute the core of his teachings, were later elaborated in *Progress and Poverty* (1879), his most influential work. Fundamentally his theory rests upon the conception that land values are the basic economic values, and that wealth is determined by them. Whether he was right is still a matter of controversy among economists; that he stated and analyzed the problem with unerring certitude is beyond doubt. Of his other works *Social Problems* (1883) is still so timely that it might have been written yesterday.

George's most important books are *Our Land and Land Policy* (1871); *Progress and Poverty* (1879–80); *Social Problems* (1883); *Protection or Free Trade* (1886). All his writings are available in a uniform edition (1911). The standard biography is H. George, Jr., *The Life of Henry George* (1900). A. N. Young, *The Single Tax Movement in the United States* (1916); L. F. Post, *The Prophet of San Francisco* (1930); G. R. Geiger, *The Philosophy of Henry George* (1933), are exhaustive studies of George's economic thought. Among briefer discussions are *DAB*, VII; E. H. Johnson, "Economics of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*," *Journal of Political Economy*, Nov., 1910; J. A. Ryan, "Henry George and Private Property," *Catholic World*, June, 1911; J. A. Ryan, "Ethical Arguments of Henry George against Private Ownership of Land," *Catholic World*, July, 1911; B. De Casseres, "Henry George," *American Mercury*, May, 1931; A. J. Nock, "Henry George: Unorthodox American," *Scribner's*, Nov., 1933; V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1927–30); D. C. Seitz, *Uncommon Americans* (1925); McA. Coleman, *Pioneers of Freedom* (1929); I. Tarbell, "New Dealers of the Seventies," *Forum*, Oct., 1934; G. White, "Economics and Ethics," *Nation*, March 26, 1930.

## *From* PROGRESS AND POVERTY

In *Progress and Poverty* George sought a remedy for the evils which followed in the immediate wake of industrial expansion, with its abuses and maladjustments, especially the unequal distribution of wealth. This remedy he found in making land "common property" and in the single tax. *Social Problems* is a discussion of social and economic ills from a wider point of view.

### *The Problem*

THE present century has been marked by a prodigious increase in wealth-producing power. The utilization of steam and electricity, the introduction of improved processes and labor-saving machinery, the greater subdivision and grander scale of production, the wonderful facilitation of exchanges, have multiplied enormously the effectiveness of labor.

At the beginning of this marvelous era it was natural to expect, and it was expected, that labor-saving inventions would lighten the toil and improve the condition of the laborer; that the enormous increase in the power of producing wealth would make real poverty a thing of the past. Could a man of the last century—a Franklin or a Priestley—have seen, in a vision of the future, the steamship taking the place of the sailing vessel, the railroad train of the wagon, the reaping machine of the scythe, the threshing machine of the flail; could he have heard the throb of the engines that in obedience to human will, and for the satisfaction of human desire, exert a power greater than that of all the men and all the beasts of burden of the earth combined; could he have seen the forest tree transformed into finished lumber—into doors, sashes, blinds, boxes or barrels, with hardly the touch of a human hand; the great workshops where boots and shoes are turned out by the case with less labor than the old-fashioned cobbler could have put on a sole; the factories where, under the eye of a girl, cotton becomes cloth faster than hundreds of stalwart weavers could have turned it out with their handlooms; could he have seen steam hammers

shaping mammoth shafts and mighty anchors, and delicate machinery making tiny watches; the diamond drill cutting through the heart of the rocks, and coal oil sparing the whale; could he have realized the enormous saving of labor resulting from improved facilities of exchange and communication—sheep killed in Australia eaten fresh in England, and the order given by the London banker in the afternoon executed in San Francisco in the morning of the same day; could he have conceived of the hundred thousand improvements which these only suggest, what would he have inferred as to the social condition of mankind?

It would not have seemed like an inference; further than the vision went it would have seemed as though he saw; and his heart would have leaped and his nerves would have thrilled, as one who from a height beholds just ahead of the thirst-stricken caravan the living gleam of rustling woods and the glint of laughing waters. Plainly, in the sight of the imagination, he would have beheld these new forces elevating society from its very foundations, lifting the very poorest above the possibility of want, exempting the very lowest from anxiety for the material needs of life; he would have seen these slaves of the lamp of knowledge taking on themselves the traditional curse, these muscles of iron and sinews of steel making the poorest laborer's life a holiday, in which every high quality and noble impulse could have scope to grow.

And out of these bounteous material conditions he would have seen arising, as necessary sequences, moral conditions realizing the golden age of which mankind have always dreamed. Youth no longer stunted and starved; age no longer harried by avarice; the child at play with the tiger; the man with the muck-rake drinking in the glory of the stars! Foul things fled, fierce things tame; discord turned to harmony! For how could there be greed where all had enough? How could the vice, the crime, the ignorance, the brutality, that spring from poverty and the fear of poverty, exist where poverty had vanished? Who should crouch where all were freemen; who oppress where all were peers?

More or less vague or clear, these have been the hopes, these the dreams born of the improvements which give this wonderful century its preëminence. They have sunk so deeply into the popular mind as to radically change the currents of thought, to recast creeds and displace the most fundamental conceptions. The haunting visions of higher possibilities have not merely gathered splendor and vividness, but their direction has changed —instead of seeing behind the faint tinges of an expiring sunset, all the glory of the daybreak has decked the skies before.

It is true that disappointment has followed disappointment, and that discovery upon discovery, and invention after invention, have neither lessened the toil of those who most need respite, nor brought plenty to the poor. But there have been so many to which it seemed this failure could be laid, that up to our time the new faith has hardly weakened. We have better appreciated the difficulties to be overcome; but not the less trusted that the tendency of the times was to overcome them.

Now, however, we are coming into collision with facts which there can be no mistaking. From all parts of the civilized world come complaints of industrial depression; of labor condemned to involuntary idleness; of capital massed and wasting; of pecuniary distress among business men; of want and suffering and anxiety among the working classes. All the dull, deadening pain, all the keen, maddening anguish, that to great masses of men are involved in the words "hard times," afflict the world today. This state of things, common to communities differing so widely in situation, in political institutions, in fiscal and financial systems, in density of population and in social organization, can hardly be accounted for by local causes. There is distress where large standing armies are maintained, but there is also distress where the standing armies are nominal; there is distress where protective tariffs stupidly and wastefully hamper trade, but there is also distress where trade is nearly free; there is distress where autocratic government yet prevails, but there is also distress where political power is wholly in the hands of the people; in countries where paper is money, and in countries where gold and silver are the only currency. Evi-

dently, beneath all such things as these, we must infer a common cause.

That there is a common cause, and that it is either what we call material progress or something closely connected with material progress, becomes more than an inference when it is noted that the phenomena we class together and speak of as industrial depression are but intensifications of phenomena which always accompany material progress, and which show themselves more clearly and strongly as material progress goes on. Where the conditions to which material progress everywhere tends are most fully realized—that is to say, where population is densest, wealth greatest, and the machinery of production and exchange most highly developed—we find the deepest poverty, the sharpest struggle for existence, and the most of enforced idleness.

It is to the newer countries—that is, to the countries where material progress is yet in its earlier stages—that laborers emigrate in search of higher wages, and capital flows in search of higher interest. It is in the older countries—that is to say, the countries where material progress has reached later stages—that widespread destitution is found in the midst of the greatest abundance. Go into one of the new communities where Anglo-Saxon vigor is just beginning the race of progress; where the machinery of production and exchange is yet rude and inefficient; where the increment of wealth is not yet great enough to enable any class to live in ease and luxury; where the best house is but a cabin of logs or a cloth and paper shanty, and the richest man is forced to daily work—and though you will find an absence of wealth and all its concomitants, you will find no beggars. There is no luxury, but there is no destitution. No one makes an easy living, nor a very good living; but every one *can* make a living, and no one able and willing to work is oppressed by the fear of want.

But just as such a community realizes the conditions which all civilized communities are striving for, and advances in the scale of material progress—just as closer settlement and a more intimate connection with the rest of the world, and greater utilization of labor-saving machinery, make possible greater economies in production and exchange, and wealth in consequence increases, not merely in the aggregate, but in proportion to population—so does poverty take a darker aspect. Some get an infinitely better and easier living, but others find it hard to get a living at all. The "tramp" comes with the locomotive, and alms-houses and prisons are as surely the marks of "material progress" as are costly dwellings, rich warehouses, and magnificent churches. Upon streets lighted with gas and patrolled by uniformed policemen, beggars wait for the passer-by, and in the shadow of college, and library, and museum, are gathering the more hideous Huns and fiercer Vandals of whom Macaulay prophesied.

This fact—the great fact that poverty and all its concomitants show themselves in communities just as they develop into the conditions toward which material progress tends—proves that the social difficulties existing wherever a certain stage of progress has been reached, do not arise from local circumstances, but are, in some way or another, engendered by progress itself.

And, unpleasant as it may be to admit it, it is at last becoming evident that the enormous increase in productive power which has marked the present century and is still going on with accelerating ratio, has no tendency to extirpate poverty or to lighten the burdens of those compelled to toil. It simply widens the gulf between Dives and Lazarus, and makes the struggle for existence more intense. The march of invention has clothed mankind with powers of which a century ago the boldest imagination could not have dreamed. But in factories where labor-saving machinery has reached its most wonderful development, little children are at work; wherever the new forces are anything like fully utilized, large classes are maintained by charity or live on the verge of recourse to it; amid the greatest accumulations of wealth, men die of starvation, and puny infants suckle dry breasts; while everywhere the greed of gain, the worship of wealth, shows the force of the fear of want. The promised land flies before us like the mirage. The fruits of the tree of knowledge turn as we grasp them to apples of Sodom that crumble at the touch.

It is true that wealth has been greatly increased, and that the average of comfort, leisure, and refinement has been raised; but these gains are not general. In them the lowest class do not share. I do not mean that the condition of the lowest class has nowhere nor in anything been improved; but that there is nowhere any improvement which can be credited to increased productive power. I mean that the tendency of what we call material progress is in nowise to improve the condition of the lowest class in the essentials of healthy, happy human life. Nay, more, that it is to still further depress the condition of the lowest class. The new forces, elevating in their nature though they be, do not act upon the social fabric from underneath, as was for a long time hoped and believed, but strike it at a point intermediate between top and bottom. It is as though an immense wedge were being forced, not underneath society, but through society. Those who are above the point of separation are elevated, but those who are below are crushed down.

This depressing effect is not generally realized, for it is not apparent where there has long existed a class just able to live. Where the lowest class barely lives, as has been the case for a long time in many parts of Europe, it is impossible for it to get any lower, for the next lowest step is out of existence, and no tendency to further depression can readily show itself. But in the progress of new settlements to the conditions of older communities it may clearly be seen that material progress does not merely fail to relieve poverty—it actually produces it. In the United States it is clear that squalor and misery, and the vices and crimes that spring from them, everywhere increase as the village grows to the city, and the march of development brings the advantages of the improved methods of production and exchange. It is in the older and richer sections of the Union that pauperism and distress among the working classes are becoming most painfully apparent. If there is less deep poverty in San Francisco than in New York, is it not because San Francisco is yet behind New York in all that both cities are striving for? When San Francisco reaches the point where New York now is, who can doubt that there will also be ragged and barefooted children on her streets?

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social, and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain. From it come the clouds that overhang the future of the most progressive and self-reliant nations. It is the riddle which the Sphinx of Fate puts to our civilization, and which not to answer is to be destroyed. So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent. The reaction must come. The tower leans from its foundations, and every new story but hastens the final catastrophe. To educate men who must be condemned to poverty, is but to make them restive; to base on a state of most glaring social inequality political institutions under which men are theoretically equal, is to stand a pyramid on its apex.

All-important as this question is, pressing itself from every quarter painfully upon attention, it has not yet received a solution which accounts for all the facts and points to any clear and simple remedy. This is shown by the widely varying attempts to account for the prevailing depression. They exhibit not merely a divergence between vulgar notions and scientific theories, but also show that the concurrence which should exist between those who avow the same general theories breaks up upon practical questions into an anarchy of opinion. Upon high economic authority we have been told that the prevailing depression is due to over-consumption; upon equally high authority, that it is due to over-production; while the wastes of war, the extension of railroads, the attempts of workmen to keep up wages, the demonetization of silver, the issues of paper money, the increase of labor-saving machinery, the opening of shorter avenues to trade, etc., etc., are separately pointed out as the cause, by writers of reputation.

And while professors thus disagree, the ideas that there is a necessary conflict between capital and labor, that machinery is an evil, that competition must be restrained and interest abolished, that wealth may be created by the issue of money, that it is the duty of government to furnish capital or to furnish work, are rapidly making way among the great body of the people, who keenly feel a hurt and are sharply conscious of a wrong. Such ideas, which bring great masses of men, the repositories of ultimate political power, under the leadership of charlatans and demagogues, are fraught with danger; but they cannot be successfully combated until political economy shall give some answer to the great question which shall be consistent with all her teachings, and which shall commend itself to the perceptions of the great masses of men.

It must be within the province of political economy to give such an answer. For political economy is not a set of dogmas. It is the explanation of a certain set of facts. It is the science which, in the sequence of certain phenomena, seeks to trace mutual relations and to identify cause and effect, just as the physical sciences seek to do in other sets of phenomena. It lays its foundation upon firm ground. The premises from which it makes its deductions are truths which have the highest sanction; axioms which we all recognize; upon which we safely base the reasoning and actions of everyday life, and which may be reduced to the metaphysical expression of the physical law that motion seeks the line of least resistance—viz., that men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion. Proceeding from a basis thus assured, its processes, which consist simply in identification and separation, have the same certainty. In this sense it is as exact a science as geometry, which, from similar truths relative to space, obtains its conclusions by similar means, and its conclusions when valid should be as self-apparent. And although in the domain of political economy we cannot test our theories by artificially produced combinations or conditions, as may be done in some of the other sciences, yet we can apply tests no less conclusive, by comparing societies in which different conditions exist, or by, in imagination, separating, combining, adding or eliminating forces or factors of known direction.

I propose in the following pages to attempt to solve by the methods of political economy the great problem I have outlined. I propose to seek the law which associates poverty with progress, and increases want with advancing wealth; and I believe that in the explanation of this paradox we shall find the explanation of those recurring seasons of industrial and commercial paralysis which, viewed independently of their relations to more general phenomena, seem so inexplicable. Properly commenced and carefully pursued, such an investigation must yield a conclusion that will stand every test, and as truth, will correlate with all other truth. For in the sequence of phenomena there is no accident. Every effect has a cause, and every fact implies a preceding fact.

That political economy, as at present taught, does not explain the persistence of poverty amid advancing wealth in a manner which accords with the deep-seated perceptions of men; that the unquestionable truths which it does teach are unrelated and disjointed; that it has failed to make the progress in popular thought that truth, even when unpleasant, must make; that, on the contrary, after a century of cultivation, during which it has engrossed the attention of some of the most subtle and powerful intellects, it should be spurned by the statesman, scouted by the masses, and relegated in the opinion of many educated and thinking men to the rank of a pseudo-science in which nothing is fixed or can be fixed—must, it seems to me, be due not to any inability of the science when properly pursued, but to some false step in its premises, or overlooked factor in its estimates. And as such mistakes are generally concealed by the respect paid to authority, I propose in this inquiry to take nothing for granted, but to bring even accepted theories to the test of first principles, and should they not stand the test, freshly to interrogate facts in the endeavor to discover their law.

I propose to beg no question, to shrink from no conclusion, but to follow truth wherever it may lead. Upon us is the responsibility of seeking the law, for in the very heart

of our civilization today women faint and little children moan. But what that law may prove to be is not our affair. If the conclusions that we reach run counter to our prejudices, let us not flinch; if they challenge institutions that have long been deemed wise and natural, let us not turn back.

1879–1880

## *From* SOCIAL PROBLEMS

### CHAPTER IV

### *Two Opposing Tendencies*

So much freer, so much higher, so much fuller and wider is the life of our time, that, looking back, we cannot help feeling something like pity, if not contempt, for preceding generations.

Comforts, conveniences, luxuries, that a little while ago wealth could not purchase, are now matters of ordinary use. We travel in an hour, easily and comfortably, what to our fathers was a hard day's journey; we send in minutes messages that, in their time, would have taken weeks. We are better acquainted with remote countries than they with regions little distant; we know as common things what to them were fast-locked secrets of nature; our world is larger, our horizon is wider; in the years of our lives we may see more, do more, learn more.

Consider the diffusion of knowledge, the quickened transmission of intelligence. Compare the schoolbooks used by our children with the schoolbooks used by our fathers; see how cheap printing has brought within the reach of the masses the very treasures of literature; how enormously it has widened the audience of the novelist, the historian, the essayist and the poet; see how superior are even the trashy novels and story-papers in which shopgirls delight, to the rude ballads and "last dying speeches and confessions," which were their prototypes. Look at the daily newspapers, read even by the poorest, and giving to them glimpses of the doings of all classes of society, news from all parts of the world. Consider the illustrated journals that every week bring to the million pictures of life in all phases and in all countries— bird's-eye views of cities, of grand and beautiful landscapes; the features of noted men and women; the sittings of parliaments, and congresses, and conventions; the splendor of courts, and the wild life of savages; triumphs of art; glories of architecture; processes of industry; achievements of inventive skill. Such a panorama as thus, week after week, passes before the eyes of common men and women, the richest and most powerful could not a generation ago have commanded.

These things, and the many other things that the mention of these will suggest, are necessarily exerting a powerful influence upon thought and feeling. Superstitions are dying out, prejudices are giving way, manners and customs are becoming assimilated, sympathies are widening, new aspirations are quickening the masses.

We come into the world with minds ready to receive any impression. To the eyes of infancy all is new, and one thing is no more wonderful than another. In whatever lies beyond common experience we assume the beliefs of those about us, and it is only the strongest intellects that can in a little raise themselves above the accepted opinions of their times. In a community where that opinion prevailed, the vast majority of us would as unhesitatingly believe that the earth is a plain, supported by a gigantic elephant, as we now believe it a sphere circling round the sun. No theory is too false, no fable too absurd, no superstition too degrading for acceptance when it has become embedded in common belief. Men will submit themselves to tortures and to death, mothers will immolate their children, at the bidding of beliefs they thus accept. What more unnatural than polygamy? Yet see how long and how widely polygamy has existed!

In this tendency to accept what we find, to believe what we are told, is at once good and evil. It is this which makes social advance possible; it is this which makes it so slow and painful. Each generation thus obtains without effort the hard-won knowledge bequeathed to it; it is thus, also, enslaved by errors and perversions which it in the same way receives.

It is thus that tyranny is maintained and superstition perpetuated. Polygamy is unnatural. Obvious facts of universal experience

prove this. The uniform proportion in which the sexes are brought into the world; the exclusiveness of the feeling with which in healthy conditions they attract each other; the necessities imposed by the slow growth and development of children, point to the union of one man with one woman as the intent of Nature. Yet, although it is repugnant to the most obvious facts and to the strongest instincts, polygamy seems a perfectly natural thing to those educated in a society where it has become an accepted institution, and it is only by long effort and much struggling that this idea can be eradicated. So with slavery. Even to such minds as those of Plato and Aristotle, to own a man seemed as natural as to own a horse. Even in this nineteenth century and in this "land of liberty," how long has it been since those who denied the right of property in human flesh and blood were denounced as "communists," as "infidels," as "incendiaries," bent on uprooting social order and destroying all property rights? So with monarchy, so with aristocracy, so with many other things as unnatural that are still unquestioningly accepted. Can anything be more unnatural—that is to say, more repugnant to right reason and to the facts and laws of nature—than that those who work least should get most of the things that work produces? "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." That is not merely the word of the Apostle; it is the obvious law of Nature. Yet all over the world, hard and poor is the fare of the toiling masses; while those who aid production neither with hand nor with head live luxuriously and fare sumptuously. This we have been used to, and it has therefore seemed to us natural; just as polygamy, slavery, aristocracy and monarchy seem natural to those accustomed to them.

But mental habits which made this state of things seem natural are breaking up; superstitions which prevented its being questioned are melting away. The revelations of physical science, the increased knowledge of other times and other peoples, the extension of education, emigration, travel, the rise of the critical spirit and the changes in old methods everywhere going on, are destroying beliefs which made the masses of men content with the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water, are softening manners and widening sympathies, are extending the idea of human equality and brotherhood.

All over the world the masses of men are becoming more and more dissatisfied with conditions under which their fathers would have been contented. It is in vain that they are told that their situation has been much improved; it is in vain that it is pointed out to them that comforts, amusements, opportunities, are within their reach that their fathers would not have dreamed of. The having got so much, only leads them to ask why they should not have more. Desire grows by what it feeds on. Man is not like the ox. He has no fixed standard of satisfaction. To arouse his ambition, to educate him to new wants, is as certain to make him discontented with his lot as to make that lot harder. We resign ourselves to what we think cannot be bettered; but when we realize that improvement is possible, then we become restive. This is the explanation of the paradox that De Tocqueville thought astonishing: that the masses find their position the more intolerable the more it is improved. The slave codes were wise that prescribed pains and penalties for teaching bondsmen to read, and they reasoned well who opposed popular education on the ground that it would bring revolution.

But there is in the conditions of the civilized world today something more portentous than a growing restiveness under evils long endured. Everything tends to awake the sense of natural equality, to arouse the aspirations and ambitions of the masses, to excite a keener and keener perception of the gross injustice of existing inequalities of privilege and wealth. Yet, at the same time, everything tends to the rapid and monstrous increase of these inequalities. Never since great estates were eating out the heart of Rome has the world seen such enormous fortunes as are now arising—and never more utter proletarians. In the paper which contained a many-column account of the Vanderbilt ball, with its gorgeous dresses and its wealth of diamonds, with its profusion of roses, costing $2 each, and its precious wines flowing like water, I also read a brief item telling how, at a station-house

near by, thirty-nine persons—eighteen of them women—had sought shelter, and how they were all marched into court next morning and sent for six months to prison. "The women," said the item, "shrieked and sobbed bitterly as they were carried to prison." Christ was born of a woman. And to Mary Magdalen he turned in tender blessing. But such vermin have some of these human creatures, made in God's image, become, that we must shovel them off to prison without being too particular.

The railroad is a new thing. It has scarcely begun its work. Yet it has already differentiated the man who counts his income by millions every month, and the thousands of men glad to work for him at from 90 cents to $1.50 a day. Who shall set bounds, under present tendencies, to the great fortunes of the next generation? Or to the correlatives of these great fortunes, the tramps?

The tendency of all the inventions and improvements so wonderfully augmenting productive power is to concentrate enormous wealth in the hands of a few, to make the condition of the many more hopeless; to force into the position of machines for the production of wealth they are not to enjoy, men whose aspirations are being aroused. Without a single exception that I can think of, the effect of all modern industrial improvements is to production upon a large scale, to the minute division of labor, to the giving to the possession of large capital an overpowering advantage. Even such inventions as the telephone and the typewriter tend to the concentration of wealth, by adding to the ease with which large businesses can be managed, and lessening limitations that after a certain point made further extension more difficult.

The tendency of the machine is in everything not merely to place it out of the power of the workman to become his own employer, but to reduce him to the position of a mere attendant or feeder; to dispense with judgment, skill and brains, save in a few overseers; to reduce all others to the monotonous work of automatons, to which there is no future save the same unvarying round.

Under the old system of handicraft, the workman may have toiled hard and long, but in his work he had companionship, variety, the pleasure that comes of the exercise of creative skill, the sense of seeing things growing under his hand to finished form. He worked in his own home or side by side with his employer. Labor was lightened by emulation, by gossip, by laughter, by discussion. As apprentice, he looked forward to becoming a journeyman; as a journeyman, he looked forward to becoming a master and taking an apprentice of his own. With a few tools and a little raw material he was independent. He dealt directly with those who used the finished articles he produced. If he could not find a market for money he could find a market in exchange. That terrible dread —the dread of having the opportunities of livelihood shut off; of finding himself utterly helpless to provide for his family—never cast its shadow over him.

Consider the blacksmith of the industrial era now everywhere passing—or rather the "black and white smith," for the finished workman worked in steel as well. The smithy stood by roadside or street. Through its open doors were caught glimpses of nature; all that was passing could be seen. Wayfarers stopped to inquire, neighbors to tell or hear the news, children to see the hot iron glow and watch the red sparks fly. Now the smith shod a horse; now he put on a wagon-tire; now he forged and tempered a tool; again he welded a broken andiron, or beat out with graceful art a crane for the deep chimney-place, or, when there was nothing else to do, he wrought iron into nails.

Go now into one of those enormous establishments covering acres and acres, in which workmen by the thousand are massed together, and, by the aid of steam and machinery, iron is converted to its uses at a fraction of the cost of the old system. You cannot enter without permission from the office, for over each door you will find the sign, "Positively no admittance." If you are permitted to go in, you must not talk to the workmen; but that makes little difference, as amid the din and the clatter, and whir of belts and wheels, you could not if you would. Here you find men doing over and over the selfsame thing—passing, all day long, bars of iron through great rollers; presenting plates to steel jaws; turning, amid clangor in which you can scarcely "hear yourself think,"

bits of iron over and back again, sixty times a minute, for hour after hour, for day after day, for year after year. In the whole great establishment there will be not a man, save here and there one who got his training under the simpler system now passing away, who can do more than some minute part of what goes to the making of a salable article. The lad learns in a little while how to attend his particular machine. Then his progress stops. He may become gray-headed without learning more. As his children grow, the only way he has of augmenting his income is by setting them to work. As for aspiring to become master of such an establishment, with its millions of capital in machinery and stock, he might as well aspire to be King of England or Pope of Rome. He has no more control over the conditions that give him employment than has the passenger in a railroad car over the motion of the train. Causes which he can neither prevent nor foresee may at any time stop his machine and throw him upon the world, an utterly unskilled laborer, unaccustomed even to swing a pick or handle a spade. When times are good, and his employer is coining money, he can only get an advance by a strike or a threatened strike. At the least symptoms of harder times his wages are scaled down, and he can only resist by a strike, which means, for a longer or shorter time, no wages.

I have spoken of but one trade; but the tendency is the same in all others. This is the form that industrial organization is everywhere assuming, even in agriculture. Great corporations are now stocking immense ranges with cattle, and "bonanza farms" are cultivated by gangs of nomads destitute of anything that can be called home. In all occupations the workman is steadily becoming divorced from the tools and opportunities of labor; everywhere the inequalities of fortune are becoming more glaring. And this at a time when thought is being quickened; when the old forces of conservatism are giving way; when the idea of human equality is growing and spreading.

When between those who work and want and those who live in idle luxury there is so great a gulf fixed that in popular imagination they seem to belong to distinct orders of beings; when, in the name of religion, it is persistently instilled into the masses that all things in this world are ordered by Divine Providence, which appoints to each his place; when children are taught from the earliest infancy that it is, to use the words of the Episcopal catechism, their duty toward God and man to "honor and obey the civil authority," to "order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters, and to do their duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call them"; when these counsels of humility, of contentment and of self-abasement are enforced by the terrible threat of an eternity of torture, while on the other hand the poor are taught to believe that if they patiently bear their lot here God will after death translate them to a heaven where there is no private property and no poverty, the most glaring inequalities in condition may excite neither envy nor indignation.

But the ideas that are stirring in the world today are different from these.

Near nineteen hundred years ago, when another civilization was developing monstrous inequalities, when the masses everywhere were being ground into hopeless slavery, there arose in a Jewish village an unlearned carpenter, who, scorning the orthodoxies and ritualisms of the time, preached to laborers and fishermen the gospel of the fatherhood of God, of the equality and brotherhood of men, who taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The college professors sneered at him, the orthodox preachers denounced him. He was reviled as a dreamer, as a disturber, as a "communist," and, finally, organized society took the alarm, and he was crucified between two thieves. But the word went forth, and, spread by fugitives and slaves, made its way against power and against persecution till it revolutionized the world, and out of the rotting old civilization brought the germ of the new. Then the privileged classes rallied again, carved the effigy of the man of the people in the courts and on the tombs of kings, in his name consecrated inequality, and wrested his gospel to the defense of social injustice. But again the same great ideas of a common fatherhood, of a common brotherhood, of a social state in which none shall be

overworked and none shall want, begin to quicken in common thought.

When a mighty wind meets a strong current, it does not portend a smooth sea. And whoever will think of the opposing tendencies beginning to develop will appreciate the gravity of the social problems the civilized world must soon meet. He will also understand the meaning of Christ's words when he said:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword."

1883

CHAPTER VI

## *The Wrong in Existing Social Conditions*

The comfortable theory that it is in the nature of things that some should be poor and some should be rich, and that the gross and constantly increasing inequalities in the distribution of wealth imply no fault in our institutions, pervades our literature, and is taught in the press, in the church, in school and in college.

This is a free country, we are told—every man has a vote and every man has a chance. The laborer's son may become President; poor boys of today will be millionaires thirty or forty years from now, and the millionaire's grandchildren will probably be poor. What more can be asked? If a man has energy, industry, prudence and foresight, he may win his way to great wealth. If he has not the ability to do this he must not complain of those who have. If some enjoy much and do little, it is because they, or their parents, possessed superior qualities which enabled them to "acquire property" or "make money." If others must work hard and get little, it is because they have not yet got their start, because they are ignorant, shiftless, unwilling to practise that economy necessary for the first accumulation of capital; or because their fathers were wanting in these respects. The inequalities in condition result from the inequalities of human nature, from the difference in the powers and capacities of different men. If one has to toil ten or twelve hours a day for a few hundred dollars a year, while another, doing little or no hard work, gets an income of many thousands, it is because all that the former contributes to the augmentation of the common stock of wealth is little more than the mere force of his muscles. He can expect little more than the animal, because he brings into play little more than animal powers. He is but a private in the ranks of the great army of industry, who has but to stand still or march, as he is bid. The other is the organizer, the general, who guides and wields the whole great machine, who must think, plan and provide; and his larger income is only commensurate with the far higher and rarer powers which he exercises, and the far greater importance of the function he fulfils. Shall not education have its reward, and skill its payment? What incentive would there be to the toil needed to learn to do anything well were great prizes not to be gained by those who learn to excel? It would not merely be gross injustice to refuse a Raphael or a Rubens more than a house-painter, but it would prevent the development of great painters. To destroy inequalities in condition would be to destroy the incentive to progress. To quarrel with them is to quarrel with the laws of nature. We might as well rail against the length of the days or the phases of the moon; complain that there are valleys and mountains; zones of tropical heat and regions of eternal ice. And were we by violent measures to divide wealth equally, we should accomplish nothing but harm; in a little while there would be inequalities as great as before.

This, in substance, is the teaching which we constantly hear. It is accepted by some because it is flattering to their vanity, in accordance with their interests or pleasing to their hope; by others, because it is dinned into their ears. Like all false theories that obtain wide acceptance, it contains much truth. But it is truth isolated from other truth or alloyed with falsehood.

To try to pump out a ship with a hole in her hull would be hopeless; but that is not to say that leaks may not be stopped and ships pumped dry. It is undeniable that, under present conditions, inequalities in fortune would tend to reassert themselves even if arbitrarily leveled for a moment; but that does not prove that the conditions from which this tendency to inequality springs may not be altered. Nor

because there are differences in human qualities and powers does it follow that existing inequalities of fortune are thus accounted for. I have seen very fast compositors and very slow compositors, but the fastest I ever saw could not set twice as much type as the slowest, and I doubt if in other trades the variations are greater. Between normal men the difference of a sixth or seventh is a great difference in height —the tallest giant ever known was scarcely more than four times as tall as the smallest dwarf ever known, and I doubt if any good observer will say that the mental differences of men are greater than the physical differences. Yet we already have men hundreds of millions of times richer than other men.

That he who produces should have, that he who saves should enjoy, is consistent with human reason and with the natural order. But existing inequalities of wealth cannot be justified on this ground. As a matter of fact, how many great fortunes can be truthfully said to have been fairly earned? How many of them represent wealth produced by their possessors or those from whom their present possessors derived them? Did there not go to the formation of all of them something more than superior industry and skill? Such qualities may give the first start, but when fortunes begin to roll up into millions there will always be found some element of monopoly, some appropriation of wealth produced by others. Often there is a total absence of superior industry, skill or self-denial, and merely better luck or greater unscrupulousness.

An acquaintance of mine died in San Francisco recently, leaving $4,000,000, which will go to heirs to be looked up in England. I have known many men more industrious, more skilful, more temperate than he—men who did not or who will not leave a cent. This man did not get his wealth by his industry, skill or temperance. He no more produced it than did those lucky relations in England who may now do nothing for the rest of their lives. He became rich by getting hold of a piece of land in the early days, which, as San Francisco grew, became very valuable. His wealth represented not what he had earned, but what the monopoly of this bit of the earth's surface enabled him to appropriate of the earnings of others.

A man died in Pittsburgh, the other day, leaving $3,000,000. He may or may not have been particularly industrious, skilful and economical, but it was not by virtue of these qualities that he got so rich. It was because he went to Washington and helped lobby through a bill which, by way of "protecting American workmen against the pauper labor of Europe," gave him the advantage of a sixty-per-cent tariff. To the day of his death he was a stanch protectionist, and said free trade would ruin our "infant industries." Evidently the $3,000,000 which he was enabled to lay by from his own little cherub of an "infant industry" did not represent what he had added to production. It was the advantage given him by the tariff that enabled him to scoop it up from other people's earnings.

This element of monopoly, of appropriation and spoliation will, when we come to analyze them, be found largely to account for all great fortunes.

There are two classes of men who are always talking as though great fortunes resulted from the power of increase belonging to capital—those who declare that present social adjustments are all right; and those who denounce capital and insist that interest should be abolished. The typical rich man of the one set is he who, saving his earnings, devotes the surplus to aiding production, and becomes rich by the natural growth of his capital. The other set make calculations of the enormous sum a dollar put out at six per cent compound interest will amount to in a hundred years, and say we must abolish interest if we would prevent the growth of great fortunes.

But I think it difficult to instance any great fortune really due to the legitimate growth of capital obtained by industry.

The great fortune of the Rothschilds springs from the treasure secured by the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel by selling his people to England to fight against our forefathers in their struggle for independence. It began in the blood-money received by this petty tyrant from greater tyrants as the price of the lives of his subjects. It has grown to its present enormous dimensions by the jobbing of loans raised by European kings for holding in subjection the people and waging destructive wars upon each other. It no

more represents the earnings of industry or of capital than do the sums now being wrung by England from the poverty-stricken fellahs of Egypt to pay for the enormous profits on loans to the Khedive, which he wasted on palaces, yachts, harems, ballet-dancers, and cartloads of diamonds, such as he gave to the Shermans.

The great fortune of the Duke of Westminster, the richest of the rich men of England, is purely the result of appropriation. It no more springs from the earnings of the present Duke of Westminster or any of his ancestors than did the great fortunes bestowed by Russian monarchs on their favorites when they gave them thousands of the Russian people as their serfs. An English king, long since dead, gave to an ancestor of the present Duke of Westminster a piece of land over which the city of London has now extended—that is to say, he gave him the privilege, still recognized by the stupid English people, which enables the present duke to appropriate so much of the earnings of so many thousands of the present generation of Englishmen.

So, too, the great fortunes of the English brewers and distillers have been largely built up by the operation of the excise in fostering monopoly and concentrating the business.

Or, turning again to the United States, take the great fortune of the Astors. It represents for the most part a similar appropriation of the earnings of others, as does the income of the Duke of Westminster and other English landlords. The first Astor made an arrangement with certain people living in his time by virtue of which his children are now allowed to tax other people's children—to demand a very large part of their earnings from many thousands of the present population of New York. Its main element is not production or saving. No human being can produce land or lay up land. If the Astors had all remained in Germany, or if there had never been any Astors, the land of Manhattan Island would have been here all the same.

Take the great Vanderbilt fortune. The first Vanderbilt was a boatman who earned money by hard work and saved it. But it was not working and saving that enabled him to leave such an enormous fortune. It was spoliation and monopoly. As soon as he got money enough he used it as a club to extort from others their earnings. He ran off opposition lines and monopolized routes of steamboat travel. Then he went into railroads, pursuing the same tactics. The Vanderbilt fortune no more comes from working and saving than did the fortune that Captain Kidd buried.

Or take the great Gould fortune. Mr. Gould might have got his first little start by superior industry and superior self-denial. But it is not that which has made him the master of a hundred millions. It was by wrecking railroads, buying judges, corrupting legislatures, getting up rings and pools and combinations to raise or depress stock values and transportation rates.

So, likewise, of the great fortunes which the Pacific railroads have created. They have been made by lobbying through profligate donations of lands, bonds and subsidies, by the operations of Crédit Mobilier and Contract and Finance Companies, by monopolizing and gouging. And so of fortunes made by such combinations as the Standard Oil Company, the Bessemer Steel Ring, the Whisky Tax Ring, the Lucifer Match Ring, and the various rings for the "protection of the American workman from the pauper labor of Europe."

Or take the fortunes made out of successful patents. Like that element in so many fortunes that comes from the increased value of land, these result from monopoly, pure and simple. And though I am not now discussing the expediency of patent laws, it may be observed, in passing, that in the vast majority of cases the men who make fortunes out of patents are not the men who make the inventions.

Through all great fortunes, and, in fact, through nearly all acquisitions that in these days can fairly be termed fortunes, these elements of monopoly, of spoliation, of gambling run. The head of one of the largest manufacturing firms in the United States said to me recently, "It is not on our ordinary business that we make our money; it is where we can get a monopoly." And this, I think, is generally true.

Consider the important part in building up fortunes which the increase of land values has had, and is having, in the United States.

This is, of course, monopoly, pure and simple. When land increases in value it does not mean that its owner has added to the general wealth. The owner may never have seen the land or done aught to improve it. He may, and often does, live in a distant city or in another country. Increase of land values simply means that the owners, by virtue of their appropriation of something that existed before man was, have the power of taking a larger share of the wealth produced by other people's labor. Consider how much the monopolies created and the advantages given to the unscrupulous by the tariff and by our system of internal taxation—how much the railroad (a business in its nature a monopoly), telegraph, gas, water and other similar monopolies, have done to concentrate wealth; how special rates, pools, combinations, corners, stock-watering and stock-gambling, the destructive use of wealth in driving off or buying off opposition which the public must finally pay for, and many other things which these will suggest, have operated to build up large fortunes, and it will at least appear that the unequal distribution of wealth is due in great measure to sheer spoliation; that the reason why those who work hard get so little, while so many who work little get so much, is, in very large measure, that the earnings of the one class are, in one way or another, filched away from them to swell the incomes of the other.

That individuals are constantly making their way from the ranks of those who get less than their earnings to the ranks of those who get more than their earnings, no more proves this state of things right than the fact that merchant sailors were constantly becoming pirates and participating in the profits of piracy, would prove that piracy was right and that no effort should be made to suppress it.

I am not denouncing the rich, nor seeking, by speaking of these things, to excite envy and hatred; but if we would get a clear understanding of social problems, we must recognize the fact that it is due to monopolies which we permit and create, to advantages which we give one man over another, to methods of extortion sanctioned by law and by public opinion, that some men are enabled to get so enormously rich while others remain so miserably poor. If we look around us and note the elements of monopoly, extortion and spoliation which go to the building up of all, or nearly all, fortunes, we see on the one hand how disingenuous are those who preach to us that there is nothing wrong in social relations and that the inequalities in the distribution of wealth spring from the inequalities of human nature; and on the other hand, we see how wild are those who talk as though capital were a public enemy, and propose plans for arbitrarily restricting the acquisition of wealth. Capital is a good; the capitalist is a helper, if he is not also a monopolist. We can safely let any one get as rich as he can if he will not despoil others in doing so.

There are deep wrongs in the present constitution of society, but they are not wrongs inherent in the constitution of man nor in those social laws which are as truly the laws of the Creator as are the laws of the physical universe. They are wrongs resulting from bad adjustments which it is within our power to amend. The ideal social state is not that in which each gets an equal amount of wealth, but in which each gets in proportion to his contribution to the general stock. And in such a social state there would not be less incentive to exertion than now; there would be far more incentive. Men will be more industrious and more moral, better workmen and better citizens, if each takes his earnings and carries them home to his family, than where they put their earnings in a "pot" and gamble for them until some have far more than they could have earned, and others have little or nothing.

1883

# 1850 ~ *Edward Bellamy* ~ 1898

PROPAGANDIST, romancer, and social reformer, Edward Bellamy represents, with Henry George, the reaction against the high-powered industrialism of the Gilded Age. He was born, and lived practically all his life, in Chicopee, Massachusetts, where his father was pastor of a Baptist Church for thirty-five years. He attended Union College as a special student of literature, and in 1868 went to Europe for a year. After his return he studied law, was admitted to the bar, but abandoned practice to accept an editorial position on the *Springfield Union*. Later he was on the staff of the New York *Evening Post*, and in 1880 he and his brother founded the Springfield *Daily News*. Meanwhile he had published in a newspaper an unfinished novel entitled *The Duke of Stockbridge* (1879). This was followed by *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* (1880) and *Mrs. Ludington's Sister* (1884). Having definitely adopted literature as a career, he began *Looking Backward* in 1886, completing it in two years. With the income from his books he founded and financed the *New Nation*, published in Boston. The writing of his last book, *Equality* (1897), so drained his physical resources that he became a victim of tuberculosis, from the effects of which, after a futile visit to Colorado in search of a cure, he died in his native town.

Although some of the earlier works invited comparison with Hawthorne, his fame rests almost exclusively on *Looking Backward* (1888). This is a Utopian novel, the germ of which is the unequal distribution of wealth, and the consequent extremes of great wealth and dire poverty. While traveling in Europe as a boy of eighteen he was impressed by the economic abyss which separated the upper and lower classes, and he had ample opportunity to see a similar and widening gap in his own country. His avowed purpose in *Looking Backward* is to arrive at an economic system by means of which the government could guarantee economic well-being to all citizens; in other words, to realize the equal opportunity for happiness as promised in the Declaration of Independence. The scene of the story is laid in the year 2000 A.D., and is told by the hero, whose memory miraculously bridges the hundred and more intervening years, against the background of the recreated state as Bellamy envisions it.

The book had an unparalleled vogue in this country and abroad, and still continues in print. As a romance it is not only readable but even fascinating. As a piece of Utopian propaganda it shares the faults common to all such endeavors, especially the doctrinaire refusal to accept the essential facts about human nature. One accustomed to the old order could hardly conceive of a society without money, politics, crime, labor troubles, and inordinate ambition.

Bellamy's chief works are *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* (1880); *Miss Ludington's Sister* (1884); *Looking Backward, 2000–1887* (1888); *Equality* (sequel to *Looking Backward*) (1897); *The Blind Man's World and Other Stories* (1898); *The Duke of Stockbridge* (1900). No extended biography of Bellamy has yet appeared. For brief criticism see *DAB*, II; F. Bellamy, introduction to *The Duke of Stockbridge* (1900); S. Baxter, introduction to *Looking Backward* (1931); H. P. Peebles, "Utopias of the Past Compared with the Theories of Bellamy," *Overland Monthly*, Sept., 1921; R. L. Shurter, "The Literary Work of Edward Bellamy," *American Literature*, Nov., 1933; I. M. Tarbell, "New Dealers of the Seventies," *Forum*, Oct., 1934; V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1927–30); C. Ticknor, *Glimpses of Authors* (1922); and Jay Hertzler, *History of Utopian Thought* (1923).

## *From* LOOKING BACKWARD

*Looking Backward* is a novel of social criticism, written from the socialistic viewpoint, and dealing with the industrial maladjustments of the Gilded Age, such as the conflict between capital and labor and the unequal distribution of wealth. Chapter one is a description of the way of life in a capitalistic society as Bellamy sees it. With this, chapter five, which contains an account of the transformed society, stands in sharp contrast. The intervening chapters launch the fantastic plot which centers about a young man, Julian West, who falls into a mesmeric sleep in capitalistic Boston and awakens one hundred and thirteen years later to find himself in a socialistic Boston.

### CHAPTER I

I FIRST saw the light in the city of Boston in the year 1857. "What!" you say, "eighteen fifty-seven? That is an odd slip. He means nineteen fifty-seven, of course." I beg pardon, but there is no mistake. It was about four in the afternoon of December the 26th, one day after Christmas, in the year 1857, not 1957, that I first breathed the east wind of Boston, which, I assure the reader, was at that remote period marked by the same penetrating quality characterizing it in the present year of grace, 2000.

These statements seem so absurd on their face, especially when I add that I am a young man apparently of about thirty years of age, that no person can be blamed for refusing to read another word of what promises to be a mere imposition upon his credulity. Nevertheless I earnestly assure the reader that no imposition is intended, and will undertake, if he shall follow me a few pages, to entirely convince him of this. If I may, then, provisionally assume, with the pledge of justifying the assumption, that I know better than the reader when I was born, I will go on with my narrative. As every schoolboy knows, in the latter part of the nineteenth century the civilization of today, or anything like it, did not exist, although the elements which were to develop it were already in ferment. Nothing had, however, occurred to modify the immemorial division of society into the four classes, or nations, as they may be more fitly called, since the differences between them were far greater than those between any nations nowadays, of the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant. I myself was rich and also educated, and possessed, therefore, all the elements of happiness enjoyed by the most fortunate in that age. Living in luxury, and occupied only with the pursuit of the pleasures and refinements of life, I derived the means of my support from the labor of others, rendering no sort of service in return. My parents and grandparents had lived in the same way, and I expected that my descendants, if I had any, would enjoy a like easy existence.

But how could I live without service to the world? you ask. Why should the world have supported in utter idleness one who was able to render service? The answer is that my great-grandfather had accumulated a sum of money on which his descendants had ever since lived. The sum, you will naturally infer, must have been very large not to have been exhausted in supporting three generations in idleness. This, however, was not the fact. The sum had been originally by no means large. It was, in fact, much larger now that three generations had been supported upon it in idleness, than it was at first. This mystery of

use without consumption, of warmth without combustion, seems like magic, but was merely an ingenious application of the art now happily lost but carried to great perfection by your ancestors, of shifting the burden of one's support on the shoulders of others. The man who had accomplished this, and it was the end all sought, was said to live on the income of his investments. To explain at this point how the ancient methods of industry made this possible would delay us too much. I shall only stop now to say that interest on investments was a species of tax in perpetuity upon the product of those engaged in industry which a person possessing or inheriting money was able to levy. It must not be supposed that an arrangement which seems so unnatural and preposterous according to modern notions was never criticised by your ancestors. It had been the effort of lawgivers and prophets from the earliest ages to abolish interest, or at least to limit it to the smallest possible rate. All these efforts had, however, failed, as they necessarily must so long as the ancient social organizations prevailed. At the time of which I write, the latter part of the nineteenth century, governments had generally given up trying to regulate the subject at all.

By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days, and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than to compare society as it then was to a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and to leave it to his child after him. By the rule of the coach a man could leave his seat to whom he wished, but on the other hand there were many accidents by which it might at any time be wholly lost. For all that they were so easy, the seats were very insecure, and at every sudden jolt of the coach persons were slipping out of them and falling to the ground, where they were instantly compelled to take hold of the rope and help to drag the coach on which they had before ridden so pleasantly. It was naturally regarded as a terrible misfortune to lose one's seat, and the apprehension that this might happen to them or their friends was a constant cloud upon the happiness of those who rode.

But did they think only of themselves? you ask. Was not their very luxury rendered intolerable to them by comparison with the lot of their brothers and sisters in the harness, and the knowledge that their own weight added to their toil? Had they no compassion for fellow beings from whom fortune only distinguished them? Oh, yes; commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially when the vehicle came to a bad place in the road, as it was constantly doing, or to a particularly steep hill. At such times, the desperate straining of the team, their agonized leaping and plunging under the pitiless lashing of hunger, the many who fainted at the rope and were trampled in the mire, made a very distressing spectacle, which often called forth highly creditable displays of feeling on the top of the coach. At such times the passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments for the crippled and injured. It was agreed that it was a great pity that the coach should be so hard to pull, and there was a sense of general relief when the specially bad piece of road was gotten over. This relief was not, indeed, wholly on account of the team, for there was always some danger at these bad places of a general overturn in which all would lose their seats.

It must in truth be admitted that the main effect of the spectacle of the misery of the

toilers at the rope was to enhance the passengers' sense of the value of their seats upon the coach, and to cause them to hold on to them more desperately than before. If the passengers could only have felt assured that neither they nor their friends would ever fall from the top, it is probable that, beyond contributing to the funds for liniments and bandages, they would have troubled themselves extremely little about those who dragged the coach.

I am well aware that this will appear to the men and women of the twentieth century an incredible inhumanity, but there are two facts, both very curious, which partly explain it. In the first place, it was firmly and sincerely believed that there was no other way in which Society could get along, except the many pulled at the rope and the few rode, and not only this, but that no very radical improvement even was possible, either in the harness, the coach, the roadway, or the distribution of the toil. It had always been as it was, and it always would be so. It was a pity, but it could not be helped, and philosophy forbade wasting compassion on what was beyond remedy.

The other fact is yet more curious, consisting in a singular hallucination which those on the top of the coach generally shared, that they were not exactly like their brothers and sisters who pulled at the rope, but of finer clay, in some way belonging to a higher order of beings who might justly expect to be drawn. This seems unaccountable, but, as I once rode on this very coach and shared that very hallucination, I ought to be believed. The strangest thing about the hallucination was that those who had but just climbed up from the ground, before they had outgrown the marks of the rope upon their hands, began to fall under its influence. As for those whose parents and grandparents before them had been so fortunate as to keep their seats on the top, the conviction they cherished of the essential difference between their sort of humanity and the common article was absolute. The effect of such a delusion in moderating fellow feeling for the sufferings of the mass of men into a distant and philosophical compassion is obvious. To it I refer as the only extenuation I can offer for the indifference which, at the period I write of, marked my own attitude toward the misery of my brothers.

In 1887 I came to my thirtieth year. Although still unmarried, I was engaged to wed Edith Bartlett. She, like myself, rode on the top of the coach. That is to say, not to encumber ourselves further with an illustration which has, I hope, served its purpose of giving the reader some general impression of how we lived then, her family was wealthy. In that age, when money alone commanded all that was agreeable and refined in life, it was enough for a woman to be rich to have suitors; but Edith Bartlett was beautiful and graceful also.

My lady readers, I am aware, will protest at this. "Handsome she might have been," I hear them saying, "but graceful never, in the costumes which were the fashion at that period, when the head covering was a dizzy structure a foot tall, and the almost incredible extension of the skirt behind by means of artificial contrivances more thoroughly dehumanized the form than any former device of dressmakers. Fancy any one graceful in such a costume!" The point is certainly well taken, and I can only reply that while the ladies of the twentieth century are lovely demonstrations of the effect of appropriate drapery in accenting feminine graces, my recollection of their great-grandmothers enables me to maintain that no deformity of costume can wholly disguise them.

Our marriage only waited on the completion of the house which I was building for our occupancy in one of the most desirable parts of the city, that is to say, a part chiefly inhabited by the rich. For it must be understood that the comparative desirability of different parts of Boston for residence depended then, not on natural features, but on the character of the neighboring population. Each class or nation lived by itself, in quarters of its own. A rich man living among the poor, an educated man among the uneducated, was like one living in isolation among a jealous and alien race. When the house had been begun, its completion by the winter of 1886 had been expected. The spring of the following year found it, however, yet incomplete, and my marriage still a thing of the future. The cause of a delay calculated to be par-

ticularly exasperating to an ardent lover was a series of strikes, that is to say, concerted refusals to work on the part of the bricklayers, masons, carpenters, painters, plumbers, and other trades concerned in house building. What the specific causes of these strikes were I do not remember. Strikes had become so common at that period that people had ceased to inquire into their particular grounds. In one department of industry or another, they had been nearly incessant ever since the great business crisis of 1873. In fact it had come to be the exceptional thing to see any class of laborers pursue their avocation steadily for more than a few months at a time.

The reader who observes the dates alluded to will of course recognize in these disturbances of industry the first and incoherent phase of the great movement which ended in the establishment of the modern industrial system with all its social consequences. This is all so plain in the retrospect that a child can understand it, but not being prophets, we of that day had no clear idea what was happening to us. What we did see was that industrially the country was in a very queer way. The relation between the workingman and the employer, between labor and capital, appeared in some unaccountable manner to have become dislocated. The working classes had quite suddenly and very generally become infected with a profound discontent with their condition, and an idea that it could be greatly bettered if they only knew how to go about it. On every side, with one accord, they preferred demands for higher pay, shorter hours, better dwellings, better educational advantages, and a share in the refinements and luxuries of life, demands which it was impossible to see the way to granting unless the world were to become a great deal richer than it then was. Though they knew something of what they wanted, they knew nothing of how to accomplish it, and the eager enthusiasm with which they thronged about any one who seemed likely to give them any light on the subject lent sudden reputation to many would-be leaders, some of whom had little enough light to give. However chimerical the aspirations of the laboring classes might be deemed, the devotion with which they supported one another in the strikes, which were their chief weapon, and the sacrifices which they underwent to carry them out left no doubt of their dead earnestness.

As to the final outcome of the labor troubles, which was the phrase by which the movement I have described was most commonly referred to, the opinions of the people of my class differed according to individual temperament. The sanguine argued very forcibly that it was in the very nature of things impossible that the new hopes of the workingmen could be satisfied, simply because the world had not the wherewithal to satisfy them. It was only because the masses worked very hard and lived on short commons that the race did not starve outright, and no considerable improvement in their condition was possible while the world, as a whole, remained so poor. It was not the capitalists whom the laboring men were contending with, these maintained, but the iron-bound environment of humanity, and it was merely a question of the thickness of their skulls when they would discover the fact and make up their minds to endure what they could not cure.

The less sanguine admitted all this. Of course the workingmen's aspirations were impossible of fulfillment for natural reasons, but there were grounds to fear that they would not discover this fact until they had made a sad mess of society. They had the votes and the power to do so if they pleased, and their leaders meant they should. Some of these desponding observers went so far as to predict an impending social cataclysm. Humanity, they argued, having climbed to the top round of the ladder of civilization, was about to take a header into chaos, after which it would doubtless pick itself up, turn round, and begin to climb again. Repeated experiences of this sort in historic and prehistoric times possibly accounted for the puzzling bumps on the human cranium. Human history, like all great movements, was cyclical, and returned to the point of beginning. The idea of indefinite progress in a right line was a chimera of the imagination, with no analogue in nature. The parabola of a comet was perhaps a yet better illustration of the career of humanity. Tending upward and sunward from the aphe-

lion of barbarism, the race attained the perihelion of civilization only to plunge downward once more to its nether goal in the regions of chaos.

This, of course, was an extreme opinion, but I remember serious men among my acquaintances who, in discussing the signs of the times, adopted a very similar tone. It was no doubt the common opinion of thoughtful men that society was approaching a critical period which might result in great changes. The labor troubles, their causes, course, and cure, took lead of all other topics in the public prints, and in serious conversation.

The nervous tension of the public mind could not have been more strikingly illustrated than it was by the alarm resulting from the talk of a small band of men who called themselves anarchists, and proposed to terrify the American people into adopting their ideas by threats of violence, as if a mighty nation which had but just put down a rebellion of half its own numbers, in order to maintain its political system, were likely to adopt a new social system out of fear.

As one of the wealthy, with a large stake in the existing order of things, I naturally shared the apprehensions of my class. The particular grievance I had against the working classes at the time of which I write, on account of the effect of their strikes in postponing my wedded bliss, no doubt lent a special animosity to my feeling toward them.

[Chapters two, three, and four relate how Julian West, the hero, fell into a trance in his underground sleeping room in the year 1887; how he was awakened from the trance in the year 2000, met Dr. Leete and his family, and became aware of astounding changes.]

### CHAPTER V

When, in the course of the evening the ladies retired, leaving Dr. Leete and myself alone, he sounded me as to my disposition for sleep, saying that if I felt like it my bed was ready for me; but if I was inclined to wakefulness nothing would please him better than to bear me company. "I am a late bird, myself," he said, "and, without suspicion of flattery, I may say that a companion more interesting than yourself could scarcely be imagined. It is decidedly not often that one has a chance to converse with a man of the nineteenth century."

Now I had been looking forward all the evening with some dread to the time when I should be alone, on retiring for the night. Surrounded by these most friendly strangers, stimulated and supported by their sympathetic interest, I had been able to keep my mental balance. Even then, however, in pauses of the conversation I had had glimpses, vivid as lightning flashes, of the horror of strangeness that was waiting to be faced when I could no longer command diversion. I knew I could not sleep that night, and as for lying awake and thinking, it argues no cowardice, I am sure, to confess that I was afraid of it. When, in reply to my host's question, I frankly told him this, he replied that it would be strange if I did not feel just so, but that I need have no anxiety about sleeping; whenever I wanted to go to bed, he would give me a dose which would insure me a sound night's sleep without fail. Next morning, no doubt, I would awake with the feeling of an old citizen.

"Before I acquire that," I replied, "I must know a little more about the sort of Boston I have come back to. You told me when we were upon the housetop that though a century only had elapsed since I fell asleep, it had been marked by greater changes in the conditions of humanity than many a previous millennium. With the city before me I could well believe that, but I am very curious to know what some of the changes have been. To make a beginning somewhere, for the subject is doubtless a large one, what solution, if any, have you found for the labor question? It was the Sphinx's riddle of the nineteenth century, and when I dropped out the Sphinx was threatening to devour society, because the answer was not forthcoming. It is well worth sleeping a hundred years to learn what the right answer was, if, indeed, you have found it yet."

"As no such thing as the labor question is known nowadays," replied Dr. Leete, "and there is no way in which it could arise, I suppose we may claim to have solved it. Society would indeed have fully deserved being devoured if it had failed to answer a riddle so

purely simple. In fact, to speak by the book, it was not necessary for society to solve the riddle at all. It may be said to have solved itself. The solution came as the result of a process of industrial evolution which could not have terminated otherwise. All that society had to do was to recognize and coöperate with that evolution, when its tendency had become unmistakable."

"I can only say," I answered, "that at the time I fell asleep no such evolution had been recognized."

"It was in 1887 that you fell into this sleep, I think you said."

"Yes, May 30th, 1887."

My companion regarded me musingly for some moments. Then he observed, "And you tell me that even then there was no general recognition of the nature of the crisis which society was nearing? Of course, I fully credit your statement. The singular blindness of your contemporaries to the signs of the times is a phenomenon commented on by many of our historians, but few facts of history are more difficult for us to realize, so obvious and unmistakable as we look back seem the indications, which must also have come under your eyes, of the transformation about to come to pass. I should be interested, Mr. West, if you would give me a little more definite idea of the view which you and men of your grade of intellect took of the state and prospects of society in 1887. You must, at least, have realized that the widespread industrial and social troubles, and the underlying dissatisfaction of all classes with the inequalities of society, and the general misery of mankind, were portents of great changes of some sort."

"We did, indeed, fully realize that," I replied. "We felt that society was dragging anchor and in danger of going adrift. Whither it would drift nobody could say, but all feared the rocks."

"Nevertheless," said Dr. Leete, "the set of the current was perfectly perceptible if you had but taken pains to observe it, and it was not toward the rocks, but toward a deeper channel."

"We had a popular proverb," I replied, "that 'hindsight is better than foresight,' the force of which I shall now, no doubt, appreciate more fully than ever. All I can say is, that the prospect was such when I went into that long sleep that I should not have been surprised had I looked down from your housetop today on a heap of charred and moss-grown ruins instead of this glorious city."

Dr. Leete had listened to me with close attention and nodded thoughtfully as I finished speaking. "What you have said," he observed, "will be regarded as a most valuable vindication of Storiot, whose account of your era has been generally thought exaggerated in its pictures of the gloom and confusion of men's minds. That a period of transition like that should be full of excitement and agitation was indeed to be looked for; but seeing how plain was the tendency of the forces in operation, it was natural to believe that hope rather than fear would have been the prevailing temper of the popular mind."

"You have not yet told me what was the answer to the riddle which you found," I said. "I am impatient to know by what contradiction of natural sequence the peace and prosperity which you now seem to enjoy could have been the outcome of an era like my own."

"Excuse me," replied my host, "but do you smoke?" It was not till our cigars were lighted and drawing well that he resumed. "Since you are in the humor to talk rather than to sleep, as I certainly am, perhaps I cannot do better than to try to give you enough idea of our modern industrial system to dissipate at least the impression that there is any mystery about the process of its evolution. The Bostonians of your day had the reputation of being great askers of questions, and I am going to show my descent by asking you one to begin with. What should you name as the most prominent feature of the labor troubles of your day?"

"Why, the strikes, of course," I replied.

"Exactly; but what made the strikes so formidable?"

"The great labor organizations."

"And what was the motive of these great organizations?"

"The workmen claimed they had to organize to get their rights from the big corporations," I replied.

"That is just it," said Dr. Leete; "the organization of labor and the strikes were an effect,

merely, of the concentration of capital in greater masses than had ever been known before. Before this concentration began, while as yet commerce and industry were conducted by innumerable petty concerns with small capital, instead of a small number of great concerns with vast capital, the individual workman was relatively important and independent in his relations to the employer. Moreover, when a little capital or a new idea was enough to start a man in business for himself, workingmen were constantly becoming employers and there was no hard and fast line between the two classes. Labor unions were needless then, and general strikes out of the question. But when the era of small concerns with small capital was succeeded by that of the great aggregations of capital, all this was changed. The individual laborer, who had been relatively important to the small employer, was reduced to insignificance and powerlessness over against the great corporation, while at the same time the way upward to the grade of employer was closed to him. Self-defense drove him to union with his fellows.

"The records of the period show that the outcry against the concentration of capital was furious. Men believed that it threatened society with a form of tyranny more abhorrent than it had ever endured. They believed that the great corporations were preparing for them the yoke of a baser servitude than had ever been imposed on the race, servitude not to men but to soulless machines incapable of any motive but insatiable greed. Looking back, we cannot wonder at their desperation, for certainly humanity was never confronted with a fate more sordid and hideous than would have been the era of corporate tyranny which they anticipated.

"Meanwhile, without being in the smallest degree checked by the clamor against it, the absorption of business by ever larger monopolies continued. In the United States there was not, after the beginning of the last quarter of the century, any opportunity whatever for individual enterprise in any important field of industry, unless backed by a great capital. During the last decade of the century, such small businesses as still remained were fast-failing survivals of a past epoch, or mere parasites on the great corporations, or else existed in fields too small to attract the great capitalists. Small businesses, as far as they still remained, were reduced to the condition of rats and mice, living in holes and corners, and counting on evading notice for the enjoyment of existence. The railroads had gone on combining till a few great syndicates controlled every rail in the land. In manufactories, every important staple was controlled by a syndicate. These syndicates, pools, trusts, or whatever their name, fixed prices and crushed all competition except when combinations as vast as themselves arose. Then a struggle, resulting in a still greater consolidation, ensued. The great city bazar crushed its country rivals with branch stores, and in the city itself absorbed its smaller rivals till the business of a whole quarter was concentrated under one roof, with a hundred former proprietors of shops serving as clerks. Having no business of his own to put his money in, the small capitalist, at the same time that he took service under the corporation, found no other investment for his money but its stocks and bonds, thus becoming doubly dependent upon it.

"The fact that the desperate popular opposition to the consolidation of business in a few powerful hands had no effect to check it proves that there must have been a strong economical reason for it. The small capitalists, with their innumerable petty concerns, had in fact yielded the field to the great aggregations of capital, because they belonged to a day of small things and were totally incompetent to the demands of an age of steam and telegraphs and the gigantic scale of its enterprises. To restore the former order of things, even if possible, would have involved returning to the day of stage-coaches. Oppressive and intolerable as was the régime of the great consolidations of capital, even its victims, while they cursed it, were forced to admit the prodigious increase of efficiency which had been imparted to the national industries, the vast economies effected by concentration of management and unity of organization, and to confess that since the new system had taken the place of the old the wealth of the world had increased at a rate before undreamed of. To be sure this vast increase had gone chiefly to make the rich richer,

increasing the gap between them and the poor; but the fact remained that, as a means merely of producing wealth, capital had been proved efficient in proportion to its consolidation. The restoration of the old system with the subdivision of capital, if it were possible, might indeed bring back a greater equality of conditions, with more individual dignity and freedom, but it would be at the price of general poverty and the arrest of material progress.

"Was there, then, no way of commanding the services of the mighty wealth-producing principle of consolidated capital without bowing down to a plutocracy like that of Carthage? As soon as men began to ask themselves these questions, they found the answer ready for them. The movement toward the conduct of business by larger and larger aggregations of capital, the tendency toward monopolies, which had been so desperately and vainly resisted, was recognized at last, in its true significance, as a process which only needed to complete its logical evolution to open a golden future to humanity.

"Early in the last century the evolution was completed by the final consolidation of the entire capital of the nation. The industry and commerce of the country, ceasing to be conducted by a set of irresponsible corporations and syndicates of private persons at their caprice and for their profit, were intrusted to a single syndicate representing the people, to be conducted in the common interest for the common profit. The nation, that is to say, organized as the one great business corporation in which all other corporations were absorbed; it became the one capitalist in the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly in which all previous and lesser monopolies were swallowed up, a monopoly in the profits and economies of which all citizens shared. The epoch of trusts had ended in The Great Trust. In a word, the people of the United States concluded to assume the conduct of their own business, just as one hundred odd years before they had assumed the conduct of their own government, organizing now for industrial purposes on precisely the same grounds that they had then organized for political purposes. At last, strangely late in the world's history, the obvious fact was perceived that no business is so essentially the public business as the industry and commerce on which the people's livelihood depends, and that to entrust it to private persons to be managed for private profit is a folly similar in kind, though vastly greater in magnitude, to that of surrendering the functions of political government to kings and nobles to be conducted for their personal glorification."

"Such a stupendous change as you describe," said I, "did not, of course, take place without great bloodshed and terrible convulsions."

"On the contrary," replied Dr. Leete, "there was absolutely no violence. The change had been long foreseen. Public opinion had become fully ripe for it, and the whole mass of the people was behind it. There was no more possibility of opposing it by force than by argument. On the other hand the popular sentiment toward the great corporations and those identified with them had ceased to be one of bitterness, as they came to realize their necessity as a link, a transition phase, in the evolution of the true industrial system. The most violent foes of the great private monopolies were now forced to recognize how invaluable and indispensable had been their office in educating the people up to the point of assuming control of their own business. Fifty years before, the consolidation of the industries of the country under national control would have seemed a very daring experiment to the most sanguine. But by a series of object lessons, seen and studied by all men, the great corporations had taught the people an entirely new set of ideas on this subject. They had seen for many years syndicates handling revenues greater than those of states, and directing the labors of hundreds of thousands of men with an efficiency and economy unattainable in smaller operations. It had come to be recognized as an axiom that the larger the business the simpler the principles that can be applied to it; that, as the machine is truer than the hand, so the system, which in a great concern does the work of the master's eye in a small business, turns out more accurate results. Thus it came about that, thanks to the corporations themselves, when it was proposed that the nation should assume their functions, the suggestion implied nothing

which seemed impracticable even to the timid. To be sure it was a step beyond any yet taken, a broader generalization, but the very fact that the nation would be the sole corporation in the field would, it was seen, relieve the undertaking of many difficulties with which the partial monopolies had contended."

1888

# 1838 ~ *Henry Adams* ~ 1918

THE GREAT-GRANDSON of one president, grandson of another, son of a successful diplomat and public servant, scion therefore of one of the nation's leading families, Henry Adams was born into a heritage and environment which seldom fall to the lot of youth in a democratic society. A Bostonian by birth and training, he inherited the highest intellectual and social traditions of the one-time Hub of the Universe. His entrance into Harvard College was taken as a matter of course, for the sons of first families were born to be educated, and where else but at Harvard? The course he pursued was not especially satisfying, nor did he exert himself to any particular degree. Lowell and Agassiz interested and stimulated him. He wrote contributions for the college publications and was elected class orator, but in academic rank he stood exactly in the middle of his class. His desire to study Civil Law took him to Germany. After traveling in Italy and France he returned in 1860, planning to continue the study of law. For a year he lived in Washington as secretary to his father, who was a member of Congress, and on the latter's appointment as Minister to Great Britain accompanied him in a similar capacity, remaining until after the close of the Civil War. On the invitation of President Eliot he accepted an assistant professorship in history at Harvard, and at the same time conducted the *North American Review*.

Resigning after seven years, he made his home in Washington, where he formed intimate friendships with John Hay and Clarence King. His creative output from 1878 to 1891 included two novels, *Democracy* (1880) and *Esther* (1884); *The Life of Albert Gallatin* (1879); *John Randolph* (1882); and the monumental *History of the United States* (1889–1891), covering the administrations of Jefferson and Madison. He also edited *The Writings of Albert Gallatin* (1879) and *Documents Relating to New England Federalism* (1877). After his wife's death in 1885, he spent much time in foreign travel, frequently accompanied by Hay, King, or the artist La Farge, and lived in Paris a part of each year. The immediate literary result of this travel and residence abroad was *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904), an interpretation of 12th- and 13th-century civilization as expressed in ecclesiastical architecture. His last book was *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918) which had been privately printed during his lifetime, but was not published until after his death.

Adams's reputation as a literary man rests undoubtedly upon *Chartres* and *The Education*, although his other work must not for that reason be minimized. The biography of Gallatin is still readable and in the main authoritative. That of Randolph is less successful because the subject was not congenial to the author's interest and temperament. While his *History*, a meticulous account of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, is primarily a study of political movements, it is in a sense a pioneer effort in that Adams does consider social and cultural conditions which have come to occupy so large a place in the new historical method. Some critics regard the opening chapters of the work dealing with American civilization at the turn of the century as his best historical writing.

However, it is as a social critic, rather than as a historian, that he is most impressive. In *Chartres* he undertakes to evaluate medieval civilization in terms of the forces that determined the making of the renowned architectural monument, and in accordance with the dynamic theory of history which he developed toward the end of his life. It is not an attempt at art criticism in general, or a study of architecture in particular; rather, it is an attempt to illuminate the human aspirations and the balanced union of faith and reason, to which this particular cathedral gave expression, a study somewhat akin to Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. The critical spirit is also manifested in *The Education*, by far the most widely read of all his books. The book is rather difficult to classify. By some it is regarded as autobiography; by others as the statement of a philosophy of history; by still others as mere playing with ideas. Some maintain that it is a deliberate exhibition of a soul frustrated by an inferiority complex and an uncongenial environment. Undoubtedly there is truth in each of these suggestions, but it is also evident that neither one expresses the whole truth. It may be said, however, that it is an ironic and somewhat cynical criticism of his time, or as he puts it, of civilization in "multiplicity," as the earlier *Chartres* is an attempt to find a civilization still unified. And Adams was not happy.

Adams was a voluminous writer. His best known books are *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904) and *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907, 1918). Aside from these very personal books his thought lay mostly in the field of history and politics, as the following selection of titles will show: *The Life of Albert Gallatin* (1879); *John Randolph* (1882); *History of the United States of America (1801–1817)* (1889–91); *The Tendency of History* (1895); *A Letter to American Teachers of History* (1910); *The Life of George Cabot Lodge* (1911); *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (1919). *Democracy: an American Novel* (1880) and *Esther: A Novel* (1884) constitute his efforts in fiction. Extended biographies: J. T. Adams, *The Adams Family* (1930); J. T. Adams, *Henry Adams* (1933). Many of Adams's letters have been published: A. S. Cook, ed., "Three Letters of Henry Adams," *Pacific Review*, Sept., 1921; A. S. Cook, ed., "Six Letters of Henry Adams," *Yale Review*, Oct., 1920; W. C. Ford, ed., *A Cycle of Adams Letters, 1861–65* (2 vols., 1920); W. C. Ford, ed., *Letters of Henry Adams, 1858–1891* (1930); "Letters of Henry Adams [to Moreton Frewen]," with note by Shane Leslie, *Yale Review*, Sept., 1934; F. B. Luquiens, ed.,

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## *From* THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS

*The Education of Henry Adams* is an unusual autobiography. It is based on a conception of education as a lifelong process of growth and development. It records the reactions of a sensitive spirit to the stifling currents and tendencies of the Gilded Age with which Adams had very little in common.

### CHAPTER XXII

### *Silence (1894–1898)*

THE convulsion of 1893 left its victims in dead-water, and closed much education. While the country braced itself up to an effort such as no one had thought within its powers, the individual crawled as best he could, through the wreck, and found many values of life upset. But for connecting the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the four years, 1893 to 1897, had no value in the drama of education, and might be left out. Much that had made life pleasant between 1870 and 1890 perished in the ruin, and among the earliest wreckage had been the fortunes of Clarence King. The lesson taught whatever the bystander chose to read in it; but to Adams it seemed singularly full of moral, if he could but understand it. In 1871 he had thought King's education ideal, and his personal fitness unrivalled. No other young American approached him for the combination of chances—physical energy, social standing, mental scope and training, wit, geniality, and science, that seemed superlatively American and irresistibly strong. His nearest rival was Alexander Agassiz, and, as far as their friends knew, no one else could be classed with them in the running. The result of twenty years'

effort proved that the theory of scientific education failed where most theory fails—for want of money. Even Henry Adams, who kept himself, as he thought, quite outside of every possible financial risk, had been caught in the cogs, and held for months over the gulf of bankruptcy, saved only by the chance that the whole class of millionaires were more or less bankrupt too, and the banks were forced to let the mice escape with the rats; but in sum, education without capital could always be taken by the throat and forced to disgorge its gains, nor was it helped by the knowledge that no one intended it, but that all alike suffered. Whether voluntary or mechanical the result for education was the same. The failure of the scientific scheme, without money to back it, was flagrant.

The scientific scheme in theory was alone sound, for science should be equivalent to money; in practice science was helpless without money. The weak holder was, in his own language, sure to be frozen out. Education must fit the complex conditions of a new society, always accelerating its movement, and its fitness could be known only from success. One looked about for examples of success among the educated of one's time—the men born in the thirties, and trained to professions. Within one's immediate acquaintance, three were typical: John Hay, Whitelaw Reid, and William C. Whitney; all of whom owed their free hand to marriage, education serving only for ornament, but among whom, in 1893, William C. Whitney was far and away the most popular type.

Newspapers might prate about wealth till commonplace print was exhausted, but as matter of habit, few Americans envied the very rich for anything the most of them got out of money. New York might occasionally fear them, but more often laughed or sneered at them, and never showed them respect. Scarcely one of the very rich men held any position in society by virtue of his wealth, or could have been elected to an office, or even into a good club. Setting aside the few, like Pierpont Morgan, whose social position had little to do with greater or less wealth, riches were in New York no object of envy on account of the joys they brought in their train, and Whitney was not even one of the very rich; yet in his case the envy was palpable. There was reason for it. Already in 1893 Whitney had finished with politics after having gratified every ambition, and swung the country almost at his will; he had thrown away the usual objects of political ambition like the ashes of smoked cigarettes; had turned to other amusements, satiated every taste, gorged every appetite, won every object that New York afforded, and, not yet satisfied, had carried his field of activity abroad, until New York no longer knew what most to envy, his horses or his houses. He had succeeded precisely where Clarence King had failed.

Barely forty years had passed since all these men started in a bunch to race for power, and the results were fixed beyond reversal; but one knew no better in 1894 than in 1854 what an American education ought to be in order to count as success. Even granting that it counted as money, its value could not be called general. America contained scores of men worth five millions or upwards, whose lives were no more worth living than those of their cooks, and to whom the task of making money equivalent to education offered more difficulties than to Adams the task of making education equivalent to money. Social position seemed to have value still, while education counted for nothing. A mathematician, linguist, chemist, electrician, engineer, if fortunate, might average a value of ten dollars a day in the open market. An administrator, organizer, manager, with mediaeval qualities of energy and will, but no education beyond his special branch, would probably be worth at least ten times as much.

Society had failed to discover what sort of education suited it best. Wealth valued social position and classical educations as highly as either of these valued wealth, and the women still tended to keep the scales even. For anything Adams could see he was himself as contented as though he had been educated; while Clarence King, whose education was exactly suited to theory, had failed; and Whitney, who was not better educated than Adams had achieved phenomenal success.

Had Adams in 1894 been starting in life as he did in 1854, he must have repeated that all he asked of education was the facile use of

the four old tools: Mathematics, French, German, and Spanish. With these he could still make his way to any object within his vision, and would have a decisive advantage over nine rivals in ten. Statesman, or lawyer, chemist or electrician, priest or professor, native or foreign, he would fear none.

King's breakdown, physical as well as financial, brought the indirect gain to Adams that, on recovering strength, King induced him to go to Cuba, where, in January, 1894, they drifted into the little town of Santiago. The picturesque Cuban society which King knew well, was more amusing than any other that one had yet discovered in the whole broad world, but made no profession of teaching anything unless it were Cuban Spanish or the *danza;* and neither on his own nor on King's account did the visitor ask any loftier study than that of the buzzards floating on the trade-wind down the valley to Dos Bocas, or the colors of sea and shore at sunrise from the height of the Gran Piedra; but, as though they were still twenty years old and revolution were as young as they, the decaying fabric, which had never been solid, fell on their heads and drew them with it into an ocean of mischief. In the half-century between 1850 and 1900, empires were always falling on one's head, and, of all lessons, these constant political convulsions taught least. Since the time of Rameses, revolutions have raised more doubts than they solved, but they have sometimes the merit of changing one's point of view, and the Cuban rebellion served to sever the last tie that attached Adams to a Democratic administration. He thought that President Cleveland could have settled the Cuban question, without war, had he chosen to do his duty, and this feeling, generally held by the Democratic Party, joined with the stress of economical needs and the gold standard to break into bits the old organization and to leave no choice between parties. The new American, whether consciously or not, had turned his back on the nineteenth century before he was done with it; the gold standard, the protective system, and the laws of mass could have no other outcome, and, as so often before, the movement, once accelerated by attempting to impede it, had the additional, brutal consequence of crushing equally the good and the bad that stood in its way.

The lesson was old—so old that it became tedious. One had studied nothing else since childhood, and wearied of it. For yet another year Adams lingered on these outskirts of the vortex, among the picturesque, primitive types of a world which had never been fairly involved in the general motion, and were the more amusing for their torpor. After passing the winter with King in the West Indies, he passed the summer with Hay in the Yellowstone; and found there little to study. The Geysers were an old story; the Snake River posed no vital statistics except in its fordings; even the Tetons were as calm as they were lovely; while the wapiti and bear, innocent of strikes and corners, laid no traps. In return the party treated them with affection. Never did a band of less bloody or bloodthirsty wander over the roof of the continent. Hay loved as little as Adams did, the labor of skinning and butchering big game; he had even outgrown the sedate, middle-aged, meditative joy of duck-shooting, and found the trout of the Yellowstone too easy a prey. Hallett Phillips himself, who managed the party, loved to play Indian hunter without hunting so much as a field-mouse; Iddings the geologist was reduced to shooting only for the table, and the guileless prattle of Billy Hofer alone taught the simple life. Compared with the Rockies of 1871, the sense of wildness had vanished; one saw no possible adventures except to break one's neck as in chasing an aniseed fox. Only the more intelligent ponies scented an occasional friendly and sociable bear.

When the party came out of the Yellowstone, Adams went on alone to Seattle and Vancouver to inspect the last American railway systems yet untried. They, too, offered little new learning, and no sooner had he finished this debauch of Northwestern geography than with desperate thirst for exhausting the American field, he set out for Mexico and the Gulf, making a sweep of the Caribbean and clearing up, in these six or eight months, at least twenty thousand miles of American land and water.

He was beginning to think, when he got

back to Washington in April, 1895, that he knew enough about the edges of life—tropical islands, mountain solitudes, archaic law, and retrograde types. Infinitely more amusing and incomparably more picturesque than civilization, they educated only artists, and, as one's sixtieth year approached, the artist began to die; only a certain intense cerebral restlessness survived which no longer responded to sensual stimulants; one was driven from beauty to beauty as though art were a trotting-match. For this, one was in some degree prepared, for the old man had been a stage-type since drama began; but one felt some perplexity to account for failure on the opposite or mechanical side, where nothing but cerebral action was needed.

Taking for granted that the alternative to art was arithmetic, he plunged deep into statistics, fancying that education would find the surest bottom there; and the study proved the easiest he had ever approached. Even the Government volunteered unlimited statistics, endless columns of figures, bottomless averages merely for the asking. At the Statistical Bureau, Worthington Ford supplied any material that curiosity could imagine for filling the vast gaps of ignorance, and methods for applying the plasters of fact. One seemed for a while to be winning ground, and one's averages projected themselves as laws into the future. Perhaps the most perplexing part of the study lay in the attitude of the statisticians, who showed no enthusiastic confidence in their own figures. They should have reached certainty, but they talked like other men who knew less. The method did not result in faith. Indeed, every increase of mass—of volume and velocity—seemed to bring in new elements, and, at last, a scholar, fresh in arithmetic and ignorant of algebra, fell into a superstitious terror of complexity as the sink of facts. Nothing came out as it should. In principle, according to figures, any one could set up or pull down a society. One could frame no sort of satisfactory answer to the constructive doctrines of Adam Smith, or to the destructive criticisms of Karl Marx or to the anarchistic imprecations of Élisée Reclus. One revelled at will in the ruin of every society in the past, and rejoiced in proving the prospective overthrow of every society that seemed possible in the future; but meanwhile these societies which violated every law, moral, arithmetical, and economical, not only propagated each other, but produced also fresh complexities with every propagation and developed mass with every complexity.

The human factor was worse still. Since the stupefying discovery of *Pteraspis* in 1867, nothing had so confused the student as the conduct of mankind in the *fin-de-siècle*. No one seemed very much concerned about this world or the future, unless it might be the anarchists, and they only because they disliked the present. Adams disliked the present as much as they did, and his interest in future society was becoming slight, yet he was kept alive by irritation at finding his life so thin and fruitless. Meanwhile he watched mankind march on, like a train of pack-horses on the Snake River, tumbling from one morass into another, and at short intervals, for no reason but temper, falling to butchery, like Cain. Since 1850, massacres had become so common that society scarcely noticed them unless they summed up hundreds of thousands, as in Armenia; wars had been almost continuous, and were beginning again in Cuba, threatening in South Africa, and possible in Manchuria; yet impartial judges thought them all not merely unnecessary, but foolish—induced by greed of the coarsest class, as though the Pharaohs or the Romans were still robbing their neighbors. The robbery might be natural and inevitable, but the murder seemed altogether archaic.

At one moment of perplexity to account for this trait of *Pteraspis*, or shark, which seemed to have survived every moral improvement of society, he took to study of the religious press. Possibly growth in human nature might show itself there. He found no need to speak unkindly of it; but, as an agent of motion, he preferred on the whole the vigor of the shark, with its chances of betterment; and he very gravely doubted, from his aching consciousness of religious void, whether any large fraction of society cared for a future life, or even for the present one, thirty years hence. Not an act, or an expression, or an image, showed depth of faith or hope.

The object of education, therefore, was changed. For many years it had lost itself in studying what the world had ceased to care for; if it were to begin again, it must try to find out what the mass of mankind did care for, and why. Religion, politics, statistics, travel had thus far led to nothing. Even the Chicago Fair had only confused the roads. Accidental education could go no further, for one's mind was already littered and stuffed beyond hope with the millions of chance images stored away without order in the memory. One might as well try to educate a gravel-pit. The task was futile, which disturbed a student less than the discovery that, in pursuing it, he was becoming himself ridiculous. Nothing is more tiresome than a superannuated pedagogue.

For the moment he was rescued, as often before, by a woman. Towards midsummer, 1895, Mrs. Cabot Lodge bade him follow her to Europe with the Senator and her two sons. The study of history is useful to the historian by teaching him his ignorance of women; and the mass of this ignorance crushes one who is familiar enough with what are called historical sources to realize how few women have ever been known. The woman who is known only through a man is known wrong, and excepting one or two like Mme. de Sévigné, no woman has pictured herself. The American woman of the nineteenth century will live only as the man saw her; probably she will be less known than the woman of the eighteenth; none of the female descendants of Abigail Adams can ever be nearly so familiar as her letters have made her; and all this is pure loss to history, for the American woman of the nineteenth century was much better company than the American man; she was probably much better company than her grandmothers. With Mrs. Lodge and her husband, Senator since 1893, Adams's relations had been those of elder brother or uncle since 1871 when Cabot Lodge had left his examination-papers on Assistant Professor Adams's desk, and crossed the street to Christ Church in Cambridge to get married. With Lodge himself, as scholar, fellow instructor, co-editor of the *North American Review*, and political reformer from 1873 to 1878, he had worked intimately, but with him afterwards as politician he had not much relation; and since Lodge had suffered what Adams thought the misfortune of becoming not only a Senator but a senator from Massachusetts—a singular social relation which Adams had known only as fatal to friends—a superstitious student, intimate with the laws of historical fatality, would rather have recognized him only as an enemy; but apart from this accident he valued Lodge highly, and in the waste places of average humanity had been greatly dependent on his house. Senators can never be approached with safety, but a Senator who has a very superior wife and several superior children who feel no deference for Senators as such, may be approached at times with relative impunity while they keep him under restraint.

Where Mrs. Lodge summoned, one followed with gratitude, and so it chanced that in August one found one's self for the first time at Caen, Coutances, and Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy. If history had a chapter with which he thought himself familiar, it was the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries; yet so little has labor to do with knowledge that these bare playgrounds of the lecture system turned into green and verdurous virgin forests merely through the medium of younger eyes and fresher minds. His German bias must have given his youth a terrible twist, for the Lodges saw at a glance what he had thought unessential because un-German. They breathed native air in the Normandy of 1200, a compliment which would have seemed to the Senator lacking in taste or even in sense when addressed to one of a class of men who passed life in trying to persuade themselves and the public that they breathed nothing less American than a blizzard; but this atmosphere, in the touch of a real emotion, betrayed the unconscious humor of the senatorial mind. In the thirteenth century, by an unusual chance, even a Senator became natural, simple, interested, cultivated, artistic, liberal—genial.

Through the Lodge eyes the old problem became a new and personal; it threw off all association with the German lecture-room. One could not at first see what this novelty meant; it had the air of mere antiquarian emotion like Wenlock Abbey and *Pteraspis;*

but it expelled archaic law and antiquarianism once for all, without seeming conscious of it; and Adams drifted back to Washington with a new sense of history. Again he wandered south, and in April returned to Mexico with the Camerons to study the charms of *pulque* and Churriguerresque[1] architecture. In May he ran through Europe again with Hay, as far south as Ravenna. There came the end of the passage. After thus covering once more, in 1896, many thousand miles of the old trails, Adams went home in October, with every one else, to elect McKinley President and to start the world anew.

For the old world of public men and measures since 1870, Adams wept no tears. Within or without, during or after it, as partisan or historian, he never saw anything to admire in it, or anything he wanted to save; and in this respect he reflected only the public mind which balanced itself so exactly between the unpopularity of both parties as to express no sympathy with either. Even among the most powerful men of that generation he knew none who had a good word to say for it. No period so thoroughly ordinary had been known in American politics since Christopher Columbus first disturbed the balance of American society; but the natural result of such lack of interest in public affairs, in a small society like that of Washington, led an idle bystander to depend abjectly on intimacy of private relation. One dragged one's self down the long vista of Pennsylvania Avenue, by leaning heavily on one's friends, and avoiding to look at anything else. Thus life had grown narrow with years, more and more concentrated on the circle of houses round La Fayette Square, which had no direct or personal share in power except in the case of Mr. Blaine, whose tumultuous struggle for existence held him apart. Suddenly Mr. McKinley entered the White House and laid his hand heavily on this special group. In a moment the whole nest so slowly constructed, was torn to pieces and scattered over the world. Adams found himself alone. John Hay took his orders for London. Rockhill departed to Athens. Cecil Spring-Rice had been buried in Persia. Cameron refused to remain in public life either at home or abroad, and broke up his house on the Square. Only the Lodges and Roosevelts remained, but even they were at once absorbed in the interests of power. Since 1861, no such social convulsion had occurred.

Even this was not quite the worst. To one whose interests lay chiefly in foreign affairs, and who, at this moment, felt most strongly the nightmare of Cuban, Hawaiian, and Nicaraguan chaos, the man in the State Department seemed more important than the man in the White House. Adams knew no one in the United States fit to manage these matters in the face of a hostile Europe, and had no candidate to propose; but he was shocked beyond all restraints of expression to learn that the President meant to put Senator John Sherman in the State Department in order to make a place for Mr. Hanna in the Senate. Grant himself had done nothing that seemed so bad as this to one who had lived long enough to distinguish between the ways of presidential jobbery, if not between the jobs. John Sherman, otherwise admirably fitted for the place, a friendly influence for nearly forty years, was notoriously feeble and quite senile, so that the intrigue seemed to Adams the betrayal of an old friend as well as of the State Department. One might have shrugged one's shoulders had the President named Mr. Hanna his Secretary of State, for Mr. Hanna was a man of force if not of experience, and selections much worse than this had often turned out well enough; but John Sherman must inevitably and tragically break down.

The prospect for once was not less vile than the men. One can bear coldly the jobbery of enemies, but not that of friends, and to Adams this kind of jobbery seemed always infinitely worse than all the petty money bribes ever exploited by the newspapers. Nor was the matter improved by hints that the President might call John Hay to the Department whenever John Sherman should retire. Indeed, had Hay been even unconsciously party to such an intrigue, he would have put an end, once for all, to further concern in public affairs on his friend's part; but even without this last

[1] A style of architecture noted for its picturesqueness in composition and decoration. Named after Churriguera, a Spanish architect and sculptor.

disaster, one felt that Washington had become no longer habitable. Nothing was left there but solitary contemplation of Mr. McKinley's ways which were not likely to be more amusing than the ways of his predecessors; or of senatorial ways, which offered no novelty of what the French language expressively called *embêtement;* or of poor Mr. Sherman's ways which would surely cause anguish to his friends. Once more, one must go!

Nothing was easier! On and off, one had done the same thing since the year 1858, at frequent intervals, and had now reached the month of March, 1897; yet, as the whole result of six years' dogged effort to begin a new education, one could not recommend it to the young. The outlook lacked hope. The object of travel had become more and more dim, ever since the gibbering ghost of the Civil Law had been locked in its dark closet, as far back as 1860. Noah's dove had not searched the earth for resting-places so carefully, or with so little success. Any spot on land or water satisfies a dove who wants and finds rest; but no perch suits a dove of sixty years old, alone and uneducated, who has lost his taste even for olives. To this, also, the young may be driven, as education, and the lesson fails in humor; but it may be worth knowing to some of them that the planet offers hardly a dozen places where an elderly man can pass a week alone without ennui, and none at all where he can pass a year.

Irritated by such complaints, the world naturally answers that no man of sixty should live, which is doubtless true, though not original. The man of sixty, with a certain irritability proper to his years, retorts that the world has no business to throw on him the task of removing its carrion, and that while he remains he has a right to require amusement—or at least education, since this costs nothing to any one—and that a world which cannot educate, will not amuse, and is ugly besides, has even less right to exist than he. Both views seem sound; but the world wearily objects to be called by epithets what society always admits in practice; for no one likes to be told that he is a bore, or ignorant, or even ugly; and having nothing to say in its defense, it rejoins that, whatever license is pardonable in youth, the man of sixty who wishes consideration had better hold his tongue. This truth also has the defect of being too true. The rule holds equally for men of half that age. Only the very young have the right to betray their ignorance or ill-breeding. Elderly people commonly know enough not to betray themselves.

Exceptions are plenty on both sides, as the Senate knew to its acute suffering; but young or old, women or men, seemed agreed on one point with singular unanimity; each praised silence in others. Of all characteristics in human nature, this has been one of the most abiding. Mere superficial gleaning of what, in the long history of human expression, has been said by the fool or unsaid by the wise, shows that, for once, no difference of opinion has ever existed on this. "Even a fool," said the wisest of men, "when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise," and still more often, the wisest of men, when he spoke the highest wisdom, has been counted a fool. They agreed only on the merits of silence in others. Socrates made remarks in its favor, which should have struck the Athenians as new to them; but of late the repetition had grown tiresome. Thomas Carlyle vociferated his admiration of it. Matthew Arnold thought it the best form of expression; and Adams thought Matthew Arnold the best form of expression in his time. Algernon Swinburne called it the most noble to the end. Alfred de Vigny's dying wolf remarked:—

"A voir ce que l'on fut sur terre et ce qu'on laisse,
Seul le silence est grand; tout le reste est faiblesse."

"When one thinks what one leaves in the world when one dies,
Only silence is strong,—all the rest is but lies."

Even Byron, whom a more brilliant era of genius seemed to have decided to be but an indifferent poet, had ventured to affirm that—

"The Alp's snow summit nearer heaven is seen
Than the volcano's fierce eruptive crest";

with other verses, to the effect that words are but a "temporary torturing flame"; of which

no one knew more than himself. The evidence of the poets could not be more emphatic:—

"Silent, while years engrave the brow!
Silent,—the best are silent now!"

Although none of these great geniuses had shown faith in silence as a cure for their own ills or ignorance, all of them, and all philosophy after them, affirmed that no man, even at sixty, had ever been known to attain knowledge; but that a very few were believed to have attained ignorance, which was in result the same. More than this, in every society worth the name, the man of sixty had been encouraged to ride this hobby—the Pursuit of Ignorance in Silence—as though it were the easiest way to get rid of him. In America the silence was more oppressive than the ignorance; but perhaps elsewhere the world might still hide some haunt of *futilitarian* silence where content reigned—although long search had not revealed it—and so the pilgrimage began anew!

The first step led to London where John Hay was to be established. One had seen so many American Ministers received in London that the Lord Chamberlain himself scarcely knew more about it; education could not be expected there; but there Adams arrived, April 21, 1897, as though thirty-six years were so many days, for Queen Victoria still reigned and one saw little change in St. James's Street. True, Carlton House Terrace, like the streets of Rome, actually squeaked and gibbered with ghosts, till one felt like Odysseus before the press of shadows, daunted by a "bloodless fear"; but in spring London is pleasant, and it was more cheery than ever in May, 1897, when every one was welcoming the return of life after the long winter since 1893. One's fortunes, or one's friends' fortunes, were again in flood.

This amusement could not be prolonged, for one found one's self the oldest Englishman in England, much too familiar with family jars better forgotten, and old traditions better unknown. No wrinkled Tannhäuser, returning to the Wartburg, needed a wrinkled Venus to show him that he was no longer at home, and that even penitence was a sort of impertinence. He slipped away to Paris, and set up a household at St. Germain where he taught and learned French history for nieces who swarmed under the venerable cedars of the Pavillon d'Angoulême, and rode about the green forest-alleys of St. Germain and Marly. From time to time Hay wrote humorous laments, but nothing occurred to break the summer-peace of the stranded Tannhäuser, who slowly began to feel at home in France as in other countries he had thought more homelike. At length, like other dead Americans, he went to Paris because he could go nowhere else, and lingered there till the Hays came by, in January, 1898; and Mrs. Hay, who had been a stanch and strong ally for twenty years, bade him go with them to Egypt.

Adams cared little to see Egypt again, but he was glad to see Hay, and readily drifted after him to the Nile. What they saw and what they said had as little to do with education as possible, until one evening, as they were looking at the sun set across the Nile from Assouan, Spencer Eddy brought them a telegram to announce the sinking of the Maine in Havana Harbor. This was the greatest stride in education since 1865, but what did it teach? One leant on a fragment of column in the great hall at Karnak and watched a jackal creep down the débris of ruin. The jackal's ancestors had surely crept up the same wall when it was building. What was his view about the value of silence? One lay in the sands and watched the expression of the Sphinx. Brooks Adams had taught him that the relation between civilizations was that of trade. Henry wandered, or was storm-driven, down the coast. He tried to trace out the ancient harbor of Ephesus. He went over to Athens, picked up Rockhill, and searched for the harbor of Tiryns; together they went on to Constantinople and studied the great walls of Constantine and the greater domes of Justinian. His hobby had turned into a camel, and he hoped, if he rode long enough in silence, that at last he might come on a city of thought along the great highways of exchange.

1907

# 1842 — *John Fiske* — 1901

FISKE deserves a place in the annals of American literature largely because of the influence he exerted on American thought. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, of parents descended from English Puritans, he gave early evidence of unusual ability. At eight, he claims to have read some two hundred books on philosophy, grammar, chemistry, astronomy, and other subjects, and at twenty he was able to read sixteen foreign languages, ancient and modern. He attended schools in Middletown and Stamford, studied privately under tutors, and entered the sophomore class at Harvard in 1860. Here he discovered Herbert Spencer, adopted his evolutionary philosophy and in general allied himself with the Darwinians, in those days a rather hazardous step. Although he was cautioned that his liberal views might result in disciplinary action, he was graduated with his class in 1863.

He tried the law, only to find it distasteful, held minor posts at Harvard as lecturer and assistant librarian, was non-resident professor of history at Washington University, St. Louis, and devoted much time and energy to writing. His early interest was scientific and philosophical, and found expression in his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* (1874) and numerous other books. While never relinquishing this early interest, his later years were given largely to the study of American history in which he was a popular lecturer and prolific writer.

He was not an original thinker or investigator in either of the two great fields of thought which he cultivated. His work in philosophy is mainly the interpretation of Herbert Spencer; in history, the application of the Comtian law of continuity. Historians are wont to say that he was primarily a philosopher, and philosophers consider him primarily a historian. His significance lies in his ability to popularize what is already known. For this reason he probably exerted a wider and more stimulating influence than if he had been more of a scholar in the technical sense. This is particularly true of his defense of Darwinism by which he made the country evolution-conscious, and thereby paved the way for the many changes of thought which came in its wake. Practically all phases of human thought were affected by it, and it helped to bring about a change which was symptomatic of the transition from the romantic to the realistic note in post-war American literature. The scientific method, with its emphasis on careful and minute observation, high regard for fact, refusal to accept anything but factual truth, may therefore be to some extent responsible for the gentle realism of Howells as well as the naturalism of Dreiser. Fiske stands as the very fountainhead of this influence.

Fiske's scientific and philosophical writings include *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* (4 vols., 1874); *The Unseen World and Other Essays* (1876); *Darwinism and Other Essays* (1879); *Excursions of an Evolutionist* (1883); *The Destiny of Man Viewed in the Light of His Origin* (1884); *The Idea of God as Affected by Modern Knowledge* (1885); *Through Nature to God* (1899); *The Life Everlasting* (1901). As critic and historian he wrote *The Critical Period of American History, 1783–9* (1888); *The Beginnings of New England* (1889); *The American Revolution* (2 vols., 1891); *The Discovery of America* (2 vols., 1892); *Essays, Historical and Literary* (1902). The standard biography is J. S. Clark, *The Life and Letters of John Fiske* (1917). For further information, both biographical and critical, see *DAB*, VI; T. S. Perry, *John Fiske* (1906); S. S. Green, "Reminiscences of John Fiske," American Antiquarian Society *Proceedings*, N.S. XIV, 1902; W. R. Thayer, "Memoir of John Fiske," *Proceedings* of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1913; F. W. Halsey, *American Authors and Their Homes* (1901); P. R. Frothingham, *All These* (1927); W. N. Guthrie, "Fiske's 'Through Nature to God,'" *Sewanee Review*, Jan., 1900; J. B. Sanders, "John Fiske," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Sept., 1930; A. B. Hart, "The Historical Science of John Fiske," *Connecticut Magazine*, 1902–3 (reprinted from *International Monthly*, Oct., 1901); R. O. Mason, "Professor Fiske and the New Thought," *Arena*, April, 1901; Mrs. S. Van Rensselaer, "Mr. Fiske and the History of New York," *North American Review*, August, 1901; T. S. Perry, "John Fiske: An Appreciation," *Atlantic*, May, 1902; H. Holt, "John Fiske," *Unpopular Review*, July, 1918; and M. Kraus, *A History of American History* (1937).

## *From* EXCURSIONS OF AN EVOLUTIONIST

### *In Memoriam: Charles Darwin*

TODAY, while all that was mortal of Charles Darwin is borne to its last resting-place in Westminster Abbey, by the side of Sir Isaac Newton, it seems a fitting occasion to utter a few words of tribute to the memory of the beautiful and glorious life that has just passed away from us. Though Mr. Darwin had more than completed his threescore and ten years, and though his life had been rich in achievement and crowned with success such as is but seldom vouchsafed to man, yet the news of his death has none the less impressed us with a sense of sudden and premature bereavement. For on the one hand the time would never have come when those of us who had learned the inestimable worth of such a teacher and friend could have felt ready to part with him; and on the other hand Mr. Darwin was one whom the gods, for love of him, had endowed with perpetual youth, so that his death could never seem otherwise than premature. As Mr. Galton has well said, the period of physical youth—say from the fifteenth to the twenty-second year—is, with most men, the only available period for acquiring the intellectual habits and amassing the stores of knowledge that are to form their equipment for the work of a lifetime; but in the case of men of the highest order this period is simply a period of seven years, neither more nor less valuable than any other seven years. There is, now and then, a mind—perhaps one in four or five millions—which in early youth thinks the thoughts of mature manhood, and which in old age retains the flexibility, the receptiveness, the keen appetite for new impressions, that are characteristic of the fresh season of youth. Such a mind as this was Mr. Darwin's. To the last he was eager for new facts and suggestions, to the last he held his judgments in readiness for revision; and to this unfailing freshness of spirit was joined a sagacity which, naturally great, had been refined and strengthened by half a century most fruitful in experiences, till it had come to be almost superhuman. When we remember how Alexander von Humboldt began at the age of seventy-five to write his *Kosmos*, and how he lived to turn off in his ninetieth year the fifth bulky volume of that prodigiously learned book,—when we remember this, and consider the great scientific value of the monographs which Mr. Darwin has lately

been publishing almost every year, we must feel that it is in a measure right to speak of his death as premature.

After all, however, no one can fail to recognize in the career of Mr. Darwin the interest that belongs to a complete and well-rounded tale. When the extent of his work is properly estimated, it is not too much to say that among all the great leaders of human thought that have ever lived there are not half a dozen who have achieved so much as he. In an age that has been richer than any preceding age in great scientific names, his name is indisputably the foremost. He has already found his place in the history of science by the side of Aristotle, Descartes, and Newton. And among thinkers of the first order of originality, he has been peculiarly fortunate in having lived to see all the fresh and powerful minds of a new generation adopting his fundamental conceptions, and pursuing their inquiries along the path which he was the first to break.

When Mr. Darwin was born, in 1809, the name which he inherited was already a famous name. Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the friend of Priestley and Watt, and author of the "Botanic Garden," was deservedly ranked among the most ingenious and original thinkers of the eighteenth century in England. His brother, Robert Waring Darwin, was the author of a work on botany which for many years enjoyed high repute. Of the sons of Erasmus, one, Sir Francis Darwin, was noted as a keen observer of animals; another, Charles, who died at the age of twenty-one from a dissection wound, had already written a medical essay of such importance as to give his name a place in biographical dictionaries; a third, Robert Waring, who achieved great distinction as a physician, married a daughter of the celebrated Josiah Wedgwood, and became the father of the immortal discoverer who has just been taken away from us. While citing these remarkable instances of inherited ability, it may be of interest to mention also that among the cousins of Mr. Darwin who have become more or less distinguished in our own time are Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, the philologist, the late Sir Henry Holland, and Mr. Francis Galton, whose excellent treatise on *Hereditary Genius* is known to everyone. Nor can it be irrelevant to add that one of Mr. Darwin's sons has already, through his study of the tides, achieved some remarkable results, which seem likely to give him a high place among the astronomers of the present day.

There is one thing which a man of original scientific or philosophical genius in a rightly ordered world should never be called upon to do. He should never be called upon to "earn a living"; for that is a wretched waste of energy, in which the highest intellectual power is sure to suffer serious detriment, and runs the risk of being frittered away into hopeless ruin. Like his great predecessor and ally, Sir Charles Lyell, Mr. Darwin was so favoured by fortune as to be free from this odious necessity. He was able to devote his whole life with a single mind to the pursuit of scientific truth, and to ministering in the most exalted way to the welfare of his fellow-creatures. After taking his Master's degree at Cambridge in 1831, at the age of twenty-two, an opportunity was offered Mr. Darwin for studying natural history on a grand scale. The Beagle, a ten gun brig under the command of Captain Fitzroy, was then about to start on a long voyage, "to complete the survey of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, . . . to survey the shores of Chili, Peru, and of some islands in the Pacific, and to carry a chain of chronometrical measurements round the world." As Captain Fitzroy had expressed a wish to have a naturalist accompany the expedition, Mr. Darwin volunteered his services, which the Lords of the Admiralty readily accepted,—a fact which in itself is sufficient evidence of the reputation for scientific attainments which Mr. Darwin had already gained at that youthful age. This memorable voyage, which lasted five years, was very fruitful in results. The general history of the voyage, with an account of such observations in natural history as seemed likely to interest the ordinary reader, is to be found in the *Journal of Researches* published by Mr. Darwin some three years after his return to England. This book immediately acquired a great popularity, which it has retained to this day, having gone through at least thirteen editions; and it is

certainly one of the most fascinating books of travel that was ever written. "The author," said the *Quarterly Review*, in December, 1839, "is a first-rate landscape painter with the pen, and the dreariest solitudes are made to teem with interest." An abridgment of this charming journal, lately published with illustrations, under the title "What Mr. Darwin saw in his Voyage round the World," has become a favorite book for boys and girls.

The scientific results of Mr. Darwin's voyage in the Beagle were so voluminous that it required several years and the assistance of many able hands to record them all. Owen, Hooker, Waterhouse, Berkeley, Bell, and other eminent naturalists took part in the publication of these results, which formed a very important contribution to the zoölogy and botany, and to the palaeontology, of the countries visited in the course of the voyage. To this great series of volumes, which appeared between 1840 and 1846, Mr. Darwin contributed three from his own hand,—the work on *Volcanic Islands*, the *Geological Observations on South America*, and the famous essay on "Coral Reefs." In this latter work Mr. Darwin proved that through gradual submergence fringing-reefs are developed into barrier-reefs, and these again into atolls or lagoon-islands; and thus he not only for the first time rendered comprehensible the work of coral-building, but threw a new and wonderful light upon the movements of elevation and of subsidence in all parts of the globe. By thus bringing the work of the corals into its direct relationship with volcanic phenomena, Mr. Darwin succeeded in presenting "a grand and harmonious picture of the movements which the crust of the earth has undergone within a late period"; and the result was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant contributions to geology that has been made since the first publication of the great work of Sir Charles Lyell. In 1851–53 Mr. Darwin published a *Monograph of the Cirripedia*, in two volumes octavo, and accompanied this, about the same time, with monographs of the various fossil genera of cirripeds (or barnacle family) in Great Britain. In recognition of his solid and brilliant achievements, Mr. Darwin in 1853 received the royal medal from the Royal Society, and in 1859 the Wollaston medal from the Geological Society. By this time his name had come to be known in all parts of the civilized world, and he was already ranked among the foremost living naturalists, so that when, in the year 1859, the *Origin of Species* was published, it at once attracted universal attention by reason of the eminence of its author. I well remember how, in the first few weeks after the book was published, every one at all instructed in the biological sciences was eager to ascertain the views of so distinguished a naturalist with regard to a question which for several years had agitated the scientific world.

Like the great works which had preceded it, the *Origin of Species* must be regarded as one of the results of the ever memorable voyage of the Beagle. In the course of this voyage Mr. Darwin visited the Galapagos Islands, and was struck by the peculiar relations which the floras and faunas of this archipelago sustained to one another, and to the flora and fauna of the nearest mainland of Ecuador, distant some five hundred miles. These islands are purely volcanic in formation, and have never at any time been joined to the South American continent. They possess no batrachians and no mammals, save a mouse, which was no doubt introduced by some ship. The only insects are coleoptera, which possess peculiar facilities for transportation across salt water upon floating logs or branches; and along with these are two or three species of land shells. There are also two snakes, one land tortoise, and four kinds of lizard; and in striking contrast with all this general extreme paucity of animal forms, there are at least fifty-five species of birds. Now these insects, mollusks, reptiles, and birds are like the insects, mollusks, reptiles, and birds of the western coast of South America, and not like the corresponding animals in other parts of the world. But this is not all; for the Galapagos animals, while very like the animals of Ecuador, Peru, and Chili, are not quite like them. While the families are identical, the differences are always at least specific, sometimes generic, in value. Precisely the same sort of relationship is sustained by the Gala-

pagos flora toward the flora of the mainland. And, to crown all, the differences between forms that are generic when the archipelago as a whole is compared with the continent sink into specific differences when the several islands of the archipelago are compared with one another. Such a group of facts as these leads irresistibly to the conclusion that the specific forms of plants and animals have been originated, not by "special creations," but by "descent with modifications." If species have been separately created, there is of course no reason why the population of such an archipelago should be strictly limited to such organisms as can fly or get floated across the water; nor is there any reason why these organisms should resemble those of the nearest mainland rather than those of any other tropical mainland, such as Africa or India. One might indeed object that organisms have been created in such wise as most completely to harmonize with the physical conditions by which they are surrounded, and that it is to be presumed that the physical conditions of the Galapagos Islands are more like those of Ecuador and Peru than they are like those of any other countries; so that in this way the general similarity between the floras and faunas may be accounted for. But such an explanation is very weak, for it rests upon an assumption which has been proved to be untrue. It is not always true that the organisms in any given part of the world are such as harmonize best with the physical conditions by which they are surrounded. It is approximately true only where the competition among organisms is practically unlimited; in protected areas it is not at all true. In Australia and New Zealand, for example, the plants and animals which have been introduced by Europeans are exterminating and supplanting the native plants and animals quite as rapidly as the Englishman is supplanting the native human population of these countries. And to state this fact is only to say, in other words, that the plants and animals of Europe are better adapted to the physical conditions which prevail in Australia and New Zealand than the plants and animals which are indigenous there. A comprehensive survey of the distribution of life all over the globe confirms this conclusion, and shows that by no assumption of a special act of creation can the peculiar features of the Galapagos flora and fauna be explained. The only way in which to account for these features is to suppose that the archipelago has been peopled by migrations from the nearest mainland. This explains why the creatures there are most like the creatures of Ecuador and Peru, and it also explains why the only indigenous animals to be found there are such as could have flown or been blown thither, or such as could have been ferried thither on floating vegetation.

But if all this be true—and today no competent naturalist doubts it—a conclusion of vast importance immediately follows. If the Galapagos plants and animals are descended from ancestors that migrated thither from the continent, they have been modified during ages of residence in the islands, until they have come to differ specifically, and in many cases generically, from their collateral relations on the mainland. And this amounts to saying that species are not fixed, but mutable,—that every distinct form of plant and animal was not originally created with its present attributes, but that some forms have arisen from the modification of ancestral forms.

In this way, from the study of the inhabitants of a single well-defined area, Mr. Darwin was led into a series of most grand and startling considerations relating to the past history of life upon our globe. The conclusions thus succinctly stated were amply confirmed by a survey of the distribution of organisms all over the earth, and thus was inaugurated the study of zoölogical and botanical geography, —a study which in half a century has reached such magnificent proportions in the great works of Hooker and Wallace, and which owes its wonderful progress mainly to the sagacious impulse communicated at the outset by Mr. Darwin. It has now become well established that in very few cases, if any, have animals and plants originated exactly in the places where we now find them, but that they are almost always the offspring of immigrants; and the study of the ancient migrations of the progenitors of living plants and animals

has begun to throw a flood of light upon the history of the changes that have taken place in the physical geography of the earth.

The conception of the origin of species through "descent with modifications" having been thus forcibly suggested to Mr. Darwin by the facts of geographical distribution, it was still further strengthened by a study of the geological succession of extinct organisms and their relations to living organisms in the same areas. Such broad facts as the successive appearance of various sloth-like and armadillo-like animals in South America, or of various marsupials and monotremes in Australia, forcibly suggest the descent of the later forms from the earlier ones that lived in the same countries. Of like import is the general fact that in the course of geological succession any given organism is sure to be intermediate in character between those that have preceded and those that have followed it. But still more powerfully suggestive even than this is the fact that, in proportion as we go back in geologic time, we find the characteristics of plants and animals to be less and less distinctly specialized: so that, for example, in the Eocene period, instead of horses and tapirs such as now exist we find an animal something like a tapir and something like a horse; and instead of leopards and wolves and bears we find carnivorous animals, not specialized as of feline or canine or ursine family, but with some points of resemblance to all three, and with some points like opossums and wombats into the bargain. In conformity with this general principle, the arrangement of organisms according to their succession in geologic time would be like the branches and branchlets of a tree, which is the typical form of arrangement where the link that connects the facts arranged is the link of parentage.

But just here the facts of geological succession are reinforced, with truly overwhelming conclusiveness, by the great facts of classification in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. This branching tree-like arrangement, which alone correctly represents the relationships of organisms in their geological succession, is at the same time the only possible arrangement by which the likenesses and affinities among existing organisms can be represented with anything like an approach to correctness. The facts of palaeontology exactly dovetail in with those of taxonomy, and serve to elucidate and emphasize them. Many eminent naturalists before Cuvier attempted to classify all animals in a linear series, but Cuvier proved once for all that no such arrangement is possible. The only feasible arrangement is that of groups within groups, diverging like the branches and twigs of what we aptly term a "family-tree"; and this fact not only strongly suggests the theory of "descent with modifications," but is indeed utterly incompatible with any other theory.

Further powerful evidence in favor of the same view is furnished by countless familiar facts of morphology and embryology. On the theory of "descent with modifications," it is intelligible that all the classes and orders of the vertebrate sub-kingdom, for example, should be constructed on exactly the same fundamental plan,—that the arms of men, the forelegs of quadrupeds, the paddles of cetacea, the wings of birds, and the pectoral fins of fishes should be structurally identical with one another. It is intelligible that a horse's hoof should be, as it is, made up of toes that have grown together. It is intelligible that every mammalian embryo should begin, as it does, to develop as if it were going to become a fish, circulating its blood through gills and a two-chambered heart, and then, changing its course, should behave as if it were going to become a reptile or bird, and only after long delay should assume the distinctive characteristics of mammality. It is intelligible that many snakes should possess beneath their skin the rudiments of limbs; that sundry insects, which never fly, should have wings firmly fastened down to their sides; and that the embryos of many birds, while developing in the egg, should grow temporary teeth within their little beaks. But it is only on the theory of "descent with modifications" that such facts, which are in no wise exceptional, but common throughout the entire animal kingdom, have any meaning whatever.

Many of these facts had been noticed by eminent naturalists before Mr. Darwin, and their incompatibility with any theory of

special creations had also been observed; but it was Mr. Darwin who first marshalled them into one mighty argument, of which the cumulative result was that the phenomena of the organic world are unintelligible from beginning to end save on the theory of "descent with modifications." Had Mr. Darwin done nothing but this, it would have given him a peculiar right to associate his name with the development theory, it would have established that theory on a basis of "convincing probability," and it would have entitled him to a high place in the history of scientific thought in the nineteenth century. But Mr. Darwin did not stop here. Convinced by such considerations as those just presented that the specific characters of plants and animals are not constant, but variable, he sought for some grand all-pervading *cause of variation* in organisms, and his search was crowned with success. This was the achievement which in his hands raised the development theory from the rank of a brilliant philosophical speculation into the rank of an irrefragable scientific discovery. This was the achievement which gave to mankind a new implement of research and a new insight into the workings of Nature, and it was this which justifies us in placing Mr. Darwin's name beside those of Newton and Descartes.

The method by which Mr. Darwin succeeded in discovering the cause of variation in organisms was the thoroughly scientific method of advancing tentatively from the known to the unknown. Are there any instances in which the forms of plants and animals have actually been seen to vary, and, if there are, what seems to have been the principal cause of variation in these instances? The answer is not far to seek. The instances are very numerous indeed in which variations —and very marked ones, too—have been wrought in the characteristics of plants and animals through the agency of man. The phenomena of variation presented by animals and plants under domestication are so numerous and so complex that it would require many volumes to describe them. Dogs, horses, pigs, cattle, sheep, rabbits, pigeons, poultry, silk-moths, cereal and culinary plants, fruits and flowers innumerable, have been reared and bred by man for many long ages,—some of them from time immemorial. These domesticated organisms man has caused to vary, in one direction or another, to suit his natural or artificial needs, or even the mere whim of his fancy. The variations, moreover, which have thus been produced have been neither slight nor unimportant, and have been by no means confined to superficial characteristics. Compare the thoroughbred race-horse with the gigantic London dray-horse on the one hand, and the Shetland pony on the other; or, among pigeons, contrast the pouter with the fan-tail, the barb, the short-faced tumbler, or the jacobin, all of which are historically known to have descended from one and the same ancestral form. The differences extend throughout the whole bony framework as well as throughout the muscular and nervous systems, and exceed in amount the differences by which naturalists often adjudge species to be distinct. Through what agency has man produced such results as these? He has produced them simply by taking advantage of a slight tendency to variation which exists perpetually in all plants and animals, and which exhibits itself in the simple fact that nowhere do we ever find any two individuals exactly alike. Taking advantage of these individual variations, the breeder simply *selects* the individuals which best suit his purpose, and breeds them apart by themselves. The qualities for which they are selected are propagated and enhanced through inheritance and renewed selection in each succeeding generation, until by the slow accumulation of small differences a new race is formed. And thus we have peaches and almonds from a common source, grapes to eat and grapes to make wine of, pointer-dogs and mastiffs, and so on throughout the list of cultivated plants and domesticated animals.

These facts about variation under domestication are for the most part well known, and the alleged cause of variation, in selection by man, is not an occult cause, but is a phenomenon perfectly familiar to every one. Starting from this point, Mr. Darwin made a very elaborate study of all that farmers, horticulturists, and breeders could impart concerning "artificial selection"; and more especially with regard to pigeons his own observa-

tions were so extensive and minute that, when the *Origin of Species* was published, I recollect reading one silly review, in which we were gravely informed that here was a new theory of development,—not by a naturalist, but by a mere pigeon-fancier, and probably worthy of very little consideration!

Such being the wonders which man has wrought within a comparatively short time through "artificial selection" in the breeding of animals and plants, the question next arises whether any selective process like this has been going on through countless ages without the intervention of man. Can it be that there is a "natural selection" of individual variations, whereby new species are produced in just the same way that breeders produce new races of pigeons? There is such a "natural selection" forever going on as one of the inseparable concomitants of organic life; and it was just in the detection of this great truth that the very kernel of Mr. Darwin's stupendous discovery consisted. It was here that the poetic or creative act of genius came into play, just as it did in Newton's discovery, when the fall of the moon was likened to the fall of the apple, and the tangential force of the moon to the tangential force of a stone whirled at the end of a string. The case is simple enough, when creative genius has once explained it. So great is the destruction of organic life that out of hundreds of seeds, or spawn, or ova, but one or two ever live to come to maturity and reproduce themselves in offspring. Such is the result of the universal and unrelenting competition between organisms for the means of subsistence. Any creature that lives to reproduce its kind is selected from out of a thousand that perish prematurely, and its selection is evidence of its better adaptation to the conditions amid which it is placed. And so stern and so ubiquitous is the competition that there is no individual variation, however slight or apparently trivial, that is not liable to be seized upon and enhanced if it tend in any way to promote the survival of the species. Thus it is natural selection that at every moment preserves the stability of a species, and keeps it in harmony with its environment, by cutting off all individual variations that oscillate too far on either side of a prescribed mean. The stability of a species depends, therefore, upon the stability of the environment; and the only condition under which a species could remain unchanged would be, that it should remain forever exposed to the action of changeless groups of circumstances. But this has never been the case with any species, and never will be. The habitable surface of the earth has been perpetually changing for a hundred million years, and the relations between the countless groups of organisms that have covered its surface have been perpetually changing in endless degrees of complexity; and in such a world, under the working of natural selection, there can be no such thing as "fixity of species."

Having arrived at these grand conclusions, it became comparatively easy for Mr. Darwin to go on and trace the workings of natural selection in many special instances. In these inquiries, upon which he brought to bear a knowledge of the details of organic life more vast and multifarious than has ever been possessed by any other man, he occupied nearly a quarter of a century before it seemed to him that the time had come for making his discovery known to the world. In 1844, he wrote out a brief sketch of the conclusions which, as he modestly says, "then seemed to me probable"; and this sketch he showed to his friend Hooker, perhaps also to Lyell. But fifteen years more, rich in observation and reflection, passed away, and still the world had heard nothing about the origin of species by means of natural selection. How much longer this silence might have lasted, had not an unforeseen circumstance come in to break it, one cannot say. But no doubt it would have lasted some time longer, for Mr. Darwin did not wish to publish his conclusions until he had given due attention to every fact and every argument which might in any way bear upon them; and it is quite evident that when he wrote the *Origin of Species* he did not realize either the wonderful maturity which his argument had attained, or the overwhelming cogency with which he was then actually presenting it to the world. It was very characteristic of Mr. Darwin—into the fibre of whose mind there entered not the smallest

shred of egotism or of the pride of knowledge—to make so many allowances for the inevitable incompleteness of his work, when judged by that standard of ideal perfection which he alone among men was able to apply to it, as to have rendered himself incapable for the time being of appreciating its real magnitude. In writing the *Origin of Species*, he regarded the book as merely a preliminary outline of his theory, which would serve to prevent his being forestalled by any one else in the announcement of it, and he made frequent allusions to the larger and more elaborate treatise in which he intended presently to follow up the exposition and to reinforce the argument. When I first met Mr. Darwin in London, in 1873, he told me that he was surprised at the great fame which his book instantly won, and at the quickness with which it carried conviction to the minds of all the men on whose opinions he set the most value. The success of his theory was, indeed, wonderfully rapid and complete. To understand him was to agree with him, and before ten years more had passed by, so many able men had become expounders and illustrators of the theory of natural selection that—as he told me—it seemed no longer so necessary as it had once seemed for him to write the larger and more elaborate treatise. The learned work on the *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, which appeared in 1868 in two octavo volumes, formed the first installment of this long-projected treatise. The second part was to have treated of the variation of animals and plants through natural selection; and a third part would have dealt at length with the phenomena of morphology, of classification, and of distribution in space and time. But these second and third parts were never published.

I alluded, just now, to the "unforeseen circumstance" which led Mr. Darwin in 1859 to break his long silence, and to write and publish the *Origin of Species*. This circumstance served, no less than the extraordinary success of his book, to show how ripe the minds of men had become for entertaining such views as those which Mr. Darwin propounded. In 1858 Mr. Wallace, who was then engaged in studying the natural history of the Malay Archipelago, sent to Mr. Darwin (as to the man most likely to understand him) a paper, in which he sketched the outlines of a theory identical with that upon which Mr. Darwin had so long been at work. The same sequence of observed facts and inferences that had led Mr. Darwin to the discovery of natural selection and its consequences had led Mr. Wallace to the very threshold of the same discovery; but in Mr. Wallace's mind the theory had by no means been wrought out to the same degree of completeness to which it had been wrought in the mind of Mr. Darwin. In the preface to his charming book on *Natural Selection*, Mr. Wallace, with rare modesty and candor, acknowledges that, whatever value his speculations may have had, they have been utterly surpassed in richness and cogency of proof by those of Mr. Darwin. This is no doubt true, and Mr. Wallace has done such good work in further illustration of the theory that he can well afford to rest content with the second place in the first announcement of it.

The coincidence, however, between Mr. Wallace's conclusions and those of Mr. Darwin was very remarkable. But, after all, coincidences of this sort have not been uncommon in the history of scientific inquiry. Nor is it at all surprising that they should occur now and then, when we remember that a great and pregnant discovery must always be concerned with some question which many of the foremost minds in the world are busy in thinking about. It was so with the discovery of the differential calculus, and again with the discovery of the planet Neptune. It was so with the interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and with the establishment of the undulatory theory of light. It was so, to a considerable extent, with the introduction of the new chemistry, with the discovery of the mechanical equivalent of heat, and the whole doctrine of the correlation of forces. It was so with the invention of the electric telegraph and with the discovery of spectrum analysis. And it is not at all strange that it should have been so with the doctrine of the origin of species through natural selection. The belief that all species have originated through derivation from other species, and not through special creation, had been held by part of the scientific world ever since the time of Mr. Darwin's grandfather, who was one of its

earliest and most eminent advocates. Even those naturalists who did not hold this belief can hardly be said to have held any antagonistic belief, inasmuch as the so-called "doctrine of special creations" is not a positive doctrine at all, but a mere confession of ignorance, and was so regarded by scientific naturalists, such as Owen, for example, before 1859. The truth is that before the publication of the *Origin of Species* there was no opinion whatever current respecting the subject that deserved to be called a scientific hypothesis. That the more complex forms of life must have come into existence through some process of development from simpler forms was no doubt the only sensible and rational view to take of the subject; but in a vague and general opinion of this sort there is nothing that is properly scientific. A scientific hypothesis must connect the phenomena with which it deals by alleging a "true cause"; and before 1859 no one had suggested a "true cause" for the origination of new species, although the problem was one over which every philosophical naturalist had puzzled since the beginning of the century. This explains why Mr. Darwin's success was so rapid and complete, and it also explains why he came so near being anticipated. His long delay, however, in bringing forward his theory had one good result. The work was so thoroughly done that, although Darwinism has now for twenty-three years been one of the chief subjects of popular discussion in all the civilized countries of the world, no one as yet seems to have discovered any argument against the theory of natural selection which Mr. Darwin had not himself already foreseen and considered in the first edition of the *Origin of Species*.

After an interval of twelve years Mr. Darwin followed up the first announcement of his general theory with his treatise on the *Descent of Man*, a book which deals with a subject in one respect even more difficult than the origin of species. In his earlier book Mr. Darwin, with masterly skill, brought together huge masses of facts, and showed their bearings upon a few general propositions relating to the whole organic world. In the *Descent of Man* the problem was different. Propositions of great generality, such as had been established in the *Origin of Species*, served here as fundamental principles; but they had to be supplemented by a consideration of the enormously complex and heterogeneous circumstances which attended the origination of a particular genus. It is enough to say that in the treatment of this arduous problem Mr. Darwin showed no less acuteness and grasp than had been displayed in his earlier work.

In connection with this problem of the origin of the human race, Mr. Darwin announced the results of his extensive researches into the subject of sexual selection in the animal kingdom. Some time before this, in his treatise on the *Fertilization of Orchids*, published in 1862, he had called attention to the interdependence between the insect world and the world of flowers. Further research in this direction has made it clear that the beautiful colors and sweet odors of flowers are due to selection on the part of insects. The bright colors and delicious perfumes attract insects, who come to sip the nectar, and carry away on their backs the pollen with which to fertilize the next plant they visit. Thus the fairest and sweetest flowers are continually selected to perpetuate their race, and thus have insects and flowering plants been developed in close correlation with one another.

It was Mr. Darwin's good fortune to live long enough to see his theory not only adopted by all competent naturalists, but demonstrated by crucial evidence in the case of at least one genus. The researches of Professor Marsh into the palaeontology of the horse have established beyond question the descent of the genus *equus* from a five-toed mammal not larger than a pig, and somewhat resembling a tapir. All the "missing links" in this case have been found; and thus the primitive barbaric hypothesis of "special creations" may be said to have disappeared forever from the field of natural history. It has taken its place by the side of the Ptolemaic astronomy and the dreams of the alchemists.

Mr. Darwin's latest books belong to a period in which, having lived to witness the complete success of his great work, he has employed his time in recording the results of his researches on many subsidiary points, of no little interest and importance. The treatises on *The Expres-*

*sion of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, on *The Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants*, on *Insectivorous Plants*, on *Cross and Self-Fertilization*, on *The Different Forms of Flowers*, and on the *Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms*, should be read as models of sound scientific method by every one who cares to learn what scientific method is. They may be counted, too, among the most entertaining books of science that have ever been written; and the points that have been established in them, taken in connection with Mr. Darwin's previous works, make up an aggregate of scientific achievement such as has rarely been equalled.

It is fitting that in the great Abbey, where rest the ashes of England's noblest heroes, the place of the discoverer of natural selection should be near that of Sir Isaac Newton. Since the publication of the immortal *Principia*, no single scientific book has so widened the mental horizon of mankind as the *Origin of Species*. Mr. Darwin, like Newton, was a very young man when his great discovery suggested itself to him. Like Newton, he waited many years before publishing it to the world. Like Newton, he lived to see it become part and parcel of the mental equipment of all men of science. The theological objection urged against the Newtonian theory by Leibnitz, that it substituted the action of natural causes for the immediate action of the Deity, was also urged against the Darwinian theory by Agassiz; and the same objection will doubtless continue to be urged against scientific explanations of natural phenomena so long as there are men who fail to comprehend the profoundly theistic and religious truth that the action of natural causes is in itself the immediate action of the Deity. It is interesting, however, to see that, as theologians are no longer frightened by the doctrine of gravitation, so they are already beginning to outgrow their dread of the doctrine of natural selection. On the Sunday following Mr. Darwin's death, Canon Liddon, at St. Paul's Cathedral, and Canons Barry and Prothero, at Westminster Abbey, agreed in referring to the Darwinian theory as "not necessarily hostile to the fundamental truths of religion." The effect of Mr. Darwin's work has been, however, to remodel the theological conceptions of the origin and destiny of man which were current in former times. In this respect it has wrought a revolution as great as that which Copernicus inaugurated and Newton completed, and of very much the same kind. Again has man been rudely unseated from his imaginary throne in the centre of the universe, but only that he may learn to see in the universe and in human life a richer and deeper meaning than he had before suspected. Truly, he who unfolds to us the way in which God works through the world of phenomena may well be called the best of religious teachers. In the study of the organic world, no less than in the study of the starry heavens, is it true that "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."

1882

# 1837 ~ *Edward Eggleston* ~ 1902

As PIONEER realist and as historian, the author of numerous books, some of them admittedly second-rate, Eggleston was destined to become a determining influence in literature and historical scholarship. He was born in Indiana, the son of a well-known lawyer-politician and of the daughter of a frontier Indian fighter. He attended the high school at Vevay, his native town, but refused to enter the University of Virginia because of his attitude toward slavery. Eventually he became a Methodist minister and served pastorates in Minnesota where he had previously

spent some time in search of better health. *The Mystery of Metropolisville* (1873) is the direct literary product of his sojourn in Minnesota. Retiring from the ministry in 1866, he engaged in journalistic work, and held positions on such periodicals as the *Sunday School Teacher*, *Hearth and Home*, *Independent* (New York), and *Scribner's Monthly*. In 1871 he published *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, his first novel. During the next twenty years he published seven more novels, including *The Circuit Rider* (1874), *Roxy* (1878), and *The Graysons* (1888). Toward the end of his life he matured the plans for a monumental history of the United States, only two volumes of which, *The Beginners of a Nation* (1896) and *The Transit of Civilization* (1901), he lived to complete. Besides his major works he published many books of lesser interest, compiled textbooks, and lectured extensively. During his later years he spent his summers on Lake George, and his winters in New York and other cities. He died in 1902.

Precisely how and why Eggleston came to be a novelist cannot be determined, unless we assume that he sought to translate his interest in history into social-historical fiction. That he had read very few novels is undeniable for he was brought up in strict Methodist fashion with its antipathy to everything that savored of fiction. It has even been pointed out that he himself evaded the issue by determining to write the truth rather than fiction. And in this emphasis rests the very core of his literary theory which, as he says in his preface to *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, resulted directly from reading Taine's *Art in the Netherlands*. The chief ideas in the theory, gathered from prefaces and scattered passages in his writings, are (1) that the artist select material with which he is thoroughly familiar; (2) that he represent what he knows with the utmost fidelity to truth; (3) that social conditions, namely environment, be strongly emphasized; (4) that no human material is excluded from artistic treatment; (5) that a novel is a form of social history; and finally (6) that veracious use should be made of regional dialects. Every novel that he wrote is a practical working out of the theory. Here may be seen the reasons why he became a realist and why, coming at this particular time, he gave impetus and direction to American fiction. He is the pioneer realist and shares with Ed Howe the distinction of releasing art forces which have dominated the novel in America for well-nigh sixty years.

*The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871) is the story of the vicissitudes of an idealistic schoolmaster in a crude frontier community; *The End of the World* (1872) is a story of religious fanaticism; in *The Mystery of Metropolisville* (1873) he turned to account a mysterious drowning of which he learned in Minnesota, against the double background of land speculation and the intense rivalry between two neighboring towns. *Roxy* is a rather audacious treatment of the marriage problem. *The Graysons* is climaxed by an episode in the early career of Abraham Lincoln. The historical value of these novels is unquestioned, because they represent a definite milestone in liter-

ary development; at the same time they possess a measure of intrinsic value because of their fidelity to life, their detached treatment of hitherto unused material, and the authentic rendering of forgotten phases of social history.

As a historian Eggleston anticipated the change in attitude which has led to the so-called "new history." Instead of stressing the political and military movements of a given period, he insisted that the general culture of a people constitutes the chief material for its history.

Eggleston wrote many novels, among which are *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871); *The End of the World* (1872); *The Mystery of Metropolisville* (1873); *The Circuit Rider* (1874); *Roxy* (1878); *The Graysons* (1888); *The Faith Doctor* (1891). G. C. Eggleston's *The First of the Hoosiers* (1903) is the most extended biography. Edward Eggleston's two articles, "Books That Have Helped Me," *Forum*, August, 1887, and "Formative Influences," *Forum*, Nov., 1890, contain autobiographical information. Further information, biographical and critical, is contained in J. L. and J. B. Gilder, *Authors at Home* (1889); *DAB*, VI; M. Nicholson, *The Hoosiers* (1900); H. C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-Day* (1894); C. Van Doren, *The American Novel* (1921); M. Nicholson, "Edward Eggleston," *Atlantic*, Dec., 1902; W. Gladden, "Edward Eggleston," *Scribner's*, Sept., 1873; R. F. Tooker, "Fiction of the Magazines," *Century*, June, 1924; F. L. Pattee, *A History of American Literature since 1870* (1915).

## *From* THE MYSTERY OF METROPOLISVILLE

The scene of this novel is laid in early Minnesota. The plot centers about a tragic love affair which culminated in the drowning of the heroine. Eggleston tells his tale and represents his characters in a simple, homespun manner.

### *Preface*

A NOVEL should be the truest of books. It partakes in a certain sense of the nature of both history and art. It needs to be true to human nature in its permanent and essential qualities, and it should truthfully represent some specific and temporary manifestation of human nature: that is, some form of society. It has been objected that I have copied life too closely, but it seems to me that the work to be done just now, is to represent the forms and spirit of our own life, and thus free ourselves from habitual imitation of that which is foreign. I have wished to make my stories of value as a contribution to the history of civilization in America. If it be urged that this is not the highest function, I reply that it is just now the most necessary function of this kind of literature. Of the value of these stories as works of art, others must judge; but I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have at least rendered one substantial though humble service to our literature, if I have portrayed correctly certain forms of American life and manners.

CHAPTER XV

### *The Author's Method*

I fear the gentle reader, how much more the savage one, will accuse me of having beguiled him with false pretenses. Here I have written XIV chapters of this story, which claims to be a mystery, and there stand the letters XV at the head of this chapter and I have not got to the mystery yet, and my friend Miss Cormorant, who devours her dozen novels a week for steady diet, and perhaps makes it a baker's dozen at this season of the year, and who loves nothing so well as to be mystified by labyrinthine plots and counterplots—Miss Cormorant is about to part company with me at this point. She doesn't like this plain sailing. Now, I will be honest with you, Miss Cormorant, all the more that I don't care if you do quit. I will tell you plainly that to my mind the mystery lies yet several chapters in advance, and that I shouldn't be surprised if I have to pass out of my teens and begin to head with double X's before I get to that mystery. Why don't I

hurry up then? Ah! there's the rub. Miss Cormorant and all the Cormorant family are wanting me to hurry up with this history, and just so surely as I should skip over any part of the tale, or slight my background, or show any eagerness, that other family, the Critics—the recording angels of literature—take down their pens, and with a sad face joyfully write: "This book is so-so, but bears evident marks of hurry in its execution. If the author shall ever learn the self-possession of the true artist, and come to tell his stories with leisurely dignity of manner—and so on—and so on—and so forth—he will—well, he will—do middling well for a man who had the unhappiness to be born in longitude west from Washington. Ah! well, I shrug my shoulders, and bidding both Cormorant and Critic to get behind me, Satan, I write my story in my own fashion for my gentle readers who are neither Cormorants nor Critics, and of whom I am sincerely fond.

CHAPTER XXII

## *Sailing*

On the Saturday morning after this Friday-evening boat-ride, Charlton was vigilant as ever, and yet Saturday was not a dangerous day. It was the busy day at the Emporium, and he had not much to fear from Westcott, whose good quality was expressed by one trite maxim to which he rigidly adhered. "Business before pleasure" uttered the utmost self-denial of his life. He was fond of repeating his motto, with no little exultation in the triumph he had achieved over his pleasure-loving disposition. To this fidelity to business he owed his situation as "Agent," or head-clerk, of the branch store of Jackson, Jones & Co. If he could have kept from spending money as fast as he made it, he might have been a partner in the firm. However, he rejoiced in the success he had attained, and, to admiring neophytes who gazed in admiration on his perilous achievement of rather reckless living and success in gaining the confidence of his employers, he explained the marvel by uttering his favorite adage in his own peculiar style: "Business before pleasure! By George! That's the doctrine! A merchant don't care how fast you go to the devil out of hours, if you keep his business straight. Business before pleasure! That's the ticket! He! He! By George!"

When evening came, and Charlton felt that he had but one more day of standing guard, his hopes rose, he talked to Isabel Marlay with something of exultation. And he thought it due to Miss Marlay to ask her to make one of the boating-party. They went to the hotel, where Miss Minorkey joined them. Albert found it much more convenient walking with three ladies than with two. Isa and Katy walked on arm-in-arm, and left Albert to his tête-à-tête with Helen. And as Sunday evening would be the very last on which he should see her before leaving for the East, he found it necessary to walk slowly and say much. For lovers who see each other a great deal have more to say the more they are together.

At the lake a disappointment met them. The old pine boat was in use. It was the evening of the launching of the new sailboat "The Lady of the Lake," and there was a party of people on the shore. Two young men, in a spirit of burlesque and opposition, had seized on the old boat and had chalked upon her bow, "The Pirate's Bride." With this they were rowing up and down the lake, and exciting much merriment in the crowd on the shore.

Ben Towle, who was one of the principal stockholders in "The Lady of the Lake" and who had been suspected of a tender regard for Isabel Marlay, promptly offered Albert and his party seats in the boat on her first trip. There were just four vacancies, he said. The three ladies had stepped aboard, and Albert was following, when the ex-sailor who held the rudder touched his arm and said, "I don't think it's safe, Mr. Charlton, fer nobody else to git in. She's got 'leven now, and ef the wind freshens, twelve would be dangerous."

"Oh! I'll stay out!" said Albert, retreating.

Come, Albert, take my place," said Towle. "You're welcome to it."

"No, I won't, Ben; you sit still, and I'll stand on the shore and cheer."

Just as the boat was about to leave her moorings, Smith Westcott came up and insisted on getting in.

" 'Twon't do, Mr. Wes'cott. 'Ta'n't safe," said the helmsman. "I jest begged Mr. Charlton not to go. Sh's got a full load now."

"Oh! I don't weigh anything. Lighter'n a feather. Only an infant. And besides, I'm going anyhow, by George!" and with that he started to get aboard. But Albert had anticipated him by getting in at the other end of the boat and taking the only vacant seat. The Privileged Infant scowled fiercely, but Charlton affected not to see him, and began talking in a loud tone to Ben Towle about the rigging. The line was thrown off and the boat pushed out, the wind caught the new white sail, and the "Lady of the Lake" started along in the shallows, gradually swinging round toward the open water. Soon after her keel had ceased to grind upon the gravel, Albert jumped out, and standing over boot-top in water, waved his hat and wished them a pleasant voyage, and all the ladies in the boat waved their handkerchiefs at him, appreciating his efforts to keep the boat from being overloaded, but not thinking of the stronger motive Charlton had for keeping Smith Westcott ashore. They could not know how much exultation Albert felt as he sat down on the green grass and poured the water from his boots.

There was a fine breeze, the boat sailed admirably, the party aboard laughed and talked and sang; their voices made merry music that reached the shore. The merry music was irritating discord to the ears of Westcott, it made him swear bitterly at Charlton. I am afraid that it made Charlton happy to think of Westcott swearing at him. There is great comfort in being the object of an enemy's curses sometimes—when the enemy is down, and you are above and master. I think the consciousness that Westcott was swearing at him made even the fine sunset seem more glorious to Charlton. The red clouds were waving banners of victory.

But in ten minutes the situation had changed. Albert saw Westcott walking across the beaver-dam at the lower end of the lake, and heard him hallooing to the young men who were rowing the "Pirate's Bride" up and down and around the "Lady of the Lake," for the ugly old boat was swiftest. "The Pirate's Bride" landed and took Westcott aboard, and all of Albert's rejoicing was turned to cursing, for there, right before his eyes, the "Pirate's Bride" ran her brown hull up alongside the white and graceful "Lady of the Lake," and Smith Westcott stepped from the one to the other. The beauty of the sunset was put out. The new boat sailed up and down the little lake more swiftly and gracefully than ever as the breeze increased but Albert hated it.

By some change or other in seats Westcott at last got alongside Katy. Albert distinctly saw the change made, and his anger was mingled with despair. For Isabel and Helen were in the other end of the boat, and there were none to help. And so on, on, in the gray dusk of the evening, the boat kept sailing from one end of the lake to the other, and as it passed now and then near him, he could see that Smith was in conversation with little Katy.

"You needn't worry, Mr. Charlton, I'll fix him." It was the voice of the Guardian Angel. "I'll fix him, shore as shootin'." And there he stood looking at Albert. For the first time now it struck Albert that George Gray was a little insane. There was a strange look in his eyes. If he should kill Westcott, the law would not hold him accountable. Nobody would be accountable, and Katy would be saved.

But in a moment Albert's better feeling was uppermost. The horribleness of murder came distinctly before him. He shuddered that he should have entertained the thought of suffering it.

"You see, Mr. Charlton," said Gray, with eyes having that strange mysterious look that only belongs to the eyes of people who are at least on the borders of insanity, "you see this 'ere pistol's got five bar'ls, all loadened. I tuck out the ole loads las' night and filled her up weth poder what's shore to go off. Now you leave that air matter to me, will you?"

"Let me see your revolver," said Albert.

Gray handed it to him, and Charlton examined it a minute, and then, with a sudden resolution, he got to his feet, ran forward a few paces, and hurled the pistol with all his might into the lake.

"Don't let us commit murder," he said, turning round and meeting the excited eyes of the half-insane poet.

"Well, maybe you're right, but I'll be hanged ef I think it's hardly far and square and gentlemanly to wet a feller's catridges that-away."

"I had to," said Albert, trembling. "If I hadn't, you or I would have been a murderer before morning."

"Maybe so, but they ain't nothin' else to be done. Ef you don't let me kill the devil, why, then the devil will pack your sister off, and that's the end on't."

The moon shone out, and still the boat went sailing up and down the lake, and still the party in the boat laughed and talked and sang merry songs, and still Charlton walked up and down the shore, though almost all the rest of the spectators had gone, and the poet sat down in helpless dejection. And still Smith Westcott sat and talked to Katy. What he said need not be told; how, while all the rest laughed and sang, the Privileged Infant was serious; and how he appealed to Katy's sympathies by threatening to jump off into the lake; and how he told her that they must be married, and have it all over at once. Then, when it was all over, Albert wouldn't feel bad about it any more. Brothers never did. When he and Albert should get to be brothers-in-law, they'd get on splendidly. By George! Some such talk as this he had as they sailed up and down the lake. Just what it was will never be known, whether he planned an elopement that very night, or on Sunday night, or on the night which they must pass in Red Owl Landing, nobody knows. Isabel Marlay, who saw all, was sure that Smith had carried all his points. He had convinced the sweet and trusting Katy that an immediate marriage would be best for Brother Albert as well as for themselves.

And as the boat sailed on, tacking to and fro, even the pilot got over his anxiety at the overloading which had taken place when Westcott got in. The old tar said to Towle that she carried herself beautifully.

Five minutes after he made the remark, while Westcott was talking to Katy, and playfully holding his fingers in the water as he leaned over the gunwale that almost dipped, there came a flaw in the wind, and the little boat having too much canvas and too much loading, careened suddenly and capsized.

There was a long, broken, mingled, discordant shriek as of a dozen voices on different keys uttering cries of terror and despair. There was the confusion of one person falling over another; there was the wild grasping for support, the seizing of each other's garments and arms, the undefined and undefinable struggle of the first desperate minute after a boat has capsized, the scream that dies to a gurgle in the water and then breaks out afresh, louder and sharper than before, and then is suddenly smothered into a gurgle again. There were all these things, there was an alarm on the shore, a rush of people, and then there came stillness, and those minutes of desperate waiting, in which the drowning people cling to rigging and boat, and test the problem of human endurance. It is a race between the endurance of frightened, chilled, drowning people, and the stupid lack of presence of mind of those on shore. All the inmates of the boat got hold of something, and for a minute all their heads were out of water. Their eyes were so near to the water, that not even the most self-possessed of them could see what exertions were being made by people on shore to help them. Thus they clung a minute, no one saying anything, when Jane Downing, who held to the rigging at some distance from the boat, paralyzed by fear, let go, and slowly sank out of sight, saying never a word as she went down, but looking with beseeching eyes at the rest, who turned away as the water closed over her, and held on more tenaciously than ever, and wondered whether help ever would reach them. And this was only at the close of the first minute. There were twenty-nine other minutes before help came.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## *Sinking*

Isabel Marlay's first care had been to see that little Katy had a good hold. Helen Minorkey was quite as self-possessed, but her chief care was to get into a secure position herself. Nothing brings out character more distinctly than an emergency such as this. Miss Minorkey was resolute and bent on self-preservation from the first moment. Miss Marlay was resolute, but full of sympathy for the rest. With characteristic practical sense, she did what she could to make herself and those within her reach secure, and then with characteristic faith she composed her mind to death if it

should come, and even ventured with timid courage to exhort Katy and Miss Minorkey to put their trust in Christ, who could forgive their sins, and care for them living or dying. Even the most skeptical of us respect a settled belief in a time of trial. There was much broken praying from others, simply the cry of terror-stricken spirits. In all ages men have cried in their extremity to the Unseen Power, and the drowning passengers in Diamond Lake uttered the same old cry. Westcott himself, in his first terror, prayed a little and swore a little by turns.

The result of self-possession in the case of Isa Marlay and Helen Minorkey was the same. They did not waste their strength. When people drown, it is nearly always from a lack of economy of force. Here was poor little Katy so terrified at thoughts of drowning, and of the cold slimy bed at the bottom of the lake, and more than all at thoughts of the ugly black leeches that abounded at the bottom, that she was drawing herself up head and shoulders out of the water all the time, and praying brokenly to God and Brother Albert to come and help them. Isa tried to soothe her, but she shuddered, and said that the lake was so cold, and she knew she should drown, and Cousin Isa, and Smith, and all of them. Two or three times, in sheer desperation, little Katy let go, but each time Isa Marlay saved her and gave her a better hold, and cheered her with assurances that all would be well yet.

While one party on the shore were building a raft with which to reach the drowning people, Albert Charlton and George Gray ran to find the old boat. But the young men who had rowed in it, wishing to keep it for their own use, had concealed it in a little estuary on the side of the lake opposite to the village, so that the two rescuers were obliged to run half the circumference of the lake before they found it. And even when they reached it, there were no oars to be found, the party rowing last having carefully hidden them in the deep grass of the slough by the outlet. George Gray's quick frontiersman's instinct supplied the deficiency with sticks broken from a fallen tree. But with the time consumed in finding the boat, and the time lost in searching for the oars, and the slowness of the progress made in rowing with these clumsy poles, and the distance of the boat's starting-point from the scene of the disaster, the raft had greatly the advantage of them, though Charlton and Gray used their awkward paddles with the energy of desperation. The wrecked people had clung to their frail supports nearly a quarter of an hour, listening to the cries and shouts of their friends ashore, unable to guess what measures were being taken for their relief, and filled with a distrustful sense of having been abandoned by God and man. It just then occurred to Westcott, who had recovered from his first fright, and who for some time had neither prayed to God nor cursed his luck, that he might save himself by swimming. In his boyish days, before he had weakened his texture by self-indulgence and shattered his nerves by debauchery, he had been famous for his skill and endurance in the water, and it now occurred to him that he might swim ashore and save Katy Charlton at the same time. It is easy enough for us to see the interested motives he had in proposing to save little Katy. He would wipe out the censure sure to fall on him for overloading the boat, he would put Katy and her friends under lasting obligations to him, he would win his game. It is always easy to see the selfish motive. But let us do him justice, and say that these were not the only considerations. Just as the motives of no man are good without some admixture of evil, so are the motives of no man entirely bad. I do not think that Westcott, in taking charge of Katy, was wholly generous, yet there was a generous, and after a fashion, maybe, a loving feeling for the girl in the proposal. That good motives were uppermost, I will not say. They were somewhere in the man, and that is enough to temper our feeling toward him.

Isa Marlay was very unwilling to have Katy go. But the poor little thing was disheartened where she was—the shore did not seem very far away, looking along the water horizontally—the cries of the people on the bank seemed near—she was sure she could not hold on much longer—she was so anxious to get out of this cold lake—she was so afraid to die—she dreaded the black leeches at the bottom—she loved and trusted Smith as such women as she always love and trust—and so she was glad to

accept his offer. It was so good of Smith to love her so and to save her. And so she took hold of his coat-collar as he bade her, and Westcott started to swim toward the nearest shore. He had swam his two miles once, when he was a boy, testing his endurance in the waters of the North River, and Diamond Lake was not a mile wide. There seemed no reason to doubt that he could swim to the shore, which could not in any event be more than half a mile away, and which seemed indeed much nearer as he looked over the surface of the water. But Westcott had not taken all the elements into the account. He had on his clothing, and before he had gone far, his boots seemed to fetter him, his saturated sleeves dragged through the water like leaden weights. His limbs, too, had grown numb from remaining so long in the water, and his physical powers had been severely taxed of late years by his dissipations. Add to this that he was encumbered by Katy, that his fright now returned, and that he made the mistake so often made by the best of swimmers under excitement, of wasting power by swimming too high, and you have the causes of rapid exhaustion.

"The shore seems so far away," murmured Katy. "Why don't Albert come and save us?" and she held on to Smith with a grasp yet more violent, and he seemed more and more embarrassed by her hold.

"Let go my arm, or we'll both drown," he cried savagely, and the poor little thing took her left hand off his arm, but held all the more firmly to his collar; but her heart sank in hopelessness. She had never heard him speak in that savage tone before. She only called out feebly, "Brother Albert!" and the cry, which revealed to Westcott that she put no more trust in him, but turned now to the strong heart of her brother, angered him, and helped him to take the resolution he was already meditating. For his strength was fast failing; he looked back and could see the raft nearing the capsized boat, but he felt that he had not strength enough left to return; he began to sink, and Katy, frightened out of all self-control as they went under the water, clutched him desperately with both hands. With one violent effort Smith Westcott tore her little hands from him, and threw her off. He could not save her, anyhow. He must do that, or drown. He was no hero or martyr to drown with her. That is all. It cost him a pang to do it, I doubt not.

Katy came up once, and looked at him. It was not terror at thought of death, so much as it was heartbreak at being thus cast off, that looked at him out of her despairing eyes. Then she clasped her hands, and cried aloud, in broken voice: "Brother Albert!"

And then with a broken cry she sank.

Oh! Katy! Katy! It were better to sink. I can hardly shed a tear for thee, as I see thee sink to thy cold bed at the lake-bottom among the slimy water-weeds and leeches; but for women who live to trust professions, and who find themselves cast off and sinking—neglected and helpless in life—for them my heart is breaking.

Oh! little Katy. Sweet, and loving, and trustfull It were better to sink among the water-weeds and leeches than to live on. God is more merciful than man.

1873

## 1853 ~ *Edgar Watson Howe* ~ 1937

PRODUCT of the Middle Border, inveterate and incurable newspaper man, lover of the small town and small-town people, Ed Howe achieved fame as the author of *The Story of a Country Town*, a novel in which he pictured Middle West pioneer life with a stern and austere realism. He was born in Indiana, but as a child moved with his family to Fairview, Missouri. Unhappy domestic circumstances compelled

him to shift for himself from the time he was eleven years old. He learned the printer's trade and acquired his education while serving newspapers in Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Colorado. As a young man in the middle twenties he bought the Atchison (Kansas) *Globe*, which he published until his retirement in 1927, and which became internationally famous under his control. During vacations he traveled extensively, visited many foreign countries, and made two trips around the world.

Since no publisher would venture to issue *The Story of a Country Town*, Howe printed it in his own shop. The first edition bears the copyright date of 1882. The reviews were for the most part favorable, and Howells and Mark Twain wrote commendatory letters to the author. Though never a best seller, its continued vitality is attested by a new and illustrated edition in Blue Ribbon Books.

At the time of its publication Howells had already won a commanding position as a realistic novelist. But the realism of Howe was so audacious in its grimness and sternness, so much more penetrating than anything which Howells had undertaken, that it stood out like a brilliant beacon illuminating the possibilities of realistic treatment. He maintained that literature is rooted in life, and made the assertion that the events in great books were real experiences rather than mere inventions. Pioneer life was hard, and this hardness, with its lack of warmth and poetry, Howe caught in his novel. It is doubtful whether later realists have grown up to Howe's stature, whether any of them have achieved his epic objectivity and saga-like directness. The style, unfortunately, is as inflexible as the subject matter and the treatment, a quality of the book which does not, however, impair its epoch-making position.

Howe's most famous book is *The Story of a Country Town* (1883). He also wrote *The Mystery of the Locks* (1885); *A Moonlight Boy* (1886); *Daily Notes of a Trip Around the World* (1907); *Country Town Sayings: A Collection of Paragraphs from the Atchison Globe* (1911). As no biography of him has been written, one must resort to his *Plain People* (1929), an autobiography, for information. The following references are suggested for further study: C. G. Baldwin, *The Men Who Make Our Novels* (rev. ed., 1924); C. Van Doren, "Prudence Militant: E. W. Howe, Village Sage," *Century*, May, 1923; C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924); G. Carson, "Village Atheist," *Scribner's*, Dec., 1928; H. L. Mencken, introduction to *Ventures in Common Sense* (1919); E. Boyd, "The Sage of Potato Hill," *Nation*, August 29, 1934; "Mr. Howe and His 'Country Town,'" *Critic*, August 22, 1885; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* THE STORY OF A COUNTRY TOWN

**One critic speaks of the greatness of this book as comparable with that of *Huckleberry Finn* and *Moby Dick*. It is a grim story of life in the West, is almost uniformly drab, and at times rather savage. The action springs from the personality of the characters rather than from a clearly defined plot. It anticipates such books as *Spoon River Anthology* and the novels of Dreiser and Anderson.**

### CHAPTER VIII

### *The Smoky Hill Secret*

It having been decided to begin the summer school a few weeks earlier than at first intended, it became necessary for me to go after

the teacher; so it was arranged that I should drive over to Smoky Hill on Friday, and return any time the following day.

My mother shared the feeling that the neighborhood where Agnes lived was superior to ours—although none of us knew why we had this impression—and after taking unusual pains with my toilet, she asked Jo to cut my hair, which he kindly did just before I drove away in the wagon, from the high seat of which my short legs barely touched the floor.

I knew nothing of the settlement except the direction, which was north, and that the uncle with whom Agnes lived was named Biggs, but they said I could easily inquire the way. The distance was twenty miles, and by repeated inquiries I found that Mr. Biggs—who was called Little Biggs by those living near him—lived in the first white house after crossing the north fork of Bull River, and when I came in sight of the place I knew it as well as if I had lived within hailing distance all my life. It was just such a place as I expected to find; an aristocratic porch on two sides of a house evidently built after the plans of an architect—the first house of such pretensions I had ever seen—with a gravel walk leading down to the gate, and a wide and neglected yard in front. A broken and dismantled windmill stood in the barnyard, and around it was piled a great collection of farm machinery in an equally advanced stage of decay, all rotting away for lack of care and use. There was a general air of neglect everywhere, and I thought Mr. Biggs was an indifferent farmer, or else an invalid. Boards were off the fences, and gates off the hinges, and pigs roamed in every place where they did not belong. A herd of them, attracted by the sound of my wheels, dashed out from under the porch, and went snorting into the vegetable garden through a broken fence. I noticed these things as I stopped at a gate intended for wagons to drive through, and while wondering whether I had better drive in there, or tie the team and walk up to the house. While debating the question I saw that a large, boyish-looking young man was pitching hay near the barn, and, noticing that he had stopped his work and was looking at me, I motioned for him to come out. Impatiently throwing down his fork, he came out to the fence, and, resting his chin on the top board, he looked at me with great impudence.

"Does Mr. Biggs live here?" I civilly inquired.

"Yes, Mr. Biggs lives here," he answered, drawling the first word.

"Well, then," I said, "if you will open the gate I'll come in."

He threw the gate open in a manner to express an unfavorable opinion of me, and I drove through, and stopped down by the stables. He followed silently, after banging the gate again, and, picking up his fork without looking at me, went on with his pitching. I began to feel uncomfortable at this cool reception, and inquired quite respectfully:—

"Is Mr. Biggs at home?"

"No," the fellow replied, plunging his fork viciously into the hay as though he were wishing I was under it.

"Is Miss Agnes at home, then?"

"Yes, Miss Agnes is at home." He looked up in better humor, as though the name of Agnes was not so disagreeable as that of Biggs.

"Well, I'm told to stay here tonight, and take Agnes to her school tomorrow. If you'll show me where to stand the horses I'll put them away."

He laid down his fork at this, and went to look through the stables. There seemed to be a spring somewhere near, for the stalls were oozy and wet, and unfit for use, and the fellow was debating in his mind which was the worst or the best one, I could not tell which. Finally he found a place, but the feed boxes were gone; and then another, but it had no place for the hay. I was following him around by this time, and said the last one would do very well, as it was the best one there.

He helped me to unhitch the horses, and while we were about it I looked up at the house and saw Agnes at one of the windows. She went away immediately, however, and I supposed she would be down to welcome me; but she didn't come, and I began to feel very uncomfortable. I had consoled myself for the rudeness of the young man by the thought that he would be very much ashamed of his incivility when Agnes came running down to meet me; but she didn't come, and kept away from the window, and I was uncertain whether

I had better return home or seek shelter for the night at another house.

I noticed in the meantime that the fellow helping me was large in stature, and that he had a very little head, on which was perched a hat evidently bought for one of the children. The band and shape being gone, it looked very much like an inverted V.

"I suppose you are the preacher's boy?" he said, after eyeing me a long while, as though that was a very good reason why he should dislike me.

On my replying that such was the case, he looked at me as if thinking I was larger or smaller than he had imagined, and continued apparently in better humor:—

"I have heard of you. I live here. I'm the hired man. My name is Big Adam; lazy Adam, she calls me. Anything to trade?"

I looked through my pockets, but could find nothing save a piece of natural chalk I had picked up along the creek riffles. We called it keel; but he did not seem to be familiar with it, nor care much about it. Finding he could make a red mark with it, we finally came to terms.

I had heard that little eyes denoted cunning, and little ears great curiosity, and Big Adam's were so particularly small that I determined to be very wary of him during my stay.

"She owns the farm, though Biggs pretends to own it," Big Adam went on, referring again to the person who called him lazy, "but while they do not agree in this, they agree that Big Adam hasn't enough to do, and between them I have trouble. I do all the work that is done here, though you may think I'm not kept very busy. There are four hundred acres here, and they expect me to keep it in a high state of cultivation. You see how well I succeed; it's the worst-looking place on earth."

I began to understand him better, and said it looked very well when I drove up.

"May be it does—from the road. I haven't been out there for a year to see. I am kept too busy. But if you stay here long I'll take you out into the field, and show you weeds higher than your head. Instead of spending the money to mend the stables and fences, they buy more land with it, to give Big Adam something to do; for they are always saying that I am fat from idleness. I am fat, but not from idleness. I haven't had time this spring to comb my hair. Look at it."

He took off the V-shaped hat, and held his head down for me to see. It reminded me of the brush heaps in which we found rabbits at home, and I wished Jo had come along; he would have been delighted to shingle it.

"But you go into the house," he said, putting on his hat again, and, taking up the fork he had laid down to hunt a stall for my horses; "you'll hear enough of Big Adam in there. They'll tell you I'm lazy and shiftless, because I can't do the work of a dozen men; and they'll tell you I am surly, because I can't cheerfully go ahead and do all they ask me to. A fine opinion of Big Adam you'll have when you go away; but I ask you to notice while you are here if Big Adam is not always at work; and Agnes will tell you—she is the only one among them who pretends to tell the truth—that she has never seen me idle. But go on into the house; I am not allowed to talk to strangers."

Accepting this suggestion, I went through a gate which was torn off its hinges and lying flat in the path, and, walking up the steps, I knocked timidly at the front door. While waiting for some one to answer my rap, I noticed a door-plate hanging on one screw, and careening my head around, read "Lytle Biggs." I then understood why his neighbors called him Little Biggs—it was his name.

I hadn't time to congratulate myself on this discovery, for just then the door-plate flew in, and Agnes stood before me. Although she was friendly to me as usual there was a constraint in her manner that I could not understand, and as she led the way in she looked as though she was expecting the house to blow up.

"My uncle is away," she said, confusedly, after we were seated in a room opening off from the hall where I had entered, "but we expect him home tonight. My mother is not well, and demands a great deal of care, or I should have come down to the gate to meet you when you drove up."

She was so ill at ease that I hurried to explain my errand, and I thought she was greatly relieved to know I had not come on a visit.

"I shall be ready in the morning at any time you are," she said; and I wondered she could leave her mother, for I had been fearing that

perhaps I should have to go back without her.

There was a great romp and noise in the room above the one in which we sat, and she looked out through the door leading into the hall as if half expecting to see somebody come tumbling down the stairs.

"My uncle's children," she said, seeing I wondered at the noise. "He has eight."

I wondered she had not told of them before, and then I remembered that she seldom talked of her uncle's family or of her mother.

"How are they all?" I inquired, thinking I must say something.

There was a great crash in the room overhead and a cry of pain, and Agnes went quickly to the door to listen. Being convinced that nothing serious had happened, she came back, and replied to my question.

"Very noisy," she said, half laughingly. "I fear they will annoy you; it is so quiet at your house, and there is so much confusion here."

I said, "Oh! not at all," not knowing what other reply to make.

"My uncle Lytle"—I pricked up my ears at this, as her pronunciation of her uncle's name was different from that given it by his neighbors—"my uncle Lytle is trying to bring them up in a town fashion here in the country, and they are seldom allowed to go out of doors, so that they can't be blamed for being rude and bad. All of them except the baby would be out at the stables with Big Adam if they were given the opportunity, but their father's orders are to keep them away from the stables, and in the house. So we make the best of them."

Just then they all came tearing out into the hall above to the stair rail, as if they knew of the arrival of a visitor, and were anxious to see him; but some one came out hurriedly after them, and, driving them all back into the room again, slammed the door.

"They are anxious to see you," Agnes said, smiling. "They have the greatest curiosity imaginable. There will be no peace until they are allowed to look at you."

Feeling that I was an intruder in the house, for some reason, I suggested that she let them come down, promising I would amuse them as best I could. She thought a moment, and then, excusing herself, went out. After a long time I heard her coming back with them. Six of them rushed into the room ahead of her, and, taking up a position behind the chairs, looked at me curiously. The other two she carried in her arms, one of them being an infant not more than four or five months old.

They seemed a queer lot to me, their clothing being of a pattern I had never seen before, and I noticed that the boys wore their hair in long curls, and that their frocks were braided. All of their faces were pale, which did not result solely from being lately washed, and the older boys were dressed in short trousers, and wore shoes, though it was summer, a peculiarity which attracted my attention particularly, because most of the boys I had known went barefooted. Agnes placed the baby on my knee, and I soon had all the children about me, asking questions and going through my pockets. Indeed, I succeeded very well in amusing them. While they were playing around, I heard some one come down the stairs, and go down the hall to a door which I judged led into the kitchen. Presently Agnes went out too, and I supposed they were making arrangements for supper, which thought was probably suggested by the fact that it was late, and that I was very hungry. The children amused themselves with me for a considerable time, and were more noisy than ever, when unfortunately one of them fell headlong, and set up a most terrible cry. Immediately a little old woman came hurrying into the room, who, picking up the screaming one, and roughly taking the baby out of my arms, drove them all up the stairs before her, slapping and banging them as they went, so that they were all screaming by the time the door up stairs closed upon them.

While she was collecting them I saw that the newcomer's hair was twisted behind her head in a tight little knot, and that she was very slender, and very short; that her features were small and sharp, and dried-up like a mummy's, and that, altogether, she was the most repulsive-looking creature I had ever seen. I half expected that she would give me a rap as she went out, she looked so sour and ugly. I supposed she was a servant; possibly Adam's mother, and when Agnes came in, which she did a moment after, looking very

much frightened, I had it in my mind to say that the old woman of the sky had swept the children away with a broomstick.

"I was afraid they would annoy you," she said hurriedly, as though it was necessary to say something before I could remark on the queer little old woman who had driven them away.

I was about to reply that we were getting along very well until one of them fell down, when she continued:—"My uncle has just driven up. He is coming in."

At that moment the door opened softly, and a very small and handsomely dressed man stepped into the room. He spoke to Agnes pleasantly, and as he looked inquiringly at me, she explained:—

"One of my pupils from Fairview, Ned Westlock. I shall go home with him tomorrow, as the school opens a week earlier than was expected."

I knew now why his neighbors called him Little Biggs—because he was very short, and very thin, and very little.

"Ah! Mr. Westlock."

It was the first time I had been called Mr. Westlock, and thought it sounded very well. After he had said this, he looked at me very attentively while he removed his gloves. Placing them in his tall hat, he set both away, and came back to me.

"I am very glad to know you," Mr. Biggs said. "I am glad to have you a guest at our house."

This was encouraging, as nobody else had said as much, and I felt better.

"I need not apologize," he said, "for the rough but honest ways of us farmers," looking admiringly at his thin legs, and brushing at a speck of dirt which seemed to be on one of them, "for I believe you come of an agricultural family yourself."

I was surprised at this reference to his rough ways, for he was extremely fastidious in his dress and manner. I managed to admit, however, that I came of an agricultural family.

"Those of us who live in the country," Mr. Biggs went on, seating himself beside me, "cannot be particular. Our clothing, our food, and our ways are rough, but substantial and honest. We have other matters to look after. We may have our ambitions like other men, but they are dwarfed and bent by holding the plow, and pitching the hay. When did you come, and how long do you stay?"

I replied that I had arrived but a few hours before, and that I would depart the next day at any hour Agnes was ready.

"I am sorry," Mr. Biggs was good enough to say, "I should be delighted to show you how we carry on a four hundred acre farm. Other great farmers have from four to a dozen hired men about them, but Big Adam and I do all the work here; and we are equal to it, though it keeps us very busy, as you will imagine. We have no time for the arts, you may be certain."

He ran on gayly in this way, making himself out in ignorance and muscle the equal of one of our Fairview farmers, although he was really nothing else to my mind than a fop, until Agnes came in and said we were to walk out to supper. There was no one in the supper room when we entered it, and although I expected other members of the family every moment, none came. Agnes was there most of the time, but did not sit down, and supplied the place of a servant.

"Those of us who live in the country," said Mr. Biggs, helping me to food with the greatest ceremony, "cannot be particular as to what we eat, except that it is substantial and hearty. Meat and bread and milk make muscle, and muscle is in great demand on a farm. Big Adam and I find a great deal of it necessary in tilling these four hundred acres, therefore we insist on plenty of plain and substantial food."

The supper was a very good one, but he talked a great deal about its being plain but hearty; and although he was dainty in his eating, and ate nothing but toasted bread and tea, he kept on apologizing for his ravenous appetite. He had something to say, too, about shoveling in his food with a knife, and bolting it—he did neither, but on the contrary was very delicate—and as he kept watching me, I thought that he must be apologizing for his guest, which made me very uncomfortable at my bad manners, for up to that time I had not been backward in falling to. But as he continued to denounce his unnatural craving

for food, and frequently expressed the fear that the meal lacked so much of what I was accustomed to, that I could not possibly make out a comfortable supper, I finally made up my mind he did not mean me at all.

When I had finished he was waiting for me, and we adjourned to the room in which I had played with the children. Lighting a cigar (which he said was a very poor one, but which he observed in the course of the evening, as an example of his extravagance, had cost twenty cents) he took a dressing-gown from a closet, and, putting it on, sat down before me, the picture of luxurious ease.

While we sat there I heard the family of eight, accompanied by their mother and the little old woman who had frightened me, come banging down the stairs, and file into the supper room, where there were a steady noise and wrangle until they had finished and gone up the stairs again. I heard Big Adam protesting to some one that it was not pleasant to be always "jawed at," and that he did all he could; but when the argument threatened to become boisterous, I heard a pleasanter voice intercede, and establish peace, and I was sure this was Agnes's. Mr. Biggs stopped once or twice to listen to the confusion, as if trying to hear what was being said, but recollecting that if he could hear, I could as well, he began talking again to draw my attention from it. He tried to make me believe the children were making the disturbance, and said:—

"There can be no order in a house full of children, and very little comfort." He stopped to think a moment, but the uproar in the supper room was so great that he went on, trying to draw my attention away from it. "I confess to thinking something of them, but every pleasure they bring is accompanied by inconvenience, expense, and annoyance. A great many men regard children as blessings. I have failed to discover any kind of blessing or pleasure in being called up in the middle of the night to run for a doctor when there is croup in the house. Usually, too, in such cases the medical man lives a great many miles away, over a rough road. Whenever I go to bed early to make up lost sleep, or come home particularly tired, one of them is sick, and I am compelled to go for a doctor. This never fails if the night is very wet, the roads unusually heavy, or the weather particularly cold. While everybody admires little children, I am sure they would be more popular if their teeth came more easily; and that there would be a greater demand for them if they did not take a hundred different diseases to which they are not exposed."

The fire in his cigar having about gone out, from holding it in his hand and waving it at me, he revived it with a great deal of puffing, and went on:—

"I do not complain. I am like other men, except that I am not a fool; and while I accept the bitter with the sweet, I point out the bitter, and refuse to call it palatable. I am at a loss to understand, for example, why the Creator is more considerate of pigs than He is of children; for I believe pigs cut their teeth before birth, and seldom die except when fat from good health, and at the hands of a butcher. Children, on the other hand"—he used his right hand to represent the pigs, and his left to represent the children—"are never well, and for every tooth there is an insolent doctor with a bill, to say nothing of measles, coughs, rashes, and fevers. I have seen it estimated that it required three thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine dollars and thirty-five or forty cents to raise a baby to manhood or womanhood. A pig may be raised to maturity and usefulness with a few hundred buckets of swill, a few bushels of corn, and a wisp of hay occasionally for a bed."

As he looked at me as though I had been stubbornly arguing the cause of the children, I replied that the pigs had the best of it, so far, decidedly.

"If you have never talked with a candid man before you may never have had your attention called to the fact, which possibly has escaped your own notice, that children do not appreciate good treatment, as do pigs and other animals. The very worst thing you can do for a boy is to treat him well. Where do you find the good boys?"

He made a pause as if expecting a reply, and I said I had never known any, but knew at once that he was impatient that I had replied, for he wanted to do all the talking himself.

"In families where boys are always hungry

and abused," he resumed. "Where do you find your bad boys? In families where they are treated well, of course."

He stopped again to listen to the noise made by his family upstairs. It was very uproarious, and I thought he was regretting that his philosophy had not been made to bear some practical fruit.

"If you were a young man," he continued, coming out of a brown study, "and had driven from Fairview to ask my advice on this question, I should advise you thus: 'Sir, if you covet the society of little children, hire them to play at your house until you are tired; for then you can send them away, and enjoy the quiet following their absence. That would be my candid advice; you may accept it, or let it alone, as you choose."

He waved the hand at me which he had previously used to represent the pigs, as though I had been asking him to advise me on the subject, and as if he were impatient that I did not accept it at once. But recollecting himself, he took a delicate knife from his pocket, and after profuse apologies for his ill-manners, proceeded to pare his finger nails.

"I understand your father is a singer," he said, after his fingers were mentally pronounced satisfactory.

I replied with a show of pride that he had the finest voice ever heard in Fairview church, and that he was famous for it.

"He ought to stop it," Mr. Biggs abruptly said. "How does it come he is not in the legislature? Because he sings. Did you ever know a great man who sang?"

I replied that I had not, for I had never known a great man.

"Well," he answered curtly, "I know most of them, and none of them sing. Or play."

I had been wishing all evening that Agnes would come in, and ask me to sing, as I thought I had talent in that direction, and even debated in my mind whether I would roar the "Hunter's Horn," or "Glorious Day of Rest" for the amusement of my host; but I was now glad she had been so considerate of my feeling, and spared me the humiliation. I was quite certain that if she should ask me to sing after what Mr. Biggs had said, I should declare I had never attempted to do such a ridiculous thing.

Later in the evening Mr. Biggs picked up the light as though he could decide questions for boys without their assistance, and said he would show me my bed. Leading the way upstairs, I meekly followed. Opening a door after reaching the upper floor, he gave me the light, said goodnight, and went down again, as though he had not had enough of his own company, and would sit up a while longer.

There were two beds in the room to which Mr. Biggs had shown me, and Big Adam occupied one of them already, sound asleep. His clothes were piled up in a heap by the side of it, with the V-shaped hat on top, ready to go on the first thing in the morning. He mumbled occasionally in his sleep, and I thought he was saying he did the best he could, and that it wasn't pleasant to be "jawed at," which made me think again of the terrible old woman with the parchment face, the little head, the little body, and the little knot of hair on the back of her head. I felt like kneeling down by my bed and praying that the queer woman might not have a habit of walking through the house at night, accompanied by the kitchen butcher-knife freshly sharpened at the grindstone, for there was no lock on the door. But speedily occupying the other bed, and putting out the light, I had hardly begun thinking of the curious family before I was sound asleep.

*1882* 1883

## 1840 ~ *Constance Fenimore Woolson* ~ 1894

DESCENDED from colonial stock, and a grandniece of James Fenimore Cooper, the novelist, Miss Woolson was born in Claremont, N.H., where her father was prominent in business and politics. At a very early age she moved with her family to Cleveland. She was educated in the local schools and in the French School of Madame Chegary in New York. At the family summer home at Mackinac her interest was aroused in the French habitants, whose language, habits, and customs she studied. For six years she lived in Florida and other Southern states in order to be with her mother who was in failing health. From 1879 to the end of her life she made her home in Europe, living most of the time in Italy. She died in Venice.

In theory, Miss Woolson had little patience with the so-called confusion of the arts. Each art has its particular purpose and effect to achieve, and with whatever resources and materials that fall to hand. The painter cannot represent a drama any more than a writer can paint a landscape. "You can't make men women, or women men!" As a literary artist she worked slowly and painstakingly, being completely absorbed in the creative process. A plot must arouse curiosity like a riddle, and characters undergo change so that their actions cannot be anticipated. She avoided a style that is merely sweet and pretty, and was ready to tolerate ugliness as long as it possessed strength and vigor. Above all, art is more than the representation of externals, no matter how accurate; it must be an understanding interpretation of these externals by means of the artist's instinctive insight, and what she calls the "underknowledge" of character.

Her books are regional or sectional rather than local colorist in the strict sense, dealing with the Great Lakes region, the impoverished South of the Reconstruction period, and Italy. *Castle Nowhere* (1875), *Rodman the Keeper* (1880), and *The Front Yard and Other Italian Stories* (1895) are representative of the three regions respectively. In her treatment of the American scene there are suggestive hints of the work of her famous great-uncle, notably the love of nature and the wide sweep of her imagination, a circumstance cleverly capitalized by her publishers. The stories of foreign life are less successful. Her permanent place in American literature will depend ultimately upon the excellence of her short stories, a number of which are masterpieces of plot and treatment. Novels like *East Angels* (1886) and *Horace Chase* (1894), in many respects brilliant, just miss being classics. During her lifetime her books were very popular, and many critics were outspoken in their praise. Henry James included her in his gallery of *Partial Portraits*. Since her death her

reputation has steadily declined, far more than the general merits of her work seem to justify, and several prominent critics very recently expressed the opinion that a real revival of interest in her books was sure to take place.

Miss Woolson's novels are *Anne* (1882); *For the Major* (1883); *East Angels* (1886); *Jupiter Lights* (1889); *Horace Chase* (1894). Her short stories and sketches appear in *Castle Nowhere* (1875); *Rodman the Keeper* (1880); *The Front Yard* (1895); *Dorothy* (1896). The only extensive study at present available is J. D. Kern, *Constance Fenimore Woolson, Literary Pioneer* (1934). See also Claire Benedict, *Constance Fenimore Woolson* (1930). Since no formal biography has been written, one is dependent on minor sources such as H. M. Alden, introduction to Biographical Edition of *Anne* (1899); J. H. Harper, *The House of Harper* (1912); A. Stedman, *The Book-Buyer*, Oct., 1889. For criticism see F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923); H. James, *Partial Portraits* (1888); M. Harris, *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dec. 21, 1929.

## OLD GARDISTON

First published in *Harper's*, April, 1876; later collected in *Rodman the Keeper*. Although a native of New England, Miss Woolson's later residence in Florida aroused her sympathy for the South as it faced the devastating result of the Civil War. She writes with sympathy and understanding, if not with the nostalgic regret that one finds in Thomas Nelson Page.

One by one they died—
  Last of all their race;
Nothing left but pride,
  Lace and buckled hose;
Their quietus made,
  On their dwelling-place
Ruthless hands are laid:
  Down the old house goes!

Many a bride has stood
  In yon spacious room;
Here her hand was wooed
  Underneath the rose;
O'er that sill the dead
  Reached the family tomb;
All that were have fled—
  Down the old house goes!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

OLD GARDISTON was a manor-house down in the ricelands, six miles from a Southern seaport. It had been called Old Gardiston for sixty or seventy years, which showed that it must have belonged to colonial days, since no age under that of a century could have earned for it that honorable title in a neighborhood where the Declaration of Independence was still considered an event of comparatively modern times. The war was over, and the mistress of the house, Miss Margaretta Gardiston, lay buried in St. Mark's churchyard, near by. The little old church had long been closed; the very road to its low stone doorway was overgrown, and a second forest had grown up around it; but the churchyard was still open to those of the dead who had a right there; and certainly Miss Margaretta had this right, seeing that father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all lay buried there, and their memorial tablets, quaintly emblazoned, formed a principal part of the decorations of the ancient little sanctuary in the wilderness. There was no one left at Old Gardiston now save Cousin Copeland and Gardis Duke, a girl of seventeen years, Miss Margaretta's niece and heir. Poor little Gardis, having been born a girl when she should have been a boy, was christened with the family name—a practice not uncommon in some parts of the South, where English customs of two centuries ago still retain their hold with singular tenacity; but the three syllables were soon abbreviated to two for common use, and the child grew up with the quaint name of Gardis.

They were at breakfast now, the two remaining members of the family, in the marble-floored dining-room. The latticed windows were open; birds were singing outside, and roses blooming; a flood of sunshine lit up every corner of the apartment, showing its massive Chinese vases, its carved ivory ornaments, its hanging lamp of curious shape, and its spindle-legged sideboard, covered with dark-colored plates and platters ornamented with dark-

blue dragons going out to walk, and crocodiles circling around fantastically roofed temples as though they were waiting for the worshipers to come out in order to make a meal of them. But, in spite of these accessories, the poor old room was but a forlorn place: the marble flooring was sunken and defaced, portions were broken into very traps for unwary feet, and its ancient enemy, the penetrating dampness, had finally conquered the last resisting mosaic, and climbed the walls, showing in blue and yellow streaks on the old-fashioned moldings. There had been no fire in the tiled fireplace for many years; Miss Margaretta did not approve of fires, and wood was costly: this last reason, however, was never mentioned; and Gardis had grown into a girl of sixteen before she knew the comfort of the sparkling little fires that shine on the hearths morning and evening during the short winters in well-appointed Southern homes. At that time she had spent a few days in the city with some family friends who had come out of the war with less impoverishment than their neighbors. Miss Margaretta did not approve of them exactly; it was understood that all Southerners of "our class" were "impoverished." She did not refuse the cordial invitation *in toto*, but she sent for Gardis sooner than was expected, and set about carefully removing from the girl's mind any wrong ideas that might have made a lodgment there. And Gardis, warmly loving her aunt, and imbued with all the family pride from her birth, immediately cast from her the bright little comforts she had met in the city as plebeian, and, going up stairs to the old drawing-room, dusted the relics enshrined there with a new reverence for them, glorifying herself in their undoubted antiquity. Fires, indeed! Certainly not.

The breakfast-table was spread with snowy damask, worn thin almost to gossamer, and fairly embroidered with delicate darning; the cups and plates belonged to the crocodile set, and the meager repast was at least daintily served. Cousin Copeland had his egg, and Gardis satisfied her young appetite with fish caught in the river behind the house by Pompey, and a fair amount of Dinah's corn-bread. The two old slaves had refused to leave Gardiston House. They had been trained all their lives by Miss Margaretta; and now that she was gone, they took pride in keeping the expenses of the table, as she had kept them, reduced to as small a sum as possible, knowing better than poor Gardis herself the pitiful smallness of the family income, derived solely from the rent of an old warehouse in the city. For the war had not impoverished Gardiston House; it was impoverished long before. Acre by acre the land had gone, until nothing was left save a small cornfield and the flower-garden; piece by piece the silver had vanished, until nothing was left save three teaspoons, three tablespoons, and four forks. The old warehouse had brought in little rent during those four long years, and they had fared hardly at Gardiston. Still, in their isolated situation away from the main roads, their well-known poverty a safeguard, they had not so much as heard a drum or seen a uniform, blue or gray, and this was a rare and fortunate exemption in those troublous times; and when the war was at last ended, Miss Margaretta found herself no poorer than she was before, with this great advantage added, that now everybody was poor, and, indeed, it was despicable to be anything else. She bloomed out into a new cheerfulness under this congenial state of things, and even invited one or two contemporaries still remaining on the old plantations in the neighborhood to spend several days at Gardiston. Two ancient dames accepted the invitation, and the state the three kept together in the old drawing-room under the family portraits, the sweep of their narrow-skirted, old-fashioned silk gowns on the inlaid staircase when they went down to dinner, the supreme unconsciousness of the breakneck condition of the marble flooring and the mold-streaked walls, the airy way in which they drank their tea out of the crocodile cups, and told little stories of fifty years before, filled Gardis with admiring respect. She sat, as it were, in the shadow of their greatness, and obediently ate only of those dishes that required a fork, since the three spoons were, of course, in use. During this memorable visit Cousin Copeland was always "engaged in his study" at mealtimes; but in the evening he appeared, radiant and smiling, and then the four played whist together on the Chinese

table, and the ladies fanned themselves with stately grace, while Cousin Copeland dealt not only the cards, but compliments also—both equally old-fashioned and well preserved.

But within this first year of peace Miss Margaretta had died—an old lady of seventy-five, but bright and strong as a winter apple. Gardis and Cousin Copeland, left alone, moved on in the same way: it was the only way they knew. Cousin Copeland lived only in the past, Gardis in the present; and indeed the future, so anxiously considered always by the busy, restless Northern mind, has never been lifted into the place of supreme importance at the South.

When breakfast was over, Gardis went up stairs into the drawing-room. Cousin Copeland, remarking, in his busy little way, that he had important work awaiting him, retired to his study—a round room in the tower, where, at an old desk with high back full of pigeon-holes, he had been accustomed for years to labor during a portion of the day over family documents a century or two old, recopying them with minute care, adding foot-notes, and references leading back by means of red-ink stars to other documents, and appending elaborately phrased little comments neatly signed in flourishes with his initials and the date, such as "Truly a doughty deed. C.B.G. 1852."—"'Worthy,' quotha? Nay, it seemeth unto my poor comprehension a *marvelous* kindness! C.B.G. 1856."—"May we all profit by this! C.B.G. 1858."

This morning, as usual, Gardis donned her gloves, threw open the heavy wooden shutters, and, while the summer morning sunshine flooded the room, she moved from piece to piece of the old furniture, carefully dusting it all. The room was large and lofty; there was no carpet on the inlaid floor, but a tapestry rug lay under the table in the center of the apartment; everything was spindle-legged, chairs, tables, the old piano, two cabinets, a sofa, a card-table, and two little tabourets embroidered in Scriptural scenes, reduced now to shadows, Joseph and his wicked brethren having faded to the same dull yellow hue, which Gardis used to think was not the discrimination that should have been shown between the just and the unjust. The old cabinets were crowded with curious little Chinese images and vases, and on the high mantel were candelabra with more crocodiles on them, and a large mirror which had so long been veiled in gauze that Gardis had never fairly seen the fat, gilt cherubs that surrounded it. A few inches of wax-candle still remained in the candelabra, but they were never lighted, a tallow substitute on the table serving as a nucleus during the eight months of warm weather when the evenings were spent in the drawing-room. When it was really cold a fire was kindled in the boudoir—a narrow chamber in the center of the large rambling old mansion, where, with closed doors and curtained windows, the three sat together, Cousin Copeland reading aloud, generally from the "Spectator," often pausing to jot down little notes as they occurred to him in his orderly memorandum-book—"mere outlines of phrases, but sufficiently full to recall the desired train of thought," he observed. The ladies embroidered, Miss Margaretta sitting before the large frame she had used when a girl. They did all the sewing for the household (very little new material, and much repairing of old), but these domestic labors were strictly confined to the privacy of their own apartments; in the drawing-room or boudoir they always embroidered. Gardis remembered this with sadness as she removed the cover from the large frame, and glanced at "Moses in the Bulrushes," which her inexperienced hand could never hope to finish; she was thinking of her aunt, but any one else would have thought of the bulrushes, which were now pink, now saffron, and now blue, after some mediaeval system of floss-silk vegetation.

Having gone all around the apartment and dusted everything, Chinese images and all, Gardis opened the old piano and gently played a little tune. Miss Margaretta had been her only teacher, and the young girl's songs were old-fashioned; but the voice was sweet and full, and before she knew it she was filling the house with her melody.

"Little Cupid one day in a myrtle-bough strayed,
And among the sweet blossoms he playfully played,

customed to remark to a bachelor friend that an atmosphere of repose was best adapted to his constitution and to his work. He therefore now retired to the first wife of the second cousin of his grandfather, and speedily forgot all about the camp and the officers. Not so Gardis. Putting on her straw hat, she went out into the garden to attend to her flowers and work off her annoyance. Was it annoyance, or excitement merely? She did not know. But she did know that the grove was full of men and tents, and she could see several of the bluecoats fishing in the river. "Very well," she said to herself hotly; "we shall have no dinner, then!" But the river was not hers, and so she went on clipping the roses, and tying back the vines all the long bright afternoon, until old Dinah came to call her to dinner. As she went, the bugle sounded from the grove, and she seemed to be obeying its summons; instantly she sat down on a bench to wait until its last echo had died away: "I foresee that I shall hate that bugle," she said to herself.

The bluecoats were encamped in the grove three long months. Captain Newell and the lieutenant, Roger Saxton, made no more visits at Gardiston House; but, when they passed by and saw the little mistress in the garden or at the window, they saluted her with formal courtesy. And the lieutenant looked back; yes, there was no doubt of that—the lieutenant certainly looked back. Saxton was a handsome youth; tall and finely formed, he looked well in his uniform, and knew it. Captain Newell was not so tall—a gray-eyed, quiet young man. "Commonplace," said Miss Gardis. The bugle still gave forth its silvery summons. "It is insupportable," said the little mistress daily; and daily Cousin Copeland replied, "Certainly." But the bugle sounded on all the same.

One day a deeper wrath came. Miss Duke discovered Dinah in the act of taking cakes to the camp to sell to the soldiers!

"Well, Miss Gardis, dey pays me well for it, and we's next to not'ing laid up for de winter," replied the old woman anxiously, as the irate little mistress forbade the sale of so much as "one kernel of corn."

"Dey don't want de corn, but dey pays well for de cakes, dearie Miss Gardis. Yer see, yer don't know not'ing about it; it's only ole Dinah makin' a little money for herself and Pomp," pleaded the faithful creature, who would have given her last crumb for the family, and died content. But Gardis sternly forbade all dealings with the camp from that time forth, and then she went up to her room and cried like a child. "They knew it, of course," she thought; "no doubt they have had many a laugh over the bakery so quietly carried on at Gardiston House. They are capable of supposing even that *I* sanctioned it." And with angry tears she fell to planning how she could best inform them of their mistake, and overwhelm them with her scorn. She prepared several crushing little speeches, and held them in reserve for use; but the officers never came to Gardiston House, and of course she never went to the camp—no, nor so much as looked that way; so there was no good opportunity for delivering them. One night, however, the officers did come to Gardiston House—not only the officers, but all the men; and Miss Duke was very glad to see them.

It happened in this way. The unhappy State had fallen into the hands of double-faced, conscienceless whites, who used the newly enfranchised blacks as tools for their evil purposes. These leaders were sometimes emigrant Northerners, sometimes renegade Southerners, but always rascals. In the present case they had inflamed their ignorant followers to riotous proceedings in the city, and the poor blacks, fancying that the year of jubilee had come, when each man was to have a plantation, naturally began by ejecting the resident owners before the grand division of spoils. At least this was their idea. During the previous year, when the armies were still marching through the land, they had gone out now and then in a motiveless sort of way and burned the fine plantation residences near the city; and now, chance having brought Gardiston to their minds, out they came, inconsequent and reasonless as ever, to burn Gardiston. But they did not know the United States troops were there.

There was a siege of ten minutes, two or three volleys from the soldiers, and then a

disorderly retreat; one or two wounded were left on the battlefield (Miss Duke's flower-garden), and the dining-room windows were broken. Beyond this there was no slaughter, and the victors drew off their forces in good order to the camp, leaving the officers to receive the thanks of the household—Cousin Copeland, enveloped in a mammoth dressing-gown that had belonged to his grandfather, and Gardis, looking distractingly pretty in a hastily donned short skirt and a little white sack (she had no dressing-gown), with her brown hair waving over her shoulders, and her cheeks scarlet from excitement. Roger Saxton fell into love on the spot: hitherto he had only hovered, as it were, on the border.

"Had you any idea she was so exquisitely beautiful?" he exclaimed, as they left the old house in the gray light of dawn.

"Miss Duke is not exquisitely beautiful; she is not even beautiful," replied the slow-voiced Newell. "She has the true Southern colorless, or rather cream-colored, complexion, and her features are quite irregular."

"Colorless! I never saw more beautiful coloring in my life than she had tonight," exclaimed Saxton.

"Tonight, yes; I grant that. But it took a good-sized riot to bring it to the surface," replied the impassive captain.

A guard was placed around the house at night and pickets sent down the road for some time after this occurrence. Gardis, a prey to conflicting feelings, deserted her usual haunts and shut herself up in her own room, thinking, thinking what she ought to do. In the mean time, beyond a formal note of inquiry delivered daily by a wooden-faced son of Mars, the two officers made no effort toward a further acquaintance; the lieutenant was on fire to attempt it, but the captain held him back. "It is her place to make the advances now," he said. It was; and Gardis knew it.

One morning she emerged from her retreat, and with a decided step sought Cousin Copeland in his study. The little man had been disquieted by the night attack; it had come to him vaguely once or twice since then that perhaps there might be other things to do in the world besides copying family documents; but the nebula—it was not even a definite thought—had faded, and now he was at work again with more ardor than ever.

"Cousin Copeland," said Gardis, appearing at the door of the study, "I have decided at last to yield to your wishes, and—and invite the officers to dinner."

"By all means," said Cousin Copeland, putting down his pen and waving his hands with a hearty little air of acquiescence—"by all means." It was not until long afterward that he remembered he had never expressed any wish upon the subject whatever. But it suited Gardis to imagine that he had done so; so she imagined it.

"We have little to work with," continued the little mistress of the house; "but Dinah is an excellent cook, and—and—O cousin, I do not wish to do it; I can not bear the mere thought of it; but oh! we must, we must." Tears stood in her eyes as she concluded.

"They are going soon," suggested Cousin Copeland, hesitatingly, biting the end of his quill.

"That is the very reason. They are going soon, and we have done nothing to acknowledge their aid, their courtesy—we Gardistons, both of us. They have saved our home, perhaps our lives; and we—we let them go without a word! O cousin, it must not be. Something we must do; *noblesse oblige!* I have thought and thought, and really there is nothing but this: we must invite them to dinner," said Miss Duke, tragically.

"I—I always liked little dinners," said Cousin Copeland, in a gentle, assenting murmur.

Thus it happened that the officers received two formal little notes with the compliments of Miss Gardiston Duke inclosed, and an invitation to dinner. "Hurrah!" cried Saxton. "At last!"

The day appointed was at the end of the next week; Gardis had decided that that would be more ceremonious. "And they are to understand," she said proudly, "that it is a mere dinner of ceremony, and not of friendship."

"Certainly," said Cousin Copeland.

Old Dinah was delighted. Gardis brought out some of the half-year rent money, and a dinner was planned, of few dishes truly, but

each would be a marvel of good cooking, as the old family servants of the South used to cook when time was nothing to them. It is not much to them now; but they have heard that it ought to be, and that troubles the perfection of their pie-crust. There was a little wine left in the wine-room—a queer little recess like a secret chamber; and there was always the crocodile china and the few pieces of cut glass. The four forks would be enough, and Gardis would take no jelly, so that the spoons would serve also; in fact, the dinner was planned to accommodate the silver. So far, so good. But now as to dress; here the poor little mistress was sadly pinched. She knew this; but she hoped to make use of a certain well-worn changeable silk that had belonged to Miss Margaretta, in hue a dull green and purple. But, alas! upon inspection she discovered that the faithful garment had given way at last, after years of patient service, and now there was nothing left but mildew and shreds. The invitation had been formally accepted; the dinner was in course of preparation: what should she do? She had absolutely nothing, poor child, save the two faded old lawns which she wore ordinarily, and the one shabby woolen dress for cooler weather. "If they were anything but what they are," she said to herself, after she had again and again turned over the contents of her three bureau drawers, "I would wear my everyday dress without a moment's thought or trouble. But I will not allow these men, belonging to the despot army of the North, these aliens forced upon us by a strong hand and a hard fate, to smile at the shabby attire of a Southern lady."

She crossed the hall to Miss Margaretta's closed room: she would search every corner; possibly there was something she did not at the moment recall. But, alas! only too well did she know the contents of the closet and the chest of drawers, the chest of drawers and the closet; had she not been familiar with every fold and hue from her earliest childhood? Was there nothing else? There was the cedar chamber, a little cedar cupboard in the wall, where Miss Margaretta kept several stately old satin bonnets, elaborate structures of a past age. Mechanically Gardis counted the steps, and opened the little door halfway up the wall. The bonnets were there, and with them several packages; these she took down and opened. Among various useless relics of finery appeared, at last, one whole dress; narrow-skirted, short, with a scantily fashioned waist, it was still a complete robe of its kind, in color a delicate blue, the material clinging and soft like Canton crape. Folded with the dress were blue kid slippers and a silk belt with a broad buckle. The package bore a label with this inscription, "The gown within belonged to my respected mother, Pamela Gardiston," in the handwriting of Miss Margaretta; and Gardis remembered that she had seen the blue skirt once, long ago, in her childhood. But Miss Margaretta allowed no prying, and her niece had been trained to ask permission always before entering her apartment, and to refrain from touching anything, unless asked to do so while there. Now the poverty-stricken little hostess carried the relics carefully across to her own room, and, locking the door, attired herself, and anxiously surveyed the effect. The old-fashioned gown left her shoulders and arms bare, the broad belt could not lengthen the short waist, and the skirt hardly covered her ankles. "I can wear my old muslin cape, but my arms will have to show, and my feet too," she thought, with nervous distress. The creased blue kid slippers were full of little holes and somewhat mildewed, but the girl mended them bravely; she said to herself that she need only walk down to the dining-room and back; and, besides, the rooms would not be brightly lighted. If she had had anything to work with, even so much as one yard of material, she would have made over the old gown; but she had absolutely nothing, and so she determined to overcome her necessities by sheer force of will.

"How do I look, cousin?" she said, appearing at the study-door on the afternoon of the fatal day. She spoke nervously, and yet proudly, as though defying criticism. But Cousin Copeland had no thought of criticism.

"My child," he said, with pleased surprise, "you look charming. I am very glad you have a new gown, dear, very glad."

"Men are all alike," thought Gardis ex-

ultingly. "The others will think it is new also."

Cousin Copeland possessed but one suit of clothes; consequently he had not been able to honor the occasion by a change of costume; but he wore a ruffled shirt and a flower in his buttonhole, and his countenance was sedately illumined by the thought of the festal board below. He was not at work, but merely dabbling a little on the outer edges—making flourishes at the ends of the chapters, numbering pages, and so forth. Gardis had gone to the drawing-room; she longed to see herself from head to foot, but, with the exception of the glasses in two old pier-tables, there was no large mirror save the gauze-veiled one in the drawing-room. Should she do it? Eve listened to the tempter, and fell. Likewise Gardis. A scissors, a chair, a snip, and lo! it was done. There she was, a little figure in a quaint blue gown, the thick muslin cape hiding the neck, but the dimpled arms bare almost to the shoulder, since the sleeve was but a narrow puff; the brown hair of this little image was braided around the head like a coronet; the wistful face was colorless and sad; in truth, there seemed to be tears in the brown eyes. "I will not cry," said Gardis, jumping down from her chair, "but I *do* look odd; there is no doubt of that." Then she remembered that she should not have jumped, on account of the slippers, and looked anxiously down; but the kid still held its place over the little feet, and, going to the piano, the young mistress of the manor began playing a gay little love-song, as if to defy her own sadness. Before it was finished, old Pompey, his everyday attire made majestic by a large, stiffly starched collar, announced the guests, and the solemnities began.

Everything moved smoothly, however. Cousin Copeland's conversation was in its most flowing vein, the simple little dinner was well cooked and served, Pompey was statuesque, and the two guests agreeable. They remained at the table some time, according to the old Gardiston custom, and then, the ends of wax-candles having been lighted in the drawing-room, coffee was served there in the crocodile cups, and Miss Duke sang one or two songs. Soon after the officers took leave. Captain Newell bowed as he said farewell, but Roger Saxton, younger and more impulsive, extended his hand. Miss Duke made a stately courtesy, with downcast eyes, as though she had not observed it; but by her heightened color the elder guest suspected the truth, and smiled inwardly at the proud little reservation. "The *hand* of Douglas is his own," he said to himself.

The dreaded dinner was over, and the girl had judged correctly: the two visitors had no suspicion of the antiquity of the blue gown.

"Did you ever see such a sweet little picture, from the pink rose in the hair down to the blue slipper!" said Saxton enthusiastically.

"She looked well," replied Newell; "but as for cordiality—"

"I'll win that yet. I like her all the better for her little ways," said the lieutenant. "I suppose it is only natural that Southern girls should cherish bitterness against us; although, of course *she* is far too young to have lost a lover in the war—far too young."

"Which is a comfort," said Newell dryly.

"A great comfort, old man. Don't be bearish, now, but just wait a while and see."

"Precisely what I intend to do," said Newell.

In the mean time Gardis, in the privacy of her own room, was making a solemn funeral pyre on the hearth, composed of the blue gown, the slippers, and the pink rose, and watching the flame as it did its work. "So perish also the enemies of my country!" she said to herself. (She did not mean exactly that they should be burned on funeral pyres, but merely consigned them on this, as on all occasions, to a general perdition.) The old dress was but a rag, and the slippers were worthless; but, had they been new and costly, she would have done the same. Had they not been desecrated? Let them die!

It was, of course, proper that the guests should call at Gardiston House within a day or two; and Roger Saxton, ignoring the coldness of his reception, came again and again. He even sought out Cousin Copeland in his study, and won the heart of the old bachelor by listening a whole morning to extracts from the documents. Gardis found that her reserve was of no avail against this bold young

soldier, who followed her into all her little retreats, and paid no attention to her stinging little speeches. Emboldened and also angered by what she deemed his callousness, she every day grew more and more open in her tone, until you might have said that she, as a unit, poured out upon his head the whole bitterness of the South. Saxton made no answer until the time came for the camp to break up, the soldiers being ordered back to the city. Then he came to see her one afternoon, and sat for some time in silence; the conversation of the little mistress was the same as usual.

"I forgive this, and all the bitter things you have said to me, Gardis," he remarked abruptly.

"Forgive! And by what right, sir—"

"Only this: I love you, dear." And then he poured out all the tide of his young ardor, and laid his heart and his life at her feet.

But the young girl, drawing her slight figure up to its full height, dismissed him with haughty composure. She no longer spoke angrily, but simply said, "That you, a Northerner and a soldier, should presume to ask for the hand of a Southern lady, shows, sir, that you have not the least comprehension of us or of our country." Then she made him a courtesy and left the room. The transformation was complete; it was no longer the hot-tempered girl flashing out in biting little speeches, but the woman uttering the belief of her life. Saxton rode off into town that same night, dejected and forlorn.

Captain Newell took his leave a day later in a different fashion; he told Miss Duke that he would leave a guard on the premises if she wished it.

"I do not think it will be necessary," answered the lady.

"Nor do I; indeed, I feel sure that there will be no further trouble, for we have placed the whole district under military rule since the last disturbance. But I thought possibly you might feel timid."

"I am not timid, Captain Newell."

The grave captain stroked his mustache to conceal a smile, and then, as he rose to go, he said: "Miss Duke, I wish to say to you one thing. You know nothing of us, of course, but I trust you will accept my word when I say that Mr. Saxton is of good family, that he is well educated, and that he is heir to a fair fortune. What he is personally you have seen for yourself—a frank, kind-hearted, manly young fellow."

"Did you come here to plead his cause?" said the girl scornfully.

"No; I came here to offer you a guard, Miss Duke, for the protection of your property. But at the same time I thought it only my duty to make you aware of the real value of the gift laid at your feet."

"How did you know—" began Gardis.

"Roger tells me everything," replied the officer. "If it were not so, I—" Here he paused; and then, as though he had concluded to say no more, he bowed and took leave.

That night Gardiston House was left to itself in the forest stillness. "I am glad that bugle is silenced for ever," said Gardis.

"And yet it was a silvern sound," said Cousin Copeland.

The rains began, and there was no more walking abroad; the excitement of the summer and the camp gone, in its place came the old cares which had been half forgotten. (Care always waits for a cold or a rainy day.) Could the little household manage to live—live with their meager comforts—until the next payment of rent came in? That was the question.

Bitterly, bitterly poor was the whole Southern country in those dreary days after the war. The second year was worse than the first; for the hopes that had buoyed up the broken fortunes soon disappeared, and nothing was left. There was no one to help Gardis Duke, or the hundreds of other women in like desolate positions. Some of the furniture and ornaments of the old house might have been sold, could they have been properly brought forward in New York City, where there were people with purses to buy such things; but in the South no one wanted Chinese images, and there was nothing of intrinsic value. So the little household lived along, in a spare, pinched way, until, suddenly, final disaster overtook them: the tenant of the warehouse gave up his lease, declaring that the old building was too ruinous for use; and, as no one succeeded him, Gardiston House beheld itself face to face with starvation.

"If we wasn't so old, Pomp and me, Miss Gardis, we could work for yer," said Dinah, with great tears rolling down her wrinkled cheeks; "but we's just good for not'ing now."

Cousin Copeland left his manuscripts and wandered aimlessly around the garden for a day or two; then the little man rose early one morning and walked into the city, with the hopeful idea of obtaining employment as a clerk. "My handwriting is more than ordinarily ornate, I think," he said to himself, with proud confidence.

Reaching the town at last, he walked past the stores several times and looked timidly within; he thought perhaps some one would see him, and come out. But no one came; and at last he ventured into a clothing-store, through a grove of ticketed coats and suspended trousers. The proprietor of the establishment, a Northern Hebrew whose venture had not paid very well, heard his modest request, and asked what he could do.

"I can write," said Cousin Copeland, with quiet pride; and in answer to a sign he climbed up on a tall stool and proceeded to cover half a sheet of paper in his best style. As he could not for the moment think of anything else, he wrote out several paragraphs from the last family document.

"Richard, the fourth of the name, a descendant on the maternal side from the most respected and valorous family—"

"Oh, we don't care for that kind of writing; it's old-fashioned," said Mr. Ottenheimer, throwing down the paper, and waving the applicant toward the door with his fat hand. "I don't want my books frescoed."

Cousin Copeland retired to the streets again with a new sensation in his heart. Old-fashioned? Was it old-fashioned? And even if so, was it any the less a rarely attained and delicately ornate style of writing? He could not understand it. Weary with the unaccustomed exercise, he sat down at last on the steps of a church—an old structure whose spire bore the marks of bombshells sent in from the blockading fleet outside the bar during those months of dreary siege—and thought he would refresh himself with some furtive mouthfuls of the corn-bread hidden in his pocket for lunch.

"Good morning, sir," said a voice, just as he had drawn forth his little parcel and was opening it behind the skirt of his coat. "When did you come in from Gardiston?"

It was Captain Newell. With the rare courtesy which comes from a kind heart, he asked no questions regarding the fatigue and the dust-powdered clothes of the little bachelor, and took a seat beside him as though a church-step on a city street was a customary place of meeting.

"I was about to—to eat a portion of this corn-bread," said Cousin Copeland, hesitatingly; "will you taste it also?"

The young officer accepted a share of the repast gravely, and then Cousin Copeland told his story. He was a simple soul. Miss Margaretta would have made the soldier believe she had come to town merely for her own lofty amusement or to buy jewels. It ended, however, in the comfortable eating of a good dinner at the hotel, and a cigar in Captain Newell's own room, which was adorned with various personal appliances for comfort that astonished the eyes of the careful little bachelor, and left him in a maze of vague wonderings. Young men lived in that way, then, nowadays? They could do so, and yet not be persons of—of irregular habits?

David Newell persuaded his guest to abandon, for the present, all idea of obtaining employment in the city. "These shopkeepers are not capable of appreciating qualifications such as yours, sir," he said. "Would it not be better to set about obtaining a new tenant for the warehouse?"

Cousin Copeland thought it would; but repairs were needed, and—

"Will you give me the charge of it? I am in the city all the time, and I have acquaintances among the Northerners who are beginning to come down here with a view of engaging in business."

Cousin Copeland gladly relinquished the warehouse, and then, after an hour's rest, he rode gallantly back to Gardiston House on one of the captain's horses; he explained at some length that he had been quite a man of mettle in his youth as regards horseflesh—"often riding, sir, ten and fifteen miles a day."

"I will go in for a moment, I think," said

the young officer, as they arrived at the old gate.

"Most certainly," said Cousin Copeland cordially; "Gardis will be delighted to see you."

"Will she?" said the captain.

Clouds had gathered, a raw wind from the ocean swept over the land, and fine rain was beginning to fall. The house seemed dark and damp as the two entered it. Gardis listened to Cousin Copeland's detailed little narrative in silence, and made no comments while he was present; but when he left the room for a moment she said abruptly:

"Sir, you will make no repairs, and you will take no step toward procuring a tenant for our property in the city. I will not allow it."

"And why may I not do it as well as any other person?" said Captain Newell.

"You are not 'any other person,' and you know it," said Gardis, with flushed cheeks. "I do not choose to receive a favor from your hands."

"It is a mere business transaction, Miss Duke."

"It is not. You know you intend to make the repairs yourself," cried the girl passionately.

"And if I do so intend? It will only be advancing the money, and you can pay me interest if you like. The city will certainly regain her old position in time; my venture is a sure one. But I *wish* to assist you, Miss Duke; I do not deny it."

"And I—will not allow it!"

"What will you do, then?"

"God knows," said Gardis. "But I would rather starve than accept assistance from you." Her eyes were full of tears as she spoke, but she held her head proudly erect.

"And from Saxton? He has gone North, but he would be so proud to help you."

"From him least of all."

"Because of his love for you?"

Gardis was silent.

"Miss Duke, let me ask you one question. If you had loved Roger Saxton, would you have married him?"

"Never!"

"You would have sacrificed your whole life, then, for the sake of—"

"My country, sir."

"We have a common country, Gardis," answered the young man gravely. Then, as he rose, "Child," he said, "I shall not relinquish the charge of your property, given into my hands by Mr. Copeland Gardiston, and, for your own sake, I beg you to be more patient, more gentle, as becomes a woman. A few weeks will no doubt see you released from even your slight obligation to me: you will have but a short time to wait."

Poor Gardis! Her proud scorn went for nothing, then? She was overridden as though she had been a child, and even rebuked for want of gentleness. The drawing-room was cheerless and damp in the rainy twilight; the girl wore a faded lawn dress, and her cheeks were pale; the old house was chilly through and through, and even the soldier, strong as he was, felt himself shivering. At this instant enter Cousin Copeland. "Of course you will spend the night here," he said heartily. "It is raining, and I must insist upon your staying over until tomorrow—must really insist."

Gardis looked up quickly; her dismayed face said plainly, "Oh, no, no." Thereupon the young officer immediately accepted Cousin Copeland's invitation, and took his seat again with quiet deliberation. Gardis sank down upon the sofa. "Very well," she thought desperately, "this time it is hopeless. Nothing can be done."

And hopeless it was. Pompey brought in a candle, and placed it upon the table, where its dim light made the large apartment more dismal than before; the rain poured down outside, and the rising wind rattled the loose shutters. Dinner was announced—one small fish, potatoes, and corn-bread. Pale Gardis sat like a statue at the head of the table, and made no effort to entertain the guest; but Cousin Copeland threw himself bravely into the breach, and, by way of diversion, related the whole story of the unchronicled wife of one of our grandfather's second cousins," who had turned out to be a most remarkable personage of Welsh descent, her golden harp having once stood in the very room in which they were now seated.

"Do you not think, my child, that a—a little fire in your Aunt Margaretta's boudoir would

—would be conducive to our comfort?" suggested the little bachelor, as they rose from the table.

"As you please," said Gardis.

So the three repaired thither, and when the old red curtains were drawn, and the fire lighted, the little room had at least a semblance of comfort, whatever may have been in the hearts of its occupants. Gardis embroidered, Cousin Copeland chatted on in a steady little stream, and the guest listened. "I will step up stairs to my study, and bring down that file of documents," said the bachelor, rising. He was gone, and left only silence behind him. Gardis did not raise her head, but went steadily on with the embroidered robe of the Queen of Sheba.

"I am thinking," began David Newell, breaking the long pause at last, "how comfortable you would be, Miss Duke, as the wife of Roger Saxton. He would take you North, away from this old house, and he would be so proud and so fond of you."

No answer.

"The place could be put in order if you did not care to sell it, and your Cousin Copeland could live on here as usual; indeed, I could scarcely imagine him in any other home."

"Nor myself."

"Oh yes, Miss Duke; I can easily imagine you in New York, Paris, or Vienna. I can easily imagine you at the opera, in the picture-galleries, or carrying out to the full your exquisite taste in dress."

Down went the embroidery. "Sir, do you mean to insult me?" said the pale, cotton-robed little hostess.

"By no means."

"Why do you come here? Why do you sneer at my poor clothes? Why—" Her voice trembled, and she stopped abruptly.

"I was not aware that they were poor or old, Miss Duke. I have never seen a more exquisite costume than yours on the evening when we dined here by invitation; it has been like a picture in my memory ever since."

"An old robe that belonged to my grandmother, and I burned it, every shred, as soon as you had gone," said Gardis hotly.

Far from being impressed as she had intended he should be, David Newell merely bowed; the girl saw that he set the act down as "temper."

"I suppose your Northern ladies never do such things?" she said bitterly.

"You are right; they do not," he answered.

"Why do you come here?" pursued Gardis. "Why do you speak to me of Mr. Saxton? Though he had the fortune of a prince, he is nothing to me."

"Roger's fortune is comfortable, but not princely, Miss Duke—by no means princely. We are not princely at the North," added Newell, with a slight smile, "and neither are we 'knightly.' We must, I fear, yield all claim to those prize words of yours."

"I am not aware that I have used the words," said Miss Duke, with lofty indifference.

"Oh, I did not mean you alone—you personally—but all Southern women. However, to return to our subject: Saxton loves you, and has gone away with a saddened heart."

This was said gravely. "As though," Miss Duke remarked to herself—"really as though a heart was of consequence!"

"I presume he will soon forget," she said carelessly, as she took up her embroidery again.

"Yes, no doubt," replied Captain Newell. "I remember once on Staten Island, and again out in Mississippi, when he was even more—Yes, as you say, he will soon forget."

"Then why do you so continually speak of him?" said Miss Duke sharply. Such prompt corroboration was not, after all, as agreeable as it should have been to a well-regulated mind.

"I speak of him, Miss Duke, because I wish to know whether it is only your Southern girlish pride that speaks, or whether you really, as would be most natural, love him as he loves you; for in the latter case, you would be able, I think, to fix and retain his somewhat fickle fancy. He is a fine fellow, and, as I said before, it would be but natural, Miss Duke, that you should love him."

"I do not love him," said Gardis, quickly and angrily, putting in her stitches all wrong. Who was this person, daring to assume what would or would not be natural for her to do?

"Very well; I believe you. And now that I know the truth I will tell you why I come here:

you have asked me several times. I too love you, Miss Duke."

Gardis had risen. "You!" she said—"you?"

"Yes, I; I too."

He was standing also, and they gazed at each other a moment in silence.

"I will never marry you," said the girl at last—"never! never! You do not, can not, understand the hearts of Southern women, sir."

"I have not asked you to marry me, Miss Duke," said the young soldier composedly; "and the hearts of Southern women are much like those of other women, I presume." Then, as the girl opened the door to escape, "You may go away if you like, Gardis," he said, "but I shall love you all the same, dear."

She disappeared, and in a few moments Cousin Copeland reëntered, with apologies for his lengthened absence. "I found several other documents I thought you might like to see," he said eagerly. "They will occupy the remainder of our evening delightfully."

They did. But Gardis did not return; neither did she appear at the breakfast-table the next morning. Captain Newell rode back to the city without seeing her.

Not long afterward Cousin Copeland received a formal letter from a city lawyer. The warehouse had found a tenant, and he, the lawyer, acting for the agent, Captain Newell, had the honor to inclose the first installment of rent-money, and remained an obedient servant, and so forth. Cousin Copeland was exultant. Gardis said to herself, "He is taking advantage of our poverty," and, going to her room, she sat down to plan some way of release. "I might be a governess," she thought. But no one at the South wanted a governess now, and how could she go North? She was not aware how old-fashioned were her little accomplishments —her music, her embroidery, her ideas of literature, her prim drawings, and even her deportment. No one made courtesies at the North any more, save perhaps in the Lancers. As to chemistry, trigonometry, physiology, and geology, the ordinary studies of a Northern girl, she knew hardly more than their names. "We might sell the place," she thought at last, "and go away somewhere and live in the woods."

This, indeed, seemed the only way open to her. The house was an actual fact; it was there; it was also her own. A few days later an advertisement appeared in the city newspaper: "For sale, the residence known as Gardiston House, situated six miles from the city, on Green River. Apply by letter, or on the premises, to Miss Gardiston Duke." Three days passed, and no one came. The fourth day an applicant appeared, and was ushered into the dining-room. He sent up no name; but Miss Duke descended hopefully to confer with him, and found—Captain Newell.

"You!" she said, paling and flushing. Her voice faltered; she was sorely disappointed.

"It will always be myself, Gardis," said the young man gravely. "So you wish to sell the old house? I should not have supposed it."

"I wish to sell it in order to be freed from obligation forced upon us, sir."

"Very well. But if *I* buy it, then what?"

"You will not buy it, for the simple reason that I will not sell it to you. You do not wish the place; you would only buy it to assist us."

"That is true."

"Then there is nothing more to be said, I believe," said Miss Duke, rising.

"*Is* there nothing more, Gardis?"

"Nothing, Captain Newell."

And then, without another word, the soldier bowed, and rode back to town.

The dreary little advertisement remained in a corner of the newspaper a month longer, but no purchaser appeared. The winter was rainy, with raw east winds from the ocean, and the old house leaked in many places. If they had lived in one or two of the smaller rooms, which were in better condition and warmer than the large apartments, they might have escaped; but no habit was changed, and three times a day the table was spread in the damp dining-room, where the atmosphere was like that of a tomb, and where no fire was ever made. The long evenings were spent in the somber drawing-room by the light of the one candle, and the rain beat against the old shutters so loudly that Cousin Copeland was obliged to elevate his gentle little voice as he read aloud to his silent companion. But one evening he found himself forced to pause; his voice had failed. Four days afterward he died, gentle and placid

to the last. He was an old man, although no one had ever thought so.

The funeral notice appeared in the city paper, and a few old family friends came out to Gardiston House to follow the last Gardiston to his resting-place in St. Mark's forest churchyard. They were all sad-faced people, clad in mourning much the worse for wear. Accustomed to sorrow, they followed to the grave quietly, not a heart there that had not its own dead. They all returned to Gardiston House, sat a while in the drawing-room, spoke a few words each in turn to the desolate little mistress, and then took leave. Gardis was left alone.

Captain Newell did not come to the funeral; he could not come into such a company in his uniform, and he would not come without it. He had his own ideas of duty, and his own pride. But he sent a wreath of beautiful flowers, which must have come from some city where there was a hothouse. Miss Duke would not place the wreath upon the coffin, neither would she leave it in the drawing-room; she stood a while with it in her hand, and then she stole up stairs and laid it on Cousin Copeland's open desk, where daily he had worked so patiently and steadily through so many long years. Uselessly? Who among us shall dare to say that?

A week later, at twilight, old Dinah brought up the young officer's card.

"Say that I see no one," replied Miss Duke.

A little note came back, written on a slip of paper: "I beg you to see me, if only for a moment; it is a business matter that has brought me here today." And certainly it was a very forlorn day for a pleasure ride: the wind howled through the trees, and the roads were almost impassable with deep mire. Miss Duke went down to the dining-room. She wore no mourning garments; she had none. She had not worn mourning for her aunt, and for the same reason. Pale and silent, she stood before the young officer waiting to hear his errand. It was this: some one wished to purchase Gardiston House—a real purchaser this time, a stranger. Captain Newell did not say that it was the wife of an army contractor, a Northern woman, who had taken a fancy for an old family residence, and intended to be herself an old family in future; he merely stated the price offered for the house and its furniture, and in a few words placed the business clearly before the listener.

Her face lighted with pleasure.

"At last!" she said.

"Yes, at last, Miss Duke." There was a shade of sadness in his tone, but he spoke no word of entreaty. "You accept?"

"I do," said Gardis.

"I must ride back to the city," said David Newell, taking up his cap, "before it is entirely dark, for the roads are very heavy. I came out as soon as I heard of the offer, Miss Duke, for I knew you would be glad, very glad."

"Yes," said Gardis, "I am glad; very glad." Her cheeks were flushed now, and she smiled as she returned the young officer's bow. "Some time, Captain Newell—some time I trust I shall feel like thanking you for what was undoubtedly intended, on your part, as kindness," she said.

"It was never intended for kindness at all," said Newell bluntly. "It was never but one thing, Gardis, and you know it; and that one thing is, and always will be, love. Not 'always will be,' though; I should not say that. A man can conquer an unworthy love if he chooses."

"Unworthy?" said Gardis involuntarily.

"Yes, unworthy; like this of mine for you. A woman should be gentle, should be loving; a woman should have a womanly nature. But you—you—you do not seem to have anything in you but a foolish pride. I verily believe, Gardis Duke, that, if you loved me enough to die for me, you would still let me go out of that door without a word, so deep, so deadly is that pride of yours. What do I want with such a wife? No. My wife must love me—love me ardently, as I shall love her. Farewell, Miss Duke; I shall not see you again, probably. I will send a lawyer out to complete the sale."

He was gone, and Gardis stood alone in the darkening room. Gardiston House, where she had spent her life—Gardiston House, full of the memories and associations of two centuries—Gardiston House, the living reminder and the constant support of that family pride in which she had been nurtured, her one possession in the land which she had so loved, the beautiful, desolate South—would soon be hers no longer. She began to sob, and then when the

sound came back to her, echoing through the still room, she stopped suddenly, as though ashamed. "I will go abroad," she said; "there will be a great deal to amuse me over there." But the comfort was dreary; and, as if she must do something, she took a candle, and slowly visited every room in the old mansion, many of them long unused. From garret to cellar she went, touching every piece of the antique furniture, folding back the old curtains, standing by the dismantled beds, and softly pausing by the empty chairs; she was saying farewell. On Cousin Copeland's desk the wreath still lay; in that room she cried from sheer desolation. Then, going down to the dining-room, she found her solitary repast awaiting her, and, not to distress old Dinah, sat down in her accustomed place. Presently she perceived smoke, then a sound, then a hiss and a roar. She flew upstairs; the house was on fire. Somewhere her candle must have started the flame; she remembered the loose papers in Cousin Copeland's study, and the wind blowing through the broken window-pane; it was there that she had cried so bitterly forgetting everything save her own loneliness.

Nothing could be done; there was no house within several miles—no one to help. The old servants were infirm, and the fire had obtained strong headway; then the high wind rushed in, and sent the flames up through the roof and over the tops of the trees. When the whole upper story was one sheet of red and yellow, some one rode furiously up the road and into the garden, where Gardis stood alone, her little figure illumined by the glare; nearer the house the two old servants were at work, trying to save some of the furniture from the lower rooms.

"I saw the light and hurried back, Miss Duke," began Captain Newell. Then, as he saw the wan desolation of the girl's face: "O Gardis! why will you resist me longer?" he cried passionately. "You shall be anything you like, think anything you like—only love me, dear, as I love you."

And Gardis burst into tears. "I can not help it," she sobbed; "everything is against me. The very house is burning before my eyes. O David, David! it is all wrong; everything is wrong. But what can I do when—when you hold me so, and when—Oh, do not ask me any more."

"But I shall," said Newell, his face flushing with deep happiness. "When what, dear?"

"When I—"

"Love me?" said Newell. He would have it spoken.

"Yes," whispered Gardis, hanging her head.

"And I have adored the very shoe-tie of my proud little love ever since I first saw her sweet face at the drawing-room window," said Newell, holding her close and closer, and gazing down into her eyes with the deep gaze of the quiet heart that loves but once.

And the old house burned on, burned as though it knew a contractor's wife was waiting for it. "I see our Gardis is provided for," said the old house. "She never was a real Gardiston—only a Duke; so it is just as well. As for that contractor's wife, she shall have nothing; not a Chinese image, not a spindle-legged chair, not one crocodile cup—no, not even one stone upon another."

It kept its word: in the morning there was nothing left. Old Gardiston was gone!

1876

# 1848 ~ *Joel Chandler Harris* ~ 1908

HARRIS, a native of Georgia, belongs to that small group of practical journalists who have achieved a permanent place in American literary history. His father, of Irish descent, disappeared shortly after his son's birth, and his mother, estranged from her family because of her unsanctioned marriage, gave the boy her maiden name. When he was barely fourteen young Harris was apprenticed to Turner, proprietor of the *Countryman*, the only paper ever published on a plantation. During his apprenticeship his chief avocations were roaming through the countryside and reading in his employer's library. After serving in newspaper offices in Georgia and Louisiana he joined the staff of the *Atlanta Constitution* in 1876, a position which he held for twenty-four years. The prominence of the paper was in no small measure due to the work of Harris as paragrapher, columnist, editorial writer, and miscellaneous contributor. Toward the end of his life he and his son were instrumental in launching the *Uncle Remus Magazine* of which he was the editor at the time of his death.

Harris took his newspaper work very seriously. He sought to cut down old prejudices, strengthen timid convictions, support clean politics, and simplify life. With his associate Henry W. Grady he labored to heal the wounds of the North and the South, and in such a fine-spirited manner that Theodore Roosevelt said he wrote in terms of the South but for America as a whole.

In spite of the hectic pressure of his professional work Harris turned out short stories and novels at almost incredible speed. Although he maintained that he happened upon authorship by accident, an assertion which may be open to question, and referred to himself rather disparagingly as "a sort of one-horse literary man," he nevertheless followed some very definite principles in choice of subject matter and manner of writing. Very early in his career he sensed the popular interest in legends and folk tales, and set himself to record them as nearly as possible as they were told him by aged Negroes to whom they had been handed down through many generations. His purpose was to entertain; in the scientific study of folklore as such he had little interest. "Art," in the technical and professional sense, he disclaimed; in the face of its artificial demands he seemed to be powerless, and preferred "to deal with things as they were." Of *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* (1880), he wrote to Mark Twain that the "book has no basis of literary art to stand upon," and that the "matter and not the manner" is responsible for its success. But that he gave serious thought to the "manner" as well is seen in the fact that he was never satisfied with his literary work, and lamented his lack of leisure to revise it.

To him character was more important than artistry. He was not satisfied with mere sectionalism, for in 1879 he wrote: "The very spice and essence of all literature . . . is in its localism. . . . We have no Southern literature worthy of the name because an attempt has been made to give it the peculiarities of sectionalism rather than to impart to it the flavor of localism." All fiction is historical in the sense that it deals with a definite period of time, and with the ways of life that are characteristic of it. In the end, however, nature herself is the great revealer; Harris set down what he saw and felt.

The subject matter of his books falls naturally into two divisions—(1) the Negro folk material already mentioned, centering for the most part about Uncle Remus, and represented by such volumes as *Uncle Remus and His Friends* (1892), *Told by Uncle Remus* (1905), *Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit* (1906); (2) life in Georgia during the Civil War and the Reconstruction period, about which he wrote from abundant knowledge and with a kindly realism, impelled by the conviction that the South should make use of its environment and tradition. In this field *Mingo and Other Sketches in Black and White* (1884) and *Free Joe and Other Georgian Sketches* (1887) are regarded as his best work.

The war tales are told well enough, but with no particular distinction, and might have been done by some less gifted writer. Harris's ultimate fame will no doubt rest upon the Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit stories. These have been popular from the beginning and have held a prominent place among the writings of recent times. In his stories of plantation life he has not been surpassed. His knowledge and understanding of the Negro spirit were so profound as to seem almost uncanny, and his use of dialect is so true to life that his books are not only "the first attempt to write what the negro actually said, and in his own peculiar way, but remain unexcelled to this day."

Among Harris's better known books are *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* (1880); *Nights with Uncle Remus* (1883); *Mingo and Other Sketches in Black and White* (1884); *On the Plantation* (1892); *Uncle Remus and His Friends* (1892); *Tales of the Home Folk in Peace and War* (1898); *Gabriel Tolliver, a Story of Reconstruction* (1902); *Told by Uncle Remus* (1905); J. C. Harris (ed.), *Joel Chandler Harris, Editor and Essayist* (1931). The best biography is J. C. Harris, *Joel Chandler Harris* (1918). R. L. Wiggins, *The Life of Joel Chandler Harris* (1918), contains a lengthy biographical sketch and a mass of selections from his early works. Briefer references of a biographical and critical nature are W. M. Baskervill, *Southern Writers: Biographical and Critical Studies* (1897); M. L. Avary, *Joel Chandler Harris and His Home* (1913); R. S. Baker, "Joel Chandler Harris," *Outlook*, Nov., 1904; E. W. Bowen, "Joel Chandler Harris," *Reformed Church Review*, 4th series, July, 1919; F. M. Warren, " 'Uncle Remus' and 'The Roman de Renard,' " *Modern Language Notes*, May, 1890; H. S. Bradley, "Joel Chandler Harris," *Library of Southern Literature*, V; J. L. and J. B. Gilder, *Authors at Home* (1889); *DAB*, VIII; J. D. Wade, "Profits and Losses in the Life of Joel Chandler Harris," *American Review*, April, 1933; H. A. Toulmin, *Social Historians* (1911); E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages among the Men Who Have Written*

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*From* UNCLE REMUS, HIS SONGS AND HIS SAYINGS

## *Miss Cow Falls a Victim to Mr. Rabbit*

"UNCLE REMUS," said the little boy, "what became of the Rabbit after he fooled the Buzzard, and got out of the hollow tree?"

"Who? Brer Rabbit? Bless yo' soul, honey, Brer Rabbit went skippin' 'long home, he did, des ez sassy ez a jay-bird at a sparrer's nes'. He went gallopin' 'long, he did, but he feel mighty tired out, en stiff in his j'ints, en he wuz mighty nigh dead for sumpin fer ter drink,' en bimeby, w'en he got mos' home, he spied ole Miss Cow feedin' roun' in a fiel', he did, en he 'termin' fer ter try his han' wid 'er. Brer Rabbit know mighty well dat Miss Cow won't give 'im no milk, kaze she done 'fuse 'im mo'n once, en w'en his ole 'oman wuz sick, at dat. But never mind dat. Brer Rabbit sorter dance up 'long side er de fence, he did, en holler out:

" 'Howdy, Sis Cow,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

" 'W'y, howdy, Brer Rabbit,' sez Miss Cow, sez she.

" 'How you fine yo'se'f deze days, Sis Cow?' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

" 'I'm sorter toler'ble, Brer Rabbit; how you come on?' sez Miss Cow, sez she.

" 'Oh, I'm des toler'ble myse'f, Sis Cow; sorter lingerin' twix' a bauk en a break-down,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

" 'How yo' fokes, Brer Rabbit?' sez Miss Cow, sez she.

" 'Dey er des middlin', Sis Cow; how Brer Bull gittin' on?' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

" 'Sorter so-so,' sez Miss Cow, sez she.

" 'Dey er some mighty nice 'simmons up dis tree, Sis Cow,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'en I'd like mighty well fer ter have some un um,' sezee.

" 'How you gwineter git um, Brer Rabbit?' sez she.

" 'I'low'd maybe dat I might ax you fer ter butt 'gin de tree, en shake some down, Sis Cow,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

"C'ose Miss Cow don't wanter diskommerdate Brer Rabbit, en she march up ter de 'simmon tree, she did, en hit it a rap wid 'er horns—blam! Now, den," continued Uncle Remus, tearing off the corner of a plug of tobacco and cramming it into his mouth—"now, den, dem 'simmons wuz green ez grass, en na'er one never drap. Den Miss Cow butt de tree—blim! Na'er 'simmon drap. Den Miss Cow sorter back off little, en rum agin de tree—blip! No 'simmons never drap. Den Miss Cow back off little fudder, she did, en hi'st her tail on 'er back, en come agin de tree, kerblam! en she come so fas', en she come so hard, twel one 'er her horns went spang thoo de tree, en dar she wuz. She can't go forreds, en she can't go backerds. Dis zackly w'at Brer Rabbit waitin' fer, en he no sooner seed ole Miss Cow all fas'en'd up dan he jump up, he did, en cut de pidjinwing.

" 'Come he'p me out, Brer Rabbit," sez Miss Cow, sez she.

" 'I can't clime, Sis Cow,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but I'll run'n tell Brer Bull,' sezee; en wid dat Brer Rabbit put out fer home, en 'twan't long 'fo her he come wid his ole 'oman en all his chilluns, en de las' one er de fambly wuz totin' a pail. De big uns had big pails, en de little uns had little pails. En dey all s'roundid ole Miss Cow, dey did, en you hear me, honey, dey milk't 'er dry. De ole uns milk't en de young uns milk't, en den w'en dey done got nuff, Brer Rabbit, he up'n say, sezee:

" 'I wish you mighty well, Sis Cow, I 'low'd bein's how dat you'd hatter sorter camp out all night dat I'd better come en swaje yo' bag,' sezee."

"Do which, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"Go 'long, honey! Swaje 'er bag. W'en cows

don't git milk't, der bag swells, en youk'n hear um a moanin' en a beller'n des like dey wuz gittin' hurtid. Dat's w'at Brer Rabbit done. He 'sembled his fambly, he did, en he swaje ole Miss Cow's bag.

"Miss Cow, she stood dar, she did, en she study en study, en strive fer ter break loose, but de horn done bin jam in de tree so tight dat twuz way 'fo day in de mornin' 'fo' she loose it. Anyhow hit wuz endurin' er de night, en atter she git loose she sorter graze 'roun', she did, fer ter jestify 'er stummuck. She 'low'd, ole Miss Cow did, dat Brer Rabbit be hoppin' 'long dat way fer ter see how she gittin' on, en she tuck'n lay er trap fer 'im; en des 'bout sunrise wat'd ole Miss Cow do but march up ter de 'simmon tree en stick er horn back in de hole? But, bless yo' soul, honey, w'ile she wuz croppin' de grass, she tuck one moufull too menny, kaze w'en she hitch on ter de 'simmon tree agin, Brer Rabbit wuz settin' in de fence cornder a watchin' un 'er. Den Brer Rabbit he say ter hisse'f:

" 'Heyo,' sezee, 'w'at dis yer gwine on now? Hole yo' hosses, Sis Cow, twel you hear me comin',' sezee.

"En den he crope off down de fence, Brer Rabbit did, en bimeby here he come—lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity—des a sailin' down de big road.

" 'Mornin', Sis Cow,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'how you come on dis mornin'?' sezee.

" 'Po'ly, Brer Rabbit, po'ly,' sez Miss Cow, sez she. 'I ain't had no res' all night,' sez she. 'I can't pull loose,' sez she, 'but ef you'll come en ketch holt er my tail, Brer Rabbit,' sez she, 'I reckin may be I kin fetch my horn out,' sez she. Den Brer Rabbit, he come up little closer, but he ain't gittin' too close.

" 'I speck I'm nigh nuff, Sis Cow,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. 'I'm a mighty puny man, en I might git trompled,' sezee. 'You do de pullin', Sis Cow,' sezee, 'en I'll do de gruntin',' sezee.

"Den Miss Cow, she pull out 'er horn, she did, en tuck atter Brer Rabbit, en down de big road dey had it, Brer Rabbit wid his years laid back, en Miss Cow wid 'er head down en 'er tail curl. Brer Rabbit kep' on gainin', en bimeby he dart in a brier-patch, en by de time Miss Cow come 'long he had his head stickin' out, en his eyes look big ez Miss Sally's chany sassers.

" 'Heyo, Sis Cow! Whar you gwine?' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

" 'Howdy, Brer Big-Eyes,' sez Miss Cow, sez she. 'Is you seed Brer Rabbit, go by?'

" 'He des dis minit pass,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'en he look mighty sick,' sezee.

"En wid dat, Miss Cow tuck down de road like de dogs wuz atter 'er, en Brer Rabbit, he des lay down dar in de brier-patch en roll en laugh twel his sides hurtid 'im. He bleedzd ter laff. Fox atter 'im, Buzzard atter 'im, en Cow atter 'im, en dey ain't kotch 'im yit."

1880

## *Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter*

"De animils en de beastesses," said Uncle Remus, shaking his coffee around in the bottom of his tin-cup, in order to gather up all the sugar, "dey kep' on gittin' mo' en mo' familious wid wunner nudder, twel bimeby, 'twan't long 'fo' Brer Rabbit, en Brer Fox, en Brer Possum got ter sorter bunchin' der perwishuns tergedder in de same shanty. Atter w'ile de roof sorter 'gun ter leak, en one day Brer Rabbit, en Brer Fox, en Brer Possum, 'semble fer ter see ef dey can't kinder patch her up. Dey had a big day's work in front un um, en dey fotch der dinner wid um. Dey lump de vittles up in one pile, en de butter w'at Brer Fox brung, dey goes en puts in de spring-'ouse fer ter keep cool, en den dey went ter wuk, en 'twan't long 'fo' Brer Rabbit stummuck 'gun ter sorter growl en pester 'im. Dat butter er Brer Fox sot heavy on his mine, en his mouf water eve'y time he 'member 'bout it. Present'y he say ter hisse'f dat he bleedzd ter have a nip at dat butter, en den he lay his plans, he did. Fus' news you know, w'ile dey wuz all wukkin' 'long, Brer Rabbit raise his head quick en fling his years forrerd en holler out:

" 'Here I is. W'at you want wid me?' en off he put like sump'n wuz atter 'im.

"He sallied 'roun', ole Brer Rabbit did, en atter he make sho dat nobody ain't foller'n un 'im, inter de spring-'ouse he bounces, en dar he stays twel he git a bait er butter. Den he santer on back en go to wuk.

" 'Whar you bin?' sez Brer Fox, sezee.

" 'I hear my chilluns callin' me,' sez Brer

Rabbit, sezee, 'en I hatter go see w'at dey want. My ole 'oman done gone en tuck mighty sick,' sezee.

"Dey wuk on twel bimeby de butter tas'e so good dat ole Brer Rabbit want some mo'. Den he raise up his head, he did, en holler out:

" 'Heyo! Hole on. I'm a comin'!' en off he put.

"Dis time he stay right smart w'ile, en w'en he git back Brer Fox ax him whar he bin.

" 'I been ter see my ole 'oman, en she's a sinkin',' sezee.

"Dreckly Brer Rabbit hear um callin' 'im ag'in en off he goes, en dis time, bless yo' soul, he gits de butter out so clean dat he kin see hisse'f in de bottom er de bucket. He scrape it clean en lick it dry, en den he go back ter wuk lookin' mo' samer dan a nigger w'at de patterrollers bin had holt un.

" 'How's yo' ole 'oman dis time?' sez Brer Fox, sezee.

" 'I'm oblije ter you, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but I'm fear'd she's done gone by now,' en dat sorter make Brer Fox en Brer Possum feel in moanin' wid Brer Rabbit.

"Bimeby, w'en dinner-time come, dey all got out der vittles, but Brer Rabbit keep on lookin' lonesome, en Brer Fox en Brer Possum dey sorter rustle roun' fer ter see ef dey can't make Brer Rabbit feel sorter splimmy."

"What is that, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"Sorter splimmy-splammy, honey—sorter like he in a crowd—sorter like his ole 'oman ain't dead ez she mout be. You know how fokes duz w'en dey gits whar people's a moanin'."

The little boy didn't know, fortunately for him, and Uncle Remus went on:

"Brer Fox en Brer Possum rustle roun', dey did, gittin out de vittles, en bimeby Brer Fox, he say, sezee:

" 'Brer Possum, you run down ter de spring en fetch de butter, en I'll sail 'roun' yer en set de table,' sezee.

"Brer Possum, he lope off atter de butter, en dreckly here he come lopin' back wid his years a trimblin' en his tongue a hangin' out. Brer Fox, he holler out:

" 'W'at de matter now, Brer Possum?' sezee.

" 'You all better run yer, fokes,' sez Brer Possum, sezee. 'De las' drap er dat butter done gone!'

" 'Whar she gone?' sez Brer Fox, sezee.

" 'Look like she dry up,' sez Brer Possum, sezee.

"Den Brer Rabbit, he look sorter sollum, he did, en he up'n say, sezee:

" 'I speck dat butter melt in somebody mouf,' sezee.

"Den dey went down ter de spring wid Brer Possum, en sho nuff de butter done gone. W'iles dey wuz sputin' over der wunderment, Brer Rabbit say he see tracks all 'roun' dar, en he p'int out dat ef dey'll all go ter sleep, he kin ketch de chap w'at stole de butter. Den dey all lie down en Brer Fox en Brer Possum dey soon drapt off ter sleep, but Brer Rabbit he stay 'wake, en w'en de time come he raise up easy en smear Brer Possum mouf wid de butter on his paws, en den he run off en nibble up de bes' er de dinner w'at dey lef' layin' out, en den he come back en wake up Brer Fox, en show 'im de butter on Brer Possum mouf. Den dey wake up Brer Possum, en tell 'im 'bout it, but c'ose Brer Possum 'ny it ter de las'. Brer Fox, dough, he's a kinder lawyer, en he argafy dis way—dat Brer Possum wuz de fus one at de butter, en de fus one fer ter miss it, en mo'n dat, dar hang de signs on his mouf. Brer Possum see dat dey got 'im jammed up in a cornder, en den he up en say dat de way fer ter ketch de man w'at stole de butter is ter b'il' a big bresh-heap en set her afier, en all han's try ter jump over, en de one w'at fall in, den he de chap w'at stole de butter. Brer Rabbit en Brer Fox dey bofe 'gree, dey did, en dey whirl in en b'il' de bresh-heap, en dey b'il' her high en dey b'il' her wide, en den dey totch her off. W'en she got ter blazin' up good, Brer Rabbit, he tuck de fus turn. He sorter step back, en look 'roun' en giggle, en over he went mo' samer dan a bird flyin'. Den come Brer Fox. He got back little fudder, en spit on his han's, en lit out en made de jump, en he come so nigh gittin' in dat de een' er his tail kotch afier. Ain't you never see no fox, honey?" inquired Uncle Remus, in a tone that implied both conciliation and information.

The little boy thought probably he had, but he wouldn't commit himself.

"Well, den," continued the old man, "nex'

time you see one un um, you look right close en see ef de een' er his tail ain't w'ite. Hit's des like I tell you. Dey b'ars de skyar er dat bresh-heap down ter dis day. Dey er marked—dat's w'at dey is—dey er marked."

"And what about Brother Possum?" asked the little boy.

"Ole Brer Possum, he tuck a runnin start, he did, en he come lumberin' 'long, en he lit—kerblam!—right in de middle er de fier, en dat wuz de las' er ole Brer Possum."

"But, Uncle Remus, Brother Possum didn't steal the butter after all," said the little boy, who was not at all satisfied with such summary injustice.

"Dat w'at make I say w'at I duz, honey. In dis worril, lots er fokes is gotter suffer fer udder fokes' sins. Look like hit's mighty on-wrong; but hit's des dat way. Tribbalashun seem like she's a waitin' roun' de corner fer ter ketch one en all un us, honey."

1880

## 1844 ~ *George Washington Cable* ~ 1925

IT SEEMS a unique coincidence that the two original English strains of Colonial America were blended in Cable. On his father's side he is descended from the Virginia Cables of Cavalier ancestry, whereas his mother came from Puritan New England stock. They met and were married in Indiana, but moved to New Orleans where the father engaged in business. His death in 1858 left the fourteen-year-old son the virtual head of the family. He secured what employment he could to contribute to their support. Being denied the advantages of a formal education, he undertook a self-imposed course of study, including mathematics, the Bible, and French. While serving as a cavalryman in the Confederate army he continued his study, preferring the outfit which had books in its luggage. After his discharge he was engaged in a state surveying project, later on conducted a miscellaneous column in the *Daily Picayune*, became interested in Louisiana history, and began to write stories about Creole life. These were collected in *Old Creole Days*, which was published in 1879. He was an industrious writer and by 1918 had published almost a score of books, many of them dealing with life in the South. In 1882 President Gilman invited him to deliver a course of lectures at Johns Hopkins University. Cable and Mark Twain made extensive tours giving readings from their works. To escape the enervating Louisiana climate the family settled in Northampton, Massachusetts, where Cable organized the People's Institute. The last years, outwardly uneventful, were saddened by deaths in the family, and by the foreboding gloom of advancing age, which gradually dampened his exuberant youthfulness.

Cable belonged to the regional or local-color school of fiction, and did for the South what Bret Harte did for the West, and Miss Jewett and Miss Wilkins for New England. In his stories of the South he made use of the racial and linguistic peculiarities which set off this region from other parts of the country. His literary

theory is based upon his conviction that the facts of life as such, "natural facts" he calls them, do not satisfy man's deepest spiritual cravings. It becomes the business of the story-teller therefore to reshape, reorganize, and harmonize these facts in the way that best satisfies his purpose. For this purpose he may use actual facts or imagined facts, "fiction," as he says, as long as he remains within the bounds of essential truth to life. In fact he may use whatever comes to hand "if he can so wield it that in the end it is cheerfully forgiven by the head for the good it has brought to the heart." The treatment of the material may be either positive or negative, but the ultimate result must tend to stimulate the positive virtues of conduct and character, "to make you feel today that you are entertained, and find tomorrow that you are profited."

*Old Creole Days* was hailed as an American classic when it was published in 1879, and has consistently held a high place. It was followed by *The Grandissimes* (1884) and *Dr. Sevier* (1885), dealing respectively with the evils of slavery and prison conditions. Cable was deeply interested in the social and political conditions of the South, as titles like *The Silent South* (1888) and *The Southern Struggle for Pure Government* (1890) indicate. Later in his career he returned to the writing of romances, among them *The Cavalier* (1901), *Bylow Hill* (1902), and *Kincaid's Battery* (1908). Whether for reasons of multiple and diversified interests, intellectual and social, his artistic power began to decline. In his later books the romantic fire flares up only occasionally, and there is a general flattening of energy and effect, which the author's Gallic vivacity could not overcome. The early romances still find many readers.

The titles of Cable's books are *Old Creole Days* (1879); *The Grandissimes* (1880); *Madame Delphine* (1881); *The Creoles of Louisiana* (1884); *Dr. Sevier* (1885); *The Silent South* (1885); *Bonaventure* (1888); *Strange True Stories of Louisiana* (1889); *The Negro Question* (1890); *The Busy Man's Bible* (1891); *John March, Southerner* (1894); *Strong Hearts* (1899); *The Cavalier* (1901); *Bylow Hill* (1902); *Kincaid's Battery* (1908); *"Posson Jone'" and Père Raphaël* (1909); *Gideon's Band* (1914); *The Amateur Garden* (1914); *Lovers of Louisiana* (1918); *The Flower of the Chapdelaines* (1918). M. E. Burt and L. L. Cable, eds., *The Cable Story Book* (1899), contains selected stories. L. L. C. Bikle, *George W. Cable* (1928), is a biography written by his daughter. Brief biographical sketches may be found in E. A. Alderman and Others, *Library of Southern Literature*, II, sketch by Mrs. John S. Kendall; *DAB*, III; E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books* (1902); F. W. Halsey, *American Authors and Their Homes* (1901); J. L. and J. B. Gilder, *Authors at Home* (1889); G. S. Wykoff, "The Cable Family in Indiana," *American Literature*, May, 1929. For helpful critical studies consult H. A. Toulmin, *Social Historians* (1911); H. C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-day* (1894); M. Bloom, "George W. Cable: a New Englander in the South," *Bookman*, June, 1931; F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923); E. L. Tinker, "Cable and the Creoles," *American Literature*, Jan., 1934; E. W. Bowen, "George W. Cable: an Appreciation," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, April, 1919; L. Hearn, "The Scenes of Cable's Romances," *Century*, Nov., 1883; W. M. Baskervill, *Southern Writers* (1897); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## 'SIEUR GEORGE

From *Old Creole Days*. Cable achieved his most distinctive fame in the portrayal of Creole life in Louisiana. He caught the character, customs, and language of these people, and delineated them with understanding, sympathy, and inimitable art. "'Sieur George" was originally published in *Scribner's*, October, 1873.

In the heart of New Orleans stands a large four-story brick building, that has so stood for about three-quarters of a century. Its rooms are rented to a class of persons occupying them simply for lack of activity to find better and cheaper quarters elsewhere. With its gray stucco peeling off in broad patches, it has a solemn look of gentility in rags, and stands, or, as it were, hangs, about the corner of two ancient streets, like a faded fop who pretends to be looking for employment.

Under its main archway is a dingy apothecary-shop. On one street is the bazaar of a *modiste en robes et chapeaux*[1] and other humble shops; on the other, the immense batten doors with gratings over the lintels, barred and bolted with masses of cobwebbed iron, like the door of a donjon, are overhung by a creaking sign (left by the sheriff), on which is faintly discernible the mention of wines and liquors. A peep through one of the shops reveals a square court within, hung with many lines of wet clothes, its sides hugged by rotten staircases that seem vainly trying to clamber out of the rubbish.

The neighborhood is one long since given up to fifth-rate shops, whose masters and mistresses display such enticing mottoes as "*Au gagne petit!*"[2] Innumerable children swarm about, and, by some charm of the place, are not run over, but obstruct the sidewalks playing their clamorous games.

The building is a thing of many windows, where passably good-looking women appear and disappear, clad in cotton gowns, watering little outside shelves of flowers and cacti, or hanging canaries' cages. Their husbands are keepers in wine-warehouses, rent-collectors for the agents of old Frenchmen who have been laid up to dry in Paris, customhouse supernumeraries and court clerks' deputies (for your second-rate Creole is a great seeker for little offices). A decaying cornice hangs over, dropping bits of mortar on passers below, like a boy at a boarding-house.

The landlord is one Kookoo, an ancient Creole of doubtful purity of blood, who in his landlordly old age takes all suggestions of repairs as personal insults. He was but a stripling when his father left him this inheritance, and has grown old and wrinkled and brown, a sort of periodically animate mummy, in the business. He smokes cascarilla, wears velveteen, and is as punctual as an executioner.

To Kookoo's venerable property a certain old man used for many years to come every evening, stumbling through the groups of prattling children who frolicked about in the early moonlight—whose name no one knew, but whom all the neighbors designated by the title of 'Sieur George. It was his wont to be seen taking a straight—too straight—course toward his home, never careening to right or left, but now forcing himself slowly forward, as though there were a high gale in front, and now scudding briskly ahead at a ridiculous little dog-trot, as if there were a tornado behind. He would go up the main staircase very carefully, sometimes stopping halfway up for thirty or forty minutes' doze, but getting to the landing eventually, and tramping into his room in the second story, with no little elation to find it still there. Were it not for these slight symptoms of potations, he was such a one as you would pick out of a thousand for a miser. A year or two ago he suddenly disappeared.

A great many years ago, when the old house was still new, a young man with no baggage save a small hair-trunk, came and took the room I have mentioned and another adjoining. He supposed he might stay fifty days—and he staid fifty years and over. This was a very fashionable neighborhood, and he kept the rooms on that account month after month.

But when he had been here about a year something happened to him, so it was rumored, that greatly changed the tenor of his life; and from that time on there began to appear in him and to accumulate upon each other in a manner which became the profound

[1] "designer of dresses and hats" [2] "at small profit"

study of Kookoo, the symptoms of a decay, whose cause baffled the landlord's limited powers of conjecture for well-nigh half a century. Hints of a duel, of a reason warped, of disinheritance, and many other unauthorized rumors, fluttered up and floated off, while he became recluse, and, some say, began incidentally to betray the unmanly habit which we have already noticed. His neighbors would have continued neighborly had he allowed them, but he never let himself be understood, and *les Américains* are very droll anyhow; so, as they could do nothing else, they cut him.

So exclusive he became that (though it may have been for economy) he never admitted even a housemaid, but kept his apartments himself. Only the merry serenaders, who in those times used to sing under the balconies, would now and then give him a crumb of their feast for pure fun's sake; and after a while, because they could not find out his full name, called him, at hazard, George—but always prefixing Monsieur. Afterward, when he began to be careless in his dress, and the fashion of serenading had passed away, the commoner people dared to shorten the title to "'Sieur George."

Many seasons came and went. The city changed like a growing boy; gentility and fashion went uptown, but 'Sieur George still retained his rooms. Every one knew him slightly, and bowed, but no one seemed to know him well, unless it were a brace or so of those convivial fellows in regulation-blue at little Fort St. Charles. He often came home late, with one of these on either arm, all singing different tunes and stopping at every twenty steps to tell secrets. But by and by the fort was demolished, church and government property melted down under the warm demand for building-lots, the city spread like a ring-worm,—and one day 'Sieur George steps out of the old house in full regimentals.

The Creole neighbors rush bareheaded into the middle of the street, as though there were an earthquake or a chimney on fire. What to do or say or think they do not know; they are at their wits' ends, therefore well-nigh happy. However, there is a German blacksmith's shop near by, and they watch to see what *Jacob* will do. Jacob steps into the street with every eye upon him; he approaches Monsieur—he addresses to him a few remarks—they shake hands—they engage in some conversation—Monsieur places his hand on his sword!—now Monsieur passes.

The populace crowd around the blacksmith, children clap their hands softly and jump up and down on tiptoes of expectation—'Sieur George is going to the war in Mexico!

"Ah!" says a little girl in the throng, "'Sieur George's two rooms will be empty; I find that very droll."

The landlord,—this same Kookoo,—is in the group. He hurls himself into the house and up the stairs. "Fifteen years pass since he have been in those room!" He arrives at the door—it is shut—"It is lock!"

In short, further investigation revealed that a youngish lady in black, who had been seen by several neighbors to enter the house, but had not, of course, been suspected of such remarkable intentions, had, in company with a middle-aged slave-woman, taken these two rooms, and now, at the slightly-opened door, proffered a month's rent in advance. What could the landlord do but smile? Yet there was a pretext left; "the rooms must need repairs?" —"No, sir; he could look in and see." Joy! he looked in. All was neatness. The floor unbroken, the walls cracked but a little, and the cracks closed with new plaster, no doubt by the jealous hand of 'Sieur George himself. Kookoo's eyes swept sharply round the two apartments. The furniture was all there. Moreover, there was Monsieur's little hair-trunk. He should not soon forget that trunk. One day, fifteen years or more before, he had taken hold of that trunk to assist Monsieur to arrange his apartment, and Monsieur had drawn his fist back and cried to him to "drop it!" *Mais!* there it was, looking very suspicious in Kookoo's eyes, and the lady's domestic, as tidy as a yellow-bird, went and sat on it. Could that trunk contain treasure? It might, for Madame wanted to shut the door, and, in fact, did so.

The lady was quite handsome—had been more so, but was still young—spoke the beautiful language, and kept, in the inner room, her discreet and taciturn mulattress, a tall, straight woman, with a fierce eye, but

called by the young Creoles of the neighborhood "confound' good lookin'."

Among *les Américaines*, where the new neighbor always expects to be called upon by the older residents, this lady might have made friends in spite of being as reserved as 'Sieur George; but the reverse being the Creole custom, and she being well pleased to keep her own company, chose mystery rather than society.

The poor landlord was sorely troubled; it must not that anything *de trop* take place in his house. He watched the two rooms narrowly, but without result, save to find that Madame plied her needle for pay, spent her money for little else besides harpstrings, and took good care of the little trunk of Monsieur. This espionage was a good turn to the mistress and maid, for when Kookoo announced that all was proper, no more was said by outsiders. Their landlord never got but one question answered by the middle-aged maid:

"Madame, he feared, was a litt' bit embarrass' *pour* money, eh?"

"*Non;* Mademoiselle [Mademoiselle, you notice!] had some property, but did not want to eat it up."

Sometimes lady-friends came, in very elegant private carriages, to see her, and one or two seemed to beg her—but in vain—to go away with them; but these gradually dropped off, until lady and servant were alone in the world. And so years, and the Mexican war, went by.

The volunteers came home; peace reigned, and the city went on spreading up and down the land; but 'Sieur George did not return. It overran the country like cocoa-grass. Fields, roads, woodlands, that were once 'Sieur George's places of retreat from mankind, were covered all over with little one-story houses in the "Old Third," and fine residences and gardens up in "Lafayette." Streets went slicing like a butcher's knife, through old colonial estates, whose first masters never dreamed of the city reaching them,—and 'Sieur George was still away. The four-story brick got old and ugly, and the surroundings dim and dreamy. Theatres, processions, dry-goods stores, government establishments, banks, hotels, and all spirit of enterprise were gone to Canal Street and beyond, and the very beggars were gone with them. The little trunk got very old and bald, and still its owner lingered; still the lady, somewhat the worse for lapse of time, looked from the balcony-window in the brief southern twilights, and the maid every morning shook a worn rug or two over the dangerous-looking railing; and yet neither had made friends or enemies.

The two rooms, from having been stingily kept at first, were needing repairs half the time, and the occupants were often moving, now into one, now back into the other; yet the hair-trunk was seen only by glimpses, the landlord, to his infinite chagrin, always being a little too late in offering his services, the women, whether it was light or heavy, having already moved it. He thought it significant.

Late one day of a most bitter winter,—that season when, to the ecstatic amazement of a whole city-full of children, snow covered the streets ankle-deep,—there came a soft tap on the corridor door of this pair of rooms. The lady opened it, and beheld a tall, lank, iron-gray man, a total stranger, standing behind—Monsieur George! Both men were weather-beaten, scarred, and tattered. Across 'Sieur George's crown, leaving a long, bare streak through his white hair, was the souvenir of a Mexican sabre.

The landlord had accompanied them to the door: it was a magnificent opportunity. Mademoiselle asked them all in, and tried to furnish a seat to each; but failing, 'Sieur George went straight across the room and *sat on the hair-trunk*. The action was so conspicuous, the landlord laid it up in his penetrative mind.

'Sieur George was quiet, or, as it appeared, quieted. The mulattress stood near him, and to her he addressed, in an undertone, most of the little he said, leaving Mademoiselle to his companion. The stranger was a warm talker, and seemed to please the lady from the first; but if he pleased, nothing else did. Kookoo, intensely curious, sought some pretext for staying, but found none. They were, altogether, an uncongenial company. The lady seemed to think Kookoo had no business there; 'Sieur George seemed to think the same concerning his companion; and the few words between Mademoiselle and 'Sieur George were

cool enough. The maid appeared nearly satisfied, but could not avoid casting an anxious eye at times upon her mistress. Naturally the visit was short.

The next day but one the two gentlemen came again in better attire. 'Sieur George evidently disliked his companion, yet would not rid himself of him. The stranger was a gesticulating, stagy fellow, much Monsieur's junior, an incessant talker in Creole-French, always excited on small matters, and unable to appreciate a great one. Once, as they were leaving, Kookoo,—accidents will happen,—was under the stairs. As they began to descend the tall man was speaking:"—better to bury it,"—the startled landlord heard him say, and held his breath, thinking of the trunk; but no more was uttered.

A week later they came again.

A week later they came again.

A week later they came yet again!

The landlord's eyes began to open. There must be a courtship in progress. It was very plain now why 'Sieur George had wished not to be accompanied by the tall gentleman; but since his visits had become regular and frequent, it was equally plain why he did not get rid of him; because it would not look well to be going and coming too often alone. Maybe it was only this tender passion that the tall man had thought "better to bury." Lately there often came sounds of gay conversation from the first of the two rooms, which had been turned into a parlor; and as, week after week, the friends came down-stairs, the tall man was always in high spirits and anxious to embrace 'Sieur George, who,—"sly dog," thought the landlord,—would try to look grave, and only smiled in an embarrassed way. "Ah! Monsieur, you tink to be varry conning; *mais* you not so conning as Kookoo, no"; and the inquisitive little man would shake his head and smile, and shake his head again, as a man has a perfect right to do under the conviction that he has been for twenty years baffled by a riddle and is learning to read it at last; he had guessed what was in 'Sieur George's head, he would by and by guess what was in the trunk.

A few months passed quickly away, and it became apparent to every eye in or about the ancient mansion that the landlord's guess was not so bad; in fact, that Mademoiselle was to be married.

On a certain rainy spring afternoon, a single hired hack drove up to the main entrance of the old house, and after some little bustle and the gathering of a crowd of damp children about the big doorway, 'Sieur George, muffled in a newly-repaired overcoat, jumped out and went upstairs. A moment later he re-appeared, leading Mademoiselle, wreathed and veiled, down the stairway. Very fair was Mademoiselle still. Her beauty was mature,—fully ripe,—maybe a little too much so, but only a little; and as she came down with the ravishing odor of bridal flowers floating about her, she seemed the garlanded victim of a pagan sacrifice. The mulattress in holiday gear followed behind.

The landlord owed a duty to the community. He arrested the maid on the last step: "Your mistress, she goin' *pour marier* 'Sieur George? It make me glad, glad, glad!"

"Marry 'Sieur George? Non, Monsieur."

"Non? Not marrie 'Sieur George? *Mais comment?*"

"She's going to marry the tall gentleman."

"*Diable!* ze long gentyman!"—With his hands upon his forehead, he watched the carriage trundle away. It passed out of sight through the rain; he turned to enter the house, and all at once tottered under the weight of a tremendous thought—they had left the trunk! He hurled himself up-stairs as he had done seven years before, but again—"Ah, bah!!"—the door was locked, and not a picayune of rent due.

Late that night a small square man, in a wet overcoat, fumbled his way into the damp entrance of the house, stumbled up the cracking stairs, unlocked, after many languid efforts, the door of the two rooms, and falling over the hair-trunk, slept until the morning sunbeams climbed over the balcony and in at the window, and shone full on the back of his head. Old Kookoo, passing the door just then, was surprised to find it slightly ajar—pushed it open silently, and saw within 'Sieur George in the act of rising from his knees beside the mysterious trunk! He had come back to be once more the tenant of the two rooms.

'Sieur George, for the second time, was a changed man—changed from bad to worse;

from being retired and reticent, he had come, by reason of advancing years, or mayhap that which had left the terrible scar on his face, to be garrulous. When, once in a while, employment sought him (for he never sought employment), whatever remuneration he received went its way for something that left him dingy and threadbare. He now made a lively acquaintance with his landlord, as, indeed, with every soul in the neighborhood, and told all his adventures in Mexican prisons and Cuban cities; including full details of the hardships and perils experienced jointly with the "long gentleman" who had married Mademoiselle, and who was no Mexican or Cuban, but a genuine Louisianian.

"It was he that fancied me," he said, "not I him; but once he had fallen in love with me I hadn't the force to cast him off. How Madame ever should have liked him was one of those woman's freaks that a man mustn't expect to understand. He was no more fit for her than rags are fit for a queen; and I could have choked his head off the night he hugged me round the neck and told me what a suicide she had committed. But other fine women are committing that same folly every day, only they don't wait until they're thirty-four or five to do it.—'Why don't I like him?' Well, for one reason, he's a drunkard!" Here Kookoo, whose imperfect knowledge of English prevented his intelligent reception of the story, would laugh as if the joke came in just at this point.

However, with all Monsieur's prattle, he never dropped a word about the man he had been before he went away; and the great hair-trunk puzzle was still the same puzzle, growing greater every day.

Thus the two rooms had been the scene of some events quite queer, if not really strange; but the queerest that ever they presented, I guess, was 'Sieur George coming in there one day, crying like a little child, and bearing in his arms an infant—a girl—the lovely offspring of the drunkard whom he so detested, and poor, robbed, spirit-broken and now dead Madame. He took good care of the orphan, for orphan she was very soon. The long gentleman was pulled out of the Old Basin one morning, and 'Sieur George identified the body at the Trémé station. He never hired a nurse—the father had sold the lady's maid quite out of sight; so he brought her through all the little ills and around all the sharp corners of baby-life and childhood, without a human hand to help him, until one evening, having persistently shut his eyes to it for weeks and months, like one trying to sleep in the sunshine, he awoke to the realization that she was a woman. It was a smoky one in November, the first cool day of autumn. The sunset was dimmed by the smoke of burning prairies, the air was full of the ashes of grass and reeds, ragged urchins were lugging home sticks of cordwood, and when a bit of coal fell from a cart in front of Kookoo's old house, a child was boxed half across the street and robbed of the booty by a *blanchisseuse de fin* from over the way.

The old man came home quite steady. He mounted the stairs smartly without stopping to rest, went with a step unusually light and quiet to his chamber and sat by the window opening upon the rusty balcony.

It was a small room, sadly changed from what it had been in old times; but then so was 'Sieur George. Close and dark it was, the walls stained with dampness and the ceiling full of bald places that showed the lathing. The furniture was cheap and meagre, including conspicuously the small, curious-looking hair-trunk. The floor was of wide slabs fastened down with spikes, and sloping up and down in one or two broad undulations, as if they had drifted far enough down the current of time to feel the tide-swell.

However, the floor was clean, the bed well made, the cypress table in place, and the musty smell of the walls partly neutralized by a geranium on the window-sill.

He so coming in and sitting down, an unseen person called from the room adjoining (of which, also, he was still the rentee), to know if he were he, and being answered in the affirmative, said, "Papa George, guess who was here today?"

"Kookoo, for the rent?"

"Yes, but he will not come back."

"No? why not?"

"Because you will not pay him."

"No? and why not?"

"Because I have paid him."

"Impossible? where did you get the money?"

"Cannot guess?—Mother Nativity."

"What, not for embroidery?"

"No? and why not? *Mais oui!*"—saying which, and with a pleasant laugh, the speaker entered the room. She was a girl of sixteen or thereabout, very beautiful, with very black hair and eyes. A face and form more entirely out of place you could not have found in the whole city. She sat herself at his feet, and, with her interlocked hands upon his knee, and her face, full of childish innocence mingled with womanly wisdom, turned to his, appeared for a time to take principal part in a conversation which, of course, could not be overheard in the corridor outside.

Whatever was said, she presently rose, he opened his arms, and she sat on his knee and kissed him. This done, there was a silence, both smiling pensively and gazing out over the rotten balcony into the street. After a while she started up, saying something about the change of weather, and, slipping away, thrust a match between the bars of the grate. The old man turned about to the fire, and she from her little room brought a low sewing-chair and sat beside him, laying her head on his knee, and he stroking her brow with his brown palm.

And then, in an altered—a low, sad tone—he began a monotonous recital.

Thus they sat, he talking very steadily and she listening, until all the neighborhood was wrapped in slumber,—all the neighbors, but not Kookoo.

Kookoo in his old age had become a great eavesdropper; his ear and eye took turns at the keyhole that night, for he tells things that were not intended for outside hearers. He heard the girl sobbing, and the old man saying, "But you must go now. You cannot stay with me safely or decently, much as I wish it. The Lord only knows how I'm to bear it, or where you're to go; but He's your Lord, child, and He'll make a place for you. I was your grandfather's death; I frittered your poor, dead mother's fortune away: let that be the last damage I do.

"I have always meant everything for the best," he added half in soliloquy.

From all Kookoo could gather, he must have been telling her the very story just recounted. She had dropped quite to the floor, hiding her face in her hands, and was saying between her sobs, "I cannot go, Papa George, oh, Papa George, I cannot go!"

Just then 'Sieur George, having kept a good resolution all day, was encouraged by the orphan's pitiful tones to contemplate the most senseless act he ever attempted to commit. He said to the sobbing girl that she was not of his blood; that she was nothing to him by natural ties; that his covenant was with her grandsire to care for his offspring; and though it had been poorly kept, it might be breaking it worse than ever to turn her out upon ever so kind a world.

"I have tried to be good to you all these years. When I took you, a wee little baby, I took you for better or worse. I intended to do well by you all your childhood-days, and to do best at last. I thought surely we should be living well by this time, and you could choose from a world full of homes and a world full of friends.

"I don't see how I missed it!" Here he paused a moment in meditation, and presently resumed with some suddenness:

"I thought that education, far better than Mother Nativity has given you, should have afforded your sweet charms a noble setting; that good mothers and sisters would be wanting to count you into their families, and that the blossom of a happy womanhood would open perfect and full of sweetness.

"I would have given my life for it. I did give it, such as it was; but it was a very poor concern, I know—my life—and not enough to buy any good thing.

"I have had a thought of something, but I'm afraid to tell it. It didn't come to me today or yesterday; it has beset me a long time—for months."

The girl gazed into the embers, listening intensely.

"And oh! dearie, if I could only get you to think the same way, you might stay with me then."

"How long?" she asked, without stirring.

"Oh, as long as heaven should let us. But there is only one chance," he said, as it were feeling his way, "only one way for us to stay together. Do you understand me?"

She looked up at the old man with a glance of painful inquiry.

"If you could be—my wife, dearie?"

She uttered a low, distressful cry, and, gliding swiftly into her room, for the first time in her young life turned the key between them.

And the old man sat and wept.

Then Kookoo, peering through the keyhole, saw that they had been looking into the little trunk. The lid was up, but the back was toward the door, and he could see no more than if it had been closed.

He stooped and stared into the aperture until his dry old knees were ready to crack. It seemed as if 'Sieur George was stone, only stone couldn't weep like that.

Every separate bone in his neck was hot with pain. He would have given ten dollars—ten sweet dollars?—to have seen 'Sieur George get up and turn that trunk around.

There! 'Sieur George rose up—what a face!

He started toward the bed, and as he came to the trunk he paused, looked at it, muttered something about "ruin," and something about "fortune," kicked the lid down and threw himself across the bed.

Small profit to old Kookoo that he went to his own couch; sleep was not for the little landlord. For well-nigh half a century he had suspected his tenant of having a treasure hidden in his house, and tonight he had heard his own admission that in the little trunk was a fortune. Kookoo had never felt so poor in all his days before. He felt a Creole's anger, too, that a tenant should be the holder of wealth while his landlord suffered poverty.

And he knew very well, too, did Kookoo, what the tenant would do. If he did not know what he kept in the trunk, he knew what he kept behind it, and he knew he would take enough of it to-night to make him sleep soundly.

No one would ever have supposed Kookoo capable of a crime. He was too fearfully impressed with the extra-hazardous risks of dishonesty; he was old, too, and weak, and, besides all, intensely a coward. Nevertheless, while it was yet two or three hours before daybreak, the sleep-forsaken little man arose, shuffled into his garments, and in his stocking-feet sought the corridor leading to 'Sieur George's apartment. The November night, as it often does in that region, had grown warm and clear; the stars were sparkling like diamonds pendent in the deep blue heavens, and at every window and lattice and cranny the broad, bright moon poured down its glittering beams upon the hoary-headed thief, as he crept along the mouldering galleries and down the ancient corridor that led to 'Sieur George's chamber.

'Sieur George's door, though ever so slowly opened, protested with a loud creak. The landlord, wet with cold sweat from head to foot, and shaking till the floor trembled, paused for several minutes, and then entered the moonlit apartment. The tenant, lying as if he had not moved, was sleeping heavily. And now the poor coward trembled so, that to kneel before the trunk, without falling, he did not know how. Twice, thrice, he was near tumbling headlong. He became as cold as ice. But the sleeper stirred, and the thought of losing his opportunity strung his nerves up in an instant. He went softly down upon his knees, laid his hands upon the lid, lifted it, and let in the intense moonlight. The trunk was full, full, crowded down and running over full, of the tickets of the Havana Lottery!

A little after daybreak, Kookoo from his window saw the orphan, pausing on the corner. Stood for a moment, and then dove into the dense fog which had floated in from the river, and disappeared. He never saw her again.

But her Lord is taking care of her. Once only she has seen 'Sieur George. She had been in the belvedere of the house which she now calls home, looking down upon the outspread city. Far away southward and westward the great river glistened in the sunset. Along its sweeping bends the chimneys of a smoking commerce, the magazines of surplus wealth, and the gardens of the opulent, the steeples of a hundred sanctuaries and thousands on thousands of mansions and hovels covered the fertile birthright arpents which 'Sieur George, in his fifty years' stay, had seen tricked away from dull colonial Esaus by their blue-eyed brethren of the North. Nearer by she looked upon the forlornly silent region of lowly dwellings, neglected by legislation and shunned by all lovers of comfort, that once had been the smiling fields of her own grandsire's broad planta-

tion; and but a little way off, trudging across the marshy commons, her eye caught sight of 'Sieur George following the sunset out upon the prairies to find a night's rest in the high grass.

She turned at once, gathered the skirt of her pink calico uniform, and, watching her steps through her tears, descended the steep winding-stair to her frequent kneeling-place under the fragrant candles of the chapel-altar in Mother Nativity's asylum.

'Sieur George is houseless. He cannot find the orphan. Mother Nativity seems to know nothing of her. If he could find her now, and could get from her the use of ten dollars for but three days, he knows a combination which would repair all the past; it could not fail, he—thinks. But he cannot find her, and the letters he writes—all containing the one scheme—disappear in the mail-box, and there's an end.

1873

# 1850 ~ *Lafcadio Hearn* ~ 1904

HEARN is undoubtedly the most cosmopolitan figure in American letters. Born on the island of Leukos in the Aegean Sea, the son of an Irish army surgeon and a Greek mother, he was taken to Dublin at a very early age. His mother, unable to adjust herself to Western ways, returned to her native East, leaving her oldest son to be adopted by an aunt who lived in Wales. Very little is known of the next twelve years of his life. Evidence gleaned from his writings points to a rebellious attitude toward his upbringing and consequent wretchedness. He attended a Jesuit College in northern France, where he learned French, in which he retained a lifelong interest, and a Roman Catholic College in Durham where he lost the sight of one eye as the result of participating in an athletic contest. Completely estranged from his relatives, he found himself at the age of nineteen a penniless immigrant in New York. Two years later he turned up in Cincinnati, where his story of a notorious murder brought him a position on the staff of the *Examiner*. His next move was to New Orleans. Here he contributed to the *Daily Item* the sketches later published as *Fantastics and Other Fancies* (1914). In 1881 he joined the staff of the *Times-Democrat*, in which he published translations from French literature, editorials, and miscellaneous material. His interest in French led him to study Creole civilization which resulted in the publication of a volume of Creole proverbs. Among other books issued during this period were *Some Chinese Ghosts* (1886) and *Chita: A Memory of Lost Island* (1889). For *Harper's* he wrote a series of articles published under the title of *Two Years in the French West Indies* (1890), and in the same year the firm commissioned him to visit Japan. He taught English in the University of Tokyo, married a native girl, became a Japanese citizen, and assumed the name of Yokumo Koizumi. Nominally he accepted Buddhism, but, as P. E. More pointed out, his religious philosophy was an ingenious mixture of Spencerian evolution and Japanese ancestor worship. He became deeply interested

in the manners and customs of his adopted country, and published many volumes on Japanese life and civilization, notably *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) and *Japan: an Attempt at Interpretation* (1904). Several volumes of his university lectures have been collected and edited from the notebooks of some of his students.

To Hearn art meant the pursuit and creation of beauty. This is the first and primary consideration. During his American career he came near giving offense because of his apparent indifference to prevailing standards. Because of his mixed racial heritage and his study of French literature, he was unable to understand the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward art, with its prudery, hypocrisy, and insistent demands for moralizing. Yet the artist could not ignore moral and ethical values, as is clearly indicated in his *Talks to Writers* (1920); nor is the beauty which art is to discover and make permanent a mere impressionistic representation, for to him beauty without truth is impossible. In a letter to Krehbiel he intimates that art must be sublime, that it is indeed a revelation of the Unknowable, and that artists are the selected media of expression "in the holy cycling of its purpose." With an ideal like this realized, he says, "I should know the pride of the prophet that had seen God face to face." Of himself as an artist he demands concentrated power and a high degree of polish. Finally, art is to be created and measured not by a single and one-sided standard, by "Gothic" ideals alone, but by an inclusive cosmopolitanism which transcends the limitations of time, geography, and influence.

Hearn loved the gay, variegated colors and the exotic beauty of the tropics, whose very atmosphere is redolent with the fancies and fantasies to which his spirit was so sensitively responsive. He raised what might easily have been mere ephemeral trivial sketches to the level of permanent literature. He communicates sensuous impressions with a depth and reality that make them unforgettable experiences. His pictures of Creole life are notable for their color and fidelity to historical fact. His style is characterized by a melodious harmony, and a choice of words which for appropriateness, precision, and meticulous regard for values is seldom equaled. The lectures are marked by simplicity and directness of expression.

It is regrettable that Hearn's writings have never been published in a definitive edition. A partially complete collection has gone out of print, though numerous individual volumes are still available. The civilization of mechanics which was so irritating to his sensitive spirit has for the moment destroyed his vogue. An age whose appreciation of values is to a large extent bounded by the economic horizon can hardly be expected to appreciate a delicate and aesthetic touch such as Hearn's.

There is no complete uniform edition of Hearn's writings. Only a limited number of his books can be noted here: *Chita* (1889); *Two Years in the French West Indies* (1890); *Out of the East* (1895); *Kokoro* (1896); *Japan: an Attempt at Interpretation* (1904); *Fantastics and Other Fancies* (1914); *Interpretations of Literature* (1915); *Appreciations of Poetry* (1916); *Talks to Writers* (1920); *An American Miscellany* (1924); *On Poets* (1934). The biographies of Hearn are

E. Bisland, *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* (1906); J. Temple, *Blue Ghost* (1931); N. H. Kennard, *Lafcadio Hearn* (1912); G. M. Gould, *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn* (1908); E. L. Tinker, *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days* (1925); L. Q. Barel, *The Idyl: My Personal Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn* (1933). His letters have been collected and published in M. Bronner, *Letters from the Raven* (1907); E. Bisland, *The Japanese Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* (1910); E. C. Beck, "The Letters of Lafcadio Hearn to His Brother," *English Journal*, April, 1931; also *American Literature*, May, 1932; O. Edwards, "Some Unpublished Letters of Lafcadio Hearn," *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society*, XVI (1917–18); S. Ichikawa, *Some New Letters and Writings of Lafcadio Hearn* (1925). Critical studies and estimates are found in N. Amenomori, "Lafcadio Hearn, the Man," *Atlantic*, Oct., 1905; P. H. Boynton, *More Contemporary Americans* (1927); Y. Noguchi, *Lafcadio Hearn in Japan* (1911); F. H. Davis, "Lafcadio Hearn," *Forum*, March, 1914; *DAB*, VIII; O. Lewis, *Hearn and His Biographers: the Record of a Literary Controversy* (1930); E. Foxwall, "Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn," *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society* (1907–9); K. Koizumi, *Father and I* (1935); S. Koizumi (Mrs. Hearn), *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn* (1918); H. Masamuné, "New Light on Lafcadio Hearn," *Contemporary Japan*, Sept., 1933; M. Monahan, "Lafcadio Hearn: a French Estimate," *Forum*, March, 1913; P. E. More, *Shelburne Essays*, Second Series (1905); D. H. Langton, "Lafcadio Hearn," *Manchester Quarterly*, XXXI, 1912; M. Monahan, "The Celtic Strain in Lafcadio Hearn," *Forum*, May, 1914; H. W. Boynton, "A Voice from Yesterday," *Saturday Review of Literature*, March 7, 1931.

## THE GHOSTLY KISS

THE theater was full. I cannot remember what they were playing. I did not have time to observe the actors. I only remember how vast the building seemed. Looking back, I saw an ocean of faces stretching away almost beyond the eye's power of definition to the far circles where the seats rose tier above tier in lines of illumination. The ceiling was blue, and in the midst a great mellow lamp hung suspended like a moon, at a height so lofty that I could not see the suspending chain. All the seats were black. I fancied that the theater was hung with hangings of black velvet, bordered with a silver fringe that glimmered like tears. The audience were all in white.

All in white!—I asked myself whether I was not in some theater of some tropical city—why all in white? I could not guess. I fancied at moments that I could perceive a moonlit landscape through far distant oriel windows, and the crests of palms casting moving shadows like gigantic spiders. The air was sweet with a strange and a new perfume; it was a drowsy air—a poppied air, in which the waving of innumerable white fans made no rustle, no sound.

There was a strange stillness and a strange silence. All eyes were turned toward the stage, except my own. I gazed in every direction but that of the stage! I cannot imagine why it was that I rarely looked toward the stage. No one noticed me; no one appeared to perceive that I was the only person in all that vast assembly clad in black—a tiny dark speck in a sea of white light.

Gradually the voices of the actors seemed to me to become fainter and fainter—thin sounds like whispers from another world—a world of ghosts!—and the music seemed not music, but only an echo in the mind of the hearer, like a memory of songs heard and forgotten in forgotten years.

There were faces that I thought strangely familiar—faces I fancied I had seen somewhere else in some other time. But none recognized me.

* * *

A woman sat before me—a fair woman with hair as brightly golden as the locks of Aphrodite. I asked my heart why it beat so strangely when I turned my eyes upon her. I felt as if it sought to leap from my breast and fling itself all palpitating under her feet. I watched the delicate movements of her neck, where a few loose bright curls were straying, like strands of gold clinging to a column of ivory;—the

soft curve of the cheek flushed by a faint ruddiness like the velvet surface of a half-ripe peach;—the grace of the curving lips—lips sweet as those of the Cnidian Venus, which even after two thousand years still seem humid, as with the kisses of the last lover. But the eyes I could not see.

And a strange desire rose within me—an intense wish to kiss those lips. My heart said, Yes;—my reason whispered, No. I thought of the ten thousand thousand eyes that might suddenly be turned upon me. I looked back; and it seemed to me as if the whole theater had grown vaster! The circles of seats had receded;—the great center lamp seemed to have mounted higher;—the audience seemed vast as that we dream of in visions of the Last Judgment. And my heart beat so violently that I heard its passionate pulsation, louder than the voices of the actors and I feared lest it should betray me to all the host of white-clad men and women above me. But none seemed to hear or to see me. I trembled as I thought of the consequences of obeying the mad impulse that became every moment more overpowering and uncontrollable.

And my heart answered, "One kiss of those lips were worth the pain of ten thousand deaths."

* * *

I do not remember that I arose. I only remember finding myself beside her, close to her, breathing her perfumed breath, and gazing into eyes deep as the amethystine heaven of a tropical night. I pressed my lips passionately to hers;—I felt a thrill of inexpressible delight and triumph;—I felt the warm soft lips curl back to meet mine, and give me back my kiss!

And a great fear suddenly came upon me. And all the multitude of white-clad men and women arose in silence; and ten thousand thousand eyes looked upon me.

* * *

I heard a voice, faint, sweet,—such a voice as we hear when dead loves visit us in dreams.

"*Thou hast kissed me: the compact is sealed forever.*"

And raising my eyes once more I saw that all the seats were graves and all the white dresses shrouds. Above me a light still shone in the blue roof, but only the light of a white moon in the eternal azure of heaven. White tombs stretched away in weird file to the verge of the horizon;—where it had seemed to me that I beheld a play, I saw only a lofty mausoleum;—and I knew that the perfume of the night was but the breath of flowers dying upon the tombs!

1880

## THE QUESTION OF THE HIGHEST ART

In taking this title for the present short lecture, I have not said "literary art," but simply art. That is because I think that all the arts are so related to each other, and to some form of highest truth, that each obeys the same laws as the others, and manifests the same principles. Of course I intend to refer especially to literary art; but in order to do this effectually, I must first speak about art in general.

I take it that art signifies the emotional expression of life in some form or other. This may be expressed in music, in painting, in sculpture, in poetry, in drama, or in fiction. Truth to life is the object even of the best fiction—though the story in itself may not be true, or may even be impossible. But it has of course been said that the kinds of art are almost innumerable. The question that I want to answer is this. What is the highest form of art?

Without attempting to discuss the different kinds of art in any way, I think we may fairly assume that intellectual life represents something higher than physical life, and that ethical life represents something higher still. In short, the position of Spencer that moral beauty is far superior to intellectual beauty, ought to be a satisfactory guide to the answer of this question. If moral beauty be the very highest possible form of beauty, then the highest possible form of art should be that which expresses it.

I do not think that anybody would deny these premises from a philosophical point of view. But the mere statement that moral beauty ought to be ranked above all other beauty, and that the highest art should necessarily express moral beauty, leaves a vague and unsatisfactory impression upon the mind. It is not very easy to answer the question, How can music or

painting or sculpture or poetry or fiction represent moral beauty? And have I not often told you that books written for a moral purpose are nearly always inartistic and unsatisfactory?

It seems to me that a solution of this difficulty is at least suggested by the experience of love.

To love another human being is really a moral experience, although this fact is very commonly overlooked. You might say, That is all very fine, but how can it be a moral experience to love a bad person, or to love for sense and self? I shall answer that the selfish side of the feeling has no importance at all; and that whether the person loved be good or bad or indifferent is also of no importance. I mean that the experience is not at all affected as to its moral side by the immorality of the conditions of it. Certainly it is a great misfortune and a great folly to love a bad person; but in spite of the misfortune and the folly a certain moral experience comes, which has immense value to a wholesome nature. The experience is one which very few of the poets and philosophers dwell upon; yet it is the only important, the supremely important, part of the experience. What is it? It is the sudden impulse to unselfishness. For there are two sides to every passion of love in a normal human life. One side is selfish; the other side, and the stronger, is unselfish. In other words, one of the first results of truly loving another human being is the sudden wish to die for the sake of that person, to endure anything, to attempt anything difficult or dangerous for the benefit of the person beloved. That is what Tennyson refers to in the celebrated verse about the chord of Self suddenly disappearing. The impulse to self-sacrifice is the moral experience of loving; and this experience is not necessarily confined to the kind of affection described by Tennyson. Other forms of love may produce the same result. Strong faith may do it. Patriotism may do it. I have only mentioned the ordinary form of love, because it is the most universal experience, and most likely to produce the moral impulse, the unselfish desire to suffer pain, to suffer loss, or even to suffer death, for the sake of a person loved.

I know that mere beauty of form may produce such emotion, though beauty of form is by no means the highest source of moral inspiration. There is a possible relation between physical and moral beauty; but it does not seem to be a relation now often realized in this imperfect world. Intellectual beauty never, I think, excites our affection—though, it may excite our admiration. Moral beauty, the highest of all, has indeed been a supreme source of unselfish action; but it has moved men's minds chiefly through superhuman ideals, and very seldom through the words or acts of a person, an individual. It must be confessed that in a person we are much more ready to perceive the lower than the higher forms of beauty.

But in this we have a suggestion of possible values in regard to future art. Taking it for granted that some forms of beauty inspire men with such affection as to make them temporarily unselfish, I do not see any reason to doubt that in future very much higher forms of beauty will produce the same effect. I should say that the highest form of art must necessarily be such art as produces upon the beholder the same moral effect that the passion of love produces in a generous lover. Such art would be a revelation of moral beauty for which it were worth while to sacrifice self,—of moral ideas for which it were a beautiful thing to die. Such an art ought to fill men even with a passionate desire to give up life, pleasure, everything, for the sake of some grand and noble purpose. Just as unselfishness is the real test of strong affection, so unselfishness ought to be the real test of the very highest kind of art. Does this art make you feel generous, make you willing to sacrifice yourself, make you eager to attempt some noble undertaking? If it does, then it belongs to the higher class of art, if not to the very highest. But if a work of art, whether sculpture or painting or poem or drama, does not make us feel kindly, more generous, morally better than we were before seeing it, then I should say that, no matter how clever, it does not belong to the highest forms of art.

By this statement I do not mean in the least to decry such art as the sculpture of the Greeks, as the painting of the Italians—not at all. The impression of great sculpture and great painting, like the impression of grand music, *is* to make us feel more kindly to our fellowmen,

more unselfish in our action, more exalted in our aspirations. When art has not this effect, it is often because the nature of man is deficient, not because his art is bad. But I do not know that any art which has existed in the past could be called the highest possible. The highest possible ought to be, I think, one that treats of ethical ideals, not physical ideals, and of which the effect should be a purely moral enthusiasm. Sculpture, painting, music,—these arts can never, I imagine, attempt the highest art in the sense that I mean. But drama, poetry, great romance or fiction, in other words, great literature, may attempt the supreme, and very probably will do so at some future time.

1920

## 1849 ~ *Sarah Orne Jewett* ~ 1909

SARAH ORNE JEWETT and Mary E. Wilkins came upon the New England scene during the period of its decline following the Civil War. They witnessed the gradual decay of once thriving communities, especially coast towns, because of changed shipping and industrial conditions, the Western emigration, the influx of European immigrants, and the coming of the summer vacationist. They lived through the first period of the abandoned house and farm era; as writers they sought to delineate the lives of the men and women who were left stranded as the new national currents surged past them. In spite of rare gifts of humor the picture that remains is for the most part drab and austere, with a pervading sense of hopelessness and futility, tempered on the other hand by courageous resolution and fortitude.

Miss Jewett is a native of Berwick, Maine. Her father, a graduate of Bowdoin College and for a time a member of the teaching staff, was a country doctor who, like Bryant's father, served his patients in other than merely professional ways. To him she owed her earliest intellectual stimulus as well as some fundamental principles which determined the nature and course of her artistic work. Her natural delicacy and somewhat restrained gayety is traceable to the French strain which she inherited from her mother. She attended Berwick Academy where her imagination was stirred by the ways of students from the West Indies. During her mature years she made frequent trips abroad, and spent winters in Boston, mostly at the home of Mrs. James T. Fields, returning to Berwick for intermittent periods of residence in the family mansion.

Two aspects of her native New England were ever present in Miss Jewett's mind—the memory of a glorious past and the unhappy realization of an inglorious present, two phases of life which provide the material for her stories. On one of the countless rounds on which she accompanied him, her father remarked that "Great writers don't try to write *about* people and things, they tell them just as they are," a principle the daughter endeavored to follow throughout her career. Her first ambition was to give a beautiful rendering of the life about her that

would serve as a corrective to the patronizing attitude of the city boarder; she persistently aimed to show that beneath crude exteriors the finer human traits may often be found. Yet she is neither moralist nor propagandist, preferring to leave the moral inherent in character and story, and to rely on her essentially realistic method, with its careful selection of material, to portray the dignity of human nature. Her purpose was to report life as she knew and felt it, from a definite point of view.

Miss Jewett belongs to the local colorists. She made use of dialect, but not to the extent, as Lowell says, that it savors of garlic. Her work was acclaimed by critics and literary men at home and abroad. One must make allowance, however, for what seemed like the mutual admiration tactics of her day. *The Country Doctor* (1884), *A White Heron and Other Stories* (1886), and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) are remarkable for their simple beauty and fidelity, for they represent what she saw, not through a glass darkly, but most selectively, though at times superficially. She never probes very deep beneath the surface of life, does not face crucial problems, does not portray souls in moments of great crises, and does not emphasize the rage of passion and sin. The conception of art has expanded immeasurably since she wrote, and to its larger demands she cannot be held responsible. What she set out to do she did admirably, and in a style that is well adapted to her purpose.

Miss Jewett's short stories appeared in *Deephaven* (1877); *Play Days: A Book of Stories for Children* (1878); *Old Friends and New* (1879); *Country By-Ways* (1881); *The Mate of the Daylight and Friends Ashore* (1883); *A White Heron and Other Stories* (1886); *The King of Folly Island and Other People* (1888); *Strangers and Wayfarers* (1890); *A Native of Winby and Other Tales* (1893); *The Life of Nancy* (1895); *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896); *The Queen's Twin and Other Stories* (1899). Her other books are *A Country Doctor* (1884); *Marsh Island* (1885); *The Normans* (1898); *The Tory Lover* (1901); *Verses* (1916). Much of her work is available in *Stories and Tales* (7 vols., 1910); there is also a two-volume edition of *The Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett* (1925), with a preface by Willa Cather. The only extended biography is F. O. Matthiesen's *Sarah Orne Jewett* (1929); a brief sketch is in *DAB*, X; see also A. Fields, ed., *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett* (1929). For criticism of her work consult E. M. Chapman, "The New England of Sarah Orne Jewett," *Yale Review*, Oct., 1913; C. M. Thompson, "The Art of Miss Jewett," *Atlantic*, Oct., 1904; E. Garnett, *Friday Nights* (1922); H. Grattan, "Sarah Orne Jewett," *Bookman*, May, 1929; H. P. Spofford, *A Little Book of Friends* (1916); F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923); M. H. Shackford, "Sarah Orne Jewett," *Sewanee Review*, Jan., 1922; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## THE PASSING OF SISTER BARSETT

**First published in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, May, 1892; collected in *A Native of Winby and Other Tales* (1893). This story is a splendid illustration of the humor which may be found in an otherwise drab and unhappy situation.**

MRS. MERCY CRANE was of such firm persuasion that a house is meant to be lived in, that during many years she was never known to leave her own neat two-storied dwelling-place on the Ridge road. Yet being very fond of company, in pleasant weather she often sat in

the side doorway looking out on her green yard, where the grass grew short and thick and was undisfigured even by a path toward the steps. All her faded green blinds were securely tied together and knotted on the inside by pieces of white tape; but now and then, when the sun was not too hot for her carpets, she opened one window at a time for a few hours, having pronounced views upon the necessity of light and air. Although Mrs. Crane was acknowledged by her best friends to be a peculiar person and very set in her ways, she was much respected, and one acquaintance vied with another in making up for her melancholy seclusion by bringing her all the news they could gather. She had been left alone many years before by the sudden death of her husband from sunstroke, and though she was by no means poor, she had, as some one said, "such a pretty way of taking a little present that you couldn't help being pleased when you gave her anything."

For a lover of society, such a life must have had its difficulties at times, except that the Ridge road was more traveled than any other in the township, and Mrs. Crane had invented a system of signals, to which she always resorted in case of wishing to speak to some one of her neighbors.

The afternoon was wearing late, one day toward the end of summer, and Mercy Crane sat in her doorway dressed in a favorite old-fashioned light calico and a small shoulder shawl figured with large palm leaves. She was making some tatting of a somewhat intricate pattern; she believed it to be the prettiest and most durable of trimmings, and having decorated her own wardrobe in the course of unlimited leisure, she was now making a few yards apiece for each of her more intimate friends, so that they might have something to remember her by. She kept glancing up the road as if she expected some one, but the time went slowly by, until at last a woman appeared to view, walking fast, and carrying a large bundle in a checked handkerchief.

Then Mercy Crane worked steadily for a short time without looking up, until the desired friend was crossing the grass between the dusty road and the steps. The visitor was out of breath, and did not respond to the polite greeting of her hostess until she had recovered herself to her satisfaction. Mrs. Crane made her the kind offer of a glass of water or a few peppermints, but was answered only by a shake of the head, so she resumed her work for a time until the silence should be broken.

"I have come from the house of mourning," said Sarah Ellen Dow at last, unexpectedly.

"You don't tell me that Sister Barsett"—

"She's left us this time, she's really gone," and the excited news-bringer burst into tears. The poor soul was completely overwrought; she looked tired and wan, as if she had spent her forces in sympathy as well as hard work. She felt in her great bundle for a pocket handkerchief, but was not successful in the search, and finally produced a faded gingham apron with long, narrow strings, with which she hastily dried her tears. The sad news appealed also to Mercy Crane, who looked across to the apple-trees, and could not see them for a dazzle of tears in her own eyes. The spectacle of Sarah Ellen Dow going home with her humble workaday possessions, from the house where she had gone in haste only a few days before to care for a sick person well known to them both, was a very sad sight.

"You sent word yesterday that you should be returnin' early this afternoon, and would stop. I presume I received the message as you gave it?" asked Mrs. Crane, who was tenacious in such matters; "but I do declare I never looked to hear she was gone."

"She's been failin' right along sence yisterday about this time," said the nurse. "She's taken no notice to speak of, an' been eatin' the valley o' nothin', I may say, sence I went there a-Tuesday. Her sisters both come back yisterday, an' of course I was expected to give up charge to them. They're used to sickness, an' both havin' such a name for bein' great housekeepers!"

Sarah Ellen spoke with bitterness, but Mrs. Crane was reminded instantly of her own affairs. "I feel condemned that I ain't begun my own fall cleanin' yet," she said, with an ostentatious sigh.

"Plenty o' time to worry about that," her friend hastened to console her.

"I do desire to have everything decent about my house," resumed Mrs. Crane. "There's no-

body to do anything but me. If I was to be taken away sudden myself, I shouldn't want to have it said afterwards that there was wisps under my sofy or—There! I can't dwell on my own troubles with Sister Barsett's loss right before me. I can't seem to believe she's really passed away; she always was saying she should go in some o' these spells, but I deemed her to be troubled with narves."

Sarah Ellen Dow shook her head. "I'm all nerved up myself," she said brokenly. "I made light of her sickness when I went there first, I'd seen her what she called dreadful low so many times; but I saw her looks this morning, an' I begun to believe her at last. Them sisters o' hers is the master for unfeelin' hearts. Sister Barsett was a-layin' there yisterday, an' one of 'em was a-settin' right by her tellin' how difficult 'twas for her to leave home, her niece was goin' to graduate to the high school, an' they was goin' to have a time in the evening, an' all the exercises promised to be extry interesting. Poor Sister Barsett knew what she said an' looked at her with contempt, an' then she give a glance at me an' closed up her eyes as if 'twas for the last time. I know she felt it."

Sarah Ellen Dow was more and more excited by a sense of bitter grievance. Her rule of the afflicted household had evidently been interfered with; she was not accustomed to be ignored and set aside at such times. Her simple nature and uncommon ability found satisfaction in the exercise of authority, but she had now left her post feeling hurt and wronged, besides knowing something of the pain of honest affliction.

"If it hadn't been for esteemin' Sister Barsett as I always have done, I should have told 'em no, an' held to it, when they asked me to come back an' watch tonight. 'Tain't for none o' their sakes, but Sister Barsett was a good friend to me in her way." Sarah Ellen broke down once more, and felt in her bundle again hastily, but the handkerchief was again elusive, while a small object fell out upon the doorstep with a bounce.

"'Tain't nothin' but a little taste-cake I spared out o' the loaf I baked this mornin'," she explained, with a blush. "I was so shoved out that I seemed to want to turn my hand to somethin' useful an' feel I was still doin' for Sister Barsett. Try a little piece, won't you, Mis' Crane? I thought it seemed light an' good."

They shared the taste-cake with serious enjoyment, and pronounced it very good indeed when they had finished and shaken the crumbs out of their laps. "There's nobody but you shall come an' do for me at the last, if I can have my way about things," said Mercy Crane impulsively. She meant it for a tribute to Miss Dow's character and general ability, and as such it was meekly accepted.

"You're a younger person than I be, an' less wore," said Sarah Ellen, but she felt better now that she had rested, and her conversational powers seemed to be refreshed by her share of the little cake. "Doctor Bangs has behaved real pretty, I can say that," she continued presently in a mournful tone.

"Heretofore, in the sickness of Sister Barsett, I have always felt to hope certain that she would survive; she's recovered from a sight o' things in her day. She has been the first to have all the new diseases that's visited this region. I know she had the spinal mergeetis months before there was any other case about," observed Mrs. Crane with satisfaction.

"An' the new throat troubles, all of 'em," agreed Sarah Ellen; "an' has made trial of all the best patent medicines, an' could tell you their merits as no one else could in this vicinity. She never was one that depended on herbs alone, though she considered 'em extremely useful in some cases. Everybody has their herb, as we know, but I'm free to say that Sister Barsett sometimes done everything she could to kill herself with such rovin' ways o' dosin'. She must see it now she's gone an' can't stuff down no more invigorators." Sarah Ellen Dow burst out suddenly with this, as if she could no longer contain her honest opinion.

"There, there! you're all worked up," answered placid Mercy Crane, looking more interested than ever.

"An' she was dreadful handy to talk religion to other folks, but I've come to a realizin' sense that religion is somethin' besides opinions. She an' Elder French has been mostly of one mind, but I don't know's they've got hold of all the religion there is."

"Why, why, Sarah Ellen!" exclaimed Mrs. Crane, but there was still something in her tone that urged the speaker to further expression of her feelings. The good creature was much excited, her face was clouded with disapproval.

"I ain't forgettin' nothin' about their good points either," she went on in a more subdued tone, and suddenly stopped.

"Preachin' 'll be done away with soon or late,—preachin' o' Elder French's kind," announced Mercy Crane, after waiting to see if her guest did not mean to say anything more. "I should like to read 'em out that verse another fashion: 'Be ye doers o' the word, not preachers only,' would hit it about right; but there, it's easy for all of us to talk. In my early days I used to like to get out to meetin' regular, because sure as I didn't I had bad luck all the week. I didn't feel pacified 'less I'd been half a day, but I was out all day the Sabbath before Mr. Barlow died as he did. So you mean to say that Sister Barsett's really gone?"

Mrs. Crane's tone changed to one of real concern, and her manner indicated that she had put the preceding conversation behind with her decision.

"She was herself to the last," instantly responded Miss Dow. "I see her put out a thumb an' finger from under the spread an' pinch up a fold of her sister Deckett's dress, to try an' see if 'twas all wool. I thought 'twa'n't all wool, myself, an' I know it now by the way she looked. She was a very knowin' person about materials; we shall miss poor Mis' Barsett in many ways, she was always the one to consult with about matters o' dress."

"She passed away easy at the last, I hope?" asked Mrs. Crane with interest.

"Why, I wa'n't there, if you'll believe it!" exclaimed Sarah Ellen, flushing, and looking at her friend for sympathy. "Sister Barsett revived up the first o' the afternoon, an' they sent for Elder French. She took notice of him, and he exhorted quite a spell, an' then he spoke o' there being need of air in the room, Mis' Deckett havin' closed every window, an' she asked me of all folks if I hadn't better step out; but Elder French come too, an' he was very reasonable, an' had a word with me about Mis' Deckett an' Mis' Peak an' the way they was workin' things. I told him right out how they never come near when the rest of us was havin' it so hard with her along in the spring, but now they thought she was re'lly goin' to die, they come settlin' down like a pair o' old crows in a field to pick for what they could get. I just made up my mind they should have all the care if they wanted it. It didn't seem as if there was anything more I could do for Sister Barsett, an' I set there in the kitchen within call an' waited, an' when I heard 'em sayin', 'There, she's gone, she's gone!' and Mis' Deckett a-weepin', I put on my bunnit and stepped myself out into the road. I felt to repent after I had gone but a rod, but I was so worked up, an' I thought they'd call me back, an' then I was put out because they didn't, an' so here I be. I can't help it now." Sarah Ellen was crying again; she and Mrs. Crane could not look at each other.

"Well, you set an' rest," said Mrs. Crane kindly, and with the merest shadow of disapproval. "You set an' rest, an' by an' by, if you'd feel better, you could go back an' just make a little stop an' inquire about the arrangements. I wouldn't harbor no feelin's, if they be inconsiderate folks. Sister Barsett has often deplored their actions in my hearing an' wished she had sisters like other folks. With all her faults she was a useful person an' a good neighbor," mourned Mercy Crane sincerely. "She was one that always had somethin' interestin' to tell, an' if it wa'n't for her dyin' spells an' all that sort o' nonsense, she'd make a figger in the world, she would so. She walked with an air always, Mis' Barsett did; you'd ask who she was if you hadn't known, as she passed you by. How quick we forget the outs about anybody that's gone! but I always feel grateful to anybody that's friendly, situated as I be. I shall miss her runnin' over. I can seem to see her now, coming over the rise in the road. But don't you get in a way of takin' things too hard, Sarah Ellen! You've worked yourself all to pieces since I saw you last; you're gettin' to be as lean as a meetin'-house fly. Now, you're comin' in to have a cup o' tea with me, an' then you'll feel better. I've got some new molasses gingerbread that I baked this mornin'."

"I do feel beat out, Mis' Crane," acknowl-

edged the poor little soul, glad of a chance to speak, but touched by this unexpected mark of consideration. "If I could ha' done as I wanted to I should be feelin' well enough, but to be set aside an' ordered about, where I'd taken the lead in sickness so much, an' knew how to deal with Sister Barsett so well! She might be livin' now, perhaps"—

"Come; we'd better go in, 'tis gettin' damp," and the mistress of the house rose so hurriedly as to seem bustling. "Don't dwell on Sister Barsett an' her foolish folks no more; I wouldn't, if I was you."

They went into the front room, which was dim with the twilight of the half-closed blinds and two great syringa bushes that grew against them. Sarah Ellen put down her bundle and bestowed herself in the large, cane-seated rocking-chair. Mrs. Crane directed her to stay there awhile and rest, and then come out into the kitchen when she got ready.

A cheerful clatter of dishes was heard at once upon Mrs. Crane's disappearance. "I hope she's goin' to make one o' her nice shortcakes, but I don't know's she'll think it quite worth while," thought the guest humbly. She desired to go out into the kitchen, but it was proper behavior to wait until she should be called. Mercy Crane was not a person with whom one could venture to take liberties. Presently Sarah Ellen began to feel better. She did not often find such a quiet place, or the quarter of an hour of idleness in which to enjoy it, and was glad to make the most of this opportunity. Just now she felt tired and lonely. She was a busy, unselfish, eager-minded creature by nature, but now, while grief was sometimes uppermost in her mind and sometimes a sense of wrong, every moment found her more peaceful, and the great excitement little by little faded away.

"What a person poor Sister Barsett was to dread growing old so she couldn't get about. I'm sure I shall miss her as much as anybody," said Mrs. Crane, suddenly opening the kitchen door, and letting in an unmistakable and delicious odor of shortcake that revived still more the drooping spirits of her guest. "An' a good deal of knowledge has died with her," she added, coming into the room and seeming to make it lighter.

"There, she knew a good deal, but she didn't know all, especially o' doctorin'," insisted Sarah Ellen from the rocking-chair, with an unexpected little laugh. "She used to lay down the law to me as if I had neither sense nor experience, but when it came to her bad spells she'd always send for me. It takes everybody to know everything, but Sister Barsett was of an opinion that her information was sufficient for the town. She was tellin' me the day I went there how she disliked to have old Mis' Doubleday come an' visit with her, an' remarked that she called Mis' Doubleday very officious. 'Went right down on her knees an' prayed,' says she. 'Anybody would have thought I was a heathen!' But I kind of pacified her feelin's, an' told her I supposed the old lady meant well."

"Did she give away any of her things?—Mis' Barsett, I mean," inquired Mrs. Crane.

"Not in my hearin'," replied Sarah Ellen Dow. "Except one day, the first of the week, she told her oldest sister, Mis' Deckett,—'twas that first day she rode over,—that she might have her green quilted petticoat; you see it was a rainy day, an' Mis' Deckett had complained o' feelin' thin. She went right up an' got it, and put it on an' wore it off, an' I'm sure I thought no more about it, until I heard Sister Barsett groanin' dreadful in the night. I got right up to see what the matter was, an' what do you think but she was wantin' that petticoat back, and not thinking any too well o' Nancy Deckett for takin' it when 'twas offered. 'Nancy never showed no sense of propriety,' says Sister Barsett; I just wish you'd heard her go on!

"If she had felt to remember me," continued Sarah Ellen, after they had laughed a little, "I'd full as soon have some of her nice crockery-ware. She told me once, years ago, when I was stoppin' to tea with her an' we were havin' it real friendly, that she should leave me her Britannia tea-set, but I ain't got it in writin', and I can't say she's ever referred to the matter since. It ain't as if I had a home o' my own to keep it in, but I should have thought a great deal of it for her sake," and the speaker's voice faltered. "I must say that with all her virtues she never was a first-class housekeeper, but I wouldn't say it to

any but a friend. You never eat no preserves o' hers that wa'n't commencin' to work, an' you know as well as I how little forethought she had about putting away her woolens. I sat behind her once in meetin' when I was stoppin' with the Tremletts and so occupied a seat in their pew, an' I see between ten an' a dozen moth millers come workin' out o' her fitch-fur tippet. They was flutterin' round her bonnet same's 'twas a lamp. I should be mortified to death to have such a thing happen to me."

"Every housekeeper has her weak point; I've got mine as much as anybody else," acknowledged Mercy Crane with spirit, "but you never see no moth millers come workin' out o' me in a public place."

"Ain't your oven beginning to get overhet?" anxiously inquired Sarah Ellen Dow, who was sitting more in the draught, and could not bear to have any accident happen to the supper. Mrs. Crane flew to a shortcake's rescue, and presently called her guest to the table.

The two women sat down to deep and brimming cups of tea. Sarah Ellen noticed with great gratification that her hostess had put on two of the best teacups and some citron-melon preserves. It was not an every-day supper. She was used to hard fare, poor, hard-working Sarah Ellen, and this handsome social attention did her good. Sister Crane rarely entertained a friend, and it would be a pleasure to speak of the tea-drinking for weeks to come.

"You've put yourself out quite a consid'able for me," she acknowledged. "How pretty these cups is! You oughtn't to use 'em so common as for me. I wish I had a home I could really call my own to ask you to, but 'tain't never been so I could. Sometimes I wonder what's goin' to become o' me when I get so I'm past work. Takin' care o' sick folks an' bein' in houses where there's a sight goin' on an' everybody in a hurry kind of wears on me now I'm most a-gittin' in years. I was wishin' the other day that I could get with some comfortable kind of a sick person, where I could live right along quiet as other folks do, but folks never sends for me 'less they're drove to it. I ain't laid up anything to really depend upon."

The situation appealed to Mercy Crane, well to do as she was and not burdened with responsibilities. She stirred uneasily in her chair, but could not bring herself to the point of offering Sarah Ellen the home she coveted.

"Have some hot tea," she insisted, in a matter of fact tone, and Sarah Ellen's face, which had been lighted by a sudden eager hopefulness, grew dull and narrow again.

"Plenty, plenty, Mis' Crane," she said sadly, "'tis beautiful tea,—you always have good tea"; but she could not turn her thoughts from her own uncertain future. "None of our folks has ever lived to be a burden," she said presently, in a pathetic tone, putting down her cup. "My mother was thought to be doing well until four o'clock an' was dead at ten. My Aunt Nancy came to our house well at twelve o'clock an' died that afternoon; my father was sick but ten days. There was dear sister Betsy, she did go in consumption, but 'twa'n't an expensive sickness."

"I've thought sometimes about you, how you'd get past rovin' from house to house one o' these days. I guess your friends will stand by you." Mrs. Crane spoke with unwonted sympathy, and Sarah Ellen's heart leaped with joy.

"You're real kind," she said simply. "There's nobody I set so much by. But I shall miss Sister Barsett, when all's said an' done. She's asked me many a time to stop with her when I wasn't doin' nothin'. We all have our failin's, but she was a friendly creatur'. I sha'n't want to see her laid away."

"Yes, I was thinkin' a few minutes ago that I shouldn't want to look out an' see the funeral go by. She's one o' the old neighbors. I s'pose I shall have to look, or I shouldn't feel right afterward," said Mrs. Crane mournfully. "If I hadn't got so kind of housebound," she added with touching frankness, "I'd just as soon go over with you an' offer to watch this night."

"'Twould astonish Sister Barsett so I don't know but she'd return." Sarah Ellen's eyes danced with amusement; she could not resist her own joke, and Mercy Crane herself had to smile.

"Now I must be goin', or 'twill be dark," said the guest, rising and sighing after she had

eaten her last crumb of gingerbread. "Yes, thank ye, you're real good, I will come back if I find I ain't wanted. Look what a pretty sky there is!" and the two friends went to the side door and stood together in a moment of affectionate silence, looking out toward the sunset across the wide fields. The country was still with that deep rural stillness which seems to mean the absence of humanity. Only the thrushes were singing far away in the walnut woods beyond the orchard, and some crows were flying over and cawed once loudly, as if they were speaking to the women at the door.

Just as the friends were parting, after most grateful acknowledgments from Sarah Ellen Dow, some one came driving along the road in a hurry and stopped.

"Who's that with you, Mis' Crane?" called one of their near neighbors.

"It's Sarah Ellen Dow," answered Mrs. Crane. "What's the matter?"

"I thought so, but I couldn't rightly see. Come, they are in a peck o' trouble up to Sister Barsett's, wonderin' where you be," grumbled the man. "They can't do nothin' with her; she's drove off everybody an' keeps a-screechin' for you. Come, step along, Sarah Ellen, do!"

"Sister Barsett!" exclaimed both the women. Mercy Crane sank down upon the doorstep, but Sarah Ellen stepped out upon the grass all of a tremble, and went toward the wagon. "They said this afternoon that Sister Barsett was gone," she managed to say. "What did they mean?"

"Gone where?" asked the impatient neighbor. "I expect 'twas one of her spells. She's come to; they say she wants somethin' hearty for her tea. Nobody can't take one step till you get there, neither."

Sarah Ellen was still dazed; she returned to the doorway, where Mercy Crane sat shaking with laughter. "I don't know but we might as well laugh as cry," she said in an aimless sort of way. "I know you too well to think you're going to repeat a single word. Well, I'll get my bonnet an' start; I expect I've got considerable to cope with, but I'm well rested. Good-night, Mis' Crane, I certain did have a beautiful tea, whatever the future may have in store."

She wore a solemn expression as she mounted into the wagon in haste and departed, but she was far out of sight when Mercy Crane stopped laughing and went into the house.

1892

## 1850 ~ *Mary Noailles Murfree* ~ 1922

MISS MURFREE, who wrote under the pen name of "Charles Egbert Craddock," was born at "Grantlands," the family estate, near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Both her father and her mother were of English descent, though there was an added Huguenot strain in the family. Being stricken at an early age with a fever that left her partially crippled, she found enjoyment in music and books. She attended school in Nashville and Philadelphia. Her reading was extensive in history and law and in literature, including English, French, Italian, and Latin. She lived in the South most of her life, and for many years spent her summers in the Cumberland Mountains, where she had opportunity to observe the life of the mountain people she depicted in her writings, and to contemplate the beauties of nature which she loved with a real passion. She died in Murfreesboro.

An industrious and prolific writer, she tried her hand at the short story and the

novel. Her material was selected for the most part from the life of the mountaineers, their language, habits, customs, fears, and superstitions, and the events and conditions centering about the Civil War. Her first book, *In the Tennessee Mountains* (1884), was widely acclaimed. Other volumes of short stories, including *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains* (1885) and *The Mystery of Witch-Face Mountains* (1895), appeared at intervals until 1897. Her novels, most of which are historical, deal with colonial times and the Civil War period. Of these *Where the Battle Was Fought* (1876) still finds an occasional reader. In such books as *The Bushwhackers and Other Stories* (1899) and *The Raid of the Guerilla and Other Stories* (1912) Civil War themes and mountaineer characters are intermingled. In the novels, however, one misses the freshness and the masculine directness of the earlier short stories. Some of the stories are overloaded with landscape, while some mannerisms of style detract rather than add to her reputation. As in the case of Cable, her first book will probably have the longest life.

Miss Murfree's short stories are to be found in *In the Tennessee Mountains* (1884); *The Mystery of Witch-Face Mountain and Other Stories* (1895); *Phantoms of the Footbridge* (1895); *The Young Mountaineers* (1897); *The Bushwhackers and Other Stories* (1899); *The Frontiersman* (1904); *Raid of the Guerilla and Other Stories* (1912). Her novels: *Where the Battle Was Fought* (1884); *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains* (1885); *Down the Ravine* (1885); *In the Clouds* (1886); *The Story of Keedon Bluffs* (1887); *The Despot of Broomsedge Cove* (1888); *In the "Stranger Peoples'" Country* (1891); *His Vanished Star* (1894); *The Juggler* (1897); *The Champion* (1902); *A Spectre of Power* (1903); *The Storm Center* (1905); *The Story of Duciehurst* (1914). There is no extended biography. For brief biographical and critical studies consult *DAB*, XIII; W. M. Baskervill, *Southern Writers* (1897–1903); H. C. Vedder, *American Writers of To-day* (1894); G. H. Baskette, "Mary Noailles Murfree," *Library of Southern Literature*, VIII; H. A. Toulmin, *Social Historians* (1911); E. W. Parks, *Publications of the Eastern Tennessee Historical Society*, No. 6 (1934); K. A. Orgain, *Southern Writers* (1908); F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923); F. Waldo, *New England Magazine*, April, 1901; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## THE STAR IN THE VALLEY

First published in the *Atlantic*, November, 1878; later included in *In the Tennessee Mountains*. Miss Murfree was one of the first writers to portray life in the Tennessee Mountains. Although much has been written since about these lowly people, the authenticity of her tales has not been impaired.

He first saw it in the twilight of a clear October evening. As the earliest planet sprang into the sky, an answering gleam shone red amid the glooms in the valley. A star too it seemed. And later, when the myriads of the fairer, whiter lights of a moonless night were all athrob in the great concave vault bending to the hills, there was something very impressive in that solitary star of earth, changeless and motionless beneath the ever-changing skies.

Chevis never tired of looking at it. Somehow it broke the spell that draws all eyes heavenward on starry nights. He often strolled with his cigar at dusk down to the verge of the crag, and sat for hours gazing at it and vaguely speculating about it. That spark seemed to have kindled all the soul and imagination within him, although he knew well enough its prosaic source, for he had once questioned the gawky mountaineer whose

services he had secured as guide through the forest solitudes during this hunting expedition.

"That thar spark in the valley?" Hi Bates had replied, removing the pipe from his lips and emitting a cloud of strong tobacco smoke. " 'Tain't nuthin' but the light in Jerry Shaw's house, 'bout haffen mile from the foot of the mounting. Ye pass that thar house when ye goes on the Christel road, what leads down the mounting off the Back-bone. That's Jerry Shaw's house,—that's what it is. He's a blacksmith, an' he kin shoe a horse toler'ble well when he ain't drunk, ez he mos'ly is."

"Perhaps that is the light from the forge," suggested Chevis.

"That thar forge ain't run more'n half the day, let 'lone o' nights. I hev never hearn tell on Jerry Shaw a-workin' o'nights, nor in the daytime nuther, ef he kin git shet of it. No sech no 'count critter 'twixt hyar an' the Settlemint."

So spake Chevis's astronomer. Seeing the star even through the prosaic lens of stern reality did not detract from its poetic aspect. Chevis never failed to watch for it. The first faint glinting in the azure evening sky sent his eyes to that red reflection suddenly aglow in the valley; even when the mists rose above it and hid it from him, he gazed at the spot where it had disappeared, feeling a calm satisfaction to know that it was still shining beneath the cloud-curtain. He encouraged himself in this bit of sentimentality. These unique eventide effects seemed a fitting sequel to the picturesque day, passed in hunting deer, with horn and hounds, through the gorgeous autumnal forest; or perchance in the more exciting sport in some rocky gorge with a bear at bay and the frenzied pack around him; or in the idyllic pleasures of bird-shooting with a thoroughly-trained dog; and coming back in the crimson sunset to a well-appointed tent and a smoking supper of venison or wild turkey,—the trophies of his skill. The vague dreaminess of his cigar and the charm of that bright bit of color in the night-shrouded valley added a sort of romantic zest to these primitive enjoyments, and ministered to that keen susceptibility of impressions which Reginald Chevis considered eminently characteristic of a highly wrought mind and nature.

He said nothing of his fancies, however, to his fellow sportsman, Ned Varney, nor to the mountaineer. Infinite as was the difference between these two in mind and cultivation, his observation of both had convinced him that they were alike incapable of appreciating and comprehending his delicate and dainty musings. Varney was essentially a man of this world; his mental and moral conclusions had been adopted in a calm, mercantile spirit, as giving the best return for the outlay, and the market was not liable to fluctuations. And the mountaineer could go no further than the prosaic fact of the light in Jerry Shaw's house. Thus Reginald Chevis was wont to sit in contemplative silence on the crag until his cigar was burnt out, and afterward to lie awake deep in the night, listening to the majestic lyric welling up from the thousand nocturnal voices of these mountain wilds.

During the day, in place of the red light a gauzy little curl of smoke was barely visible, the only sign or suggestion of human habitation to be seen from the crag in all the many miles of long, narrow valley and parallel tiers of ranges. Sometimes Chevis and Varney caught sight of it from lower down on the mountain side, whence was faintly distinguishable the little log-house and certain vague lines marking a rectangular inclosure; near at hand, too, the forge, silent and smokeless. But it did not immediately occur to either of them to theorize concerning its inmates and their lives in this lonely place; for a time, not even to the speculative Chevis. As to Varney, he gave his whole mind to the matter in hand,—his gun, his dog, his game,—and his notebook was as systematic and as romantic as the ledger at home.

It might be accounted an event in the history of that log-hut when Reginald Chevis, after riding past it eighty yards or so, chanced one day to meet a country girl walking toward the house. She did not look up, and he caught only an indistinct glimpse of her face. She spoke to him, however, as she went by, which is the invariable custom with the inhabitants of the sequestered nooks among the encompassing mountains, whether meeting stranger or acquaintance. He lifted his hat in return, with that punctilious courtesy which

he made a point of according to persons of low degree. In another moment she had passed down the narrow sandy road, overhung with gigantic trees, and, at a deft, even pace, hardly slackened as she traversed the great log extending across the rushing stream, she made her way up the opposite hill, and disappeared gradually over its brow.

The expression of her face, half-seen though it was, had attracted his attention. He rode slowly along, meditating. "Did she go into Shaw's house, just around the curve of the road?" he wondered. "Is she Shaw's daughter, or some visiting neighbor?"

That night he looked with a new interest at the red star, set like a jewel in the floating mists of the valley.

"Do you know," he asked of Hi Bates, when the three men were seated, after supper, around the camp-fire, which sent lurid tongues of flame and a thousand bright sparks leaping high in the darkness, and illumined the vistas of the woods on every side, save where the sudden crag jutted over the valley,—"Do you know whether Jerry Shaw has a daughter, —a young girl?"

"Ye-es," drawled Hi Bates, disparagingly, "he hev."

A pause ensued. The star in the valley was blotted from sight; the rising mists had crept to the verge of the crag; nay, in the undergrowth fringing the mountain's brink, there were softly clinging white wreaths.

"Is she pretty?" asked Chevis.

"Waal, no, she ain't," said Hi Bates, decisively. "She's a pore, no 'count critter." Then he added, as if he were afraid of being misapprehended, "Not ez thar is any harm in the gal, ye onderstand. She's a mighty good, saft-spoken, quiet sort o' gal, but she's a pore, white-faced, slim little critter. She looks like she hain't got no sort'n grit in her. She makes me think o' one o' them slim little slips o' willow every time nor I sees her. She hain't got long ter live, I reckon," he concluded, dismally.

Reginald Chevis asked him no more questions about Jerry Shaw's daughter.

Not long afterward, when Chevis was hunting through the deep woods about the base of the mountain near the Christel road, his horse happened to cast a shoe. He congratulated himself upon his proximity to the forge, for there was a possibility that the blacksmith might be at work; according to the account which Hi Bates had given of Jerry Shaw's habits, there were half a dozen chances against it. But the shop was at no great distance, and he set out to find his way back to the Christel road, guided by sundry well-known landmarks on the mountain side: certain great crags hanging above the treetops, showing in grander sublimity through the thinning foliage, or beetling bare and grim; a dismantled and deserted hovel, the red-berried vines twining amongst the rotting logs; the full flow of a tumultuous stream making its last leap down a precipice eighty feet high, with yeasty, maddening waves below and a rainbow-crowned crystal sheet above. And here again the curves of the woodland road. As the sound of the falling water grew softer and softer in the distance, till it was hardly more than a drowsy murmur, the faint vibrations of a far-off anvil rang upon the air. Welcome indeed to Chevis, for however enticing might be the long rambles through the redolent October woods with dog and gun, he had no mind to tramp up the mountain to his tent, five miles distant, leading the resisting horse all the way. The afternoon was so clear and so still that the metallic sound penetrated far through the quiet forest. At every curve of the road he expected to see the log-cabin with its rail fence, and beyond the low-hanging chestnut-tree, half its branches resting upon the roof of the little shanty of a blacksmith's shop. After many windings a sharp turn brought him full upon the humble dwelling, with its background of primeval woods and the purpling splendors of the western hills. The chickens were going to roost in a stunted cedar-tree just without the door; an incredibly old man, feeble and bent, sat dozing in the lingering sunshine on the porch; a girl, with a pail on her head, was crossing the road and going down a declivity toward a spring which bubbled up in a cleft of the gigantic rocks that were piled one above another, rising to a great height. A mingled breath of cool, dripping water, sweet-scented fern, and pungent mint greeted him as he passed it. He

did not see the girl's face, for she had left the road before he went by, but he recognized the slight figure, with that graceful poise acquired by the prosaic habit of carrying weights upon the head, and its lithe, swaying beauty reminded him of the mountaineer's comparison, —a slip of willow.

And now, under the chestnut-tree, in anxious converse with Jerry Shaw, who came out hammer in hand from the anvil, concerning the shoe to be put on Strathspey's left forefoot, and the problematic damage sustained since the accident. Chevis's own theory occupied some minutes in expounding, and so absorbed his attention that he did not observe, until the horse was fairly under the blacksmith's hands, that, despite Jerry Shaw's unaccustomed industry, this was by no means a red-letter day in his habitual dissipation. He trembled for Strathspey, but it was too late now to interfere. Jerry Shaw was in that stage of drunkenness which is greatly accented by an elaborate affectation of sobriety. His desire that Chevis should consider him perfectly sober was abundantly manifest in his rigidly steady gait, the preternatural gravity in his bloodshot eyes, his sparingness of speech, and the earnestness with which he enunciated the acquiescent formulae which had constituted his share of the conversation. Now and then, controlling his faculties by a great effort, he looked hard at Chevis to discover what doubts might be expressed in his face concerning the genuineness of his staid deportment; and Chevis presently found it best to affect too. Believing that the blacksmith's histrionic attempts in the role of sober artisan were occupying his attention more than the paring of Strathspey's hoof, which he held between his knees on his leather apron, while the horse danced an animated measure on the other three feet, Chevis assumed an appearance of indifference, and strolled away into the shop. He looked about him, carelessly, at the horseshoes hanging on a rod in the rude aperture that served as window, at the wagon-tires, the plowshares, the glowing fire of the forge. The air within was unpleasantly close, and he soon found himself again in the doorway.

"Can I get some water here?" he asked, as Jerry Shaw re-entered, and began hammering vigorously at the shoe destined for Strathspey.

The resonant music ceased for a moment. The solemn, drunken eyes were slowly turned upon the visitor, and the elaborate affectation of sobriety was again obtrusively apparent in the blacksmith's manner. He rolled up more closely the blue-checked homespun sleeve from his corded hammer-arm, twitched nervously at the single suspender that supported his copper-colored jeans trousers, readjusted his leather apron hanging about his neck, and, casting upon Chevis another glance, replete with a challenging gravity, fell to work upon the anvil, every heavy and well-directed blow telling with the precision of machinery.

The question had hardly been heard before forgotten. At the next interval, when he was going out to fit the horse, Chevis repeated his request.

"Water, did ye say?" asked Jerry Shaw, looking at him with narrowing eyelids, as if to shut out all other contemplation that he might grapple with this problem. "Thar's no fraish water hyar, but ye kin go yander ter the house and ax fur some; or," he added, shading his eyes from the sunlight with his broad, blackened hand, and looking at the huge wall of stone beyond the road, "ye kin go down yander ter the spring, an' ax that thar gal fur a drink."

Chevis took his way, in the last rays of sunshine, across the road and down the declivity in the direction indicated by the blacksmith. A cool gray shadow fell upon him from the heights of the great rocks, as he neared them; the narrow path leading from the road grew dank and moist, and presently his feet were sunk in the still green and odorous water-loving weeds, the clumps of fern, and the pungent mint. He did not notice the soft verdure; he did not even see the beautiful vines that hung from earth-filled niches among the rocks, and lent to their forbidding aspect something of a smiling grace; their picturesque grouping, where they had fallen apart to show this sparkling fountain of bright up-springing water, was all lost upon his artistic perceptions. His eyes were fixed on the girl standing beside the spring, her pail filled, but waiting, with a

calm, expectant look on her face, as she saw him approaching.

No creature could have been more coarsely habited: a green cotton dress, faded to the faintest hue; rough shoes, just visible beneath her skirts; a dappled gray and brown calico sunbonnet, thrown aside on a moss-grown bowlder near at hand. But it seemed as if the wild nature about her had been generous to this being toward whom life and fortune had played the niggard. There were opaline lights in her dreamy eyes which one sees nowhere save in sunset clouds that brood above dark hills; the golden sunbeams, all faded from the landscape, had left a perpetual reflection in her bronze hair; there was a subtle affinity between her and other pliant, swaying, graceful young things, waving in the mountain breezes, fed by the rain and the dew. She was hardly more human to Chevis than certain lissome little woodland flowers, the very names of which he did not know,—pure white, star-shaped, with a faint green line threading its way through each of the five delicate petals; he had seen them embellishing the banks of lonely pools, or growing in dank, marshy places in the middle of the unfrequented road, where perhaps it had been mended in a primitive way with a few rotting rails.

"May I trouble you to give me some water?" asked Chevis, prosaically enough. She neither smiled nor replied. She took the gourd from the pail, dipped it into the lucent depths of the spring, handed it to him, and stood awaiting its return when he should have finished. The cool, delicious water was drained, and he gave the gourd back. "I am much obliged," he said.

"Ye're welcome," she replied, in a slow, singing monotone. Had the autumn winds taught her voice that melancholy cadence?

Chevis would have liked to hear her speak again, but the gulf between his station and hers —so undreamed of by her (for the differences of caste are absolutely unknown to the independent mountaineers), so patent to him—could be bridged by few ideas. They had so little in common that for a moment he could think of nothing to say. His cogitation suggested only the inquiry, "Do you live here?" indicating the little house on the other side of the road.

"Yes," she chanted in the same monotone, "I lives hyar."

She turned to lift the brimming pail. Chevis spoke again: "Do you always stay at home? Do you never go anywhere?"

Her eyes rested upon him, with a slight surprise looking out from among their changing lights. "No," she said, after a pause; "I hev no call to go nowhar ez I knows on."

She placed the pail on her head, took the dappled sunbonnet in her hand, and went along the path with the assured, steady gait and the graceful backward poise of the figure that precluded the possibility of spilling a drop from the vessel.

He had been touched in a highly romantic way by the sweet beauty of this little woodland flower. It seemed hard that so perfect a thing of its kind should be wasted here, unseen by more appreciative eyes than those of bird, or rabbit, or the equally uncultured human beings about her; and it gave him a baffling sense of the mysterious injustice of life to reflect upon the difference in her lot and that of others of her age in higher spheres. He went thoughtfully through the closing shadows to the shop, mounted the re-shod Strathspey, and rode along the rugged ascent of the mountain, gravely pondering on worldly inequalities.

He saw her often afterward, although he spoke to her again but once. He sometimes stopped as he came and went on the Christel road, and sat chatting with the old man, her grandfather, on the porch, sunshiny days, or lounged in the barnlike door of Jerry Shaw's shop talking to the half-drunken blacksmith. He piqued himself on the readiness with which he became interested in these people, entered into their thoughts and feelings, obtained a comprehensive idea of the machinery of life in this wilderness,—more complicated than one could readily believe, looking upon the changeless face of the wide, unpopulated expanse of mountain ranges stretching so far beneath that infinite sky. They appealed to him from the basis of their common humanity, he thought, and the pleasure of watching the development of the common human attributes in this peculiar and primitive state of society never palled upon him. He regarded with contempt Varney's frivolous displeasure and annoyance be-

cause of Hi Bates's utter insensibility to the difference in their social position, and the necessity of either acquiescing in the supposititious equality or dispensing with the invaluable services of the proud and independent mountaineer; because of the *patois* of the untutored people, to hear which, Varney was wont to declare, set his teeth on edge; because of their narrow prejudices, their mental poverty, their idle shiftlessness, their uncouth dress and appearance. Chevis flattered himself that he entertained a broader view. He had not even a subacute idea that he looked upon these people and their inner life only as picturesque bits of the mental and moral landscape; that it was an aesthetic and theoretical pleasure their contemplation afforded him; that he was as far as ever from the basis of common humanity.

Sometimes while he talked to the old man on the sunlit porch, the "slip o' willow" sat in the doorway, listening too, but never speaking. Sometimes he would find her with her father at the forge, her fair, ethereal face illumined with an alien and fluctuating brilliancy, shining and fading as the breath of the fire rose and fell. He came to remember that face so well that in a sorry sketchbook, where nothing else was finished, there were several laborious pages lighted up with a faint reflection of its beauty. But he was as much interested perhaps, though less poetically, in that massive figure, the idle blacksmith. He looked at it all from an ideal point of view. The star in the valley was only a brilliant, set in the night landscape, and suggested a unique and pleasing experience.

How should he imagine what luminous and wistful eyes were turned upward to where another star burned,—the light of his camp-fire on the crag; what pathetic, beautiful eyes had learned to watch and wait for that red gleam high on the mountain's brow,—hardly below the stars in heaven it seemed! How could he dream of the strange, vague, unreasoning trouble with which his idle comings and goings had clouded that young life, a trouble as strange, as vague, as vast, as the limitless sky above her.

She understood him as little. As she sat in the open doorway, with the flare of the fire behind her, and gazed at the red light shining on the crag, she had no idea of the heights of worldly differences that divided them, more insurmountable than precipices and flying chutes of mountain torrents, and chasms and fissures of the wild ravine: she knew nothing of the life he had left, and of its rigorous artificialities and gradations of wealth and estimation. And with a heart full of pitiable unrealities she looked up at the glittering simulacrum of a star on the crag, while he gazed down on the ideal star in the valley.

The weeks had worn deep into November. Chevis and Varney were thinking of going home; indeed, they talked of breaking camp day after tomorrow, and saying a long adieu to wood and mountain and stream. They had had an abundance of good sport and a surfeit of roughing it. They would go back to town and town avocations invigorated by their holiday, and taking with them a fresh and exhilarating recollection of the forest life left so far behind.

It was near dusk, on a dull, cold evening, when Chevis dismounted before the door of the blacksmith's little log-cabin. The chestnut-tree hung desolate and bare on the eaves of the forge; the stream rushed by in swift gray whirlpools under a sullen gray sky; the gigantic wall of broken rocks loomed gloomy and sinister on the opposite side of the road,—not so much as a withered leaf of all their vines clung to their rugged surfaces. The mountains had changed color: the nearest ranges were black with the myriads of the grim black branches of the denuded forest; far away they stretched in parallel lines, rising tier above tier, and showing numberless gradations of a dreary, neutral tint, which grew ever fainter in the distance, till merged in the uniform tone of the somber sky.

Indoors it was certainly more cheerful. A hickory fire dispensed alike warmth and light. The musical whir of a spinning-wheel added its unique charm. From the rafters depended numberless strings of bright red pepper-pods and ears of popcorn; hanks of woolen and cotton yarn; bunches of medicinal herbs; brown gourds and little bags of seeds. On rude shelves against the wall were ranged cooking utensils, drinking vessels, etc., all distinguished by that scrupulous cleanliness which is a marked feature of the poor hovels of these mountaineers,

and in striking contrast to the poor hovels of lowlanders. The rush-bottomed chairs, drawn in a semicircle before the rough, ill-adjusted stones which did duty as hearth, were occupied by several men, who seemed to be making the blacksmith a prolonged visit; various members of the family were humbly seated on sundry inverted domestic articles, such as wash-tubs, and splint-baskets made of white-oak. There was circulating among Jerry Shaw's friends a flat bottle, facetiously denominated "tickler," readily emptied, but as readily replenished from a keg in the corner. Like the widow's cruse of oil, that keg was miraculously never empty. The fact of a still near by in the wild ravine might suggest a reason for its perennial flow. It was a good strong article of apple-brandy, and its effects were beginning to be distinctly visible.

Truly the ethereal woodland flower seemed strangely incongruous with these brutal and uncouth conditions of her life, as she stood at a little distance from this group, spinning at her wheel. Chevis felt a sudden sharp pang of pity for her when he glanced toward her; the next instant he had forgotten it in his interest in her work. It was altogether at variance with the ideas which he had hitherto entertained concerning that humble handicraft. There came across him a vague recollection from his city life that the peasant girls of art galleries and of the lyric stage were wont to sit at the wheel. "But perhaps they were spinning flax," he reflected. This spinning was a matter of walking back and forth with smooth, measured steps, and graceful, undulatory motion; a matter, too, of much pretty gesticulation,—the thread in one hand, the other regulating the whirl of the wheel. He thought he had never seen attitudes so charming.

Jerry Shaw hastened to abdicate and offer one of the rush-bottomed chairs with the eager hospitality characteristic of these mountaineers,—a hospitality that meets a stranger on the threshold of every hut, presses upon him, ungrudgingly, its best, and follows him on his departure with protestations of regret out to the rickety fence. Chevis was more or less known to all of the visitors and after a little, under the sense of familiarity and the impetus of the apple-brandy, the talk flowed on as freely as before his entrance. It was wilder and more antagonistic to his principles and prejudices than anything he had hitherto heard among these people, and he looked on and listened, interested in this new development of a phase of life which he had thought he had sounded from its lowest note to the top of its compass. He was glad to remain; the scene had impressed his cultivated perceptions as an interior by Teniers might have done, and the vehemence and lawlessness of the conversation and the threats of violence had little reality for him; if he thought about the subject under discussion at all, it was with a reassuring conviction that before the plans could be carried out the already intoxicated mountaineers would be helplessly drunk. Nevertheless, he glanced ever and anon at the young girl, loath that she should hear it, lest its virulent, angry bitterness should startle her. She was evidently listening, too, but her fair face was as calm and untroubled as one of the pure white faces of those flower-stars of his early stay in the mountains.

"Them Peels oughtn't ter be let live!" exclaimed Elijah Burr, a gigantic fellow, arrayed in brown jeans, with the accompaniments of knife, powder-horn, etc., usual with the hunters of the range; his gun stood, with those of the other guests, against the wall in a corner of the room. "They oughtn't ter be let live, an' I'd top off all three of 'em fur the skin an' horns of a deer."

"That thar is a true word," assented Jerry Shaw. "They oughter be run down an' kilt,—all three o' them Peels."

Chevis could not forbear a question. Always on the alert to add to his stock of knowledge of men and minds, always analyzing his own inner life and the inner life of those about him, he said, turning to his intoxicated host, "Who are the Peels, Mr. Shaw,—if I may ask?"

"Who air the Peels?" repeated Jerry Shaw, making a point of seizing the question. "They air the meanest men in these hyar mountings. Ye might hunt from Copperhead Ridge ter Clinch River, an' the whole spread o' the valley, an' never hear tell o' no sech no' count critters."

"They oughtn't ter be let live!" again urged Elijah Burr. "No man ez treats his wife like

that dad-burned scoundrel Ike Peel do oughter be let live. That thar woman is my sister an' Jerry Shaw's cousin,—an' I shot him down in his own door year afore las'. I shot him ter kill; but somehow 'nother I war that shaky, an' the cussed gun hung fire a-fust, an' that thar pore wife o' his'n screamed an' hollered so, that I never done nuthin' arter all but lay him up for four month an' better for that thar pore critter ter nuss. He'll see a mighty differ nex' time I gits my chance. An' 'tain't fur off," he added threateningly.

"Wouldn't it be better to persuade her to leave him?" suggested Chevis pacifically, without, however, any wild idea of playing peacemaker between fire and tow.

Burr growled a fierce oath, and then was silent.

A slow fellow on the opposite side of the fireplace explained: "Thar's whar all the trouble kem from. She wouldn't leave him, fur all he treated her awful. She said ez how he war mighty good ter her when he warn't drunk. So 'Lijah shot him."

This way of cutting the Gordian knot of domestic difficulties might have proved efficacious but for the shakiness induced by the thrill of fraternal sentiment, the infusion of apple-brandy, the protest of the bone of contention, and the hanging fire of the treacherous gun. Elijah Burr could remember no other failure of aim for twenty years.

"He won't git shet of me that easy agin!" Burr declared, with another pull at the flat tickler. "But ef it hedn't hev been fur what happened las' week, I mought hev let him off fur awhile," he continued, evidently actuated by some curiously distorted sense of duty in the premises. "I oughter hev kilt him afore. But now the cussed critter is a gone coon. Dad-burn the whole tribe!"

Chevis was desirous of knowing what had happened last week. He did not, however, feel justified in asking more questions. But apple-brandy is a potent tongue-loosener, and the unwonted communicativeness of the stolid and silent mountaineers attested its strength in this regard. Jerry Shaw, without inquiry, enlightened him.

"Ye see," he said, turning to Chevis, "'Lijah he thought ez how ef he could git that fool woman ter come ter his house, he could shoot Ike fur his meanness 'thout botherin' of her, an' things would all git easy agin. Wall, he went thar one day when all them Peels, the whole layout, war gone down ter the Settlemint ter hear the rider preach, an' he jes' run away with two of the brats,—the littlest ones, ye onderstand,—a-thinkin' he mought tole her off from Ike that thar way. We hearn ez how the pore critter war nigh on ter distracted 'bout 'em, but Ike never let her come arter 'em. Leastways, she never kem. Las' week Ike kem fur 'em hisself,—him an' them two cussed brothers o' his'n. All 'Lijah's folks war out'n the way; him an' his boys war off a-huntin', an' his wife hed gone down ter the spring, a haffen mile an' better, a-washin' clothes; nobody war ter the house 'ceptin' them two chillen o' Ike's. An' Ike an' his brothers jes' tuk the chillen away, an' set fire ter the house; an' time 'Lijah's wife got thar, 'twar nuthin' but a pile o' ashes. So we've determinated ter go up yander ter Laurel Notch, twenty mile along the ridge of the mounting, ternight, an' wipe out them Peels,—'kase they air a-goin' ter move away. That thar wife o' Ike's, what made all the trouble, hev fretted an' fretted at Ike till he hev determinated ter break up an' wagon across the range ter Kaintucky, whar his uncle lives in the hills thar. Ike hev gin his consent ter go jes' ter pleasure her, 'kase she air mos' crazed ter git Ike away whar 'Lijah can't kill him. Ike's brothers is a-goin', too. I hearn ez how they'll make a start at noon termorrer."

"They'll never start ter Kaintucky termorrer," said Burr, grimly. "They'll git off, afore that, fur hell, stidder Kaintucky. I hev been a-tryin' ter make out ter shoot that thar man ever sence that thar gal war married ter him, seven year ago,—seven year an' better. But what with her a-foolin' round, an' a-talkin', and a-goin' on like she war distracted—she run right 'twixt him an' the muzzle of my gun wunst, or I would hev hed him that time fur sure—an' somehow 'nother that critter makes me so shaky with her ways of goin' on that I feel like I hain't got good sense, an' can't get no good aim at nuthin'. Nex' time, though, thar'll be a differ. She ain't a-goin' ter Kaintucky along of him ter be beat fur nuthin' when he's drunk."

It was a pitiable picture presented to Chevis's open-eyed imagination,—this woman standing for years between the two men she loved: holding back her brother from his vengeance of her wrongs by that subtle influence that shook his aim; and going into exile with her brute of a husband when that influence had waned and failed, and her wrongs were supplemented by deep and irreparable injuries to her brother. And the curious moral attitude of the man: the strong fraternal feeling that alternately nerved and weakened his revengeful hand.

"We air goin' thar 'bout two o'clock ternight," said Jerry Shaw, "and wipe out all three o' them Peels,—Ike an' his two brothers."

"They oughtn't ter be let live," reiterated Elijah Burr, moodily. Did he speak to his faintly stirring conscience, or to a woful premonition of his sister's grief?

"They'll all three be stiff an' stark afore daybreak," resumed Jerry Shaw. "We air all kin ter 'Lijah, an' we air goin' ter holp him top off them Peels. Thar's ten of us an' three o' them, an' we won't hev no trouble 'bout it. An' we'll bring that pore critter, Ike's wife, an' her chillen hyar ter stay. She's welcome ter live along of us till 'Lijah kin fix some sort'n place fur her an' the little chillen. Thar won't be no trouble a-gittin' rid of the men folks, ez thar is ten of us an' three o' them, an' we air goin' ter take 'em in the night."

There was a protest from an unexpected quarter. The whir of the spinning-wheel was abruptly silenced. "I don't see no sense," said Celia Shaw, her singing monotone vibrating in the sudden lull,—"I don't see no sense in shootin' folks down like they war nuthin' better nor bear, nor deer, nor suthin' wild. I don't see no sense in it. An' I never did see none."

There was an astonished pause.

"Shet up, Cely! Shet up!" exclaimed Jerry Shaw, in mingled anger and surprise. "Them folks ain't no better nor bear, nor sech. They hain't got no right ter live,—them Peels."

"No, that they hain't!" said Burr.

"They is powerful no 'count critters, I know," replied the little woodland flower, the firelight bright in her opaline eyes and on the flakes of burnished gold gleaming in the dark masses of her hair. "They is always a-hangin' round the still an' a-gettin' drunk; but I don't see no sense in a-huntin' 'em down an' a-killin' 'em off. 'Pears ter me like they air better nor the dumb ones. I don't see no sense in shootin' 'em."

"Shet up, Cely! Shet up!" reiterated Shaw. Celia said no more. Reginald Chevis was pleased with this indication of her sensibility; the other women—her mother and grandmother—had heard the whole recital with the utmost indifference, as they sat by the fire monotonously carding cotton. She was beyond her station in sentiment, he thought. However, he was disposed to recant this favorable estimate of her higher nature when, twice afterward, she stopped her work, and, filling the bottle from the keg, pressed it upon her father, despite her unfavorable criticism of the hangers-on of stills. Nay, she insisted. "Drink some more," she said. "Ye hain't got half enough yit." Had the girl no pity for the already drunken creature? She seemed systematically trying to make him even more helpless than he was.

He had fallen into a deep sleep before Chevis left the house, and the bottle was circulating among the other men with a rapidity that boded little harm to the unconscious Ike Peel and his brothers at Laurel Notch, twenty miles away. As Chevis mounted Strathspey he saw the horses of Jerry Shaw's friends standing partly within and partly without the blacksmith's shop. They would stand there all night, he thought. It was darker when he commenced the ascent of the mountain than he had anticipated. And what was this driving against his face,—rain? No, it was snow. He had not started a moment too soon. But Strathspey, by reason of frequent travel, knew every foot of the way, and perhaps there would only be a flurry. And so he went on steadily up and up the wild, winding road among the great, bare, black trees and the grim heights and chasms. The snow fell fast,—so fast and so silently, before he was halfway to the summit he had lost the vague companionship of the sound of his horse's hoofs, now muffled in the thick carpet so suddenly flung upon the ground. Still the snow fell, and when

he had reached the mountain's brow the ground was deeply covered, and the whole aspect of the scene was strange. But though obscured by the fast-flying flakes, he knew that down in the bosom of the white valley there glittered still that changeless star.

"Still spinning, I suppose," he said to himself, as he looked toward it and thought of the interior of the log-cabin below. And then he turned into the tent to enjoy his cigar, his aesthetic reveries, and a bottle of wine.

But the wheel was no longer awhirl. Both music and musician were gone. Toiling along the snow-filled mountain ways; struggling with the fierce gusts of wind as they buffeted and hindered her, and fluttered derisively among her thin, worn, old garments; shivering as the driving flakes came full into the pale, calm face, and fell in heavier and heavier wreaths upon the dappled calico sunbonnet; threading her way through unfrequented woodland paths, that she might shorten the distance; now deftly on the verge of a precipice, whence a false step of those coarse, rough shoes would fling her into unimaginable abysses below; now on the sides of steep ravines, falling sometimes with the treacherous, sliding snow, but never faltering; tearing her hands on the shrubs and vines she clutched to help her forward, and bruised and bleeding, but still going on; trembling more than with the cold, but never turning back, when a sudden noise in the terrible loneliness of the sheeted woods suggested the close proximity of a wild beast, or perhaps, to her ignorant, superstitious mind, a supernatural presence,—thus she journeyed on her errand of deliverance.

Her fluttering breath came and went in quick gasps; her failing limbs wearily dragged through the deep drifts; the cruel winds untiringly lashed her; the snow soaked through the faded green cotton dress to the chilled white skin,—it seemed even to the dull blood coursing feebly through her freezing veins. But she had small thought for herself during those long, slow hours of endurance and painful effort. Her pale lips moved now and then with muttered speculations: how the time went by; whether they had discovered her absence at home; and whether the fleeter horsemen were even now ploughing their way through the longer, winding mountain road. Her only hope was to outstrip their speed. Her prayer—this untaught being!—she had no prayer, except perhaps her life, the life she was so ready to imperil. She had no high, cultured sensibilities to sustain her. There was no instinct stirring within her that might have nerved her to save her father's, or her brother's, or a benefactor's life. She held the creatures that she would have died to warn in low estimation, and spoke of them with reprobation and contempt. She had known no religious training, holding up forever the sublimest ideal. The measureless mountain wilds were not more infinite to her than that great mystery. Perhaps, without any philosophy, she stood upon the basis of a common humanity.

When the silent horsemen, sobered by the chill night air and the cold snow, made their cautious approach to the little porch of Ike Peel's log-hut at Laurel Notch, there was a thrill of dismayed surprise among them to discover the door standing half open, the house empty of its scanty furniture and goods, its owners fled, and the very dogs disappeared; only, on the rough stones before the dying fire, Celia Shaw, falling asleep and waking by fitful starts.

"Jerry Shaw swore ez how he would hev shot that thar gal o' his'n,—that thar Cely," Hi Bates said to Chevis and Varney the next day, when he recounted the incident, "only he didn't think she hed her right mind; a-walkin' through this hyar deep snow full fifteen mile,—it's fifteen mile by the short cut ter Laurel Notch,—ter git Ike Peel's folks off 'fore 'Lijah an' her dad could come up an' settle Ike an' his brothers. Leastways, 'Lijah an' the t'others, fur Jerry hed got so drunk he couldn't go; he war dead asleep till terday, when they kem back a-fotchin' the gal with 'em. That thar Cely Shaw never did look ter me like she hed good sense, nohow. Always looked like she war queer an' teched in the head."

There was a furtive gleam of speculation on the dull face of the mountaineer when his two listeners broke into enthusiastic commendation of the girl's high heroism and courage. The man of ledgers swore that he had never heard of anything so fine, and that he himself

would walk through fifteen miles of snow and midnight wilderness for the honor of shaking hands with her. There was that keen thrill about their hearts sometimes felt in crowded theatres, responsive to the cleverly simulated heroism of the boards; or in listening to a poet's mid-air song; or in looking upon some grand and ennobling phase of life translated on a great painter's canvas.

Hi Bates thought that perhaps they too were a little "teched in the head."

There had fallen upon Chevis a sense of deep humiliation. Celia Shaw had heard no more of that momentous conversation than he; a wide contrast was suggested. He began to have a glimmering perception that despite all his culture, his sensibility, his yearnings toward humanity, he was not so high a thing in the scale of being; that he had placed a false estimate upon himself. He had looked down on her with a mingled pity for her dense ignorance, her coarse surroundings, her low station, and a dilettante's delight in picturesque effects, and with no recognition of the moral splendors of that star in the valley. A realization, too, was upon him that fine feelings are of most avail as the motive power of fine deeds.

He and his friend went down together to the little log-cabin. There had been only jeers and taunts and reproaches for Celia Shaw from her own people. These she had expected, and she had stolidly borne them. But she listened to the fine speeches of the city-bred men with a vague wonderment on her flower-like face,—whiter than ever today.

"It was a splendid—a noble thing to do," said Varney, warmly.

"I shall never forget it," said Chevis, "it will always be like a sermon to me."

There was something more that Reginald Chevis never forgot: the look on her face as he turned and left her forever; for he was on his way back to his former life, so far removed from her and all her ideas and imaginings. He pondered long upon that look in her inscrutable eyes,—was it suffering, some keen pang of despair?—as he rode down and down the valley, all unconscious of the heartbreak he left behind him. He thought of it often afterward; he never penetrated its mystery.

He heard of her only once again. On the eve of a famous day, when visiting the outposts of a gallant corps, Reginald Chevis happened to recognize in one of the pickets the gawky mountaineer who had been his guide through those autumnal woods so far away. Hi Bates was afterward sought out and honored with an interview in the general's tent; for the accidental encounter had evoked many pleasant reminiscences in Chevis's mind, and among other questions he wished to ask was what had become of Jerry Shaw's daughter.

"She's dead,—long ago," answered Hi Bates. "She died afore the winter war over the year ez ye war a-huntin' thar. She never hed good sense ter my way o' thinkin', nohow, an' one night she run away, an' walked 'bout fifteen mile through a big snowstorm. Some say it settled on her chist. Anyhow, she jes' sorter fell away like afterward, an' never held up her head good no more. She always war a slim little critter, an' looked like she war teched in the head."

There are many things that suffer unheeded in those mountains: the birds that freeze on the trees; the wounded deer that leaves its cruel kind to die alone; the despairing, flying fox with its pursuing train of savage dogs and men. And the jutting crag whence had shone the camp-fire she had so often watched—her star, set forever—looked far over the valley beneath, where in one of those sad little rural graveyards she had been laid so long ago.

But Reginald Chevis has never forgotten her. Whenever he sees the earliest star spring into the evening sky, he remembers the answering red gleam of that star in the valley.

1878

# 1852 ~ *Mary E. Wilkins Freeman* ~ 1930

THE SPAN of Mrs. Freeman's life embraced three distinct movements in modern American literature. She saw the rise of the realistic trend following upon the close of the Civil War, with its emphasis upon local color, witnessed the romantic explosion in the late nineties, and saw the growth of naturalism in more recent contemporary writing. She belongs to the local-color group, and like Sarah Orne Jewett takes New England as her literary locale. She was a native of Randolph, Massachusetts, born of New England ancestors among whom a Salem witch judge is said to be numbered. At a very early age her father, who was a carpenter and storekeeper, moved to Brattleboro, Vermont. The girl attended the local schools, and studied at Mount Holyoke Seminary, but on account of frail health was withdrawn at the end of a year. Her education, consequently, was for the most part self-acquired through wide reading during the formative Brattleboro years. By 1883 the members of her immediate family had died, her sole remaining relative being an aunt for whose support she was responsible. Having already tried her hand at writing, and returning now to her birthplace where she made her home with intimate friends, she settled down to a literary career as the only means of livelihood. Here she lived until 1902, when after her marriage to Dr. Charles Manning Freeman she moved to Metuchen, New Jersey. Her marriage turned out to be an unhappy venture.

Mrs. Freeman's art comprises various literary forms. Her first efforts were in verse. Sensing the public taste of the time, and feeling the need of immediate financial return, she selected the short story as her medium. She published various collections, including such well-known volumes as *A Humble Romance* (1887), *A New England Nun* (1891), and *Understudies* (1901). In the field of the novel her success was less marked, although *Pembroke* (1894) was highly acclaimed by an English critic, and *The Portion of Labor* (1901) was admittedly a faithful picture of, and protest against, industrial conditions. Her difficulty was structural; in comparison with the masters of technique her plots seemed loose-jointed and poorly articulated. In view of the later development of the episodic novel, criticism has softened in this respect. Furthermore, her novels were of uneven merit, to be explained largely by her insistent experimentation with varying types such as the detective story (*The Long Arm*, 1895), period novel (*The Jamesons*, 1899), romance (*The Heart's Highway*, 1900), and propagandist fiction (*The Portion of Labor*, 1901). It is in the field of the short story that she has achieved her enduring fame. Her ambition to become a playwright came to an abrupt end with the utter failure of *Giles Corey, Yeoman* (1893).

In the realm of the short story, however, her achievement is of solid merit, and this despite her narrow range of characters, what Professor Pattee calls her "gasping" sentence structure, the bare, almost austere, style, and the constant restraint of treatment. Toward the end of her career she became more and more the conscious artist, sensitive to ulterior purposes and effects; but the earlier collections, on which her fame primarily rests, are characterized by a detachment and objectivity of attitude, an unconscious rendering of her characters as almost to make her apparent artlessness the real greatness of her art. Her own explanation of the matter is not very illuminating; to her, writing meant essentially making a beginning and then following the train of events as they unfolded. One cannot learn much about the creative process from that, and it is doubtful whether she ever stopped to analyze critically how she managed to achieve her effects. To some extent, at least, the secret of her power lies in the fine humanity which is everywhere apparent. Her characters, rather than technique, constitute the very heart of her artistic practice. Her interest in life and people and her ability to find variety even in the more or less homogeneous group in a restricted area constitute the chief assets in her art.

Mrs. Freeman is primarily the artistic chronicler of New England in decline, a decline which came as the result of the Civil War, the western migration, and changed economic conditions. For many of the inhabitants, life became a tenacious clinging to the past, clouded by the prospects of an uncertain future.

It is from those who were left behind to face this uncertain future, and whose outlook was blurred by the imminence of tragedy that Mrs. Freeman chose most of her characters. Yet the note of her work is not entirely tragic, for the grim earnestness of life is softened by a delicate and never-failing humor which extracts laughter from gloom and foreboding. Traits of Yankee character, such as determination, abhorrence of change, shrewdness, and eccentricity are capitalized in a telling manner.

The dominant note is revolt, which appears in a great variety of forms. One finds it in "A New England Nun," "A Village Singer," "A Stolen Christmas," and "The Revolt of Mother." In her hands revolt becomes the source of most of the issues of New England life, its humor, its courage, its forthrightness, even its occasional gayety, and to be sure, its tragedy. Nor must one neglect to mention her celebration of "maiden independence" and integrity at any price. Her unconscious humor lightens many an otherwise gloomy page.

H. W. Lanier, *Best Stories of Mary E. Wilkins* (1927), a one-volume collection, contains many of her most famous short stories. Other volumes of short stories are *A Humble Romance and Other Stories* (1887); *A New England Nun and Other Stories* (1891); *Young Lucretia and Other Stories* (1892); *Silence and Other Stories* (1898); *People of Our Neighborhood* (1898); *The Love of Parson Lord and Other Stories* (1900); *Understudies* (1901); *The Wind in the Rosebush* (1903); *Fair*

*Lavinia and Others* (1907); *Edgewater People* (1918). Some of her novels: *Jane Field* (1893); *Pembroke* (1894); *Jerome, a Poor Man* (1897); *The Heart's Highway* (1900); *The Portion of Labor* (1901); *The Shoulders of Atlas* (1908). She also wrote a play, *Giles Corey, Yeoman* (1893). No biography of Mrs. Freeman has appeared. For studies of her life and work consult *DAB*, VII; E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages Among the Women Who Have Written Famous Books* (1901); F. W. Halsey, *Women Authors of Our Day in Their Homes* (1903); F. L. Pattee, *Side-Lights on American Literature* (1922); B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); C. M. Thompson, "Miss Wilkins: an Idealist in Masquerade," *Atlantic*, May, 1899; F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## A NEW ENGLAND NUN

From *A New England Nun and Other Stories*. By common consent this is regarded as one of the very best stories written by Mrs. Freeman. Tragedy and suppressed humor are cleverly mingled.

It was late in the afternoon, and the light was waning. There was a difference in the look of the tree shadows out in the yard. Somewhere in the distance cows were lowing and a little bell was tinkling; now and then a farm wagon tilted by, and the dust flew; some blue-shirted laborers with shovels over their shoulders plodded past; little swarms of flies were dancing up and down before the people's faces in the soft air. There seemed to be a gentle stir arising over everything for the mere sake of subsidence—a very premonition of rest and hush and night.

This soft diurnal commotion was over Louisa Ellis also. She had been peacefully sewing at her sitting-room window all the afternoon. Now she quilted her needle carefully into her work, which she folded precisely, and laid in a basket with her thimble and thread and scissors. Louisa Ellis could not remember that ever in her life she had mislaid one of these little feminine appurtenances, which had become, from long use and constant association, a very part of her personality.

Louisa tied a green apron round her waist, and got out a flat straw hat with a green ribbon. Then she went into the garden with a little blue crockery bowl, to pick some currants for her tea. After the currants were picked she sat on the back doorstep and stemmed them, collecting the stems carefully in her apron and afterward throwing them into the hencoop. She looked sharply at the grass beside the step to see if any had fallen there.

Louisa was slow and still in her movements; it took her a long time to prepare her tea; but when ready it was set forth with as much grace as if she had been a veritable guest to her own self. The little square table stood exactly in the center of the kitchen, and was covered with a starched linen cloth whose border pattern of flowers glistened. Louisa had a damask napkin on her tea tray, where were arranged a cut-glass tumbler full of teaspoons, a silver cream pitcher, a china sugar bowl, and one pink china cup and saucer. Louisa used china every day—something which none of her neighbors did. They whispered about it among themselves. Their daily tables were laid with common crockery, their sets of best china stayed in the parlor closet, and Louisa Ellis was no richer nor better bred than they. Still she would use the china. She had for her supper a glass dish full of sugared currants, a plate of little cakes, and one of light white biscuits. Also a leaf or two of lettuce, which she cut up daintily. Louisa was very fond of lettuce, which she raised to perfection in her little garden. She ate quite heartily, though in a delicate, pecking way; it seemed almost surprising that any considerable bulk of the food should vanish.

After tea she filled a plate with nicely baked thin corn cakes, and carried them out into the back yard.

"Caesar!" she called. "Caesar! Caesar!"

There was a little rush, and the clank of a chain, and a large yellow-and-white dog appeared at the door of his tiny hut, which was half hidden among the tall grasses and flowers. Louisa patted him and gave him the corn cakes. Then she returned to the house and washed the tea things, polishing the china carefully. The twilight had deepened; the

chorus of the frogs floated in at the open window wonderfully loud and shrill, and once in a while a long sharp drone from a tree toad pierced it. Louisa took off her green gingham apron, disclosing a shorter one of pink-and-white print. She lighted her lamp, and sat down again with her sewing.

In about half an hour Joe Dagget came. She heard his heavy step on the walk, and rose and took off her pink-and-white apron. Under that was still another—white linen with a little cambric edging on the bottom; that was Louisa's company apron. She never wore it without her calico sewing apron over it unless she had a guest. She had barely folded the pink-and-white one with methodical haste and laid it in a table drawer when the door opened and Joe Dagget entered.

He seemed to fill up the whole room. A little yellow canary that had been asleep in his green cage at the south window woke up and fluttered wildly, beating his little yellow wings against the wires. He always did so when Joe Dagget came into the room.

"Good evening," said Louisa. She extended her hand with a kind of solemn cordiality.

"Good evening, Louisa," returned the man, in a loud voice.

She placed a chair for him, and they sat facing each other, with the table between them. He sat bolt upright, toeing out his heavy feet squarely, glancing with a good-humored uneasiness around the room. She sat gently erect, folding her slender hands in her white-linen lap.

"Been a pleasant day," remarked Dagget.

"Real pleasant," Louisa assented, softly. "Have you been haying?" she asked, after a little while.

"Yes, I've been haying all day, down in the ten-acre lot. Pretty hot work."

"It must be."

"Yes, it's pretty hot work in the sun."

"Is your mother well today?"

"Yes, mother's pretty well."

"I suppose Lily Dyer's with her now?"

Dagget colored. "Yes, she's with her," he answered, slowly.

He was not very young, but there was a boyish look about his large face. Louisa was not quite so old as he, her face was fairer and smoother, but she gave people the impression of being older.

"I suppose she's a good deal of help to your mother," she said, further.

"I guess she is; I don't know how mother'd get along without her," said Dagget, with a sort of embarrassed warmth.

"She looks like a real capable girl. She's pretty-looking too," remarked Louisa.

"Yes, she is pretty fair looking."

Presently Dagget began fingering the books on the table. There was a square red autograph album, and a Young Lady's Gift Book which had belonged to Louisa's mother. He took them up one after the other and opened them; then laid them down again, the album on the Gift Book.

Louisa kept eyeing them with mild uneasiness. Finally she rose and changed the position of the books, putting the album underneath. That was the way they had been arranged in the first place.

Dagget gave an awkward little laugh. "Now what difference did it make which book was on top?" said he.

Louisa looked at him with a deprecating smile. "I always keep them that way," murmured she.

"You do beat everything," said Dagget, trying to laugh again. His large face was flushed.

He remained about an hour longer, then rose to take leave. Going out, he stumbled over a rug, and trying to recover himself, hit Louisa's workbasket on the table, and knocked it on the floor.

He looked at Louisa, then at the rolling spools; he ducked himself awkwardly toward them, but she stopped him. "Never mind," said she; "I'll pick them up after you're gone."

She spoke with a mild stiffness. Either she was a little disturbed, or his nervousness affected her and made her seem constrained in her effort to reassure him.

When Joe Dagget was outside he drew in the sweet evening air with a sigh, and felt much as an innocent and perfectly well-intentioned bear might after his exit from a china shop.

Louisa, on her part, felt much as the kind-hearted, long-suffering owner of the china

shop might have done after the exit of the bear.

She tied on the pink, then the green apron, picked up all the scattered treasures and replaced them in her workbasket, and straightened the rug. Then she set the lamp on the floor and began sharply examining the carpet. She even rubbed her fingers over it, and looked at them.

"He's tracked in a good deal of dust," she murmured. "I thought he must have."

Louisa got a dustpan and brush, and swept Joe Dagget's track carefully.

If he could have known it, it would have increased his perplexity and uneasiness, although it would not have disturbed his loyalty in the least. He came twice a week to see Louisa Ellis, and every time, sitting there in her delicately sweet room, he felt as if surrounded by a hedge of lace. He was afraid to stir lest he should put a clumsy foot or hand through the fairy web, and he had always the consciousness that Louisa was watching fearfully lest he should.

Still the lace and Louisa commanded perforce his perfect respect and patience and loyalty. They were to be married in a month, after a singular courtship which had lasted for a matter of fifteen years. For fourteen out of the fifteen years the two had not once seen each other, and they had seldom exchanged letters. Joe had been all those years in Australia, where he had gone to make his fortune, and where he had stayed until he made it. He would have stayed fifty years if it had taken so long, and come home feeble and tottering, or never come home at all, to marry Louisa.

But the fortune had been made in the fourteen years, and he had come home now to marry the woman who had been patiently and unquestioningly waiting for him all that time.

Shortly after they were engaged he had announced to Louisa his determination to strike out into new fields and secure a competency before they should be married. She had listened and assented with the sweet serenity which never failed her, not even when her lover set forth on that long and uncertain journey. Joe, buoyed up as he was by his sturdy determination, broke down a little at the last, but Louisa kissed him with a mild blush, and said good-by.

"It won't be for long," poor Joe had said, huskily; but it was for fourteen years.

In that length of time much had happened. Louisa's mother and brother had died, and she was all alone in the world. But greatest happening of all—a subtle happening which both were too simple to understand—Louisa's feet had turned into a path, smooth maybe under a calm, serene sky, but so straight and unswerving that it could only meet a check at her grave, and so narrow that there was no room for anyone at her side.

Louisa's first emotion when Joe Dagget came home (he had not apprised her of his coming) was consternation, although she would not admit it to herself, and he never dreamed of it. Fifteen years ago she had been in love with him—at least she considered herself to be. Just at that time, gently acquiescing with and falling into the natural drift of girlhood, she had seen marriage ahead as a reasonable feature and a probable desirability of life. She had listened with calm docility to her mother's views upon the subject. Her mother was remarkable for her cool sense and sweet, even temperament. She talked wisely to her daughter when Joe Dagget presented himself, and Louisa accepted him with no hesitation. He was the first lover she had ever had.

She had been faithful to him all these years. She had never dreamed of the possibility of marrying anyone else. Her life, especially for the last seven years, had been full of a pleasant peace; she had never felt discontented nor impatient over her lover's absence; still, she had always looked forward to his return and their marriage as the inevitable conclusion of things. However, she had fallen into a way of placing it so far in the future that it was almost equal to placing it over the boundaries of another life.

When Joe came she had been expecting him, and expecting to be married for fourteen years, but she was as much surprised and taken aback as if she had never thought of it.

Joe's consternation came later. He eyed Louisa with an instant confirmation of his old admiration. She had changed but little. She still kept her pretty manner and soft grace, and

was, he considered, every whit as attractive as ever. As for himself, his stent was done; he had turned his face away from fortune seeking, and the old winds of romance whistled as loud and sweet as ever through his ears. All the song which he had been wont to hear in them was Louisa; he had for a long time a loyal belief that he heard it still, but finally it seemed to him that although the winds sang always that one song, it had another name. But for Louisa the wind had never more than murmured; now it had gone down, and everything was still. She listened for a little while with half-wistful attention; then she turned quietly away and went to work on her wedding clothes.

Joe had made some extensive and quite magnificent alterations in his house. It was the old homestead; the newly-married couple would live there, for Joe could not desert his mother, who refused to leave her old home. So Louisa must leave hers. Every morning, rising and going about among her neat maidenly possessions, she felt as one looking her last upon the faces of dear friends. It was true that in a measure she could take them with her, but, robbed of their old environments, they would appear in such new guises that they would almost cease to be themselves.

Then there were some peculiar features of her happy solitary life which she would probably be obliged to relinquish altogether. Sterner tasks than these graceful but half-needless ones would probably devolve upon her. There would be a large house to care for; there would be company to entertain; there would be Joe's rigorous and feeble old mother to wait upon; and it would be contrary to all thrifty village traditions for her to keep more than one servant.

Louisa had a little still, and she used to occupy herself pleasantly in summer weather with distilling the sweet and aromatic essences from roses and peppermint and spearmint. By-and-by her still must be laid away. Her store of essences was already considerable, and there would be no time for her to distill for the mere pleasure of it. Then Joe's mother would think it foolishness; she had already hinted her opinion in the matter.

Louisa dearly loved to sew a linen seam, not always for use, but for the simple, mild pleasure which she took in it. She would have been loath to confess how more than once she had ripped a seam for the mere delight of sewing it together again. Sitting at her window during long sweet afternoons, drawing her needle gently through the dainty fabric, she was peace itself. But there was small chance of such foolish comfort in the future. Joe's mother, domineering, shrewd old matron that she was even in her old age, and very likely even Joe himself, with his honest masculine rudeness, would laugh and frown down all these pretty but senseless old maiden ways.

Louisa had almost the enthusiasm of an artist over the mere order and cleanliness of her solitary home. She had throbs of genuine triumph at the sight of the windowpanes which she had polished until they shone like jewels. She gloated gently over her orderly bureau drawers, with their exquisitely folded contents redolent with lavender and sweet clover and very purity. Could she be sure of the endurance of even this? She had visions, so startling that she half repudiated them as indelicate, of coarse masculine belongings strewn about in endless litter; of dust and disorder arising necessarily from a coarse masculine presence in the midst of all this delicate harmony.

Among her forebodings of disturbance, not the least was with regard to Caesar. Caesar was a veritable hermit of a dog. For the greater part of his life he had dwelt in his secluded hut, shut out from the society of his kind and all innocent canine joys. Never had Caesar since his early youth watched at a woodchuck's hole; never had he known the delights of a stray bone at a neighbor's kitchen door. And it was all on account of a sin committed when hardly out of his puppyhood. No one knew the possible depth of remorse of which this mild-visaged, altogether innocent-looking old dog might be capable; but whether or not he had encountered remorse, he had encountered a full measure of righteous retribution. Old Caesar seldom lifted up his voice in a growl or a bark; he was fat and sleepy; there were yellow rings which looked like spectacles around his dim old eyes; but there was a neighbor who bore on his hand the imprint of several of Caesar's sharp white youthful teeth, and for that he had lived at the end of a chain, all alone in a little

hut, for fourteen years. The neighbor, who was choleric and smarting with the pain of his wound, had demanded either Caesar's death or complete ostracism. So Louisa's brother, to whom the dog had belonged, had built him his little kennel and tied him up. It was now fourteen years since, in a flood of youthful spirits, he had inflicted that memorable bite, and with the exception of short excursions, always at the end of the chain, under the strict guardianship of his master or Louisa, the old dog had remained a close prisoner. It is doubtful if, with his limited ambition, he took much pride in the fact, but it is certain that he was possessed of considerable cheap fame. He was regarded by all the children in the village and by many adults as a very monster of ferocity. St. George's dragon could hardly have surpassed in evil repute Louisa Ellis's old yellow dog. Mothers charged their children with solemn emphasis not to go too near him, and the children listened and believed greedily, with a fascinated appetite for terror, and ran by Louisa's house stealthily, with many sidelong and backward glances at the terrible dog. If perchance he sounded a hoarse bark, there was a panic. Wayfarers chancing into Louisa's yard eyed him with respect, and inquired if the chain were stout. Caesar at large might have seemed a very ordinary dog and excited no comment whatever; chained, his reputation overshadowed him, so that he lost his own proper outlines and looked darkly vague and enormous. Joe Dagget, however, with his good-humored sense and shrewdness, saw him as he was. He strode valiantly up to him and patted him on the head, in spite of Louisa's soft clamor of warning, and even attempted to set him loose. Louisa grew so alarmed that he desisted, but kept announcing his opinion in the matter quite forcibly at intervals. "There ain't a better-natured dog in town," he would say, "and it's downright cruel to keep him tied up there. Some day I'm going to take him out."

Louisa had very little hope that he would not, one of these days, when their interests and possessions should be more completely fused in one. She pictured to herself Caesar on the rampage through the quiet and unguarded village. She saw innocent children bleeding in his path. She was herself very fond of the old dog, because he had belonged to her dead brother, and he was always very gentle with her; still she had great faith in his ferocity. She always warned people not to go too near him. She fed him on ascetic fare of corn mush and cakes, and never fired his dangerous temper with heating and sanguinary diet of flesh and bones. Louisa looked at the old dog munching his simple fare, and thought of her approaching marriage and trembled. Still no anticipation of disorder and confusion in lieu of sweet peace and harmony, no forebodings of Caesar on the rampage, no wild fluttering of her little yellow canary, were sufficient to turn her a hair's-breadth. Joe Dagget had been fond of her and working for her all these years. It was not for her, whatever came to pass, to prove untrue and break his heart. She put the exquisite little stitches into her wedding garments, and the time went on until it was only a week before her wedding day. It was a Tuesday evening, and the wedding was to be a week from Wednesday.

There was a full moon that night. About nine o'clock Louisa strolled down the road a little way. There were harvest fields on either hand, bordered by low stone walls. Luxuriant clumps of bushes grew beside the wall, and trees—wild cherry and old apple trees—at intervals. Presently Louisa sat down on the wall and looked about her with mildly sorrowful reflectiveness. Tall shrubs of blueberry and meadowsweet, all woven together and tangled with blackberry vines and horsebriers, shut her in on either side. She had a little clear space between them. Opposite her, on the other side of the road, was a spreading tree; the moon shone between its boughs, and the leaves twinkled like silver. The road was bespread with a beautiful shifting dapple of silver and shadow; the air was full of a mysterious sweetness. "I wonder if it's wild grapes?" murmured Louisa. She sat there some time. She was just thinking of rising, when she heard footsteps and low voices, and remained quiet. It was a lonely place, and she felt a little timid. She thought she would keep still in the shadow and let the persons, whoever they might be, pass her.

But just before they reached her the voices ceased, and the footsteps. She understood that their owners had also found seats upon the

stone wall. She was wondering if she could not steal away unobserved, when the voice broke the stillness. It was Joe Dagget's. She sat still and listened.

The voice was announced by a loud sigh, which was as familiar as itself. "Well," said Dagget, "you've made up your mind, then, I suppose?"

"Yes," returned another voice; "I'm going day after tomorrow."

"That's Lily Dyer," thought Louisa to herself. The voice embodied itself in her mind. She saw a girl tall and full-figured, with a firm, fair face, looking fairer and firmer in the moonlight, her strong yellow hair braided in a close knot. A girl full of a calm rustic strength and bloom, with a masterful way which might have beseemed a princess. Lily Dyer was a favorite with the village folk; she had just the qualities to arouse the admiration. She was good and handsome and smart. Louisa had often heard her praises sounded.

"Well," said Joe Dagget, "I ain't got a word to say."

"I don't know what you could say," returned Lily Dyer.

"Not a word to say," repeated Joe, drawing out the words heavily. Then there was a silence. "I ain't sorry," he began at last, "that that happened yesterday—that we kind of let on how we felt to each other. I guess it's just as well we knew. Of course I can't do anything any different. I'm going right on an' get married next week. I ain't going back on a woman that's waited for me fourteen years, an' break her heart."

"If you should jilt her tomorrow, I wouldn't have you," spoke up the girl, with sudden vehemence.

"Well, I ain't going to give you the chance," said he; "but I don't believe you would, either."

"You'd see I wouldn't. Honor's honor, an' right's right. An' I'd never think anything of any man that went against 'em for me or any other girl; you'd find that out, Joe Dagget."

"Well, you'll find out fast enough that I ain't going against 'em for you or any other girl," returned he. Their voices sounded almost as if they were angry with each other. Louisa was listening eagerly.

"I'm sorry you feel as if you must go away," said Joe, "but I don't know but it's best."

"Of course it's best. I hope you and I have got common sense."

"Well, I suppose you're right." Suddenly Joe's voice got an undertone of tenderness. "Say, Lily," said he, "I'll get along well enough myself, but I can't bear to think—You don't suppose you're going to fret much over it?"

"I guess you'll find out I shan't fret much over a married man."

"Well, I hope you won't—I hope you won't, Lily. God knows I do. And—I hope—one of these days—you'll—come across somebody else—"

"I don't see any reason why I shouldn't." Suddenly her tone changed. She spoke in a sweet, clear voice, so loud that she could have been heard across the street. "No, Joe Dagget," said she, "I'll never marry any other man as long as I live. I've got good sense, an' I ain't going to break my heart nor make a fool of myself; but I'm never going to be married, you can be sure of that. I ain't that sort of girl to feel this way twice."

Louisa heard an exclamation and a soft commotion behind the bushes; then Lily spoke again—the voice sounded as if she had risen. "This must be put a stop to," said she. "We've stayed here long enough. I'm going home."

Louisa sat there in a daze, listening to their retreating steps. After a while she got up and slunk softly home herself. The next day she did her housework methodically; that was as much a matter of course as breathing; but she did not sew on her wedding clothes. She sat at her window and meditated. In the evening Joe came. Louisa Ellis had never known that she had any diplomacy in her, but when she came to look for it that night she found it, although meek of its kind, among her little feminine weapons. Even now she could hardly believe that she had heard aright, and that she would not do Joe a terrible injury should she break her troth plight. She wanted to sound him without betraying too soon her own inclinations in the matter. She did it successfully, and they finally came to an understanding; but it was a difficult thing, for he was as afraid of betraying himself as she.

She never mentioned Lily Dyer. She simply said that while she had no cause of complaint against him, she had lived so long in one way that she shrank from making a change.

"Well, I never shrank, Louisa," said Dagget. "I'm going to be honest enough to say that I think maybe it's better this way; but if you'd wanted to keep on, I'd have stuck to you till my dying day. I hope you know that."

"Yes, I do," said she.

That night she and Joe parted more tenderly than they had done for a long time. Standing in the door, holding each other's hands, a last great wave of regretful memory swept over them.

"Well, this ain't the way we've thought it was all going to end, is it, Louisa?" said Joe.

She shook her head. There was a little quiver on her placid face.

"You let me know if there's ever anything I can do for you," said he. "I ain't ever going to forget you, Louisa." Then he kissed her, and went down the path.

Louisa, all alone by herself that night, wept a little, she hardly knew why; but the next morning, on waking, she felt like a queen who, after fearing lest her domain be wrested away from her, sees it firmly insured in her possession.

Now the tall weeds and grasses might cluster around Caesar's little hermit hut, the snow might fall on its roof year in and year out, but he never would go on a rampage through the unguarded village. Now the little canary might turn itself into a peaceful yellow ball night after night, and have no need to wake and flutter with wild terror against its bars. Louisa could sew linen seams, and distill roses, and dust and polish and fold away in lavender, as long as she listed. That afternoon she sat with her needlework at the window, and felt fairly steeped in peace. Lily Dyer, tall and erect and blooming, went past; but she felt no qualm. If Louisa Ellis had sold her birthright she did not know it; the taste of the pottage was so delicious, and had been her sole satisfaction for so long. Serenity and placid narrowness had become to her as the birthright itself. She gazed ahead through a long reach of future days strung together like pearls in a rosary, every one like the others, and all smooth and flawless and innocent, and her heart went up in thankfulness. Outside was the fervid summer afternoon; the air was filled with the sounds of the busy harvest of men and birds and bees; there were halloos, metallic clatterings, sweet calls, and long hummings. Louisa sat, prayerfully numbering her days, like an uncloistered nun.

1891

## 1853 ~ *Thomas Nelson Page* ~ 1922

PAGE was a Virginia gentleman of the old school. The Pages were prominent in state and cultural affairs from the time of the Revolution. His parents were first cousins, who through their connections shared the blood of John Marshall, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert E. Lee. His childhood was spent in a luxurious plantation environment. During the war, in which his father was a staff officer in the Confederate army, he witnessed many memorable scenes as the armies swayed back and forth over the surrounding terrain. After attending Washington and Lee University and the University of Virginia Law School he established a successful practice in Richmond which he continued until 1893, when he moved to Washington. Meanwhile, in 1887, he had published *In Ole Virginia*, a collection of short stories mostly in Negro dialect. A visit to Europe in 1889 brought him in contact

to you; she'll want t' know too much about you, an' you can't never git away from her"—a bit of philosophy the soundness of which must be left to married men.

However it was, his reputation did not interfere with his ability to procure a new wife as often as occasion arose. With Jabez the supply was ever equal to the demand.

Mrs. Meriwether, his old mistress, was just telling me of him one day in reply to a question of mine as to what had become of him; for I had known him before the war.

"Oh! he is living still, and he bids fair to outlast the whole colored female sex. He is a perfect Bluebeard. He has had I do not know how many wives and I heard that his last wife was sick. They sent for my son, Douglas, the doctor, not long ago to see her. However, I hope she is better as he has not been sent for again."

At this moment, by a coincidence, the name of Jabez was brought in by a maid.

"Unc' Jabez, m'm."

That was all; but the tone and the manner of the maid told that Jabez was a person of note with the messenger; every movement and glance were self-conscious.

"That old—! He is a nuisance! What does he want now? Is his wife worse, or is he after a new one?"

"I d'n' kn', m'm," said the maid, sheepishly, twisting her body and looking away, to appear unconcerned. "Wouldn' tell me. He ain' after *me!*"

"Well, tell him to go to the kitchen till I send for him. Or—wait: if his wife's gone, he'll be courting the cook if I send him to the kitchen. And I don't want to lose her just now. Tell him to come to the door."

"Yes, 'm." The maid gave a half-suppressed giggle, which almost became an explosion as she said something to herself and closed the door. It sounded like, "Dressed up might'ly—settin' up to de cook now, I b'lieve."

There was a slow, heavy step without, and a knock at the back door; and on a call from his mistress, Jabez entered, bowing low, very pompous and serious. He was a curious mixture of assurance and conciliation, as he stood there, hat in hand. He was tall and black and bald, with white side-whiskers cut very short, and a rim of white wool around his head. He was dressed in an old black coat, and held in his hand an ancient beaver hat around which was a piece of rusty crape.

"Well, Jabez?" said his mistress, after the salutations were over. "How are you getting along?"

"Well, mist'is, not very well, not at all well, ma'am. Had mighty bad luck. 'Bout my wife," he added, explanatorily. He pulled down his lips, and looked the picture of solemnity.

I saw from Mrs. Meriwether's mystified look that she did not know what he considered "bad luck." She could not tell from his reference whether his wife was better or worse.

"Is she—ah? What—oh—how is Amanda?" she demanded finally, to solve the mystery.

"Mandy! Lord! 'm, 'Mandy was two back. She's de one runned away wid Tom Halleck, an' lef' me. I don't know how *she* is. I never went ahter her. I wuz re-ally glad to git shet o' her. She was too expansive. Dat ooman want two frocks a year. When dese women begin to dress up so much, a man got to look out. Dee ain't always dressin' fer *you!*"

"Indeed!" But Mrs. Meriwether's irony was lost on Jabez.

"Yes, 'm; dat she did! Dis one's name was Sairey." He folded his hands and waited, the picture of repose and contentment.

"Oh, yes. So; true. I'd forgotten that 'Mandy left you. But I thought the new one was named Susan?" observed Mrs. Meriwether.

"No, 'm; not de *newes'* one. Susan—I had her las' Christmas; but she wouldn' stay wid me. She was al'ays runnin' off to town; an' you know a man don' want a ooman on wheels. Ef de Lawd had intended a ooman to have wheels, he'd 'a' gi'n 'em to her, wouldn' he?"

"Well, I suppose he would," assented Mrs. Meriwether. "And this one is Sarah? Well, how is——?"

"Yes, 'm; dis one was Sairey." We just caught the past tense.

"You get them so quickly, you see, you can't expect one to remember them," said Mrs. Meriwether, frigidly. She meant to impress Jabez; but Jabez remained serene.

"Yes, 'm; dat's so," said he, cheerfully. "I kin hardly remember 'em myself."

"No, I suppose not." His mistress grew severe. "Well, how's Sarah?"

"Well, m'm, I couldn' exactly say—Sairey she's done lef' me—yes, 'm." He looked so cheerful that his mistress said with asperity:

"Left you! She has run off, too! You must have treated her badly?"

"No, 'm. I didn'. I never had a wife I treated better. I let her had all she could eat; an' when she was sick—"

"I heard she was sick. I heard you sent for the doctor."

"Yes, 'm; dat I did—dat's what I was gwine to tell you. I had a doctor to see her *twice*. I had two separate and *indifferent* physicians: fust Dr. Overall, an' den Marse Douglas. I couldn' do no mo' 'n dat, now, could I?"

"Well, I don't know," observed Mrs. Meriwether. "My son told me a week ago that she was sick. Did she get well?"

The old man shook his head solemnly.

"No, 'm; but she went mighty easy. Marse Douglas he eased her off. He is the bes' doctor I ever see to let 'em die easy."

Mingled with her horror at his cold-blooded recital, a smile flickered about Mrs. Meriwether's mouth at this shot at her son, the doctor; but the old man looked absolutely innocent.

"Why didn't you send for the doctor again?" she demanded.

"Well, m'm, I gin her two chances. I think dat was 'nough. I wuz right fond o' Sairey; but I declar' I'd ruther lost Sairey than to *broke*."

"You would!" Mrs. Meriwether sat up and began to bristle. "Well, at least, you have the expense of her funeral; and I'm glad of it," she asserted with severity.

"Dat's what I come over t' see you 'bout. I'm gwine to give Sairey a fine fun'ral. I want you to let yo' cook cook me a cake an'—one or two more little things."

"Very well," said Mrs. Meriwether, relenting somewhat; "I will tell her to do so. I will tell her to make you a good cake. When do you want it?"

Old Jabez bowed very low.

"Thank you m'm. Yes, m'm; ef you'll gi' me a right *good*-sized cake—an'—a loaf or two of flour-bread—an'—a ham, I'll be very much obleeged to you. I heah she's a mighty good cook?"

"She is," said Mrs. Meriwether; "the best I've had in a long time." She had not caught the tone of interrogation in his voice, nor seen the shrewd look in his face, as I had done. Jabez appeared well satisfied.

"I'm mighty glad to heah you give her sech a good char-àcter; I heahed you'd do it. I don' know her very well."

Mrs. Meriwether looked up quickly enough to catch his glance this time.

"Jabez—I know nothing about her character," she began coldly. "I know she has a vile temper; but she is an excellent cook, and so long as she is not impudent to me, that is all I want to know."

Jabez bowed approvingly.

"Yes, 'm; dat's right. Dat's all I want t' know. I don' keer nothin' 'bout de temper; atter I git 'em, I kin manage 'em. I jist want t' know 'bout de char-àcter, dat's all. I didn' know her so well, an' I thought I'd ax you. I tolt her ef you'd give her a good char-àcter, she might suit me; but I'd wait fer de cake—*an'* de ham."

His mistress rose to her feet.

"Jabez, do you mean that you have spoken to that woman already?"

"Well, yes, 'm; but not to say *speak* to her. I jes kind o' mentioned it to her as I'd inquire as to her char-àcter."

"And your wife has been gone—how long? Two days?"

"Well, mist'is, she's gone fer good, ain't she?" demanded Jabez. "She can't be no mo' gone?"

"You are a wicked, hardened old sinner!" declared the old lady, vehemently.

"Nor, I ain't, mist'is; I clar' I ain't," protested Jabez, with unruffled front.

"You treat your wives dreadfully."

"Nor, I don't, mist'is. You ax 'em ef I does. Ef I did, dee wouldn' be so many of 'em anxious t' git me. Now, would dee? I can start in an' beat *a'* one o' dese young bloods aroun' heah, now." He spoke with pride.

"I believe that is so, and I cannot understand it. And before one of them is in her grave you are courting another. It is horrid—an old—Methuselah like you." She paused to take

breath, and Jabez availed himself of the pause.

"Dat's de reason I got t' do things in a kind o' hurry—I ain' no Methuselum. I got no time 't wait."

"Jabez," said Mrs. Meriwether, seriously, "tell me how you manage to fool all these women."

The old man pondered for a moment.

"Well, I declar, mist'is, I hardly knows how. Dee wants to be fooled. I think it is becuz dee wants t' see what de urrs marry me fer, an' what dee done lef' me. Woman is mighty curisome folk."

I have often wondered since if this was really the reason.

1904

## 1838 ~ *John Hay* ~ 1905

THIS AMERICAN author, diplomat, and statesman was born in Indiana. After graduating from Brown University in 1858 he studied law in the office of Abraham Lincoln, whom he also served as private secretary during his presidency. He held minor diplomatic posts at Paris, Vienna, and Madrid, and in 1870 joined the staff of the New York *Tribune* in an editorial capacity. During a ten-year residence in Cleveland he had ample opportunity to see the disastrous results of the struggle between capital and labor, which focused his thinking upon one of the most besetting problems in American life. In 1897 President McKinley appointed him ambassador to Great Britain, from which post he resigned a year later to become Secretary of State, an office which he held until his death.

Although Hay achieved fame as one of the great statesmen of his time, he was widely known as an author before he entered public service as a definite career. With the exception of the monumental life of Lincoln, written in collaboration with John G. Nicolay, the literary work upon which his reputation rests had been completed by the time he was forty years old. *Pike County Ballads* and *Castilian Days* came out in 1871, and *The Bread-Winners*, the authorship of which Hay persistently refused to admit, was published in the *Century* in 1883.

*Pike County Ballads* (1871) is a significant work, having both historical and intrinsic value. In this work Hay joins Lowell (*The Biglow Papers*) and Bret Harte in releasing poetry from conventional subject matter, and in showing its possibilities in the regional representation of life. The poems are written in dialect, treating homely themes, yet with a dignity and high moral elevation that make them impressive. He has proved that there is real poetry in the routine lives and experiences of ordinary people, as well as in those more fortunate in their culture and refinement. At one time rather savagely attacked in certain quarters, poems like "Jim Bludso" and "Little Breeches" have become part of our accepted American heritage. George Eliot called the former one of the gems in the language. *Castilian Days* (1871) is a study of social and political conditions in Spain, able but occasionally rather too

polemical. *The Bread-Winners* (1884) deals with the conflict between capital and labor. It received wide recognition in this country and abroad in spite of faults in treatment and structure. Favoring, as he did, the side of capital, Hay could scarcely be expected to treat his theme with impartial sympathy. It is generally conceded that his greatest work is *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, written in collaboration with John Nicolay. Although superseded by later biographies, this monumental study of the man and his times can be ignored by no student of Lincoln in the future.

Hay's poetry is collected in the Household Edition. His prose consists of *Castilian Days* (1871); *The Bread-Winners* (1884); *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (with John G. Nicolay) (1890). L. Sears, *John Hay, Author and Statesman* (1914); W. R. Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay* (2 vols., 1915); T. Dennett, *John Hay: From Poetry to Politics* (1933), are extensive biographies. His early letters are published in C. Ticknor, ed., *A Poet in Exile* (1910). For briefer studies and criticism see *DAB*, VIII; B. Adams, "John Hay," *McClure's*, June, 1902; J. B. Moore, "John Hay: an Estimate," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Nov. 11, 1933; W. D. Howells, "John Hay in Literature," *North American Review*, Sept., 1905; G. Hicks, "The Conversion of John Hay," *New Republic*, June 10, 1931; A. S. Chapman, "The Boyhood of John Hay," *Century*, July, 1909; J. B. Bishop, "A Friendship with John Hay," *Century*, March, 1906; G. F. Mellen, "John Hay—Littérateur," *Methodist Review*, July–August, 1918; T. Stanton, "John Hay and the Bread-Winners," *Nation*, Aug. 10, 1916; J. L. and J. B. Gilder, *Authors at Home* (1902).

## LITTLE BREECHES

I DON'T go much on religion,
  I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
  On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
  And free-will, and that sort of thing,—
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
  Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
  And my little Gabe come along,—
No four-year-old in the county
  Could beat him for pretty and strong,
Peart and chipper and sassy,
  Always ready to swear and fight,—
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
  Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
  As I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
  And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started,—
  I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
  Went team, Little Breeches, and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!
  I was almost froze with skeer;
But we rousted up some torches,
  And sarched for 'em far and near.
At last we struck hosses and wagon,
  Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat,—but of little Gabe
  No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,
  Of my fellow-critter's aid,—
I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
  Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

. . . . . .

By this, the torches was played out,
  And me, and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
  That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
  Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
  So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
  As peart as ever you see,
"I want a chaw of terbacker,
  And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he git thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm;
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child,
And fotching him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around the Throne.

1870

## JIM BLUDSO
### OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

A vivid rendering of an episode from the romantic era of the Mississippi steamboat.

WALL, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Because he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint,—them engineers
Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had,—
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,—
A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she come tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint,—but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a-going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

1871

# 1849 ~ *James Whitcomb Riley* ~ 1916

RILEY belonged to the Hoosier group which made Indiana famous in literature. He was born in Greenfield, the son of Reuben A. Riley, a captain in the Union army and small-town lawyer, and Elizabeth Marine Riley, of Welsh descent, who hailed from North Carolina. His formal education ended when he was sixteen, although the educational process continued throughout his life, for to Riley's

mind the two were synonymous. As a house and sign painter he toured the local countryside with the "Graphics," carrying on their trade and giving public entertainments. For a time a musical career seemed remotely possible. Unable to decide upon a profession (his study of law was futile and abortive), he drifted into journalism, and held positions with various newspapers until 1877 when he joined the staff of the *Indianapolis Journal.* During this period he published in the *Kokomo Dispatch* what purported to be a newly discovered poem by Edgar Allan Poe, a hoax which received nation-wide attention, and which Riley never ceased to regret. He became celebrated as a platform lecturer and reader, toured the country from East to West, sometimes joining forces with such men as Bill Nye and Eugene Field. The period between 1890 and 1902 he called the "book-building years," during which he issued many volumes of poetry. The fame of his poetry spread far beyond the borders of his native state, his birthdays were observed by school children throughout the nation, and at the time of his death he was acclaimed a national poet.

The three forces which had a determining influence upon his life and art were McGuffey's Readers, the Indiana countryside (it is said that all his subjects were drawn from within a radius of forty miles from Greenfield), and the poetry of Longfellow, whom he held in highest esteem.

Riley had definite convictions regarding the nature and mission of poetry. He speaks of it as a "spiritual essence" which, through its sweetening and purifying effect, makes men "just, and generous and humane." With almost self-effacing modesty he hesitates to think of himself as a poet, maintaining that poetry as such is inherent in experience, and that he is merely the instrument for making it manifest. "God made the stories and gave me the ability to see them." Man is not ever the author of anything. Although working incessantly, almost slavishly, he made much of the necessity of writing only when in the proper mood, when one is in tune with the infinite melody. To him poetry was a mysterious entity which one should approach in deep humility and reverence. Another article in his artistic creed was truthfulness to nature, which explains his loyalty to his immediate environment, and the use of dialect to represent that environment. Finally, the poet must please in order that his work may be most effective. In giving advice to a young writer he emphasized the patient revision which may be necessary in order to secure even approximate perfection.

Riley maintained that poetry was too often written for the educated and cultured classes; it should be written, he insisted, for the common people, and on subjects which common people can appreciate. He found his subject matter largely among rural folk whose lives he depicted sympathetically and understandingly, and with a fine balance of humor and pathos. He frequently wrote under the guise of a semi-literate back-country farmer, much as Lowell did in his *Biglow Papers.* Like

the other poets of this period, he was unimpressed by the effect of the Civil War and by the national movements which were taking shape. He felt no concern with problems and issues, preferring to restrict himself to the homely thoughts, feelings, virtues, and ideals which constitute, as it were, the unshakable common sense of American life. Many of the characters have the savor of the soil. His tendency to sentimentalize was part of that romantic idealization of the past in which many novelists of the "Golden Nineties" indulged, and found almost universal acceptance. His vogue has declined since his death, scarcely because of insincerity, however, which has been charged against him in some quarters, but rather because of changing literary fashions. His place is secure as the interpreter of humble life; he did for his section what the local-color novelists did for their respective regions, with the difference that he became a national figure. Poems like "Little Orphant Annie" and "The Ole Swimmin'-Hole," are too redolent of life to be easily forgotten.

The standard collection of Riley's *Complete Works* is that of the Homestead Edition (16 vols., 1916). There is a one-volume *Complete Poetical Works* (1937). M. Dickey's *The Youth of James Whitcomb Riley* (1919) and *The Maturity of James Whitcomb Riley* (1922) form a two-volume biography. Briefer studies of a biographical nature: *DAB*, XV; G. S. Cottman, "Some Reminiscences of James Whitcomb Riley," *Indiana Magazine of History*, June, 1918; C. E. Laughlin, *Reminiscences of James Whitcomb Riley* (1916). Some of his letters are published in *Love Letters of the Bachelor Poet, James Whitcomb Riley, to Miss Elizabeth Kahle* (1922); "Letters of Riley and Bill Nye," *Harper's*, March, 1919; W. L. Phelps, *Letters of James Whitcomb Riley* (1930). For critical studies and estimates see H. A. Beers, *The Connecticut Wits and Other Essays* (1922); E. H. Hughes, "James Whitcomb Riley," *Methodist Review*, Nov., 1916; D. L. Marsh, *The Faith of the People's Poet* (1920); E. Wyatt, *Great Companions* (1917); E. L. Masters, "James Whitcomb Riley," *Century*, Oct., 1927; C. V. Tevis, " 'Jim' Riley: an Appreciation," *Bookman*, August, 1912; H. Monroe, "James Whitcomb Riley," *Poetry*, Sept., 1916; M. Thompson, "The Poetry of James Whitcomb Riley," *Critic*, Dec., 1898; M. Nicholson, "James Whitcomb Riley," *Atlantic*, Oct., 1916; H. H. Howland, "How Riley Came Into His Own," *Bookman*, March, 1911; L. P. Richards, "James Whitcomb Riley on a Country Newspaper," *Bookman*, Sept., 1904; G. Harvey, "In Memoriam: James Whitcomb Riley," *North American Review*, Sept., 1916.

## A LIFE-LESSON

THERE! little girl; don't cry!
They have broken your doll, I know;
And your tea-set blue,
And your play-house, too,
Are things of the long ago;
But childish troubles will soon pass by.—
There! little girl; don't cry!

There! little girl; don't cry!
They have broken your slate, I know;
And the glad, wild ways
Of your school-girl days
Are things of the long ago;
But life and love will soon come by.—
There! little girl; don't cry!

There! little girl; don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know;
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago;
But Heaven holds all for which you sigh.—
There! little girl; don't cry!

1880

## WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bare-headed, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the early autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty, russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yeller heaps;
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and saussage, too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

1882

## A SONG

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;
And in and out, when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—
There is ever a song somewhere!

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
In the midnight black, or the mid-day blue;
The robin pipes when the sun is here,
And the cricket chirrups the whole night through.
The buds may blow, and the fruit may grow,
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sear;
But whether the sun, or the rain, or the snow,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—
There is ever a song somewhere!

1884

## A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

Oh! tell me a tale of the airly days—
Of the times as they ust to be;
"Piller of Fi-er" and "Shakespeare's Plays"
Is a'most too deep fer me!
I want plane facts, and I want plane words,
Of the good old-fashioned ways,
When speech run free as the songs of birds
'Way back in the airly days.

Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—
Of the old-time pioneers;
Somepin' a pore man understands
With his feelin's's well as ears.
Tell of the old long house,—about
The loft, and the puncheon flore—
The old Fi-er-place, with the crane swung out,
And the latch-string thrugh the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—
They don't need to excuse!—
Don't tech 'em up like the poets does,
Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—
Say they was 'leven in the fambily—
Two beds, and the chist, below,
And the trundle-beds that each helt three,
And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back-door
Tel the echoes all halloo,
And the children gethers home onc't more,
Jest as they ust to do:
Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,
With Tomps and Elias, too,
A-marchin' home, with the fife and drums
And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low
As the moan of the whipperwill,
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,
All sleepin' at Bethel hill:
Blow and call tel the faces all
Shine out in the back-log's blaze,
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall
As they did in the airly days.

1886

## THE POET OF THE FUTURE

O the Poet of the Future! He will come to us as comes
The Beauty of the bugle's voice above the roar of drums—
The beauty of the bugle's voice above the roar and din
Of battle-drums that pulse the time the victor marches in.
His hands will hold no harp, in sooth; his lifted brow will bear
No coronet of laurel—nay, nor symbol anywhere,
Save that his palms are brothers to the toiler's at the plow,
His face to heaven, and the dew of duty on his brow.

He will sing across the meadow,—and the woman at the well
Will stay the dripping bucket, with a smile ineffable;
And the children in the orchard will gaze wistfully the way
The happy song comes to them, with the fragrance of the hay;
The barn will neigh in answer, and the pasture-lands behind
Will chime with bells, and send responsive lowings down the wind;
And all the echoes of the wood will jubilantly call
In sweetest mimicry of that one sweetest voice of all.

O the Poet of the Future! He will come as man to man,
With the honest arm of labor, and the honest face of tan,
The honest heart of lowliness, the honest soul of love
For human-kind and nature-kind about him and above.

His hands will hold no harp, in sooth; his lifted brow will bear
No coronet of laurel—nay, nor symbol anywhere,
Save that his palms are brothers to the toiler's at the plow,
His face to heaven, and the dew of duty on his brow.

1889

# 1857 — *Henry Blake Fuller* — 1929

ALTHOUGH never a popular novelist, Fuller is regarded by many critics as one of the most potent forces in contemporary fiction. He was born in Chicago where his grandfather, who had migrated from New England, and his father had business interests. His education was obtained in the public schools and in a private academy in Wisconsin. Endowed with the artist's urge and therefore not content to devote his life to business, he lived in Italy, studied its language and literature, and returned with the manuscript of his first book, *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani* (1890), which fortunately attracted the attention of Professor Norton, Lowell, and Miss Agnes Repplier. This paved the way for the serial publication of his second book, *The Chatelaine of La Trinité* (1892). Turning now from the dreamy old-world atmosphere, he brought out two novels of contemporary life in Chicago, *The Cliff-Dwellers* (1893) and *With the Procession* (1895), upon which rests whatever fame he has achieved. After this realistic outburst he withdrew from the clatter of New World mechanical civilization, spent occasional periods in Europe, but in the main built for himself a dreamy spiritual universe in which he lived and wrote to satisfy himself rather than prospective readers. He held editorial positions on the staffs of the Chicago *Post* and the Chicago *Record-Herald* and contributed articles and reviews to various periodicals.

The fundamental principle in Fuller's theory of fiction was that the writer must determine first of all in what phase or phases of life he is seriously interested, and then proceed to tell what interests him in the form of a story. He goes so far as to say that the writer's chief concern is his own interest as over against that of the reader, an attitude which may account in a measure for his lack of popularity. Fuller had the instincts of an artist, and since the artist is sensitive to form, he insisted that the writer discipline himself in order that he may tell his story in the most effective manner, that is, by creating a unified impression.

To that end he recommended the advisability of writing shorter novels, a practice which Jack London had proposed and followed more than fifteen years earlier. This can be done without sacrifice of power or aesthetic effectiveness by stripping fiction of all extraneous material, much of which he regarded as padding, such as description of persons and places, and conversation which is neither necessary

nor significant. Of all such hitherto accepted paraphernalia he would retain only some preliminary, expository chapter to give the reader the right kind of a start. The premium is placed, therefore, upon brevity.

Fuller is the novelist of Midwest localism as Vachel Lindsay later was to become its poet. The scene is the sprawling, money-grabbing, ambitious, aspiring, prosperous Chicago which was rapidly stretching farther and farther along Lake Michigan. This Chicago interested him, and he would picture it with the same attention to detail which characterized Zola's description of Paris. In its material strivings this Chicago had the assurance of a young gladiator who had never suffered defeat, felt quite sure of the future as far as material prosperity was concerned; in its striving for "culture" and the social amenities as they had been transplanted from the East it felt distinctly inferior, and its endeavors to overcome the shortcomings had an ironical aspect which Fuller caught and capitalized. But with all its faults, Chicago is important, for in it Fuller and a host of young writers saw not only a lusty young city but the seat of a new civilization, and they anticipated the time when it would be the center of American culture, intellectual, social, and artistic. These realistic novels of Fuller were among the very first in which Chicago figured as scene or background.

Fuller is a pioneer, along with Hamlin Garland, in making use of Midwest material, and in portraying it with fidelity to truth; but Fuller is not pioneer-minded and one gets the impression that in the writing of these novels he was making the best of a bad bargain. He did not like the atmosphere of Chicago, and the books show it. But they came at a time when their influence gave definite impetus to the groping realism of the nineties. Numerous younger writers have paid tribute to Fuller's influence.

Fuller's novels: *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani* (1890); *The Chatelaine of La Trinité* (1892); *The Cliff-Dwellers* (1893); *With the Procession* (1895); *The Last Refuge* (1900); *On the Stairs* (1918). Short story collections: *From the Other Side* (1898); *Under the Skylights* (1901); *Waldo Trench, and Others* (1908). *The Puppet Booth* (1896) and *Lines Long and Short* (1917) are collections of plays and poems respectively. For biographical and critical studies see *DAB*, VII; H. Garland, "Roadside Meetings of a Literary Nomad," *Bookman*, Feb., 1930; C. Van Vechten, *Excavations* (1926); R. M. Lovett, "Fuller of Chicago," *New Republic*, August 21, 1929; V. Schultz, "Henry Blake Fuller: Civilized Chicagoan," *Bookman*, Sept., 1929; W. D. Howells, *Heroines of Fiction* (1901); A. Morgan, ed., *Tributes to Henry B. from Friends* (1929); H. Monroe, "Henry B. Fuller," *Poetry*, Oct., 1929.

## *From* THE CLIFF-DWELLERS

Fuller speaks of *The Cliff-Dwellers* as a "simple succession of brief episodes." It is a story of life in Chicago during the earlier boom days. This life is symbolized by an eighteen-story office building, The Clifton, at once a daring architectural innovation and an expression of the forces and tendencies current in rapidly expanding business enterprise. The story concerns the family of Erastus Brainard, a hard-headed banker, and people associated with him. Chapter four contains some excellent characterizations, and also suggests some of the implications of the plot.

INTRODUCTION

BETWEEN the former site of old Fort Dearborn and the present site of our newest Board of Trade there lies a restricted yet tumultuous territory through which, during the course of the last fifty years, the rushing streams of commerce have worn many a deep and rugged chasm. These great cañons—conduits, in fact, for the leaping volume of an ever-increasing prosperity—cross each other with a sort of systematic rectangularity, and in deference to the practical directness of local requirements they are in general called simply—streets. Each of these cañons is closed in by a long frontage of towering cliffs, and these soaring walls of brick and limestone and granite rise higher and higher with each succeeding year, according as the work of erosion at their bases goes onward—the work of the seething flood of carts, carriages, omnibuses, cabs, cars, messengers, shoppers, clerks, and capitalists, which surges with increasing violence for every passing day. This erosion, proceeding with a sort of fateful regularity, has come to be a matter of constant and growing interest. Means have been found to measure its progress—just as a scale has been arranged to measure the rising of the Nile or to gauge the draught of an ocean liner. In this case the unit of measurement is called the "story." Ten years ago the most rushing and irrepressible of the torrents which devastate Chicago had not worn its bed to a greater depth than that indicated by seven of these "stories." This depth has since increased to eight—to ten—to fourteen—to sixteen, until some of the leading avenues of activity promise soon to become little more than mere obscure trails half lost between the bases of perpendicular precipices.

High above this architectural upheaval rise yet other structures in crag-like isolation. El Capitan is duplicated time and again both in bulk and in stature, and around him the floating spray of the Bridal Veil is woven by the breezes of lake and prairie from the warp of soot-flakes and the woof of damp-drenched smoke.

The explorer who has climbed to the shoulder of one of these great captains and has found one of the thinnest folds in the veil may readily make out the nature of the surrounding country. The rugged and erratic plateau of the Bad Lands lies before him in all its hideousness and impracticability. It is a wild tract full of sudden falls, unexpected rises, precipitous dislocations. The high and the low are met together. The big and the little alternate in a rapid and illogical succession. Its perilous trails are followed successfully by but few—by a lineman, perhaps, who is balanced on a cornice, by a roofer astride some dizzy gable, by a youth here and there whose early apprehension of the main chance and the multiplication table has stood him in good stead. This country is a treeless country—if we overlook the "forest of chimneys" comprised in a bird's eye view of any great city, and if we are unable to detect any botanical analogies in the lofty articulated iron funnels whose ramifying cables reach out wherever they can, to fasten wherever they may. It is a shrubless country—if we give no heed to the gnarled carpentry of the awkward frame-works which carry the telegraph, and which are set askew on such dizzy corners as the course of the wires may compel. It is an arid country—if we overlook the numberless tanks that squat on the high angles of alley walls, or if we fail to see the little pools of tar and gravel that ooze and shimmer in the summer sun on the roofs of old-fashioned buildings of the humbler sort. It is an airless country—if by air we mean the mere combination of oxygen and nitrogen which is commonly indicated by that name. For here the medium of sight, sound, light, and life becomes largely carbonaceous, and the remoter peaks of this mighty yet unprepossessing landscape loom up grandly, but vaguely, through swathing mists of coal-smoke.

From such conditions as these—along with the Tacoma, the Monadnock, and a great host of other modern monsters—towers the Clifton. From the beer-hall in its basement to the barber-shop just under its roof the Clifton stands full eighteen stories tall. Its hundreds of windows glitter with multitudinous letterings in gold and in silver, and on summer afternoons its awnings flutter score on score in the tepid breezes that sometimes come up from Indiana. Four ladder-like constructions which rise skyward stage by stage promote the agility

of the clambering hordes that swarm within it, and ten elevators—devices unknown to the real, aboriginal inhabitants—ameliorate the daily cliff-climbing for the frail of physique and the pressed for time.

The tribe inhabiting the Clifton is large and rather heterogeneous. All told, it numbers about four thousand souls. It includes bankers, capitalists, lawyers, "promoters"; brokers in bonds, stocks, pork, oil, mortgages; real-estate people and railroad people and insurance people—life, fire, marine, accident; a host of principals, agents, middlemen, clerks, cashiers, stenographers, and errand-boys; and the necessary force of engineers, janitors, scrub-women, and elevator-hands.

All these thousands gather daily around their own great camp-fire. This fire heats the four big boilers under the pavement of the court which lies just behind, and it sends aloft a vast plume of smoke to mingle with those of other like communities that are settled round about. These same thousands may also gather—in instalments—at their tribal feasts, for the Clifton has its own lunch-counter just off one corner of the grand court, as well as a restaurant several floors higher up. The members of the tribe may also smoke the pipe of peace among themselves whenever so minded, for the Clifton has its own cigar-stand just within the principal entrance. Newspapers and periodicals, too, are sold at the same place. The warriors may also communicate their messages, hostile or friendly, to chiefs more or less remote; for there is a telegraph office in the corridor and a squad of messenger-boys in wait close by.

In a word, the Clifton aims to be complete within itself, and it will be unnecessary for us to go afield either far or frequently during the present simple succession of brief episodes in the life of the Cliff-dwellers.

## CHAPTER IV

On the twelfth floor of the Clifton—at the far end of a long corridor—is the office of Eugene H. McDowell, real estate.

Ogden, at the beginning of one of his brief noonings, took the elevator up to the quarters of his coming brother-in-law.

He found McDowell stretching himself violently in his swivel chair, which was tilted as far back as its mechanism would permit; his head was thrown back, too, as far as anatomical considerations would allow. His eyes would have seen the ceiling if they had not been so tight shut; his Adam's apple appeared prominently between the turned-down points of his collar. His desk was strewn with a litter of papers, and the tassels depending from his map-rack began a trembling at varying heights as Ogden closed the door behind him.

"Waugh—oo!" yawned McDowell, with his mouth at its widest. Then he let his chair down, all at once. "Oh, it's you, George, is it?"

He used the careless and patronizing freedom of a man of thirty odd to another several years his junior—of a man in business for himself to a man in business for some one else—of a man who was presently to undertake the protection and support of the other's sister.

"Sit down." He motioned Ogden to a chair which stood close to the window—a window that looked out on the court and that commanded the multifarious panorama of daily business going on behind the ranks and rows of great glass sheets which formed the other three sides of the enclosure—the ends of over-crowded desks, the digital dumb-show of stenographers, the careful handling by shirt-sleeved clerks of the damp yellow sheets in copying-books, the shaking fingers and nodding heads that accompanied the persuasion and expostulation of personal interviews.

McDowell presented a physiognomy that seemed to have been stripped of all superfluities. He contrived to avoid the effect of absolute leanness, yet he was without a spare ounce of flesh. His cheekbones did not obtrude themselves, nor were his finger-joints unduly prominent; yet his trousers seemed more satisfactory as trousers than his legs as legs, and his feet were in long, narrow, thin-soled shoes, through whose flexible leather one almost divined the articulations of his toes. His hair had shrunk back from his forehead and temples, but his moustache sprang out as boldly and decidedly as if constructed of steel wires. His nose was sharp; his eyes were like two gimlets. The effect of his presence was nervous, excitant, dry to aridity. He had a flattish chest and bony shoulders; his was an

earthly tabernacle that gave its tailor considerable cause for study.

"Your friends called again this morning," he began folding up two or three documents and thrusting them into the pigeonholes before him. "We have had quite a session. But they're fixed finally. Does that cousin of theirs live with them?"

"Cousin? Isn't she their sister—sister-in-law?"

"I mean the other one; Miss—Bradley, isn't it?"

"Oh! Well, no; she comes in and stays with them a week now and then. But her people live in Hinsdale."

"Hinsdale; nice country around there. Seems as if you just had to get outside of Cook County to find anything hilly or even rolling. I'd like to take it up first rate. The minute you are over the county line you get clean out of all that flat land and everything's up and down—like around Worcester. But I don't believe they save much on taxes." He tore some pencilled memoranda off the top of a pad and threw them into the wastebasket.

"Yes, the sister-in-law was here, all right enough. She's a pretty smart woman, too; got a good deal more head than any of the rest of them. She's striking out a little late, but she may make something of herself yet.

"But she wants to get that poetical streak out of her," he went on. "What was it she said, now? Oh, yes; all this down-town racket came to her like the music of a battle-hymn. Our hustling, it seems, resembles a hand-to-hand combat from street to street—she lugged in mediaeval Florence. And to finish up with, she told me I was like a gladiator stripped for the fray." He ran his hand down the stripes of his handsome trousers. "What did she mean by that? Was it some of her Boston literary business?"

He lifted his hand and thoughtfully twirled the scanty locks over one of his ears.

"Here's a letter I got this morning from Kittie." He drew out a small folded sheet from the bottom of a pile of correspondence. "She has about come around to my way of thinking. There don't seem any very good reason for my travelling away down there again, especially when your father and mother are going to move out here anyway. I'm awful busy. She'll have her own family at the wedding, then, and she'll give me a show to scare up some of mine. Things are just too rushing—that's the amount of it."

"I'm glad to have it settled one way or another," George said. "And how about that other affair—have you made any report to father?"

"Yes. That's as good as settled. The deeds are all made out; they've only got to be signed." He reached into one of his pigeonholes and brought out a bulk of bluish paper whose fractious folds were held in some shape by a wide rubber strap. "Here's one of the abstracts—just come in. The other is a good deal longer and the copy isn't finished. I suppose they'll put that one on a board."

He snapped the band once or twice and put the abstract back again.

"I'm glad," he said, "that your father has finally decided to pull up altogether and to transfer everything to the West. That old block of his was wanting repairs all the time; I don't believe it paid him four percent. It takes more than soldier's monuments and musical festivals to make a town move."

George felt his heart give an indignant throb. He seemed to see before him the spokesman of a community where prosperity had drugged patriotism into unconsciousness, and where the bare scaffoldings of materialism felt themselves quite independent of the graces and draperies of culture. It seemed hardly possible that one short month could make his native New England appear so small, so provincial, so left-behind.

"You've got to have snap, go. You've got to have a big new country behind you. How much do you suppose people in Iowa and Kansas and Minnesota think about Down East? Not a great deal. It's Chicago they're looking to. This town looms up before them and shuts out Boston and New York and the whole seaboard from the sight and the thoughts of the West and the Northeast and the New Northwest and the Far West and all the other Wests yet to be invented. They read our papers, they come here to buy and to enjoy themselves." He turned his thumb towards the ceiling, and gave it an upward thrust that sent

it through the six ceilings above it. "If you'd go up on our roof and hear them talking—"

"Oh, well," said George; "hadn't we better get something to eat?"

"And what kind of a town is it that's wanted," pursued McDowell, as he pulled down the cover of his desk, "to take up a big national enterprise and put it through with a rush? A big town, of course, but one that has grown big so fast that it hasn't had time to grow old. One with lots of youth and plenty of momentum. Young enough to be confident and enthusiastic, and to have no cliques and sets full of bickerings and jealousies. A town that will all pull one way. What's New York?" he asked, flourishing his towel from the corner where the wash-stand stood. "It ain't a city at all; it's like London—it's a province. Father Knickerbocker is too old, and too big and logy, and too all-fired selfish. We are the people, right here. Well, Johnny, you hold the fort," he called to a boy who was dividing an open-eyed attention between this oration and his own sandwich; "I've got to have a bite myself."

"How are you getting on downstairs?" he asked, as they tramped over the tiles of the long corridor towards the elevators. "I hear you were over at Brainard's house last night—he's a fine bird. And his son is like him. He's got another, hasn't he—a younger one? In the bank, isn't he? Used to be. Well, he might be without your knowing it. Queer genius—his father don't know what to do with him. He's kind of in the background, as it were. How did you happen to go over there?"

"Papers to sign. Mr. Brainard was at home, sick. It was something that they could hardly give to any of the boys to manage. I met his other daughter."

"Other? Didn't know he had any. Got two, has he? And two sons. Well, he's a great old father, from all I hear, and I shouldn't—D—ow—n!"

But the elevator was too far past them to return.

"Here's another coming," said George, to whom the indicator showed that a cab had left the top story and was half way down to their level.

Ogden had now gone through a novitiate of five or six weeks. After his first wrench—from the East to the West—his second one—from the West Side to the North—seemed an unimportant matter. He had learned his new neighborhood, had made a few acquaintances there, had become familiar with his work at the bank; and the early coming of his own family, who had elected to swell the great westward movement by the contribution of themselves and all their worldly goods, helped him to the feeling of being tolerably well at home. From the vantage-ground of a secure present and a promising future he became an interested observer of the life that swept and swirled about him. He found that there might be an inner quiet under all this vast and apparently unregulated din: he recalled how, in a cotton factory or a copper foundry, the hands talked among themselves in tones lower than the average, rather than higher. The rumble of drays and the clang of streetcar gongs became less disconcerting; the town's swarming hordes presently appeared less slovenly in their dress and less offensive in their manners than his startled sensibilities had found them at first; even their varied physiognomies began to take on a cast less comprehensively cosmopolitan. His walks through the streets and his journeyings in the public conveyances showed him a range of human types completely unknown to his past experience; yet it soon came to seem possible that all these different elements might be scheduled, classified, brought into a sort of *catalogue raisonné* which should give every feature its proper place—skulls, foreheads, gaits, odors, facial angles; ears, with their different shapes and sets; eyes, with their varying shapes and colors; hair, with its divergent shades and textures; noses, with their multiplied turns and outlines; dialects, brogues, patois, accents in all their palatal and labial varieties and according to all the differentiations in pharynx, larynx, and epiglottis.

He disposed as readily of the Germans, Irish, and Swedes as of the Negroes and the Chinese. But how to tell the Poles from the Bohemians? How to distinguish the Sicilians from the Greeks? How to catalogue the various grades of Jews? How to tabulate the Medes, and the Elamites, and the Cappadocians, and the dwellers from Mesopotamia?

During the enforced leisure of his first weeks he had gone several times to the City Hall, and had ascended in the elevator to the reading-room of the public library. On one of these occasions a heavy and sudden downpour had filled the room with readers and had closed all the windows. The downpour without seemed but a trifle compared with the confused cataract of conflicting nationalities within, and the fumes of incense that the united throng caused to rise upon the altar of learning stunned him with a sudden and sickening surprise—the bogs of Kilkenny, the dung-heaps of the Black Forest, the miry ways of Transylvania and Little Russia had all contributed to it.

The universal brotherhood of man appeared before him, and it smelt of mortality—no partial, exclusive mortality, but a mortality comprehensive, universal, condensed and averaged up from the grand totality of items.

In a human maelstrom, of which such a scene was but a simple transitory eddy, it was grateful to regain one's bearings in some degree, and to get an opportunity for meeting one or two familiar drops. It had pleased him, therefore, to find that Brainard's house was in the neighborhood of Union Park and in the immediate vicinity of his own first lodgings; and when he went over there with his documents in his pocket he appreciated the privilege of ringing the bell of a door behind which were one or two faces that he might recognize.

The Brainards lived on a corner, and the house was so set as to allow a narrow strip of yard along the side street. It was built in the yellow limestone which used to come from quarries at Joliet, and the architect had shown his preference for the exaggerated keystones that had so great a vogue in the late sixties. The house had a basement, and above the elaborate wooden cornice there was a mansard with several windows that were set in a framework of clumsy and pretentious carpentry. Behind the house was a brick stable; it had been built of cheap material and covered with a cheaper red wash. The dampness of the lower walls had caused this wash to discolor and then to fall off altogether. Around the premises there ran an old-fashioned iron fence; it stood on a stone coping that was covered with perpendicular streaks of yellow rust. In the yard a meandering asphalt walk led past a few lilacs and syringas, which were looked down upon by a painful side porch that nobody ever used. The walk in front of the house was of stone; that at the side was of plank and showed three long lines of nailheads.

The interior, so far as it came under Ogden's notice, was furnished with a horrible yet consistent simplicity. The large rooms were set sparely with chairs, tables, and sofas that represented the spoil of Centralia, and there were few modern additions to introduce discords. An ideal sculptured head, placed on a marble pedestal swathed in a fringed scarf of saffron silk and set between the lace curtains so as to show from the street, would have ruined the effect both within and without. Perhaps the same might be said of any other house.

Brainard himself was not visible; he was only audible. His deep voice came in a sort of deadened growl through the closed door of a small side room; and mingled with it were the querulous tones of a woman's voice—an elderly woman, a woman in poor health, a woman whom some sudden and distressful stroke had brought to the verge of tears.

The house had been built in the primitive days when local architecture was still in such exact accord with local society that anything like graded receptions was undreamed of. Everybody who seemed too good to be kept waiting in the hall was shown into the front parlor. This room had a carpet whose design was in large baskets of bright flowers, and a ceiling that was frescoed in a manner derived from a former style of railroad decoration. This scheme of decoration centred around a massive and contorted chandelier with eight globes. Nobody had ever seen the whole eight "going" at one time. Lincoln and his family were on one side of the marble mantelpiece; Grant and his family on the other.

It was in this room that Ogden was received by the elder daughter of the house. She seemed a quiet, self-poised girl, four or five years the senior of her sister. She amply filled her gown of gray woollen; her hair was drawn back from her forehead and made a knot just above the nape of her neck. She had a pair of cool, steady gray eyes. She appeared wholesome, stable, capable of keeping herself well in hand.

"My father isn't able to see you," she said; "but if you will give me what you have brought I will take it to him."

There was a tremulousness in her voice, quite at variance with her manner and appearance. She put out her hand with a wavering motion; the flaring of the gas in her face seemed to strike her with a positive pain.

A door opened suddenly and her brother Burt came in. He was a stocky young man three or four years older than Ogden. He seemed stuffed with importance both present and future, both personal and parental—he was himself and his father rolled into one.

"Abbie," he said, in a sharp, curt way, "I wish you'd find father the copy of that report you made for him yesterday." He looked at Ogden in a fashion that changed the young man from a person to a thing. "We have been looking for you some time," he said. "I'll take those papers myself."

He spoke in a way that was abrupt and autocratic. Ogden recognized it as the utterance of a masterful nature, but he was unable to see that the masterful nature was moved by an emotion that must be controlled and concealed. His indignation made no allowance for this, and his subsequent ten minutes of solitary reflection left a bitterness that passed away but lingeringly. More and more, with every moment of this short wait, did he feel himself a gentleman turned into a lackey by his inferiors.

There was no salve for his wounded sensibilities save, perhaps, in the look of dumb expostulation which the girl cast upon her brother and in the few commonplace words which she addressed to their caller before she went out.

"Kindly wait a few moments, and the papers will be ready to take back. Perhaps you will find this other chair more comfortable."

It was after this fashion that he first met Abbie Brainard; met her—as he reported it to McDowell—and hardly more.

He followed his brother-in-law into the elevator and they dropped swiftly to the ground floor. At this level is situated the Acme Lunch Room.

1893

## 1860 ~ *Hamlin Garland* ~ 1940

BORN IN 1860 on a Wisconsin farm, Hamlin Garland experienced the hardships and sufferings of pioneer farm life. His father, who hailed from Maine, was of a roving disposition, and after serving in the Civil War lived successively in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Dakota. In Iowa the family paused long enough to permit young Garland to graduate from Cedar Valley Seminary. Driven by an insatiable passion for reading, and ambitious to become a teacher, he went to Boston, where, living on the scantiest fare and often suffering acutely because of his meager means, he followed a rigorous, self-imposed course of study to make up for his lack of formal education. Part of the time he lectured in a School of Oratory. By sheer grit and determination he carried through his program of self-discipline, training himself in the art of writing, which included experimenting with poetry, the essay, and the short story. The writers of the eighties, many of whom he came to know, received him with kindly sympathy. The friendship of William Dean Howells was especially encouraging and inspiring, and lightened the burdens of literary apprenticeship. When the first fruits were accepted by B. O. Flower for the *Arena*, the path to a literary career was clear.

It was during a visit to his father's farm that the main tenets of his literary creed began to take form. After observing the older civilization of the East, the unhappy lot of the pioneer, particularly the hardships of the women, appeared in a new perspective. Here was an aspect of the American scene which had been practically ignored, a phase similar to that which constituted the very fiber of many modern European novels, notably Russian. Moved by the titanic power of these novels, and aroused by reading Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* to a realization of the injustice under which pioneer farmers were compelled to labor, he set out on a course of writing the object of which was to tell the truth as he saw it, and which combined the purposive ideals of art and reform.

In a little volume of iconoclastic essays, published under the title of *Crumbling Idols* (1894), he stated his critical principles, and elaborated his theory of "veritism." Instead of writing with one eye on British models and traditions, he admonished prospective authors to see things as they are and represent them as they saw them. He prophesied that the literature of the future would be written in terms of the local, and argued that localism and sectionalism were not inimical to the national spirit. By virtue of these critical-propagandist essays and the original flavor of his early creative work Garland takes his place among the leaders of the new realistic movement.

His literary career may be divided roughly into three periods. To the first belong *Main-Travelled Roads* (1890–1898) and *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly* (1895–1898) which were written in the white heat of his zeal for literary and social reform; in the second, influenced undoubtedly by prevailing tendencies, he turned to more romantic themes, and in such novels as *The Eagle's Heart* (1900) and *The Captain of the Gray-Horse Troop* (1902) he "endowed man in a state of nature," as Parrington says, "with exalted social responsibilities." The third may be called the autobiographical period. To it belong *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917) and *A Daughter of the Middle Border* (1921). Critics differ as to the relative merit of the realistic and romantic tales, but it goes without saying that in the former Garland did his most original and influential work. On the other hand there is a general unanimity of agreement that in the "Border" books he wrote not only significant autobiography, but the saga of the Middle West empire as well.

A uniform edition of *The Works of Hamlin Garland* (12 vols., Border Edition) appeared in 1923. Some of the more important novels are *Jason Edwards* (1891); *A Spoil of Office* (1892); *A Little Norsk* (1892); *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly* (1895); *The Captain of the Gray-Horse Troop* (1902); *Hesper* (1903); *The Long Trail* (1907); *Cavanagh, Forest Ranger* (1910); *The Forester's Daughter* (1914). Collections of short stories: *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891, 1899); *Prairie Folks* (1892, 1899); *Wayside Courtships* (1897); *Other Main-Travelled Roads* (1916); *They of the High Trails* (1916). Autobiographical books: *Boy Life on the Prairie* (1899); *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917); *A Daughter of the Middle Border* (1921); *Trail-Makers of the Middle Border* (1926); *Back-Trailers from the Middle Border* (1928). *Crumbling Idols* (1894) is a volume of critical essays; *Ulysses S.*

*Grant* (1898), a biography. *Roadside Meetings* (1930); *Companions on the Trail* (1931); *My Friendly Contemporaries* (1932); *Afternoon Neighbors* (1934) are volumes of reminiscences. For studies of Garland's work consult L. L. Hazard, *The Frontier in American Literature* (1927); A. Keiser, *The Indian in American Literature* (1933); A. R. Marble, *A Study of the Modern Novel* (1928); V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents of American Thought*, III (1930); B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); W. D. Howells, "Garland's Books," *North American Review*, Oct., 1912; R. M. Raw, "Hamlin Garland, the Romanticist," *Sewanee Review*, April, 1928; F. L. Mott, "Exponents of the Pioneers," *Palimpsest*, Feb., 1930; F. L. Pattee, *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923); E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages Among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books* (1902); J. Brigham, ed., *A Book of Iowa Authors* (1930).

## UNDER THE LION'S PAW

First published in *Harper's Weekly*, in September, 1889; later collected in *Main-Travelled Roads*. Garland was an enthusiastic follower of Henry George in his denunciation of land speculation and the advocacy of the single tax. "Under the Lion's Paw" was obviously written under George's influence.

I

It was the last of autumn and first day of winter coming together. All day long the ploughmen on their prairie farms had moved to and fro in their wide level fields through the falling snow, which melted as it fell, wetting them to the skin—all day, notwithstanding the frequent squalls of snow, the dripping, desolate clouds, and the muck of the furrows, black and tenacious as tar.

Under their dripping harness the horses swung to and fro silently, with that marvellous uncomplaining patience which marks the horse. All day the wild geese, honking wildly, as they sprawled sidewise down the wind, seemed to be fleeing from an enemy behind, and with neck outthrust and wings extended, sailed down the wind, soon lost to sight.

Yet the ploughman behind his plough, though the snow lay on his ragged greatcoat, and the cold clinging mud rose on his heavy boots, fettering him like gyves, whistled in the very beard of the gale. As day passed, the snow, ceasing to melt, lay along the ploughed land, and lodged in the depth of the stubble, till on each slow round the last furrow stood out black and shining as jet between the ploughed land and the gray stubble.

When night began to fall, and the geese, flying low, began to alight invisibly in the near cornfield, Stephen Council was still at work "finishing a land." He rode on his sulky plough when going with the wind, but walked when facing it. Sitting bent and cold but cheery under his slouch hat, he talked encouragingly to his four-in-hand.

"Come round there, boys!—Round agin! We got t' finish this land. Come in there, Dan! Stiddy, Kate,—stiddy! None o' y'r tantrums, Kittie. It's purty tuff, but got a be did. Tchk! tchk! Step along, Pete! Don't let Kate git y'r single-tree on the wheel. Once more!"

They seemed to know what he meant, and that this was the last round, for they worked with greater vigor than before.

"Once more, boys, an' then, sez I, oats an' a nice warm stall an' sleep f'r all."

By the time the last furrow was turned on the land it was too dark to see the house, and the snow was changing to rain again. The tired and hungry man could see the light from the kitchen shining through the leafless hedge, and he lifted a great shout, "Supper f'r a half a dozen!"

It was nearly eight o'clock by the time he had finished his chores and started for supper. He was picking his way carefully through the mud, when the tall form of a man loomed up before him with a premonitory cough.

"Waddy ye want?" was the rather startled question of the farmer.

"Well, ye see," began the stranger, in a deprecating tone, "we'd like t' git in f'r the night. We've tried every house f'r the last two miles, but they hadn't any room f'r us. My wife's jest about sick, 'n' the children are cold and hungry—"

"Oh, y' want 'o stay all night, eh?"

"Yes, sir; it'ud be a great accom—"

"Waal, I don't make it a practice t' turn anybuddy way hungry not on sech nights as this. Drive right in. We ain't got much, but sech as it is—"

But the stranger had disappeared. And soon his steaming, weary team, with drooping heads and swinging singletrees, moved past the well to the block beside the path. Council stood at the side of the "schooner" and helped the children out—two little half-sleeping children —and then a small woman with a babe in her arms.

"There ye go!" he shouted jovially, to the children. "Now we're all right! Run right along to the house there, an' tell Mam' Council you wants sumpthin' t' eat. Right this way, Mis'—keep right off t' the right there. I'll go an' git a lantern. Come," he said to the dazed and silent group at his side.

"Mother," he shouted, as he neared the fragrant and warmly lighted kitchen, "here are some wayfarers an' folks who need sumthin' t' eat an' a place t' snooze." He ended by pushing them all in.

Mrs. Council, a large, jolly, rather coarse-looking woman, took the children in her arms. "Come right in, you little rabbits. 'Most asleep, hey? Now here's a drink o' milk f'r each o' ye. I'll have s'm tea in a minute. Take off y'r things and set up t' the fire."

While she set the children to drinking milk, Council got out his lantern and went out to the barn to help the stranger about his team, where his loud, hearty voice could be heard as it came and went between the haymow and the stalls.

The woman came to light as a small, timid, and discouraged-looking woman, but still pretty, in a thin and sorrowful way.

"Land sakes! An' you've travelled all the way from Clear Lake t'-day in this mud! Waal! waal! No wonder you're all tired out. Don' wait f'r the men, Mis'—" She hesitated, waiting for the name.

"Haskins."

"Mis' Haskins, set right up to the table an' take a good swig o' tea whilst I make y' s'm toast. It's green tea, an' it's good. I tell Council as I git older I don't seem to enjoy Young Hyson n'r Gun powder. I want the reel green tea, jest as it comes off'n the vines. Seems t' have more heart in it, some way. Don't s'pose it has. Council says it's all in m' eye."

Going on in this easy way, she soon had the children filled with bread and milk and the woman thoroughly at home, eating some toast and sweet-melon pickles, and sipping the tea.

"See the little rats!" she laughed at the children. "They're full as they can stick now, and they want to go to bed. Now, don't git up, Mis' Haskins; set right where you are an' let me look after 'em. I know all about young ones, though I'm all alone now. Jane went an' married last fall. But, as I tell Council, it's lucky we keep our health. Set right there, Mis' Haskins; I won't have you stir a finger."

It was an unmeasured pleasure to sit there in the warm, homely kitchen, the jovial chatter of the housewife driving out and holding at bay the growl of the impotent, cheated wind.

The little woman's eyes filled with tears which fell down upon the sleeping baby in her arms. The world was not so desolate and cold and hopeless, after all.

"Now I hope Council won't stop out there and talk politics all night. He's the greatest man to talk politics an' read the Tribune. How old is it?"

She broke off and peered down at the face of the babe.

"Two months 'n' five days," said the mother, with a mother's exactness.

"Ye don't say! I want 'o know! The dear little pudzy-wudzy!" she went on, stirring it up in the neighborhood of the ribs with her fat forefinger.

"Pooty tough on 'oo to go gallivant'n' 'cross lots this way—"

"Yes, that's so; a man can't lift a mountain," said Council, entering the door. "Mother, this is Mr. Haskins, from Kansas. He's been eat up 'n' drove out by grasshoppers."

"Glad t' see yeh!—Pa, empty that wash-basin 'n' give him a chance t' wash."

Haskins was a tall man, with a thin, gloomy face. His hair was a reddish brown, like his coat, and seemed equally faded by the wind and sun, and his sallow face, though hard and set, was pathetic somehow. You would have felt that he had suffered much by the line of

his mouth showing under his thin, yellow mustache.

"Hain't Ike got home yet, Sairy?"

"Hain't seen 'im."

"W-a-a-l, set right up, Mr. Haskins; wade right into what we've got; 'tain't much, but we manage to live on it—she gits fat on it," laughed Council, pointing his thumb at his wife.

After supper, while the women put the children to bed, Haskins and Council talked on, seated near the huge cooking-stove, the steam rising from their wet clothing. In the Western fashion Council told as much of his own life as he drew from his guest. He asked but few questions, but by and by the story of Haskins' struggles and defeat came out. The story was a terrible one, but he told it quietly, seated with his elbows on his knees, gazing most of the time at the hearth.

"I didn't like the looks of the country, anyhow," Haskins said, partly rising and glancing at his wife. "I was ust t' northern Ingyannie, where we have lots o' timber 'n' lots o' rain, 'n' I didn't like the looks of that dry prairie. What galled me the worst was goin' s' far away acrosst so much fine land layin' all through here vacant."

"And the 'hoppers eat ye four years, hand runnin', did they?"

"Eat! They wiped us out. They chawed everything that was green. They jest set around waitin' f'r us to die t' eat us, too. My God! I ust t' dream of 'em sittin' 'round on the bedpost, six feet long, workin' their jaws. They eet the fork-handles. They got worse 'n' worse till they jest rolled on one another, piled up like snow in winter. Well, it ain't no use. If I was t' talk all winter I couldn't tell nawthin'. But all the while I couldn't help thinkin' of all that land back here that nobuddy was usin' that I ought 'o had 'stead o' bein' out there in that cussed country."

"Waal, why didn't ye stop an' settle here?" asked Ike, who had come in and was eating his supper.

"Fer the simple reason that you fellers wantid ten 't' fifteen dollars an acre fer the bare land, and I hadn't no money fer that kind o' thing."

"Yes, I do my own work," Mrs. Council was heard to say in the pause which followed. "I'm a gettin' purty heavy t' be on m' laigs all day, but we can't afford t' hire, so I keep rackin' around somehow, like a foundered horse. S' lame—I tell Council he can't tell how lame I am, f'r I'm jest as lame in one laig as t' other." And the good soul laughed at the joke on herself as she took a handful of flour and dusted the biscuit-board to keep the dough from sticking.

"Well, I hain't never been very strong," said Mrs. Haskins. "Our folks was Canadians an' small-boned, and then since my last child I hain't got up again fairly. I don't like t' complain. Tim has about all he can bear now—but they was days this week when I jest wanted to lay right down an' die."

"Waal, now, I'll tell ye," said Council, from his side of the stove, silencing everybody with his good-natured roar, "I'd go down and see Butler, anyway, if I was you. I guess he'd let you have his place purty cheap; the farm's all run down. He's been anxious t' let t' somebuddy next year. It'ud be a good chance fer you. Anyhow, you go to bed and sleep like a babe. I've got some ploughin' t' do, anyhow, an' we'll see if somethin' can't be done about your case. Ike, you go out an' see if the horses is all right, an' I'll show the folks t' bed."

When the tired husband and wife were lying under the generous quilts of the spare bed, Haskins listened a moment to the wind in the eaves, and then said, with a slow and solemn tone.

"There are people in this world who are good enough t' be angels, an' only haff t' die to be angels."

## II

Jim Butler was one of those men called in the West "land poor." Early in the history of Rock River he had come into the town and started in the grocery business in a small way, occupying a small building in a mean part of the town. At this period of his life he earned all he got, and was up early and late sorting beans, working over butter, and carting his goods to and from the station. But a change came over him at the end of the second year, when he sold a lot of land for four times what

he paid for it. From that time forward he believed in land speculation as the surest way of getting rich. Every cent he could save or spare from his trade he put into land at forced sale, or mortgages on land, which were "just as good as the wheat," he was accustomed to say.

Farm after farm fell into his hands, until he was recognized as one of the leading landowners of the county. His mortgages were scattered all over Cedar County, and as they slowly but surely fell in he sought usually to retain the former owner as tenant.

In the meantime he had sold his store; he couldn't spend time in it; he was mainly occupied now with sitting around town on rainy days smoking and "gassin' with the boys," or in riding to and from his farms. In fishing-time he fished a good deal. Doc Grimes, Ben Ashley, and Cal Cheatham were his cronies on these fishing excursions or hunting trips in the time of chickens or partridges. In winter they went to Northern Wisconsin to shoot deer.

In spite of all these signs of easy life Butler persisted in saying he "hadn't enough money to pay taxes on his land," and was careful to convey the impression that he was poor in spite of his twenty farms. At one time he was said to be worth fifty thousand dollars, but land had been a little slow of sale of late, so that he was not worth so much.

A fine farm, known as the Higley place, had fallen into his hands in the usual way the previous year, and he had not been able to find a tenant for it. Poor Higley, after working himself nearly to death on it in the attempt to lift the mortgage, had gone off to Dakota, leaving the farm and his curse to Butler.

This was the farm which Council advised Haskins to apply for; and the next day Council hitched up his team and drove down town to see Butler.

"You jest let *me* do the talkin'," he said. "We'll find him wearin' out his pants on some salt barrel somew'ers; and if he thought you wanted a place he'd sock it to you hot and heavy. You jest keep quiet; I'll fix 'im."

Butler was seated in Ben Ashley's store telling fish yarns when Council sauntered in casually.

"Hello, But; lyin' agin, hey?"

"Hello, Steve! how goes it?"

"Oh, so-so. Too dang much rain these days. I thought it was goin' t' freeze up f'r good last night. Tight squeak if I get m' ploughin' done. How's farmin' with you these days?"

"Bad. Ploughin' ain't half done."

"It'ud be a religious idee f'r you t' go out an' take a hand y'rself."

"I don't haff to," said Butler, with a wink. "Got anybody on the Higley place?"

"No. Know of anybody?"

"Waal, no; not eggsackly. I've got a relation back t' Michigan who's ben hot an' cold on the idee o' comin' West f'r some time. Might come if he could get a good lay-out. What do you talk on the farm?"

"Well, I d'know. I'll rent it on shares or I'll rent it money rent."

"Waal, how much money, say?"

"Well, say ten per cent, on the price—two-fifty."

"Waal, that ain't bad. Wait on 'im till 'e thrashes?"

Haskins listened eagerly to his important question, but Council was coolly eating a dried apple which he had speared out of a barrel with his knife. Butler studied him carefully.

"Well, knocks me out of twenty-five dollars interest."

"My relation'll need all he's got t' git his crops in," said Council, in the safe, indifferent way.

"Well, all right; say wait," concluded Butler.

"All right; this is the man. Haskins, this is Mr. Butler—no relation to Ben—the hardest-working man in Cedar County."

On the way home Haskins said: "I ain't much better off. I'd like that farm; it's a good farm, but it's all run down, an' so'm I. I could make a good farm of it if I had half a show. But I can't stock it n't seed it."

"Waal, now, don't you worry," roared Council in his ear. "We'll pull y' through somehow till next harvest. He's agreed t' hire it ploughed, an' you can earn a hundred dollars ploughin' an' y' c'n git the seed o' me, an' pay me back when y' can."

Haskins was silent with emotion, but at last he said, "I ain't got nothin' t' live on."

"Now, don't you worry 'bout that. You jest make your headquarters at ol' Steve Coun-

cil's. Mother'll take a pile o' comfort in havin' y'r wife an' children 'round. Y' see, Jane's married off lately, an' Ike's away a good'eal, so we'll be darn glad t' have y' stop with us this winter. Nex' spring we'll see if y' can't git a start agin." And he chirruped to the team, which sprang forward with the rumbling, clattering wagon.

"Say, looky here, Council, you can't do this. I never saw—" shouted Haskins in his neighbor's ear.

Council moved about uneasily in his seat and stopped his stammering gratitude by saying: "Hold on, now; don't make such a fuss over a little thing. When I see a man down, an' things all on top of 'im, I jest like t' kick 'em off an' help 'm up. That's the kind of religion I got, an' it's about the only kind."

They rode the rest of the way home in silence. And when the red light of the lamp shone out into the darkness of the cold and windy night, and he thought of this refuge for his children and wife, Haskins could have put his arm around the neck of his burly companion and squeezed him like a lover. But he contented himself with saying, "Steve Council, you'll git y'r pay f'r this some day."

"Don't want any pay. My religion ain't run on such business principles."

The wind was growing colder, and the ground was covered with a white frost, as they turned into the gate of the Council farm, and the children came rushing out, shouting, "Papa's come!" They hardly looked like the same children who had sat at the table the night before. Their torpidity, under the influence of sunshine and Mother Council, had given way to a sort of spasmodic cheerfulness, as insects in winter revive when laid on the hearth.

III

Haskins worked like a fiend, and his wife, like the heroic woman that she was, bore also uncomplainingly the most terrible burdens. They rose early and toiled without intermission till the darkness fell on the plain, then tumbled into bed, every bone and muscle aching with fatigue, to rise with the sun next morning to the same round of the same ferocity of labor.

The eldest boy drove a team all through the spring, ploughing and seeding, milked the cows, and did chores innumerable, in most ways taking the place of a man.

An infinitely pathetic but common figure—this boy on the American farm, where there is no law against child labor. To see him in his coarse clothing, his huge boots, and his ragged cap, as he staggered with a pail of water from the well, or trudged in the cold and cheerless dawn out into the frosty field behind his team, gave the city-bred visitor a sharp pang of sympathetic pain. Yet Haskins loved his boy, and would have saved him from this if he could, but he could not.

By June the first year the result of such Herculean toil began to show on the farm. The yard was cleaned up and sown to grass, the garden ploughed and planted, and the house mended.

Council had given them four of his cows.

"Take 'em an' run 'em on shares. I don't want 'o milk s' many. Ike's away s' much now, Sat'd'ys an' Sund'ys, I can't stand the bother anyhow."

Other men, seeing the confidence of Council in the newcomer, had sold him tools on time; and as he was really an able farmer, he soon had round him many evidences of his care and thrift. At the advice of Council he had taken the farm for three years, with privilege of renting or buying at the end of the term.

"It's a good bargain, an' y' want 'o nail it," said Council. "If you have any kind ov a crop, you c'n pay y'r debts, an' keep seed an' bread."

The new hope which now sprang up in the heart of Haskins and his wife grew great almost as a pain by the time the wide field of wheat began to wave and rustle and swirl in the winds of July. Day after day he would snatch a few moments after supper to go and look at it.

"Have ye seen the wheat t'day, Nettie?" he asked one night as he rose from supper.

"No, Tim, I ain't had time."

"Well, take time now. Le's go look at it."

She threw an old hat on her head—Tommy's hat—and looking almost pretty in her thin, sad way, went out with her husband to the hedge.

"Ain't it grand, Nettie? Just look at it."

It was grand. Level, russet here and there, heavyheaded, wide as a lake, and full of multitudinous whispers and gleams of wealth, it stretched away before the gazers like the fabled field of the cloth of gold.

"Oh, I think—I hope we'll have a good crop, Tim; and oh, how good the people have been to us!"

"Yes; I don't know where we'd be t'-day if it hadn't ben f'r Council and his wife."

"They're the best people in the world," said the little woman, with a great sob of gratitude.

"We'll be in the field on Monday, sure," said Haskins, gripping the rail on the fence as if already at the work of the harvest.

The harvest came, bounteous, glorious, but the winds came and blew it into tangles, and the rain matted it here and there close to the ground, increasing the work of gathering it threefold.

Oh, how they toiled in those glorious days! Clothing dripping with sweat, arms aching, filled with briers, fingers raw and bleeding, backs broken with the weight of heavy bundles, Haskins and his man toiled on. Tommy drove the harvester, while his father and a hired man bound on the machine. In this way they cut ten acres every day, and almost every night after supper, when the hand went to bed, Haskins returned to the field shocking the bound grain in the light of the moon. Many a night he worked till his anxious wife came out at ten o'clock to call him in to rest and lunch.

At the same time she cooked for the men, took care of the children, washed and ironed, milked the cows at night, made the butter, and sometimes fed the horses and watered them while her husband kept at the shocking.

No slave in the Roman galleys could have toiled so frightfully and lived, for this man thought himself a free man, and that he was working for his wife and babes.

When he sank into his bed with a deep groan of relief, too tired to change his grimy, dripping clothing, he felt that he was getting nearer and nearer to a home of his own, and pushing the wolf of want a little farther from his door.

There is no despair so deep as the despair of a homeless man or woman. To roam the roads of the country or the streets of the city, to feel there is no rood of ground on which the feet can rest, to halt weary and hungry outside lighted windows and hear laughter and song within,—these are the hungers and rebellions that drive men to crime and women to shame.

It was the memory of this homelessness, and the fear of its coming again, that spurred Timothy Haskins and Nettie, his wife, to such ferocious labor during that first year.

## IV

"'M, yes; 'm, yes; first-rate," said Butler, as his eye took in the neat garden, the pig-pen, and the well-filled barnyard. "You're gitt'n' quite a stock around yeh. Done well, eh?"

Haskins was showing Butler around the place. He had not seen it for a year, having spent the year in Washington and Boston with Ashley, his brother-in-law, who had been elected to Congress.

"Yes, I've laid out a good deal of money durin' the last three years. I've paid out three hundred dollars f'r fencin'."

"Um-h'm! I see, I see," said Butler, while Haskins went on:

"The kitchen there cost two hundred; the barn ain't cost much in money, but I've put a lot o' time on it. I've dug a new well, and I—"

"Yes, yes, I see. You've done well. Stock worth a thousand dollars," said Butler, picking his teeth with a straw.

"About that," said Haskins, modestly. "We begin to feel's if we was gitt'n' a home f'r ourselves; but we've worked hard. I tell you we begin to feel it, Mr. Butler, and we're goin' t' begin to ease up purty soon. We've been kind o' plannin' a trip back t' her folks after the fall ploughin's done."

"Eggs-actly!" said Butler, who was evidently thinking of something else. "I suppose you've kind o' calc'lated on stayin' here three years more?"

"Well, yes. Fact is, I think I c'n buy the farm this fall, if you'll give me a reasonable show."

"Um-m! What do you call a reasonable show?"

"Well, say a quarter down and three years' time."

Butler looked at the huge stack of wheat, which filled the yard, over which the chickens

were fluttering and crawling, catching grasshoppers, and out of which the crickets were singing innumerably. He smiled in a peculiar way as he said, "Oh, I won't be hard on yeh. But what did you expect to pay f'r the place?"

"Why, about what you offered it for before, two thousand five hundred, or possibly three thousand dollars," he added quickly, as he saw the owner shake his head.

"This farm is worth five thousand and five hundred dollars," said Butler, in a careless and decided voice.

"What!" shrieked the astounded Haskins. "What's that? Five thousand? Why, that's double what you offered it for three years ago."

"Of course, and it's worth it. It was all run down then; now it's in good shape. You've laid out fifteen hundred dollars in improvements, according to your own story."

"But you had nothin' t' do about that. It's my work an' my money."

"You bet it was; but it's my land."

"But what's to pay me for all my—"

"Ain't you had the use of 'em?" replied Butler, smiling calmly into his face.

Haskins was like a man struck on the head with a sandbag; he couldn't think; he stammered as he tried to say: "But—I never'd git the use—You'd rob me! Moren that: you agreed—you promised that I could buy or rent at the end of three years at—"

"That's all right. But I didn't say I'd let you carry off the improvements, nor that I'd go on renting the farm at two-fifty. The land is doubled in value, it don't matter how; it don't enter into the question; an' now you can pay me five hundred dollars a year rent, or take it on your own terms at fifty-five hundred, or—git out."

He was turning away when Haskins, the sweat pouring from his face, fronted him, saying again:

"But you've done nothing to make it so. You hain't added a cent. I put it all there myself, expectin' to buy. I worked an' sweat to improve it. I was workin' for myself an' babes—"

"Well, why didn't you buy when I offered to sell? Whay y' kickin' about?"

"I'm kickin' about payin' you twice f'r my own things,—my own fences, my own kitchen, my own garden."

Butler laughed. "You're too green t' eat, young feller. Your improvements! The law will sing another tune."

"But I trusted your word."

"Never trust anybody, my friend. Besides, I didn't promise not to do this thing. Why, man, don't look at me like that. Don't take me for a thief. It's the law. The reg'lar thing. Everybody does it."

"I don't care if they do. It's stealin' jest the same. You take three thousand dollars of my money—the work o' my hands and my wife's." He broke down at this point. He was not a strong man mentally. He could face hardship, ceaseless toil, but he could not face the cold and sneering face of Butler.

"But I don't take it," said Butler, coolly. "All you've got to do is to go on jest as you've been a-doin', or give me a thousand dollars down, and a mortgage at ten per cent on the rest."

Haskins sat down blindly on a bundle of oats near by, and with staring eyes and drooping head went over the situation. He was under the lion's paw. He felt a horrible numbness in his heart and limbs. He was hid in a mist, and there was no path out.

Butler walked about, looking at the huge stacks of grain, and pulling now and again a few handfuls out, shelling the heads in his hands and blowing the chaff away. He hummed a little tune as he did so. He had an accommodating air of waiting.

Haskins was in the midst of the terrible toil of the last year. He was walking again in the rain and the mud behind his plough; he felt the dust and dirt of the threshing. The ferocious husking-time, with its cutting wind and biting, clinging snows, lay hard upon him. Then he thought of his wife, how she had cheerfully cooked and baked, without holiday and without rest.

"Well, what do you think of it?" inquired the cool, mocking, insinuating voice of Butler.

"I think you're a thief and a liar!" shouted Haskins, leaping up. "A black-hearted houn'." Butler's smile maddened him; with a sudden leap he caught a fork in his hands, and whirled it in the air. "You'll never rob another man,

damn ye!" he grated through his teeth, a look of pitiless ferocity in his accusing eyes.

Butler shrank and quivered, expecting the blow; stood, held hypnotized by the eyes of the man he had a moment before despised—a man transformed into an avenging demon. But in the deadly hush between the lift of the weapon and its fall there came a gush of faint, childish laughter and then across the range of his vision, far away and dim, he saw the sun-bright head of his baby-girl, as, with the pretty, tottering run of a two-year-old, she moved across the grass of the dooryard. His hands relaxed: the fork fell to the ground; his head lowered.

"Make out y'r deed an' mor'gage, an' git off'n my land, an' don't ye never cross my line agin; if y' do, I'll kill ye."

Butler backed away from the man in wild haste, and climbing into his buggy with trembling limbs drove off down the road, leaving Haskins seated dumbly on the sunny pile of sheaves, his head sunk into his hands.

1889

## THE LOCAL NOVEL

A chapter from *Crumbling Idols*. Garland was dissatisfied with what he regarded as a superficial portrayal of life in the fiction of his day. In "The Local Novel" he proposed a type which would lead to a more penetrating treatment.

THE local novel seems to be the heir-apparent to the kingdom of poesy. It is already the most promising of all literary attempts today; certainly it is the most sincere. It seems but beginning its work. It is "hopelessly contemporaneous"; that is its strength. It is (at its best) unaffected, natural, emotional. It is sure to become all-powerful. It will redeem American literature, as it has already redeemed the South from its conventional and highly wrought romanticism.

By reason of growing truth and sincerity the fiction of the South has risen from the dead. It is now in the spring season of shooting wilding plants and timorous blades of sown grains. Its future is assured. Its soil is fertilized with the blood of true men. Its women are the repositories of great, vital, sincere, emotional experiences which will inevitably appear in their children, and at last in art, and especially in fiction. The Southern people are in the midst of a battle more momentous than the Rebellion, because it is the result of the Rebellion; that is, the battle of intrenched privilege against the swiftly-spreading democratic idea of equality before the law and in the face of nature.

They have a terribly, mightily dramatic race-problem on their hands. The South is the meeting-place of winds. It is the seat of swift and almost incalculable change; and this change, this battle, this strife of invisible powers, is about to enter their fiction.

The Negro has already entered it. He has brought a musical speech to his masters, and to the new fiction. He has brought a strange and pleading song into music. The finest writers of the New South already find him a never-failing source of interest. He is not, of course, the only subject of Southern fiction, nor even the principal figure; but he is a necessary part, and a most absorbingly interesting part.

The future of fiction in the South will also depict the unreconstructed rebel unreservedly, and the race-problem without hate or contempt or anger; for the highest art will be the most catholic in its sympathy. It will delineate vast contending forces, and it will be a great literature.

The Negro will enter the fiction of the South, first, as subject; second, as artist in his own right. His first attempts will be imitative, but he will yet utter himself, as surely as he lives. He will contribute a poetry and a novel as peculiarly his own as the songs he sings. He may appear, also, in a strange half-song, half-chant, and possibly in a drama peculiar to himself; but in some form of fiction he will surely utter the sombre and darkly-florid genius for emotional utterance which characterizes him.

In the North the novel will continue local for some time to come. It will delineate the intimate life and speech of every section of our enormous and widely scattered republic. It will catch and fix in charcoal the changing, assimilating races, delineating the pathos and humor and the infinite drama of their swift adjustment to new conditions. California, New

Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, each wonderful locality in our Nation of Nations will yet find its native utterance. The superficial work of the tourist and outsider will not do. The real novelist of these sections is walking behind the plow or trudging to school in these splendid potential environments.

This local movement will include the cities as well, and St. Louis, Chicago, San Francisco, will be delineated by artists born of each city, whose work will be so true that it could not have been written by any one from the outside. The real utterance of a city or a locality can only come when a writer is born out of its intimate heart. To such an one, nothing will be "strange" or "picturesque"; all will be familiar, and full of significance or beauty. The novel of the slums must be written by one who has played there as a child, and taken part in all its amusements; not out of curiosity, but out of pleasure seeking. It cannot be done from above nor from the outside. It must be done out of a full heart and without seeking for effect.

The artist should not look abroad to see how others are succeeding. Success does not always measure merit. It took nearly a third of a century for Whitman and Monet to be recognized. The great artist never conforms. He does not trail after some other man's success. He works out his individual perception of things.

The contrast of city and country, everywhere growing sharper, will find its reflection in this local novel of the immediate future,—the same tragedies and comedies, with the essential difference called local color, and taking place all over the land, wherever cities arise like fungi, unhealthy, yet absorbing as subjects of fictional art.

As I have elsewhere pointed out, the drama will join the novel in this study of local conditions. It will be derived from fiction, and in many cases the dramatist and novelist will be the same person. In all cases the sincerity of the author's love for his scenes and characters will find expression in tender care for truth, and there will be made to pass before our eyes wonderfully suggestive pictures of other lives and landscapes. The drama will grow in dignity and importance along these lines.

Both drama and novel will be colloquial. This does not mean that they will be exclusively in the dialects, but the actual speech of the people of each locality will unquestionably be studied more closely than ever before. Dialect is the life of a language, precisely as the common people of the nation form the sustaining power of its social life and art.

And so in the novel, in the short story, and in the drama—by the work of a multitude of living artists, not by the work of an overtopping personality—will the intimate social, individual life of the nation be depicted. Before this localism shall pass away, such a study will have been made of this land and people as has never been made by any other age or social group,—a literature from the plain people, reflecting their unrestrained outlook on life, subtle in speech and color, humane beyond precedent, humorous, varied, simple in means, lucid as water, searching as sunlight.

To one who believes each age to be its own best interpreter, the idea of "decay of fiction" never comes. That which the absolutist takes for decay is merely change. The conservative fears change; the radical welcomes it. The conservative tries to argue that fundamentals cannot change; that they are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. If that were true, then a sorrowful outlook on the future would be natural. Such permanency would be death. Life means change.

As a matter of fact, the minute differentiations of literature which the conservative calls its non-essentials, are really its essentials. Vitality and growth are in these "non-essentials." It is the difference in characters, not their similarity, which is forever interesting. It is the subtle coloring individuality gives which vitalizes landscape art, and so it is the subtle differences in the interpretation of life which each age gives that vitalizes its literature and makes it its own.

The individuality of the artist is the saving grace of art; and landscape painting will not be fantastic so long as men study nature. It will never be mere reproduction so long as the artist represents it as he sees it. The fact will correct the fantasy. The artist will color the fact.

The business of the present is not to express

fundamentals, but to sincerely present its own minute and characteristic interpretation of life. This point cannot be too often insisted upon. Unless a writer add something to the literature of his race, has he justification? Is there glory in imitation? Is the painter greatest who copies old masters, or is it more praiseworthy to embody an original conception? These are very important questions for the young artist.

To perceive the hopelessness of absolutism in literature, you have but to stop a moment to think. Admit that there are perfect models to which must be referred all subsequent writing, and we are committed to a barren round of hopeless imitations. The young writer is disheartened or drawn off into imitations, and ruined for any real expression. This way of looking at literature produced our Barlows and Coltons and Hillhouses, with their "colossi of cotton-batting," and it produces blank-verse dramas today.

But the relativists in art are full of hope. They see that life is the model,—or, rather, that each man stands accountable to himself first, and to the perceived fact of life second. Life is always changing, and literature changes with it. It never decays; it changes. Poetry—that is to say *impassioned personal outlook on life*—is in no more danger of extinction today than in the days of Edmund Spenser. The American novel will continue to grow in truth to American life without regard to the form and spirit of the novel or drama of the past. Consciously or unconsciously, the point of view of the modern writer is that of the veritist, or truth stater.

Once out of the period of tutelage, it is natural for youth to overleap barriers. He naturally discards the wig and cloak of his grandfathers. He comes at last to reject, perhaps a little too brusquely, the models which conservatism regards with awe. He respects them as history, but he has life, abounding, fresh, contiguous life; life that stings and smothers and overwhelms and exalts, like the salt, green, snow-tipped ocean surf; life, with its terrors and triumphs, right here and now; its infinite drama, its allurement, its battle, and its victories. Life is the model, truth is the master, the heart of the man himself his motive power. The pleasure of recreating in the image of nature is the artist's unfailing reward.

To him who sees that difference, not similarity, is the vitalizing quality, there is no sorrow at change. The future will take care of itself. In the space of that word "difference" lies all the infinite range of future art. Some elements are comparatively unchanging. The snow will fall, spring will come, men and women love, the stars will rise and set, and grass return again and again in vast rhythms of green, but society will not be the same.

The physical conformation of our nation will change. It will lose its wildness, its austerity. Its unpeopled plains will pass away, and gardens will bloom where the hot sand now drifts. Cities will rise where now the elk and the mountain lions are. Swifter means of transportation will bring the lives of different sections into closer relationship. It will tend to equalize intellectual opportunities. The physical and mental life of men and women will be changed, the relation of man to man, and man to woman, will change in detail, and the fiction of the future will express these changes.

To the veritist, therefore, the present is the vital theme. The past is dead, and the future can be trusted to look after itself. The young men and maidens of that time will find the stars of their present brighter than the stars of '92, the people around them more absorbing than books, and their own outlook on life more reasonable than that of dead men. Their writing and painting, in proportion to its vitality and importance, will reflect this, their natural attitude, toward life and history.

1894

# 1871 ~ *Winston Churchill* ~ —

CHURCHILL is a native of St. Louis, born when that city was still youthful and romantic with the vivid memories of stirring events. In his blood, we are told, there is a commingling of the Puritan and the Cavalier. He was brought up by an uncle and aunt, prepared for college at Smith Academy, engaged in business at sixteen because the prospects of a college education were uncertain. An appointment to the Naval Academy, however, solved the problem of his educational training. It was during his course in the Academy that, besides achieving commendable rating as a student, he developed an intense interest in American history and American problems, and thus laid the foundation for his future career as a novelist. He read widely and studied the famous colonial and Revolutionary mansions in Annapolis, allowing his active imagination to play on what he read and saw. On graduation in 1894 he resigned his commission in the Navy, either for the reason that there was no promising opening for him or that he had determined to make literature his profession. He joined the staff of the *Army and Navy Journal*, and later held an important position on the *Cosmopolitan*.

Meanwhile he must have been writing *The Celebrity* (1898), the success of which, together with a prosperous marriage, enabled him to relinquish magazine work and devote himself to fiction. In 1899 came *Richard Carvel*, which was received with universal acclaim. There was neither doubt nor certainty about the future. He established his home in New Hampshire among a colony of artists and writers which included Maxfield Parrish, Augustus St. Gaudens, and Percy MacKaye. He has taken an active part in the affairs of his adopted state, having served as a member of the state legislature and conducted a thrilling campaign for the governorship, which he barely missed. His political activity is particularly significant because it was partially responsible in leading him to devote his later novels to social and political reforms.

Churchill, even more than Tarkington, kept his ears open to the shouts and murmurs of the reading public. The years from 1896 to 1902 were dominated by the revival of interest in romance. Historical novels were the fashion. In response to the demand he wrote *Richard Carvel* (1899), *The Crisis* (1901), and *The Crossing* (1904), only to find that the romantic rage was spent as far as the public interest was concerned. Then came the period of political enthusiasm. Theodore Roosevelt was recalling the moral conscience to its rightful place in public affairs. The zeal against bosses, graft, and corruption knew no end. Churchill himself took active part in the fight. But what is more important, he wrote two novels, *Coniston* (1906) and *Mr.*

*Crewe's Career* (1908), the former revealing the methods and power of a onetime state boss, the other the corrupt practices of the railroads, both novels good as fiction and effective as propaganda. Besides romantic and political novels, he wrote others dealing with social and economic problems. To this group belong *A Modern Chronicle* (1901), a study of the problem of divorce; *The Inside of the Cup* (1913), in which the central theme is religion, its social responsibility, and its more or less undercover relations with business; *A Far Country* (1915), a story dealing with lust for power and its effect upon the soul; *The Dwelling Place of Light* (1917), showing the effect of modern industrialism upon woman. He thus becomes an excellent example of the romanticist turned sociologist.

Churchill was a painstaking and meticulous worker. He regarded two or three years as a reasonable time in which to do a novel. In preparation he read widely and intensively, covering all phases of the subject that might have a bearing upon his plan. It was his theory that the historical novel should "give an absolutely faithful picture, complete on all sides, of the thoughts, ideas, manners and customs, dress, occupations, and pleasures of a given people in a given age." It is to record details which would ordinarily not find a place in history proper. A plan and purpose so comprehensive demanded research of the most painstaking kind.

The result is that his novels are characterized by an opulence and substantiality rarely to be found in these post-Victorian days. Some critics have compared him with Thackeray in this respect. He was intent not only upon writing good novels but upon writing the best possible novels, an aim which does not necessarily make him a literary Pharisee, as some have intimated. He did not always succeed, for his plots are not always well articulated, his conversation is in spots very poorly managed, and in the entire range of the characters he has created, only Jethro Bass and Cynthia Wetherill are really memorable. Yet in spite of flaws the novels are a solid achievement.

They will have a place both as pieces of art and as social documents. The three romances presenting American life during three important crises are almost epic in their sweep and comprehensiveness. The political and sociological novels portray America during a period of acute industrial expansion, and point out many of the spiritual implications of the progressive change. Nor do these statements imply that the novels suffer because of their social significance. They combine narrative skill and social purpose in fine balance.

Churchill's novels: *The Celebrity* (1898); *Richard Carvel* (1899); *The Crisis* (1901); *The Crossing* (1904); *Coniston* (1906); *Mr. Crewe's Career* (1908); *A Modern Chronicle* (1910); *The Inside of the Cup* (1913); *A Far Country* (1915); *The Dwelling-Place of Light* (1917). His essays and sketches are collected in *A Traveller in War-Time* (1918). He published two plays: *The Title-Mart* (1905) and *Dr. Jonathan* (1919). Critical and biographical: F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages Among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books* (1902); M. E.

Speare, *The Political Novel: Its Development in England and in America* (1924); J. C. Underwood, *Literature and Insurgency* (1914); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); H. J. Bridges, *Criticisms of Life* (1915); J. M. Dixon, "Some Real Persons and Places in 'The Crisis,'" *Bookman*, Sept., 1901; C. A. Pratt, "Churchill and the Epic Novel," *Critic*, July, 1901; B. Henderson, "Winston Churchill's Country," *Bookman*, Aug., 1915; J. W. Remick, "Winston Churchill and His Campaign," *Outlook*, Sept. 1, 1906; S. Johnson, "Novelist and his Novels in Politics," *World's Work*, Dec., 1908; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* RICHARD CARVEL

*Richard Carvel* was written in the Waverley tradition of the historical romance. The purpose was the glorification of a segment of the national past. By the time Churchill came to write *A Far Country*, fifteen years later, his interest had been diverted to social problems, and he became one of the chief sociological novelists.

CHAPTER LV

### *"The Love of a Maid for a Man"*

THE next morning, when Dr. Barry had gone, Mrs. Manners propped me up in bed and left me for a little, so she said. Then who should come in with my breakfast on a tray but my lady herself, looking so fresh and beautiful that she startled me vastly.

"A penny for your thoughts, Richard," she cried. "Why, you are as grave as a screech-owl this brave morning."

"To speak truth, Dolly," said I, "I was wondering how the commodore is to get away from the Texel, with half the British navy lying in wait outside."

"Do not worry your head about that," said she, setting down the tray; "it will be mere child's play to him. Oh, but I should like to see your commodore again, and tell him how much I love him."

"I pray that you may have the chance," I replied.

With a marvellous quickness she had tied the napkin beneath my chin, not so much as looking at the knot. Then she stepped to the mantel and took down one of Mr. Wedgwood's cups and dishes and, wiping them with her apron, filled the cup with fragrant tea which she tendered me with her eyes sparkling.

"Your excellency is the first to be honored with this service," says she with a curtsey.

I was as a man without a tongue, my hunger gone from sheer happiness—and fright. And yet eating the breakfast with a relish because she had made it. She busied herself about the room, dusting here and tidying there, and anon throwing a glance at me to see if I needed anything. My eyes followed her hither and thither. When I had finished, she undid the napkin, and brushed the crumbs from the coverlet.

"You are not going?" I said, with dismay.

"Did you wish anything more, sir?" she asked.

"Oh, Dorothy," I cried, "it is you I want, and you will not come near me."

For an instant she stood irresolute. Then she put down the tray and came over beside me.

"Do you really want me, sir?"

"Dorothy," I began, "I must first tell you that I have some guess at the sacrifice you are making for my sake, and of the trouble and danger which I bring you."

Without more ado she put her hand over my mouth.

"No," she said, reddening, "you shall tell me nothing of the sort."

I seized her hand, however it struggled, and, holding it fast, continued:

"And I learned that you have been watching with me by night, and working by day, when you never should have worked at all. To think that you should be reduced to that, and I not know it!"

Her eyes sought mine for a fleeting second.

"Why, you silly boy, I have made a fortune out of my cookery. And fame, too, for now am I known from Mary-le-bonne to Chelsea, while before my name was unheard of out of little Mayfair. Indeed, I would not have missed the experience for a lady-in-waiting-ship. I have learned a deal since I saw you last, sir.

I know that the world, like our Continental money, must not be taken for the price that is stamped upon it. And as for the watching with you," said my lady, "that had to be borne with as cheerfully as might be. Since I had sent off for you, I was in duty bound to do my share toward your recovery. I was even going to add that this watching was a pleasure,—our curate says the sense of duty performed is sure to be. But you used to cry out the most terrifying things to frighten me; the pattering of blood and the bumping of bodies on the decks, and the black rivulets that ran and ran and ran and never stopped; and strange, rough commands I could not understand; and the name of your commodore whom you love so much. And often you would repeat over and over: *'I have not yet begun to fight, I have not yet begun to fight!'*"

"Yes, 'twas that he answered when they asked him if he had struck," I exclaimed.

"It must have been an awful scene," she said, and her shoulders quivered. "When you were at your worst you would talk of it, and sometimes of what happened to you in London, of that ride in Hyde Park, or—or of Vauxhall," she continued hurriedly. "And when I could bear it no longer, I would take your hand and call you by name, and often quiet you thus."

"And did I speak of aught else?" I asked eagerly.

"Oh, yes. When you were calmer, it would be of your childhood, of your grandfather and your birthdays, of Captain Clapsaddle, and of Patty and her father."

"And never of Dolly, I suppose."

She turned away her head.

"And never of Dolly?"

"I will tell you what you said once, Richard," she answered, her voice dropping very low. "I was sitting by the window there, and the dawn was coming. And suddenly I heard you cry: 'Patty, when I return will you be my wife?' I got up and came to your side, and you said it again, twice."

The room was very still. And the vision of Patty in the parlor of Gordon's Pride, knitting my woolen stocking, rose before me.

"Yes," I said at length, "I asked her that the day before I left for the war. God bless her! She has the warmest heart in the world, and the most generous nature. Do you know what her answer was, Dorothy?"

"No." 'Twas only her lips moving that formed the word. She was twisting absently the tassel of the bed curtain.

"She asked me if I loved her."

My lady glanced up with a start, then looked me searchingly through and through.

"And you?" she said, in the same inaudible way.

"I could answer nothing. 'Twas because of her father's dying wish I asked her, and she guessed that same. I would not tell her a lie, for only the one woman lives whom I love, and whom I have loved ever since we were children together among the strawberries. Need I say that that woman is you, Dorothy? I loved you before we sailed to Carvel Hall between my grandfather's knees, and I will love you till death claims me."

Then it seemed as if my heart had stopped beating. But the snowy apron upon her breast fluttered like a sail stirring in the wind, her head was high, and her eyes were far away. Even my voice sounded in the distance as I continued:—

"Will you be the mistress of Carvel Hall, Dorothy? Hallowed is the day that I can ask it."

What of this earth may excel in sweetness the surrender of that proud and noble nature! And her words, my dears, shall be sacred to you, too, who are descended from her. She bent forward a little, those deep blue eyes gazing full into my own with a fondness to make me tremble.

"Dear Richard," she said, "I believe I have loved you always. If I have been wilful and wicked, I have suffered more than you know —even as I have made you suffer."

"And now our suffering is over, Dorothy."

"Oh, don't say that, my dear!" she cried, "but let us rather make a prayer to God."

Down she got on her knees close beside me, and I took both of her hands between my own. But presently I sought for a riband that was around my neck, and drew out a locket. Within it were pressed those lilies of the valley I had picked for her long years gone by on my birthday. And she smiled,

though the tears shone like dewdrops on her lashes.

"When Jack brought you to us for dead, we did not take it off, dear," she said gently. "I wept with sorrow and joy at sight of it, for I remembered you as you were when you picked those flowers, and how lightly I had thought of leaving you as I wound them into my hair. And then, when I had gone aboard the *Annapolis*, I knew all at once that I would have given anything to stay, and I thought my heart would break when we left the Severn cliffs behind. But that, sir, has been a secret until this day," she added, smiling archly through her tears.

She took out one of the withered flowers, and then as caressingly put it back beside the others, and closed the locket.

"I forbade Dr. Barry to take it off, Richard, when you lay so white and still. I knew then that you had been true to me, despite what I had heard. And if you were to die—" her voice broke a little as she passed her hand over my brow, "if you were to die, my single comfort would have been that you wore it then."

"And you heard rumors of me, Dorothy?"

"George Worthington and others told me how ably you managed Mr. Swain's affairs, and that you had become of some weight with the thinking men of the province. Richard, I was proud to think that you had the courage to laugh at disaster and to become a factor. I believe," she said shyly, "'twas that put the cooking into my head, and gave me courage. And when I heard that Patty was to marry you, Heaven is my witness that I tried to be reconciled and think it for the best. Through my own fault I had lost you, and I knew well she would make you a better wife than I."

"And you would not even let Jack speak for me!"

"Dear Jack!" she cried; "were it not for Jack we should not be here, Richard."

"Indeed, Dolly, two people could scarce fall deeper in debt to another than are you and I to my Lord Viscount," I answered with feeling. "His honesty and loyalty to us both saved you for me at the very outset."

"Yes," she replied thoughtfully, "I believed you dead. And I should have married him, I think. For Dr. Courtenay had sent me that piece from the *Gazette* telling of the duel between you over Patty Swain—"

"Dr. Courtenay sent you that!" I interrupted.

"I was a wild young creature then, my dear, with little beside vanity under my cap. And the notion that you could admire and love any girl but me was beyond endurance. Then his Lordship arrived in England, brimming with praise of you, to assure me that the affair was not about Patty at all. This was far from making me satisfied that you were not in love with her, and I may say now that I was miserable. Then, as we were setting out for Castle Howard, came the news of your death on the road to Upper Marlboro'. I could not go a step. Poor Jack, he was very honest when he proposed," she said, with a sigh.

"He loved you, Dorothy."

She did not hear me, so deep was she in thought.

"'Twas he who gave me news of you, when I was starving at Gordon's."

"And I—I starved, too, Richard," she answered softly. "Dearest, I did very wrong. There are some matters that must be spoken of between us, whatever the pain they give. And my heart aches now when I think of that dark day in Arlington Street when I gave you the locket, and you went out of my life. I knew that I had done wrong then, Richard, as soon as ever the door closed behind you. I should have gone with you, for better for worse, for richer for poorer. I should have run after you in the rain and thrown myself at your feet. And that would have been best for my father and for me."

She covered her face with her hands, and her words were stifled by a sob.

"Dorothy, Dorothy!" I cried, drawing her to me. "Another time. Not now, when we are so happy."

"Now, and never again, dear," she said. "Yes, I saw and heard all that passed in the drawing-room. And I did not blame, but praised you for it. I have never spoken a word beyond necessity to my father since. God forgive me!" she cried, "but I have despised him from that hour. When I knew that he

had plotted to sell me to that detestable brute, working upon me to save his honor, of which he has not the smallest spark; that he had recognized and denied you, friendless before our house, and sent you into the darkness at Vauxhall to be murdered, then he was no father of mine. I would that you might know what my mother has suffered from such a man, Richard."

"My dear, I have often pitied her from my soul," I said.

"And now I shall tell you something of the story of the Duke of Chartersea," she went on, and I felt her tremble as she spoke that name. "I think of all we have Lord Comyn to thank for, next to saving your life twice, was his telling you of the danger I ran. And, Richard, after refusing you that day on the balcony over the Park, I had no hope left. You may thank your own nobility and courage that you remained in London after that. Richard," she said, "do you recall my asking you in the coach, on the way from Castle Yard, for the exact day you met my father in Arlington Street?"

"Yes," I replied, in some excitement, "yes." For I was at last to come at the bottom of this affair.

"The duke had made a formal offer for me when first we came to London. I think my father wrote of that to Dr. Courtenay." (I smiled at the recollection now.) "Then his Grace persisted in following me everywhere, and vowed publicly that he would marry me. I ordered him from our house, since my father would not. At last one afternoon he came back to dine with us, insolent to excess. I left the table. He sat with my father two hours or more, drinking and singing, and giving orders to the servants. I shut my door, that I might not hear. After a while my mother came up to me, crying, saying that Mr. Manners would be branded with dishonor if I did not consent to marry his Grace,—a most terrible dishonor, of which she could not speak. That the duke had given my father a month to win my consent. And that month was up, Richard, the very afternoon you appeared with Mr. Dix in Arlington Street."

"And you agreed to marry him, Dolly?" I asked breathlessly.

"By the grace of Heaven, I did not," she answered quickly. "The utmost that I would consent to was a two months' respite, promising to give my hand to no one in that interval. And so I was forced to refuse you, Richard. You must have seen even then that I loved you, dear, though I was so cruel when you spoke of saving me from his Grace. I could not bear to think that you knew of any stain upon our family. I think—I think I would rather have died, or have married him. That day I threw Chartersea's presents out of the window, but my father made the servants gather them all which escaped breaking, and put them in the drawing-room. Then I fell ill."

She was silent, I clinging to her, and shuddering to think how near I had been to losing her.

"It was Jack who came to cheer me," I said presently. "His faith in you was never shaken, sweetheart. But I went to Newmarket and Ampthill, and behaved like the ingrate I was. I richly deserved the scolding he had for me when I got back to town, which sent me running to Arlington Street. There I met Dr. James coming out, who asked me if I was Mr. Carvel, and told me that you had called my name."

"And, you goose, you never suspected," says she, smiling.

"How was I to suspect that you loved a provincial booby like me, when you had the choice of so many accomplished gentlemen with titles and estates?"

"How were you to perceive, indeed, that you had qualities which they lacked?"

"And you were forever vowing that you would marry a nobleman, my lady. For you said to me once that I should call you so, and ride in the coach with the coroneted panels when I came home on a visit."

"And I said, too," retorted Dolly, with mischief in her eyes, "do you remember what I told you the New Year's eve when we sat out by the sundial at Carvel Hall, when I was so proud of having fixed Dr. Courtenay's attentions? I said that I should never marry you, sir, who was so rough and masterful, and thrashed every lad that did not agree with you."

"Alas, so you did, and a deal more!" I exclaimed.

With that she broke away from me and, getting to her feet, made me a low curtsey with the grace that was hers alone.

"You are my Lord and my King, sir," she said, "and my rough Patriot Squire, all in one."

"Are you happy, Dolly?" I asked, tremulous from my own joy.

"I have never been happy in all my life before, Richard dear," she said.

In truth, she was a being transformed, and more wondrous fair than ever. And even then I pictured her in the brave gowns and jewels I would buy her when times were mended, when our dear country would be free. All at once, ere I could draw a breath, she had stooped and kissed me ever so lightly on the forehead.

The door opened upon Aunt Lucy. She had but to look at us, and her black face beamed at our blushes. My lady threw her arms about her neck, and hid her face in the ample bosom.

"Now praise de good Lawd!" cried Mammy; "I knowed it dis longest time. What's I done tole you, Miss Dolly? What's I done tole you, honey?"

But my lady flew from the room. Presently I heard the spinet playing softly, and the words of that air came out of my heart from long ago.

"Love me little, love me long,
Is the burthen of my song.
Love that is too hot and strong
Burneth soon to waste.
Still, I would not have thee cold,
Nor too backward, nor too bold.
Love that lasteth till 'tis old
Fadeth not in haste."

1899

## *From* A FAR COUNTRY

### CHAPTER XVI

THE *Pilot* published a series of sensational articles and editorials about the Galligan matter, a picture of Galligan, an account of the destitute state of his wife and family. The time had not yet arrived when such newspapers dared to attack the probity of our courts, but a system of law that permitted such palpable injustice because of technicalities was bitterly denounced. What chance had a poor man against such a moloch as the railroad, even with a lawyer of such ability as had been exhibited by Hermann Krebs? Krebs was praised, and the attention of Mr. Lawler's readers was called to the fact that Krebs was the man who, some years before, had opposed single-handed in the legislature the notorious Bill 709. It was well known in certain circles—the editorial went on to say—that this legislation had been drawn by Theodore Watling in the interests of the Boyne Iron Works, etc., etc. Hugh Paret had learned at the feet of the able master. This first sight of my name thus opprobriously flung to the multitude gave me an unpleasant shock. I had seen Mr. Scherer attacked, Mr. Gorse attacked, and Mr. Watling: I had all along realized, vaguely, that my turn would come, and I thought myself to have acquired a compensating philosophy. I threw the sheet into the waste basket, presently picked it out again and reread the sentence containing my name. Well, there were certain penalties that every career must pay. I had become, at last, a marked man, and I recognized the fact that this assault would be the forerunner of many.

I tried to derive some comfort and amusement from the thought of certain operations of mine that Mr. Lawler had not discovered, that would have been matters of peculiar interest to his innocent public: certain extra-legal operations at the time when the Boyne corporation was being formed, for instance. And how they would have licked their chops had they learned of that manoeuvre by which I had managed to have one of Mr. Scherer's subsidiary companies in another state, with property and assets amounting to more than twenty millions, reorganized under the laws of New Jersey, and the pending case thus transferred to the Federal court, where we won hands down! This Galligan affair was nothing to that. Nevertheless, it *was* annoying. As I sat in the street car on my way homeward, a man beside me was reading the *Pilot*. I had a queer sensation as he turned the page, and scanned the editorial; and I could not help wondering what he and the thousands like him thought of me; what he would say if I introduced

myself and asked his opinion. Perhaps he did not think at all: undoubtedly he, and the public at large, were used to Mr. Lawler's daily display of "injustices." Nevertheless, like slow acid, they must be eating into the public consciousness. It was an outrage—this freedom of the press.

With renewed exasperation I thought of Krebs, of his disturbing and almost uncanny faculty of following me up. Why couldn't he have remained in Elkington? Why did he have to follow me here, to make capital out of a case that might never have been heard of except for him? . . . I was still in this disagreeable frame of mind when I turned the corner by my house and caught sight of Maude, in the front yard, bending bareheaded over a bed of late flowers which the frost had spared. The evening was sharp, the dusk already gathering.

"You'll catch cold," I called to her.

She looked up at the sound of my voice.

"They'll soon be gone," she sighed, referring to the flowers. "I hate winter."

She put her hand through my arm, and we went into the house. The curtains were drawn, a fire was crackling on the hearth, the lamps were lighted, and as I dropped into a chair this living-room of ours seemed to take on the air of a refuge from the vague, threatening sinister things of the world without. I felt I had never valued it before. Maude took up her sewing and sat down beside the table.

"Hugh," she said suddenly, "I read something in the newspaper—"

My exasperation flared up again.

"Where did you get that disreputable sheet?" I demanded.

"At the dressmaker's!" she answered. "I—I just happened to see the name *Paret*."

"It's just politics," I declared, "stirring up discontent by misrepresentation. Jealousy."

She leaned forward in her chair, gazing into the flames.

"Then it isn't true that this poor man, Galligan—isn't that his name?—was cheated out of the damages he ought to have to keep himself and his family alive?"

"You must have been talking to Perry or Susan," I said. "They seem to be convinced that I am an oppressor of the poor."

"Hugh!" The tone in which she spoke my name smote me. "How can you say that? How can you doubt their loyalty, and mine? Do you think they would undermine you, and to *me*, behind your back?"

"I didn't mean that, of course, Maude. I was annoyed—about something else. And Tom and Perry have an air of deprecating most of the enterprises in which I am professionally engaged. It's very well for them to talk. All Perry has to do is to sit back and take in the receipts from the Boyne Street car line, and Tom is content if he gets a few commissions every week. They're like militiamen criticizing soldiers under fire. I know they're good friends of mine, but sometimes I lose patience with them."

I got up and walked to the window, and came back again and stood before her.

"I'm sorry for this man, Galligan," I went on, "I can't tell you how sorry. But few people who are not on the inside, so to speak, grasp the fact that big corporations, like the Railroad, are looked upon as fair game for every kind of parasite. Not a day passes in which attempts are not made to bleed them. Some of these cases are pathetic. It had cost the Railroad many times fifteen thousand dollars to fight Galligan's case. But if they had paid it, they would have laid themselves open to thousands of similiar demands. Dividends would dwindle. The stockholders have a right to a fair return on their money. Galligan claims that there was a defective sill on the car which is said to have caused the wreck. If damages are paid on that basis, it means the daily inspection of every car which passes over their lines. And more than that: there are certain defects, as in the present case, which an inspection would not reveal. When a man accepts employment on a railroad he assumes a certain amount of personal risk,—it's not precisely a chamber-maid's job. And the lawyer who defends such cases, whatever his personal feelings may be, cannot afford to be swayed by them. He must take the larger view."

"Why didn't you tell me about it before?" she asked.

"Well, I didn't think it of enough importance—these things are all in the day's work."

"But Mr. Krebs? How strange that he should be here, connected with the case!"

I made an effort to control myself.

"Your old friend," I said. "I believe you have a sentiment about him."

She looked up at me.

"Scarcely that," she replied gravely, with the literalness that often characterized her, "but he isn't a person easily forgotten. He may be queer, one may not agree with his views, but after the experience I had with him I've never been able to look at him in the way George does, for instance, or even as father does."

"Or even as I do," I supplied.

"Well, perhaps not even as you do," she answered calmly. "I believe you once told me, however, that you thought him a fanatic, but sincere."

"He's certainly a fanatic!" I exclaimed.

"But sincere, Hugh—you still think him sincere."

"You seem a good deal concerned about a man you've laid eyes on but once."

She considered this.

"Yes, it is surprising," she admitted, "but it's true. I was sorry for him, but I admired him. I was not only impressed by his courage in taking charge of me, but also by the trust and affection the work-people showed. He must be a good man, however mistaken he may be in the methods he employs. And life is cruel to those people."

"Life is—life," I observed. "Neither you nor I nor Krebs is able to change it."

"Has he come here to practice?" she asked, after a moment.

"Yes. Do you want me to invite him to dinner?" and seeing that she did not reply I continued: "In spite of my explanation I suppose you think, because Krebs defended the man Galligan, that a monstrous injustice has been done."

"That is unworthy of you," she said, bending over her stitch.

I began to pace the room again, as was my habit when overwrought.

"Well, I was going to tell you about this affair if you had not forestalled me by mentioning it yourself. It isn't pleasant to be vilified by rascals who make capital out of vilification, and a man has a right to expect some sympathy from his wife."

"Did I ever deny you that, Hugh?" she asked. "Only—you don't ever seem to need it, to want it."

"And there are things," I pursued, "things in a man's province that a woman ought to accept from her husband, things which in the very nature of the case she can know nothing about."

"But a woman must think for herself," she declared. "She shouldn't become a mere automaton,—and these questions involve so much! People are discussing them, the magazines and periodicals are beginning to take them up."

I stared at her, somewhat appalled by this point of view. There had, indeed, been signs of its development before now, but I had not heeded them. And for the first time I beheld Maude in a new light.

"Oh, it's not that I don't trust you," she continued, "I'm open to conviction, but I must be convinced. Your explanation of this Galligan case seems a sensible one, although it's depressing. But life *is* hard and depressing sometimes—I've come to realize that. I want to think over what you've said, I want to talk over it some more. Why won't you tell me more of what you are doing? If you only would confide in me—as you have now! I can't help seeing that we are growing farther and farther apart, that business, your career, is taking all of you and leaving me nothing." She faltered and went on again. "It's difficult to tell you this—you never give me the chance. And it's not for my sake alone, but for yours, too. You are growing more and more self-centered, surrounding yourself with a hard shell. You don't realize it, but Tom notices, Perry notices it, it hurts them, it's *that* they complain of, Hugh!" she cried appealingly, sensing my resentment, forestalling the words of defence ready on my lips. "I know that you are busy, that many men depend on you, it isn't that I'm not proud of you and your success, but you don't understand what a woman craves,—she doesn't want only to be a good housekeeper, a good mother, but she wants to share a little, at any rate, in the life of her husband, in his troubles as well as in his successes. She wants to be of some little use, of some little help to him."

My feelings were reduced to a medley.

"But you are a help to me—a great help," I protested.

She shook her head. "I wish I were," she said.

It suddenly occurred to me that she might be. I was softened, and alarmed by the spectacle she had revealed of the widening breach between us. I laid my hand on her shoulder.

"Well, I'll try to do better, Maude."

She looked up at me, questioningly yet gratefully, through a mist of tears. But her reply—whatever it might have been—was forestalled by the sound of shouts and laughter in the hallway. She sprang up and ran to the door.

"It's the children," she exclaimed, "they've come home from Susan's party!"

II

It begins indeed to look as if I were writing this narrative upside down, for I have said nothing about children. Perhaps one reason for this omission is that I did not really appreciate them, that I found it impossible to take the same minute interest in them as Tom, for instance, who was, apparently, not content alone with the six which he possessed, but had adopted mine. One of them, little Sarah, said "Uncle Tom" before "Father." I do not mean to say that I had not occasional moments of tenderness toward them, but they were out of my thoughts much of the time. I have often wondered, since, how they regarded me; how, in their little minds, they defined the relationship. Generally, when I arrived home in the evening I liked to sit down before my study fire and read the afternoon newspapers or a magazine; but occasionally I went at once to the nursery for a few moments, to survey with complacency the medley of toys on the floor, and to kiss all three. They received my caresses with a certain shyness—the two younger ones, at least, as though they were at a loss to place me as a factor in the establishment. They tumbled over each other to greet Maude, and even Tom. If I were an enigma to them, what must they have thought of him? Sometimes I would discover him on the nursery floor, with one or two of his own children, building towers and castles and railroad stations, or forts to be attacked and demolished by regiments of lead soldiers. He was growing comfortable-looking, if not exactly stout; prematurely paternal, oddly willing to renounce the fiercer joys of life, the joys of acquisition, of conquest, of youth.

"You'd better come home with me, Chickabiddy," he would say, "that father of yours doesn't appreciate you. He's too busy getting rich."

"Chickabiddy," was his name for little Sarah. Half of the name stuck to her, and when she was older we called her Biddy.

She would gaze at him questioningly, her eyes like blue flower cups, a strange little mixture of solemnity and bubbling mirth, of shyness and impulsiveness. She had fat legs that creased above the tops of the absurd little boots that looked to be too tight; sometimes she rolled and tumbled in an ecstasy of abandon, and again she would sit motionless, as though absorbed in dreams. Her hair was like corn silk in the sun, twisting up into soft curls after her bath, when she sat rosily presiding over her supper table.

As I look back over her early infancy, I realize that I loved her, although it is impossible for me to say how much of this love is retrospective. Why I was not mad about her every hour of the day is a puzzle to me now. Why, indeed, was I not mad about all three of them? There were moments when I held and kissed them, when something within me melted: moments when I was away from them, and thought of them. But these moments did not last. The something within me hardened again, I became indifferent, my family was wiped out of my consciousness as though it had never existed.

There was Matthew, for instance, the oldest. When he arrived, he was to Maude a never-ending miracle, she would have his crib brought into her room, and I would find her leaning over the bedside, gazing at him with a rapt expression beyond my comprehension. To me he was just a brick-red morsel of humanity, all folds and wrinkles, and not at all remarkable in any way. Maude used to annoy me by getting out of bed in the middle of the night when he cried, and at such times I was apt to wonder at the odd trick the life-force had played me, and ask myself why I got

married at all. It was a queer method of carrying on the race! Later on, I began to take a cursory interest in him, to watch for signs in him of certain characteristics of my own youth which, in the philosophy of my manhood, I had come to regard as defects. And it disturbed me somewhat to see these signs appear. I wished him to be what I had become by force of will—a fighter. But he was a sensitive child, anxious for approval; not robust, though spiritual rather than delicate; even in comparative infancy he cared more for books than toys, and his greatest joy was in being read to. In spite of these traits—perhaps because of them—there was a sympathy between us. From the time that he could talk the child seemed to understand me. Occasionally I surprised him gazing at me with a certain wistful look that comes back to me as I write.

Moreton, Tom used to call Alexander the Great because he was a fighter from the cradle, beating his elder brother, too considerate to strike back, and likewise—when opportunity offered—his sister; and appropriating their toys. A self-sufficient, doughty young man, with the round head that withstands many blows, taking by nature to competition and buccaneering in general. I did not love him half so much as I did Matthew—if such intermittent emotions as mine may be called love. It was a standing joke of mine—which Maude strongly resented—that Moreton resembled Cousin George of Elkington.

III

Imbued with the highest ambition of my time, I had set my barque on a great circle, and almost before I realized it the barque was burdened with a wife and family and the steering had insensibly become more difficult; for Maude cared nothing about the destination, and when I took my hand off the wheel our ship showed a tendency to make for a quiet harbor. Thus the social initiative, which I believed should have been the woman's, was thrust back on me. It was almost incredible, yet indisputable, in a day when most American women were credited with a craving for social ambition that I, of all men, should have married a wife in whom the craving was wholly absent! She might have had what other women would have given their souls for. There were many reasons why I wished her to take what I deemed her proper place in the community as my wife—not that I cared for what is called society in the narrow sense; with me, it was a logical part of a broader scheme of life; an auxiliary rather than an essential, but a needful auxiliary; a means of dignifying and adorning the position I was taking. No only that, but I felt the need of intercourse—of intercourse of a lighter and more convivial nature with men and women who saw life as I saw it. In the evenings when we did not go out into that world our city afforded ennui took possession of me: I had never learned to care for books, I had no resources outside of my profession, and when I was not working on some legal problem I dawdled over the newspapers and went to bed. I don't mean to imply that our existence, outside of our continued intimacy with the Peterses and the Blackwoods, was socially isolated. We gave little dinners that Maude carried out with skill and taste; but it was I who suggested them; we went out to other dinners, sometimes to Nancy's—though we saw less and less of her—sometimes to other houses. But Maude had given evidence of domestic tastes and a disinclination for gaiety that those who entertained more were not slow to sense. I should have liked to take a larger house, but I felt the futility of suggesting it; the children were still small, and she was occupied with them. Meanwhile I beheld, and at times with considerable irritation, the social world changing, growing larger and more significant, a more important function of that higher phase of American existence the new century seemed definitely to have initiated. A segregative process was under way to which Maude was wholly indifferent. Our city was throwing off its social conservatism; wealth (which implied ability and superiority) was playing a greater part, entertainments were more luxurious, lines more strictly drawn. We had an elaborate country club for those who could afford expensive amusements. Much of this transformation had been due to the initiative and leadership of Nancy Durrett. . . .

Great and sudden wealth, however, if combined with obscure antecedents and question-

able qualifications, was still looked upon askance. In spite of the fact that Adolf Scherer had "put us on the map," the family of the great iron-master still remained outside of the social pale. He himself might have entered had it not been for his wife, who was supposed to be "queer," who remained at home in her house opposite Gallatin Park and made little German cakes,—a huge house which an unknown architect had taken unusual pains to make pretentious and hideous, for it was Rhenish, Moorish and Victorian by turns. Its geometric grounds matched those of the park, itself a monument to bad taste in landscape. The neighborhood was highly respectable, and inhabited by families of German extraction. There were two flaxen-haired daughters who had just graduated from an expensive boarding-school in New York, where they had received the polish needful for future careers. But the careers were not forthcoming.

I was thrown constantly with Adolf Scherer; I had earned his gratitude, I had become necessary to him. But after the great coup whereby he had fulfilled Mr. Watling's prophecy and become the chief factor in our business world he began to show signs of discontent, of an irritability that seemed foreign to his character, and that puzzled me. One day, however, I stumbled upon the cause of this fermentation, to wonder that I had not discovered it before. In many ways Adolf Scherer was a child. We were sitting in the Boyne Club.

"Money—yes!" he exclaimed, apropos of some demand made upon him by a charitable society. "They come to me for my money—there is always Scherer, they say. He will make up the deficit in the hospitals. But what is it they do for me? Nothing. Do they invite me to their houses, to their parties?"

This was what he wanted, then,—social recognition. I said nothing, but I saw my opportunity: I had the clew, now, to a certain attitude he had adopted of late toward me, an attitude of reproach; as though, in return for his many favours to me, there were something I had left undone. And when I went home I asked Maude to call on Mrs. Scherer.

"On Mrs. Scherer!" she repeated.

"Yes, I want you to invite them to dinner."

The proposal seemed to take away her breath. "I owe her husband a great deal, and I think he feels hurt that the wives of the men he knows down town haven't taken up his family." I felt that it would not be wise, with Maude, to announce my rather amazing discovery of the iron-master's social ambitions.

"But, Hugh, they must be very happy, they have their friends. And after all this time wouldn't it seem like an intrusion?"

"I don't think so," I said, "I'm sure it would please him, and them. You know how kind he's been to us, how he sent us East in his private car last year."

"Of course I'll go if you wish it, if you're sure they feel that way." She did make the call, that very week, and somewhat to my surprise reported that she liked Mrs. Scherer and the daughters: Maude's likes and dislikes, needless to say, were not governed by matters of policy.

"You were right, Hugh," she informed me, almost with enthusiasm, "they did seem lonely. And they were so glad to see me, it was rather pathetic. Mr. Scherer, it seems, had talked to them a great deal about you. They wanted to know why I hadn't come before. That was rather embarrassing. Fortunately they didn't give me time to talk,—I never heard people talk as they do. They all kissed me when I went away, and came down the steps with me. And Mrs. Scherer went into the conservatory and picked a huge bouquet. There it is," she said, laughingly, pointing to several vases. "I separated the colours as well as I could when I got home. We had coffee, and the most delicious German cakes in the Turkish room, or the Moorish room, whichever it is. I'm sure I shan't be able to eat anything more for days. When do you wish to have them for dinner?"

"Well," I said, "we ought to have time to get the right people to meet them. We'll ask Nancy and Ham."

Maude opened her eyes.

"Nancy! Do you think Nancy would like them?"

"I'm going to give her a chance, anyway," I replied. . . .

It was, in some ways, a memorable dinner. I don't know what I expected in Mrs. Scherer —from Maude's description a benevolent and

somewhat stupid, blue-eyed German woman, of peasant extraction. There could be no doubt about the peasant extraction, but when she hobbled into our little parlour with the aid of a stout, gold-headed cane she dominated it. Her very lameness added to a distinction that evinced itself in a dozen ways. Her nose was hooked, her colour high,—despite the years in Steelville,—her peculiar costume heightened the effect of her personality; her firelit black eyes bespoke a spirit accustomed to rule, and instead of being an aspirant for social honors, she seemed to confer them. Conversation ceased at her entrance.

"I'm sorry we are late, my dear," she said, as she greeted Maude affectionately, "but we have far to come. And this is your husband!" she exclaimed, as I was introduced. She scrutinized me. "I have heard something of you, Mr. Paret. You are smart. Shall I tell you the smartest thing you ever did?" She patted Maude's shoulder. "When you married your wife—that was it. I have fallen in love with her. If you do not know it, I tell you."

Next, Nancy was introduced.

"So you are Mrs. Hambleton Durrett?"

Nancy acknowledged her identity with a smile, but the next remark was a bombshell.

"The leader of society."

"Alas!" exclaimed Nancy, "I have been accused of many terrible things."

Their glances met. Nancy's was amused, baffling, like a spark in amber. Each, in its way, was redoubtable. A greater contrast between two women could scarcely have been imagined. It was well said (and not snobbishly) that generations had been required to make Nancy's figure: she wore a dress of blue sheen, the light playing on its ripples; and as she stood, apparently wholly at ease, looking down at the wife of Adolf Scherer, she reminded me of an expert swordsman who, with remarkable skill, was keeping a too-pressing and determined aspirant at arm's length. I was keenly aware that Maude did not possess this gift, and I realized for the first time something of the similarity between Nancy's career and my own. She, too, in her feminine sphere, exercised, and subtly, a power in which human passions were deeply involved.

If Nancy Durrett symbolized aristocracy, established order and prestige, what did Mrs. Scherer represent? Not democracy, mob rule—certainly. The stocky German peasant woman with her tightly drawn hair and heavy jewels seemed grotesquely to embody something that ultimately would have its way, a lusty and terrible force in the interests of which my own services were enlisted; to which the old American element in business and industry, the male counterpart of Nancy Willett, had already succumbed. And now it was about to storm the feminine fastnesses! I beheld a woman who had come to this country with a shawl over her head transformed into a new species of duchess, sure of herself, scorning the delicate euphemisms in which Nancy's kind were wont to refer to a social realm, that was no less real because its boundaries had not definitely been defined. She held her stick firmly, and gave Nancy an indomitable look.

"I want you to meet my daughters. Gretchen, Anna, come here and be introduced to Mrs. Durrett."

It was not without curiosity I watched these of the second generation as they made their bows, noted the differentiation in the type for which an American environment and a "finishing school" had been responsible. Gretchen and Anna had learned—in crises, such as the present—to restrain the superabundant vitality they had inherited. If their cheek bones were a little too high, their Delft blue eyes a little too small, their colour was of the proverbial rose-leaves and cream. Gene Hollister's difficulty was to know which to marry. They were nice girls,—of that there could be no doubt; there was no false modesty in their attitude toward "society"; nor did they pretend—as so many silly people did, that they were not attempting to get anywhere in particular, that it was less desirable to be in the center than on the dubious outer walks. They, too, were so glad to meet Mrs. Durrett.

Nancy's eyes twinkled as they passed on.

"You see what I have let you in for?" I said.

"My dear Hugh," she replied, "sooner or later we should have had to face them anyhow. I have recognized that for some time. With their money, and Mr. Scherer's prestige, and the will of that lady with the stick, in a few years we should have had nothing to say. Why

she's a female Napoleon. Hilda's the man of the family."

After that, Nancy invariably referred to Mrs. Scherer as Hilda.

If Mrs. Scherer was a surprise to us, her husband was a still greater one; and I had difficulty in recognizing the Adolf Scherer who came to our dinner party as the personage of the business world before whom lesser men were wont to cringe. He seemed rather mysteriously to have shed that personality, become an awkward, ingratiating, rather too-exuberant, ordinary man with a marked German accent. From time to time I found myself speculating uneasily on this phenomenon as I glanced down the table at his great torso, white waistcoated for the occasion. He was plainly "making up" to Nancy, and to Mrs. Ogilvy, who sat opposite him. On the whole, the atmosphere of our entertainment was rather electric. "Hilda" was chiefly responsible for this; her frankness was of the breath-taking kind. Far from attempting to hide or ignore the struggle by which she and her husband had attained their present position, she referred with the utmost naïveté to incidents in her career, while the whole table paused to listen.

"Before we had a carriage, yes, it was hard for me to get about. I had to be helped by the conductors into the street cars. I broke my hip when we lived in Steelville, and the doctor was a numbskull. He should be put in prison, is what I tell Adolf. I was standing on a clothes-horse, when it fell. I had much washing to do in those days."

"And—can nothing be done, Mrs. Scherer?" asked Leonard Dickinson, sympathetically.

"For an old woman? I am fifty-five. I have had many doctors. I would put them all in prison. How much was it you paid Dr. Stickney, in New York, Adolf? Five thousand dollars? And he did nothing—nothing. I'd rather be poor again, and work. But it is well to make the best of it." . . .

"Your grandfather was a fine man, Mr. Durrett," she informed Hambleton. "It is a pity for you, I think, that you do not have to work."

Ham, who sat on her other side, was amused.

"My grandfather did enough work for both of us," he said.

"If I had been your grandfather, I would have started you in puddling," she observed, as she eyed with disapproval the filling of his third glass of champagne. "I think there is too much gay life, too much games for rich young men nowadays. You will forgive me for saying what I think to young men?"

"I'll forgive you for not being my grandfather, at any rate," replied Ham, with unaccustomed wit.

She gazed at him with grim humor.

"It is bad for you I am not," she declared.

There was no gainsaying her. What can be done with a lady who will not recognize that morality is not discussed, and that personalities are tabooed save between intimates. Hilda was a personage as well as a Tartar. Laws, conventions, usages—to all these she would conform when it pleased her. She would have made an admirable inquisitorial judge, and quite as admirable a sick nurse. A rare criminal lawyer, likewise, was wasted in her. She was one of those individuals, I perceived, whose loyalties dominate them; and who, in behalf of those loyalties, carry chips on their shoulders.

"It is a long time that I have been wanting to meet you," she informed me. "You are smart."

I smiled, yet I was inclined to resent her use of the word, though I was by no means sure of the shade of meaning she meant to put into it. I had, indeed, an uneasy sense of the scantiness of my fund of humor to meet and turn such a situation; for I was experiencing, now, with her, the same queer feeling I had known in my youth in the presence of Cousin Robert Breck —the suspicion that this extraordinary person saw through me. It was as though she held up a mirror and compelled me to look at my soul features. I tried to assure myself that the mirror was distorted. I lost, nevertheless, the sureness of touch that comes from the conviction of being *all of a piece*. She contrived to resolve me again into conflicting elements. I was, for the moment, no longer the self-confident and triumphant young attorney accustomed to carry all before him, to command respect and admiration, but a complicated being whose unity had suddenly been split. I glanced around the table at Ogilvy, at Dickinson, at Ralph Hambleton. These men were functioning truly.

But was I? If I were not, might not this be the reason for the lack of synthesis—of which I was abruptly though vaguely aware—between my professional life, my domestic relationships, and my relationships with friends? The loyalty of the woman beside me struck me forcibly as a supreme trait. Where she had given, she did not withdraw. She had conferred it instantly on Maude. Did I feel that loyalty towards a single human being? towards Maude herself—my wife? or even towards Nancy? I pulled myself together, and resolved to give her credit for using the word "smart" in its unobjectionable sense. After all, Dickens had so used it.

"A lawyer must needs know something of what he is about, Mrs. Scherer, if he is to be employed by such a man as your husband," I replied.

Her black eyes snapped with pleasure.

"Ah, I suppose that is so," she agreed. "I knew he was a great man when I married him, and that was before Mr. Nathaniel Durrett found it out."

"But surely you did not think, in those days, that he would be as big as he has become? That he would not only be president of the Boyne Iron Works, but of a Boyne Iron Works that has exceeded Mr. Durrett's wildest dreams."

She shook her head complacently.

"Do you know what I told him when he married me? I said, 'Adolf, it is a pity you are born in Germany.' And when he asked me why, I told him that some day he might have been President of the United States."

"Well, that won't be a great deprivation to him," I remarked. "Mr. Scherer can do what he wants, and the President cannot."

"Adolf always does as he wants," she declared, gazing at him as he sat beside the brilliant wife of the grandson of the man whose red-shirted foreman he had been. "He does what he wants, and gets what he wants. He is getting what he wants now," she added, with such obvious meaning that I found no words to reply. "She is pretty, that Mrs. Durrett, and clever,—is it not so?"

I agreed. A new and indescribable note had come into Mrs. Scherer's voice, and I realized that she, too, was aware of that flaw in the redoubtable Mr. Scherer which none of his associates had guessed. It would have been strange if she had not discovered it. "She is beautiful, yes," the lady continued critically, "but she is not to compare with your wife. She has not the heart,—it is so with all your people of society. For them it is not what you are, but what you have done, and what you have."

The banality of this observation was mitigated by the feeling she threw into it.

"I think you misjudge Mrs. Durrett," I said, incautiously. "She has never before had the opportunity of meeting Mr. Scherer, of appreciating him."

"Mrs. Durrett is an old friend of yours?" she asked.

"I was brought up with her."

"Ah!" she exclaimed, and turned her penetrating glance upon me. I was startled. Could it be that she had discerned and interpreted those renascent feelings even then stirring within me, and of which I myself was as yet scarcely conscious? At this moment, fortunately for me, the women rose; the men remained to smoke; and Scherer, as they discussed matters of finance, became himself again. I joined in the conversation, but I was thinking of those instants when in flashes of understanding my eyes had met Nancy's, instants in which I was lifted out of my humdrum, deadly serious self and was able to look down objectively upon the life I led, the life we all led—and Nancy herself; to see with her the comic irony of it all. Nancy had the power to give me this exquisite sense of detachment that must sustain her. And was it not just this sustenance she could give that I needed? For want of it I was hardening, crystallizing, growing blind to the joy and variety of existence. Nancy could have saved me; she brought it home to me that I needed salvation. . . . I was struck by another thought; in spite of our separation, in spite of her marriage and mine, she was still nearer to me—far nearer—than any other being.

Later, I sought her out. She looked up at me amusedly from the window-seat in our living-room, where she had been talking to the Scherer girls.

"Well, how did you get along with Hilda?" she asked. "I thought I saw you struggling."

"She's somewhat disconcerting," I said. "I felt as if she were turning me inside out."

Nancy laughed.

"Hilda's a discovery—a genius. I'm going to have them to dinner myself."

"And Adolf?" I inquired. "I believe she thought you were preparing to run away with him. You seemed to have him hypnotized."

"I'm afraid your great man won't be able to stand—elevation," she declared. "He'll have vertigo. He's even got it now, at this little height, and when he builds his palace on Grant Avenue, and later moves to New York, I'm afraid he'll wobble even more."

"Is he thinking of doing all that?" I asked.

"I merely predict New York—It's inevitable," she replied. "Grant Avenue, yes; he wants me to help him choose a lot. He gave me ten thousand dollars for our Orphans' Home, but on the whole I think I prefer Hilda—even if she doesn't approve of me."

Nancy rose. The Scherers were going. While Mr. Scherer pressed my hand in a manner that convinced me of his gratitude, Hilda was bidding an affectionate good night to Maude. A few moments later she bore her husband and daughters away, and we heard the tap-tap of her cane on the walk outside. . . .

1914

# 1871 ~ *Stephen Crane* ~ 1900

STEPHEN CRANE was born in Newark, New Jersey, the fourteenth child in a Methodist minister's family. The boy showed early signs of revolt against the confining atmosphere of the parsonage, as well as against the genteel family traditions which generations of Cranes, prominent in state and nation, had built up. He shocked his family by announcing his disbelief in hell, and his schoolmasters by condemning Tennyson's poetry as "swill." Although he studied at Lafayette College and Syracuse University, he did not complete the course at either institution, and was more interested in baseball than in academic distinction. His efforts in journalism were unsuccessful because impressions seemed more important than facts. Commissioned by the Bacheller Syndicate, he traveled through the West and Southwest, and into Mexico, to write a series of sketches, and was sent by the New York *Journal* as a war correspondent to Greece. He settled in England where, with the exception of several months in America reporting the Spanish-American War, he lived until his premature death in 1900.

Crane was one of the leaders of the realistic revolt against the saccharine insincerity of the time. The chief tenet in his literary theory was the demand for sincerity. Of his first book, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1892), he said, "I had no other purpose . . . than to show people to people as they seem to me. If this be evil make the best of it." Inasmuch as man is born with his eyes he cannot be held responsible for his vision—"he is merely responsible for his quality of personal honesty. To keep close to this personal honesty is my supreme ambition." Life is represented without comment, as it appears to him. Critical values are left to the reader. Thus it is clear that he is a naturalist by virtue of this impersonal and detached treatment, as

well as by his refusal to give expression to moral judgments. He is also a determinist, for both Maggie and the recruit in *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) are in their respective spheres of the Bowery and war the victims of circumstances over which they had no control. The impressionistic phase of his art is seen in the discarding of detail, and achieving descriptive effect through "snapshot" economy. To be a great artist one must see clearly, and have the gift and inclination to report honestly and sincerely what has been seen.

Although Crane's complete works fill twelve volumes, the two books by which he will be known to posterity are *Maggie* and *The Red Badge of Courage*. The former is a short episodic novel, virile, outspoken, almost brutal, in which is recorded the degeneration of a young Irish girl, a habitué of the Bowery, the life of which Crane came to know intimately during his reporting days. Subject matter like this was not considered respectable, and it was three years after the book was privately printed that a publisher was found to sponsor it. In *The Red Badge of Courage* Crane dealt the death blow to the romantic treatment of war. As a young boy he had listened to Civil War veterans relate experiences when they were not on dress parade, and he came to the conclusion that war was neither glorious nor heroic, but sordid, ghastly, and futile. From this viewpoint he laid bare the soul of the young conscript, the fear, uncertainty, suffering, resentment, and ignorance of everything but the immediate commands of his superiors. Under his hand war became in fiction what it always has been in actuality,—a foolish, brutal, ghastly, confused, and unheroic experience. Crane marks the parting of the ways of war and romance. The best evidence of the power of his books is the influence which they have exerted on subsequent literature.

Crane's poetry anticipated some of the later developments in the new movement. His skill in imagery is unquestioned, though his force is sometimes weakened by a self-conscious effort to say startling things. He is austerely economical in style, as a result of which one feels a distinct lack of artistic warmth.

Crane's two famous books are *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets* (1893) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895). *The Little Regiment* (1896), *The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure* (1898), *The Monster and Other Stories* (1899), and *Whilomville Stories* (1900) are collections of short stories. His complete writings are available in W. Follett, ed., *The Work of Stephen Crane* (12 vols., 1925–6). Selections may be found in V. Starrett, ed., *Maggie and Other Stories* (1933); V. Starrett, ed., *Men, Women, and Books* (1921); Henry Hazlitt, *Maggie, Together with George's Mother and The Blue Hotel*, with introduction (1931). The poetry is available in *The Collected Poems of Stephen Crane* (1930). T. Beer's *Stephen Crane* (1923) is a full-length biography. T. L. Raymond's *Stephen Crane* (1923) is a briefer study. For further biographical information see J. D. Barry, "A Note on Stephen Crane," *Bookman*, April, 1901; C. Bohnenberger and N. M. Hill, eds., "The Letters of Joseph Conrad to Stephen and Cora Crane," *Bookman*, May and June, 1929; J. Conrad, "Stephen Crane: a Note Without Dates," *Bookman*, Feb., 1920; Mrs. J. Conrad, "Recollections of Stephen Crane," *Bookman*, April, 1926; H. R. Crane, "My Uncle, Stephen Crane at College,"

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## *From* THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE

Crane believed that the closer an artist gets to life the greater his art will be. With this as his guiding principle, he undertook to picture war as it really is, stripped of the melodrama, glamour and heroism which characterized many of the romantic war novels. He achieves his purpose by means of a psychological study of the common soldier from the time he enters the army, recording his reactions to his experiences with minute detail. It should be added that from the viewpoint of style the novel is a piece of excellent writing.

### CHAPTER V

THERE were moments of waiting. The youth thought of the village street at home before the arrival of the circus parade on a day in the spring. He remembered how he had stood, a small, thrillful boy, prepared to follow the dingy lady upon the white horse, or the band in its faded chariot. He saw the yellow road, the lines of expectant people, and the sober houses. He particularly remembered an old fellow who used to sit upon a cracker box in front of the store and feign to despise such exhibitions. A thousand details of color and form surged in his mind. The old fellow upon the cracker box appeared in middle prominence.

Some one cried, "Here they come!"

There was a rustling and muttering among the men. They displayed a feverish desire to have every possible cartridge ready to their hands. The boxes were pulled around into various positions, and adjusted with great care. It was as if seven hundred new bonnets were being tried on.

The tall soldier, having prepared his rifle, produced a red handkerchief of some kind. He was engaged in knitting it about his throat with exquisite attention to its position, when the cry was repeated up and down the line in a muffled roar of sound.

"Here they come! Here they come!" Gun locks clicked.

Across the smoke-infested fields came a brown swarm of running men who were giving shrill yells. They came on, stooping and swinging their rifles at all angles. A flag, tilted forward, sped near the front.

As he caught sight of them the youth was momentarily startled by a thought that perhaps his gun was not loaded. He stood trying to rally his faltering intellect so that he might recollect the moment when he had loaded, but he could not.

A hatless general pulled his dripping horse to a stand near the colonel of the 304th. He shook his fist in the other's face. "You've got to hold 'em back!" he shouted, savagely; "you've got to hold 'em back!"

In his agitation the colonel began to stammer. "A-all r-right, General, all right, by Gawd! We-we'll do our—we-we'll d-d-do—do our best, General." The general made a passionate gesture and galloped away. The colonel, perchance to relieve his feelings, began to scold like a wet parrot. The youth, turning swiftly to make sure that the rear was unmolested, saw the commander regarding his men in a highly resentful manner, as if he regretted above everything his association with them.

The man at the youth's elbow was mumbling, as if to himself: "Oh, we're in for it now! oh, we're in for it now!"

The captain of the company had been pacing

excitedly to and fro in the rear. He coaxed in schoolmistress fashion, as to a congregation of boys with primers. His talk was an endless repetition. "Reserve your fire, boys—don't shoot till I tell you—save your fire—wait till they get close up—don't be damned fools—"

Perspiration streamed down the youth's face, which was soiled like that of a weeping urchin. He frequently, with a nervous movement, wiped his eyes with his coat sleeve. His mouth was still a little way open.

He got the one glance at the foe-swarming field in front of him, and instantly ceased to debate the question of his piece being loaded. Before he was ready to begin—before he had announced to himself that he was about to fight—he threw the obedient, well-balanced rifle into position and fired a first wild shot. Directly he was working at his weapon like an automatic affair.

He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was a part—a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country—was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire. For some moments he could not flee no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand.

If he had thought the regiment was about to be annihilated perhaps he could have amputated himself from it. But its noise gave him assurance. The regiment was like a firework that, once ignited, proceeds superior to circumstances until its blazing vitality fades. It wheezed and banged with a mighty power. He pictured the ground before it as strewn with the discomfited.

There was a consciousness always of the presence of his comrades about him. He felt the subtle battle brotherhood more potent even than the cause for which they were fighting. It was a mysterious fraternity born of the smoke and danger of death.

He was at a task. He was like a carpenter who has made many boxes, making still another box, only there was furious haste in his movement. He, in his thought, was careering off in other places, even as the carpenter who as he works whistles and thinks of his friend or his enemy, his home or a saloon. And these jolted dreams were never perfect to him afterward, but remained a mass of blurred shapes.

Presently he began to feel the effects of the war atmosphere—a blistering sweat, a sensation that his eyeballs were about to crack like hot stones. A burning roar filled his ears.

Following this came a red rage. He developed the acute exasperation of a pestered animal, a well-meaning cow worried by dogs. He had a mad feeling against his rifle, which could only be used against one life at a time. He wished to rush forward and strangle with his fingers. He craved a power that would enable him to make a world-sweeping gesture and brush all back. His impotency appeared to him, and made his rage into that of a driven beast.

Buried in the smoke of many rifles his anger was directed not so much against the men whom he knew were rushing toward him as against the swirling battle phantoms which were choking him, stuffing their smoke robes down his parched throat. He fought frantically for respite for his senses, for air, as a babe being smothered attacks the deadly blankets.

There was a blare of heated rage mingled with a certain expression of intentness on all faces. Many of the men were making low-toned noises with their mouths, and these subdued cheers, snarls, imprecations, prayers, made a wild, barbaric song that went as an undercurrent of sound, strange and chant-like with the resounding chords of the war march. The man at the youth's elbow was babbling. In it there was something soft and tender like the monologue of a babe. The tall soldier was swearing in a loud voice. From his lips came a black procession of curious oaths. Of a sudden another broke out in a querulous way like a man who has mislaid his hat. "Well, why don't they support us? Why don't they send supports? Do they think——"

The youth in his battle sleep heard this as one who dozes hears.

There was a singular absence of heroic poses. The men bending and surging in their haste and rage were in every impossible attitude. The steel ramrods clanked and clanged with incessant din as the men pounded them

furiously into the hot rifle barrels. The flaps of the cartridge boxes were all unfastened, and bobbed idiotically with each movement. The rifles, once loaded, were jerked to the shoulder and fired without apparent aim into the smoke or at one of the blurred and shifting forms which upon the field before the regiment had been growing larger and larger like puppets under a magician's hand.

The officers, at their intervals, rearward, neglected to stand in picturesque attitudes. They were bobbing to and fro roaring directions and encouragements. The dimensions of their howls were extraordinary. They expended their lungs with prodigal wills. And often they nearly stood upon their heads in their anxiety to observe the enemy on the other side of the tumbling smoke.

The lieutenant of the youth's company had encountered a soldier who had fled screaming at the first volley of his comrades. Behind the lines these two were acting a little isolated scene. The man was blubbering and staring with sheeplike eyes at the lieutenant, who had seized him by the collar and was pommeling him. He drove him back into the ranks with many blows. The soldier went mechanically, dully, with his animal-like eyes upon the officer. Perhaps there was to him a divinity expressed in the voice of the other—stern, hard, with no reflection of fear in it. He tried to reload his gun, but his shaking hands prevented. The lieutenant was obliged to assist him.

The men dropped here and there like bundles. The captain of the youth's company had been killed in an early part of the action. His body lay stretched out in the position of a tired man resting, but upon his face there was an astonished and sorrowful look, as if he thought some friend had done him an ill turn. The babbling man was grazed by a shot that made the blood stream widely down his face. He clapped both hands to his head. "Oh!" he said, and ran. Another grunted suddenly as if he had been struck by a club in the stomach. He sat down and gazed ruefully. In his eyes there was mute, indefinite reproach. Farther up the line a man, standing behind a tree, had had his knee joint splintered by a ball. Immediately he had dropped his rifle and gripped the tree with both arms. And there he remained, clinging desperately and crying for assistance that he might withdraw his hold upon the tree.

At last an exultant yell went along the quivering line. The firing dwindled from an uproar to a last vindictive popping. As the smoke slowly eddied away, the youth saw that the charge had been repulsed. The enemy were scattered into reluctant groups. He saw a man climb to the top of the fence, straddle the rail, and fire a parting shot. The waves had receded, leaving bits of dark *débris* upon the ground.

Some in the regiment began to whoop frenziedly. Many were silent. Apparently they were trying to contemplate themselves.

After the fever had left his veins, the youth thought that at last he was going to suffocate. He became aware of the foul atmosphere in which he had been struggling. He was grimy and dripping like a laborer in a foundry. He grasped his canteen and took a long swallow of the warmed water.

A sentence with variations went up and down the line. "Well, we've helt 'em back. We've helt 'em back; derned if we haven't." The men said it blissfully, leering at each other with dirty smiles.

The youth turned to look behind him and off to the right and off to the left. He experienced the joy of a man who at last finds leisure in which to look about him.

Under foot there were a few ghastly forms motionless. They lay twisted in fantastic contortions. Arms were bent and heads were turned in incredible ways. It seemed that the dead men must have fallen from some great height to get into such positions. They looked to be dumped out upon the ground from the sky.

From a position in the rear of the grove a battery was throwing shells over it. The flash of the guns startled the youth at first. He thought they were aimed directly at him. Through the trees he watched the black figures of the gunners as they worked swiftly and intently. Their labor seemed a complicated thing. He wondered how they could remember its formula in the midst of confusion.

The guns squatted in a row like savage

chiefs. They argued with abrupt violence. It was a grim pow-pow. Their busy servants ran hither and thither.

A small procession of wounded men were going drearily toward the rear. It was a flow of blood from the torn body of the brigade.

To the right and to the left were the dark lines of other troops. Far in front he thought he could see lighter masses protruding in points from the forest. They were suggestive of unnumbered thousands.

Once he saw a tiny battery go dashing along the line of the horizon. The tiny riders were beating the tiny horses.

From a sloping hill came the sound of cheerings and clashes. Smoke welled slowly through the leaves.

Batteries were speaking with thunderous oratorical effort. Here and there were flags, the red in the stripes dominating. They splashed bits of warm color upon the dark lines of troops.

The youth felt the old thrill at the sight of the emblem. They were like beautiful birds strangely undaunted in a storm.

As he listened to the din from the hillside, to a deep pulsating thunder that came from afar to the left, and to the lesser clamors which came from many directions, it occurred to him that they were fighting, too, over there, and over there, and over there. Heretofore he had supposed that all the battle was directly under his nose.

As he gazed around him the youth felt a flash of astonishment at the blue, pure sky and the sun gleamings on the trees and fields. It was surprising that Nature had gone tranquilly on with her golden process in the midst of so much devilment.

### CHAPTER VI

The youth awakened slowly. He came gradually back to a position from which he could regard himself. For moments he had been scrutinizing his person in a dazed way as if he had never before seen himself. Then he picked up his cap from the ground. He wriggled in his jacket to make a more comfortable fit, and kneeling relaced his shoe. He thoughtfully mopped his reeking features.

So it was all over at last! The supreme trial had been passed. The red, formidable difficulties of war had been vanquished.

He went into an ecstasy of self-satisfaction. He had the most delightful sensations of his life. Standing as if apart from himself, he viewed that last scene. He perceived that the man who had fought thus was magnificent.

He felt that he was a fine fellow. He saw himself even with those ideals which he had considered as far beyond him. He smiled in deep gratification.

Upon his fellows he beamed tenderness and good will. "Gee! ain't it hot, hey?" he said affably to a man who was polishing his streaming face with his coat sleeves.

"You bet!" said the other, grinning sociably. "I never seen sech dumb hotness." He sprawled out luxuriously on the ground. "Gee, yes! An' I hope we don't have no more fightin' till a week from Monday."

There were some handshakings and deep speeches with men whose features were familiar, but with whom the youth now felt the bonds of tied hearts. He helped a cursing comrade to bind up a wound of the shin.

But, of a sudden, cries of amazement broke out along the ranks of the new regiment. "Here they come ag'in! Here they come ag'in!" The man who had sprawled upon the ground started up and said, "Gosh!"

The youth turned quick eyes upon the field. He discerned forms begin to swell in masses out of a distant wood. He again saw the tilted flag speeding forward.

The shells, which had ceased to trouble the regiment for a time, came swirling again, and exploded in the grass or among the leaves of the trees. They looked to be strange war flowers bursting into fierce bloom.

The men groaned. The luster faded from their eyes. Their smudged countenances now expressed a profound dejection. They moved their stiffened bodies slowly, and watched in sullen mood the frantic approach of the enemy. The slaves toiling in the temple of this god began to feel rebellion at his harsh tasks.

They fretted and complained each to each. "Oh, say, this is too much of a good thing! Why can't somebody send us supports?"

"We ain't never goin' to stand this second

banging. I didn't come here to fight the hull damn' rebel army."

There was one who raised a doleful cry. "I wish Bill Smithers had trod on my hand, insteader me treddin' on his'n." The sore joints of the regiment creaked as it painfully floundered into position to repulse.

The youth stared. Surely, he thought, this impossible thing was not about to happen. He waited as if he expected the enemy to suddenly stop, apologize, and retire bowing. It was all a mistake.

But the firing began somewhere on the regimental line and ripped along in both directions. The level sheets of flame developed great clouds of smoke that tumbled and tossed in the mild wind near the ground for a moment, and then rolled through the ranks as through a gate. The clouds were tinged an earthlike yellow in the sunrays and in the shadow were a sorry blue. The flag was sometimes eaten and lost in this mass of vapor, but more often it projected, sun-touched, resplendent.

Into the youth's eyes there came a look that one can see in the orbs of a jaded horse. His neck was quivering with nervous weakness and the muscles of his arms felt numb and bloodless. His hands, too, seemed large and awkward as if he was wearing invisible mittens. And there was a great uncertainty about his knee joints.

The words that comrades had uttered previous to the firing began to recur to him. "Oh, say, this is too much of a good thing! What do they take us for—why don't they send supports? I didn't come here to fight the hull damned rebel army."

He began to exaggerate the endurance, the skill, and the valor of those who were coming. Himself reeling from exhaustion, he was astonished beyond measure at such persistency. They must be machines of steel. It was very gloomy struggling against such affairs, wound up perhaps to fight until sundown.

He slowly lifted his rifle and catching a glimpse of the thick-spread field he blazed at a cantering cluster. He stopped then and began to peer as best he could through the smoke. He caught changing views of the ground covered with men who were all running like pursued imps, and yelling.

To the youth it was an onslaught of redoubtable dragons. He became like the man who lost his legs at the approach of the red and green monster. He waited in a sort of a horrified, listening attitude He seemed to shut his eyes and wait to be gobbled.

A man near him who up to this time had been working feverishly at his rifle suddenly stopped and ran with howls. A lad whose face had borne an expression of exalted courage, the majesty of he who dares give his life, was, at an instant, smitten abject. He blanched like one who has come to the edge of a cliff at midnight and is suddenly made aware. There was a revelation. He, too, threw down his gun and fled. There was no shame in his face. He ran like a rabbit.

Others began to scamper away through the smoke. The youth turned his head, shaken from his trance by this movement as if the regiment was leaving him behind. He saw the few fleeting forms.

He yelled then with fright and swung about. For a moment, in the great clamor, he was like a proverbial chicken. He lost the direction of safety. Destruction threatened him from all points.

Directly he began to speed toward the rear in great leaps. His rifle and cap were gone. His unbottoned coat bulged in the wind. The flap of his cartridge box bobbed wildly, and his canteen, by its slender cord, swung out behind. On his face was all the horror of those things which he imagined.

The lieutenant sprang forward bawling. The youth saw his features wrathfully red, and saw him make a dab with his sword. His one thought of the incident was that the lieutenant was a peculiar creature to feel interested in such matters upon this occasion.

He ran like a blind man. Two or three times he fell down. Once he knocked his shoulder so heavily against a tree that he went headlong.

Since he had turned his back upon the fight his fears had been wondrously magnified. Death about to thrust him between the shoulder blades was far more dreadful than death about to smite him between the eyes. When he thought of it later, he conceived the impression that it is better to view the

appalling than to be merely within hearing. The noises of the battle were like stones; he believed himself liable to be crushed.

As he ran on he mingled with others. He dimly saw men on his right and on his left, and he heard footsteps behind him. He thought that all the regiment was fleeing, pursued by these ominous crashes.

In his flight the sound of these following footsteps gave him his one meager relief. He felt vaguely that death must make a first choice of the men who were nearest; the initial morsels for the dragons would be then those who were following him. So he displayed the zeal of an insane sprinter in his purpose to keep them in the rear. There was a race.

As he, leading, went across a little field, he found himself in a region of shells. They hurtled over his head with long wild screams. As he listened he imagined them to have rows of cruel teeth that grinned at him. Once one lit before him and the livid lightning of the explosion effectually barred the way in his chosen direction. He groveled on the ground and then springing up went careering off through some bushes.

He experienced a thrill of amazement when he came within view of a battery in action. The men there seemed to be in conventional moods, altogether unaware of the impending annihilation. The battery was disputing with a distant antagonist and the gunners were wrapped in admiration of their shooting. They were continually bending in coaxing postures over the guns. They seemed to be patting them on the back and encouraging them with words. The guns, stolid and undaunted, spoke with dogged valor.

The precise gunners were coolly enthusiastic. They lifted their eyes every chance to the smoke-wreathed hillock from whence the hostile battery addressed them. The youth pitied them as he ran. Methodical idiots! Machine-like fools! The refined joy of planting shells in the midst of the other battery's formation would appear a little thing when the infantry came swooping out of the woods.

The face of a youthful rider, who was jerking his frantic horse with an abandon of temper he might display in a placid barnyard, was impressed deeply upon his mind. He knew that he looked upon a man who would presently be dead.

Too, he felt a pity for the guns, standing, six good comrades, in a bold row.

He saw a brigade going to the relief of its pestered fellows. He scrambled upon a wee hill and watched it sweeping finely, keeping formation in difficult places. The blue of the line was crusted with steel color, and the brilliant flags projected. Officers were shouting.

This sight also filled him with wonder. The brigade was hurrying briskly to be gulped into the infernal mouths of the war god. What manner of men were they, anyhow? Ah, it was some wondrous breed! Or else they didn't comprehend—the fools.

A furious order caused commotion in the artillery. An officer on a bounding horse made maniacal motions with his arms. The teams went swinging up from the rear, the guns were whirled about, and the battery scampered away. The cannon with their noses poked slantingly at the ground grunted and grumbled like stout men, brave but with objections to hurry.

The youth went on, moderating his pace since he had left the place of noises.

Later he came upon a general of division seated upon a horse that pricked its ears in an interested way at the battle. There was a great gleaming of yellow and patent leather about the saddle and bridle. The quiet man astride looked mouse-colored upon such a splendid charger.

A jingling staff was galloping hither and thither. Sometimes the general was surrounded by horsemen and at other times he was quite alone. He looked to be much harassed. He had the appearance of a business man whose market is swinging up and down.

The youth went slinking around this spot. He went as near as he dared trying to overhear words. Perhaps the general, unable to comprehend chaos, might call upon him for information. And he could tell him. He knew all concerning it. Of a surety the force was in a fix, and any fool could see that if they did not retreat while they had opportunity—why——

He felt that he would like to thrash the general, or at least approach and tell him in

plain words exactly what he thought him to be. It was criminal to stay calmly in one spot and make no effort to stay destruction. He loitered in a fever of eagerness for the division commander to apply to him.

As he warily moved about, he heard the general call out irritably: "Tompkins, go over an' see Taylor, an' tell him not t' be in such an all-fired hurry; tell him t' halt his brigade in th' edge of th' woods; tell him t' detach a reg'ment—say I think th' center'll break if we don't help it out some; tell him t' hurry up."

A slim youth on a fine chestnut horse caught these swift words from the mouth of his superior. He made his horse bound into a gallop almost from a walk in his haste to go upon his mission. There was a cloud of dust.

A moment later the youth saw the general bounce excitedly in his saddle.

"Yes, by heavens, they have!" The officer leaned forward. His face was aflame with excitement. "Yes, by heavens, they've held 'im! They've held 'im!"

He began to blithely roar at his staff: "We'll wallop 'im now. We'll wallop 'im now. We've got 'em sure." He turned suddenly upon an aid: "Here—you—Jones—quick—ride after Tompkins—see Taylor—tell him t' go in—everlastingly—like blazes—anything."

As another officer sped his horse after the first messenger, the general beamed upon the earth like a sun. In his eyes was a desire to chant a paean. He kept repeating, "They've held 'em, by heavens!"

His excitement made his horse plunge, and he merrily kicked and swore at it. He held a little carnival of joy on horseback.

1895

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## *From* THE BLACK RIDERS

One of the very earliest attempts at writing free verse. As pioneer work it showed the potential possibilities of this literary form which later writers realized more completely.

### XXIV

I SAW a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never—"

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

### XXXVI

I met a seer.
He held in his hands
The book of wisdom.
"Sir," I addressed him,
"Let me read."
"Child—" he began.
"Sir," I said,
"Think not that I am a child,
For already I know much
Of that which you hold.
Ay, much."
He smiled.
Then he opened the book
And held it before me.—
Strange that I should have grown so suddenly blind.

1895

## *From* WAR IS KIND

### I

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

XII

A newspaper is a collection of half-injustices
Which, bawled by boys from mile to mile,
Spreads its curious opinion
To a million merciful and sneering men,
While families cuddle the joys of the fireside
When spurred by tale of dire lone agony.
A newspaper is a court
Where every one is kindly and unfairly tried
By a squalor of honest men.
A newspaper is a market
Where wisdom sells its freedom
And melons are crowned by the crowd.
A newspaper is a game
Where his error scores the player victory
While another's skill wins death.
A newspaper is a symbol;
It is feckless life's chronicle,
A collection of loud tales
Concentrating eternal stupidities,
That in remote ages lived unhaltered,
Roaming through a fenceless world.

XIII

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
"Ha," he said,
"I see that none has passed here
In a long time."
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
"Well," he mumbled at last,
"Doubtless there are other roads."

XXI

A man said to the universe:
"Sir, I exist!"
"However," replied the universe,
"The fact has not created in me
A sense of obligation."

1899

## 1870 ~ *Frank Norris* ~ 1902

FRANK NORRIS was one of the leaders in the revolt against the literary fashions of his day. Broadened by education, training, and a wide range of experience, he was enabled to view life from a cosmopolitan vantage point. He was born in Chicago, studied art in Paris, and on his return entered the University of California. A year of graduate study at Harvard followed. He served as war correspondent during the Spanish-American War, and in South Africa at the time of the Jameson Raid. A severe attack of fever from which he never fully recovered undoubtedly hastened his premature death. With the exception of journalistic work in San Francisco and a period as a reader for a publishing company, Norris devoted his remaining years to the fulfillment of his literary plans.

The plans he had laid were grandiose and epic in scope. There was to be an epic of wheat, a trilogy dealing with its raising, disposal, and distribution respectively. Only two of the three volumes, *The Octopus* (1901) and *The Pit* (1903), were writ-

ten. Then there was to be a trilogy about the three days at Gettysburg. This, however, was never even begun.

Unlike Garland, Norris did not approach the problem of revolt through the "local" novel alone. In his *The Responsibilities of the Novelist* (1903), a collection of critical essays, the view is more comprehensive, more cosmopolitan, certainly more continentalized. The novelist is confronted with grave responsibilities, for of the three great "molders of public opinion and public morals," the pulpit, the press, and the novel, the latter, he insists, is by far the most powerful. "Every novel," according to his theory, "must do one of three things—it must (1) tell something, or (2) show something, or (3) prove something." Obviously a given novel may do all three, and by that token would be superior to others. This also makes it clear that in his judgment any great novel is a purpose novel, that is, "it preaches by telling things and showing things"; in other words it must evaluate what is told and shown, therefore prove something. Yet Norris maintains that as soon as the writer becomes consciously aware of the purpose the novel will fail, which is another way of saying that the artistic interest must be supreme, a modified version of Shakespeare's suggestion that we may "by indirections find directions out." He laid his plans on a big scale, including the representation of "a whole congeries of forces, social development, race impulses," which opened the way "not to the study of men but of man." He shared the aspirations of one of his characters in *The Octopus*, the poet Presley, who "strove for the diapason, the great song which should embrace in itself a whole epoch, a complete era, the voice of an entire people."

Norris preferred to think of himself as a naturalist, although like Garland he wrote at times in a romantic vein. *McTeague* (1899), and *Vandover and the Brute* (1914), which were begun while he was a student, though not published until later, were written when he was at the height of his rebellion against the literary insincerity of the time, and are outspokenly realistic. The novelettes, *Moran of the Lady Letty* (1898) and *Blix* (1899), are as frankly romantic, insofar, at any rate, as they are unusual, spectacular, and bizarre. *The Octopus* (1901) and *The Pit* (1903) were written under the spell of his critical theory. Although this forced him into his best artistic and creative behavior, there is question whether the process yielded what was hoped for. In *The Octopus* he wrote what Frederic Tabor Cooper called "an example of symbolism pushed to the extreme limit"; in *The Pit* the sociological interest and implications became so absorbing that they victimized Norris the novelist. It is easy to see that Norris was definitely opposed to the ruthlessness and brutality of the capitalistic order, as represented by the railroad, and that his sympathies went out to the "embattled farmers" in their struggle against this mighty colossus. His realistic novels *McTeague* and *Vandover* have been most influential and possess the most likely guarantee of permanence. The work as a whole leaves the impression of incompleteness, "a rugged torso of a broken statue."

Besides the novels mentioned above, Norris also wrote *Yvernelle* (1892); and *A Man's Woman* (1900). His short stories are found in *A Deal in Wheat* (1903); *The Third Circle* (1909); *Frank Norris of "The Wave": Stories and Sketches from the San Francisco Weekly, 1893–1897*, foreword by C. G. Norris (1931). *The Responsibilities of the Novelist* (1903) is a collection of critical essays; see also W. E. Martin, Jr., "Two Uncollected Essays by Frank Norris," *American Literature*, May, 1936. A uniform edition, *The Complete Works of Frank Norris* (1928), is available. The only complete biography is F. Walker, *Frank Norris* (1932). Further information may be found in *DAB*, XIII; H. M. Wright, "In Memoriam—Frank Norris," *University of California Chronicle*, Oct., 1902; C. C. Dobie, "Frank Norris, or Up from Culture," *American Mercury*, April, 1928; H. Garland, *Companions on the Trail* (1931); E. Peixotto, "Romanticist under the Skin: Frank Norris," *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 27, 1933. For criticism the following are helpful: V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); J. C. Underwood, *Literature and Insurgency* (1914); E. Wyatt, *Great Companions* (1917); F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); H. Garland, "The Work of Frank Norris," *Critic*, March, 1903; W. D. Howells, "Frank Norris," *North American Review*, Dec., 1902; W. E. Martin, Jr., "Frank Norris's Reading at Harvard College," *American Literature*, May, 1935; H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); C. H. Grattan, "Frank Norris," *Bookman*, July, 1929; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* McTEAGUE

Although Norris also wrote romantic novels, *McTeague* and *The Octopus* are realistic in subject matter and treatment. The former is a novel of degeneracy in an adverse environment, the main elements in which are chance and economic pressure. The latter, on the other hand, is built on a larger scale and portrays the losing struggle of the California wheat growers against the economic and political tyranny of the railroads. Norris sought to tell the truth as he saw it with passionate zeal.

### CHAPTER X

THAT summer passed, then the winter. The wet season began in the last days of September and continued all through October, November, and December. At long intervals would come a week of perfect days, the sky without a cloud, the air motionless, but touched with a certain nimbleness, a faint effervescence that was exhilarating. Then, without warning, during a night when a south wind blew, a gray scroll of cloud would unroll and hang high over the city, and the rain would come pattering down again, at first in scattered showers, then in an uninterrupted drizzle.

All day long Trina sat in the bay window of the sitting-room that commanded a view of a small section of Polk Street. As often as she raised her head she could see the big market, a confectionery store, a bell-hanger's shop, and farther on, above the roofs, the glass skylights and water tanks of the big public baths. In the nearer foreground ran the street itself; the cable cars trundled up and down, thumping heavily over the joints of the rails; market carts by the score came and went, driven at a great rate by preoccupied young men in their shirt sleeves, with pencils behind their ears, or by reckless boys in blood-stained butcher's aprons. Upon the sidewalks the little world of Polk Street swarmed and jostled through its daily round of life. On fine days the great ladies from the avenue, one block above, invaded the street, appearing before the butcher stalls, intent upon their day's marketing. On rainy days their servants —the Chinese cooks or the second girls—took their places. These servants gave themselves great airs, carrying their big cotton umbrellas as they had seen their mistresses carry their parasols, and haggling in supercilious fashion with the market men, their chins in the air.

The rain persisted. Everything in the range of Trina's vision, from the tarpaulins on the market-cart horses to the panes of glass in the roof of the public baths, looked glazed and varnished. The asphalt of the sidewalks shone like the surface of a patent leather boot; every hollow in the street held its little puddle,

that winked like an eye each time a drop of rain struck into it.

Trina still continued to work for Uncle Oelbermann. In the mornings she busied herself about the kitchen, the bedroom, and the sitting-room; but in the afternoon, for two or three hours after lunch, she was occupied with the Noah's ark animals. She took her work to the bay window, spreading out a great square of canvas underneath her chair, to catch the chips and shavings, which she used afterwards for lighting fires. One after another she caught up the little blocks of straight-grained pine, the knife flashed between her fingers, the little figure grew rapidly under her touch, was finished and ready for painting in a wonderfully short time, and was tossed into the basket that stood at her elbow.

But very often during that rainy winter after her marriage Trina would pause in her work, her hands falling idly into her lap, her eyes—her narrow, pale blue eyes—growing wide and thoughtful as she gazed, unseeing, out into the rain-washed street.

She loved McTeague now with a blind, unreasoning love that admitted of no doubt or hesitancy. Indeed, it seemed to her that it was only *after* her marriage with the dentist that she had really begun to love him. With the absolute final surrender of herself, the irrevocable, ultimate submission, had come an affection the like of which she had never dreamed in the old B Street days. But Trina loved her husband, not because she fancied she saw in him any of those noble and generous qualities that inspire affection. The dentist might or might not possess them, it was all one with Trina. She loved him because she had given herself to him freely, unreservedly; had merged her individuality into his; she was his, she belonged to him forever and forever. Nothing that he could do (so she told herself), nothing that she herself could do, could change her in this respect. McTeague might cease to love her, might leave her, might even die; it would be all the same, *she was his.*

But it had not been so at first. During those long, rainy days of the fall, days when Trina was left alone for hours, at that time when the excitement and novelty of the honeymoon were dying down, when the new household was settling into its grooves, she passed through many an hour of misgiving, of doubt, and even of actual regret.

Never would she forget one Sunday afternoon in particular. She had been married but three weeks. After dinner she and little Miss Baker had gone for a bit of a walk to take advantage of an hour's sunshine and to look at some wonderful geraniums in a florist's window on Sutter Street. They had been caught in a shower, and on returning to the flat the little dressmaker had insisted on fetching Trina up to her tiny room and brewing her a cup of strong tea, "to take the chill off." The two women had chatted over their teacups the better part of the afternoon, then Trina had returned to her rooms. For nearly three hours McTeague had been out of her thoughts, and as she came through their little suite, singing softly to herself, she suddenly came upon him quite unexpectedly. Her husband was in the "Dental Parlors," lying back in his operating chair, fast asleep. The little stove was crammed with coke, the room was overheated, the air thick and foul with the odors of ether, of coke gas, of stale beer and cheap tobacco. The dentist sprawled his gigantic limbs over the worn velvet of the operating chair; his coat and vest and shoes were off, and huge feet, in their thick gray socks, dangled over the edge of the foot-rest; his pipe, fallen from his half-open mouth, had spilled the ashes into his lap; while on the floor, at his side, stood the half-empty pitcher of steam beer. His head had rolled limply upon one shoulder, his face was red with sleep, and from his open mouth came a terrific sound of snoring.

For a moment Trina stood looking at him as he lay thus, prone, inert, half-dressed, and stupefied with the heat of the room, the steam beer, and the fumes of the cheap tobacco. Then her little chin quivered and a sob rose to her throat; she fled from the "Parlors," locking herself in her bedroom, flung herself on the bed and burst into an agony of weeping. Ah, no, ah, no, she could not love him. It had all been a dreadful mistake, and now it was irrevocable; she was bound to this man for life. If it was as bad as this now, only three weeks

after her marriage, how would it be in the years to come? Year after year, month after month, hour after hour, she was to see this same face, with its salient jaw, was to feel the touch of those enormous red hands, was to hear the heavy, elephantine tread of those huge feet—in thick gray socks. Year after year, day after day, there would be no change, and it would last all her life. Either it would be one long continued revulsion, or else—worse than all—she would come to be content with him, would come to be like him, would sink to the level of steam beer and cheap tobacco, and all her pretty ways, her clean, trim little habits, would be forgotten, since they would be thrown away upon her stupid, brutish husband. "Her husband!" *That*, was her husband in there—she could yet hear his snores—for life, for life. A great despair seized upon her. She buried her face in the pillow and thought of her mother with an infinite longing.

Aroused at length by the chittering of the canary, McTeague had awakened slowly. After a while he had taken down his concertina and played upon it the six very mournful airs that he knew.

Face downward upon the bed, Trina still wept. Throughout that little suite could be heard but two sounds, the lugubrious strains of the concertina and the noise of stifled weeping.

That her husband should be ignorant of her distress seemed to Trina an additional grievance. With perverse inconsistency she began to wish him to come to her, to comfort her. He ought to know that she was in trouble, that she was lonely and unhappy.

"Oh, Mac," she called in a trembling voice. But the concertina still continued to wail and lament. Then Trina wished she were dead, and on the instant jumped up and ran into the "Dental Parlors," and threw herself into her husband's arms, crying: "Oh, Mac, dear, love me, love me *big!* I'm *so* unhappy."

"What—what—what—" the dentist exclaimed starting up bewildered, a little frightened.

"Nothing, nothing, only *love* me, love me always and always."

But this first crisis, this momentary revolt, as much a matter of high-strung feminine nerves as of anything else, passed, and in the end Trina's affection for her "old bear" grew in spite of herself. She began to love him more and more, not for what he was, but for what she had given up to him. Only once again did Trina undergo a reaction against her husband, and then it was but the matter of an instant, brought on, curiously enough, by the sight of a bit of egg on McTeague's heavy mustache one morning just after breakfast.

Then, too, the pair had learned to make concessions, little by little, and all unconsciously they adapted their modes of life to suit each other. Instead of sinking to McTeague's level as she had feared, Trina found that she could make McTeague rise to hers, and in this saw a solution of many a difficult and gloomy complication.

For one thing, the dentist began to dress a little better, Trina even succeeding in inducing him to wear a high silk hat and a frock coat on a Sunday. Next he relinquished his Sunday afternoon's nap and beer in favor of three or four hours spent in the park with her—the weather permitting. So that gradually Trina's misgivings ceased, or when they did assail her, she could at last meet them with a shrug of the shoulders, saying to herself meanwhile, "Well, it's done now and it can't be helped; one must make the best of it."

During the first months of their married life these nervous relapses of hers had alternated with brusque outbursts of affection when her only fear was that her husband's love did not equal her own. Without an instant's warning, she would clasp him about the neck, rubbing her cheek against his, murmuring:

"Dear old Mac, I love you so, I love you so. Oh, aren't we happy together, Mac, just us two and no one else? You love me as much as I love you, don't you, Mac? Oh, if you shouldn't—if you *shouldn't*."

But by the middle of the winter Trina's emotions, oscillating at first from one extreme to another, commenced to settle themselves to an equilibrium of calmness and placid quietude. Her household duties began more and more to absorb her attention, for she was an admirable housekeeper, keeping the little

suite in marvellous good order and regulating the schedule of expenditure with an economy that often bordered on positive niggardliness. It was a passion with her to save money. In the bottom of her trunk, in the bedroom, she hid a brass match-safe that answered the purpose of a savings bank. Each time she added a quarter or a half dollar to the little store she laughed and sang with a veritable childish delight; whereas, if the butcher or milkman compelled her to pay an overcharge she was unhappy for the rest of the day. She did not save this money for any ulterior purpose, she hoarded instinctively, without knowing why, responding to the dentist's remonstrances with:

"Yes, yes, I know I'm a little miser, I know it."

Trina had always been an economical little body, but it was only since her great winning in the lottery that she had become especially penurious. No doubt, in her fear lest their great good luck should demoralize them and lead to habits of extravagance, she had recoiled too far in the other direction. Never, never, never should a penny of that miraculous fortune be spent; rather should it be added to. It was a nest-egg, a monstrous, roc-like nest egg, not so large, however, but that it could be made larger. Already by the end of that winter Trina had begun to make up the deficit of two hundred dollars that she had been forced to expend on the preparations for her marriage.

McTeague, on his part, never asked himself now-a-days whether he loved Trina the wife as much as he had loved Trina the young girl. There had been a time when to kiss Trina, to take her in his arms, had thrilled him from head to heel with a happiness that was beyond words; even the smell of her wonderful odorous hair had sent a sensation of faintness all through him. That time was long past now. Those sudden outbursts of affection on the part of his little woman, outbursts that only increased in vehemence the longer they lived together, puzzled rather than pleased him. He had come to submit to them good-naturedly, answering her passionate inquiries with a "Sure, sure, Trina, sure I love you. What—what's the matter with you?"

1899

## *From* THE OCTOPUS

### BOOK II, CHAPTER II

THE figure was that of a middle-aged man, fat, with a great stomach, which he stroked from time to time. As he turned about, addressing a remark to the clerk, Dyke recognized S. Behrman. The banker, railroad agent, and political manipulator seemed to the ex-engineer's eyes to be more gross than ever. His smooth-shaven jowl stood out big and tremulous on either side of his face; the roll of fat on the nape of his neck, sprinkled with sparse, stiff hairs, bulged out with greater prominence. His great stomach, covered with a light brown linen vest, stamped with innumerable interlocked horseshoes, protruded far in advance, enormous, aggressive. He wore his inevitable round-topped hat of stiff brown straw, varnished so bright that it reflected the light of the office windows like a helmet, and even from where he stood Dyke could hear his loud breathing and the clink of the hollow links of his watch chain upon the vest buttons of imitation pearl, as his stomach rose and fell.

Dyke looked at him with attention. There was the enemy, the representative of the Trust with which Derrick's League was locking horns. The great struggle had begun to invest the combatants with interest. Daily, almost hourly, Dyke was in touch with the ranchers, the wheat-growers. He heard their denunciations, their growls of exasperation and defiance. Here was the other side—this placid, fat man, with a stiff straw hat and linen vest, who never lost his temper, who smiled affably upon his enemies, giving them good advice, commiserating with them in one defeat after another, never ruffled, never excited, sure of his power, conscious that back of him was the Machine, the colossal force, the inexhaustible coffers of a mighty organization, vomiting millions to the League's thousands.

The League was clamorous, ubiquitous, its objects known to every urchin on the streets, but the Trust was silent, its ways inscrutable, the public saw only results. It worked on in the dark, calm, disciplined, irresistible. Abruptly Dyke received the impression of the multitudinous ramifications of the colossus.

Under his feet the ground seemed mined; down there below him in the dark the huge tentacles went silently twisting and advancing, spreading out in every direction, sapping the strength of all opposition, quiet, gradual, biding the time to reach up and out and grip with a sudden unleashing of gigantic strength.

"I'll be wanting some cars of you people before the summer is out," observed Dyke to the clerk as he folded up and put away the order that the other had handed him. He remembered perfectly well that he had arranged the matter of transporting his crop some months before, but his rôle of proprietor amused him and he liked to busy himself again and again with the details of his undertaking.

"I suppose," he added, "you'll be able to give 'em to me. There'll be a big wheat crop to move this year and I don't want to be caught in any car famine."

"Oh, you'll get your cars," murmured the other.

"I'll be the means of bringing business your way," Dyke went on; "I've done so well with my hops that there are a lot of others going into the business next season. Suppose," he continued, struck with an idea, "suppose we went into some sort of pool, a sort of shippers' organization, could you give us special rates, cheaper rates—say a cent and a half?"

The other looked up.

"A cent and a half! Say *four* cents and a half and maybe I'll talk business with you."

"Four cents and a half," returned Dyke, "I don't see it. Why, the regular rate is only two cents."

"No, it isn't," answered the clerk, looking him gravely in the eye, "it's five cents."

"Well, there's where you are wrong, m'son," Dyke retorted, genially. "You look it up. You'll find the freight on hops from Bonneville to 'Frisco is two cents a pound for car load lots. You told me that yourself last fall."

"That was last fall," observed the clerk. There was a silence. Dyke shot a glance of suspicion at the other. Then, reassured, he remarked:

"You look it up. You'll see I'm right."

S. Behrman came forward and shook hands politely with the ex-engineer.

"Anything I can do for you, Mr. Dyke?"

Dyke explained. When he had done speaking, the clerk turned to S. Behrman and observed, respectfully:

"Our regular rate on hops is five cents."

"Yes," answered S. Behrman, pausing to reflect; "yes, Mr. Dyke, that's right—five cents."

The clerk brought forward a folder of yellow paper and handed it to Dyke. It was inscribed at the top "Tariff Schedule No. 8," and underneath these words, in brackets, was a smaller inscription, "*Supersedes No. 7 of Aug. 1.*"

"See for yourself," said S. Behrman. He indicated an item under the head of "Miscellany."

"The following rates for carriage of hops in car load lots," read Dyke, "take effect June 1, and will remain in force until superseded by a later tariff. Those quoted beyond Stockton are subject to changes in traffic arrangements with carriers by water from that point."

In the list that was printed below, Dyke saw that the rate for hops between Bonneville or Guadalajara and San Francisco was five cents.

For a moment Dyke was confused. Then swiftly the matter became clear in his mind. The Railroad had raised the freight on hops from two cents to five.

All his calculations as to a profit on his little investment he had based on a freight rate of two cents a pound. He was under contract to deliver his crop. He could not draw back. The new rate ate up every cent of his gains. He stood there ruined.

"Why, what do you mean?" he burst out. "You promised me a rate of two cents and I went ahead with my business with that understanding. What do you mean?"

S. Behrman and the clerk watched him from the other side of the counter.

"The rate is five cents," declared the clerk doggedly.

"Well, that ruins me," shouted Dyke. "Do you understand? I won't make fifty cents. *Make!* Why, I will *owe*,—I'll be—be—That ruins me, do you understand?"

The other raised a shoulder.

"We don't force you to ship. You can do as you like. The rate is five cents."

"Well—but—damn you, I'm under contract to deliver. What am I going to do? Why, you told me—you promised me a two-cent rate."

"I don't remember it," said the clerk. "I don't know anything about that. But I know this; I know that hops have gone up. I know the German crop was a failure and that the crop in New York wasn't worth the hauling. Hops have gone up to nearly a dollar. You don't suppose we don't know that, do you, Mr. Dyke?"

"What's the price of hops got to do with you?"

"It's got *this* to do with us," returned the other with a sudden aggressiveness, "that the freight rate has gone up to meet the price. We're not doing business for our health. My orders are to raise your rate to five cents, and I think you are getting off easy."

Dyke stared in blank astonishment. For the moment, the audacity of the affair was what most appealed to him. He forgot its personal application.

"Good Lord," he murmured, "good Lord! What will you people do next? Look here. What's your basis of applying freight rates, anyhow?" he suddenly vociferated with furious sarcasm. "What's your rule? What are you guided by?"

But at the words, S. Behrman, who had kept silent during the heat of the discussion, leaned abruptly forward. For the only time in his knowledge, Dyke saw his face inflamed with anger and with the enmity and contempt of all this farming element with whom he was contending.

"Yes, what's your rule? What's your basis?" demanded Dyke, turning swiftly to him.

S. Behrman emphasized each word of his reply with a tap of one forefinger on the counter before him:

"All—the—traffic—will—bear."

The ex-engineer stepped back a pace, his fingers on the ledge of the counter, to steady himself. He felt himself grow pale, his heart became a mere leaden weight in his chest, inert, refusing to beat.

In a second the whole affair, in all its bearings, went speeding before the eye of his imagination like the rapid unrolling of a panorama. Every cent of his earnings was sunk in this hop business of his. More than that, he had borrowed money to carry it on, certain of success—borrowed of S. Behrman, offering his crop and his little home as security. Once he failed to meet his obligations, S. Behrman would foreclose. Not only would the Railroad devour every morsel of his profits, but also it would take from him his home; at a blow he would be left penniless and without a home. What would then become of his mother—and what would become of the little tad? She, whom he had been planning to educate like a veritable lady. For all that year he had talked of his ambition for his little daughter to every one he met. All Bonneville knew of it. What a mark for gibes he had made of himself. The workingman turned farmer! What a target for jeers—he who had fancied he could elude the Railroad! He remembered he had once said the great Trust had overlooked his little enterprise, disdaining to plunder such small fry. He should have known better than that. How had he ever imagined the Road would permit him to make any money?

Anger was not in him yet; no rousing of the blind, white-hot wrath that leaps to the attack with prehensile fingers, moved him. The blow merely crushed, staggered, confused.

He stepped aside to give place to a coatless man in a pink shirt, who entered, carrying in his hands an automatic door-closing apparatus.

"Where does this go?" inquired the man.

Dyke sat down for a moment on a seat that had been removed from a worn-out railway car to do duty in Ruggles's office. On the back of a yellow envelope he made some vague figures with a stump of blue pencil, multiplying, subtracting, perplexing himself with many errors.

S. Behrman, the clerk, and the man with the door-closing apparatus involved themselves in a long argument, gazing intently at the top panel of the door. The man who had come to fix the apparatus was unwilling to guarantee it, unless a sign was put on the outside of the door, warning incomers that the door was self-closing. This sign would cost fifteen cents extra.

"But you didn't say anything about this when the thing was ordered," declared S. Behrman. "No, I won't pay it, my friend. It's an overcharge."

"You needn't think," observed the clerk, "that just because you are dealing with the Railroad you are going to work us."

Genslinger came in, accompanied by Delaney. S. Behrman and the clerk, abruptly dismissing the man with the door-closing machine, put themselves behind the counter and engaged in conversation with these two. Genslinger introduced Delaney. The buster had a string of horses he was shipping southward. No doubt he had come to make arrangements with the Railroad in the matter of stock cars. The conference of the four men was amicable in the extreme.

Dyke, studying the figures on the back of the envelope, came forward again. Absorbed only in his own distress, he ignored the editor and the cow-puncher.

"Say," he hazarded, "how about this? I make out—"

"We've told you what our rates are, Mr. Dyke," exclaimed the clerk angrily. "That's all the arrangement we will make. Take it or leave it." He turned again to Genslinger, giving the ex-engineer his back.

Dyke moved away and stood for a moment in the center of the room, staring at the figures on the envelope.

"I don't see," he muttered, "just what I'm going to do. No, I don't see what I'm going to do at all."

Ruggles came in, bringing with him two other men in whom Dyke recognized dummy buyers of the Los Muertos and Osterman ranchos. They brushed by him, jostling his elbow, and as he went out of the door he heard them exchange jovial greetings with Delaney, Genslinger, and S. Behrman.

Dyke went down the stairs to the street and proceeded onward aimlessly in the direction of the Yosemite House, fingering the yellow envelope and looking vacantly at the sidewalk.

There was a stoop to his massive shoulders. His great arms dangled loosely at his sides, the palms of his hands open.

As he went along, a certain feeling of shame touched him. Surely his predicament must be apparent to every passer-by. No doubt, every one recognized the unsuccessful man in the very way he slouched along. The young girls in lawns, muslins, and garden hats, returning from the Post Office, their hands full of letters, must surely see in him the type of the failure, the bankrupt.

Then brusquely his tardy rage flamed up. By God, *no*, it was not his fault; he had made no mistake. His energy, industry, and foresight had been sound. He had been merely the object of a colossal trick, a sordid injustice, a victim of the insatiate greed of the monster, caught and choked by one of those millions of tentacles suddenly reaching up from below, from out the dark beneath his feet, coiling around his throat, throttling him, strangling him, sucking his blood. For a moment he thought of the courts, but instantly laughed at the idea. What court was immune from the power of the monster? Ah, the rage of helplessness, the fury of impotence! No help, no hope,—ruined in a brief instant—he a veritable giant, built of great sinews, powerful, in the full tide of his manhood, having all his health, all his wits. How could he now face his home? How could he tell his mother of this catastrophe? And Sidney—the little tad; how could he explain to her this wretchedness—how soften her disappointment? How keep the tears from out her eyes—how keep alive her confidence in him—her faith in his resources?

Bitter, fierce, ominous, his wrath loomed up in his heart. His fists gripped tight together, his teeth clenched. Oh, for a moment to have his hand upon the throat of S. Behrman, wringing the breath from him, wrenching out the red life of him—staining the street with the blood sucked from the veins of the People!

1901

## *From* ESSAYS IN AUTHORSHIP

### *The Responsibilities of the Novelist*

It is not here a question of the "unarrived," the "unpublished"; these are the care-free irresponsibilities whose hours are halcyon and

whose endeavors have all the lure, all the recklessness of adventure. They are not recognized; they have made no standards for themselves, and if they play the *saltimbanque* and the charlatan nobody cares and nobody (except themselves) is affected.

But the writers in question are the successful ones who have made a public and to whom some ten, twenty or a hundred thousand people are pleased to listen. You may believe if you choose that the novelist, of all workers, is independent—that he can write what he pleases, and that certainly, certainly he should never "write down to his readers"—that he should never consult them at all.

On the contrary, I believe it can be proved that the successful novelist should be more than all others limited in the nature and character of his work, more than all others he should be careful of what he says; more than all others he should defer to his audience; more than all others—more even than the minister and the editor—he should feel "his public" and watch his every word, testing carefully his every utterance, weighing with the most relentless precision his every statement; in a word, possess a sense of his responsibilities.

For the novel is the great expression of modern life. Each form of art has had its turn at reflecting and expressing its contemporaneous thought. Time was when the world looked to the architects of the castles and great cathedrals to truly reflect and embody its ideals. And the architects—serious, earnest men—produced such "expressions of contemporaneous thought" as the Castle of Coucy and the Church of Notre Dame. Then with other times came other customs, and the painters had their day. The men of the Renaissance trusted Angelo and Da Vinci and Velasquez to speak for them, and trusted not in vain. Next came the age of drama. Shakespeare and Marlowe found the value of $x$ for the life and the times in which they lived. Later on contemporary life had been so modified that neither painting, architecture nor drama was the best vehicle of expression, the day of the longer poems arrived, and Pope and Dryden spoke for their fellows.

Thus the sequence. Each age speaks with its own peculiar organ, and has left the Word for us moderns to read and understand. The Castle of Coucy and the Church of Notre Dame are the spoken words of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance speaks—and intelligibly—to us through the sibyls of the Sistine chapel and the Mona Lisa. "Macbeth" and "Tamerlane" *résumé* the whole spirit of the Elizabethan age, while the "Rape of the Lock" is a wireless message to us straight from the period of the Restoration.

Today is the day of the novel. In no other day and by no other vehicle is contemporaneous life so adequately expressed; and the critics of the twenty-second century, reviewing our times, striving to reconstruct our civilization, will look not to the painters, not to the architects nor dramatists, but to the novelists to find our idiosyncrasy.

I think this is true. I think if the matter could in any way be statisticized, the figures would bear out the assumption. There is no doubt the novel will in time "go out" of popular favor as irrevocably as the long poem has gone, and for the reason that it is no longer the right mode of expression.

It is interesting to speculate upon what will take its place. Certainly the coming civilization will revert to no former means of expressing its thought or its ideals. Possibly music will be the interpreter of the life of the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries. Possibly one may see a hint of this in the characterization of Wagner's operas as the "Music of the Future."

This, however, is parenthetical and beside the mark. Remains the fact that today is the day of the novel. By this one does not mean that the novel is merely popular. If the novel was not something more than a simple diversion, a means of whiling away a dull evening, a long railway journey, it would not, believe me, remain in favor another day.

If the novel, then, is popular, it is popular with a reason, a vital, inherent reason; that is to say, it is essential. Essential—to resume once more the proposition—because it expresses modern life better than architecture, better than painting, better than poetry, better than music. It is as necessary to the civilization of the twentieth century as the violin is

necessary to Kubelik, as the piano is necessary to Paderewski, as the plane is necessary to the carpenter, the sledge to the blacksmith, the chisel to the mason. It is an instrument, a tool, a weapon, a vehicle. It is that thing which, in the hand of man, makes him civilized and no longer savage, because it gives him a power of durable, permanent expression. So much for the novel—the instrument.

Because it is so all-powerful today, the people turn to him who wield this instrument with every degree of confidence. They expect —and rightly—that results shall be commensurate with means. The unknown archer who grasps the bow of Ulysses may be expected by the multitude to send his shaft far and true. If he is not true nor strong he has no business with the bow. The people give heed to him only because he bears a great weapon. He himself knows before he shoots whether or no he is worthy.

It is all very well to jeer at the People and at the People's misunderstanding of the arts, but the fact is indisputable that no art that is not in the end understood by the People can live or ever did live a single generation. In the larger view, in the last analysis, the People pronounce the final judgment. The People, despised of the artist, hooted, caricatured and vilified, are, after all, and in the main, the real seekers after Truth. Who is it, after all, whose interest is liveliest in any given work of art? It is not now a question of *esthetic* interest—that is, the artist's, the amateur's, the *cognoscente's*. It is a question of *vital* interest. Say what you will, Maggie Tulliver—for instance—is far more a living being for Mrs. Jones across the street than she is for your sensitive, fastidious, keenly critical artist, litterateur, or critic. The People—Mrs. Jones and her neighbors—take the life history of these fictitious characters, these novels, to heart with a seriousness that the esthetic cult have no conception of. The cult consider them almost solely from their artistic sides. The People take them into their innermost lives. Nor do the People discriminate. Omnivorous readers as they are today, they make little distinction between Maggie Tulliver and the heroine of the last "popular novel." They do not stop to separate true from false; they do not care.

How necessary it becomes, then, for those who, by the simple art of writing, can invade the heart's heart of thousands, whose novels are received with such measureless earnestness—how necessary it becomes for those who wield such power to use it rightfully. Is it not expedient to act fairly? Is it not in Heaven's name essential that the People hear, not a lie, but the Truth?

If the novel were not one of the most important factors of modern life; if it were not the completest expression of our civilization; if its influence were not greater than all the pulpits, than all the newspapers between the oceans, it would not be so important that its message should be true.

But the novelist today is the one who reaches the greatest audience. Right or wrong, the People turn to him the moment he speaks, and what he says they believe.

For the Million, Life is a contracted affair, is bounded by the walls of the narrow channel of affairs in which their feet are set. They have no horizon. They look today as they never have looked before, as they never will look again, to the writer of fiction to give them an idea of life beyond their limits, and they believe him as they never have believed before and never will again.

This being so, is it not difficult to understand how certain of these successful writers of fiction—these favored ones into whose hands the gods have placed the great bow of Ulysses—can look so frivolously upon their craft? It is not necessary to specify. One speaks of those whose public is measured by "one hundred and fifty thousand copies sold." We know them, and because the gods have blessed us with wits beyond our deserving we know their work is false. But what of the "hundred and fifty thousand" who are not discerning and who receive this falseness as Truth, who believe this topsy-turvy picture of Life beyond their horizons is real and vital and sane?

There is no gauge to measure the extent of this malignant influence. Public opinion is made no one can say how, by infinitesimal accretions, by a multitude of minutest ele-

ments. Lying novels, surely, surely in this day and age of indiscriminate reading, contribute to this more than all other influences or present-day activity.

The Pulpit, the Press and the Novel—these indisputably are the great molders of public opinion and public morals today. But the Pulpit speaks but once a week; the Press is read with lightning haste and the morning news is waste-paper by noon. But the novel goes into the home to stay. It is read word for word; is talked about, discussed; its influence penetrates every chink and corner of the family.

Yet novelists are not found wanting who write for money. I do not think this is an unfounded accusation. I do not think it is asking too much of credulity. This would not matter if they wrote the Truth. But these gentlemen who are "in literature for their own pocket every time" have discovered that for the moment the People have confounded the Wrong with the Right, and prefer that which is a lie to that which is true. "Very well, then," say these gentlemen. "If they want a lie they shall have it"; and they give the People a lie in return for royalties.

The surprising thing about this is that you and I and all the rest of us do not consider this as disreputable—do not yet realize that the novelist has responsibilities. We condemn an editor who sells his editorial columns, and we revile the pulpit attainted of venality. But the venal novelist—he whose influence is greater than either the Press or Pulpit—*him* we greet with a wink and the tongue in the cheek.

This should not be so. Somewhere the protest should be raised, and those of us who see the practice of this fraud should bring home to ourselves the realization that the selling of one hundred and fifty thousand books is a serious business. The People have a right to the Truth as they have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is *not* right that they be exploited and deceived with false views of life, false characters, false sentiment, false morality, false history, false philosophy, false emotions, false heroism, false notions of self-sacrifice, false views of religion, of duty, of conduct and of manners.

The man who can address an audience of one hundred and fifty thousand people who—unenlightened—*believe what he says*, has a heavy duty to perform, and tremendous responsibilities to shoulder; and he should address himself to his task not with the flippancy of a catchpenny juggler at the county fair, but with earnestness, with soberness, with a sense of his limitations, and with all the abiding sincerity that by the favor and mercy of the gods may be his.

1902

## 1852 ~ *Edwin Markham* ~ 1940

TEACHER, social philosopher, and poet, Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, during the early pioneer days in the Far West. He lost his father at a very early age, and at five moved with his mother to central California, where he worked as farm hand, blacksmith, and cattle and sheep herder. It was during the lonely watches of the herding days that his poetic sensitiveness was awakened by reading and intimate communion with nature. After completing his education at the San José Normal School and the Christian College in Santa Rosa he became a teacher, rising later to a superintendency of schools. After 1899 he made his home in New York. He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Markham was distinctly a product of the nineteenth century, and found it difficult

to adjust himself spiritually to the later movements in literature. He was out of sympathy with the work of many of the younger writers because, he maintained, their ultra-realism fails to produce a true picture of life, which must combine the real and the ideal. The ideas, ideals, and emotions of the Golden Nineties continued to dominate him.

Although he wrote and published much verse in local California journals, and published numerous volumes in later life, his fame rests on two individual poems. The publication of "The Man with the Hoe" (1899) caused a literary sensation and brought him national recognition; "Lincoln, the Man of the People" (1900) holds its place as one of the best interpretations of the prairie President. To these may be added "The Sower" and "The Leader of His People" as possessing distinction.

There can be no question that some of his work was overrated in the enthusiasm of the moment. By some the appearance of a poem by him was hailed as a national event; others compared him with Milton and Whitman; to still others he was the true and exquisite poet. In popular acclaim his return to California in 1915 was comparable to a triumphant progress. Nor can there be any question that he gave voice to long-dormant popular emotions and ideals, thus becoming the spokesman of a great mass of the hitherto inarticulate populace. And he did this effectually through his sincerity, sympathy for the unfortunate, insistence upon justice, and a prophetic challenge of things as they are. "The Man with the Hoe" and "Lincoln" will remain as landmarks in American social and literary history long after the bulk of his work is forgotten.

Markham also possessed unusual critical ability. Although the body of his criticism is relatively small, his essay on Poe, in Macy's *American Writers on American Literature* (1931), is a well-rounded literary portrait, marked by sympathetic insight and understanding, careful analysis, and sound evaluation.

The individual volumes of Markham's poetry are *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (1899); *Lincoln and Other Poems* (1901); *The Shoes of Happiness* (1915); *Gates of Paradise* (1920); *New Poems: Eighty Songs at Eighty* (1932). He also compiled *The Book of Poetry* (1926). W. L. Stidger, *Edwin Markham* (1933), is a rather hero-worshiping biography. For further discussion of his work consult H. M. Bland, "Edwin Markham: the Boy, the Man, His Art," *Overland Monthly*, October, 1915; E. S. Bromer, "Edwin Markham, the Poet of Democracy," *Reformed Church Review*, April, 1911; M. Monahan, "Edwin Markham's Poetry," *Stratford Journal*, Sept., 1919; B. O. Flower, "Edwin Markham, a Poet-Prophet of Democracy," *Arena*, Feb., 1906; W. R. Benét, "Edwin Markham Is Eighty," *Saturday Review of Literature*, April 23, 1932.

## THE MAN WITH THE HOE

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING THE PAINTING BY MILLET

God made man in his own image, in the image of God made he him. —Genesis

This poem, first printed in the San Francisco *Examiner*, is a forceful expression of Markham's deep-seated sympathy for the unfortunate.

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,

And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Thru this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Thru this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world
After the silence of the centuries?

1899

## LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE

Another example of Markham's democratic regard for man. For the purpose of representing this attitude no better subject could be selected than Lincoln, who sprang from a lowly social stratum.

WHEN the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal vail.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things;
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—

To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul,
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow;
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spikt again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

1901

## 1864 ~ *Richard Hovey* ~ 1900

HOVEY was born at Normal, Illinois. His father, originally from Vermont, was president of the recently established State Normal University, and served in the Civil War, retiring with the rank of Brevet Major General. After the war was over the family lived in Washington, D.C., where Richard prepared for college. During this period his literary talent was manifested in a book of verse which he wrote, printed, bound, and copyrighted. Following in his father's footsteps he entered Dartmouth College, was elected class poet, edited student publications, and graduated in 1885. He studied art in Washington, theology in New York, served as Episcopal lay reader, but did not take orders in the Church. After doing some newspaper work in Boston, and lecturing at a summer school of philosophy, he went to Europe, spending the year 1891–1892 in England and France, where he came under the influence of the French poets Verlaine and Mallarmé and other Symbolists. The next six years were occupied in writing. In 1898 he was appointed lecturer at Barnard College in New York, where he died two years later as a result of a surgical operation.

*The Quest of Merlin* and *The Marriage of Guenevere*, two of nine dramatic poems which he planned on the Arthurian legend, appeared in 1891, *Songs from Vagabondia*, in collaboration with Bliss Carman, in 1894; *Taliesin: A Masque* and *The Birth of Galahad*, continuing the Arthur poems, in 1896 and 1898 respectively; *Along the Trail* in 1898; *More Songs from Vagabondia*, *Last Days from Vagabondia*,

likewise with Carman, in 1898 and 1900 respectively. *The Holy Graal* and *To the End of the Trail* were edited and published by Mrs. Hovey after her husband's death.

Hovey's work, with that of William Vaughn Moody, marks the transition from the older ideals to the new movements in contemporary American poetry. It represents a reaction against the late nineteenth-century esthetes, whose blood began to pale and run thin. Into this declining art which was threatening to become anemic Hovey injected a new, red-blooded, flannel-shirted, daring virility, founded on revolt against its lusterless products, an infectious love of nature, an athletic enjoyment of the out-of-doors, and a passion for wandering which in imagination took him to the ends of the earth. He loved books, but he loved men more. There is something essentially Whitmanesque in his fondness of Bohemian camaraderie, the glorification of nature and the occasional irregularity of form. Although Hovey did not break entirely with tradition, his use of new verse forms anticipates the revolt which was soon to follow. In fact, he was in sympathy with tradition, and tried to harmonize the new spirit with it as far as possible. Yet the time-spirit is strong in him, with its Bohemianism, revolt, and jingo-idealistic patriotism. Freedom is the keynote. But the freedom he craved is a mere innocent forebear of its more rebellious offspring of later days. He stood near the halfway mark between the old and the new.

Although Hovey's poetry is to some extent colored by the influence of other writers, his enthusiasm is basic and therefore not dependent on external stimulus. He writes with a definite object and purpose. To him poetry is not an end in itself but a means to more ultimate ends. Far from justifying itself merely as an agent of pleasure, it must enter into the very heart of man, help him to maintain his spiritual equilibrium as over against the unbalanced extremes of experience, and champion his rights under all circumstances. The second purpose of poetry, as he saw it, is to reveal the heart of man, not in fragments, but wholly, completely, to show heights and depths of experience, the extremes of his suffering and his exultation. Above all, poetry must reveal the beauty of things. It is its ultimate function to reveal the beauty of life and to inspire man to a genuine and enthusiastic love of it. Poetry, far from being an aesthetic soporific, must be an ethically and aesthetically dynamic stimulant. These were the articles of his poetic creed.

His best work is undoubtedly found in the Vagabondia volumes. The enthusiasm for experience, the enjoyment of comrades and the open road, and the reckless spontaneity of expression strike a new note in American poetry. In his patriotic poems, most of which were inspired by the Spanish-American War, he is not so successful.

Although his sincerity cannot be called into question, his patriotism savors of the jingo, and rests upon the assumption that certain age-long human traits, like war,

for instance, are unavoidable and must therefore be accepted. To this, "Unmanifest Destiny" with its reflective insight and wisdom is a notable exception. His poetic tributes to Dartmouth, and the occasional poems written for college and fraternity gatherings, reach a high level. The Arthurian series is only partially completed. What Hovey would have done had he lived one cannot, of course, surmise. That the treatment of his materials is unique and unusual the completed poems indicate conclusively. He did not select this material for its inherent poetic value, nor for the purpose of restoring a past epoch, but because he would attack a social system which, although championing freedom, has never succeeded in permitting men to live free lives. He also saw a psychological problem in the relations of Arthur, Guenevere, and Launcelot which intrigued him. Arthur became more human and less commanding than in Tennyson's *Idylls*, but the tragedy descends at times to mere intrigue.

Hovey's poems have not been collected in a complete edition. Some of the individual volumes are *Launcelot and Guenevere* (1891–1896); *Seaward* (1893); *Along the Trail* (1898); *Taliesin* (1900). With Bliss Carman he wrote *Songs from Vagabondia* (1893); *More Songs from Vagabondia* (1896); *Last Songs from Vagabondia* (1900). For biographical information and critical discussion see *DAB*, IX; J. B. Rittenhouse, *The Younger American Poets* (1904); C. H. Page, "Richard Hovey's 'Taliesin'—a Poet's Poem," *Bookman*, April, 1900; A. von Ende, "The Ethical Message of Richard Hovey's Poem in Dramas," *Poet-Lore*, Jan.–Feb., 1909; L. Ward, "Richard Hovey," *Harvard Monthly*, Dec., 1900; B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg* (1924).

## AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever—
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

We have striven fair in love and war,
But the wheel was always weighted;
We have lost the prize that we struggled for,
We have won the prize that was fated.
We have met our loss with a smile and a song,
And our gains with a wink and a whistle,—
For, whether we're right or whether we're wrong,
There's a rose for every thistle.
Here's luck—
And a drop to wet your whistle!

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under—
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck—
That we may not go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us,
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,

And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
*Here's luck!*
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

1900

## THREE OF A KIND

THREE of us without a care
In the red September
Tramping down the roads of Maine,
Making merry with the rain,
With the fellow winds a-fare
Where the winds remember.

Three of us with shocking hats,
Tattered and unbarbered,
Happy with the splash of mud,
With the highways in our blood,
Bearing down on Deacon Platt's
Where last year we harbored.

We've come down from Kennebec,
Tramping since last Sunday,
Loping down the coast of Maine,
With the sea for a refrain,
And the maples neck and neck
All the way to Fundy.

Sometimes lodging in an inn,
Cosy as a dormouse—
Sometimes sleeping on a knoll
With no rooftree but the Pole—
Sometimes halely welcomed in
At an old-time farmhouse.

Loafing under ledge and tree,
Leaping over boulders,
Sitting on the pasture bars,
Hail-fellow with storm or stars—
Three of us alive and free,
With unburdened shoulders!

Three of us with hearts like pine
That the lightnings splinter,
Clean of cleave and white of grain—
Three of us afoot again,
With a rapture fresh and fine
As a spring in winter!

All the hills are red and gold;
And the horns of vision
Call across the crackling air
Till we shout back to them there,
Taken captive in the hold
Of their bluff derision.

Spray-salt gusts of ocean blow
From the rocky headlands;
Overhead the wild geese fly,
Honking in the autumn sky;
Black sinister flocks of crow
Settle on the dead lands.

Three of us in love with life,
Roaming like wild cattle,
With the stinging air a-reel
As a warrior might feel
The swift orgasm of the knife
Slay him in mid-battle.

Three of us to march abreast
Down the hills of morrow!
With a clean heart and a few
Friends to clinch the spirit to!—
Leave the gods to rule the rest,
And good-by, sorrow!

1896

## UNMANIFEST DESTINY

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star,
  Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach
  The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
  Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
  To mightier issues than we planned,
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
  My country, serves Its dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
  Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
  I only know it shall be great.

1898

## SPRING

(Read at the Sixty-third Annual Convention of the Psi Upsilon Fraternity at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich., May 7, 1896)

I SAID in my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.
I have need of the sky.
I have business with the grass.
I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling.
Lone and high,
And the slow clouds go by.
I will get me away to the waters that glass
The clouds as they pass,
To the waters that lie
Like the heart of a maiden aware of a doom drawing nigh
And dumb for sorcery of impending joy.
I will get me away to the woods.
Spring, like a huntsman's boy,
Halloos along the hillsides and unhoods
The falcon in my will.
The dogwood calls me, and the sudden thrill
That breaks in apple blooms down country roads
Plucks me by the sleeve and nudges me away.
The sap is in the boles to-day,
And in my veins a pulse that yearns and goads."

When I got to the woods, I found out
What the Spring was about,
With her gypsy ways
And her heart ablaze,
Coming up from the south
With the wander-lure of witch songs in her mouth.
For the sky
Stirred and grew soft and swimming as a lover's eye
As she went by;
The air
Made love to all it touched, as if its care
Were all to spare;
The earth
Prickled with lust of birth;
The woodland streams
Babbled the incoherence of the thousand dreams
Wherewith the warm sun teems.
And out of the frieze
Of the chestnut trees
I heard
The sky and the fields and the thicket find voice in a bird.
The goldenwing—hark!
How he drives his song
Like a golden nail
Through the hush of the air!
I thrill to his cry in the leafage there;
I respond to the new life mounting under the bark.
I shall not be long
To follow
With eft and bulrush, bee and bud and swallow,
On the old trail.

Spring in the world!
And all things are made new!
There was never a mote that whirled
In the nebular morn,
There was never a brook that purled
When the hills were born,
There was never a leaf uncurled—
Not the first that grew—
Nor a bee-flight hurled,—
Nor a bird-note skirled,
Nor a cloud-wisp swirled
In the depth of the blue,
More alive and afresh and impromptu, more thoughtless and certain and free,
More a-shout with the glee
Of the Unknown new-burst on the wonder, than here, than here,

In the re-wrought sphere
Of the new-born year—
Now, now,
When the greenlet sings on the red-bud bough
Where the blossoms are whispering "I and thou,"—
"I and thou,"
And a lass at the turn looks after her lad with a dawn on her brow,
And the world is just made—now!

Spring in the heart!
With her pinks and pearls and yellows!
Spring, fellows,
And we too feel the little green leaves a-start
Across the bare-twigged winter of the mart.
The campus is reborn in us to-day;
The old grip stirs our hearts with new-old joy;
Again bursts bonds for madcap holiday
The eternal boy.
For we have not come here for long debate
Nor taking counsel for our household order,
Howe'er we make a feint of serious things,—
For all the world as in affairs of state
A word goes out for war along the border
To further or defeat the loves of kings.
We put our house to rights from year to year,
But that is not the call that brings us here;
We have come here to be glad.

*Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime*
*For a life that knows no fear!*
*Turn night-time into daytime*
*With the sunlight of good cheer!*
*For it's always fair weather*
*When good fellows get together*
*With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.*

*When the wind comes up from Cuba*
*And the birds are on the wing,*
*And our hearts are patting juba*
*To the banjo of the spring,*
*Then there's no wonder whether*
*The boys will get together,*
*With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.*

*For we're all frank-and-twenty*
*When the spring is in the air,*
*And we've faith and hope a-plenty,*
*And we've life and love to spare;*
*And it's birds of a feather*
*When we all get together,*
*With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.*

*For we know the world is glorious*
*And the goal a golden thing,*
*And that God is not censorious*
*When his children have their fling;*
*And life slips its tether*
*When the boys get together,*
*With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.*

A road runs east and a road runs west
From the table where we sing;
And the lure of the one is a roving quest,
And the lure of the other a lotus dream.
And the eastward road leads into the West
Of the lifelong chase of the vanishing gleam;
And the westward road leads into the East,
Where the spirit from striving is released,
Where the soul like a child in God's arms lies
And forgets the lure of the butterflies.
And west is east, if you follow the trail to the end;
And east is west, if you follow the trail to the end;
And the East and the West in the spring of the world shall blend
As a man and a woman that plight
Their troth in warm spring night.
And the spring for the East is the sap in the heart of a tree;
And the spring for the West is the will in the wings of a bird;
But the spring for the East and the West alike shall be
An urge in their bones and an ache in their spirit, a word
That shall knit them in one for Time's foison, once they have heard.

And do I not hear
The first low stirring of that greater spring
Thrill in the underworld of the cosmic year?
The wafture of scant violets presaging
The roses and the tasselled corn to be;

A yearning in the roots of grass and tree;
A swallow in the eaves;
The hint of coming leaves;
The signals of the summer coming up from Arcadie!

For surely in the blind deep-buried roots
Of all men's souls to-day
A secret quiver shoots.
An underground compulsion of new birth
Lays hold upon the dark core of our being,
And unborn blossoms urge their uncomprehended way
Toward the outer day.
Unconscious, dumb, unseeing,
The darkness in us is aware
Of something potent burning through the earth,
Of something vital in the procreant air.

Is it a spring, indeed?
Or do we stir and mutter in our dreams,
Only to sleep again?
What warrant have we that we give not heed
To the caprices of an idle brain
That in its slumber deems
The world of slumber real as it seems?
No,—
Spring's not to be mistaken.
When her first far flute notes blow
Across the snow,
Bird, beast, and blossom know
That she is there.
The very bats awaken
That hang in clusters in Kentucky caves
All winter, breathless, motionless, asleep,
And feel no alteration of the air,
For all year long those vasty caverns keep,
Winter and summer, even temperature;
And yet when April whistles on the hill,
Somehow, far in those subterranean naves,
They know, they hear her, they obey her will,
And wake and circle through the vaulted aisles
To find her in the open where she smiles.

So we are somehow sure,
By this dumb turmoil in the soul of man,
Of an impending something. When the stress
Climbs to fruition, we can only guess
What many-seeded harvest we shall scan;
But from one impulse, like a northering sun,
The innumerable outburst is begun,
And in that common sunlight all men know
A common ecstasy
And feel themselves at one.
The comradeship of joy and mystery
Thrills us more vitally as we arouse,
And we shall find our new day intimate
Beyond the guess of any long ago.
Doubting or elate,
With agony or triumph on our brows,
We shall not fail to be
Better comrades than before;
For no new sense puts forth in us but we
Enter our fellows' lives thereby the more.

And three great spirits with the spirit of man
Go forth to do his bidding. One is free,
And one is shackled, and the third, unbound,
Halts yet a little with a broken chain
Of antique workmanship, not wholly loosed,
That dangles and impedes his forthright way.
Unfettered, swift, hawk-eyed, implacable,
The wonder-worker, Science, with his wand,
Subdues an alien world to man's desires.
And Art with wide imaginative wings
Stands by, alert for flight, to bear his lord
Into the strange heart of that alien world
Till he shall live in it as in himself
And know its longing as he knows his own.
Behind a little, where the shadows fall,
Lingers Religion with deep-brooding eyes,
Serene, impenetrable, transpicuous
As the all-clear and all-mysterious sky,
Biding her time to fuse into one act
Those other twain, man's right hand and his left.

For all the bonds shall be broken and rent in sunder,
And the soul of man go free
Forth with those three
Into the lands of wonder;
Like some undaunted youth,
Afield in quest of truth,
Rejoicing in the road he journeys on
As much as in the hope of journey done.
And the road runs east, and the road runs west,
That his vagrant feet explore;

And he knows no haste and he knows no rest,
And every mile has a stranger zest
Than the miles he trod before;
And his heart leaps high in the nascent year
When he sees the purple buds appear;
For he knows, though the great black frost may blight
The hope of May in a single night,
That the spring, though it shrink back under the bark,
But bides its time somewhere in the dark—
Though it come not now to its blossoming,
By the thrill in his heart he knows the spring;
And the promise it makes perchance too soon,
It shall keep with its roses yet in June;
For the ages fret not over a day,
And the greater to-morrow is on its way.

*1896* 1898

## 1869 ~ *William Vaughn Moody* ~ 1910

MOODY was born in Spencer, Indiana, the third son and sixth child of Francis Burdette and Henrietta Story Moody. English, French, and German strains were mingled in his lineage. The father, who was captain of a river steamboat, lost his property during the Civil War. After his death in 1886 the son taught country school for a year, after which through the interest and assistance of a cousin, he entered Riverside Academy in New York to prepare himself for Harvard. Having fulfilled the requirement of the Harvard course in three years, he spent the fourth year in European travel. After achieving his master's degree and holding an instructorship at Harvard for a brief period, he joined the English staff of the recently founded University of Chicago. From 1895 to the end of his short life he devoted his time and energy to teaching, writing, and travel. In 1909 he was married to Harriet C. Brainerd. He died in Colorado Springs in 1910.

The dominant motivating power in Moody's life was his intense desire for culture. This took him from the Middle West to Cambridge and later on European excursions to Italy, Greece, and England. His associates testify that he was a brilliant teacher although, judging by his own statements, his heart was not in it. He chafed under the confining restraints of academic routine, and was always looking forward to the periods of freedom which afforded him opportunity to write.

To him the pursuit of the Muse was like an act of worship. Poetry, as such, is an elusive essence, a state of mind, a somewhat intangible verity which can at best be only partially realized. The gift of the poetic outlook is of greater consequence. "To be a poet," he said in a letter to his friend Mason, "is a much better thing than to write poetry." Through his entire life he labored incessantly to catch this poetic spirit and translate it into verse.

Moody's work is rooted in the best poetic traditions. Shakespeare, Milton, whom he edited, and the Greek tragic dramatists were especially significant in his literary and cultural development. Yet his poetry is essentially forward-looking. It stands,

with that of Hovey, as the transition between noble traditions and the revolutionary new poetry which at the time of Moody's death was startling the literary world. A general loosening up of metrical schemes, which at times approached *vers libre*, anticipations of Imagism, and the treatment of contemporary subject matter, particularly political and social themes, are indisputable signs of the coming change in poetry. "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" and "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" are good examples of the tendency. Moody's command of word and figure, coupled with his painstaking and conscientious workmanship, makes him a master craftsman. In the poetic trilogy consisting of *The Fire-Bringer* (1904), *The Masque of Judgment* (1900), and *The Death of Eve* (1906), in the order in which they should be read, the latter left uncompleted, he attempted to show the ultimate unity of God and the world, and the place which woman holds in the perpetual reconciliation.

Of the two prose plays, "The Great Divide" (1906) met with enthusiastic reception, while "The Faith Healer" (1909) failed to arouse much interest.

Moody's successive volumes are *The Masque of Judgment* (1900); *Poems* (1901); *The Fire-Bringer* (1904); *The Great Divide: a Play* (1909); *The Faith Healer: a Play* (1909). These have been collected in J. M. Manly, ed., and with introduction, *The Poems and Plays of William Vaughn Moody* (1912). R. M. Lovett, ed., *Selected Poems of William Vaughn Moody* (1931), also contains a good introduction. With R. M. Lovett he wrote *A History of English Literature* (1902). D. D. Henry's *William Vaughn Moody* (1934) is a biographical and critical study. Some of his letters are published in D. G. Mason, *Some Letters of William Vaughn Moody* (1913); and in P. MacKaye, *Letters to Harriet* (1936). See also *DAB*, XIII; R. M. Lovett, "Memories of William Vaughn Moody," *Atlantic*, March, 1931. For other critical discussion of Moody's work consult B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg* (1924); N. F. Adkins, "The Poetic Philosophy of William V. Moody," *Texas Review*, Jan., 1924; C. R. Walker, "The Poetry of William Vaughn Moody," *Texas Review*, 1915; M. H. Shackford, "Moody's *The Fire-Bringer* for To-day," *Sewanee Review*, Oct., 1918; A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); C. M. Lewis, "William Vaughn Moody," *Yale Review*, July, 1913; J. W. Buckham, "The Doubt and Faith of William Vaughn Moody," *Homiletic Review*, May, 1918; G. B. Munson, "The Limbo of American Literature," *Broom*, June, 1922; N. O. Barr and C. H. Caffin, "William Vaughn Moody," *Drama*, May, 1911; T. H. Dickinson, *Playwrights of the New American Theater* (1925); K. W. Baker, "A Poet of the Lean Years," *Forum*, Oct., 1922.

## AN ODE IN TIME OF HESITATION

(After seeing at Boston the statue of Robert Gould Shaw, killed while storming Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863, at the head of the first enlisted Negro regiment, the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts.)

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The poem was first published in the *Atlantic*, May, 1900. When St. Gaudens's monument in memory of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and his regiment of colored soldiers was unveiled and dedicated, Moody was touring in Europe. His friend, Professor Lovett, who accompanied him, says that they read an account of the dedication ceremony and the address by William James in a Boston newspaper which had been forwarded to them. On seeing the monument after his return to America he was deeply impressed by the beauty of the bas-relief portraying the splendid spirit of Colonel Shaw and his soldiers. At the time of the Spanish-American war, which was fought to liberate Cuba, but which also resulted in the subjugation of the Philippines, Moody felt the sharp contrast between the course of events and the ideals behind the St. Gaudens monument. The contrast is the basis of the poem.

I

Before the solemn bronze Saint Gaudens made
To thrill the heedless passer's heart with awe,
And set here in the city's talk and trade
To the good memory of Robert Shaw,
This bright March morn I stand,
And hear the distant spring come up the land;
Knowing that what I hear is not unheard
Of this boy soldier and his Negro band,
For all their gaze is fixed so stern ahead,
For all the fatal rhythm of their tread.
The land they died to save from death and shame
Trembles and waits, hearing the spring's great name,
And by her pangs these resolute ghosts are stirred.

II

Through street and mall the tides of people go
Heedless; the trees upon the Common show
No hint of green; but to my listening heart
The still earth doth impart
Assurance of her jubilant emprise,
And it is clear to my long-searching eyes
That love at last has might upon the skies.
The ice is runneled on the little pond;
A telltale patter drips from off the trees;
The air is touched with southland spiceries,
As if but yesterday it tossed the frond
Of pendant mosses where the live-oaks grow
Beyond Virginia and the Carolines,
Or had its will among the fruits and vines
Of aromatic isles asleep beyond
Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

III

Soon shall the Cape Ann children shout in glee,
Spying the arbutus, spring's dear recluse;
Hill lads at dawn shall hearken the wild goose
Go honking northward over Tennessee;
West from Oswego to Sault Sainte-Marie,
And on to where the Pictured Rocks are hung,
And yonder where, gigantic, wilful, young,
Chicago sitteth at the northwest gates,
With restless violent hands and casual tongue
Mounding her mighty fates,
The Lakes shall robe them in ethereal sheen;
And like a larger sea, the vital green
Of springing wheat shall vastly be out-flung
Over Dakota and the prairie states.
By desert people immemorial
On Arizonan mesas shall be done
Dim rites unto the thunder and the sun;
Nor shall the primal gods lack sacrifice
More splendid, when the white Sierras call
Unto the Rockies straightway to arise
And dance before the unveiled ark of the year,
Sounding their windy cedars as for shawms,
Unrolling rivers clear
For flutter of broad phylacteries;
While Shasta signals to Alaskan seas
That watch old sluggish glaciers downward creep
To fling their icebergs thundering from the steep,
And Mariposa through the purple calms
Gazes at far Hawaii crowned with palms
Where East and West are met,—
A rich seal on the ocean's bosom set
To say that East and West are twain,
With different loss and gain:
The Lord hath sundered them; let them be sundered yet.

IV

Alas! what sounds are these that come
Sullenly over the Pacific seas,—
Sounds of ignoble battle, striking dumb
The season's half-awakened ecstasies?
Must I be humble, then,
Now when my heart hath need of pride?
Wild love falls on me from these sculptured men;
By loving much the land for which they died
I would be justified.
My spirit was away on pinions wide
To soothe in praise of her its passionate mood
And ease it of its ache of gratitude.
Too sorely heavy is the debt they lay
On me and the companions of my day.
I would remember now
My country's goodliness, make sweet her name.
Alas! what shade art thou
Of sorrow or of blame
Liftest the lyric leafage from her brow,
And pointest a slow finger at her shame?

V

Lies! lies! It cannot be! The wars we wage
Are noble, and our battles still are won
By justice for us, ere we lift the gage.
We have not sold our loftiest heritage.
The proud republic hath not stooped to cheat
And scramble in the market-place of war;
Her forehead weareth yet its solemn star.
Here is her witness: this, her perfect son,
This delicate and proud New England soul
Who leads despisèd men, with just-unshackled feet,
Up the large ways where death and glory meet,
To show all peoples that our shame is done,
That once more we are clean and spirit-whole.

VI

Crouched in the sea fog on the moaning sand
All night he lay, speaking some simple word
From hour to hour to the slow minds that heard,
Holding each poor life gently in his hand
And breathing on the base rejected clay
Till each dark face shone mystical and grand
Against the breaking day;
And lo, the shard the potter cast away
Was grown a fiery chalice crystal-fine
Fulfilled of the divine
Great wine of battle wrath by God's ring-finger stirred.
Then upward, where the shadowy bastion loomed
Huge on the mountain in the wet sea light,
Whence now, and now, infernal flowerage bloomed,
Bloomed, burst, and scattered down its deadly seed,—
They swept, and died like freemen on the height,
Like freemen, and like men of noble breed;
And when the battle fell away at night
By hasty and contemptuous hands were thrust
Obscurely in a common grave with him
The fair-haired keeper of their love and trust
Now limb doth mingle with dissolvèd limb
In nature's busy old democracy
To flush the mountain laurel when she blows
Sweet by the southern sea,
And heart with crumbled heart climbs in the rose:—
The untaught hearts with the high heart that knew
This mountain fortress for no earthly hold
Of temporal quarrel, but the bastion old
Of spiritual wrong,
Built by an unjust nation sheer and strong,
Expugnable but by a nation's rue
And bowing down before that equal shrine
By all men held divine,
Whereof his band and he were the most holy sign.

VII

O bitter, bitter shade!
Wilt thou not put the scorn
And instant tragic question from thine eye?
Do thy dark brows yet crave
That swift and angry stave—
Unmeet for this desirous morn—
That I have striven, striven to evade?
Gazing on him, must I not deem they err
Whose careless lips in street and shop aver
As common tidings, deeds to make his cheek
Flush from the bronze, and his dead throat to speak?
Surely some elder singer would arise,
Whose harp hath leave to threaten and to mourn
Above this people when they go astray.
Is Whitman, the strong spirit, overworn?
Has Whittier put his yearning wrath away?
I will not and I dare not yet believe!
Though furtively the sunlight seems to grieve,
And the spring-laden breeze
Out of the gladdening west is sinister
With sounds of nameless battle overseas;
Though when we turn and question in suspense
If these things be indeed after these ways,
And what things are to follow after these,
Our fluent men of place and consequence
Fumble and fill their mouths with hollow phrase,
Or for the end-all of deep arguments
Intone their dull commercial liturgies—
I dare not yet believe! My ears are shut!
I will not hear the thin satiric praise
And muffled laughter of our enemies,
Bidding us never sheathe our valiant sword
Till we have changed our birthright for a gourd

Of wild pulse stolen from a barbarian's hut;
Showing how wise it is to cast away
The symbols of our spiritual sway,
That so our hands with better ease
May wield the driver's whip and grasp the jailer's keys.

VIII

Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
This crown shall crown their struggle and their ruth?
Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
Mewing its mighty youth,
Soon to possess the mountain winds of truth,
And be a swift familiar of the sun
Where aye before God's face his trumpets run?
Or have we but the talons and the maw,
And for the abject likeness of our heart
Shall some less lordly bird be set apart?—
Some gross-billed wader where the swamps are fat?
Some gorger in the sun? Some prowler with the bat?

IX

Ah no!
We have not fallen so.
We are our fathers' sons: let those who lead us know!
'Twas only yesterday sick Cuba's cry
Came up the tropic wind, "Now help us, for we die!"
Then Alabama heard,
And rising, pale, to Maine and Idaho
Shouted a burning word.
Proud state with proud impassioned state conferred,
And at the lifting of a hand sprang forth,
East, west, and south, and north,
Beautiful armies. Oh, by the sweet blood and young
Shed on the awful hill slope at San Juan,
By the unforgotten names of eager boys
Who might have tasted girls' love and been stung
With the old mystic joys
And starry griefs, now the spring nights come on,
But that the heart of youth is generous,—
We charge you, ye who lead us,
Breathe on their chivalry no hint of stain!
Turn not their new-world victories to gain!
One least leaf plucked for chaffer from the bays
Of their dear praise,
One jot of their pure conquest put to hire,
The implacable republic will require;
With clamor, in the glare and gaze of noon,
Or subtly, coming as a thief at night,
But surely, very surely, slow or soon
That insult deep we deeply will requite.
Tempt not our weakness, our cupidity!
For save we let the island men go free,
Those baffled and dislaureled ghosts
Will curse us from the lamentable coasts
Where walk the frustrate dead.
The cup of trembling shall be drainèd quite,
Eaten the sour bread of astonishment,
With ashes of the hearth shall be made white
Our hair, and wailing shall be in the tent;
Then on your guiltier head
Shall our intolerable self-disdain
Wreak suddenly its anger and its pain;
For manifest in that disastrous light
We shall discern the right
And do it, tardily.—O ye who lead,
Take heed!
Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

1900

## THE QUARRY

This poem was likewise suggested by contemporary events. The occasion was the preservation of the integrity of China by the intervention of the United States against the attacks of Britain, Russia, and Germany. Both "The Ode" and "The Quarry" voice Moody's criticism of the policy of imperialism.

Between the rice swamps and the fields of tea
I met a sacred elephant, snow-white.
Upon his back a huge pagoda towered
Full of brass gods and food of sacrifice.
Upon his forehead sat a golden throne,
The massy metal twisted into shapes
Grotesque, antediluvian, such as move
In myth or have their broken images
Sealed in the stony middle of the hills.
A peacock spread his thousand dyes to screen
The yellow sunlight from the head of one
Who sat upon the throne, clad stiff with gems,

Heirlooms of dynasties of buried kings,—
Himself the likeness of a buried king,
With frozen gesture and unfocused eyes.
The trappings of the beast were over-scrawled
With broideries—sea-shapes and flying things,
Fan-trees and dwarfed nodosities of pine,
Mixed with old alphabets, and faded lore
Fallen from ecstatic mouths before the Flood,
Or gathered by the daughters when they walked
Eastward in Eden with the Sons of God
Whom love and the deep moon made garrulous.
Between the carven tusks his trunk hung dead;
Blind as the eyes of pearl in Buddha's brow
His beaded eyes stared thwart upon the road;
And feebler than the doting knees of eld,
His joints, of size to swing the builder's crane
Across the war-walls of the Anakim,
Made vain and shaken haste. Good need was his
To hasten: panting, foaming, on the slot
Came many brutes of prey, their several hates
Laid by until the sharing of the spoil.
Just as they gathered stomach for the leap,
The sun was darkened, and wide-balanced wings
Beat downward on the trade-wind from the sea.
A wheel of shadow sped along the fields
And o'er the dreaming cities. Suddenly
My heart misgave me, and I cried aloud,
"Alas! What dost thou here? What dost *thou* here?"
The great beasts and the little halted sharp,
Eyed the grand circler, doubting his intent.
Straightway the wind flawed and he came about,
Stooping to take the vanward of the pack;
Then turned, between the chasers and the chased,
Crying a word I could not understand,—
But stiller-tongued, with eyes somewhat askance,
They settled to the slot and disappeared.

*1900* 1901

# 1869 ~ *Booth Tarkington* ~ —

A HOOSIER like Eggleston and Riley, Tarkington was born in Indianapolis which he still calls his home. His father was a veteran of the Civil War, practiced law, and also engaged in politics. Somewhere along the line of descent an infusion of French blood mingled in his ancestry. At an early age the child was subject to nervous disorders but apparently overcame them and grew up to be a healthy, normal boy. At eleven he formed a lifelong friendship with his neighbor James Whitcomb Riley, whose influence is clearly seen in Tarkington's writings. He attended Phillips Exeter, entered Purdue University to remain only two years, for he heard the call of another Eastern institution, this time Princeton, from which he graduated in 1893. As an undergraduate he participated in musical and dramatic activities, and was also one of the authors of a comic opera produced by a campus organization.

Upon his return to Indianapolis after graduation, not being under the immediate and pressing necessity of earning a living, he engaged in social activities and "wrote." This means that like Hawthorne and Stevenson before him he put himself

through a self-imposed graduate course in writing in preparation for his profession —he had always taken it for granted that he could be a novelist. For five years he earned practically nothing by his pen, but when in 1899 *The Gentleman from Indiana* was published it met with immediate success. This was followed by *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900), which was also very popular. His career opened auspiciously, and the omens were not misleading. He has been successful ever since. He served one term in the Indiana state legislature. With the exception of brief periods abroad he has divided his time between Indianapolis and his seashore home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Tarkington's literary career falls naturally into distinct divisions. First came the period of apprenticeship to which belongs *Monsieur Beaucaire* and *The Gentleman from Indiana*. This was followed by *The Two Vanrevels* (1902) and *Cherry* (1903), romantic novels abounding in sentiment and swift action. About 1913 he abandoned romance to write stories of youth and adolescence in a mildly realistic fashion. To this period belong *The Flirt* (1913), *Penrod* (1914), and *Seventeen* (1916). Still following the changing mode, Tarkington next devoted himself to a series of studies of midwestern life such as *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918), *Ramsay Milholland* (1919), and *Alice Adams* (1921). It was during this period that he did his best work. Other books were to follow, many of them highly successful, but he broke no new ground, cultivated no new type. His good-humored treatment of the American business magnate in *The Plutocrat* (1927) is in sharp contrast with the unrelieved portrait of the predatory and rapacious financier in *The Titan* (1914) by Dreiser. Besides his novels he has also written a number of plays and published several volumes of short stories.

In *The World Does Move* (1928), a somewhat impersonal autobiographical record, he points out the two phases of his literary theory and practice, practically admitting that he followed the current fashions as they changed from romance to realism. He wrote what the public wanted to read. For his purpose he devised a type of romance, compounded of sentiment, action, dramatic clashes, and melodrama. When the brief romantic rage subsided at the turn of the century, and the emphasis shifted to the realistic attitude, Tarkington again rowed with the current, albeit with dragging oars. To him realism was a method of treatment that aimed at conveying an impression of lifelikeness. With the sexmongers he had little patience because they willfully dragged the animal among the humans; he reminded them that one should always distinguish between "art" and "dirt." And by dirt he meant everything which stimulated the animal side of man. Art is not a literal or photographic reproduction of life, but the "beautiful interpretation of a truth." The truth may be ugly, but its representation and interpretation must bear the hallmarks of beauty.

According to his own statement, then, Tarkington has been a follower rather than a leader. He does not possess the spirit of the pioneer, and in his creative wan-

derings keeps the landmarks of the charted literary landscape always in sight. In fact, this has been urged against him as a very significant weakness which, as some critics point out, kept him from becoming a really first-rate novelist. Nor did he, these same critics say, exhibit any new or startling revelations of life; he has been called the novelist of the obvious. In other words, his artistic complacency irritated them when they preferred to be startled or at least mildly shocked. Whether or not he may be charged with undue submissiveness to the bourgeoise virtues, he has tried to sense public taste, and to supply its demands as far as possible.

Whether or not this catering to the common taste prevented him from achieving the highest development is beside the point. He succeeded in doing what he set out to do. He has held the attention of his reading public for more than thirty-five years. The freshness and the sparkle of his style have not been dimmed by the years. Furthermore, his stories of boy life, his acute analysis and representation of the psychology of adolescence, his studies of Middle West society under the impact of industrialism, his gentle humor, and his satire have won him an established place in contemporary literature.

Tarkington's output is so great that only a limited number of his works can be noted. In addition to those named above are such novels as *The Conquest of Canaan* (1905); *The Turmoil* (1915); *Seventeen* (1916); *The Midlander* (1923); *Little Orvie* (1934). *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The Turmoil*, and *The Midlander* are available in *Growth* (1927). His short stories appear in *In the Arena* (1905); *Beasley's Christmas Party* (1909); *The Fascinating Stranger* (1923); *Mr. White, The Red Barn, Hell, and Bridewater* (1935). Among his plays are *The Man from Home*, with H. L. Wilson (1908); *Beauty and the Jacobin* (1912); *Mr. Antonio* (1917); *Clarence* (1921). *Looking Forward and Others* (1926) is a collection of essays. Two biographical sketches of Tarkington have appeared: R. C. Holliday, *Booth Tarkington* (1918); and A. D. Dickinson, *Booth Tarkington, A Gentleman from Indiana* (1926). For helpful criticism see F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); C. C. Baldwin, *The Men Who Make Our Novels* (1924); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); S. P. Sherman, *Points of View* (1924); A. P. Dennis, *Gods and Little Fishes* (1931); E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages Among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books* (1903); D. Karsner, *Sixteen Authors to One* (1928); G. Overton, *Authors of the Day* (1924); E. F. Corbett, "Tarkington and His Veiled Lady," *American Review*, Sept.–Oct., 1925; E. F. Wyatt, "Booth Tarkington: the Seven Ages of Man," *North American Review*, Oct., 1922; A. B. Maurice, "Newton Booth Tarkington," *Bookman*, Feb., 1907; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* THE FASCINATING STRANGER

### *"You"*

**Tarkington is pre-eminently a novelist of adolescence and youth. "You" is a good example of his treatment of young love. It is taken from *The Fascinating Stranger*.**

MURIEL ELIOT'S friends and contemporaries were in the habit of describing her as "the most brilliant girl in town." She was "up on simply everything," they said, and it was customary to add the exclamation: "How on earth she finds the *time!*" And since Muriel also found time to be always charmingly dressed, in harmony with her notable comeliness, the marvel of so

much upness in her infant twenties may indeed need a little explaining.

Her own conception was that she was a "serious" person and cared for "serious reading"—that is to say, after she left college, she read, not what is acceptably called literature, but young journalists' musings about what aspires to be called that; she was not at all interested in buildings or pictures or statues themselves, but thought she was, read a little of what is printed about such things in reviews, and spoke of "art" and "literature" with authoritative conviction. She was a kind-hearted girl, and she believed that "capitalism" was the cunning device of greedy men to keep worthy persons under heel; hence it followed that all "capital" should be taken away from the "capitalist class" by the "people"; and, not picturing herself as in any way uncomfortably affected by the process of seizure, she called herself a "socialist."

In addition to all this, Muriel's upness included "the new psychology" and the appropriate humorous contempt for the Victorian Period, that elastic conception of something-or-other which, according to the writing young ladies and gentlemen who were her authorities, seemed to extend from about the time of Custer's Last Fight to the close of President Wilson's first administration. Muriel, like her original sources of information, was just becoming conscious of herself as an authority at about the latter date—she was sixteen then; and at twenty she began to speak of having spent her youth in the Late Victorian Period. That obscure decade before her birth, that time so formless and dark between the years of our Lord 1890 and 1900, was Mid-Victorian; people still mistook Tennyson and Longfellow for poets.

Sometimes older women thought Muriel a little hard; she was both brilliant and scholarly, they admitted; but the papers she wrote for the women's clubs were so "purely intellectual," so icily scientific, so little reticent in the discussion of love, marriage and children, that these ladies shook their heads. The new generation, as expressed by Muriel, lacked something important, they complained; for nothing less than maidenliness itself had been lost, and with it the rosebud reveries, the twilight half-dreams of a coming cavalier, the embowered guitar at moonrise. In a word, the charm of maidenhood was lost because romance was lost. Muriel lacked the romantic imagination, they said, a quality but ill replaced by so much "new thought."

They made this mistake the more naturally because Muriel herself made it, though of course she did not think of her supposed lack of romance as a fault. She believed herself to be a severely practical person, and an originally thinking person, as a quotation from one of her essays may partly explain. "I face the actual world as it is; I face it without superstition, and without tradition. Despising both the nonsense and the misery into which former generations have been led by romance, I permit no illusions to guide my thinking. I respect nothing merely because it is established; I examine mathematically; I think mathematically; I believe nothing that I do not prove. I am a realist."

When she wrote this, she was serious and really thought it true; but as a matter of fact, what she believed to be her thinking was the occasional mulling over of scattered absorptions from her reading. Her conception of her outward appearance, being somewhat aided by mirrors, came appreciably near the truth, but her conception of her mind had no such guide. Her mind spent the greater part of its time adrift in half-definite dreaming, and although she did not even suspect such a thing, her romantic imagination was the abode in which she really dwelt.

There is an astronomer who knows as much about the moon as can yet be known; but when that moon is new in the sky, each month, he will be a little troubled if he fails to catch his first glimpse of it over the right shoulder. When he does fail, his disappointment is so slight that he forgets all about it the next moment, and should you ask him if he has any superstition he will laugh disdainfully, with no idea that he deceives both his questioner and himself. This is the least of the mistakes he makes about his own thoughts; he is mistaken about most of them; and yet he is a great man, less given to mistakes than the rest of us. Muriel Eliot's grandmother, who used to sing "Robin Adair," who danced the Span-

ish Fandango at the Orphan Asylum Benefit in 1877, and wrote an anonymous love-letter to Lawrence Barrett, was not actually so romantic as Muriel.

The point is that Muriel's dreaminess, of which she was so little aware, had a great deal more to do with governing her actions than had her mathematical examinings and what she believed to be her thinking. Moreover, this was the cause of her unkindness to young Renfrew Mears, who lived across the street. Even to herself she gave other reasons for rejecting him; but the motive lay deep in her romanticism; for Muriel, without knowing it, believed in fairies.

Had she been truly practical, she would have seen that young Mr. Mears was what is called an "ideal match" for her. His grandfather, a cautious banker, had thought so highly of the young man's good sense as to leave him the means for a comfortable independence; yet Renfrew continued to live at home with his family and was almost always in bed by eleven o'clock. He was of a pleasant appearance; he was kind, modest, thoughtfully polite, and in everything the perfect material from which the equerry or background husband of a brilliant woman is constructed. No wonder her mother asked her what on earth she *did* want! Muriel replied that she despised the capitalistic institution of marriage, and she believed that she meant what she said; but of course what she really wanted was a fairy-story.

In those wandering and somewhat shapeless reveries that controlled her so much more than she guessed, there were various repetitions that had become rather definite, though never quite so. One of these was the figure of her Mate. Her revery-self never showed her this mystery clearly in contours and colors, but rather in shadowy outlines, though she was sure that her Mate had dark and glowing eyes. He was somewhere, and sometime she would see him. When she did see him, she would recognize him instantly; the first look exchanged would bring the full revelation to both of them—they would ever have little need of spoken words. But her most frequent picture of this mystic encounter was a painful one: she saw herself a bride upon the bridegroom's arm and coming down the steps of the church;—a passing stranger, halting abruptly upon the pavement, gave her one look from dark and glowing eyes, a look fateful with reproach and a tragic derision, seeming to say: "You did not wait till *I* came, but took that fool!"

Then he passed on, forever; and it was unfortunate for young Mr. Mears that the figure of the bridegroom in these foreshadowings invariably bore a general resemblance to his own. Renfrew had more to overcome than appeared upon the surface; he had shadows to fight; and so have other lovers—more of them than is guessed—when ladies are reluctant. For that matter, the thing is almost universal; and rare is the girl, however willing, who says "Yes," without giving up at least some faint little tremulous shadow of a dream—though she may forget it and deny it as honestly as that astronomer forgets and denies the moon and his right shoulder.

Renfrew's case with his pretty neighbor was also weakened by the liking and approval of her father and mother, who made the mistake of frequently praising him to her; for when parents do this, with the daughter adverse, the poor lover is usually ruined—the reason being obvious to everybody except the praising parents. Mrs. Eliot talked Renfrew Mears and his virtues at her daughter till the latter naturally declared that she hated him. "I do!" she said one morning. "I really do hate him, mamma!"

"What nonsense!" her mother exclaimed. "When I heard the two of you chatting together on the front porch for at least an hour, only last evening!"

"Chatting!" Muriel repeated scornfully. "Chatting together! That shows how much you observe, mamma! I don't think he said more than a dozen words the whole evening."

"Well, don't you like a good listener?"

"Yes," Muriel replied emphatically. "Indeed, I do! A good listener is one who understands what you're saying. Renfrew Mears has just lately learned enough to keep quiet, for fear if he speaks at all, it'll show he doesn't understand *any*thing!"

"Well, if he doesn't, why did you talk to him?"

"Good gracious!" Muriel cried. "We can't always express ourselves as we wish to in this life, mamma; I should think you'd know that by this time! I can't throw rocks at him and say, 'Go back home!' every time he comes poking over here, can I? I have to be polite, even to Renfrew Mears, don't you suppose?"

The mother, sighing, gave her daughter one of those little half-surreptitious glances in which mothers seem to review troubled scenes with their own mothers; then she said gently: "Your father and I do wish you could feel a little more kindly toward the poor boy, Muriel."

"Well, I can't, and I don't want to. What's more, I wouldn't marry him if I did."

"Not if you were in love?"

"Poor mamma!" Muriel said compassionately. "What has love to do with marrying? I expect to retain my freedom; I don't propose to enter upon a period of child-rearing—"

"Oh, good gracious!" Mrs. Eliot cried. "What a way to talk!"

"But if I did," Muriel continued, with some sharpness, "I should never select Renfrew Mears to be my assistant in the task. And as for what you call 'love,' it seems to me a rather unhealthy form of excitement that I'm not subject to, fortunately."

"You *are* so queer," her mother murmured; whereupon Muriel laughed.

No doubt her laughter was a little condescending. "Queer?" she said. "No—only modern. Only frank and wholesome! Thinking people look at life as it really is, nowadays, mamma. I am a child of the new age; but more than that, I am not the slave of my emotions; I am the product of my thinking. Unwholesome excitement and queer fancies have no part in my life, mamma."

"I hope not," her mother responded with a little spirit. "I'm not exactly urging anything unwholesome upon you, Muriel. You're very inconsistent, it seems to me."

"I!" Muriel said haughtily. "Inconsistent!"

"Why, when I just mention that your father and I'd be glad if you could feel a little kinder toward a good-looking, fine young man that we know all about, you begin talking, and pretty soon it sounds as though we were trying to get you to do something criminal! And then you go on to say you haven't got any 'queer fancies!' Isn't it a queer fancy to think we'd want you to do anything unhealthy or excited? That's why I say you're inconsistent."

Muriel colored; her breathing quickened; and her eyes became threateningly bright. "The one thing I *won't* be called," she said, "is 'inconsistent!' "

"Well, but—"

"I won't!" she cried, and choked. "You *know* it makes me furious; that's why you do it!"

"Did I understand you to say you never permitted your emotions to control you?" her mother asked dryly.

In retort, Muriel turned to the closet where she kept her hats; for her favorite way of meeting these persecutions was to go out of the house abruptly, leaving her mother to occupy it in full remorse; but this time Mrs. Eliot forestalled her. A servant appeared in the doorway and summoned her: "There's someone downstairs wants to see you; I took him in the library."

"I'll come," said Mrs. Eliot, and with a single dignified glance at her daughter, she withdrew, leaving Muriel to digest a discomfiture. For the art of domestic altercation lies almost wholly in the withdrawal, since here the field is won by abandoning it. In family embroilments she proves herself right, and the others wrong, who adroitly seizes the proper moment to make an unexpected departure either with dignity or in tears. People under stress of genuine emotion have been known to practice this art, seeming thereby to indicate the incompatible presence of a cool dramatist somewhere in the back of their heads; yet where is there anything that is not incompatible? Muriel, injured by the word "inconsistent," had meant to withdraw in silent pain, thus putting her mother in the wrong; but, in the sometimes invaluable argot of the race-course, Mrs. Eliot got away first. Muriel felt severely baffled.

There remained to her, however, a retreat somewhat enfeebled by her mother's successful withdrawal: Mrs. Eliot had gone out of the room; Muriel could still go out of the house. Therefore she put on a hat, descended the

stairs and went toward the front door in a manner intended to symbolize insulted pride taking a much more important departure than the mere walking out of a room.

Her mother, of course, was intended to see her pass the open double doors of the library, but Mrs. Eliot's back happened to be toward those doors, and she was denied the moving picture of the daughter sweeping through the hall. The caller, however, suffered no such deprivation; he sat facing the doorway, and although Muriel did not look directly at him, she became aware of a distinguished presence. The library was shadowy, the hall much lighter; she passed the doors quickly; but she was almost startled by the impression made upon her by this young man whom she had never before seen. Then, as she went on toward the front door, she had suddenly a sensation queerly like dizziness; it seemed to her that this stranger had looked at her profoundly as she passed, and that the gaze he bent upon her had come from a pair of dark and glowing eyes.

She went out into the yard, but not, as she had intended, to the street; and turning the corner of the house, she crossed the sunny lawn to some hydrangea bushes in blossom, where she paused and stood, apparently in contemplation of the flowers. She was trembling a little, so strong was her queer consciousness of the stranger in the library and of his dark and glowing eyes. Such sensations as hers have often been described as "unreal"; that is to say, "she seemed to be in a dream." Her own eyes had not fully encountered the dark and glowing ones, but never had any person made so odd and instantaneous an impression upon her. What else was she to conclude but that there must have been "something psychic" about it? And how, except by telepathy, could she have so suddenly found in her mind the conviction that the distinguished-looking young man was a painter? For to her own amazement, she was sure of this.

After a time she went back into the house, and again passed through the hall and by the open doors, but now her bearing was different. In a sweet, low voice she hummed a careless air from Naples, while in her arms she bore a sheaf of splendid hydrangea blossoms, thus offering, in the momentary framing of the broad doorway, a composition rich in color and also of no mean decorative charm in contour, it may be said. "The Girl from the Garden" might have been the title she wished to suggest to the painter's mind, but when she came into the view of her mother's caller, consciousness of him increased all at once so overwhelmingly that she forgot herself. She had meant to pass the doorway with a cool leisureliness and entirely in profile—a Girl from the Garden with no other thought than to enliven her room with an armful of hydrangea blossoms—but she came almost to a halt midway, and, for the greater part of a second packed with drama, looked full upon the visitor.

He was one of those black-and-white young men: clothes black, linen white, a black bow at the collar, thick black hair, the face of a fine pallor, and black eyes lustrously comprehending. What they must have comprehended now was at least a little of the significance of the arrested attitude beyond the doorway, and more than a little of what was meant by the dark and lustrous eyes that with such poignant inquiry met his own. For Muriel's fairly shouted at him the startled question: "Who are *you?*"

Time, life and love are made of seconds and bits of seconds: Muriel had gone on, carrying her question clamoring down the hall with her, before this full second elapsed. She ran up the stairs and into her own room, dropped the hydrangeas upon a table, and in two strides confronted a mirror. A moment later she took up the hydrangeas again, with a care to hold them as she had held them in the hall below, then walked by the mirror, paused, gave the glass a deep, questioning look and went on. After that she seated herself beside an open window that commanded a view of the front gate, and waited, the great question occupying her tumultuously.

By this time the great question had grown definite, and of course it was, "Is it He?" Other questions came tumbling after it: How did she know he was a painter, this young man of whom she had never heard? It is only in the moving pictures that a doctor must

look like a doctor, a judge like a judge, an anarchist like an anarchist, a painter like a painter; the age of machines, hygiene and single-type clothing has so blurred men into indistinguishability that only a few musicians still look like musicians, a feat accomplished simply by the slight impoverishment of barbers. The young man in the library was actually a painter, but Muriel may well have been amazed that she knew it; for nowadays it is a commonplace that a Major General in mufti may reasonably be taken for a plumber, while an unimportant person soliciting alms at the door is shown into the house under the impression that a Senator is calling.

Why (Muriel asked herself) had her mother not mentioned such an appointment? But perhaps there had been no appointment; perhaps he had called without one. What for? To ask permission to paint the daughter's portrait? Had he seen her somewhere before today? Where did he live? In Paris?

The front door could be heard closing below, and she looked down upon a white straw hat with a black band. This hat moved quickly down the path to the gate, and the young stranger was disclosed beneath the hat: a manly figure with an elastic step. Outside the gate he paused, looking back thoughtfully with his remarkable eyes; and Muriel, who had instantly withdrawn into the concealment of a window-curtain, marked that this look of his had the quality of covering the whole front of the house at a glance. It was a look, moreover, that seemed to comprehend the type of the house and even to measure its dimensions—a look of the kind that "takes in everything," as people say. Muriel trembled again. Did he say to himself: "This is Her house?" Did he think: "I should like to set my easel here by the gate and paint this house, because it is the house where She dwells?"

His pause at the gate was only a momentary one; he turned toward the region of commerce and hotels and walked quickly away, the intervening foliage of the trees almost immediately cutting him off from the observation of the girl at the window. Then she heard her mother coming up the stairs and through the upper hall; whereupon Muriel, still tremulous, began hastily to alter the position of the little silver implements upon her dressing-table, thus sketching a preoccupation with small housewifery, if Mrs. Eliot should come into the room. But to the daughter's acute disappointment, the mother passed the open door without even looking in, and retired to her own apartment.

Muriel most urgently wished to follow her and shower her with questions: "Who *is* he? Isn't he a painter? Why did he come to see you? What were you talking about? When is he coming again? What did he say when he saw me?" But remembering the terms upon which she and her mother had so recently parted, and that odious word "inconsistent," Muriel could not bend to the intimacy of such a questioning. In fact, her own thought took the form, "I'd rather die!"

She turned to the window again, looked out at that gate so lately made significant by the passage of the stranger—and there was young Mr. Renfrew Mears, just coming in. He was a neat picture of a summer young gentleman for any girl's eye; but to Muriel he was a too-familiar object, and just now about as interesting as a cup of tepid barley-water. She tried to move away before he saw her, but Renfrew had always a fatal quickness for seeing her. He called to her.

"Oh, Muriel!"

"Well—what?" she said reluctantly.

"There's something I want to ask you about. Will you come down in a few minutes?"

"Oh, well—I suppose so," was her not too heartening response; but on the way downstairs a thought brightened her. Perhaps Renfrew might know something about a dark young man—a painter—lately come to town.

He was blank upon this subject, however, as she discovered when they had seated themselves upon a wicker settee on the veranda. "No," he said. "I haven't heard of any artist that's come here lately. Where'd you hear about one?"

"Oh, around," she said casually. "I'm not absolutely certain he's an artist, but I got that idea somewhere. The reason I wanted to know is because I thought he might be one of the new group that have broken away, like Matisse and Gaugin."

"Who?"

"Never mind. Haven't you heard of anybody at *all* that's a stranger here—visiting somebody, perhaps?"

"Not exactly," Renfrew replied, thinking it over conscientiously. "I don't believe I have, exactly."

"What do you mean, you don't think you have 'exactly?'" she asked irritably. "Have you, or haven't you?"

"Well," he said, "my Aunt Milly from Burnetsville is visiting my cousins, the Thomases, but she's an invalid and you probably wouldn't ——"

"No, I wouldn't!" Muriel said. "Don't strain your mind any more, Renfrew."

"I could inquire around," he suggested. "I thought it wouldn't likely be my aunt, but you said 'anybody at all.'"

"Never mind! What was it you wanted to ask me?"

"Well, it's something rather important, but of course maybe you won't think so, Muriel. Anyway, though, I hope you'll think it's *sort* of important."

"But what *is* it? Don't hang fire so, Renfrew!"

"I just wanted to lead up to it a little," he explained mildly. "I've been thinking about getting a new car, and I wondered what sort you think I'd better look at. I didn't want to get one you wouldn't like."

Her lips parted to project that little series of sibilances commonly employed by adults to make children conscious of error. "Why on earth should you ask me?" she said sharply. "Is that your idea of an important question?"

Renfrew's susceptible complexion showed an increase of color, but he was growing more and more accustomed to be used as a doormat, and he responded, without rancor: "I meant and hoped you'd sort of think it important, my not wanting to get one you wouldn't like."

"Now, what do you mean by that?"

"Well," he said, "I mean I hoped you'd think it was important, my thinking it was important to ask you."

"I don't," she returned as a complete answer.

"You say ——"

"I say I don't," she repeated. "I don't. I don't think it's important. Isn't that clear enough, Renfrew?"

"Yes," he said, and looked plaintively away from her.

"Is there anything more this morning?" she was cruel enough to inquire.

"No," he answered, rising. "I guess that's all." Then, having received another of his almost daily rejections, he went away, leaving her to watch his departing figure with some exasperation, though she might well have admired him for his ingenuity: every day or two he invented a new way of proposing to her. In comparison, her refusals were commonplace, but of course she neither realized that nor cared to be brilliant for Renfrew; and also, this was a poor hour for him, when the electric presence of the black-and-white stranger was still vibrant in the very air. Muriel returned to her room and put the hydrangeas in a big silver vase; she moved them gently, with a touch both reverent and caressing, for they had borne a part in a fateful scene, and already she felt it possible that in the after years she would never see hydrangeas in blossom without remembering today and the First Meeting.

Impulsively she went to her desk and wrote:

"Is it true that You have come? My hand trembles, and I know that if I spoke to my mother about You, my voice would tremble. Oh, I could never ask her a question about You! A moment ago I sat upon the veranda with a dull man who wants to marry me. It seemed a desecration to listen to him—an offense to You! He has always bored me. How much more terribly he bored me when perhaps I had just seen You for the first time in my life! Perhaps it is not for the first time in eternity, though! Was I ever a Queen in Egypt and were You a Persian sculptor? Did we meet in Ephesus once?

"It is a miracle that we should meet at all. I might have lived in another century—or on another planet! Should we then have gone seeking, seeking one another always vainly? All my life I have been waiting for You. Always I have known that I was waiting, but until today I did not know it was for just You. My whole being trembled when I saw You—if it *was* You? I am trembling now as I

think of You, as I write of You—write *to* You! A new life has possibly begun for me in this hour!

"And some day will I show you this writing? That thought is like fire and like ice. I burn with it and freeze with it, in terror of You! See! Here is my heart opened like a book for your reading!

"Oh, is it, *is* it You? I think that you are a painter; that is all I know of You—and why do I think it? It *came* to me as I stood in a garden, thrilling with my first quick glimpse of You. Was that the proof of our destiny, yours and mine? Yes, the miracle of my knowing that you are a painter when I do not even know your name—that is the answer! It must be You! I tremble with excitement as I write that word 'You' which has suddenly leaped into such fiery life and meaning: I tremble and I could weep! Oh, You—You—You! *Is* it?"

Twice, during the latter phases of this somewhat hasty record of ardor, she had been summoned to lunch, and after hurrying the final words upon the page, she put the paper into a notebook and locked it inside her desk. Then she descended the stairs and went toward the dining-room, but halted suddenly, unseen, outside the door. She had caught the word "painter," spoken by her father.

"Well, I'm glad you liked that painter."

"Yes," Mrs. Eliot said. "I talked it over with him, and I'm afraid he agreed with you instead of with me. Naturally, he would, though! I was quite interested in him."

"You were?"

"Yes—such an unexpected type."

"Well, no," Mr. Eliot said. "Nobody's an unexpected type nowadays. Isn't Muriel coming down at all?"

"Jennie's been for her twice," his wife informed him. "I suppose she'll come eventually. She's cross this morning."

"What about?"

"Oh, I just asked her if she couldn't be a little fairer to a certain somebody. I suppose I'd better not have mentioned it, because it made her very peevish."

Upon this, Muriel made her entrance swiftly enough to let her mother know that the last words had been overheard, an advantage the daughter could not forego. She took her place at the table opposite to her gourmandizing little brother Robert, and in silence permitted her facial expression alone to mention what she thought of a mother who called her "peevish" when she was not present to defend herself.

Only a moment before, she had been thrilled inexpressibly: the black-and-white stranger, so mysteriously spoken of by her parents, was indeed a painter. That proved his You-ness, proved everything! Her whole being (as she would have said) shook with the revelation, and her anxiety to hear more of him was consuming; but the word "peevish" brought about an instantaneous reversion. She entered the dining-room in an entirely different mood, for her whole being was now that of a daughter embattled with a parent who attacks unfairly—so intricately elastic are the ways of our whole beings!

Mrs. Eliot offered only the defense of a patient smile; Mr. Eliot looked puzzled and oppressed; and for a time there was no conversation during the further progress of this uncomfortable meal. Nothing was to be heard in the room except the movements of a servant and the audible eating of fat little Robert, who was incurably natural with his food.

It was Muriel who finally decided to speak. "I'm sorry to have interrupted your conversation," she said frostily. "Perhaps, though, you'd prefer not to say any more about me to papa and Robert while I'm here to explain what really happened, mamma."

"Oh, nonsense!" Mr. Eliot said. "I suppose even the Pope gets 'peevish' now and then; it's no deadly insult to say a person got a little peevish. We weren't having a 'conversation' about you at all. We were talking about other matters, and just barely mentioned you."

Muriel looked at him quickly. "What other things were you talking about?"

He laughed. "My! How suspicious you are!"

"Not at all; I simply asked you what other things you were talking about."

Instead of replying, "About a distinguished young painter who saw you on the street and wants to paint your portrait," Mr. Eliot laughed again and rose, having finished his coffee. He came round the table to her and

pinched her ear on his way to the door. "Good gracious!" he said. "Don't you suppose your mother and I ever talk about anything except what a naughty daughter we have?" And with that he departed. Mrs. Eliot said, "Excuse me," rather coldly to Muriel, followed him to the front door, and failed to return.

Muriel did not see her mother again during the afternoon, and in the evening Mr. and Mrs. Eliot went out to a dinner of their bridge-club, leaving their daughter to dine in the too audible company of Robert. She dressed exquisitely, though not for Robert, whose naturalness at the table brought several annoyed glances from her. "*Can't* you manage it more quietly, Robert?" she asked at last, with the dessert. "Try!"

"Whaffor?" he inquired.

"Only because it's so hideous!"

"Oh, hush!" he said rudely, and, being offended, became more natural than ever, on purpose.

She sighed. With the falling of the dusk, her whole being, not antagonized by her mother's presence, had become an uplifted and mysterious expectation; and the sounds made by the gross child Robert were not to be borne. She left the table, went out into the starlight, and stood by the hydrangeas, an ethereal figure in draperies of mist.

"Oh, You!" she whispered, and let a bare arm be caressed by the clumps of great blossoms. "When are you coming again, You? Tonight?"

She quivered with the sense of impending drama; it seemed to her certain that the next moment she would see him—that he would come to her out of the darkness. The young painter should have done so; he should have stepped out of the vague nightshadows, a poetic and wistful figure, melancholy with mystery yet ineffably radiant. "Mademoiselle, step lightly!" he should have said. "Do you not see the heart beneath your slipper? It was mine until I threw it there!"

"Ah, You!" she murmured to the languorous hydrangeas.

At such a moment the sounds of peanuts being eaten, shells and all, could not fail to prove inharmonious. She shivered with the sudden anguish of a dislocated mood; but she was Robert's next of available kin and recognized a duty. She crossed the lawn to the veranda, where he sat, busy with a small paper sack upon his knee.

"Robert! Stop that!"

"I ain't doin' anything," he said crossly.

"You *are*. What do you mean, eating peanuts when you've just finished an enormous dinner?"

"Well, what hurt is that?"

"And with the shells on!" she cried.

"Makes more *to* 'em," he explained.

"Stop it!"

"I won't," Robert said doggedly. "I'm goin' to do what I please tonight, no matter how much trouble I get into tomorrow!"

"What 'trouble' do you expect tomorrow?"

"Didn't you hear about it?" he asked. "Papa and mamma were talkin' about it at lunch."

"I didn't hear them."

"I guess it was before you came down," Robert said; and then he gave her a surprise. "The painter was here this morning, and they got it all fixed up."

Muriel moved back from him a step, and inexplicably a dismal foreboding took her. "What?" she said.

"Well, the thing that bothers *me* is simply this," Robert informed her: "He told mamma he'd have to bring his little boy along and let him play around here as long as the work went on. He said he has to take this boy along with him, because his wife's a dentist's 'sistant and can't keep him around a dentist office, and they haven't got any place to leave him. He's about nine years old, and I'll bet anything I have trouble with him before the day's over."

"Do you mean the—the painter is married, Robert?"

"Yes, and got this boy," Robert said, shaking his head. "I bet I *do* have trouble with him, if he's got to be around here until they get three coats o' paint on our house. Mamma thought they only needed two, but papa said three, and the painter talked mamma into it this morning."

"The house?" Muriel said. "We're going to have the—the house painted?"

Robert was rather surprised. "Why, don't you remember how much papa and mamma

were talkin' about it, two or three weeks ago? And then they thought not and didn't say so much about it, but for a while was goin' to have every painter in town come up here and make a bid. Don't you remember?"

"I do now," Muriel said feebly; and a moment later she glanced toward the bright windows of the house across the street. "Robert," she said, "if you've finished those horrible peanuts, you might run and ask Mr. Renfrew Mears if he'd mind coming over a little while."

She had been deeply stirred by the subject that had occupied her all day, and it was a spiritual necessity for her (so to say) to continue upon the topic with somebody—even with Renfrew Mears! However, she rejected him again, though with a much greater consideration for his feelings than was customary; and when he departed, she called after him:

"Look out for your clothes when you come over tomorrow. We're going to have the house painted."

Then, smiling contentedly, she went indoors and up to her room. The great vase of hydrangeas stood upon a table; she looked at it absently, and was reminded of something. She took some sheets of written paper from a notebook in her desk, tossed them into a waste-basket, yawned, and went to bed.

1923

## *From* THE WORLD DOES MOVE

In this autobiographical work Tarkington frequently becomes critical, and some current tendencies, movements, and tastes are handled rather savagely.

### CHAPTER XXI

IN this new age of "frankness in art" the old-fashioned liberal discovered that he was now become a puzzled conservative protesting against what appeared to him a prevailing tainted ugliness, anything but frank. The moment he did protest, however, he encountered hot defenders of the new frankness: they assailed him in the sacred name of "realism," and were loftily scornful of him. "You belong to the age of half-truths and the old hypocrisies," they informed him. "You called legs 'limbs.'"

"No," he replied. "As a matter of record, I didn't, unless I spoke of arms and legs together. But it is a curious thing that I hear you repeatedly charging old-fashioned people with this crime. Whenever we ask you to tell us precisely what are the old hypocrisies that you have so usefully swept away, you almost always fall back upon 'limb.' It seems to make you very bitter with us to believe that we said 'limb' for 'leg.' You repeat and reiterate the accusation, evidently regarding it as serious. You are not historians and fail to understand that 'limb,' instead of 'leg,' was a euphuism of the feebler spirits practising the art of being genteel—an art that disappeared in our youth, when we ourselves assisted it to disappear. But, just to please you, let us imagine that we did say 'limb' when 'leg' would have been more definite. You are not indignant with us when we sometimes say 'seat' for 'chair,' or 'building' for 'warehouse,' perhaps, or 'pets' for 'dogs' and 'cats,' or 'bird' for 'parrot.' In fact, I think you may say such things, upon occasion, yourselves, without any subsequent great amount of moral anguish or remorse. How does it happen that you concentrate your attack upon 'limb?' Why is 'leg' of such overpowering importance to you?"

"Because you felt that 'leg' had some connection with sex," they replied, "and you declined to speak frankly of sex."

Here the liberal of a former age had again to make an inquiry: "What do you mean by 'frankly?'"

"The way we are speaking now is art—our honest realism in art. You charge us with offering as art a 'tainted ugliness.' Well, life has uglinesses. We are frank enough to represent in art the uglinesses as well as the beauties of life, as they are in reality. How do you justify the use of the word 'tainted' that you apply to our honest realism?"

"I have been to your serious theater," the old liberal answered. "I have read your novels and, also, I have listened to your frank comedies. You say truly there are uglinesses and beauties in life, but the uglinesses I find you concerned with are mainly those of what you call sex; and, in this euphuism of yours, 'sex' for 'sensualism' and 'sexuality' and 'animalism,' you yourselves are far more genteel than

the poetess who spoke of 'limbs' in Eighteen-seventy. Out of all the uglinesses of life you select but the one for your great subject; and when you consider it a beauty of life, not an ugliness, you make it hideous by your 'frankness'—a maiden upon a hilltop is something in anatomy for you. You are interested in her dreams only as they may reveal something about her 'sex life,' and, when you speak of her heart, you love the jargon of sex-specialist psychologist better than English. You appear to found your claim to a universal honesty upon your own predilection for the sexual, which is your topic."

"We are compelled to make it our topic because you denied its existence by ignoring it."

"Ignore?" the veteran returned. "If I write of a man eating his dinner, do I ignore his digesting it? If I say that he stood without a raincoat or umbrella for hours in a heavy rain, must you be informed that he got wet? And, without ignoring, if I omit from detailed description the known inevitable results, common to all men under such circumstances, leaving descriptive details to the imagination of a reader, or an audience, may I not also, without ignoring, omit descriptive details of universal intimate and private sexual experiences when those details may possibly stimulate imaginations unhealthily?"

"No," the new champions retorted with ardor, "you may not. Unless you report such details faithfully, you are not honest and give us nothing of life."

"While you, on the contrary," the veteran responded, "are busy giving us nothing of art."

This seemed to be, so far as a spectator could make out, something like the inimical dialogue between the old and the new in "realism." The new charged the old with lack of frankness and the old charged the new with dirt, and in this latter charge there was matter of concern to the bystander. He had no need to be concerned with the former; the charge of lack of frankness in the old was negligible. It was merely a form of saying that certain artists did not choose the sexual, or the digestive, or the obvious for their subjects.

Of course any artist may choose whatever subject he pleases: the Nike of Samothrace is not a dishonest work because she is draped; and although the undraped Venus of Syracuse lacks the "frankness" believed necessary by the "new realists" of Pompeii, and by those of today, yet it is evident that the Venus of Syracuse is a very great work of art. Lack of realistic frankness, or merely imitative literalness, is therefore no impediment in the way of truth and beauty: there is no more sex or sexuality in Gray's Elegy than there is in the Sainte-Chapelle; the old has already proved itself, that it is honest art. Hence, in the dispute between the older "realists" and the newer, the only question that concerned us, as bystanders thinking of art, was whether or not there was dirt in the "new realism." That is to say: When is "art" art and when is it dirt? With this problem in mind, I went to New York and attended the theater, for, if I could discover the essential truth of the matter there, the same truth would apply to any other art anywhere.

It was necessary to go to New York because New York had apparently become the United States, at least so far as the commercial theater was concerned. The Little Theater Movement was independent of the metropolis; so were several excellent stock companies. Moreover, a few special enterprises in classic drama, revivals of Sheridan's or Goldsmith's comedies, or of Shakespearean plays, and a few theatrical stars, personally admired for their talents and for themselves, might successfully ignore New York; but these were the exceptions. Chicago or Philadelphia or Los Angeles might exhibit symptoms of theatrical independence, as regional dramatic capitals; but, for the purpose of general practical consideration everything outside of New York, theatrically speaking, had become "the provinces." This was not the most agreeable view for the rest of us, who were the provincials; but more and more we had been forced to accept it.

"If there's anybody who doubts it," said a New York manager who would have liked to doubt it himself, "he has only to produce a play in New York and take it out on tour. After he's read the New York opinion of his play, rehashed in the newspapers of one-night

stands in the Midlands, New England, the South and the Far West for a couple of years, he'll begin to see what he's up against."

However, to say that New York was the United States theatrically was not to say that New York opinion could make audiences out of Minneapolis or Kansas City people who had stopped going to the theater. The provincial theater had become so often discouraging to managers that they found themselves more and more stressingly forced to depend, for any success at all, upon a New York run. Since the provincial audiences wouldn't go to see a play unless it had secured a New York run, and, since they wouldn't go often enough, even then, the New York run might, indeed, become the manager's whole means of support. Therefore he must please the New York audience; he must either give New York what it wanted or perish—and even theatrical managers cling to life, though I have known them to wonder why they do.

It may not well be doubted that a Rip Van Winkle of a playgoer who went to sleep theatrically in 1906 and woke twenty years later to visit the New York theater would have been amazed and delighted by many things. It is true that he would have found a little of the old artificiality here and there, and some of the old and cheap stencils of pathos and of humor; but Rip Van Winkle would have discovered that most of the old offenses against theatrical plausibility had been swept away. Improvements in the technique of the drama and in stage direction would have astounded him, while in naturalism of character building and in the writing of dramatic dialogue there was such an advance as he could hardly have dared to hope.

He might have wished to strike medals in honor of the people responsible for so much improvement; the distribution of such medals should have included the first-nighters, and especially the dramatic critics, who are apparently the first-nighters made articulate. For it is, in most cases, the enthusiasm of the first-nighter that gives a play its chance of life. A not ill-founded opinion is that the critics and first-nighters who opened the way for the success of that fine "Harlem-flat" play, *Paid in Full*, by Mr. Eugene Walter, would be entitled to special recognition for their encouragement of what was the beginning of a new epoch in naturalism. No one can doubt that the best dramatic criticism in the New York newspapers has been not only the expression of the first-nighter but his education; and we must not deny the critic his medal, for it is the better critic who gives the better playwright, better actor, better director and better manager the chance to exist.

A new generation of critics found that a gay mockery was a keener weapon than any other; and, mocking the old-school balderdash and clumsiness, they pretty well cleared the stage of a great clutter of nonsense and pinchbeck monstrosity. At least the old-school clumsiness and balderdash have gone; and, if there is a new balderdash come in with the moderns, a newer school of critics may, in turn, clear it away. Something must always be left for critics to do, and we may thank the present ones for depositing upon the trash heap stage villains, perfect heroes and heroines, stencilled maternal pathos, stencilled patriotism, stencilled virtue, valor and a great deal of stencilled humor.

They laughed, too, at the stencilled coincidences that made the success of many of our old melodramas and comedies; they laughed at anomalies in stage settings, furnishings and lighting; they laughed effectively at so many false and cumbersome things that elaborate research would need to be undertaken in order to make a fair list of what they have laughed to death. One thing above all others the true audience of a play asks of those who put plays upon the stage: it asks to be allowed to believe what it sees and hears; and the New York best critics of these recent years have done more to allow an intelligent playgoer to believe what he sees on the stage than was accomplished by all the previous forces for naturalism since Sheridan. In a word, the theater was prepared, by intelligent criticism, to be more intelligent than it had ever been.

We had seen the advance in naturalism, for which we have just been thanking the newer criticism; and it was certainly true that naturalism had come to prevail. But it may be that in this new naturalism there was something

done halfway—a naturalism that was not yet natural—and also something that was distasteful to us, though acceptable to the New York first-nighter.

Going over the plays of recent seasons in New York, we seemed to find among all sorts of plays a type that prevails over the other types; and the prevalent play appeared to be what we provincials in our unsophisticated way called a "sex play"; or, when we were still more unsophisticated, a "realistic play," thus bringing two inoffensive words into rather wide and wholly undeserved disrepute through misuse. For, although there may be some modernist opinion to the contrary, it is fairly safe to assume that a love theme in any expression of art depends for its interest upon the principals being of opposite sexes. Hence, any play constructed about a love story is a "sex play," and *Hazel Kirke*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *Fanchon*, *The Banker's Daughter*, and *The Little Minister* are "sex plays," while *Damaged Goods* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* are not—the former being instructive propaganda against disease and the latter a moral allegory.

Realism in any art means only lifelikeness, and since likeness to life cannot be complete in art—for even the best waxworks have no digestions—realism in a play or novel can mean no more than that an apparently natural effect is presented, which, of course, may be done in plays wholly lacking a love theme and not depending on a relation between the sexes. Both terms, "sex play" and "realistic play," are misnomers, therefore, though they have attained a kind of acceptance as jargon. What we mean when we thus slangily speak of a "sex play" or a "realistic play" is rather definitely a play in which there are represented or discussed more details of animal sexualism than police authorities used to permit as part of public exhibitions in this country. A "sex play," more accurately speaking, would concern love, while what is generally called a "sex play" dwells upon and emphasizes man as merely an animal, though not broadly or realistically, since it represents him as primarily concerned with—and generally consisting entirely of—only one animal function, and that one not the most important; whereas, even when considered entirely as an animal mechanism, he has several.

1926

## 1862 — *William Sydney Porter* — 1910

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER, writing under the pseudonym of O. Henry, was without question the most widely read short story writer of his time—ten years after his death over four million copies of his books had been distributed. He was born in the little village of Greensboro, North Carolina, the son of a physician who neglected his medical practice to perfect a perpetual-motion apparatus. Without formal education, young Porter worked in his uncle's drug store until he was twenty, when threatened tuberculosis made it advisable for him to move to Texas. After a brief period on a ranch where he had the opportunity to see the vanishing life of the cowboy, he moved to Austin, center of culture and seat of the state university. He made his livelihood as a clerk, reporter, bank-teller, joke-writer, and tried his hand at editing a humorous paper. After the failure of his paper he conducted a column in the Houston *Daily Post*.

He was summoned to answer charges of fraud in the bank of Austin, but although

the evidence does not imply any guilt on his part, he lacked courage to face the charges, and fled to Honduras. After spending a year with bandits, beachcombers, and underworld characters, the illness of his wife spurred him to return. At the trial he was found guilty and sentenced to the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. On his discharge, hastened by excellent conduct, he made his way to New York, and in six hectic, prolific years produced the bulk of his literary work.

O. Henry began to write while serving his prison sentence. Professor Pattee estimates that to this period belong at least twelve stories, later to be scattered through the volumes of his collected works. Much of this output is obviously apprentice work, yet shot through with a dash and verve of originality that held out unusual promise. "Whistling Dick's Christmas Stocking," "An Afternoon Miracle," and "The Duplicity of Hargraves" show little sign of experiment and amateurishness. His first two years in New York, from 1902 to 1904, while he was adjusting himself to the diversity of metropolitan life, constitute the second period of his literary career. During this time he drew upon his earlier experience for subject matter—his year in South America and the tales he heard from his prison mates —and wrote the wild, exotic, impressionistic stories collected under the titles of *Cabbages and Kings* (1904) and *The Gentle Grafter* (1908). By 1904 he had become acclimated to the modern Bagdad with its diverse and devious ways, and had seen the rich material which it offered ready to hand. He was in great demand as a writer, but it remained for the New York *World* to subsidize him as a reporter-at-large whose duty it was to supply a full-page story for the Sunday edition. The pace he maintained was too much for his already abused body and he died before he even began to do the work he felt capable of doing. To this last period belong *The Voice of the City* (1908) and *The Four Million* (1909).

O. Henry was an entertainer *par excellence*. He wrote for no other purpose than to amuse the reader for the moment, very much as the vaudeville performer seeks to draw laughter from his audiences. Nor was he very different from the vaudevillian in his method, for he resorted deliberately to the tricks in his craft which would most effectively draw the attention and grip the interest of the reader. His style is one of these devices, particularly his use of colloquialism, even slang. He has a keen sense of word values developed by close observation and, no doubt, by his early habit of reading the dictionary. His use of a far-fetched metaphor and circumlocution became a stylistic virtue in his hands. Another device which marks his method is the surprise ending. The reader follows the action in a given story, senses the general direction of the movement, at times even anticipates what the ending might be, when with a sentence or two the action is turned into a totally different direction and concluded in a totally unsuspected way.

The other qualities that characterize O. Henry's work are humor, irony, and satire. Of these humor is undoubtedly the most general, always catching, yet as

Professor Pattee points out, somewhat artificial because of its too frequent recourse to the juxtaposition of incongruities, and it may be added, the strained metaphor. Irony becomes a ready ally in his manipulation of the surprise ending, while satire gives to some of the stories a purpose which extends beyond the entertaining moment.

For sheer amusement and escape O. Henry will continue to be read, but scarcely for illuminating understanding of human life. The pressure of the Sunday edition, his preoccupation with tricks and devices seem to have put a philosophy of life out of the question. That is probably the reason why at the time of his death, disappointed with the ephemeral nature of his output, he was laying serious plans to do a substantial novel. In time the philosopher in him might have displaced the harlequin. However, thoughtful readers of O. Henry have always recognized the serious side to his nature and that his work is at least the partial expression of a philosophy closely linked with Transcendentalism. That he is concerned about social conditions is evident in such a story as "An Unfinished Story," which voices strong criticism of capitalism. On the other hand, one gets the impression that he looked upon his work as ephemeral, and without sufficient emphasis upon the deeper interests of life.

O. Henry's writings are available in *Complete Works* (1 vol., 1927); *Works*, Biographical Edition (18 vols., 1925). The titles of some individual volumes are *Cabbages and Kings* (1904); *The Heart of the West* (1907); *The Gentle Grafter* (1908); *Options* (1909); *Roads of Destiny* (1909); *The Four Million* (1909); *Strictly Business* (1910). Several biographies of O. Henry have appeared: C. A. Smith, *O. Henry* (1916); R. H. Davis and A. B. Maurice, *The Caliph of Bagdad* (1931); A. J. Jennings, *Through the Shadows with O. Henry* (1921). For briefer accounts and critical estimates see F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); *DAB*, XV; B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); A. Henderson, *O. Henry: a Memorial Essay* (1914); S. Leacock, *Essays and Literary Studies* (1916); L. W. Payne, Jr., "The Humor of O. Henry," *Texas Review*, Oct., 1918; H. E. Rollins, "O. Henry," *Sewanee Review*, Apr., 1914; F. L. Pattee, *Side-Lights on American Literature* (1922); C. Van Doren, "O Henry," *Texas Review*, Jan., 1917; P. S. Clarkson, "A Decomposition of *Cabbages and Kings*," *American Literature*, May, 1935; H. E. Rollins, "O. Henry's Texas Days," *Bookman*, Oct., 1914; R. Nye, "Social Criticism in O. Henry," *Modern Quarterly*, Summer, 1939; H. Noack, *O. Henry als Mystiker* (1937).

## A MUNICIPAL REPORT

The cities are full of pride,
  Challenging each to each—
This from her mountainside
  That from her burthened beach.

R. KIPLING

**Fancy a novel about Chicago or Buffalo, let us say, or Nashville, Tennessee! There are just three big cities in the United States that are "story cities"—New York, of course, New Orleans, and, best of the lot, San Francisco.**

FRANK NORRIS

EAST is East, and West is San Francisco, according to Californians. Californians are a race of people; they are not merely inhabitants of a State. They are the Southerners of the West. Now, Chicagoans are no less loyal to their city; but when you ask them why, they stammer and speak of lake fish and the new

Odd Fellows Building. But Californians go into detail.

Of course they have, in the climate, an argument that is good for half an hour while you are thinking of your coal bills and heavy underwear. But as soon as they come to mistake your silence for conviction, madness comes upon them, and they picture the city of the Golden Gate as the Bagdad of the New World. So far, as a matter of opinion, no refutation is necessary. But, dear cousins all (from Adam and Eve descended), it is a rash one who will lay his finger on the map and say: "In this town there can be no romance—what could happen here?" Yes, it is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and McNally.

NASHVILLE.—A city, port of delivery, and the capital of the State of Tennessee, is on the Cumberland River and on the N. C. & St. L. and the L. & N. railroads. This city is regarded as the most important educational centre in the South.

I stepped off the train at 8 P.M. Having searched the thesaurus in vain for adjectives, I must, as a substitution, hie me to comparison in the form of a recipe.

Take of London fog 30 parts; malaria 10 parts; gas leaks 20 parts; dewdrops gathered in a brick yard at sunrise, 25 parts; odor of honeysuckle 15 parts. Mix.

The mixture will give you an approximate conception of a Nashville drizzle. It is not so fragrant as a moth-ball nor as thick as pea soup; but 'tis enough—'twill serve.

I went to a hotel in a tumbril. It required strong self-suppression for me to keep from climbing to the top of it and giving an imitation of Sidney Carton. The vehicle was drawn by beasts of a bygone era and driven by something dark and emancipated.

I was sleepy and tired, so when I got to the hotel I hurriedly paid it the fifty cents it demanded (with approximate lagniappe, I assure you). I knew its habits; and I did not want to hear it prate about its old "marster" or anything that happened "befo' de wah."

The hotel was one of the kind described as "renovated." That means $20,000 worth of new marble pillars, tiling, electric lights and brass cuspidors in the lobby, and a new L. & N. timetable and a lithograph of Lookout Mountain in each one of the great rooms above. The management was without reproach, the attention full of exquisite Southern courtesy, the service as slow as the progress of a snail and as good-humored as Rip Van Winkle. The food was worth traveling a thousand miles for. There is no other hotel in the world where you can get such chicken livers *en brochette*.

At dinner I asked a Negro waiter if there was anything doing in town. He pondered gravely for a minute, and then replied: "Well, boss, I don't really reckon there's anything at all doin' after sundown."

Sundown had been accomplished; it had been drowned in the drizzle long before. So that spectacle was denied me. But I went forth upon the streets in the drizzle to see what might be there.

It is built on undulating grounds; and the streets are lighted by electricity at a cost of $32,470 per annum.

As I left the hotel there was a race riot. Down upon me charged a company of freedmen, or Arabs, or Zulus, armed with—no, I saw with relief that they were not rifles, but whips. And I saw dimly a caravan of black, clumsy vehicles; and at the reassuring shouts, "Kyar you anywhere in the town, boss, fuh fifty cents," I reasoned that I was merely a "fare" instead of a victim.

I walked through long streets, all leading uphill. I wondered how those streets ever came down again. Perhaps they didn't until they were "graded." On a few of the "main streets" I saw lights in stores here and there; saw street cars go by conveying worthy burghers hither and yon; saw people pass engaged in the art of conversation, and heard a burst of semi-lively laughter issuing from a soda-water and ice-cream parlor. The streets other than "main" seemed to have enticed upon their borders houses consecrated to peace and domesticity. In many of them lights shone behind discreetly drawn window shades; in a few pianos tinkled orderly and irreproachable music. There was, indeed, little "doing." I wished I had come before sundown. So I returned to my hotel.

In November, 1864, the Confederate General Hood advanced against Nashville, where he shut up a National force under General Thomas. The latter then sallied forth and defeated the Confederates in a terrible conflict.

All my life I have heard of, admired, and witnessed the fine marksmanship of the South in its peaceful conflicts in the tobacco-chewing regions. But in my hotel a surprise awaited me. There were twelve bright, new, imposing, capacious brass cuspidors in the great lobby, tall enough to be called urns and so wide-mouthed that the crack pitcher of a lady baseball team should have been able to throw a ball into one of them at five paces distant. But, although a terrible battle had raged and was still raging, the enemy had not suffered. Bright, new, imposing, capacious, untouched, they stood. But, shades of Jefferson Brick! the tile floor—the beautiful tile floor! I could not avoid thinking of the battle of Nashville, and trying to draw, as is my foolish habit, some deductions about hereditary marksmanship.

Here I first saw Major (by misplaced courtesy) Wentworth Caswell. I knew him for a type the moment my eyes suffered from the sight of him. A rat has no geographical habitat. My old friend, A. Tennyson, said, as he so well said almost everything:

> Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
> And curse me the British vermin, the rat.

Let us regard the word "British" as interchangeable *ad lib.* A rat is a rat.

This man was hunting about the hotel lobby like a starved dog that had forgotten where he had buried a bone. He had a face of great acreage, red, pulpy, and with a kind of sleepy massiveness like that of Buddha. He possessed one single virtue—he was very smoothly shaven. The mark of the beast is not indelible upon a man until he goes about with a stubble. I think that if he had not used his razor that day I would have repulsed his advances, and the criminal calendar of the world would have been spared the addition of one murder.

I happened to be standing within five feet of a cuspidor when Major Caswell opened fire upon it. I had been observant enough to perceive that the attacking force was using Gatlings instead of squirrel rifles; so I side-stepped so promptly that the major seized the opportunity to apologize to a noncombatant. He had the blabbing lip. In four minutes he had become my friend and had dragged me to the bar.

I desire to interpolate here that I am a Southerner. But I am not one by profession or trade. I eschew the string tie, the slouch hat, the Prince Albert, the number of bales of cotton destroyed by Sherman, and plug chewing. When the orchestra plays Dixie I do not cheer. I slide a little lower on the leather-cornered seat and, well, order another Würzburger and wish that Longstreet had—but what's the use?

Major Caswell banged the bar with his fist, and the first gun at Fort Sumter re-echoed. When he fired the last one at Appomattox I began to hope. But then he began on family trees, and demonstrated that Adam was only a third cousin of a collateral branch of the Caswell family. Genealogy disposed of, he took up, to my distaste, his private family matters. He spoke of his wife, traced her descent back to Eve, and profanely denied any possible rumor that she may have had relations in the land of Nod.

By this time I began to suspect that he was trying to obscure by noise the fact that he had ordered the drinks, on the chance that I would be bewildered into paying for them. But when they were down he crashed a silver dollar loudly upon the bar. Then, of course, another serving was obligatory. And when I had paid for that I took leave of him brusquely; for I wanted no more of him. But before I had obtained my release he had prated loudly of an income that his wife received, and showed a handful of silver money.

When I got my key at the desk the clerk said to me courteously: "If that man Caswell has annoyed you, and if you would like to make a complaint, we will have him ejected. He is a nuisance, a loafer, and without any known means of support, although he seems to have some money most the time. But we don't seem to be able to hit upon any means of throwing him out legally."

"Why, no," said I, after some reflection; "I don't see my way clear to making a com-

plaint. But I would like to place myself on record as asserting that I do not care for his company. Your town," I continued, "seems to be a quiet one. What manner of entertainment, adventure, or excitement have you to offer to the stranger within your gates?"

"Well, sir," said the clerk, "there will be a show here next Thursday. It is—I'll look it up and have the announcement sent up to your room with the ice water. Good night."

After I went up to my room I looked out the window. It was only about ten o'clock, but I looked upon a silent town. The drizzle continued, spangled with dim lights, as far apart as currants in a cake sold at the Ladies' Exchange.

"A quiet place," I said to myself, as my first shoe struck the ceiling of the occupant of the room beneath mine. "Nothing of the life here that gives color and variety to the cities in the East and West. Just a good, ordinary, humdrum, business town."

Nashville occupies a foremost place among the manufacturing centres of the country. It is the fifth boot and shoe market in the United States, the largest candy and cracker manufacturing city in the South, and does an enormous wholesale drygoods, grocery, and drug business.

I must tell you how I came to be in Nashville, and I assure you the digression brings as much tedium to me as it does to you. I was traveling elsewhere on my own business, but I had a commission from a Northern literary magazine to stop over there and establish a personal connection between the publication and one of its contributors, Azalea Adair.

Adair (there was no clue to the personality except the handwriting) had sent in some essays (lost art!) and poems that had made the editors swear approvingly over their one o'clock luncheon. So they had commissioned me to round up said Adair and corner by contract his or her output at two cents a word before some other publisher offered her ten or twenty.

At nine o'clock the next morning, after my chicken livers *en brochette* (try them if you can find that hotel), I strayed out into the drizzle, which was still on for an unlimited run. At the first corner I came upon Uncle Caesar. He was a stalwart Negro, older than the pyramids, with gray wool and a face that reminded me of Brutus, and a second afterwards of the late King Cettiwayo. He wore the most remarkable coat that I ever had seen or expect to see. It reached to his ankles and had once been a Confederate gray in colors. But rain and sun and age had so variegated it that Joseph's coat, beside it, would have faded to a pale monochrome. I must linger with that coat, for it has to do with the story —the story that is so long in coming, because you can hardly expect anything to happen in Nashville.

Once it must have been *the* military coat of an officer. The cape of it had vanished, but all adown its front it had been frogged and tasseled magnificently. But now the frogs and tassels were gone. In their stead had been patiently stitched (I surmised by some surviving "black mammy") new frogs made of cunningly twisted common hempen twine. This twine was frayed and disheveled. It must have been added to the coat as a substitute for vanished splendors, with tasteless but painstaking devotion, for it followed faithfully the curves of the long-missing frogs. And, to complete the comedy and pathos of the garment, all its buttons were gone save one. The second button from the top alone remained. The coat was fastened by other twine strings tied through the buttonholes and other holes rudely pierced in the opposite side. There was never such a weird garment so fantastically bedecked and of so many mottled hues. The lone button was the size of a half-dollar, made of yellow horn and sewed on with coarse twine.

This Negro stood by a carriage so old that Ham himself might have started a hack line with it after he left the ark with the two animals hitched to it. As I approached he threw open the door, drew out a feather duster, waved it without using it, and said in deep, rumbling tones:

"Step right in, suh; ain't a speck of dust in it—jus' got back from a funeral, suh."

I inferred that on such gala occasions carriages were given an extra cleaning. I looked up and down the street and perceived that

there was little choice among the vehicles for hire that lined the curb. I looked in my memorandum book for the address of Azalea Adair.

"I want to go to 861 Jessamine Street," I said, and was about to step into the hack. But for an instant the thick, long, gorilla-like arm of the old Negro barred me. On his massive and saturnine face a look of sudden suspicion and enmity flashed for a moment. Then, with quickly returning conviction, he asked blandishingly: "What are you gwine there for, boss?"

"What is that to you?" I asked, a little sharply.

"Nothin', suh, jus' nothin'. Only it's a lonesome kind of part of town and few folks ever has business out there. Step right in. The seats is clean—jes' got back from a funeral, suh."

A mile and a half it must have been to our journey's end. I could hear nothing but the fearful rattle of the ancient hack over the uneven brick paving; I could smell nothing but the drizzle, now further flavored with coal smoke and something like a mixture of tar and oleander blossoms. All I could see through the streaming windows were two rows of dim houses.

The city has an area of 10 square miles; 181 miles of streets, of which 137 miles are paved; a system of waterworks that cost $2,000,000, with 77 miles of mains.

Eight-sixty-one Jessamine Street was a decayed mansion. Thirty yards back from the street it stood out, merged in a splendid grove of trees and untrimmed shrubbery. A row of box bushes overflowed and almost hid the paling fence from sight; the gate was kept closed by a rope noose that encircled the gate post and the first paling of the gate. But when you got inside you saw that 861 was a shell, a shadow, a ghost of former grandeur and excellence. But in the story, I have not yet got inside.

When the hack had ceased from rattling and the weary quadrupeds came to a rest I handed my jehu his fifty cents with an additional quarter, feeling a glow of conscious generosity, as I did so. He refused it.

"It's two dollars, suh," he said.

"How's that?" I asked. "I plainly heard you call out at the hotel: 'Fifty cents to any part of the town.' "

"It's two dollars, suh," he repeated obstinately. "It's a long ways from the hotel."

"It is within the city limits and well within them," I argued. "Don't think that you have picked up a greenhorn Yankee. Do you see those hills over there?" I went on, pointing toward the east (I could not see them, myself, for the drizzle); "well, I was born and raised on their other side. You old fool nigger, can't you tell people *from other people* when you see 'em?"

The grim face of King Cettiwayo softened. "Is you from the South, suh? I reckon it was them shoes of yourn fooled me. They is somethin' sharp in the toes for a Southern gen'l'man to wear."

"Then the charge is fifty cents, I suppose?" said I inexorably.

His former expression, a mingling of cupidity and hostility, returned, remained ten seconds, and vanished.

"Boss," he said, "fifty cents is right; but I *needs* two dollars, suh; I'm *obleeged* to have two dollars. I ain't *demandin'* it now, suh; after I knows whar you's from; I'm jus' sayin' that I *has* to have two dollars tonight, and business is mighty po'."

Peace and confidence settled upon his heavy features. He had been luckier than he had hoped. Instead of having picked up a greenhorn, ignorant of rates, he had come upon an inheritance.

"You confounded old rascal," I said, reaching down to my pocket, "you ought to be turned over to the police."

For the first time I saw him smile. He knew; *he knew;* HE KNEW.

I gave him two one-dollar bills. As I handed them over I noticed that one of them had seen parlous times. Its upper right-hand corner was missing, and it had been torn through in the middle, but joined again. A strip of blue tissue paper, pasted over the split, preserved its negotiability.

Enough of the African bandit for the present: I left him happy, lifted the rope and opened the creaky gate.

The house, as I said, was a shell. A paint

brush had not touched it in twenty years. I could not see why a strong wind should not have bowled it over like a house of cards until I looked again at the trees that hugged it close—the trees that saw the battle of Nashville and still drew their protecting branches around it against storm and enemy and cold.

Azalea Adair, fifty years old, white-haired, a descendant of the cavaliers, as thin and frail as the house she lived in, robed in the cheapest and cleanest dress I ever saw, with an air as simple as a queen's, received me.

The reception room seemed a mile square, because there was nothing in it except some rows of books, on unpainted white-pine bookshelves, a cracked marble-top table, a rag rug, a hairless horsehair sofa and two or three chairs. Yes, there was a picture on the wall, a colored crayon drawing of a cluster of pansies. I looked around for the portrait of Andrew Jackson and the pine-cone hanging basket but they were not there.

Azalea Adair and I had conversation, a little of which will be repeated to you. She was a product of the old South, gently nurtured in the sheltered life. Her learning was not broad, but was deep and of splendid originality in its somewhat narrow scope. She had been educated at home, and her knowledge of the world was derived from inference and by inspiration. Of such is the precious, small group of essayists made. While she talked to me I kept brushing my fingers, trying, unconsciously, to rid them guiltily of the absent dust from the half-calf backs of Lamb, Chaucer, Hazlitt, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne and Hood. She was exquisite, she was a valuable discovery. Nearly everybody nowadays knows too much —oh, so much too much—of real life.

I could perceive clearly that Azalea Adair was very poor. A house and a dress she had, not much else, I fancied. So, divided between my duty to the magazine and my loyalty to the poets and essayists who fought Thomas in the valley of the Cumberland, I listened to her voice, which was like a harpsichord's, and found that I could not speak of contracts. In the presence of the nine Muses and the three Graces one hesitated to lower the topic to two cents. There would have to be another colloquy after I had regained my commercialism. But I spoke of my mission, and three o'clock of the next afternoon was set for the discussion of the business proposition.

"Your town," I said, as I began to make ready to depart (which is the time for smooth generalities), "seems to be a quiet, sedate place. A home town, I should say, where few things out of the ordinary ever happen."

It carries on an extensive trade in stoves and hollow ware with the West and South, and its flouring mills have a daily capacity of more than 2,000 barrels.

Azalea Adair seemed to reflect.

"I have never thought of it that way," she said, with a kind of sincere intensity that seemed to belong to her. "Isn't it in the still, quiet places that things do happen? I fancy that when God began to create the earth on the first Monday morning one could have leaned out one's window and heard the drops of mud splashing from His trowel as He built up the everlasting hills. What did the noisiest project in the world—I mean the building of the tower of Babel—result in finally? A page and a half of Esperanto in the *North American Review*."

"Of course," said I platitudinously, "human nature is the same everywhere; but there is more color—er—more drama and movement and er—romance in some cities than in others."

"On the surface," said Azalea Adair. "I have traveled many times around the world in a golden airship wafted on two wings—print and dreams. I have seen (on one of my imaginary tours) the Sultan of Turkey bowstring with his own hands one of his wives who had uncovered her face in public. I have seen a man in Nashville tear up his theater tickets because his wife was going out with her face covered—with rice flour. In San Francisco's Chinatown I saw the slave girl Sing Yee dipped slowly, inch by inch, in boiling almond oil to make her swear she would never see her American lover again. She gave in when the boiling oil had reached three inches above her knee. At a euchre party in East Nashville the other night I saw Kitty Morgan cut dead by seven of her schoolmates and lifelong friends because she had married

a house painter. The boiling oil was sizzling as high as her heart; but I wish you could have seen the fine little smile that she carried from table to table. Oh, yes, it is a humdrum town. Just a few miles of red brick houses and mud and stores and lumber yards."

Someone knocked hollowly at the back of the house. Azalea Adair breathed a soft apology and went to investigate the sound. She went back in three minutes with brightened eyes, a faint flush on her cheeks, and ten years lifted from her shoulders.

"You must have a cup of tea before you go," she said, "and a sugar cake."

She reached and shook a little iron bell. In shuffled a small Negro girl about twelve, barefoot, not very tidy, glowering at me with thumb in mouth and bulging eyes.

Azalea Adair opened a tiny, worn purse and drew out a dollar bill, a dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn in two pieces and pasted together again with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was one of the bills I had given the piratical Negro—there was no doubt of it.

"Go up to Mr. Baker's store on the corner, Impy," she said, handing the girl the dollar bill, "and get a quarter of a pound of tea—the kind he always sends me—and ten cents worth of sugar cakes. Now, hurry. The supply of tea in the house happens to be exhausted," she explained to me.

Impy left by the back way. Before the scrape of her hard, bare feet had died away on the back porch, a wild shriek—I was sure it was hers—filled the hollow house. Then the deep, gruff tones of an angry man's voice mingled with the girl's further squeals and unintelligible words.

Azalea Adair rose without surprise or emotion and disappeared. For two minutes I heard the hoarse rumble of the man's voice; then something like an oath and a light scuffle, and she returned calmly to her chair.

"This is a roomy house," she said, "and I have a tenant for part of it. I am sorry to have to rescind my invitation to tea. It was impossible to get the kind I always use at the store. Perhaps tomorrow Mr. Baker will be able to supply me."

I was sure that Impy had not had time to leave the house. I inquired concerning streetcar lines and took my leave. After I was well on my way I remembered that I had not learned Azalea Adair's name. But tomorrow would do.

That same day I started in on the course of iniquity that this uneventful city forced upon me. I was in the town only two days, but in that time I managed to lie shamelessly by telegraph, and to be an accomplice—after the fact, if that is the correct legal term—to a murder.

As I rounded the corner nearest my hotel the Afrite coachman of the polychromatic, nonpareil coat seized me, swung open the dungeony door of his peripatetic sarcophagus, flirted his feather duster and began his ritual: "Step right in, boss. Carriage is clean—jus' got back from a funeral. Fifty cents to any——"

And then he knew me and grinned broadly. "'Scuse me, boss; you is de gen'l'man what rid out with me dis mawnin'. Thank you kindly, suh."

"I am going out to 861 again tomorrow afternoon at three," said I, "and if you will be here, I'll let you drive me. So you know Miss Adair?" I concluded, thinking of my dollar bill.

"I belonged to her father, Judge Adair, suh," he replied.

"I judge that she is pretty poor," I said. "She hasn't much money to speak of, has she?"

For an instant I looked again at the fierce countenance of King Cettiwayo, and then he changed back to an extortionate old Negro hack driver.

"She ain't gwine to starve, suh," he said slowly. "She has reso'ces, suh; she has reso'ces."

"I shall pay you fifty cents for the trip," said I.

"Dat is puffeckly correct, suh," he answered humbly. "I jus' *had* to have dat two dollars dis mawnin', boss."

I went to the hotel and lied by electricity. I wired the magazine: "A. Adair holds out for eight cents a word."

The answer that came back was: "Give it to her quick, you duffer."

Just before dinner "Major" Wentworth

Caswell bore down upon me with the greetings of a long-lost friend. I have seen few men whom I have so instantaneously hated, and of whom it was so difficult to be rid. I was standing at the bar when he invaded me; therefore I could not wave the white ribbon in his face. I would have paid gladly for the drinks, hoping, thereby, to escape another; but he was one of those despicable, roaring, advertising bibbers who must have brass bands and fireworks attend upon every cent that they waste in their follies.

With an air of producing millions he drew two one-dollar bills from a pocket and dashed one of them upon the bar. I looked once more at the dollar bill with the upper right-hand corner missing, torn through the middle, and patched with a strip of blue tissue paper. It was my dollar bill again. It could have been no other.

I went up to my room. The drizzle and the monotony of a dreary, eventless Southern town had made me tired and listless. I remember that just before I went to bed I mentally disposed of the mysterious dollar bill (which might have formed the clew to a tremendously fine detective story of San Francisco) by saying to myself sleepily: "Seems as if a lot of people here own stock in the Hack-Driver's Trust. Pays dividends promptly, too. Wonder if——" Then I fell asleep.

King Cettiwayo was at his post the next day, and rattled my bones over the stones out to 861. He was to wait and rattle me back again when I was ready.

Azalea Adair looked paler and cleaner and frailer than she had looked on the day before. After she had signed the contract at eight cents per word she grew still paler and began to slip out of her chair. Without much trouble I managed to get her up on the antediluvian horsehair sofa and then I ran out to the sidewalk and yelled to the coffee-colored Pirate to bring a doctor. With a wisdom that I had not suspected in him, he abandoned his team and struck off up the street afoot, realizing the value of speed. In ten minutes he returned with a grave, grayhaired and capable man of medicine. In a few words (worth much less than eight cents each) I explained to him my presence in the hollow house of mystery. He bowed with a stately understanding, and turned to the old Negro.

"Uncle Caesar," he said calmly, "run up to my house and ask Miss Lucy to give you a cream pitcher full of fresh milk and half a tumbler of port wine. And hurry back. Don't drive—run. I want you to get back sometime this week."

It occurred to me that Dr. Merriman also felt a distrust as to the speeding powers of the land-pirate's steeds. After Uncle Caesar was gone, lumberingly, but swiftly, up the street, the doctor looked me over with great politeness and as much careful calculation until he had decided that I might do.

"It is only a case of insufficient nutrition," he said. "In other words, the result of poverty, pride, and starvation. Mrs. Caswell has many devoted friends who would be glad to aid her, but she will accept nothing except from that old Negro, Uncle Caesar, who was once owned by her family."

"Mrs. Caswell!" said I, in surprise. And then I looked at the contract and saw that she had signed it "Azalea Adair Caswell."

"I thought she was Miss Adair," I said.

"Married to a drunken, worthless loafer, sir," said the doctor. "It is said that he robs her even of the small sums that her old servant contributes toward her support."

When the milk and wine had been brought the doctor soon revived Azalea Adair. She sat up and talked of the beauty of the autumn leaves that were then in season, and their height of color. She referred lightly to her fainting seizure as the outcome of an old palpitation of the heart. Impy fanned her as she lay on the sofa. The doctor was due elsewhere, and I followed him to the door. I told him that it was within my power and intentions to make a reasonable advance of money to Azalea Adair on future contributions to the magazine, and he seemed pleased.

"By the way," he said, "perhaps you would like to know that you have had royalty for a coachman. Old Caesar's grandfather was a king in Congo. Caesar himself has royal ways, as you may have observed."

As the doctor was moving off I heard Uncle Caesar's voice inside: "Did he git bofe of dem two dollars from you, Mis' Zalea?"

"Yes, Caesar," I heard Azalea Adair answer weakly. And then I went in and concluded business negotiations with our contributor. I assumed the responsibility of advancing fifty dollars, putting it as a necessary formality in binding our bargain. And then Uncle Caesar drove me back to the hotel.

Here ends all of the story as far as I can testify as a witness. The rest must be only bare statements of facts.

At about six o'clock I went out for a stroll. Uncle Caesar was at his corner. He threw open the door of his carriage, flourished his duster and began his depressing formula: "Step right in, suh. Fifty cents to anywhere in the city—hack's puffickly clean, suh—jus' got back from a funeral—"

And then he recognized me. I think his eyesight was getting bad. His coat had taken on a few more faded shades of color, the twine strings were more frayed and ragged, the last remaining button—the button of yellow horn—was gone. A motley descendant of kings was Uncle Caesar!

About two hours later I saw an excited crowd besieging the front of a drug store. In a desert where nothing happens this was manna; so I wedged my way inside. On an extemporized couch of empty boxes and chairs was stretched the mortal corporeality of Major Wentworth Caswell. A doctor was testing him for the immortal ingredient. His decision was that it was conspicuous by its absence.

The erstwhile Major had been found dead on a dark street and brought by curious and ennuied citizens to the drug store. The late human being had been engaged in terrific battle—the details showed that. Loafer and reprobate though he had been, he had been also a warrior. But he had lost. His hands were yet clinched so tightly that his fingers would not be opened. The gentle citizens who had known him stood about and searched their vocabularies to find some good words, if it were possible, to speak of him. One kind-looking man said, after much thought: "When Cas' was about fo'teen he was one of the best spellers in school."

While I stood there the fingers of the right hand of "the man that was," which hung down the side of a white pine box, relaxed, and dropped something at my feet. I covered it with one foot quietly, and a little later on I picked it up and pocketed it. I reasoned that in his last struggle his hand must have seized that object unwittingly and held it in a death grip.

At the hotel that night the main topic of conversation, with the possible exceptions of politics and prohibition, was the demise of Major Caswell. I heard one man say to a group of listeners: "In my opinion, gentlemen, Caswell was murdered by some of these no-account niggers for his money. He had fifty dollars this afternoon which he showed to several gentlemen in the hotel. When he was found the money was not on his person."

I left the city the next morning at nine, and as the train was crossing the bridge over the Cumberland River I took out of my pocket a yellow horn overcoat button the size of a fifty-cent piece, with frayey ends of coarse twine hanging from it, and cast it out of the window into the slow, muddy waters below.

*I wonder what's doing in Buffalo!*

## 1860 ~ *Owen Wister* ~ 1938

WISTER was born in Philadelphia. He belonged to a family prominent for generations in the social, literary, and professional life of his native city. One of his grandmothers was the actress Fanny Kemble, who was a niece of Mrs. Siddons. He was educated at Harvard where he was a college-mate of Theodore Roosevelt, with whom he formed a lifelong friendship and whose influence on his

literary work is undeniable. Admitted to the Pennsylvania bar in 1889 he abandoned the law after a few years to devote himself to literature. As a young man he spent much time in Arizona and Wyoming in search of health. The life of the West appealed to him very strongly, and the sharp contrast between its open democratic ways, with its mingling of Eastern culture, Southern chivalry, and frontier gambling, and the aristocracy and effete culture of the East suggested the field in which he did some of his best writing, notably *Lin McLean* (1898) and *The Virginian* (1902). His interests were not confined to literature; at one time he was candidate for city office in behalf of clean municipal government, and he served on the Harvard Board of Overseers from 1912 to 1925. His address on "American Inferiority in Scholarship" remains a ringing challenge to American students and teachers.

Wister is best known as the author of *The Virginian*, a best-selling novel in its day, and by some acclaimed as the forerunner of *the* American novel. As a piece of art it is representative of his theory and practice. He is essentially a writer of short stories, having done notable work in *Red Men and White* (1896), and later in *Members of the Family* (1911) and *When West Was West* (1928). The method of the short story was employed in his revolt against the use of a typical plot. Parts of *The Virginian* had been published as separate short stories. In reality, a novel is to consist of a series of short stories, each developing a complete adventure, which in turn has its source in a situation of the preceding one. All of them are to be linked together by an underlying motive or "drama." The same practice was followed in *Lin McLean* but with less obviousness than in *The Virginian*, where the short-story aspect is more skillfully concealed.

It is somewhat difficult to classify Wister's work, for it shows characteristics of the romanticist as well as the realist. According to his own theory, everything he wrote is in a sense historical, for he makes it clear that any novel which conveys a faithful representation of an era or an age and which "personifies" a type of character is historical. This is precisely what he did in *The Virginian*, all scenes and events of which were contemporary, as well as in *Lady Baltimore* (1906), which dealt with a society that was of the past. Both are representations of an age, and therefore documents in social history. Aside from the generally accepted purpose of telling a story, Wister aimed to preserve two widely different societies from total oblivion. No better portrayal of the cattlemen and their era, now completely vanished, is to be found anywhere; and historians, we are told, recommend *Lady Baltimore* as an incomparable aid to the understanding of the South.

The hero of *The Virginian*, who remains nameless, is a splendid specimen of the "strenuous life" type of superman, for Wister, with Jack London and Stewart Edward White, is a literary apostle of the Roosevelt doctrine. In episode after episode, some of them highly melodramatic in nature, he is hurled into difficulties that seem beyond his ingenuity and power to face, but he meets every emergency with a

resourceful coolness which in the end helps him to overcome almost insuperable obstacles. Power, self-control, and resourcefulness become in him supervirtues.

Wister's two novels are *The Virginian* (1902) and *Lady Baltimore* (1906). There are several volumes of short stories and sketches, among them *The Dragon of Wantley* (1892); *Red Men and White* (1896); *Lin McLean* (1898); *The Jimmyjohn Boss* (1900); *Philosophy Four* (1903); *Members of the Family* (1911); *When West Was West* (1928). His social criticism includes *The Pentecost of Calamity* (1915); *A Straight Deal* (1920); *Neighbors Henceforth* (1922). He wrote three biographies: *Ulysses S. Grant* (1900); *The Seven Ages of Washington* (1907); *Roosevelt, the Story of a Friendship* (1931). His work is collected in *The Writings of Owen Wister* (11 vols., 1928), with prefaces by the author. For critical study the following will be helpful: F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); E. F. Harkins, *Little Pilgrimages Among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books*, 2nd series (1903); C. C. Baldwin, *The Men Who Make Our Novels* (1924); E. C. Marsh, "Representative American Story Tellers," *Bookman*, July, 1908; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## SPECIMEN JONES

First published in *Harper's*, July, 1894. The story, taken from *Red Men and White*, offers a good view of frontier life in the West after the Civil War.

EPHRAIM, the proprietor of Twenty Mile, had wasted his day in burying a man. He did not know the man. He had found him, or what the Apaches had left of him, sprawled among some charred sticks just outside the Cañon del Oro. It was a useful discovery in its way, for otherwise Ephraim might have gone on hunting his strayed horses near the cañon, and ended among charred sticks himself. Very likely the Indians were far away by this time, but he returned to Twenty Mile with the man tied to his saddle, and his pony nervously snorting. And now the day was done, and the man lay in the earth, and they had even built a fence around him; for the hole was pretty shallow, and coyotes have a way of smelling this sort of thing a long way off when they are hungry, and the man was not in a coffin. They were always short of coffins in Arizona.

Day was done at Twenty Mile, and the customary activity prevailed inside that flat-roofed cube of mud. Sounds of singing, shooting, dancing, and Mexican tunes on the concertina came out of the windows, to float and die among the hills. A limber, pretty boy, who might be nineteen, was dancing energetically, while a grave old gentleman, with tobacco running down his beard, pointed a pistol at the boy's heels, and shot a hole in the earth now and then to show that the weapon was really loaded. Everybody was quite used to all of this—excepting the boy. He was an Eastern newcomer, passing his first evening at a place of entertainment.

Night in and night out every guest at Twenty Mile was either happy and full of whisky, or else his friends were making arrangements for his funeral. There was water at Twenty Mile—the only water for twoscore of miles. Consequently it was an important station on the road between the southern country and Old Camp Grant, and the new mines north of the Mescal Range. The stunt, liquor-perfumed adobe cabin lay on the gray floor of the desert like an isolated slab of chocolate. Near it a corral, two desolate stable-sheds, and the slowly turning windmill completed the establishment. Here Ephraim and one or two helpers abode, armed against Indians, and selling whisky. Variety in their vocation of drinking and killing was brought them by the travellers. These passed and passed through the glaring vacant months—some days only one ragged fortune-hunter, riding a pony; again by twos and threes, with high-loaded burrows; and sometimes they came in companies, walking beside their clanking freight-wagons. Some were young, and some were old, and all drank whisky, and wore knives and guns to keep each other

civil. Most of them were bound for the mines, and some of them were seen again. No man trusted the next man, and their names, when they had any, would be O'Rafferty, Angus, Schwartzmeyer, José Maria, and Smith. All stopped for one night; some longer, remaining drunk and profitable to Ephraim; now and then one stayed permanently, and had a fence built round him. Whoever came, and whatever befell them, Twenty Mile was chronically hilarious after sundown—a dot of riot in the dumb Arizona night.

On this particular evening they had a tenderfoot. The boy, being new in Arizona, still trusted his neighbor. Such people turned up occasionally. This one had paid for everybody's drink several times, because he felt friendly, and never noticed that nobody ever paid for his. They had played cards with him, stolen his spurs, and now they were making him dance. It was an ancient pastime; yet two or three were glad to stand round and watch it, because it was some time since they had been to the opera. Now the tenderfoot had misunderstood these friends at the beginning, supposing himself to be among good fellows, and they therefore naturally set him down as a fool. But even while dancing you may learn much, and suddenly. The boy, besides being limber, had good tough black hair, and it was not in fear, but with a cold blue eye, that he looked at the old gentleman. The trouble had been that his own revolver had somehow hitched, so he could not pull it from the holster at the necessary moment.

"Tried to draw on me, did yer?" said the old gentleman. "Step higher! Step, now, or I'll crack open yer kneepans, ye robin's egg."

"Thinks he's having a bad time," remarked Ephraim. "Wonder how he'd like to have been that man the Injuns had sport with?"

"Weren't his ear funny?" said one who had helped bury the man.

"Ear?" said Ephraim. "You boys ought to been along when I found him, and seen the way they'd fixed up his mouth." Ephraim explained the details simply, and the listeners shivered. But Ephraim was a humorist. "Wonder how it feels," he continued, "to have——"

Here the boy sickened at his comments and the loud laughter. Yet a few hours earlier these same half-drunken jesters had laid the man to rest with decent humanity. The boy was taking his first dose of Arizona. By no means was everybody looking at his jig. They had seen tenderfeet so often. There was a Mexican game of cards; there was a concertina; and over in the corner sat Specimen Jones, with his back to the company, singing to himself. Nothing had been said or done that entertained him in the least. He had seen everything quite often.

"Higher! skip higher, you elegant calf," remarked the old gentleman to the tenderfoot. "Highyer!" And he placidly fired a fourth shot that scraped the boy's boot at the ankle and threw earth over the clock, so that you could not tell the minute from the hour hand.

"'Drink to me only with thine eyes,'" sang Specimen Jones, softly. They did not care much for his songs in Arizona. These lyrics were all, or nearly all, that he retained of the days when he was twenty, although he was but twenty-six now.

The boy was cutting pigeon-wings, the concertina played "Matamoras," Jones continued his lyric, when two Mexicans leaped at each other, and the concertina stopped with a quack.

"Quit it!" said Ephraim from behind the bar, covering the two with his weapon. "I don't want any greasers scrapping round here to-night. We've just got cleaned up."

It had been cards, but the Mexicans made peace, to the regret of Specimen Jones. He had looked round with some hopes of a crisis, and now for the first time he noticed the boy.

"Blamed if he ain't neat," he said. But interest faded from his eye, and he turned again to the wall. "'Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein,'" he melodiously observed. His repertory was wide and refined. When he sang he was always grammatical.

"Ye kin stop, kid," said the old gentleman, not unkindly, and he shoved his pistol into his belt.

The boy ceased. He had been thinking matters over. Being lithe and strong, he was not tired nor much out of breath, but he was trembling with the plan and the prospect he

had laid out for himself. "Set 'em up," he said to Ephraim. "Set 'em up again all round."

His voice caused Specimen Jones to turn and look once more, while the old gentleman, still benevolent, said, "Yer langwidge means pleasanter than it sounds, kid." He glanced at the boy's holster, and knew he need not keep a very sharp watch as to that. Its owner had bungled over it once already. All the old gentleman did was to place himself next the boy on the off side from the holster; any move the tenderfoot's hand might make for it would be green and unskilful, and easily anticipated. The company lined up along the bar, and the bottle slid from glass to glass. The boy and his tormentor stood together in the middle of the line, and the tormentor, always with half a thought for the holster, handled his drink on the wet counter, waiting till all should be filled and ready to swallow simultaneously, as befits good manners.

"Well, my regards," he said, seeing the boy raise his glass; and as the old gentleman's arm lifted in unison, exposing his waist, the boy reached down a lightning hand, caught the old gentleman's own pistol, and jammed it in his face.

"Now you'll dance," said he.

"Whoop!" exclaimed Specimen Jones, delighted. "*Blamed* if he ain't neat!" And Jones's handsome face lighted keenly.

"Hold on!" the boy sang out, for the amazed old gentleman was mechanically drinking his whisky out of sheer fright. The rest had forgotten their drinks. "Not one swallow," the boy continued. "No, you'll not put it down either. You'll keep hold of it, and you'll dance all round this place. Around and around. And don't you spill any. And I'll be thinking what you'll do after that."

Specimen Jones eyed the boy with growing esteem. "Why, he ain't bigger than a pint of cider," said he.

"Prance away!" commanded the tenderfoot, and fired a shot between the old gentleman's not widely straddled legs.

"You hev the floor, Mr. Adams," Jones observed, respectfully, at the old gentleman's agile leap. "I'll let no man here interrupt you." So the capering began, and the company stood back to make room. "I've saw juicy things in this Territory," continued Specimen Jones, aloud, to himself, "but this combination fills my bill."

He shook his head sagely, following the blackhaired boy with his eye. That youth was steering Mr. Adams round the room with the pistol, proud as a ringmaster. Yet not altogether. He was only nineteen, and though his heart beat stoutly, it was beating alone in a strange country. He had come straight to this from hunting squirrels along the Susquehanna, with his mother keeping supper warm for him in the stone farmhouse among the trees. He had read books in which hardy heroes saw life, and always triumphed with precision on the last page, but he remembered no receipt for this particular situation. Being good game American blood, he did not think now about the Susquehanna, but he did long with all his might to know what he ought to do next to prove himself a man. His buoyant rage, being glutted with the old gentleman's fervent skipping, had cooled, and a stress of reaction was falling hard on his brave young nerves. He imagined everybody against him. He had no notion that there was another American wanderer there, whose reserved and whimsical nature he had touched to the heart.

The fickle audience was with him, of course, for the moment, since he was upper dog and it was a good show; but one in that room was distinctly against him. The old gentleman was dancing with an ugly eye; he had glanced down to see just where his knife hung at his side, and he had made some calculations. He had fired four shots; the boy had fired one. "Four and one hez always made five," the old gentleman told himself with much secret pleasure, and pretended that he was going to stop his double shuffle. It was an excellent trap, and the boy fell straight into it. He squandered his last precious bullet on the spittoon near which Mr. Adams happened to be at the moment, and the next moment Mr. Adams had him by the throat. They swayed and gulped for breath, grooving the earth with sharp heels; they rolled to the floor and floundered with legs tight tangled, the boy in his inexperience blindly striking at Mr. Adams with the pistol butt, instead of its barrel, and the audience drawing closer to lose nothing, when

the bright knife flashed suddenly. It poised, and flew across the room, harmless; for a foot had driven into Mr. Adams's arm, and he felt a cold circle pressing his temple. It was the smooth, chilly muzzle of Specimen Jones's six-shooter.

"That's enough," said Jones. "More than enough."

Mr. Adams, being mature in judgment, rose instantly, like a good old sheep, and put his knife back obedient to orders. But in the brain of the overstrained, bewildered boy universal destruction was whirling. With a face stricken lean with ferocity, he staggered to his feet, plucking at his holster, and glaring for a foe. His eye fell first on his deliverer, leaning easily against the bar watching him, while the more and more curious audience scattered, and held themselves ready to murder the boy if he should point his pistol their way. He was dragging at it clumsily, and at last it came. Specimen Jones sprang like a cat, and held the barrel vertical and gripped the boy's wrist.

"Go easy, son," said he.

The boy had been wrenching to get a shot at Jones, and now the quietness of the man's voice reached his brain, and he looked at Specimen Jones. He felt a potent brotherhood in the eyes that were considering him, and he began to fear he had been a fool. There was his dwarf Eastern revolver, slack in his inefficient fist, and the singular person still holding its barrel and tapping one derisive finger over the end, careless of the risk to his first joint.

"Why, you little yearling," said Specimen Jones, caressingly, to the hypnotized youth, "if you was to pop that squirt off at me, I'd turn you up and spank y'u. Set 'em up, Ephraim."

But the commercial Ephraim hesitated, and Jones remembered. His last cent was gone. It was his third day at Ephraim's. He had stopped, having a little money, on his way to Tucson, where a friend had a job for him, and was waiting. He was far too experienced a character ever to sell his horse or his saddle on these occasions, and go on drinking. He looked as if he might, but he never did; and this was what disappointed business men like Ephraim in Specimen Jones.

But now, here was this tenderfoot he had undertaken to see through, and Ephraim reminding him that he had no more of the wherewithal. "Why, so I haven't," he said, with a short laugh, and his face flushed. "I guess," he continued, hastily, "this is worth a dollar or two." He drew a chain up from below his flannel shirt-collar and over his head. He drew it a little slowly. It had not been taken off for a number of years—not, indeed, since it had been placed there originally. "It ain't brass," he added lightly, and strewed it along the counter without looking at it. Ephraim did look at it, and, being satisfied, began to uncork a new bottle, while the punctual audience came up for its drink.

"Won't you please let me treat?" said the boy, unsteadily. "I ain't likely to meet you again, sir." Reaction was giving him trouble inside.

"Where are you bound, kid?"

"Oh, just a ways up the country," answered the boy, keeping a grip on his voice.

"Well, you *may* get there. Where did you pick up that—that thing? Your pistol, I mean."

"It's a present from a friend," replied the tenderfoot, with dignity.

"Farewell gift, wasn't it, kid? Yes; I thought so. Now I'd hate to get an affair like that from a friend. It would start me wondering if he liked me as well as I'd always thought he did. Put up that money, kid. You're drinking with me. Say, what's yer name?"

"Cumnor—J. Cumnor."

"Well, J. Cumnor, I'm glad to know y'u. Ephraim, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Cumnor. Mr. Adams, if you're rested from your quadrille, you can shake hands with my friend. Step around, you Miguels and Serapios and Cristobals, whatever y'u claim your names are. This is Mr. J. Cumnor."

The Mexicans did not understand either the letter or the spirit of these American words, but they drank their drink, and the concertina resumed its acrid melody. The boy had taken himself off without being noticed.

"Say, Spec," said Ephraim to Jones, "I'm no hog. Here's yer chain. You'll be along again."

"Keep it till I'm along again," said the owner.

"Just as you say, Spec," answered Ephraim, smoothly, and he hung the pledge over an advertisement chromo of a nude cream-colored lady with bright straw hair holding out a bottle of somebody's champagne. Specimen Jones sang no more songs, but smoked, and leaned in silence on the bar. The company were talking of bed, and Ephraim plunged his glasses into a bucket to clean them for the morrow.

"Know anything about that kid?" inquired Jones, abruptly.

Ephraim shook his head as he washed.

"Travelling alone, ain't he?"

Ephraim nodded.

"Where did y'u say y'u found that fellow layin' the Injuns got?"

"Mile this side the cañon. 'Mong them sand-humps."

"How long had he been there, do y'u figure?"

"Three days, anyway."

Jones watched Ephraim finish his cleansing. "Your clock needs wiping," he remarked. "A man might suppose it was nine, to see that thing the way the dirt hides the hands. Look again in half an hour and it'll say three. That's the kind of clock gives a man the jams. Sends him crazy."

"Well, that ain't a bad thing to be in this country," said Ephraim, rubbing the glass case and restoring identity to the hands. "If that man had been crazy he'd been livin' right now. Injuns'll never touch lunatics."

"That band have passed here and gone north," Jones said. "I saw a smoke among the foot-hills as I came along day before yesterday. I guess they're aiming to cross the Santa Catalina. Most likely they're that band from round the San Carlos that were reported as raiding down in Sonora."

"I seen well enough," said Ephraim, "when I found him that they wasn't going to trouble us any, or they'd have been around by then."

He was quite right, but Specimen Jones was thinking of something else. He went out to the corral, feeling disturbed and doubtful. He saw the tall white freight-wagon of the Mexicans, looming and silent, and a little way off the new fence where the dead man lay. An odd sound startled him, though he knew it was no Indians at this hour, and he looked down into a little dry ditch. It was the boy, hidden away flat on his stomach among the stones, sobbing.

"Oh, snakes!" whispered Specimen Jones, and stepped back. The Latin races embrace and weep, and all goes well; but among Saxons tears are a horrid event. Jones never knew what to do when it was a woman, but this was truly disgusting. He was well seasoned by the frontier, had tried a little of everything: town and country, ranches, saloons, stage-driving, marriage occasionally, and latterly mines. He had sundry claims staked out, and always carried pieces of stone in his pockets, discoursing upon their mineral-bearing capacity, which was apt to be very slight. That is why he was called Specimen Jones. He had exhausted all the important sensations, and did not care much for anything any more. Perfect health and strength kept him from discovering that he was a saddened, drifting man. He wished to kick the boy for his baby performance, and yet he stepped carefully away from the ditch so the boy should not suspect his presence. He found himself standing still, looking at the dim, broken desert.

"Why, hell," complained Specimen Jones, "he played the little man to start with. He did so. He scared that old horse-thief, Adams, just about dead. Then he went to kill me, that kep' him from bein' buried early to-morrow. I've been wild that way myself, and wantin' to shoot up the whole outfit." Jones looked at the place where his middle finger used to be, before a certain evening in Tombstone. "But I never——" He glanced towards the ditch, perplexed. "What's that mean? Why in the world does he git to cryin' for *now*, do you suppose?" Jones took to singing without knowing it. " 'Ye shepherds, tell me, have you seen my Flora pass this way?' " he murmured. Then a thought struck him. "Hello, kid!" he called out. There was no answer. "Of course," said Jones. "Now he's ashamed to hev me see him come out of there." He walked with elaborate slowness round the corral and behind a shed. "Hello, you kid!" he called again.

"I was thinking of going to sleep," said the

boy, appearing quite suddenly. "I—I'm not used to riding all day. I'll get used to it, you know," he hastened to add.

" 'Ha-ve you seen my Flo'—Say, kid, where y'u bound, anyway?"

"San Carlos."

"San Carlos? Oh. Ah. 'Flo-ra pass this way?' "

"Is it far, sir?"

"Awful far, sometimes. It's always liable to be far through the Arivaypa Cañon."

"I didn't expect to make it between meals," remarked Cumnor.

"No. Sure. What made you come this route?"

"A man told me."

"A man? Oh. Well, it *is* kind o' difficult, I admit, for an Arizonan not to lie to a stranger. But I think I'd have told you to go by Tres Alamos and Point of Mountain. It's the road the man that told you would choose himself every time. Do you like Injuns, kid?"

Cumnor snapped eagerly.

"Of course y'u do. And you've never saw one in the whole minute-and-a-half you've been alive. I know all about it."

"I'm not afraid," said the boy.

"Not afraid? Of course y'u ain't. What's your idea in going to Carlos? Got town lots there?"

"No," said the literal youth, to the huge internal diversion of Jones. "There's a man there I used to know back home. He's in the cavalry. What sort of a town is it for sport?" asked Cumnor, in a gay Lothario tone.

"*Town?*" Specimen Jones caught hold of the top rail of the corral. "*Sport?* Now I'll tell y'u what sort of a town it is. There ain't no streets. There ain't no houses. There ain't any land and water in the usual meaning of them words. There's Mount Turnbull. It's pretty near a usual mountain, but y'u don't want to go there. The Creator didn't make San Carlos. It's a heap older than Him. When He got around to it after slickin' up Paradise and tham fruit-trees, He just left it to be as He found it, as a sample of the way they done business before He come along. He ain't done any work around the spot at all, He ain't. Mix up a barrel of sand and ashes and thorns, and jam scorpions and rattlesnakes along in, and dump the outfit on stones, and heat yer stones red-hot, and set the United States army loose over the place chasin' Apaches, and you've got San Carlos."

Cumnor was silent for a moment. "I don't care," he said. "I want to chase Apaches."

"Did you see that man Ephraim found by the cañon?" Jones inquired.

"Didn't get here in time."

"Well, there was a hole in his chest made by an arrow. But there's no harm in that if you die at wunst. That chap didn't y'u see. You heard Ephraim tell about it. They'd done a number of things to the man before he could die. Roastin' was only one of 'em. Now your road takes you through the mountains where these Injuns hev gone. Kid, come along to Tucson with me," urged Jones, suddenly.

Again Cumnor was silent. "Is my road different from other people's?" he said, finally.

"Not to Grant, it ain't. These Mexicans are hauling freight to Grant. But what's the matter with your coming to Tucson with me?"

"I started to go to San Carlos, and I'm going," said Cumnor.

"You're a poor chuckle-headed fool!" burst out Jones, in a rage. "And y'u can go, for all I care—you and your Christmas-tree pistol. Like as not you won't find your cavalry friend at San Carlos. They've killed a lot of them soldiers huntin' Injuns this season. Good-night."

Specimen Jones was gone. Cumnor walked to his blanket-roll, where his saddle was slung under the shed. The various doings of the evening had bruised his nerves. He spread his blankets among the dry cattle-dung and sat down, taking off a few clothes slowly. He lumped his coat and overalls under his head for a pillow, and, putting the despised pistol alongside, lay between the blankets. No object showed in the night but the tall freight-wagon. The tenderfoot thought he had made altogether a fool of himself upon the first trial trip of his manhood, alone on the open sea of Arizona. No man, not even Jones now, was his friend. A stranger, who could have had nothing against him but his inexperience, had taken the trouble to direct him on the wrong road. He did not mind definite enemies. He had punched the heads of those in Pennsylvania, and would not object to shooting them here;

but this impersonal, surrounding hostility of the unknown was new and bitter: the cruel, assassinating, cowardly Southwest, where prospered those jail-birds whom the vigilantes had driven from California. He thought of the nameless human carcass that lay near, buried that day, and of the jokes about its mutilations. Cumnor was not an innocent boy, either in principles or in practice, but this laughter about a dead body had burned into his young, unhardened soul. He lay watching with hot, dogged eyes the brilliant stars. A passing wind turned the windmill, which creaked a forlorn minute, and ceased. He must have gone to sleep and slept soundly, for the next he knew it was the cold air of dawn that made him open his eyes. A numb silence lay over all things, and the tenderfoot had that moment of curiosity as to where he was now which comes to those who have journeyed for many days. The Mexicans had already departed with their freight-wagon. It was not entirely light, and the embers where these early starters had cooked their breakfast lay glowing in the sand across the road. The boy remembered seeing a wagon where now he saw only chill, distant peaks, and while he lay quiet and warm, shunning full consciousness, there was a stir in the cabin, and at Ephraim's voice reality broke upon his drowsiness, and he recollected Arizona and the keen stress of shifting for himself. He noted the gray paling round the grave. Indians? He would catch up with the Mexicans, and travel in their company to Grant. Freighters made but fifteen miles in the day, and he could start after breakfast and be with them before they stopped at noon. Six men need not worry about Apaches, Cumnor thought. The voice of Specimen Jones came from the cabin, and sounds of lighting the stove, and the growling conversation of men getting up. Cumnor, lying in his blankets, tried to overhear what Jones was saying, for no better reason than this was the only man he had met lately who seemed to care whether he were alive or dead. There was the clink of Ephraim's whisky-bottles, and the cheerful tones of old Mr. Adams, saying, "It's better'n brushin' yer teeth"; and then further clinking, and an inquiry from Specimen Jones.

"Whose spurs?" said he.

"Mine." This came from Mr. Adams.

"How long have they been yourn?"

"Since I got 'em, I guess."

"Well, you've enjoyed them spurs long enough." The voice of Specimen Jones now altered in quality. "And you'll give 'em back to that kid."

Muttering followed that the boy could not catch. "You'll give 'em back," repeated Jones. "I seen y'u lift 'em from under that chair when I was in the corner."

"That's straight, Mr. Adams," said Ephraim. "I noticed it myself, though I had no objections, of course. But Mr. Jones has pointed out——"

"Since when have you growed so honest, Jones?" cackled Mr. Adams, seeing that he must lose his little booty. "And why didn't you raise yer objections when you seen me do it?"

"I didn't know the kid," Jones explained. "And if it don't strike you that game blood deserves respect, why it does strike me."

Hearing this, the tenderfoot, outside in his shed, thought better of mankind and life in general, arose from his nest, and began preening himself. He had all the correct trappings for the frontier, and his toilet in the shed gave him pleasure. The sun came up, and with a stroke struck the world to crystal. The near sand-hills went into rose, the crabbed yucca and the mesquite turned transparent, with lances and pale films of green, like drapery graciously veiling the desert's face, and the distant violet peaks and edges framed the vast enchantment beneath the liquid exhalations of the sky. The smell of bacon and coffee from open windows filled the heart with bravery and yearning, and Ephraim, putting his head round the corner, called to Cumnor that he had better come in and eat. Jones, already at table, gave him the briefest nod; but the spurs were there, replaced as Cumnor had left them under a chair in the corner. In Arizona they do not say much at any meal, and at breakfast nothing at all; and as Cumnor swallowed and meditated, he noticed the cream-colored lady and the chain, and he made up his mind he should assert his identity with regard to that business, though how and when was not

clear to him. He was in no great haste to take up his journey. The society of the Mexicans whom he must sooner or later overtake did not tempt him. When breakfast was done he idled in the cabin, like the other guests, while Ephraim and his assistant busied about the premises. But the morning grew on, and the guests, tilted back against the wall, after a season of smoking and silence, shook themselves and their effects together, saddled, and were lost among the waste thorny hills. Twenty Mile became hot and torpid. Jones lay on three consecutive chairs, occasionally singing, and old Mr. Adams had not gone away either, but watched him, with more tobacco running down his beard.

"Well," said Cumnor, "I'll be going."

"Nobody's stopping y'u," remarked Jones.

"You're going to Tucson?" the boy said, with the chain problem still unsolved in his mind. "Good-bye, Mr. Jones. I hope I'll—we'll——"

"That'll do," said Jones; and the tenderfoot, thrown back by his severity, went to get his saddle-horse and his burro.

Presently Mr. Jones remarked to Mr. Adams that he wondered what Ephraim was doing, and went out. The old gentleman was left alone in the room, and he swiftly noticed that the belt and pistol of Specimen Jones were left alone with him. The accoutrement lay by the chair its owner had been lounging in. It is an easy thing to remove cartridges from the chambers of a revolver, and replace the weapon in its holster so that everything looks quite natural. The old gentleman was entertained with the notion that somewhere in Tucson Specimen Jones might have a surprise, and he did not take a minute to prepare this, drop the belt as it lay before, and saunter innocently out of the saloon. Ephraim and Jones were criticizing the tenderfoot's property as he packed his burro.

"Do y'u make it a rule to travel with ice-cream?" Jones was inquiring.

"They're for water," Cumnor said. "They told me at Tucson I'd need to carry water for three days on some trails."

It was two good-sized milk-cans that he had, and they bounced about on the little burro's pack, giving him as much amazement as a jackass can feel. Jones and Ephraim were hilarious.

"Don't go without your spurs, Mr. Cumnor," said the voice of old Mr. Adams, as he approached the group. His tone was particularly civil.

The tenderfoot had, indeed, forgotten his spurs, and he ran back to get them. The cream-colored lady still had the chain hanging upon her, and Cumnor's problem was suddenly solved. He put the chain in his pocket, and laid the price of one round of drinks for last night's company on the shelf below the chromo. He returned with his spurs on, and tightened the cinches; but the chain was now in the saddle-bag of Specimen Jones, mixed up with some tobacco, stale bread, a box of matches, and a hunk of fat bacon. The men at Twenty Mile said good-day to the tenderfoot, with monosyllables and indifference, and watched him depart into the heated desert. Wishing for a last look at Jones, he turned once, and saw the three standing, and the chocolate brick of the cabin, and the windmill white and idle in the sun.

"He'll be gutted by night," remarked Mr. Adams.

"I ain't buryin' him, then," said Ephraim.

"Nor I," said Specimen Jones. "Well, it's time I was getting to Tucson."

He went to the saloon, strapped on his pistol, saddled, and rode away. Ephraim and Mr. Adams returned to the cabin; and here is the final conclusion they came to after three hours of discussion as to who took the chain and who had it just then:

*Ephraim.* Jones, he hadn't no cash.

*Mr. Adams.* The kid, he hadn't no sense.

*Ephraim.* The kid, he lent the cash to Jones.

*Mr. Adams.* Jones, he goes off with his chain.

*Both.* What damn fools everybody is, anyway!

And they went to dinner. But Mr. Adams did not mention his doings with Jones's pistol. Let it be said, in extenuation of that performance, that Mr. Adams supposed Jones was going to Tucson, where he said he was going, and where a job and a salary were awaiting him. In Tucson an unloaded pistol in the holster of so handy a man on the drop as was

Specimen would keep people civil, because they would not know, any more than the owner, that it was unloaded; and the mere possession of it would be sufficient in nine chances out of ten—though it was undoubtedly for the tenth that Mr. Adams had a sneaking hope. But Specimen Jones was not going to Tucson. A contention in his mind as to whether he would do what was good for himself, or what was good for another, had kept him sullen ever since he got up. Now it was settled, and Jones in serene humor again. Of course he had started on the Tucson road, for the benefit of Ephraim and Mr. Adams.

The tenderfoot rode along. The Arizona sun beat down upon the deadly silence, and the world was no longer of crystal, but a mesa, dull and gray and hot. The pony's hoofs grated in the gravel, and after a time the road dived down and up among lumpy hills of stone and cactus, always nearer the fierce glaring Sierra Santa Catalina. It dipped so abruptly in and out of the shallow sudden ravines that, on coming up from one of these into sight of the country again, the tenderfoot's heart jumped at the close apparition of another rider quickly bearing in upon him from gullies where he had been moving unseen. But it was only Specimen Jones.

"Hello!" said he, joining Cumnor. "Hot, ain't it?"

"Where are you going?" inquired Cumnor.

"Up here a ways." And Jones jerked his finger generally towards the Sierra, where they were heading.

"Thought you had a job in Tucson."

"That's what I have."

Specimen Jones had no more to say, and they rode for a while, their ponies' hoofs always grating in the gravel, and the milk-cans lightly clanking on the burro's pack. The bunched blades of the yuccas bristled steel-stiff, and as far as you could see it was a gray waste of mounds and ridges sharp and blunt, up to the forbidding boundary walls of the Tortilita one way and the Santa Catalina the other. Cumnor wondered if Jones had found the chain. Jones was capable of not finding it for several weeks, or of finding it at once and saying nothing.

"You'll excuse my meddling with your business?" the boy hazarded.

Jones looked inquiring.

"Something's wrong with your saddle-pocket."

Specimen saw nothing apparently wrong with it, but perceiving Cumnor was grinning, unbuckled the pouch. He looked at the boy rapidly, and looked away again, and as he rode, still in silence, he put the chain back round his neck below the flannel shirt-collar.

"Say, kid," he remarked, after some time, "what does J stand for?"

"J? Oh, my name! Jock."

"Well, Jock, will y'u explain to me as a friend how y'u ever come to be such a fool as to leave yer home—wherever and whatever it was—in exchange for this here God-forsaken and iniquitous hole?"

"If you'll explain to me," said the boy, greatly heartened, "how you come to be ridin' in the company of a fool, instead of going to your job at Tucson."

The explanation was furnished before Specimen Jones had framed his reply. A burning freight-wagon and five dismembered human stumps lay in the road. This was what had happened to the Miguels and Serapios and the concertina. Jones and Cumnor, in their dodging and struggles to exclude all expressions of growing mutual esteem from their speech, had forgotten their journey, and a sudden bend among the rocks where the road had now brought them revealed the blood and fire staring them in the face. The plundered wagon was three parts empty; its splintered, blazing boards slid down as they burned into the fiery heap on the ground; packages of soda and groceries and medicines slid with them, bursting into chemical spots of green and crimson flame; a wheel crushed in and sank, spilling more packages that flickered and hissed; the garbage of combat and murder littered the earth, and in the air hung an odor that Cumnor knew, though he had never smelled it before. Morsels of dropped booty up among the rocks showed where the Indians had gone, and one horse remained, groaning, with an accidental arrow in his belly.

"We'll just kill him," said Jones; and his pistol snapped idly, and snapped again, as his eye caught a motion—a something—two hundred yards up among the bowlders on the hill. He whirled round. The enemy was behind them also. There was no retreat. "Yourn's no good!" yelled Jones, fiercely, for Cumnor was getting out his little foolish revolver. "Oh, what a trick to play on a man! Drop off yer horse, kid; drop, and do like me. Shootin's no good here, even if I was loaded. *They* shot, and look at them now. God bless them ice-cream freezers of yourn, kid! Did y'u ever see a crazy man? If you ain't, *make it up as y'u go along!*"

More objects moved up among the bowlders. Specimen Jones ripped off the burro's pack, and the milk-cans rolled on the ground. The burro began grazing quietly, with now and then a step towards new patches of grass. The horses stood where their riders had left them, their reins over their heads, hanging and dragging. From two hundred yards on the hill the ambushed Apaches showed, their dark, scattered figures appearing cautiously one by one, watching with suspicion. Specimen Jones seized up one milk-can, and Cumnor obediently did the same.

"You kin dance, kid, and I kin sing, and we'll go to it," said Jones. He rambled in a wavering loop, and diving eccentrically at Cumnor, clashed the milk-cans together. " 'Es schallt ein Ruf wie Donnerhall,' " he bawled, beginning the song of "Die Wacht am Rhein." "Why don't you dance?" he shouted, sternly. The boy saw the terrible earnestness of his face, and, clashing his milk-cans in turn, he shuffled a sort of jig. The two went over the sand in loops, toe and heel; the donkey continued his quiet grazing, and the flames rose hot and yellow from the freight-wagon. And all the while the stately German hymn pealed among the rocks, and the Apaches, crept down nearer the bowing, scraping men. The sun shone bright, and their bodies poured with sweat. Jones flung off his shirt; his damp, matted hair was half in ridges and half glued to his forehead, and the delicate gold chain swung and struck his broad, naked breast. The Apaches drew nearer again, their bows and arrows held uncertainly. They came down the hill, fifteen or twenty, taking a long time, and stopping every few yards. The milk-cans clashed, and Jones thought he felt the boy's strokes weakening. "Die Wacht am Rhein" was finished, and now it was "Ha-ve you seen my Flora pass this way?" "Y'u mustn't play out, kid," said Jones, very gently. "Indeed y'u mustn't"; and he at once resumed his song. The silent Apaches had now reached the bottom of the hill. They stood some twenty yards away, and Cumnor had a good chance to see his first Indians. He saw them move, and the color and slim shape of their bodies, their thin arms, and their long, black hair. It went through his mind that if he had no more clothes on than that, dancing would come easier. His boots were growing heavy to lift, and his overalls seemed to wrap his sinews in wet, strangling thongs. He wondered how long he had been keeping this up. The legs of the Apaches were free, with light moccasins only halfway to the thigh, slenderly held up by strings from the waist. Cumnor envied their unencumbered steps as he saw them again walk nearer to where he was dancing. It was long since he had eaten, and he noticed a singing dullness in his brain, and became frightened at his thoughts, which were running and melting into one fixed idea. This idea was to take off his boots, and offer to trade them for a pair of moccasins. It terrified him—this endless, molten rush of thoughts; he could see them coming in different shapes from different places in his head, but they all joined immediately, and always formed the same fixed idea. He ground his teeth to master this encroaching inebriation of his will and judgment. He clashed his can more loudly to wake him to reality, which he still could recognize and appreciate. For a time he found it a good plan to listen to what Specimen Jones was singing, and tell himself the name of the song, if he knew it. At present it was "Yankee Doodle," to which Jones was fitting words of his own. These ran, "Now I'm going to try a bluff, And mind you do what I do"; and then again, over and over. Cumnor waited for the word "bluff"; for it was hard and heavy, and fell into his thoughts, and stopped them for a moment. The dance was so long now he had forgotten about that. A numbness

had been spreading through his legs, and he was glad to feel a sharp pain in the sole of his foot. It was a piece of gravel that had somehow worked its way in, and was rubbing through the skin into the flesh. "That's good," he said, aloud. The pebble was eating the numbness away, and Cumnor drove it hard against the raw spot, and relished the tonic of its burning friction. The Apaches had drawn into a circle. Standing at some interval apart, they entirely surrounded the arena. Shrewd, half convinced, and yet with awe, they watched the dancers, who clashed their cans slowly now in rhythm to Jones's hoarse, parched singing. He was quite master of himself, and led the jig round the still blazing wreck of the wagon, and circled in figures of eight between the corpses of the Mexicans, clashing the milk-cans above each one. Then, knowing his strength was coming to an end, he approached an Indian whose splendid fillet and trappings denoted him as a chief of consequence; and Jones was near shouting with relief when the Indian shrank backward. Suddenly he saw Cumnor let his can drop, and without stopping to see why, he caught it up, and, slowly rattling both, approached each Indian in turn with tortuous steps. The circle that had never uttered a sound till now receded, chanting almost in a whisper some exorcising song which the man with the fillet had begun. They gathered round him, retreating always, and the strain, with its rapid muttered words, rose and fell softly among them. Jones had supposed the boy was overcome by faintness, and looked to see where he lay. But it was not faintness. Cumnor, with his boots off, came by and walked after the Indians in a trance. They saw him, and quickened their pace, often turning to be sure he was not overtaking them. He called to them unintelligibly, stumbling up the sharp hill, and pointing to the boots. Finally he sat down. They continued ascending the mountain, herding close round the man with the feathers, until the rocks and the filmy tangles screened them from sight; and like a wind that hums uncertainly in grass, their chanting died away.

The sun was half behind the western range when Jones next moved. He called, and, getting no answer, he crawled painfully to where the boy lay on the hill. Cumnor was sleeping heavily; his head was hot, and he moaned. So Jones crawled down, and fetched blankets and the canteen of water. He spread the blankets over the boy, wet a handkerchief and laid it on his forehead; then he lay down himself.

The earth was again magically smitten to crystal. Again the sharp cactus and the sand turned beautiful, and violet floated among the mountains, and rose-colored orange in the sky above them.

"Jock," said Specimen at length.

The boy opened his eyes.

"Your foot is awful, Jock. Can y'u eat?"

"Not with my foot."

"Ah, God bless y'u, Jock! Y'u ain't turruble sick. But *can* y'u eat?"

Cumnor shook his head.

"Eatin's what y'u need, though. Well, here." Specimen poured a judicious mixture of whisky and water down the boy's throat, and wrapped the awful foot in his own flannel shirt. "They'll fix y'u over to Grant. It's maybe twelve miles through the cañon. It ain't a town any more than Carlos is, but the soldiers 'll be good to us. As soon as night comes you and me must somehow git out of this."

Somehow they did, Jones walking and leading the horse and the imperturbable little burro, and also holding Cumnor in the saddle. And when Cumnor was getting well in the military hospital at Grant, he listened to Jones recounting to all that chose to hear how useful a weapon an ice-cream freezer can be, and how if you'll only chase Apaches in your stocking feet they are sure to run away. And then Jones and Cumnor both enlisted; and I suppose Jones's friend is still expecting him in Tucson.

1894

# 1876 ~ *Jack London* ~ 1916

LABORER, tramp, sailor, journalist, socialist, novelist, Jack London crowded into the forty years of his life a range of experience that might have put a Renaissance gentleman to shame. As an apostle of the "strenuous life" he out-Roosevelted Theodore Roosevelt. A mixture of English, Welsh, and German, he came of ancestors who were for generations constitutional wanderers, and made their way west from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Young London seems to have inherited the accumulated nomadic tendencies in concentrated form; this heritage, together with the teaching and practice of the "strenuous life" so fashionable at the turn of the century, turned him into a lifelong, restless roamer.

Born in San Francisco, he spent most of his childhood on California ranches. When he was eleven the family moved to Oakland, where the boy peddled papers, swept out saloons, fought with his gang, and by the age of fifteen had been longshoreman, oyster-pirate, salmon fisher, and fish-patrol man. At seventeen he shipped before the mast across the North Pacific to Japan. Next he joined Kelly's "Army of Protest," only to abandon the project and turn tramp, roaming literally thousands of miles through the United States and Canada. By the time he returned, two things had happened to him—he had become a socialist, and he had learned the need of books and study.

After attending the Oakland Grammar School for a year, he completed his preparation for the University of California in three months of private study. Dissatisfied with academic life, he withdrew before the end of the freshman year to undertake a course of self-discipline in writing, and then joined the gold rush to the Klondike. In this Alaskan experience he found himself as a writer, the silent North, the white man's struggle against insuperable odds, and the pathos of a vanishing native race providing his setting. The first literary product was *The Son of the Waif* (1900), to be followed by *The God of His Fathers*, *A Daughter of the Snows*, *Children of the Frost*, and *The Call of the Wild*, all of them published in 1904. He was a war correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War, made several voyages in a small sailing vessel which took him as far as Australia and around the Horn. At the same time he was developing an agricultural project on his Sonoma Valley farm on an almost imperial scale. Along with this amazingly active and intense life he published from 1900 to 1916 upwards of fifty volumes, consisting of short stories, novels, essays, plays, and autobiographical writings, and he lectured extensively on socialism and related subjects.

As early as October, 1900 he published in the *Bookman* a brief essay which contained the elements of his literary theory and method. It must be remembered that he

was essentially self-taught, driven by an irrepressible urge to learn to say what he wanted to say in the most effective manner. Certain tendencies of the time had become manifest to him in his reading. Among these were the passing of the lengthy, leisurely novel, the prominence of the short story, the virtual disappearance of allegory with its figurative treatment of theme and subject matter. Language had become more concentrated, less figurative, and long sentences were yielding to shorter and more expressive sentences. On the basis of these observations he concludes that "The race wants its reading matter to be not only concentrative, compact, but crisp, incisive, terse." Life, he notes, is becoming more complex and active (a corollary product of machine civilization); men are becoming more and more busy, and consequently demand that the greatest possible amount of their reading be compressed into the smallest possible space. "What the race wants chiefly is the passing thing done in the eternal way." To some extent under the influence of Kipling, he adopted the "episodal" method, and cultivated a terse, crisp, incisive style in order that through the power of the written word he might enable his readers to hear, see, and feel.

London's work is very uneven, ranging from mere propagandism to the superb representation of life, both animal and human, in its most elemental forms, as seen in *The Call of the Wild* (1904) and *The Sea Wolf* (1904), respectively. He had read Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, and through their influence regarded life as a struggle for survival. His characters are for the most part superbeasts and supermen, creatures of dreams endowed with power to meet any emergency. In his opinion man and beast are closely allied, share the same instincts, follow the same impulses, and are waging abysmal conflicts for supremacy—all of which London portrays with a barbarism and brutality which at times becomes almost incredible. He resorts to extremes. Carl Van Doren points out that London sees life as a vast unfolding panorama, of which his stories are the individual episodes.

Much of his work is avowed propaganda for socialism, especially *War of the Classes* (1905), *Revolution* (1910), and *The Iron Heel* (1908), a romance which prophesies a revolution in 1932. Many of his books are autobiographical, recounting his experiences as tramp (*The Road*, 1903), slummer in East End London (*The People of the Abyss*, 1903), sailor (*The Snark*, 1911), and alcoholic addict (*John Barleycorn*, 1913).

In his day London was one of the most popular and best-paid writers. But his popularity and the anticipation of huge royalties drove him at such speed that he never realized the full fruit of his power and genius. He reached the height of his career early in his writing years, when he published *The Call of the Wild*. Nothing that he wrote afterward compares with it. His perpetual hurry prevented him from sensing the subtlety, delicacy, and depth that would have enriched his art. By some he has been accused of mawkish melodrama.

London's writings are available in two collected editions: *The Works of Jack London* (12 vols., 1917); *Complete Works of Jack London* (21 vols., 1926). Among his novels and social criticism are *A Daughter of the Snows* (1902); *The Call of the Wild* (1903); *The People of the Abyss* (1903); *The Sea Wolf* (1904); *War of the Classes* (1905); *Before Adam* (1906); *Martin Eden* (1909); *Revolution and Other Essays* (1910); *The Valley of the Moon* (1913); *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* (1914). Short stories appear in *The Son of the Wolf* (1900); *The God of His Fathers* (1901); *Children of the Frost* (1902); *Tales of the Fish Patrol* (1905); *When God Laughs* (1910); *Smoke Bellew* (1912); *The Strength of the Strong* (1914). *The Cruise of the Snark* (1911); and *John Barleycorn* (1913) are autobiographical. C. London, *The Book of Jack London* (2 vols., 1921) is the standard biography. See also I. Stone, *Beggar on Horseback* (1938); G. L. Bamford, *The Mystery of Jack London* (1931); M. Johnson, *Through the South Seas with Jack London* (1913); L. R. Livingston, *From Coast to Coast with Jack London* (1917). For other accounts see *DAB*, XI; C. Houck, "Jack London's Philosophy of Life," *Overland Monthly*, April, 1926; R. W. Lane, "Life and Jack London," *Sunset*, Oct., Nov., and Dec., 1917, Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., and May, 1918; "Tramping with Kelley through Iowa: a Jack London Diary," with comment by J. E. Briggs, *Palimpsest*, May, 1926; B. Millard, "Jack London, Farmer," *Bookman*, Oct., 1916; U. Sinclair, "Is This Jack London?" *Occult Review*, Dec., 1930; G. S. Viereck, "The Ghost of Jack London," *Liberty*, Oct. 10, 1931. For criticism the following are helpful: H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); E. B. Payne, *The Soul of Jack London* (1926); Van W. Brooks, *Sketches in Criticism* (1932); E. W. Bowen, "Jack London's Place in American Literature," *Reformed Church Review*, July, 1920; B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); C. H. Grattan, "Jack London," *Bookman*, Feb., 1929; F. L. Pattee, *Side-Lights on American Literature* (1922); H. M. Bland, "Jack London: Traveler, Novelist and Social Reformer," *Craftsman*, Feb., 1906; L. S. Friedland, "Jack London as Titan," *Dial*, Jan. 25, 1917; G. I. Colbron, "Jack London, What He Was and What He Accomplished," *Bookman*, Jan., 1917.

## THE MAN ON THE OTHER BANK

London wrote the *Smoke Bellew* stories from which this is taken, in later life, when he had somewhat outgrown his earlier brutal masculinity and still retained his love of adventure in the frozen North. "The Man on the Other Bank" first appeared in *Cosmopolitan*, Oct., 1911.

It was before Smoke Bellew staked the farcical town-site of Tra-Lee, made the historic corner of eggs that nearly broke Swiftwater Bill's bank-account, or won the dog-team race down the Yukon for an even million dollars, that he and Shorty parted company on the upper Klondike. Shorty's task was to return down the Klondike to Dawson to record some claims they had staked.

Smoke, with the dog-team, turned south. His quest was Surprise Lake and the mythical Two Cabins. His traverse was to cut the headwaters of the Indian River and cross the unknown region over the mountains to the Stewart River. Here, somewhere, rumor persisted, was Surprise Lake, surrounded by jagged mountains and glaciers, its bottom paved with raw gold. Old-timers, it was said, whose very names were forgotten in the frosts of earlier years, had dived into the icy waters of Surprise Lake and fetched lump-gold to the surface in both hands. At differing times parties of old-timers had penetrated the forbidding fastness and sampled the lake's golden bottom. But the water was too cold. Some died in the water, being pulled up dead. Others died later of consumption. And one who had gone down never did come up. All survivors had planned to return and drain the lake, yet none had ever gone back. Disaster always smote them. One man fell into an air-hole below Forty Mile; another was killed and eaten by his dogs; a third was crushed by a falling tree. And so the tale ran. Surprise Lake was a hoodoo; its location was unremembered; and the gold still paved its undrained bottom.

Two Cabins, no less mythical, was more definitely located. "Five sleeps" up the Mc-

Question River from the Stewart stood two ancient cabins. So ancient were they that they must have been built before ever the first known gold-hunter had entered the Yukon Basin. Wandering moose-hunters, whom even Smoke had met and talked with, claimed to have found the two cabins in the old days, but to have sought vainly for the mine which those early adventurers must have worked.

"I wish you was goin' with me," Shorty said wistfully, at parting. "Just because you got the Indian bug ain't no reason for to go pokin' into trouble. They's no getting away from it, that's loco country you're bound for. The hoodoo's sure on it, from the first flip to the last call, judgin' from all you an' me has hearn tell about it."

"It's all right, Shorty," replied Smoke. "I'll make the round trip and be back in Dawson in six weeks. The Yukon trail is packed, and the first hundred miles or so of the Stewart ought to be packed. Old-timers from Henderson have told me a number of outfits went up last fall after the freeze-up. When I strike their trail I ought to hit her up forty or fifty miles a day. I'm likely to be back inside a month, once I get across."

"Yep, once you get acrost. But it's the gettin' acrost that worries me. Well, so long, Smoke. Keep your eyes open for that hoodoo, that's all. An' don't be ashamed to turn back if you don't kill any meat."

A week later, Smoke found himself among the jumbled ranges south of Indian River. On the divide from the Klondike he had abandoned the sled and packed his wolf-dogs. The six big huskies each carried fifty pounds, and on his own back was an equal burden. Through the soft snow he led the way, packing it down under his snow-shoes, and behind, in single file, toiled the dogs.

He loved the life, the deep arctic winter, the silent wilderness, the unending snow-surface unpressed by the foot of man. About him towered icy peaks unnamed and uncharted. No hunter's camp-smoke, rising in the still air of the valleys, ever caught his eye. He, alone, moved through the brooding quiet of the untraveled wastes; nor was he oppressed by the solitude. He loved it all, the day's toil, the bickering wolf-dogs, the making of the camp in the long twilight, the leaping stars overhead, and the flaming pageant of the aurora borealis.

Especially he loved his camp at the end of day, and in it he saw a picture which he ever yearned to paint and which he knew he would never forget—a beaten place in the snow, where burned his fire; his bed a couple of rabbit-skin robes spread on fresh-chopped spruce-boughs; his shelter a stretched strip of canvas that caught and threw back the heat of the fire; the blackened coffee-pot and pail resting on a length of log, the moccasins propped on sticks to dry, the snow-shoes upended in the snow; and across the fire the wolf-dogs snuggling to it for the warmth, wistful and eager, furry and frost-rimed, with bushy tails curled protectingly over their feet; and all about, pressed backward but a space, the wall of encircling darkness.

At such times San Francisco, *The Billow*, and O'Hara seemed very far away, lost in a remote past, shadows of dreams that had never happened. He found it hard to believe that he had known any other life than this of the wild, and harder still was it for him to reconcile himself to the fact that he had once dabbled and dawdled in the Bohemian drift of city life. Alone, with no one to talk to, he thought much, and deeply, and simply. He was appalled by the wastage of his city years, by the cheapness, now, of the philosophies of the schools and books, of the clever cynicism of the studio and the editorial room, of the cant of the business men in their clubs. They knew neither food, nor sleep, nor health; nor could they ever possibly know the sting of real appetite, the goodly ache of fatigue, nor the rush of mad strong blood that bit like wine through all one's body as work was done.

And all the time this fine, wise, Spartan Northland had been here, and he had never known. What puzzled him was that, with such intrinsic fitness, he had never heard the slightest calling whisper, had not himself gone forth to seek. But this, too, he solved in time.

"Look here, Yellow Face, I've got it clear!"

The dog addressed lifted first one forefoot and then the other with quick, appeasing movements, curled his bush of a tail about them again, and laughed across the fire.

"Herbert Spencer was nearly forty before he caught the vision of his greatest efficiency and desire. I'm none so slow. I didn't have to wait till I was thirty to catch mine. Right here is my efficiency and desire. Almost, Yellow Face, do I wish I had been born a wolf-boy and been brother all my days to you and yours."

For days he wandered through a chaos of canyons and divides which did not yield themselves to any rational topographical plan. It was as if they had been flung there by some cosmic joker. In vain he sought for a creek or feeder that flowed truly south toward the McQuestion and the Stewart. Then came a mountain storm that blew a blizzard across the riffraff of high and shallow divides. Above timberline, fireless, for two days, he struggled blindly to find lower levels. On the second day he came out upon the rim of an enormous palisade. So thickly drove the snow that he could not see the base of the wall, nor dared he attempt the descent. He rolled himself in his robes and huddled the dogs about him in the depths of a snow drift, but did not permit himself to sleep.

In the morning, the storm spent, he crawled out to investigate. A quarter of a mile beneath him, beyond all mistake, lay a frozen, snow-covered lake. About it, on every side, rose jagged peaks. It answered the description. Blindly, he had found Surprise Lake.

"Well named," he muttered, an hour later, as he came out upon its margin. A clump of aged spruce was the only woods. In his way to it, he stumbled upon three graves, snow-buried, but marked by hand-hewn head posts and undecipherable writing. On the edge of the woods was a small ramshackle cabin. He pulled the latch and entered. In a corner, on what had once been a bed of spruce-boughs, still wrapped in mangy furs that had rotted to fragments, lay a skeleton. The last visitor to Surprise Lake, was Smoke's conclusion, as he picked up a lump of gold as large as his doubled fist. Beside the lump was a pepper-can filled with nuggets of the size of walnuts, rough-surfaced, showing no signs of wash.

So true had the tale run that Smoke accepted without question that the source of the gold was the lake's bottom. Under many feet of ice and inaccessible, there was nothing to be done, and at midday, from the rim of the palisade, he took a farewell look back and down at his find.

"It's all right, Mr. Lake," he said. "You just keep right on staying there. I'm coming back to drain you—if that hoodoo doesn't catch me. I don't know how I got here, but I'll know by the way I go out."

In a little valley, beside a frozen stream and under beneficent spruce-trees, he built a fire four days later. Somewhere in that white anarchy he had left behind him was Surprise Lake—somewhere, he knew now where; for a hundred hours of drifting and struggle through blinding, driving snow had concealed his course from him, and he knew not in what direction lay *behind*. It was as if he had just emerged from a nightmare. He was not sure whether four days or a week had passed. He had slept with the dogs, fought across a forgotten number of shallow divides, followed the windings of weird canyons that ended in pockets, and twice had managed to make a fire and thaw out frozen moose-meat. And here he was, well fed and well camped. The storm had passed, and it had turned clear and cold. The lay of the land had again become rational. The creek he was on was natural in appearance, and trended, as it should, toward the southwest. But Surprise Lake was as lost to him as it had been to all its seekers in the past.

Half a day's journey down the creek brought him to the valley of a larger stream which he decided was the McQuestion. Here he shot a moose, and once again each wolf-dog carried a full fifty pound pack of meat. As he turned down the McQuestion, he came upon a sled-trail. The late snows had drifted over, but underneath it was well packed by travel. His conclusion was that two camps had been established on the McQuestion, and that this was the connecting trail. Evidently, Two Cabins had been found, and it was the lower camp, so he headed down the stream.

It was forty below zero when he camped that night, and he fell asleep wondering who were the men who had rediscovered the Two Cabins and if he would fetch it next day. At the first hint of dawn he was under way,

easily following the half-obliterated trail and packing the recent snow with his webbed shoes so that the dogs should not wallow.

And then it came, the unexpected, leaping out upon him on a bend of the river. It seemed to him that he heard and felt simultaneously. The crack of the rifle came from the right, and the bullet, tearing through and across the shoulders of his drill parka and woolen coat, pivoted him half around with the shock of its impact. He staggered on his twisted snow-shoes to recover balance, and heard a second crack of the rifle. This time it was a clean miss. He did not wait for more, but plunged across the snow for the sheltering trees of the bank a hundred feet away. Again and again the rifle cracked, and he was unpleasantly aware of a trickle of warm moisture down his back.

He climbed the bank, the dogs floundering behind, and dodged in among the trees and brush. Slipping out of his snow-shoes, he wallowed forward at full length and peered cautiously out. Nothing was to be seen. Whoever had shot at him was lying quiet among the trees of the opposite bank.

"If something doesn't happen pretty soon," he muttered at the end of half an hour, "I'll have to sneak away and build a fire or freeze my feet. Yellow Face, what'd you do, lying in the frost with circulation getting slack and a man trying to plug you?"

He crawled back a few yards, packed down the snow, danced a jig that sent the blood back into his feet, and managed to endure another half-hour. Then, from down the river, he heard the unmistakable jingle of dog-bells. Peering out, he saw a sled round the bend. Only one man was with it, straining at the gee-pole and urging the dogs along. The effect on Smoke was one of shock, for it was the first human he had seen since he parted from Shorty three weeks before. His next thought was of the potential murderer concealed on the opposite bank.

Without exposing himself, Smoke whistled warningly. The man did not hear, and came on rapidly. Again, and more sharply, Smoke whistled. The man whoaed his dogs, stopped, and had turned and faced Smoke when the rifle cracked. The instant afterward, Smoke fired into the woods in the direction of the sound. The man on the river had been struck by the first shot. The shock of the high velocity bullet staggered him. He stumbled awkwardly to the sled, half falling, and pulled a rifle out from under the lashings. As he strove to raise it to his shoulder, he crumpled at the waist and sank down slowly to a sitting posture on the sled. Then, abruptly as the gun went off aimlessly, he pitched backward and across a corner of the sledload, so that Smoke could see only his legs and stomach.

From below came more jingly bells. The man did not move. Around the bend swung three sleds, accompanied by half a dozen men. Smoke cried warningly, but they had seen the condition of the first sled, and they dashed on to it. No shots came from the other bank, and Smoke, calling his dogs to follow, emerged into the open. There were exclamations from the men, and two of them, flinging off the mittens of their right hands, leveled their rifles at him.

"Come on, you red-handed murderer, you," one of them, a black-bearded man, commanded. "An' jest pitch that gun of yourn in the snow."

Smoke hesitated, then dropped his rifle and came up to them.

"Go through him, Louis, an' take his weapons," the black-bearded man ordered.

Louis was a French-Canadian voyageur, Smoke decided, as were four of the others. His search revealed only Smoke's hunting knife, which was appropriated.

"Now what have you got to say for yourself, stranger, before I shoot you dead?" the black-bearded man demanded.

"That you're making a mistake if you think I killed that man," Smoke answered.

A cry came from one of the voyageurs. He had quested along the trail and found Smoke's tracks where he had left it to take refuge on the bank. The man explained the nature of his find.

"What'd you kill Joe Kinade for?" he of the black beard asked.

"I tell you I didn't," Smoke began.

"Aw, what's the good of talkin'? We got you red-handed. Right up there's where you left the trail when you heard him comin'. You laid among the trees an' bushwacked

him. A short shot. You couldn't 'a' missed. Pierre, go an' get that gun he dropped."

"You might let me tell what happened," Smoke objected.

"You shut up," the man snarled at him. "I reckon your gun'll tell the story."

All the men examined Smoke's rifle, ejecting and counting the cartridges, and examining the barrel at muzzle and breech.

"One shot," Blackbeard concluded.

Pierre, with nostrils that quivered and distended like a deer's, sniffed at the breech. "Him one fresh shot," he said.

"The bullet entered his back," Smoke said. "He was facing me when he was shot. You see, it came from the other bank."

Blackbeard considered this proposition for a scant second, and shook his head. "Nope. It won't do. Turn him around to face the other bank—that's how you whopped him in the back. Some of you boys run up an' down the trail, and see if you can see any tracks making for the other bank."

Their report was that on that side the snow was unbroken. Blackbeard, bending over the dead man, straightened up with a wooly, furry wad in his hand. Shredding this, he found imbedded in the center the bullet which had perforated the body. Its nose was spread to the size of a half-dollar, its butt-end, steel-jacketed, was undamaged. He compared it with a cartridge from Smoke's belt.

"That's plain enough evidence, stranger, to satisfy a blind man. It's soft-nosed an' steel-jacketed; yourn is soft-nosed and steel-jacketed. It's a thirty-thirty; yourn is thirty-thirty. It's manufacted by the J. & T. Arms Company; yourn is manufactured by the J. & T. Arms Company. Now you come along an' we'll go over to the bank an' see jest how you done it."

"I was bushwacked myself," Smoke said. "Look at the hole in my parka."

While Blackbeard examined it, one of the voyageurs threw open the breech of the dead man's gun. It was patent to all that it had been fired once. The empty cartridge was still in the chamber.

"A damn shame poor Joe didn't get you," Blackbeard said bitterly. "But he did pretty well with a hole like that in him. Come on, you."

"Search the other bank first," Smoke urged.

"You shut up an' come on, an' let the facts do the talkin'."

They left the trail at the same spot that he had, and followed it up along the bank and then in among the trees.

"Him dance that place keep him feet warm," Louis pointed out. "That place him crawl on belly. That place him put one elbow w'en him shoot."

"And there's the empty cartridge he done it with!" was Blackbeard's discovery. "Boys, there's only one thing to do."

"You might ask me how I came to fire that shot," Smoke interrupted.

"An' I might knock your teeth into your gullet if you butt in again. You can answer them questions later on. Now, boys, we're decent an' law-abidin', an' we got to handle this right an' regular. How far do you reckon we've come, Pierre?"

"Twenty mile, I t'ink, for sure."

"All right. We'll cache the outfit an' run him an' poor Joe back to Two Cabins. I reckon we've seen an' can testify to what'll stretch his neck."

It was three hours after dark when the dead man, Smoke, and his captors arrived at Two Cabins. By the starlight Smoke could make out a dozen or more recently built cabins snuggling about a larger and older cabin on a flat by the river bank. Thrust inside this older cabin, he found it tenanted by a young giant of a man, his wife, and an old blind man. The woman, whom her husband called "Lucy," was herself a strapping creature of the frontier type. The old man, as Smoke learned afterward, had been a trapper on the Stewart for years, and had gone finally blind the winter before. The camp of Two Cabins he was also to learn, had been made the previous fall by a dozen men who arrived in half as many poling-boats loaded with provisions. Here they had found the blind trapper, on the site of Two Cabins, and about his cabin they had built their own. Later arrivals, mushing up the ice with dog-teams, had tripled the population. There was plenty of meat in camp, and good low-pay dirt had been discovered and was being worked.

In five minutes, all the men of Two Cabins

were jammed into the room. Smoke, shoved off into a corner, ignored and scowled at, his hands and feet tied with thongs of moose-hide, looked on. Thirty-eight men he counted, a wild and husky crew, all frontiersmen of the States or voyageurs from upper Canada. His captors told the tale over and over, each the center of an excited and wrathful group. There were mutterings of: "Lynch him now! Why wait?" And, once a big Irishman was restrained only by force from rushing upon the helpless prisoner and giving him a beating.

It was while counting the men that Smoke caught sight of a familiar face. It was Breck, the man whose boat Smoke had run through the rapids. He wondered why the other did not come and speak to him, but himself gave no sign of recognition. Later, when with shielded face Breck passed him a wink, Smoke understood.

Blackbeard, whom Smoke heard called Eli Harding, ended the discussion as to whether or not the prisoner should be immediately lynched. "Hold on!" he roared. "Keep your shirts on. That man belongs to me. I caught him an' I brought him here. D'ye think I brought him all the way here to be lynched? Not on your life. I could 'a' done that myself when I found him. I brought him here for a fair an' impartial trial, an' by God, a fair an' impartial trial he's goin' to get. He's tied up safe an' sound. Chuck him in a bunk till morning, an' we'll hold the trial right here."

Smoke woke up. A draft that possessed all the rigidity of an icicle was boring into the front of his shoulders as he lay on his side facing the wall. When he had been tied into the bunk there had been no such draft, and now the outside air, driving into the heated atmosphere of the cabin with the pressure of fifty below zero, was sufficient advertisement that some one from without had pulled away the moss-chinking between the logs. He squirmed as far as his bonds would permit, then craned his neck forward until his lips just managed to reach the crack.

"Who is it?" he whispered.

"Breck," came the almost inaudible answer. "Be careful you don't make a noise. I'm going to pass a knife to you."

"No good," Smoke said. "I couldn't use it. My hands are tied behind me and made fast to the leg of the bunk. Besides, you couldn't get a knife through that crack. But something must be done. Those fellows are of a temper to hang me, and of course you know I didn't kill that man."

"It wasn't necessary to mention it, Smoke. And if you did you had your reasons. Which isn't the point at all. I want to get you out of this. It's a tough bunch of men here. You've seen them. They're shut off from the world, and they make and enforce their own law—by miners' meeting, you know. They handled two men already—both grub-thieves. One they hiked from camp without an ounce of grub and no matches. He made about forty miles and lasted a couple of days before he froze stiff. Two weeks ago they hiked the second man. They gave him his choice: no grub, or ten lashes for each day's ration. He stood for forty lashes before he fainted. And now they've got you, and every last one is convinced you killed Kinade."

"The man who killed Kinade shot at me, too. His bullet broke the skin on my shoulder. Get them to delay the trial till some one goes up and searches the bank where the murderer hid."

"No use. They take the evidence of Harding and the five Frenchmen with him. Besides, they haven't had a hanging yet, and they're keen for it. You see, things have been pretty monotonous. They haven't located anything big, and they got tired of hunting for Surprise Lake. They did some stampeding the first part of the Winter, but they've got over that now. Scurvy is beginning to show up among them, too, and they're just ripe for excitement."

"And it looks like I'll furnish it," was Smoke's comment. "Say, Breck, how did you ever fall in with such a God-forsaken bunch?"

"After I got the claims at Squaw Creek opened up and some men to working, I came up here by way of the Stewart, hunting for Two Cabins. They'd beaten me to it, so I've been higher up the Stewart. Just got back yesterday out of grub."

"Find anything?"

"Nothing much. But I think I've got a hydraulic proposition that'll work big when

the country's opened up. It's that, or a gold-dredger."

"Hold on," Smoke interrupted. "Wait a minute. Let me think."

He was very much aware of the snores of the sleepers as he pursued the idea that had flashed into his mind.

"Say, Breck, have they opened up the meat-packs my dogs carried?" he asked.

"A couple. I was watching. They put them in Harding's cache."

"Did they find anything?"

"Meat."

"Good. You've got to get into the brown-canvas pack that's patched with moose-hide. You'll find a few pounds of lumpy gold. You've never seen gold like it in the country, nor has anybody else. Here's what you've got to do. Listen."

A quarter of an hour later, fully instructed and complaining that his toes were freezing, Breck went away. Smoke, his own nose and one cheek frosted by proximity to the chink, rubbed them against the blankets for half an hour before the blaze and bite of the returning blood assured him of the safety of his flesh.

"My mind's made up right now. There ain't no doubt but what he killed Kinade. We heard the whole thing last night. What's the good of goin' over it again? I vote guilty."

In such fashion Smoke's trial began. The speaker, a loose-jointed, hard-rock man from Colorado, manifested irritation and disgust when Harding set his suggestion aside, demanded the proceedings should be regular, and nominated one Shunk Wilson for judge and chairman of the meeting. The population of Two Cabins constituted the jury, though, after some discussion, the woman, Lucy, was denied the right to vote on Smoke's guilt or innocence.

While this was going on, Smoke, jammed into a corner on a bunk, overheard a whispered conversation between Breck and a miner.

"You haven't fifty pounds of flour you'll sell?" Breck queried.

"You ain't got the dust to pay the price I'm askin'," was the reply.

"I'll give you two hundred."

The man shook his head.

"Three hundred. Three fifty."

At four hundred, the man nodded, and said, "Come on over to my cabin an' weigh out the dust."

The two squeezed their way to the door and slipped out. After a few minutes Breck returned alone.

Harding was testifying when Smoke saw the door shoved open slightly, and in the crack appear the face of the man who had sold the flour. He was grimacing and beckoning emphatically to some one inside, who arose from near the stove and started to work toward the door.

"Where are you goin', Sam?" Shunk Wilson demanded.

"I'll be back in a jiffy," Sam explained. "I jes' got to go."

Smoke was permitted to question the witnesses, and he was in the middle of the cross-examination of Harding when from without came the whining of dogs in harness and the grind and churn of sled-runners. Somebody near the door peeped out.

"It's Sam an' his pardner an' a dog-team hell-bent down the trail for Stewart River," the man reported.

Nobody spoke for a long half-minute, but men glanced significantly at one another, and a general restlessness pervaded the packed room. Out of the corner of his eye, Smoke caught a glimpse of Breck, Lucy, and her husband whispering together.

"Come on, you," Shunk Wilson said gruffly to Smoke. "Cut this questionin' short. We know what you're tryin' to prove—that the other bank wa'n't searched. The witness admits it. We admit it. It wa'n't necessary. No tracks led to that bank. The snow wa'n't broke."

"There was a man on the other bank just the same," Smoke insisted.

"That's too thin for skatin', young man. There ain't many of us on the McQuestion, an' we got every man accounted for."

"Who was the man you hiked out of camp two weeks ago?" Smoke asked.

"Alonzo Miramer. He was a Mexican. What's that grub-thief got to do with it?"

"Nothing, except that you haven't accounted for *him*, Mr. Judge."

"He went down river, not up."

"How do you know where he went?"

"Saw him start."

"And that's all you know of what became of him?"

"No, it ain't, young man. I know, we all know, he had four days' grub an' no gun to shoot meat with. If he didn't make the settlement on the Yukon he'd croaked long before this."

"I suppose you've got all the guns in this part of the country accounted for, too," Smoke observed pointedly.

Shunk Wilson was angry. "You'd think I was the prisoner the way you slam questions into me. Now then, come on with the next witness. Where's French Louis?"

While French Louis was shoving forward Lucy opened the door.

"Where you goin'?" Shunk Wilson shouted.

"I reckon I don't have to stay," she answered defiantly. "I ain't got no vote, an' besides, my cabin's so jammed up I can't breathe."

In a few minutes her husband followed. The closing of the door was the first warning the judge received of it.

"Who was that?" he interrupted Pierre's narrative to ask.

"Bill Peabody," somebody spoke up. "Said he wanted to ask his wife something and was coming right back."

Instead of Bill, it was Lucy who reëntered, took off her furs, and resumed her place by the stove.

"I reckon we don't need to hear the rest of the witnesses," was Shunk Wilson's decision, when Pierre had finished. "We know they can testify to the same facts we've already heard. Say, Sorenson, you go an' bring Bill Peabody back. We'll be votin' a verdict pretty short. Now, stranger, you can get up an' say your say concernin' what happened. In the meantime, we'll just be savin' delay by passin' around the two rifles, the ammunition, an' the bullet that done the killin'."

Midway in his story of how he had arrived in that part of the country, and at the point in his narrative where he described his own ambush and how he had fled to the bank, Smoke was interrupted by the indignant Shunk Wilson.

"Young man, what sense is there in you testifyin' that way? You're just takin' up valuable time. Of course you got the right to lie to save your neck, but we ain't goin' to stand for such foolishness. The rifle, the ammunition, an' the bullet that killed Joe Kinade is against you. What's that? Open the door, somebody!"

The frost rushed in, taking form and substance in the heat of the room, while through the open door came the whining of dogs that decreased rapidly with distance.

"It's Sorenson an' Peabody," some one cried, "a-throwin' the whip into the dawgs an' headin' down river!"

"Now what the——?" Shunk Wilson paused with dropped jaw, and glared at Lucy. "I reckon you can explain, Mrs. Peabody."

She tossed her head and compressed her lips, and Shunk Wilson's wrathful and suspicious gaze passed and rested on Breck.

"An' I reckon that newcomer you've been chinning with could explain if *he* had a mind to."

Breck, now very uncomfortable, found all eyes centered on him.

"Sam was chewing the rag with him, too, before he lit out," some one said.

"Look here, Mr. Breck," Shunk Wilson continued. "You've ben interruptin' proceedings, and you got to explain the meanin' of it. What was you chinnin' about?"

Breck cleared his throat timidly and replied, "I was just trying to buy some grub."

"What with?"

"Dust, of course."

"Where'd you get it?"

Breck did not answer.

"He's been snoopin' around up the Stewart," a man volunteered. "I run across his camp a week ago when I was huntin'. An' I want to tell you he was almighty secretious about it."

"The dust didn't come from there," Breck said. "That's only a low grade hydraulic proposition."

"Bring your poke here an' let's see your dust," Wilson commanded.

"I tell you it didn't come from there."

"Let's see it, just the same."

Breck made as if to refuse, but all about him were menacing faces. Reluctantly, he fumbled in his coat pocket. In the act of drawing forth a pepper-can, it rattled against what was evidently a hard object.

"Fetch it all out!" Shunk Wilson thundered.

And out came the big nugget, fist-size, yellow as no gold any onlooker had ever seen. Shunk Wilson gasped. Half a dozen, catching one glimpse, made a break for the door. They reached it at the same moment, and, with cursing and scuffling, jammed and pivoted through. The judge emptied the contents of the pepper-can on the table, and the sight of the rough lump-gold sent half a dozen more toward the door.

"Where are you goin'?" Eli Harding asked, as Shunk started to follow.

"For my dogs, of course."

"Ain't you goin' to hang him?"

"It'd take too much time right now. He'll keep till we get back, so I reckon this court is adjourned. This ain't no place for lingerin'."

Harding hesitated. He glanced savagely at Smoke, saw Pierre beckoning to Louis from the doorway, took one last look at the lump-gold on the table, and decided.

"No use you tryin' to get away," he flung over his shoulder. "Besides, I'm goin' to borrow your dogs."

"What is it?—another one of them blamed stampedes?" the old blind trapper asked in a queer and petulant falsetto, as the cries of men and dogs and the grind of the sleds swept the silence of the room.

"It sure is," Lucy answered. "An' I never seen gold like it. Feel that, ole man."

She put the big nugget in his hand. He was but slightly interested.

"It was a good fur-country," he complained, "before them danged miners come in an' scared back the game."

The door opened, and Breck entered. "Well," he said, "we four are all that are left in camp. It's forty miles to the Stewart by the cut-off I broke, and the fastest of them can't make the round trip in less than five or six days. But it's time you pulled out, Smoke, just the same."

Breck drew his hunting knife across the other's bonds, and glanced at the woman. "I hope you don't object?" he said with significant politeness.

"Go on, an' don't mind me," Lucy answered. "If I ain't good enough to hang a man, I ain't good enough to hold him."

Smoke stood up, rubbing his wrists where the thongs had impeded the circulation.

"I've got a pack all ready for you," Breck said. "Ten days' grub, blankets, matches, tobacco, an ax, and a rifle."

"Go to it," Lucy encouraged. "Hit the high places, stranger. Beat it as fast as God'll let you."

"I'm going to have a square meal before I start," Smoke said. "And when I start it will be up the McQuestion, not down. I'm going to search that other bank for the man that really did the killing."

"If you'll listen to me, you'll head down for the Stewart and the Yukon," Breck objected. "When this gang gets back it'll be seeing red."

Smoke laughed and shook his head. "I can't jump this country, Breck. I've got interests here. I've found Surprise Lake. That's where that gold came from. Besides, they took my dogs, and I've got to wait to get them back. Also, I know what I'm about. There was a man hidden on that bank. He came pretty close to emptying his magazine at me."

Half an hour afterward, with a big plate of moose-steak before him and a big mug of coffee at his lips, Smoke half started up from his seat. He had heard the sounds first. Lucy threw open the door.

"Hello, Spike; hellow, Methody," she greeted the two frost-rimed men who were bending over the burden on their sled.

"We just come down from Upper Camp," one said, as the pair staggered into the room with a fur-wrapped object which they handled with exceeding gentleness. "An' this is what we found by the way. He's all in, I guess."

"Put him in the rear bunk there," Lucy said. She bent over and pulled back the furs, disclosing a face composed principally of large, staring, black eyes and of skin, dark and

scabbed by repeated frost-bite, tightly stretched across the bones.

"If it ain't Alonzo!" she cried. "You pore, starved devil!"

"That's the man on the other bank," Smoke said in an undertone to Breck.

"We found it raidin' a cache that Harding must 'a' made," one of the men was explaining. "He was eatin' raw flour an' frozen bacon, an' when we got 'm he was cryin' an' squealin' like a hawg. Look at him! He's all starved, an' most of him frozen. He'll kick at any moment."

Half an hour later, when the furs had been drawn over the face of the still form in the bunk, Smoke turned to Lucy. "If you don't mind, Mrs. Peabody, I'll have another whack at that steak. Make it thick and not so well done. I'm a meat-eater, I am."

1912

## 1862 ~ *Edith Wharton* ~ 1937

DESTINED to become the most impressive woman novelist of her time, Mrs. Wharton devoted her life to her art with singular zeal and energy. Born in New York during the Civil War, by birth and breeding belonging to the socially élite, Edith Newbold Jones experienced the changing currents in metropolitan society as they were determined under the impact of post-war influences. On her mother's side she was descended from the Rhinelanders, a family long prominent in the social, civic, and commercial life of New York. Her great-grandfather was a general in the Continental army during the Revolution. She was educated for the most part in Europe, and knew at firsthand the art, literature, and culture of Italy, France, and Germany, a fact which accounts for the reflection of European life in many of her writings. In 1885 she married Edward Wharton, a wealthy banker, established her permanent home in her native city, spending her summers in Newport or Lenox and making frequent trips abroad. After 1906 she lived in Paris. With the exception of the war years, during which she engaged in relief work with whole-hearted devotion, her life is largely a record of the successive appearance of her numerous books. In recognition of her war work she was made an Officer of the French Legion of Honor. In 1924 she received the gold medal for literature from the Institute of Arts and Letters.

In *The Writing of Fiction* (1925), a little book which might be used profitably as a text by aspiring writers, Mrs. Wharton states the main principles which she followed as novelist and short story writer. Art, she maintains at the outset, is still in a fluxlike stage, open therefore to countless experiments which will preserve the artist against becoming set and stereotyped in method and practice. The primary problem in planning a novel is the selection of adequate material, a choice which must be guided, first, by what the material actually contains, and second, by the writer's ability to extract from it what is significant and illuminating. That is, the writer's vision must be commensurate with his capacity to record what he sees;

otherwise the artistic product would be marred by a lack of balance and proportion. The novelist must assume a point of view sufficiently removed from the raw material selected for treatment that it can be considered and recorded in an objective manner; to achieve consistency this point of view, once it is chosen, must not be changed lest the singleness of development, both of character and narrative, be broken. Roughly speaking, she recognizes two types of fiction—the novel of manners and the novel of character—but admits that the classification is arbitrary, and that the best novels are a combination of the two types. In the short story situation is more important than character; in the novel character is more important, and must change, either develop or decline, with the lapse of time as the narrative progresses. The length of a story will depend entirely upon the nature of the subject. It should stop when it is ended. Brief and inadequate as this summary of her theory is, it does convey the impression that her art is the result of painstaking reflection, and that it rests upon a carefully planned foundation—one reason for the almost uncanny technical excellence of her work.

Like her master, Henry James, Mrs. Wharton achieved distinction in the short story as well as in the novel. She began her career with a collection of short stories under the title of *The Greater Inclination* (1899), followed by another volume, *The Descent of Man* (1904), regarded by some as her best work in this field. In later years she published similar collections in *Here and Beyond* (1926), *Human Nature* (1933), and *The World Over* (1936). The list of her novels is so long, and the subject matter and technique so varied, that even a brief characterization of each one is impossible here. The best that one can do is to single out a few more or less typical examples. *The Valley of Decision* (1902), for instance, is a historical novel about Italy in the eighteenth century, based upon such meticulous research that the background becomes more impressive than the narrative. In *The House of Mirth* (1905) she tells the story of Lily Bart and her adventures in exploiting the New York social set. *The Fruit of the Tree* (1907), although unconvincing as a story, illustrates her view of industrialism and social welfare. Critics are practically in unanimous agreement that *Ethan Frome* (1911) is not only her masterpiece, but one of the supreme achievements in our literature. It is a tale of frustrate love set in a Massachusetts countryside, and told with the concentrated austerity of a Greek tragedy. A group of novels including *The Custom of the Country* (1913), *The Children* (1928), *Hudson River Bracketed* (1929), and its sequel, *The Gods Arrive* (1932), deal with divorce and social problems. *A Backward Glance* (1934) is an autobiography treated with the same aloof detachment and objectivity that characterizes her fiction, never very intimate or revealing, and containing, besides personal memoirs, observations on society in New York, London, and Paris, and reminiscences of many noteworthy people whom she met in the course of her life. A chapter is devoted to Henry James.

Mrs. Wharton was a capable and conscientious artist. Her work is marked by painstaking attention to artistic technique, with the result that many of her novels are almost perfect in structure. On the other hand this self-conscious striving for perfection is at times so obvious that it overshadows the freshness and spontaneity which one expects in art. She is most at home with characters and themes taken from the select and cultured classes of society, and only in *Ethan Frome* does she become really impressive outside her preferred field. In accordance with her principle that the art of fiction is "fluid" and fluxlike, she employed a varying technique in her successive novels, a method by which in spite of certain typical traits she avoided the use of a set and hackneyed formula. Because she makes her strongest appeal to intellectual and cultured readers, her popularity has been somewhat limited. Even her most devoted followers are seldom stirred to a high pitch of enthusiasm; in spite of her admitted power, versatility, and artistic skill she seldom arouses more than an attitude of half-awesome respect and admiration.

Mrs. Wharton's novels and novelettes include *The Valley of Decision* (1902); *The House of Mirth* (1905); *Madame de Treymes* (1907); *The Fruit of the Tree* (1907); *Ethan Frome* (1911); *The Custom of the Country* (1913); *The Age of Innocence* (1917); *The Old Maid* (1924); *New Year's Day* (1924); *False Dawn* (1924); *The Spark* (1924); *The Children* (1928); *Certain People* (1930); *The Gods Arrive* (1933). Collections of short stories: *The Greater Inclination* (1899); *Crucial Instances* (1901); *The Descent of Man and Other Stories* (1904); *Tales of Men and Ghosts* (1910); *Xingu and Other Stories* (1916); *Here and Beyond* (1926); *Human Nature* (1933). *The Writing of Fiction* (1925) is a critical essay. For biographical information reference is made to her autobiography, *A Backward Glance* (1934); to R. M. Lovett, *Edith Wharton* (1925); and to J. Flanner, "Dearest Edith," *New Yorker*, March 2, 1929. The following references will prove helpful for criticism: K. F. Gerould, *Edith Wharton: a Critical Study* (1922); F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); H. Hatcher, *Creating the American Novel* (1935); R. Michaud, *The American Novel To-day* (1928); G. Overton, *The Women Who Make Our Novels* (1928); S. P. Sherman, *The Main Stream* (1927); J. C. Underwood, *Literature and Insurgency* (1914); B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); H. T. and W. Follett, *Some Modern Novelists* (1919); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); E. Björkman, *Voices of To-morrow* (1913); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1920); F. T. Russell, "Melodramatic Mrs. Wharton," *Sewanee Review*, Oct.–Dec., 1932; H. James, *Notes on Novelists* (1914); H. D. Sedgwick, *The New American Type and Other Essays* (1908); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936); E. K. Brown, "Edith Wharton," *Études Anglaises* (1935).

## THE OTHER TWO

**Taken from *The Descent of Man*. Although written early in her career, "The Other Two" illustrates many of the artistic traits which characterize Mrs. Wharton's later work.**

I

WAYTHORN, on the drawing-room hearth, waited for his wife to come down to dinner. It was their first night under his own roof, and he was surprised at his thrill of boyish agitation. He was not so old, to be sure—his glass gave him little more than the five-and-thirty years to which his wife confessed—but he had fancied himself already in the temperate zone; yet there he was listening for her step with a tender sense of all it symbolised,

with some old trail of verse about the garlanded nuptial door-posts floating through his enjoyment of the pleasant room and the good dinner just beyond it.

They had been hastily recalled from their honeymoon by the illness of Lily Haskett, the child of Mrs. Waythorn's first marriage. The little girl, at Waythorn's desire, had been transferred to his house on the day of her mother's wedding, and the doctor, on their arrival, broke the news that she was ill with typhoid, but declared that all the symptoms were favorable. Lily could show twelve years of unblemished health, and the case promised to be a light one. The nurse spoke as reassuringly, and after a moment of alarm Mrs. Waythorn had adjusted herself to the situation. She was very fond of Lily—her affection for the child had perhaps been her decisive charm in Waythorn's eyes—but she had the perfectly balanced nerves which her little girl had inherited, and no woman ever wasted less tissue in unproductive worry. Waythorn was therefore quite prepared to see her come in presently, a little late because of a last look at Lily, but as serene and well-appointed as if her good-night kiss had been laid on the brow of health. Her composure was restful to him; it acted as ballast to his somewhat unstable sensibilities. As he pictured her bending over the child's bed he thought how soothing her presence must be in illness: her very step would prognosticate recovery.

His own life had been a gay one, from temperament rather than circumstance, and he had been drawn to her by the unperturbed gaiety which kept her fresh and elastic at an age when most women's activities are growing either slack or febrile. He knew what was said about her; for, popular as she was, there had always been a faint undercurrent of detraction. When she had appeared in New York, nine or ten years earlier, as the pretty Mrs. Haskett whom Gus Varick had unearthed somewhere —was it in Pittsburg or Utica?—society, while promptly accepting her, had reserved the right to cast a doubt on its own indiscrimination. Enquiry, however, established her undoubted connection with a socially reigning family, and explained her recent divorce as the natural result of a runaway match at seventeen; and as nothing was known of Mr. Haskett it was easy to believe the worst of him.

Alice Haskett's remarriage with Gus Varick was a passport to the set whose recognition she coveted, and for a few years the Varicks were the most popular couple in town. Unfortunately the alliance was brief and stormy, and this time the husband had his champions. Still, even Varick's grievances were of a nature to bear the inspection of the New York courts. A New York divorce is in itself a diploma of virtue, and in the semi-widowhood of this second separation Mrs. Varick took on an air of sanctity, and was allowed to confide her wrongs to some of the most scrupulous ears in town. But when it was known that she was to marry Waythorn there was a momentary reaction. Her best friends would have preferred to see her remain in the role of the injured wife, which was as becoming to her as crape to a rosy complexion. True, a decent time had elapsed, and it was not even suggested that Waythorn had supplanted his predecessor. People shook their heads over him, however, and one grudging friend, to whom he affirmed that he took the step with his eyes open, replied oracularly: "Yes—and with your ears shut."

Waythorn could afford to smile at these innuendoes. In the Wall Street phrase, he had "discounted" them. He knew that society has not yet adapted itself to the consequences of divorce, and that till the adaptation takes place every woman who uses the freedom the law accords her must be her own social justification. Waythorn had an amused confidence in his wife's ability to justify herself. His expectations were fulfilled, and before the wedding took place Alice Varick's group had rallied openly to her support. She took it all imperturbably: she had a way of surmounting obstacles without seeming to be aware of them, and Waythorn looked back with wonder at the trivialities over which he had worn his nerves thin. He had the sense of having found refuge in a richer, warmer nature than his own, and his satisfaction, at the moment, was humorously summed up in the thought that his wife, when she had done all she could for Lily, would not be ashamed to come down and enjoy a good dinner.

The anticipation of such enjoyment was not, however, the sentiment expressed by Mrs. Waythorn's charming face when she presently joined him. Though she had put on her most engaging teagown she had neglected to assume the smile that went with it, and Waythorn thought he had never seen her look so nearly worried.

"What is it?" he asked. "Is anything wrong with Lily?"

"No; I've just been in and she's still sleeping." Mrs. Waythorn hesitated. "But something tiresome has happened."

He had taken her two hands, and now perceived that he was crushing a paper between them.

"This letter?"

"Yes—Mr. Haskett has written—I mean his lawyer has written."

Waythorn felt himself flush uncomfortably. He dropped his wife's hands.

"What about?"

"About seeing Lily. You know the courts——"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted nervously.

Nothing was known about Haskett in New York. He was vaguely supposed to have remained in the outer darkness from which his wife had been rescued, and Waythorn was one of the few who were aware that he had given up his business in Utica and followed her to New York in order to be near his little girl. In the days of his wooing, Waythorn had often met Lily on the doorstep, rosy and smiling, on her way "to see papa."

"I am so sorry," Mrs. Waythorn murmured. "If Lily could have been moved——"

"That's out of the question," he returned impatiently.

"I suppose so."

Her lip was beginning to tremble, and he felt himself a brute.

"He must come, of course," he said. "When is—his day?"

"I'm afraid—tomorrow."

"Very well. Send a note in the morning."

The butler entered to announce dinner.

Waythorn turned to his wife. "Come—you must be tired. It's beastly, but try to forget about it," he said, drawing her hand through his arm.

"You're so good, dear. I'll try," she whispered back.

Her face cleared at once, and as she looked at him across the flowers, between the rosy candle-shades, he saw her lips waver back into a smile.

"How pretty everything is!" she sighed luxuriously.

He turned to the butler. "The champagne at once, please. Mrs. Waythorn is tired."

In a moment or two their eyes met above the sparkling glasses. Her own were quite clear and untroubled: he saw that she had obeyed his injunction and forgotten.

II

Waythorn, the next morning, went down town earlier than usual. Haskett was not likely to come till the afternoon, but the instinct of flight drove him forth. He meant to stay away all day—he had thoughts of dining at his club. As his door closed behind him he reflected that before he opened it again it would have admitted another man who had as much right to enter it as himself, and the thought filled him with a physical repugnance.

He caught the "elevated" at the employes' hour, and found himself crushed between two layers of pendulous humanity. At Eighth Street the man facing him wriggled out, and another took his place. Waythorn glanced up and saw that it was Gus Varick. The men were so close together that it was impossible to ignore the smile of recognition on Varick's handsome overblown face. And after all—why not? They had always been on good terms, and Varick had been divorced before Waythorn's attentions to his wife began. The two exchanged a word on the perennial grievance of the congested trains, and when a seat at their side was miraculously left empty the instinct of self-preservation made Waythorn slip into it after Varick.

The latter drew the stout man's breath of relief. "Lord—I was beginning to feel like a pressed flower." He leaned back, looking unconcernedly at Waythorn. "Sorry to hear that Sellers is knocked out again."

"Sellers?" echoed Waythorn, starting at his partner's name.

Varick looked surprised. "You didn't know he was laid up with the gout?"

"No. I've been away—I only got back last night." Waythorn felt himself reddening in anticipation of the other's smile.

"Ah—yes; to be sure. And Sellers's attack came on two days ago. I'm afraid he's pretty bad. Very awkward for me, as it happens, because he was just putting through a rather important thing for me."

"Ah?" Waythorn wondered vaguely since when Varick had been dealing in "important things." Hitherto he had dabbled only in the shallow pools of speculation, with which Waythorn's office did not usually concern itself.

It occurred to him that Varick might be talking at random, to relieve the strain of their propinquity. That strain was becoming momentarily more apparent to Waythorn, and when, at Cortlandt Street, he caught sight of an acquaintance and had a sudden vision of the picture he and Varick must present to an initiated eye, he jumped up with a muttered excuse.

"I hope you'll find Sellers better," said Varick civilly, and he stammered back: "If I can be of any use to you——" and let the departing crowd sweep him to the platform.

At his office he heard that Sellers was in fact ill with the gout, and would probably not be able to leave the house for some weeks.

"I'm sorry it should have happened so, Mr. Waythorn," the senior clerk said with affable significance. "Mr. Sellers was very much upset at the idea of giving you such a lot of extra work just now."

"Oh, that's no matter," said Waythorn hastily. He secretly welcomed the pressure of additional business, and was glad to think that, when the day's work was over, he would have to call at his partner's on the way home.

He was late for luncheon, and turned in at the nearest restaurant instead of going to his club. The place was full, and the waiter hurried him to the back of the room to capture the only vacant table. In the cloud of cigar-smoke Waythorn did not at once distinguish his neighbors; but presently, looking about him, he saw Varick seated a few feet off. This time, luckily, they were too far apart for conversation, and Varick, who faced another way, had probably not even seen him; but there was an irony in their renewed nearness.

Varick was said to be fond of good living, and as Waythorn sat despatching his hurried luncheon he looked across half enviously at the other's leisurely degustation of his meal. When Waythorn first saw him he had been helping himself with critical deliberation to a bit of Camembert at the ideal point of liquefaction, and now, the cheese removed, he was just pouring his cafe double from its little two-storied earthen pot. He poured slowly, his ruddy profile bent above the task, and one beringed white hand steadying the lid of the coffee-pot; then he stretched his other hand to the decanter of cognac at his elbow, filled a liqueur-glass, took a tentative sip, and poured the brandy into his coffee-cup.

Waythorn watched him in a kind of fascination. What was he thinking of—only of the flavor of the coffee and the liqueur? Had the morning's meeting left no more trace in his thoughts than on his face? Had his wife so completely passed out of his life that even this odd encounter with her present husband, within a week after her remarriage, was no more than an incident in his day? And as Waythorn mused, another idea struck him: had Haskett ever met Varick as Varick and he had just met: The recollection of Haskett perturbed him, and he rose and left the restaurant, taking a circuitous way out to escape the placid irony of Varick's nod.

It was after seven when Waythorn reached home. He thought the footman who opened the door looked at him oddly.

"How is Miss Lily?" he asked in haste.

"Doing very well, sir. A gentleman——"

"Tell Barlow to put off dinner for half an hour," Waythorn cut him off, hurrying upstairs.

He went straight to his room and dressed without seeing his wife. When he reached the drawing-room she was there, fresh and radiant. Lily's day had been good; the doctor was not coming back that evening.

At dinner Waythorn told her of Sellers's illness and of the resulting complications. She listened sympathetically, adjuring him not to let himself be overworked, and asking vague feminine questions about the routine of the

office. Then she gave him the chronicle of Lily's day; quoted the nurse and doctor, and told him who had called to inquire. He had never seen her more serene and unruffled. It struck him, with a curious pang, that she was very happy in being with him, so happy that she found a childish pleasure in rehearsing the trivial incidents of her day.

After dinner they went to the library, and the servant put the coffee and liqueurs on a low table before her and left the room. She looked singularly soft and girlish in her rosy pale dress, against the dark leather of one of his bachelor armchairs. A day earlier the contrast would have charmed him.

He turned away now, choosing a cigar with affected deliberation.

"Did Haskett come?" he asked, with his back to her.

"Oh, yes—he came."

"You didn't see him, of course?"

She hesitated a moment. "I let the nurse see him."

That was all. There was nothing more to ask. He swung round toward her, applying a match to his cigar. Well, the thing was over for a week, at any rate. He would try not to think of it. She looked up at him, a trifle rosier than usual, with a smile in her eyes.

"Ready for your coffee, dear?"

He leaned against the mantelpiece, watching her as she lifted the coffee-pot. The lamplight struck a gleam from her bracelets and tipped her soft hair with brightness. How light and slender she was, and how each gesture flowed into the next! She seemed a creature all compact of harmonies. As the thought of Haskett receded, Waythorn felt himself yielding again to the joy of possessorship. They were his, those white hands with their flitting motions, his the light haze of hair, the lips and eyes . . .

She set down the coffee-pot, and reaching for the decanter of cognac, measured off a liqueur-glass and poured it into his cup.

Waythorn uttered a sudden exclamation.

"What is the matter?" she said, startled.

"Nothing; only—I don't take cognac in my coffee."

"Oh, how stupid of me," she cried.

Their eyes met, and she blushed a sudden agonized red.

III

Ten days later, Mr. Sellers, still housebound, asked Waythorn to call on his way down town. The senior partner, with his swaddled foot propped up by the fire, greeted his associate with an air of embarrassment.

"I'm sorry, my dear fellow; I've got to ask you to do an awkward thing for me."

Waythorn waited, and the other went on, after a pause apparently given to the arrangement of his phrases: "The fact is, when I was knocked out I had just gone into a rather complicated piece of business for—Gus Varick."

"Well?" said Waythorn, with an attempt to put him at his ease.

"Well—it's this way: Varick came to me the day before my attack. He had evidently had an inside tip from somebody, and had made about a hundred thousand. He came to me for advice, and I suggested his going in with Vanderlyn."

"Oh, the deuce!" Waythorn exclaimed. He saw in a flash what had happened. The investment was an alluring one, but required negotiation. He listened quietly while Sellers put the case before him, and, the statement ended, he said: "You think I ought to see Varick?"

"I'm afraid I can't as yet. The doctor is obdurate. And this thing can't wait. I hate to ask you, but no one else in the office knows the ins and outs of it."

Waythorn stood silent. He did not care a farthing for the success of Varick's venture, but the honor of the office was to be considered, and he could hardly refuse to oblige his partner.

"Very well," he said, "I'll do it."

That afternoon, apprised by telephone, Varick called at the office. Waythorn, waiting in his private room, wondered what the others thought of it. The newspapers, at the time of Mrs. Waythorn's marriage, had acquainted their readers with every detail of her previous matrimonial ventures, and Waythorn could fancy the clerks smiling behind Varick's back as he was ushered in.

Varick bore himself admirably. He was easy without being undignified, and Waythorn was conscious of cutting a much less impressive

figure. Varick had no experience of business, and the talk prolonged itself for nearly an hour while Waythorn set forth with scrupulous precision the details of the proposed transaction.

"I'm awfully obliged to you," Varick said as he rose. "The fact is I'm not used to having much money to look after, and I don't want to make an ass of myself——" He smiled, and Waythorn could not help noticing that there was something pleasant about his smile. "It feels uncommonly queer to have enough cash to pay one's bills. I'd have sold my soul for it a few years ago!"

Waythorn winced at the allusion. He had heard it rumored that a lack of funds had been one of the determining causes of the Varick separation, but it did not occur to him that Varick's words were intentional. It seemed more likely that the desire to keep clear of embarrassing topics had fatally drawn him into one. Waythorn did not wish to be outdone in civility.

"We'll do the best we can for you," he said. "I think this is a good thing you're in."

"Oh, I'm sure it's immense. It's awfully good of you——" Varick broke off, embarrassed. "I suppose the thing's settled now—— but if——"

"If anything happens before Sellers is about, I'll see you again," said Waythorn quietly. He was glad, in the end, to appear the more self-possessed of the two.

* * *

The course of Lily's illness ran smooth, and as the days passed Waythorn grew used to the idea of Haskett's weekly visit. The first time the day came round, he stayed out late, and questioned his wife as to the visit on his return. She replied at once that Haskett had merely seen the nurse downstairs, as the doctor did not wish any one in the child's sick-room till after the crisis.

The following week Waythorn was again conscious of the recurrence of the day, but had forgotten it by the time he came home to dinner. The crisis of the disease came a few days later, with a rapid decline of fever, and the little girl was pronounced out of danger. In the rejoicing which ensued the thought of Haskett passed out of Waythorn's mind, and one afternoon, letting himself into the house with a latch-key, he went straight to his library without noticing a shabby hat and umbrella in the hall.

In the library he found a small effaced-looking man with a thinnish gray beard sitting on the edge of a chair. The stranger might have been a piano-tuner, or one of those mysteriously efficient persons who are summoned in emergencies to adjust some detail of the domestic machinery. He blinked at Waythorn through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles and said mildly: "Mr. Waythorn, I presume? I am Lily's father."

Waythorn flushed. "Oh——" he stammered uncomfortably. He broke off, disliking to appear rude. Inwardly he was trying to adjust the actual Haskett to the image of him projected by his wife's reminiscences. Waythorn had been allowed to infer that Alice's first husband was a brute.

"I am sorry to intrude," said Haskett, with his over-the-counter politeness.

"Don't mention it," returned Waythorn, collecting himself. "I suppose the nurse has been told?"

"I presume so. I can wait," said Haskett. He had a resigned way of speaking, as though life had worn down his natural powers of resistance.

Waythorn stood on the threshold, nervously pulling off his gloves.

"I'm sorry you've been detained. I will send for the nurse," he said; and as he opened the door he added with an effort: "I'm glad we can give you a good report of Lily." He winced as the we slipped out, but Haskett seemed not to notice it.

"Thank you, Mr. Waythorn. It's been an anxious time for me."

"Ah, well, that's past. Soon she'll be able to go to you." Waythorn nodded and passed out.

In his own room he flung himself down with a groan. He hated the womanish sensibility which made him suffer so acutely from the grotesque chances of life. He had known when he married that his wife's former husbands were both living, and that amid the multiplied contacts of modern existence there were a thousand chances to one that he would run

against one or the other, yet he found himself as much disturbed by his brief encounter with Haskett as though the law had not obligingly removed all difficulties in the way of their meeting.

Waythorn sprang up and began to pace the room nervously. He had not suffered half as much from his two meetings with Varick. It was Haskett's presence in his own house that made the situation so intolerable. He stood still, hearing steps in the passage.

"This way, please," he heard the nurse say. Haskett was being taken upstairs, then: not a corner of the house but was open to him. Waythorn dropped into another chair, staring vaguely ahead of him. On his dressing-table stood a photograph of Alice, taken when he had first known her. She was Alice Varick then—how fine and exquisite he had thought her! Those were Varick's pearls about her neck. At Waythorn's instance they had been returned before her marriage. Had Haskett ever given her any trinkets—and what had become of them, Waythorn wondered? He realized suddenly that he knew very little of Haskett's past or present situation; but from the man's appearance and manner of speech he could reconstruct with curious precision the surroundings of Alice's first marriage. And it startled him to think that she had, in the background of her life, a phase of existence so different from anything with which he had connected her. Varick, whatever his faults, was a gentleman, in the conventional, traditional sense of the term: the sense which at that moment seemed, oddly enough, to have most meaning to Waythorn. He and Varick had the same social habits, spoke the same language, understood the same allusions. But this other man . . . it was grotesquely uppermost in Waythorn's mind that Haskett had worn a made-up tie attached with an elastic. Why should that ridiculous detail symbolize the whole man? Waythorn was exasperated by his own paltriness, but the fact of the tie expanded, forced itself on him, became as it were the key to Alice's past. He could see her, as Mrs. Haskett, sitting in a "front parlor" furnished in plush, with a pianola, and a copy of "Ben Hur" on the center-table. He could see her going to the theater with Haskett —or perhaps even to a "Church Sociable"—she in a "picture hat" and Haskett in a black frock-coat, a little creased, with the made-up tie on an elastic. On the way home they would stop and look at the illuminated shop-windows, lingering over the photographs of New York actresses. On Sunday afternoons Haskett would take her for a walk, pushing Lily ahead of them in a white enamelled perambulator, and Waythorn had a vision of the people they would stop and talk to. He could fancy how pretty Alice must have looked, in a dress adroitly constructed from the hints of a New York fashion-paper, and how she must have looked down on the other women, chafing at her life, and secretly feeling that she belonged in a bigger place.

For the moment his foremost thought was one of wonder at the way in which she had shed the phase of existence which her marriage with Haskett implied. It was as if her whole aspect, every gesture, every inflection, every allusion, were a studied negation of that period of her life. If she had denied being married to Haskett she could hardly have stood more convicted of duplicity than in this obliteration of the self which had been his wife.

Waythorn started up, checking himself in the analysis of her motives. What right had he to create a fantastic effigy of her and then pass judgment on it? She had spoken vaguely of her first marriage as unhappy, had hinted, with becoming reticence, that Haskett had wrought havoc among her young illusions. . . . It was a pity for Waythorn's peace of mind that Haskett's very inoffensiveness shed a new light on the nature of those illusions. A man would rather think that his wife has been brutalized by her first husband than that the process has been reversed.

IV

"Mr. Waythorn, I don't like that French governess of Lily's."

Haskett, subdued and apologetic, stood before Waythorn in the library, revolving his shabby hat in his hand.

Waythorn, surprised in his armchair over the evening paper, stared back perplexedly at his visitor.

"You'll excuse my asking to see you," Haskett continued. "But this is my last visit, and I thought if I could have a word with you it would be a better way than writing to Mrs. Waythorn's lawyer."

Waythorn rose uneasily. He did not like the French governess either; but that was irrelevant.

"I am not so sure of that," he returned stiffly; "but since you wish it I will give your message to—my wife." He always hesitated over the possessive pronoun in addressing Haskett.

The latter sighed. "I don't know as that will help much. She didn't like it when I spoke to her."

Waythorn turned red. "When did you see her?" he asked.

"Not since the first day I came to see Lily—right after she was taken sick. I remarked to her then that I didn't like the governess."

Waythorn made no answer. He remembered distinctly that, after that first visit, he had asked his wife if she had seen Haskett. She had lied to him then, but she had respected his wishes since; and the incident cast a curious light on her character. He was sure she would not have seen Haskett that first day if she had divined that Waythorn would object, and the fact that she did not divine it was almost as disagreeable to the latter as the discovery that she had lied to him.

"I don't like the woman," Haskett was repeating with mild persistency. "She ain't straight, Mr. Waythorn—she'll teach the child to be underhand. I've noticed a change in Lily—she's too anxious to please—and she don't always tell the truth. She used to be the straightest child, Mr. Waythorn——" He broke off, his voice a little thick. "Not but what I want her to have a stylish education," he ended.

Waythorn was touched. "I'm sorry, Mr. Haskett; but frankly, I don't quite see what I can do."

Haskett hesitated. Then he laid his hat on the table, and advanced to the hearth-rug, on which Waythorn was standing. There was nothing aggressive in his manner, but he had the solemnity of a timid man resolved on a decisive measure.

"There's just one thing you can do, Mr. Waythorn," he said. "You can remind Mrs. Waythorn that, by the decree of the courts, I am entitled to have a voice in Lily's bringing up." He paused, and went on more deprecatingly: "I'm not the kind to talk about enforcing my rights, Mr. Waythorn. I don't know as I think a man is entitled to rights he hasn't known how to hold on to; but this business of the child is different. I've never let go there—and I never mean to."

* * *

The scene left Waythorn deeply shaken. Shamefacedly, in indirect ways, he had been finding out about Haskett; and all that he had learned was favorable. The little man, in order to be near his daughter, had sold out his share in a profitable business in Utica, and accepted a modest clerkship in a New York manufacturing house. He boarded in a shabby street and had few acquaintances. His passion for Lily filled his life. Waythorn felt that this exploration of Haskett was like groping about with a dark-lantern in his wife's past; but he saw now that there were recesses his lantern had not explored. He had never enquired into the exact circumstances of his wife's first matrimonial rupture. On the surface all had been fair. It was she who had obtained the divorce, and the court had given her the child. But Waythorn knew how many ambiguities such a verdict might cover. The mere fact that Haskett retained a right over his daughter implied an unsuspected compromise. Waythorn was an idealist. He always refused to recognize unpleasant contingencies till he found himself confronted with them, and then he saw them followed by a spectral train of consequences. His next days were thus haunted, and he determined to try to lay the ghosts by conjuring them up in his wife's presence.

When he repeated Haskett's request a flame of anger passed over her face; but she subdued it instantly and spoke with a slight quiver of outraged motherhood.

"It is very ungentlemanly of him," she said.

The word grated on Waythorn. "That is neither here nor there. It's a bare question of rights."

She murmured: "It's not as if he could ever be a help to Lily——"

Waythorn flushed. This was even less to his taste. "The question is," he repeated, "what authority has he over her?"

She looked downward, twisting herself a little in her seat. "I am willing to see him—I thought you objected," she faltered.

In a flash he understood that she knew the extent of Haskett's claims. Perhaps it was not the first time she had resisted them.

"My objecting has nothing to do with it," he said coldly; "if Haskett has a right to be consulted you must consult him."

She burst into tears, and he saw that she expected him to regard her as a victim.

Haskett did not abuse his rights. Waythorn had felt miserably sure that he would not. But the governess was dismissed, and from time to time the little man demanded an interview with Alice. After the first outburst she accepted the situation with her usual adaptability. Haskett had once reminded Waythorn of the piano-tuner, and Mrs. Waythorn, after a month or two, appeared to class him with that domestic familiar. Waythorn could not but respect the father's tenacity. At first he had tried to cultivate the suspicion that Haskett might be "up to" something, that he had an object in securing a foothold in the house. But in his heart Waythorn was sure of Haskett's single-mindedness; he even guessed in the latter a mild contempt for such advantages as his relation with the Waythorns might offer. Haskett's sincerity of purpose made him invulnerable, and his successor had to accept him as a lien on the property.

* * *

Mr. Sellers was sent to Europe to recover from his gout, and Varick's affairs hung on Waythorn's hands. The negotiations were prolonged and complicated; they necessitated frequent conferences between the two men, and the interests of the firm forbade Waythorn's suggesting that his client should transfer his business to another office.

Varick appeared well in the transaction. In moments of relaxation his coarse streak appeared, and Waythorn dreaded his geniality; but in the office he was concise and clear-headed, with a flattering deference to Waythorn's judgment. Their business relations being so affably established, it would have been absurd for the two men to ignore each other in society. The first time they met in a drawing-room, Varick took up their intercourse in the same easy key, and his hostess's grateful glance obliged Waythorn to respond to it. After that they ran across each other frequently, and one evening at a ball Waythorn, wandering through the remoter rooms, came upon Varick seated beside his wife. She colored a little, and faltered in what she was saying; but Varick nodded to Waythorn without rising, and the latter strolled on.

In the carriage, on the way home, he broke out nervously: "I didn't know you spoke to Varick."

Her voice trembled a little. "It's the first time—he happened to be standing near me; I didn't know what to do. It's so awkward, meeting everywhere—and he said you had been very kind about some business."

"That's different," said Waythorn.

She paused a moment. "I'll do just as you wish," she returned pliantly. "I thought it would be less awkward to speak to him when we meet."

Her pliancy was beginning to sicken him. Had she really no will of her own—no theory about her relation to these men? She had accepted Haskett—did she mean to accept Varick? It was "less awkward," as she had said, and her instinct was to evade difficulties or to circumvent them. With sudden vividness Waythorn saw how the instinct had developed. She was "as easy as an old shoe"—a shoe that too many feet had worn. Her elasticity was the result of tension in too many different directions. Alice Haskett—Alice Varick—Alice Waythorn—she had been each in turn, and had left hanging to each name a little of her privacy, a little of her personality, a little of the inmost self where the unknown god abides.

"Yes—it's better to speak to Varick," said Waythorn wearily.

V

The winter wore on, and society took advantage of the Waythorns' acceptance of

Varick. Harassed hostesses were grateful to them for bridging over a social difficulty, and Mrs. Waythorn was held up as a miracle of good taste. Some experimental spirits could not resist the diversion of throwing Varick and his former wife together, and there were those who thought he found a zest in the propinquity. But Mrs. Waythorn's conduct remained irreproachable. She neither avoided Varick nor sought him out. Even Waythorn could not but admit that she had discovered the solution of the newest social problem.

He had married her without giving much thought to that problem. He had fancied that a woman can shed her past like a man. But now he saw that Alice was bound to hers both by the circumstances which forced her into continued relation with it, and by the traces it had left on her nature. With grim irony Waythorn compared himself to a member of a syndicate. He held so many shares in his wife's personality and his predecessors were his partners in the business. If there had been any element of passion in the transaction he would have felt less deteriorated by it. The fact that Alice took her change of husbands like a change of weather reduced the situation to mediocrity. He could have forgiven her for blunders, for excesses; for resisting Haskett, for yielding to Varick; for anything but her acquiescence and her tact. She reminded him of a juggler tossing knives; but the knives were blunt and she knew they would never cut her.

And then, gradually, habit formed a protecting surface for his sensibilities. If he paid for each day's comfort with the small change of his illusions, he grew daily to value the comfort more and set less store upon the coin. He had drifted into a dulling propinquity with Haskett and Varick and he took refuge in the cheap revenge of satirizing the situation. He even began to reckon up the advantages which accrued from it, to ask himself if it were not better to own a third of a wife who knew how to make a man happy than a whole one who had lacked opportunity to acquire the art. For it was an art, and made up, like all others, of concessions, eliminations and embellishments; of lights judiciously thrown and shadows skilfully softened. His wife knew exactly how to manage the lights, and he knew exactly to what training she owed her skill. He even tried to trace the source of his obligations, to discriminate between the influences which had combined to produce his domestic happiness: he perceived that Haskett's commonness had made Alice worship good breeding, while Varick's liberal construction of the marriage bond had taught her to value the conjugal virtues; so that he was directly indebted to his predecessors for the devotion which made his life easy if not inspiring.

From this phase he passed into that of complete acceptance. He ceased to satirize himself because time had dulled the irony of the situation and the joke lost its humor with its sting. Even the sight of Haskett's hat on the hall table had ceased to touch the springs of epigram. The hat was often seen there now, for it had been decided that it was better for Lily's father to visit her than for the little girl to go to his boarding-house. Waythorn, having acquiesced in this arrangement, had been surprised to find how little difference it made. Haskett was never obtrusive, and the few visitors who met him on the stairs were unaware of his identity. Waythorn did not know how often he saw Alice, but with himself Haskett was seldom in contact.

One afternoon, however, he learned on entering that Lily's father was waiting to see him. In the library he found Haskett occupying a chair in his usual provisional way. Waythorn always felt grateful to him for not leaning back.

"I hope you'll excuse me, Mr. Waythorn," he said rising. "I wanted to see Mrs. Waythorn about Lily, and your man asked me to wait here till she came in."

"Of course," said Waythorn, remembering that a sudden leak had that morning given over the drawing-room to the plumbers.

He opened his cigar-case and held it out to his visitor, and Haskett's acceptance seemed to mark a fresh stage in their intercourse. The spring evening was chilly, and Waythorn invited his guest to draw up his chair to the fire. He meant to find an excuse to leave Haskett in a moment; but he was tired and cold, and after all the little man no longer jarred him.

The two were enclosed in the intimacy of their blended cigar-smoke when the door opened and Varick walked into the room. Waythorn rose abruptly. It was the first time that Varick had come to the house, and the surprise of seeing him, combined with the singular inopportuneness of his arrival, gave a new edge to Waythorn's blunted sensibilities. He stared at his visitor without speaking.

Varick seemed too preoccupied to notice his host's embarrassment.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed in his most expansive tone, "I must apologize for tumbling in on you in this way, but I was too late to catch you down town, and so I thought——"

He stopped short, catching sight of Haskett, and his sanguine color deepened to a flush which spread vividly under his scant blond hair. But in a moment he recovered himself and nodded slightly. Haskett returned the bow in silence, and Waythorn was still groping for speech when the footman came in carrying a tea-table.

The intrusion offered a welcome vent to Waythorn's nerves. "What the deuce are you bringing this here for?" he said sharply.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but the plumbers are still in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Waythorn said she would have tea in the library." The footman's perfectly respectful tone implied a reflection on Waythorn's reasonableness.

"Oh, very well," said the latter resignedly, and the footman proceeded to open the folding tea-table and set out its complicated appointments. While this interminable process continued the three men stood motionless, watching it with a fascinated stare, till Waythorn, to break the silence, said to Varick: "Won't you have a cigar?"

He held out the case he had just tendered to Haskett, and Varick helped himself with a smile. Waythorn looked about for a match, and finding none, proffered a light from his own cigar. Haskett, in the background, held his ground mildly, examining his cigar-tip now and then, and stepping forward at the right moment to knock its ashes into the fire.

The footman at last withdrew, and Varick immediately began: "If I could just say half a word to you about this business——"

"Certainly," stammered Waythorn; "in the dining-room——"

But as he placed his hand on the door it opened from without, and his wife appeared on the threshold.

She came in fresh and smiling, in her street dress and hat, shedding a fragrance from the boa which she loosened in advancing.

"Shall we have tea in here, dear?" she began; and then she caught sight of Varick. Her smile deepened, veiling a slight tremor of surprise.

"Why, how do you do?" she said with a distinct note of pleasure.

As she shook hands with Varick she saw Haskett standing behind him. Her smile faded for a moment, but she recalled it quickly, with a scarcely perceptible side-glance at Waythorn.

"How do you do, Mr. Haskett?" she said, and shook hands with him a shade less cordially.

The three men stood awkwardly before her, till Varick always the most self-possessed, dashed into an explanatory phrase.

"We—I had to see Waythorn a moment on business," he stammered, brick-red from chin to nape.

Haskett stepped forward with his air of mild obstinacy. "I am sorry to intrude; but you appointed five o'clock——" he directed his resigned glance to the time-piece on the mantel.

She swept aside their embarrassment with a charming gesture of hospitality.

"I'm so sorry—I'm always late; but the afternoon was so lovely." She stood drawing off her gloves, propitiatory and graceful, diffusing about her a sense of ease and familiarity in which the situation lost its grotesqueness. "But before talking business," she added brightly, "I'm sure every one wants a cup of tea."

She dropped into her low chair by the tea-table, and the two visitors, as if drawn by her smile, advanced to receive the cups she held out.

She glanced about for Waythorn, and he took the third cup with a laugh.

1904

# 1874 ~ *Ellen Glasgow* ~ —

A NATIVE of Virginia, Miss Glasgow is regarded by many critics as one of the most authentic literary voices of the South. She was born in Richmond, and has lived in that city all her life. Her home is a spacious, old-fashioned Southern mansion with a well-kept garden in which she indulges her passion for flowers. She acquired the rudiments of education at home, learning, we are told, the alphabet from one of Scott's novels. The educational process was continued under the direction of tutors and by wide and varied independent reading. Her favorite poet was Browning. At the University of Virginia she made a distinguished record and was elected to membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Society. It is apparent that she had early chosen literature as her profession, for her first book, *The Descendant*, was published in 1897. Since that time she has brought out in the neighborhood of twenty volumes, including a book of verse, *The Freeman and Other Poems* (1902), and her reputation has steadily increased.

Miss Glasgow has written no treatise on the art of fiction. However, in the prefaces to her novels in the Old Dominion Edition and in a recent essay ("One Way to Write Novels," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dec. 8, 1934), she has set down some of the principles which have guided her as a novelist. One is impressed by the thoughtful, though not self-conscious, seriousness with which she regards her art.

With the mediocre, made-to-order novel she has little patience; a novel is more than a mere invention. To her the really great or significant novel is a creation, and springs naturally from the inexhaustible spiritual springs of the writer's inner life. It would get itself written as the result of compulsion from within rather than of the demands from without. With her a novel usually takes its beginning with the unaccountable emergence of some character from the recesses of her subconscious mind. This character gathers about itself other characters of greater or lesser diversity until they together constitute the artistic world in which she lives and moves and has her being. The next step is to provide the setting, the background and scenes, which are to serve as the artistic environment. As a stylist she is meticulously careful in her search for the right word, the apt phrase, and the appropriate rhythm, and finds the tedium of composition as adventurous as the imagined universe which she seeks to commit to paper. She is inclined to be an idealist, and although her work is usually characterized as realistic, it must be remembered that her realism reflects her personal idealism, especially in its freedom from cheap sensationalism, which she scrupulously avoids. Even her localism and her social

criticism are softened by the universal implications which her treatment conveys. A novel, she says in the preface to *The Miller of Old Church*, must be rooted in the age-old instincts which are common to all mankind. It is a fusion of the past and the present, the joint product of the scholar, who seeks to "defend," and the artist, who seeks to "preserve," in a relationship which she described as the "Elder and Younger Brother."

From what has been said it is apparent that the chief concern of a novelist who approaches the art from this point of view is to maintain a youthful freshness of mind and heart, and thereby guard against paralyzing ennui and disillusionment. Miss Glasgow achieves this by what she calls the "method of constant renewal," by virtue of which she never allows herself to exhaust her inner resources, provides for the replenishment of these resources as they are depleted under the strain of artistic creation, and maintains a deep, inner reserve, not to be touched even for artistic purposes, but sacred alone as the very core of personality. In this way she has proceeded, and advises aspiring writers to proceed.

Although Miss Glasgow's fame rests primarily on her work as a novelist, she has published a volume of short stories under the title of *The Shadowy Third* (1923). The stories deal with the psychic; an invisible presence seems to brood over them, at times almost usurping the place of the characters. They are told with a rare economy of detail without impairment of vividness and effect.

With the exception of *The Wheel of Life* (1906), which portrays the New York social set in a manner reminiscent of Mrs. Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, her novels deal with the changing life of Virginia from the Civil War to the present time. *The Battle-Ground* (1902), *The Romance of a Plain Man* (1909), and *The Voice of the People* (1900), read in this order, portray the old regime, reconstruction, and the new regime, respectively. *The Builders* (1919) and *One Man in His Time* (1922) belong to the period of the World War and the years immediately following. Such novels as *Barren Ground* (1919), *The Romantic Comedians* (1926), and *They Stooped to Folly* (1929) are studies of changing phases of life during the later post-war period. *Vein of Iron* (1935) emphasizes her religious views.

Although geographically Miss Glasgow is of the South, spiritually she has dwelt apart from the aristocratic tradition associated with the South. She wrote *The Descendant* (1897) in secret for fear that her attitude might prove offensive to fellow Southerners. This attitude is that of the realist, in consequence of which she endeavors to portray people as they are; but not of the realist exclusively, for as Stuart Pratt Sherman points out, she uses the "fighting edge of romance." In a general way the two may amount to the same thing in the long run, with the exception however that the balance inclines toward the realist. When *Barren Ground* was published it was hailed as a sign that realism had crossed the Potomac southward; as a matter of fact realism crossed the Potomac northward before Sinclair

Lewis swept the country with *Main Street.* Miss Glasgow is also a regionalist, makes use of local color in setting, character, and language; yet she can barely be classed with the local colorists. She portrays what is universal through the medium of the region. Such themes as unequal marriages, changing ethical ideals, struggle against social prejudices, triumph over obstacles, the manifestation of courage as well as stupidity have wider than a regional interest.

Miss Glasgow tells an interesting human story against the background of some besetting problem, as for instance the dual standard of morals for the sexes. Yet she cannot be regarded as a problem novelist. Instead, through the union of story and problem she has achieved an epic quality in her writing reminiscent of some of the older novelists, and seldom found in contemporary literature. Her style is clear and luminous, her sense of humor never lags, her idealism is pitched on a high plane, her sanity and balance prevent extremes and excesses. In consideration of this catalogue of excellences, and what is more, of her steadily growing fame, one must conclude that Miss Glasgow is one of the few really authentic living writers.

Miss Glasgow's novels are *The Descendant* (1897); *The Voice of the People* (1900); *The Battle-Ground* (1902); *The Deliverance* (1904); *The Ancient Law* (1908); *The Romance of a Plain Man* (1909); *The Miller of Old Church* (1911); *Virginia* (1913); *Life and Gabriella* (1916); *The Builders* (1919); *One Man and His Time* (1922); *Barren Ground* (1925); *The Romantic Comedians* (1926); *Twisted Tendril* (1928); *They Stooped to Folly* (1929); *The Sheltered Life* (1932); *Vein of Iron* (1935). For critical and biographical help consult Miss Glasgow's "One Way to Write Novels," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Dec. 8, 1934; "Elder and Younger Brother," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Jan. 23, 1937; and her introductions in *Collected Works* (1929); D. L. Mann, *Ellen Glasgow* (1927); S. P. Sherman, *Critical Woodcuts* (1926); W. R. Parker, "Ellen Glasgow: a Gentle Rebel," *English Journal*, March, 1931; E. Mims, "The Social Philosophy of Ellen Glasgow," *Social Forces*, March, 1926; J. B. Cabell, *Some of Us* (1930); F. T. Cooper, *Some American Story Tellers* (1911); D. S. Freeman, "Ellen Glasgow: Idealist," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Aug. 31, 1935; H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); J. Kilmer, *Literature in the Making* (1917); S. Haardt, "Ellen Glasgow and the South," *Bookman*, Apr., 1929; C. Rogers, "Realism from the Romantic South," *Bookman*, May, 1925; S. Young, "Prefaces to Distinction," *New Republic*, June 7, 1933.

## JORDAN'S END

Published in *The Shadowy Third.* Miss Glasgow has written comparatively few short stories, but these few are fairly representative of her work as a whole. "Jordan's End" is laid in a Southern setting and told against a characteristic background. There is a well-nigh perfect merging of scene and characters.

AT THE fork of the road there was the dead tree where buzzards were roosting, and through its boughs I saw the last flare of the sunset. On either side the November woods were flung in broken masses against the sky. When I stopped they appeared to move closer and surround me with vague, glimmering shapes. It seemed to me that I had been driving for hours; yet the ancient Negro who brought the message had told me to follow the Old Stage Road till I came to Buzzard's Tree at the fork. "F'om dar on hit's moughty nigh ter Marse Jur'dn's place," the old man

had assured me, adding tremulously, "en young Miss she sez you mus' come jes' ez quick ez you kin." I was young then (that was more than thirty years ago), and I was just beginning the practice of medicine in one of the more remote counties of Virginia.

My mare stopped, and leaning out, I gazed down each winding road, where it branched off, under half bared boughs, into the autumnal haze of the distance. In a little while the red would fade from the sky, and the chill night would find me still hesitating between those dubious ways which seemed to stretch into an immense solitude. While I waited uncertainly there was a stir in the boughs overhead, and a buzzard's feather floated down and settled slowly on the robe over my knees. In the effort to drive off depression, I laughed aloud and addressed my mare in a jocular tone:

"We'll choose the most God-forsaken of the two, and see where it leads us."

To my surprise the words brought an answer from the trees at my back. "If you're goin' to Isham's store, keep on the Old Stage Road," piped a voice from the underbrush.

Turning quickly, I saw the dwarfed figure of a very old man, with a hunched back, who was dragging a load of pine knots out of the woods. Though he was so stooped that his head reached scarcely higher than my wheel, he appeared to possess unusual vigor for one of his age and infirmities. He was dressed in a rough overcoat of some wood brown shade, beneath which I could see his overalls of blue jeans. Under a thatch of grizzled hair his shrewd little eyes twinkled cunningly, and his bristly chin jutted so far forward that it barely escaped the descending curve of his nose. I remember thinking that he could not be far from a hundred; his skin was so wrinkled and weather-beaten that, at a distance, I had mistaken him for a Negro.

I bowed politely. "Thank you, but I am going to Jordan's End," I replied.

He cackled softly. "Then you take the bad road. Thar's Jur'dn's turnout." He pointed to the sunken trail, deep in mud, on the right. "An' if you ain't objectin' to a little comp'ny, I'd be obleeged if you'd give me a lift. I'm bound thar on my own o'count, an' it's a long ways to tote these here lightwood knots."

While I drew back my robe and made room for him, I watched him heave the load of resinous pine into the buggy, and then scramble with agility to his place at my side.

"My name is Peterkin," he remarked by way of introduction. "They call me Father Peterkin along o' the gran'child'en." He was a garrulous soul, I suspected, and would not be averse to imparting the information I wanted.

"There's not much travel this way," I began, as we turned out of the cleared space into the deep tunnel of the trees. Immediately the twilight enveloped us, though now and then the dusky glow in the sky was still visible. The air was sharp with the tang of autumn; with the effluvium of rotting leaves, the drift of wood smoke, the ripe flavor of crushed apples.

"Thar's nary a stranger, thoughten he was a doctor, been to Jur'dn's End as fur back as I kin recollect. Ain't you the new doctor?"

"Yes, I am the doctor." I glanced down at the gnomelike shape in the wood brown overcoat. "Is it much farther?"

"Naw, suh, we're all but thar jest as soon as we come out of Whitten woods."

"If the road is so little travelled, how do you happen to be going there?"

Without turning his head, the old man wagged his crescent shaped profile. "Oh, I live on the place. My son Tony works a slice of the farm on shares, and I manage to lend a hand at the harvest or corn shuckin', and, now-and-agen, with the cider. The old gentleman used to run the place that away afore he went deranged, an' now that the young one is laid up, thar ain't nobody to look arter the farm but Miss Judith. Them old ladies don't count. Thar's three of 'em, but they're all addle-brained an' look as if the buzzards had picked 'em. I reckon that comes from bein' shut up with crazy folks in that thar old tumbledown house. The roof ain't been patched fur so long that the shingles have most rotted away, an' thar's times, Tony says, when you kin skearcely hear yo' years fur the rumpus the wrens an' rats are makin' overhead."

"What is the trouble with them—the Jordans, I mean?"

"Jest run to seed, suh, I reckon."

"Is there no man of the family left?"

For a minute Father Peterkin made no reply. Then he shifted the bundle of pine knots, and responded warily. "Young Alan, he's still livin' on the old place, but I hear he's been took now, an' is goin' the way of all the rest of 'em. 'Tis a hard trial for Miss Judith, po' young thing, an' with a boy nine year old that's the very spit an' image of his pa. Wall, wall, I kin recollect away back yonder when old Mr. Timothy Jur'dn was the proudest man anywhar aroun' in these parts; but arter the War things sorter begun to go down hill with him, and he was obleeged to draw in his horns."

"Is he still living?"

The old man shook his head. "Mebbe he is, an' mebbe he ain't. Nobody knows but the Jur'dn's, an' they ain't tellin' fur the axin'."

"I suppose it was this Miss Judith who sent for me?"

"'Twould most likely be she, suh. She was one of the Yardlys that lived over yonder at Yardly's Field; an' when young Mr. Alan begun to take notice of her, 'twas the first time sence way back that one of the Jur'dn's had gone courtin' outside the family. That's the reason the blood went bad like it did, I reckon. Thar's a sayin' down aroun' here that Jur'dn an' Jur'dn won't mix." The name was invariably called Jurdin by all classes; but I had already discovered that names are rarely pronounced as they are spelled in Virginia.

"Have they been married long?"

"Ten year or so, suh. I remember as well as if 'twas yestiddy the day young Alan brought her home as a bride, an' thar warn't a soul besides the three daft old ladies to welcome her. They drove over in my son Tony's old buggy, though 'twas spick an' span then. I was goin' to the house on an arrant, an' I was standin' right down thar at the ice pond when they come by. She hadn't been much in these parts, an' none of us had ever seed her afore. When she looked up at young Alan her face was pink all over and her eyes war shinin' bright as the moon. Then the front do' opened an' them old ladies, as black as crows, flocked out on the po'ch. Thar never was anybody as peart-lookin' as Miss Judith was when she come here; but soon arterwards she begun to peak an' pine, though she never lost her sperits an' went mopin' roun' like all the other women folks at Jur'dn's End. They married sudden, an' folks do say she didn't know nothin' about the family, an' young Alan didn't know much mo' than she did. The old ladies had kep' the secret away from him, sorter believin' that what you don't know cyarn' hurt you. Anyways they never let it leak out tell arter his chile was born. Thar ain't never been but that one, an' old Aunt Jerusly declars he was born with a caul over his face, so mebbe things will be all right fur him in the long run."

"But who are the old ladies? Are their husbands living?"

When Father Peterkin answered the question he had dropped his voice to a hoarse murmur. "Deranged. All gone deranged," he replied.

I shivered, for a chill depression seemed to emanate from the November woods. As we drove on, I remembered grim tales of enchanted forests filled with evil faces and whispering voices. The scents of wood earth and rotting leaves invaded my brain like a magic spell. On either side the forest was as still as death. Not a leaf quivered, not a bird moved, not a small wild creature stirred in the underbrush. Only the glossy leaves and the scarlet berries of the holly appeared alive amid the bare interlacing branches of the trees. I began to long for an autumn clearing and the red light of the afterglow.

"Are they living or dead?" I asked presently.

"I've hearn strange tattle," answered the old man nervously, "but nobody kin tell. Folks do say as young Alan's pa is shut up in a padded place, and that his gran'pa died thar arter thirty years. His uncles went crazy too, an' the daftness is beginnin' to crop out in the women. Up tell now it has been mostly the men. One time I remember old Mr. Peter Jur'dn tryin' to burn down the place in the dead of the night. Thar's the end of the wood, suh. If you'll jest let me down here, I'll be gittin' along home across the old-field, an' thanky too."

At last the woods ended abruptly on the edge of an abandoned field which was thickly sown with scrub pine and broomsedge. The glow in the sky had faded now to a thin yellow-green, and a melancholy twilight per-

vaded the landscape. In this twilight I looked over the few sheep huddled together on the ragged lawn, and saw the old brick house crumbling beneath its rank growth of ivy. As I drew nearer I had the feeling that the surrounding desolation brooded there like some sinister influence.

Forlorn as it appeared at this first approach, I surmised that Jordan's End must have possessed once charm as well as distinction. The proportions of the Georgian front were impressive, and there was beauty of design in the quaint doorway, and in the steps of rounded stone which were brocaded now with a pattern of emerald moss. But the whole place was badly in need of repair. Looking up, as I stopped, I saw that the eaves were falling away, that crumbled shutters were sagging from loosened hinges, that odd scraps of hemp sacking or oil cloth were stuffed into windows where panes were missing. When I stepped on the floor of the porch, I felt the rotting boards give way under my feet.

After thundering vainly on the door, I descended the steps, and followed the beaten path that led round the west wing of the house. When I had passed an old boxwood tree at the corner, I saw a woman and a boy of nine years or so come out of a shed, which I took to be the smokehouse, and begin to gather chips from the woodpile. The woman carried a basket made of splits on her arm, and while she stooped to fill this, she talked to the child in a soft musical voice. Then, at a sound that I made, she put the basket aside, and rising to her feet, faced me in the pallid light from the sky. Her head was thrown back, and over her dress of some dark calico, a tattered gray shawl clung to her figure. That was thirty years ago; I am not young any longer; I have been in many countries since then, and looked on many women; but her face, with that wan light on it, is the last one I shall forget in my life. Beauty! Why, that woman will be beautiful when she is a skeleton, was the thought that flashed into my mind.

She was very tall, and so thin that her flesh seemed faintly luminous, as if an inward light pierced the transparent substance. It was the beauty, not of earth, but of triumphant spirit. Perfection, I suppose, is the rarest thing we achieve in this world of incessant compromise with inferior forms; yet the woman who stood there in that ruined place appeared to me to have stepped straight out of legend or allegory. The contour of her face was Italian in its pure oval; her hair swept in wings of dusk above her clear forehead; and, from the faintly shadowed hollows beneath her brows, the eyes that looked at me were purple-black, like dark pansies.

"I had given you up," she began in a low voice, as if she were afraid of being overheard. "You are the doctor?"

"Yes, I am the doctor. I took the wrong road and lost my way. Are you Mrs. Jordan?"

She bowed her head. "Mrs. Alan Jordan. There are three Mrs. Jordans besides myself. My husband's grandmother and the wives of his two uncles."

"And it is your husband who is ill?"

"My husband, yes. I wrote a few days ago to Doctor Carstairs." (Thirty years ago Carstairs, of Baltimore, was the leading alienist in the country.) "He is coming tomorrow morning; but last night my husband was so restless that I sent for you today." Her rich voice, vibrating with suppressed feeling, made me think of stained glass windows and low organ music.

"Before we go in," I asked, "will you tell me as much as you can?"

Instead of replying to my request, she turned and laid her hand on the boy's shoulder. "Take the chips to Aunt Agatha, Benjamin," she said, "and tell her that the doctor has come."

While the child picked up the basket and ran up the sunken steps to the door, she watched him with breathless anxiety. Not until he had disappeared into the hall did she lift her eyes to my face again. Then, without answering my question, she murmured, with a sigh which was like the voice of that autumn evening, "We were once happy here." She was trying, I realized, to steel her heart against the despair that threatened it.

My gaze swept the obscure horizon, and returned to the mouldering woodpile where we were standing. The yellow-green had faded from the sky, and the only light came from the house where a few scattered lamps were

burning. Through the open door I could see the hall, as bare as if the house were empty, and the spiral staircase which crawled to the upper story. A fine old place once, but repulsive now in its abject decay, like some young blood of former days who has grown senile.

"Have you managed to wring a living out of the land?" I asked, because I could think of no words that were less compassionate.

"At first a poor one," she answered slowly. "We worked hard, harder than any Negro in the fields, to keep things together, but we were happy. Then three years ago this illness came, and after that everything went against us. In the beginning it was simply brooding, a kind of melancholy, and we tried to ward it off by pretending that it was not real, that we imagined it. Only of late, when it became so much worse, have we admitted the truth, have we faced the reality—"

This passionate murmur, which had almost the effect of a chant rising out of the loneliness, was addressed, not to me, but to some abstract and implacable power. While she uttered it her composure was like the tranquility of the dead. She did not lift her hand to hold her shawl, which was slipping unnoticed from her shoulders, and her eyes, so like dark flowers in their softness, did not leave my face.

"If you will tell me all, perhaps I may be able to help you," I said.

"But you know our story," she responded. "You must have heard it."

"Then it is true? Heredity, intermarriage, insanity?"

She did not wince at the bluntness of my speech. "My husband's grandfather is in an asylum, still living after almost thirty years. His father—my husband's, I mean—died there a few years ago. Two of his uncles are there. When it began I don't know, or how far back it reaches. We have never talked of it. We have tried always to forget it—Even now I cannot put the thing into words—My husband's mother died of a broken heart, but the grandmother and the two others are still living. You will see them when you go into the house. They are old women now, and they feel nothing."

"And there have been other cases?"

"I do not know. Are not four enough?"

"Do you know if it has assumed always the same form?" I was trying to be as brief as I could.

She flinched, and I saw that her unnatural calm was shaken at last. "The same, I believe. In the beginning there is melancholy, moping, Grandmother calls it, and then——" She flung out her arms with a despairing gesture, and I was reminded again of some tragic figure of legend.

"I know, I know," I was young, and in spite of my pride, my voice trembled. "Has there been in any case partial recovery, recurring at intervals?"

"In his grandfather's case, yes. In the others none. With them it has been hopeless from the beginning."

"And Carstairs is coming?"

"In the morning. I should have waited, but last night——" Her voice broke, and she drew the tattered shawl about her with a shiver. "Last night something happened. Something happened," she repeated, and could not go on. Then, collecting her strength with an effort which made her tremble like a blade of grass in the wind, she continued more quietly, "Today he has been better. For the first time he has slept, and I have been able to leave him. Two of the hands from the fields are in the room." Her tone changed suddenly, and a note of energy passed into it. Some obscure resolution brought a tinge of color to her pale cheek. "I must know," she added, "if this is as hopeless as all the others."

I took a step toward the house. "Carstairs's opinion is worth as much as that of any man living," I answered.

"But will he tell me the truth?"

I shook my head. "He will tell you what he thinks. No man's judgment is infallible."

Turning away from me, she moved with an energetic step to the house. As I followed her into the hall the threshold creaked under my tread, and I was visited by an apprehension, or, if you prefer, by a superstitious dread of the floor above. Oh, I got over that kind of thing before I was many years older; though in the end I gave up medicine, you know, and turned to literature as a safer outlet for a suppressed imagination.

But the dread was there at that moment, and it was not lessened by the glimpse I caught, at the foot of the spiral staircase, of a scantily furnished room, where three lean black-robed figures, as impassive as the Fates, were grouped in front of a wood fire. They were doing something with their hands. Knitting, crocheting, or plaiting straw?

At the head of the stairs the woman stopped and looked back at me. The light from the kerosene lamp on the wall fell over her, and I was struck afresh not only by the alien splendor of her beauty, but even more by the look of consecration, of impassioned fidelity that illumined her face.

"He is very strong," she said in a whisper. "Until this trouble came on him he had never had a day's illness in his life. We hoped that hard work, not having time to brood, might save us; but it has only brought the thing we feared sooner."

There was a question in her eyes, and I responded in the same subdued tone. "His health, you say, is good?" What else was there for me to ask when I understood everything?

A shudder ran through her frame. "We used to think that a blessing, but now——" She broke off and then added in a lifeless voice, "We keep two field hands in the room day and night, lest one should forget to watch the fire, or fall asleep."

A sound came from a room at the end of the hall, and, without finishing her sentence, she moved swiftly toward the closed door. The apprehension, the dread, or whatever you choose to call it, was so strong upon me, that I was seized by an impulse to turn and retreat down the spiral staircase. Yes, I know why some men turn cowards in battle.

"I have come back, Alan," she said in a voice that wrung my heartstrings.

The room was dimly lighted; and for a minute after I entered, I could see nothing clearly except the ruddy glow of the wood fire in front of which two Negroes were seated on low wooden stools. They had kindly faces, these men; there was a primitive humanity in their features, which might have been modelled out of the dark earth of the fields.

Looking round the next minute, I saw that a young man was sitting away from the fire, huddled over in a cretonne-covered chair with a high back and deep wings. At our entrance the Negroes glanced up with surprise; but the man in the winged chair neither lifted his head nor turned his eyes in our direction. He sat there, lost within the impenetrable wilderness of the insane, as remote from us and from the sound of our voices as if he were the inhabitant of an invisible world. His head was sunk forward; his eyes were staring fixedly at some image we could not see; his fingers, moving restlessly, were plaiting and unplaiting the fringe of a plaid shawl. Distraught as he was, he still possessed the dignity of mere physical perfection. At his full height he must have measured not under six feet three; his hair was the color of ripe wheat, and his eyes, in spite of their fixed gaze, were as blue as the sky after rain. And this was only the beginning, I realized. With that constitution, that physical frame, he might live to be ninety.

"Alan!" breathed his wife again in her pleading murmur.

If he heard her voice, he gave no sign of it. Only when she crossed the room and bent over his chair, he put out his hand, with a gesture of irritation, and pushed her away, as if she were a veil of smoke which came between him and the object at which he was looking. Then his hand fell back to its old place, and he resumed his mechanical plaiting of the fringe.

The woman lifted her eyes to mine. "His father did that for twenty years," she said in a whisper that was scarcely more than a sigh of anguish.

When I had made my brief examination, we left the room as we had come, and descended the stairs together. The three old women were still sitting in front of the wood fire. I do not think they had moved since we went upstairs; but, as we reached the hall below, one of them, the youngest, I imagine, rose from her chair, and came out to join us. She was crocheting something soft and small, an infant's sacque, I perceived as she approached, of pink wool. The ball had rolled from her lap as she stood up, and it trailed after her now, like a woollen rose, on the bare floor. When the skein pulled at her, she turned back and

stooped to pick up the ball, which she rewound with caressing fingers. Good God, an infant's sacque in that house!

"Is it the same thing?" she asked.

"Hush!" responded the younger woman kindly. Turning to me she added, "We cannot talk here," and opening the door, passed out on the porch. Not until we had reached the lawn, and walked in silence to where my buggy stood beneath an old locust tree, did she speak again.

Then she said only, "You know now?"

"Yes, I know," I replied, averting my eyes from her face while I gave my directions as briefly as I could. "I will leave an opiate," I said. "Tomorrow, if Carstairs should not come, send for me again. If he does come," I added, "I will talk to him and see you afterward."

"Thank you," she answered gently; and taking the bottle from my hand, she turned away and walked quickly back to the house.

I watched her as long as I could; and then getting into my buggy, I turned my mare's head toward the woods, and drove by moonlight, past Buzzard's Tree and over the Old Stage Road, to my home. "I will see Carstairs tomorrow," was my last thought that night before I slept.

But, after all, I saw Carstairs only for a minute as he was taking the train. Life at its beginning and its end had filled my morning; and when at last I reached the little station, Carstairs had paid his visit, and was waiting on the platform for the approaching express. At first he showed a disposition to question me about the shooting, but as soon as I was able to make my errand clear, his jovial face clouded.

"So you've been there?" he said. "They didn't tell me. An interesting case, if it were not for that poor woman. Incurable, I'm afraid, when you consider the predisposing causes. The race is pretty well deteriorated, I suppose. God! what isolation! I've advised her to send him away. There are three others, they tell me, at Staunton."

The train came; he jumped on it, and was whisked away while I gazed after him. After all, I was none the wiser because of the great reputation of Carstairs.

All that day I heard nothing more from Jordan's End; and then, early next morning, the same decrepit Negro brought me a message.

"Young Miss, she tole me ter ax you ter come along wid me jes' ez soon ez you kin git ready."

"I'll start at once, Uncle, and I'll take you with me."

My mare and buggy stood at the door. All I needed to do was to put on my overcoat, pick up my hat, and leave word, for a possible patient, that I should return before noon. I knew the road now, and I told myself, as I set out, that I would make as quick a trip as I could. For two nights I had been haunted by the memory of that man in the armchair, plaiting and unplaiting the fringe of the plaid shawl. And his father had done that, the woman had told me, for twenty years!

It was a brown autumn morning, raw, windless, with an overcast sky and a peculiar illusion of nearness about the distance. A high wind had blown all night, but at dawn it had dropped suddenly, and now there was not so much as a ripple in the broomsedge. Over the fields, when we came out of the woods, the thin trails of blue smoke were as motionless as cobwebs. The lawn surrounding the house looked smaller than it had appeared to me in the twilight, as if the barren fields had drawn closer since my last visit. Under the trees, where the few sheep were browsing, the piles of leaves lay in windrifts along the sunken walk and against the wings of the house.

When I knocked the door was opened immediately by one of the old women, who held a streamer of black cloth or rusty crape in her hands.

"You may go straight upstairs," she croaked; and, without waiting for an explanation, I entered the hall quickly, and ran up the stairs.

The door of the room was closed, and I opened it noiselessly, and stepped over the threshold. My first sensation, as I entered, was one of cold. Then I saw that the windows were wide open, and that the room seemed to be full of people, though, as I made out presently, there was no one there except Alan Jordan's wife, her little son, the two old aunts, and an aged crone of a Negress. On the bed

there was something under a yellowed sheet of fine linen (what the Negroes call "a burial sheet," I suppose), which had been handed down from some more affluent generation.

When I went over, after a minute, and turned down one corner of the covering, I saw that my patient of the other evening was dead. Not a line of pain marred his features, not a thread of gray dimmed the wheaten gold of his hair. So he must have looked, I thought, when she first loved him. He had gone from life, not old, enfeebled and repulsive, but enveloped still in the romantic illusion of their passion.

As I entered, the two old women, who had been fussing about the bed, drew back to make way for me, but the witch of a Negress did not pause in the weird chant, an incantation of some sort, which she was mumbling. From the rag carpet in front of the empty fireplace, the boy, with his father's hair and his mother's eyes, gazed at me silently, broodingly, as if I were trespassing; and by the open window, with her eyes on the ashen November day, the young wife stood as motionless as a statue. While I looked at her a redbird flew out of the boughs of a cedar, and she followed it with her eyes.

"You sent for me?" I said to her.

She did not turn. She was beyond the reach of my voice, of any voice, I imagine; but one of the palsied old women answered my question.

"He was like this when we found him this morning," she said. "He had a bad night, and Judith and the two hands were up with him until daybreak. Then he seemed to fall asleep, and Judith sent the hands, turn about, to get their breakfast."

While she spoke my eyes were on the bottle I had left there. Two nights ago it had been full, and now it stood empty, without a cork, on the mantelpiece. They had not even thrown it away. It was typical of the pervading inertia of the place that the bottle should still be standing there awaiting my visit.

For an instant the shock held me speechless; when at last I found my voice it was to ask mechanically.

"When did it happen?"

The old woman who had spoken took up the story. "Nobody knows. We have not touched him. No one but Judith has gone near him." Her words trailed off into unintelligible muttering. If she had ever had her wits about her, I dare say fifty years at Jordan's End had unsettled them completely.

I turned to the woman at the window. Against the gray sky and the black intersecting branches of the cedar, her head, with its austere perfection, was surrounded by that visionary air of legend. So Antigone might have looked on the day of her sacrifice, I reflected. I had never seen a creature who appeared so withdrawn, so detached, from all human associations. It was as if some spiritual isolation divided her from her kind.

"I can do nothing," I said.

For the first time she looked at me, and her eyes were unfathomable. "No, you can do nothing," she answered. "He is safely dead."

The Negress was still crooning on; the other old women were fussing helplessly. It was impossible in their presence, I felt, to put in words the thing I had to say.

"Will you come downstairs with me?" I asked. "Outside of this house?"

Turning quietly, she spoke to the boy. "Run out and play, dear. He would have wished it."

Then, without a glance toward the bed, or the old women gathered about it, she followed me over the threshold, down the stairs, and out on the deserted lawn. The ashen day could not touch her, I saw then. She was either so remote from it, or so completely a part of it, that she was impervious to its sadness. Her white face did not become more pallid as the light struck it; her tragic eyes did not grow deeper; her frail figure under the thin shawl did not shiver in the raw air. She felt nothing, I realized suddenly.

Wrapped in that silence as in a cloak, she walked across the windrifts of leaves to where my mare was waiting. Her step was so slow, so unhurried, that I remember thinking she moved like one who had all eternity before her. Oh, one has strange impressions, you know, at such moments!

In the middle of the lawn, where the trees had been stripped bare in the night, and the leaves were piled in long mounds like double

graves, she stopped and looked in my face. The air was so still that the whole place might have been in a trance or asleep. Not a branch moved, not a leaf rustled on the ground, not a sparrow twittered in the ivy; and even the few sheep stood motionless, as if they were under a spell. Farther away, beyond the sea of broomsedge, where no wind stirred, I saw the flat desolation of the landscape. Nothing moved on the earth, but high above, under the leaden clouds, a buzzard was sailing.

I moistened my lips before I spoke. "God knows I want to help you!" At the back of my brain a hideous question was drumming. How had it happened? Could she have killed him? Had that delicate creature nerved her will to the unspeakable act? It was incredible. It was inconceivable. And yet. . . .

"The worst is over," she answered quietly, with that tearless agony which is so much more terrible than any outburst of grief. "Whatever happens, I can never go through the worst again. Once in the beginning he wanted to die. His great fear was that he might live too long, until it was too late to save himself. I made him wait then. I held him back by a promise."

So she had killed him, I thought. Then she went on steadily, after a minute, and I doubted again.

"Thank God, it was easier for him than he feared it would be," she murmured.

No, it was not conceivable. He must have bribed one of the Negroes. But who had stood by and watched without intercepting? Who had been in the room? Well, either way! "I will do all I can to help you," I said.

Her gaze did not waver. "There is so little that any one can do now," she responded, as if she had not understood what I meant. Suddenly, without the warning of a sob, a cry of despair went out of her, as if it were torn from her breast. "He was my life," she cried, "and I must go on!"

So full of agony was the sound that it seemed to pass like a gust of wind over the broomsedge. I waited until the emptiness had opened and closed over it. Then I asked as quietly as I could:

"What will you do now?"

She collected herself with a shudder of pain. "As long as the old people live, I am tied here. I must bear it out to the end. When they die, I shall go away and find work. I am sending my boy to school. Doctor Carstairs will look after him, and he will help me when the time comes. While my boy needs me, there is no release."

While I listened to her, I knew that the question on my lips would never be uttered. I should always remain ignorant of the truth. The thing I feared most, standing there alone with her, was that some accident might solve the mystery before I could escape. My eyes left her face and wandered over the dead leaves at our feet. No, I had nothing to ask her.

"Shall I come again?" That was all.

She shook her head. "Not unless I send for you. If I need you, I will send for you," she answered; but in my heart I knew that she would never send for me.

I held out my hand, but she did not take it; and I felt that she meant me to understand, by her refusal, that she was beyond all consolation and all companionship. She was nearer to the bleak sky and the deserted fields than she was to her kind.

As she turned away, the shawl slipped from her shoulders to the dead leaves over which she was walking; but she did not stoop to recover it, nor did I make a movement to follow her. Long after she had entered the house I stood there, gazing down on the garment that she had dropped. Then climbing into my buggy, I drove slowly across the field and into the woods.

1923

## 1876 — *Willa Cather* — —

MISS CATHER was born in Virginia, whither her great-grandfather had migrated from England by way of Ireland. When she was eight her family moved to a farm in Nebraska. Here she grew up in tomboy enjoyment of the open prairie spaces, the thrills of farm life, and association with persons of other nationalities. Since there was no available elementary school, she was taught at home, reading the English classics with her grandmother. Later she attended the high school in Red Cloud, and took her B.A. degree at the University of Nebraska at nineteen. During this time she read much French and Russian fiction. Discontented with the meager cultural opportunities of the Middle West, especially the lack of good music, she secured employment on the Pittsburgh *Daily Leader*. From 1901 to 1906 she taught English in the Alleghany High School, at the same time publishing verse and prose in various periodicals. Her work attracted the attention of S. S. McClure, of whose magazine she became in turn associate and later managing editor. This position brought her in contact with many literary people, developed her sense of literary values, and gave her an indication of public taste. The encouragement she received from her friend, Sarah Orne Jewett, whose *Best Stories* she later edited with an admiring introduction, undoubtedly influenced her decision to abandon editorial work. She resigned in 1912 in order to devote herself to creative writing. Unlike most artists, she finds travel unpleasant.

In her book of collected essays, *Not Under Forty* (1936), particularly in "The Novel Démeublé" (first published in 1922), she states the general theory of fiction upon which her work is grounded. She distinguishes between novels as entertainment and novels as art. She is interested only in fiction as art. Assuming herself to be a realist, she takes issue with the realistic practice of securing effect by means of piling up details. Realism, in fact, is not at all a matter of recording what one has observed, but a state of mind, an attitude toward one's material. The novel suffers from too many physical properties which clutter up the scene and obscure what is really significant. Her contention is that artistic effects cannot be produced by what is seen or heard, but by what remains unnamed, an overtone, as it were, what she calls "verbal mood, the emotional aura." Her implied contrast between Balzac and Hawthorne illustrates her point: the former overfurnished his novels, the latter seldom lets the reader see anything; Balzac is the showman who insists on showing all his wares, Hawthorne is indifferent to surroundings, but makes one feel their presence by suggestion. She is a selective realist who insists upon paring down the material properties, indeed the action itself, to the very minimum

consistent with the effect she wishes to create. Bare scenes are the ideal setting. Carefully selected properties, wisely chosen action, a minimum of detail, exhibition and suggestion rather than enumeration, and the firm reliance upon the "unnamed thing" as the master key to the finest artistic effects—these are the main items in her literary creed.

It is precisely this economy and restraint, the refusal to let herself be drawn into emotional debauches, that has led some readers to the conclusion that she is cold and objective, and that her art lacks warmth and sympathy. One might as well charge Hawthorne with the same limitation. The coldness may be due to the limitation of the reader rather than of the author. Her very theory of art presupposes a certain sensitiveness to suggestion, for she herself relies upon suggestion instead of veritistic enumeration of details or a reporter-like chronicling of events. In this respect she is unique, but this unique quality is not necessarily a weakness. Her art has developed steadily from the apprentice gropings in *The Troll Garden* (1905), a collection of early short stories, and *Alexander's Bridge* (1912), her first novel, immature in some respects, yet not to be dismissed as mere promise, to the confident, subtle handling of later novels like *The Professor's House* (1925) and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927). The more mature works came as a direct fulfillment of the hints dropped at the beginning of her career, and a progressive realization of her theory.

By some critics Miss Cather has been called the novelist of the transplanted European; by others she is associated with those who attack the village and small-town life generally. There is a trace of truth in each suggestion, but neither tells the whole truth. Each method of categorizing leaves some of her work out of account. In *O Pioneers!* (1913) and *My Antonia* (1918), for instance, she does write about transplanted Europeans and their bitter struggles for economic security and spiritual integrity; nor can it be denied that in some of her novels she has in mind the cultural shortcomings of the small town. The truth of the matter is that her work must be regarded from a larger point of view. The note that runs through practically all her writings is the struggle that man is compelled to wage against his environment. This may take the form of a positive attack against the barrenness of the typical prairie village, as in *The Sculptor's Funeral* (1920); but it is also true of the professor who was unable to adjust himself when he suddenly found himself in an atmosphere of wealth and luxury, and of Archbishop Latour who after years of labor finally became the victim of life itself. Although she writes against a Midwest background, her theme is universal and limited to no locality. Her backgrounds are so harmonized, almost submerged, that, as in the case of Tolstoy, they are absorbed by the personalities of the characters. Her novels are commentaries on the age-old struggle of man against the forces that would becloud his vision and hinder his upward movement. In *A Lost Lady* (1923), for example, she projects the gradual

degeneration of the heroine, Marian Forrester, against the background of the declining West which was losing its heroic qualities.

Her style is in keeping with her high ideals of art in general. As some reviewer remarked laconically, her observance of the rules of grammar has not cramped it. She writes not merely lucidly and effectively, but with dignity, and does not resort to cheapness to stir ephemeral interest. Her ear cannot tolerate vulgarity.

Miss Cather's novels are *Alexander's Bridge* (1912); *O Pioneers!* (1913); *The Song of the Lark* (1915); *My Antonia* (1918); *One of Ours* (1922); *A Lost Lady* (1923); *The Professor's House* (1925); *My Mortal Enemy* (1926); *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927); *Shadows on the Rock* (1931); *Lucy Gayheart* (1935). Her short stories appear in *The Troll Garden* (1905); *Youth and the Bright Medusa* (1920); *Obscure Destinies* (1932). Her poems are published in *April Twilights* (1903); *April Twilights and Other Poems* (1923). R. Rapin's *Willa Cather* (1930) is a critical and biographical study. Further biographical material may be found in L. Carroll, "Willa Sibert Cather," *Bookman*, May, 1921; W. Tittle, "Glimpses of Interesting Americans," *Century*, July, 1925. For critical estimates and discussion of Miss Cather's work consult P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); G. Hicks, "The Case Against Willa Cather," *English Journal*, Nov., 1933; L. Morris, "Willa Cather," *North American Review*, May, 1924; L. Kronenberger, "Willa Cather," *Bookman*, Oct., 1931; C. Fadiman, "The Past Recaptured," *Nation*, Dec. 7, 1932; R. Michaud, *The American Novel To-day* (1928); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); E. S. Sergeant, *Fire Under the Andes* (1927); S. P. Sherman, *Critical Woodcuts* (1926); E. Wagenknecht, "Willa Cather," *Sewanee Review*, 1929; C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); H. van Dyke, *The Man Behind the Book* (1929); W. L. Myers, "The Novel Dedicate," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, July, 1932; P. Edgar, *The Art of the Novel from 1700 to the Present Time* (1933); A. R. Marble, *A Study of the Modern Novel* (1928); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## THE SCULPTOR'S FUNERAL

Published in *McClure's Magazine*, Jan., 1905. It was issued later in *Youth and the Bright Medusa*. A general favorite with many of Miss Cather's readers, it seems to have caught the essential attitude of the small town and its effect upon the aspiring young mind.

A GROUP of the townspeople stood on the station siding of a little Kansas town, awaiting the coming of the night train, which was already twenty minutes overdue. The snow had fallen thick over everything; in the pale starlight the line of bluffs across the wide, white meadows south of the town made soft, smoke-colored curves against the clear sky. The men on the siding stood first on one foot and then on the other, their hands thrust deep into their trousers pockets, their overcoats open, their shoulders screwed up with the cold; and they glanced from time to time toward the southeast, where the railroad track wound along the river shore. They conversed in low tones and moved about restlessly, seeming uncertain as to what was expected of them. There was but one of the company who looked as if he knew exactly why he was there, and he kept conspicuously apart; walking to the far end of the platform, returning to the station door, then pacing up the track again, his chin sunk in the high collar of his overcoat, his burly shoulders drooping forward, his gait heavy and dogged. Presently he was approached by a tall, spare, grizzled man clad in a faded Grand Army suit, who shuffled out from the group and advanced with a certain deference, craning his neck forward until his back made the angle of a jack-knife three-quarters open.

"I reckon she's a-goin' to be pretty late

agin tonight, Jim," he remarked in a squeaky falsetto. "S'pose it's the snow?"

"I don't know," responded the other man with a shade of annoyance, speaking from out an astonishing cataract of red beard that grew fiercely and thickly in all directions.

The spare man shifted the quill toothpick he was chewing to the other side of his mouth. "It ain't likely that anybody from the East will come with the corpse, I s'pose," he went on reflectively.

"I don't know," responded the other, more curtly than before.

"It's too bad he didn't belong to some lodge or other. I like an order funeral myself. They seem more appropriate for people of some repytation," the spare man continued, with an ingratiating concession in his shrill voice, as he carefully placed his toothpick in his vest pocket. He always carried the flag at the G.A.R. funerals in the town.

The heavy man turned on his heel, without replying, and walked up the siding. The spare man rejoined the uneasy group. "Jim's ez full ez a tick, ez ushel," he commented commiseratingly.

Just then a distant whistle sounded, and there was a shuffling of feet on the platform. A number of lanky boys, of all ages, appeared as suddenly and slimily as eels wakened by the crack of thunder; some came from the waiting-room, where they had been warming themselves by the red stove, or half asleep on the slat benches; others uncoiled themselves from baggage trucks or slid out of express wagons. Two clambered down from the driver's seat of a hearse that stood backed up against the siding. They straightened their stooping shoulders and lifted their heads, and a flash of momentary animation kindled their dull eyes at that cold, vibrant scream, the world-wide call for men. It stirred them like the note of a trumpet; just as it had often stirred the man who was coming home tonight, in his boyhood.

The night express shot, red as a rocket, from out the eastward marsh lands and wound along the river shore under the long lines of shivering poplars that sentinelled the meadows, the escaping steam hanging in grey masses against the pale sky and blotting out the Milky Way. In a moment the red glare from the headlight streamed up the snow-covered track before the siding and glittered on the wet, black rails. The burly man with the dishevelled red beard walked swiftly up the platform toward the approaching train, uncovering his head as he went. The group of men behind him hesitated, glanced questioningly at one another, and awkwardly followed his example. The train stopped, and the crowd shuffled up to the express car just as the door was thrown open, the man in the G.A.R. suit thrusting his head forward with curiosity. The express messenger appeared in the doorway, accompanied by a young man in a long ulster and travelling cap.

"Are Mr. Merrick's friends here?" inquired the young man.

The group on the platform swayed uneasily. Philip Phelps, the banker, responded with dignity: "We have come to take charge of the body. Mr. Merrick's father is very feeble and can't be about."

"Send the agent out here," growled the express messenger, "and tell the operator to lend a hand."

The coffin was got out of its rough-box and down on the snowy platform. The townspeople drew back enough to make room for it, and then formed a close semicircle about it, looking curiously at the palm leaf which lay across the black cover. No one said anything. The baggage man stood by his truck, waiting to get at the trunks. The engine panted heavily, and the fireman dodged in and out among the wheels with his yellow torch and long oil-can, snapping the spindle boxes. The young Bostonian, one of the dead sculptor's pupils who had come with the body, looked about him helplessly. He turned to the banker, the only one of that black, uneasy, stoop-shouldered group who seemed enough of an individual to be addressed.

"None of Mr. Merrick's brothers are here?" he asked uncertainly.

The man with the red beard for the first time stepped up and joined the others. "No, they have not come yet; the family is scattered. The body will be taken directly to the house." He stooped and took hold of one of the handles of the coffin.

"Take the long hill road up, Thompson, it will be easier on the horses," called the liveryman as the undertaker snapped the door of the hearse and prepared to mount to the driver's seat.

Laird, the red-bearded lawyer, turned again to the stranger: "We didn't know whether there would be any one with him or not," he explained. "It's a long walk, so you'd better go up in the hack." He pointed to a single battered conveyance, but the young man replied stiffly: "Thank you, but I think I will go up with the hearse. If you don't object," turning to the undertaker, "I'll ride with you."

They clambered up over the wheels and drove off in the starlight up the long, white hill toward the town. The lamps in the still village were shining from under the low, snow-burdened roofs; and beyond, on every side, the plains reached out into emptiness, peaceful and wide as the soft sky itself, and wrapped in a tangible, white silence.

When the hearse backed up to a wooden sidewalk before a naked, weather-beaten frame house, the same composite, ill-defined group that had stood upon the station siding was huddled about the gate. The front yard was an icy swamp, and a couple of warped planks, extending from the sidewalk to the door, made a sort of rickety footbridge. The gate hung on one hinge, and was opened wide with difficulty. Steavens, the young stranger, noticed that something black was tied to the knob of the front door.

The grating sound made by the casket, as it was drawn from the hearse, was answered by a scream from the house; the front door was wrenched open, and a tall, corpulent woman rushed out bareheaded into the snow and flung herself upon the coffin, shrieking: "My boy, my boy! And this is how you've come home to me!"

As Steavens turned away and closed his eyes with a shudder of unutterable repulsion, another woman, also tall, but flat and angular, dressed entirely in black, darted out of the house and caught Mrs. Merrick by the shoulders, crying sharply: "Come, come, mother; you mustn't go on like this!" Her tone changed to one of obsequious solemnity as she turned to the banker: "The parlor is ready, Mr. Phelps."

The bearers carried the coffin along the narrow boards, while the undertaker ran ahead with the coffin-rests. They bore it into a large, unheated room that smelled of dampness and disuse and furniture polish, and set it down under a hanging lamp ornamented with jingling glass prisms and before a "Rogers group" of John Alden and Priscilla, wreathed with smilax. Henry Steavens stared about him with the sickening conviction that there had been a mistake, and that he had somehow arrived at the wrong destination. He looked at the clover-green Brussels, the fat plush upholstery, among the hand-painted china placques and panels and vases, for some mark of identification,—for something that might once conceivably have belonged to Harvey Merrick. It was not until he recognized his friend in the crayon portrait of a little boy in kilts and curls, hanging above the piano, that he felt willing to let any of these people approach the coffin.

"Take the lid off, Mr. Thompson; let me see my boy's face," wailed the elder woman between her sobs. This time Steavens looked fearfully, almost beseechingly into her face, red and swollen under its masses of strong, black, shiny hair. He flushed, dropped his eyes, and then, almost incredulously, looked again. There was a kind of power about her face—a kind of brutal handsomeness, even; but it was scarred and furrowed by violence, and so colored and coarsened by fiercer passions that grief seemed never to have laid a gentle finger there. The long nose was distended and knobbed at the end, and there were deep lines on either side of it; her heavy black brows almost met across her forehead, her teeth were large and square, and set far apart—teeth that could tear. She filled the room; the men were obliterated, seemed tossed about like twigs in an angry water, and even Steavens felt himself being drawn into the whirlpool.

The daughter—the tall, raw-boned woman in crêpe, with a mourning comb in her hair which curiously lengthened her long face—sat stiffly upon the sofa, her hands, conspicuous for their large knuckles, folded in her lap, her mouth and eyes drawn down,

solemnly awaiting the opening of the coffin. Near the door stood a mulatto woman, evidently a servant in the house, with a timid bearing and emaciated face pitifully sad and gentle. She was weeping silently, the corner of her calico apron lifted to her eyes, occasionally suppressing a long, quivering sob. Steavens walked over and stood beside her.

Feeble steps were heard on the stairs, and an old man, tall and frail, odorous of pipe smoke, with shaggy, unkept grey hair and a dingy beard, tobacco stained about the mouth, entered uncertainly. He went slowly up to the coffin and stood rolling a blue cotton handkerchief between his hands, seeming so pained and embarrassed by his wife's orgy of grief that he had no consciousness of anything else.

"There, there, Annie, dear, don't take on so," he quavered timidly, putting out a shaking hand and awkwardly patting her elbow. She turned and sank upon his shoulder with such violence that he tottered a little. He did not even glance toward the coffin, but continued to look at her with a dull, frightened, appealing expression, as a spaniel looks at the whip. His sunken cheeks slowly reddened and burned with miserable shame. When his wife rushed from the room, her daughter strode after her with set lips. The servant stole up to the coffin, bent over it for a moment, and then slipped away to the kitchen, leaving Steavens, the lawyer, and the father to themselves. The old man stood looking down at his dead son's face. The sculptor's splendid head seemed even more noble in its rigid stillness than in life. The dark hair had crept down upon the wide forehead; the face seemed strangely long, but in it there was not that repose we expect to find in the faces of the dead. The brows were so drawn that there were two deep lines above the beaked nose, and the chin was thrust forward defiantly. It was as though the strain of life had been so sharp and bitter that death could not at once relax the tension and smooth the countenance into perfect peace—as though he were still guarding something precious, which might even yet be wrested from him.

The old man's lips were working under his stained beard. He turned to the lawyer with timid deference: "Phelps and the rest are comin' back to set up with Harve, ain't they?" he asked. "Thank'ee, Jim, thank'ee." He brushed the hair back gently from his son's forehead. "He was a good boy, Jim; always a good boy. He was ez gentle ez a child and the kindest of 'em all—only we didn't none of us ever onderstand him." The tears trickled slowly down his beard and dropped upon the sculptor's coat.

"Martin, Martin! Oh, Martin! come here," his wife wailed from the top of the stairs. The old man started timorously: "Yes, Annie, I'm coming." He turned away, hesitated, stood for a moment in miserable indecision; then reached back and patted the dead man's hair softly, and stumbled from the room.

"Poor old man, I didn't think he had any tears left. Seems as if his eyes would have gone dry long ago. At his age nothing cuts very deep," remarked the lawyer.

Something in his tone made Steavens glance up. While the mother had been in the room, the young man had scarcely seen any one else; but now, from the moment he first glanced into Jim Laird's florid face and blood-shot eyes, he knew that he had found what he had been heartsick at not finding before—the feeling, the understanding, that must exist in some one, even here.

The man was red as his beard, with features swollen and blurred by dissipation, and a hot, blazing blue eye. His face was strained—that of a man who is controlling himself with difficulty—and he kept plucking at his beard with a sort of fierce resentment. Steavens, sitting by the window, watched him turn down the glaring lamp, with its jangling pendants with an angry gesture, and then stand with his hands locked behind him, staring down into the master's face. He could not help wondering what link there had been between the porcelain vessel and so sooty a lump of potter's clay.

From the kitchen an uproar was sounding; when the dining-room door opened, the import of it was clear. The mother was abusing the maid for having forgotten to make the dressing for the chicken salad which had been prepared for the watchers. Steavens had never heard anything in the least like it; it was injured, emotional, dramatic abuse, unique and masterly in its excruciating cruelty, as violent

and unrestrained as had been her grief of twenty minutes before. With a shudder of disgust the lawyer went into the dining-room and closed the door into the kitchen.

"Poor Roxy's getting it now," he remarked when he came back. "The Merricks took her out of the poor-house years ago; and if her loyalty would let her, I guess the poor old thing could tell tales that would curdle your blood. She's the mulatto woman who was standing in here a while ago, with her apron to her eyes. The old woman is a fury; there never was anybody like her. She made Harvey's life a hell for him when he lived at home; he was so sick ashamed of it. I never could see how he kept himself sweet."

"He was wonderful," said Steavens slowly, "wonderful; but until tonight I have never known how wonderful."

"That is the eternal wonder of it, anyway; that it can come even from such a dung heap as this," the lawyer cried, with a sweeping gesture which seemed to indicate much more than the four walls within which they stood.

"I think I'll see whether I can get a little air. The room is so close I am beginning to feel rather faint," murmured Steavens, struggling with one of the windows. The sash was stuck, however, and would not yield, so he sat down dejectedly and began pulling at his collar. The lawyer came over, loosened the sash with one blow of his red fist and sent the window up a few inches. Steavens thanked him, but the nausea which had been gradually climbing into his throat for the last half hour left him with but one desire—a desperate feeling that he must get away from this place with what was left of Harvey Merrick. Oh, he comprehended well enough now the quiet bitterness of the smile that he had seen so often on his master's lips!

Once when Merrick returned from a visit home, he brought with him a singularly feeling and suggestive bas-relief of a thin, faded old woman, sitting and sewing something pinned to her knee, while a full-lipped, full-blooded little urchin, his trousers held up by a single gallows, stood beside her, impatiently twitching her gown to call her attention to a butterfly he had caught. Steavens, impressed by the tender and delicate modelling of the thin, tired face, had asked him if it were his mother. He remembered the dull flush that had burned up in the sculptor's face.

The lawyer was sitting in a rocking-chair beside the coffin, his head thrown back and his eyes closed. Steavens looked at him earnestly, puzzled at the line of the chin, and wondering why a man should conceal a feature of such distinction under that disfiguring shock of beard. Suddenly, as though he felt the young sculptor's keen glance, Jim Laird opened his eyes.

"Was he always a good deal of an oyster?" he asked abruptly. "He was terribly shy as a boy."

"Yes, he was an oyster, since you put it so," rejoined Steavens. "Although he could be very fond of people, he always gave one the impression of being detached. He disliked violent emotion; he was reflective, and rather distrustful of himself—except, of course, as regarded his work. He was sure enough there. He distrusted men pretty thoroughly and women even more, yet somehow without believing ill of them. He was determined, indeed, to believe the best; but he seemed afraid to investigate."

"A burnt dog dreads the fire," said the lawyer grimly, and closed his eyes.

Steavens went on and on, reconstructing that whole miserable boyhood. All this raw, biting ugliness had been the portion of the man whose mind was to become an exhaustless gallery of beautiful impressions—so sensitive that the mere shadow of a poplar leaf flickering against a sunny wall would be etched and held there for ever. Surely, if ever a man had the magic word in his finger tips, it was Merrick. Whatever he touched, he revealed its holiest secret; liberated it from enchantment and restored it to its pristine loveliness. Upon whatever he had come in contact with, he had left a beautiful record of the experience—a sort of ethereal signature; a scent, a sound, a color that was his own.

Steavens understood now the real tragedy of his master's life; neither love nor wine, as many had conjectured; but a blow which had fallen earlier and cut deeper than anything else could have done—a shame not his, and yet so unescapably his, to hide in his heart

from his very boyhood. And without—the frontier warfare; the yearning of a boy, cast ashore upon a desert of newness and ugliness and sordidness, for all that is chastened and old, and noble with traditions.

At eleven o'clock the tall, flat woman in black announced that the watchers were arriving, and asked them to "step into the dining-room." As Steavens rose, the lawyer said dryly: "You go on—it'll be a good experience for you. I'm not equal to that crowd tonight; I've had twenty years of them."

As Steavens closed the door after him he glanced back at the lawyer, sitting by the coffin in the dim light, with his chin resting on his hand.

The same misty group that had stood before the door of the express car shuffled into the dining-room. In the light of the kerosene lamp they separated and became individuals. The minister, a pale, feeble-looking man with white hair and blond chin-whiskers, took his seat beside a small side table and placed his Bible upon it. The Grand Army man sat down behind the stove and tilted his chair back comfortably against the wall, fishing his quill toothpick from his waistcoat pocket. The two bankers, Phelps and Elder, sat off in a corner behind the dinner-table, where they could finish their discussion of the new usury law and its effect on chattel security loans. The real estate agent, an old man with a smiling, hypocritical face, soon joined them. The coal and lumber dealer and the cattle shipper sat on opposite sides of the hard coal-burner, their feet on the nickel-work. Steavens took a book from his pocket and began to read. The talk around him ranged through various topics of local interest while the house was quieting down. When it was clear that the members of the family were in bed, the Grand Army man hitched his shoulders and, untangling his long legs, caught his heels on the rounds of his chair.

"S'pose there'll be a will, Phelps?" he queried in his weak falsetto.

The banker laughed disagreeably, and began trimming his nails with a pearl-handled pocket-knife.

"There'll scarcely be any need for one, will there?" he queried in his turn.

The restless Grand Army man shifted his position again, getting his knees still nearer his chin. "Why, the ole man says Harve's done right well lately," he chirped.

The other banker spoke up. "I reckon he means by that Harve ain't asked him to mortgage any more farms lately, so as he could go on with his education."

"Seems like my mind don't reach back to a time when Harve wasn't bein' edycated," tittered the Grand Army man.

There was a general chuckle. The minister took out his handkerchief and blew his nose sonorously. Banker Phelps closed his knife with a snap. "It's too bad the old man's sons didn't turn out better," he remarked with reflective authority. "They never hung together. He spent money enough on Harve to stock a dozen cattle-farms, and he might as well have poured it into Sand Creek. If Harve had stayed at home and helped nurse what little they had, and gone into stock on the old man's bottom farm, they might all have been well fixed. But the old man had to trust everything to tenants and was cheated right and left."

"Harve never could have handled stock none," interposed the cattleman. "He hadn't it in him to be sharp. Do you remember when he bought Sander's mules for eight-year olds, when everybody in town knew that Sander's father-in-law give 'em to his wife for a wedding present eighteen years before, an' they was full-grown mules then?"

The company laughed discreetly, and the Grand Army man rubbed his knees with a spasm of childish delight.

"Harve never was much account for anything practical, and he shore was never fond of work," began the coal and lumber dealer. "I mind the last time he was home; the day he left, when the old man was out to the barn helpin' his hand hitch up to take Harve to the train, and Cal Moots was patchin' up the fence; Harve, he come out on the step and sings out, in his ladylike voice: 'Cal Moots, Cal Moots! please come cord my trunk.' "

"That's Harve for you," approved the Grand Army man. "I kin hear him howlin' yet, when he was a big feller in long pants and his mother used to whale him with a rawhide

in the barn for lettin' the cows git foundered in the cornfield when he was drivin' 'em home from pasture. He killed a cow of mine that-a-way onct—a pure Jersey and the best milker I had, an' the ole man had to put up for her. Harve, he was watchin' the sun set acrost the marshes when the anamile got away."

"Where the old man made his mistake was in sending the boy East to school," said Phelps, stroking his goatee and speaking in a deliberate, judicial tone. "There was where he got his head full of nonsense. What Harve needed of all people, was a course in some first-class Kansas City business college."

The letters were swimming before Steavens's eyes. Was it possible that these men did not understand, that the palm on the coffin meant nothing to them? The very name of their town would have remained for ever buried in the postal guide had it not been now and again mentioned in connection with Harvey Merrick's. He remembered what his master had said to him on the day of his death, after the congestion of both lungs had shut off any probability of recovery, and the sculptor had asked his pupil to send his body home. "It's not a pleasant place to be lying while the world is moving and doing and bettering," he had said with a feeble smile, "but it rather seems as though we ought to go back to the place we came from, in the end. The townspeople will come in for a look at me; and after they have had their say, I shan't have much to fear from the judgment of God!"

The cattleman took up the comment. "Forty's young for a Merrick to cash in; they usually hang on pretty well. Probably he helped it along with whisky."

"His mother's people were not long lived and Harvey never had a robust constitution," said the minister mildly. He would have liked to say more. He had been the boy's Sunday-school teacher, and had been fond of him; but he felt that he was not in a position to speak. His own sons had turned out badly, and it was not a year since one of them had made his last trip home in the express car, shot in a gambling-house in the Black Hills.

"Nevertheless, there is no disputin' that Harve frequently looked upon the wine when it was red, also variegated, and it shore made an oncommon fool of him," moralized the cattleman.

Just then the door leading into the parlor rattled loudly and every one started involuntarily, looking relieved when only Jim Laird came out. The Grand Army man ducked his head when he saw the spark in his blue, bloodshot eye. They were all afraid of Jim; he was a drunkard, but he could twist the law to suit his client's needs as no other man in all western Kansas could do, and there were many who tried. The lawyer closed the door behind him, leaned back against it and folded his arms, cocking his head a little to one side. When he assumed this attitude in the court-room, ears were always pricked up, as it usually foretold a flood of withering sarcasm.

"I've been with you gentlemen before," he began in a dry, even tone, "when you've sat by the coffins of boys born and raised in this town; and, if I remember rightly, you were never any too well satisfied when you checked them up. What's the matter, anyhow? Why is it that reputable young men are as scarce as millionaires in Sand City? It might almost seem to a stranger that there was some way something the matter with your progressive town. Why did Ruben Sayer, the brightest young lawyer you ever turned out, after he had come home from the university as straight as a die, take to drinking and forge a check and shoot himself? Why did Bill Merrit's son die of the shakes in a saloon in Omaha? Why was Mr. Thomas's son, here, shot in a gambling-house? Why did young Adams burn his mill to beat the insurance companies and go to the pen?"

The lawyer paused and unfolded his arms, laying one clenched fist quietly on the table. "I'll tell you why. Because you drummed nothing but money and knavery into their ears from the time they wore knickerbockers; because you carped away at them as you've been carping here tonight, holding our friends Phelps and Elder up to them for their models, as our grandfathers held up George Washington and John Adams. But the boys were young, and raw at the business you put them to, and how could they match coppers with such artists as Phelps and Elder? You wanted them to be successful rascals; they were only

unsuccessful ones—that's all the difference. There was only one boy ever raised in this borderland between ruffianism and civilization who didn't come to grief, and you hated Harvey Merrick more for winning out than you hated all the other boys who got under the wheels. Lord, Lord, how you did hate him! Phelps, here, is fond of saying that he could buy and sell us all out any time he's a mind to; but he knew Harve wouldn't have given a tinker's damn for his bank and all his cattle-farms put together; and a lack of appreciation that way, goes hard with Phelps.

"Old Nimrod thinks Harve drank too much; and this from such as Nimrod and me!

"Brother Elder says Harve was too free with the old man's money—fell short in filial consideration, maybe. Well, we can all remember the very tone in which brother Elder swore his own father was a liar, in the county court; and we all know that the old man came out of that partnership with his son as bare as a sheared lamb. But maybe I'm getting personal, and I'd better be driving ahead at what I want to say."

The lawyer paused a moment, squared his heavy shoulders, and went on: "Harvey Merrick and I went to school together, back East. We were dead in earnest, and we wanted you all to be proud of us some day. We meant to be great men. Even I, and I haven't lost my sense of humor, gentlemen, *I* meant to be a great man. I came back here to practice, and I found you didn't in the least want me to be a great man. You wanted me to be a shrewd lawyer—oh, yes! Our veteran here wanted me to get him an increase of pension, because he had dyspepsia; Phelps wanted a new county survey that would put the widow Wilson's little bottom farm inside his south line; Elder wanted to lend money at 5 per cent a month, and get it collected; and Stark here wanted to wheedle old women up in Vermont into investing their annuities in real estate mortgages that are not worth the paper they are written on. Oh, you needed me hard enough, and you'll go on needing me!

"Well, I came back here and became the damned shyster you wanted me to be. You pretend to have some sort of respect for me; and yet you'll stand up and throw mud at Harvey Merrick, whose soul you couldn't dirty and whose hands you couldn't tie. Oh, you're a discriminating lot of Christians! There have been times when the sight of Harvey's name in some Eastern paper has made me hang my head like a whipped dog, and, again, times when I liked to think of him off there in the world, away from all this hog-wallow, climbing the big, clean up-grade he'd set for himself.

"And we? Now that we've fought and lied and sweated and stolen, and hated as only the disappointed strugglers in a bitter, dead little Western town know how to do, what have we got to show for it? Harvey Merrick wouldn't have given one sunset over your marshes for all you've got put together, and you know it. It's not for me to say why, in the inscrutable wisdom of God, a genius should ever have been called from this place of hatred and bitter waters; but I want this Boston man to know that the drivel he's been hearing tonight is the only tribute any truly great man could have from such a lot of side-tracked, burnt-dog, land-poor sharks as the here-present financiers of Sand City—upon which town may God have mercy!"

The lawyer thrust out his hand to Steavens as he passed him, caught up his overcoat in the hall and had left the house before the Grand Army man had had time to lift his ducked head and crane his long neck about at his fellows.

Next day Jim Laird was drunk and unable to attend the funeral services. Steavens called twice at his office, but was compelled to start East without seeing him. He had a presentiment that he would hear from him again, and left his address on the lawyer's table; but if Laird found it, he never acknowledged it. The thing in him that Harvey Merrick had loved must have gone under ground with Harvey Merrick's coffin; for it never spoke again, and Jim got the cold he died of driving across the Colorado mountains to defend one of Phelps's sons who had got into trouble out there by cutting government timber.

1920

## 1879 — *Dorothy Canfield Fisher* — —

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER, scholar in comparative literature, novelist, short-story writer, and apostle of culture, comes of a New England family which settled in Vermont as early as 1764. She was born in Kansas where her father was a professor in the state university. She received her undergraduate degree from Ohio State University in 1899 and her doctorate from Columbia University in 1904. She also studied at the Sorbonne in Paris. Her scholarship has led a half dozen institutions to grant her the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. In 1907 she was married to John R. Fisher, and moved to a farm near Arlington, Vermont, which has been their home since. Here they have entered wholeheartedly into the life of the community, Mrs. Fisher's interest in education winning her an appointment to the state board of education. The publication of *The Squirrel-Cage* (1912), *Hillsboro People* (1915), and *The Bent Twig* (1915) established her reputation among contemporary writers. While spending a year in Rome, she studied the methods of the Montessori School which was developing new ways of child training, her experience resulting in two books, *A Montessori Mother* (1913) and *Mothers and Children* (1914). In 1916 the family went to France. Mrs. Fisher engaged in relief work, while her husband served in the ambulance corps. Meantime she had written *Understood Betsy* (1917), a story of a sheltered neurotic girl who found herself in the freedom of a Vermont farm. This was followed by *Home Fires in France* (1918) and *The Day of Glory* (1919), collections of short stories reflecting her war experiences. Two years after the Fishers returned from France, she published *The Brimming Cup* (1921), one of her best novels, and at intervals later *Rough Hewn* (1922), *The Home-Maker* (1924), *The Deepening Stream* (1930), and *Seasoned Timber* (1939). Many of her short stories are collected in *Raw Material* (1923) and *Basque People* (1931).

Although Mrs. Fisher belongs to the so-called novelists of the village, she has held aloof from the tirades of Floyd Dell, Sherwood Anderson, and Sinclair Lewis, who sought to expose and ridicule the village for its pretense, puritanism, and provincialism. Nor is one warranted in assuming that she wrote in a defensive mood; but she did reverse the shield, and showed that the small town, in spite of inevitable disadvantages, does not deserve all the criticism directed against it. She herself had long known village life, had found it satisfying, accepted it at its face value, on the assumption that it really needed no defense. The scenes of her novels as well as many of her short stories are laid in small communities. The communities are not isolated, but feel to a degree at least the impact of the same forces and the

perplexity of the same problems which bewilder city-dwellers. Nor is she unaware of the larger problems which are common and national, like those of divorce, women's rights, revolt against morals. She recognizes them, feels their force and urgency, and does not hesitate to meet them with reciprocal force and conviction. This does not mean that she writes in a fighting mood; it does mean that there are some phases of life which long human experience has to some extent sanctified, which she has accepted and sees no reason for uprooting. A balanced sanity which admits the value of tradition without denying the need of change characterizes most of her work. She recognizes the press of the new with the detachment of the artist rather than the zeal of the enthusiast.

Mrs. Fisher finds the essential stability of society in the integrity and inviolability of family life. If this suffers the entire fabric will be affected. Many of her stories center about the dangers which have been and are threatening the family. In *The Squirrel-Cage*, an early novel, the heroine finds deliverance from conventions against which she rebels, only to find herself swept into an unhappy marriage. When in *The Brimming Cup*, a later novel, the family is threatened by an alien love affair, the heroine, preferring the sanctity of home to freedom, settles the matter quite handily. In *The Home-Maker* a family is endangered because neither the husband nor the wife finds the part in the homemaking enterprise congenial. As a result of an accident the wife becomes the provider, the husband the housekeeper, and the family is saved. *The Deepening Stream* presents still another view of the same problem, as well as her reactions to the World War.

It has been suggested that her situations, problems, and solutions are so obvious that there was no need to write about them in the first place. The charge must be considered in the light of the treatment accorded to similar problems by other writers. It may even turn out that her contemporaries merely followed the more obvious, the easier path. It is, of course, too early to express any judgment as to her place in contemporary letters. This, however, is a fact—she stood firmly for a wholesome home and family life during a crucial period in which social and domestic gods were violently attacked by savage young iconoclasts. And by her attitude she served as a balance for those same young iconoclasts, to whom nothing was sacred except the impulse of the moment.

"The Portrait of a Philosopher" is a good example of her art. By implication is set forth the main principle of her literary theory—the artist's responsibility to present truthfully the inner realities as they are and to avoid the subjective treatment which often results in capricious sensationalism.

Mrs. Fisher's novels include *The Squirrel-Cage* (1912); *The Bent Twig* (1915); *Understood Betsy* (1917); *The Brimming Cup* (1921); *The Home-Maker* (1924); *Her Son's Wife* (1926); *The Deepening Stream* (1930); *Bonfire* (1933); *Seasoned Timber* (1939). Her short stories are collected in *Hillsboro People* (1915); *The Real Motive* (1916); *Home Fires in France* (1918); *The Day of Glory*

(1919); *Raw Material* (1923); *Basque People* (1931). She also wrote *A Montessori Mother* (1912) and *Why Stop Learning?* (1927). For criticism see E. Wyckoff, "Dorothy Canfield: a Neglected Best Seller," *Bookman*, Sept., 1931; H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); W. L. Phelps, "Dorothy Canfield Fisher," *English Journal*, Jan., 1933; B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); D. L. Mann, "Dorothy Canfield; the Little Vermonter," *Bookman*, Aug., 1927; Z. Humphrey, "Dorothy Canfield," *Woman Citizen*, Jan., 1926; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## PORTRAIT OF A PHILOSOPHER

Published in *Scribner's*, April, 1911, and later included in *Hillsboro People*. An excellent short story as well as a bit of incidental art criticism.

I

THE news of Professor Gridley's death filled Middletown College with consternation. Its one claim to distinction was gone, for in spite of the excessive quiet of his private life, he had always cast about the obscure little college the shimmering aura of greatness. There had been no fondness possible for the austere old thinker, but Middletown village, as well as the college, had been touched by his fidelity to the very moderate attractions of his birthplace. When, as often happened, some famous figure was seen on the streets, people used to say first, "Here to see old Grid, I suppose," and then, "Funny how he sticks here. They say he was offered seven thousand at the University of California." In the absence of any known motive for this steadfastness, the village legend-making instinct had evolved a theory that he did not wish to move away from a State of which his father had been Governor, and where the name of Gridley was like a patent of nobility.

And now he was gone, the last of the race. His disappearance caused the usual amount of reminiscent talk among his neighbors. The older people recalled the by-gone scandals connected with his notorious and popular father and intimated with knowing nods that there were plenty of other descendants of the old Governor who were not entitled legally to bear the name; but the younger ones, who had known only the severely ascetic life and cold personality of the celebrated scholar, found it difficult to connect him with such a father. In their talk they brought to mind the man himself, his queer shabby clothes, his big stooping frame, his sad black eyes, absent almost to vacancy as though always fixed on high and distant thoughts; and those who had lived near him told laughing stories about the crude and countrified simplicity of his old aunt's housekeeping—it was said that the president of Harvard had been invited to join them once in a Sunday evening meal of crackers and milk—but the general tenor of feeling was, as it had been during his life, of pride in his great fame and in the celebrated people who had come to see him.

This pride warmed into something like affection when, the day after his death, came the tidings that he had bequeathed to his college the Gino Sprague Fallères portrait of himself. Of course, at that time, no one in Middletown had seen the picture, for the philosopher's sudden death had occurred, very dramatically, actually during the last sitting. He had, in fact, had barely one glimpse of it himself, as, according to Fallères's invariable rule, no one, not even the subject of the portrait, had been allowed to examine an unfinished piece of work. But, though Middletown had no first-hand knowledge of the picture, there could be no doubt about the value of the canvas. As soon as it was put on exhibition in London, from every art-critic in the three nations who claimed Fallères for their own there rose a wail that this masterpiece was to be buried in an unknown college in an obscure village in barbarous America. It was confidently stated that it would be saved from such an unfitting resting-place by strong action on the part of an International Committee of Artists; but Middletown, though startled by its own good fortune, clung with Yankee tenacity to its rights. Raphael Collin, of Paris, commenting on this in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, cried out whimsically upon the woes of an art-critic's life, "as if there were

not already enough wearisome pilgrimages necessary to remote and uncomfortable places with jaw-breaking names, which must nevertheless be visited for the sake of a single picture!" And a burlesque resolution to carry off the picture by force was adopted at the dinner in London given in honor of Fallères the evening before he set off for America to attend the dedicatory exercises with which Middletown planned to install its new treasure.

For the little rustic college rose to its one great occasion. Bold in their confidence in their dead colleague's fame, the college authorities sent out invitations to all the great ones of the country. Those to whom Gridley was no more than a name on volumes one never read came because the portrait was by Fallères, and those who had no interest in the world of art came to honor the moralist whose noble clear-thinking had simplified the intimate problems of modern life. There was the usual residuum of those who came because the others did, and, also as usual, they were among the most brilliant figures in the procession which filed along, one October morning, under the old maples of Middletown campus.

It was a notable celebration. A bishop opened the exercises with prayer, a United States senator delivered the eulogy of the dead philosopher, the veil uncovering the portrait was drawn away by the mayor of one of America's largest cities, himself an ardent Gridleyite, and among those who spoke afterward were the presidents of three great universities. The professor's family was represented but scantily. He had had one brother, who had disappeared many years ago under a black cloud of ill report, and one sister who had married and gone West to live. Her two sons, middle-aged merchants from Ohio, gave the only personal note to the occasion by their somewhat tongue-tied and embarrassed presence, for Gridley's aunt was too aged and infirm to walk with the procession from the Gymnasium, where it formed, to the Library building, where the portrait was installed.

After the inevitable photographers had made their records of the memorable gathering, the procession began to wind its many-colored way back to the Assembly Hall, where it was to lunch. Everyone was feeling relieved that the unveiling had gone off so smoothly, and cheerful at the prospect of food. The undergraduates began lustily to shout their college song, which was caught up by the holiday mood of the older ones. This cheerful tumult gradually died away in the distance, leaving the room of the portrait deserted in an echoing silence. A janitor began to remove the rows of folding chairs. The celebration was over.

Into the empty room there now limped forward a small, shabby old woman, with a crutch. "I'm his aunt, that lived with him," she explained apologetically, "and I want to see the picture."

She advanced, peering nearsightedly at the canvas. The janitor continued stacking up chairs until he was stopped by a cry from the newcomer. She was a great deal paler than when she came in. She was staring hard at the portrait and now beckoned him wildly to do the same. "Look at it! Look at it!"

Surprised, he followed the direction of her shaking hand. "Sure, it's Professor Grid to the life!" he said admiringly.

"Look at it! Look at it!" She seemed not to be able to find any other words.

After a prolonged scrutiny he turned to her with a puzzled line between his eyebrows. "Since you've spoken of it, ma'am, I will say that there's something about the expression of the eyes . . . and mouth, maybe . . . that ain't just the professor. He was more absent-like. It reminds me of somebody else . . . of some face I've seen . . ."

She hung on his answer, her mild, timid old face drawn like a mask of tragedy. "Who? Who?" she prompted him.

For a time he could not remember, staring at the new portrait and scratching his head. Then it came to him suddenly: "Why, sure, I ought to ha' known without thinkin', seeing the other picture as often as every time I've swep' out the president's office. And Professor Grid always looked like him some, anyhow."

The old woman leaned against the wall, her crutch trembling, in her hand. Her eyes questioned him mutely.

"Why, ma'am, who but his own father, to be sure . . . the old Governor."

II

While they had been duly sensible of the luster reflected upon them by the celebration in honor of their distinguished uncle, Professor Gridley's two nephews could scarcely have said truthfully that they enjoyed the occasion. As one of them did say to the other, the whole show was rather out of their line. Their line was wholesale hardware and, being eager to return to it, it was with a distinct feeling of relief that they waited for the train at the station. They were therefore as much displeased as surprised by the sudden appearance to them of their great-aunt, very haggard, her usual extreme timidity swept away by overmastering emotion. She clutched at the two merchants with a great sob of relief: "Stephen! Eli! Come back to the house," she cried, and before they could stop her was hobbling away. They hurried after her, divided between the fear of losing their train and the hope that some inheritance from their uncle had been found. They were not mercenary men, but they felt a not unnatural disappointment that Professor Gridley had left not a penny, not even to his aunt, his one intimate.

They overtook her, scuttling along like some frightened and wounded little animal. "What's the matter, Aunt Amelia?" they asked shortly. "We've got to catch this train."

She faced them. "You can't go now. You've got to make them take that picture away."

"Away!" Their blankness was stupefaction.

She raged at them, the timid, harmless little thing, like a creature distraught. "Didn't you see it? Didn't you *see* it?"

Stephen answered: "Well, no, not to have a good square look at it. The man in front of me kept getting in the way."

Eli admitted: "If you mean you don't see anything in it to make all this hurrah about, I'm with you. It don't look half finished. I don't like that slap-dash style."

She was in a frenzy at their denseness. "Who did it look like?" she challenged them.

"Why, like Uncle Grid, of course. Who else?"

"Yes, yes," she cried; "who else? Who else?"

They looked at each other, afraid that she was crazed, and spoke more gently: "Why, I don't know, I'm sure, who else. Like Grandfather Gridley, of course; but then Uncle Grid always did look like his father."

At this she quite definitely put it out of their power to leave her by fainting away.

They carried her home and laid her on her own bed, where one of them stayed to attend her while the other went back to rescue their deserted baggage. As the door closed behind him the old woman came to herself. "Oh, Stephen," she moaned, "I wish it had killed me, the way it did your uncle."

"What *is* the matter?" asked her great-nephew wonderingly. "What do you think killed him?"

"That awful, awful picture! I know it now as plain as if I'd been there. He hadn't seen it all the time he was sitting for it, though he'd already put in his will that he wanted the college to have it, and when he did see it——" she turned on the merchant with a sudden fury: "How *dare* you say those are your uncle's eyes!"

He put his hand soothingly on hers. "Now, now, Aunt 'Melia, maybe the expression isn't just right, but the color is *fine* . . . just that jet-black his were . . . and the artist has got in exact that funny stiff way uncle's hair stood up over his forehead."

The old woman fixed outraged eyes upon him. "Color!" she said. "And hair! Oh, Lord, help me!"

She sat up on the bed, clutching her nephew's hand, and began to talk rapidly. When, a half-hour later, the other brother returned, neither of them heard him enter the house. It was only when he called at the foot of the stairs that they both started and Stephen ran down to join him.

"You'll see the president . . . you'll fix it?" the old woman cried after him.

"I'll see, Aunt 'Melia," he answered pacifyingly, as he drew his brother out of doors. He looked quite pale and moved, and drew a long breath before he could begin. "Aunt Amelia's been telling me a lot of things I never knew, Eli. It seems that . . . say, did

you ever hear that Grandfather Gridley, the Governor, was such a bad lot?"

"Why, mother never said much about her father one way or the other, but I always sort of guessed he wasn't all he might have been from her never bringing us on to visit here until after he died. She used to look queer, too, when folks congratulated her on having such a famous man for father. All the big politicians of his day thought a lot of him. He *was* as smart as chain-lightning."

"He was a disreputable old scalawag!" cried his other grandson. "Some of the things Aunt Amelia has been telling me make me never want to come back to this part of the country again. Do you know why Uncle Grid lived so poor and scrimped and yet left no money? He'd been taking care of a whole family grandfather had beside ours; and paying back some people grandfather did out of a lot of money on a timber deal fifty years ago; and making it up to a little village in the backwoods that grandfather persuaded to bond itself for a railroad that he knew wouldn't go near it."

The two men stared at each other an instant, reviewing in a new light the life that had just closed. "That's why he never married," said Eli finally.

"No, that's what I said, but Aunt Amelia just went wild when I did. She said . . . gee!" he passed his hand over his eyes with a gesture of mental confusion. "Ain't it strange what can go on under your eyes and you never know it? Why, she says Uncle Grid was just like his father."

The words were not out of his mouth before the other's face of horror made him aware of his mistake. "No! No! Not that! Heavens, no! I mean . . . made like him . . . *wanted* to be that kind, 'specially drink . . ." His tongue, unused to phrasing abstractions, stumbled and tripped in his haste to correct the other's impression. "You know how much Uncle Grid used to look like grandfather . . . the same black hair and broad face and thick red lips and a kind of knob on the end of his nose? Well, it seems he had his father's insides, too . . . *but his mother's conscience!* I guess, from what Aunt Amelia says, that the combination made life about as near Tophet for him . . . ! She's the only one to know anything about it, because she's lived with him always, you know, took him when grandmother died and he was a child. She says when he was younger he was like a man fighting a wild beast . . . he didn't dare let up or rest. Some days he wouldn't stop working at his desk all day long, not even to eat, and then he'd grab up a piece of bread and go off for a long tearing tramp that'd last 'most all night. You know what a tremendous physique all the Gridley men have had. Well, Uncle Grid turned into work all the energy the rest of them spent in deviltry. Aunt Amelia said he'd go on like that day after day for a month, and then he'd bring out one of those essays folks are so crazy about. She said she never could bear to *look* at his books . . . seemed to her they were written in his blood. She told him so once and he said it was the only thing to do with blood like his."

He was silent, while his listener made a clucking noise of astonishment. "My! My! I'd have said that there never was anybody more different from grandfather than uncle. Why, as he got on in years he didn't even look like him any more."

This reference gave Stephen a start. "Oh, yes, that's what all this came out for. Aunt Amelia is just wild about this portrait. It's just a notion of hers, of course, but after what she told me I could see, easy, how the idea would come to her. It looks this way, she says, as though Uncle Grid inherited his father's physical make-up complete, and spent all his life fighting it . . . and won out! And here's this picture making him look the way he would if he'd been the worst old . . . as if he'd been like the Governor. She says she feels as though she was the only one to defend uncle . . . as if it could make any difference to him! I guess the poor old lady is a little touched. Likely it's harder for her, losing uncle, than we realized. She just about worshipped him. Queer business, anyhow, wasn't it? Who'd ha' thought he was like that?"

He had talked his unwonted emotion quite out, and now looked at his brother with his usual matter-of-fact eye. "Did you tell the station agent to hold the trunk?"

The other, who was the younger, looked a

little abashed. "Well, no; I found the train was so late I thought maybe we could . . . you know, there's that business tomorrow . . ."

His senior relieved him of embarrassment. "That's a good idea. Sure we can. There's nothing we could do if we stayed. It's just a notion of Aunt 'Melia's, anyhow. I agree with her that it don't look so awfully like Uncle Grid, but, then, oil-portraits are never any good. Give me a photograph!"

"It's out of our line, anyhow," agreed the younger, looking at his watch.

III

The president of Middletown College had been as much relieved as pleased by the success of the rather pretentious celebration he had planned. His annoyance was correspondingly keen at the disturbing appearance, in the afternoon reception before the new portrait, of the late professor's aunt, "an entirely insignificant old country woman," he hastily assured M. Fallères after she had been half forced, half persuaded to retire, "whose criticisms were as negligible as her personality."

The tall, Jove-like artist concealed a smile by stroking his great brown beard. When it came to insignificant country people, he told himself, it was hard to draw lines in his present company. He was wondering whether he might not escape by an earlier train.

To the president's remark he answered that no portrait-painter escaped unreasonable relatives of his sitters. "It is an axiom with our guild," he went on, not, perhaps, averse to giving his provincial hosts a new sensation, "that the family is never satisfied, and also that the family has no rights. A sitter is a subject only, like a slice of fish. The only question is how it's done. What difference does it make a century from now, if the likeness is good? It's a work of art or it's nothing." He announced this principle with a regal absence of explanation and turned away; but his thesis was taken up by another guest, a New York art-critic.

"By Jove, it's inconceivable, the ignorance of art in America!" he told the little group before the portrait. "You find everyone so incurably personal in his point of view . . . always objecting to a masterpiece because the watch-chain isn't the kind usually worn by the dear departed."

Someone else chimed in. "Yes, it's incredible that anyone, even an old village granny, should be able to look at that canvas and not be struck speechless by its quality."

The critic was in Middletown to report on the portrait and he now began marshaling his adjectives for that purpose. "I never saw such use of pigment in my life . . . it makes the Whistler 'Carlyle' look like burnt-out ashes . . . the luminous richness of the blacks in the academic gown, the masterly generalization in the treatment of the hair, the placing of those great talons of hands on the canvas carrying out the vigorous lines of the composition, and the unforgettable felicity of those brutally red lips as the one ringing note of color. As for life-likeness, what's the old dame talking about! I never saw such eyes! Not a hint of meretricious emphasis on their luster and yet they fairly flame."

The conversation spread to a less technical discussion as the group was joined by the professor of rhetoric, an ambitious young man with an insatiable craving for sophistication, who felt himself for once entirely in his element in the crowd of celebrities. "It's incredibly good luck that our little two-for-a-cent college should have so fine a thing," he said knowingly. "I've been wondering how such an old skinflint as Gridley ever got the money loose to have his portrait done by——"

A laugh went around the group at the idea. "It was Mackintosh, the sugar king, who put up for it. He's a great Gridleyite, and persuaded him to sit."

"*Persuade* a man to sit to Fallères!" The rhetoric professor was outraged at the idea.

"Yes, so they say. The professor was dead against it from the first. Fallères himself had to beg him to sit. Fallères said he felt a real inspiration at the sight of the old fellow . . . knew he could make a good thing out of him. He *was* a good subject!"

The little group turned and stared appraisingly at the portrait hanging so close to them that it seemed another living being in their midst. The rhetoric professor was asked what kind of a man the philosopher had been pet-

sonally, and answered briskly: "Oh, nobody knew him personally . . . the silent old codger. He was a dry-as-dust, bloodless, secular monk——"

He was interrupted by a laugh from the art-critic, whose eyes were still on the portrait.

"Excuse me for my cynical mirth," he said, "but I must say he doesn't look it. I was prepared for any characterization but that. He looks like a powerful son of the Renaissance, who might have lived in that one little vacation of the soul after medievalism stopped hag-riding us, and before the modern conscience got its claws on us. And you say he was a blue-nosed Puritan!"

The professor of rhetoric looked an uneasy fear that he was being ridiculed. "I only repeated the village notion of him," he said airily. "He may have been anything. All I know is that he was secretive as a clam, and about as interesting personally."

"Look at the picture," said the critic, still laughing; "you'll know all about him!"

The professor of rhetoric nodded. "You're right, he doesn't look much like my character of him. I never seem to have had a good, square look at him before. I've heard several people say the same thing, that they seemed to understand him better from the portrait than from his living face. There was something about his eyes that kept you from thinking of anything but what he was saying."

The critic agreed. "The eyes are wonderful . . . ruthless in their power . . . fires of hell." He laughed a deprecating apology for his overemphatic metaphor and suggested: "It's possible that there was more to the professorial life than met the eye. Had he a wife?"

"No; it was always a joke in the village that he would never look at a woman."

The critic glanced up at the smoldering eyes of the portrait and smiled. "I've heard of that kind of a man before," he said. "Never known to drink, either, I suppose?"

"Cold-water teetotaler," laughed the professor, catching the spirit of the occasion.

"Look at the color in that nose!" said the critic. "I fancy that the ascetic moralist——"

A very young man, an undergraduate who had been introduced as the junior usher, nodded his head. "Yep, a lot of us fellows always thought old Grid a little too good to be true."

An older man with the flexible mouth of a politician now ventured a contribution to a conversation no longer bafflingly esthetic: "His father, old Governor Gridley, wasn't he . . . Well, I guess you're right about the son. No halos were handed down in *that* family!"

The laugh which followed this speech was stopped by the approach of Fallères, his commanding presence dwarfing the president beside him. He was listening with a good-natured contempt to the apparently rather anxious murmurs of the latter.

"Of course I know, Mr. Fallères, it is a great deal to ask, but she is so insistent . . . she won't go away and continues to make the most distressing spectacle of herself . . . and several people, since she has said so much about it, are saying that the expression is not that of the late professor. Much against my will I promised to speak to you——"

His mortified uneasiness was so great that the artist gave him a rescuing hand. "Well, Mr. President, what can I do in the matter? The man is dead. I cannot paint him over again, and if I could I would only do again as I did this time, choose that aspect which my judgment told me would make the best portrait. If his habitual vacant expression was not so interesting as another not so permanent a habit of his face . . . why, the poor artist must be allowed some choice. I did not know I was to please his grandmother, and not posterity."

"His aunt," corrected the president automatically.

The portrait-painter accepted the correction with his tolerant smile. "His aunt," he repeated. "The difference is considerable. May I ask what it was you promised her?"

The president summoned his courage. It was easy to gather from his infinitely reluctant insistence how painful and compelling had been the scene which forced him to action. "She wants you to change it . . . to make the expression of the——"

For the first time the artist's equanimity was

shaken. He took a step backward. "Change it!" he said, and although his voice was low the casual chat all over the room stopped short as though a pistol had been fired.

"It's not *my* ideal" The president confounded himself in self-exoneration. "I merely promised, to pacify her, to ask you if you could not do some little thing that would——"

The critic assumed the rôle of conciliator. "My dear sir, I don't believe you quite understand what you are asking. It's as though you asked a priest to make just a little change in the church service and leave out the 'not' in the Commandments."

"I only wish to know Mr. Fallères's attitude," said the president stiffly, a little nettled by the other's note of condescension. "I presume he will be willing to take the responsibility of it himself and explain to the professor's aunt that I have done——"

The artist had recovered from his lapse from Olympian calm and now nodded, smiling: "Dear me, yes, Mr. President, I'm used to irate relatives."

The president hastened away and the knot of talkers in other parts of the room, who had been looking with expectant curiosity at the group before the portrait, resumed their loud-toned chatter. When their attention was next drawn in the same direction, it was by a shaky old treble, breaking, quavering with weakness. A small, shabby old woman, leaning on a crutch, stood looking up imploringly at the tall painter.

"My dear madam," he broke in on her with a kindly impatience, "all that you say about Professor Gridley is much to his credit, but what has it to do with me?"

"You painted his portrait," she said with a simplicity that was like stupidity. "And I am his aunt. You made a picture of a bad man. I know he was a good man."

"I painted what I saw," sighed the artist wearily. He looked furtively at his watch.

The old woman seemed dazed by the extremity of her emotion. She looked about her silently, keeping her eyes averted from the portrait that stood so vividly like a living man beside her. "I don't know what to do!" she murmured with a little moan. "I can't *bear* it to have it stay here—people forget so. Everybody'll think that Gridley looked like *that!* And there isn't anybody but me. He never had anybody but me."

The critic tried to clear the air by a roundly declaratory statement of principles. "You'll pardon my bluntness, madam; but you must remember that none but the members of Professor Gridley's family are concerned in the exact details of his appearance. Fifty years from now nobody will remember how he looked, one way or the other. The world is only concerned with portraits as works of art."

She followed his reasoning with a strained and docile attention and now spoke eagerly as though struck by an unexpected hope: "If that's all, why put his name to it? Just hang it up, and call it anything."

She shrank together timidly and her eyes reddened at the laughter which greeted this naïve suggestion.

Fallères looked annoyed and called his defender off. "Oh, never mind explaining me," he said, snapping his watch shut. "You'll never get the rights of it through anybody's head who hasn't himself sweat blood over a composition only to be told that the other side of the sitter's profile is usually considered the prettier. After all, we have the last word, since the sitter dies and the portrait lives."

The old woman started and looked at him attentively.

"Yes," said the critic, laughing, "immortality's not a bad balm for pin-pricks."

The old woman turned very pale and for the first time looked again at the portrait. An electric thrill seemed to pass through her as her eyes encountered the bold, evil ones fixed on her. She stood erect with a rigid face, and "Immortality!" she said, under her breath.

Fallères moved away to make his adieux to the president, and the little group of his satellites straggled after him to the other end of the room. For a moment there was no one near the old woman to see the crutch furiously upraised, hammer-like, or to stop her sudden passionate rush upon the picture.

At the sound of crackling cloth, they turned back, horrified. They saw her, with an insane violence, thrust her hands into the gaping hole that had been the portrait's face and, tear-

ing the canvas from end to end, fall upon the shreds with teeth and talon.

All but Fallères flung themselves toward her, dragging her away. With a movement as instinctive he rushed for the picture, and it was to him, as he stood aghast before the ruined canvas, that the old woman's shrill treble was directed, above the loud shocked voices of those about her: "There ain't anything immortal but souls!" she cried.

1915

# 1871 ~ *Theodore Dreiser* ~ —

DREISER was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, of German immigrant parents, the twelfth child in a family of thirteen. His father was given to an intense religiosity almost fanatical in its manifestations, against which the boy rebelled at a very early age, and which by its negative influence colored his mature philosophy of life. The mother, on the other hand, was a somewhat dreamy and poetic soul, whose justness and sympathy endeared her to the son. Although the family had to contend with poverty, and unremitting toil and economy were necessary to keep the family larder supplied, young Dreiser made his way through the public schools of his native state, and into the local university, which he left, however, before taking a degree.

The reading of Eugene Field's "Sharps and Flats" column in the *Chicago Daily News* awakened his desire to become a writer. His ambition led him in 1892 to Chicago, where he secured a position on the staff of the *Chicago Globe*. In search of advancement, he went to St. Louis, and for the next two years he was employed by the *Globe-Democrat* and the *Republican*. Dissatisfied with his prospects and encouraged by friends to seek the larger opportunities in the East, he went to New York, where for a number of years he edited several second-rate magazines and did special editorial work for *Harper's*, *McClure's*, *Century*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Munsey's*. As editor-in-chief of all the Butterick publications, a position to which he was appointed in 1907, he achieved signal success both in increasing the subscription lists and in stimulating the intellectual interest of the readers. He retired from editorial work in 1910.

As early as 1900 he had brought out *Sister Carrie*, his first novel, enthusiastically received by Frank Norris, but viewed askance by the critics on account of its extreme frankness, and consequently withdrawn from circulation. The American attitude changed somewhat in the course of the decade, and *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911) was received with less antagonism. *The Financier* (1912) and *The Titan* (1914) deal with big business, while *The "Genius"* (1915) is concerned with artist life, and is largely autobiographical. In 1925 he published *An American Tragedy* in which, against a meticulously drawn background, he portrays what he conceives to be the

essentially tragic struggle of the inept and helpless. He also published several volumes of autobiography—*A Traveller at Forty* (1913), *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916), and *A Book About Myself* (1922)—as well as *Plays of the Natural and Supernatural* (1916) and *Free and Other Stories* (1918) and *Chains* (1927), collections of "lesser novels and stories." His political views find expression in such books as *Dreiser Looks at Russia* (1928) and *Tragic America* (1931). His solution for the current social ills lies in a socialistic control of the economic system for the benefit of the people.

To understand Dreiser one must have some knowledge of his naturalistic philosophy, inspired, to be sure, by science. In this philosophy, described in *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub* (1920), change is the only changeless factor. Life has no significance beyond the limits of experience. Human destiny is determined by environment, a succession of physico-chemical reactions, beyond the control of the individual, and therefore no responsibility of his. Man is swept along by blind forces, apparently causeless, from which he can get no help unless by "accident or per adventure." To him life has neither meaning nor moral purpose; it is merely a "struggle for existence" in various forms, and divides humanity not into the good and the bad, but into the strong and weak.

In the light of this outlook and philosophy, life becomes for the artist "a thing to be observed, studied, interpreted," "our one great realm of discovery," and art becomes a recording of the facts of life as discovered. Throughout his career Dreiser has manifested the reporter's intense curiosity and passion for fact, unflagging attention to detail—traits which explain at least partially the ponderous quality of the novels. Nothing is allowed to stand between the observing and recording artist and the procession of the changing facts of life; the artist must be free and unhampered in his endeavor "to observe, synchronize, and orientate human knowledge in the most comprehensive form." The novelist is therefore a glorified reporter. Dreiser holds out little hope for great art in America because of the prevailing puritanical attitude and tradesmen's atmosphere. Under these conditions there can be no original thinking, and consequently no leadership (cf. "Life, Art and America," in *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub*).

In the course of the controversies which have raged about Dreiser, he has been subject to savage attacks. His assumption that human conduct revolves rather closely around the focal center of sex, and his utter frankness in portraying this conduct aroused violent reactions and opinions. Stuart Pratt Sherman attacked his "representations of animal behavior"; H. L. Mencken and Randolph Bourne rose vehemently to his defense. The controversies have died down, and Dreiser has achieved a definite place in contemporary letters, the acknowledged leader of the "naturalists" in fiction. He wrote during a period of great uncertainty in every phase of life. His insistence on mere observation, his refusal to assume any social responsi-

bility, as Norris did, and the meticulous recording of what he saw are the most representative traits.

Dreiser's novels are *Sister Carrie* (1900); *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911); *The Financier* (1912); *The Titan* (1914); *The "Genius"* (1915); *An American Tragedy* (1925). The short stories are collected in *Free* (1918); *Twelve Men* (1919); *Chains* (1927); *A Gallery of Women* (2 vols., 1929). The following are books of travel, description, and social criticism: *A Traveller at Forty* (1913); *A Hoosier Holiday* (1916); *The Color of a Great City* (1923); *Dreiser Looks at Russia* (1928); *Tragic America* (1932). *Moods, Cadenced and Declaimed* (1926) and *Moods, Philosophic and Emotional, Cadenced and Declaimed* (1935) contain his poetry. *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub* (1920) is a volume of essays. In the field of the drama he has published *Plays of the Natural and the Supernatural* (1916); *The Hand of the Potter* (1918). *A Book About Myself* (1922 reissued as *Newspaper Days*, 1931) and *Dawn* (1931) are autobiographical. For biographical information see D. Dudley, *Forgotten Frontiers* (1932); F. Harris, *Contemporary Portraits* (2nd series, 1919); E. Boyd, *Portraits: Real and Imaginary* (1924); D. Karsner, *Sixteen Authors to One* (1928); E. D. McDonald, "Dreiser Before 'Sister Carrie,'" *Bookman*, June, 1928; *The Intimate Notebooks of George Jean Nathan* (1932); I. Schneider, "Theodore Dreiser," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Mar. 10, 1934. The following provide helpful criticism: T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); S. P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature* (1917); S. P. Sherman, *The Main Stream* (1927); V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); B. Rascoe, *Prometheans* (1933); H. L. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces* (1917); H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); J. B. Cabell, *Some of Us* (1930); E. H. Smith, "Dreiser—After Twenty Years," *American Mercury*, Jan., 1926; R. Michaud, *The American Novel of To-day* (1928); G. B. Munson, *Destinations* (1928); C. R. Walker, "How Big Is Dreiser," *Bookman*, April, 1926; L. Jones, "An American Tragedy," in L. W. Smith, ed., *Current Reviews* (1926); R. Shafer, "An American Tragedy," in N. Foerster, ed., *Humanism and America* (1930); M. Waldman, "German-American Insurgent," *Living Age*, Oct. 1, 1926; J. C. Squire, *Contemporary American Authors* (1928).

## THE HAND

### I

DAVIDSON could distinctly remember that it was between two and three years after the grisly event in the Monte Orte range—the sickening and yet deserved end of Mersereau, his quondam partner and fellow adventurer—that anything to be identified with Mersereau's malice toward him, and with Mersereau's probable present existence in the spirit world, had appeared in his life.

He and Mersereau had worked long together as prospectors, investors, developers of property. It was only after they had struck it rich in the Klondike that Davidson had grown so much more apt and shrewd in all commercial and financial matters, whereas Mersereau had seemed to stand still—not to rise to the splendid opportunities which then opened to him. Why, in some of those later deals it had not been possible for Davidson even to introduce his old partner to some of the moneyed men he had to deal with. Yet Mersereau had insisted, as his right, if you please, on being "in on" everything—everything!

Take that wonderful Monte Orte property, the cause of all the subsequent horror. He, Davidson—not Mersereau—had discovered or heard of the mine, and had carried it along, with old Besmer as a tool or decoy—Besmer being the ostensible factor—until it was all ready for him to take over and sell or develop. Then it was that Mersereau, having been for so long his partner, demanded a full half—a

third, at least—on the ground that they had once agreed to work together in all these things.

Think of it! And Mersereau growing duller and less useful and more disagreeable day by day, and year by year! Indeed, toward the last he had threatened to expose the trick by which jointly, seven years before, they had possessed themselves of the Skyute Pass Mine; to drive Davidson out of public and financial life, to have him arrested and tried—along with himself, of course. Think of that!

But he had fixed him—yes, he had, damn him! He had trailed Mersereau that night to old Besmer's cabin on the Monte Orte, when Besmer was away. Mersereau had gone there with the intention of stealing the diagram of the new field, and had secured it, true enough. A thief he was, damn him. Yet, just as he was making safely away, as he thought, he, Davidson, had struck him cleanly over the ear with that heavy rail-bolt fastened to the end of a walnut stick, and the first blow had done for him.

Lord, how the bone above Mersereau's ear had sounded when it cracked! And how bloody one side of that bolt was! Mersereau hadn't had time to do anything before he was helpless. He hadn't died instantly, though, but had turned over and faced him, Davidson, with that savage, scowling face of his and those blazing, animal eyes.

Lying half propped up on his left elbow, Mersereau had reached out toward him with that big, rough, bony right hand of his—the right with which he always boasted of having done so much damage on this, that, and the other occasion—had glared at him as much as to say:

"Oh, if I could only reach you just for a moment before I go!"

Then it was that he, Davidson, had lifted the club again. Horrified as he was, and yet determined that he must save his own life, he had finished the task, dragging the body back to an old fissure behind the cabin and covering it with branches, a great pile of pine fronds, and as many as one hundred and fifty boulders, great and small, and had left his victim. It was a sickening job and a sickening sight, but it had to be.

Then, having finished, he had slipped dismally away, like a jackal, thinking of that hand in the moonlight, held up so savagely, and that look. Nothing might have come of that either, if he hadn't been inclined to brood on it so much, on the fierceness of it.

No, nothing had happened. A year had passed, and if anything had been going to turn up it surely would have by then. He, Davidson, had gone first to New York, later to Chicago, to dispose of the Monte Orte claim. Then, after two years, he had returned here to Mississippi, where he was enjoying comparative peace. He was looking after some sugar property which had once belonged to him, and which he was now able to reclaim and put in charge of his sister as a home against a rainy day. He had no other.

But that body back there! That hand uplifted in the moonlight—to clutch him if it could! Those eyes.

## II—June, 1905

Take that first year, for instance, when he had returned to Gatchard in Mississippi, whence both he and Mersereau had originally issued. After looking after his own property he had gone out to a tumble-down estate of his uncle's in Issaqueena County—a leaky old slope-roofed house where, in a bedroom on the top floor, he had had his first experience with the significance or reality of the hand.

Yes, that was where first he had really seen it pictured in that curious, unbelievable way; only who would believe that it was Mersereau's hand? They would say it was an accident, chance, rain dropping down. But the hand had appeared on the ceiling of that room just as sure as anything, after a heavy rainstorm—it was almost a cyclone—when every chink in the old roof had seemed to leak water.

During the night, after he had climbed to the room by way of those dismal stairs with their great landing and small glass oil-lamp he carried, and had sunk to rest, or tried to, in the heavy, wide, damp bed, thinking, as he always did those days, of the Monte Orte and Mersereau, the storm had come up. As he had listened to the wind moaning outside he had heard first the scratch, scratch, scratch, of some limb, no doubt, against the wall—sounding,

or so it seemed in his feverish unrest, like some one penning an indictment against him with a worn, rusty pen.

And then, the storm growing worse, and in a fit of irritation and self-contempt at his own nervousness, he had gone to the window, but just as lightning struck a branch of the tree nearest the window and so very near him, too —as though some one, something, was seeking to strike him—(Mersereau?) and as though he had been lured by that scratching. God! He had retreated, feeling that it was meant for him.

But that big, knotted hand painted on the ceiling by the dripping water during the night! There it was, right over him when he awoke, outlined or painted as if with wet, gray whitewash against the wretched but normally pale-blue of the ceiling when dry. There it was—a big, open hand just like Mersereau's as he had held it up that night—huge, knotted, rough, the fingers extended as if tense and clutching. And, if you will believe it, near it was something that looked like a pen—an old, long-handled pen—to match that scratch, scratch, scratch!

"Huldah," he had inquired of the old black mammy who entered in the morning to bring him fresh water and throw open the shutters, "what does that look like to you up there— that patch on the ceiling where the rain came through?"

He wanted to reassure himself as to the character of the thing he saw—that it might not be a creation of his own feverish imagination, accentuated by the dismal character of this place.

"'Pears t' me mo' like a big han' 'an anythin' else, Marse Davi'son," commented Huldah, pausing and staring upward. "Mo' like a big fist, kinda. Dat air's a new drip come las' night, I reckon. Dis here old place ain' gonna hang togethah much longah, less'n some repairin' be done mighty quick now. Yassir, dat air's a new drop, sho's yo' bo'n, en it come on'y las' night. I hain't never seed dat befo'."

And then he had inquired, thinking of the fierceness of the storm:

"Huldah, do you have many such storms up this way?"

"Good gracious, Marse Davi'son, we hain't seed no sech blow en—en come three years now. I hain't seed no sech lightnin' en I doan' know when."

Wasn't that strange, that it should all come on the night, of all nights, when he was there? And no such other storm in three years!

Huldah stared idly, always ready to go slow and rest, if possible, whereas he had turned irritably. To be annoyed by ideas such as this! To always be thinking of that Monte Orte affair! Why couldn't he forget it? Wasn't it Mersereau's own fault? He never would have killed the man if he hadn't been forced to it.

And to be haunted in this way, making mountains out of mole-hills, as he thought then! It must be his own miserable fancy— and yet Mersereau had looked so threateningly at him. That glance had boded something; it was too terrible not to.

Davidson might not want to think of it, but how could he stop? Mersereau might not be able to hurt him any more, at least not on this earth; but still, couldn't he? Didn't the appearance of this hand seem to indicate that he might? He was dead, of course. His body, his skeleton, was under that pile of rocks and stones, some of them as big as washtubs. Why worry over that, and after two years? And still—

That hand on the ceiling!

### III—December, 1905

Then, again, take that matter of meeting Pringle in Gatchard just at that time, within the same week. It was due to Davidson's sister. She had invited Mr. and Mrs. Pringle in to meet him one evening, without telling him that they were spiritualists and might discuss spiritualism.

Clairvoyance, Pringle called it, or seeing what can't be seen with material eyes, and clairaudience, or hearing what can't be heard with material ears, as well as materialization, or ghosts, and table-rapping, and the like. Table-rapping—that damned tap-tapping that he had been hearing ever since!

It was Pringle's fault, really. Pringle had persisted in talking. He, Davidson, wouldn't have listened, except that he somehow became fascinated by what Pringle said concerning what he had heard and seen in his time. Mer-

sereau must have been at the bottom of that, too.

At any rate, after he had listened, he was sorry, for Pringle had had time to fill his mind full of those awful facts or ideas which had since harassed him so much—all that stuff about drunkards, degenerates, and weak people generally being followed about by vile, evil spirits and used to effect those spirits' purposes or desires in this world. Horrible!

Wasn't it terrible? Pringle—big, mushy, creature that he was, sickly and stagnant like a springless pool—insisted that he had even seen clouds of these spirits about drunkards, degenerates, and the like, in street-cars, on trains, and about vile corners at night. Once, he said, he had seen just one evil spirit—think of that!—following a certain man all the time, at his left elbow—a dark, evil, red-eyed thing, until finally the man had been killed in a quarrel.

Pringle described their shapes, these spirits, as varied. They were small, dark, irregular clouds, with red or green spots somewhere for eyes, changing in form and becoming longish or round like a jellyfish, or even like a misshapen cat or dog. They could take any form at will—even that of a man.

Once, Pringle declared, he had seen as many as fifty about a drunkard who was staggering down a street, all of them trying to urge him into the nearest saloon, so that they might reexperience in some vague way the sensation of drunkenness, which at some time or other they themselves, having been drunkards in life, had enjoyed!

It would be the same with a drug fiend, or indeed with any one of weak or evil habits. They gathered about such an one like flies, their red or green eyes glowing—attempting to get something from them perhaps, if nothing more than a little sense of their old earth-life.

The whole thing was so terrible and disturbing at the time, particularly that idea of men being persuaded or influenced to murder, that he, Davidson, could stand it no longer, and got up and left. But in his room upstairs he meditated on it, standing before his mirror. Suddenly—would he ever forget it—as he was taking off his collar and tie, he had heard that queer tap, tap, tap, right on his dressing-table or under it, and for the first time, which Pringle said, ghosts made when table-rapping in answer to a call, or to give warning of their presence.

Then something said to him, almost as clearly as if he heard it:

"*This is me, Mersereau, come back at last to get you! Pringle was just an excuse of mine to let you know I was coming, and so was that hand in that old house, in Issaqueena County. It was mine! I will be with you from now on. Don't think I will ever leave you!*"

It had frightened and made him half sick, so wrought up was he. For the first time he felt cold chills run up and down his spine—the creeps. He felt as if some one were standing over him—Mersereau, of course—only he could not see or hear a thing, just that faint tap at first, growing louder a little later, and quite angry when he tried to ignore it.

People did live, then, after they were dead, especially evil people—people stronger than you, perhaps. They had the power to come back, to haunt, to annoy you if they didn't like anything you had done to them. No doubt Mersereau was following him in the hope of revenge, there in the spirit world, just outside this one, close at his heels, like that evil spirit attending the other man whom Pringle had described.

## IV—February, 1906

Take that case of the hand impressed on the soft dough and plaster of Paris, described in an article that he had picked up in the dentist's office out there in Pasadena—Mersereau's very hand, so far as he could judge. How about that for a coincidence, picking up the magazine with that disturbing article about psychic materialization in Italy, and later in Berne, Switzerland, where the scientists were gathered to investigate that sort of thing? And just when he was trying to rid himself finally of the notion that any such thing could be!

According to that magazine article, some old crone over in Italy—spiritualist, or witch, or something—had got together a crowd of experimentalists or professors in an abandoned house on an almost deserted island off the coast of Sardinia. There they had conducted experiments with spirits, which they called

materialization, getting the impression of the fingers of a hand, or of a whole hand and arm, or of a face, on a plate of glass covered with soot, the plate being locked in a small safe on the center of a table about which they sat!

He, Davidson, couldn't understand, of course, how it was done, but done it was. There in that magazine were half a dozen pictures, reproductions of photographs of a hand, an arm and a face—or a part of one, anyhow. And if they looked like anything, they looked exactly like Mersereau's! Hadn't Pringle, there in Gatchard, Miss., stated spirits could move anywhere, over long distances, with the speed of light. And would it be any trick for Mersereau to appear there at Sardinia, and then engineer this magazine into his presence, here in Los Angeles? Would it? It would not. Spirits were free and powerful *over there*, perhaps.

There was not the least doubt that these hands, these partial impressions of a face, were those of Mersereau. Those big knuckles! That long, heavy, humped nose and big jaw! Whose else could they be?—they were Mersereau's, intended, when they were made over there in Italy, for him, Davidson, to see later here in Los Angeles. Yes, they were! And looking at that sinister face reproduced in the magazine, it seemed to say, with Mersereau's old coarse sneer:

"*You see? You can't escape me! I'm showing you how much alive I am over here, just as I was on earth. And I'll get you yet, even if I have to go farther than Italy to do it!*"

It was amazing, the shock he took from that. It wasn't just that alone, but the persistence and repetition of this hand business. What could it mean? Was it really Mersereau's hand? As for the face, it wasn't all there—just the jaw, mouth, cheek, left temple, and a part of the nose and eye; but it was Mersereau's, all right. He had gone clear over there into Italy somewhere, in a lone house on an island, to get this message of his undying hate back to him. Or was it just spirits, evil spirits, bent on annoying him because he was nervous and sensitive now?

## V—October, 1906

Even new crowded hotels and new buildings weren't the protection he had at first hoped and thought they would be. Even there you weren't safe—not from a man like Mersereau. Take that incident there in Los Angeles, and again in Seattle, only two months ago now, when Mersereau was able to make that dreadful explosive or crashing sound, as if one had burst a huge paper bag full of air, or upset a china closet full of glass and broken everything, when as a matter of fact nothing at all had happened. It had frightened him horribly the first two or three times, believing as he did that something fearful had happened. Finding that it was nothing—or Mersereau—he was becoming used to it now; but other people, unfortunately, were not.

He would be—as he had been that first time—sitting in his room perfectly still and trying to amuse himself, or not to think, when suddenly there would be that awful crash. It was astounding! Other people heard it, of course. They had in Los Angeles. A maid and a porter had come running the first time to inquire, and he had had to protest that he had heard nothing. They couldn't believe it at first, and had gone to other rooms to look. When it happened the second time, the management had protested, thinking it was a joke he was playing; and to avoid the risk of exposure he had left.

After that he could not keep a valet or nurse about him for long. Servants wouldn't stay, and managers of hotels wouldn't let him remain when such things went on. Yet he couldn't live in a house or apartment alone, for there the noises and atmospheric conditions would be worse than ever.

## VI—June, 1907

Take that last old house he had been in—but never would be in again!—at Anne Haven. There he actually visualized the hand—a thing as big as a washtub at first, something like smoke or shadow in a black room moving about over the bed and everywhere. Then, as he lay there, gazing at it spellbound, it condensed slowly, and he began to feel it. It was now a hand of normal size—there was no doubt of it in the world—going over him softly, without force, as a ghostly hand must, having no real physical strength, but all the time with a strange, electric, secretive some-

thing about it, as if it were not quite sure of itself, and not quite sure that he was really there.

The hand, or so it seemed—God!—moved right up to his neck and began to feel over that as he lay there. Then it was that he guessed just what it was that Mersereau was after.

It was just like a hand, the fingers and thumb made into a circle and pressed down over his throat, only it moved over him gently at first, because it really couldn't do anything yet, not having the material strength. But the intention! The sense of cruel, savage determination that went with it!

And yet, if one went to a nerve specialist or doctor about all this, as he did afterward, what did the doctor say? He had tried to describe how he was breaking down under the strain, how he could not eat or sleep on account of all these constant tappings and noises; but the moment he even began to hint at his experiences, especially the hand or the noises, the doctor exclaimed:

"Why, this is plain delusion! You're nervously run down, that's all that ails you—on the verge of pernicious anemia, I should say. You'll have to watch yourself as to this illusion about spirits. Get it out of your mind. There's nothing to it!"

Wasn't that just like one of these nerve specialists, bound up in their little ideas of what they knew or saw, or thought they saw?

## VII—November, 1907

And now take this very latest development at Battle Creek recently where he had gone trying to recuperate on the diet there. Hadn't Mersereau, implacable demon that he was, developed this latest trick of making his food taste queer to him—unpalatable, or with an odd odor?

He, Davidson, knew it was Mersereau, for he felt him beside him at the table whenever he sat down. Besides, he seemed to hear something—clairaudience was what they called it, he understood—he was beginning to develop that, too, now! It was Mersereau, of course, saying in a voice which was more like a memory of a voice than anything real—the voice of some one you could remember as having spoken in a certain way, say, ten years or more ago:

*"I've fixed it so you can't eat any more, you—"*

There followed a long list of vile expletives, enough in itself to sicken one.

Thereafter, in spite of anything he could do to make himself think to the contrary, knowing that the food was all right, really, Davidson found it to have an odor or a taste which disgusted him, and which he could not overcome, try as he would. The management assured him that it was all right, as he knew it was—for others. He saw them eating it. But he couldn't—had to get up and leave, and the little he could get down he couldn't retain, or it wasn't enough for him to live on. God, he would die, this way! Starve, as he surely was doing by degrees now.

And Mersereau always seeming to be standing by. Why, if it weren't for fresh fruit on the stands at times, and just plain, fresh-baked bread in bakers' windows, which he could buy and eat quickly, he might not be able to live at all. It was getting to that pass!

## VIII—August, 1908

That wasn't the worst, either, bad as all that was. The worst was the fact that under the strain of all this he was slowly but surely breaking down, and that in the end Mersereau might really succeed in driving him out of life here—to do what, if anything, to him there? What? It was such an evil pack by which he was surrounded, now, those who lived just on the other side and hung about the earth, vile, debauched creatures, as Pringle had described them, and as Davidson had come to know for himself, fearing them and their ways so much, and really seeing them at times.

Since he had come to be so weak and sensitive, he could see them for himself—vile things that they were, swimming before his gaze in the dark whenever he chanced to let himself be in the dark, which was not often—friends of Mersereau, no doubt, and inclined to help him just for the evil of it.

For this long time now Davidson had taken to sleeping with the light on, wherever he was, only tying a handkerchief over his eyes to keep out some of the glare. Even then he could see them—queer, misshapen things, for all the

world like wavy, stringy jellyfish or coils of thick, yellowish-black smoke, moving about, changing in form at times, yet always looking dirty or vile, somehow, and with those queer, dim, reddish or greenish glows for eyes. It was sickening!

## IX—October, 1908

Having accomplished so much, Mersereau would by no means be content to let him go. Davidson knew that! He could talk to him occasionally now, or at least could hear him and answer back, if he chose, when he was alone and quite certain that no one was listening.

Mersereau was always saying, when Davidson would listen to him at all—which he wouldn't often—that he would get him yet, that he would make him pay, or charging him with fraud and murder.

*"I'll choke you yet!"* The words seemed to float in from somewhere, as if he were remembering that at some time Mersereau had said just that in his angry, savage tone—not as if he heard it; and yet he was hearing it of course.

*"I'll choke you yet! You can't escape! You may think you'll die a natural death, but you won't, and that's why I'm poisoning your food to weaken you. You can't escape! I'll get you, sick or well, when you can't help yourself, when you're sleeping. I'll choke you, just as you hit me with that club. That's why you're always seeing and feeling this hand of mine! I'm not alone. I've nearly had you many a time already, only you have managed to wriggle out so far, jumping up, but some day you won't be able to—see? Then——"*

The voice seemed to die away at times, even in the middle of a sentence, but at the other times—often, often—he could hear it completing the full thought. Sometimes he would turn on the thing and exclaim:

"Oh, go to the devil!" or, "Let me alone!" or, "Shut up!" Even in a closed room and all alone, such remarks seemed strange to him, addressed to a ghost; but he couldn't resist at times, annoyed as he was. Only he took good care not to talk if any one was about.

It was getting so that there was no real place for him outside of an asylum, for often he would get up screaming at night—he had to, so sharp was the clutch on his throat—and then always, wherever he was, a servant would come in and want to know what was the matter. He would have to say that it was a nightmare—only the management always requested him to leave after the second or third time, say, or after an explosion or two. It was horrible!

He might as well apply to a private asylum or sanatorium now, having all the money he had, and explain that he had delusions—delusions. Imagine!—and ask to be taken care of. In a place like that they wouldn't be disturbed by his jumping up and screaming at night, feeling that he was being choked, as he was, or by his leaving the table because he couldn't eat the food, or by his talking back to Mersereau, should they chance to hear him, or by the noises when they occurred.

They could assign him a special nurse and a special room, if he wished—only he didn't wish to be too much alone. They could put him in charge of some one who would understand all these things, or to whom he could explain. He couldn't expect ordinary people, or hotels catering to ordinary people, to put up with him any more. Mersereau and his friends made too much trouble.

He must go and hunt up a good place somewhere where they understood such things, or at least tolerated them, and explain, and then it would all pass for the hallucinations of a crazy man,—though, as a matter of fact, he wasn't crazy at all. It was all too real, only the average or so-called normal person couldn't see or hear as he could—hadn't experienced what he had.

## X—December, 1908

"The trouble is, doctor, that Mr. Davidson is suffering from the delusion that he is pursued by evil spirits. He was not committed here by any court, but came of his own accord about four months ago, and we let him wander about here at will. But he seems to be growing worse, as time goes on.

"One of his worst delusions, doctor, is that there is one spirit in particular who is trying to choke him to death. Dr. Major, our superintendent, says he has incipient tuberculosis of

the throat, with occasional spasmodic contractions. There are small lumps or calluses here and there as though caused by outside pressure and yet our nurse assures us that there is no such outside irritation. He won't believe that; but whenever he tries to sleep, especially in the middle of the night, he will jump up and come running out into the hall, insisting that one of these spirits, which he insists are after him, is trying to choke him to death. He really seems to believe it, for he comes out coughing and choking and feeling at his neck as if some one has been trying to strangle him. He always explains the whole matter to me as being the work of evil spirits, and asks me to not pay any attention to him unless he calls for help or rings his call-bell; and so I never think anything more of it now unless he does.

"Another of his ideas is that these same spirits do something to his food—put poison in it, or give it a bad odor or taste, so that he can't eat it. When he does find anything he can eat, he grabs it and almost swallows it whole, before, as he says, the spirits have time to do anything to it. Once, he says, he weighed more than two hundred pounds, but now he only weighs one hundred and twenty. His case is exceedingly strange and pathetic, doctor!

"Dr. Major insists that it is purely a delusion, that so far as being choked is concerned, it is the incipient tuberculosis, and that his stomach trouble comes from the same thing; but by association of ideas, or delusion, he thinks some one is trying to choke him and poison his food, when it isn't so at all. Dr. Major says that he can't imagine what could have started it. He is always trying to talk to Mr. Davidson about it, but whenever he begins to ask him questions, Mr. Davidson refuses to talk, and gets up and leaves.

"One of the peculiar things about his idea of being choked, doctor, is that when he is merely dozing he always wakes up in time, and has the power to throw it off. He claims that the strength of these spirits is not equal to his own when he is awake, or even dozing, but when he's asleep their strength is greater and that then they may injure him. Sometimes, when he has had a fright like this, he will come out in the hall and down to my desk there at the lower end, and ask if he mayn't sit there by me. He says it calms him. I always tell him yes, but it won't be five minutes before he'll get up and leave again, saying that he's being annoyed, or that he won't be able to contain himself if he stays any longer, because of the remarks being made over his shoulder or in his ear.

"Often he'll say: 'Did you hear that, Miss Liggett? It's astonishing, the low, vile things that man can say at times!' When I say, 'No, I didn't hear,' he always says, 'I'm so glad!' "

"No one has ever tried to relieve him of this by hypnotism, I suppose?"

"Not that I know of, doctor. Dr. Major may have tried it. I have only been here three months."

"Tuberculosis is certainly the cause of the throat trouble, as Dr. Major says, and as for the stomach trouble, that comes from the same thing—natural enough under the circumstances. We may have to resort to hypnotism a little later. I'll see. In the meantime you'd better caution all who come in touch with him never to sympathize, or even to seem to believe in anything he imagines is being done to him. It will merely encourage him in his notions. And get him to take his medicine regularly; it won't cure, but it will help. Dr. Major has asked me to give especial attention to his case, and I want the conditions as near right as possible."

"Yes, sir."

XI—January, 1909

The trouble with these doctors was that they really knew nothing of anything save what was on the surface, the little they had learned at a medical college or in practice—chiefly how certain drugs, tried by their predecessors in certain cases, were known to act. They had no imagination whatever, even when you tried to tell them.

Take that latest young person who was coming here now in his good clothes and with his car, fairly bursting with his knowledge of what he called psychiatrics, looking into Davidson's eyes so hard, and smoothing his temples and throat—massage, he called it—saying that he had incipient tuberculosis of

the throat and stomach trouble, and utterly disregarding the things which he, Davidson, could personally see and hear! Imagine the fellow trying to persuade him, at this late date, that all that was wrong with him was tuberculosis, that he didn't see Mersereau standing right beside him at times, bending over him, holding up that hand and telling him how he intended to kill him yet—that it was all an allusion!

Imagine saying that Mersereau couldn't actually seize him by the throat when he was asleep, or nearly so, when Davidson himself, looking at his throat in the mirror, could see the actual finger prints,—Mersereau's,—for a moment or so afterward. At any rate, his throat was red and sore from being clutched, as Mersereau of late was able to clutch him! And that was the cause of these lumps. And to say, as they had said at first, that he himself was making them by rubbing and feeling his throat, and that it was tuberculosis!

Wasn't it enough to make one want to quit the place? If it weren't for Miss Liggett and Miss Koehler, his private nurse, and their devoted care, he would. That Miss Koehler was worth her weight in gold, learning his ways as she had, being so uniformly kind, and bearing with his difficulties so genially. He would leave her something in his will.

To leave this place and go elsewhere, though, unless he could take her along, would be folly. And anyway, where else would he go? Here at least were other people, patients like himself, who could understand and could sympathize with him,—people who weren't convinced as were these doctors that all that he complained of was mere delusion. Imagine! Old Rankin, the lawyer, for instance, who had suffered untold persecution from one living person and another, mostly politicians, was convinced that his, Davidson's, troubles were genuine, and liked to hear about them, just as did Miss Koehler. These two did not insist, as the doctors did, that he had slow tuberculosis of the throat, and could live a long time and overcome his troubles if he would. They were merely companionable at such times as Mersereau would give him enough peace to be sociable.

The only real trouble, though, was that he was growing so weak from lack of sleep and food—his inability to eat the food which his enemy bewitched and to sleep at night on account of the choking—that he couldn't last much longer. This new physician whom Dr. Major had called into consultation in regard to his case was insisting that along with his throat trouble he was suffering from acute anemia, due to long undernourishment, and that only a solution of strychnin injected into the veins would help him. But as to Mersereau poisoning his food—not a word would he hear. Besides, now that he was practically bedridden, not able to jump up as freely as before, he was subject to a veritable storm of bedevilment at the hands of Mersereau. Not only could he see—especially toward evening, and in the very early hours of the morning—Mersereau hovering about him like a black shadow, a great, bulky shadow—yet like him in outline, but he could feel his enemy's hand moving over him. Worse, behind or about him he often saw a veritable cloud of evil creatures, companions or tools of Mersereau's, who were there to help him and who kept swimming about like fish in dark waters, and seemed to eye the procedure with satisfaction.

When food was brought to him, early or late, and in whatever form, Mersereau and they were there, close at hand, as thick as flies, passing over and through it in an evident attempt to spoil it before he could eat it. Just to see them doing it was enough to poison it for him. Besides, he could hear their voices urging Mersereau to do it.

"*That's right—poison it!*"

"*He can't last much longer!*"

"*Soon he'll be weak enough so that when you grip him he will really die!*"

It was thus that they actually talked—he could hear them.

He also heard vile phrases addressed to him by Mersereau, the iterated and reiterated words "murderer" and "swindler" and "cheat," there in the middle of the night. Often, although the light was still on, he saw as many as seven dark figures, very much like Mersereau's, although different, gathered close about him,—like men in consultation—evil men. Some of them sat upon his bed, and it seemed as if

they were about to help Mersereau to finish him, adding their hands to his.

Behind them again was a complete circle of all those evil, swimming things with green and red eyes, always watching—helping, probably. He had actually felt the pressure of the hand to grow stronger of late, when they were all there. Only, just before he felt he was going to faint, and because he could not spring up any more, he invariably screamed or gasped a choking gasp and held his finger on the button which would bring Miss Koehler. Then she would come, lift him up, and fix his pillows. She also always assured him that it was only the inflammation of his throat, and rubbed it with alcohol, and gave him a few drops of something internally to ease it.

After all this time, and in spite of anything he could tell them, they still believed, or pretended to believe, that he was suffering from tuberculosis, and that all the rest of this was delusion, a phase of insanity!

And Mersereau's skeleton still out there on the Monte Orte!

And Mersereau's plan, with the help of others, of course, was to choke him to death, there was no doubt of that now; and yet they would believe after he was gone that he had died of tuberculosis of the throat. Think of that.

XII—Midnight of February 10, 1909

THE GHOST OF MERSEREAU (*bending over Davidson*): "Softly! Softly! He's quite asleep! He didn't think we could get him—that I could! But this time,—yes. Miss Koehler is asleep at the end of the hall and Miss Liggett can't come, can't hear. He's too weak now. He can scarcely move or groan. Strengthen my hand, will you! I will grip him so tight this time that he won't get away! His cries won't help him this time! He can't cry as he once did! Now! Now!"

A CLOUD OF EVIL SPIRITS (*swimming about*): "Right! Right! Good! Good! Now! Ah!"

DAVIDSON (*waking, choking, screaming, and feebly striking out*): "Help! Help! H-e-l-p! Miss—Miss—H-e-l-p!"

MISS LIGGETT (*dozing heavily in her chair*): "Everything is still. No one restless. I can sleep." (*Her head nods.*)

THE CLOUD OF EVIL SPIRITS: "Good! Good! Good! His soul at last! Here it comes! He couldn't escape this time! Ah! Good! Good! Now!"

MERSEREAU (*to Davidson*): "You murderer! At last! At last!"

XIII—3 A.M. of February 17, 1909

MISS KOEHLER (*at the bedside, distressed and pale*): "He must have died some time between one and two, doctor. I left him at one o'clock, comfortable as I could make him. He said he was feeling as well as could be expected. He's been very weak during the last few days, taking only a little gruel. Between half past one and two I thought I heard a noise, and came to see. He was lying just as you see here, except that his hands were up to his throat, as if it were hurting or choking him. I put them down for fear they would stiffen that way. In trying to call one of the other nurses just now, I found that the bell was out of order, although I know it was all right when I left, because he always made me try it. So he may have tried to ring."

DR. MAJOR (*turning the head and examining the throat*): "It looks as if he had clutched at his throat rather tightly this time, I must say. Here is the mark of his thumb on this side and of his four fingers on the other. Rather deep for the little strength he had. Odd that he should have imagined that some one else was trying to choke him, when he was always pressing at his own neck! Throat tuberculosis is very painful at times. That would explain the desire to clutch at his throat."

MISS LIGGETT: "He was always believing that an evil spirit was trying to choke him, doctor."

DR. MAJOR: "Yes, I know—association of ideas. Dr. Scain and I agree as to that. He had a bad case of chronic tuberculosis of the throat, with accompanying malnutrition, due to the effect of the throat on the stomach; and his notion about evil spirits pursuing him and trying to choke him was simply due to an innate tendency on the part of the subconscious mind to join things together—any notion, say, with any pain. If he had had a diseased leg, he would have imagined that evil spirits were attempting to saw it off, or

something like that. In the same way the condition of his throat affected his stomach, and he imagined that the spirits were doing something to his food. Make out a certificate showing acute tuberculosis of the esophagus as the cause, with delusions of persecution as his mental condition. While I am here we may as well look in on Mr. Baff."

1927

## 1876 — *Sherwood Anderson* — 1941

ANDERSON, like his contemporary, Dreiser, hails from the Middle West, having been born in Camden, Ohio, the third of five children. His father, a veteran of the Civil War, popularly known as the colonel, the major, or the captain, lover of fine clothes and good food, was notorious for his thriftlessness and his irrepressible tendency for storytelling. The mother, partly of Italian descent, practical, resourceful, and warmhearted, was the mainstay of the family until her death when Sherwood was fourteen.

Young Anderson, whose education was at best desultory, left school about this time and earned a livelihood in a variety of odd enterprises—hostler, mechanic's apprentice, factory worker, and hobo. He answered the call for volunteers at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War because enlistment offered an avenue of escape from the drab and sordid life which he had been leading. After demobilization he married, settled down, and rose to the presidency of a paint-manufacturing company, well on the way to become a prosperous, successful business man.

But neither business success nor prosperity had any fascination for him. He began to sense what the oncoming industrialism, with its standardization, was doing to society and feared what it would do to him. Without warning he left his business and his home to seek the life of his choice in Chicago. Here he wrote advertisements for business concerns, and in his leisure time composed *Windy McPherson's Son* (1916), his first novel, which at forty launched him upon a literary career. From this time on, his life was for the most part the record of his books, which appeared with almost annual regularity. In his later years Anderson published a small-town newspaper in Virginia.

His career divides itself into three periods. To the first belong *Windy McPherson's Son* (1916) and *Marching Men* (1917), dominated by a "defeated romanticism." Then came the Freudian influence shown in *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), *Poor White* (1920), *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921), and *Many Marriages* (1922). The more recent books, such as *Dark Laughter* (1925) and *Death in the Woods* (1933), constitute a third, and more sensual, group. He has also published several volumes of verse and autobiography.

In *A Story Teller's Story* (1924) he states clearly the theory with which he ap-

proached the business of writing. To begin with, he set himself deliberately to restore the intimate relation of life and art between which he felt there had grown an ever-widening breach. Artists had drifted into the habit of doctoring life to fit the conveniences of their art. He objected to the plotted story because it enabled writers to take liberties which transcend the bounds of common sense, as for instance, the transformation of villains into saints, a common American trick. "It was certain there were no plot stories ever lived in any life I had known anything about." In the second place, he would dissociate art and morality, rebelling with equal vehemence against "that absurd Anglo-Saxon notion that they [stories] must point a moral, uplift the people, make better citizens, etc." He insisted that "In the life of the fancy there is no such thing as good or bad," and that morality is, as far as the artist is concerned, a matter of aesthetics. The third point in his theory dealt with the matter of language. Here too he found fault with earlier practices which made average Americans feel and talk in a manner utterly out of harmony with real life. He set himself, therefore, to find the medium of expression which would convey the artist's ideas without violence to his subject.

Anderson was one of the stout rebels against village life, its narrowness, provincialism, frustration, and prejudice, especially as it is changed by growing industrialism. In this respect he anticipated Sinclair Lewis, but was far less easily satisfied with mere surface castigation. Lewis mimics and satirizes; Anderson was moved by intense wonder and sought to understand. Like Dreiser he was a naturalist, at any rate to the extent of his belief in environmental determinism, but he insisted upon probing beyond the merely physical for an explanation of life. The fact that he experienced difficulty in reaching a satisfactory explanation caused him to brood with melancholy disillusionment, and drove him to employ a symbolism which is at times not apparent, and to resort to an "intuitive mysticism," which to the matter-of-fact reader is somewhat baffling.

Furthermore, a society dominated by lust for material gain, gradually regimented by a growing standardizing industrialism, presented a spectacle beyond which he saw little hope. His concern for an American civilization built on intellectual and cultural interests is especially noticeable in his earlier novels. Then came the period dominated by the Freudian pre-occupation with sex, as the core and center of all human motives. To the frustration of sex impulses he traced most of the ills and griefs of life. He capitalized it in *Winesburg, Ohio*, a collection of short stories, as well as in some of his novels. The result is a combination of primitivism, sensualism, and mysticism which, in the estimation of some, out-Whitmans even Whitman. His persistent quarrel with society, indeed with life itself, is its emphasis upon inhibitions rather than free and unhindered self-expression. His success lay in his short stories rather than the novels, for the sharp and vivid impression of the short story was better suited to his genius than the sustained interest of the novels.

As novelist Anderson wrote *Windy McPherson's Son* (1916); *Marching Men* (1917); *Poor White* (1920); *Many Marriages* (1923); *Dark Laughter* (1925); *Tar* (1926); *Beyond Desire* (1932); *Kit Brandon* (1936). His short stories are in *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919); *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921); *Horses and Men* (1923); *Death in the Woods* (1933). His essays and sketches are collected in *The Modern Writer* (1925); *Sherwood Anderson's Notebook* (1926); *Hello Towns!* (1929); *Puzzled America* (1935). *Mid-American Chants* (1918) and *A New Testament* (1927) contain his poetry. *Perhaps Women* (1931) is a book of social criticism. *A Story Teller's Story* (1924) is autobiography. *Tar* (1926) is likewise autobiographic. For biography and criticism consult D. Karsner, *Sixteen Authors to One* (1928); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); S. P. Sherman, *Critical Woodcuts* (1926); C. Van Doren, "Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson," *Century*, July, 1925; H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); R. Michaud, *The American Novel To-day* (1928); P. Rosenfeld, *Port of New York* (1924); J. Collins, *Taking the Literary Pulse* (1924); V. F. Calverton, "Sherwood Anderson," *Modern Quarterly*, Fall, 1924; P. H. Boynton, *More Contemporary Americans* (1927); N. B. Fagin, *The Phenomenon of Sherwood Anderson* (1927); H. Hansen, *Midwest Portraits* (1923); C. B. Chase, *Sherwood Anderson* (1927); H. Wickham, *The Impuritans* (1929); C. Fadiman, "Sherwood Anderson: the Search for Salvation," *Nation*, Nov. 9, 1932; E. J. O'Brien, *The Advance of the American Short Story* (rev. ed., 1931); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* WINESBURG, OHIO

The author calls this volume of short stories, dealing with life in a small midwestern town, a book of "grotesques." Most of the characters are frustrated and abnormal and do not seem to have developed beyond the adolescent stage.

### *The Thinker*

THE house in which Seth Richmond of Winesburg lived with his mother had been at one time the show place of the town, but when young Seth lived there its glory had become somewhat dimmed. The huge brick house which Banker White had built on Buckeye Street had overshadowed it. The Richmond place was in a little valley far out at the end of Main Street. Farmers coming into town by a dusty road from the south passed by a grove of walnut trees, skirted the Fair Ground with its high board fence covered with advertisements, and trotted their horses down through the valley past the Richmond place into town. As much of the country north and south of Winesburg was devoted to fruit and berry raising, Seth saw wagonloads of berry pickers—boys, girls, and women—going to the fields in the morning and returning covered with dust in the evening. The chattering crowd, with their rude jokes cried out from wagon to wagon, sometimes irritated him sharply. He regretted that he also could not laugh boisterously, shout meaningless jokes and make of himself a figure in the endless stream of moving, giggling activity that went up and down the road.

The Richmond house was built of limestone, and although it was said in the village to have become run down, had in reality grown more beautiful with every passing year. Already time had begun a little to color the stone, lending a golden richness to its surface and in the evening or on dark days touching the shaded places beneath the eaves with wavering patches of browns and blacks.

The house had been built by Seth's grandfather, a stone quarryman, and it, together with the stone quarries on Lake Erie eighteen miles to the north, had been left to his son, Clarence Richmond, Seth's father. Clarence Richmond, a quiet passionate man extraordinarily admired by his neighbors, had been killed in a street fight with the editor of a newspaper in Toledo, Ohio. The fight concerned the publication of Clarence Richmond's name coupled with that of a woman school teacher, and as the dead man had begun the row by firing upon the editor, the effort to punish the slayer was unsuccessful. After the quarryman's death it was found that much of

the money left to him had been squandered in speculation and in insecure investments made through the influence of friends.

Left with but a small income, Virginia Richmond had settled down to a retired life in the village and to the raising of her son. Although she had been deeply moved by the death of the husband and father, she did not at all believe the stories concerning him that ran about after his death. To her mind, the sensitive, boyish man whom all had instinctively loved, was but an unfortunate, a being too fine for everyday life. "You'll be hearing all sorts of stories, but you are not to believe what you hear," she said to her son. "He was a good man, full of tenderness for everyone, and should not have tried to be a man of affairs. No matter how much I were to plan and dream of your future, I could not imagine anything better for you than that you turn out as good a man as your father."

Several years after the death of her husband, Virginia Richmond had become alarmed at the growing demands upon her income and had set herself to the task of increasing it. She had learned stenography and through the influence of her husband's friends got the position of court stenographer at the county seat. There she went by train each morning during the sessions of the court and when no court sat, spent her days working among the rosebushes in her garden. She was a tall, straight figure of a woman with a plain face and a great mass of brown hair.

In the relationship between Seth Richmond and his mother, there was a quality that even at eighteen had begun to color all of his traffic with men. An almost unhealthy respect for the youth kept the mother for the most part silent in his presence. When she did speak sharply to him he had only to look steadily into her eyes to see dawning there the puzzled look he had already noticed in the eyes of others when he looked at them.

The truth was that the son thought with remarkable clearness and the mother did not. She expected from all people certain conventional reactions to life. A boy was your son, you scolded him and he trembled and looked at the floor. When you had scolded enough he wept and all was forgiven. After the weeping and when he had gone to bed, you crept into his room and kissed him.

Virginia Richmond could not understand why her son did not do these things. After the severest reprimand, he did not tremble and look at the floor but instead looked steadily at her, causing uneasy doubts to invade her mind. As for creeping into his room —after Seth had passed his fifteenth year, she would have been half afraid to do anything of the kind.

Once when he was a boy of sixteen, Seth in company with two other boys, ran away from home. The three boys climbed into the open door of an empty freight car and rode some forty miles to a town where a fair was being held. One of the boys had a bottle filled with a combination of whiskey and blackberry wine, and the three sat with legs dangling out of the car door drinking from the bottle. Seth's two companions sang and waved their hands to idlers about the stations of the towns through which the train passed. They planned raids upon the baskets of farmers who had come with their families to the fair. "We will live like kings and won't have to spend a penny to see the fair and horse races," they declared boastfully.

After the disappearance of Seth, Virginia Richmond walked up and down the floor of her home filled with vague alarms. Although on the next day she discovered, through an inquiry made by the town marshal, on what adventure the boys had gone, she could not quiet herself. All through the night she lay awake hearing the clock tick and telling herself that Seth, like his father, would come to a sudden and violent end. So determined was she that the boy should this time feel the weight of her wrath that, although she would not allow the marshal to interfere with his adventure, she got out pencil and paper and wrote down a series of sharp, stinging reproofs she intended to pour out upon him. The reproofs she committed to memory, going about the garden and saying them aloud like an actor memorizing his part.

And when, at the end of the week, Seth returned, a little weary and with coal soot in his ears and about his eyes, she again found herself unable to reprove him. Walking into

the house he hung his cap on a nail by the kitchen door and stood looking steadily at her. "I wanted to turn back within an hour after we had started," he explained. "I didn't know what to do. I knew you would be bothered, but I knew also that if I didn't go on I would be ashamed of myself. I went through with the thing for my own good. It was uncomfortable, sleeping on wet straw, and two drunken Negroes came and slept with us. When I stole a lunch basket out of a farmer's wagon I couldn't help thinking of his children going all day without food. I was sick of the whole affair, but I was determined to stick it out until the other boys were ready to come back."

"I'm glad you did stick it out," replied the mother, half resentfully, and kissing him upon the forehead pretended to busy herself with the work about the house.

On a summer evening Seth Richmond went to the New Willard House to visit his friend, George Willard. It had rained during the afternoon, but as he walked through Main Street, the sky had partially cleared and a golden glow lit up the west. Going around a corner, he turned in at the door of the hotel and began to climb the stairway leading up to his friend's room. In the hotel office the proprietor and two traveling men were engaged in a discussion of politics.

On the stairway Seth stopped and listened to the voices of the men below. They were excited and talked rapidly. Tom Willard was berating the traveling men. "I am a Democrat but your talk makes me sick," he said. "You don't understand McKinley. McKinley and Mark Hanna are friends. It is impossible perhaps for your mind to grasp that. If anyone tells you that a friendship can be deeper and bigger and more worth while than dollars and cents, or even more worth while than state politics, you snicker and laugh."

The landlord was interrupted by one of the guests, a tall grey-mustached man who worked for a wholesale grocery house. "Do you think that I've lived in Cleveland all these years without knowing Mark Hanna?" he demanded. "Your talk is piffle. Hanna is after money and nothing else. This McKinley is his tool. He has McKinley bluffed and don't you forget it."

The young man on the stairs did not linger to hear the rest of the discussion, but went on up the stairway and into a little dark hall. Something in the voices of the men talking in the hotel office started a chain of thoughts in his mind. He was lonely and had begun to think that loneliness was a part of his character, something that would always stay with him. Stepping into a side hall he stood by a window that looked into an alleyway. At the back of his shop stood Abner Groff, the town baker. His tiny bloodshot eyes looked up and down the alleyway. In his shop someone called the baker who pretended not to hear. The baker had an empty milk bottle in his hand and an angry sullen look in his eyes.

In Winesburg, Seth Richmond was called the "deep one." "He's like his father," men said as he went through the streets. "He'll break out some of these days. You wait and see."

The talk of the town and the respect with which men and boys instinctively greeted him, as all men greet silent people, had affected Seth Richmond's outlook on life and on himself. He, like most boys, was deeper than boys are given credit for being, but he was not what the men of the town, and even his mother, thought him to be. No great underlying purpose lay back of his habitual silence, and he had no definite plan for his life. When the boys with whom he associated were noisy and quarrelsome, he stood quietly at one side. With calm eyes he watched the gesticulating lively figures of his companions. He wasn't particularly interested in what was going on, and sometimes wondered if he would ever be particularly interested in anything. Now, as he stood in the half-darkness by the window watching the baker, he wished that he himself might become thoroughly stirred by something, even by the fits of sullen anger for which Baker Groff was noted. "It would be better for me if I could become excited and wrangle about politics like windy old Tom Willard," he thought, as he left the window and went again along the hallway to the room occupied by his friend, George Willard.

George Willard was older than Seth Richmond, but in the rather odd friendship between the two, it was he who was forever

courting and the younger boy who was being courted. The paper on which George worked had one policy. It strove to mention by name in each issue, as many as possible of the inhabitants of the village. Like an excited dog, George Willard ran here and there, noting on his pad or paper who had gone on business to the county seat or had returned from a visit to a neighboring village. All day he wrote little facts upon the pad. "A. P. Wringlet has received a shipment of straw hats. Ed Byerbaum and Tom Marshall were in Cleveland Friday. Uncle Tom Sinnings is building a new barn on his place on the Valley Road."

The idea that George Willard would some day become a writer had given him a place of distinction in Winesburg, and to Seth Richmond he talked continually of the matter. "It's the easiest of all lives to live," he declared, becoming excited and boastful. "Here and there you go and there is no one to boss you. Though you are in India or in the South Seas in a boat, you have but to write and there you are. Wait till I get my name up and then see what fun I shall have."

In George Willard's room, which had a window looking down into an alleyway and one that looked across railroad tracks to Biff Carter's Lunch Room facing the railroad station, Seth Richmond sat in a chair and looked at the floor. George Willard who had been sitting for an hour idly playing with a lead pencil, greeted him effusively. "I've been trying to write a love story," he explained, laughing nervously. Lighting a pipe he began walking up and down the room "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to fall in love. I've been sitting here and thinking it over and I'm going to do it."

As though embarrassed by his declaration, George went to a window and turning his back to his friend leaned out. "I know who I'm going to fall in love with," he said sharply. "It's Helen White. She is the only girl in town with any 'get-up' to her."

Struck with a new idea, young Willard turned and walked towards his visitor. "Look here," he said. "You know Helen White better than I do. I want you to tell her what I said. You just get to talking to her and say that I'm in love with her. See what she says to that. See how she takes it, and then you come and tell me."

Seth Richmond arose and went towards the door. The words of his comrade irritated him unbearably. "Well, good-bye," he said briefly.

George was amazed. Running forward he stood in the darkness trying to look into Seth's face. "What's the matter? What are you going to do? You stay here and let's talk," he urged.

A wave of resentment directed against his friends, the men of the town who were, he thought, perpetually talking of nothing, and most of all, against his own habit of silence, made Seth half desperate. "Aw, speak to her yourself," he burst forth and then going quickly through the door, slammed it sharply in his friend's face. "I'm going to find Helen White and talk to her, but not about him," he muttered.

Seth went down the stairway and out at the front door of the hotel muttering with wrath. Crossing a little dusty street and climbing a low iron railing, he went to sit upon the grass in the station yard. George Willard he thought a profound fool, and he wished that he had said so more vigorously. Although his acquaintanceship with Helen White, the banker's daughter, was outwardly but casual, she was often the subject of his thoughts and he felt that she was something private and personal to himself. "The busy fool with his love stories," he muttered, staring back over his shoulder at George Willard's room, "why does he never tire of his eternal talking."

It was berry harvest time in Winesburg and upon the station platform men and boys loaded the boxes of red, fragrant berries into two express cars that stood upon the siding. A June moon was in the sky, although in the west a storm threatened, and no street lamps were lighted. In the dim light the figures of the men standing upon the express truck and pitching the boxes in at the doors of the cars were but dimly discernible. Upon the iron railing that protected the station lawn sat other men. Pipes were lighted. Village jokes went back and forth. Away in the distance a train whistled and the men loading the boxes into the cars worked with renewed activity.

Seth arose from his place on the grass and went silently past the men perched upon the railing and into Main Street. He had come to a resolution. "I'll get out of here," he told himself. "What good am I here? I'm going to some city and go to work. I'll tell mother about it tomorrow."

Seth Richmond went slowly along Main Street, past Wacker's Cigar Store and the Town Hall, and into Buckeye Street. He was depressed by the thought that he was not a part of the life in his own town, but the depression did not cut deeply as he did not think of himself as at fault. In the heavy shadows of a big tree before Dr. Welling's house, he stopped and stood watching half-witted Turk Smollet, who was pushing a wheelbarrow in the road. The old man with his absurdly boyish mind had a dozen long boards on the wheelbarrow, and as he hurried along the road, balanced the load with extreme nicety. "Easy there, Turk! Steady now, old boy!" the old man shouted to himself, and laughed so that the load of boards rocked dangerously.

Seth knew Turk Smollet, the half dangerous old wood chopper whose peculiarities added so much of color to the life of the village. He knew that when Turk got into Main Street he would become the center of a whirlwind of cries and comments, that in truth the old man was going far out of his way in order to pass through Main Street and exhibit his skill in wheeling the boards. "If George Willard were here, he'd have something to say," thought Seth. "George belongs to this town. He'd shout at Turk and Turk would shout at him. They'd both be secretly pleased by what they had said. It's different with me. I don't belong. I'll not make a fuss about it, but I'm going to get out of here."

Seth stumbled forward through the half darkness, feeling himself an outcast in his own town. He began to pity himself, but a sense of the absurdity of his thoughts made him smile. In the end he decided that he was simply old beyond his years and not at all a subject for self-pity. "I'm made to go to work. I may be able to make a place for myself by steady working, and I might as well be at it," he decided.

Seth went to the house of Banker White and stood in the darkness by the front door. On the door hung a heavy brass knocker, an innovation introduced into the village by Helen White's mother, who had also organized a woman's club for the study of poetry. Seth raised the knocker and let it fall. Its heavy clatter sounded like a report from distant guns. "How awkward and foolish I am," he thought. "If Mrs. White comes to the door, I won't know what to say."

It was Helen White who came to the door and found Seth standing at the edge of the porch. Blushing with pleasure, she stepped forward, closing the door softly. "I'm going to get out of town. I don't know what I'll do, but I'm going to get out of here and go to work. I think I'll go to Columbus," he said. "Perhaps I'll get into the State University down there. Anyway, I'm going. I'll tell mother tonight." He hesitated and looked doubtfully about. "Perhaps you wouldn't mind coming to walk with me?"

Seth and Helen walked through the streets beneath the trees. Heavy clouds had drifted across the face of the moon, and before them in the deep twilight went a man with a short ladder upon his shoulder. Hurrying forward, the man stopped at the street crossing and, putting the ladder against the wooden lamp post, lighted the village lights so that their way was half lighted, half darkened, by the lamps and by the deepening shadows cast by the low-branched trees. In the tops of the trees the wind began to play, disturbing the sleeping birds so that they flew about calling plaintively. In the lighted space before one of the lamps, two bats wheeled and circled, pursuing the gathering swarm of night flies.

Since Seth had been a boy in knee trousers there had been a half expressed intimacy between him and the maiden who now for the first time walked beside him. For a time she had been beset with a madness for writing notes which she addressed to Seth. He had found them concealed in his books at school and one had been given him by a child met in the street, while several had been delivered through the village post office.

The notes had been written in a round, boyish hand and had reflected a mind in-

flamed by novel reading. Seth had not answered them, although he had been moved and flattered by some of the sentences scrawled in pencil upon the stationery of the banker's wife. Putting them into the pocket of his coat, he went through the street or stood by the fence in the school yard with something burning at his side. He thought it fine that he should be thus selected as the favorite of the richest and most attractive girl in town.

Helen and Seth stopped by a fence near where a low dark building faced the street. The building had once been a factory for the making of barrel staves but was now vacant. Across the street upon the porch of a house a man and woman talked of their childhood, their voices coming clearly across to the half-embarrassed youth and maiden. There was the sound of scraping chairs and the man and woman came down the gravel path to a wooden gate. Standing outside the gate, the man leaned over and kissed the woman. "For old times' sake," he said and, turning, walked rapidly away along the sidewalk.

"That's Belle Turner," whispered Helen, and put her hand boldly into Seth's hand. "I didn't know she had a fellow. I thought she was too old for that." Seth laughed uneasily. The hand of the girl was warm and a strange, dizzy feeling crept over him. Into his mind came a desire to tell her something he had been determined not to tell. "George Willard's in love with you," he said, and in spite of his agitation his voice was low and quiet. "He's writing a story, and he wants to be in love. He wants to know how it feels. He wanted me to tell you and see what you said."

Again Helen and Seth walked in silence. They came to the garden surrounding the old Richmond place and going through a gap in the hedge sat on a wooden bench beneath a bush.

On the street as he walked beside the girl new and daring thoughts had come into Seth Richmond's mind. He began to regret his decision to get out of town. "It would be something new and altogether delightful to remain and walk often through the streets with Helen White," he thought. In imagination he saw himself putting his arm about her waist and feeling her arms clasped tightly about his neck. One of those odd combinations of events and places made him connect the idea of love-making with this girl and a spot he had visited some days before. He had gone on an errand to the house of a farmer who lived on a hillside beyond the Fair Ground and had returned by a path through a field. At the foot of the hill below the farmer's house Seth had stopped beneath a sycamore tree and looked about him. A soft humming noise had greeted his ears. For a moment he had thought the tree must be the home of a swarm of bees.

And then, looking down, Seth had seen the bees everywhere all about him in the long grass. He stood in a mass of weeds that grew waist-high in the field that ran away from the hillside. The weeds were abloom with tiny purple blossoms and gave forth an overpowering fragrance. Upon the weeds the bees were gathered in armies, singing as they worked.

Seth imagined himself lying on a summer evening, buried deep among the weeds beneath the tree. Beside him, in the scene built in his fancy, lay Helen White, her hand lying in his hand. A peculiar reluctance kept him from kissing her lips, but he felt he might have done that if he wished. Instead, he lay perfectly still, looking at her and listening to the army of bees that sang the sustained masterful song of labor above his head.

On the bench in the garden Seth stirred uneasily. Releasing the hand of the girl, he thrust his hands into his trouser pockets. A desire to impress the mind of his companion with the importance of the resolution he had made came over him and he nodded his head toward the house. "Mother'll make a fuss, I suppose," he whispered. "She hasn't thought at all about what I'm going to do in life. She thinks I'm going to stay on here forever just being a boy."

Seth's voice became charged with boyish earnestness. "You see, I've got to strike out. I've got to get to work. It's what I'm good for."

Helen White was impressed. She nodded her head and a feeling of admiration swept over her. "This is as it should be," she thought. "This boy is not a boy at all, but a strong, purposeful man." Certain vague de-

sires that had been invading her body were swept away and she sat up very straight on the bench. The thunder continued to rumble and flashes of heat lightning lit up the eastern sky. The garden that had been so mysterious and vast, a place that with Seth beside her might have become the background for strange and wonderful adventures, now seemed no more than an ordinary Winesburg back yard, quite definite and limited in its outlines.

"What will you do up there?" she whispered.

Seth turned half around on the bench, striving to see her face in the darkness. He thought her infinitely more sensible and straightforward than George Willard, and was glad he had come away from his friend. A feeling of impatience with the town that had been in his mind returned, and he tried to tell her of it. "Everyone talks and talks," he began. "I'm sick of it. I'll do something, get into some kind of work where talk don't count. Maybe I'll just be a mechanic in a shop. I don't know. I guess I don't care much. I just want to work and keep quiet. That's all I've got in my mind."

Seth arose from the bench and put out his hand. He did not want to bring the meeting to an end but could not think of anything more to say. "It's the last time we'll see each other," he whispered.

A wave of sentiment swept over Helen. Putting her hand upon Seth's shoulder, she started to draw his face down towards her own upturned face. The act was one of pure affection and cutting regret that some vague adventure that had been present in the spirit of the night would now never be realized. "I think I'd better be going along," she said, letting her hand fall heavily to her side. A thought came to her. "Don't you go with me; I want to be alone," she said. "You go and talk with your mother. You'd better do that now."

Seth hesitated and, as he stood waiting, the girl turned and ran away through the hedge. A desire to run after her came to him, but he only stood staring, perplexed and puzzled by her action as he had been perplexed and puzzled by all of the life of the town out of which she had come. Walking slowly toward the house, he stopped in the shadow of a large tree and looked at his mother sitting by a lighted window busily sewing. The feeling of loneliness that had visited him earlier in the evening returned and colored his thoughts of the adventure through which he had just passed. "Huh!" he exclaimed, turning and staring in the direction taken by Helen White. "That's how things'll turn out. She'll be like the rest. I suppose she'll begin now to look at me in a funny way." He looked at the ground and pondered this thought. "She'll be embarrassed and feel strange when I'm around," he whispered to himself. "That's how it'll be. That's how everything'll turn out. When it comes to loving some one, it won't never be me. It'll be someone else—some fool—some one who talks a lot—some one like that George Willard."

1919

## *From* A STORY TELLER'S STORY

### *Note IV*

LET us, however, return to father and the tale he is telling as he sits in the farmhouse on the winter's evening. I am too good a son of my father to leave such a tale hanging forever thus, in the air.

As it turned out on that night, when it rained and when he in his young manhood stood just outside the door of that southern mansion house of his childhood, and when his mother, that proud woman of the Southland, spat at him and his companions in misery, so that a white speck of her spittle landed on his beard—where, as he said, it lay like a thing of fire burning into his soul—on that night, I say, he did, by a stroke of fortune, escape the fate that seemed to have him in its clutches.

Dawn was just beginning to break when the two Confederate officers came out at the door of the house and marched their prisoners away.

"We went off into the gray dawn, up out of the valley and over the hills, and then I turned to look back," father explained. Gray and weary and half dead with starvation, he turned to look. If he dropped dead from starvation and weariness on his way to the prison pen,

what did it matter now? The light of his life had gone out. He was never again to see any of his own people, that he knew.

But even as he looked he did see something. The company had stopped to rest for a moment and stood where a sharp wind blew over them, just at the crest of a hill. Down in the valley the dawn was just breaking and, as father looked, he could see the gray of the old house and against the gray of it, on the front veranda, just a fleck of white.

That would be his young and innocent sister, come out of the house, you will understand, to look along the road taken by the prisoners, whose evident misery had touched her young heart.

For father it would be, as he would so elaborately explain, a very high spot in his life, perhaps the highest spot he was to reach in all his weary march to the grave.

He stood there on the hillside, quite cold and miserable—in just that utterly miserable and weary state when one is sometimes most alive—the senses, that is to say, are most alive. At the moment he felt, as any man must feel sometime in life, that an invisible cord does extend from the innermost parts of himself to the innermost parts of some other person. Love comes. For once in a lifetime a state of feeling becomes as definite a thing as a stone wall touched with the hand.

And father had that feeling, at that moment on the hill; and that the person for whom he had it was a woman and his own sister, made it even more an assured thing. He might have expressed the feeling by saying that, as by a miracle, the hill dropped away and he stood on dry level ground in the very presence of his younger sister, so close to her in fact that he might very easily have put out his hand and touched her. So strong was the feeling that he lost for the moment all sense of his presence among the prisoners, all sense of the cold, hunger, and weariness of the hour and—exactly as the thing might be done, quite ridiculously, by a second-rate actor in the movies—he did in fact step out from among the ranks of prisoners and, with his hands extended before him and his eyes shining, took several steps down the hillside, only to be stopped by an oath from one of the guards.

In the farmhouse, as he told of that moment he would get out of his chair and actually take several steps. He would at bottom be always a good deal of an actor as well as a story teller, as every story teller worth his salt inevitably is.

And then came the oath from the guard and an upraised gun, the heavy butt of a gun, ready to swing down upon his head, and back he goes into the ranks of prisoners. He mutters some excuse: "I just wanted to have a look"—and is thus jerked down from the high place, to which his imagination had suddenly lifted him, and back into the weariness of his apparently hopeless journey. Gone, he thought at the moment, was the sister he loved, his boyhood with its memories, all his past life, but it wasn't quite true.

Father did make an escape. How many escapes he, in fancy, made from the hands of the enemy during that Civil War! He lived, you will understand, in a rather dull farming community and loved at least some air of probability hanging over his tales.

And so the Civil War became for him the canvas, the tubes of paint, the brushes with which he painted his pictures. Perhaps one might better say his own imagination was the brush and the Civil War his paint pot. And he did have a fancy for escapes, as I myself have always had. My own tales, told and untold, are full of escapes—by water in the dark and in a leaky boat, escapes from situations, escapes from dullness, from pretense, from the heavy-handed seriousness of the half artists. What writer of tales does not dote upon escapes? They are the very breath in our nostrils.

It is just possible that upon that occasion, father would have put it to his audience, that the sight, or the imagined sight, of his sister that morning had given him new hope. She was a virgin and there was something catholic about father.

Very well, then, off he goes down the road with his head held high, thinking of the possible schemes for escape and of his sister. He had been given something, a new flair for life. A ray of new hope had come into the black night of his situation. He walked more stoutly.

Stout Cortes—
Silent upon a peak in Darien.

It was just that stout way in which he now walked that gave him his opportunity for escape—that time. All that day the other prisoners went with hanging heads, tramping through the deep mud of the southern roads in winter, but father walked with his head up.

Another night came and they were again in a forest, on a dark and lonely road, with the guards walking at the side and sometimes quite lost in the shadows cast by the trees— the prisoners a dark mass in the very centre of the road.

Father stumbled over a stick, the heavy branch of a tree, quite dead and broken off by the wind, and, stooping down, picked it up. Something, perhaps just the impulse of a soldier, led him to sling the stick lightly over his shoulder and carry it like a gun.

There he was, stepping proudly among those who were not proud—that is to say, the other prisoners—and not having any plan in mind —just thinking of his virginal sister back there, I dare say; and one of the two officers of the guard spoke to him kindly.

"Don't walk in there so close to the Yanks, in the deep mud, John," the officer said; "It's better going out here. There is a path here at the side. Get in here back of me."

By his very pride lifted up out of the ranks of the prisoners father's mind acted quickly and with a muttered thanks he stepped to the side of the road and became as one of the guards. The men came out on the crest of another low hill and again, in the valley below, there was the faint light of a farmhouse. "Halt!" one of the officers gave command; and then—the younger of the two officers having been told by his superior to send a man down into the valley to the farmhouse to see if there was a chance for the guard and prisoners to rest for a few hours and to get food—he sent father. The officer touched him on the arm. "Go on you," he said. "You go down and find out."

So off father went, down a lane, holding the stick very correctly, like a gun, until he was safely out of sight of the others, and then he threw the stick away and ran.

The devil! He knew every inch of the ground on which he now stood. What an opportunity for escape! One of his boyhood friends had lived in the very house, toward which he was supposed to be going, and often, in his young manhood and when he had come home for vacation from the northern school, he had ridden and hunted along the very path his feet now touched. Why, the very dogs and "niggers" on the place knew him as they might have known their master.

And so, if he ran madly now, he ran knowing the ground under his feet. Ah, he would be sure! When his escape was discovered dogs might be set on his trail.

He plunged downward, getting clear of the trees, running across a field—the soft mud clinging to his feet—and so skirted the house and got to where there was a small creek down which he went for a mile in the darkness, walking in the cold water that often came up to his waist. That was to throw dogs off his trail, as any schoolboy should know.

By making a great circle he got back into the road, by which he and the other prisoners had been marched from his own father's house. They had come some twelve miles during the day and early evening, but the night was still young and, after he had gone three or four miles, he knew a short cut through the woods by which several miles could be cut off.

And so, you see, father went back again to his old home after all and once again saw the sister he loved. The dawn was just breaking when he arrived, but the dogs knew him and the Negroes knew him. The very Negro who had held the light while his mother spat at the prisoners hid him away in the loft of a barn and brought him food.

Not only food was brought, but also a suit of his own clothes that had been left in the house.

And so he stayed hidden in the loft for three days, and then another night came when it rained and was dark.

Then he crept out, with food for the needs of his journey, and knowing that, when he had walked for a mile along the road that led back toward the distant Union camp, a Negro would be standing in a little grove with a good horse saddled and bridled for him. The Negro, in the late afternoon, had gone off to a distant town, ostensibly for mail and was to be bound to a tree where he would be discovered later

by a party of other Negroes sent in search of him. Oh, all was arranged—everything elaborately planned to ward off, from his helpers, the wrath of the mother.

There was the night and the rain, and father, with a dark cloak now about his shoulders, creeping from the stables and toward the house. By the window of one of the rooms downstairs his young sister sat playing an organ, and so he crept to the window and stood for a time looking. Ah; there was moving-picture stuff for your soul! Why, oh why, did not father live in another and later generation? In what affluence might we not all have flourished! The old homestead, a fire burning in the grate, the stern and relentless parent, and outside in the cold and wet, father, the outcast son, the disowned, the homeless one, about to ride off into the night in the service of his country—never to return.

On the organ his sister would have been playing "The Last Link Is Broken," and there stands father with the great tears rolling down his cheeks.

Then to ride away into the night, to fight again for the flag he loved, and that to him meant more than home, more than family—ah! more than the love of the woman who was long afterward to come into his life, and to console him somewhat for the fair sister he had lost.

For he did love her, quite completely. Is it not odd, when one considers the matter, that the fair sister—who would have been my aunt, and who never perhaps existed except in father's fancy, but concerning whom I have heard him tell so many touching tales—is it not odd that I have never succeeded in inventing a satisfactory name for her? Father never —if I remember correctly—gave her a name and I have never succeeded in doing so.

How often have I tried and without success! Ophelia, Cornelia, Emily, Violet, Eunice. You see the difficulty? It must have a quaint and southern sound and must suggest—what must it not suggest?

But father's tale must have its proper dénouement. One could trust the tale-teller for that. Even had he lived in the days of the movies and had the dénouement quite killed his story —for movie purposes, at least in the northern towns, which would have been the best market —even in the face of all of such difficulties which he fortunately did not have to meet, one could be quite sure of the dénouement.

And he made it splashy. It was at the dreadful battle of Gettysburg, late in the war and on the third of July too. The Confederates had such a dreadful way of getting off on just the wrong foot on the very eve of our national holiday. Vicksburg and Gettysburg for Fourth of July celebrations. Surely it was, what, during the World War, would have been called, "bad war psychology."

There can be no doubt that father had been a soldier of some sort during the Civil War and so, as was natural, he would give his tale a soldier's dénouement, sacrificing even the beloved and innocent younger sister to his purpose (to be brought back to life—oh, many, many times later, and made to serve in many future tales).

It was the second day of that great, that terrible battle of Gettysburg, father had picked upon to serve as the setting for the end of his yarn.

That was a moment! All over the North the people stood waiting; farmers stopped working in the fields and drove into northern towns, waiting for the click of the little telegraph instruments; country doctors let the sick lie unattended and stood with all the others in the streets of towns, where was no running in and out of stores. The whole North stood waiting, listening. No time for talk now.

Ah! that Confederate General Lee—the neat quiet Sunday-school superintendent among generals! One could never tell what he would do next. Was it not all planned that the war should be fought out on southern soil?—and here he had brought a great army of his finest troops far into the North.

Everyone waited and listened. No doubt the South waited and listened too.

No Lincoln and Douglas debates now. "A nation cannot exist half slave and half free."

Now there is the rattle of the box, and the dice that shall decide the fate of a nation are being thrown. In an obscure farmhouse, far in the North, long after the battle of those two terrible days was fought and half forgotten, father also has got his hands on the dice box.

He is rattling words in it now. We poor tellers of tales have our moments too, it seems. Like great generals sitting upon horses upon the tops of hills and throwing troops into the arena we throw the little soldier words into our battles. No uniforms for us, no riders springing away into the gray smoke-mist of battle to carry out orders. We must sit in lonely farmhouses or in cheap rooms in city lodging houses before our typewriters; but if we do not look like generals, we at least feel like that at moments anyway.

Father dropping his little rattling words into the hearts of the farmer, the farmer's wife, Tilly's heart too. At Gettysburg a nation in the death grapple. The innocent sister, fair virgin of the South, cast in too.

Look at the eyes of that stoic Aldrich. They are shining now, eh? Ah! he has been a soldier too. In his youth he also stood firmly amid shot and shell, but ever after, poor dear, he had to be satisfied with mere blank dumbness about it all. At the best he could but turn the crank of a magic-lantern machine or join the G.A.R., and march with other men through the streets of an Ohio town on Decoration days, when the real question in the minds of all the onlookers was as to whether Clyde or Tiffin, Ohio, would win the ball game to be played at Ame's field that afternoon.

A poor sort Aldrich, being able to do nothing but fight. On Decoration days he marched dumbly through the dust to a graveyard and listened to an address made by a candidate for Congress, who had made his money in the wholesale poultry business. At best Aldrich could but speak in low tones to another comrade, as the file of men marched along. "I was with Grant at the Wilderness and before that at Shiloh. Where were you? Oh, you were with Sherman, one of Sherman's bummers, eh?"

That and no more for Aldrich—but for father, ah!

The second day at Gettysburg and Pickett's men ready for their charge. Was that not a moment? What men—those fellows of Pickett's the very flower of the Southland—young bearded giants, tough like athletes, trained to the minute.

It is growing late on that second day of the fight and Pickett's men are to decide it all. The sun will soon be going down behind the hills of that low flat valley—the valley in which, but a few short days ago, farmers were preparing to gather the grain crops. On the slope of one of the hills a body of men lies waiting. It is the flower of the Union army too. Father is among them, lying there.

They wait.

They are not trembling, but back of them in a thousand towns men and women are both waiting and trembling. Freedom itself waits and trembles—liberty is trembling—"You can't fool all of the people all of the time" is trembling like a broken reed. How many grand passages, words, Decoration day addresses, messages to Congress, Fourth of July addresses of the next two hundred years, not worth eight cents on the dollar at the moment!

And now they come—Pickett's men—down through the valley, in and out of groves of trees and up the little slope. There is a place, known to history as "the bloody angle." There the men of the South rush straight into a storm of iron. A hailstorm of iron swept also in among the men of the North waiting for them.

That wild Rebel yell that broke from the lips of Pickett's men is dying now. The lips of Pickett's men are turning white.

The voice of Meade has spoken and down through the valley go the Union men in their turn—father among them.

It was then that a bullet in the leg dropped him in his tracks, and in memory of that moment he stops the telling of his tale in the farmhouse long enough to pull up his pants leg and show the scar of his wound. Father was a true naturalist, liked to pin his tales down to earth, put a spike of truth in them—at moments.

He pitched forward and fell and the men of his company rolled on to a victory in which he could have no part. He had fallen in what was now, suddenly, a little, quiet place among trees in an old orchard, and there close beside him was a confederate boy, mortally wounded. The two men roll uneasily in their pain and look directly into each other's eyes. It is a long, long look the two men give each other, for one of them the last look into the eyes of a fellow before he goes on, over the river.

The man lying there, and now dying, is just that young man who, as a boy, was father's best friend and comrade, the lad to whose place—some twelve miles from his own father's plantation—he used to ride for days of sport. What rides they had taken together through the forests, a pack of dogs at their heels, and what talks they then had!

You will understand that the young man now dying lived in that very house, far back from the road, toward which father went that night when he escaped the Rebel guard. He had marched off with the stick over his shoulder, you will remember, and had then cut off across fields to his own home where he was concealed by the Negroes until the night of his final escape.

And he had gone away from his own home on that dark night, dreaming of a return, some time when the cruel war was over and the wounds it had made were healed; but now he could never return. He was condemned to remain alone, a wanderer always on the face of this earth.

For the lad now dying beside him on the field of Gettysburg was, in his death hour, telling a fearful and tragic story.

Father's family had been entirely wiped out. His father had been killed in battle as had also his brothers.

And now, from the lips of his old comrade, he was to hear the most fearful tale of all.

A party of northern foragers had come to the southern plantation house on just such another dark, rainy night as the one on which he was taken there as a prisoner. They marched as the confederate troops had marched, along the driveway to the front of the house, and stood on the lawn. A northern officer's voice called as the southern officer had called on that other night, and again the tall young Negro came to the door with a light, followed by that fiery woman of the Southland.

The Negro held the light above his head so that, even in the darkness, the blue coats of the hated northern troops could be seen.

The old southern woman came to stand at the edge of the porch. She understood for what purpose the northern men had come, and she had sworn that not a bite of food, raised on that plantation, should ever pass the lips of a Yank.

Now she held a shotgun in her hand and, without a word or without any sort of warning, raised it and fired into the mass of the men.

There was a cry of rage, and then many guns were raised to shoulders. A sudden roar of the guns and a hundred leaden bullets cut through the front of the house. It wiped out all of father's family—except just himself—and deprived his sons, too, of a proud southern ancestry; for, just in the moment, before the shower of bullets came, father's young and innocent sister—realizing, with that sure instinct that, everyone understands, all women inevitably possess—realizing, I say, that death was about to call her mother—the young girl had rushed panic-stricken out of the door and had thrown her arms about her mother's body, just in time to meet death with her. And so all that was left of the family—except just father—fell there in a heap. The captain of the northern troops—a German brewer's son from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, cried when later he looked down into the white silent face of the young girl, and all his life afterward carried in his heart the remembrance of the dead, pleading young eyes; but, as father so philosophically remarked, what was done was done.

And with that fall there was father—a man left to wander forever stricken and forlorn through life. Later he had, to be sure, married and he had children whom he loved and treasured, but was that the same thing? To the heart of a southerner, as every American understands, ancestry means everything.

The purity of a southern woman is unlike any other purity ever known to mankind. It is something special. The man who has been under the influence of it can never afterward quite escape. Father didn't expect to. He declared always, after he had told the above story, that he did not ever expect to be gay or happy again.

What he expected was that he would go on for the rest of his days doing just what he was doing at the time. Well, he would try to bring a little joy into the hearts of others—he would sing songs, dance a little dance—he would join an old comrade in arms, one whose heart he knew was as true as steel, and give a magic-lantern show. Others, for an hour anyway,

would be made to forget that element of sadness and tragedy in life that he, of course, could never quite forget.

On that very night, lying half dead on the field of Gettysburg beside the dead comrade of his youth, he had made up his mind to spend the remaining days of his life bringing what sweetness and joy he could into the lacerated hearts of a nation torn by civil strife. It had been two o'clock in the morning before he was picked up by a squad of men sent out to gather in the wounded, and already the news of the great victory and the triumph of the cause of freedom was sweeping over the northern land. And he had lain looking at the stars and had made his resolution. Others might seek for the applause of the world, but, as for himself, he would go into the dusty highways and byways of life and bring to the lowly and forgotten the joy of a little fun at the schoolhouse.

## *Note V*

As for the show father and Aldrich put on, that is another matter. One may, without too much injustice, reserve judgment on the show. I myself never saw one of their performances, but one of my brothers once did and always, quietly and with commendable firmness, refused to speak of it afterward.

Fancy will, however, serve. Aldrich would show his pictures of McKinley, Grover Cleveland and the others, and then father would sing and do one of his dances. There would be more pictures and another song and dance and after that the picture of the flag, in colors. If the night were fair forty or even fifty people, farmers, their wives, the hired men and the children, would gather in the schoolhouse. The show only cost ten cents. Too much injustice was not done them.

It is, however, rather a shame they did not let father tell stories instead. Perhaps in all his life it never occurred to him they might have been written. Poor father! As a public figure, he had to content himself with the exercise of an art in which he was as bad, I fancy, as any man who has ever lived.

And it is his singing and dancing that remains like a scar in my memory of him. In the late fall, before Aldrich and he started out on their adventure, father used to rehearse upstairs in our house.

The evening meal would have been out of the way and we children would be sitting by the stove, about the table in the kitchen. Mother had washed clothes during the day and now she was doing an ironing. Father walked about, his hands clasped behind his back as though in deep thought, and occasionally he raised his eyes to the ceiling, while his lips moved silently.

Then he went out of the room and we heard him go upstairs into a bedroom above. None of us, in the kitchen below, looked at each other. We pretended to read books, to get our school lessons, or we looked at the floor.

At that time the humor of America—of which we Americans were so inordinately proud—expressed itself in the broader and less subtle jokes of Mark Twain, Bill Nye and Petroleum V. Nasby, and there was a book, commonly read by both children and grown-ups, and reputed to be very funny, called *Peck's Bad Boy*. It told, if I remember correctly, of the doings of a certain quite terrible youngster who put chewing gum or molasses on the seats of chairs, threw pepper into people's eyes, stuck pins into schoolteachers, hung cats over clotheslines by their tails, and did any number of other such charmingly expressive things.

This terrible child was, as I have said, reputed to be very funny and the book recounting his doings must have sold tremendously. And father, having read it, had written a ballad concerning just such another youngster. This child also made life a hell for his fellows, and his father was very proud of him. When the child had done something unusually shocking the father tried, one gathered, to share in the honor.

At any rate the refrain of father's song was:

"You grow more like your dad every day."

Evening after evening these words rang through our house. They made all of us children shiver a little. Father sang them, danced a few halting steps, and then sang them again.

In the kitchen, as I have already said, we

others sat with our eyes on the floor. One could not hear the words of the verses themselves, but the spirit of the song was known to all of us. Am I right? Were there—sometimes—tears in mother's eyes as she bent over the ironing board?

Of that, after all, I cannot be too sure. I can only be everlastingly sure of the refrain:

"You grow more like your dad every day."

* * *

And, however that may be, there is always one consoling thought. As a showman, and on stormy nights, there must sometimes have been but slight audiences at the schoolhouses and the takings for Aldrich and father must have been thin. One fancies evenings when eighty cents might cover all the receipts at the door.

One thinks of the eighty cents and shudders, and then a consoling thought comes. Of one thing we may be quite sure—father and Aldrich would not have gone hungry, and at night there must always have been comfortable beds into which they could crawl. Father had promised Aldrich he would see to the matter of bed and board.

And no doubt he did.

Even though the farmer and the farmer's wife should have proved hard-hearted one remembers the number of Tillies in the farmhouses of Ohio. When everything else failed the Tillies would have taken care of the troubadours. Of that one may be, I should say, very very sure.

1924

# 1869 ~ *Edwin Arlington Robinson* ~ 1935

THE STORY of Robinson's life is simple and uneventful. Born of Anglo-Saxon ancestry in Head Tide, Maine, where his father was a grain dealer, he was taken by the family to Gardiner at a very early age. After completing the course in the local high school, he entered Harvard in 1891. He remained only two years, because his father's illness made it necessary to support himself. In 1896 a small, privately printed volume appeared under the title of *The Torrent and the Night Before*, to be followed the succeeding year by *The Children of the Night*. Shortly after this he moved to New York in order to be closer to the literary market. The attention of President Roosevelt was drawn to his work by the publication of *Captain Craig and Other Poems* (1902) with the very practical result that he offered Robinson an appointment in the New York Custom House, which he held from 1905 to 1910. Robinson was never married. He spent his winters in Brooklyn and his summers at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, where he did most of his writing. After 1910 he published some twenty volumes of poetry, including *The Man Against the Sky* (1916), *Merlin* (1917), *Lancelot* (1920), *Tristram* (1927), *The Glory of the Nightingales* (1930), and *Matthias at the Door* (1931).

Robinson was shy and retiring. He shrank from dramatizing himself, was averse to lecturing and public reading of his poetry, and did not allow himself to become the victim of press agent and publicity enterprises. Aside from editing the letters of a friend he devoted himself exclusively to poetry, accepting the slow but

growing recognition of his work with a quiet dignity which is a reflection of the art itself.

Someone has spoken of Robinson as a great explorer of the human spirit. Like Browning he had the rare gift of laying bare the souls of men in moments and situations of crises. Lives that have suffered frustration, that show a wide disparity between what was hoped for and what was achieved, held a peculiar fascination for him. In fact he rarely chose characters that do not fall in this category. His whole philosophy of life is conditioned by man's apparent inability to realize himself fully and completely. Even the Arthurian stories which he retold point toward ultimate tragedy. Life at best is in a state of partial occultation and seldom emerges into the clear sunlight of complete fruition. Without doubt Robinson was influenced by the "pessimistic naturalism" of the time, but we can hardly claim that he accepted it. For he says in the closing lines of "Credo,"

> "I know the far-sent message of the years,
> I feel the coming glory of the Light."

This fondness for the unusual, the eccentric, and the frustrate is paralleled to a degree by the method of artistic treatment. Early in life Robinson came under the enduring influence of Thomas Hardy and George Crabbe. As a result of this influence he stripped poetry of all extraneous adornments, rejected all artistic superfluities, and reduced the matter of presentation to an objectivity of almost steel-like hardness, suggestive in some respects of the method of the Imagists. He said he formed the habit, as a young man, of "fishing" for the right word to convey an idea or a mood. He claimed adherence to no literary theory, and endeavored to do "as well as I can what insists on being done." In view of this individualism, it is interesting to note that he avoided free verse, preferring the conventional form, in which he sought to combine the rhythm of speech with that of the verse patterns. The poet must seek the "fearful truth," and present it with utter fearlessness, no matter where it leads. These ideals he steadily pursued; he belonged to no school of poetry, and followed the gleam of his youth irrespective of the bewildering lights of changing poetic fashions. He came upon the scene when poetry in America had become largely a matter of verse-mongering in search of prettiness; naturally, his very austere vigor marked him from the beginning. Indeed, he would have been prominent in any period. His calm contemplation of changeless life during a time when its only constant seemed to be change, his intellectual penetration, his objective, yet sympathetic attitude, not to mention his achievement of austere beauty, give to Robinson a high place in contemporary poetry.

There is a one-volume *Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1937). More recent individual volumes are *Dionysus in Doubt* (1925); *Tristram* (1927); *Sonnets, 1889–1927* (1928); *Fortunatus* (1928); *Modred, a Fragment* (1929); *The Prodigal Son* (1929); *Cavender's House* (1929); *The*

*Glory of the Nightingales* (1930); *Matthias at the Door* (1931); *Nicodemus* (1932); *Talifer* (1933); *Amaranth* (1934); *King Jasper* (1935). A full-length biography and criticism is Hermann Hagedorn's *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1938). M. Van Doren, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1927), is a biographical and critical study; "Edwin A. Robinson," *Wilson Bulletin*, Nov., 1928, and J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924) are also biographical. See also R. H. Schauffler, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1938). The more extensive critical studies are L. M. Beebe, *Edwin Arlington Robinson and the Arthurian Legend* (1927), and *Aspects of the Poetry of E. A. Robinson* (1928); C. Cestre, *An Introduction to Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1930); B. R. Redman, *Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1926); L. Morris, *The Poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1923); A. Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917). Briefer discussions may be found in: L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry* (1924); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); R. Brenner, *Ten Modern Poets* (1930); J. Drinkwater, *The Muse in Council* (1925); H. Monroe, *Poets & Their Art* (1926); E. E. Pipkin, "The Arthur of Edwin Arlington Robinson," *English Journal*, March, 1930; J. C. Squire and others, *Contemporary American Authors* (1928); T. Maynard, *Our Best Poets* (1922); G. B. Munson, *Destinations* (1928); O. F. Theis, "Edwin Arlington Robinson," *Forum*, Feb., 1914; T. Maynard, "Edwin Arlington Robinson," *Catholic World*, June, 1935; H. Monroe, "Robinson as Man and Poet," *Poetry*, June, 1935; M. D. Zabel, "Edwin Arlington Robinson," *Commonweal*, Feb. 15, 1933; M. D. Zabel, "Robinson in America," *Poetry*, June, 1935; L. Lippincott, *A Bibliography of the Writings and Criticisms of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (1937); L. E. Richards, *E. A. R.* (1936); R. W. Brown, *Next Door to a Poet* (1937). For valuable notes and further bibliography, see H. H. Clark, *Major American Poets* (1936).

## THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

A villanelle, giving a glimpse of the vanished New England, the same New England described also by Miss Jewett and Mrs. Freeman.

THEY are all gone away,
The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray
The winds blow bleak and shrill:
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day
To speak them good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
Around that sunken sill?
They are all gone away,

And our poor fancy-play
For them is wasted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

1897

## RICHARD CORY

Robinson's chief interest was in people, as numerous titles of his poems indicate. "Richard Cory" is a sharply etched portrait.

WHENEVER Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

1897

## CALVARY

FRIENDLESS and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary;
We gibed him, as he went, with houndish glee,
Till his dimmed eyes for us did overflow;
We cursed his vengeless hands thrice wretchedly,—
And this was nineteen hundred years ago.

But after nineteen hundred years the shame
Still clings, and we have not made good the loss
That outraged faith has entered in his name.
Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!
Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord how long
Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross!

1897

## GEORGE CRABBE

Crabbe was one of Robinson's favorite poets. This chastely wrought sonnet is a sincere tribute to a fellow poet as well as an excellent evaluation of his work and influence.

GIVE him the darkest inch your shelf allows,
Hide him in lonely garrets, if you will,—
But his hard, human pulse is throbbing still
With the sure strength that fearless truth endows.
In spite of all fine science disavows,
Of his plain excellence and stubborn skill
There yet remains what fashion cannot kill,
Though years have thinned the laurel from his brows.

Whether or not we read him, we can feel
From time to time the vigor of his name
Against us like a finger for the shame
And emptiness of what our souls reveal
In books that are as altars where we kneel
To consecrate the flicker, not the flame.

1897

## CREDO

I CANNOT find my way: there is no star
In all the shrouded heavens anywhere;
And there is not a whisper in the air
Of any living voice but one so far
That I can hear it only as a bar
Of lost, imperial music, played when fair
And angel fingers wove, and unaware,
Dead leaves to garlands where no roses are.

No, there is not a glimmer, nor a call,
For one that welcomes, welcomes when he fears,
The black and awful chaos of the night;
For through it all—above, beyond it all—
I know the far-sent message of the years,
I feel the coming glory of the Light.

1897

## THE TOWN DOWN THE RIVER

I

SAID the Watcher by the Way
To the young and the unladen,
To the boy and to the maiden,
"God be with you both to-day.
First your song came ringing,
Now you come, you two,—
Knowing naught of what you do,
Or of what your dreams are bringing.

"O you children who go singing
To the Town down the River,
Where the millions cringe and shiver,
Tell me what you know to-day;
Tell me how far you are going,
Tell me how you find your way.
O you children who go dreaming,
Tell me what you dream to-day."

"He is old and we have heard him,"
Said the boy then to the maiden;
"He is old and heavy laden
With a load we throw away.
Care may come to find us,
Age may lay us low;
Still, we seek the light we know,
And the dead we leave behind us.

"Did he think that he would blind us
Into such a small believing
As to live without achieving,
When the lights have led so far?
Let him watch or let him wither,—
Shall he tell us where we are?
We know best who go together,
Downward, onward, and so far."

II

Said the Watcher by the Way
To the fiery folk that hastened,
To the loud and the unchastened,
"You are strong, I see, to-day.
Strength and hope may lead you
To the journey's end,—
Each to be the other's friend
If the Town should fail to need you.

"And are ravens there to feed you
In the Town down the River,
Where the gift appalls the giver
And youth hardens day by day?
O you brave and you unshaken,
Are you truly on your way?
And are sirens in the River,
That you come so far to-day?"

"You are old, and we have listened,"
Said the voice of one who halted;
"You are sage and self-exalted,
But your way is not our way.
You that cannot aid us
Give us words to eat.
Be assured that they are sweet,
And that we are as God made us.

"Not in vain have you delayed us,
Though the River still be calling
Through the twilight that is falling
And the Town be still so far.
By the whirlwind of your wisdom
Leagues are lifted as leaves are;
But a king without a kingdom
Fails us, who have come so far."

III

Said the Watcher by the Way
To the slower folk who stumbled,
To the weak and the world-humbled,
"Tell me how you fare to-day.
Some with ardor shaken,
All with honor scarred,
Do you falter, finding hard
The far chance that you have taken?

"Or, do you at length awaken
To an antic retribution,
Goading to a new confusion
The drugged hopes of yesterday?
O you poor mad men that hobble,
Will you not return, or stay?
Do you trust, you broken people,
To a dawn without the day?"

"You speak well of what you know not,"
Muttered one; and then a second:
"You have begged and you have beckoned,
But you see us on our way.
Who are you to scold us,
Knowing what we know?
Jeremiah, long ago,
Said as much as you have told us.

"As we are, then, you behold us:
Derelicts of all conditions,
Poets, rogues, and sick physicians,
Plodding forward from afar;
Forward now into the darkness
Where the men before us are;
Forward, onward, out of grayness,
To the light that shone so far."

IV

Said the Watcher by the Way
To some aged ones who lingered,
To the shrunken, the claw-fingered,
"So you come for me to-day."—
"Yes, to give you warning;
You are old," one said;
"You have old hairs on your head,
Fit for laurel, not for scorning.

"From the first of early morning
We have toiled along to find you;
We, as others, have maligned you,
But we need your scorn to-day.
By the light that we saw shining,
Let us not be lured alway;
Let us hear no River calling
When to-morrow is to-day."

"But your lanterns are unlighted
And the Town is far before you:
Let us hasten, I implore you,"
Said the Watcher by the Way.
"Long have I waited,
Longer have I known
That the Town would have its own,
And the call be for the fated.

"In the name of all created,
Let us hear no more, my brothers;
Are we older than all others?
Are the planets in our way?"—
"Hark," said one; "I hear the River,
Calling always, night and day."—
"Forward, then! The lights are shining,"
Said the Watcher by the Way.

1908

## FLAMMONDE

This is not a mere etching, but a well-rounded picture, filled in with details and comparable to a painted portrait.

The man Flammonde, from God knows where,
With firm address and foreign air,
With news of nations in his talk
And something royal in his walk,
With glint of iron in his eyes,
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head
As one by kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose
About him, and about his clothes,
He pictured all tradition hears
Of what we owe to fifty years.
His cleansing heritage of taste
Paraded neither want nor waste;
And what he needed for his fee
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,
Had banished him from better days
To play the Prince of Castaways.
Meanwhile he played surpassing well
A part, for most, unplayable;
In fine, one pauses, half afraid
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego
Conviction as to yes or no;
Nor can I say just how intense
Would then have been the difference
To several, who, having striven
In vain to get what he was given,
Would see the stranger taken on
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover, many a malcontent
He soothed and found munificent;
His courtesy beguiled and foiled
Suspicion that his years were soiled;
His mien distinguished any crowd,
His credit strengthened when he bowed;
And women, young and old, were fond
Of looking at the man Flammonde.

There was a woman in our town
On whom the fashion was to frown;
But while our talk renewed the tinge
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,
The man Flammonde saw none of that,
And what he saw we wondered at—
That none of us, in her distress,
Could hide or find our littleness.

There was a boy that all agreed
Had shut within him the rare seed
Of learning. We could understand,
But none of us could lift a hand.
The man Flammonde appraised the youth,
And told a few of us the truth;
And thereby, for a little gold,
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought
For years and years, and over nought;
They made life awkward for their friends,
And shortened their own dividends.
The man Flammonde said what was wrong
Should be made right; nor was it long
Before they were again in line,
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four
Of many out of many more.
So much for them. But what of him—
So firm in every look and limb?
What small satanic sort of kink
Was in his brain? What broken link
Withheld him from the destinies
That came so near to being his?

What was he, when we came to sift
His meaning, and to note the drift
Of incommunicable ways
That make us ponder while we praise?
Why was it that his charm revealed
Somehow the surface of a shield?
What was it that we never caught?
What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met
We cannot ever know; nor yet
Shall all he gave us quite atone
For what was his, and his alone;
Nor need we now, since he knew best,
Nourish an ethical unrest:
Rarely at once will nature give
The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn
From those who never will return,
Until a flash of unforeseen
Remembrance falls on what has been.
We've each a darkening hill to climb;
And this is why, from time to time
In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
Horizons for the man Flammonde.

1915

## 1875 — *Robert Frost* — —

FROST is *par excellence* the poet of contemporary New England, who does in poetry what Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins had previously done in prose. On his father's side he is of New England ancestry, the family having lived in New Hampshire for seven generations; his mother was a native of Edinburgh, of Lowland Scotch descent. Although he was born, and for ten years lived, in San Francisco, this western environment seems to have made no impression on his mind so far as the subject matter of his work is concerned. On the death of his father, he and his mother moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts, where his paternal grandfather provided a home for them.

Here he graduated from the local high school, fell in love with Elinor Miriam White, to whom he was later married, and began to write poetry. He entered Dartmouth College, but remained only a few months because the routine pursuit of courses was distasteful to him. At Harvard his venture was scarcely more successful, for he left without a degree at the end of two years. Until 1912 he combined farming, authorship, and teaching, earning very little as a poet, and attracting wide attention through his original methods as a teacher. From 1912 to 1915 he and his family lived in England, where *A Boy's Will* (1913) and *North of Boston* (1914) were published and received with enthusiasm. The University of Michigan offered him an appointment without specified academic duties; later he was on the staff of Amherst College. A number of colleges and universities have conferred honorary degrees upon him, and the Pulitzer prize for poetry was twice awarded to him. His permanent home is in Vermont, where he is a neighbor of Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

Besides *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston*, issued in America in 1915, he is also

the author of *Mountain Interval* (1916), *New Hampshire* (1923), *West-Running Brook* (1928), and *A Lone Striker* (1933).

Although admittedly one of the most American of our poets, he was in reality "discovered" in England. It was only after assurance came from England that Frost was a poet of high caliber that America became hospitable to him. He is now generally recognized as one of the major living poets; discriminating readers regard him highly, and a few of his poems, like "Mending Wall" and "The Death of the Hired Man," have passed into the common vernacular.

In a sense Frost is a traditionalist, for he writes in the accepted forms and meter, frequently in rhyme, yet allowing himself liberties which would make a confirmed classicist wink askance. On the other hand, he is a poet of the here and now. Seldom, if at all, does the past enter into his work, and this in spite of the fact that he is well versed in the historic backgrounds of civilization. In this respect he is almost like a dual personality. He finds no poetic inspiration in second-hand ideas or in books. One searches in vain for a hint in the poems that he is a college professor.

Not only is he interested artistically in the present, but in a present of a very limited area. The background of his scene extends from Boston northward and westward some three hundred miles, centering for the most part in New Hampshire, and within the confines of this space he finds the facts of life which he transmutes into art. He is of the soil and loves country life and country people, and in his poetry country people and country scenes predominate.

In fact, people are his chief poetic interest. Here one notices too a certain exclusiveness of selection, for of the many types that might be found even in so restricted an area as central New England, Frost is concerned primarily with the people of the countryside. Nowhere is there a suggestion of an industrial Manchester or even of his own Lawrence. Only the men and women whose roots extend into the soil intrigue him. Their limited, often frustrate experiences, eccentricities, oddities, tragedies, comedies, passions, and philosophy suggest to him the breath and beauty of poetry.

In a rural New England whose farms at best yield only grudgingly to the farmer's efforts, and whose population consists of the residue left behind after the migration of some of its best blood, it is natural to suspect an atmosphere of depression, gloom, hopelessness, and futility. In the stories of Miss Jewett and Miss Wilkins this atmosphere is present; but not in Frost, at any rate not to the same degree, for he catches a certain youthfulness-in-spite-of-age feeling which defies futility and flings a challenge even at threatening decadence. Without outward gayety and lustiness, Frost's New England people are vital, vigorous, and prophetic of continuing life.

The chief characteristic of Frost's style is its concentration, a characteristic difficult to achieve, and sometimes objectionable when achieved. Such a style often becomes lifeless, colorless, and cold, and leaves an impression of arid intellectuality

without warmth of blood and passion. Frost has overcome the dangers by centering the whole matter of style about the individual word, that is, the painstaking selection of the one word which alone and unaided conveys the maximum burden of mood and thought. Frost describes poetry as "words that have become deeds." He brought poetry into harmony with the spoken word, not by adopting the crudeness and the vulgarities of common speech, but by refining the vernacular without robbing it of its savor—what Wordsworth aimed at but achieved only indifferently. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is a splendid illustration of his best traits.

*A Boy's Will* (1913); *North of Boston* (1914); *Mountain Interval* (1916); *New Hampshire* (1923); *West-Running Brook* (1928), have been brought together in *Collected Poems of Robert Frost* (1930). Since this date he has published *The Lone Striker* (1933); *Three Poems* (1935); *A Further Range* (1936). He is the author of a play, *A Way Out* (*Seven Arts*, Feb., 1917), also included in H. L. Cohen, ed., *More One-Act Plays by Modern Authors* (1927). S. Cox, *Robert Frost, Original "Ordinary Man"* (1929), and G. B. Munson, *Robert Frost* (1927), are biographies. For criticism see P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry* (1924); G. R. Elliott, *The Cycle of Modern Poetry* (1929); J. C. Squire and others, *Contemporary American Authors* (1928); A. Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917); A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); T. Maynard, *Our Best Poets* (1922); G. B. Munson, "Robert Frost and the Humanistic Temper," *Bookman*, July, 1930; E. S. Sergeant, *Fire Under the Andes* (1927); C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); R. Brenner, *Ten Modern Poets* (1930); J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924); L. Jones, *First Impressions* (1925); C. Cestre, "*Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson*," *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*, March, 1926; J. McB. Dabbs, "Robert Frost and the Dark Woods," *Yale Review*, March, 1934; E. Garnett, *Friday Nights* (1922); G. O. Akroyed, "The Classical in Robert Frost," *Poet-Lore*, Winter, 1929; C. Ford, *The Less Traveled Road, A Study of Robert Frost* (1935); R. Thornton, *Recognition of Robert Frost* (1937).

## THE TRIAL BY EXISTENCE

**A clue to Frost's outlook on life. Man is responsible for his fate, for the kind of life he leads is a matter of choice.**

Even the bravest that are slain
  Shall not dissemble their surprise
On waking to find valor reign,
  Even as on earth, in paradise;
And where they sought without the sword
  Wide fields of asphodel fore'er
To find that the utmost reward
  Of daring should be still to dare.

The light of heaven falls whole and white
  And is not shattered into dyes,
The light forever is morning light;
  The hills are verdured pasture-wise;
The angel hosts with freshness go,
  And seek with laughter what to brave;—
And binding all is the hushed snow
  Of the far-distant breaking wave.

And from a cliff-top is proclaimed
  The gathering of the souls for birth,
The trial by existence named,
  The obscuration upon earth.
And the slant spirits trooping by
  In streams and cross- and counter-streams
Can but give ear to that sweet cry
  For its suggestion of what dreams!

And the more loitering are turned
  To view once more the sacrifice
Of those who for some good discerned
  Will gladly give up paradise.

And a white shimmering concourse rolls
  Toward the throne to witness there
The speeding of devoted souls
  Which God makes his especial care.

And none are taken but who will,
  Having first heard the life read out
That opens earthward, good and ill,
  Beyond the shadow of a doubt;
And very beautifully God limns,
  And tenderly, life's little dream,
But naught extenuates or dims,
  Setting the thing that is supreme.

Nor is there wanting in the press
  Some spirit to stand simply forth,
Heroic in its nakedness,
  Against the uttermost of earth.
The tale of earth's unhonored things
  Sounds nobler there than 'neath the sun;
And the mind whirls and the heart sings,
  And a shout greets the daring one.

But always God speaks at the end:
  "One thought in agony of strife
The bravest would have by for friend,
  The memory that he chose the life;
But the pure fate to which you go
  Admits no memory of choice,
Or the woe were not earthly woe
  To which you give the assenting voice."

And so the choice must be again,
  But the last choice is still the same;
And the awe passes wonder then,
  And a hush falls for all acclaim.
And God has taken a flower of gold
  And broken it, and used therefrom
The mystic link to bind and hold
  Spirit to matter till death come.

'Tis of the essence of life here,
  Though we choose greatly, still to lack
The lasting memory at all clear,
  That life has for us on the wrack
Nothing but what we somehow chose;
  Thus are we wholly stripped of pride
In the pain that has but one close,
  Bearing it crushed and mystified.

1911

## MENDING WALL

Stone walls still serve as fences on many New England farms. During the winter so many of the stones become dislodged by the "groundswell" and by thoughtless hunters that it is necessary to mend the wall in the spring. In case the wall separates adjoining properties, the neighbors "walk the line," each one replacing the stones which have fallen on his side. This custom forms the basis of the poem.

SOMETHING there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

1914

## THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

Justly reputed to be one of Frost's best poems. It tells a tragic story with economy and restraint.

MARY sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tiptoe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbor him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—
You needn't smile—I didn't recognise him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.

Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathise. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay——"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like big birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us, you think,
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt today.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"*I* can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there tonight.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.
Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

1914

## THE MOUNTAIN

A glimpse into one type of native New Hampshire mind.

The mountain held the town as in a shadow.
I saw so much before I slept there once:
I noticed that I missed stars in the west,
Where its black body cut into the sky.
Near me it seemed: I felt it like a wall
Behind which I was sheltered from the wind.
And yet between the town and it I found,
When I walked forth at dawn to see new things,
Were fields, a river, and beyond, more fields.
The river at the time was fallen away,
And made a widespread brawl on cobble-stones;
But the signs showed what it had done in spring;
Good grassland gullied out, and in the grass
Ridges of sand, and driftwood stripped of bark,
I crossed the river and swung round the mountain.
And there I met a man who moved so slow
With white-faced oxen in a heavy cart,
It seemed no harm to stop him altogether.

"What town is this?" I asked.

"This? Lunenburg."

Then I was wrong: the town of my sojourn,
Beyond the bridge, was not that of the mountain,
But only felt at night its shadowy presence.
"Where is your village? Very far from here?"

"There is no village—only scattered farms.
We were but sixty voters last election.
We can't in nature grow to many more:
That thing takes all the room!" He moved his goad.
The mountain stood there to be pointed at.
Pasture ran up the side a little way,
And then there was a wall of trees and trunks:
After that only tops of trees, and cliffs
Imperfectly concealed among the leaves.
A dry ravine emerged from under boughs
Into the pasture.

"That looks like a path.
Is that the way to reach the top from here?—
Not for this morning, but some other time:
I must be getting back to breakfast now."

"I don't advise your trying from this side.
There is no proper path, but those that *have*
Been up, I understand, have climbed from Ladd's.
That's five miles back. You can't mistake the place:
They logged it there last winter some way up.
I'd take you, but I'm bound the other way."

"You've never climbed it?"

"I've been on the sides
Deer-hunting and trout-fishing. There's a brook
That starts up on it somewhere—I've heard say
Right on the top, tip-top—a curious thing.
But what would interest you about the brook,
It's always cold in summer, warm in winter.
One of the great sights going is to see
It steam in winter like an ox's breath,
Until the bushes all along its banks
Are inch-deep with the frosty spines and bristles—
You know the kind. Then let the sun shine on it!"

"There ought to be a view around the world
From such a mountain—if it isn't wooded
Clear to the top." I saw through leafy screens
Great granite terraces in sun and shadow,
Shelves one could rest a knee on getting up—
With depths behind him sheer a hundred feet;
Or turn and sit on and look out and down,
With little ferns in crevices at his elbow.

"As to that I can't say. But there's the spring,
Right on the summit, almost like a fountain.
That ought to be worth seeing."

"If it's there.
You never saw it?"

"I guess there's no doubt
About its being there. I never saw it.
It may not be right on the very top:
It wouldn't have to be a long way down
To have some head of water from above,
And a *good distance* down might not be noticed
By anyone who'd come a long way up.
One time I asked a fellow climbing it
To look and tell me later how it was."

"What did he say?"

"He said there was a lake
Somewhere in Ireland on a mountain top."

"But a lake's different. What about the spring?"

"He never got up high enough to see.
That's why I don't advise your trying this side.
He tried this side. I've always meant to go
And look myself, but you know how it is:
It doesn't seem so much to climb a mountain
You've worked around the foot of all your life.
What would I do? Go in my overalls,
With a big stick, the same as when the cows
Haven't come down to the bars at milking time?
Or with a shotgun for a stray black bear?
'Twouldn't seem real to climb for climbing it."

"I shouldn't climb it if I didn't want to—
Not for the sake of climbing. What's its name?"

"We call it Hor: I don't know if that's right."

"Can one walk around it? Would it be too far?"

"You can drive round and keep in Lunenburg,
But it's as much as ever you can do,
The boundary lines keep in so close to it.
Hor is the township, and the township's Hor—
*And* a few houses sprinkled round the foot,
Like boulders broken off the upper cliff,
Rolled out a little farther than the rest."

"Warm in December, cold in June, you say?"

"I don't suppose the water's changed at all.
You and I know enough to know it's warm
Compared with cold, and cold compared with warm.
But all the fun's in how you say a thing."

"You've lived here all your life?"

"Ever since Hor
Was no bigger than a——" What, I did not hear.
He drew the oxen toward him with light touches
Of his slim goad on nose and offside flank,
Gave them their marching orders and was moving.

1914

## THE BLACK COTTAGE

We chanced in passing by that afternoon
To catch it in a sort of special picture
Among tar-banded ancient cherry trees,

Set well back from the road in rank lodged grass,
The little cottage we were speaking of,
A front with just a door between two windows,
Fresh painted by the shower a velvet black.
We paused, the minister and I, to look.
He made as if to hold it at arm's length
Or put the leaves aside that framed it in.
"Pretty," he said. "Come in. No one will care."
The path was a vague parting in the grass
That led us to a weathered window-sill.
We pressed our faces to the pane. "You see," he said,
"Everything's as she left it when she died.
Her sons won't sell the house or the things in it.
They say they mean to come and summer here
Where they were boys. They haven't come this year.
They live so far away—one is out West—
It will be hard for them to keep their word.
Anyway they won't have the place disturbed."
A buttoned hair-cloth lounge spread scrolling arms
Under a crayon portrait on the wall
Done sadly from an old daguerreotype.
"That was the father as he went to war.
She always, when she talked about war,
Sooner or later came and leaned, half knelt,
Against the lounge beside it, though I doubt
If such unlifelike lines kept power to stir
Anything in her after all the years.
He fell at Gettysburg or Fredericksburg,
I ought to know—it makes a difference which:
Fredericksburg wasn't Gettysburg, of course.
But what I'm getting to is how forsaken
A little cottage this has always seemed;
Since she went more than ever, but before—
I don't mean altogether by the lives
That had gone out of it, the father first,
Then the two sons, till she was left alone.
(Nothing could draw her after those two sons.
She valued the considerate neglect
She had at some cost taught them after years.)
I mean by the world's having passed it by—
As we almost got by this afternoon.
It always seems to me a sort of mark
To measure how far fifty years have brought us.
Why not sit down if you are in no haste?
These doorsteps seldom have a visitor.
The warping boards pull out their own old nails
With none to tread and put them in their place.
She had her own idea of things, the old lady.
And she liked talk. She had seen Garrison
And Whittier, and had her story of them.
One wasn't long in learning that she thought
Whatever else the Civil War was for
It wasn't just to keep the States together,
Nor just to free the slaves, though it did both.
She wouldn't have believed those ends enough
To have given outright for them all she gave.
Her giving somehow touched the principle
That all men are created free and equal.
And to hear her quaint phrases—so removed
From the world's view today of all those things.
That's a hard mystery of Jefferson's.
What did he mean? Of course the easy way
Is to decide it simply isn't true.
It may not be. I heard a fellow say so.
But never mind, the Welshman got it planted
Where it will trouble us a thousand years.
Each age will have to reconsider it.
You couldn't tell her what the West was saying,
And what the South to her serene belief.
She had some art of hearing and yet not
Hearing the latter wisdom of the world.
White was the only race she ever knew.
Black she had scarcely seen, and yellow never.
But how could they be made so very unlike
By the same hand working in the same stuff?
She had supposed the war decided that.
What are you going to do with such a person?
Strange how such innocence gets its own way.
I shouldn't be surprised if in this world
It were the force that would at last prevail.
Do you know but for her there was a time
When to please younger members of the church,
Or rather say non-members in the church,
Whom we all have to think of nowadays,
I would have changed the Creed a very little?
Not that she ever had to ask me not to;
It never go so far as that; but the bare thought
Of her old tremulous bonnet in the pew,
And of her half asleep was too much for me.

Why, I might wake her up and startle her.
It was the words "descended into Hades"
That seemed too pagan to our liberal youth.
You know they suffered from a general onslaught.
And well, if they weren't true why keep right on
Saying them like the heathen? We could drop them.
Only—there was the bonnet in the pew.
Such a phrase couldn't have meant much to her.
But suppose she had missed it from the Creed
As a child misses the unsaid Good-night,
And falls asleep with heartache—how should I feel?
I'm just as glad she made me keep hands off,
For, dear me, why abandon a belief
Merely because it ceases to be true.
Cling to it long enough, and not a doubt
It will turn true again, for so it goes.
Most of the change we think we see in life
Is due to truths being in and out of favor.
As I sit here, and oftentimes, I wish
I could be monarch of a desert land
I could devote and dedicate forever
To the truths we keep coming back and back to.
So desert it would have to be, so walled
By mountain ranges half in summer snow,
No one would covet it or think it worth
The pains of conquering to force change on.
Scattered oases where men dwelt, but mostly
Sand dunes held closely in tamarisk
Blown over and over themselves in idleness.
Sand grains should sugar in the natal dew
The babe born to the desert, the sand storm
Retard mid-waste my cowering caravans——

"There are bees in this wall." He struck the clapboards,
Fierce heads looked out; small bodies pivoted.
We rose to go. Sunset blazed on the windows.

1914

## AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him—at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off;—and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man—one man—can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

1916

## BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.

They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.

One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
*Toward* heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

1915

## THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Another treatment of choice as a determining factor in life.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

1915

## A TIME TO TALK

When a friend calls to me from the road
And slows his horse to a meaning walk,
I don't stand still and look around
On all the hills I haven't hoed,
And shout from where I am, What is it?
No, not as there is a time to talk.

I thrust my hoe in the mellow ground,
Blade-end up and five feet tall,
And plod: I go up to the stone wall
For a friendly visit.

1916

## STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

1923

## OUR SINGING STRENGTH

It snowed in spring on earth so dry and warm
The flakes could find no landing place to form.
Hordes spent themselves to make it wet and cold,
And still they failed of any lasting hold.
They made no white impression on the black.
They disappeared as if earth sent them back.
Not till from separate flakes they changed at night
To almost strips and tapes of ragged white
Did grass and garden ground confess it snowed,
And all go back to winter but the road.
Next day the scene was piled and puffed and dead.
The grass lay flattened under one great tread.
Borne down until the end almost took root,
The rangey bough anticipated fruit
With snowballs cupped in every opening bud.
The road alone maintained itself in mud,
Whatever its secret was of greater heat
From inward fires or brush of passing feet.

In spring more mortal singers than belong
To any one place cover us with song.
Thrush, bluebird, blackbird, sparrow, and robin throng;
Some to go further north to Hudson's Bay,
Some that have come too far north back away,
Really a very few to build and stay.
Now was seen how these liked belated snow.
The fields had nowhere left for them to go;
They'd soon exhausted all there was in flying;
The trees they'd had enough of with once trying
And setting off their heavy powder load.
They could find nothing open but the road.
So there they let their lives be narrowed in
By thousands the bad weather made akin.
The road became a channel running flocks
Of glossy birds like ripples over rocks.
I drove them under foot in bits of flight
That kept the ground, almost disputing right
Of way with me from apathy of wing,
A talking twitter all they had to sing.
A few I must have driven to despair
Made quick asides, but having done in air
A whir among white branches great and small
As in some too much carven marble hall
Where one false wing beat would have brought down all,
Came tamely back in front of me, the Drover,
To suffer the same driven nightmare over.
One such storm in a lifetime couldn't teach them
That back behind pursuit it couldn't reach them;
None flew behind me to be left alone.

Well, something for a snowstorm to have shown
The country's singing strength thus brought together,
That though repressed and moody with the weather
Was none the less there ready to be freed
And sing the wildflowers up from root and seed.

1923

### TWO LOOK AT TWO

Love and forgetting might have carried them
A little further up the mountain side
With night so near, but not much further up.
They must have halted soon in any case
With thoughts of the path back, how rough it was
With rock and washout, and unsafe in darkness;
When they were halted by a tumbled wall
With barbed-wire binding. They stood facing this,
Spending what onward impulse they still had
In one last look the way they must not go,
On up the failing path, where, if a stone
Or earthslide moved at night, it moved itself;
No footstep moved it. "This is all," they sighed,
"Good-night to woods." But not so; there was more.
A doe from round a spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall, as near the wall as they.
She saw them in their field, they in hers.
The difficulty of seeing what stood still,
Like some up-ended boulder split in two,
Was in her clouded eyes: they saw no fear there.
She seemed to think that two thus they were safe.
Then, as if they were something that, though strange,
She could not trouble her mind with too long,
She sighed and passed unscared along the wall.
"*This*, then, is all. What more is there to ask?"
But no, not yet. A snort to bid them wait.
A buck from round the spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall as near the wall as they.
This was an antlered buck of lusty nostril,
Not the same doe come back into her place.
He viewed them quizzically with jerks of head,
As if to ask, "Why don't you make some motion?
Or give some sign of life? Because you can't.
I doubt if you're as living as you look."
Thus till he had them almost feeling dared
To stretch a proffering hand—and a spell-breaking.
Then he too passed unscared along the wall.
Two had seen two, whichever side you spoke from.
"This *must* be all." It was all. Still they stood,
A great wave from it going over them,
As if the earth in one unlooked-for favor
Had made them certain earth returned their love.

1923

## 1869 ~ *Edgar Lee Masters* ~ —

MASTERS was the first authentic poet of the Mississippi valley. He was born at Garnett, Kansas, descended on his father's side from Virginia stock and on his mother's from New Englanders. When the boy was a year old, the family moved to Petersburg, Illinois, where his father, a lawyer by profession, was state's attorney. The next move was to Lewiston, in the region of the Spoon and Sangamon rivers, the section he was to immortalize in his most famous book. Intensely eager and energetic intellectually, he read whatever books came to his hand (and let it be said that in some frontier communities literary classics were regarded as household necessities), learned the printer's trade on the *Lewiston News*, later became city editor, wrote and published verses in newspapers, and attended Knox College, where he studied Greek and German. Meanwhile he had been studying law and observing

court procedure under his father's direction. He practiced law successfully in Chicago, at one time associated with Clarence Darrow, from whom he may have derived some of his liberal views.

But literature, rather than the law, was his real passion. *A Book of Verses*, written for the most part under the spell of the traditional masters, especially Shelley, Keats, Shakespeare and Swinburne, was published in 1898, and *Maximilian*, a drama in blank verse, in 1902. About 1904 he met William Marion Reedy, editor of the *Mirror*, who encouraged him to break away from traditional poetic forms, to adopt the principles of the "new poetry" whose vogue was slowly gaining momentum, and to read the *Greek Anthology*. In this manner the way was paved for the *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), a collection of epitaphs as the dead themselves might have composed them. The book became a best seller. Of the volumes which now came in a steady stream, including *The Great Valley* (1916) and *Starved Rock* (1919), by far the most impressive is *Domesday Book* (1920), a Browningesque attempt to portray life comprehensively by telling a story from various angles. He is also the author of the novels *Mitch Miller* (1920), *Children of the Market Place* (1922), and *Skeeters Kirby* (1923), as well as of *Lincoln—The Man* (1931), a critical biography. His latest publications are *Invisible Landscapes* (1935), a volume of poems, and *Vachel Lindsay, a Poet in America* (1935), a biography.

Masters would not admit that he belonged to the so-called "new poetry" movement. All he professed was that he portrayed life as he saw it, and in the medium that best fitted his purpose. That he came under the influence of Whitman may be seen in the sonnet, "While Whitman Sighed in the Pines." At the beginning of his career he wrote in the accepted forms, but in *Spoon River Anthology* he broke away from them and thus allied himself with the newer poetic practice. Nevertheless, he maintained that there was nothing essentially new in the practice, and that he could defend his course on the authority of such critics as Aristotle and Goethe, and on the ground that changing forms are merely a response on the part of the poet to the ever-changing conceptions of life itself. Each writer must do the thing in his own way, without hindrance of any sort.

According to his conception of poetry this close connection with life becomes especially significant. To begin with, he maintains that the quality of life, that is, the type of civilization, determines the quality of its poetry, arguing that a society given to meanness and smallness cannot produce great art, a point made by Ruskin years ago. He is equally explicit concerning the mission of poetry. Whether poets generally admit it or not, he insists that poetry is an elevating and civilizing factor among men, citing in support of his contention the curbing effect of the satirists' ridicule, and the exaltation that results from lyrical singing. On this point he agrees with Shelley that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Masters is a social critic as well as creative artist. He holds a rather low estimate of

American civilization and culture, especially in his biography of Vachel Lindsay, and uses his art, as Sandburg also does, in directing attention to their shortcomings.

The work of Masters, especially *Spoon River* and *Domesday Book*, came as a crashing reaction against American poetry of the past, with its romance, prettiness, and refusal to see the harsher facts of life. Here was everything to which the reading public had already become accustomed in fiction—a dominating realism, a defiantly muscular style, recognition and admittance of sex, frustration and Freudian interpretation. His weaknesses were for the moment ignored and the wide gap between the best and the worst passages was pretty generally overlooked. The conservative voices of an older generation were lost in the loud hurrahs.

There is no question that Masters's fame is declining, yielding to the same law of change which brought him his opportunity in the first place. He wielded strong influence, but his voice was rather like that of the court crier—when the court gets down to business a lot of evidence is usually thrown out. He will likely be remembered by the *Spoon River Anthology* and *Domesday Book*, and only parts of them deserve remembrance. His novels have not been widely read.

The list of Masters's works is so long that only representative titles can be given. Among his volumes of poetry are *A Book of Verses* (1898); *Blood of the Prophets* (1905); *Spoon River Anthology* (1915); *The Great Valley* (1916); *Starved Rock* (1919); *Domesday Book* (1920); *The New Spoon River* (1924); *Lee: a Dramatic Poem* (1926); *Jack Kelso: a Dramatic Poem* (1928); *The Fate of the Jury* (1929); *Godbey: a Dramatic Poem* (1931); *Richmond: a Dramatic Poem* (1934); *Invisible Landscapes* (1935). Among his novels are *Mitch Miller* (1920); *Children of the Market Place* (1922); *Skeeters Kirby* (1923); *Mirage* (1927). *Vachel Lindsay: a Poet in America* (1935), *Whitman* (1937), and *Mark Twain, a Portrait* (1938) are biographies; *The Tale of Chicago* (1933) is a historical study; *The New Star Chamber and Other Essays* (1904) is a collection of political essays. He has also written a number of plays, among them *Maximilian* (1902); *The Trifler* (1908); *The Bread of Idleness* (1911). E. L. Masters, *Across Spoon River* (1936) is an autobiography. Information about his life may also be found in E. L. Masters, "The Genesis of Spoon River," *American Mercury*, Jan., 1933; E. L. Masters, "Introduction to Chicago," *American Mercury*, Jan., 1934; J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924); D. Karsner, *Sixteen Authors to One* (1928); J. C. Chandler, "The Spoon River Country," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1921–22). The following are helpful critical studies: C. Aiken, *Scepticisms* (1919); C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry Since 1900* (1923); H. Monroe, *Poets & Their Art* (1926); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); A. Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917); B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry* (1924); H. E. Childs, "Agrarianism and Sex," *Sewanee Review*, July–Sept., 1933; H. Hansen, *Midwest Portraits* (1923); L. Jones, *First Impressions* (1925); J. C. Powys, "Edgar Lee Masters," *Bookman*, August, 1929; S. Anderson, "Lindsay and Masters," *New Republic*, Dec. 25, 1935; J. W. Pratt, "Whitman and Masters: a Contrast," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, April, 1917.

## *From* SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY

Masters employed the naturalistic method in poetry as Dreiser and others employed it in prose. He has been enthusiastically praised and savagely condemned. What he tried to do is to probe deeper into life, which he felt had not been sufficiently explored. His discoveries were made known in these epitaphic soliloquies.

### *The Hill*

WHERE are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all, are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful childbirth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
One after life in far-away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all, are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all, are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

### *Lucinda Matlock*

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

### *Editor Whedon*

To be able to see every side of every question;
To be on every side, to be everything, to be nothing long;

To pervert truth, to ride it for a purpose,
To use great feelings and passions of the human family
For base designs, for cunning ends,
To wear a mask like the Greek actors—
Your eight-page paper—behind which you huddle,
Bawling through the megaphone of big type:
"This is I, the giant."
Thereby also living the life of a sneak-thief,
Poisoned with the anonymous words
Of your clandestine soul.
To scratch dirt over scandal for money,
And exhume it to the winds for revenge,
Or to sell papers,
Crushing reputations, or bodies, if need be,
To win at any cost, save your own life.
To glory in demoniac power, ditching civilization,
As a paranoiac boy puts a log on the track
And derails the express train.
To be an editor as I was.
Then to lie here close by the river over the place
Where the sewage flows from the village,
And the empty cans and garbage are dumped,
And abortions are hidden.

### *Doc Hill*

I went up and down the streets
Here and there by day and night,
Through all hours of the night caring for the poor who were sick.
Do you know why?
My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
And I turned to the people and poured out my love to them.
Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on the day of my funeral,
And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
To hold to the railing of the new life
When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
At the grave,
Hiding herself, and her grief!

1915

## 1879 ~ *Vachel Lindsay* ~ 1931

LINDSAY, the most original and most spectacular of the prairie poets, was like Sandburg a native of Illinois. His father was a religious evangelist and his mother was an artist—significant facts because the son inherited both traits. He was born in Springfield, rich in memories of Lincoln, and with the exception of temporary excursions lived there throughout his life. After graduating from high school, he attended Hiram College for three years, where he came under the influence of a vital academic tradition in oratory, and began to write poetry somewhat oratorical in tone and spirit. The influence is noticeable in much of his later work.

He left college without a degree in order to study art, first in Chicago, later in New York under Robert Henri. For four years he was a lecturer for the Y.M.C.A., and for a year served the Illinois Anti-Saloon League in a similar capacity. After the manner of the ancient troubadours he took at various times extensive walking tours, through the West, the Southwest, and the industrial East, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel of Beauty. He traveled alone, carried no baggage or money, avoided cities. He did carry a supply of *Rhymes to Be Traded for Bread*, for the purpose indicated, including lodging. As his fame and popularity grew, he made extensive

tours, giving readings from his works in exchange for greater compensation than bread and lodging. As a reader he was in great demand, for in the estimation of the people the poet and his work were synonymous. He lived for a short time in the state of Washington, where he was married. Later he returned to Springfield.

*General Booth Enters into Heaven* (1913) was his first volume of poems. This was followed by *The Congo* (1914), *The Chinese Nightingale* (1917), *Collected Poems* (1923), and *Every Soul Is a Circus* (1929). He has also published a number of prose works, chief among which are *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914); *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915); *The Golden Book of Springfield*, the picture of a Utopia shaped by Art and Beauty; and *The Litany of Washington Street* (1929), which contains an essay on Whitman and voices his political creed.

Lindsay has been variously called "minstrel missionary," "vaudevillian," and "poet of jazz." He was, besides an evangelist crusading for beauty, a political idealist and humanitarian. He dared to do what few poets admit as part of their mission, that is, consciously and deliberately strive to improve mankind. One of his major passions was to help men live better lives. Although a Campbellite himself, he preached neither sect nor creed, but the religion of Beauty as the final goal and achievement. On his tramping tours he frequently read to his hosts a group of three poems, "The Proud Father," "The Illinois Village," and "On the Building of Springfield," in which he not only expressed, as he said, his theory of American civilization, but described concretely the process of achieving the beautiful life, as he conceived it. As the central function of his gospel, he believed in making one's home community the most beautiful place in the world, a constructive attitude similar to that of Carol Kennicott in *Main Street*. This is precisely what he did himself and advised Clement Wood to do—return to Birmingham and join the Salvation Army, a combination of religion and glorified boosting of the home town. In a larger sense he attacked industrialism and preached a militant agrarianism.

His poetic theory may be gathered from *The Gospel of Beauty*, *The Art of the Moving Picture*, the prefaces to his *Collected Poems* and to *Every Soul Is a Circus*, and from "The New Localism, an Illustrated Essay for the Village Statesman." This New Localism is based upon his conception of what he calls the New States' Rights, social rather than political in character, and will reach its consummation in the cities and villages of the future, transformed by a new zeal for beauty, in all its phases. According to Professor H. H. Clark, the theory may be summarized as follows: (1) beauty is the work of *civic* virtue, while ugliness results from misgovernment; (2) the poet must proceed from the local to the universal; (3) poems are by-products of a happy life and are to be shared with the poet's fellow men; (4) other arts contribute to the creation of perfect poems; (5) poems are to be evaluated on the basis of their broad human significance.

With similar zeal he strove to bring poetry back to its historic place as a posses-

sion of the people as a whole, not only of the esoteric few, to make an appeal to average men as well as to the intellectually and culturally élite. He made it vocal as it had not been since the days of the scops and troubadours, to be read aloud and chanted, as he read and chanted, and invited his audiences to join him. He was a singer, wandering up and down the world singing his songs.

He wrote in both the traditional form, with stanzaic arrangement and rhyme, as well as in the freer form of the new poetry. For effect he frequently relied upon thumping rhythms and a daring, outspoken style, vocally expressive. To some of the poems he added directions for their proper reading and accompaniment as in "General Booth Enters into Heaven." It was in renderings of poems like this that some critics maintained he became at times a cheap vaudevillian. The temptation was there, to be sure.

Lindsay was, however, more than merely a poet of middle-west localism; in a sense he was representative of the America of his time. "The Congo" is symptomatic of the general interest in the Negro and his early backgrounds; the "Santa Fé Trail" renders forth the raucous noises of our mechanical civilization; "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight" is a pacifist poem of social sympathy and pity; the poems of "Johnny Appleseed" are indicative of the widespread interest in American folklore, and its poetic significance.

At his best Lindsay speaks with conviction and authority; at his worst he can be silly and even maudlin. His sense of discrimination seems to have weakened during the later years of his life; at any rate there is a distinct falling off in power and quality. More efficient terminal facilities ready to hand might have saved some otherwise too-thinly expanded pieces. At his best he combines middle-west power with a fine appreciation of aesthetic values and high moral enthusiasm. And by his preaching and singing he aroused Americans throughout the land to a quickened sense of poetic enjoyment. In the light of this achievement some of his faults may well be overlooked. In comparison with the pessimism and gloom of Masters, Anderson, and other contemporaries, obsessed with frustration, disillusionment, and futility, the courage, energy, and optimism of Lindsay are refreshing and enheartening.

The successive volumes of Lindsay's poetry are brought together in *Collected Poems* (rev. ed., 1925). Volumes which have appeared since that time are *Going-to-the-Stars* (1926); *The Candle in the Cabin* (1926); *Every Soul Is a Circus* (1929). There is also *Selected Poems*, with introduction by H. Spencer (1931). His prose includes *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914); *A Handy Guide for Beggars* (1916); "Adventures While Preaching Hieroglyphic Sermons" and "Adventures While Singing These Songs" in *Collected Poems; The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915, rev. ed., 1922); *The Golden Book of Springfield* (1920); *The Litany of Washington Street* (1929). E. L. Masters, *Vachel Lindsay: a Poet in America* (1935), is an excellent biography. Other biographical studies are S. Graham, *Tramping With a Poet in the Rockies* (1922); E. L. Masters, "The Tragedy of Vachel Lindsay," *American Mercury*, July, 1933; A. E. Trombly, *Vachel Lindsay, Adventurer* (1929); L. C. Wimberly, "Vachel Lindsay," *Frontier and Midland*,

March, 1934. Good critical studies are C. Aiken, *Scepticisms* (1919); L. Jones, *First Impressions* (1925); A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry* (1924); H. Monroe, *Poets & Their Art* (1926); G. B. Munson, *Destinations* (1928); T. Maynard, *Our Best Poets* (1922); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); H. Spencer, "The Life and Death of a Bard," *Bookman*, April, 1932; J. C. Squire and others, *Contemporary American Authors* (1928); H. S. Canby, "Vachel Lindsay," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Jan. 9, 1932; F. Hackett, "Vachel Lindsay," *New Republic*, Part 2, Nov. 18, 1916; J. B. Rittenhouse, "Vachel Lindsay," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, July, 1933; A. E. Trombly, "Vachel Lindsay's Prose," *Southwest Review*, Summer, 1928; C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924). For helpful notes and bibliography see H. H. Clark, *Major American Poets* (1936).

## GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

Lindsay's popularity began with the publication of this poem in Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* in 1913. Many reviewers praised it, among them William Dean Howells. From this time on he was a prominent figure in the revival of interest in poetry.

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(To be sung to the tune of "The Blood of the Lamb" with indicated instrument.)

I

(*Brass drum beaten loudly.*)

BOOTH led boldly with his big bass drum—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said: "He's come."
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail:—
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

(*Banjos.*)

Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over. (Booth had groaned for more.)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang:—
"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare blare
On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

II

(*Bass drum slower and softer.*)

Booth died blind and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

(*Sweet flute music.*)

Jesus came from out the courthouse door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty courthouse square.
Yet in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.

(*Bass drum louder.*)

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

*(Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground.)*

The hosts were sandalled, and their wings were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Oh, shout Salvation! It was good to see
Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

*(Reverently sung, no instruments.)*

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down.
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

1913

## *From* THE CONGO

Many of Lindsay's poems are built upon impressions of sound. "The Congo" (the title of Part I, omitted here, is "Their Basic Savagery") represents phases of life among African Negroes; the "Santa Fé Trail" catches the noise of contemporary industrial civilization.

### *II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits*

WILD crap-shooters with a whoop and a call — *Rather shrill and high.*
Danced the juba in their gambling hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, — *Read exactly as in first section.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
A negro fairyland swung into view, — *Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.*
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.
A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came — *With pomposity.*
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng — *With a great deliberation and ghostliness.*
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes, — *With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.*
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.

And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black-feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)
The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
While the witch-man laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
BOOM."
(Oh, rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

*With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.*

*With a touch of Negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.*

*Slow philosophic calm.*

## *III. The Hope of Their Religion*

A good old Negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob and the golden stairs,
And they all repented, a thousand strong
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed with their hymn books till they shook the room
With "glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the Apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

*Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.*

*Exactly as in the first section. Begin with terror and power, end with joy.*

*Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."*

Then along that river, a thousand miles
The vine-snared trees fell down in files. *With growing deliberation and joy.*
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.
There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed *In a rather high key—as delicately as possible.*
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the Negro nation
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle. *To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."*
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, *Dying down into a penetrating, terrified whisper.*
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

1914

## THE SANTA-FÉ TRAIL (A HUMORESQUE)

(I asked the old Negro: "What is that bird that sings so well?" He answered: "That is the Rachel-Jane." "Hasn't it another name—lark, or thrush, or the like?" "No. Jus' Rachel-Jane.")

### *I. In Which a Racing Auto Comes from the East*

THIS is the order of the music of the morning:— *To be sung delicately, to an improvised tune.*
First, from the far East comes but a crooning.
The crooning turns to a sunrise singing.
Hark to the *calm*-horn, *balm*-horn, *psalm*-horn.
Hark to the *faint*-horn, *quaint*-horn, *saint*-horn. . . .

Hark to the *pace*-horn, *chase*-horn, *race*-horn. *To be sung or read with great speed.*
And the holy veil of the dawn has gone.
Swiftly the brazen car comes on.
It burns in the East as the sunrise burns.
I see great flashes where the far trail turns.
Its eyes are lamps like the eyes of dragons.
It drinks gasoline from big red flagons.
Butting through the delicate mists of the morning,
It comes like lightning, goes past roaring.
It will hail all the windmills, taunting, ringing,
Dodge the cyclones,
Count the milestones,

On through the ranges the prairie-dog tills—
Scooting past the cattle on the thousand hills. . . .
Ho for the *tear*-horn, *scare*-horn, *dare*-horn,
Ho for the *gay*-horn, *bark*-horn, *bay*-horn.
*Ho for Kansas, land that restores us*
*When houses choke us, and great books bore us!*
*Sunrise Kansas, harvesters' Kansas,*
*A million men have found you before us.*

*To be read or sung in a rolling bass, with some deliberation.*

## *II. In Which Many Autos Pass Westward*

I want live things in their pride to remain.
I will not kill one grasshopper vain
Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a door.
I let him out, give him one chance more.
Perhaps, while he gnaws my hat in his whim,
Grasshopper lyrics occur to him.

*In an even, deliberate, narrative manner.*

I am a tramp by the long trail's border,
Given to squalor, rags and disorder.
I nap and amble and yawn and look,
Write fool-thoughts in my grubby book,
Recite to the children, explore at my ease,
Work when I work, beg when I please,
Give crank-drawings, that make folks stare
To the half-grown boys in the sunset glare,
And get me a place to sleep in the hay
At the end of a live-and-let-live day.

I find in the stubble of the new-cut weeds
A whisper and a feasting, all one needs:
The whisper of the strawberries, white and red
Here where the new-cut weeds lie dead.
But I would not walk all alone till I die
Without some life-drunk horns going by.
And up round this apple-earth they come
Blasting the whispers of the morning dumb:—
Cars in a plain realistic row.
And fair dreams fade
When the raw horns blow.

On each snapping pennant
A big black name:—
The careering city
Whence each car came.
They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah,
Tallahassee and Texarkana.
They tour from St. Louis, Columbus, Manistee,
They tour from Peoria, Davenport, Kankakee.
Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston,
Cars from Topeka, Emporia, and Austin.

*Like a train-caller in a Union Depot.*

Cars from Chicago, Hannibal, Cairo.
Cars from Alton, Oswego, Toledo.
Cars from Buffalo, Kokomo, Delphi,
Cars from Lodi, Carmi, Loami.
Ho for Kansas, land that restores us
When houses choke us, and great books bore us!
While I watch the highroad
And look at the sky,
While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur
Roll their legions without rain
Over the blistering Kansas plain—
While I sit by the milestone
And watch the sky,
The United States
Goes by.

Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking.
Listen to the quack-horns, slack and clacking.
Way down the road, trilling like a toad,
Here comes the *dice*-horn, here comes the *vice*-horn,
Here comes the *snarl*-horn, *brawl*-horn, *lewd*-horn,
Followed by the *prude*-horn, bleak and squeaking:—
(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from Kansas.)
Here comes the *hod*-horn, *plod*-horn, *sod*-horn,
Nevermore-to-*roam*-horn, *loam*-horn, *home*-horn.
(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from Kansas.)
Far away the Rachel-Jane
Not defeated by the horns
Sings amid a hedge of thorns:—
"Love and life,
Eternal youth—
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,
Dew and glory,
Love and truth,
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet."
WHILE SMOKE-BLACK FREIGHTS ON THE DOUBLE-TRACKED RAILROAD,
DRIVEN AS THOUGH BY THE FOUL FIEND'S OX-GOAD,
SCREAMING TO THE WEST COAST, SCREAMING TO THE EAST,
CARRY OFF A HARVEST, BRING BACK A FEAST,
AND HARVESTING MACHINERY AND HARNESS FOR THE BEAST,
THE HAND-CARS WHIZ, AND RATTLE ON THE RAILS,
THE SUNLIGHT FLASHES ON THE TIN DINNER-PAILS.
And then, in an instant, ye modern men,
Behold the procession once again,
The United States goes by!
Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking,
Listen to the *wise*-horn, desperate-to-*advise* horn,
Listen to the *fast*-horn, *kill*-horn, *blast*-horn. . . .
Far away the Rachel-Jane
Not defeated by the horns

*To be given very harshly, with a snapping explosiveness.*

*To be read or sung, well-nigh in a whisper.*

*Louder and louder, faster and faster.*

*In a rolling bass, with increasing deliberation.*

*With a snapping explosiveness.*

Sings amid a hedge of thorns:— *To be sung or read well-nigh in a whisper.*
Love and life,
Eternal youth,
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,
Dew and glory,
Love and truth.
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.
The mufflers open on a score of cars *To be brawled in the beginning with a snapping explosiveness, ending in a languorous chant.*
With wonderful thunder,
CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK,
CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
Listen to the gold-horn . . .
Old-horn . . .
Cold horn . . .
And all of the tunes, till the night comes down
On hay-stack, and ant-hill, and wind-bitten town.
Then far in the west, as in the beginning, *To be sung to exactly the same whispered tune as the first five lines.*
Dim in the distance, sweet in retreating,
Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn,
Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn. . . .

They are hunting the goals that they understand:— *This section beginning sonorously, ending in a languorous whisper.*
San-Francisco and the brown sea-sand.
My goal is the mystery the beggars win.
I am caught in the web the night-winds spin.
The edge of the wheat-ridge speaks to me.
I talk with the leaves of the mulberry tree.
And now I hear, as I sit all alone
In the dusk, by another big Santa-Fé stone,
The souls of the tall corn gathering round
And the gay little souls of the grass in the ground.
Listen to the tale the cottonwood tells.
Listen to the windmills, singing o'er the wells.
Listen to the whistling flutes without price
Of myriad prophets out of paradise.
Harken to the wonder
That the night-air carries. . . .
Listen . . . to . . . the . . . whisper . . .
Of . . . the . . . prairie . . . fairies
Singing o'er the fairy plain:— *To the same whispered tune as the Rachel-Jane song—but very slowly.*
"Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.
Love and glory,
Stars and rain,
Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. . . ."

1914

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

(In Springfield, Illinois)

One of the significant poems called forth by the Great War.

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old courthouse pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.
It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

1914

## THE GHOST OF THE BUFFALOES

A forgotten era in the frontier life on the great plain is here restored and vivified.

Last night at black midnight I woke with a cry,
The windows were shaking, there was thunder on high,
The floor was a-tremble, the door was a-jar,
White fires, crimson fires, shone from afar.
I rushed to the door yard. The city was gone.
My home was a hut without orchard or lawn.
It was mud-smear and logs near a whispering stream,
Nothing else built by man could I see in my dream . . .
Then . . .
Ghost-kings came headlong, row upon row,
Gods of the Indians, torches aglow.

They mounted the bear and the elk and the deer,
And eagles gigantic, aged and sere,
They rode long-horn cattle, they cried "A-la-la."
They lifted the knife, the bow, and the spear,
They lifted ghost-torches from dead fires below,
The midnight made grand with the cry "A-la-la."
The midnight made grand with a red-god charge,
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
"A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

With bodies like bronze, and terrible eyes
Came the rank and the file, with catamount cries,
Gibbering, yipping, with hollow-skull clacks,
Riding white bronchos with skeleton backs,
Scalp-hunters, beaded and spangled and bad,
Naked and lustful and foaming and mad,

Flashing primeval demoniac scorn,
Blood-thirst and pomp amid darkness reborn,
Power and glory that sleep in the grass
While the winds and the snows and the great rains pass.
They crossed the gray river, thousands abreast,
They rode in infinite lines to the west,
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep.
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

And the wind crept by
Alone, unkempt, unsatisfied,
The wind cried and cried—
Muttered of massacres long past,
Buffaloes in shambles vast . . .
An owl said: "Hark, what is a-wing?"
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling.
Then . . .
Snuffing the lightning that crashed from on high
Rose royal old buffaloes, row upon row.
The lords of the prairie came galloping by.
And I cried in my heart "A-la-la, a-la-la,
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

Buffaloes, buffaloes, thousands abreast,
A scourge and amazement, they swept to the west.
With black bobbing noses, with red rolling tongues,
Coughing forth steam from their leather-wrapped lungs,
Cows with their calves, bulls big and vain,
Goring the laggards, shaking the mane,
Stamping flint feet, flashing moon eyes,
Pompous and owlish, shaggy and wise.
Like sea-cliffs and caves resounded their ranks
With shoulders like waves, and undulant flanks.
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

I heard a cricket's cymbals play,
A scarecrow lightly flapped his rags,
And a pan that hung by his shoulder rang,
Rattled and thumped in a listless way,
And now the wind in the chimney sang,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
Seemed to say:—
"Dream, boy, dream,
If you anywise can.
To dream is the work
Of beast or man.
Life is the west-going dream-storm's breath,
Life is a dream, the sigh of the skies,
The breath of the stars, that nod on their pillows
With their golden hair mussed over their eyes."
The locust played on his musical wing,
Sang to his mate of love's delight.
I heard the whippoorwill's soft fret.
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket carolling,
I heard a cricket say: "Good-night, good-night,
Good-night, good-night, . . . good-night."

1917

## *From* THE BOOKER WASHINGTON TRILOGY

A MEMORIAL TO BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

### *I. Simon Legree:—A Negro Sermon*

(To be read in your own variety of Negro dialect.)

LEGREE's big house was white and green.
His cotton-fields were the best to be seen.
He had strong horses and opulent cattle,
And bloodhounds bold, with chains that would rattle.

His garret was full of curious things:
Books of magic, bags of gold,
And rabbits' feet on long twine strings.
*But he went down to the Devil.*

Legree he sported a brass-buttoned coat,
A snake-skin necktie, a blood-red shirt.
Legree he had a beard like a goat,
And a thick hairy neck, and eyes like dirt.
His puffed-out cheeks were fish-belly white,
He had great long teeth, and an appetite.
He ate raw meat, 'most every meal,
And rolled his eyes till the cat would squeal.

His fist was an enormous size
To mash poor niggers that told him lies:
He was surely a witch-man in disguise.
*But he went down to the Devil.*

He wore hip-boots, and would wade all day
To capture his slaves that fled away.
*But he went down to the Devil.*

He beat poor Uncle Tom to death
Who prayed for Legree with his last breath.
Then Uncle Tom to Eva flew,
To the high sanctoriums bright and new;
And Simon Legree stared up beneath,
And cracked his heels, and ground his teeth:
*And went down to the Devil.*

He crossed the yard in the storm and gloom;
He went into his grand front room.
He said, "I killed him, and I don't care."
He kicked a hound, he gave a swear;
He tightened his belt, he took a lamp,
Went down cellar to the webs and damp.
There in the middle of the mouldy floor
He heaved up a slab, he found a door—
*And went down to the Devil.*

His lamp blew out, but his eyes burned bright.
Simon Legree stepped down all night—
*Down, down to the Devil.*
Simon Legree reached the place,
He saw one half of the human race,
He saw the Devil on a wide green throne,
Gnawing the meat from a big ham-bone,
And he said to Mister Devil:

"I see that you have much to eat—
A red ham-bone is surely sweet.
I see that you have lion's feet;
I see your frame is fat and fine,
I see you drink your poison wine—
Blood and burning turpentine."

And the Devil said to Simon Legree:
"I like your style, so wicked and free.
Come sit and share my throne with me,
And let us bark and revel."
And there they sit and gnash their teeth,
And each one wears a hop-vine wreath.
They are matching pennies and shooting craps,
They are playing poker and taking naps.
And old Legree is fat and fine:
He eats the fire, he drinks the wine—
Blood and burning turpentine—
*Down, down with the Devil;*
*Down, down with the Devil;*
*Down, down with the Devil.*

1917

## 1878 ~ *Carl Sandburg* ~ —

LIKE HIS contemporaries, Lindsay and Masters, Sandburg is a product of the Middle West, and with them shares the distinction of making this section of America articulate in poetry. He is a native of Galesburg, Illinois, the son of Swedish immigrant parents who changed their name from Johnson to Sandburg in order to avoid confusion with the many other Johnsons. The boy contributed to his support by serving in turn as milk peddler, barbershop porter, sceneshifter in a theater,

brickyard laborer, dishwasher, and harvest hand—employment in which he experienced the vicissitudes of unskilled labor and undoubtedly gave direction to his later social sympathies. He saw military service in Porto Rico during the Spanish-American War, and after his discharge entered Lombard College, from which he graduated in 1902.

College transformed Sandburg from an unskilled laborer to a thinking man with socialist leanings. He chose newspaper work as the most likely means of giving expression to his ideals, which he also translated into more tangible forms as organizer for the Social Democratic party. For two years he was secretary to the Mayor of Milwaukee. In 1918 he accepted an appointment as editorial writer on the staff of the *Chicago Daily News*, a post which he held for many years. The publication in 1914 of "Chicago," for which he received the Levinson Poetry Prize, marks the definite beginning of his career as a poet.

He has published numerous volumes of poetry, chief of them being *Chicago Poems* (1915), *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920), *Slabs of the Sunburnt West* (1922), *Good Morning, America* (1928), and *The People, Yes* (1936). He has also edited *The American Songbag* (1927), a collection of folk ballads and folk tunes on which he is an authority, and which he sings in his platform entertainments. The first two volumes of his monumental study of Lincoln appeared in 1926 under the title of *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*—a study completed in 1939 by the publication of four more volumes called *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years.*

In *Good Morning, America* Sandburg published thirty-eight "Tentative (First Model) Definitions of Poetry." Some of them are rather fantastic, others are somewhat obscure, while still others are far-fetched to say the least. One gathers that, outwardly, poetry is an art expressed in the medium of language, leaving an effect of music, cadence, "wavelengths," and overtones. Inwardly, it seems to be a process of imposing the sublime upon the ridiculous. Its body consists largely of implications, universal deductions from the sphere of the particular. In other words, poetry rests upon the immediate and the factual, but its implications transcend the immediate and the factual, and point to the realm of the unknown and unknowable. These same implications of what is factual are concerned with the deepest yearnings of the human spirit, its desire for beauty, satisfaction, and that eternal reality which gives it infinite security. Life is hard, coarse, often brutal; poetry softens it, gives it meaning, beauty, and direction. The most striking characteristic of the definitions is the sharp contrasts between the two factors of poetry, as for instance "kinetic arrangement of static syllables," "synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits." Poetry is the art which extracts the infinitely spiritual and eternal from the utterly commonplace, and presents the persistent moods and ideas which characterize man's reactions to the facts of life as he tries to make his way upward.

The poetry itself is marked by similar extremes. Sandburg has been accused of coarseness and brutality, and in some instances the accusation is not without foundation. On the other hand one finds in his work individual pieces which for sheer beauty and delicacy have seldom been equalled. Contrast, for instance, the opening line of "Chicago,"

Hog Butcher for the World

with

The fog comes
on little cat feet

from "Fog," and the range is clearly indicated. But the brutality and coarseness are inherent in the subjects he selects; they are not artificial or imposed. Sandburg proceeds from the physically expressive, whether it is the strength of lusty shoulders, the war of modern industrialism, the rage of crime, or the hardship of the laborer, and he fits his language to his subject matter.

Sandburg is a Socialist, and because he is an insistent pleader for justice to the unfortunate, some have come to regard many of his poems as pieces of propaganda. There can be no question about his sincerity in his sympathy for the downtrodden. He may err, however, in his somewhat mystical conviction that the underdog is necessarily good, and that the millionaire, who is responsible for his condition, is by the same token wicked. He seems to forget that the opposite may likewise be true. The real question is whether the poems are propaganda to the exclusion of art. On the whole it seems to be the consensus of opinion that he is a poet, first and foremost. For he has demonstrated that from sheer invective he can rise to rare poetic emotion in comparatively brief space.

Sandburg writes in a language that carries conviction because conviction prompts it in the first place. He loves a resounding, muscular expressiveness when the subject requires it. Nor does occasional slang detract from poetic force. The strong, clear, expressive word is his chief quest. He eschews so-called prettiness, and relies on force and clearness rather than ornament.

Sandburg is the authentic poetic voice of Chicago and the great Midwest territory which it dominates. The farmer, the industrialist, the laborer, the criminal are made vocal by him. He speaks for a variegated America.

Sandburg's successive volumes of poetry are *Chicago Poems* (1916); *Cornhuskers* (1918); *Smoke and Steel* (1920); *Slabs of the Sunburnt West* (1922); *Good Morning, America* (1928); *Early Moon* (poems for children) (1930). In biography he has written *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (2 vols., 1926); *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (4 vols., 1939); and *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow* (1932). *Rootabaga Stories* (1922), *Rootabaga Pigeons* (1923), and *Potato Face* (1930), are stories for children. He is also the compiler of *The American Songbag* (1927). Biographical information may be obtained in H. Hansen, *Carl Sandburg: the Man and His Poetry* (1925); D. Karsner, *Sixteen Authors to One* (1928); W. Yust, "Carl Sandburg, Human Being," *Bookman*,

Jan., 1921; H. Hansen, "Carl Sandburg—Poet of the Prairie," *Pictorial Review*, Sept., 1925. For criticism the following will be helpful: P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); H. Hansen, *Midwest Portraits* (1923); L. Jones, *First Impressions* (1925); A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); A. Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917); S. P. Sherman, *Americans* (1922); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); H. Monroe, *Poets & Their Art* (1926); C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924); B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry* (1924); C. H. Compton, "Who Reads Carl Sandburg?", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, April, 1929; C. Aiken, *Scepticisms* (1919); H. M. Jones, "Backgrounds of Sorrow," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Jan., 1927; R. Brenner, *Ten Modern Poets* (1930); R. West, *Saturday Review of Literature*, Sept. 4, 1926; E. Carnevali, "Our Great Carl Sandburg," *Poetry*, Feb., 1921.

## CHICAGO

The content, form and style, as well as the rugged outspokenness and brutality struck a new note in American poetry.

HOG Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked, and I believe them; for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal, and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shovelling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

1916

## THE HARBOR

PASSING through huddled and ugly walls
By doorways where women
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,
I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake,
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and whirling free in the open.

1916

## A TEAMSTER'S FAREWELL

*Sobs En Route to a Penitentiary*

GOOD-BYE now to the streets and the clash of wheels and locking hubs,
The sun coming on the brass buckles and harness knobs,
The muscles of the horses sliding under their heavy haunches,
Good-bye now to the traffic policeman and his whistle,
The smash of the iron hoofs on the stones,
All the crazy wonderful slamming roar of the street—
O God, there's noises I'm going to be hungry for.

1916

## TO A CONTEMPORARY BUNKSHOOTER

**An unmistakable expression of Sandburg's revulsion to some contemporary evangelistic practices.**

You come along . . . tearing your shirt . . . yelling about Jesus.
Where do you get that stuff?
What do you know about Jesus,
Jesus had a way of talking soft and outside of a few bankers and higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem everybody liked to have this Jesus around because he never made any fake passes and everything he said went and he helped the sick and gave the people hope.

You come along squirting words at us, shaking your fist and call us all dam fools so fierce the froth slobbers over your lips . . . always blabbing we're all going to hell straight off and you know all about it.

I've read Jesus' words. I know what he said. You don't throw any scare into me. I've got your number. I know how much you know about Jesus.
He never came near clean people or dirty people but they felt cleaner because he came along. It was your crowd of bankers and business men and lawyers hired the sluggers and murderers who put Jesus out of the running.
I say the same bunch backing you nailed the nails into the hands of this Jesus of Nazareth. He had lined up against him the same crooks and strong-arm men now lined up with you paying your way.

This Jesus was good to look at, smelled good, listened good. He threw out something fresh and beautiful from the skin of his body and the touch of his hands wherever he passed along.
You slimy bunkshooter, you put a smut on every human blossom in reach of your rotten breath belching about hell-fire and hiccupping about this Man who lived a clean life in Galilee.
When are you going to quit making the carpenters build emergency hospitals for women and girls driven crazy with wrecked nerves from your gibberish about Jesus?—I put it to you again: Where do you get that stuff? what do you know about Jesus?

Go ahead and bust all the chairs you want to. Smash a whole wagon-load of furniture at every performance. Turn sixty somersaults and stand on your nutty head. If it wasn't for the way you scare the women and kids I'd feel sorry for you and pass the hat.

I like to watch a good four-flusher work, but not when he starts people puking and calling for the doctors.
I like a man that's got nerve and can pull off a great original performance, but you—you're only a bug-house pedlar of second-hand gospel—you're only shoving out a phoney imitation of the goods this Jesus wanted free as air and sunlight.

You tell people living in shanties Jesus is going to fix it up all right with them by giving them mansions in the skies after they're dead and the worms have eaten 'em.
You tell $6 a week department store girls all they need is Jesus; you take a steel trust wop, dead without having lived, grey and shrunken at forty years of age, and you tell him to look at Jesus on the cross and he'll be all right.
You tell poor people they don't need any more money on pay day and even if it's fierce to be out of a job, Jesus'll fix that up all right, all right—all they gotta do is take Jesus the way you say.
I'm telling you Jesus wouldn't stand for the stuff you're handing out. Jesus played it different. The bankers and lawyers of Jerusalem got their sluggers and murderers to go after Jesus just because Jesus wouldn't play their game. He didn't sit in with the big thieves.

I don't want a lot of gab from a bunkshooter in my religion.
I won't take my religion from any man who never works except with his mouth and never cherishes any memory except the face of the woman on the American silver dollar.
I ask you to come through and show me where you're pouring out the blood of your life.
I've been to this suburb of Jerusalem they call Golgotha, where they nailed Him, and I know if the story is straight it was real blood ran from His hands and the nail-holes, and it was real blood spurted in red drops where the spear of the Roman soldier rammed in between the ribs of this Jesus of Nazareth.

1916

## FOG

**A poem which shows the more delicate aspect of Sandburg's poetry.**

THE fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

1916

## NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

STUFF of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

1916

## COOL TOMBS

WHEN Abraham Lincoln was shovelled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

1916

## WORK GANGS

**Compare this poem with Markham's "The Man with the Hoe."**

Box cars run by a mile long.
And I wonder what they say to each other
When they stop a mile long on a sidetrack.
Maybe their chatter goes:
I came from Fargo with a load of wheat up to the danger line.
I came from Omaha with a load of shorthorns and they splintered my boards.
I came from Detroit heavy with a load of flivvers.
I carried apples from the Hood river last year and this year bunches of bananas from Florida; they look for me with watermelons from Mississippi next year.

Hammers and shovels of work gangs sleep in shop corners
when the dark stars come on the sky and the night watchmen walk and look.

Then the hammer heads talk to the handles,
then the scoops of the shovels talk,
how the day's work nicked and trimmed them,
how they swung and lifted all day,
how the hands of the work gangs smelled of hope
In the night of the dark stars
when the curve of the sky is a work gang handle,
in the night on the mile long sidetracks,
in the night where the hammers and shovels sleep in corners,
the night watchmen stuff their pipes with dreams—
and sometimes they doze and don't care for nothin',
and sometimes they search their heads for meanings, stories, stars.
The stuff of it runs like this:
A long way we come; a long way to go; long rests and long deep sniffs for our lungs on the way.
Sleep is a belonging of all; even if all songs are old songs and the singing heart is snuffed out like a switchman's lantern with the oil gone, even if we forget our names and houses in the finish, the secret of sleep is left us, sleep belongs to all, sleep is the first and last and best of all.

People singing; people with song mouths connecting with song hearts; people who must sing or die; people whose song hearts break if there is no song mouth; these are my people.

1920

## DEATH SNIPS PROUD MEN

Death is stronger than all the governments because the governments are men and men die and then death laughs: Now you see 'em, now you don't.

Death is stronger than all proud men and so death snips proud men on the nose, throws a pair of dice and says: Read 'em and weep.

Death sends a radiogram every day: When I want you I'll drop in—and then one day he comes with a master-key and lets himself in and says: We'll go now.

Death is a nurse mother with big arms: 'Twon't hurt you at all; it's your time now; you just need a long sleep, child; what have you had anyhow better than sleep?

1920

## FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

*"The past is a bucket of ashes"*

I

The woman named To-morrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

2

The doors were cedar
and the panels strips of gold
and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.
The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
where the golden girls ran and the panels read:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

3

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
to warble: We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang
and the strong men listened
and paid the singers well
and felt good about it all
there were rats and lizards who listened
. . . and the only listeners left now
. . . are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

And there are black crows
Crying, "Caw, caw,"
bringing mud and sticks
building a nest
over the words carved
on the doors where the panels were cedar
and the strips on the panels were gold
and the golden girls came singing:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.
The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw,"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

4

The feet of the rats
scribble on the door sills;
the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
chatter the pedigrees of the rats
and babble of the blood
and gabble of the breed
of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
of the rats.

And the wind shifts
and the wind on the door sill shifts
and even the writing of the rat footprints
tell us nothing, nothing at all
about the greatest city, the greatest nation
where the strong men listened
and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was.

1920

## A.E.F.

THERE will be a rusty gun on the wall, sweetheart,
The rifle grooves curling with flakes of rust.
A spider will make a silver string nest in the darkest, warmest corner of it.
The trigger and the range-finder, they too will be rusty.
And no hands will polish the gun, and it will hang on the wall.
Forefingers and thumbs will point absently and casually toward it.
It will be spoken among half-forgotten, wished-to-be-forgotten things.
They will tell the spider: Go on, you're doing good work.

1920

# 1874 ~ *Amy Lowell* ~ 1925

MISS LOWELL came from a distinguished New England family and numbered among her ancestors famous statesmen, educators, writers, and diplomats. Her grandfather was a cousin of James Russell Lowell, and her brothers were Percival Lowell, the astronomer, and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, for many years president of Harvard University. She was a native of Brookline, Massachusetts, where she made her home to the end of her life. Born to great wealth, she had the advantage of private education and much foreign travel. At thirteen, it is said, she began to write verse, but it was not until she was twenty-eight that she made up her mind to make poetry her profession. At thirty-eight she published her first book. Although known primarily as a poet, she also achieved distinction as a critic and biographer. By some it is believed that the unremitting work on her life of Keats, one of her masters, hastened her death.

During her lifetime she published eight volumes of poetry, and three others appeared after her death. Of these *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914) and *Can Grande's Castle* (1918) are representative of her most original and best work. *A Critical Fable* (1922) aims to do for her contemporaries what James Russell Lowell did earlier in his *A Fable for Critics*, and does it with verve and enthusiasm. *Six French Poets* (1915) and *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917) are critical studies variously estimated as to their ultimate value. There are differing opinions about her biography of *John Keats* (1925), but it is safe to say that she brought together the greatest amount of material concerning Keats ever assembled, and that all future biographers and interpreters will be indebted to her.

In view of Miss Lowell's staid New England ancestry and backgrounds it would have been natural for her to become a poet in the classical tradition. Indeed, her first volume, *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass* (1912), seemed to confirm this anticipation, for most of the poems in it were written in more or less stereotyped forms. Two forces, however, united to change the current of her development. During recent years America with its youthful instability and passion for change had become interested in a changing form of poetic art, referred to in such terms as "new poetry," *vers libre*, and Imagism. A woman of boundless energy, with a good deal of the pugnacious and belligerent in her nature, she seized the opportunity to make herself the promoter, leader, spokesman, and interpreter of the small group of poets who were struggling to arrive at a new medium of poetic expression. And in her own creative work she began to experiment with new forms in accordance with their *Credo*, the change being definitely noticeable in *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed*.

The chief articles in the new creed to which the Imagists subscribed are: (1) to use only the *exact* word; (2) to substitute cadence for meter; (3) to have free choice of subject matter, with a preference, however, for modern life; (4) to create definite and concrete images that are hard and clear; and (5) to strive for concentration.

Some of the precepts Miss Lowell followed, and others she ignored. She chose her subject matter rather promiscuously from human experience past and present, actual as well as imagined (one of her volumes is entitled *Legends*), but in no way confined herself to what is modern; in her development of polyphonic prose as a medium of expression she probably went further than was originally anticipated. On the other hand the exact word, the hard poetic effect, and the clear image are never absent.

One wonders why the creed of the Imagists, on the surface harmless enough, should have precipitated discussion and controversy. Some of the suggestions had been followed by poets from time immemorial. Yet controversy did rage as to whether this new thing was actually poetry, and stirred up anew the age-old problem of the relation of prose to poetry. To a certain degree it was undoubtedly due to the aggressive tactics of Miss Lowell, who throve on argument and loved a fight. While she lived the Imagists were active and aggressive; since her death the fever has declined.

It is too early to appraise the work of a writer much of whose work was frankly experimental. It can be said, however, that her experiments have revealed new powers and beauties in poetic expression, that she can tell a story well, that she has written several lyrics of unquestionable beauty, and that her hardness and clearness are a salutary antidote to the softness and over-ornateness of earlier American poetry, a sign perhaps of the continued vitality of her work.

With the possible exception of such a poem as "Patterns," her poetry does lack the warmth of life. There seems to be a made-to-order feeling about it, something artificial, something done according to a pattern, something from which the vital breath of life has been squeezed. Her own description of poetry as "created beauty" suggests this coldness and artificiality. Thought there is, to be sure, and emotion there is, but so frequently drained of personality as almost to seem mechanical. She seems to have few contacts with the life about her; no note distinct of New England life, very little suggestion of local background. One gets the feeling that there are really no roots anywhere, no cohesive, spiritual force, that she temporizes, withal deftly and artistically, with what in her heart she already accepts as temporizing experience. Perhaps that is all life meant to her.

Miss Lowell's writings include poetry, criticism, and biography. The volumes of her poems are *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass* (1912); *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914); *Men, Women and Ghosts* (1916); *Can Grande's Castle* (1918); *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919); *Legends* (1921); *A Critical Fable* (1922); *What's O'Clock* (1925); *East Wind* (1926); *Ballads for Sale* (1927); *The*

*Madonna of Carthagena* (1927); selections from her poetry are published in J. L. Lowes, ed., *Selected Poems of Amy Lowell* (1928). In criticism she has written *Six French Poets* (1915); *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917); *Poetry and Poets* (1930). Her biographical work is *John Keats* (2 vols., 1925). S. F. Damon, *Amy Lowell* (1935), is a definitive biography. Briefer accounts are found in R. Hunt and R. H. Snow, *Amy Lowell: a Sketch of Her Life and Her Place in Contemporary American Literature* (1917); E. S. Sergeant, *Fire Under the Andes* (1927); H. B. Kizer, "Amy Lowell, a Personality," *North American Review*, Jan., 1918; H. Monroe, *Poets & Their Art* (1926). For critical estimates and interpretation consult C. Wood, *Amy Lowell* (1926); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); J. W. Tupper, "The Poetry of Amy Lowell," *Sewanee Review*, Jan., 1920; R. Brenner, *Ten Modern Poets* (1930); C. Cestre, "Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, and Edwin Arlington Robinson," *Johns Hopkins Alumni Magazine*, March, 1926; J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924); T. Maynard, *Our Best Poets* (1922); W. T. Scott, "Amy Lowell and the Art of Poetry," *North American Review*, March, 1925; A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); G. Hughes, *Imagism and the Imagists* (1931); B. Weirick, *From Whitman to Sandburg in American Poetry* (1924); C. Aiken, *Scepticisms* (1919); W. L. Schwartz, "A Study of Amy Lowell's Far Eastern Verse," *Modern Language Notes*, March, 1928; J. Kilmer, *Literature in the Making* (1917); J. G. Fletcher, "Living History: Amy Lowell's *Men, Women and Ghosts*," *Poetry*, June, 1917; J. G. Fletcher, "Miss Lowell's Discovery: Polyphonic Prose," *Poetry*, April, 1915; F. Ayscough, "Amy Lowell and the Far East," *Bookman*, March, 1926; W. M. Patterson, "New Verse and New Prose," *North American Review*, Feb., 1918.

## THE BOMBARDMENT

A good example of Miss Lowell's use of sound effects. The story is told that once when giving a public reading of the poem, fearing that her voice was not strong enough to sound the heavy cannon "boom," she engaged a man with a bass drum to sound it behind the scenes.

SLOWLY, without force, the rain drops into the city. It stops a moment on the carved head of Saint John, then slides on again, slipping and trickling over his stone cloak. It splashes from the lead conduit of a gargoyle, and falls from it in turmoil on the stones in the Cathedral square. Where are the people, and why does the fretted steeple sweep about in the sky? Boom! The sound swings against the rain. Boom, again! After it, only water rushing in the gutters, and the turmoil from the spout of the gargoyle. Silence. Ripples and mutters. Boom!

The room is damp, but warm. Little flashes swarm about from the firelight. The lustres of the chandelier are bright, and clusters of rubies leap in the bohemian glasses on the *étagère*. Her hands are restless, but the white masses of her hair are quite still. Boom! Will it never cease to torture, this iteration! Boom! The vibration shatters a glass on the *étagère*. It lies there, formless and glowing, with all its crimson gleams shot out of pattern, spilled, flowing red, blood-red. A thin bell-note pricks through the silence. A door creaks. The old lady speaks: "Victor, clear away that broken glass." "Alas! Madame, the bohemian glass!" "Yes, Victor, one hundred years ago my father brought it——" Boom! The room shakes, the servitor quakes. Another goblet shivers and breaks. Boom!

It rustles at the window-pane, the smooth, streaming rain, and he is shut within its clash and murmur. Inside is his candle, his table, his ink, his pen, and his dreams. He is thinking, and the walls are pierced with beams of sunshine, slipping through young green. A fountain tosses itself up at the blue sky, and through the spattered water in the basin he can see copper carp, lazily floating among cold leaves. A wind-harp in a cedar-tree grieves and whispers, and words, blow into his brain, bubbled, iridescent, shooting up like flowers of fire, higher and higher. Boom!

The flame-flowers snap on their slender stems. The fountain rears up in long broken spears of dishevelled water and flattens into the earth. Boom! And there is only the room, the table, the candle, and the sliding rain. Again, Boom! —Boom!—Boom! He stuffs his fingers into his ears. He sees corpses, and cries out in fright. Boom! It is night, and they are shelling the city! Boom! Boom!

A child wakes and is afraid, and weeps in the darkness. What has made the bed shake? "Mother, where are you? I am awake." "Hush, my Darling. I am here." "But, Mother, something so queer happened, the room shook." Boom! "Oh! What is it? What is the matter?" Boom! "Where is Father? I am so afraid." Boom! The child sobs and shrieks. The house trembles and creaks. Boom!

Retorts, globes, tubes, and phials lie shattered. All his trials oozing across the floor. The life that was his choosing, lonely, urgent, goaded by a hope, all gone. A weary man in a ruined laboratory, that is his story. Boom! Gloom and ignorance, and the jig of drunken brutes. Diseases like snakes crawling over the earth, leaving trails of slime. Wails from people burying their dead. Through the window, he can see the rocking steeple. A ball of fire falls on the lead of the roof, and the sky tears apart on a spike of flame. Up the spire, behind the lacings of stone, zigzagging in and out of the carved tracings, squirms the fire. It spouts like yellow wheat from the gargoyles, coils round the head of Saint John, and aureoles him in light. It leaps into the night and hisses against the rain. The Cathedral is a burning stain on the white, wet night.

Boom! The Cathedral is a torch, and the houses next to it begin to scorch. Boom! The bohemian glass on the *étagère* is no longer there. Boom! A stalk of flame sways against the red damask curtains. The old lady cannot walk. She watches the creeping stalk and counts. Boom!—Boom!—Boom!

The poet rushes into the street, and the rain wraps him in a sheet of silver. But it is threaded with gold and powdered with scarlet beads. The city burns. Quivering, spearing, thrusting, lapping, streaming, run the flames. Over roofs, and walls, and shops, and stalls. Smearing its gold on the sky, the fire dances, lances itself through the doors, and lisps and chuckles along the floors.

The child wakes again and screams at the yellow petalled flower flickering at the window. The little red lips of flame creep along the ceiling beams.

The old man sits among his broken experiments and looks at the burning Cathedral. Now the streets are swarming with people. They seek shelter and crowd into the cellars. They shout and call, and over all, slowly and without force, the rain drops into the city. Boom! And the steeple crashes down among the people. Boom! Boom, again! The water rushes along the gutters. The fire roars and mutters. Boom!

1914

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## NUMBER 3 ON THE DOCKET

Miss Lowell speaks of this as easily the most popular poem on New England life and character.

THE lawyer, are you?
Well! I ain't got nothin' to say.
Nothin'!
I told the perlice I hadn't nothin'.
They know'd real well 'twas me.
Ther warn't no supposin',
Ketchin' me in the woods as they did,
An' me in my house dress.
Folks don't walk miles an' miles
In the drifted snow,
With no hat nor wrap on 'em
Ef everythin's all right, I guess.
All Right? Ha! Ha! Ha!
Nothin' warn't right with me.
Never was.
Oh, Lord! Why did I do it?
Why ain't it yesterday, and Ed here agin?
Many's the time I've set up with him nights
When he had cramps, or rheumatizm, or somethin'.

I used ter nurse him same's ef he was a baby.
I wouldn't hurt him, I love him!
Don't you dare to say I killed him. 'Twarn't me!
Somethin' got aholt o' me. I couldn't help it.
Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!
Yes, Sir.
No, Sir.
I beg your pardon, I—I——
Oh, I'm a wicked woman!
An' I'm desolate, desolate!
Why warn't I struck dead or paralyzed
Afore my hands done it.
Oh, my God, what shall I do!
No, Sir, ther ain't no extenuatin' circumstances,
An' I don't want none.
I want a bolt o' lightnin'
To strike me dead right now!
Oh, I'll tell yer.
But it won't make no diff'rence.
Nothin' will.
Yes, I killed him.
Why do yer make me say it?
It's cruel! Cruel!
I killed him because o' th' silence.
The long, long silence,
That watched all around me,
And he wouldn't break it.
I tried to make him,
Time an' agin,
But he was terrible taciturn, Ed was.
He never spoke 'cept when he had to,
An' then he'd only say "yes" and "no."
You can't even guess what that silence was.
I'd hear it whisperin' in my ears,
An' I got frightened, 'twas so thick,
An' al'ays comin' back.
Ef Ed would ha' talked sometimes
It would ha' driven it away;
But he never would.
He didn't hear it same as I did.
You see, Sir,
Our farm was off'n the main road,
And set away back under the mountain;
And the village was seven mile off,
Measurin' after you'd got out o' our lane.
We didn't have no hired man,
'Cept in hayin' time;
An' Dane's place,
That was the nearest,
Was clear way t'other side the mountain.
They used Marley post-office
An' ours was Benton.
Ther was a cart-track took yer to Dane's in Summer,
An' it warn't above two mile that way,
But it warn't never broke out Winters.
I used to dread the Winters.
Seem's af I couldn't abear to see the golden-rod bloomin';
Winter'd come so quick after that.
You don't know what snow's like when yer with it
Day in an' day out.
Ed would be out all day loggin',
An' I set at home and look at the snow
Layin' over everythin';
It 'ud dazzle me blind,
Till it warn't white any more, but black as ink.
Then the quiet 'ud commence rushin' past my ears
Till I most went mad listenin' to it.
Many's the time I've dropped a pan on the floor
Jest to hear it clatter.
I was most frantic when dinner-time come
An' Ed was back from the woods.
I'd ha' give my soul to hear him speak.
But he'd never say a word till I asked him
Did he like the raised biscuits or whatever,
An' then sometimes he'd jest nod his answer.
Then he'd go out agin,
An' I'd watch him from the kitchin winder.
It seemed the woods come marchin' out to meet him
An' the trees 'ud press round him an' hustle him.
I got so I was scared o' th' trees.
I thought they come nearer,
Every day a little nearer,
Closin' up round the house.
I never went in t' th' woods Winters,
Though in Summer I liked 'em well enough.
It warn't so bad when my little boy was with us.
He used to go sleddin' and skatin',
An' every day his father fetched him to school in the pung
An' brought him back agin.

We scraped an' scraped fer Neddy,
We wanted him to have a education.
We sent him to High School,
An' then he went up to Boston to Technology.
He was a minin' engineer,
An' doin' real well,
A credit to his bringin' up.
But his very first position ther was an explosion in the mine.
And I'm glad! I'm glad!
He ain't here to see me now.
Neddy! Neddy!
I'm your mother still, Neddy.
Don't turn from me like that.
I can't abear it. I can't! I can't!
What did you say?
Oh, yes, Sir.
I'm here.
I'm very sorry,
I don't know what I'm sayin'.
No, Sir,
Not till after Neddy died.
'Twas the next Winter the silence come,
I don't remember noticin' it afore.
That was five year ago,
An' it's been gittin' worse an' worse.
I asked Ed to put in a telephone.
I thought ef I felt the whisperin' comin' on
I could ring up some o' th' folks.
But Ed wouldn't hear of it.
He said we'd paid so much for Neddy
We couldn't hardly git along as 'twas.
An' he never understood me wantin' to talk.
Well, this year was worse'n all the others;
We had a terrible spell o' stormy weather,
An' the snow lay so thick
You couldn't see the fences even.
Out o' doors was as flat as the palm o' my hand,
Ther warn't a hump or a holler
Fer as you could see.
It was so quiet
The snappin' o' the branches back in the wood-lot
Sounded like pistol shots.
Ed was out all day
Same as usual,
An' it seemed he talked less'n ever.
He didn't even say "Good-mornin'," once or twice,
An' jest nodded or shook his head when I asked him Things.
On Monday he said he'd got to go over to Benton
Fer some oats.
I'd oughter ha' gone with him,
But 'twas washin' day
An' I was afeared the fine weather'd break,
An' I couldn't do my dryin'.
All my life I'd done my work punctual,
An' I couldn't fix my conscience
To go junketin' on a washin'-day.
I can't tell you what that day was to me.
It dragged an' dragged,
Fer ther warn't no Ed ter break it in the middle
Fer dinner.
Every time I stopped stirrin' the water
I heerd the whisperin' all about me.
I stopped oftener'n I should
To see ef 'twas still ther,
An' it al'ays was.
An' gittin' louder
It seemed ter me.
Once I threw up the winder to feel the wind.
That seemed most alive somehow.
But the woods looked so kind of menacin'
I closed it quick
An' started to mangle's hard's I could,
The squeakin' was comfortin'.
Well Ed come home 'bout four.
I seen him down the road,
An' I run out through the shed inter th' barn
To meet him quicker.
I hollered out, "Hullo!"
But he didn't say nothin',
He jest drove right in
An' climbed out o' th' sleigh
An' commenced unharnessin'.
I asked him a heap o' questions
Who he'd seed
An' what he'd done.
Once in a while he'd nod or shake,
But most o' th' time he didn't do nothin'.
'Twas gittin' dark then,
An' I was in a state,
With the loneliness
An' Ed payin' no attention
Like somethin' warn't livin'.
All of a sudden it come,
I don't know what,
But I jest couldn't stand no more.

It didn't seem as though I was me.
I had to break a way out somehow,
Somethin' was closin' in
An' I was stiflin'.
Ed's loggin' axe was ther,
An' I took it.
Oh, my God!
I can't see nothin' else afore me all the time.
I run out inter th' woods,
Seemed as ef they was pullin' me;
An' all the time I was wadin' through the snow
I seed Ed in front of me
Where I'd laid him.
An' I see him now.
There! There!
What you holdin' me fer?
I want ter go to Ed,
He's bleedin'
Stop holdin' me.
I got to go.
I'm comin', Ed.
I'll be ther in a minit.
Oh, I'm so tired!
(*Faints*)

1916

## 1886 ~ *Elinor Hoyt Wylie* ~ 1928

KNOWN BOTH as novelist and poet, Elinor Hoyt was born in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, the daughter of Henry Martyn and Anne Hoyt. She attended private schools in Bryn Mawr, and in Washington where her father held a government post. Her education was continued through foreign travel. An unhappy marital venture and *ennui* over the activities of capital society induced her to leave Washington. In 1919 she made her home in New York, where in 1925 she married the poet William Rose Benét. For a time she was associate editor of *Vanity Fair* and at the time of her death was a contributing editor on the staff of *The New Republic*. Having found the spiritual freedom she craved and the stimulus necessary to creative activity, she published four novels and four volumes of poetry in the short period of eight years, which, in view of her careful workmanship, is an almost unparalleled achievement. To those who knew her intimately it seemed as though her creative and artistic powers increased while disease was making its inroads on her body.

Elinor Wylie's poetry was not received with the wide acclaim that greeted some of her contemporaries. Her work does not have inherent popular appeal but has been praised highly by discriminating readers. Some critics have suggested comparison with Emily Dickinson. She belonged to no school, took part in no movement, was apparently unmindful of contemporary currents and popular taste, but like Emily Dickinson, perfected and practiced her art in a way that was satisfying to her own ideals. Her work is carefully wrought and trimmed, abounds in compact phrasing, with an occasional telling epigram, and all in all is characterized by a beauty which is crystalline and often colorful. To the uninitiated it does not yield itself readily, and demands the toll of sympathetic effort and imaginative penetration on the part of the reader as the price of complete understanding and enjoyment.

Characterized somewhat by a lack of warmth, her poetry is a combination of serious thought and deep emotion, held in fine balance and uttered with dignity, restraint, and compact expressiveness.

Her novels show the same precision of style that marks her poetry. All of them are historical, the scenes being laid in eighteenth-century England and Italy, only one, *The Orphan Angel* (1926), having part of its setting in America. The research necessary to document novels such as *Jennifer Lorn* (1923) and *The Venetian Glass Nephew* (1925) might easily overweight them with pedantry; Mrs. Wylie buried it under the beauty of her style. In beauty they are as notable as the poems.

Mrs. Wylie's poetry appeared in *Nets to Catch the Wind* (1921); *Black Armour* (1923); *Trivial Breath* (1928); *Angels and Earthly Creatures* (1929). These, together with hitherto uncollected poems, are available in *Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie*, foreword by W. R. Benét (1932). Her novels, *Jennifer Lorn*, *The Venetian Glass Nephew*, *The Orphan Angel* and *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard*, together with some fugitive prose, were issued in *Collected Prose of Elinor Wylie*, prefaces by C. Van Doren, C. Van Vechten, S. V. Benét, I. Patterson, and W. R. Benét (1933). For criticism consult W. R. Benét, *The Prose and Poetry of Elinor Wylie* (1934); J. B. Cabell, *One of Us* (1930); E. S. Sergeant, *Fire Under the Andes* (1927); E. Clark, *Innocence Abroad* (1927); N. Hoyt, *Elinor Wylie: the Portrait of an Unknown Lady* (1935); A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); H. Gorman, "Daughter of Donne," *North American Review*, May, 1924; C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); M. M. Colum, "O Virtuous Light!", *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 25, 1929; E. Wilson and M. M. Colum, "In Memory of Elinor Wylie," *New Republic*, Feb. 6, 1929; M. D. Zabel, "The Pattern of the Atmosphere," *Poetry*, Aug., 1932; L. Untermeyer, "Elinor Wylie's Poetry," *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 21, 1932; C. Van Doren, *Three Worlds* (1936).

## THE LION AND THE LAMB

I saw a Tiger's golden flank,
I saw what food he ate,
By a desert spring he drank;
The Tiger's name was Hate.

Then I saw a placid Lamb
Lying fast asleep;
Like a river from its dam
Flashed the Tiger's leap.

I saw a Lion tawny-red,
Terrible and brave;
The Tiger's leap overhead
Broke like a wave.

In sand below or sun above
He faded like a flame.
The Lamb said, "I am Love;
Lion, tell your name."

The Lion's voice thundering
Shook his vaulted breast,
"I am Love. By this spring,
Brother, let us rest."

1921

## SUNSET ON THE SPIRE

All that I dream
By day or night
Lives in that stream
Of lovely light.
Here is the earth,
And there is the spire;
This is my hearth,
And that is my fire.
From the sun's dome
I am shouted proof
That this is my home,
And that is my roof.

Here is my food,
  And here is my drink,
And I am wooed
  From the moon's brink.
And the days go over,
  And the nights end;
Here is my lover,
  Here is my friend.
All that I
  Could ever ask
Wears that sky
  Like a thin gold mask.

1921

## HEROICS

THOUGH here and there a man is left
Whose iron thread eludes the shears,
The martyr with his bosom cleft
Is dead these seven heavy years.

Does he survive whose tongue was slit,
To slake some envy of a king's?
Sportive silver cried from it
Before the savage cut the strings.

The rack has crumpled up the limb
Stretched immediate to fly;
Never ask the end of him
Stubborn to outstare the sky.

Assuming an heroic mask,
He stands a tall derisive tree,
While servile to the speckled task
We move devoted hand and knee.

It is no virtue, but a fault
Thus to breathe ignoble air,
Suffering unclean assault
And insult dubious to bear.

1922

## KING HONOR'S ELDEST SON

HIS father's steel, piercing the wholesome fruit
Of his mother's flesh, wrought acidly to mar
Its own Damascus, staining worse than war
A purity intense and absolute;
While her clean stock put forth a poisoned shoot,
In likeness of a twisted scimitar,
Sleek as a lovelock, ugly as a scar,
Wrong as the firstborn of a mandrake root.

There was a waning moon upon his brow,
A fallen star upon his pointed chin;
He mingled Ariel with Caliban;
But such a blossom upon such a bough
Convinced his poor progenitors of sin
In having made a something more than man.

1923

## UNFINISHED PORTRAIT

MY love, you know that I have never used
That fluency of colour smooth and rich
Could cage you in enamel for the niche
Whose heart-shape holds you; I have been accused
Of gold and silver trickery, infused
With blood of meteors, and moonstones which
Are cold as eyeballs in a flooded ditch;
In no such goblin smithy are you bruised.

I do not glaze a lantern like a shell
Inset with stars, nor make you visible
Through jewelled arabesques which adhere to clothe
The outline of your soul; I am content
To leave you an uncaptured element;
Water, or light, or air that's stained by both.

1923

## NAMELESS SONG

The deeper implications of this poem may be overlooked because of the simplicity of the imagery and the style.

MY heart is cold and weather-worn,
  A musical and hollow shell:
The winds have blown it like a horn,
  The waves have rung it like a bell.

The waves have whirled it round and round,
  The winds have worn it thin and fine:
It is alive with a singing sound:
  Whose Voice is that? It is not mine.

1932

# 1884 ~ *Sara Teasdale* ~ 1933

ON BOTH SIDES of her family Miss Teasdale came from an ancestry that was prominent in early American history. One of her forebears took a leading part in founding Concord, Massachusetts, and others fought in the Revolution. She was born in St. Louis, and educated in a local private school, from which she graduated in 1903. Here, with the exception of periods of residence abroad, she made her home. As a child she was interested in poetry, and began to write at a very early age. In collaboration with some of her friends she published a monthly magazine in manuscript, an enterprise which continued for a number of years. Her marriage to Ernest Filsinger in 1914 turned out to be unhappy. For her *Love Songs* (1917) she received the Columbia University-Poetry Society of America prize, and the Poetry Society of America awarded her a further prize in 1918. Her poems appeared in many of the leading magazines. Translations were made into Japanese and other foreign languages.

Sara Teasdale held aloof from the poetic revolution through which she lived. Although she experimented with free verse, she found her best medium in the traditional forms, modified to suit her purpose and temperament, achieving her greatest success in blank verse, which she wrote with freedom and flexibility, and in the short lyric. Her lyrics are charged with deep and sincere emotion, and are expressed in rare verbal melody, ample reason why some have been set to music.

To Miss Teasdale, poetry was a very personal matter. According to her theory, the poet must express *himself*, what he thinks and feels, with sincerity and spontaneity, for the reason that he naturally knows himself more intimately than any one else. If each individual poet records himself with fidelity, the range of human experience will be increasingly transmuted into beauty, and poetry will have fulfilled its mission. Creatively, poetry is the result of what she calls "emotional irritation," originating in the subconscious mind from combinations of "partly forgotten thoughts and feelings." Thus it also follows that poetry springs directly from experience and gets itself written in order to lift the emotional burden from the poet. When the poet has found his own relation to this inner disturbance, the form and rhythm in which this relation is to be expressed shape themselves almost automatically. Form must be so thoroughly at one with the subject, a means of expression so transparent, that the reader should scarcely be conscious of it.

Miss Teasdale is essentially a lyric poet. As Theodore Maynard points out, she is concerned with the "minutiae of passion." Her development is marked by several distinct stages. *Sonnets to Duse* (1907), her first book, was scarcely more than promise; *Helen of Troy* (1911) was youthful and gave expression to emotions and moods

still somewhat beyond the author's actual experience, and for this reason derived largely from the experiences of other women such as Helen, Beatrice, Sappho, and Guinevere. In *Rivers to the Sea* (1915) she discovered herself, wrote from her own experience, a sure sign of her emotional maturity. One misses the melancholy note of earlier volumes, for she has found that joy, too, is poetical. To this emotional maturity she added in *Flame and Shadow* (1920) a richer and deeper intellectual element, which indicated that she had emerged into the full possession of all her powers. Her later books showed the earmarks of this full and rounded development.

Like all poets, Miss Teasdale was impressed by the mystery of life, its pain, grief, joy, hope, and aspiration. For her the heart of life was love, and from this point of view she approached the riddle in her search for Beauty, which is both the goal and the compensation of life. In her love poems, which for delicacy and appeal are almost unequalled, she faced the variety of moods from despair to triumph. Whatever may be the course of it, the perfect fulfillment of it lies in complete spiritual surrender to its object, a harmonious merging as it were of two personalities. She wrote from a full heart, but always with restraint as though the whole had not been said, thereby conferring a double dignity on love as well as on her art. She was the center of her poetic universe; from this center of self she proceeds in accordance with her theory, not merely revealing herself, but revealing at the same time truths which transcend the merely personal. In nature she also found a key which opened the door to her coveted beauty.

Many of the love lyrics are built upon patterns of antitheses, which to a less conscientious artist would have become a temptation to be satisfied with mere cleverness. She escapes the pitfall through her sincerity, her simple, direct, and unaffected style, and the warmth with which she communicates human experience.

Miss Teasdale was the author of *Sonnets to Duse and Other Poems* (1907); *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911); *Rivers to the Sea* (1915); *Love Songs* (1917); *Flame and Shadow* (1920); *Dark of the Moon* (1926); *Strange Victory* (1933). Her best work is reprinted in *Collected Poems* (1937). For biography and criticism see H. W. Cook, *Our Poets of Today* (1923); M. Wilkinson, "Sara Teasdale's Poems," *Forum*, Feb., 1921; L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); C. Aiken, "It Is in Truth a Pretty Toy," *Dial*, Feb., 1925; H. Monroe, *Poets & Their Art* (1926); H. Monroe, "Sara Teasdale," *Poetry*, April, 1933; J. B. Rittenhouse, "Sara Teasdale," *Bookman*, May, 1927; I. Fisher, "Strange Victory: One Woman's Life," *New Mexico Quarterly*, May, 1934; T. Maynard, *Our Best Poets* (1922); P. Colum, "Sara Teasdale's Poems," *New Republic*, June 22, 1918; L. Untermeyer, "Sara Teasdale's Solemn Music," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Nov. 4, 1933.

## THE SONG MAKER

The chief qualities in Miss Teasdale's poetry are simplicity and sincerity. They give the impression of having sprung from the very throes and elations of experience.

I MADE a hundred little songs
  That told the joy and pain of love,
And sang them blithely, tho' I knew
  No whit thereof.

I was a weaver deaf and blind;
  A miracle was wrought for me,
But I have lost my skill to weave
  Since I can see.

For a while I sang—ah swift and strange!
  Love passed and touched me on the brow,
And I who made so many songs
  Am silent now.

1908

## "I AM NOT YOURS"

I AM not yours, not lost in you,
  Not lost, altho' I long to be
Lost as a candle lit at noon,
  Lost as a snow-flake in the sea.

You love me, and I find you still
  A spirit beautiful and bright,
Yes I am I, who long to be
  Lost as a light is lost in light.

Oh plunge me deep in love—put out
  My senses, leave me deaf and blind,
Swept by the tempest of your love,
  A taper in a rushing wind.

1915

## NOVEMBER

THE world is tired, the year is old,
  The little leaves are glad to die,
The wind goes shivering with cold
  Among the rushes dry.

Our love is dying like the grass,
  And we who kissed grow coldly kind,
Half glad to see our poor love pass
  Like leaves along the wind.

1917

## WINTER NIGHTS

MY window-pane is starred with frost,
  The world is bitter cold to-night,
The moon is cruel and the wind
  Is like a two-edged sword to smite.

God pity all the homeless ones,
  The beggars pacing to and fro.
God pity all the poor to-night
  Who walk the lamp-lit streets of snow.

My room is like a bit of June,
  Warm and close-curtained fold on fold,
But somewhere, like a homeless child,
  My heart is crying in the cold.

1917

## THE SILENT BATTLE

HE was a soldier in that fight
  Where there is neither flag nor drum,
And without sound of musketry
  The stealthy foemen come.

Year in, year out, by day and night
  They forced him to a slow retreat,
And for his gallant fight alone
  No fife was blown, and no drum beat.

In winter fog, in gathering mist
  The gray grim battle had its end—
And at the very last we knew
  His enemy had turned his friend.

1920

## "THERE WILL BE REST"

THERE will be rest, and sure stars shining
  Over the roof-tops crowned with snow,
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,
  The music of stillness holy and low.

I will make this world of my devising
  Out of a dream in my lonely mind,
I shall find the crystal of peace,—above me
  Stars I shall find.

1933

## 1892 — *Edna St. Vincent Millay* — —

MISS MILLAY was born in Rockland, Maine, and received her early education in Camden. As a schoolgirl she wrote verses, some of which were printed in magazines. When she was nineteen her "Renascence" was published and caused a literary sensation. After her schooldays she continued the study of literature and music, was for a time a student at Barnard College, and then entered Vassar, from which she was graduated in 1917. In college she took part in dramatic performances, in her senior year playing the leading role in *The Princess Marries the Page*, a poetical play of her own composition.

For several years she was associated with the Greenwich Village and Provincetown Players as playwright and actress. In 1923 she won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry and married Eugene Jan Boissevain, an importer. She makes her home on a farm at Austerlitz, New York, whence occasional excursions take her to Florida and Italy. Miss Millay has given many public readings of her poems, and not only has won distinction as a reader, but has added new beauty and charm to her poems. In her platform appearances she maintains the naïve, childlike attitude which is characteristic of many of her poems.

Miss Millay's first book, *Renascence and Other Poems* (1917), appeared in the year of her graduation from college, and established her reputation as a poet of unusual ability. She has published numerous volumes since, the most widely known of which are *Second April* (1921), *The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver* (1922), *Fatal Interview* (1931), *Wine from These Grapes* (1934), and *Huntsman, What Quarry?* (1939). Among her short plays are *Two Slatterns and a King* (1921), and *The Lamp and the Bell* (1921). *The King's Henchman* (1927), a poetic drama, was written as an opera for which Deems Taylor, an American musician, composed the music. It is a sincere piece of work but does not reach the usual high level of her art.

Although born in the nineties and therefore subjected during her development to the forces and currents of the poetic revolution, she can hardly be numbered among the "new" poets. She belongs to no school and subscribes to no particular movement. Most of her work is linked distinctly with traditional forms and regular stanzaic and metrical arrangements, many of which she uses with rare effect. The sonnet is her favorite form, and in it she has achieved a distinction which gives her a high place among sonnet writers. In her use of the accepted forms she has allowed herself a liberal treatment, thereby achieving a flexibility which robs formal verse of its ironclad stiffness. Like the Imagists, who may have influenced her in this respect, she prefers directness and economy of expression, devoid of poetic

ornament, and a brittleness of style which at times becomes somewhat hard. On the whole, however, her work is characterized by a warm naturalness which is strikingly effective in its softness and appeal, a quality which is almost fairylike in nature.

Nor has Miss Millay been appreciably affected by the changing currents of thought which have swept across the literary landscape during her lifetime. In late years she has become interested in social problems, as may be seen in her "Justice Denied in Massachusetts." But for the most part she has remained aloof from the stress of life about her, and has resorted to her own inner life for poetic suggestion and inspiration. Her poetry is characterized by her abounding love of life, her joy in experience, her happy realization of anticipated happiness in her environment, which is based upon an instinctive sense of kinship with all things, yet colored with a permeating mysticism which on occasion approaches the transcendental. This may be seen especially in "Renascence" and "God's World," poems almost pagan in their sheer striving for poetic ecstasy as a result of communion with nature. Love and death, to her the most inclusive facts of life, are the source and subject of much of her poetic contemplation. She approaches them with a full realization of the implications that are involved, love with its joy not unmixed with disappointment and pain, death with its disintegration and possible finality. She accepts them as inevitable phenomena in the contradictory complexities of life with a courage and hardihood that are suggestive of the Stoics. Her "Memorial to D.C." is by some regarded as one of her best works.

Miss Millay is recognized as one of the authentic poetic voices of the day. That she is a poet of rare and unusual originality cannot be gainsaid. Her following is large and enthusiastic. Many readers find in her a poetic rapture which is more gripping than that of presumably greater masters. And if she adds to this lyric rapture an increasingly substantial body of thought she may claim entrance into the realm of the elect.

There is no collected edition of Miss Millay's poems. The successive volumes are *Renascence* (1917); *A Few Figs from Thistles* (1920); *Second April* (1921); *The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver* (1922); *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* (1923); *Distressing Dialogues* (1924); *The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems* (1928); *Fatal Interview* (1931); *Wine from These Grapes* (1934), *Conversation at Midnight* (1937), and *Huntsman, What Quarry?* (1939). Her plays are: *Aria da Capo* (1921); *The Lamp and the Bell* (1921); *Two Slatterns and a King* (1921); *The King's Henchman* (1927); *The Princess Marries the Page* (1932). Biographical accounts: J. Beatty, " 'Best Sellers' in Verse: the Story of Edna St. Vincent Millay," *American Magazine*, Jan., 1932; E. Breuer, "Edna St. Vincent Millay," *Pictorial Review*, Nov., 1931. For criticism, see R. Brenner, *Ten Modern Poets* (1930); E. Davidson, "Edna St. Vincent Millay," *English Journal*, Nov., 1927; A. E. DuBois, "Edna St. Vincent Millay," *Sewanee Review*, Jan.–Mar., 1935; J. H. Preston, "Edna St. Vincent Millay," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, April, 1927; H. Monroe, *Poets and Their Art* (1926); C. Wood, *Poets of America* (1925); L. Untermeyer, *American Poetry since 1900* (1923); L. Simonson, *Minor*

*Prophecies* (1927); C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924); J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924); T. Maynard, *Our Best Poets* (1922); E. W. Parks, "Edna St. Vincent Millay," *Sewanee Review*, Jan.–Mar., 1930; P. B. Rice, "Edna Millay's Maturity," *Nation*, Nov. 14, 1934; E. Atkins, *Edna St. Vincent Millay and Her Times* (1936).

## GOD'S WORLD

O WORLD, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists, that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart,—Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year;
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

1913

## JUSTICE DENIED IN MASSACHUSETTS

This poem was suggested by the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, who after repeated and prolonged trials were finally convicted of murder. On the night of their execution Miss Millay joined a peaceful parade in protest.

LET us abandon then our gardens and go home
And sit in the sitting-room.
Shall the larkspur blossom or the corn grow under this cloud?
Sour to the fruitful seed
Is the cold earth under this cloud,
Fostering quack and weed, we have marched upon but cannot conquer;
We have bent the blades of our hoes against the stalks of them.

Let us go home, and sit in the sitting-room.
Not in our day
Shall the cloud go over and the sun rise as before,
Beneficent upon us
Out of the glittering bay,
And the warm winds be blown inward from the sea
Moving the blades of corn
With a peaceful sound.
Forlorn, forlorn,
Stands the blue hay-rack by the empty mow.
And the petals drop to the ground,
Leaving the tree unfruited.
The sun that warmed our stooping backs and withered the weed uprooted—
We shall not feel it again.
We shall die in darkness, and be buried in the rain.
What from the splendid dead
We have inherited—
Furrows sweet to the grain, and the weed subdued—
See now the slug and the mildew plunder.
Evil does overwhelm
The larkspur and the corn;
We have seen them go under.

Let us sit here, sit still,
Here in the sitting-room until we die;
At the step of Death on the walk, rise and go;
Leaving to our children's children this beautiful doorway,
And this elm,
And blighted earth to till
With a broken hoe.

1928

## SONNET TO GATH

COUNTRY of hunchbacks!—where the strong, straight spine,
Jeered at by crooked children, makes his way
Through by-streets at the kindest hour of day,
Till he deplore his stature, and incline
To measure manhood with a gibbous line;
Till out of loneliness, being flawed with clay,
He stoop into his neighbor's house and say,
"Your roof is low for me—the fault is mine."

Dust in an urn long since, dispersed and dead
Is great Apollo; and the happier he;
Since who amongst you all would lift a head
At a god's radiance on the mean door-tree,
Saving to run and hide your dates and bread,
And cluck your children in about your knee.

1928

# 1887 — *Robinson Jeffers* — —

HAILED by some as the most powerful figure in contemporary poetry, Jeffers, a native of western Pennsylvania, has spent his working years on the Pacific coast. His father was a Presbyterian clergyman and professor of theology, his mother a woman of high character, fine education, and a lover of music. As a boy, Jeffers had the advantage of extensive European travel as well as early training in European schools. While he was a student at Occidental College in California, from which he graduated in 1905, he contributed verse to campus publications, and developed a passion for poetry and nature which became a determining factor in his life. After completing his course, he pursued at various times graduate study in literature, medicine, and forestry. By 1911 he was convinced that poetry was his primary interest, and withdrew to Hermosa Beach where he spent a year in writing. *Flagons and Apples*, his first volume, appeared in 1912. Since 1914 he has made his home on the California coast near Carmel-by-the-Sea. He does his writing in the tiny top room of Hawk's Tower which he erected close to his home. He has published numerous volumes, among them being *Tamar and Other Poems* (1924), *Roan Stallion* (1925), *Cawdor and Other Poems* (1926), *Thurso's Landing and Other Poems* (1932), *Give Your Heart to the Hawks* (1933), and *Solstice and Other Poems* (1935).

The early work of Jeffers attracted scarcely any attention, and it was not until 1924 when *Tamar* appeared that he began to be recognized. Even then recognition was slow. Though the country had passed through a poetic revolution, and had become accustomed to free verse and Imagism, here was a voice which came with such a shock of originality that the reading public was confused, and slow to realize its power and significance. It was marked by daring treatment of sex as the center of life, and its tragedies as well, and a poetic prosody so unusual that it yielded up its secret very slowly. It was only after the relations between poetic machinery and poetic purpose became gradually clearer that he began to command serious study.

For behind the framework of gray landscape, stark tragedies, neurotic characters obsessed by sex and an abounding love of nature, a definite purpose is steadily unfolding, and this purpose is the search for fundamental and ultimate reality. He does not tell tragic stories merely for their own sakes, but in order to track down, as it were, the primal irreducible force in the universe. Having revolted early from

the Calvinistic theology of his forebears, he set out on an independent quest to find, if possible, a rational theory more satisfying than their explanations. Upon the results of his scientific study, and upon his observations of the Carmel landscape, of which he has grown to be an indigenous poet, he trained the sharp focus of his imagination to see what light there might be on the eternal problems of living.

But the light he sought turned to darkness. Science led him to see man as merely another phenomenon of nature at one with the pounding surf, the stars, and the Carmel landscape, essentially ignorant and helpless as far as his questing is concerned, still held in the clutches of this blind force. Nor did the post-war pessimism, the economic insecurity, the memory of the overseas shambles, together with the debacle of democracy, bring him any comfort. The world of the twenties was a hopeless world. This explains, in a measure at least, his primitivistic treatment of man in his most elemental relations, far removed from the culture and sophistication of the city and the fatalistic mysticism with which he accepts his unhappy fate. Jeffers is still a young man, and there is a possibility that he may find his way out of the Slough of Despond. At any rate, his search is worth following.

On the other hand, certain very definite characteristics of a more positive nature tend to offset the negative quality of his gloom, hopelessness, and depression. These equalities are found in Jeffers the poet rather than in Jeffers the thinker. Chief of these are his penetrating imagination, which finds poetry in even the most tragic phases of life, and the remarkably original style in which he writes, a style which is personal and unique, and does not seem to fit into any of the accepted categories. On the surface it seems to be formless and uncontrolled, but closer study shows in the apparent formlessness a definite plan in the use of stresses and syllabic quantity which reveals new rhythmic possibilities of the language. He startles and refreshes by his originality of treatment and expression.

Even though human life, as he sees it, is hopeless and pointless, it achieves new dignity by his treatment. He pictures it as a tragic struggle with its catastrophic ending and destruction, but finds greatness in man's ability to endure when nothing is to be hoped for. It may be the greatness of the lonely tree defying the storm, the granite cliff withstanding the pounding surf, or Reave Thurso in his determination never to yield, but greatness nevertheless. And so he brings hope even out of hopelessness for the rest of humanity.

Jeffers has published many volumes; of the more important are *Tamar and Other Poems* (1924); *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (1925); *The Women at Point Sur* (1927); *Poems* (1928); *Cawdor and Other Poems* (1928); *Dear Judas and Other Poems* (1929); *Descent to the Dead* (1931); *Thurso's Landing and Other Poems* (1932); *Give Your Heart to the Hawks and Other Poems* (1933); *Solstice and Other Poems* (1935). The most extensive critical and biographical study of Jeffers is L. C. Powell, *Robinson Jeffers: the Man and His Work* (1934). There is a briefer account in L. Adamic, *Robinson Jeffers: a Portrait* (1929). Helpful critical discussions and estimates are

J. G. Fletcher, "The Dilemma of Robinson Jeffers," *Poetry*, March, 1934; H. Hatcher, "The Torches of Violence," *English Journal*, Feb., 1934; G. Sterling, *Robinson Jeffers: the Man and the Artist* (1926); A. Kreymborg, *Our Singing Strength* (1929); H. L. Davis, "Jeffers Denies Us Twice," *Poetry*, Feb., 1928; B. H. Lehman, "The Most Significant Tendency in Modern Poetry," *Scripps College Papers*, No. 2, 1929; Y. Winters, "Robinson Jeffers," *Poetry*, Feb., 1930; H. S. Canby, "North of Hollywood," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 7, 1933; B. DeCasseres, "Robinson Jeffers: Tragic Error," *Bookman*, Nov., 1927; R. Humphries, "Robinson Jeffers," *Modern Monthly*, Jan., 1935; H. Gorman, "Jeffers, Metaphysician," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Sept. 17, 1927; H. H. Waggoner, "Science and the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers," *American Literature*, Nov., 1938; E. K. Brown, "Robinson Jeffers: The Tower beyond Tragedy," *Manitoba Arts Review*, Spring, 1939—an especially fine interpretation.

## VICES

The first four poems are from *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems;* the last three, from *Cawdor.* Although these selections are taken from the shorter poems, they suggest some of the fundamental traits of his work. One finds comments on nature, art and artists, and at least one aspect of contemporary civilization.

SPIRITED people make a thousand jewels in verse and prose, and the restlessness of talent
Runs over and floods the stage or spreads its fever on canvas.
They are skilled in music too, the demon is never satisfied, they take to puppets, they invent
New arts, they take to drugs . . . and we all applaud our vices.
Mine, coldness and the tenor of a stone tranquillity; slow life, the growth of trees and verse,
Content the unagitable and somewhat earthfast nature.

1925

## BOATS IN A FOG

SPORTS and gallantries, the stage, the arts, the antics of dancers,
The exuberant voices of music,
Have charm for children but lack nobility; it is bitter earnestness
That makes beauty; the mind
Knows, grown adult.
A sudden fog-drift muffled the ocean,
A throbbing of engines moved in it,
At length, a stone's throw out, between the rocks and the vapor,
One by one moved shadows
Out of the mystery, shadows, fishing-boats, trailing each other,
Following the cliff for guidance,
Holding a difficult path between the peril of the sea-fog
And the foam on the shore granite.
One by one, trailing their leader, six crept by me,
Out of the vapor and into it,
The throb of their engines subdued by the fog, patient and cautious,
Coasting all round the peninsula
Back to the buoys in Monterey harbor. A flight of pelicans
Is nothing lovelier to look at;
The flight of the planets is nothing nobler; all the arts lose virtue
Against the essential reality
Of creatures going about their business among the equally
Earnest elements of nature.

1925

## SCIENCE

MAN, introverted man, having crossed
In passage and but a little with the nature of things this latter century
Has begot giants; but being taken up
Like a maniac with self-love and inward conflicts cannot manage his hybrids.
Being used to deal with edgeless dreams,
Now he's bred knives on nature turns them also inward: they have thirsty points though.
His mind forebodes his own destruction;
Actaeon who saw the goddess naked among leaves and his hounds tore him.
A little knowledge, a pebble from the shingle,
A drop from the oceans: who would have dreamed this infinitely little too much?

1925

## POINT PINOS AND POINT LOBOS

I

A LIGHTHOUSE and a graveyard and gaunt pines
Not old, no tree lives long here, where the northwind
Has forgot mercy. All night the light blinks north,
The Santa Cruz mountain redwoods hate its flashing,
The night of the huge western water takes it,
The long rays drown a little off shore, hopelessly
Attempting distance, hardly entering the ocean.
The lighthouse, and the gaunt boughs of the pines,
The carved gray stones, and the people of the graves.

They came following the sun, here even the sun is bitter,
A scant gray heartless light down wind, glitter and sorrow,
The northwind fog much kindlier. When shall these dead arise,
What day stand up from the earth among the broken pines?
A God rearisen will raise them up, this walking shadow?
Which tortured trunk will you choose, Lord, to be hewn to a cross?
I am not among the mockers Master, I am one of your lovers,
Ah weariest spirit in all the world, we all have rest
Being dead but you still strive, nearly two thousand years
You have wrestled for us against God, were you not conquered
At the first close, when the long horrible nails went home
Between the slender bones of the hands and feet, you frightfully
Heightened above man's stature saw the hateful crowd
Shift and sicken below, the sunburnt legionaries
Draw back out of the blood-drops . . . Far off the city
Slid on its hill, the eyes fainting. The earth was shaken
And the sun hid, you were not quieted. Men may never
Have seen you as they said in the inner room of the house,
Nor met you on the dusty suburb road toward Emmaus,
But nine years back you stood in the Alps and wept for Europe,
To-day pale ghost you walk among the tortured pines
Between the graves here and the sea.

Ah but look seaward,
For here where the land's charm dies love's chain falls loose, and the freedom of the eyes and the fervor of the spirit
Sea-hawks wander the huge gray water, alone in a nihilist simplicity, cleaner than the primal
Wings of the brooding of the dove on the waste of the waters beginning, perplexed with creation; but ours
Turned from creation, returned from the beauty of things to the beauty of nothing, to a nihilist simplicity,
Content with two elements, the wave and the cloud, and if one were not there then the other were lovelier to turn to,
And if neither . . . O shining of night, O eloquence of silence, the mother of the stars, the beauty beyond beauty,
The sea that the stars and the sea and the mountain bones of the earth and men's souls are the foam on, the opening
Of the womb of that ocean.

You have known this, you have known peace, and forsaken
Peace for pity, you have known the beauty beyond beauty
And the other shore of God. You will never again know them,
Except he slay you, the spirit at last, as more than once
The body, and root out love. Is it for this you wander
Tempting him through the thickets of the wolvish world?

O a last time in the last wrench of man made godlike
Shall God not rise, bitterly, the power behind power, the last star
That the stars hide, rise and reveal himself in anger—
Christ, in that moment when the hard loins of your ancient
Love and unconquerable will crack to lift up humanity
The last step heavenward—rise and slay, and you and our children
Suddenly stumble on peace? The oceans we shall have tamed then
Will dream between old rocks having no master, the earth
Forget corn, dreaming her own precious weeds and free
Forests, from the rivers upward; our tributary planets
Tamed like the earth, the morning star and the many-mooned
Three-belted giant, and those red sands of Mars between them,
Rust off the metal links of human conquest, the engines
Rust in the fields, and under that old sun's red waning
Nothing forever remember us.

And you at peace then
Not walk by a lighthouse on a wild north foreland
Choosing which trunk of the poor wind-warped pines
Will hew to a cross, and your eye's envy searching
The happiness of these bleak burials. Unhappy brother
That high imagination mating mine
Has gazed deeper than graves: is it unendurable
To know that the huge season and wheel of things
Turns on itself forever, the new stars pass
And the old return and find out their old places,
And these gray dead infallibly shall arise
In the very flesh. . . . But first the camel bells

Tinkle into Bethlehem, the men from the east
Gift you sweet-bedded between Mary's breasts,
And no one in the world has thought of Golgotha.

II

Gray granite ridges over swinging pits of sea, pink stone-crop spangles
Stick in the stone, the stiff plates of the cypress-boughs divide the sea's breath,
Hard green cutting soft gray . . . I know the uplands
And windy pastures where the great globes of the oaks are like green planets
Each in his place; I know the scents and resonances of desolate hills,
The wide-winged shadows of the vultures wandering across them; and I have visited
Deserts and many-colored rocks . . . mountains I know
From the Dent d'Oche in Savoy and that peak of the south past Saint Gingolphe
To Grayback and Tahoma . . . as for sea-borderers
The caverned Norman cliffs north of the Seine's mouth, the Breton sea-heads, the Cornish
Horns of their west had known me as a child before I knew Point Dume or Pinos
Or Sur, the sea-light in his forehead: also I heard my masters
Speak of Pelorum head and the Attic rocks of Sunium, or that Nymphaean
Promontory under the holy mountain Athos, a warren of monks
Walls in with prayer-cells of old stone, perpetual incense and religion
Smoke from it up to him who is greater than they guess, through what huge emptiness
And chasms above the stars seeking out one who is here already, and neither
Ahunting nor asleep nor in love; and Actium and the Acroceraunian
And Chersonese abutments of Greek ridges on the tideless wave
They named, my spirit has visited . . . there is no place
Taken like this out of deep Asia for a marriage-token, this planted
Asiaward over the west water. Our race nor the great springs we draw from,
Not any race of Europe, nor the Syrian blood from south of Lebanon
Our fathers drank and mixed with ours, has known this place nor its like nor suffered
The air of its religion. The elder shapes and shows in extreme Asia,
Like remote mountains over immeasurable water, half seen, thought clouds,
Of God in the huge world from the Altai eagle-peaks and Mongol pastures
To the home of snow no wing inhabits, temples of height on earth, Gosainthan
And Gaurisankar north of Ganges, Nanda Devi a mast of the ship
We voyage upon among the stars; and the earth-sprung multitudes of India,
Where human bodies grow like weeds out of the earth, and life is nothing,
There is so much life, and like the people the divinities of the people
Swarm, and the vulgar worship; thence far east to the islands of this ocean
Our sun is buried in, theirs born of, to the noble slope of the lone peak
Over Suruga Bay, and the headlands of Hai-nan: God without name,
God without form, the Lord of Asia, is here as there.

Serenely smiling
Face of the godlike man made God, who tore the web of human passions
As a yellow lion the antelope-hunter's net, and freeing himself made free
All who could follow, the tissue of new births and deaths dissolved away from him,
He reunited with the passionless light sky, not again to suffer
The shame of the low female gate, freed, never to be born again,
Whom Maha Maya bore in the river garden, the Himalayan barrier northward
Bounding the world: is it freedom, smile of the Buddha, surely freedom? For someone
Whispered into my ear when I was very young, some serpent whispered

That what has gone returns; what has been, is; what will be, was; the future
Is a farther past; our times he said fractions of arcs of the great circle;
And the wheel turns, nothing shall stop it nor destroy it, we are bound on the wheel,
We and the stars and seas, the mountains and the Buddha. Weary tidings
To cross the weary, bitter to bitter men: life's conqueror will not fear
Life; and to meditate again under the sacred tree, and again Vanquish desire will be no evil.

The evening opens
Enormous wings out of the west, the sad red splendid light beats upward
These granite gorges, the wind-battered cypress trees blacken above them,
The divine image of my dream smiles his immortal peace, commanding
This old sea-garden, crumble of granite and old buttressed cypress trunks,
And the burnt place where that wild girl whose soul was fire died with her house.

III

I have spoken on sea-forelands with the lords of life, the men wisdom made Gods had nothing
So wise to tell me nor so sweet as the alternation of white sunlight and brown night,
The beautiful succession of the breeding springs, the enormous rhythm of the stars' deaths
And fierce renewals: O why were you rebellious, teachers of men, against the instinctive God,
One striving to overthrow his ordinances through love and the other crafty-eyed to escape them
Through patient wisdom: though you are wiser than all men you are foolisher than the running grass,
That fades in season and springs up in season, praising whom you blame.

For the essence and the end
Of his labor is beauty, for goodness and evil are two things and still variant, but the quality of life as of death and of light
As of darkness is one, one beauty, the rhythm of that Wheel, and who can behold it is happy and will praise it to the people.

1925

## TO A YOUNG ARTIST

It is good for strength not to be merciful
To its own weakness, good for the deep urn to run over, good to explore
The peaks and the deeps, who can endure it,
Good to be hurt, who can be healed afterward: but you that have whetted consciousness
Too bitter an edge, too keenly daring,
So that the color of a leaf can make you tremble, and your own thoughts like harriers
Tear the live mind: were your bones mountains,
Your blood rivers to endure it? and all that labor of discipline labors to death.
Delight is exquisite, pain is more present;
You have sold the armor, you have bought shining with burning, one should be stronger than strength
To fight baresark in the stabbing field
In the rage of the stars: I tell you unconsciousness is the treasure, the tower, the fortress;
Referred to that one may live anything;
The temple and the tower: poor dancer on the flints and shards in the temple porches, turn home.

1928

## ASCENT TO THE SIERRAS

Beyond the great valley an odd instinctive rising
Begins to possess the ground, the flatness gathers to little humps and barrows, low aimless ridges,
A sudden violence of rock crowns them. The crowded orchards end, they have come to a stone knife;
The farms are finished; the sudden foot of the sierra. Hill over hill, snow-ridge beyond mountain gather
The blue air of their height about them.

Here at the foot of the pass
The fierce clans of the mountain you'd think for thousands of years,
Men with harsh mouths and eyes like the eagles' hunger,
Have gathered among these rocks at the dead hour
Of the morning star and the stars waning
To raid the plain and at moonrise returning driven
Their scared booty to the highlands, the tossing horns
And glazed eyes in the light of torches. The men have looked back
Standing above these rock-heads to bark laughter
At the burning granaries and the farms and the town
That sow the dark flat land with terrible rubies . . . lighting the dead . . .
It is not true: from this land
The curse was lifted; the highlands have kept peace with the valleys; no blood in the sod; there is no old sword
Keeping grim rust, no primal sorrow. The people are all one people, their homes never knew harrying;
The tribes before them were acorn-eaters, harmless as deer. Oh, fortunate earth; you must find someone
To make you bitter music; how else will you take bonds of the future, against the wolf in men's hearts?

1928

## HURT HAWKS

I

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted shoulder,
The wing trails like a banner in defeat,
No more to use the sky forever but live with famine
And pain a few days: cat nor coyote
Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is game without talons.
He stands under the oak-bush and waits
The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers freedom
And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.
He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity is worse.
The curs of the day come and torment him
At distance, no one but death the redeemer will humble that head,
The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to those
That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant,
You do not know him, you communal people, or you have forgotten him;
Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are dying, remember him.

II

I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk; but the great redtail
Had nothing left but unable misery
From the bone too shattered for mending, the wing that trailed under his talons when he moved.
We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,
He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in the evening, asking for death,
Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old
Implacable arrogance. I gave him the lead gift in the twilight. What fell was relaxed,
Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what
Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the flooded river cried fear at its rising
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality.

1928

# 1851 ~ *William Crary Brownell* ~ 1928

ONE OF the foremost literary critics of his time, Brownell was born in New York of a New England ancestry which before him had produced a prominent churchman and a poet. After spending his childhood and young boyhood in his native city and Buffalo, where he attended a dame's school, he completed his preparation for college at Newport, R.I., by the time he was sixteen. The original plan was that he should attend Harvard, but uncertain health caused his family to select Amherst as a more desirable place, a decision which had a lasting effect upon his career. After graduation in 1871, he engaged in journalism, first on the staff of the *New York World*, of which he promptly became city editor, and later on the *Nation*. After his first marriage in 1881, he and his wife spent three years in Europe, for the most part in France, during which time he made the studies which formed the basis of his *French Traits* (1889) and *French Art* (1892). Another brief period of newspaper work followed his return to America, this time on the *Philadelphia Press*. In 1888 he joined Scribners as editor and literary adviser, a position which he held for approximately forty years. At the time of his death he was hailed by some as the "first American critic," a judgment, however, which was not received with unanimous acceptance.

Brownell's successive books follow an evolutionary plan as clear and definite as though they had been forecast in his mind at the very outset of his career. In his first works he surveyed the French scene, making penetrating studies of its life and art, at the same time setting French and American culture in antithesis, for the purpose, in the first place, of arriving at a clear and thorough understanding of French achievements, and in the second place, of making available what he felt might contribute to his deficient America. In *Victorian Prose Masters* (1901) and *American Prose Masters* (1909), proceeding on the idea that the business of criti-

cism is to study and evaluate the personality which "informs" art, he concentrated his investigation upon the more restricted focus of individual writers. To some readers his conclusions were somewhat startling. Among English authors Arnold and Thackeray stood at the top while Ruskin and George Eliot were relegated to positions, at best, secondary; among Americans Hawthorne was compelled to contest his laurels with Cooper who was suddenly raised to an eminence which he had not hitherto reached among critics. And Poe was practically disregarded as a technician lacking greatness of ideas and spirit. Yet these revolutionary verdicts bore weight because they were delivered with a detachment and objectivity that lifted them above mere prejudice and personal impression.

*Criticism* (1914) is an elaboration of his critical theory. Art, as he conceives it, whether plastic or literary, is an expression of personality. The artist endeavors to put ideas into definite concrete form; the critic is to measure his success by comparing the idea with the artist's expression of it; thus the critic states the concrete in terms of the abstract, keeping always in mind that his chief concern is the qualities of the artist rather than the characteristics of the art product. *Standards* (1917) is a study of popular taste and culture and their significance in determining critical ideals, with the evident conclusion that American individualism and the craving for sensation are inimical to the highest cultural development. Taking his cue from *Standards*, he insists in *The Genius of Style* (1924) upon discipline as the remedy for our chaotic impulsiveness. *Democratic Distinction in America* (1927) expresses the faith that a society which is democratic is not for that reason culturally hopeless.

As to his place in the critical movements of his time, it has been suggested, and with an element of truth, that he is a bridge between Matthew Arnold and the new Humanists. For he is a disciple of Arnold, and like the Humanists has his roots in the classic tradition, although he has cultivated other soil at the same time. The span of his life reaches from the Lowell tradition of the mid-nineteenth century to the aggressive sword-rattlings of the young rebels during the first quarter of the twentieth century. But his position is neither defensive nor controversial. He treated the critical swashbucklers with polite tolerance; in fact Stuart Sherman suggests that he occupied an intermediary position between this party of nature (otherwise free expression) on the one side, and the party of culture and tradition which they opposed, on the other. In the controversy between the two groups which broke out about the time of his death there can be no doubt, had he lived, that his sympathies would have been with the traditionalists led by such men as Babbitt and More. On the other hand, it is doubtful that he would have ruled their opponents out of court. He will remain a transition critic, for death took him before he was forced to a commitment in the confusion of contending voices.

For the same reason he also remains as one of the best examples of the critical

temper so far produced in America. He never lost control of himself; he had no propagandist axes to grind, and prejudices did not sway him. Whatever heat of passion he may at times have felt was cooled by his essentially impersonal and objective outlook. His verdicts are rendered with the authority of a court of law, because they are based upon evidence which he declared sound. He is probably the best example of his own ideal, that the critic must think until he is dead weary and then think some more. He inspires confidence because of his dispassionate procedure and his penetrating thought.

Besides the works mentioned above, Brownell also wrote *The Spirit of Society* (1927). The only biographical information available is G. H. Brownell, *William Crary Brownell*, an anthology and biographical notes (1933). Critical studies and interpretations include E. Wharton, "William C. Brownell," *Scribner's*, Nov., 1928; G. McL. Harper, *John Morley and Other Essays* (1920); L. J. A. Mercier, "W. C. Brownell and Our Neo-Barbarism," *Forum*, June, 1929; S. P. Sherman, *Points of View* (1924); *W. C. Brownell: Tributes and Appreciations* (privately printed, 1929); R. Sturgis, "William Crary Brownell as Critic on Fine Art," *International Monthly*, April, 1902.

## CRITERION

First published in the *Atlantic*, April, 1911, and later issued in *Criticism* with slight changes. The field, function, and method of criticism, and the equipment of the critic are considered.

Its equipment established, criticism calls for a criterion. Sainte-Beuve says somewhere that our liking anything is not enough, that it is necessary to know further whether we are right in liking it—one of his many utterances that show how thoroughly and in what classic spirit he later rationalized his early romanticism.

The remark judges in advance the current critical impressionism. It involves more than the implication of Mr. Vedder's well-known retort to the time-honored philistine boast, "I know nothing of art, but I know what I like": "So do the beasts of the field." Critical impressionism, intelligent and scholarly, such as that illustrated and advocated by M. Jules Lemaître and M. Anatole France, for example, though it may, I think, be strictly defined as appetite, has certainly nothing gross about it, but, contrariwise, everything that is refined. Its position is, in fact, that soundness of criticism varies directly with the fastidiousness of the critic, and that consequently this fastidiousness cannot be too highly cultivated, since it is the court of final jurisdiction. It is, however, a court that resembles rather a star chamber in having the peculiarity of giving no reasons for its decisions. It has, therefore, at the outset an obvious disadvantage in the impossibility of validating its decisions for the acceptance of others. So far as this acceptance is concerned, it can only say, "If you are as well endowed with taste, native and acquired, as I am, the chances are that you will feel in the same way."

But it is of the tolerant essence of impressionism to acknowledge that there is no certainty about the matter. And, in truth, the material to be judged is too multifarious for the criterion of taste. Matthew Arnold's measure of a successful translation: that is, the degree in which it produces the same effect as the original to a sense competent to appreciate the original, is an instance of a sensible appeal to taste: first, because the question is comparatively simple; and secondly, because in the circumstances there can be no other arbiter. But such instances are rare, and the very fact that so much matter for criticism still remains matter of controversy proves the proverb that tastes differ and the corollary that there is no use in disputing about them. It is quite probable that M. France would find M. Lemaître's plays and stories insipid, and quite certain that M. Lemaître would shrink from the strain

of salacity in M. France's romance. High differentiation and the acme of aristocratic fastidiousness, which both of these critics illustrate, manifestly do not serve to unify their taste. There *is* no universal taste. And criticism to be convincing must appeal to some accepted standard. And the aim of criticism is conviction. Otherwise actuated it must be pursued on the art-for-art theory, which, in its case at least, would involve a loss of identity. Recording the adventures of one's soul among masterpieces, which is M. France's variant of Eugène Véron's definition of landscape,—the first formal appearance of the idea, I think,—"painting one's emotions in the presence of nature," must be a purely self-regardant exercise unless the reader has an answering soul and can himself authenticate the masterpieces.

Feeling the unsatisfactoriness of the impressionist's irresponsibility, the late Ferdinand Brunetière undertook a campaign in opposition to it. He began it, if I remember aright, in his lectures in this country nearly twenty years ago. These lectures, however, and the course of polemic which followed them excelled particularly, I think, in attack. They contained some very effective destructive criticism of mere personal preference, no matter whose, as a final critical criterion. Constructively, on the other hand, Brunetière was less conclusive. In a positive way he had nothing to offer but a defense of academic standards. He harked back to the classic canon—that canon in accordance with which were produced those works designed, as Stendhal says, "to give the utmost possible pleasure to our great-grandfathers."

The case might perhaps have been better stated. Brunetière was devoted to the noble French literature of the seventeenth century. The august had no doubt a special attraction for the self-made scholar. Out of reach the aristocratic always looks its best—the less attainable the more admirable. But though he became a distinguished scholar, Brunetière retained the temperament of the schoolmaster, which was either native to him or the result of belated acquaintance, however thorough, with what French impatience calls the *déjà-vu*. It was because he had so explicitly learned that he wished always to teach.

Now there is nothing strictly to teach save the consecrated and the canonical, whereas criticism is a live art, and contemporaneousness is of its essence. Once codified, it releases the genuine critic to conceive new combinations,—the "new duties" taught by "new occasions,"—and becomes itself either elementary or obsolete. It is important to know which, of course, as Wordsworth's failure successfully to recast the catalogue of the poetic *genres*, noted by Arnold, piquantly attests. Moreover in his devotion to the seventeenth, Brunetière was blind to the eighteenth century,—as well as, by the way, heedless of Voltaire's warning that the only bad style is the *style ennuyeux;* his style alone devitalized his polemic in favor of prescription. Finally, instead of winning adherents for him, this ardent advocacy of authority took despotic possession of his entire mind and gathered him to the bosom of religious and political reaction.

Whatever our view of criticism, it is impossible at the present day to conceive it as formula, and the rigidity of rules of taste is less acceptable than the license permitted under the reign of taste unregulated, however irregular, individual, and irresponsible. In spite of the logical weakness of the impressionist theory, it is to be observed that a high level of taste, uniform enough to constitute a very serviceable arbiter, at least in circumstances at all elementary, is practically attainable; and as a matter of fact is, in France at least, often attained. For in criticism as elsewhere it is true that we rest finally upon instinct, and faith underlies reason. The impressionist may properly remind us that all proof, even Euclidian, proceeds upon postulates.

The postulates of criticism, however, are apt unsatisfactorily to differ from those of mathematics in being propositions taken for granted rather than self-evident. The distinction is radical. It is not the fact that everybody is agreed about them that gives axioms their validity, but their self-evidence. Postulates that depend on the sanction of universal agreement, on the other hand, are conventions. Universal agreement may be brought about in a dozen ways. It may be imposed by authority, as in the case of classic criticism, or it may develop insensibly, illogically, and indefensi-

bly; it may derive, not from truth but from tradition, or it may certainly be the result of general reaction, and promptly crystallize with a rigidity equivalent to that from which it is just emancipated. Examples would be superfluous. The conventions of romanticism, realism, impressionism, symbolism, or what-not, are no more intrinsically valid than those underlying the criticism of academic prescription, as is attested by this variability of the universal agreement which is their sanction.

The true postulates of criticism have hardly varied since Aristotle's day, and impressionism itself, in imagining its own an advance upon them, would be in peril of fatuity. Yet even sound intuitions, fundamental as they may be, do not take us very far. Pascal, who though one of the greatest of reasoners is always girding at reason, was obliged to admit that it does the overwhelming bulk of the work. "Would to God," he exclaims, "that we had never any need of it, and knew everything by instinct and sentiment! But nature has refused us this blessing; she has, on the contrary, given us but very little knowledge of this kind, and all other knowledge can only be acquired by reasoning." But even if intuitions had all the importance claimed for them, it would still be true that *conventions* are extremely likely to be disintegrated by the mere lapse of time into what every one sees to have been really inductions from practice become temporarily and more or less fortuitously general, and not genuine intuitive postulates at all. Still clearer is the conventionality of the systems erected upon them, beneath which as a matter of fact they customarily lie buried. All sorts of eccentricity are incident to elaboration, of course, whether its basis be sound or unsound.

So that, in brief, when the impressionist alleges that a correct judgment of a work of literature or art depends ultimately upon feeling, we are quite justified in requiring him to tell us *why* he feels as he does about it. It is not enough for him to say that he is a person of particularly sensitive and sound organization, and that his feeling, therefore, has a corresponding finality. In the first place, as I have said, it is impossible to find in the judgments derived from pure taste anything like the uniformity to be found in the equipment as regards taste of the judges themselves. But for all their fastidiousness these judges are as amenable as grosser spirits to the test of reason. And it is only rational that the first question asked of them when they appeal to the arbitrament of feeling should be: Is your feeling the result of direct intuitive perception, or of unconscious subscription to convention? Your true distinction from the beasts of the field surely should lie, not so much in your superior organization resulting in superior taste, as in freedom from the conventional, to which even in their appetites the beasts of the field, often extremely fastidious in this respect, are nevertheless notoriously enslaved. In a word, even if impressionism be philosophically sound in the impeachment of reason unsupported by intuitive taste, it cannot dethrone reason as an arbiter in favor of the taste that is not intuitive but conventional. The true criterion of criticism therefore is only to be found in the rationalizing of taste.

This position once reached, it is clear that the only way in which the impressionist, however cultivated, can be at all sure of the validity of the *feeling* on which he bases his judgment is by the exercise of his reasoning faculty. Only in this way can he hope to determine whether his "impression" originates in a genuine personal perception of the relations of the object producing it to some self-evident principle of truth or beauty, or proceeds from habit, from suggestion, from the insensible pressure of current, which is even more potent than classic, convention. Absolutely certain of achieving this result, the critic can hardly expect to be. Nothing is more insidious than the conventional. Civilized life is continually paying it tribute in innumerable ways. Culture itself, so far as it is uncritical, is perhaps peculiarly susceptible to it. But the critic can discharge his critical duty only by approximating this certainty as nearly as possible, by processes of scrutiny, comparison, and reflection, and in general that arduous but necessary and not unrewarding exercise of the mind involved in the checking of sensation by thought.

There is nothing truistic at the present time in celebrating the thinking power, counselling

its cultivation and advocating its application—at least within the confines of criticism where the sensorium has decidedly supplanted it in consideration. Nor, on the other hand, is there anything recondite in so doing. It is as plain as it used to be remembered that it is in "reason" that a man is "noble," in "faculty" that he is "infinite," in "apprehension" that he is "like a god." The importance of his exquisite sensitiveness to impressions is a *post*-Shakespearean discovery. I certainly do not mean to belittle the value of this sensitiveness, in suggesting for criticism the advantages of its control by the thinking power, and in noting the practical disappearance of the latter from the catalogue of contemporary prescription. If my topic were not criticism, but performance in the field of American imaginative activity, to belittle taste would at the present time be unpardonable. The need of it is too apparent. The lack of it often cheapens our frequent expertness, ruptures the relation between truth and beauty, and is responsible for a monotonous miscellaneity that is relieved less often than we could wish by works of enduring interest.

It cannot, however, be maintained that the standard of pure taste is a wholly adequate corrective for this condition even in the field of performance. At least it has been tried, and the results have not been completely satisfactory. We have in literature more taste than we had in days when, perhaps, we had more talent. (I exclude the domain of scholarship and its dependencies, in which we have made, I should suppose, a notable advance.) But the very presence of taste has demonstrated its insufficiency. In general literature, indeed, if its presence has been marked, its effect is not very traceable, because it has been mainly exhibited in technic. It can't be said, I think, to have greatly affected the substance of our literary production. In two of the arts, however, taste has long had full swing with us—the arts, I mean, of architecture and sculpture; and the appreciation it has met with in these is, though general, not rarely of the kind that confuses the merits of the decorative with those of the monumental, and the virtues of adaptation with those of design. A rational instead of a purely susceptible spirit, dictating constructive rather than merely appreciative and assimilative activity, might have been more richly rewarded in these fields—might even have resulted in superior taste.

In the restricted field of criticism, at all events, the irresponsibility of pure temperament seems currently so popular as to imply a general belief that reasoning in criticism died with Macaulay and is as defunct as Johnson, having given place to a personal disposition which perhaps discounts its prejudices but certainly caresses its predilections as warrant of "insight" and "sympathy." Yet our few star examples in current criticism are eminently critics who give reasons for the hope that is in them; and certainly American literature has one critic who so definitely illustrated the value of the thinking power in criticism that he may be said almost to personify the principle of critical ratiocination. I mean Poe. Poe's perversities, his cavilling temper, his unscrupulousness in praise if not in blame, his personal irresponsibility, invalidate a great deal of his criticism, to say nothing of its dogmatic and mechanical character. But at its best it is the expression of his altogether exceptional reasoning faculty. His reasons were not the result of reflection, and his ideas were often the crotchets Stedman called them; but he was eminently prolific in both, and his handling of them was expertness itself. His ratiocination here has the artistic interest it had in those of his tales that are based on it, and that are imaginative as mathematics is imaginative. And his dogmas were no more conventions than his conclusions were impressions. His criticism was equally removed from the canonical and the latitudinarian. If he stated a proposition he essayed to demonstrate it, and if he expressed a preference he told *why* he had it.

Poe's practice is, indeed, rather baldly ratiocinative than simply rational, and its felicity in his case does not, it is true, disguise its somewhat stark, exclusive, and exaggerated effect. I do not cite M. Dupin as an example of the perfect critic. There is something debased—not to put too fine a point upon it—in the detective method wherever used. It is not merely subtle, but serpentine—too tortuous and too terrene for the ampler upper air of examination, analysis, and constructive com-

ment. Reason is justified of her children, not of her caricaturists. But if the answer to the question Why? which I have noted as her essential monopoly (since prescription precludes and impressionism scouts the inquiry), be challenged as an advantage to criticism, I think its value can be demonstrated in some detail.

The epicurean test of the impressionist, let me repeat, is of course not a standard, since what gives pleasure to some gives none to others. And some standard is a necessary postulate, not only of all criticism, but of all discussion or even discourse. Without one, art must indeed be "received in silence," as recommended by the persistently communicative Whistler. In literature and art there are, it is true, no longer any statutes, but the common law of principles is as applicable as ever, and it behooves criticism to interpret the cases that come before it in the light of these. Its function is judicial, and its business to weigh and reason rather than merely to testify and record. And if it belongs in the field of reason rather than in that of emotion, it must consider less the pleasure that a work of art produces than the worth of the work itself. This is a commonplace in ethics, where conduct is not approved by its happy result but by its spiritual worthiness. And if art and literature were felt to be as important as ethics, the same distinction would doubtless have become as universal in literary and art criticism. Which is of course only another way of stating Sainte-Beuve's contention that we need to know whether we are right or not when we are pleased. And the only guide to that knowledge—beyond the culture which, however immensely it may aid us, does not automatically produce conformity or secure conviction—is the criterion of reason applied to the work of ascertaining value apart from mere attractiveness. The attractiveness takes care of itself, as happiness does when we have done our duty.

At all events, aside from its superior philosophic satisfactoriness, thus indicated, a rational—rather than either an academic and authoritative or an impressionist and individual—criticism is especially useful, I think, at the present time, in two important particulars. It is, in the first place, especially fitted to deal with the current phase of art and letters. Of this phase, I take it, freedom and eclecticism are the main traits. Even followers of tradition exercise the freest of choices, tradition itself having become too multifarious to be followed *en bloc*. On the other hand, those who flout tradition and pursue the experimental, illustrate naturally still greater diversity. Both must ultimately appeal to the criterion of reason, for neither can otherwise justify its practice and pretensions. Prescription is a practical ideal if it is coherent; it loses its constituting sanction the moment it offers a choice. And experiment attains success only when through proof it reaches demonstration. In either case a criterion is ultimately addressed which is untrammeled by precedent and unmoved by change; which is strict without rigidity, and seeks the law of any performance within and not outside it; which demands no correspondence to any other concrete, but only to the appropriate abstract; which, in fact, substitutes for a concrete ideal a purely abstract one of intrinsic applicability to the matter in hand. It exacts titles, but they may be couched in any form, or expressed in any tongue but that of irrationality. No more the slave of schools than the sponsor of whim, it does not legislate, but judges performance, in its twofold aspect of conception and execution, in accordance with principles universally uncontested.

In the next place, no other criterion is competent to deal critically with the great question of our day in art and letters alike, namely, the relation of reality to the ideal. No other, I think, can hope to preserve disentangled the skein of polemic and fanaticism in which this question tends constantly to wind itself up into apparently inextricable confusion. Taste, surely, cannot. Taste, quite comprehensibly, I think, breathes a sigh of weariness whenever the subject of "realism" is mentioned. Nevertheless, "realism" is established, entrenched, and I should say impregnable to the assaults of its more radical and numerous foes, more particularly those of the art-for-art's-sake army. It is too fundamentally consonant with the current phase of the Time-Spirit to be in any present danger. But it is only reason that can reconcile its claims with those of its

censors by showing wherein, and to what extent, "realism" is really a catholic treatment of reality, and not a protestant and polemic gospel of the literal.

Reality has become recognized as the one vital element of significant art, and it seems unlikely that the unreal will ever regain the empire it once possessed. Its loss, at all events, is not ours, since it leaves us the universe. But it is obvious that "realism" is often in practice, and not infrequently in conception, a very imperfect treatment of reality, which indeed not rarely receives more sympathetic attention in the romantic or even the classic household. Balzac is a realist, and at times the most artificial of great romancers. George Sand is a romanticist, and a very deep and fundamental reality not rarely underlies her superficial extravagances. Fundamentally, truth—which is certainly none other than reality—was her inspiration, as, fundamentally, it certainly was not always Balzac's. "Realism" has made reality our touchstone. But it is not a talisman acting automatically if misapplied. To mistake the badge for the credentials of a doctrine is so frequent an error because it is irrational, and close-thinking, being difficult, is exceptional. Exponents of "realism," such as that most admirable of artists, Maupassant, are extraordinarily apt in practice to restrict the field of reality till the false proportion results in a quintessentially unreal effect. Every detail is real, but the implication of the whole is fantastic. Why? Because the ideal is excluded. The antithesis of reality is not the ideal, but the fantastic.

This is, I think, the most important distinction to bear in mind in considering the current realistic practice in all the arts. I refer of course to what we characterize as the ideal in general —not to the particular ideal whose interpenetration with the object constitutes the object a work of art and measures it as such. But for that matter the ideal in general may be conceived as having a similar relation to reality. Since it is a part of the order of the universe,—of reality, that is to say,—it is obviously not antithetic to it. On the other hand, the fantastic is essentially chaotic by definition though often speciously, attractively, and at times poetically garbed in the raiment of order—the poetry of Coleridge or the compositions of Blake, for example. The defect of this kind of art *is* its lack of reality, and its consequent comparative insignificance. But it is no more ideal for that reason than *Lear* or the Venus of Melos. This is still more apparent in the less artistic example of Hawthorne's tales, where in general the fantasticality consists in the garb rather than the idea, and where accordingly we can more readily perceive the unreality and consequent insignificance, the incongruous being more obvious in the material than in the moral field. But it is the special business of criticism at the present time of "realistic" tyranny to avoid confusing the ideal with the fantastic, to avoid disparagement of it as opposed to reality, and to disengage it from elements that obscure without invalidating it.

*Ivanhoe*, for example, is fantastic history, but the character of the Templar is a splendid instance of the ideal inspiring, informing, intensifying, incontestable reality. In *Le Père Goriot*, on the other hand, in which the environment and atmosphere are realistic to the last degree, the protagonist is the mere personification of a passion. These are, no doubt, subtleties. But they are not verbal subtleties. They are inseparable from the business of criticism. And they impose on it the criterion of reason rather than that of feeling, which cannot be a standard, or that of precedent and prescription, which is outworn.

Finally,—and if I have hitherto elaborated to excess, here I need not elaborate at all,—no other than a rational criterion so well serves criticism in the most important of all its functions, that of establishing and determining the relation of art and letters to the life that is their substance and their subject as well.

1911

# 1855 ~ *George Edward Woodberry* ~ 1930

FAMOUS as poet, literary critic, and biographer, Woodberry was born at Beverly, Massachusetts. He came of a family of seamen, his ancestors having settled in New England in early colonial days. He attended Phillips Exeter Academy and graduated from Harvard, where he came under the influence of Charles Eliot Norton. As a student he attracted the attention of his teachers by his unusual gift of expression, and according to one of his letters earned part of his college expenses by writing. After graduation in 1877 he taught for a year at the University of Nebraska, to which he returned for a second appointment after a short time on the staff of the *Nation*. From 1882 to 1891 he was engaged in literary work, contributing to the *Atlantic Monthly* and serving as literary editor of the *Boston Post*. In 1891 he became professor of English at Columbia, being transferred later to the department of Comparative Literature. After his retirement in 1904 he made his home in Beverly, and spent his time in writing, traveling, and lecturing. He held membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Woodberry published books in prose and poetry for over forty years. He began his career with *A History of Wood Engraving* (1883). His most important works in prose are the biographies of Poe, Hawthorne, and Emerson, and the literary and critical essays in *Studies in Letters and Life* (1890), *The Torch* (1905), *Great Writers* (1907) and *The Inspiration of Poetry* (1910). His chief poetic works are *The North Shore Watch* (1890), *Wild Eden* (1899), and *The Roamer* (1920).

Woodberry is remembered by his students as an unusually stimulating and inspiring teacher; many have given testimony of his influence and power. He made literature the means of teaching life, for in his thought the two were synonymous; or as one expressed it, he opened his students' minds to the universe. The abiding friendship between him and his students is revealed in the recently published letters.

The biographies are still valuable even though, as in the cases of Poe and Hawthorne, the discovery of new material has made new interpretations inevitable. The sources available to his hand he used wisely and judiciously. Untouched by the Freudian rage and the debunking madness, he suggests in his Hawthorne an atmosphere almost as haunting as that of his subject. For the moment he was an artist who wrote biography.

His poetry fell on evil times, for a poetic revolution was under way. Because of the clamor for the new, the music of his carefully wrought verse was neglected in

favor of the less melodious voices of the *vers librists*, Imagists, and what not. A more leisurely civilization will restore it to its deserved recognition.

It was as a critic that Woodberry was most widely known. But in criticism as well as in poetry he was the victim of changing modes. He belonged essentially to the nineteenth century, for which the new voices in creative literature and criticism showed little sympathy. He spoke with authority to an extensive group of admirers, but even before his death he saw the gradual decline of his reputation before the press of the younger critics, and realized that he belonged to a passing era.

Woodberry's critical theory is stated in his *Two Phases of Criticism* (1913). One phase of his thinking, his conception of the relationship between art, whether poetry, music, or painting, and the individual soul is of peculiar interest. This relationship is dual and reciprocal. In the first place, any piece of art in the past, a tragedy, a lyric, or a symphony, if it has in it the lasting qualities of permanence amid its ephemeral qualities of time and place, will be appreciated and interpreted by succeeding generations in terms of the changing localisms of time and space. It is this capacity of repeated readjustments which confers long life upon it. Paradoxically enough, art may be changing in spite of its permanence, as may be seen by comparing Malory's King Arthur, with the Arthur of Tennyson's *Idylls*. In the second place, Woodberry maintains that not art alone, but likewise the individual soul, undergoes a change as a result of the mutual contacts. An artistic experience leaves the soul different, because of the dynamic power inherent in art itself. The mutual intercourse between art and humanity becomes therefore one of the most potent civilizing factors. Most of Woodberry's criticism, especially such a study as "Man and the World Soul," rests upon this fundamental conception. Woodberry wrote in a style which is distinguished for its simplicity and urbanity. His interests are wide and varied. The range of his criticism extends from the ancient Greeks to his own time, and includes studies of many significant figures in foreign and American literature.

Woodberry's poems include *The North Shore Watch* (1893); *Wild Eden* (1899); *The Flight* (1914); *Ideal Passion* (1917), *The Roamer* (1920). Among his critical studies are *Studies in Letters and Life* (1890, enl. 1900 as *Makers of Literature*); *Heart of Man* (1899); *The Torch* (1905, enl. 1920); *The Appreciation of Literature* (1907); *The Inspiration of Poetry* (1910); *Two Phases of Criticism* (1915); *Studies of a Littérateur* (1921). All the critical essays have been brought together in *Collected Works* (6 vols., 1920). His work in biography and criticism includes *Edgar Allan Poe* (1885); *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (1902); *Swinburne* (1905); *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1907); *Great Writers* (1907). *Selected Letters*, introduction by W. de la Mare, appeared in 1933. For further study see F. W. Halsey, *American Authors and Their Homes* (1901); L. V. Ledoux, *The Poetry of George Edward Woodberry* (1917); J. B. Rittenhouse, *The Younger American Poets* (1904); E. M. Bacon, *Literary Pilgrimages in New England* (1902); J. Erskine, "A Human Spirit," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Aug. 5, 1933; V. F. Calverton, *The Newer Spirit* (1925); G. S. Hellman, "Men of Letters at Columbia," *Critic*, Oct., 1903; L. V. Ledoux, "George Edward Woodberry," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Jan. 11, 1930.

## AESTHETIC CRITICISM

Read as a lecture at Kenyon College. With its companion lecture on "Historical Criticism" it was privately printed in 1914.

Is it an error to relegate art to the dead past and translate it into history? Works of art are not like political events and persons; they do not pass at once away. The Hermes of Praxiteles is still with us. Is it really the same Hermes that it was when it was made? Is its personal identity a fixed state, or does its personality, like our own, change in the passage of time? May it not be the nature of art to cast off what is mortal, and emancipate itself from the mind of its creator? Is it truly immortal, still alive, or only a stone image forever the same—a petrifaction, as it were, of the artist's soul at a certain moment? or is it possible, on the other hand, that such a life really abides in art as to make what is immortal in the work greatly exceed that mortal and temporary part which historical criticism preserves? Let us ignore the historical element, and consider what is left in the critical act, still conceived as a re-creation of the image, but the re-creation of the image before us apart from any attempt to realize what was in the artist's mind, or with only a passing reference to that.

Expression is the nucleus of the artist's power. What is expression? It is the process of externalizing what was in the artist's mind, in some object of sense which shall convey it to others. The material used may be actual form and color, as in painting and sculpture; or imaginary objects and actions through the medium of language, as in literature; or pure sound, as in music: always there is some material which is perceived by the senses and intelligible only through their mediation. Slight, indeed, would be the artist's power and inept his skill, if he should not so frame the lineaments of his work as to stamp on the senses of all comers the same intelligible image, and give for the bodily eye what the bodily eye can see in picture, statue or story. The work of art, however, is not merely the material object, but that object charged with the personality of the artist. It is in his power to make that charge effective that his true faculty of expression lies. The material object—form, color, action, sound—is enveloped in his feeling; the words he uses are loaded with his meanings and tones. His personality is immaterial, and cannot be bodied forth; hence, the most essential and significant part of what he expresses, that which clothes the material object with its spirituality, is dependent in a supreme degree on suggestion, on what can be only incompletely set forth, on half-lights and intimations, and the thousand subtleties which lie on the borderland of the inexpressible.

In so far as a work of art is a thing of nature, it can be expressed materially with the more adequacy; in so far as it is a thing of the spirit, of personality, it is less subject to complete and certain expression; and in all art there are these two elements. In that process of re-creating the image which we are now examining the mind's fortune with these two elements is unequal; so far as the material part is concerned, normal eyes will see the same thing, normal intelligence will grasp the same thing, in figure, action and event; but when it is a question of realizing the spirit, differences begin to emerge and multiply. Rifts of temperament and varieties of experience between artist and spectator make chasms of misunderstanding and misappreciation. How diverse are the representations in the mind finally, as revealed in our tastes and judgments! The same image, mirrored in individuals, becomes radically different in opposed minds, and each is apt to believe that his own is the true and only one. It is a commonplace that every reader thinks that he is Hamlet. What a number of Hamlets that makes! It is a commonplace also that this ease of identification with a character is a test of genius in a writer and ranks him in power and significance. Those who create so are called the universal writers. Whence arises this paradox, so common in art, of infinite diversity in identity? It comes from the fact that, so far from realizing the image as it was in the artist's mind and receiving it charged with his personality merely, it is we ourselves who create the image by charging it with our own personality. In this creation we do not simply repeat in ourselves his state of mind and become as it were ghosts of him who is dead; but we originate something new, liv-

ing and our own. There is no other way for us to appropriate his work, to interpret it and understand it. The fact is that a work of art, being once created and expressed, externalized, is gone from the artist's mind and returns to the world of nature; it becomes a part of our external world, and we treat it precisely as we treat the rest of that world, as mere material for our own artist-life which goes on in our own minds and souls in the exercise of our own powers in their limitations. Our appropriation of art is as strictly held within these bounds as is our grasp upon the material world.

It is one of the charms of art that it is not to be completely understood. In an age in which so high a value is put upon facts, information, positive knowledge, it is a relief to have still reserved to us a place apart where it is not necessary to know all. The truth of science is stated in a formula of mathematics, a law of physics, a generalization of one or another kind; it is clear, and it is all contained there; in each specific case there is nothing more to be known. The truth of art is of a different sort; it does not seem to be all known, finished and finally stated, but on the contrary to be ever growing, more rich in significance, more profound in substance, disclosing heaven over heaven and depth under depth. The greatest books share our lives, and grow old with us; we read them over and over, and at each decade it is a new book that we find there, so much has it gained in meaning from experience of life, from ripening judgment, from the change of seasons in the soul. The poetry of Wordsworth is a typical instance of such a book. It is the same with the artists, with sculptors and musicians. Art of all sorts has this lifelong increment of value, and whoever has experienced this easily realizes to what a degree and how constantly the reader's intelligence, cultivation and experience are controlling and limiting factors in his power to appropriate what is before him. In art he appropriates only a part of what the work contains. It is thus that the great artists, Shakespeare, Dante, Virgil, are lifelong studies.

A second but powerful limitation lies in those differences of temperament, just referred to, which have an arbitrary potency in appreciation. The practical man is, as a rule, really self-excluded from the field of art; but, inside the field, the stoic will not make much of Byron nor the cynic of Shelley. In certain arts, such as the many kinds of prints, a special training of the eye and some technical knowledge of processes must be acquired before one really sees what the eye itself must discover in the engraving in order to apprehend its subtle qualities. The way, however, is most commonly blocked by certain inhibitions which are so lodged in the mind by education and opinion that they effectively paralyze any effort at re-creation. I remember once, years ago, when I was myself a student, meeting on a western train out of Buffalo a clergyman who kindly engaged me in conversation; and I, being but a boy, repaid his interest by flooding him with my enthusiasms for George Eliot and Scott, who happened to be then my ascendant stars. I recall well his final reply: "Young man," he said, "I never read anything that isn't true." What an inhibition that was, in his literary and artistic career! I have since wondered if he found much to read. Ideal truth, as you perceive, had never dawned upon his mind—and that is the finer and happier part of truth. The prejudice of the early New England church against the theater is a curious instance of an inhibition that rendered nugatory a great historic branch of art, the drama; and it is the more singular, viewed as a religious phenomenon, because of the great place the drama held in religion itself in Catholic countries and especially in medieval times. What Puritan could read the sacred drama of Spain with any understanding? I have friends who object to war as a theme of verse, and the praise of wine by the poets is anathema in many quarters. These are all examples of moral inhibitions bred in the community and operating against great divisions of literature. What a sword of destruction that would be which would strike Mars and Bacchus from the world's poetry! The American inhibition, however, which best illustrates what I have in mind, is that which rejects the nude in sculpture and painting, not only forfeiting thereby the supreme of Greek genius and sanity, but to the prejudice, also, of human dignity, as it seems to me. Such inhibitions

in one way and another exist in communities and individuals; the appreciation of literature, and of art in general, is subject to them; and I cite these examples to bring out clearly how true it is that, almost involuntarily and unconsciously, in re-creating the work of art we remake it in ourselves and not in its own old world, and the meaning we charge it with is our own personality and not that of its original creator. If I look with shamed eyes at Hermes, Narcissus and Venus, the shame is mine, and not the sculptor's; if I cannot read the old verses on Agincourt with sympathy and delight in their heroic breath, the poverty of soul is mine, not Drayton's. In every way, the responsibility for what we make of art, in re-creating it, springs from what we are.

It is plain that, in consequence of our various limitations in faculty, knowledge, experience, temperament and working always with some subjection to communal ideas and tastes, we must suffer many losses of what the work of art originally contained and fall short of realizing it as it was in the artist's mind. On the other hand there is some compensation in the fact that the work itself may take on new meanings that the artist did not dream of; for, in returning to the external world and becoming a part of our real environment, the work of art has resumed that plastic quality which belongs to the world of nature and makes it material for us to mold our own souls in. The essence of the work, its living power for us, is not what the artist put in it, but what we draw from it; its world-value is not what it was to the artist, but what it is to the world. It is common enough for the reader to find meanings in a book that the writer did not consciously put there; there is much in personality that the artist himself is not aware of, and also there may be much in the work which he does not attend to, and hence there is excess of significance in both ways; and moreover, the reader may respond to the work with greater sensitiveness than belonged to the creator and in new ways. Thus arises the paradox which I often maintain, that it is not the poet, but the reader, who writes the poem.

This is more plainly seen when literature is looked at under the changing lights of time. New ages appropriate the works of the past by accomplishing a partial transformation in them, and unless art is capable of such a remaking, it cannot last; it becomes merely archaic, historic, dead—a thing for the scholar's museum. Homer has delighted the ages, but it is through his capacity to live again in the battle-loving and travel-loving hearts of men; it is not because later generations have read the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" as the Greeks read or heard them. Each age reads something into the text, as we say, and this "reading-in" is incessant in the history of art. It is well illustrated in the criticism of Pater, so frequently called creative criticism, and especially in his *Marius, the Epicurean*,—a marvelous blend of the modern spirit with ancient material—but such "reading-in" is his most brilliant achievement in all his essays, whether they treat of Greek gods, like Dionysus, or French gallants, or Roman gentlemen; all his figures are developed in the dark chamber of his own singularly sensitive and refined artistic temperament. The same phenomenon occurs as characteristically, though in so contrasted a way, in the Puritan rehabilitation of the Old Testament at the time of the Civil War, when Agag and Naboth and their lives served as the eternal pattern of the ideal for the Roundheads; and at the present day one often hears in orthodox churches a discourse which, so far as its figures and colors are concerned, always reminds me of antique tapestry and seems to belong to some Oriental art of expression rather than to our own tongue, manners and ideas. Literature, and indeed all art, has this magic to change the meaning without altering the signs. It was thus that the picturesque and mythologic side of Paganism, the poetic part, was taken up, absorbed and reëmbodied in the Catholicism of southern Europe, and lives to this day, little changed in outward seeming, by the old Mediterranean shores. Indeed, in much modern poetry I often find the necessity of translating the old signs into fresh meanings in order to keep the language alive to me. Poetic imagery is none too abundant, take it all together; we cannot afford to sacrifice much of it. Instead of abolishing battle and the wine-cup, the gods and the heroes, the Old Testament, and what

not, it will be far wiser to use them in the service of our new ideals. Art, taken either as a language or in its individual works, has not one meaning, but many. This is a part of the poet's subtle mystery that he declares he knows not what.

If you have followed these remarks with any sympathy and I have conveyed to you my belief that each of us has the artist-soul, continually engaged in its own creations, you will readily comprehend that works of art are not to me historical monuments valuable for the information they give of the past, nor even artistic entities to be known apart from ourselves and as they were in the artist's mind; but rather such works are only raw material, or at least new material, for us to make our own statues and pictures and poems out of; or, in a word, to create the forms of our own souls out of; for the soul must be given forms in order to be aware of its being, to know itself, truly to be. The soul moves toward self-expression in many ways, but in finding forms for itself the soul discovers its most plastic material in the world of art. It is in forms of ideality that the soul hastens to clothe itself; and while it is possible for us to elaborate such forms from the crude mass of nature, as the first artists did, yet later generations are the more fortunate in that they possess in art and literature a vast treasure of ideality already elaborated and present. Works of art thus constitute a select material wherein the artist-soul that is in each of us can work, not only with our own native force of penetration and aspiration, but, as it were, with higher aid—the aid of genius, the aid of the select souls of the race. It is true that the recreation of old art which we accomplish is our own personal act, and cannot be otherwise; but the way is made easier for us, doors are opened, directions are indicated, light is shed on forward and unknown paths, sympathy, guidance and courage are given to us by companionship with the works of those, our forerunners, who have lived long in the soul's own world and left their testimony for us so far as we have skill to read in their text and understand in their spirit. This is the true service of art—of the poets, painters, musicians—to prepare the material of the soul's life so that those who are less fortunately endowed and more humble may more readily put on the spiritual garment that all must wear if they are to be souls, indeed, and live above the bodily sphere. There are other ways than art, it is true, by which the soul comes into its own; but in the way of art it is by recreating in ourselves the past forms of the spirit, vitally appropriating them and charging them with our own life, that we win most directly and happily to true self-knowledge of the wonderful creature that man is.

It has become plain, I trust, in what sense it is indeed true that it is the nature of art to cast off what is mortal and emancipate itself from the mind of its creator, and thus to enter upon a life of its own, continually renewed in the minds of those who appropriate it. This is its real immortality—not the fact that it lasts through time, but that it lives in the souls of mankind. I am fond of biography, and few are the pleasures of the literary life that are more pure and precious than the quiet and unknown companionship which biography may establish between ourselves and those whose works have endeared to us their persons and interested us in their human fortunes as if they were friends; but I am always glad when time has destroyed all merely mortal record of them, and there remains only their work—only the "souls of poets dead and gone." It is only when fame shrinks to that narrow limit of the book or the deed, that it rises to its height. The Greek Anthology is a book of pure immortality because it has brought down with it so little of the alloy of temporal personality; and that clarity of fame, which seems almost a peculiarity of classical literature and antique art, gathering all its luster often into one lonely name, is due, perhaps, most to this freedom from human detail. The poet, the sculptor, has come to live only in his work, where the immortal part of him found expression and lodgment while he was yet alive; all else was dust, and is in the tomb which is appointed for mortal things. It is better so, when the poet's memory itself becomes ideal, and the imagination paints its Dante and carves its Shelley after the image of the pure soul they left on earth when they departed hence, Even that soul, that personality which

they incarnated in their art, suffers changes and refinement. Only that element abides which can enter continuously and permanently into the souls of men, according to their several grades of being—only that which can live in humanity; the rest fades away with time. And then this miracle arises that into the soul of Virgil, for example, enters a Christian soul, new-born, and deepening its pathos; and not Virgil only, but many others, are, as it were, adopted into the race itself and become the ever growing children of the human spirit, ideals and fathers of ideals through ages. That is earthly immortality—the survival and increment of the spirit through time. Thus arises another paradox, that as art begins by being charged with personality, it ends by becoming impersonal, solving the apparent contradiction in the soul universal, the common soul of mankind. Each of us creates art in his own image—it seems an infinite variable; and yet it is the variable of something identical in all—the soul. I often think that in the artistic life, and its wonderful spiritual interchange through the re-creation in each of the ideals of all, there is realized something analogous to the religious conception of the communion of saints, especially when one considers the impersonality of art in its climax of world-fame; for the communion of saints is not a communion of individual with individual, but of each one with all. It is thus in the artistic life that one shares in the soul universal, the common soul of mankind, which yet is manifest only in individuals and their concrete works. Art like life has its own material being in the concrete, but the spiritual being of both is in the universal.

We have come, then, in our examination of criticism, or, in other words, of the act of appreciation, to the point I indicated earlier upon opening the subject, where criticism appears to be a private affair, a deeply personal act, such that every one of us must be his own artist. Each of us has the artist-soul, and if we enter truly into the world of art, it is not merely as spectators, but as participants, as ourselves the artists. It is on this activity of the soul in its artist-life that the whole subject concentrates its interest. I reminded you that from time to time in history our ancestors encountered successively alien literatures, and as each was in turn appropriated, a Renaissance resulted. It is thus that civilization has grown in body and quality, ever enriching itself by what it absorbs from this and that particular race and age. Nothing can exceed in folly the policy and temper that would isolate nations and races one from another; it is from the intermingling of all, with their various gifts and labors, that the greatest good finally comes; and no sign of the times is so disturbing to me as the present reactionary tendency in America apparent in the growth of race-prejudice and a jealous contempt of the foreigner. In this respect the life of the individual is like that of nations. If he grows, it is often by a Renaissance attending the introduction of something novel into his life. You are all familiar with the splendid burst of the human spirit which attended the re-discovery of the ancient classic world in Italy, and you will recall how at a later time the re-discovery of the Middle Ages occasioned a similar flowering of art in the Gothic Renaissance, so variously fruitful in its turn in the last century. The parallel is easily found in the individual life; such a profound and developing experience was the Italian journey for Goethe, the study of Plato and the Greek dramatists for Shelley, mythology for Keats—and everywhere in literary biography one finds illustrations.

The most arresting trait of the artist-life, as one begins to lead it, is that it is a life of discovery. It is not truth that is discovered, but faculty; what results is not an acquisition of knowledge, but an exercise of inward power. The most wonderful thing in the soul is the extraordinary latency of power in it; and it is in the artist-life, in the world of art, that this latent power is most variously and brilliantly released. What happens to you when you begin to see, really to see, pictures, for example? It is not that a new object has come within the range of your vision; but that a new power of seeing has arisen in your eye, and through this power a new world has opened before you—a world of such marvels of space, color and beauty, luminosity, shadow and line, atmosphere and disposition, that you begin to live in it as a child begins to learn to live in

the natural world. It is not the old world seen piece-meal; it is a new world on another level of being than natural existence. So, when you begin to take in a poem, it is not a mere fanciful arrangement of idea and event added to your ordinary memory of things; new powers of feeling have opened in your heart that constitute a fresh passion of life there, and as you feel it with lyric and drama, a significance, a mystery, a light enter into the universe as you know it, with transforming and exalting power. To the lover of pictures the visible world has become something other than it was—even nature herself flowers with Corots and Manets, coruscates with Turners and Claudes, darkens with Rembrandts; to the lover of poetry also the visible world has suffered change and lies in the light of Wordsworth or of Shelley, but much more the invisible world of inward life is transformed into visions of human fate in Aeschylus and Shakespeare, into throbs of passion in Dante and Petrarch, into cries of ecstasy and pain in how many generations of the poets world-wide. It is not that you have acquired knowledge; you have acquired heart. To lead the artist-life is not to look at pictures and read books; it is to discover the faculties of the soul, that slept unknown and unused, and to apply them in realizing the depth and tenderness, the eloquence, the hope and joy, of the life that is within. It is by this that the life of art differs from the life of science: its end is not to know, but to be. The revolt against the historical treatment of art arises from feeling that in such treatment art loses its own nature, and that what is truly life, and has its only value as life, is degraded into what is merely knowledge. I appreciate the worth and function of knowledge, and join with Tennyson in recognition of her rightful realm, but add with him—

"Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first."

The first place is held by life. It is against the substitution of knowledge for life in scholarship, especially in the literary and artistic fields, that the protest is made.

A second main trait of the artist-life of the soul, for which I am, as it were, pleading, is that it is a life of growth by an inward secret and mysterious process. There is nothing mechanical in it; it is vital. It was this aspect of the soul's life which Wordsworth brought so prominently forward, and made elemental in his verse, advocating a "wise passiveness" in the conduct of the mind:

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?"

"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin." That is the type of the artist-soul; in the artist-life there is neither toiling nor spinning. In an economical civilization like ours, leisure is apt to be confounded with indolence, and it is hard to see how the poet watching

"the sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy bloom,"

is not an idler in the land. Especially is it hard to see how things will come without planning. In our own day planning has become an all-engrossing occupation. A belief in organization has spread through the country, and is applied in all quarters of life, as if success were always a matter of machinery, and preferably of legislative machinery. Even in the churches, which have been the home of spiritual force, organization plays an ever increasing part, as if failure in driving-force could be made up for by appliances in the machine; to a certain extent this is possible, but the driving force is not the machine. The practical reason so occupies all the field of our life that the result is to belittle and destroy whatever has not its ground of being in the useful. Art, by its own nature, excludes the useful. Art, in its creative process, discards the instrumentality of means to an end, in the sense of planning and intention; its process is inspirational, as we say—a secret and mysterious growth. The artist, in generating his work—the poem, statue, picture—does not plan it; it comes to him. And when we, in our turn, look at what he has figured, or read what he has expressed, we do not plan what the result—the re-creation—will be in us; one of the most precious qualities of art is the divine surprise that attends its reception and realiza-

tion in ourselves. There is a part of life where planning, the adjustment of means to an end, organization, and all that belongs in the practical sphere, has its place; but the growth of the soul proceeds on other principles and in another realm. This is Eucken's text. Our bodies and our mortal interests are subject to the world of use; but our spirituality, our immortal part, is above use. The artist-life of the soul—and the soul's life is characteristically artistic—lies in the self-revelation of its own nature, and this is a growth which takes place in a world of beauty, passion, adoration—in a word, of ideality, where what Wordsworth calls "our meddling intellect," the practical reason, has small part.

I well know how opposed this doctrine is to the ruling spirit of our time, which shrinks our lives to the limits of an economical and mechanical sphere, to use Eucken's phrases, and accustoms us to the dominance of their precepts and methods. Art with difficulty finds room among us. It is not by accident that our most literary temperament, Henry James, and our two great artists, Whistler and Sargent, have had their homes abroad, and that from the beginning the literature and art of America have often had their true locality on a foreign soil. Yet, whatever may be the seeming, it is always true that the soul grows, it is not made; and the world of art is chiefly precious to us because it is a place for the soul's growth.

A third main trait of the world of art is that it is a place of freedom. I have already alluded to this briefly. It is not merely that the soul is there freed from the manacles of utility and has escaped from the great burden of success in life; that is only the negative side. It has also, on the positive side, entered into a realm of new power, the exercise of which is its highest function. The soul transcends nature, and reconstitutes the world in the image of its own finer vision and deeper wisdom, realizing ideality in its own consciousness and conveying at least the shadow of its dream to mankind. It transcends nature in creating form. The Hermes of Praxiteles, whether or not one knows it is Hermes and discerns in it the godlike nature, gives to all ages a figure such as nature never shaped. The soul, also, in its artist-life, transcends nature in idea; each of us, in reading the play, may believe he is Hamlet, but each is well aware that he is identifying himself with a more perfect type of himself, such as is known only to the mind's eye. And, similarly, the soul transcends nature in the field of the relation of things; it builds up an Arcadia, an earthly Paradise, an ideal state, a forest of Arden, an island-kingdom of Prospero, a Round Table, a School of Athens, a Last Judgment, a legend of the Venusberg—what not?—so vast and various is the imaginary world wherein the soul from the beginning has bodied forth that inner vision and wisdom in which it finds its true self-consciousness. So great is its freedom there that, as is often said, it transcends also the moral world, and so far as morals belong in the sphere of mere utility and social arrangement, this must be granted; but the subject is too large and complicated to be entered upon here. I allude to it only to emphasize and bring out fully the doctrine that the soul exercises in its artist-life an unchartered freedom; for it is not concerned there with practical results of any kind, but only with the discovery of its nature, both active and passive. The fruit of this large freedom is the ideal world, in which each realizes his dream of the best. It is here that experiments are made, that revolutions sometimes begin; for the ideal, as I have said, once expressed, passes back into the ordinary world, and there it may be made a pattern, a thing to be actualized, and it falls under the dominance of the practical reason and has this or that fortune according to the wisdom or folly of mankind at the time. The ideal world is very mutable in different ages and races; and history is full of its débris. It is not an everlasting city set in the heavens that shall some time descend upon the earth in a millennium; it is a dream, the dream of the soul in its creative response to the world about it. Yet there is nothing insubstantial about the dream; however unrealized in the external world of fact, it is spiritually real, for it is lived in the soul—it is the conscious life of the soul. There are times, however, when the ideal world does enter into the actual world, and partly permeate it, if it does not wholly master it. The classic, the chivalric, the Christian world attest

the fact, broadly; and in individual life how must we ourselves bear witness to the mingling in ourselves of the poets' blood—which is the blood of the world. In the intimacy of this communion is our best of life, and it is accomplished solely by the re-creation in us, in our minds and hearts, our hopes, admirations and loves, of what was first in the artists of every sort, according to our capacity to receive and reëmbody in our own spiritual substance their finer, wiser, deeper power. Their capacity to enter thus into the life of humanity is the measure of their genius, and our capacity to receive the gift is the measure of our souls.

Such in its main lines is the artist-life of the soul, a life of discovery, of growth, of freedom; but what is most precious in it, and most characterizes it, is a prophetic quality that abides in its experiences. The poets are often spoken of as prophets, and in history the greatest are those most lonely peaks that seem to have taken the light of an unrisen dawn, like Virgil, whose humanity in the "Aeneid" shines with a foregleam of the Christian temperament, or like Plato, whose philosophy in many a passage was a morning star that went before the greater light of Christian faith in the divine. But it is not such poets and such prophecy that I have in mind. I mean that in our own experiences in this artist-life with the poets, sculptors and musicians there abides the feeling that we shall have, as Tennyson says,* "the wages of going on"—there is our clearest intimation of immortality. Wordsworth found such intimations in fragments of his boyhood and youth. I find them rather in fragments of manhood and maturer life. Life impresses me less as a birth initially out of the divine into mortal being than as birth into the divine at each step of the onward way. I am always fearful that in such statements, and in such a discourse as this has been, I may seem to be speaking of exceptional things, of life that is only for the select and methods that are practicable only for the few and for men especially endowed with rare temperaments. Nothing could be further from my own belief. The artist-life of the soul is common to all, as soon as the soul begins to be and breathe, for it is in the world of art that the soul lives. The child with his picture-book and the dying Laureate reading the Shakespearian "Dirge" in the moonlight lead the same life and follow the same life and follow the same method. The boy with Homer, the sage with Plato—it is all one: each is finding his soul, and living in it. The herb of grace grows everywhere. I have never such firm conviction of the divine meaning that abides in our life as when I notice how the soul puts forth its flower in the humblest lives and in the most neglected places, what deeds of the spirit are simply done by the poor and almost as if they did not know it. It is true that human life is an animal existence, and the sphere of the useful is primary in it; the necessity for earning one's food, building one's lodging, caring for one's offspring, governs our days and years; but if I am in favor of social betterment and a more just economic order in the state to lessen the burden of common life and free it from an animal enslavement, it is not that I am thinking so much of what is called the welfare of the masses, in the sense of comfort. It is because I desire for them the leisure which would leave their souls room to grow. I should be sorry to see material comfort, which is an animal good, become the ideal of the state, as now seems the tendency. We are all proud of America, and look on our farms and workshops, the abundance of work, the harvest of universal gain dispersed through multitudes reclaimed from centuries of poverty—we see and proclaim the greatness of the good; but I am ill-content with the spiritual harvest, with the absence of that which has been the glory of great nations in art and letters, with the indifference to that principle of human brotherhood in devotion to which our fathers found greatness and which is most luminous in art and letters; our enormous success in the economical and mechanical sphere leaves me unreconciled to our failure to enter the artistic sphere as a nation.

There is always, however, as you know, "a remnant." It is true that the conditions of our time almost enforce upon our citizens, especially as they grow old and become absorbed in the work of the world, so abundant and compelling here—it is true that these

conditions almost enforce a narrowly practical life. But there is one period of life when this pressure is less felt, and when nature herself seems to open the gateways for this artist-life that I have been speaking of: it is youth. I hope some random sentence, perhaps, may have made it easier for some one of you who are young to believe in that world, to follow its beckoning lights and to lead its life.

*1913* 1914

# 1860 ~ *James Gibbons Huneker* ~ 1921

BY PROFESSION Huneker was a journalist, by the grace of Heaven a critic of the arts. His versatile and authentic enthusiasms have hardly been matched by any writer on the American scene. It is easy to say that Hungarian, English, Irish, and Pennsylvania German blood flowed in his veins, that he traveled extensively, and read widely and wisely, yet one is no nearer to an explanation of the cosmopolitanism which characterized his incredibly active mind. Such spirits remain forever in the realm of mystery, and must be contemplated from afar. To add that he was gifted with an extraordinarily absorbing mind merely adds to the bewilderment, for nature's capricious manner in giving and withholding her gifts is no less mysterious. In his genius rare capacity was happily blended with intellectual curiosity and inexhaustible energy.

He was born in Philadelphia, and reared in a home in which art, that is, music, painting, and the drama, were held in high regard. His mother was eager to have him enter the priesthood of the Roman Church, but his early interest in books and writers apparently put that out of the question. A mere glance at the authors he read as a boy makes one wonder why he should be subjected to a formal educational program. He had acquired a liberal education before he enrolled in Roth's Academy, where it was to be expected that he would not distinguish himself. For a few years he was an indifferent student of law, being far more interested in the course of reading he had mapped out for himself. The law was abandoned in favor of music. He studied in Paris, where incidentally his enthusiasm was aroused for impressionistic art, only to discover that his skill in music did not measure up to professional requirements. Nevertheless he taught piano in the National Conservatory of Music in New York for a number of years. He began his journalistic career on the staff of the *Musical Courier*. Later he was music critic of the *Morning Advertiser*, *Philadelphia Press*, *New York Times*, and *New York World*, and from 1902 to 1917 dramatic critic of the *New York Sun*. It was during this later period that he wrote extensively on literary and artistic subjects.

*Mezzotints in Modern Music*, his first published work, appeared in 1899. This was followed by *Chopin: the Man and His Music* (1900), regarded by some as his best work. *Iconoclasts: A Book of Dramatists* (1905), *Egoists: A Book of Supermen*

(1909), and *Ivory Apes and Peacocks* (1915), are examples of his purely literary criticism. *Steeplejack* (1920) is a spirited and opulent autobiography.

In theory and practice he belongs to the impressionists. His conception of the critic's function is aptly expressed in his own words: "Humbly to follow and register his emotions aroused by the masterpiece." This obviously leaves the way open for the weak critic to become a mere enthusiast and hero-worshipper, but to the credit of Huneker it must be said that he was seldom indiscriminate. On the one hand he maintained that criticism cannot be objective, and on the other, that the use of the personal pronoun "I" is not necessarily a sign of subjectivity. In so-called "constructive criticism" he had little faith, for he failed to see that it ever changed the currents of creative activity. The chief characteristics of his critical attitude are cosmopolitanism and vitality. Above everything else, the critic cannot afford to be narrow; he must know the best that has been thought in the past, as Arnold says he must. The artist may be exclusive, the critic must be inclusive. Once he has arrived at his convictions, he must give compelling utterance to them in a style that conveys the authority of a rich personality. He belongs to no school, and has no "message" to deliver. Contrary to the view of Irving Babbitt, he assumes the confusion of the arts, at the same time admitting the unsoundness of the assumption, and writes "of painting in terms of tone, of literature as if it were only form and color, and of life as if it is a promenade of flavors." He called himself a "Jack of the Seven Arts."

Huneker published the following volumes of critical essays and sketches: *Mezzotints in Modern Music* (1899); *Melomaniacs* (1902); *Overtones* (1904); *Iconoclasts* (1905); *Visionaries* (1905); *Egoists: A Book of Supermen* (1909); *Promenades of an Impressionist* (1910); *The Pathos of Distance* (1913); *Old Fogy, His Musical Opinions and Grotesques* (pub. anonymously, 1913); *Ivory Apes and Peacocks* (1915); *New Cosmopolis* (1915); *Unicorns* (1917); *Bedouins* (1920); *Variations* (1921). *Chopin* (1900) and *Franz Liszt* (1911) are biographical and critical studies. *Steeplejack* (1920) is an autobiography. *Painted Veils* (1920) is a collection of short stories. *Letters* (1922) and *Intimate Letters* (1924) have been edited by J. Huneker. For biographical and critical studies see B. DeCasseres, *James Gibbons Huneker* (1925); *DAB*, IX; H. L. Mencken, *A Book of Prefaces* (1917); H. L. Mencken, *Prejudices* (3rd ser., 1922); G. E. DeMille, *Literary Criticism in America* (1931); E. C. Marsh, "James Huneker: Individualist," *Forum*, June, 1909; L. Gilman, "The Playboy of Criticism," *North American Review*, April, 1921; B. Smith, "Huneker, Man of the Tribe," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Aug. 19, 1933.

## *From* UNICORNS

**Huneker possessed an insatiable curiosity and wrote on a great variety of books, men, and subjects. Since he was both impressionist and individualist, his essays reveal his own personality as well as throw light on the matter under discussion.**

### *The Great American Novel*

I

WHEN the supreme master of the historical novel modestly confessed that he could do the "big wow-wow strain," but to Jane Austen must be accorded the palm of exquisite crafts-

manship, there was then no question upon the critical map of the so-called "great American novel." Sir Walter Scott—to whom such authors of historical novels as Chateaubriand and his *Martyrs*, the *Salammbô* of Flaubert, and that well-nigh perfect fiction, *The History of Henry Esmond*, by Thackeray, yield precedence—might have achieved the impossible: the writing of a library, epitomising the social history of "These States"—as Walt Whitman would say. After Scott no name but Balzac's occurs to the memory; Balzac, who laid all France under his microscope (and France is all of a piece, not the checker-board of nationalities we call America). Even the mighty Tolstoy would have balked the job. And if these giants would have failed, what may be said of their successors? The idea of a great American novel is an "absolute," and nature abhors an absolute, despite the belief of some metaphysicians to the contrary. Yet the notion still obtains and inquests are held from time to time, and the opinions of contemporary novelists are taken toll of; as if each man and woman could give aught else but their own side of the matter, that side which is rightfully enough personal and provincial. The question is, after all, an affair for critics, and the great American novel will be in the plural; thousands perhaps. America is a chord of many nations, and to find the key-note we must play much and varied music.

While a novelist may be cosmopolitan at his own risk, a critic should be ever so. Consider the names of such widely contrasted critical temperaments as Sainte-Beuve, Taine, De Gourmont, Matthew Arnold, Brandes, Swinburne, Arthur Symons, Havelock Ellis, Henry James, Gosse, and W. C. Brownell; all cosmopolitan as well as national. The sublime tenuities of Henry James, like the black music of Michael Artzibashef, are questions largely temperamental. But the Russian is all Slavic, and no one would maintain that Mr. James shows a like ingrained nationalism. Nevertheless, he is American, though dealing only with a certain side of American life, the cosmopolitan phase. At his peril an American novelist sails eastward to describe the history of his countrymen abroad. With the critic we come upon a different territory. He may go gadding after new mud-gods (the newest god invented by man is always the greatest), for the time being, and return to his native heath mentally refreshed and broadened by his foreign outing. Not so the maker of fiction. Once he cuts loose his balloon he is in danger of not getting home again.

Mr. James is a splendid case for us; he began in America and landed in England, there to stay. Our other felicitous example of cosmopolitanism is Henry Blake Fuller, the author of *The Chevalier Pensieri Vani* and *The Châtelaine de la Trinité*, who was so widely read in the nineties. After those charming excursions into a rapidly vanishing Europe Mr. Fuller reversed the proceeding of James; he returned to America and composed two novels of high artistic significance, *The Cliff-Dwellers* and *With the Procession*, which, while they continued the realistic tradition of William Dean Howells, were also the forerunners of a new movement in America. It is not necessary to dwell now on *The Last Refuge*, or on that masterly book of spiritual parodies, *The Puppet-Booth*. But Mr. Fuller did not write the great American novel. Neither did Mr. Howells, nor Mr. James. Who has? No one. Is there such a thing? Without existing it might be described in Celtic fashion, this mythical work, as pure fiction. Let us admit for the sake of argument that if it were written by some unknown monster of genius, it would, like Lewis Carroll's *Snark*, turn into a Boojum.

Henry James has said that no one is compelled to admire any particular sort of writing; that the province of fiction is all life, and he has also wisely remarked that "when you have no taste you have no discretion, which is the conscience of taste," and may we add, when you have no discretion you perpetrate the shocking fiction with which America is deluged at this hour. We are told that the new writers have altered the old canons of bad taste, but "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." A liquorish sentimentality is the ever-threatening rock upon which the bark of young American novelists goes to pieces. (Pardon the mixed metaphor.) Be sentimental and you will succeed! We agree with Dostoievsky that in fiction, as well as in life,

there are no general principles, only special cases. But these cases, could they not be typical? Even if there are not types, only individuals. And are men and women so inthralled by the molasses of sentimentalism in life? Have the motion-pictures hopelessly deranged our critical values? I know that in America charity covers a multitude of mediocrities, nevertheless, I am loath to believe that all one reads in praise of wretched contemporary fiction is meant in earnest.

Well, chacun à ses dégoûts! The "thrilling" detective story, the romantic sonorities of the ice-cream-soda woman novelist?—with a triple-barrelled name, as Rudyard Kipling put it once upon a time—or that church of Heavenly Ennui, the historical novel—what a cemetery of ideas, all of them! An outsider must be puzzle-pated by this tumult of tasteless writing and worse observation. However, history in fiction may be a cavalcade of shining shadows, brilliant, lugubrious, dull, or joyful happenings; but where Thackeray succeeded multitudes have failed. Who shall bend the bow of that Ulysses? Native talent, subtle and robust, we possess in abundance; thus far it has cultivated with success its own parochial garden—which is as it should be. The United States of Fiction. America is Cosmopolis.

II

As to the Puritanism of our present novels one may dare to say in the teeth of youthful protestants that it is non-existent. The pendulum has swung too far the other way. And as literary artists are rare, the result has not been reassuring. Zola seems prudish after some experiments of the younger crowd. How badly they pull off the trick. How coarse and hard and heavy their touch. Most of these productions read like stupid translations from a dull French original. They are not immoral, only vulgar. As old Flaubert used to say: such books are false, nature is not like that. How keenly he saw through the humbug of "free love"—a romantic tradition of George Sand's epoch—may be noted in his comment that Emma Bovary found in adultery all the platitudes of marriage. Ah! that much-despised, stupid, venerable institution, marriage! How it has been flouted since the days of Rousseau—the father of false romanticism and that stupefying legend, the "equality" of mankind. (O! the beautiful word, "equality," invented for the delectation of rudimentary minds.) A century and more fiction has played with the theme of concubinage. If the Nacquet divorce bill had been introduced a decade or so before it was in France, what would have become of the theatre of Dumas fils, or later, of the misunderstood woman in Ibsen's plays? All such tribal taboos make or unmake literature.

So, merely as a suggestion to ambitious youngsters, let the novelist of the future in search of a novelty describe a happy marriage, children, a husband who doesn't drink or gamble, a wife who votes, yet loves her home, her family, and knows how to cook. What a realistic bombshell he would hurl into the camp of sentimental socialists and them that believe a wedding certificate is like Balzac's *La Peau de Chagrin*—a document daily shrinking in happiness. Absurdities make martyrs, but of all the absurd and ineffectual martyrdoms that of running off with another's wife is usually the crowning one. "I don't call this very popular pie," said the little boy in Richard Grant White's story; and the man in the case is usually the first to complain of his bargain in pastry.

However, categories are virtually an avowal of mental impuissance, and all marriages are not made in heaven. In the kingdom of morality there are many mansions. When too late you may sport with the shade—not in the shade—of Amaryllis, and perhaps elbow epigrams as a lean consolation. That is your own affair. Paul Verlaine has told us that "j'ai vécu énormément," though his living enormously did not prove that he was happy. Far from it. But he had at least the courage to relate his terrors. American novelists may agree with Dostoievsky that "everything in the world always ends in meanness"; or with Doctor Pangloss that all is for the best in the best of possible worlds. An affair of temperament. But don't mix the values. Don't confuse intellectual substances. Don't smear a fact with treacle and call it truth. Above all, don't preach. Impiety is an indiscretion, yet, don't be afraid to tell the truth. From Jane Austen

and Walter Scott, the parents of the modern English novel, to many modern instances, fiction has thrived best on naked truth. All the rest is sawdust, tripe-selling, and sentimentalism. Didn't Mr. Roundabout declare in one of his famous papers that "Figs are sweet, but fictions are sweeter"? In our land we can't get the latter sweet enough. Altruism, Brotherhood of Man Uplifting. These are the shibboleths of the "nouvelles couches socials." Prodigious!

III

J. K. Huysmans declared that in the land of books there are no schools; no idealism, realism, symbolism; only good writers and bad. Whistler said the same about painting and painters. Setting aside the technical viewpoint of such dicta, we fancy that our "best sellers" do not preoccupy themselves with the "mere writing" of their fictions, but they have developed a formidable faculty of preaching. Old-fashioned fiction that discloses personal charm, that delineates manners, or stirs the pulse of tragedy—not melodrama, is vanishing from publishers' lists. Are there not as many charming men and women perambulating the rind of the planet as there were in the days when Jane Austen, or Howells, or Turgenev wrote? We refuse to believe there are not; but there is little opportunity, in a word, no market, for the display of these qualities. The novel with a purpose, generally an unpleasant purpose, has usurped the rule of the novel of character and manners. Boanerges, not Balzac, now occupies the pasteboard pulpit of fiction.

I quoted Henry James to the effect that all life is the province of the novelist. Nevertheless, the still small garden wherein is reared the tender solitary flower does but ill represent the vaster, complicated forest of common humanity. The ivory tower of the cultivated egoist is not to be unduly admired; rather Zola's *La Terre* with its foul facts than a palace of morbid art. Withal, the didactic side of our fiction is overdone. I set it down to the humbug about the "masses" being opposed to the "classes." Truly a false antithesis. As if the French bourgeois were not a product of the revolution (poor bourgeois, always abused by the novelist). As if a poor man suddenly enriched didn't prove, as a rule, the hardest taskmaster to his own class. Consider the new-rich. What a study they afford the students of manners. A new generation has arisen. Its taste, intelligence, and culture; its canned manners, canned music—preferably pseudo-African—canned art, canned food, canned literature; its devotion to the mediocre —what a field for our aspiring young "secretaries to society."

Cheap prophylactics, political and religious —for religion is fast being butchered to make the sensational evangelists' holiday—are in vogue. They affect our fiction-mongers, who burn to avenge wrongs, write novels about the "downtrodden masses," and sermons on social evils—evils that have always existed, always will exist. Like the knife-grinder, story they have none to tell. Why write fiction, or what they are pleased to call fiction? Why not join the brave brigade of agitators and pamphleteers? The lay preachers are carrying off the sweepstakes. For them Mr. Howells is a superannuated writer. Would there were more like him in continence of speech, wholesomeness of judgment, nobility of ideals, and in the shrewd perception of character.

Fiction, too, is a fine art, though this patent fact has escaped the juvenile Paul Prys, who are mainly endeavoring to arouse class against mass. It's an old dodge, this equality theory, as old as Beelzebub, Lord of Flies. When all fruit fails, welcome envy and malicious slandering. When you have nothing else to write about, attack your neighbor, especially if he hath a much-coveted vineyard. Max Stirner, least understood of social philosophers, wrote, "Mind your own business," and he forged on the anvil of experience a mighty leading motive for the conduct of life. But our busy little penmen don't see in this golden motto a sufficient sentimental appeal. It doesn't flatter the "masses." Mr. Bryan a few years ago told us that we were all middle class. What is middle class? In Carlyle's day it was a "gigman"; in ours is it the owner of a "flivver"? But in the case of Snob vs. Mob, Snob always wins.

This twaddle about "democratic art" is the bane of our literature. There is only good art.

Whether it deals with such "democratic" subjects as L'Assommoir or Germinie Lacerteux, or such "aristocratic" themes as those of D'Annunzio and Paul Bourget, it is the art thereof that determines the product. I hold no brief for the sterile fiction that is enrolled under the banner of "Art for Art." I go so far as to believe that a novelist with a beautiful style often allows that style to get in the way of human nature. Stained-glass windows have their use, but they falsify the daylight. A decorative style may suit pseudo-mediaeval romances, but for twentieth-century realism it is sadly amiss. Nor is the arterio-sclerotic school of psychological analysis to be altogether commended. It has been well-nigh done to death by Stendhal, Meredith, James, and Bourget; and it is as cold as a star. Flaubert urged as an objection to writing a novel, proving something that the other fellow can prove precisely the opposite. In either case selection plays the rôle.

The chief argument against the novel "with a purpose"—as the jargon goes—is its lack of validity either as a document or as art. A novel may be anything, but it must not be polemical. Zola has been, still is, the evil genius of many talented chaps who "sling ink," not to make a genuine book, but to create a sensation. Such writers lack patience, art, and direction. They always keep one eye on the box-office. Indeed, the young men and women of the day, who are squandering upon paper their golden genius, painfully resemble in their productions the dime novels once published by the lamented Beadle or the lucubrations in the Saturday weeklies of long ago. But in those publications there was more virility. The heroes then were not well-dressed namby-pambies; the villains were villainous; the detectives detected real crimes, and were not weavers of metaphysical abstractions like your latter-day miracle-workers of an impossible Scotland Yard; and the girls were girls, neither neurasthenic, nor did they outgolf all creation. The "new" novelists still deal with the same raw material of melodrama. Their handling of love-episodes has much of the blaring-brass quality of old-fashioned Italian opera. They loudly twang the strings of sloppy sentiment, which evoke not music, but mush and moonshine. And these are our "motion-masters" to-day.

IV

There can be no objection to literature and life coming to grips. Letters should touch reality. Many a sturdy blow has been struck at abuses by penmen masquerading behind fiction. No need to summon examples. As for realism—I deny there are commonplace people. Only those writers are commonplace that believe in the phrase. It is one of the paradoxes of art that the commonplace folk of Thackeray, Flaubert, or Anthony Trollope who delight us between covers would in life greatly bore us. The ennui is artistically suggested, though not experienced by the reader. It is the magic of the novelist, his style and philosophy, that make his creations vital.

Dostoievsky says there are no old women—to be sure he puts the expression in the mouth of the sensualist Karamazov—and as a corollary I maintain that nothing is uninteresting if painted by a master hand, from carrots to Chopin. As for the historical novel, there is *Sentimental Education* as a model, if you desire something epical in scale and charged with the modern ironic spirit. A Flaubertian masterpiece, this book, with its daylight atmosphere; the inimitable sound, shape, gait, and varied prose rhythms of its sentences, its marvellous gallery of portraits executed in the Dutch manner of Hals and Vermeer, its nearness to its environment, and its fidelity to the pattern of life. It is a true "historical" novel, for it is real—to employ the admirable simile of Mr. Howells.

No need to transpose the tragic gloom of Artzibashef to America; we are an optimistic people, thanks to our air and sky, political conditions, and the immigration of sturdy peasant folk. Yet we, too, have our own peculiar gloom and misery and social problems to solve. We are far from being the "shadowland" of fiction, as a certain English critic said. When I praise the dissonantal art of Michael Artzibashef it is not with the idea that either his style or his pessimism should be aped. That way unoriginality lies. But I do contend that in the practice of his art, its sincerity, its profundity, he might be profit-

ably patterned after by the younger generation. Art should elevate as well as amuse. Must fiction always be silly and shallow? It need be neither sordid nor didactic.

William James put the matter in a nutshell when he wrote that "the whole atmosphere of present-day Utopian literature tastes mawkish and dish-watery to people who still keep a sense of life's more bitter flavors." And on this fundamentally sound note I must end my little sermon—for I find that I have been practising the very preaching against which I warned embryo novelists. But, then, isn't every critic a lay preacher?

## *Style and Rhythm in English Prose*

I

Stylists in prose are privileged persons. They may write nonsense and escape the castigation of prudish pedants; or, dealing with cryptic subjects, they can win the favor of the unthinking; witness, in the brain-carpentry of metaphysics, say, the verbal manoeuvres of three such lucid though disparate thinkers as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and William James. The names of these three writers are adduced as evidence that it is not necessary to be foggy of style even when dealing with abstract ideas. And Germany has long been the Nibelheim of philosophy; need we mention Hegel, whose commentators have made his meanings thrice-confounded? Style in literature is an antiseptic. It may embalm foolish flies in its amber, and it is a brevet of immortality—that is, as immortality goes; a brief thing, but a man's boast. When the shoeblack part of the affair is over and done with, the grammar, which was made for schoolmarms in male garb, and the shining rhetoric, what remains? The answer is eternal: Style cannot be taught. A good style is direct, plain, and simple. The writer's keyboard is that humble camel the dictionary. Style, being concerned with the process of movement, has nothing to do with results, says one authority. And an impertinent collusion on the part of the writer with his own individuality does not always constitute style; for individual opinion is virtually private opinion, notwithstanding its appearance in editions half a hundred long; Sainte-Beuve and De Quincey here occur to the memory. Men change; mankind never.

Too close imitation of the masters has its dangers for the novice. Apes and peacocks beset the way. Stevenson's prose style is highly synthesised and a mosaic of dead men's manner. He has no esoteric message beyond the expression of his sprite-like, whimsical personality, and this expression is, in the main, consummate. The lion in his pathway is the thinness of his intellectual processes; as in De Quincey's case, a master of the English language beyond compare, who in the region of pure speculation often goes sadly limping; his criticism of Kant proves it. But a musicmaker in our written speech, Robert Louis Stevenson is the supreme mockingbird in English literature. He overplayed the sedulous imitator. John Jay Chapman in a brilliant essay has traced the progress of this prose pilgrim, a professional stylist as well as a professional invalid. The American critic registers the variations in style and sensibility of the Scotsman, who did not always demonstrate in his writing the fundamental idea that the sole exponent of sensibility is analytic power. He drew freely on all his predecessors, and his personal charm exhibits the "glue of unanimity," as old Boëthius would say. Mr. Chapman quotes a passage supposedly from Sir Thomas Browne, beginning, "Time sadly overcometh all things," which is not to be found in his collected writings. Yet it is apropos because, like Stevenson's prose, it is from the crucible of an alchemist, though at the time Mr. Chapman quoted it was not known to be a clever Liverpudlian forgery. Since then, after considerable controversy, the paragraph in question has been shown as the fabrication of a Liverpool man of letters, whose name we have forgotten. But it suggests, does this false Browne, that good prose may be successfully simulated, though essentials be missing.

If style cannot be imparted, what, then, is the next best thing to do, after a close study of the masters? We should say, go in a chastened mood to the nearest newspaper office and apply for a humble position on its staff. Then one will come to grips with life,

the pacemaker of style. There is a lot of pompous advice emitted by the college professor—the Eternal Sophomore—about fleeing "journalese"; whereas it is in the daily press, whether New York, Paris, Vienna, or London, that one may find the soundest, most succinct prose, prose stripped of superfluous ornament, prose bare to the bone, and in fighting trim. But not elevated prose, "numerous" prose, as Quintilian hath it. For the supreme harmony of English prose we must go to the Bible (the Authorized, not the Revised, the latter manufactured by "the persons called revisers," as George Saintsbury bluntly describes them); to Shakespeare, Jeremy Taylor, Sir Thomas Browne, Walter Raleigh, Milton, De Quincey, Ruskin, Swinburne, Cardinal Newman, Pater, and Arthur Symons. And not forgetting the sweet intimacy of Charles Lamb, the sly charm of Max Beerbohm, or the harmonious and imaginative prose of W. H. Hudson, whose *Green Mansions* recalls the Chateaubriand of *Atala*, without its hateful note of morbid egotism.

Nor are the exponents of the grand manner, of an ornate style, to be patterned after. If elevation of theme is not present, then the peril of "fine writing" is scarcely to be avoided. Better follow such writers as Bacon, Bunyan, Hobbes, Swift in preference. Or the Augustan group, Dryden, Addison, Shaftesbury, and Temple. But Doctor Johnson, Burke and Gibbon are not models for the beginner, any more than the orotund prose of Bossuet, the musical utterance of Chateaubriand, or the dramatic prose of Hugo are safe models for French students. The rich continence of Flaubert, the stippled concision of Mérimée or the dry-sherry wit of Voltaire are surer guides. And the urbane ease and flowing rhythms of Thackeray are preferable to the baphometic verbal baptisms of Carlyle the Boanerges.

Yet what sweet temptations are to be found in the golden age of English prose, beginning with the evocation of Sir Walter Raleigh, "O eloquent, just, and mighty death; whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded"; surely not far beneath the magnificent prose of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah in the Authorized, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen unto thee," which is so mighty in rhythm that even those "dolefullest of creatures . . . utterly ignorant of English literature, the Revisers of 1870–85, hardly dared to touch at all," blandly remarks Professor Saintsbury. And to balance the famous "Now since these dead bones" of Sir Thomas, there is the tender coda to Sir William Temple's *Use of Poetry and Music*, "When all is done, human life is at the greatest and best." Those long, sweeping phrases, drumming with melody and cadences, like the humming of slow, uplifting walls of water tumbling on sullen strands, composed by the masters of that "other harmony of prose," are not mere "purple panels" but music made by immortals. (And I am convinced that if R. L. S. were alive and condemned to read this last sentence of mine, with its monotonous "run" of M's, he would condemn it.) Consider Milton and his majestic evocation: "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation arousing herself, . . . an eagle mewing her mighty youth . . ." and then fall down and worship, for we are in the holy of holies. Stevenson preferred the passage, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue," and who shall gainsay him? And Stevenson has written a most inspiring study of "The Technical Elements of Style in Literature," to be found in the Biographical Edition. In it he calls the Macaulay "an incomparable dauber" for running the letter "k" through a paragraph, and in it he sets forth in his chastened and classic style the ineluctable (Henry James revived this pretty word) perils of prose. Also its fascinations. "The prose writer," he says, "must keep his phrases large, rhythmical, comely, without letting them fall into the strictly metrical; harmonious in diversity, musical in the mouth, in texture woven into committed phrases and rounded periods." The stylist may vault airily into the saddle of logic, or in the delicate reticulation of his silver-fire paragraphs he may take, as an exemplar, John Henry Newman.

Stevenson is a perfectionist, and that way lies madness for all save a few valiant spirits. Sir Walter Raleigh, formerly Professor Raleigh, has written a crystal-clear study on *Style*, an essay of moment because in the

writing thereof he preaches what he practices. He confesses that "inanity dogs the footsteps of the classic tradition," and that "words must change to live, and a word once fixed becomes useless. . . . This is the error of the classical creed, to imagine that in a fleeting world, where the quickest eye can never see the same thing twice, and a deed once done can never be repeated, language alone should be capable of fixity and finality." The Flaubertian crux. Nevertheless, Flaubert could write of style in a fluid, impressionistic way: "A style . . . which will be as rhythmic as verse, as precise as the language of science, which will have undulations, modulations, like those of a violoncello, flashes of fire. A style which would enter into the idea like the stroke of a stiletto, . . . all the combinations of prosody have been made, those of prose are still to make." Flaubert was not obsessed by the "unique word," but by a style which is merged in the idea; as the melodic and harmonic phrases of Richard Wagner were born simultaneously and clothed in the appropriate orchestral colors. Perhaps the cadenced prose of Pater, with its multiple resonance and languorous rhythms, may be a sort of sublimated chess-game, as Saintsbury more than hints; yet, what a fair field for his carved ivory pieces. His undulating and iridescent periods are like the solemn sound of organ music accompanied from afar by a symphony of flutes, peacocks, and pomegranates.

No wonder Stevenson pronounces French prose a finer art than English, though admitting that in the richer, denser harmonies of English its native writers find at first hand the very quality so eagerly sought for by Flaubert. French is a logical language, one of distinction and clarity, and one in which metre never intrudes, but it lacks the overtones of our mother speech. The English shares in common with the Russian the art of awakening feelings and thoughts by the resonance of words, which seem to be written not in length but in depth, and then are lost in faint reverberations.

But artistic prose, chiselled prose, is a negligible quantity nowadays. It was all very well in the more spacious times of linkboys, sedan-chairs, and bag-wigs, but with the typist cutting one's phrases into angular fragments, with the soil at our heels saturated in slang, what hope is there for assonance, variety in rhythm, and the sonorous cadences of prose? Write "naturally," we are told. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as a "natural style." Even Newman, master of the pellucid, effortless phrase, confesses to laborious days of correction, and he wrote with the idea uppermost and with no thought of style, so-called. Abraham Lincoln nourished his lonely soul on the Bible and Bunyan. He is a writer of simple yet elevated prose, without parallel in our native literature other than Emerson. Hawthorne and Poe wrote in the key of classic prose; while Walt Whitman's jigsaw jingle is the ultimate deliquescence of prose form. For practical everyday needs the eighteenth-century prose men are the best to follow. But the Bible is the Golden Book of English prose.

Quintilian wrote: "We cannot even speak except in longs and shorts, and longs and shorts are the material of feet." All personal prose should go to a tune of its own. The curious are recommended to the monumental work of George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prose Rhythm*. Prose may be anything else, but it must not be bad blank verse. "Numerous" as to rhythms, but with no hint of balance, in the metrical sense; without rhythm it is not prose at all. Professor Oliver Elton has set this forth with admirable lucidity in his *English Prose Numbers*. He also analyzes a page from *The Golden Bowl* of Henry James, discovering new beauties of phrasing and subtle cadences in the prose of this writer. Professor Saintsbury's study is the authoritative one among its fellows. Walter Pater's essay on *Style* is honeycombed with involutions and preciosity. When *On the Art of Writing*, by Arthur Quiller-Couch, appeared we followed Hazlitt's advice and reread an old book, *English Composition*, by Professor Barrett Wendell, and with more pleasure and profit than followed the later perusal of the Cornish novelist's lectures.

He warns against jargon. But the seven arts, science, society, medicine, politics, religion, have each their jargon. Not music-criticism, not baseball, are so painfully "jargonised" as metaphysics. Jargon is the fly in the ointment

of every critic. Even the worthy fellow of Jesus College, Sir Arthur himself, does not altogether escape it. On page 23 of his *Inaugural Address* he speaks of "loose, discinct talk." "Discinct" is good, but "ungirded" is better because it is not obsolete, and it is more sonorous and Saxon. On page 42 we stumble against "suppeditate" and gnash our teeth. After finishing the book the timid neophyte will be apt to lay the flattering unction to his soul that he is a born stylist, like the surprised Mr. Jourdain, who spoke prose so many years without knowing it.

II

Fancy a tall, imposing man, in the middle years, standing before a music-desk, humming and beating time. His grey, lion-like mane is in disorder; his large eyes, pools of blue light, gleam with excitement. The color of his face is reddish, the blood mounts easily to his head, a prophetic sign of his death by apoplexy. It is Gustave Flaubert in his study at Croisset, a few miles down the Seine below Rouen. He is chanting a newly composed piece of prose, marking time as if he were conducting a music-drama. "What are you doing there?" asked his friend. "Scanning these words, because they don't sound well," he replied. Flaubert would spend a day over a sentence and practically tested it by declaiming—spouting, he called it—for as he wisely remarked: "A well-constructed phrase adapts itself to the rhythm of respiration." His delight in prose assonance and cadence manifested itself in his predilection for such a phrase as Chateaubriand's in *Atala*: "Elle répand dans le bois ce grand secret de mélancholie qu'elle à raconter aux vieux chênes et aux rivages antiques des mers." There's a "mouther" for you! as George Saintsbury would say. But in this age of uninflected speech the louder the click of the type-machine the better the style.

If modern prose were written for the ear as well as the eye, chanted and scanned, it might prove more sonorous and rhythmic than it does, and more artistic. Curiously enough, Professor Saintsbury in his magisterial work writes: "I rather doubt myself whether the very finest and most elaborate prose is not better read than heard." That is, it must be overheard by the inner ear, which statement rather puts a damper on Flaubert's contention. What saith the worthy Aristotle? "All things are determined by number." Prose should have rhythm but should not be metrical ("Rhetoric"); which Robert Louis Stevenson thus paraphrased in his "Technical Elements of Style in Literature": "The rule of scansion in verse is to suggest no measure but the one in hand; in prose to suggest no measure at all. Prose must be rhythmical, and it may be as much so as you will; but it must not be metrical. It may be anything, but it must not be verse." (Probably if he had read the amorphous stuff by courtesy named "vers libre" Stevenson would have written a stronger word than "anything.") Or, again, Saintsbury: "The Rhythm of Prose, like the Metre of Verse, can, in English as well as the classical languages, be best expressed by the foot system, or system of mathematical combinations of 'long' and 'short' syllables." A fig for your "ancient trumpery of skeleton scanning," cries Professor William Morrison Patterson in his *The Rhythm of Prose:* "Amphibrachs, bacchics, antibacchics, antipasts, molossi, dochmiacs, and proceleusmatics, which heretofore have been brandished before our eyes, as if they were anything more than, as stress-patterns, merely half the story."

The Columbia University professor would be far more likely to indorse the axiom of Remy de Gourmont that style is physiological, which Flaubert well knew. And now, having deployed my heaviest artillery of quotation, let me begin by saying that Professor Patterson's study is a remarkable contribution to the critical literature of a much-debated theme, *Prose Rhythms*, and this without minifying the admirable labors of Saintsbury, Shelley, Oliver Elton, Ker, or Professor Bouton of the New York University. One of the reasons that interest the present writer in the monograph is its strong musical bias. Professor Patterson is evidently the possessor of a highly organized musical ear, even if he be not a practical musician. He no doubt agrees with Disraeli's dictum that the key to literature is music; *i.e.*, number, cadence, rhythm. I recall Miss Dabney's study, *The Musical Basis of Verse*, dealing as it does with a certain side

of the subject. But the Patterson procedure is different. It is less "literary" than psychological, less psychological than physiological. He experiments with the Remy de Gourmont idea, though he probably never saw it in print. "Rhythm," he writes in his preface, "is thus regarded as first of all in experience, established, as a rule, by motor performance of however rudimentary a nature." Here is the man of science at work.

He speaks of the "lost art of rhythm," adduces syncopation so easily mastered by those born "timers," the Indians and Negroes, pertinently remarks that "no two individuals ever react exactly alike. The term 'type' is in many ways a highly misleading fiction." *Prose Rhythm*, he continues, "must be classed as subjective organization of irregular, virtually haphazard arrangement of sounds. . . . The ultimate basis of all rhythmic experience, however, is the same. To be clear-cut it must rest upon a series of definite temporal units."

Professor Patterson experimented in two rooms: "one the regular sound-room belonging to the department of psychology at Columbia; the other an expressly constructed, fairly sound-proof cabinet built into one end of an underground room belonging to the department of physics."

It has a slightly sinister ring, all this, has it not? Padded cells and aural finger-prints!—to make an Irish bull. Max Nordau called John Ruskin a Torquemada of Aesthetics. Professor Patterson might be styled a Tonal Torturer. But the experimentings were painless. "The first object," he informs us, "was to find out, as far as possible, how a group of twelve people, ten men and two women, differed with respect to the complex of mental processes usually designated roughly as the 'sense of rhythm.' After they had been ranked according to the nature of their reactions and achievements in various tests, one of the group, who had evinced a measure of ease in rapid tapping, was chosen to make drum-beat records on a phonograph. A sentence from Walter Pater, a sentence from Henry James, a passage of music from Chopin, a haphazard arrangement of words and a haphazard arrangement of musical notes, were tapped upon a small metal drum and the beats recorded by the phonograph. The words were tapped according to the syllables as felt, a tap for each syllable. 'Hours,' for instance, was given two beats. The notes were tapped according to their designated time-values. Observer No. 1, having had long training as a musician, found no technical difficulty in the task. The remaining eleven observers, without being told the source of the records, heard the five series of drum-beats and passed judgment upon them. The most significant judgment made was that of Observer No. 7, who declared that all five records gave him the impression of regular musical themes. A larger number of the observers, especially on the first hearing, found all of the records, including even the passage from Chopin, elusive and more or less irregular. An attempt was then made, by means of accompanying schedules, to find out how much or how little organization each observer could be brought to feel in the beats corresponding to the passage from Walter Pater and the passage of haphazard musical notes." All the data are carefully set down in the Appendices.

The sentence by Walter Pater was chosen from his essay on Leonardo da Vinci, in *The Renaissance*. "It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn, and hours selected from a thousand with a miracle of finesse"; subtly rhythmic, too much so for any but trained ears. Some simpler excerpt from Sir Thomas Browne or John Ruskin might have been selected, such as, in the former case, the coda from the *Urn Burial*, or even that chest-expanding phrase, "To subsist in bones, and to be pyramidally extant is a fallacy in duration." Or, best of all, because of its tremendous intensity, the passage from Saint Paul: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The drum-beat is felt throughout, but the pulsation is not marked as in the pages of Macaulay; nor has it the monotony found in Lohengrin on account of the prevalence of common or four-four time, and also the coincidence of the metrical and rhythmic beat, a

coincidence that Chopin usually avoids, and all latter-day composers flee as dulness-breeding. The base-rhythm of English prose is, so Professor Saintsbury writes, "the paeon, or four-syllabled foot," and, he could have added, provocative of ennui for delicate ears. Variety in rhythms is the ideal. Our author appositely quotes from Puffer's *Studies in Symmetry:* "A picture composed in substitutional symmetry is more rich in its suggestions of motor impulse, and thus more beautiful, than an example of geometrical symmetry." And this applies to prose and music as well as to pictures. It is the very kernel of the art of Paul Cézanne; rhythmic irregularity, syncopation, asymmetry.

De Quincey's *Our Lady of Darkness* and a sentence from Cardinal Newman's *Grammar of Assent* were included among the tests. Also one from Henry James; in the preface to *The Golden Bowl:* "For I have nowhere found vindicated the queer thesis that the right values of interesting prose depend all on withheld tests." If, according to lovers of the old rhetoric, of the resounding "purple panels" of Bossuet, Chateaubriand, Flaubert, Raleigh, Browne, and Ruskin, the cooler prose of Mr. James cannot be "spouted"; nevertheless, the interior rhythmic life is finer and more complex. The Chopin nocturne played was the familiar one in G minor, Opus 37, No. 1, simple in rhythmic structure though less interesting than its sister nocturne in G, Opus 37, No. 2 (the first is in common, the second in six-eighths time). Professor Patterson knows Riemann and his "agogic accent," which, according to that editor of the Chopin Études, is a slight expansion in the value of the note; not a dynamic accent.

In his treatment of vers libre our author is not too sympathetic. He thinks that "in their productions"—free-verse poets—"the disquieting experience of attempting to dance up the side of a mountain" is suggested. "For those who find this task exhilarating vers libre, as a form, is without rival. With regard to subtle cadence, however, which has been claimed as the chief distinction of the new poets, it is still a question as to how far they have surpassed the refinement of balance that quickens the prose of Walter Pater." They have not, despite the verbal ingenuity, banished the impression of dislocation, of the epileptic. In French, in the hands of Rimbaud, Verlaine, Verhaeren, Gustave Kahn, Régnier, Stuart Merrill, Vielé Griffin, and Jules Laforgue, the rhythms are supple, the assonances grateful to the ear, the irregular patterns not offensive to the eye; in a word, a form, or a deviation from form, more happily adapted to the genius of the French or Italian language than to the English. Most of our native vers libre sounds like a ton of coal falling through too small an aperture in the sidewalk. However, "it's not the gilt that makes a god, but the worshipper."

For musicians and writers the interesting if abstruse study of Professor Patterson will prove valuable. After reading of the results in his laboratory at Columbia we feel that we have been, all of us, talking rhythmic prose our life long.

1917

## 1864 ~ *Paul Elmer More* ~ 1937

MORE was a native of St. Louis, the seventh in a family of eight children born to Enoch Anson and Katharine Elmer More, both of English descent. His great-grandfather was a soldier in the Revolution, and his father rose to the rank of Brigadier General during the Civil War. The Elmer family, also written Aylmer, has been traced back to early eleventh-century records in England, where it occurs as Aelmar. The American progenitor came to Massachusetts in 1632 and moved to

Connecticut to take part in the founding of Hartford. One of his descendants who settled in New Jersey became the ancestor of More's mother, whose father fought in the War of 1812, later to become Attorney General and Justice of the Supreme Court of the state. She was an omnivorous reader, and brought up her children to the love of books—a fact which may account for the eminence of four of her sons. The father was a business man, interested in religion, and secretly ambitious to become an architect.

More received his A.B. degree from Washington University. He taught in Smith Academy, and wrote a thesis which won his M.A. in 1892. Impelled by serious religious problems, he entered Harvard to study Sanskrit and comparative religion. Here he met Irving Babbitt, who became his lifelong friend. After teaching at Harvard and at Bryn Mawr, still unable to bring himself into harmonious adjustment to the "life of men," he retired to Shelburne, New Hampshire, where he hoped to think things through in solitude. He read endlessly, contemplated life from afar, as it were, and began writing the critiques later to become known as the *Shelburne Essays*. On his return to "civilization" he became literary editor of the *Independent*, served in a similar capacity on the *Evening Post*, and from 1909 to 1914 was editor-in-chief of the *Nation*. After his retirement from active editorial work he lived in Princeton, where he was for a term a lecturer in the department of classics.

More's best-known work is the *Shelburne Essays*, numbering eleven volumes, a series of critical studies covering a large part of the world's literature, including Oriental, Greek, English, and American. Undoubtedly it is the most significant body of critical work produced in America, and in the estimation of some authorities ranks as one of the great contributions to the critical literature of the world. He also published a volume on *Platonism* (1917) as well as several studies under the general title of "The Greek Tradition," in which he investigates Greek religion and its relations to the early Christian Church. He also projected the *New Shelburne Essays*, of which three volumes were issued.

Practically considered, More's problem as a young man resolved itself into the search for a standard. The multiplicity of human experiences, apparently unrelated, ununified, and chaotic, the fluxlike nature of life and its constantly changing outward complexion, which this chaotic condition makes inevitable, show nothing on the surface that might reveal a clue to a possible unifying principle which might give them meaning. The "life of men," seemingly undirected and pointing to no definite end, afforded him nothing with which to reduce the external changeableness into some sense of order. He began his lifelong course of reading which took him through vast areas of the world's literature, hoping to find in it, as the expression of mankind at its best, the clue to the mystery. What he was really looking for was a common denominator of experience, a quality or principle

which maintains a reasonable constancy through all the welter of fluxlike changes, and which when discovered and seen in its proper perspective will show life, as recorded in the larger aspects of history, to be a continuous unfolding according to this quality or principle. This constant stabilizing factor then becomes a criterion, a standard for further judgment.

To More, therefore, criticism became a process of searching inquiry by a mind which must be severely skeptical. Its object and purpose is to find truth without bias or prejudice. Its method is to distill the constant from the variable.

It is not enough to say merely that in Plato and the Greek tradition More found the elusive secret. He accepted the principle of dualism, according to which there is in every individual a lower and a higher self, one leading downward, the other upward in the scale of values. As in the case of Babbitt the problem involves the conception of the essential nature of man. Life for the individual, and through the individual for the race, is a perpetual struggle between these two tendencies. He is constantly brought face to face with alternatives among which he must choose, and in so doing is forced to exercise the "inner check" or control as well as his positive will. In the long line of choices that man has made is to be found the standard by which he is to be measured. That is, he must be held up to himself at his best, rather than become the victim of ephemeral conditions, taste, and ideas, changeable and capricious as the times. In seeking a solution of the problem, More was deeply interested in religion (the supernatural), a point on which he nearly broke with Babbitt.

It is too early to predict what effect criticism such as More's will have upon the literature of the future. It is almost equally difficult to appraise his work merely as criticism. His opponents, who fail to accept his humanistic pronouncements, charge that his emphasis upon morals invalidates to a large degree his critical judgment; he replies that wherever in the past literature has shown lasting and vital qualities there has been a strong infusion of religion. It is certain, however, that as an intellectual achievement, his works, written in a style noted for its lucidity and beauty, will remain a permanent contribution to the thought of his time.

More's critical and philosophical works are *Shelburne Essays* (11 vols., 1904–21); *Nietzsche* (1912); *Platonism* (1917); *The Religion of Plato* (1921); *Hellenistic Philosophies* (1923); *The Christ of the New Testament* (1924); *Christ the Word* (1927); *New Shelburne Essays* (3 vols., 1928–1934); *The Catholic Faith* (1931). He also published *Helena and Occasional Poems* (1894); *The Jessica Letters*, with C. N. Harris (1904), and *Benjamin Franklin* (1900). R. Schafer, *Paul Elmer More and American Criticism* (1935), is a critical and biographical study. For further study see L. J. A. Mercier, *The Challenge of Humanism* (1933); L. J. A. Mercier, "The Challenge of Paul Elmer More," *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, June, 1926; B. Bandler II, "Paul Elmer More and the External World," in *The Critique of Humanism*, ed. C. H. Grattan (1930); G. R. Elliott, "Mr. More and the Gentle Reader," *Bookman*, April, 1929; S. P. Sherman, *Americans* (1922); E. Wilson, "Notes on Babbitt and More," in *The Critique of Humanism*, ed. C. H. Grattan

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## CRITICISM

This essay is not merely a statement of More's personal position regarding the function of literary criticism. In a larger sense it sets forth many of the principles which underlie the work of the humanistic critics, among whom More and Babbitt were not only prominent, but were indeed the elder spokesmen. In view of the recent controversy over the humanist position, these essays possess more than passing significance. "Criticism" appeared in *Shelburne Essays, Seventh Series*.

OF all Matthew Arnold's books I sometimes think that not the least precious is the slender posthumous volume published by his daughter in 1902. It was long his habit to carry in his pocket a narrow diary in which he jotted down engagements for the day, mingled with short quotations from the books he was reading to serve as amulets, so to speak, against the importunities of business. The quotations for a selection of years printed by Mrs. Wodehouse from these *Notebooks* form what might be called the critic's breviary. Here, if anywhere, we seem to feel the very beating of the critic's heart, and to catch the inner voice of recollection and duty, corresponding to the poet's "gleam," which he followed so devoutly in his life. I do not know to what work in English to liken it unless it be the notebooks containing quotations from Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus written down by the author of the *Characteristics* with his comments, which Dr. Rand edited in 1900 as the *Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*.

Nor is it mere chance that Matthew Arnold and Shaftesbury should have left for posthumous publication these private memoranda, which with all their differences of form and substance are in their final impression upon the mind so curiously alike; for the two men themselves, in their outlook on life and in their relation to their respective ages, had much in common, and there is perhaps no better way to reach a dispassionate understanding of the virtue and limitations of criticism than by comparing Arnold with his great forerunner of the early eighteenth century. Both men were essentially critical in their mental habit, and both magnified the critic's office. "I take upon me," said Shaftesbury, "absolutely to condemn the fashionable and prevailing custom of inveighing against critics as the common enemies, the pests and incendiaries of the commonwealth of Wit and Letters. I assert, on the contrary, that they are the props and pillars of this building; and that without the encouragement and propagation of such a race, we should remain as Gothic architects as ever." And the purpose of Shaftesbury in upholding the function of criticism was much the same as Arnold's; he too was offended by the Gothic and barbarous self-complacency of his contemporaries—the Philistines, as he might have called them. As Arnold protested that the work of the English romantic revival was doomed "to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs"; that Byron was "empty of matter," Shelley "incoherent," and Wordsworth "wanting in completeness and variety," just because they lacked critical background; so his predecessor censured the literature of his day. "An English author would be all genius," says Shaftesbury. "He would reap the fruits of art, but without study, pains, or application. He thinks it necessary, indeed (lest his learning should be called in question), to show the world that he errs knowingly against the rules of art."

Against this presumption of genius on the

one hand and the self-complacency of Philistinism on the other, both critics took up the same weapons—the barbs of ridicule and irony. With Shaftesbury this method was an avowed creed. His essays are no more than sermons on two texts: that of Horace, "*Ridiculum acri Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res*—a jest often decides weighty matters better and more forcibly than can asperity"; and the saying of Gorgias Leontinus, which he misinterprets and expands for his own purpose, "That humor was the only test of gravity; and gravity of humor. For a subject which would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear a serious examination was certainly false wit." With this touchstone of truth he proceeds to test the one-sided enthusiasms of his day, the smirking conceits, the pedantic pretensions, and the narrow dogmatisms whether of science or religion. "There is a great difference," he says, "between seeking how to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything what justly may be laughed at. For nothing is ridiculous except what is deformed; nor is anything proof against raillery except what is handsome and just." The comic spirit is thus a kind of purgation of taste, and a way or return to nature. How deliberately Matthew Arnold used this weapon of ridicule in the service of sweet reasonableness, which is only his modern phrase, a little sentimentalised, for eighteenth-century nature; how magisterially he raised the laugh against his enemies, the bishops and the great austere toilers of the press and the mighty men of political Philistia, no one needs be told who has enjoyed the elaborate irony of *Culture and Anarchy* or of *Friendship's Garland*.

Sweet reasonableness, or "sweetness and light," to use the phrase as Arnold took it from Swift's *Battle of the Books*, is, I have suggested, little more than the modern turn for the deist's nature and reason; how nearly the two ideals approach each other you may see by comparing the "good-breeding," which is the aim of Shaftesbury's philosophy, with the "culture" which is the end of Arnold's criticism. "To philosophize," said the former, "in a just signification, is but to carry good-breeding a step higher. For the accomplishment of breeding is, to learn whatever is decent in company or beautiful in arts, and the sum of philosophy is, to learn what is just in society and beautiful in Nature and the order of the world." I have wondered sometimes whether Matthew Arnold had these words in mind when he formulated his definition of culture; whether his famous command is really but another echo from the ancient quarrel of the deists. The whole scope of the essay on *Sweetness and Light* is, he avows, "to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world [Shaftesbury, too, like Arnold, is insistent on the *exemplaria Graeca*]; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits."

There is, I trust, something more than a pedantic curiosity in such a parallel, which might yet be much prolonged, between the author of *Culture and Anarchy* and the author of the *Characteristics*. It proves, if proof be necessary, more clearly than would any amount of direct exposition, that Matthew Arnold's method of criticism was not an isolated product of the nineteenth century, but that he belongs to one of the great families of human intelligence, which begins with Cicero, the father of them all, and passes through Erasmus and Boileau and Shaftesbury and Sainte-Beuve. These are the exemplars—not complete individually, I need not say—of what may be called the critical spirit: discriminators between the false and the true, the deformed and the normal; preachers of harmony and proportion and order, prophets of the religion of taste. If they deal much with the criticism of literature, this is because in literature more manifestly than anywhere else life displays its infinitely varied motives and results; and their practice is always to render literature itself more consciously a criticism of life. The past is the field out of which they draw their examples of what is in conformity with nature and of what departs from that norm. In that field they balance and weigh and measure; they are by intellect

hesitators, but at heart very much in earnest. They are sometimes contrasted to their detriment with the so-called creative writers, yet they themselves stood each among the first writers of his day, and it is not plain that, for instance, Tennyson, in any true estimation added more to the intellectual life of the world than Matthew Arnold, or Lucretius than Cicero, though their method and aim may have been different. The more significant comparison at least is not with the so-called creative writers, but with the great fulminators of new creeds—between Matthew Arnold and the Carlyles and Ruskins and Huxleys of his day; between Shaftesbury and, let us say, Rousseau; Boileau and Descartes; Erasmus and Luther; Cicero and St. Paul. Such a contrast might seem at first to lie as much in efficiency as in quality. In the very nature of things the man who seizes on one deep-reaching idea, whether newly found or rediscovered, and with singlehearted fervor forces it upon the world, might appear to have the advantage in power over the man of critical temper, who weighs and refines; who is for ever checking the enthusiasm of the living by the authority of the dead; and whose doctrine, even though in the end he may assert it with sovereign contempt of doubters, is still the command to follow the well-tried path of common-sense. Better the half-truth that makes for action and jostles the world out of its ruts, men cry, than such a timid search for the whole truth as paralyzes the will, and may after all prove only an exchange of depth for breadth. That might appear to be the plain lesson of history; yet I am not so sure. Is there not a possibility that in our estimate of these powers we are a little betrayed by the tumult of the times, just as we are prone in other things to mistake bustle for movement? The critical spirit, as it has been exercised, may have its limitations and may justly be open to censure, but I doubt if its true reproach will turn out in the end to be a lack of efficiency in comparison with the more assertive force of the reformers. I am inclined to believe, for instance, that the balancing spirit of Erasmus is really more at work among us today than that of the dogmatic and reforming Luther; that Cicero's philosophy, though they would gape to hear it said, is really more in the hearts of the men you will meet in the street than is the theology of St. Paul. This may be in part because the representatives of the critical spirit, by their very lack of warping originality and by their endeavor to separate the true from the false, the complete from the one-sided, stand with the great conservative forces of human nature, having their fame certified by the things that endure amid all the betrayals of time and fashion. I know the deductions that must be made from that kind of fame. Cicero, it will be said, when in his *De Finibus* he brought together the various experiences of antiquity in regard to the meaning and values of life, weighing the claims of Stoic and Epicurean and the others, may have stood for something more comprehensive and balanced than did St. Paul with his new dogma of justification by faith. Yet St. Paul's theory of justification by faith, though it may be losing for us its cogent veracity, was the immediate driving force of history and a power that remade the world, while Cicero's nice discussions remained a luxury of the learned few. In one sense that is indisputably true; and yet, imprudent as it may sound, I question whether it is the whole truth. When I consider the part played by Stoic and Epicurean philosophies in the Renaissance and the transcendent influence of Cicero's dissertations upon the men of that day; when I consider that the impulse of Deism in the eighteenth century, as seen in Shaftesbury and his successors, was at bottom little more than a revival of this same Stoicism, as it had been subdued to the emotions by Cicero and mixed with Epicureanism; that Shaftesbury was, in fact, despite his worship of Epictetus, almost a pure Ciceronian; and when I consider that out of Deism sprang the dominant religion and social philosophy of our present world—when I consider these and many other facts, I question whether Cicero, while he certainly represents what is more enduring, has not been also, actually and personally, as dynamic an influence in civilization as St. Paul, though the noise, no doubt, and the tumult have been around the latter. We are still too near Matthew Arnold's day to determine the resultant of all the forces

then at work, yet it would not be very rash even now to assert that his critical essays will be found in the end a broader and more lasting, as they are a saner, influence than the exaggerated aestheticism of Ruskin or the shrill prophesying of Carlyle or the scientific dogmatism of Huxley. No, if there is any deduction to be made to the value of criticism, it is not on the side of efficiency. It is well to remember Matthew Arnold's own words. "Violent indignation with the past," he says, "abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future—these are the ways of Jacobinism. . . . Culture [it is his word here for criticism] is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like."

Perhaps it is a secret inkling of this vanity of the critic in its widest bearing, besides a natural antagonism of temper, that leads so many to carp against him and his trade. The inveterate hostility of "creative" writers to criticism is well known, and has been neatly summed up by E. S. Dallas in *The Gay Science:*

> Ben Jonson spoke of critics as tinkers, who make more faults than they mend; Samuel Butler, as the fierce inquisitors of wit, and as butchers who have no right to sit on a jury; Sir Richard Steele, as of all mortals the silliest; Swift, as dogs, rats, wasps, or, at best, drones of the learned world; Shenstone, as asses, which by gnawing vines first taught the advantage of pruning them; Burns, as cutthroat bandits in the path of fame; Walter Scott, humorously reflecting the general sentiment, as caterpillars.
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> The droll thing about it is that every one of these critics of criticism was so ready to act himself as butcher or ass or caterpillar. It is a common trick of the guild. For a modern instance, turn to Mr. Horace Traubel, the shirt-sleeved Boswell of Walt Whitman, and you will find pages of conversation recorded in which the seer of Camden belabors the professors of criticism and in almost the same breath exercises the art upon his brother poets with delightful frankness and at times rare penetration. But this ancient feud of the gentlemen of the pen is a special form, due in part to special causes, of the hostility that so often manifests itself against the critical spirit in general. The man of system and the man of unhesitating action are likely to feel something like contempt for the mind that balances and waits. The imperial Mommsen felt this contempt, and showed it, in his treatment of Cicero; it is rife even yet in the current tone of condescension toward Erasmus as compared with Luther, to which Matthew Arnold replied by calling Luther "a Philistine of genius"; Warburton showed it in his sneers at Shaftesbury as the man of taste, and Cardinal Newman has, with splendid politeness, echoed them; Matthew Arnold was equally feared and despised in his own lifetime, and it is an odd fact that you will today scarcely pick up a piece of third-rate criticism (in which there is likely to be anything at work rather than the critical spirit), but you will come upon some gratuitous fling against him. Most bitter of all was Henry Sidgwick's arraignment of "The Prophet of Culture" in *Macmillan's Magazine* for August, 1867. There if anywhere the critical spirit was stabbed with its own weapon. You will recall the image of the pouncet-box:
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> Mr. Arnold may say that he does not discourage action, but only asks for delay, in order that we may act with sufficient knowledge. This is the eternal excuse of indolence—insufficient knowledge. . . . One cannot think on this subject without recalling the great man who recommended to philosophy a position very similar to that now claimed for culture. I wish to give Mr. Arnold the full benefit of his resemblance to Plato. But when we look closer at the two positions, the dissimilarity comes out: they have a very different effect on our feelings and imagination; and I confess I feel more sympathy with the melancholy philosopher looking out with hopeless placidity "from beneath the shelter of some wall" than with a cheerful modern liberal, tempered by renouncement, shuddering aloof from the rank exhalations of vulgar enthusiasm, and holding up the pouncet-box of culture betwixt the wind and his nobility.

Such an onslaught on our prophet of culture as a languid and shrinking dilettante was fair enough in the heat of controversy and was

at least justified by its own art, if not by certain affectations of its victim's style; but I protest against accepting it as essentially true. Any one might perceive that Matthew Arnold had beneath the irony and suavity of his manner a temper of determined seriousness; that, like the bride of Giacopone di Todi in his sonnet, his Muse might be young, gay, and radiant outside, but had

a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.

It would be interesting in this respect to continue the comparison of Arnold and Shaftesbury, and to show how near together they stood in their attitude toward nature and society and in their religion, and how profound was their own enthusiasm beneath their hostility to the sham or undisciplined enthusiasms of the day. Lord Shaftesbury might say that we have "in the main a witty and good-humored religion," as Matthew Arnold might ridicule the sourness of the Noncomformists and the bleakness of the reformers in whose assemblies any child of nature, if he shall stray thither, is smitten with lamentation and mourning and woe; but there was solemnity enough, however we may rate their insight, in their own search for the God that sits concealed at the center. Shaftesbury's creed became the formula of the deists. "Still ardent in its pursuit," the soul, he says, "rests not here, nor satisfies itself with the beauty of a part, but, extending further its communicative bounty, seeks the good of all, and affects the interest and prosperity of the whole. True to its native world and higher country, 'tis here it seeks order and perfection; wishing the best, and hoping still to find a just and wise administration. And since all hope of this were vain and idle if no universal mind presided; since without such a supreme intelligence and providential care the distracted universe must be condemned to suffer infinite calamities; 'tis here the generous mind labors to discover that healing cause by which the interest of the whole is securely established, the beauty of things and the universal order happily sustained." Matthew Arnold condensed that rhetoric into a phrase: "The stream of tendency, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness."

But the strongest evidence of their austerity of purpose is seen in those private notebooks which led me to couple their names together in this study of the spirit of criticism. This is not the time to deal at length with that sober and anxious self-examination of the noble Lord, as Shaftesbury's enemies of the Church were so fond of calling him. It is one of the important documents to show how completely Deism was a revival of pagan morality. It is, in brief, no more than a translation of the great maxims of antiquity into modern purposes: the inner record of a man seeking character in the two elements of attention (*προσοχή*) and the harmony of life (*verae numerosque modosque vitae*), and of a man who thought that this pursuit must be maintained unrelentingly. Of the two books it may seem strange that Matthew Arnold's, which consists merely of brief quotations without comment, should really open to us more intimately the author's heart than does the direct self-questioning of Shaftesbury's. Yet a book more filled with sad sincerity, a more perfect confession of a life's purpose, will scarcely be found than these memoranda. "I am glad to find," he wrote once in a letter to his sister, "that in the past year I have at least accomplished more than usual in the way of reading the books which at the beginning of the year I had put down to be read. . . . The importance of reading, not slight stuff to get through the time, but the best that has been written, forces itself upon me more and more every year I live." Now the *Notebooks* not only preserve some of these annual lists of books to be read, but show, in quintessential phrase, just what the books actually read meant to him. Some of the quotations are repeated a number of times, and if frequency of repetition can be taken as a criterion the maxim closest to Arnold's heart was the sentence, from what source I do not know: "*Semper aliquid certi proponendum est*—always some certain end must be kept in view." It is but an expansion of the same idea that he expresses in the words set down more than once from some French author: "A working life, a succession of labors which fill and moralize the days!" and in the beloved command of the *Imitation:* "*Cum multa legeris et cognoveris, ad*

*unum semper oportet redire principium*—when you have read and learned many things, it is necessary always to return to one principle." That principle he sets down in aphorisms and exhortations from a hundred diverse sources —nowhere, perhaps, more succinctly than in the broken phrases of the stoic Lucan:

servare modum, finemque tenere
Naturamque sequi—
Nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo—
In commune bonus.

(To preserve measure, to hold fast to the end, and follow nature—To believe oneself born not for oneself alone but for all the world—good for the community of mankind.)

He might well have applied to his own pursuit of culture the eulogy he quotes concerning another: "Study, which for most men is only a frivolous amusement and often dangerous, was for Dom Rivet a serious occupation consecrated by religion."

It was not a mere dilettante of sweetness and light who day by day laid such maxims as these upon his breast; it was not one who held up the pouncet-box of culture betwixt the wind and his nobility. Matthew Arnold, if any man in his generation, was by temperament a stoic for whom duty and submission and reverence made up the large part of life; and there is something of what we call the irony of fate in the thought that he who made σπουδαιότης, *high seriousness*, the test of great literature, should have suffered the reproach of levity. Yet, after all, fate is never quite blind in these things, and if criticism has thus drawn upon itself the censure of men like Sidgwick we may feel assured that in some way it has failed of the deeper truth. Those reproaches may in part be due to prejudice and revenge and the inevitable contrast of temperaments; they may err in ascribing to the critic a want of efficiency, as they may be wantonly perverse in denouncing him for frivolity; but they have a meaning and they cannot be overlooked. Now the future is often a strange revealer of secret things, and there is no surer way to detect the weak side of a leader than by studying the career of his disciples, or even of his successors.

You are familiar with the story of the concluding chapter of Pater's *Renaissance*—how it was withdrawn from the second edition of that book because the author "conceived it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall"; and how it was restored, with some slight changes, to the later editions where it now stands. And you know the moral of that essay: that life is but an uncertain interval before the universal judgment of death, a brief illusion of stability in the eternal flux, and that "our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time." And "of this wisdom," he concludes, "the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass and simply for those moments' sake." That philosophy of the Oxonian Epicurus and its scandal in a very un-Epicurean land are familiar enough; but perhaps we do not always stop to think how plausibly this doctrine of crowning our moments with the highest sensations of art flows from Matthew Arnold's definition of criticism as the disinterested endeavor "to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind."

The next step from Pater's Epicureanism, and so by a further remove from Arnold's criticism, brings us to one whose name, unfortunately, must always be mentioned with regret, but who is more significant in the development of English letters than is sometimes allowed. At the time when Paterism, as a recent writer has said, was "tripping indelicately along the Oxford High and by the banks of the Cherwell," a young votary of the Muses from Dublin came upon the scene, and began to push the doctrine of Pater as far beyond what the master intended as Pater had gone beyond Matthew Arnold. This is the young man who "would occasionally be seen walking the streets carrying a lily or a sunflower in his hand, at which he would gaze intently and admiringly." He had fashioned himself deliberately to pose as the head of a new sect of "aesthetes," as they styled themselves, who expanded Arnold's excluded tribe of Philis-

tines to embrace all the sober citizens of the world. The fate of Oscar Wilde is still like a fresh wound in the public memory. What I wish to call to your mind is the direct connection (strengthened no doubt by influences from across the Channel) between Pater's philosophy of the sensation-crowded moment and such a poem as that in which Wilde attempted to concentrate all the passionate moments of the past in his gloating revery upon *The Sphinx*. He was himself not unaware of the treachery of the path he had chosen; the sonnet which he prefixed to his book of poems is sincere with the pathos of conscious insincerity, and is a memorable comment on one of the tragic ambitions of a century:

To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,
Is it for this that I have given away
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control?

. . . . . .

Surely there was a time I might have trod
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance—
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?

The answer to the poet's query he was himself to write in *The Ballad of Reading Gaol:*

Silently we went round and round,
And through each hollow mind
The Memory of dreadful things
Rushed like a dreadful wind,
And Horror stalked before each man,
And Terror crept behind.

This Memory of dreadful things is the too logical end, step by step, of the philosophy of the sensation-crowded moment; the concealed suspicion of it in Matthew Arnold's definition of criticism was the justification, if any there be, of the contempt hurled upon him by some of his contemporaries.

It is necessary to repeat that such a derivation from Matthew Arnold is essentially unfair because it leaves out of view the real purpose and heart of the man. If we could not read his great moral energy in his *Essays*, as I trust we all of us can, and if we did not know the profound influence of his critical philosophy upon the better life of our age, we could still dispel our doubts by looking into the *Notebooks*, in which memory is not turned to dreadful things for the soul's disgrace, but is the guide and impulse to strong resolution and beautiful forbearance. Yet withal it remains true that the Epicureanism of Pater and the hedonism of Oscar Wilde were able to connect themselves in a disquieting way with one side of Matthew Arnold's gospel of culture; and it behooves us who come upon the heels of this movement and who believe that the critical spirit is still to be one of the powers making in the world for right enjoyment, it behooves us to examine the first definition of culture or criticism—the words had about the same meaning as Arnold used them—and see whether something was not there forgotten. The fault lay not in any intrinsic want of efficiency in the critical spirit, nor in any want of moral earnestness in Matthew Arnold or Shaftesbury: that we have seen. But these men were lacking in another direction: they missed a philosophy which could bind together their moral and their aesthetic sense, a positive principle besides the negative force of ridicule and irony; and, missing this, they left criticism more easily subject to a one-sided and dangerous development.

To the nature of that omission, to the *porro unum necessarium*, we may be directed, I think, by the critical theory of the one who carried the practice, in other respects, to its lowest degradation. In Oscar Wilde's dialogue on *The Critic as Artist*, one of the most extraordinary mixtures ever compounded of truth flaunting in the robes of error and error assuming the gravity of truth, you will remember that the advocate of criticism at the height of his argument proclaims the true man of culture to be him who has learned "the best that is known and thought in the world" (he uses Matthew Arnold's words), and who thus, as Matthew Arnold neglected to add, "bears within himself the dreams, and ideas, and feelings of myriad generations." The addition is important, how important, or at least how large, may be seen in the really splendid, if somewhat morbid, passage in which the idea is developed. Let me quote at some length:

To know anything about oneself, one must know all about others. There must be no mood with which one cannot sympathise, no dead mode of life that one cannot make alive. Is this impossible? I think not. By revealing to us the absolute mechanism of all action, and so freeing us from the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility, the scientific principle of Heredity has become, as it were, the warrant for the contemplative life. It has shown us that we are never less free than when we try to act. It has hemmed us round with the nets of the hunter, and written upon the wall the prophecy of our doom. We may not watch it, for it is within us. We may not see it, save in a mirror that mirrors the soul. It is Nemesis without her mask. It is the last of the Fates, and the most terrible. It is the only one of the Gods whose real name we know.

And yet, while in the sphere of practical and external life it has robbed energy of its freedom and activity of its choice, in the subjective sphere, where the soul is at work, it comes to us, this terrible shadow, with many gifts in its hands, gifts of strange temperaments and subtle susceptibilities, gifts of wild ardors and chill moods of indifférénce, complex multiform gifts of thoughts that are at variance with each other, and passions that war against themselves. And so, it is not our own life that we live, but the lives of the dead, and the soul that dwells within us is no single spiritual entity, making us personal and individual, created for our service, and entering into us for our joy. . . . It can help us to leave the age in which we were born, and to pass into other ages, and find ourselves not exiled from their air. It can teach us how to escape from our experience and to realise the experiences of those who are greater than we are. The pain of Leopardi crying out against life becomes our pain. Theocritus blows on his pipe, and we laugh with the lips of nymph and shepherd. In the wolfskin of Pierre Vidal we flee before the hounds, and in the armor of Lancelot we ride from the bower of the Queen. We have whispered the secret of our love beneath the cowl of Abelard, and in the stained raiment of Villon have put our shame into song. We can see the dawn through Shelley's eyes, and when we wander with Endymion the Moon grows amorous of our youth. Ours is the anguish of Atys, and ours the weak rage and noble sorrows of the Dane. Do you think that it is the imagination that enables us to live these countless lives? Yes: it is the imagination; and the imagination is the result of heredity. It is simply concentrated race-experience.

Now, this theory of race-experience, as Oscar Wilde formulated it, lends itself, no doubt, to an easy fallacy. I am aware of the rebuke administered to one who was by the range of his knowledge and by his historic sense much more justified in such a presumption than was Oscar Wilde. "Is it not the strangest illusion," exclaimed the biographer of Renan, "to believe that the mere reading of the Acts of the martyrs is sufficient to give us their soul, to transfer to us in its real intensity the ardor which ravished them amidst their tortures? . . . Those who have lost all the energy of living and acting may, if they choose, shut themselves up in this kingdom of shadows; that is their affair. But that they should proclaim theirs as the true life, is not to be conceded to them." Séailles was right. These men, whether it be a paradox-monger like Oscar Wilde or a great scholar like Renan, should have laid to heart the favorite maxim of Matthew Arnold, *semper aliquid certi proponendum est:* true culture has always before its eyes a definite end and is for self-discipline not for revery. Nor am I unaware that the theory as expressed by Oscar Wilde, is mixed up with his own personal taint of decadence. One thing at least is certain: that the way of the true critical spirit is not to free us, as he boasts, from "the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility." His avowal in the same dialogue that the sole aim of art is to produce the "beautiful sterile emotions" so hateful to the world, his shameless vaunt that "there is nothing sane about the worship of beauty," his whole philosophy of the ego as above the laws of society, cannot be severed from the memory of dreadful things in which his own song ended: such a philosophy is in fact a denial of the validity of that very race-experience out of which he attempts to derive it. In this respect again he should have remembered the maxim of Matthew Arnold: "A working life, a succession of labors that fill and moralise the days." The aim of culture is not to merge the present in a sterile dream of the past, but to hold the past

as a living force in the present. In omitting these aspects of criticism Pater and, to a greater extent, Oscar Wilde fell into extravagance far more deleterious to culture than was any omission or incompleteness on the part of Matthew Arnold.

Nevertheless, with all its false emphasis and its admixture of personal error, that positive and emotional reassumption of the past, that association of the contemplative life (the *βίος θεωρητικός*) with the rapture of memory, contains the hint of a great truth which must be grasped and properly exercised if criticism is to confirm itself against such hostility as has hitherto kept it on the defensive. I would not say even that the mysticism, out of which Oscar Wilde's critical theory really springs, though expressed in the modish language of scientific evolution, is essentially perverse. For in a very true sense the past of mankind, by the larger race-memory and particularly by that form of it which we call literature, abides as a living reality in our present. We suffer not our individual destiny alone but the fates of humanity also. We are born into an inheritance of great emotions—into the unconquerable hopes and defeated fears of an immeasurable past, the tragedies and the comedies of love, the ardent aspirations of faith, the baffled questionings of evil, the huge laughter at facts, the deep-welling passion of peace. Without that common inheritance how inconceivably poor and shallow would be this life of the world and our life in it! These recorded emotions are, indeed, not for us what they were in actuality, nor by sitting at our own ease with memory can we enter into the exact emotions of the martyr at the stake and the hero in his triumph. These things are now transmuted into something the same and different, something less and greater. The intensity of the actual moment they cannot possess, but on the other hand with this loss of separate reality they are associated with life as a whole, and in that unity of experience obtain, what they lacked before, a significance and design. They bear in a way the same relation to practical life as that life bore to the ideal world out of which it arose and into which it is continually passing. And thus this larger memory, in its transmuting and unifying power, may not unmeaningly be regarded as the purpose of activity, and literature may not too presumptuously be cherished as the final end of existence. Some such mystery as this was hinted in the Greek and Gnostic doctrine of the *logos*, the Word, and in the Hindu name for the creator as *vâcas pati*, Lord of the Word. And if such a theory sounds too absurdly metaphysical for the ears of prudent common-sense, consider that Homer, no philosopher of empty phrases surely, meant nothing very different when he judged of actions by their fame in future story. To him the warring of armies for ten long years and the desolation of Troy was for no other purpose than that the inner life of the race might be enriched by memory:

> Thus the gods fated, and such ruin wove
> That song might flourish for posterity.

And in this theory of memory criticism has an important office. We are beginning to hear a good deal these days about the French metaphysician, M. Henri Bergson, of whom Prof. William James has avowed himself a willing disciple, and whose disquisitions on *Matière et mémoire* and *L'Évolution créatrice* are perhaps more talked of than any other recent books of philosophy. I do not pretend to pronounce on the full scope of his theories, but his conception of the function of memory is rich with applications to the matter we have in hand. Our consciousness, that is to say our very self, is not, he says, a thing born new with each moment, not a *mens momentanea*, but an uninterrupted stream of activity, and what we now feel is directly bound up with what we have felt before. Nor is this consciousness, on the other hand, a mere heaping together indiscriminately of perceptions and emotions, but it is an active faculty, or, I should prefer to say, the servant of some active faculty, that depresses this particular experience into the background and centers attention upon that other experience, thus by a process of criticism secreting the present, so to speak, out of the past. Such a philosophy finds a new and profound truth in the saying of Pascal: "*La mémoire est nécessaire à toutes les opérations de l'esprit*—memory is necessary to all the operations of the mind."

This notion of the active memory is, I am told by those who should know, mixed up in Bergson with a questionable metaphysic, yet in itself alone it should seem to be nothing more than the laborious expression of a very simple fact. We have all of us met now and then in our daily intercourse a man whose conversation impressed us immediately as possessing a certain ripeness of wisdom, a certain pertinency and depth of meaning. If we wished to charaterize such a man in a single word, we should perhaps say that he was essentially educated. We feel that he has within him some central force which enables him to choose consistently amidst the innumerable conflicting impulses and attractions and dissipations of life, that he moves forward, not at haphazard, but by the direction of some principle of conduct, and that he can be depended upon for counsel and comfort. Well, if you stop to analyze this quality of mind, which we will call education you will discover in every case, I believe, that the determining trait is just the force of a critical memory. I do not mean by this the mere facility of recalling the emotions and events and spectacles which have come to a man with the years; for such undisciplined reminiscence may be but a shabby wisdom to the man himself, as it may be the very contrary of joy to his hearer. I mean rather the faculty of selection as well as of retention, the weighing of cause and effect, the constant and active assumption of the past in the present, by which the events of life are no longer regarded as isolated and fortuitous moments, but are merged into a unity of experience. Those in whom this faculty rules are commonly the possessors of practical wisdom, but there are others, a few, who by its virtue are raised into another kind of wisdom. With these men the selective, reconciling memory is associated, more or less consciously, with the Platonic reminiscence in such a manner that not only are the past and present of passing time made one but our ephemeral life is fitted into that great ring of eternity which Henry Vaughan saw as in a dream. So it is that to them the things which others behold as sudden unrelated facts are made shadows and types of the everlasting ideas; and with the accumulation of knowledge they grow ripe in vision,

Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.

And as our private memory is not a merely passive retention of sensations, so in literature the critical spirit is at work as a conscious energy of selection. The function of criticism, as thus understood, is far removed from the surrender to luxurious revery which the impressionists believed it to be; nor is the good critic, as Anatole France said, he who recounts the adventures of his soul amid masterpieces; he is rather one who has before him always the *aliquid certi*, the definite aim of a Matthew Arnold. He does not, like Oscar Wilde, seek by losing the present in the past to throw off "the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility"; he is rather one whose life is "a succession of labors that fill and moralise the days"—not in the narrow didactic sense, it need scarcely be said, but in so far as his task is a continual weighing of values. But the critical spirit is also something deeper than Matthew Arnold perceived, or, at least, clearly expressed. The error of criticism in his hands, as in the hands of his predecessors, was that in the exercise of judgment it used the past too much as a dead storehouse of precepts for schoolmastering the present; it was not sufficiently aware of the relation of this faculty of judgment to the indwelling and ever-acting memory of things. Here is the one touch of insight needed, I think, to raise criticism, while not forgetting its special duty of discrimination and judgment, to a more independent and self-respecting *genre*. In its conscious creation of the field of the present out of the past it takes an honored, if not equal, place by the side of those impulses, more commonly recognized as creative, which are continually adding new material for its selective energy. "Valuing is creating," said Nietzsche; "to value is the treasure and jewel among all things valued." The critical spirit is thus akin to that force of design or final cause in the Aristotelian sense, which we are beginning once more to divine as the guiding principle, itself unchanged, at work within the evolutionary changes of nature; and in so far as it becomes aware of this high office it introduces into our intellectual life an element outside of alteration and growth and decay, a principle

to which time is the minister and not the master.

Literary criticism is, indeed, in this sense only the specific exercise of a faculty which works in many directions. All scholars, whether they deal with history or sociology or philosophy or language or, in the narrower use of the word, literature, are servants of the critical spirit, in so far as they transmit and interpret and mould the sum of experience from man to man and from generation to generation. Might not one even say that at a certain point criticism becomes almost identical with education, and that by this standard we may judge the value of any study as an instrument of education, and may estimate the merit of any special presentation of that study? It is at least, in the existing chaos of pedagogical theories, a question worthy of consideration.

1910

## 1865 -- *Irving Babbitt* -- 1933

WRITER, teacher, and admittedly the leader of the New Humanist movement, Babbitt hailed from the Middle West, his native city being Akron, Ohio. After his graduation from Harvard he spent two years studying at the Sorbonne. In 1893–1894 he was an instructor in Romance languages at Williams College, returning to Harvard the following year as instructor in French. In 1902 he was promoted to an assistant professorship, and in 1912 to a full professorship, a position which he held until his death. He achieved fame through his writings, lectured extensively before college audiences throughout the United States, and in 1923 served as the Harvard exchange professor at the Sorbonne. The American Academy of Arts and Letters elected him to membership in 1930. Beside his original writings, he edited for college classes books by Renan, Taine, Voltaire, and Racine.

Probably no American thinker of modern times has stirred up as much discussion and controversy as Babbitt has in his books, all of which treat some phase or other of his humanistic doctrine. In his first book, *Literature and the American College* (1908), he describes Humanism as the search for individual perfection through selective discipline. It is aristocratic in temper, and concerns itself only with the individual as against society as a whole. The unique purpose of it is to help man overcome his natural propensity to one-sidedness, as manifested, for instance, in modern educational emphasis upon specialization, or in the human tendency to let one or another aspect of personality, as the emotions, let us say, dominate and control conduct. Babbitt had as his ideal a man who could harmonize within himself all the qualities of his nature, what he calls the opposite virtues, through obedience to the law of measure, which in turn saved him from excesses. This ideal man is characterized by a poised equilibrium of all his powers in which the extremes of the opposing virtues, as seen in the ideas of unity and plurality, or as Plato expresses it, the combination of the "one with the many," are held in balance. Only such a balance can

preserve mental sanity. As far as Babbitt is concerned, this ideal, based upon the classical tradition, can stem the tide of excessive sympathy, primitivism, and emotionalism let loose by Rousseau and appropriated by the Romantics. The remainder of the book is a discussion of the educational problems as affected by this approach.

*The New Laokoön* (1910), an essay in comparative aesthetics, is a study of the confusion of the arts as a result of the Romantic movement. In *The Masters of Modern French Criticism* (1912) he investigates nineteenth-century French critics to ascertain the movement of thought represented by them, as well as to erect a background against which the anti-intellectual revolt of the day can be studied and understood. The problem of critical standards is involved, and so is the philosophical problem of finding a unifying principle in the flux of life, as against the intuitive sense of change proposed and accepted by some of the newer philosophers. Babbitt returns to the Platonic "one and the many" as the core of the critical and philosophical attitude. *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919) attacks the ideals of the Romanticists and the baneful effects, which in his estimation they have had on modern civilization. *Democracy and Leadership* (1924) is a searching analysis of democratic society in reference to its ability to set up standards for its own development. His last book, *On Being Creative* (1932), is a collection of miscellaneous essays unified by their general bearing on literary criticism.

Babbitt believed with Arnold that criticism had a determining influence upon creative literature. With that constantly in mind he sought for a philosophy of life in which he could find the necessary critical standards of judgment, and which would point the way for the future development of literature. The entire body of his work is a protest and reaction against many of the younger critics who flouted the application of standards in criticism and viewed them doubtfully in life. The problem resolves itself ultimately to the problem of the essential nature of man. The younger writers and critics accepted the scientific view that man is a biological entity, determined by heredity and environment, two forces for which he is not responsible, and over which he has no control. He is what he is because of these forces, and refuses to take any responsibility for his conduct, aside from the impulses and intuitions which drive him. Against this view Babbitt set his humanistic ideal of man who is not helpless in the clutch of circumstance, but who has shown in the past that he has a power of choice, who has exercised self-control by resorting to an "inner check," and who has therefore determined the course of his conduct through an ethical will to refrain as well as to act. The younger group will accept man even at his worst; Babbitt will accept him only at his best.

He was primarily interested in establishing a philosophy of criticism which permits definite standards, rather than the application of these standards in critical practice. In the Babel of voices released by the Humanist explosion in the late twenties Babbitt was heard only occasionally, sometimes speaking with Jovian authority, at

other times taking pains to say over again what he had already said, not always to his advantage. The controversy has lost its intensity, the voices have died down to occasional mutterings, and criticism is as chaotic as it ever was.

Babbitt was the author of *Literature and the American College* (1908); *The New Laokoön* (1910); *The Masters of Modern French Criticism* (1912); *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919); *Democracy and Leadership* (1924); *French Literature* (1928); *On Being Creative and Other Essays* (1932). The best biographical account is in P. E. More, "Irving Babbitt," *American Review*, April, 1934. The most exhaustive study of Babbitt is in F. E. McMahon, *The Humanism of Irving Babbitt* (1931). Other critical studies are: J. L. Adams, "Humanism and Creations," *Hound and Horn*, Oct.–Dec., 1932; T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928); G. R. Elliott, *Humanism and Imagination* (1938); W. F. Giese, "Irving Babbitt, Undergraduate," *American Review*, Nov., 1935; F. T. Russell, "The Romanticism of Irving Babbitt," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1933; P. S. Richards, "Irving Babbitt," *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1928; L. J. A. Mercier, *The Challenge of Humanism* (1933), and "The Legacy of Irving Babbitt," *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, June, 1934; H. Nickerson, "Irving Babbitt," *American Review*, Feb., 1934; G. B. Munson, *Destinations* (1928), and *The Dilemma of the Literate* (1930); D. MacCampbell, "Irving Babbitt," *Sewanee Review*, April–June, 1935; F. J. Mather, "Irving Babbitt," *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, Dec., 1933; E. Wilson, "Notes on Babbitt and More," *The Critique of Humanism*, C. H. Grattan, ed. (1930); M. Y. Hughes, "Proud Humility," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 4, 1924; W. Lippmann, "Humanism as Dogma," *Saturday Review of Literature*, March 15, 1930; M. M. Colum, "Literature, Ethics, and the Knights of Good Sense," *Scribner's*, June, 1930.

In *Humanism and America* (1930), Norman Foerster collected and edited a group of essays by spokesmen for the Humanist movement. In *The Critique of Humanism* (1930), C. H. Grattan brought together the views of the opponents.

## ON BEING ORIGINAL

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THERE has been a radical change during the last hundred years in the world's attitude toward originality. An age of conformity has given way to an age of self-assertion; so that nowadays a man makes a bid for fame by launching a paradox, much as he might have done in the time of Pope by polishing a commonplace. Then, even a person of genuine originality was in danger of being accounted freakish. Now, many a man passes for original who is in reality only freakish. Boileau, speaking for the old criticism, says that Perrault was "bizarre"; Sainte-Beuve, speaking for the new, says that Perrault had genius. From the outset, the neo-classic critics stifled free initiative in the name of the "rules," and opposed to every attempt at innovation the authority of Aristotle and the ancients. The relation of the literary aspirant to the "models" during this period is not unfairly summed up in the words of the comic opera,—

"Of course you can never be like us,
But be as like us as you're able to be."

Later, under French influence, the tyranny of etiquette was added to the tyranny of classical imitation. Aristotle was reinforced by the dancing master. Social convention so entwined itself about the whole nature of a Frenchman of the Old Régime that it finally became almost as hard for him as we may suppose it is for a Chinaman to disengage his originality from the coils of custom. The very word original was often used as a term of ridicule and disparagement. Brossette writes of the Oriental traveler Tavernier that he is "brutal and even a bit original." "When it is desired to turn any one to ridicule," writes Boursault about the same time, "he is said to be an *original sans copie*." Anything in literature or

art that departed from the conventional type was pronounced "monstrous." La Harpe applies this epithet to the *Divine Comedy*, and points out how inferior the occasional felicities of this "absurd and shapeless rhapsody" are to the correct beauties of a true epic like Voltaire's *Henriade*.

And so we might go on, as Mr. Saintsbury, for example, does for scores of pages in his *History of Criticism*, exposing the neo-classic narrowness, and setting forth in contrast the glories of our modern emancipation. But this is to give one's self the pleasure, as the French would say, of smashing in open doors. Instead of engaging in this exhilarating pastime, we might, perhaps, find more profit in inquiring, first, into the definite historical reasons that led to the triumph of the so-called school of good sense over the school of genius and originality; and second, in seeking for the element of truth that lurked beneath even the most arid and unpromising of the neo-classic conventions. For if, like Mr. Saintsbury and many other romanticists, we reject the truth along with the convention, we shall simply fall from one extreme into another.

The whole subject of originality is closely bound up with what is rather vaguely known as individualism. We must recollect that before the disciplinary classicism of the later Renaissance there was an earlier Renaissance which was in a high degree favorable to originality. At the very beginning of this earlier period, Petrarch made his famous plea for originality, in a letter to Boccaccio, and established his claim, in this as in other respects, to be considered the first modern man. "Every one," says Petrarch, "has not only in his countenance and gestures, but also in his voice and language, something peculiarly his own (*quiddam suum ac proprium*), which it is both easier and wiser to cultivate and correct than it is to alter." And so many of the Italians who followed Petrarch set out to cultivate the *quiddam suum ac proprium*, often showing real ardor for self-expression, and still oftener, perhaps, using the new liberty merely as a cloak for license. Society finally took alarm, not only at the license, but at the clash of rival originalities, each man indulging in his own individual sense without much reference to the general or common sense of mankind. We need not, however, repeat what we have already said in our first essay about the reaction of the later Renaissance against an excessive individualism. This reaction, especially in France and Italy, soon ran into excesses of its own. Yet we must not forget that, at the moment when the neo-classic disciplinarian appeared on the scene, the great creative impulse of the early Renaissance was already dying out or degenerating into affectation. The various forms of bad taste that spread like an epidemic over Europe at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth (cultism, Marinism, euphuism, préciosité, etc.), have their common source in a straining to be original in defiance of sound reason. We may say of the writers of these different schools as a class that, in spite of occasional lyrical felicities, they have "all the nodosities of the oak without its strength and all the contortions of the Sibyl without the inspiration."

The school of good sense was the natural and legitimate protest against this pseudo-originality. But this school can be justified on higher grounds than simply as a reaction from a previous excess. It tried to apply, however imperfectly, the profound doctrine of Aristotle that the final test of art is not its originality, but its truth to the universal. The question is one of special interest because we are living in an age that comes at the end of a great era of expansion, comparable in some ways to that of the Renaissance. Now, as then, there is a riot of so-called originality. In the name of this originality art is becoming more and more centrifugal and eccentric. As the result of our loss of standards, the classicist would complain, we are inbreeding personal and national peculiarities and getting farther and farther away from what is universally human.

In other words, the chief ambition of our modern art, which resembles in this respect some of the art of the later Renaissance, is to be original. The first aim of both classic and neo-classic art, on the other hand, was to be representative. Aristotle had said that it is not enough to render a thing as it is in this or that particular case, but as it is in general; and he goes on to say that the superiority of

poetry over history lies in the fact that it has more of this universality, that it is more concerned with the essentials and less with the accidents of human nature. The weakness of neo-classic art was that it substituted the rule of thumb and servile imitation for direct observation in deciding what were accidents and what were essentials. It was ready to proscribe a thing as "monstrous,"—that is, as outside of nature,—when in reality it was simply outside the bounds set by certain commentators on Aristotle. The artist had to conform to the conventional types established in this way, even if he sacrificed to them poignancy and directness of emotion. He was limited by the type not only in dealing with any particular literary form,—tragedy, epic, and so forth,—but even in his creating of individual characters. For example, he must be careful not to paint a particular soldier, but the typical soldier, and of course he was not to depart too far from the classical models in deciding what the traits of the typical soldier are. Thus Rymer condemns Iago because he is not true to the "character constantly worn by soldiers for some thousands of years in the world." According to Rymer, again, the queen in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays oversteps the bounds of decorum. Some particular queen, Rymer admits, may have acted in this way; but she must be rid of all her "accidental historical impudence" before she can become an orthodox, typical queen, entitled to "stalk in tragedy on her high shoes."

The attempt of the neo-classicists to tyrannize over originality and restrict the creative impulse in the name of the type was bound in the long run to provoke a reaction. To carry through the difficult and delicate task of breaking with convention some man of more than Socratic wisdom was needed; instead, this task was undertaken by the "self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau." In almost the opening sentence of his *Confessions* Rousseau strikes the note that is heard throughout the nineteenth century, from the early romanticists to Ibsen and Sudermann: "If I am not better than other men, at least I am different." By this gloating sense of his own departure from the type Rousseau became the father of eccentric individualists. By his insistence on the rights and legitimacy of unrestrained emotion he inaugurated the age of storm and stress, not only in Germany, but throughout Europe. Our modern impressionists, who would make of their own sensibility the measure of all things, are only his late-born disciples.

Emotion, insists the classicist, must be disciplined and subdued to what is typical; else it will be eccentric and not true to the human heart. "The human heart of whom?" cries Alfred de Musset, like a true disciple of Jean-Jacques. "The human heart of what? Even though the devil be in it, I have my human heart of my own—*j'ai mon cœur humain, moi.*" The whole of French romanticism is in that *moi.* Away with stale authority, usage, and tradition, that would come between a man and his own spontaneity, and keep him from immediate contact with "nature." Let him once more see the world bathed in the fresh wonder of the dawn. To this end let him discard books ("a dull and endless strife") and live as if "none had lived before him."

Every man, in short, is to be an original genius. It was the assumption of this attitude by Rousseau's followers in Germany that gave its name to a whole literary period (*Genieţeit*). Germany sought its emancipation from convention, not, as Lessing would have wished, through the discipline of reason, but through "genius" and "originality," which meant in practice the opening of the floodgates of sentiment. We can imagine the disgust with which Lessing looked on the Rousseauism of the youthful Goethe. In "Werther," critics are accused of being in a conspiracy against originality. Their rules are compared to a system of dams and trenches with which the critics protect their own little cabbage-patches against genius, whose impetuous waves would otherwise burst forth and overwhelm them, and at the same time astound the world. One thinks of Lessing's admirable defense of criticism, of the passage in which he confesses that he owes all he has, not to genius and originality, but to a patient assimilation of the wisdom of the past. "Without criticism I should be poor, cold, short-sighted. I am, therefore, always ashamed or annoyed when I hear or read anything in disparagement of

criticism. It is said to suppress genius, and I flattered myself that I had gained from it something very nearly approaching genius. I am a lame man who cannot possibly be edified by abuse of his crutch."

We are still inclined to side with original genius against what Lessing calls criticism. Criticism itself has come to mean nowadays mere appreciativeness, instead of meaning, as it did for Lessing, the application of standards of judgment. It may, however, appear some day how much the great romantic leaders, Shelley for example, suffered from the absence of just what Lessing called criticism. Men may then grow weary of a genius and originality that are at bottom only an outpouring of undisciplined emotion. One whole side of our American transcendental school is only a belated echo of German romanticism, which itself continues the age of original genius. There is special danger even in Emerson's conception of originality, and the unbounded deference with which it fills him for the untrained individual. Every man, to become great, merely needs, it would appear, to plant himself indomitably on his instincts; but it is not safe for the average person to trust so blindly to what Rymer would have called his own "maggot." Hawthorne, the best observer of the group, has left an account of some of the nightmare originalities that were developed under the Concord influence.

We read of a certain character in one of Marivaux's plays: "He is a man whose first impulse is to ask, not, 'Do you esteem me?' but, 'Are you surprised at me?' His purpose is not to convince us that he is better than other people, but that he resembles himself alone." The comedy in which this eighteenth-century Bernard Shaw figures was written a number of years before Rousseau assumed the Armenian costume and began to agitate Europe with his paradoxes. Since Rousseau the world has become increasingly familiar with the man who poses and attitudinizes before it and is not satisfied until he can draw its attention to the traits that establish his own uniqueness. The eccentric individualist not only rejoices in his own singularity, but is usually eager to thrust it on other people. His aim is to startle, or, as the French would say, to *épater le bourgeois*, to make the plain citizen "stare and gasp." Dr. Johnson said of Lord Monboddo that if he had had a tail he would have been as proud of it as a squirrel. Perhaps Rousseau was never more deeply hurt than by the lady who said, on breaking with him, "You're just like other men." This, as a French critic remarks, was a home thrust that one of Molière's soubrettes could not have improved upon. The claim of Rousseau and his earlier followers was to be not simply unique, but unique in feeling. This sentiment of uniqueness in feeling speedily became that of uniqueness in suffering—on the familiar principle, no doubt, that life, which is a comedy for those who think, is a tragedy for those who feel. Hence arose in the romantic school a somewhat theatrical affectation of grief. Byron was far from being the first who paraded before the public "the pageant of his bleeding heart." Chateaubriand especially nourished in himself the sense of fated and preëminent sorrow, and was ready to exclaim at the most ordinary mischance: "Such things happen only to me!" Sainte-Beuve makes an interesting comparison between Chateaubriand and another native of Brittany, the author of *Gil Blas*. "A book like *René*," says Sainte-Beuve, "encourages a subtle spiritual pride. A man seeks in his imagination some unique misfortune to which he may abandon himself and which he may fold about him in solitude. He says to himself that a great soul must contain more sorrow than a little one; and adds in a whisper that he himself may be this great soul. *Gil Blas*, on the other hand, is a book that brings you into full contact with life and the throng of your fellow creatures. When you are very gloomy and believe in fatality and imagine that certain extraordinary things happen to you alone, read *Gil Blas*, and you will find that he had that very misfortune or one just like it, and that he took it as a simple mishap and got over it."

The same contrast might be brought out by comparing Montaigne and Rousseau, the two writers who, in a broad sense, are the masters respectively of Lesage and Chateaubriand. This contrast is easily missed, because at first glance Montaigne seems an arch-egotist like Rousseau, and is almost equally ready to

bestow his own idiosyncrasies on the reader. Yet in the final analysis Montaigne is interested in Montaigne because he is a human being; Rousseau is interested in Rousseau because he is Jean-Jacques. Montaigne observes himself impartially as a normal specimen of the genus homo. Rousseau, as we have seen, positively gloats over his own otherwiseness. Montaigne aims to be the average, or, it would be less misleading to say, the representative man; Rousseau's aim is to be the extraordinary man, or original genius. Rousseau is an eccentric, Montaigne a concentric individualist. The sentence of Montaigne that sums him up is, "Every man bears within him the entire image of the human lot." Rousseau is rather summed up in his phrase, "There are souls that are too privileged to follow the common path," with its corollary that he is himself one of these privileged souls.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of a race of eccentric individualists, especially in art and literature, who, like Rousseau scorned the common path and strove to distinguish themselves from the bourgeois and philistine in everything, from the details of their dress to the refinements of their sensations. In this quest of the rare and the original they attained to a departure from the norm that was not only eccentric, but pathological. Every man was to have the right to express not only his own particular vision of life, but his own particular nightmare. We finally come to a writer like Baudelaire, who builds himself a "little strangely scented and strangely colored kiosk on the extreme tip of the romantic Kamchatka" and "cultivates his hysteria with delight and terror"; who, instead of being true to the human heart, as the old-fashioned classicist would say, makes it his ambition to create a "new shudder." All the modern writer cares for, says M. Anatole France, is to be thought original. In his fear of becoming commonplace he prides himself, like Victor Hugo, on reading only those books that other men do not read, or else he does not read at all, and so comes to resemble that eighteenth-century Frenchwoman who was said to have "respected in her ignorance the active principle of her originality." The danger of the man who is too assimilative, who possesses too perfectly the riches of tradition, is to feel that originality is henceforth impossible. It is related of a French critic that he used to turn away wearily from every new volume of poetry that was submitted to him, with the remark: "All the verses are written."

Genuine originality, however, is a hardy growth, and usually gains more than it loses by striking deep root into the literature of the past. La Bruyère begins his *Characters* by observing that "Everything has been said," and then goes on to write one of the most original books in French. Montaigne wrote a still more original book which often impresses the reader as a mere cento of quotations. An excessive respect for the past is less harmful than the excess from which we are now suffering. For example, one of our younger writers is praised in a review for his "stark freedom from tradition . . . as though he came into the world of letters without ever a predecessor. He is the expression in literary art of certain enormous repudiations." It is precisely this notion of originality that explains the immense insignificance of so much of our contemporary writing. The man who breaks with the past in this way will think that he is original when he is in reality merely ignorant and presumptuous. He is apt to imagine himself about a century ahead of his age when he is at least four or five centuries behind it. "He comes to you," as Bagehot puts it, "with a notion that Noah discarded in the ark, and attracts attention to it as if it were a stupendous novelty of his own."

We may be sure that the more enlightened of the Cave Dwellers had already made deeper discoveries in human nature than many of our modern radicals. Goethe said that if as a young man he had known of the masterpieces that already existed in Greek he would never have written a line. Goethe carries his modesty too far; but how grateful just a touch of it would be in the average author of today! With even a small part of Goethe's knowledge and insight, he would no longer go on serving up to us the dregs and last muddy lees of the romantic and naturalistic movements as originality and genius. He would see that his very paradoxes were stale. Instead of being a half-baked author, he would become a modest and

at the same time judicious reader; or, if he continued to write, he would be less anxious to create and more anxious to humanize his creations. Sooner or later every author, as well as the characters he conceives, will have to answer the question that was the first addressed to any one who designed to enter the Buddhist church: "Are you a human being?" The world's suffrage will go in the long run to the writer or artist who dwells habitually in the center and not on the remote periphery of human nature. Gautier paid a doubtful compliment to Victor Hugo when he said that Hugo's works seemed to proceed not from a man, but an element, that they were Cyclopean, "as it were, the works of Polyphemus." Hugo remained the original genius to the end, in contrast with Goethe, who attained humane restraint after having begun as a Rousseauist.

Romanticism from the very beginning tended to become eccentric through over-anxiety to be original; and romanticism is now running to seed. Many of our contemporary writers are as plainly in an extreme as the most extreme of the neo-classicists. They think that to be original they need merely to arrive at self-expression without any effort to be representative. The neo-classicist, on the other hand, strove so hard to be representative that he often lost the personal flavor entirely and fell into colorless abstraction. Both extremes fail equally of being humane. For, to revert to our fundamental principle, the humanist must combine opposite extremes and occupy all the space between them. Genuine originality is so immensely difficult because it imposes the task of achieving work that is of general human truth and at the same time intensely individual. Perhaps the best examples of this union of qualities are found in Greek. The original man for the Greek was the one who could create in the very act of imitating the past. Greek literature at its best is to a remarkable degree a creative imitation of Homer.

The modern does not, like the Greek, hope to become original by assimilating tradition, but rather by ignoring it, or, if he is a scholar, by trying to prove that it is mistaken. We have been discussing thus far almost entirely the originality of the Rousseauist or sentimental naturalist; but we should not fail to note the curious points of contact here as elsewhere between sentimental and scientific naturalism. The Baconian aims less at the assimilation of past wisdom than at the advancement of learning. With him too the prime stress is on the new and the original. Formerly there was a pedantry of authority and prescription. As a result of the working together of Rousseauist and Baconian there has arisen a veritable pedantry of originality. The scientific pedant who is entirely absorbed in his own bit of research is first cousin to the artistic and literary pedant who is entirely absorbed in his own sensation. The hero of modern scholarship is not the humanist, but the investigator. The man who digs up an unpublished document from some musty archive outranks the man who can deal judiciously with the documents already in print. His glory will be all the greater if he can make the new document a pretext for writing a book, for attempting a rehabilitation. The love of truth shades imperceptibly into the love of paradox; and Rousseauist and Baconian often coexist in the same person.

A royal road to a reputation for originality is to impugn the verdicts of the past,—to whitewash what is traditionally black or to blackwash what is traditionally white. Only the other day one of the English reviews published the "Blackwashing of Dante." A still better example is Renan's blackwashing of King David, which concludes as follows. "Pious souls, when they take delight in the sentiments filled with resignation and tender melancholy contained in the most beautiful of the liturgical books, will imagine that they are in communion with this bandit. Humanity will believe in final justice on the testimony of David, who never gave it a thought and of the Sibyl, who never existed," etc. The whitewashings have been still more numerous. Rehabilitations have appeared of Tiberius, the Borgias, and Robespierre. A book has also been written to prove that the first Napoleon was a man of an eminently peace-loving disposition. Mr. Stephen Phillips undertakes to throw a poetical glamour over the character of Nero, that amiable youth, who, as the versifier in *Punch* observes,—

"would have doubtless made his mark,
Had he not, in a mad, mad, boyish lark,
Murdered his mother!"

If this whitewashing and blackwashing goes on, the time will soon come when the only way left to be original will be to make a modest plea for the traditional good sense of the world. This traditional good sense was never treated with an easier contempt than at present. A writer named Bax, who recently published a volume rehabilitating the revolutionary monster Marat, says in his preface: "It is in fact a fairly safe rule to ascertain for oneself what most people think on such questions" (*i.e.* as the character of Marat), "and then assume the exact opposite to be true." Of most books of this kind we may say what FitzGerald said when Henry Irving made himself up in the rôle of Shylock to look like the Saviour: "It is an attempt to strike out an original idea in the teeth of common sense and tradition." Of course there are in every age and individual, as we have said elsewhere, elements that run counter to the main tendency. One of the regular recipes for writing German doctors' theses is to seize on one of these elements, exaggerate it, and take it as a point of departure for refuting the traditional view. Thus Rousseau says in one place that he has always detested political agitators. We may be sure in advance that some German will start from this to prove that Rousseau has been cruelly maligned in being looked on as a revolutionist.

Even our more serious scholars are finding it hard to resist that something in the spirit of the age which demands that their results be not only just, but novel. Even our older universities are becoming familiar with the professor who combines in about equal measure his love of research and his love of the limelight. In public opinion, the perfection of the type is the Chicago professor whose originality has become the jest of the cheap newspapers. Here are a few Chicago "discoveries," selected almost at random from the many that have been announced from time to time in the daily press:—

Kissing causes lockjaw.

The Pennsylvanians are turning into Indians.

A man does not need to take exercise after the age of thirty-five.

Music is antiseptic.

A dog will not follow an uneducated man.

Marriage is a form of insanity.

Americans are incapable of friendship.

Boccaccio was a Swede.

John D. Rockefeller is as great a man as Shakespeare.

Some day a wounded or even worn-out heart of a human may be replaced by a healthy heart from a living monkey, etc.

The Chicago professors would say, and no doubt rightly, that they are misrepresented by these newspaper statements. But we are only giving the general impression. Even the utterance of Dr. Osler that at once gave him such a start over all his academic rivals in the race for notoriety becomes comparatively unsensational when read in its context. The professor with an itch for the limelight has only to pattern himself on Rousseau, the great master of paradox. Rousseau's method has been compared to that of a man who fires off a pistol in the street to attract a crowd. When Rousseau has once drawn his crowd, he may proceed to attenuate his paradox, until sometimes it is in danger of dwindling into a commonplace.

Most good observers would probably agree that contemporary scholarship and literature are becoming too eccentric and centrifugal; they would agree that some unifying principle is needed to counteract this excessive striving after originality. For example, Professor Gummere, who is one of the most distinguished representatives of the scholarly tradition that ultimately goes back to Herder and the Grimm brothers, diagnoses our present malady with great clearness in a recent article on "Originality and Convention in Literature." The higher forms of poetry and creative art, he says, are being made impossible by the disintegrating influences at work in modern life, and by an excess of analysis. He suggests as remedy that we jettison this intellectual and analytical element, and seek to restore once more the bond of communal sympathy. This remedy betrays at once its romantic origin. It is only one form of Rousseau's assumption that an unaided sympathy

will do more to draw men together than the naked forces of egoism and self-assertion will do to drive them asunder. Even in his studies of the beginnings of poetry Professor Gummere should, perhaps, have insisted more on communal discipline as a needful preliminary to communal sympathy. However that may be, our present hope does not seem to lie in the romanticist's attempt to revert to the unity of instinct and feeling that he supposes to have existed in primitive life. We need to commune and unite in what is above rather than in what is below our ordinary selves, and the pathway to this higher unity is not through sympathy, communal or otherwise, but through restraint. If we have got so far apart, it is because of the lack, not of sympathy, but of humane standards.

Without trying to enter fully into so large a topic as the impressionism of our modern society, its loss of traditional standards, and its failure as yet to find new, we may at least point out that education should be less infected than it is with a pedantic straining after originality. In general, education should represent the conservative and unifying element in our national life. The college especially must maintain humane standards, if it is to have any reason at all for existing as something distinct from university and preparatory school. Its function is not, as is so often assumed merely to help its students to self-expression, but even more to help them to become humane. In the words of Cardinal Newman, the college is "the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end"; this end is to supply principles of taste and judgment and train in sanity and centrality of view; to give background and perspective, and inspire, if not the spirit of conformity, at least a proper respect for the past experience of the world. Most of us have heard of Mrs. Shelley's reply when advised to send her boy to a school where he would be taught to think for himself: "My God! teach him rather to think like other people." Mrs. Shelley had lived with a man who was not only a real genius, but also an original genius in the German sense, and knew whereof she spoke. Now the college should not necessarily teach its students to think like other people, but it should teach them to distinguish between what is original and what is merely odd and eccentric, both in themselves and others. According to Lowell this is a distinction that Wordsworth could never make, and Wordsworth is not alone in this respect among the romantic leaders. We must insist, at the risk of causing scandal, that the college is not primarily intended to encourage originality and independence of thought as these terms are often understood. The story is told of a professor in one of our Eastern colleges that he invariably gave a high mark to the undergraduates who contradicted the received opinions in his subjects; but the highest mark here served for the undergraduate who in addition to contradicting the traditional view set up a new view of his own. As this fact became known, the professor was gratified by a rapid growth among his students of independent and original thinking.

The college should guard against an undue stress on self-expression and an insufficient stress on humane assimilation. This danger is especially plain in the teaching of English composition. A father once said to me of a "daily theme" course that it had at least set his son's wits to working. But what if it set them to working in the void? The most that can be expected of youths who are put to writing with little or no background of humane assimilation is a clever impressionism. They will be fitted, not to render serious service to literature, but at most to shine in the more superficial kinds of journalism. It is still an open question whether any direct method of teaching English really takes the place of the drill in the niceties of style that can be derived from translation, especially the translation of Latin; whether a student, for example, who rendered Cicero with due regard for the delicate shades of meaning would not gain more mastery of English (to say nothing of Latin) than a student who devoted the same amount of time to daily themes and original composition. We must, however, be fair to our departments of English. They have to cope with conditions not entirely of their own making, of which the most serious is something approaching illiteracy in many of the students that are forced upon them from the preparatory schools. In practice they have to

devote most of their time to imparting, not the elegancies, but the simplest decencies of the English language. Ultimately a great deal of what goes on in the more elementary college courses in English may well be relegated to the lower schools,—and the home,—and the work that is done in the advanced courses in composition will probably either be omitted entirely, or else done, as it is in France, in connection with the reading and detailed study of great writers. Assimilation will then keep pace as it should with expression.

Spinoza says that a man should constantly keep before his eye a sort of exemplar of human nature (*idea hominis, tamquam naturae humanae exemplar*). He should, in other words, have a humane standard to which he may defer, and which will not proscribe originality but will help him to discriminate between what is original and what is merely freakish and abnormal in himself and others. Now this humane standard may be gained by a few through philosophic insight, but in most cases it will be attained, if at all, by a knowledge of good literature—by a familiarity with that golden chain of masterpieces which links together into a single tradition the more permanent experience of the race; books which so agree in essentials that they seem, as Emerson puts it, to be the work of one all-seeing, all-hearing gentleman. In short, the most practical way of promoting humanism is to work for a revival of the almost lost art of reading. As a general rule, the humane man will be the one who has a memory richly stored with what is best in literature, with the sound sense perfectly expressed that is found only in the masters. Conversely, the decline of humanism and the growth of Rousseauism has been marked by a steady decay in the higher uses of the memory. For the Greeks the Muses were not the daughers of Inspiration or of Genius, as they would be for a modern, but the daughters of Memory. Sainte-Beuve says that "from time to time we should raise our eyes to the hill-tops, to the group of revered mortals, and ask ourselves: What would they say of us?" No one whose memory is not enriched in the way we have described can profit by this advice. Sainte-Beuve himself in giving it was probably only remembering Longinus.

1908

## 1881 ~ *Stuart Pratt Sherman* ~ 1926

SHERMAN achieved eminence as a teacher, scholar, and critic. He was born in Iowa, although his family came from New England. He spent his boyhood on an Iowa farm and in California whither he accompanied his father in search of health. After the latter's death he and his mother moved to Vermont, later to Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he attended the high school, and graduated from Williams College in 1903. Then followed three years of graduate study at Harvard leading to the doctorate, and a year as instructor in English at Northwestern University. In 1907 he was called to the University of Illinois where he was promoted rapidly, becoming head of his department by the time he was thirty. The greatest change in his life came in 1924 when he moved to New York to become editor-in-chief of the *Herald-Tribune* literary supplement, known as *Books*.

While Sherman was teaching, he wrote a biographical and critical study of Matthew Arnold which has not been superseded, edited numerous English classics for school and college use, and was one of the staff of collaborators on *The Cam-*

*bridge History of American Literature.* Occasionally he wrote a learned article. Along with his academic work he contributed a variety of articles to periodicals, especially the *Evening Post* and the *Nation*, including editorials, reviews of current books, and some more pretentious critical studies. The first collection of his critical writings, *On Contemporary Literature*, was published in 1917, the year in which his *Matthew Arnold: How to Know Him* also appeared. The two books made Sherman a national figure.

*On Contemporary Literature* is in large part an attack on the writers who represent the various grades and degrees of realism in recent literature. Sherman belabors them savagely against the background of his classical interests, and allies himself with the "classical" group of critics consisting of Brownell, Babbitt, his teacher at Harvard, and Paul Elmer More, who was editor of the *Nation.* For him at this early stage of his development, the surest criteria were to be found in the crystallized experience of the past as expressed in the great classics of the race. The younger writers and critics were clamoring for the separation of art and morality; Sherman made it very clear that he would tolerate nothing that was offensive to the moral sensibilities, thereby bringing himself into open conflict with radicals like Mencken, Lewisohn, Bourne, and Brooks. The critical tilting matches in which he participated are among the most exciting episodes in literary history.

But Sherman was not a confirmed classicist and traditionalist. Although leaning strongly in that direction, especially during his academic period, the World War helped to make him an apostle of militant and democratic Americanism. He felt under no obligation to cling indefinitely to his earlier ideas. The signs are noticeable in *Points of View* (1924), containing the essay on "The Significance of Sinclair Lewis," which marks, as it were, a turning point from Sherman the conservative and traditionalist to Sherman the becoming liberal. For this change of critical heart he has been taken to task by some of his admirers and lauded by his opponents. As a matter of fact it was inevitable that he should be affected to some extent by the currents that were beating about him. In his last books, *Critical Woodcuts* (1926), by some regarded his best work, and *The Main Stream* (1927), both written while he was a practical journalist, the breach with his past has widened considerably. Living in the hurly-burly of a great metropolis, associating with men and women actually engaged in the making of literature, and far removed from the protecting shades of academic elms, Sherman, never a recluse, now emerged into the clear light of the literary and critical activity of his day. This does not mean that the change was a clean about-face. His writing still savored of the formative years, but experience had softened his judgment—the man had become more tolerant and sympathetic. It is a matter of regretful speculation what Sherman might have accomplished if he had attained the Biblical measure of three score years and ten.

One of Sherman's chief assets was his gift of brilliant expression. In this respect

he is without a peer in his day. His genius for phrase-making keeps his pages sparkling through the most sober discussion. In the six-year duel which he waged with Mencken, the archmaster of a thundering vocabulary, Sherman delivered telling blows with his quicker, lighter, and more rapierlike thrusts. It seemed almost like a duel between a Big Bertha and a machine gun. By his agile mind, his sincerity and conviction, his clear, memorable style, Sherman not only upheld his cause, but brought new prestige to American criticism, and to the academic mind as well.

Sherman's published volumes are *On Contemporary Literature* (1917); *Matthew Arnold: How to Know Him* (1917); *The Significance of Sinclair Lewis* (1922); *Americans* (1922); *The Genius of America* (1923); *My Dear Cornelia* (1924); *Points of View* (1924); *Letters to a Lady in the Country* (1925); *Critical Woodcuts* (1926); *The Main Stream* (1927); *Shaping Men and Women* (1928); *The Emotional Discovery of America* (1932). The authorized biography is J. Zeitlin and H. Woodbridge, *Life and Letters of Stuart P. Sherman* (2 vols., 1929). For further study of Sherman's work as a critic and thinker see J. W. Beach, *The Outlook for American Prose* (1926); E. B. Burgum, "Stuart Sherman," *English Journal*, Feb., 1930; C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924); J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924); A. Warren, "Humanist into Journalist," *Sewanee Review*, July–Sept., 1930; G. R. Elliott, "Stuart Sherman and the War Age," *Bookman*, April–May, 1930; G. E. DeMille, *Literary Criticism in America* (1931); F. O. Matthiesen, "Sherman and Huneker," *New Republic*, Dec. 18, 1929; H. S. Canby, "Stuart P. Sherman," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Aug. 28, 1926; N. Foerster, "The Literary Historians," *Bookman*, July, 1930; M. M. Colum, "Stuart P. Sherman," *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 26, 1926.

## THE GENIUS OF AMERICA

Published in the *Atlantic*, Jan., 1921, and later reissued as the title essay of *The Genius of America*.

SOME people have one hobby and some another. Mine is studying the utterances of the Intelligentsia—a word by which those who think that they exhibit the latest aspect of mind designate themselves. I like to hear what our "young people" say, and to read what they write; for, though they are not meek, they will, at least in a temporal sense, inherit the earth—and one is always interested in heirs. So much depends upon them.

Not long ago, progressive thinkers organized a public dinner in order to consult together for the welfare of the Republic. The marks of a progressive thinker are profound pessimism with regard to the past and infinite hope with regard to the future. Such a thinker was the toastmaster. Now, a thoughtful and progressive pessimist is a joy forever. He says for the rest of us those bitter things about history and society which we all feel at times, but hesitate to utter, not being so certain that we possess the antidote. I had long surmised that this was not the best possible of worlds, whether one considered it in its present drunken and reeling state, or whether one peered backward, through stratum after stratum of wrecked enterprises, into its iniquitous and catastrophic antiquity. Accordingly, I felt a kind of rich, tragic satisfaction when this toastmaster, in a ten-minute introduction, reviewed the entire history of the world from the time of the Cave Man to the time of the Treaty of Versailles, and concluded with a delightfully cheerful smile:—

"Up to date civilization has been a failure. Life is tolerable only as a preparation for a state which neither we nor our sons shall enter. We shall all die in the desert," he continued, as the gloom thickened to emit the perorational flash; "but let us die like Moses, with a look into the Promised Land."

Then he began to call upon his associates in the organization of progress.

Nine-tenths of the speakers were, as is customary on such occasions, of the sort that

editors include when they arrange a series of articles called "Builders of Contemporary Civilization." They were the men who get cathedrals begun, and make universities expand, legislatures vote, armies fight, money circulate, commodities exchange, and grass grow two blades for one. They spoke in a business-like way of eliminating waste and introducing efficiency, of tapping unused resources here, of speeding up production there, of facilitating communications somewhere else. Except for the speeches of the bishop and the university president, the discourses had to my ear a somewhat mechanical twang. Yet one could not but approve and feel braced by the leading idea running through them all, which was to extend the control of man over nature and the control of a creative reason over man. All the speakers—engineer, banker, and farmer, no less than clergyman and educator—seemed to have their eyes fixed on some standard, which some internal passion for improvement urged them to approximate, or to attain. I couldn't help thinking how Franklin would have applauded the spirit of his posterity.

When, as I thought, the programme was completed, they had substituted for the present machinery of society a new outfit of the 1950 model, or perhaps of a still later date. The country, under intensive cultivation, looked like a Chinese garden. The roads, even in the spring of the year, were not merely navigable but Fordable. Something had happened to the great smoke-producing cities; so that Chicago, for instance, shone like a jewel in clear air and sunlight. High in the heavens, innumerable merchant vessels, guarded by aerial dreadnaughts, were passing in continuous flight across the Gulf to South America. Production had been so enormously increased by the increased expertness, health, and sobriety of the producers, that a man could go to market with only a handful of silver in his pocket and return with bread and butter enough for himself and his wife, and perhaps a couple of biscuits for his dog. Every one of the teeming population, alow and aloft, male and female, was at work in uniform, a rifle and a wireless field-telephone within easy reach; for every one was both an expert workman and a soldier. But no one was fighting. Under the shield of that profound "preparedness," the land enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity.

Perhaps I dreamed some of this. The speeches were long.

When I returned to a condition of critical consciousness, the toastmaster was introducing the last speaker as follows: "We have now provided for all matters of first-rate importance. But we have with us one of the literary leaders of the younger generation. I am going to call upon him to say a word for the way the man of the new Republic will express himself after he has been fed and clothed and housed. I shall ask him to sketch a place in our programme of democratic progress for art, music, literature, and the like—in short, for the superfluous things."

That phrase, "The superfluous things," rang in my ear like a gong: not because it was new, but because it was old; because it struck a nerve sensitive from repeated striking; because it really summed up the values of art for this representative group of builders; because it linked itself up with a series of popularly contrasted terms—practical and liberal studies, business English and literary English, useful and ornamental arts, valuable and graceful accomplishments, necessaries and luxuries of life, chemists and professors of English, and so on *ad infinitum*. I myself was a professor of superfluous things, and therefore, a superfluous professor. As I turned this uncomfortable thought over in my mind, it occurred to me that things are superfluous only with reference to particular ends; and that, in a comprehensive plan of preparation for a satisfactory national life, we might be compelled to revise the epithets conventionally applied to the arts which express our craving for beauty, harmony, happiness.

Before I had gone far in this train of thought, the literary artist was addressing the business men. His discourse was so remarkable, and yet so representative of our most conspicuous group of "young people," that I reproduce the substance of it here.

"The young men of my generation," he began, "propose the emancipation of the arts in America. Before our time, such third-rate

talents as the country produced were infected, by our institutions, and by the multitude, with a sense of their Messianic mission. Dominated by the twin incubi of Puritanism and Democracy, they servilely associated themselves with political, moral, and social programmes, and made beauty a prostitute to utility. Our generation of artists has seen through all the solemn humbug of your plans for the 'welfare of the Republic.' With a clearer-eyed pessimism than that of our toastmaster, we have not merely envisaged the failure of civilization in the past: we have also foreseen its failure in the future.

"We have talked with wiser counselors than those pious Philistines, our naïve Revolutionary Fathers. George Moore, our great contemporary, tells us that 'Humanity is a pig-sty, where liars, hypocrites, and the obscene in spirit congregate; and it has been so since the great Jew conceived it, and it will be so till the end.' Leopardi, who in this respect was our pioneer, declares that 'all things else being vain, disgust of life represents all that is substantial and real in the life of man.' Theodore Dreiser, our profound philosophical novelist, views the matter, however, with a bit of creative hopefulness. Though God, as he has assured us, cares nothing for the pure in heart, yet God does offer a 'universe-eating career to the giant,' recking not how the life-force manifests itself, 'so long as it achieves avid, forceful, artistic expression.' From serving the middle-class American, Flaubert frees us, saying, 'Hatred of the bourgeois is the beginning of virtue.' Mr. Spingarn, our learned theorist, brushes away the critical cobwebs of antique poetic doctrine, and gives us a clean aesthetic basis, by his revelation that 'beauty aims neither at morals nor at truth'; and that 'it is not the purpose of poetry to further the cause of democracy, or any other practical "cause," any more than it is the purpose of bridge-building to further the cause of Esperanto.' We have had to import our philosophy in fragments from beyond the borders of Anglo-Saxonia, from Ireland, Germany, France, and Italy; and we have had to call in the quick Semitic intelligence to piece it together. But here it is; and you will recognize that it liberates us from Puritanism and from Democracy. It emancipates us from you!

"You ask me, perhaps," continued the young representative of American letters, "what we intend to do with this new freedom, which, as Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn truly says, is our 'central passion.' Well, we intend *to let ourselves out.* If you press me as to what I mean by that, I can refer you to the new psychology. This invaluable science, developed by great German investigators, has recently announced, as you possibly know, an epoch-making discovery—namely, that most of the evil in the world is due to self-control. To modern inquiry, it appears that what all the moralists, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, have tried to curb or to suppress is precisely what they should have striven to release. If you wish corroboration, let me quote the words of our talented English colleague, Mr. W. L. George, the novelist, who says, 'I suspect that it does a people no good if its preoccupations find no outlet.'

"In passing I will remark that Mr. George, being an Englishman, shows a certain taint of inherited English Puritanism in defending letting the people out *in order to do them good.* From the point of view of the new philosophy, letting one's self out completely and perfectly is art, which has no purpose and therefore requires no defense.

"But to return: what are the 'preoccupations' of the ordinary man? Once more Mr. George shall answer for us. 'A large proportion of his thoughts run on sex if he is a live man.' French literature proves the point abundantly; American literature, as yet, very imperfectly and scantily. Consequently, a young American desiring to enlarge his sex-consciousness must import his fiction from overseas. But our own Mr. Cabell has also begun to prove the point as well as a foreigner. His release of the suppressed life is very precious. If he were encouraged, instead of being nipped by the frost of a Puritanical censorship; if a taste were developed to support him, he might do for us what George Moore is trying, subterraneously, to do for England.

"Our own Mr. Dreiser has been so preoccupied with this subject that he has been obliged to neglect a little his logic and his

grammar. His thinking, however, runs none the less surefootedly to the conclusion reached by Mr. George. What does that remorseless artist-thinker, Mr. Dreiser, say? He says: 'It is the desire to enthrone and enhance, by every possible detail of ornamentation, comfort, and color,—love, sensual gratification,—that man in the main moves, and by that alone.' We do not maintain that Mr. Dreiser is a flawless writer. But if, at your leisure, you will study that sentence from his latest and ripest book, till you discover its subject, predicate, and object, and can bridge its anacoluthon, and reconcile 'in the main' with 'by that alone,' then you will be in a position to grasp our leading idea for the future of the arts in America."

When the young man resumed his seat, there was a ripple of applause among the ladies, one of whom told me later that she thought the speaker's voice "delicious" and his eyes "soulful." But I noticed that the bishop was purple with suppressed wrath; that the university president had withdrawn; while the other builders of civilization, notably the business men, were nodding with a kind of patient and puzzled resignation.

In my neighborhood there was a quick little buzz of questions: "Will you tell me what all that has to do with a programme of democratic progress?"—"What is George Moore trying subterraneously to do for England? Is he interested in the collieries? I thought he was a novelist."—"He has downright insulted them" said my neighbor on the right, "don't you think?"

"Why, no," I replied, "not exactly. He was asked to speak on the superfluous things; and he has really demonstrated that they are superfluous. After this, don't you see, the builders of civilization can go on with their work and not worry about the arts. He has told them that beauty is not for them; and they will swiftly conclude that they are not for beauty. I think he has very honestly expressed what our radical young people are thinking. They are in revolt. They wish by all means to widen the traditional breach between the artist and the Puritan."

"What do you mean by Puritan?" inquired my friend, as we made our way out of the hall together.

He is a simple-hearted old gentleman who doesn't follow the new literature, but still reads Hawthorne and George Eliot.

"It isn't," I explained, "what I mean by Puritan that signifies. It is what the young people mean. A Puritan for them is any man who believes it possible to distinguish between good and evil, and who also believes that, having made the distinction, his welfare depends upon his furthering the one and curbing the other."

"But," cried the old gentleman in some heat, "in that sense, we are all Puritans. That isn't theological Puritanism. That is scarcely even moral Puritanism. It's just—it's just ordinary horse sense. In that sense, for God's sake, who isn't a Puritan?"

I recalled an old case that I thought would illustrate the present situation. "There was Judge Keeling," I said, "in Charles the Second's time. Judge Keeling put Bunyan in jail for failing to use the Book of Common Prayer, and similar misdemeanors. In the reign of the same Defender of the Faith, two merry wits and poets of his court became flown with wine and, stripping themselves naked, ran through the streets, giving a healthy outlet to their suppressed selves in songs of a certain sort. The constable, an ordinary English Puritan, so far misunderstood the spiritual autonomy which the artist should enjoy, that he arrested the two liberators of art. When, however, the news reached Judge Keeling, he released the young men and laid the constable by the heels; which, as Pepys,—himself a patron of the arts, yet a bit of a Puritan,—as Pepys remarked, was a 'horrid shame.' Now Judge Keeling, I think our own young people would admit, was not a Puritan, even in the latest sense of the term."

"But those Restoration fellows," replied my friend,—"Keeling and the wits and the rest of them,—they were opposing the sense of the whole English nation. They made no headway. No one took them seriously. They all disappeared like gnats in a snowstorm. When the central current of English life had done its scouring work, people thought of your two poets as mere stable-boys of the Restoration.

Surely you don't think our democratic young people are so silly as to imitate them? We have no merry monarch to reward them. What do they gain by setting themselves against the common sense?"

"Notoriety," I said, "which is as sweet under a republican as under a monarchical form of government. I used to think that to insult the common sense and always to be speaking contemptuously of the 'bourgeoisie,' implied sycophancy, either to a corrupt and degenerate aristocracy, or to a peculiarly arrogant and atheistical lowest class. But our 'democratic young people,' as you call them, preserve and foster this artistic snobbishness as a form of self-expression.

"When Mr. Dreiser declares that God cares nothing for the Ten Commandments or for the pure in heart, he really means that inanimate nature cares nothing for them, and that the animal kingdom and he and the heroes of his books follow nature. But he denies a faith which in some fifty millions of native Americans survives the decay of dogma, and somehow in attenuated form, keeps the country from going wholly to the dogs. For, of course, if it were demonstrable that God had abandoned a charge so important, plain men of sense would quietly assume responsibility and 'carry on' in his stead."

"I quite agree with you," said the old gentleman; "but as I am not acquainted with the author you mention and am just completing my third reading of *Middlemarch*, I will turn in here. Good-night."

I went on down the street, resuming, unaccompanied, the more difficult part of my meditation on the place of the fine arts in a programme of democratic progress, and internally debating with the young man who had caused such a sensation at dinner. Having made this general acknowledgment of his inspiration, I shall not attempt to reproduce our dialogue; for I found that he simply repeated the main points of his speech, and interrupted my comment upon it.

When Mr. Spingarn, who, as a man, is concerned with truth, morals, and democracy, and has a personal record of civil and military service—when Mr. Spingarn, as an aesthetic theorist, declares that beauty is not concerned with truth or morals or democracy, he makes a philosophical distinction which I have no doubt that Charles the Second would have understood, approved, and could, at need, have illustrated. But he says what the American schoolboy knows to be false to the history of beauty in this country. By divorcing, in his super-subtle Italian fashion, form from substance, he has separated beauty from her traditional associates in American letters, and so has left her open to seduction.

Beauty, whether we like it or not, has a heart full of service. Emancipated, she will still be seeking some vital activity. You have heard how the new writers propose to employ her new leisure; in extending the ordinary man's preoccupation with sex. We don't, you will observe, by the emancipation of the arts from service to truth, morals, and democracy—we don't obtain a "disinterested" beauty. We obtain merely a beauty with different interests—serving "sensual gratification" and propagating the curiously related doctrine that God cares nothing for the Ten Commandments or for the pure in heart.

We arrive finally at some such comprehensive formulation of relationships as this: It is the main function of art to deny what it is the main function of truth, morals, and democracy to affirm. Our speaker for the younger generation has made all this so clear that I suspect the bishop is going home resolved to take music out of his churches. The university president is perhaps deciding to replace his professor of Italian painting by an additional professor of soil-fertility. As for the captains of industry, they can hardly be blamed if they mutter among themselves: "May the devil fly away with the fine arts! Let's get back to business."

It is to be hoped, nevertheless, that the devil will not fly away with the fine arts or the fine artists, or with our freshly foot-loose and wandering beauty; for the builders of civilization have need of them. If the young people were not misled by more or less alien-spirited guides, the national genius itself would lead them into a larger life.

When our forefathers, whom it is now customary to speak of as "grim," outlined their programme for a new republic, though they

had many more immediately pressing matters on their minds, they included among objects to be safeguarded, indeed, among the inalienable rights of mankind, "the pursuit of happiness." It appears that they, like ourselves, had some dim idea that the ultimate end of their preparation was, not to fight the English or the savages or the wilderness, but to enjoy, they or their posterity, some hitherto unexperienced felicity. That, at heart, was what sustained them under the burdens and heats of a pioneering civilization, through those years when they dispensed with such ingredients of happiness as musical comedy and moving pictures, and when the most notable piece of imagist verse was Franklin's proverb, "It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright"—a one-line poem of humor, morality, insight, and imagination all compact.

We, too, entertain, we ordinary puritanical Americans, some shadowy notions of a time, when, at more frequent intervals than now, men shall draw in a delighted breath and cry, "Oh, that this moment might endure forever!" We believe in this far-off time, because, at least once or twice in a lifetime, each of us experiences such a moment, or, feeling the wind of its retreating wing, knows that it has just gone by. It may have been in the spell-bound glow of some magical sunset, or at the sound of a solemn music, or in the sudden apprehension of a long-sought truth, or at the thrill and tightening of resolution in some crisis, or in the presence of some fair marble image of a thought that keeps its beauty and serenity while we fret and fade. It may even have been at some vision, seen in the multitude of business, of a new republic revealed to the traveling imagination, like a shining city set on a hill in the flash of a midnight storm. Till life itself yields such moments less charily, it is incumbent upon the artist to send them as often as he can.

There came among us in war time an English poet whose face was as sad as his who from the Judecca climbed to see again *delle cose belle che porta il ciel*—the sky-borne beauty of the stars. He had been where his countrymen, fighting with incredible heroism, had suffered one of the most heart-breaking and bloody defeats in English history. His memory was seared with remembrance of the filth, waste, wounds, and screaming lunacy of the battle-front to which he was about to return. When someone asked him to write his name in a volume of his poems, he inscribed below it this line of his own verse:—

The days that make us happy make us wise.

Why these days? Because in them we learn the final object of all our preparation. These days serve us as measures of the success of our civilization.

The ultimate reason for including the "superfluous things"—art, music, literature—in a plan of national preparation is that, rightly used, they are both causes and consequences of happiness. They are the seed and the fruit of that fine and gracious and finished national life towards which we aspire. When the body is fed and sheltered, there remain to be satisfied—as what Puritan does not know?—the inarticulate hungers of the heart, to which all the arts are merely some of the ministers. Other ministers are religion, morality, patriotism, science, truth. It is only by harmonious coöperation that they can ever hope to satisfy the whole heart, the modern heart, with its ever-widening range of wakened hungers. It is certainly not by banishing or ignoring the austerer ministers, and making poetry, painting, and music perform a Franco-Turkish dance of sensual invitation—it is not thus that the artist should expect to satisfy a heart as religious, as moral, and as democratic as the American heart is, by its bitterest critics, declared to be.

"Art is expression," says the learned theorist of the young people, "and poets succeed or fail by their success or failure in completely expressing themselves." Let us concede that the poet who expresses completely what is in him by a hymn to the devil is as perfect an artist as a poet who expresses what is in him by the Iliad. Then let us remark that the poet who hymns the devil, the devil is likely to fly away with. And let us add as rapidly as possible a little series of neglected truisms. An artist is a man living in a great society. When a great artist expresses himself completely, it is found invariably that he has expressed, not merely himself, but also the dominant thought

and feeling of the men with whom he lives. Mr. Spingarn, indeed, indirectly admits the point when he says: "If the ideals they (the poets) express are not the ideals we admire most, we must blame, not the poets, but ourselves; in the world where morals count, *we have failed to give them the proper materials out of which to rear a nobler edifice.*" (Italics mine.) This seems to mean that society is responsible for the artist, even if the artist is not responsible to society. Society gives him, as a man, what, as an artist, he expresses.

I have perhaps hinted here and elsewhere my suspicion that Mr. Dreiser, a capital illustrative example, is not a great novelist, because, though living in a great society, he does not express or represent its human characteristics, but confines himself to an exhibition of the habits and traits of animals. Is it that we have not given him materials to rear a nobler edifice? That which we—that is, society—can give to a novelist is the moulding and formative influence of the national temper and character. What have we given to Mr. Dreiser? What, in short, are the dominant traits of the national genius? I am delighted to discover in Mr. Dreiser's latest book that he himself knows pretty well what the national genius is, how it has manifested itself in religion and politics, and how it is nourished and sustained by ancient traditions and strong racial proclivities. I like to agree with our young people when I can. When I find one of them testifying, contrary to their custom, that America does now possess a powerful national culture, I like to applaud his discernment. It is a pleasure to make amends for my disparagement of Mr. Dreiser as a novelist, by illustrating his critical ability with these words of his on the national genius:—

"No country in the world (at least, none that I know anything about) has such a peculiar, such a seemingly fierce determination to make the Ten Commandments work. It would be amusing, if it were not pitiful, their faith in these binding religious ideals. I have never been able to make up my mind whether this springs from the zealotry of the Puritans who landed at Plymouth Rock, or whether it is rooted in the soil . . . or whether it is a product of the Federal Constitution, compounded by such idealists as Paine and Jefferson and Franklin and the more or less religious and political dreamers of the preconstitutional days. *Certain it is that no such profound moral idealism animated the French in Canada, the Dutch in New York, the Swedes in New Jersey, or the mixed French and English in the extreme South and New Orleans.*" (Italics mine.)

I know how differently our young people feel; but, to my thinking, a national genius animated by an incomparably profound moral idealism does not seem such a contemptible moulding and formative influence for an artist to undergo. English-speaking poets, from Spenser to Walt Whitman, have grown great under the influence of such an environing spirit. At any rate, if the great artist, in expressing himself, expresses also the society of which he is a part, it should seem to follow, like a conclusion in geometry, that a great American artist must express the "profound moral idealism" of America. To rail against it, to lead an insurrection against it, is to repeat the folly of the Restoration wits. If in this connection one may use a bit of the American language, it is to "buck" the national genius; and this is an enterprise comparable with bucking a stone wall. On the other hand to acknowledge the leadership of the national genius, to subject one's self to its influence, to serve it according to one's talents, to find beautiful and potent forms to express its working—this is to ally one's self with the general creative effort of the country in all fields of activity; this is to be in a benign conspiracy with one's time and place, and to be upborne by the central stream of tendency.

There is small place for Bohemia in democratic art. I sometimes wonder with what spiritual refugees, under what rafters, those poets and novelists live who are so anxious to secede from the major effort of their countrymen. For their own sakes one wishes that they might cultivate acquaintance with our eminent "builders of civilization." The good that I should expect from this contact is a vision of the national life, a sense of the national will, which are usually possessed in some degree by those Americans, whatever their aesthetic deficiencies, who bear the burden of the state, or are widely conversant with its business, or

preside over its religious, moral, or educational undertakings. I do not intend in the least to suggest that the artist should become propagandist or reformer, or that he should go to the bishop or the statesman for a commission, though I believe that Leonardo and Michael Angelo did some very tolerable things under direct inspiration of that nature. What one feels is rather that intercourse with such men might finally create in our artistic secessionists a consciousness of the ignobility of their aims. For in America it will be found more and more that the artist who does not in some fashion concern himself with truth, morals, and democracy, is unimportant, is ignoble.

In an unfinished world, where religion has become so largely a matter of traditional sentiments and observances, poetry has a work to do, poetry of any high seriousness. Our critics and poets of vision have long since recognized what that work is. "I said to Bryant and to these young people," wrote Emerson in his journal many years ago, "that the high poetry of the world from the beginning has been ethical, and it is the tendency of the ripe modern mind to produce it."—"I hate literature," said Whitman, perhaps over emphatically expressing the traditional American disdain for art in its merely decorative and recreative aspects. "Literature is big only in one way, when used as an aid in the growth of the humanities." Our young people, of course, will exclaim that these are typical utterances of our New England Puritanism, fatal to the arts; but, as a matter of fact, this Puritanism is of a sort that the New Englanders shared with Plato and Aristotle, who have not been fatal to the arts. When Emerson said, "Honor every truth by use," he expressed, I think, what Socrates would have approved, and at the same time he spoke in fullest accord with the national genius, ever driving at practice, ever pressing towards the fulfillment of its vision.

Why should a spokesman for *belles-lettres*, bred in the national tradition, hesitate to go before a group of "practical" men and talk to them, unashamed, of the "utilities" of artistic expression? He may borrow a figure from the economist, and declare that the poet "socializes" the spiritual wealth of the country. Art is rooted in social instinct, in a desire to communicate goods to others, to share one's private experience and anticipations. It is the spontaneous overflow of thoughts and feelings which one cannot consume alone. "Full of the common joy," says Donne, "I uttered some." This is your true and unassailable communism. When Saint Gaudens, having conceived his heroic and inspiring image of Colonel Shaw leading his colored troops, sets it up on Boston Common, it becomes common property; and the loafer in the park, the student, the hurrying merchant, the newsboy, are equal sharers in its commemoration and inspiration. A village poet with an ethical bent makes this thought sing:—

> When duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
> The youth replies, "I can,"—

and he has slipped a spiritual gold-piece into the palm of each of his fellow countrymen. This is wealth really distributed. It would be of advantage to both bards and business men if some spiritual economist would remind them more frequently that the wealth of a community is in proportion to the number of such ideas that it has in common.

Among builders of American civilization, many means are now discussed for awakening national pride and attaching the affections of the people to the state; conspicuous among them are, or were, Liberty Bonds, nationalization of the railroads, and universal military service. Robert Burns and Sir Walter did the work more simply and cheaply for Scotland. It has never been hard for the native-born American to hold America "first" in political affairs; but musicians as such, painters as such, men of letters as such, cannot, without straining the meaning of the word, hold her first till her national genius expresses itself as adequately, as nobly, in music, painting, and literature, as it has, on the whole, in the great political crises. Irving, at the beginning of the last century, worked with a clear understanding of our deficiencies when he wrote his *Rip Van Winkle* and other legends of the Hudson Valley, with the avowed purpose "to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the

cities of the Old World, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home."

You may persuade all men to buy Liberty Bonds or to invest in the stock of nationalized railroads, or you may legislate them into the army; but you cannot dragoon them into crying, "O beautiful, my country!" That is the work of the poets, who have entwined their loyalty with their heart-strings. That is the work of the artists, who have made their Americanism vital, devout, affectionate. "How can our love increase," asks Thoreau, "unless our loveliness increases also?" A good question for "Americanizers" to meditate upon. It would benefit both public men and artists if someone reminded them more frequently that one of the really important tasks of national preparation is to draw out and express in forms of appealing beauty, audible as poetry or music, visible as painting or sculpture, the purpose and meaning of this vast half-articulate land, so that our hosts of new and unlearned citizens may come to understand her as they understand the divine compassion—by often kneeling before some shrine of the Virgin.

When art becomes thus informed with the larger life of the country, it vitalizes and gives permanency to the national ideals. It transmits the hope and courage and aspiration of one generation to the next, with the emotional glow and color undiminished and unimpaired. If we receive and cherish the tradition, our imaginative experience transcends the span of our natural lives. We live in the presence, as Burke declared, of our "canonized" forefathers and in a kind of reverent apprehension of our posterity, happily conscious of a noble and distinguished national thought and feeling, "above the vulgar practice of the hour."

Precisely because Lincoln had communed intimately with the national genius and obeyed devoutly its promptings, America ceases, in some passages of his letters and speeches, to be a body politic and becomes a living soul. Who was it wrote that letter to Mrs. Bixby on the loss of her five sons in battle? "I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic that they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

The words are thrilling still with the pathos and splendor of patriotic death. They seem charged with the tears and valor of the whole Civil War. To speak like that of death is to unfold the meaning of the Latin verse: *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.* It is to hallow the altar on which the sacrifice is made. One can hardly read the letter through with dry eyes; and yet reading it makes one very happy. It makes one happy because it renders one in imagination a sharer of that splendid sacrifice, that solemn pride, that divine consolation. It makes one happy because it uplifts the heart and purges it of private interests, and admits one into the higher, and more spacious, and grander life of the nation. For my purposes I am not writing an anti-climax when I say that it makes one happy because it is the perfect expression of a deep, grave, and noble emotion, which is the supreme triumph of the expressive arts. It is the work of a great artist. Was it Lincoln? Or was it the America of our dreams? It was the voice of the true emancipator of our art, who will always understand that his task is not to set Beauty and Puritanism at loggerheads, but to make Puritanism beautiful.

1921

# 1880 — *Henry Louis Mencken* — —

MENCKEN is a native of Baltimore and has lived in that city all his life. He was educated in private schools and the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, but looked upon college as a waste of time, inasmuch as he was expected to join his father in the tobacco business. After the latter's death he secured a position on the Baltimore *Morning Herald*, and served on various papers until 1914, when he became co-editor of *The Smart Set* with George Jean Nathan. From 1924 to 1933 he edited *The American Mercury*.

By some Mencken has been acclaimed as the greatest critic America has produced; others deny that he is a critic at all. Somewhere between these extremes must lie the true judgment of this man who, more than any other essayist, commanded the attention of the cynical nineteen-twenties. At the moment his influence may be waning, but his oratorios of denunciation of a former day are still read with eager interest and enthusiasm. Though retired from active journalism, and for that reason not so much in the public eye, his presence is attested by the appearance of an occasional book, and the haunting feeling that behind the scenes he is still watching the American show, prepared at any moment to dart upon the platform and rail at its stupidity and dullness. For among numerous others, stupidity and dullness, which he associated with democracy, were his pet anathemas.

Whether or not he is to be regarded as a critic will depend, to be sure, upon the point of view. But in a matter of critical controversy it is well to follow Carlyle's suggestion and judge the matter from within rather than on any external basis. Mencken himself leaves no doubt in the reader's mind. He regarded himself as a critic; but a critic with a function and mission of his own devising, who thrusts aside practically all the ideals which have hitherto motivated the work of the critic.

To begin with, criticism must be emancipated from the mistaken notion that it deals with ideas at second hand. Criticism, he maintains, is an art, the critic an artist who seeks self-expression as does the poet, painter, novelist, or musician, the only difference being that he proceeds from the vantage point of another's ideas, rather than his own. He has the same desire for the free play of his powers, the same zeal to give beautiful and permanent form to ideas, and the same hope to draw to himself the attention of thinking people. But the final product is therefore primarily the expression of the critic's ideas. For that reason Mencken approves of the methods of the earlier reviewers who wrote lengthy treatises on subjects suggested by the work or works under consideration. And in whatever he has written, his personality colors and dominates the scene.

Though not a scholar in the technical or professional sense of the term, the range of his interests and information is amazing, and he has explored many areas in the world's intellectual and artistic geography. The mere titles of his books convey an idea of this range—*The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908), *In Defense of Women* (1917), *Prejudices* (six series, 1919–1927), *Notes on Democracy* (1926), *Treatise on the Gods* (1930), *Treatise on Right and Wrong* (1934), and *The American Language* (rev. ed., 1936). He has entered the fields of philosophy, literature and art, linguistics, politics, economics, ethics, and religion.

In method he is iconoclastic and destructive. He rather frowns upon so-called constructive criticism as futile, for one never learns anything from it. By some he has been called the debunker of American literature, for many established reputations have fallen under his sturdy hammer strokes. Nor is he exclusively negative in his thought, for he was also instrumental in helping to establish reputations, as in the cases of Dreiser and Cabell. Criticism is a very personal matter, cannot be anticipated, and follows its own course. To him nothing is sacred, he bows before no idol or standard, feels no reverence for tradition or accepted usage, belabors Bryan and God with equal vehemence, a veritable bull in the world's china shop of ideas. In philosophy he was in some respects a disciple of Nietzsche and his ruthless superman philosophy; in religion he owes much to Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley.

Beside dullness and stupidity the chief objects of his venom are sham, pretense, and hypocrisy, in whatever form they may appear. And when one remembers that in his opinion humanity has been and is guilty of all these sins, it is easy to understand the Berserker rage with which he swings his flaying cudgels. He would have human beings emerge from under the dead weight of the past, assert their dignity and power in the light of growing knowledge and intelligence, and achieve their destiny through urges from within rather than through inspiration from without. And yet, despite his one-time radical protestations, present developments have made him seem reactionary. A Nietzschean aristocrat, he is an archenemy of both democracy and socialism, and an upholder of the reactionary order of *laissez-faire*. "I am," he says, as quoted by Glicksberg, "in many fields a flouter of the accepted revelation and hence immoral, but the field of economics is not one of them. Here, indeed, I know of no man who is more orthodox than I am. I believe that the present organization of society, as bad as it is, is better than any other that has ever been proposed. I reject all the sure cures in current agitation from government ownership to the single tax. I am in favor of free competition in all human enterprises, and to the utmost limit."

Mencken wrote against the background of a changing America; ideas, standards, and authority were tested, found wanting, and left by the wayside. This foot-loose quality is undoubtedly responsible for his refusal to conform. Some writers maintain that his method was a conscious and deliberate bid for a hearing. Whatever the

reason, he injected new vitality into American criticism at a time when it was drooping with inanition, and his virile bludgeonings are refreshing after the vague vaporings of some of his immediate predecessors. He irritates, exasperates, but also stimulates and invigorates. What the ultimate value of his writings will be cannot be guessed, much less predicted, but that he will continue to be read is assured. He is startling and interesting, an expert in the manipulation and expression of ideas. He has made criticism a thrilling experience and has added to American humor.

Since most of Mencken's books are of a critical nature no attempt will be made to classify them. Representative titles will be listed chronologically as follows: *George Bernard Shaw: His Plays* (1905); *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908); *A Little Book in C Major* (1916); *A Book of Prefaces* (1917); *In Defense of Women* (1918); *The American Language* (1919, rev. 1921, 1923, 1935); *Prejudices* (6 vols., 1919–27); *The American Credo*, introduction by G. J. Nathan (1920, rev. 1921); *Notes on Democracy* (1926); *James Branch Cabell* (1927); *Treatise on the Gods* (1930); *Treatise on Right and Wrong* (1934). I. Goldberg, *The Man Mencken* (1925), is a full-length biographical study. Briefer accounts are available in J. Farrar, ed., *The Literary Spotlight* (1924); G. J. Nathan, *The Intimate Notebooks of George Jean Nathan* (1932); E. Clark, *Innocence Abroad* (1931); O. Hatteras, *Pistols for Two* (1917), said to have been written by Nathan and Mencken under a pseudonym. Available critical studies are J. W. Beach, *The Outlook for American Prose* (1926); E. Boyd, *H. L. Mencken* (1925); J. B. Cabell, *Some of Us* (1930); V. F. Calverton, *The Newer Spirit* (1925); H. S. Canby, *American Estimates* (1929); B. DeCasseres, *Mencken and Shaw* (1930); C. Van Doren, *Many Minds* (1924); S. P. Sherman, *Critical Woodcuts* (1926); S. P. Sherman, *Americans* (1922); F. L. Pattee, *Side-Lights on American Literature* (1922); H Wickham, *The Impuritans* (1929); Van W. Brooks, *Sketches in Criticism* (1932); R. Forsythe, *Redder Than the Rose* (1935); F. Harris, *Contemporary Portraits* (4th ser., 1923); E. S. Sergeant, *Fire Under the Andes* (1927); H. M. Parshley, "H. L. Mencken: an Appreciation," *American Review*, Jan.–Feb., 1925; W. Lippmann, *Men of Destiny* (1927); B. Rascoe and others, *H. L. Mencken* (1920); J. B. Harrison, *A Short View of Menckenism in Menckenese* (1927); *Menckeniana: a Schimpflexikon* (1928); T. Maynard, "Mencken Leaves 'The American Mercury'," *Catholic World*, April, 1934; S. Collins, "Criticism in America," *Bookman*, June, 1930; C. Van Doren, "Smartness and Light. H. L. Mencken: a Gadfly for Democracy," *Century*, March, 1923; I. Babbitt, "The Critic and American Life," *Forum*, Feb., 1928; G. K. Chesterton, "The Skeptic as Critic," *Forum*, Feb., 1929; C. F. Glicksberg, "H. L. Mencken: The Dean of Iconoclasts," *Calcutta Review*, April, 1938.

## FOOTNOTE ON CRITICISM

**From *Prejudices: Third Series* (1922). Mencken is one of the most robust iconoclasts of his generation. Although he is perhaps best known as a literary critic, he wrote on a variety of subjects such as politics, philosophy, ethics, religion, and the place of women in society. His vigorous style is well suited to his radical temper.**

NEARLY all the discussions of criticism that I am acquainted with start off with a false assumption, to wit, that the primary motive of the critic, the impulse which makes a critic of him instead of, say, a politician, or a stockbroker, is pedagogical—that he writes because he is possessed by a passion to advance the enlightenment, to put down error and wrong, to disseminate some specific doctrine; psychological, epistemological, historical, or aesthetic. This is true, it seems to me, only of bad critics, and its degree of truth increases in direct ratio to their badness. The motive of the critic who is really worth reading—the only critic of whom, indeed, it may be said

truthfully that it is at all possible to read him, save as an act of mental discipline—is something quite different. That motive is not the motive of the pedagogue, but the motive of the artist. It is no more and no less than the simple desire to function freely and beautifully, to give outward and objective form to ideas that bubble inwardly and have a fascinating lure in them, to get rid of them dramatically and make an articulate noise in the world. It was for this reason that Plato wrote the "Republic," and for this reason that Beethoven wrote the Ninth Symphony, and it is for this reason, to drop a million miles, that I am writing the present essay. Everything else is afterthought, mock-modesty, messianic delusion—in brief, affectation and folly. Is the contrary conception of criticism widely cherished? Is it almost universally held that the thing is a brother to jurisprudence, advertising, laparotomy, chautauqua lecturing and the art of the schoolmarm? Then certainly the fact that it is so held should be sufficient to set up an overwhelming probability of its lack of truth and sense. If I speak with some heat, it is as one who has suffered. When, years ago, I devoted myself diligently to critical pieces upon the writings of Theodore Dreiser, I found that practically every one who took any notice of my proceedings at all fell into either one of two assumptions about my underlying purpose: (*a*) that I had a fanatical devotion for Mr. Dreiser's ideas and desired to propagate them, or (*b*) that I was an ardent patriot, and yearned to lift up American literature. Both assumptions were false. I had then, and I have now, very little interest in many of Mr. Dreiser's main ideas; when we meet, in fact, we usually quarrel about them. And I am wholly devoid of public spirit, and haven't the least lust to improve American literature; if it ever came to what I regard as perfection my job would be gone. What, then, was my motive in writing about Mr. Dreiser so copiously? My motive, well known to Mr. Dreiser himself and to every one else who knew me as intimately as he did, was simply and solely to sort out and give coherence to the ideas of Mr. Mencken, and to put them into suave and ingratiating terms, and to discharge them with a flourish, and maybe with a phrase of pretty song, into the dense fog that blanketed the Republic.

The critic's choice of criticism rather than of what is called creative writing is chiefly a matter of temperament—perhaps, more accurately of hormones—with accidents of education and environment to help. The feelings that happen to be dominant in him at the moment the scribbling frenzy seizes him are feelings inspired, not directly by life itself, but by books, pictures, music, sculpture, architecture, religion, philosophy—in brief, by some other man's feelings about life. They are thus, in a sense, secondhand, and it is no wonder that creative artists so easily fall into the theory that they are also second-rate. Perhaps they usually are. If, indeed, the critic continues on this plane—if he lacks the intellectual agility and enterprise needed to make the leap from the work of art to the vast and mysterious complex of phenomena behind it —then they *always* are, and he remains no more than a fugelman or policeman to his betters. But if a genuine artist is concealed within him—if his feelings are in any sense profound and original, and his capacity for self-expression is above the average of educated men—then he moves inevitably from the work of art to life itself, and begins to take on a dignity that he formerly lacked. It is impossible to think of a man of any actual force and originality, universally recognized as having those qualities, who spent his whole life appraising and describing the work of other men. Did Goethe, or Carlyle, or Matthew Arnold, or Sainte-Beuve, or Macaulay, or even, to come down a few pegs, Lewes, or Lowell, or Hazlitt? Certainly not. The thing that becomes most obvious about the writings of all such men, once they are examined carefully, is that the critic is always being swallowed up by the creative artist—that what starts out as the review of a book, or a play, or other work of art, usually develops very quickly into an independent essay upon the theme of that work of art, or upon some theme that it suggests—in a word, that it becomes a fresh work of art, and only indirectly related to the one that suggested it. This fact, indeed, is so plain that it scarcely needs statement.

What the pedagogues always object to in, for example, the *Quarterly* reviewers is that they forgot the books they were supposed to review, and wrote long papers—often, in fact, small books—expounding ideas suggested (or not suggested) by the books under review. Every critic who is worth reading falls inevitably into the same habit. He cannot stick to his task: what is before him is always infinitely less interesting to him than what is within him. If he is genuinely first-rate—if what is within him stands the test of type, and wins an audience, and produces the reactions that every artist craves—then he usually ends by abandoning the criticism of specific works of art altogether, and setting up shop as a merchant in general ideas, *i.e.*, as an artist working in the materials of life itself.

Mere reviewing, however conscientiously and competently it is done, is plainly a much inferior business. Like writing poetry, it is chiefly a function of intellectual immaturity. The young literatus just out of the university, having as yet no capacity for grappling with the fundamental mysteries of existence, is put to writing reviews of books, or plays, or music, or painting. Very often he does it extremely well; it is, in fact, not hard to do well, for even decayed pedagogues often do it, as such graves of the intellect as the New York *Times* bear witness. But if he continues to do it, whether well or ill, it is a sign to all the world that his growth ceased when they made him *Artium Baccalaureus*. Gradually he becomes, whether in or out of the academic grove, a professor, which is to say, a man devoted to diluting and retailing the ideas of his superiors—not an artist, not even a bad artist, but almost the antithesis of an artist. He is learned, he is sober, he is painstaking and accurate—but he is as hollow as a jug. Nothing is in him save the ghostly echoes of other men's thoughts and feelings. If he were a genuine artist he would have thoughts and feelings of his own, and the impulse to give them objective form would be irresistible. An artist can no more withstand that impulse than a politician can withstand the temptations of a job. There are no mute, inglorious Miltons, save in the hallucinations of poets. The one sound test of a Milton is that he functions as a Milton. His difference from other men lies precisely in the superior vigor of his impulse to self-expression, not in the superior beauty and loftiness of his ideas. Other men, in point of fact, often have the same ideas, or perhaps even loftier ones, but they are able to suppress them, usually on grounds of decorum, and so they escape being artists, and are respected by right-thinking persons, and die with money in the bank, and are forgotten in two weeks.

Obviously, the critic whose performance we are commonly called upon to investigate is a man standing somewhere along the path leading from the beginning that I have described to the goal. He has got beyond being a mere cataloguer and valuer of other men's ideas, but he has not yet become an autonomous artist—he is not yet ready to challenge attention with his own ideas alone. But it is plain that his motion, in so far as he is moving at all, must be in the direction of that autonomy—that is, unless one imagines him sliding backward into senile infantilism: a spectacle not unknown to literary pathology, but too pathetic to be discussed here. Bear this motion in mind, and the true nature of his aims and purposes becomes clear; more, the incurable falsity of the aims and purposes usually credited to him becomes equally clear. He is not actually trying to perform an impossible act of arctic justice upon the artist whose work gives him a text. He is not trying with mathematical passion to find out exactly what was in that artist's mind at the moment of creation, and to display it precisely and in an ecstasy of appreciation. He is not trying to bring the work discussed into accord with some transient theory of aesthetics, or ethics, or truth, or to determine its degree of departure from that theory. He is not trying to lift up the fine arts, or to defend democracy against sense, or to promote happiness at the domestic hearth, or to convert sophomores into right-thinkers, or to serve God. He is not trying to fit a group of novel phenomena into the orderly process of history. He is not even trying to discharge the catalytic office that I myself, in a romantic moment, once sought to force upon him. He is, first and last, simply trying to express himself. He is trying

to arrest and challenge a sufficient body of readers, to make them pay attention to him, to impress them with the charm and novelty of his ideas, to provoke them into an agreeable (or shocked) awareness of him, and he is trying to achieve thereby for his own inner ego the grateful feeling of a function performed, a tension relieved, a *katharsis* attained which Wagner achieved when he wrote "Die Walküre," and a hen achieves every time she lays an egg.

Joseph Conrad is moved by that necessity to write romances; Bach was moved to write music; poets are moved to write poetry; critics are moved to write criticism. The form is nothing; the only important thing is the motive power, and it is the same in all cases. It is the pressing yearning of every man who has ideas in him to empty them upon the world, to hammer them into plausible and ingratiating shapes, to compel the attention and respect of his equals, to lord it over his inferiors. So seen, the critic becomes a far more transparent and agreeable fellow than ever he was in the discourses of the psychologists who sought to make him a mere appraiser in an intellectual customs house, a gauger in a distillery of the spirit, a just and infallible judge upon the cosmic bench. Such offices, in point of fact, never fit him. He always bulges over their confines. So labelled and estimated, it inevitably turns out that the specific critic under examination is a very bad one, or no critic at all. But when he is thought of, not as pedagogue, but as artist, then he begins to take on reality, and, what is more, dignity. Carlyle was surely no just and infallible judge; on the contrary, he was full of prejudices, biles, naïvetés, humors. Yet he is read, consulted, attended to. Macaulay was unfair, inaccurate, fanciful, lyrical—yet his essays live. Arnold had his faults too, and so did Sainte-Beuve, and so did Goethe, and so did many another of that line—and yet they are remembered today, and all the learned and conscientious critics of their time, laboriously concerned with the precise intent of the artists under review, and passionately determined to set it forth with god-like care and to relate it exactly to this or that great stream of ideas—all these pedants are forgotten. What saved Carlyle, Macaulay and company is as plain as day. They were first-rate artists. They could make the thing charming, and that is always a million times more important than making it true.

Truth, indeed, is something that is believed in completely only by persons who have never tried personally to pursue it to its fastnesses and grab it by the tail. It is the adoration of second-rate men—men who always receive it at secondhand. Pedagogues believe in immutable truths and spend their lives trying to determine them and propagate them; the intellectual progress of man consists largely of a concerted effort to block and destroy their enterprise. Nine times out of ten, in the arts as in life, there is actually no truth to be discovered; there is only error to be exposed. In whole departments of human inquiry it seems to me quite unlikely that the truth ever *will* be discovered. Nevertheless, the rubber stamp thinking of the world always makes the assumption that the exposure of an error is identical with the discovery of the truth—that error and truth are simple opposites. They are nothing of the sort. What the world turns to when it has been cured of one error, is usually simply another error, and maybe one worse than the first one. This is the whole history of the intellect in brief. The average man of today does not believe in precisely the same imbecilities that the Greek of the fourth century before Christ believed in, but the things that he *does* believe in are often quite as idiotic. Perhaps this statement is a bit too sweeping. There is, year by year, a gradual accumulation of what may be called, provisionally, truths—there is a slow accretion of ideas that somehow manage to meet all practicable human tests, and so survive. But even so, it is risky to call them absolute truths. All that one may safely say of them is that no one, as yet, has demonstrated that they are errors. Soon or late, if experience teaches us anything, they are likely to succumb too. The profoundest truths of the Middle Ages are now laughed at by schoolboys. The profoundest truths of democracy will be laughed at, a few centuries hence, even by schoolteachers.

In the department of aesthetics, wherein

critics mainly disport themselves, it is almost impossible to think of a so-called truth that shows any sign of being permanently true. The most profound of principles begins to fade and quiver almost as soon as it is stated. But the work of art, as opposed to the theory behind it, has a longer life, particularly if that theory be obscure and questionable, and so cannot be determined accurately. "Hamlet," the Mona Lisa, "Faust," "Dixie," "Parsifal," "Mother Goose," "Annabel Lee," "Huckleberry Finn"—these things, so baffling to pedagogy, so contumacious to the categories, so mysterious in purpose and utility—these things live. And why? Because there is in them flavor of salient, novel and attractive personality, because the quality that shines from them is not that of correct demeanor but that of creative passion, because they pulse and breathe and speak, because they are genuine works of art. So with criticism. Let us forget all the heavy effort to make a science of it; it is a fine art, or nothing. If the critic, retiring to his cell to concoct his treatise upon a book or play or what-not, produces a piece of writing that shows sound structure, and brilliant color, and the flash of new and persuasive ideas, and civilized manners, and the charm of an uncommon personality in free function, then he has given something to the world that is worth having, and sufficiently justified his existence. Is Carlyle's "Frederick" true? Who cares? As well ask if the Parthenon is true, or the C Minor Symphony, or "Wiener Blut." Let the critic who is an artist leave such necropsies to professors of aesthetics, who can no more determine the truth than he can, and will infallibly make it unpleasant and a bore.

It is, of course, not easy to practice this abstention. Two forces, one within and one without, tend to bring even a Hazlitt or a Huneker under the campus pump. One is the almost universal human susceptibility to messianic delusions—the irresistible tendency of practically every man, once he finds a crowd in front of him, to strut and roll his eyes. The other is the public demand, born of such long familiarity with pedagogical criticism that no other kind is readily conceivable, that the critic teach something as well as say something—in the popular phrase, that he be constructive. Both operate powerfully against his free functioning, and especially the former. He finds it hard to resist the flattery of his customers, however little he may actually esteem it. If he knows anything at all, he knows that his following, like that of every other artist in ideas, is chiefly made up of the congenitally subaltern type of man and woman—natural converts, lodge joiners, me-toos, stragglers after circus parades. It is precious seldom that he ever gets a positive idea out of them; what he usually gets is mere unintelligent ratification. But this troop, despite its obvious failings, corrupts him in various ways. For one thing, it enormously reënforces his belief in his own ideas, and so tends to make him stiff and dogmatic—in brief, precisely everything that he ought not to be. And for another thing, it tends to make him (by a curious contradiction) a bit pliant and politic: he begins to estimate new ideas, not in proportion as they are amusing or beautiful, but in proportion as they are likely to please. So beset, front and rear, he sometimes sinks supinely to the level of a professor, and his subsequent proceedings are interesting no more. The true aim of a critic is certainly not to make converts. He must know that very few of the persons who are susceptible to conversion are worth converting. Their minds are intrinsically flabby and parasitical, and it is certainly not sound sport to agitate minds of that sort. Moreover, the critic must always harbor a grave doubt about most of the ideas that they lap up so greedily—it must occur to him not infrequently, in the silent watches of the night, that much that he writes is sheer buncombe. As I have said, I can't imagine any idea—that is, in the domain of aesthetics—that is palpably and incontrovertibly sound. All that I am familiar with, and in particular all that I announce most vociferously, seem to me to contain a core of quite obvious nonsense. I thus try to avoid cherishing them too lovingly, and it always gives me a shiver to see any one else gobble them at one gulp. Criticism, at bottom, is indistinguishable from skepticism. Both launch themselves, the one by aesthetic presentations and the other by logical presentations, at the common human tendency to accept whatever is approved, to take in ideas

ready-made, to be responsive to mere rhetoric and gesticulation. A critic who believes in anything absolutely is bound to that something quite as helplessly as a Christian is bound to the Freudian garbage in the Book of Revelation. To that extent, at all events, he is unfree and unintelligent, and hence a bad critic.

The demand for "constructive" criticism is based upon the same false assumption that immutable truths exist in the arts, and that the artist will be improved by being made aware of them. This notion, whatever the form it takes, is always absurd—as much so, indeed, as its brother delusion that the critic, to be competent, must be a practitioner of the specific art he ventures to deal with, *i.e.*, that a doctor, to cure a belly-ache, must have a belly-ache. As practically encountered, it is disingenuous as well as absurd, for it comes chiefly from bad artists who tire of serving as performing monkeys, and crave the greater ease and safety of sophomores in class. They demand to be taught in order to avoid being knocked about. In their demand is the theory that instruction, if they could get it, would profit them—that they are capable of doing better work than they do. As a practical matter, I doubt that this is ever true. Bad poets never actually grow any better; they invariably grow worse and worse. In all history there has never been, to my knowledge, a single practitioner of any art who, as a result of "constructive" criticism, improved his work. The curse of all the arts, indeed, is the fact that they are constantly invaded by persons who are not artists at all—persons whose yearning to express their ideas and feelings is unaccompanied by the slightest capacity for charming expression—in brief, persons with absolutely nothing to say. This is particularly true of the art of letters, which interposes very few technical obstacles to the vanity and garrulity of such invaders. Any effort to teach them to write better is an effort wasted, as every editor discovers for himself; they are as incapable of it as they are of jumping over the moon. The only sort of criticism that can deal with them to any profit is the sort that employs them frankly as laboratory animals. It cannot cure them, but it can at least make an amusing and perhaps edifying show of them. It is idle to argue that the good in them is thus destroyed with the bad. The simple answer is that there *is* no good in them. Suppose Poe had wasted his time trying to dredge good work out of Rufus Dawes, author of "Geraldine." He would have failed miserably—and spoiled a capital essay, still diverting after three quarters of a century. Suppose Beethoven, dealing with Gottfried Weber, had tried laboriously to make an intelligent music critic of him. How much more apt, useful and durable the simple note: "Arch-ass! Double-barrelled ass!" Here was absolutely sound criticism. Here was a judgment wholly beyond challenge. Moreover, here was a small but perfect work of art.

Upon the low practical value of so-called constructive criticism I can offer testimony out of my own experience. My books are commonly reviewed at great length, and many critics devote themselves to pointing out what they conceive to be my errors, both of fact and of taste. Well, I cannot recall a case in which any suggestion offered by a constructive critic has helped me in the slightest, or even actively interested me. Every such wet-nurse of letters has sought fatuously to make me write in a way differing from that in which the Lord God Almighty, in His infinite wisdom, impels me to write—that is, to make me write stuff which, coming from me, would be as false as an appearance of decency in a Congressman. All the benefits I have ever got from the critics of my work have come from the destructive variety. A hearty slating always does me good, particularly if it be well written. It begins by enlisting my professional respect; it ends by making me examine my ideas coldly in the privacy of my chamber. Not, of course, that I usually revise them, but I at least examine them. If I decide to hold fast to them, they are all the dearer to me thereafter, and I expound them with a new passion and plausibility. If, on the contrary, I discern holes in them, I shelve them in a *pianissimo* manner, and set about hatching new ones to take their place. But constructive criticism irritates me. I do not object to being denounced, but I can't abide being school-mastered, especially by men I regard as imbeciles.

I find, as a practicing critic, that very few men who write books are even as tolerant as

I am—that most of them, soon or late, show signs of extreme discomfort under criticism, however polite its terms. Perhaps this is why enduring friendships between authors and critics are so rare. All artists, of course, dislike one another more or less, but that dislike seldom rises to implacable enmity, save between opera singer and opera singer, and creative author and critic. Even when the latter two keep up an outward show of good-will, there is always bitter antagonism under the surface. Part of it, I daresay, arises out of the impossible demands of the critic, particularly if he be tinged with the constructive madness. Having favored an author with his good opinion, he expects the poor fellow to live up to that good opinion without the slightest compromise or faltering, and this is commonly beyond human power. He feels that any let-down compromises *him* —that his hero is stabbing him in the back, and making him ridiculous—and this feeling rasps his vanity. The most bitter of all literary quarrels are those between critics and creative artists, and most of them arise in just this way. As for the creative artist, he on his part naturally resents the critic's air of pedagogical superiority and he resents it especially when he has an uneasy feeling that he has fallen short of his best work, and that the discontent of the critic is thus justified. Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice. Under it all, of course, lurks the fact that I began with: the fact that the critic is himself an artist, and that his creative impulse, soon or late, is bound to make him neglect the punctilio. When he sits down to compose his criticism, his artist ceases to be a friend, and becomes mere raw material for his work of art. It is my experience that artists invariably resent this cavalier use of them. They are pleased so long as the critic confines himself to the modest business of interpreting them—preferably in terms of their own estimate of themselves—but the moment he proceeds to adorn their theme with variations of his own, the moment he brings new ideas to the enterprise and begins contrasting them with their ideas, that moment they grow restive. It is precisely at this point, of course, that criticism becomes genuine criticism; before that it was mere reviewing. When a critic passes it he loses his friends. By becoming an artist, he becomes the foe of all other artists.

But the transformation, I believe, has good effects upon him: it makes him a better critic. Too much *Gemütlichkeit* is as fatal to criticism as it would be to surgery or politics. When it rages unimpeded it leads inevitably either to a dull professorial sticking on of meaningless labels or to log-rolling, and often it leads to both. One of the most hopeful symptoms of the new *Aufklärung* in the Republic is the revival of acrimony in criticism—the renaissance of the doctrine that aesthetic matters are important, and that it is worth the while of a healthy male to take them seriously, as he takes business, sport and amour. In the days when American literature was showing its first vigorous growth, the native criticism was extraordinarily violent and even vicious; in the days when American literature swooned upon the tomb of the Puritan *Kultur* it became flaccid and childish. The typical critic of the first era was Poe, as the typical critic of the second was Howells. Poe carried on his critical jehads with such ferocity that he often got into law-suits, and sometimes ran no little risk of having his head cracked. He regarded literary questions as exigent and momentous. The lofty aloofness of the don was simply not in him. When he encountered a book that seemed to him to be bad, he attacked it almost as sharply as a Chamber of Commerce would attack a fanatic preaching free speech, or the corporation of Trinity Church would attack Christ. His opponents replied in the same Berserker manner. Much of Poe's surviving ill-fame, as a drunkard and dead-beat, is due to their inordinate denunciations of him. They were not content to refute him; they constantly tried to dispose of him altogether. The very ferocity of that ancient row shows that the native literature, in those days, was in a healthy state. Books of genuine value were produced. Literature always thrives best, in fact, in an atmosphere of hearty strife. Poe, surrounded by admiring professors, never challenged, never aroused to the emotions of revolt, would probably have written poetry indistinguishable from the hollow stuff of, say, Prof. Dr. George E. Woodberry. It took the persistent (an often grossly unfair and dishonorable)

opposition of Griswold *et al* to stimulate him to his highest endeavors. He needed friends, true enough, but he also needed enemies.

Today, for the first time in years, there is strife in American criticism, and the Paul Elmer Mores and Hamilton Wright Mabies are no longer able to purr in peace. The instant they fall into stiff professorial attitudes they are challenged, and often with anything but urbanity. The *ex cathedra* manner thus passes out, and free discussion comes in. Heretics lay on boldly, and the professors are forced to make some defense. Often, going further, they attempt counter-attacks. Ears are bitten off. Noses are bloodied. There are wallops both above and below the belt. I am, I need not say, no believer in any magical merit in debate, no matter how free it may be. It certainly does not necessarily establish the truth; both sides, in fact, may be wrong, and they often are. But it at least accomplishes two important effects. On the one hand, it exposes all the cruder fallacies to hostile examination, and so disposes of many of them. And on the other hand, it melodramatizes the business of the critic, and so convinces thousands of bystanders, otherwise quite inert, that criticism is an amusing and instructive art, and that the problems it deals with are important. What men will fight for seems to be worth looking into.

1922

## LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC MAN

From *Notes on Democracy.*

UNDER the festive surface, of course, envy remains: the proletarian is still a democrat. The fact shows itself grimly whenever the supply of *panem et circenses* falls off sharply, and the harsh realities make themselves felt. All the revolutions in history have been started by hungry city mobs. The fact is, indeed, so plain that it has attracted the notice even of historians, and some of them deduce from it the doctrine that city life breeds a love of liberty. It may be so, but certainly that love is not visible in the lower orders. I can think of no city revolution that actually had liberty for its object, in any rational sense. The ideas of freedom that prevail in the world today were first formulated by country gentlemen, aided and abetted by poets and philosophers, with occasional help from an eccentric king. One of the most valid of them—that of free speech—was actually given its first support in law by the most absolute monarch of modern times, to wit, Frederick the Great. When the city mob fights it is not for liberty, but for ham and cabbage. When it wins, its first act is to destroy every form of freedom that is not directed wholly to that end. And its second is to butcher all professional libertarians. If Thomas Jefferson had been living in Paris in 1793 he would have made an even narrower escape from the guillotine than Thomas Paine made.

The fact is that liberty, in any true sense, is a concept that lies quite beyond the reach of the inferior man's mind. He can imagine and even esteem, in his way, certain false forms of liberty—for example, the right to choose between two political mountebanks, and to yell for the more obviously dishonest—but the reality is incomprehensible to him. And no wonder, for genuine liberty demands of its votaries a quality he lacks completely, and that is courage. The man who loves it must be willing to fight for it; blood, said Jefferson, is its natural manure. More, he must be able to *endure* it—an even more arduous business. Liberty means self-reliance, it means resolution, it means enterprise, it means the capacity for doing without. The free man is one who has won a small and precarious territory from the great mob of his inferiors, and is prepared and ready to defend it and make it support him. All around him are enemies, and where he stands there is no friend. He can hope for little help from other men of his own kind, for they have battles of their own to fight. He has made of himself a sort of god in his little world, and he must face the responsibilities of a god, and the dreadful loneliness. Has *Homo boobiens* any talent for this magnificent self-reliance? He has the same talent for it that he has for writing symphonies in the manner of Ludwig van Beethoven, no less and no more. That is to say, he has no talent whatsoever, nor even any understanding that such a talent exists. Liberty is unfathomable to him. He can no more comprehend it than he can comprehend honour. What he mistakes for it, nine times out of ten, is simply the banal right to empty halle-

lujahs upon his oppressors. He is an ox whose last proud, defiant gesture is to lick the butcher behind the ear.

"The vast majority of persons of our race," said Sir Francis Galton, "have a natural tendency to shrink from the responsibility of standing and acting alone." It is a pity that the great pioneer of studies in heredity did not go beyond the fact to its obvious causes: they were exactly in his line. What ails "the vast majority of persons of our race" is simply the fact that, to their kind, even such mild and narrow liberties as they can appreciate are very recent acquisitions. It is barely a century and a half—a scant five generations—since four-fifths of the people of the world, white and black alike, were slaves, in reality if not in name. I could fill this book with evidence, indubitable and overwhelming. There are whole libraries upon the subject. Turn to any treatise on the causes of the French Revolution, and you will find the French peasant of 1780 but little removed, in legal rights and daily tasks, from the *fellahin* who built Cheops' pyramid. Consult any work on the rise of the Industrial System in England, and you will find the towns of that great liberty-loving land filled, in the same year, with a half-starved and anthropoid proletariat, and the countryside swarming with a dispossessed and despairing peasantry. Open any schoolbook of American history, and you will see Germans sold like cattle by their masters. If you thirst for more, keep on: the tale was precisely the same in Italy, in Spain, in Russia, in Scandinavia, and in what remained of the Holy Roman Empire. The Irish, at the close of the Eighteenth Century, were clamped under a yoke that it took more than a century of effort to throw off. The Scotch, roving their bare intolerable hills, were only two steps removed from savagery, and even cannibalism. The Welsh, but recently delivered from voodooism to Methodism, were being driven into their own coal-mines. There was no liberty anywhere in Europe, even in name, until 1789, and there was little in fact until 1848. And in America? Again I summon the historians, some of whom begin to grow honest. America was settled largely by slaves, some escaped but others transported in bondage. The Revolution was imposed upon them by their betters, chiefly, in New England, commercial gents in search of greater profits, and in the South, country gentlemen ambitious to found a nobility in the wilderness. Universal manhood suffrage, the cornerstone of modern free states, was only dreamed of until 1867, and economic freedom was little more than a name until years later.

Thus the lower orders of men, however grandiloquently they may talk of liberty today, have actually had but a short and highly deceptive experience of it. It is not in their blood. The grandfathers of at least half of them were slaves, and the great-grandfathers of three-fourths, and the great-great-grandfathers of seven-eighths, and the great-great-great-grandfathers of practically all. The heritage of freedom belongs to a small minority of men, descended, whether legitimately or by adultery, from the old lords of the soil or from the patricians of the free towns. It is my contention that such a heritage is necessary in order that the concept of liberty, with all its disturbing and unnatural implications, may be so much as grasped—that such ideas cannot be implanted in the mind of man at will, but must be bred in as all other basic ideas are bred in. The proletarian may mouth the phrases, as he did in Jefferson's day, but he cannot take in the underlying realities, as was also demonstrated in Jefferson's day. What his great-great-grandchildren may be capable of I am not concerned with here; my business is with the man himself as he now walks the world. Viewed thus, it must be obvious that he is still incapable of bearing the pangs of liberty. They make him uncomfortable; they alarm him; they fill him with a great loneliness. There is no high adventurousness in him, but only fear. He not only doesn't long for liberty; he is quite unable to stand it. What he longs for is something wholly different, to wit, security. He needs protection. He is afraid of getting hurt. All else is affectation, delusion, empty words.

The fact, as we shall see, explains many of the most puzzling political phenomena of so-called free states. The great masses of men, though theoretically free, are seen to submit supinely to oppression and exploitation of a hundred abhorrent sorts. Have they no means

of resistance? Obviously they have. The worst tyrant, even under democratic plutocracy, has but one throat to slit. The moment the majority decided to overthrow him he would be overthrown. But the majority lacks the resolution; it cannot imagine taking the risk. So it looks for leaders with the necessary courage, and when they appear it follows them slavishly, even after their courage is discovered to be mere buncombe and their altruism only a cloak for more and worse oppressions. Thus it oscillates eternally between scoundrels, or, if you would take them at their own valuation, heroes. Politics becomes the trade of playing upon its natural poltroonery—of scaring it half to death, and then proposing to save it. There is in it no other quality of which a practical politician, taking one day with another, may be sure. Every theoretically free people wonders at the slavishness of all the others. But there is no actual difference between them.

1926

## 1857 ~ *Samuel McChord Crothers* ~ 1927

BY PROFESSION a minister and by avocation a literary man, Crothers was born in Illinois, of Scotch-Irish stock, with a strain of Huguenot blood on his mother's side. He received the A.B. degree from Wittenberg College and Princeton University, and attended Union Theological Seminary for his theological training. From 1877 to 1881 he held pastorates in Nevada and California. During this period he found himself growing out of sympathy with the strict Calvinism of the Presbyterian church. He spent a year in further study at the Harvard Divinity School, and entered the ministry of the Unitarian church. After serving congregations in Vermont and Minnesota, he was called in 1894 to the First Church in Cambridge, where he remained until his death. As preacher to Harvard University he was held in high regard by the academic community and won the abiding affection of generations of Harvard men.

Like Miss Repplier, Crothers is a familiar essayist akin to Charles Lamb. Also like Miss Repplier he is a representative of the genteel school. Although he lived through the social, ethical, and literary changes of the first quarter of the century, he retained a sane and balanced attitude, faithful to an earlier, more leisurely way of life, at the same time recognizing that the new movements were the inevitable outcome of the restless times. He was rooted in the past, for in the past he found the ideals that had stood the test and which were still vital for the present.

To be sure, he would not accept everything that the changes offered, and kept a sanely critical attitude toward them. As a practical preacher he had discovered that outright denunciation is seldom an effective way of curing social ills. He resorted therefore to the more subtle method of showing men their errors and shortcomings without arousing in them the "obstinacy of contradiction." By the discreet mingling of humor, gentle satire, and wit that is never caustic, frequently speaking in the third

person, and above all a gentle, sympathetic humanity, he took the sting out of his disapproval, and left the reader in good humor. Nor did he evade the issues which the times thrust upon him. The trends in contemporary literature, for instance, were irritating to his sensitive nature, but whatever irritation and impatience he felt were cleverly disguised, as in his "Satan Among the Biographers" for instance. But whether the subject is one of the newer sins, or one of more venerable vintage, the sparkling play of his mind illuminates it in all its phases, at the same time that it does not condone the ills of which he is aware, and seeks to make men aware. He is the kindly wit, humorist, satirist who is concerned about the ideals of life, and seeks to help men to build sanely upon the foundations of their own self-respect. His is a gentle, scholarly spirit that heals and purges while it amuses and entertains.

Crothers published numerous volumes of essays, among them *The Gentle Reader* (1903); *The Pardoner's Wallet* (1905); *By the Christmas Fire* (1908); *Among Friends* (1910); *The Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord* (1916); *Ralph Waldo Emerson: How to Know Him* (1921); *The Cheerful Giver* (1923); *The Thought Broker* (1928). F. M. Eliot, *Samuel McChord Crothers: Interpreter of Life* (1930), is an account of his life and work. Briefer studies are J. F. Newton, *Some Living Masters of the Pulpit* (1923); E. A. Talbot, "Samuel McChord Crothers," *Massachusetts Magazine*, Jan., 1917; J. G. Brooks, "Samuel McChord Crothers," *Survey*, Jan. 15, 1928; G. P. Voight, "Born Essayist," *Saturday Review of Literature*, April 13, 1935.

## THE HONORABLE POINTS OF IGNORANCE

This essay is included in *The Gentle Reader*. Tolerance, sanity, and humor, three marked traits in Crothers's work, are well illustrated.

I HAPPEN to live in a community where there is a deeply rooted prejudice in favor of intelligence, with many facilities for its advancement. I may, therefore, be looked upon as unmindful of my privileges when I confess that my chief pleasures have been found in the more secluded paths of ignorance.

I am no undiscriminating lover of Ignorance. I do not like the pitch-black kind which is the negation of all thought. What I prefer is a pleasant intellectual twilight, where one sees realities through an entrancing atmosphere of dubiety.

In visiting a fine old Elizabethan mansion in the south of England our host took us to a room where he had discovered the evidences of a secret panel. "What is behind it?" we asked. "I do not know," he answered; "while I live it shall never be opened, for then I should have no secret chamber."

There was a philosopher after my own heart. He was wise enough to resist the temptation to sell his birthright of mystery for a mess of knowledge. The rural New Englander expresses his interest by saying, "I want to know!" But may one not have a real interest in persons and things which is free from inquisitiveness? For myself, I frequently prefer not to know. Were Bluebeard to do me the honor of intrusting me with his keys, I should spend a pleasant half-hour speculating on his family affairs. I might even put the key in the lock, but I do not think I should turn it. Why should I destroy twenty exciting possibilities for the sake of a single discovery?

I like to watch certain impressive figures as they cross the College Yard. They seem like the sages whom Dante saw:—

"People were there with solemn eyes and slow,
Of great authority in their countenance."

Do I therefore inquire their names, and intrusively seek to know what books they have written, before I admire their scholarship? No, to my old-fashioned way of think-

ing, scholarship is not a thing to be measured; it is a mysterious effluence. Were I to see—

"Democritus who puts the world on chance,
Diogenes, Anaxagoras, and Thales,
Zeno, Empedocles, and Heraclitus,
. . . . . .
Tully and Livy and moral Seneca,
Euclid, geometrician, and Ptolemy,
Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna,"

I should not care to ask, "Which is which?" still less should I venture to interview Galen on the subject of medicine, or put leading questions to Diogenes. The combined impression of ineffable wisdom would be more to me than any particular information I might get out of them.

But, as I said, I am not an enthusiast for Ignorance. Mine is not the zeal of a new convert, but the sober preference of one to the manner born. I do not look upon it as a panacea, nor, after the habit of reformers, would I insist that it should be taught in the public schools. There are important spheres wherein exact information is much to be preferred.

Because Ignorance has its own humble measure of bliss I would not jump at the conclusion that it is folly to be wise. That is an extravagant statement. If real wisdom were offered me I should accept it gratefully. Wisdom is an honorable estate, and, doubtless, it has pleasures of its own. I only have in mind the alternative that is usually presented to us, conscious ignorance or a kind of knowingness.

It is necessary, at this point, to make a distinction. A writer on the use of words has a chapter on Ignorantism, which is a term he uses to indicate Ignorance that mistakes itself, or seeks to make others mistake it, for Knowledge. For Ignorantism I make no plea. If Ignorance puts on a false uniform and is caught within the enemy's lines, it must suffer the penalties laid down in the laws of war.

Nor would I defend what Milton calls "the barbarous ignorance of the schools." This scholastic variety consists of the scientific definition and classification of "things that aren't so." It has no value except as a sort of gelatine culture for the propagation of verbal bacteria.

But the affectations of the pedants or the sciolists should not be allowed to cast discredit on the fair name of Ignorance. It is only natural Ignorance which I praise; not that which is acquired. It was a saying of Landor that if a man had a large mind he could afford to let the greater part of it lie fallow. Of course we small proprietors cannot do things on such a generous scale; but it seems to me that if one has only a little mind it is a mistake to keep it all under cultivation.

I hope that this praise of Ignorance may not give offense to any intelligent reader who may feel that he is placed by reason of his acquirements beyond the pale of our sympathies. He need fear no such exclusion. My Lady Ignorance is gracious and often bestows her choicest gifts on those who scorn her. The most erudite person is intelligent only in spots. Browning's Bishop Blougram questioned whether he should be called a skeptic or believer, seeing that he could only exchange

"a life of doubt diversified by faith,
For one of faith diversified by doubt:
We called the chess-board white,—we call it black."

Whether a person thinks of his own intellectual state as one of knowledge diversified by ignorance or one of ignorance diversified by knowledge is a matter of temperament. We like him better when he frankly calls his intellectual chess-board black. That, at any rate, was the original color, the white is an afterthought.

Let me, then, without suspicion of treasonable intent, be allowed to point out what we may call in Shakespearean phrase "the honorable points of ignorance."

The social law against "talking shop" is an indication of the very widespread opinion that the exhibition of unmitigated knowledge is unseemly, outside of business hours. When we meet for pleasure we prefer that it should be on the humanizing ground of not knowing. Nothing is so fatal to conversation as an authoritative utterance. When a man who is capable of giving it enters,

"All talk dies, as in a grove all song
Beneath the shadow of a bird of prey."

Conversation about the weather would lose all its easy charm in the presence of the Chief of the Weather Bureau.

It is possible that the fear of exhibiting unusual information in a mixed company may be a survival of primitive conditions. Just as the domesticated dog will turn around on the rug before lying down, for hereditary reasons which I do not remember, so it is with civilized man. Once ignorance was universal and enforced by penalties. In the progress of the race the environment has been modified, but so strong is the influence of heredity that The Man Who Knows no sooner enters the drawing-room than he is seized by guilty fears. His ancestors for having exhibited a moiety of his intelligence were executed as wizards. But perhaps the ordinary working of natural selection may account for the facts. The law of the survival of the fittest admits of no exceptions, and the fittest to give us pleasure in conversation is the sympathetic person who appears to know very little more than we do.

In the commerce of ideas there must be reciprocity. We will not deal with one who insists that the balance of trade shall always be in his favor. Moreover there must be a spice of incertitude about the transaction. The real joy of the intellectual traffic comes when we sail away like the old merchant adventurers in search of a market. There must be no prosaic bills of exchange: it must be primitive barter. We have a choice cargo of beads which we are willing to exchange for frankincense and ivory. If on some strange coast we should meet simple-minded people who have only wampum, perhaps even then we might make a trade.

Have you never when engaged in such commerce felt something of the spirit of the grave Tyrian trader who had sailed away from the frequented marts, and held on

"O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits, and unbent sails
There where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales."

It is not every day that one meets with such shy traffickers, for the world is becoming very sophisticated. One does not ask that those with whom we converse should be ignorant of everything; it is enough that they should not know what is in our bales before we undo them.

One very serious drawback to our pleasure in conversation with a too well-informed person is the nervous strain that is involved. We are always wondering what will happen when he comes to the end of his resources. After listening to one who discourses with surprising accuracy upon any particular topic, we feel a delicacy in changing the subject. It seems a mean trick, like suddenly removing the chair on which a guest is about to sit down for the evening. With one who is interested in a great many things he knows little about there is no such difficulty. If he has passed the first flush of youth, it no longer embarrasses him to be caught now and then in a mistake; indeed your correction is welcomed as an agreeable interruption, and serves as a starting point for a new series of observations.

The pleasure of conversation is enhanced if one feels assured not only of wide margins of ignorance, but also of the absence of uncanny quickness of mind.

I should not like to be neighbor to a wit. It would be like being in proximity to a live wire. A certain insulating film of kindly stupidity is needed to give a margin of safety to human intercourse. There are certain minds whose processes convey the impression of alternating currents of high voltage on a wire that is not quite large enough for them. From such I would withdraw myself.

One is freed from all such apprehensions in the companionship of people who make no pretensions to any kind of cleverness. "The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot." What cheerful sounds! The crackling of the dry thorns! and the merry bubbling of the pot!

There is an important part played by what I may call defensive Ignorance. It was said of Robert Elsmere that he had a mind that was defenseless against the truth. It is a fine thing to be thus open to conviction, but the mental

hospitality of one who is without prejudices is likely to be abused. All sorts of notions importunately demand attention, and he who thinks to examine all their credentials will find no time left for his own proper affairs.

For myself, I like to have a general reception-room in my mind for all sorts of notions with which I desire to keep up only a calling acquaintance. Here let them all be welcomed, good, bad, and indifferent, in the spacious antechamber of my Ignorance. But I am not able to invite them into my private apartments, for I am living in a small way in cramped quarters, where there is only room for my own convictions. There are many things that are interesting to hear about which I do not care to investigate. If one is willing to give me the result of his speculations on various esoteric doctrines I am ready to receive them in the spirit in which they are offered, but I should not think of examining them closely; it would be too much like looking a gift horse in the mouth.

I should like to talk with a Mahatma about the constitution of the astral body. I do not know enough about the subject to contradict his assertions, and therefore he would have it all his own way. But were he to become insistent and ask me to look into the matter for myself, I should beg to be excused. I would not take a single step alone. In such a case I agree with Sir Thomas Browne that "it is better to sit down in modest ignorance and rest contented with the natural blessings of our own reasons."

There are zealous persons of a proselyting turn of mind who insist upon our accepting their ideas or giving reasons for our rejection of them. When we see the flames of controversy sweeping upon us, the only safety lies in setting a back fire which shall clear the ground of any fuel for argument. If we can only surround ourselves with a bare space of nescience we may rest in peace. I have seen a simple Chinese laundry-man, by adopting this plan, resist a storm of argument and invective without losing his temper or yielding his point. Serene, imperturbable, inscrutable, he stood undisturbed by the strife of tongues. He had one supreme advantage,—he did not know the language.

It was thus in the sixteenth century, when religious strife waxed mad around him, that Montaigne preserved a little spot of tolerant thought. "O what a soft, easy, and wholesome pillow is ignorance and incuriosity whereon to compose a well-contrived head!"

This sounds like mere Epicureanism, but Montaigne had much to say for himself: "Great abuse in the world is begot, or, to speak more boldly, all the abuses of the world are begot by our being taught to be afraid of professing our ignorance, and that we are bound to accept all things we are not able to refute. . . . They make me hate things that are likely when they impose upon me for infallible. I love those words which mollify and moderate the temerity of our propositions, 'Peradventure, in some sort, 'tis said, I think,' and the like. . . . There is a sort of ignorance, strong and generous, that yields nothing in honor and courage to knowledge; an ignorance which to conceive requires no less knowledge than knowledge itself."

Not only is protection needed from the dogmatic assaults of our neighbors, but also from our own premature ideas. There are opinions which we are willing to receive on probation, but these probationers must be taught by judicious snubbing to know their place. The plausibilities and probabilities that are pleasantly received must not airily assume the place of certainties. Because you say to a stranger, "I'm glad to see you," it is not certain that you are ready to sign his note at the bank.

When one happens to harbor any ideas of a radical character, he is fortunate if he is so constituted that it is not necessary for his self-respect that he should be cocksure. The consciousness of the imperfection of his knowledge serves as a buffer when the train of progress starts with a jerk.

Sir Thomas More was, it is evident, favorably impressed with many of the sentiments of the gentleman from Utopia, but it was a great relief to him to be able to give them currency without committing himself to them. He makes no dogmatic assertion that the constitution of Utopia was better than that of the England of Henry VIII. In fact, he professes to know nothing about Utopia except from

mere hearsay. He gracefully dismisses the subject, allowing the seeds of revolutionary ideas to float away on the thistle-down of polite Ignorance.

"When Raphael had made an end of speaking, though many things occurred to me both concerning the manners and laws of that country that seemed very absurd . . . yet since I perceived that Raphael was weary and I was not sure whether he could bear contradiction . . . I only commended their constitution and the account he had given of it in general; and so, taking him by the hand, carried him to supper, and told him I would find some other time for examining this subject more particularly and discoursing more copiously upon it."

One whose quiet tastes lead him away from the main traveled roads into the byways of Ignorance is likely to retain a feeling in regard to books which belongs to an earlier stage of culture. Time was when a book was a symbol of intellectual mysteries rather than a tool to be used. When Omar Khayyám sang of the delights of a jug of wine and a book, I do not think he was intemperate in the use of either. The same book and the same jug of wine would last him a long time. The chief thing was that it gave him a comfortable feeling to have them within reach.

The primitive feeling in regard to a book as a kind of talisman survives chiefly among bibliophiles, but with them it is overlaid by matters of taste which are quite beyond the comprehension of ordinary people. As for myself, I know nothing of such niceties.

I know nothing of rare bindings or fine editions. My heart is never disturbed by coveting the contents of my neighbor's bookshelves. Indeed, I have always listened to the tenth commandment with a tranquil heart since I learned, in the Shorter Catechism, that "the tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his." If that be all, it is not aimed at me, particularly in this matter of books.

I feel no discontentment at the disorderly array of bound volumes that I possess. I know that they are no credit either to my taste or to my scholarship, but if that offends my neighbor, the misery is his, not mine. If he should bring a railing accusation against me, let him remember that there is a ninth commandment which "forbiddeth anything that is injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name." As for any inordinate motions or affections toward his literary treasures, I have no more than toward his choice collection of stamps.

Yet I have one weakness in common with the bibliophile; I have a liking for certain books which I have neither time nor inclination to read. Just as according to the mediaeval theory there was a sanctity about a duly ordained clergyman altogether apart from his personal character, so there is to my mind an impressiveness about some volumes which has little to do with their contents, or at least with my knowledge of them. Why should we be too curious in regard to such matters? There are books which I love to see on the shelf. I feel that virtue goes out of them, but I should think it undue familiarity to read them.

The persons who have written on "Books that have helped me" have usually confined their list to books which they have actually read. One book has clarified their thoughts, another has stimulated their wills, another has given them useful knowledge. But are there no Christian virtues to be cultivated? What about humility, that pearl of great price?

To be constantly reminded that you have not read Kant's "Critique of the Pure Reason," and that therefore you have no right to express a final opinion on philosophy, does not that save you from no end of unnecessary dogmatism? The silent monitor with its accusing, uncut pages is a blessed help to the meekness of wisdom. A book that has helped me is "The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars of England," by Edward, Earl of Clarendon. I am by nature and education a Cromwellian, of a rather narrow type. I am more likely than not to think of Charles I as a man of sin. When, therefore, I brought home Clarendon's History I felt a glow of conscious virtue; the volume was an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace,—the grace of tolerance; and so it has ever been to me.

Years have passed, and the days of leisure have not yet come when I could devote myself to the reading of it. Perhaps the fact that I discovered that the noble earl's second sentence contains almost three hundred words may have had a discouraging influence,—but we will let that pass. Because I have not crossed the Rubicon of the second chapter, will you say that the book has not influenced me? "When to the sessions of sweet, silent thought," with the Earl of Clarendon, "I summon up remembrance of things past," is it necessary that I should laboriously turn the pages? It is enough that I feel my prejudices oozing away, and that I am convinced, when I look at the much prized volume, that there are two sides to this matter of the English-Commonwealth. Could the most laborious reading do more for me?

Indeed, it is dangerous, sometimes, not to let well-enough alone. Wordsworth's fickle Muse gave him several pretty fancies about the unseen banks of Yarrow. "Yarrow Unvisited" was so delightful that he was almost tempted to be content with absent treatment.

"We will not see them, will not go
To-day nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.
Be Yarrow's stream unseen, unknown,
It must, or we shall rue it,
We have a vision of our own,
Ah, why should we undo it?"

Ah, why, indeed? the reader asks, after reading Yarrow Visited and Yarrow Re-visited. The visits were a mistake.

Perhaps Clarendon Unread is as good for my soul as Clarendon Read or Clarendon Reread. Who can tell?

There is another sphere in which the honorable points of ignorance are not always sufficiently appreciated, that of Travel. The pleasure of staying at home consists in being surrounded by things which are familiar and which we know all about. The primary pleasure of going abroad consists in the encounter with the unfamiliar and the unknown.

That was the impulse which stirred old Ulysses to set forth once more upon his travels.

"For my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down,
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew."

"It may be"—there lay the charm. There was no knowing what might happen on the dark, broad seas. Perhaps they might get lost, and then again they might come upon the Happy Isles. And if as they sailed under their looming shores they should see the great Achilles—why all the better!

What joys the explorers of the New World experienced! The heart leaps up at the very title of Sebastian Cabot's joint stock company. "Merchants Adventurers of England for the discovery of lands, territories, isles and signories, unknown." There was no knowing beforehand which was an island and which the mainland. All they had to do was to keep on, sure only of finding something which they had not expected. When they got to the mainland they were as likely as not to stumble on the great Khan himself. Of course they might not make a discovery of the first magnitude like that of the Spaniards on the Peak in Darien,—but if it was not one thing it was another!

Two or three miles back of Plymouth, Mass., is a modest little pond called Billington's Sea. Billington, an adventurous Pilgrim, had climbed a tree, and looking westwards had caught sight of the shimmering water. He looked at it with a wild surmise, and then the conviction flashed upon him that he had discovered the goal of hardy mariners,—the great South Sea. That was a great moment for Billington!

Of course the Spaniards were more fortunate in their geographical position. It turned out that it was the Pacific that they saw from their Peak in Darien; while Billington's Sea does not grow on acquaintance.

But my heart goes out to Billington. He also was a discoverer, according to his lights. He belonged to a hardy breed, and could stare on new scenes with the best of them. It was not his fault that the Pacific was not there. If it had been, Billington would have discovered it. We know perfectly well

that the Pacific Ocean does not lave the shores of Plymouth County, and so we should not go out into the woods on a fine morning to look for it. There is where Billington had the advantage of us.

Is it not curious that while we profess to envy the old adventurers the joys of discovery, yet before we set out on our travels we make it a point of convenience to rob ourselves of these possibilities? Before we set out for Ultima Thule we must know precisely where it is, and how we are going to get there, and what we are to see and what others have said about it. After a laborious course of reading the way is as familiar to our minds as the road to the post office. After that there is nothing more for us to do but to sally forth to verify the guidebooks. We have done all that we could to brush the bloom off our native Ignorance.

Of course even then all the possibilities of discovery are not shut out. The best-informed person cannot be completely guarded against surprise. Accidents will happen, and there is always the chance that one may have been misinformed.

I remember a depressed looking lady whom I encountered as she trudged through the galleries of the Vatican with grim conscientiousness. She had evidently a stern duty to perform for the cause of Art. But in the Sistine Chapel the stillness was broken by her voice, which had a note of triumph as she spoke to her daughter. She had discovered an error in Baedeker. It infused new life into her tired soul.

"Some flowerets of Eden we still inherit
Though the trail of the serpent is over them all."

Speaking of the Vatican, that suggests the weak point in my argument. It suggests that there are occasions when knowledge is very convenient. On the Peak in Darien the first comer, with the wild surmise of ignorance, has the advantage in the quality of his sensation; but it is different in Jerusalem or Rome. There the pleasure consists in the fact that a great many interesting people have been there before and done many interesting things, which it might be well to know about.

At this point I am quite willing to grant an inch; with the understanding that it shall not be lengthened into an ell. The Camel of Knowledge may push his head into the tent, and we shall have to resist his further encroachments as we may.

What we call the historic sense is not consistent with a state of nescience. The picture which the eye takes in is incomplete without the thousand associations which come from previous thought. Still, it remains true that the finest pleasure does not come when the mental images are the most precise. Before entering Paradise the mediaeval pilgrims tasted of the streams of Eunoë and Lethe,—the happy memory and the happy forgetfulness. The most potent charm comes from the judicious mingling of these waters.

There is a feeling of antiquity that only comes now and then, but which it is worth traveling far to experience. It is the thrill that comes when we consciously stand in the presence of the remote past. Some scene brings with it an impression of immemorial time. In almost every case we find that it comes from being reminded of something which we have once known and more than half forgotten. What are the "mists of time" but imperfect memories?

Modern psychologists have given tardy recognition to the "Subliminal Self,"—the self that lodges under the threshold of consciousness. He is a shy gnome, and loves the darkness rather than the light; not, as I believe, because his deeds are evil, but for reasons best known to himself. To all appearances he is the most ignorant fellow in the world, and yet he is no fool. As for the odds and ends that he stores up under the threshold, they are of more value than the treasures that the priggish Understanding displays in his show windows upstairs.

In traveling through historic lands the Subliminal Self overcomes his shyness. There are scenes and even words that reach back into hoar antiquity, and bring us into the days of eld.

Each person has his own chronology. If I were to seek to bring to mind the very ancientest time, I should not think of the cave-dwellers: I should repeat, "The Kenites, the

Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites."

There is antiquity! It is not only a long time since these tribes dwelt in the land; it has been a long time since I first heard of them.

My memory goes back to the time when a disconsolate little boy sat on a bench in a Sunday-school and asked himself, "What is a Girgashite?"

The habit of the Sunday-school of mingling the historical and ethical elements in one inextricable moral had made it uncertain whether the Girgashite was a person or a sin. In either case it happened a long time ago. There upon the very verge of Time stood the Girgashite, like the ghost in Ossian, "His spear was a column of mist, and the stars looked dim through his form."

Happily my studies have not led in that direction, and there is nothing to disturb the first impression. If some day wandering over Oriental hills I should come upon some broken monuments of the Girgashites, I am sure that I should feel more of a thrill than could possibly come to my more instructed companion. To him it would be only the discovery of another fact, to fit into his scheme of knowledge: to me it would be like stumbling unawares into the primeval world.

What is more delightful than in a railway train in Italy to hear voices in the night calling out names that recall the lost arts of our childhood! There is a sense

> "Of something here like something there,
> Of something done, I know not where,
> Such as no language can declare."

There is a bittersweet to it, for there is a momentary fear that you may be called upon to construe; but when that is past it is pure joy.

"Monte Soracte," said the Italian gentleman on the train between Foligno and Rome, as he pointed out a picturesque eminence. My answering smile was intended to convey the impression that one touch of the classics makes the whole world kin. Had I indeed kept up my Horace, a host of clean-cut ideas would have instantly rushed into my mind. "Is that Soracte! It is not what I had reason to expect. As a mountain I prefer Monadnock."

Fortunately I had no such prepossessions. I had expected nothing. There only came impressions of lessons years ago in a dingy schoolroom presided over by a loved instructor whom we knew as "Prof. Ike." Looking back through the mists of time, I felt that I had been the better for having learned the lessons, and none the worse for having long since forgotten them. In those days Soracte had been a noun standing in mysterious relations to a verb unknown; but now it was evident that it was a mountain. There it stood under the clear Italian sky just as it had been in the days of Virgil and Horace. Thoughts of Horace and of the old professor mingled pleasantly so long as the mountain was in sight.

It may seem to some timid souls that this praise of Ignorance may have a sinister motive, and may be intended to deter from the pursuit of knowledge. On the contrary, it is intended to encourage those who are "faint yet pursuing."

It must have occurred to every serious person that the pursuit of knowledge is not what it once was. Time was when to know seemed the easiest thing in the world. All that a man had to do was to assert dogmatically that a thing was so, and then argue it out with some one who had even less acquaintance with the subject than he had. He was not hampered by a rigid, scientific method, nor did he need to make experiments, which after all might not strengthen his position. The chief thing was a certain tenacity of opinion which would enable him, in Pope's phrase, to "hold the eel of science by the tail." There were no troublesome experts to cast discredit on this slippery sport. If a man had a knack at metaphysics and a fine flow of technical language he could satisfy all reasonable curiosity about the Universe. Or with the minimum of effort he might attain a jovial scholarship adequate for all convivial purposes, like Chaucer's pilgrim

> "Whan that he wel dronken had the win,
> Than wold he speken no word but Latin."

It was the golden age of the amateur, when certainty could be had for the asking, and one could stake out any part of the wide

domain of human interest and hold it by the right of squatter sovereignty. But in these days the man who aspires to know must do something more than assert his conviction. He must submit to all sorts of mortifying tests, and at best he can obtain a title to only the tiniest bit of the field he covets.

With the severer definitions of knowledge and the delimitation of the territory which any one may call his own there has come a curious result. While the aggregate of intellectual wealth has increased, the individual workers are being reduced to penury. It is a pathetic illustration of Progress and Poverty. The old and highly respected class of gentlemen and scholars is being depleted. Scholarship has become so difficult that those who aspire after it have little time for the amenities. It is not as it was in the "spacious times of great Elizabeth." Enter any company of modern scholars and ask what they know about any large subject, and you will find that each one hastens to take the poor debtor's oath. How can they be expected to know so much?

On this minute division of intellectual labor the exact sciences thrive, but conversation, poetry, art, and all that belongs to the humanities languish.

Your man of highly specialized intelligence has often a morbid fear of half-knowledge, and he does not dare to express an opinion that has not been the result of original research. He shuns the innocent questioners who would draw him out, as if they were so many dunning creditors. He becomes a veritable Dick Swiveller as one conversational thoroughfare after another is closed against him, until he no longer ventures abroad. The worst of it is that he has a haunting apprehension that even the bit of knowledge which he calls his own may be taken away from him by some new discovery, and he may be cast adrift upon the Unknowable.

It is then that he should remember the wisdom of the unjust steward, so that when he is cast out of the House of Knowledge he may find congenial friends in the habitations of Ignorance.

There are a great many mental activities that stop short of strict knowledge. Where we do not know, we may imagine, and hope, and dare; we may laugh at our neighbor's mistakes, and occasionally at our own. We may enjoy the delicious moments of suspense when we are on the verge of finding out; and if it should happen that the discovery is postponed, then we have a chance to go over the delightful process again.

To say "I do not know" is not nearly as painful as it seems to those who have not tried it. The active mind, when the conceit of absolute knowledge has been destroyed, quickly recovers itself and cries out, after the manner of Brer Rabbit when Brer Fox threw him into the brier patch, "Bred en bawn in a brier patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier patch!"

1903

## 1858 ~ *Theodore Roosevelt* ~ 1919

PUBLIC servant by vocation and literary man only by avocation, Roosevelt deserves a place in American literature by virtue of his influence as well as of his writings. His essay on *The Strenuous Life* (1899) had a determining influence on the transition from the Waverley romance of the nineties to the virile, red-blooded, superman stories of the first decade of the twentieth century. His collected writings occupy a substantial shelf of some twenty volumes.

He was endowed with tremendous physical and intellectual energy, and the range of his interests was amazing. Beside devoting many years to public office beginning

with his election to the New York Assembly in 1882, rising through the minor posts of Civil Service Commissioner, Police Commissioner of New York City, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Governor of New York, to become Vice President and President of the United States, he also participated in the Spanish-American War, led a big-game hunting expedition into Africa, an expedition into Brazil in search of the River of Doubt, and served as contributing editor on the staff of the *Outlook*. This varied experience, a restless intellect, and a passion for self-expression constitute the foundation of his work as a man of letters. The whole range of his activities became the raw material and stock in trade of his books.

His writings are as varied as his activities and experiences. They include history, biography, autobiography, reminiscences, and essays on a great variety of subjects from politics to books. His interest in history is shown in *The Naval War of 1812* (1882) and *The Winning of the West* (1889–1896), colorful and heroic narrative rather than thoughtful interpretation; biography is represented by *Thomas Hart Benton* (1886) and *Gouverneur Morris* (1888); life on his Dakota ranch is portrayed in *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885) and *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888); the adventure of hunting and exploration is described in *African Game Trails* (1910) and *Through the Brazilian Wilderness* (1914); the Spanish-American War experiences are recorded in *The Rough Riders* (1899). His best essays are found in such collections as *American Ideals* (1891), *The Strenuous Life* (1899), and *A Book-Lover's Holidays in the Open* (1916).

Roosevelt wrote in a virile, pungent style, coining many phrases which caught the popular fancy and became part of everyday speech. In his later years, unfortunately, when he was disappointed and embittered, his style savored more of the prize ring than the drawing room. He fought valiantly for clean living in high and low places, advocated and practiced strenuous activity as the great American virtue, and elevated the national life by his stern insistence upon ethical and honorable conduct in all our relations. He is interesting even when he writes on ephemeral subjects. In his serious moods he drives home his argument with sledge-hammer force. One cannot escape the feeling that he was one of the most dynamic personalities which America has yet produced. He humanized the American scene as none of his predecessors in office had done. First of all, he was a great man, according to Emerson's formula; incidentally he was public servant, historian, biographer, man of action, and crusader on behalf of an ethical conscience in national life.

Theodore Roosevelt's works have been collected several times. The National Edition, issued under the editorial supervision of Hermann Hagedorn, is perhaps the most satisfactory (20 vols., 1927). Autobiographies: *The Rough Riders* (1899); *Theodore Roosevelt; an Autobiography* (1920); *Theodore Roosevelt's Diaries of Boyhood and Youth* (1928). Some of his letters have been published in *Letters from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles, 1870–1918* (1924); J. B. Bishop, ed., *Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children* (1919). There are numerous biographies,

among them J. B. Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time, Shown in His Own Letters* (2 vols., 1920); O. Wister, *Roosevelt: the Story of a Friendship* (1930); H. F. Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt: a Biography* (1931); W. R. Thayer, *Theodore Roosevelt: an Intimate Biography* (1919); H. J. Howland, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times* (1921). For further study see L. F. Abbott, *Impressions of Theodore Roosevelt* (1919); H. A. Beers, *Four Americans* (1919); J. A. Riis, *Theodore Roosevelt, the Citizen* (1904); E. Looker, *Colonel Roosevelt, Private Citizen* (1932); C. E. Merriam, *Four American Party Leaders* (1926); W. G. Burgin, "The Political Theory of Theodore Roosevelt," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, April, 1923; *DAB*, XVI; O. K. Davis, *Released for Publication* (1925); H. F. Osborn, *Impressions of Great Naturalists* (1924); G. Bradford, *The Quick and the Dead* (1931); J. Burroughs, "Nature Lover and Observer," *Outlook*, July 13, 1907.

## REALIZABLE IDEALS

The first of five addresses delivered at Pacific Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California, in 1911. The following year they were published in book form under the title, *Realizable Ideals*, and are now incorporated in Volume XIII of the National Edition of *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*. The fact that these papers were prepared as addresses, and not written as essays, accounts for the forensic style.

WHEN I was first asked to deliver this course of lectures I refused just because what I wanted to preach was action. I did not feel sure that I could preach action in five lectures. I finally accepted, because it seemed to me so admirable a thing for the seminary to have started this kind of lecture course and so admirable a thing for the founder of the course to have provided for it that I did not feel quite at liberty to refuse.

All our extraordinary material development, our wonderful industrial growth will go for nothing unless with that growth goes hand in hand the moral, the spiritual growth that will enable us to use aright the other as an instrument. I hesitated some time as to exactly what title to give to the lectures I was to deliver because I wanted to use the two titles of Applied Ethics and Realizable Ideals. I chose these titles because they seemed to me to put into words the only spirit which I think counts for anything in preaching, whether by a professional or by an amateur; the spirit which regards preaching as worthless unless transmuted into action. If we treat the study of ethics as a mere intellectual diversion then we probably do ourselves little harm and certainly do ourselves no good. If we consciously or carelessly preach ideals which cannot be realized, then so far from accomplishing a worthy purpose we actually tend to weaken the morality we ostensibly preach. Now, anything I have to say to you during these lectures will derive its whole value from the spirit in me as I say it and the spirit in you as you listen to it. If I preach to you anything which I do not strive, with whatever haltings and shortcomings, myself to realize, then I am unworthy your listening to me; and if, on the other hand, you come to listen to me from mere curiosity, or to get a little temporary enjoyment, then you would better have stayed at home.

I chose as the opening lecture this address on realizable ideals, because the longer I have lived the more strongly I have felt the harm done by the practice among so many men of keeping their consciences in separate compartments; sometimes a Sunday conscience and a weekday conscience; sometimes a conscience as to what they say or what they like other people to say, and another conscience as to what they do and like other people to do; sometimes a conscience for their private affairs and a totally different conscience for their business relations. Or again, there may be one compartment in which the man keeps his conscience not only for his domestic affairs but for his business affairs and a totally different compartment in which he keeps his conscience when he deals with public men and public measures.

It has always irritated me when, in whatever capacity, I have attended Sunday-school celebrations, to listen to some of the speeches made, and especially when I knew some of the men making them. I have always felt most strongly that it was mischievous and wrong

for a man to get up before a number of boys and girls and preach to them to "take no thought of things of the body," not "to regard their own interests in any way," to think of "nothing whatever but others," when they knew that he did not follow any such course of action himself, and when they knew that they themselves could not act and were not expected to act literally on his words. That kind of speech does harm, because harm is always done by preaching an ideal which the preacher and the hearer know cannot be followed, which they know it is not intended to have followed; for then the hearer confounds all ideals with the false ideal to which he is listening; and because he finds that he is not expected to live up to the doctrine to which he has listened he concludes that it is needless to live up to any doctrine at all.

Now I do not mean for a moment that the ideal preached should be a low one; I do not mean for a moment that it is ever possible entirely to realize even for the very best man or woman the loftiest ideal; but I do mean that the ideal should not be preached except with sincerity, and that it should be preached in such a fashion as to make it possible measureably to approach it.

Take the Sunday-school address of the type to which I object and of which I have just spoken: If you tell a number of boys who are about to become men and go out to earn their own living—if you tell them to despise the things of the body, to care nothing for material success, you are telling them what you would not want your own boys actually to do; you are telling them what they cannot do unless they are willing to become public charges, and what it is not desirable that they should try to do. To tell them such things in the name of morality is to invite them to despise morality. What is necessary is to tell them that their first duty is to earn their own livelihood, to support themselves and those dependent upon them; but that when that first duty has been performed there yet remains a very large additional duty, in the way of service to their neighbor, of service to the rest of mankind.

Again, I have heard men, whose lives have been passed chiefly in amassing money, preach to boys that money was of no real consequence, that they ought to disregard it, that it was really entirely unimportant. Well, those men did not in practice believe what they preached. Curiously enough some of them had for so many years schooled themselves to utter that kind of sentence when they got on a platform, and to act in such diametrically opposite fashion when they were in their business offices, that they had ceased to become conscious of any incongruity; when they got up to speak they naturally fell in the very vice that represented the negation of the other vice into which they equally naturally fell as soon as they sat down before their counting-desk. Now, it is a false statement, and therefore it is a disservice to the cause of morality, to tell any man that money does not count. If he has not got it he will find that it does count tremendously. If he is worth his salt and is desirous of caring for mother and sisters, wife and children, he will not only find that it counts but he will realize that he has acted with infamy and with baseness if he has not appreciated the fact that it does count. Of course, when I speak of money I mean what money stands for. It counts tremendously. No man has any right to the respect of his fellows if through any fault of his own he has failed to keep those dependent upon him in reasonable comfort.

It is his duty not to despise money. It is his duty to regard money, up to the point where his wife and children and any other people dependent upon him have food, clothing, shelter, decent surroundings, the chance for the children to train themselves to do their life-work aright, a chance for wife and children to get reasonable relaxation. Now practically, as regards his or her own family, I doubt if there is any one here who would deny that proposition. It is so obvious that it seems needless to put it before you; and yet how often do we listen to a man on a platform like this, saying, because it is the conventional thing to say, "pay no heed to money." Now, of course, when such a preacher says "pay no heed to money" his hearers at once accept what he is about to say further as insincere; and, whether they pay heed to money or not, they pay no further heed to what he says about it.

It is not a realizable ideal, to "pay no heed to money." You must pay heed up to the point I have indicated. But it is a realizable ideal, after you have once reached that point, to understand that money is merely a means to an end, and that if you make it the end instead of a means you do little good to yourself and are a curse to everybody else. It is a realizable ideal, to make people understand that while it is their first duty to pull their own weight in the world, yet that after they have achieved a certain amount of prosperity both their capacity for usefulness toward others and their capacity for enjoyment depends infinitely more on other things than upon possessing additional money.

Now, the very fact that I grant in the fullest degree the need of having enough money, which means the need of sufficient material achievement to enable you and those dependent upon you to lead your lives healthily and under decent conditions—the very fact that I grant this as the essential first need to meet, entitles me to have you accept what I say at its face value when I add that this represents only the beginning, and that after you have reached this point your worth as a unit in the commonwealth, your worth to others and your worth to yourself, depends infinitely less upon having additional money than it depends upon your possessing certain other things, things of the soul and the spirit.

I could not overstate the grinding misery, the heart-breaking misery, I have seen come to a family where the man is unable quite to do what he should for those dependent upon him. But after the man and the woman have reached the point where they have a home in which the elemental needs are met and where in addition they have accumulated the comparatively small amount of money necessary to meet the primal needs of the spirit and of the intellect—after this point is reached it is my deliberate judgment that money, instead of being the prime factor, is one of the minor factors, both in usefulness and in happiness. Always keep in mind my first proviso—I am not going to repeat it to you—as to the necessity of having enough money. But go beyond that; for beyond that, the difference between the multimillionaire and the man of very moderate fortune is in the vast majority of cases really a difference of appearance and not of reality as regards both usefulness and happiness. The chief harm that the multimillionaire does in my mind comes not in his joining with others to make a trust—although when he does that I will try to regulate him; and it is not in the fact that in him as in other men there is, as Abraham Lincoln put it, "a deal of human nature," so that he is sometimes very good and sometimes not good at all; it is that he is apt to give to the rest of us a thoroughly false ideal. The worst ill that can befall us is to have our own souls corrupted, and it is a debasing thing for a nation to choose as its heroes the men of mere wealth.

I remember a number of years ago seeing a pleasant and very happy little community very nearly ruined—as regards many of the families completely ruined—because an entirely amiable multimillionaire moved into the neighborhood. I really think that his amiability and his perfectly sincere desire to be pleasant with every one was one of the causes of the mischief. I know, for instance, a very nice woman there, with a charming little house, who, having been asked to dinner at the very gorgeous mansion of this worthy soul of many millions, naturally wished to entertain him and his wife in return. But, alas, she was perfectly wretched when it actually came to entertaining them in her house; she was not willing to have the hired girl wait on the table; she had to have a butler, and then she had to live up to the butler. And the funny thing was that, instead of giving the multimillionaire a perfectly pleasant time in her own fashion, which she could have done, she merely gave him a dreary tenth-rate imitation of his own feasts. Instead of putting herself in a totally different class, so that there could be no competition between them at all, she insisted on competing in a class where she was certain to get the worst of it. After two or three years of the millionaire's residence in the neighborhood there were not a few families who had suffered either some permanent damage or grave temporary discomfort, not from any fault of the millionaire, but because they themselves had been foolish. Now, I don't want to preach against the millionaire; but I do want to preach

against us if we let him make us spoil ourselves—that's all.

I wish us to understand better than we now do what are the real things and what are the artificial things of life. I wish us to get a better perspective. Take even the average educational institution; if a very wealthy man visits it, altogether too many of the boys look at him with eager interest, as a man that has had just the career that they intend to emulate; and altogether too many of the girls think that they would like to marry into his class! Now, in that case, I don't blame him at all; I think it merely adds to our sin, to our iniquity, if we blame him instead of ourselves for the feelings, not that he has about us, but that we have about him. But I do blame ourselves; I blame us if we do not have a proper sense of perspective, if we fail to pay honor to the people who are entitled to it. I do not wonder that a great many men make of money-getting their one ideal when so many of their fellow countrymen treat success in making money as the chief kind of success.

When America's history is written, when the history of the last century in America is written a hundred years hence, the name of no multimillionaire, who is nothing but a multimillionaire, will appear in that history, unless it appears in some footnote to illustrate some queer vagary or extravagance. The men who will loom large in our history are the men of real achievement of the kind that counts. You can go over them—statesmen, soldiers, wise philanthropists—I wish to underscore the word "wise," for the philanthropist who is really worth calling such is the man who tries to make such use of his philanthropy as to provide against the need of philanthropy in the future, just as the real worker in charity is the worker who does his best to bring about conditions in which charity shall not be necessary. The statesman, the writer, the man of science, of letters, of art, these are the men who will leave their mark on history.

When you look back and think of the Civil War, what lives of those who then lived would you, if you had a chance, like yourselves to have lived? Not the lives of the sordid souls who stayed at home and made money out of the Civil War; not even the lives of those men who were not sordid, who acted honorably in their private business at home, but who did not have the opportunity and privilege of going to the front. The lives that you respect, the lives that you wish your fathers and forefathers to have led, are those of the men who in the time of the nation's trial each endeavored to render all the service that could possibly be rendered to the nation. Those are the men of the past to whose memory we look up; of whose fame we as Americans are jealous, whose good deeds we would like to emulate. Now, that is our attitude toward the past; I ask that we make it also our attitude in the present.

I wish it distinctly to be understood that I have not the smallest prejudice against multimillionaires. I like them. But I always feel this way when I meet one of them: You have made millions—good; that shows you must have something in you; I wish you would show it.

I do regard it as a realizable ideal for our people as a whole to demand, not of the millionaire—not at all—but of their own children and of themselves, that they shall get the millionaire in his proper perspective, and, when they once do that, ninety-five per cent of what is undesirable in the power of the millionaire will disappear. I shall speak of the other five per cent in a minute or two; but I am speaking now of much the larger part of what makes him undesirable; and much of that larger part is not in him at all, it is in us; it is in the emotions we permit the sight of him to produce in us.

Now, a word to my fellow reformers. If they permit themselves to adopt an attitude of hate and envy toward the millionaire they are just about as badly off as if they adopt an attitude of mean subservience to him. It is just as much a confession of inferiority to feel mean hatred and defiance of a man as it is to feel a mean desire to please him overmuch. In each case it means that the man having the emotion is not confident in himself, that he lacks self-confidence, self-reliance, that he does not stand on his own feet; and, therefore, in each case it is an admission that the man is not as good as the man whom he hates and envies, or before whom he truckles.

So that I shall preach as an ideal neither to truckle to nor to hate the man of mere wealth, because if you do either you admit your inferiority in reference to him; and if you admit that you are inferior as compared to him you are no good American, you have no place in this Republic. So that from our standpoint toward the millionaire ninety-five per cent of the damage he can do us is subjective and not objective; that is to say, it rests with us and not with him.

There remains the five per cent of harm that he can do us for which we are not responsible. Up to this point I have been preaching to us about him. Now I want to say a word or two to him, to the man of great wealth. The mere acquisition of wealth in and by itself, beyond a certain point, speaks very little indeed for the man compared with success in most other lines of endeavor. I want you to weigh the words that I have used—the mere acquisition of wealth in itself. I know that there are many men who have made great fortunes where the making of the great fortune has been an incident to the doing of a great task, where the man has really been at least as much interested in the task as in the fortune. It is a great epic feat to drive a railroad across a continent; it is a great epic feat to build up a business worth building. For the man who performs that feat I have a genuine regard. For the man who makes a great fortune as an incident to rendering a great service I have nothing but admiration—although unfortunately the men who are entitled to our regard, and a little more—to our admiration—for the feats that they have thus done, have too often forfeited all right to that regard and admiration and more often forfeited it by the course that they have afterward, or coincidentally, pursued in regard to money-making or in other matters. Furthermore the wealthy men who make money which does not represent service are public enemies; we are bound to make war against every form of special privilege.

We have now definitely accepted as axiomatic the fact that in this country we have to control the use of enormous aggregations of wealth in business. But no great industrial chief should be content to do only so much as is necessary to keep within the law. He may be "law honest," and yet be a sinister enemy of the commonwealth.

One great realizable ideal for our people is to discourage mere law honesty. It is necessary to have good laws and to have them well enforced. But the best laws and the most rigid enforcement will not by themselves produce a really healthy type of morals in the community. In addition to the law and its enforcement we must have the public opinion which frowns on the man who violates the spirit of the law even though he keeps within the letter. I cannot tell you any one way in which that feeling can be made to carry weight. I think it must find expression in a dozen different ways. Later in one of these lectures I shall discuss the organs of public opinion and public expression—the press and the magazines. When they more measurably reach the ideal they ought to reach, we shall be able to grapple more effectually with the man of wealth who fails in his duty than we do at present. But without waiting for that day, we should strive to create in the community the sense of proportion which will make us respect the decent man who does well, and condemn the man who does not act decently and who does wrong.

The other day a sentence was uttered in the Senate by a certain senator which I thought was fraught—quite unconsciously fraught—with a lesson for all of us. The senator in question had been engaged in an impassioned speech on behalf of Mr. Lorimer, and in speaking of some of the unsavory creatures who had testified in the case he said in answer to a question, "Yes, they were fools as well as knaves," and that in his experience all knaves were fools.

That is not so. This senator was giving expression to a very unhealthy attitude of the public mind, the tendency to treat as a knave only the foolish knave, and to pardon the wise knave who manages to succeed in his villainy. The knave who fails is usually a fool, but the knave who succeeds may be a very intelligent man, and his intelligence when unaccompanied by any trace of moral instinct merely makes him infinitely the most dangerous man that this community can bring forth; and the senator in the remark he made came danger-

ously near assuming the very dangerous position that a knave who is sufficiently able is therefore relieved from the odium of knavery.

We shall never come near realizing the very realizable ideal of honesty in business and public life until we make it evident that the scoundrel whom we hate most is not the scoundrel who fails but the scoundrel who succeeds. The scoundrel who fails is condemned by every one and is laughed at by his fellow knaves. It is the scoundrel who wins out who is the menace to this great commonwealth of ours. Let us shape our laws so as to make it difficult for the scoundrel to succeed, and to give us at least a reasonable chance of punishing him after he succeeds. In addition to this, let us also, each of us individually and all of us collectively, strive to create the kind of public opinion which will make the success of such a scoundrel hardly worth having. The dullest man, the man with the thickest skin, does not enjoy very much a success which brings on him the scorn of his fellows. The old Greek proverb was that "contempt would pierce the shell of a tortoise," and whatever our people really scorn, really despise, really condemn, is something that the knaves among us rarely care to have. When we can create the public opinion which will mean that the average honest man turns away from the successful knave, one of the prime incentives for being a successful knave will have vanished.

To that end, friends, I again wish to say that we must hold up an ideal that can be realized. If we use language which would go to show that we regard success and failure in the business world as of indifference, then we shall merely convince every man in that world that we are speaking insincerely. You do not regard success and failure with indifference. You do not regard the man who fails and the man who succeeds as standing on the same plane; and as long as you do not so regard it, tell the truth about it. No man ever permanently helped a reform by lying on behalf of the reform. Tell the truth about it; and then you can expect to be believed when you tell further truths; the truth that business success, though an admirable thing, up to a certain point an absolutely necessary thing, is beyond that point not as admirable as some other things; and the truth that business success obtained, not by serving your fellows but by swindling your fellows, is an infamy and is to be so regarded by all honest men.

Realizable ideals; we must have them in private and in public life both. I have already told you of one type of sermon to which I strongly object. There is another type to which I object almost as strongly, and that is the sermon which in its condemnation of innocent pleasure tends to make men confound vice and pleasure. I heartily abhor the man who practises vice because he regards it as the only kind of enjoyment. I do not abhor quite as much, but I at least as much despise, the clergyman who makes ready the path for such a man by condemning indiscriminately innocent enjoyment and vice. It is not only harmless, but it is eminently desirable, that young people should have a good time.

What we wish for ourselves, and have a right to wish for ourselves, I want to see us preach toward others. If you persuade the average boy that it is wicked to have a good time, it may have either one of two results: if he is a very sensitive boy it may prevent him from ever having a good time, in which case I will guarantee that he makes all those intimately associated with him have a very bad time; or else, you may persuade him that inasmuch as he thoroughly intends to have a good time, and as a good time is wicked—why, in for a lamb, in for a sheep, and he will be wicked to some purpose. I ask here again that not only every clergyman but every teacher of morals—and that ought to include every father who is worth being called father—endeavor to help the boy in getting a good time; and then hold him to a rigid accountability if he turns that good time into a bad time.

This illustrates just what I mean by a realizable ideal. Don't preach the impossible. Don't preach what makes your hearers think you are insincere. But have ideals and insist on their realization. If this nation has not the right kind of ideal in every walk of life, if we have not in our souls the capacity for idealism, the power to strive after ideals, then we are gone. No nation ever amounted to anything if it did not have within its soul the

power of fealty to a lofty ideal. For that very reason it is our duty to avoid preaching false ideals, and with almost equal scrupulousness to avoid preaching, as desirable, ideals which cannot be measurably attained.

I am to deliver four more lectures, and I wish in these lectures to speak of applied ethics, of realizable ideals; in the first place in the family, because that is the foundation of everything; in the next place in public life— which means in the collective life of all of us, in the life lived on behalf of all of us; and finally as regards the expression of public opinion; as regards the instruments that should do most to shape public opinion—the press, the magazines. In each of those four lectures I shall endeavor to show why I believe we should change certain of the ideals we now have, and why I believe we should in every way, and, above all, by the force of public opinion, insist that the realizable ideal be actually realized in practice.

1911

## 1856 — *Woodrow Wilson* — 1924

LIKE HIS predecessors Lincoln and Roosevelt, Wilson achieved distinction as a man of letters. Of the three he was perhaps the most distinctly "literary," for he wrote in a style more suggestive of the library than of the contacts of life and experience. To be sure, it has an unmistakable flavor, but the flavor has been rarefied by self-conscious effort.

Wilson came to his high office by way of a Presbyterian manse, the presidency of Princeton University, and the governorship of New Jersey. He was born in Virginia, of Scotch-Irish parentage, the father hailing from Ohio, the mother from Carlyle, England. A Presbyterian clergyman, the father served his church as parish minister and teacher of theology, living in Georgia and later in South Carolina. After a year in Davidson College, Wilson entered Princeton in 1875, and graduated without high honors in scholarship, but with a mind thoroughly awakened to the study of history and politics. Finding the law distasteful, he earned a coveted Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, and after teaching at Bryn Mawr College and Wesleyan University, returned to Princeton in 1890 as professor of history, politics, and jurisprudence. In 1902 he was elected president of the University. During his term he reorganized the curriculum, and introduced the preceptorial system as a means of stimulating the intellectual life of the undergraduates. As governor of New Jersey from 1910 to 1912 national attention was drawn to him by the liberal legislation he succeeded in having enacted, and the Democratic national convention nominated him as its candidate for President. His program of reform legislation was interrupted by the World War. After the war, weakened by his untiring efforts for peace and the League of Nations, he was stricken with paralysis while on a speaking tour through the country and never regained his health.

Wilson's intellectual interests were in history and political science, and most of

his published books fall within these two fields. His *Congressional Government* (1885) and *Division and Reunion* still hold their place as authorities; *A History of the American People* (1902), however, is noteworthy for its charm of statement rather than for scholarship and interpretation. In *Mere Literature and Other Essays* (1893) he entered the field of literary criticism, the leading essay being a spirited defense of literature as such against the inroads of the practical.

Although practically everything he wrote is marked by grace and charm of expression—even the famous textbook *The State* shares this distinction—he is at best in his papers and addresses, prepared for the most part for specific occasions in the course of a long and varied life, many of which have won deserved permanence because of some universal truth and distinctive charm of expression. There was something substantially prophetic about his thought. His pronouncements on the ideals of higher education were so far in advance of his time that only now does one see the beginnings of their realization. The same is in a measure true of his political ideals. Some of the state papers hewn out of the blood and fire of war are among the great human documents of the time. Wilson was essentially a retiring man, without any dramatic outlet in his make-up. The consequence was that into his writing passed the very essence of his spirit, the vision of realizable ideals, as well as the eagerness and passion for their realization. It is because Wilson thought and spoke and wrote in terms of an ideal world that he will continue to live in his works as the spokesman of the better life which he envisioned. To his ideal thought and his gift of style must also be added a rare sense of humor as part of his literary equipment. And in this equipment lies the greatness of such papers as "The Love of Learning" and "When a Man Comes to Himself."

Wilson's writings of particular significance to the student of literature are *Congressional Government* (1885); *Mere Literature and Other Essays* (1893); *An Old Master and Other Political Essays* (1893); *Division and Reunion* (1893); *George Washington* (1896); *A History of the American People* (5 vols., 1902); *The New Freedom* (1913); *On Being Human* (1916); *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (6 vols., 1925–27). The authorized biography, still incomplete, is R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters* (7 vols., 1927–). Other works are W. E. Dodd, *Woodrow Wilson and His Work* (rev. ed., 1932); W. W. Hollingsworth, *Woodrow Wilson's Political Ideals as Interpreted from His Works* (1918); J. Kerney, *The Political Education of Woodrow Wilson* (1926); C. E. Merriam, *Four American Party Leaders* (1926); B. Pe ry, *The Praise of Folly and Other Essays* (1923); W. B. Hale, *The Story of a Style* (1920); W. B. Hale, *Woodrow Wilson: the Story of His Life* (1912); D. Lawrence, *The True Story of Woodrow Wilson* (1924); G. Bradford, *The Quick and the Dead* (1931); B. J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* (3 vols., 1922–25); J. Daniels, *The Life of Woodrow Wilson* (1924); *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* (4 vols., 1926–28); R. Lansing, *War Memoirs* (1935); R. Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: a Personal Narrative* (1921); J. P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him* (1921); D. F. Houston, *Eight Years With Wilson's Cabinet* (2 vols., 1926); E. E. Robinson and V. J. West, *The Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson 1913–1917* (1917); W. A. White, *Woodrow Wilson: the Man, His Times, and His Task* (1924).

## THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING

An address delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Chapter at Cambridge, Massachusetts, July 1, 1909. Although in turn a college professor, university president, and statesman, Woodrow Wilson was always a literary man. Whether he wrote on topics in history and jurisprudence, his chosen fields of study, on problems in education and university administration, or on politics and statecraft, his style is marked by clearness, directness, and simplicity, as well as by a delicate chasteness of expression. From the point of view of style alone "The Spirit of Learning" deserves a place in literature.

We have fallen of late into a deep discontent with the college, with the life and the work of the undergraduates in our universities. It is an honourable discontent, bred in us by devotion, not by captiousness or hostility or by an unreasonable impatience to set the world right. We are not critics, but anxious and thoughtful friends. We are neither cynics nor pessimists, but honest lovers of a good thing, of whose slightest deterioration we are jealous. We would fain keep one of the finest instrumentalities of our national life from falling short of its best, and believe that by a little care and candor we can do so.

The American college has played a unique part in American life. So long as its aims were definite and its processes authoritative it formed men who brought to their tasks an incomparable morale, a capacity that seemed more than individual, a power touched with large ideals. The college has been the seat of ideals. The liberal training which it sought to impart took no thought of any particular profession or business, but was meant to reflect in its few and simple disciplines the image of life and thought. Men were bred by it to no skill or craft or calling: the discipline to which they were subjected had a more general object. It was meant to prepare them for the whole of life rather than for some particular part of it. The ideals which lay at its heart were the general ideals of conduct, of right living, and right thinking, which made them aware of a world moralized by principle, steadied and cleared of many an evil thing by true and catholic reflection and just feeling, a world, not of interests, but of ideas.

Such impressions, such challenges to a man's spirit, such intimations of privilege and duty are not to be found in the work and obligations of professional and technical schools. They cannot be. Every calling has its ethics, indeed, its standards of right conduct and wrong, its outlook upon action and upon the varied relationships of society. Its work is high and honorable, grounded, it may be, in the exact knowledge which moralizes the processes of thought, and in a skill which makes the whole man serviceable. But it is notorious how deep and how narrow the absorptions of the professional school are and how much they are necessarily concentrated upon the methods and interests of a particular occupation. The work to be done in them is as exact, as definite, as exclusive as that of the office and the shop. Their atmosphere is the atmosphere of business, and should be. It does not beget generous comradeships or any ardor of altruistic feeling such as the college begets. It does not contain that general air of the world of science and of letters in which the mind seeks no special interest, but feels every intimate impulse of the spirit set free to think and observe and listen,—listen to all the voices of the mind. The professional school differs from the college as middle age differs from youth. It gets the spirit of the college only by imitation or reminiscence or contagion. This is to say nothing to its discredit. Its nature and objects are different from those of the college,—as legitimate, as useful, as necessary; but different. The college is the place of orientation; the professional school is the place of concentration. The object of the college is to liberalize and moralize; the object of the professional school is to train the powers to a special task. And this is true of all vocational study.

I am, of course, using the words liberalize and moralize in their broadest significance, and I am very well aware that I am speaking in the terms of an ideal, a conception, rather than in the terms of realized fact. I have spoken, too, of what the college did "so long as its aims were definite and its processes authoritative," as if I were thinking of it wholly in the past tense and wished to intimate that it was once a very effective and ideal thing

but had now ceased to exist; so that one would suppose that I thought the college lost out of our life and the present a time when such influences were all to seek. But that is only because I have not been able to say everything at once. Give me leave, and I will slowly write in the phrases which will correct these impressions and bring a true picture to light.

The college has lost its definiteness of aim, and has now for so long a time affected to be too modest to assert its authority over its pupils in any matter of prescribed study that it can no longer claim to be the nurturing mother it once was; but the college is neither dead nor moribund, and it has made up for its relaxed discipline and confused plans of study by many notable gains, which, if they have not improved its scholarship, have improved the health and the practical morals of the young gentlemen who resort to it, have enhanced their vigor and quickened their whole natures. A freer choice of studies has imparted to it a stir, an air of freedom and individual initiative, a wealth and variety of instruction which the old college altogether lacked. The development of athletic sports and the immoderate addiction of undergraduates to stimulating activities of all sorts, academic and unacademic, which improve their physical habits, fill their lives with interesting objects, sometimes important, and challenge their powers of organization and practical management, have unquestionably raised the tone of morals and of conduct in our colleges and have given them an interesting, perhaps valuable, connection with modern society and the broader popular interests of the day. No one need regret the breaking-up of the dead levels of the old college, the introduction and exaltation of modern studies, or the general quickening of life which has made of our youngsters more manly fellows, if less docile pupils. There had come to be something rather narrow and dull and morbid, no doubt, about the old college before its day was over. If we gain our advances by excessive reactions and changes which change too much, we at least gain them, and should be careful not to lose the advantage of them.

Nevertheless, the evident fact is, that we have now for a long generation devoted ourselves to promoting changes which have resulted in all but complete disorganization, and it is our plain and immediate duty to form our plans for reorganization. We must reëxamine the college, reconceive it, reorganize it. It is the root of our intellectual life as a nation. It is not only the instrumentality through which we must effect all the broad preliminary work which underlies sound scholarship; it is also our chief instrumentality of catholic enlightenment, our chief means for giving widespread stimulation to the whole intellectual life of the country and supplying ourselves with men who shall both comprehend their age and duty and know how to serve them supremely well. Without the American college our young men would be too exclusively shut in to the pursuit of individual interests, would lose the vital contacts and emulations which awaken them to those larger achievements and sacrifices which are the highest objects of education in a country of free citizens, where the welfare of the commonwealth springs out of the character and the informed purposes of the private citizen. The college will be found to lie somewhere very near the heart of American social training and intellectual and moral enlightenment.

The process is familiar to every one by which the disintegration was brought about which destroyed the old college with its fixed disciplines and ordered life and gave us our present problem of reorganization and recovery. It centred in the break-up of the old curriculum and the introduction of the principle that the student was to select his own studies from a great variety of courses, as great a variety as the resources of the college and the supply of teachers available made possible. But the change could not in the nature of things stop with the plan of study. It held at its heart a tremendous implication: the implication of full manhood on the part of the pupil, and all the untrammelled choices of manhood. The pupil who was mature and well informed enough to study what he chose was also by necessary implication mature enough to be left free to *do* what he pleased, to choose his own associations and ways of life outside the curriculum without restraint

or suggestion; and the varied, absorbing college life of our day sprang up as the natural offspring of the free election of studies.

There went along with the relaxation of rule as to what undergraduates should study, therefore, an almost absolute divorce between the studies and the life of the college, its business and its actual daily occupations. The teacher ceased to look upon himself as related in any responsible way to the life of his pupils, to what they should be doing and thinking of between one class exercise and another, and conceived his whole duty to have been performed when he had given his lecture and afforded those who were appointed to come the opportunity to hear and heed it if they chose. The teachers of this new régime, moreover, were most of them trained for their teaching work in German universities, or in American universities in which the methods, the points of view, the spirit, and the object of the German universities were, consciously or unconsciously, reproduced. They think of their pupils, therefore, as men already disciplined by some general training such as the German gymnasium gives, and seeking in the university special acquaintance with particular studies, as an introduction to special fields of information and inquiry. They have never thought of the university as a community of teachers and pupils: they think of it, rather, as a body of teachers and investigators to whom those may resort who seriously desire specialized kinds of knowledge. They are specialists imported into an American system which has lost its old point of view and found no new one suitable to the needs and circumstances of America. They do not think of living with their pupils and affording them the contacts of culture; they are only accessible to them at stated periods and for a definite and limited service; and their teaching is an interruption to their favorite work of research.

Meanwhile, the constituency of the college has wholly changed. It is not only the bookish classes who now send their sons to college, but also the men of business and of affairs, who expect their sons to follow in their own footsteps and do work with which books have little connection. In the old days of which I have spoken most young men who went to college expected to enter one or other of the learned professions, expected to have to do with books and some of the more serious kinds of learning all their lives. Books were their proper introduction to the work that lay before them; learning was their natural discipline and preparation. But nowadays the men who are looking forward to the learned professions are in a minority at the college. Most undergraduates come out of an atmosphere of business and wish a breeding which is consonant with it. They do not wish learning. They wish only a certain freshening of their faculties for the miscellaneous contacts of life, a general acquaintance with what men are doing and saying in their own generation, a certain facility in handling themselves and in getting on with their fellows. They are much more interested in the incidental associations of college life than in the main intellectual occupations of the place. They want to be made men of, not scholars; and the life led at college is as serviceable for that as any of the tasks set in the classroom. If they want what the formal teaching offers them at all, it is for some definite and practical purpose connected with the calling they expect to follow, the business they expect to engage in. Such pupils are specially unsuitable for such teachers.

Here, then, is our situation. Here is the little world of teachers and pupils, athletic associations, musical and literary clubs, social organizations and societies for amusement, classroom and playground, of which we must make analysis, out of which we must get a new synthesis, a definite aim, and new processes of authoritative direction, losing nothing that has been gained, recovering what has been lost. All the fresh elements we have gained are valuable, many of the new points of view are those from which we must look upon the whole task and function of the college if we would see it truly; but we have fallen upon an almost hopeless confusion and an utter dispersion of energy. We must pull the whole inorganic thing together under a new conception of what the college must be and do.

The chief and characteristic mistake which the teachers and governors of our colleges have made in these latter days has been that

they have devoted themselves and their plans too exclusively to the business, the very commonplace business, of instruction, to well-conceived lectures and approved classroom method, and have not enough regarded the life of the mind. The mind does not live by instruction. It is no prolix gut to be stuffed. The real intellectual life of a body of undergraduates, if there be any, manifests itself, not in the classroom, but in what they do and talk of and set before themselves as their favorite objects between classes and lectures. You will see the true life of a college in the evenings, at the dinner-table or beside the fire in the groups that gather and the men that go off eagerly to their work, where youths get together and let themselves go upon their favorite themes,—in the effect their studies have upon them when no compulsion of any kind is on them and they are not thinking to be called to a reckoning of what they know.

The effects of learning are its real tests, the real test alike of its validity and of its efficacy. The mind can be driven, but that is not life. Life is voluntary or unconscious. It is breathed in out of a sustaining atmosphere. It is shaped by environment. It is habitual, continuous, productive. It does not consist in tasks performed, but in powers gained and enhanced. It cannot be communicated in classrooms if its aim and end is the classroom. Instruction is not its source, but only its incidental means and medium.

Here is the key to the whole matter: the object of the college, as we have known and used and loved it in America, is not scholarship (except for the few, and for them only by way of introduction and first orientation), but the intellectual and spiritual life. Its life and discipline are meant to be a process of preparation, not a process of information. By the intellectual and spiritual life I mean the life which enables the mind to comprehend and make proper use of the modern world and all its opportunities. The object of a liberal training is not learning, but discipline and the enlightenment of the mind. The educated man is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life and his fair way of thinking. He can see, he can discriminate, he can combine ideas and perceive whither they lead; he has insight and comprehension. His mind is a practised instrument of appreciation. He is more apt to contribute light than heat to a discussion, and will oftener than another show the power of uniting the elements of a difficult subject in a whole view; he has the knowledge of the world which no one can have who knows only his own generation or only his own task.

What we should seek to impart in our colleges, therefore, is not so much learning itself as the spirit of learning. You can impart that to young men; and you can impart it to them in the three or four years at your disposal. It consists in the power to distinguish good reasoning from bad, in the power to digest and interpret evidence, in a habit of catholic observation and a preference for the non-partisan point of view, in an addiction to clear and logical processes of thought and yet an instinctive desire to interpret rather than to stick in the letter of the reasoning, in a taste for knowledge and a deep respect for the integrity of the human mind. It is citizenship of the world of knowledge, but not ownership of it. Scholars are the owners of its varied plots, in severalty.

If we recognize and accept these ideas, this conception of the function and the possibilities of the college, there is hope of a general understanding and accommodation. At present there is a fundamental misunderstanding. The teachers in our colleges are men of learning and conceive it their duty to impart learning; but their pupils do not desire it, and the parents of their pupils do not desire it for them. They desire something else which the teacher has little thought of giving, generally thinks it no part of his function to give. Many of the parents of our modern undergraduates will frankly tell you that what they want for their sons is not so much what they will get in the classroom as something else, which they are at a loss to define, which they will get from the associations of college life: and many more would say the same thing if they were equally ingenuous. I know what they mean, and I am free to say that I sympathize with them. They understand that all that their boys get in the classroom is in-

struction in certain definite bodies of knowledge; that all they are expected to bring away from their lectures and recitations is items of learning. They have consorted with college men, if they are not college bred themselves, and know how very soon items of knowledge slip away from them, no matter how faithful and diligent they may have been in accumulating them when they were students. They observe that that part of the college acquisition is very soon lost. College graduates will tell you without shame or regret, within ten years of their graduation, that they remember practically nothing of what they learned in the classroom; and yet in the very same breath they will tell you that they would not have lost what they did get in college for anything in the world; and men who did not have the chance to go to college will everywhere be found to envy them, perceiving that college-bred men have something which they have not. What have they got, if learning is to be left out of the reckoning? They have got manliness, certainly, *esprit de corps*, the training of generous comradeships, a notable development of their social faculties and of their powers of appreciation; and they have lived under the influence of mental tasks of greater or less difficulty, have got from the classroom itself, from a quiet teacher here and there, some intimation, some touch of the spirit of learning. If they have not, they have got only what could no doubt be got from association with generous, self-respecting young men anywhere. Attendance on the exercises of the college was only a means of keeping them together for four years, to work out their comradeships and their mutual infections.

I said just now that I sympathized with men who said that what they wanted for their sons in college was not what they got in the classroom so much as what they got from the life and associations of the place; but I agree with them only if what is to be got in the classroom is nothing more than items of knowledge likely to be quickly lost hold of. I agree with them; but I see clearly what they are blindly feeling after. They should desire chiefly what their sons are to get out of the life and associations of the place; but that life and those associations should be freighted with things they do not now contain. The processes of life, the contagions of association, are the only things that have ever got any real or permanent hold on men's minds. These are the conducting media for every effect we seek to work on the human spirit. The undergraduate should have scholars for teachers. They should hold his attention steadily upon great tested bodies of knowledge and should insist that he make himself acquainted with them, if only for the nonce. But they will give him nothing he is likely to carry with him through life if they stop with formal instruction, however thorough or exacting they may make it. Their permanent effects will be wrought upon his spirit. Their teaching will follow him through life only if they reveal to him the meaning, the significance, the essential validity of what they are about, the motives which prompt it, the processes which verify it. They will rule him, not by what they know and inform him of, but by the spirit of the things they expound. And that spirit they cannot convey in any formal manner. They can convey it only atmospherically, by making their ideals tell in some way upon the whole spirit of the place.

How shall their pupils carry their spirit away with them, or the spirit of the things they teach, if beyond the door of the classroom the atmosphere will not contain it? College is a place of initiation. Its effects are atmospheric. They are wrought by impression, by association, by emulation. The voices which do not penetrate beyond the doors of the classroom are lost, are ineffectual, are void of consequence and power. No thought will obtain or live there for the transmission of which the prevailing atmosphere is a non-conducting medium. If young gentlemen get from their years at college only manliness, *esprit de corps*, a release of their social gifts, a training in give and take, a catholic taste in men, and the standards of true sportsmen, they have gained much, but they have not gained what a college should give them. It should give them insight into the things of the mind and of the spirit, a sense of having lived and formed their friendships amidst the gardens of the mind where

grows the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a consciousness of having taken on them the vows of true enlightenment and of having undergone the discipline, never to be shaken off, of those who seek wisdom in candor, with faithful labour and travail of spirit.

These things they cannot get from the classroom unless the spirit of the classroom is the spirit of the place as well and of its life; and that will never be until the teacher comes out of the classroom and makes himself a part of that life. Contact, companionship, familiar intercourse is the law of life for the mind. The comradeships of undergraduates will never breed the spirit of learning. The circle must be widened. It must include the older men, the teachers, the men for whom life has grown more serious and to whom it has revealed more of its meanings. So long as instruction and life do not merge in our colleges, so long as what the undergraduates do and what they are taught occupy two separate, air-tight compartments in their consciousness, so long will the college be ineffectual.

Looked at from the point of view at which I stand in all that I have been saying, some of the proposals made in our day for the improvement of the college seem very strangely conceived. It has been proposed, for example, to shorten the period of general study in college to (say) two years, and let the student who has gone the distance our present sophomores have gone enter at once upon his professional studies or receive his certificate of graduation. I take it for granted that those who have formulated this proposal never really know a sophomore in the flesh. They say, simply, that the studies of our present sophomores are as advanced as the studies of seniors were in the great days of our grandfathers, and that most of our present sophomores are as old as our grandfathers were when they graduated from the pristine college we so often boast of; and I dare say that is all true enough. But what they do not know is, that our sophomore is at the age of twenty no more mature than the sophomore of that previous generation was at the age of seventeen or eighteen. The sap of manhood is rising in him but it has not yet reached his head. It is not what a man is studying that makes him a sophomore or a senior: it is the stage the college process has reached in him. A college, the American college, is not a body of studies: it is a process of development. It takes, if our observation can be trusted, at least four years for the completion of that process, and all four of those years must be college years. They cannot be school years: they cannot be combined with school years. The school process is an entirely different one. The college is a process of slow evolution from the schoolboy and the schoolboy's mental attitude into the man and his entirely altered view of the world. It can be accomplished only in the college environment. The environment is of the essence of the whole effect.

If you wish to create a college, therefore, and are wise, you will seek to create a life. We have allowed ourselves to grow very anxious and to feel very helpless about college athletics. They play too large a part in the life of the undergraduate, we say; and no doubt they do. There are many other things which play too large a part in that life, to the exclusion of intellectual interests and the dissipation of much excellent energy: amusements of all kinds, social preoccupations of the most absorbing sort, a multitude of activities which have nothing whatever to do with the discipline and enlightenment of the mind. But that is because they are left a free field. Life, at college, is one thing, the work of the college another, entirely separate and distinct. The life is the field that is left free for athletics not only, but also for every other amusement and diversion. Studies are no part of that life, and there is no competition. Study is the work which interrupts the life, introduces an embarrassing and inconsistent element into it. The faculty has no part in the life; it organizes the interruption, the interference.

This is not to say that there are not a great many undergraduates seriously interested in study, or that it is impossible or even difficult to make the majority of them, the large majority, pass the tests of the examinations. It is only saying that the studies do not spring out of the life of the place and are hindered by it, must resist its influences if they would flourish. I have no jealousy of athletics: it has

put wholesome spirit into both the physical and the mental life of our undergraduates. There are fewer morbid boys in the new college which we know than there were in the old college which our fathers knew; and fewer prigs, too, no doubt. Athletics are indispensable to the normal life of young men, and are in themselves wholesome and delightful, besides. In another atmosphere, the atmosphere of learning, they could be easily subordinated and assimilated. The reason they cannot be now is that there is nothing to assimilate them, nothing by which they can be digested. They make their own atmosphere unmolested. There is no direct competition.

The same thing may be said, for it is true, of all the other amusements and all the social activities of the little college world. Their name is legion: they are very interesting; most of them are in themselves quite innocent and legitimate; many of them are thoroughly worth while. They now engross the attention and absorb the energies of most of the finest, most spirited, most gifted youngsters in the undergraduate body, men fit to be scholars and masters in many fields, and for whom these small things are too trivial a preparation. They would not do so if other things which would be certain to grip these very men were in competition with them, were known and spoken of and pervasive in the life of the college outside the classroom; but they are not. The field is clear for all these little activities, as it is clear for athletics. Athletics has no serious competitor except these amusements and petty engrossments; they have no serious competitor except athletics. The scholar is not in the game. He keeps modestly to his classroom and his study and must be looked up and asked questions if you would know what he is thinking about. His influence can be set going only by the deliberate effort of the undergraduate himself who looks him up and stirs him. He deplores athletics and all the other absorbing and non-academic pursuits which he sees drawing the attention of his pupils off from study and serious preparation for life, but he will not enter into competition with them. He has never dreamed of such a thing; and, to tell the truth, the life of the place is organized in such a way as to make it hardly possible for him to do so. He is therefore withdrawn and ineffectual.

It is the duty of university authorities to make of the college a society, of which the teacher will be as much, and as naturally, a member as the undergraduate. When that is done other things will fall into their natural places, their natural relations. Young men are capable of great enthusiasms for older men whom they have learned to know in some human, unartificial way, whose quality they have tasted in unconstrained conversation, the energy and beauty of whose characters and aims they have learned to appreciate by personal contact; and such enthusiasms are often amongst the strongest and most lasting influences of their lives. You will not gain the affection of your pupil by anything you do for him, impersonally, in your classroom. You may gain his admiration and vague appreciation, but he will tie to you only for what you have shown him personally or given him in intimate and friendly service.

Certain I am that it is impossible to rid our colleges of these things that compete with study and drive out the spirit of learning by the simple device of legislation, in which, as Americans, we have so childish a confidence; or, at least, that, if we did succeed in driving them out, did set our home in order and sweep and garnish it, other equally distracting occupants would crowd in to take their places. For the house would be empty. There must be life as well as study. The question is, not of what are we to empty it, but with what must we fill it? We must fill it with the things of the mind and of the spirit; and that we can do by introducing into it men for whom these things are supremely interesting, the main objects of life and endeavour, teachers who will not seem pedagogues but friends, and who can by the gentle infection of friendliness make thought a general contagion. Do that; create the atmosphere and the contacts of a society made up of men young and old, mature and adolescent, serious and gay, and you will create an emulation, a saturation, a vital union of parts in a common life, in which all questions of subordination and proportion will solve themselves. So soon as the things which now dissipate and distract and dissolve our

college life *feel* the things which should coördinate and regulate and inspire it in direct contact with them, *feel* their ardour and their competition, they will fall into their proper places, will become pleasures and cease to be occupations, will delight our undergraduate days, but not monopolize them. They are exaggerated now because they are separated and do not exchange impulses with those greater things of whose presence they are sometimes hardly conscious.

No doubt there are many ways in which this vital association may be effected, but all wise and successful ways will have this in common, that they will abate nothing of the freedom and self-government which have so quickened and purified our colleges in these recent days of change, will have no touch of school surveillance in them. You cannot force companionships upon undergraduates, if you treat them like men. You can only create the conditions, set up the organization, which will make them natural. The scholar should not need a statute behind him. The spirit of learning should not covet the support of the spirit and organization of the nursery. It will prevail of its own grace and power if you will but give it a chance, a conducting medium, an air in which it can move and breathe freely without effort of self-consciousness. If it cannot, I, for one, am willing to lend it artificial assistance. It must take its chances in the competition and win on its merits, under the ordinary rules of the game of life, where the most interesting man attracts attention, the strongest personality rules, the best organized force predominates, the most admirable thing wins allegiance. We are not seeking to force a marriage between knowledge and pleasure; we are simply trying to throw them a great deal together in the confidence that they will fall in love with one another. We are seeking to expose the undergraduate when he is most susceptible to the best and most stimulating influences of the university in the hope and belief that no sensible fellow fit for a career can resist the infection.

My plea, then, is this: that we now deliberately set ourselves to make a home for the spirit of learning: that we reorganize our colleges on the lines of this simple conception, that a college is not only a body of studies but a mode of association; that its courses are only its formal side, its contacts and contagions its realities. It must become a community of scholars and pupils,—a free community but a very real one, in which democracy may work its reasonable triumphs of accommodation, its vital processes of union. I am not suggesting that young men be dragooned into becoming scholars or tempted to become pedants, or have any artificial compulsion whatever put upon them, but only that they be introduced into the high society of university ideals, be exposed to the hazards of stimulating friendships, be introduced into the easy comradeships of the republic of letters. By this means the classroom itself might some day come to seem a part of life.

1909

## 1858 ~ *Agnes Repplier* ~ —

MISS REPPLIER, the dean of contemporary American essayists, was born in Philadelphia, where she has lived all her life. The French blood in her ancestry as well as the emphasis upon French in her formal education have put the stamp of Gallic sprightliness upon all her writings. Although she did not learn to read until she was ten years of age, she early developed a remarkable memory, and from hearing others read remembered vast quantities of poetry. She attended Sacred Heart Convent, where she was taught by French teachers and learned to speak

French. She has at various times lived in France, and of late years, owing to frail health, has spent her vacations in Quebec. Universities have conferred honorary degrees upon her, and she was one of the first four women to be admitted to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

She is a writer of familiar essays, and belongs to the school of Lamb and his *Elia*. Her subjects range from the most serious and profound to the light and near-frivolous, including such titles as "Our Accomplished Great-Grandmother," *The Fireside Sphinx* (1901), "The Eternal Feminine," and "The Public Looks at Pies." She discusses books and authors, tendencies and modern problems. The subjects, however, are of secondary consideration; the primary consideration is her treatment, which is as characteristic and distinctive as that of Charles Lamb. She is of the genteel tradition.

Her ideals of life date back to the eighteenth century. In reading her essays one feels the haunting presence of the gracious lady. Yet she is not for that reason soft and colorless in her thinking, nor does she hold herself aloof altogether from the disturbing aspects of her own times. In other words she is not a timid and shrinking gracious lady; on the other hand, she manifests at times rare intellectual courage without show of undue noise and agitation. Her humor, which seldom deserts her, her ready, sparkling wit of rare flavor, her apt quotations with which her pages are copiously sprinkled, her ability to speak sharply without offense—these are the qualities which give charm as well as power to her words.

Miss Repplier is not a shrinking personality; neither is she in any sense a propagandist or controversialist. She is interested in problems, movements, and tendencies, but maintains an objective attitude like that of the expert observer, preferring to comment rather than to strive. Nor has she sought to realize an ulterior goal, or to build up a system of thought. She will not be regarded as a great literary critic; yet there are flashes of criticism scattered through her pages the authorship of which almost any great critic would be glad to acknowledge. Nor would it be just to say that she merely plays with ideas because she herself finds the game amusing, for even the most casual reading will reveal rather deep-seated conviction lurking in the background. Never very profound, never forcing the reader to accept her viewpoint or her ideas, but always ready, indeed eager, to hold an informal fireside conversation, and above everything else, never for a moment dull, Miss Repplier represents in these noisy days the best traditions of an earlier gentility, and promises entertainment almost other-worldly to any one who will tarry with her in her leisurely manner.

Her essays include the following volumes: *Books and Men* (1888); *Points of View* (1891); *Essays in Miniature* (1892); *The Fireside Sphinx* (1901); *Americans and Others* (1912); *Counter Currents* (1916); *Under Dispute* (1924); *Times and Tendencies* (1932). In biography she has written *Père Marquette, Priest, Pioneer, and Adventurer* (1929); *Mère Marie of the Ursulines* (1931). *In Our*

*Convent Days* (1905) is autobiographical. For study of Miss Repplier's work consult F. W. Halsey, *Women Authors of Our Day in Their Homes* (1903); F. L. Pattee, *American Literature since 1870* (1915); E. H. Browne, "The Abiding Art of Agnes Repplier," *Thought*, Dec., 1930; W. Lecky, *Down at Caxton's* (1895); B. Matthews, *Americanisms and Britticisms* (1892); M. E. Chase, "The Dean of American Essayists," *Commonweal*, Aug. 18, 1933; "The Lounger," *Critic*, Sept., 1905; M. Adams, "Our Miss Repplier," *Bookman*, June, 1927; M. Adams, "Agnes Repplier, Essayist," *Woman Citizen*, Aug., 1926.

## LEISURE

Miss Repplier writes personal essays with equal felicity on subjects ranging from men and books to cats. In view of present conditions this essay is especially timely. It was first published in *Scribner's*, July, 1893, and was later reprinted in *Essays in Idleness*.

"Zounds! how has he the leisure to be sick?"

A VISITOR strolling through the noble woods of Ferney complimented Voltaire on the splendid growth of his trees. "Ay," replied the great wit, half in scorn and half, perhaps, in envy, "they have nothing else to do"; and walked on, deigning no further word of approbation.

Has it been more than a hundred years since this distinctly modern sentiment was uttered,—more than a hundred years since the spreading chestnut boughs bent kindly over the lean, strenuous, caustic, disappointed man of genius who always had so much to do, and who found in the doing of it a mingled bliss and bitterness that scorched him like fever pain? How is it that, while Dr. Johnson's sledge-hammer repartees sound like the sonorous echoes of a past age, Voltaire's remarks always appear to have been spoken the day before yesterday? They are the kind of witticisms which we do not say for ourselves, simply because we are not witty; but they illustrate with biting accuracy the spirit of restlessness, of disquiet, of intellectual vanity and keen contention which is the brand of our vehement and over-zealous generation.

"The Gospel of Work"—that is the phrase woven insistently into every homily, every appeal made to the conscience or the intelligence of a people who are now straining their youthful energy to its utmost speed. "Blessed be Drudgery!"—that is the text deliberately chosen for a discourse which has enjoyed such amazing popularity that sixty thousand printed copies have been found all inadequate to supply the ravenous demand. Readers of Dickens —if any one has the time to read Dickens nowadays—may remember Miss Monflather's inspired amendment of that familiar poem concerning the Busy Bee:—

"In work, work, work. In work alway,
Let my first years be past."

And when our first years *are* past, the same programme is considered adequate and satisfactory to the end. "A whole lifetime of horrid industry,"—to quote Mr. Bagehot's uninspired words,—this is the prize dangled alluringly before our tired eyes; and if we are disposed to look askance upon the booty, then vanity is subtly pricked to give zest to faltering resolution. "Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not"; they would be laggards in the field if our faults did not sometimes spur them to action. It is the paean of self-glorification that wells up perpetually from press and pulpit, from public orators, and from what is courteously called literature, that keeps our courage screwed to the sticking place, and veils the occasional bareness of the result with a charitable vesture of self-delusion.

Work is good. No one seriously doubts this truth. Adam may have doubted it when he first took spade in hand, and Eve when she scoured her first pots and kettles; but in the course of a few thousand years we have learned to know and value this honest, troublesome, faithful, and extremely exacting friend. But work is not the only good thing in the world; it is not a fetich to be adored; neither is it to be judged, like a sum in addition, by its outward and immediate results. The god of labor does not abide exclusively in the rolling-mill, the law courts, or the cornfield. He has a twin sister whose name is leisure,

and in her society he lingers now and then to the lasting gain of both.

Sainte-Beuve, writing of Mme. de Sévigné and her time, says that we, "with our habits of positive occupation, can scarcely form a just conception of that life of leisure and chit-chat." "Conversations were infinite," admits Mme. de Sévigné herself, recalling the long summer afternoons when she and her guests walked in the charming woods of Les Rochers until the shadows of twilight fell. The whole duty of life seemed to be concentrated in the pleasant task of entertaining your friends when they were with you, or writing them admirable letters when they were absent. Occasionally there came, even to this tranquil and finely poised French woman, a haunting consciousness that there might be other and harder work for human hands to do. "Nothing is accomplished day by day," she writes, doubtfully; "and life is made up of days, and we grow old and die." This troubled her a little, when she was all the while doing work that was to last for generations, work that was to give pleasure to men and women whose great-grandfathers were then unborn. Not that we have the time now to read Mme. de Sévigné! Why there are big volumes of these delightful letters, and who can afford to read big volumes of anything, merely for the sake of the enjoyment to be extracted therefrom? It was all very well for Sainte-Beuve to say "Lisons tout Mme. de Sévigné," when the question arose how should some long idle days in a country-house be profitably employed. It was all very well for Sainte-Beuve to plead, with touching confidence in the intellectual pastimes of his contemporaries, "Let us treat Mme. de Sévigné as we treat Clarissa Harlowe, when we have a fortnight of leisure and rainy weather in the country." A fortnight of leisure and rainy weather in the country! The words would be antiquated even for Dr. Johnson. Rain may fall or rain may cease, but leisure comes not so lightly to our calling. Nay, Sainte-Beuve's wistful amazement at the polished and cultivated inactivity which alone could produce such a correspondence as Mme. de Sévigné's is not greater than our wistful amazement at the critic's conception of possible idleness in bad weather. In one respect at least we follow his good counsel. We do treat Mme. de Sévigné precisely as we treat Clarissa Harlowe; that is, we leave them both severely alone, as being utterly beyond the reach of what we are pleased to call our time.

And what of the leisure of Montaigne, who, taking his life in his two hands, disposed of it as he thought fit, with no restless self-accusations on the score of indolence. In the world and of the world, yet always able to meet and greet the happy solitude of Gascony; toiling with no thought of toil, but rather "to entertaine my spirit as it best pleased," this man wrought out of time a coin which passes current over the reading world. And what of Horace, who enjoyed an industrious idleness, the bare description of which sets our hearts aching with desire! "The picture which Horace draws of himself in his country home," says an envious English critic, "affords us a delightful glimpse of such literary leisure as is only possible in the golden days of good Haroun-Al-Raschid. Horace goes to bed and gets up when he likes; there is no one to drag him down to the law courts the first thing in the morning, to remind him of an important engagement with his brother scribes, to solicit his interest with Maecenas, or to tease him about public affairs and the latest news from abroad. He can bury himself in his Greek authors, or ramble through the woody glens which lie at the foot of Mount Ustica, without a thought of business or a feeling that he ought to be otherwise engaged." "Swim smoothly in the stream of thy nature, and live but one man," counsels Sir Thomas Browne; and it may be this gentle current will bear us as bravely through life as if we buffeted our strength away in the restless ocean of endeavor.

Leisure has a value of its own. It is not a mere handmaid of labor; it is something we should know how to cultivate, to use, and to enjoy. It has a distinct and honorable place wherever nations are released from the pressure of their first rude needs, their first homely toil, and rise to happier levels of grace and intellectual repose. "Civilization, in its final outcome," says the keen young author of *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani*, "is heavily in the debt of leisure; and the success of any society

worth considering is to be estimated largely by the use to which its *fortunati* put their spare moments." Here is a sentiment so relentlessly true that nobody wants to believe it. We prefer uttering agreeable platitudes concerning the blessedness of drudgery and the iniquity of eating bread earned by another's hands. Yet the creation of an artistic and intellectual atmosphere in which workers can work, the expansion of a noble sympathy with all that is finest and most beautiful, the jealous guardianship of whatever makes the glory and distinction of a nation; this is achievement enough for the *fortunati* of any land, and this is the debt they owe. It can hardly be denied that the lack of scholarship—of classical scholarship especially—at our universities is due primarily to the labor-worship which is the prevalent superstition of our day, and which, like all superstitions, has gradually degraded its god into an idol, and lost sight of the higher powers and attributes beyond. The student who is pleased to think a knowledge of German "more useful" than a knowledge of Greek; the parent who deliberately declares that his boys have "no time to waste" over Homer; the man who closes the doors of his mind to everything that does not bear directly on mathematics, or chemistry, or engineering, or whatever he calls "work"; all these plead in excuse the exigencies of life, the absolute and imperative necessity of labor.

It would appear, then, that we have no *fortunati*, that we are not yet rich enough to afford the greatest of all luxuries—leisure to cultivate and enjoy "the best that has been known and thought in the world." This is a pity, because there seems to be money in plenty for so many less valuable things. The yearly taxes of the United States sound to innocent ears like the fabled wealth of the Orient; the yearly expenditures of the people are on no rigid scale; yet we are too poor to harbor the priceless literature of the past because it is not a paying investment, because it will not put bread in our mouths nor clothes on our shivering nakedness. "Poverty is a most odious calling," sighed Burton many years ago, and we have good cause to echo his lament. Until we are able to believe, with that enthusiastic Greek scholar, Mr. Butcher, that "intellectual training is an end in itself, and not a mere preparation for a trade or a profession"; until we begin to understand that there is a leisure which does not mean an easy sauntering through life, but a special form of activity, employing all our faculties, and training us to the adequate reception of whatever is most valuable in literature and art; until we learn to estimate the fruits of self-culture at their proper worth, we are still far from reaping the harvest of three centuries of toil and struggle; we are still as remote as ever from the serenity of intellectual accomplishment.

There is a strange pleasure in work wedded to leisure, in work which has grown beautiful because its rude necessities are softened and humanized by sentiment and the subtle grace of association. A little paragraph from the journal of Eugénie de Guérin illustrates with charming simplicity the gilding of common toil by the delicate touch of a cultivated and sympathetic intelligence:—

"A day spent in spreading out a large wash leaves little to say, and yet it is rather pretty, too, to lay the white linen on the grass, or to see it float on lines. One may fancy one's self Homer's Nausicaä, or one of those Biblical princesses who washed their brothers' tunics. We have a basin at Moulinasse that you have never seen, sufficiently large, and full to the brim of water. It embellishes the hollow, and attracts the birds who like a cool place to sing in."

In the same spirit, Maurice de Guérin confesses frankly the pleasure he takes in gathering fagots for the winter fire, "that little task of the woodcutter which brings us close to nature," and which was also a favorite occupation of M. de Lamennais. The fagot gathering, indeed, can hardly be said to have assumed the proportions of real toil; it was rather a pastime where play was thinly disguised by a pretty semblance of drudgery. "Idleness," admits de Guérin, "*but idleness full of thought, and alive to every impression.*" Eugénie's labors, however, had other aspects and bore different fruit. There is nothing intrinsically charming in stitching seams, hanging out clothes, or scorching one's fingers over a kitchen fire; yet every page in the journal of this nobly born French girl reveals to us the nearness of work, work

made sacred by the prompt fulfillment of visible duties, and—what is more rare—made beautiful by that distinction of mind which was the result of alternating hours of finely cultivated leisure. A very ordinary and estimable young woman might have spread her wash upon the grass with honest pride at the whiteness of her linen; but it needed the solitude of Le Cayla, the few books, well read and well worth reading, the life of patriarchal simplicity, and the habit of sustained and delicate thought, to awaken in the worker's mind the graceful association of ideas,—the pretty picture of Nausicaä and her maidens cleansing their finely woven webs in the cool, rippling tide.

For it is self-culture that warms the chilly earth wherein no good seed can mature; it is self-culture that distinguishes between the work which has inherent and lasting value and the work which represents conscientious activity and no more. And for the training of one's self, leisure is requisite; leisure and that rare modesty which turns a man's thoughts back to his own shortcomings and requirements, and extinguishes in him the burning desire to enlighten his fellow-beings. "We might make ourselves spiritual by detaching ourselves from action, and become perfect by the rejection of energy," says Mr. Oscar Wilde, who delights in scandalizing his patient readers, and who lapses unconsciously into something resembling animation over the wrongs inflicted by the solemn preceptors of mankind. The notion that it is worth while to learn a thing only if you intend to impart it to others is widespread and exceedingly popular. I have myself heard an excellent and anxious aunt say to her young niece, then working hard at college, "But, my dear, why do you give so much of your time to Greek? You don't expect to teach it, do you?"—as if there were no other use to be gained, no other pleasure to be won from that noble language, in which lies hidden the hoarded treasure of centuries. To study Greek in order to read and enjoy it, and thereby make life better worth the living is a possibility that seldom enters the practical modern mind.

Yet this restless desire to give out information, like alms, is at best a questionable bounty; this determination to share one's wisdom with one's unwilling fellow-creatures is a noble impulse provocative of general discontent. When Southey, writing to James Murray about a dialogue which he proposes to publish in the *Quarterly*, says, with characteristic complacency: "I have very little doubt that it will excite considerable attention, and lead many persons into a wholesome train of thought," we feel at once how absolutely familiar is the sentiment, and how absolutely hopeless is literature approached in this spirit. The same principle, working under different conditions today, entangles us in a network of lectures, which have become the chosen field for every educational novelty, and the diversion of the mentally unemployed.

Charles Lamb has recorded distinctly his veneration for the old-fashioned schoolmaster who taught his Greek and Latin in leisurely fashion day after day, with no thought wasted upon more superficial or practical acquirements, and who "came to his task as to a sport." He has made equally plain his aversion for the new-fangled pedagogue—new in his time, at least—who could not "relish a beggar or a gypsy" without seeking to collect or to impart some statistical information on the subject. A gentleman of this calibre, his fellow-traveler in a coach, once asked him if he had ever made "any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London?" and the magnitude of the question so overwhelmed Lamb that he could not even stammer out a confession of his ignorance. "To go preach to the first passer-by, to become tutor to the ignorance of the first thing I meet, is a task I abhor," observes Montaigne, who must certainly have been the most acceptable companion of his day.

Dr. Johnson, too, had scant sympathy with insistent and arrogant industry. He could work hard enough when circumstances demanded it; but he "always felt an inclination to do nothing," and not infrequently gratified his desires. "No man, sir, is obliged to do as much as he can. A man should have part of his life to himself," was the good doctor's soundly heterodox view, advanced upon many occasions. He hated to hear people boast of their assiduity, and nipped such vain pretensions in

the bud with frosty scorn. When he and Boswell journeyed together in the Harwich stage-coach, a "fat, elderly gentle-woman," who had been talking freely of her own affairs, wound up by saying that she never permitted any of her children to be for a moment idle. "I wish, madam," said Dr. Johnson testily, "that you would educate me too, for I have been an idle fellow all my life." "I am sure, sir," protested the woman with dismayed politeness, "you have not been idle." "Madam," was the retort, "it is true! And that gentleman there"—pointing to poor young Boswell—"has been idle also. He was idle in Edinburgh. His father sent him to Glasgow, where he continued to be idle. He came to London, where he has been very idle. And now he is going to Utrecht, where he will be as idle as ever."

That there was a background of truth in these spirited assertions we have every reason to be grateful. Dr. Johnson's value today does not depend on the number of essays, or reviews, or dedications he wrote in a year,—some years he wrote nothing,—but on his own sturdy and splendid personality; "the real primate, the soul's teacher of all England," says Carlyle; a great embodiment of uncompromising goodness and sense. Every generation needs such a man, not to compile dictionaries, but to preserve the balance of sanity, and few generations are blest enough to possess him. As for Boswell, he might have toiled in the law courts until he was gray without benefiting or amusing anybody. It was in the nights he spent drinking port wine at the Mitre, and in the days he spent trotting, like a terrier, at his master's heels, that the seed was sown which was to give the world a masterpiece of literature, the most delightful biography that has ever enriched mankind. It is to leisure that we owe the *Life of Johnson*, and a heavy debt we must, in all integrity, acknowledge it to be.

Mr. Shortreed said truly of Sir Walter Scott that he was "making himself in the busy, idle pleasures of his youth"; in those long rambles by hill and dale, those whimsical adventures in farmhouses, those merry, purposeless journeys in which the eager lad tasted the flavour of life. At home such unauthorized amusements were regarded with emphatic disapprobation. "I greatly doubt, sir," said his father to him one day, "that you were born for nae better than a gangrel scrape-gut!" and one half pities the grave clerk to the Signet, whose own life had been so decorously dull, and who regarded with affectionate solicitude his lovable and incomprehensible son. In later years Sir Walter recognized keenly that his wasted school hours entailed on him a lasting loss, a loss he was determined his sons should never know. It is to be forever regretted that "the most Homeric of modern men could not read Homer." But every day he stole from the town to give to the country, every hour he stole from law to give to literature, every minute he stole from work to give to pleasure, counted in the end as gain. It is in his pleasures that a man really lives, it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self. Perhaps Charles Lamb's fellow clerks thought that because his days were spent at a desk in the East India House, his life was spent there too. His life was far remote from that routine of labor; built up of golden moments of respite, enriched with joys, chastened by sorrows, vivified by impulses that had no filiation with his daily toil. "For the time that a man may call his own," he writes to Wordsworth, "that is his life." The Lamb who worked in the India House, and who had "no skill in figures," has passed away, and is today but a shadow and a name. The Lamb of the "Essays" and the "Letters" lives for us now, and adds each year his generous share to the innocent gayety of the world. This is the Lamb who said, "Riches are chiefly good because they give us time," and who sighed for a little son that he might christen him Nothing-to-do, and permit him to do nothing.

1893

## 1879 ~ *James Branch Cabell* ~ —

LITTLE has been published regarding Cabell's personal life. The apparent secretiveness has led to many conjectures which already seem to have lifted the Cabell of fact into the realm of legend. Only the barest skeleton of biography is available. He is a native of Richmond, Virginia, descended from a family dating back to colonial days. After obtaining his preliminary education in private schools, he entered William and Mary College, where as an undergraduate he was instructor in Greek and French, edited the college literary magazine, and became a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

From the time that he was sixteen years old, he had made up his mind to become a writer. After graduating from college he engaged in newspaper work in Richmond and New York for four years. From 1902 to 1910 he contributed to some of the leading magazines, and from 1911 to 1913 he worked in the mine fields of West Virginia. He is interested in genealogy and in history, having served as genealogist and historian in several Virginia societies.

In manner Cabell is shy and reticent, avoids public appearances, and holds himself aloof from all but a few intimate friends. For this aloofness he pays the penalty of being misunderstood by his fellow townsmen.

Since 1904, when *The Eagle's Shadow* appeared, he has published more than thirty volumes of novels, short stories, essays, sketches, poems, as well as a play. Twenty-one of them constitute his major project, what he calls the Biography of Dom Manuel, a monumental record of a medieval swineherd, who became emperor, and of his descendants down to the Virginia of our time. As the scene and background of the Biography he has made use of Poictesme, an imaginary province bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. The books should be read in the logical order as Cabell has arranged and listed them in *Preface to the Past* (1936). In *Beyond Life* (1919), a volume of conversations with the imaginary John Charteris, Cabell states his attitude toward life and art, and suggests what he proposes to do. In *Straws and Prayer-Books* (1924), the concluding volume, he reviews what he has done and elaborates various aspects of his philosophy of life and art. In the intervening volumes he gives form to some of the moods and attitudes which enter into this philosophy, notably the poetic, the chivalrous, and the gallant, as seen respectively in *The Music from Behind the Moon* (1926), *Chivalry* (1909), and *Gallantry* (1907). Although the Biography wanders from the original Poictesme to contemporary Virginia, the medieval and modern are dexterously united through the double life of the hero in *The Cream of the Jest* (1917), the last of the narrative volumes. The work as a whole is a saga of unprecedented proportions in recent literature.

If slow recognition is a sign of greatness, Cabell deserves to become a classic. For fifteen years he published books which were neither understood nor appreciated, and as a general thing met with indifference and disapproval. It was not until 1919 that the publication of two widely different books brought him before the public in no uncertain terms. *Beyond Life*, which had been serialized in a Chicago newspaper, was widely reviewed and discussed as the expression of an original approach to art; *Jurgen*, on the other hand, fell under the heavy hammer of the censor, who by his zeal afforded the book and its author an unexpected measure of publicity. His books have never been best sellers as that term is used in mass-production civilization. Readers in increasing number there are, to be sure, but one gets the impression that even the most understanding among them, while recognizing and applauding the originality, are not quite certain of the drift, and prefer to remain silent admirers rather than to become enthusiastic idolaters.

His conception of life determines the nature and characteristics of his art. As he views it, life is an altogether unsatisfactory and wholly unhappy enterprise. As science is pushing the boundaries of the universe farther and farther into space, earth and man become correspondingly smaller, and more and more inconsequential in the expanding scheme of things. The forces of nature operate with inexorable drive, and man becomes the victim of them without recourse. This scientific view, which undoubtedly found confirmation in the catastrophic debacle of the Great War, emphasizes in Cabell's mind the futility of man's efforts, and his inability to work out for himself a program of satisfaction and happiness through well-ordered living. Life as such is not only meaningless and purposeless, but it is at the same time all but unbearable. The only way in which it can be made endurable is by evading or escaping from it, by building, as it were, a universe of self-delusion into which one retires from the actualities of an unendurable situation.

Aside from this mission of providing an avenue of evasion and escape, Cabell committed himself to no artistic purpose. He refused to recognize the doctrine of art for art's sake, as well as the other extreme of art for the sake of reform and propaganda. Art, he assumes, is primarily and essentially for the artist; the literary man writes because he cannot help it, and as a relief from the pressure of unexpressed moods and ideas. Social motives, such as the desire to share experience and to communicate with one's fellows, are at best only of secondary importance. To him the permanence of art is as inconsequential as life itself. Life is such an unhappy business at best that a too subservient art would merely increase its already intolerable burdens.

His work has been attacked rather savagely on the ground of indecency and obscenity. Some magazine editors insisted that some of his stories be toned down, so as not to offend the moral sensibilities of their "respectable" clientele. Whether the charges were justified need not be argued here, but in making them critics and read-

ers seemed to forget that Cabell in his Biography covered something like six centuries of human civilization, during which it stands to reason that moral standards did not remain static. A more serious charge against him is unintelligibility. Unless one is aware of the author's scheme, and reads the books in proper sequence, one is apt to lose the drift and significance of the work. One should be fortified with a copy of the author's *Preface to the Past* (or even Mr. Van Doren's inadequate *scholia*) in order to catch the full meaning of the titanic project.

Like Hergesheimer, Cabell is an artistic escapist; unlike Hergesheimer, who finds his escape by hiding under colorful superficial exteriors, created through the art of super-costuming, Cabell retires from the scene of sense and reality, and creates for himself an imaginary, ideal universe in which he has his people live and move. Historical romancers like Scott and Cooper have likewise created imaginary, ideal universes, but out of the raw material of fact and sense; Cabell turns from fact and sense, and loses himself in the positive virtue of dreams, in which he believes unfailingly.

The books which constitute the Biography of Dom Manuel are (in logical sequence) *Beyond Life* (1919); *The Lineage of Litchfield* (1922); *Figures of Earth* (1921); *The Silver Stallion* (1926); *The Music from Behind the Moon* (1926); *The White Robe* (1928); *The Way of Ecben* (1929); *The Soul of Melicent* (1913, rev. 1920 as *Domnei*); *Chivalry* (1909, rev. 1921); *Jurgen* (1919, rev. 1921); *The Line of Love* (1905, rev. 1921); *The High Place* (1923); *Gallantry* (1907); *Something About Eve* (1927); *The Certain Hour* (1916); *The Cords of Vanity* (1909, rev. 1920); *From the Hidden Way* (1916); *The Jewel Merchants* (1921); *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* (1915, rev. 1922); *The Eagle's Shadow* (1904, rev. 1923); *The Cream of the Jest* (1917, rev. 1922). More recently he has published *Smirt* (1934); *Smith: A Sylvan Interlude* (1935); *Smire: An Acceptance of the Third Person* (1937); and *The King Was in His Counting House* (1938). His essays are found in *Beyond Life* (1919); *Joseph Hergesheimer* (1921); *Straws and Prayer-Books* (1924); *Some of Us. An Essay in Epitaphs* (1930); *These Restless Heads: A Trilogy of Romantic Essays* (1932); *Ladies and Gentlemen: A Parcel of Reconsiderations* (1934); *Preface to the Past* (1936). His poetry consists of *From the Hidden Way* (1916) and *Ballades from the Hidden Way* (1928). Many of his writings have been collected in *The Works of James Branch Cabell* (18 vols., 1927–30). For biographical data consult Cabell, *Branchiana* (1907); Cabell, *Branch of Abingdon* (1911); C. Van Doren, *James Branch Cabell* (1925, rev. 1932); E. Boyd, *Portraits: Real and Imaginary* (1924); E. R. Richardson, "Richmond and Its Writers," *Bookman*, Dec., 1928. For helpful critical studies see J. W. Beach, *The Outlook for American Prose* (1926); P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans* (1924); H. Walpole, *The Art of James Branch Cabell* (1920); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); V. Starrett, *Buried Caesars* (1923); B. Rascoe, *Prometheans* (1933); V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); W. R. Parker, "A Key to Cabell," *English Journal*, June, 1932; H. L. Mencken, *James Branch Cabell* (1927); E. Clark, *Innocence Abroad* (1931); E. Glasgow, "The Biography of Manuel," *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 7, 1930; J. J. Gunther, "James Branch Cabell: an Introduction," *Bookman*, Nov., 1920; H. Hatcher, *Creating the American Novel* (1935); H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); L. Howard, "Figures of Allegory," *Sewanee Review*, Jan.–March, 1934; C. F. McIntyre, "Mr. Cabell's Cosmos," *Sewanee Review*, July–Sept., 1930; R. Michaud, *The American Novel To-day* (1928); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* BEYOND LIFE

First published as a serial in the *Chicago Tribune*. It is a statement of Cabell's artistic theory which he exemplified in his novels. To understand Cabell's writings one must know *Beyond Life*. The selections comprise the conclusion of the first chapter and all of the second.

### *We Approach*

His notion, as I followed him, was that romance controlled the minds of men; and by creating force-producing illusions, furthered the world's betterment with the forces thus brought into being: so that each generation of naturally inert mortals was propelled toward a higher sphere and manner of living, by the might of each generation's ignorance and prejudices and follies and stupidities, beneficently directed. To me this sounded in every way Economical. And as he ran on, I really seemed to glimpse, under the spell of that melodious voice, romance and "realism" as the contending Ormuzd and Ahrimanes he depicted; and the ends for which these two contended as not merely scriptorial. . . .

But I too run on. It is more equitable to let John Charteris speak for himself, and express uninterruptedly the creed of what he called the Economist theory, as to literature and human affairs in general. . . .

### *Which Deals with the Demiurge*

I

Off-hand (began John Charteris) I would say that books are best insured against oblivion through practice of the auctorial virtues of distinction and clarity, of beauty and symmetry, of tenderness and truth and urbanity. That covers the ground, I think: and so it remains merely to cite supporting instances here and there, by mentioning a few writers who have observed these requirements, and thus to substantiate my formula without unnecessary divagation. . . .

Therefore I shall be very brief. And even so, I imagine, you will not be inclined to listen to much of what I am about to say, if only because, like most of us, you are intimidated by that general attitude toward culture and the humanities which has made of American literature, among foreign penmen, if not precisely an object of despairing envy, at least of feeling comment. In particular, I imagine that my frequent references to the affairs and people of fled years will annoy you, since the American book-purchaser shies from such pedantic, and indeed from any, allusion to the past, with that distrust peculiar to persons with criminal records. In fact, this murderer, too, is often haunted, I dare say, by memories of his victim, in thinking of the time he has killed, whether with the "uplifting" or with the "daring" current novels of yesterday.

But you perceive, I trust, that your personal indifference, and the lazy contempt of America as a whole, toward art matters no more affects the eternal verity and the eternal importance of art than do the religious practices of Abyssinia, say, affect the verity and importance of the New Testament. You perceive, I trust, that you ought to be interested in art matters, whatever is your actual emotion. You understand, in fine—as a mere abstract principle—what your feeling "ought to be." Well, it is precisely that tendency to imagine yourself and your emotions as these things "ought to be" which convicts you, over any verbal disclaimer, of a vital interest in art matters: and it is that tendency about which I propose to speak very briefly. . . .

And yet, so insidious is the influence of general opinion, even when manifested as plain unreason, that I confess I myself, whenever anyone talks of "art" and "aesthetic theories," am inclined to find him vaguely ridiculous, and seem to detect in every word he utters a flavor of affectation. So should you prove quite as susceptible as I to the herd-instinct I shall have no ground for complaint. Meanwhile in theory—without of necessity accompanying my friend Felix Kennaston all the way to his conclusion that the sum of corporeal life represents an essay in romantic fiction,—I can perceive plainly enough that the shape-giving principle of all sentient beings is artistic. That is a mere matter of looking at living creatures and noticing their forms. . . . But the principle goes deeper, in that it shapes too the minds of men, by this universal tendency to imagine—and to think

of as in reality existent—all the tenants of earth and all the affairs of earth, not as they are, but "as they ought to be." And so it comes about that romance has invariably been the demiurgic and beneficent force, not merely in letters, but in every matter which concerns mankind; and that "realism," with its teaching that the mile-posts along the road are as worthy of consideration as the goal, has always figured as man's chief enemy. . . .

2

Indeed, that scathing criticism which Sophocles passed, however anciently on a contemporary, remains no less familiar than significant,—"He paints men as they are: I paint them as they ought to be." It is aside from the mark that in imputing such veracity to Euripides the singer of Colonos was talking nonsense: the point is that Sophocles saw clearly what was the one unpardonable sin against art and human welfare.

For the Greeks, who were nurtured among art's masterworks, recognized, with much of that perturbing candor wherewith children everywhere appraise their associates, that gracefully to prevaricate about mankind and human existence was art's signal function. As a by-product of this perception, Hellenic literature restrained its endeavors, quite naturally, to embroidering events that were incontestable because time had erased the evidence for or against their actual occurrence: and poets evoked protagonists worth noble handling from bright mists of antiquity, where through, as far as went existent proofs, man might in reality have moved "as they ought to be." Thus, even Homer, the most ancient of great verbal artists, elected to deal with legends that in his day were venerable: and in Homer when Ajax lifts a stone it is with the strength of ten warriors, and Odysseus, when it at all promotes the progress of the story, becomes invisible. It seems—upon the whole—less probable that Homer drew either of these accomplishments from the actual human life about him, than from simple consciousness that it would be very gratifying if men could do these things. And, indeed, as touches enduring art, to write "with the eye upon the object" appears a relatively modern pretence, perhaps not unconnected with the coetaneous phrase of "all my eye."

Then, when the Attic drama came to flowerage, the actors were masked, so that their features might display unhuman perfection; and were mounted upon cothurni, to lend impressiveness to man's physical mediocrity; and were clothed in draperies which philanthropically eclipsed humanity's frugal graces. In painting or sculpture, where the human body could be idealized with a free hand, the Greek rule was nakedness: in drama, where the artist's material was incorrigible flesh, there was nothing for it save to disguise the uncaptivating groundwork through some discreet employment of fair apparel. Thus only could the audience be hoodwinked into forgetting for a while what men and women really looked like. So in drama Theseus declaimed in imperial vestments, and in sculpture wore at the very most a fig-leaf. It is hardly necessary to point out that the Greek shared few of our delusions concerning "decency": for, of course, they had no more moral aversion to a man's appearing naked in the street than to a toad's doing so, and objected simply on the ground that both were ugly. So they resolutely wrote about—and carved and painted, for that matter—men "as they ought to be" doing such things as it would be gratifying for men to do if these feats were humanly possible. . . . And in the twilit evening of Greek literature you will find Theocritus clinging with unshaken ardor to unreality, and regaling the townfolk of Alexandria with tales of an improbable Sicily, where the inhabitants are on terms of friendly intimacy with cyclopes, water-nymphs and satyrs.

3

Equally in the Middle Ages did literature avoid deviation into the credible. When carpets of brocade were spread in April meadows it was to the end that barons and ladies might listen with delight to peculiarly unplausible accounts of how Sire Roland held the pass at Roncevaux single-handed against an army, and of Lancelot's education at the bottom of a pond by elfin pedagogues, and of how Virgil builded Naples upon eggshells. When English-

speaking tale-tellers began to concoct home-spun romances they selected such themes as Bevis of Southampton's addiction to giant-killing, and Guy of Warwick's encounter with a man-eating cow eighteen feet long, and the exploits of Thomas of Reading, who exterminated an infinity of dragons and eloped with Prester John's daughter after jilting the Queen of Fairyland. Chaucer, questionless, was so injudicious as to dabble in that muddy stream of contemporaneous happenings which time alone may clarify: but the parts of Chaucer that endure are a Knight's story of mythological events, a Prioress's unsubstantiated account of a miracle, a Nun's Priest's anticipation of Rostand's barnyard fantasy, and a ream or two of other delightful flim-flams. From his contemporaries Chaucer got such matter as the Miller's tale of a clerk's misadventures in osculation.

4

But with the invention of printing, thoughts spread so expeditiously that it became possible to acquire quite serviceable ideas without the trouble of thinking: and very few of us since then have cared to risk impairment of our minds by using them. A consequence was that, with inaction, man's imagination in general grew more sluggish, and demurred, just as mental indolence continues to balk, over the exertion of conceiving an unfamiliar *locale*, in any form of art. The deterioration, of course, was gradual, and for a considerable while theatrical audiences remained receptively illiterate. And it seems at first sight gratifying to note that for a lengthy period Marlowe was the most "popular" of the Elizabethan playwrights: for in Marlowe's superb verse there is really very little to indicate that the writer had ever encountered any human beings, and certainly nothing whatever to show that he had seriously considered this especial division of fauna: whereas all his scenes are laid somewhere a long way west of the Hesperides. Yet Marlowe's popularity, one cannot but suspect, was furthered by unaesthetic aids, in divers "comic" scenes which time has beneficently destroyed. At all events, complaisant dramatists, out of a normal preference for butter with their daily bread, soon began to romance about contemporary life. It is not Shakespeare's least claim to applause that he sedulously avoided doing anything of the sort. To the other side, being human, Shakespeare was not untainted by the augmenting trend toward "realism," and in depicting his fellows was prone to limit himself to exaggeration of their powers of fancy and diction. This, as we now know, is a too sparing employment of untruthfulness: and there is ground for sharp arraignment of the imbecility attributed to Lear, and Othello, and Hamlet, and Macbeth, and Romeo—to cite only a few instances,—by any candid estimate of their actions, when deprived of the transfiguring glow wherewith Shakespeare invests what is being done, by evoking a haze of lovely words. For really, to go mad because a hostess resents your bringing a hundred servants on a visit, or to murder your wife because she has misplaced a handkerchief, is much the sort of conduct which is daily chronicled by the morning-paper; and in charity to man's self-respect should be restricted to the ostentatious impermanence of journalism. But at bottom Shakespeare never displayed any very hearty admiration for humanity as a race, and would seem to have found not many more commendable traits in general exercise among mankind than did the authors of the Bible.

Few of the art-reverencing Elizabethans, however, handled the surrounding English life: when they dealt with the contemporaneous it was with a reassuringly remote Italian background, against which almost anything might be supposed to happen, in the way of picturesque iniquity and poisoned wine: so that they composed with much of that fine irresponsibility wherewith American journalists expose the court-life of Madrid. But the Jacobean drama tended spasmodically toward untruths about its audience's workaday life, with such depressing results as *Hyde Park*, *The Roaring Girl*, and *The New Inn*, by men who in the field of unrestricted imagination had showed themselves to be possessed of genuine ability.

5

Then came the gallant protest of the Restoration, when Wycherley and his successors in

drama, commenced to write of contemporary life in much the spirit of modern musical comedy, which utilizes a facsimile of the New York Pennsylvania Railway Station, or of the Capitol at Washington, as an appropriate setting for a ballet and a comedian's colloquy with the orchestra leader. Thus here the scenes are in St. James's Park, outside Westminster, in the New Exchange, and in other places familiar to the audience; and the characters barter jokes on current events: but the laws of the performers' mimic existence are frankly extra-mundane, and their antics, in Restoration days as now, would have subjected them to immediate arrest upon the auditorial side of footlights. A great deal of queer nonsense has been printed concerning the comedy of Gallantry, upon the startling assumption that its authors copied the life about them. It is true that Wycherley, in this the first of English authors to go astray, began the pernicious practice of depicting men as being not very much better than they actually are: of that I will speak later: but Wycherley had the saving grace to present his men and women as trammeled by the social restrictions of Cloud-Cuckoo-Land alone. And, were there nothing else, it seems improbable that Congreve, say, really believed that every young fellow spoke habitually in terms of philosophic wit and hated his father; and that every old hunks possessed, more or less vicariously, a beautiful second wife; and that people married without licenses, or, indeed, without noticing very particularly whom they were marrying; and that monetary competence and happiness and all-important documents, as well as a sudden turn for heroic verse, were regularly accorded to everybody toward eleven o'clock in the evening.

*6*

Thus far the illiterate ages, when as yet so few persons could read that literature tended generally toward the acted drama. The stage could supply much illusory assistance, in the way of pads and wigs and grease-paints and soft lightings, toward making men appear heroic and women charming: but, after all, the rôles were necessarily performed by human beings, and the charitable deceit was not continuous. The audience was ever and anon being reminded, against its firm-set will, that men were mediocre creatures.

Nor could the poets, however rapidly now multiplied their verse-books, satisfactorily delude their patrons into overlooking this unpleasant fact. For one reason or another, men as a whole have never taken kindlily to printed poetry: most of us are unable to put up with it at all, and even to the exceptional person verse after an hour's reading becomes unaccountably tiresome. Prose—for no very patent cause—is much easier going. So the poets proved ineffectual comforters, who could but rarely be-drug even the few to whom their charms did not seem gibberish.

With the advent of the novel, all this was changed. Not merely were you relieved from metrical fatigue, but there came no commonplace flesh-and-blood to give the lie to the artist's pretensions. It was possible, really for the first time, acceptably to present in literature men "as they ought to be." Richardson could dilate as unrestrainedly as he pleased upon the super-eminence in virtue and sin, respectively, of his Grandison and his Lovelace emboldened by the knowledge that there was nothing to check him off save the dubious touchstone of his reader's common-sense. Fielding was not only able to conduct a broadshouldered young ruffian to fortune and a lovely wife, but could moreover endow Tom Jones with all sorts of heroic and estimable qualities such as (in mere unimportant fact) rascals do not display in actual life. When the novel succeeded the drama it was no longer necessary for the artist to represent human beings with even partial veracity: and this new style of writing at once became emblematic.

And so it has been ever since. Novelists have severally evolved their pleasing symbols wherewith approximately to suggest human beings and the business of human life, much as remote Egyptians drew serrated lines to convey the idea of water and a circle to indicate eternity. The symbols have often varied: but there has rarely been any ill-advised attempt to depict life as it seems in the living of it, or to crystallize the vague notions and feeble sensations with which human beings, actually, muddle through to an epitaph; if only because

all sensible persons, obscurely aware that this routine is far from what it ought to be, have always preferred to deny its existence. And moreover, we have come long ago to be guided in any really decisive speech or action by what we have read somewhere; and so, may fairly claim that literature should select (as it does) such speeches and such actions as typical of our essential lives, rather than the gray interstices, which we perforce fill in extempore, and botch.

As concerns the novelists of the day before yesterday, this evasion of veracity is already more or less conceded: the "platitudinous heroics" of Scott and the "exaggerated sentimentalism" of Dickens are notorious in quite authoritative circles whose *ducdame* is the honest belief that art is a branch of pedagogy. Thackeray, as has been pointed out elsewhere, avoids many a logical outcome of circumstance, when recognition thereof would be inconvenient, by killing off somebody and blinding the reader with a tear-drenched handkerchief. And when we sanely appraise the most cried-up writer of genteel "realism," matters are not conducted much more candidly. Here is a fair sample:—"From the very beginning of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form that groundwork of disapprobation on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike, and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry." It is Miss Austen's most famous, most beloved, and most "natural" character replying—not by means of a stilted letter, but colloquially, under the stress of emotion—to a proposal of marriage by the man she loves. This is a crisis which in human life a normal young woman simply does not meet with any such rhetorical architecture. . . . So there really seems small ground for wonder that Mr. Darcy observed, "You have said quite enough, madam"; and no cause whatever for surprise that he hastily left the room, and was heard to open the front door and quit the house. . . . Yet, be it forthwith added, Scott and Dickens and Thackeray, and even Miss Austen, were in the right, from one or another aesthetic standpoint, in thus variously editing and revising their contemporaries' unsatisfactory disposition of life. Indeed, upon no plea could they be bound to emulate malfeasance.

Criticism as to the veracity of more recent writers is best dismissed with the well-merited commendation that novelists today continue rigorously to respect the Second Commandment. Meanwhile it may, with comparative safety, be pointed out that no interred writer of widely conceded genius has ever displayed in depicting the average of human speech and thought and action, and general endowments, such exactness as would be becoming in an affidavit; but rather, when his art touched on these dangerous topics, has regarded romantic prevarication as a necessity. The truth about ourselves is the one truth, above all others, which we are adamantine not to face. And this determination springs, not wholly from vanity, but from a profound race-sense that by such denial we have little to lose, and a great deal to gain.

7

For, as has been said before, an inveterate Sophocles notes clearly that veracity is the one unpardonable sin, not merely against art, but against human welfare. . . . You will observe that the beginnings of fiction everywhere, among all races, take with curious unanimity the same form. It is always the history of the unlooked-for achievements and the ultimate very public triumph of the ill-used youngest son. From the myth of Zeus, third son of Chronos, to the third prince of the fairy-tale, there is no exception. Everywhere it is to the despised weakling that romance accords the final and very public victory. For in the life-battle for existence it was of course the men of puniest build who first developed mental ability, since hardier compeers, who took with bloodied hands that which they wanted, had no especial need of less reliable makeshifts: and everywhere this weakling, quite naturally, afforded himself in imagination what the force of circumstance denied him in fact. Competent persons, then

as now, had neither the time nor ability for literature.

By and bye a staggering stroke of genius improved the tale by adding the handicap of sex-weakness: and Cinderella (whom romance begot and deified as Psyche) straightway led captive every dreamer's hitherto unvoiced desire. This is the most beloved story in the world's library, and, barring a tremendous exception to which I shall presently return, will always remain without rival. Any author anywhere can gain men's love by remodeling (not too drastically) the history of Cinderella: thousands of calligraphic persons have, of course, availed themselves of this fortunate circumstance: and the seeming miracle is that the naïve and the most sophisticated continue to thrill, at each re-telling of the hackneyed story, with the instant response of fiddle-strings, to an interpretation of life which one is tempted to describe as fiddlesticks. Yet an inevitable very public triumph of the down-trodden—with all imaginable pomp and fanfare—is of necessity a tenet generally acceptable to a world of ineffectual inhabitants, each one of whom is a monarch of dreams incarcerated in a prison of flesh; and each of whom is hourly fretted, no less by the indifference of nature to his plight, than by the irrelevancy thereto of those social orderings he dazedly ballots into existence. . . . Christianity, with its teaching that the oppressed shall be exalted, and the unhappy made free of eternal bliss, thus came in the nick of occasion, to promise what the run of men were eager to believe. Such a delectable prospect, irrespective of its plausibility, could not in the nature of things fail to become popular: as has been strikingly attested by man's wide acceptance of the rather exigent requirements of Christianity, and his honest endeavors ever since to interpret them as meaning whatever happens to be convenient.

In similar fashion, humanity would seem at an early period to have wrenched comfort from prefiguring man as the hero of the cosmic romance. For it was unpleasantly apparent that man did not excel in physical strength, as set against the other creatures of a planet whereon may be encountered tigers and elephants. His senses were of low development, as compared with the senses of insects: and, indeed, senses possessed by some of these small contemporaries man presently found he did not share, nor very clearly understand. The luxury of wings, and even the common comfort of a caudal appendage, was denied him. He walked painfully, without hoofs, and, created naked as a shelled almond, with difficulty outlived a season of inclement weather. Physically, he displayed in not a solitary trait a product of nature's more ambitious labor. . . . He, thus, surpassed the rest of vital creation in nothing except, as was beginning to be rumored, the power to reason; and even so, was apparently too magnanimous to avail himself of the privilege.

But to acknowledge such disconcerting facts would never do: just as inevitably, therefore, as the peafowl came to listen with condescension to the nightingale, and the tortoise to deplore the slapdash ways of his contemporaries, man probably began very early to regale himself with flattering narratives as to his nature and destiny. Among the countless internecine animals that roamed earth, puissant with claw and fang and sinew, an ape reft of his tail, and grown rusty at climbing, was the most formidable, and in the end would triumph. It was of course considered blasphemous to inquire into the grounds for this belief, in view of its patent desirability, for the race was already human. So the prophetic portrait of man treading among cringing pleosauri to browbeat a frightened dinosaur was duly scratched upon the cave's wall, and art began forthwith to accredit human beings with every trait and destiny which they desiderated. . . .

And so today, as always, we delight to hear about invincible men and women of unearthly loveliness—corrected and considerably augmented versions of our family circle,—performing feats illimitably beyond our modest powers. And so today no one upon the preferable side of Bedlam wishes to be reminded of what we are in actuality, even were it possible, by any disastrous miracle, ever to dispel the mist which romance has evoked about all human doings; and to the golden twilight of which old usage has so accustomed us that, like nocturnal birds, our vision grows pen-

turbed in a clearer atmosphere. And we have come very firmly to believe in the existence of men everywhere, not as in fact they are, but "as they ought to be."

8

Now art, like all the other noteworthy factors in this remarkable world, serves in the end utilitarian purposes. When a trait is held up as desirable, for a convincingly long while, the average person, out of self-respect pretends to possess it: with time, he acts letter-perfect as one endowed therewith, and comes unshakably to believe that it has guided him from infancy. For while everyone is notoriously swayed by appearances, this is more especially true of his own appearance: cleanliness is, if not actually next to godliness, so far a promoter of benevolence that no man feels upon quite friendly terms with his fellow-beings when conscious that he needs a shave; and if in grief you resolutely contort your mouth into a smile you somehow do become forthwith aware of a considerable mitigation of misery. . . . So it is that man's vanity and hypocrisy and lack of clear thinking are in a fair way to prove in the outcome his salvation.

*All is vanity*, quoth the son of David, inverting the truth for popular consumption, as became a wise Preacher who knew that vanity is all. For man alone of animals plays the ape to his dreams. That a dog dreams vehemently is matter of public knowledge: it is perfectly possible that in his more ecstatic visions he usurps the shape of his master, and visits elysian pantries in human form: with awakening, he observes that in point of fact he is a dog, and as a rational animal, makes the best of canineship. But with man the case is otherwise, in that when logic leads to any humiliating conclusion, the sole effect is to discredit logic.

So has man's indomitable vanity made a harem of his instincts, and walled off a seraglio wherein to beget the virtues and refinements and all ennobling factors in man's long progress from gorillaship. As has been suggested, creative literature would seem to have sprung simply from the instinct of any hurt animal to seek revenge,—and "to get even," as the phrase runs, in the field of imagination when such revenge was not feasible in any other arena. . . . Then, too, it is an instinct common to brute creatures that the breeding or even the potential mother must not be bitten,—upon which modest basis a little by a little mankind builded the fair code of *domnei*, or woman-worship, which yet does yeoman service among legislators toward keeping half our citizens "out of the mire of politics." From the shuddering dread that beasts manifest toward uncomprehended forces, such as wind and thunder and tall waves, man developed religion, and a consoling assurance of divine paternity. And when you come to judge what he made of sexual desire, appraising the deed in view as against the wondrous overture of courtship and that infinity of high achievements which time has seen performed as grace-notes, words fail before his egregious thaumaturgy. For after any such stupendous bit of hocus-pocus, there seems to be no limit fixed to the conjurations of human vanity.

9

And these aspiring notions blended a great while since, into what may be termed the Chivalrous attitude toward life. Thus it is that romance, the real demiurge, the first and loveliest daughter of human vanity, contrives all those dynamic illusions which are used to further the ultimate ends of romance. . . . The cornerstone of Chivalry I take to be the idea of vicarship: for the chivalrous person is, in his own eyes at least, the child of God, and goes about this world as his Father's representative in an alien country. It was very adroitly to human pride, through an assumption of man's personal responsibility in his tiniest action, that Chivalry made its appeal; and exhorted every man to keep faith, not merely with the arbitrary will of a strong god, but with himself. There is no cause for wonder that the appeal was irresistible, when to each man it thus admitted that he himself was the one thing seriously to be considered. . . . So man became a chivalrous animal; and about this flattering notion of divine vicarship builded his elaborate mediaeval code, to which, in essentials, a great number of persons adhere even nowadays. Questionless, however, the Chivalrous attitude does not very

happily fit in with modern conditions, whereby the self-elected obligations of the knight-errant toward repressing evil are (in theory at all events) more efficaciously discharged by an organized police and a jury system.

And perhaps it was never, quite, a "practical" attitude,—no, *mais quel geste!* as was observed by a preëminently chivalrous person. At worst, it is an attitude which one finds very taking to the fancy as the posture is exemplified by divers mediaeval chroniclers, who had sound notions about portraying men "as they ought to be." . . . There is Nicolas de Caen, for instance, who in his *Dizain des Reines* (with which I am familiar, I confess, in the English version alone) presents with some naïveté this notion of divine vicarship, in that he would seem to restrict it to the nobility and gentry. "For royal persons and their immediate associates," Dom Nicolas assumes at outset, "are the responsible stewards of Heaven": and regarding them continuously as such, he selects from the lives of various queens ten crucial moments wherein (as Nicolas phrases it), "Destiny has thrust her sceptre into the hands of a human being, and left the weakling free to steer the pregnant outcome. Now prove thyself to be at bottom a god or else a beast, saith Destiny, and now eternally abide that choice." Yet this, and this alone, when you come to think of it, is what Destiny says, not merely to "royal persons and their immediate associates," but to everyone. . . . And in his *Roman de Lusignan* Nicolas deals with that quaint development of the Chivalrous attitude to which I just alluded, that took form, as an allied but individual illusion, in *domnei*, or woman-worship; and found in a man's mistress an ever-present reminder, and sometimes a rival, of God. There is something not unpathetic in the thought that this once world-controlling force is restricted today to removing a man's hat in an elevator and occasionally compelling a surrender of his seat in a streetcar. . . . But this *Roman de Lusignan* also has been put into English, with an Afterword by the translator wherein the theories of *domnei* are rather painstakingly set forth: and thereto I shall presently recur, for further consideration of this illusion of *domnei*.

Throughout, of course, the Chivalrous attitude was an intelligent attitude, in which one spun romances and accorded no meticulous attention to mere facts. . . . For thus to spin romances is to bring about, in every sense, man's recreation, since man alone of animals can, actually, acquire a trait by assuming, in defiance of reason, that he already possesses it. To spin romances is, indeed, man's proper and peculiar function in a world wherein he only of created beings can make no profitable use of the truth about himself. For man alone of animals plays the ape to his dreams. So he fares onward chivalrously, led by *ignes fatui* no doubt, yet moving onward. And that the goal remains ambiguous seems but a trivial circumstance to any living creature who knows, he knows not how, that to stay still can be esteemed a virtue only in the dead.

10

Indeed, when I consider the race to which I have the honor to belong, I am filled with respectful wonder. . . . All about us flows and gyrates unceasingly the material universe,—an endless inconceivable jumble of rotatory blazing gas and frozen spheres and detonating comets, wherethrough spins Earth like a frail midge. And to this blown molecule adhere what millions and millions and millions of parasites just such as I am, begetting and dreaming and slaying and abnegating and toiling and making mirth, just as did aforetime those countless generations of our forebears, every one of whom was likewise a creature just such as I am! Were the human beings that have been subjected to confinement in flesh each numbered, as is customary in other penal institutes, with what interminable row of digits might one set forth your number, say, or mine?

Nor is this everything. For my reason, such as it is, perceives this race, in its entirety, in the whole outcome of its achievement, to be beyond all wording petty and ineffectual: and no more than thought can estimate the relative proportion to the material universe of our poor Earth, can thought conceive with what quintillionths to express that fractional part which I, as an individual parasite, add to Earth's negligible fretting by ephemerae.

And still—behold the miracle!—still I be-

lieve life to be a personal transaction between myself and Omnipotence; I believe that what I do is somehow of importance; and I believe that I am on a journey toward some very public triumph not unlike that of the third prince in the fairy-tale. . . . Even today I believe in this dynamic illusion. For that creed was the first great inspiration of the demiurge,—man's big romantic idea of Chivalry, of himself as his Father's representative in an alien country;—and it is a notion at which mere fact and reason yelp denial unavailingly. For every one of us is so constituted that he knows the romance to be true, and corporal fact and human reason in this matter, as in divers others, to be the suborned and perjured witnesses of "realism."

1919

## 1880 ~ *Joseph Hergesheimer* ~ —

HERGESHEIMER was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania. As his name indicates he is of German ancestry. He attended a Friends' School in his native city, but because of uncertain health and natural shyness his stay amounted to scarcely more than exposure to the educational process. His ambition was to become a painter, and in order to realize this ambition he enrolled as a student in the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. Restless and unable to submit to the discipline necessary to guarantee success, he found his work rather boresome and hardly more exciting than his experience in school. The inheritance of a modest competence from a distant relative made it possible for him to travel and live in Europe, until a nervous ailment and the rapid disappearance of his fortune due to extravagant habits of spending hastened his return to America.

According to his own account the return was followed by a short period of aimless activity and misgivings about his future. Seeing no future for himself in painting, he determined to become a writer, secluded himself in a Virginia farmhouse, and laid out the plot of a story which he re-wrote a score of times, only to have it returned by the editor to whom it was submitted. This was the beginning of a fourteen-year apprentice period of writing during which he perfected his style and learned the necessary technique of his craft. *The Lay Anthony* (1914) and *Mountain Blood* (1915), his first books, brought him to the notice of the reading public, although they provided no financial remuneration. He is a prolific writer and since 1914 has averaged more than a book a year.

Hergesheimer is married and lives in an old-fashioned mansion, remodeled and furnished in luxurious splendor to satisfy his lavish taste. He does his writing in a downtown room, is a genial host, and observes the social amenities with impeccable care.

As late as 1922, when Hergesheimer had to his credit almost a dozen books, two of which, *The Three Black Pennys* (1917) and *Java Head* (1919), are among the

best he has written, he still had serious misgivings about novel-writing as a profession. Conditions in America, he asserted, are not favorable because really great novels are not wanted. There are two sources of good novels—pitting a heroic or a cowardly person against odds, or restoring beauty which has disappeared. The former leads to a type of fiction which is undesirable because the American people are averse to being jolted out of their complacency; the latter, with its emphasis upon beauty, is therefore the only alternative. Art is aristocratic, aloof, removed from the mob, and the beauty which it seeks must be beyond the sphere of the actual. In Hergesheimer's hands the novel became an avenue of aristocratic escape from the drab routine of ordinary experience.

To be sure the same may be said of many novels and many novelists, for in a sense practically all literature is a means of evasion. It is the peculiar type of beauty which he stresses that distinguishes Hergesheimer's work. He has the painter's interest in externals, sets his scene and background with meticulous attention to all details of color and arrangement, and packs his novels with physical machinery that occasionally leaves scant room for his characters. He is as concerned about emphasizing external details as Miss Cather is in reducing them to a minimum.

To a book like *San Cristóbal de la Habana* (1920) this method is well adapted, for its purpose to create an atmosphere is enhanced by the marshaling of sensuous detail, while in a novel it has obvious disadvantages. For this reason novels like *Linda Condon* (1919) and *Party Dress* (1929) are unbalanced, and therefore fall short of artistic perfection. In historical studies like *Swords and Roses* (1929) and *Limestone Tree* (1931), and in *Tampico* (1926) and *Foolscap Rose* (1934) which deal with commercial and industrial life, he is a bit more fortunate. Although he can never quite check his taste for costume and other external paraphernalia, he writes in a more controlled manner, allowing the currents of life to run their course, at times even with pitiless persistence. At any rate, character is not excluded entirely from the scene, even though it seems to be a secondary interest.

It has been observed that Hergesheimer represents a reaction against the crudities of prevailing frontier fiction and the vulgarity which followed in the wake of the Great War. As such his work satisfied a real need, especially by focusing attention on a type of beauty which was essentially delicate and fragile, albeit superficial and thin. At one time he gave promise of becoming a leader in a new development of American fiction, but this promise was largely dissipated in his continued overemphasis on details to the neglect of character analysis and development. He is the artist of the beautiful as regards color, texture, and arrangement. In the realm of ideas the common denominator underlying most of his books is the theme of the degeneration of American life since the days of the patrician Federalists whom he celebrated as near his ideal in *Balisand*, *Java Head*, and *Swords and Roses*. He is a stern critic of equalitarian democracy, standardization, and mere money-getting.

His style is consciously and deliberately designed to accentuate this idea of beauty. The striving for effect is at times so obvious that the result seems forced and artificial. What began as a peculiar manner of style has in many cases become a mere mannerism, with the inevitable consequence that force and convincingness are sacrificed. *Java Head*, however, combines an effective and controlled style with a searching criticism of American life.

Hergesheimer's novels are *The Lay Anthony* (1914, rev. 1919); *Mountain Blood* (1915, rev. 1919); *The Three Black Pennys* (1917); *Java Head* (1919); *Linda Condon* (1919); *Cytherea* (1922); *The Bright Shawl* (1922); *Tol'able David* (1922); *Balisand* (1924); *Tampico* (1926); *Party Dress* (1930); *Foolscap Rose* (1934). His short stories are collected in *Gold and Iron* (1918); *The Happy End* (1919); *Quiet Cities* (1928); *Tropical Winter* (1933). *San Cristóbal de la Habana* (1920) and *Berlin* (1932) are books of travel and description; *Hugh Walpole* (1919) is a critical essay; *Swords and Roses* (1929) and *Sheridan: A Military Narrative* (1931) are historical and biographical. For information about Hergesheimer see his autobiographical *The Presbyterian Child* (1923) and *From an Old House* (1925); also his "Art," *American Mercury*, Nov. 1926; and "Some Veracious Paragraphs," *Bookman*, Sept., 1918; L. Jones, *Joseph Hergesheimer: the Man and His Books* (1920). For critical estimates and discussion consult C. C. Baldwin, *The Men Who Make Our Novels* (1924); P. H. Boynton, *More Contemporary Americans* (1927); B. C. Williams, *Our Short Story Writers* (1920); C. Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists* (1922); J. B. Cabell, *Some of Us* (1930); J. B. Cabell, *Joseph Hergesheimer* (1921); H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); J. C. Squire and others, *Contemporary American Authors* (1928); S. Haardt, "Joseph Hergesheimer's Methods," *Bookman*, June, 1929; J. W. Beach, *The Outlook for American Prose* (1927); L. Kelley, "America and Mr. Hergesheimer," *Sewanee Review*, April–June, 1932; C. Fadiman, "The Best People's Novelist," *Nation*, Feb. 15, 1933; G. West, "Joseph Hergesheimer: an Appreciation," *English Journal*, Oct., 1931; G. West, "Joseph Hergesheimer," *Virginia Quarterly*, June, 1932; H. S. Canby, *Definitions*, First Series (1922); A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## BREAD

### I

THE train rolling rapidly over the broad salt meadows thunderously entered the long shed of the terminal at the sea. August Turnbull rose from his seat in the Pullman smoking compartment and took down the coat hanging beside him. It was gray flannel; in a waistcoat, his shirt-sleeves were a visible heavy mauve silk, and there was a complication of gold chains about his lower pockets. Above the coat a finely woven Panama hat with a narrow brim had rested, and with that now on his head he moved arrogantly toward the door.

He was a large man, past the zenith of life, but still vigorous in features and action. His face was full, and, wet from the heat, he mopped it with a heavy linen handkerchief. August Turnbull's gaze was steady and light blue; his nose was so heavy that it appeared to droop a little from sheer weight, almost resting on the moustache brushed out in a horizontal line across prominent lips; while his neck swelled in a glowing congestion above a wilting collar.

He nodded to several men in the narrow corridor of the car; men like himself in luxurious summer clothes, but for the most part fatter; then in the shed, looking about in vain for Bernard, his son-in-law, he proceeded to the street, where his automobile was waiting. It was a glittering landaulet, folded back and open. Thrusting a wadded evening paper into a crevice he sank in an upholstered corner while his chauffeur skilfully worked out

through a small confusion of similar motor activity. Before him a carved glass vase set in a bracket held smilax and yellow rosebuds, and he saw on the floor a fallen gold powder box.

Picking it up his face was suffused by a darker tide; this was the result of stooping, and the angry realization that in spite of his prohibition Louise had been using the landaulet again. She must be made to understand that he, her father, had an absolute authority over his family and property. Marriage to Bernard Foster did not relieve her from obedience to the head of the house. Bernard had a car as well as himself; yet August Turnbull knew that his son-in-law—at heart a stingy man—encouraged her to burn the parental gasoline in place of his own. Turned against the public Bernard's special quality was admirable; he was indeed more successful, richer, than August had been at the other's age; but Louise and her husband would have to recognize his precedence.

They were moving faster now on a broad paved avenue bound with steel tracks. A central business section was left for a more unpretentious region—small open fruit and fish stands, dingy lodging places, drab corner saloons, with, at the intervals of the cross streets, fleet glimpses of an elevated boardwalk and the luminous space of the sea. Though the day was ending there was no thinning of the vaporous heat, and a sodden humanity, shapeless in bathing suits, was still reluctantly moving away from the beach.

Groups of women with their hair in trailing wet wisps and short, uneven skirts dripping on the pavements, gaunt children in scant haphazard garb, surged across the broad avenue or with shrill admonishments stood in isolated, helpless patches amid the swift and shining procession of automobiles.

August Turnbull was disturbed by the sudden arrest of his progress, and gazing out saw the insignificant cause of delay. He had again removed his hat, and a frown drew a visible heavy line between his eyes.

"More police are needed for these crossings," he complained to the chauffeur; "there is the same trouble every evening. The city shouldn't encourage such rabbles; they give the place a black eye."

All the immediate section, he silently continued, ought to be torn down and rebuilt in solid expensive structures. It made him hot and uncomfortable just to pass through the shabby quarter. The people in it were there for the excellent reason that they lacked the ambition, the force to demand better things. They got what they deserved.

August Turnbull made an impatient movement of contempt; the world, success, was for the strong men, the men who knew what they wanted, and drove for it in a straight line. There was a great deal of foolishness in the air at present—the war was largely responsible; though, on the other hand, the war would cure a lot of nonsense. But America in particular was rotten with sentimentality; it was that mainly which had involved them here in a purely European affair. Getting into it had been bad business.

Nowhere was the nation's failing more evident than in the attitude toward women. It had always been maudlin; and now, long content to use their advantages in small ways, women would become a serious menace to the country generally. He had admitted their economic value—they filled every possible place in the large establishment of the Turnbull Bakery; rather, they performed all the light manual labour. There they were more satisfactory than men, more easily controlled—yes, and cheaper. But in Congress, voting, women in communities reporting on factory conditions were a dangerous nuisance.

He had left the poorer part, and the suavity of the succeeding streets rapidly increased to a soothing luxury. Wide cottages occupied velvet-green lawns, and the women he saw were of the sort he approved—closely skirted creatures with smooth shoulders in transparent crêpe de Chine. They invited a contemplative eye, the thing for which they were created—a pleasure for men; that and maternity.

The automobile turned toward the sea and stopped at his house midway in the block. It was a square dwelling painted white with a roof of tapestry slate, and broad awning-covered veranda on the sea. A sprinkler was flashing on the lawn, dripping over the concrete pavement, and filling the air with a

damp coolness. No one was visible and, leaving his hat and coat on a chair in an airy hall furnished in black wicker and flowery chintz hangings on buff walls, he descended to the basement dressing-rooms.

In his bathing suit he presented a figure of vigorous, glowing well-being. Only the silvering hair at his temples, the fatty bulge across the back of his neck, and a considerable stomach indicated his multiplying years. He left by a lower door, and immediately after was on the sand. The tide was out, the lowering sun obscured in a haze, and the sea undulated with sullen gleam. Two men were swimming, and farther at the left a woman stood in the water with arms raised to her head. It was cold, but August Turnbull marched out without hesitation and threw himself forward with an uncompromising solid splash.

He swam adequately, but he had not progressed a dozen feet before he was conscious of a strong current sweeping him up the beach, and he regained his feet with an angry flourish. The other men came nearer, and he recognized Bernard Foster, his son-in-law, and Frederick Rathe, whose cottage was directly across the street from the Turnbulls'.

Like August they were big men, with light hair and eyes. They were very strong and abrupt in their movements, they spoke in short harsh periods, and fingered moustaches waxed and rolled into severe points.

"A gully has cut in above," Bernard explained, indicating a point not far beyond them; "it's over your head. Watch where you swim." They were moving away.

"Are you coming over to dinner?" August Turnbull called to Bernard.

"Can't," the latter shouted; "Victorine is sick again. Too many chocolate sundaes."

Left alone, August dived and floated until he was thoroughly cooled; then he turned toward the beach. The woman, whose existence he had forgotten, was leaving at the same time. She approached at an angle, and he was admiring her slim figure when he realized that it was Miss Beggs, his wife's companion. He had never seen her in a bathing suit before. August Turnbull delayed until she was at his side.

"Good-evening." Her voice was low, and she scarcely lifted her gaze from the sand.

He wondered why—she had been in his house for a month—he had failed completely to notice her previously. He decided that it had been because she was so pale and quiet. Ordinarily he didn't like white cheeks; and then she had been deceptive; he had subconsciously thought of her as thin.

She stopped and took off her rubber cap, performing that act slowly, while her body, in wet satin, turned like a faultless statue of glistening black marble.

"Do you enjoy bathing in the ocean?" he asked.

A momentary veiled glance accompanied her reply.

"Yes," she said; "though I can't swim. I like to be beaten by the waves. I like to fight against them."

She hesitated, then fell definitely back; and he was forced to walk on alone.

His wife's companion! With the frown once more scoring the line between his eyes he satirically contrasted Miss Beggs, a servant really, and Emmy.

II

His room occupied the front corner on the sea, Emmy's was beyond; the door between was partly open and he could hear her moving about, but with a cigarette and his hair-brushes he made no acknowledgment of her presence. The sun was now no more than a diffused gray glow, the sea like unstirred molten silver. The sound of the muffled gong that announced dinner floated up the stairs.

Below, the damask was lit both by rose silk-shaded candles and by the radiance of a suspended alabaster bowl. August Turnbull sat at the head of a table laden with silver and crystal and flowers. There were individual pepper mills—he detested adulterated or stale spices—carved goblets for water, cocktail glasses with enamelled roosters, ruby goblets like blown flowers and little gilt-speckled liqueur glasses; there were knives with steel blades, knives all of silver, and gold fruit knives; there were slim oyster forks, entrée forks of solid design, and forks of filigree; a bank of spoons by a plate that would be

presently removed, unused, for other filled plates.

Opposite him Emmy's place was still empty, but his son, Morice, in the olive drab and bar of a first lieutenant, together with his wife, was already present. August was annoyed by any delay: one of the marks of a properly controlled household, a house admirably conscious of the importance of order—and obedience—was an utter promptness at the table. Then, silent and unsubstantial as a shadow, Emmy Turnbull slipped into her seat.

August gazed at her with the secret resentment more and more inspired by her sickness. At first he had been merely dogmatic—she must recover under the superlative advice and attention he was able to summon for her. Then his impatience had swung about toward all doctors—they were a pack of incompetent fools, medicine was nothing more than an organized swindle. They had tried baths, cures, innumerable infallible treatments—to no purpose. Finally he had given up all effort, all hope; he had given her up. And since then it had been difficult to mask his resentment.

The butler, a white jacket taking the place of the conventional sombre black, poured four cocktails from a silver mixer and placed four dishes of shaved ice, lemon rosettes, and minute pinkish clams before August Turnbull, Morice and his wife, and Miss Beggs, occupying in solitude a side of the table. Then he set at Mrs. Turnbull's hand a glass of milk thinned with lime water, and an elaborate platter holding three small pieces of zwieback.

She could eat practically nothing.

It was the particular character of her state that specially upset August Turnbull. He was continually affronted by the spectacle of Emmy seated before him sipping her diluted milk, breaking her dry bread, in the midst of the rich plenty he provided. Damn it, he admitted, it got on his nerves!

The sting of the cocktail whipped up his eagerness for the iced tender clams. His narrowed gaze rested on Emmy; she was actually seven years older than he, but from her appearance she might be a hundred, a million. There was nothing but her painfully slow movements to distinguish her from a mummy.

The plates were again removed and soup brought on, a clear steaming amber-green turtle, and with it crisp wheat rolls. Morice's wife gave a sigh of satisfaction at the latter.

"My," she said, "they're elegant! I'm sick and tired of war bread."

She was a pinkish young woman with regular features and abundant coppery hair. Marriage had brought her into the Turnbull family from the chorus of a famous New York roof beauty show. August had been at first displeased, then a certain complacency had possessed him—Morice, who was practically thirty years old, had no source of income other than that volunteered by his father, and it pleased the latter to keep them depending uncertainly on what he was willing to do. It insured just the attitude from Rosalie he most enjoyed, approved, in a youthful and not unhandsome woman. He liked her soft, scented weight hanging on his arm and the perfumed kiss with which she greeted him in the morning.

Nevertheless, at times there was a gleam in her eyes and an expression at odds with the perfection of her submission; on several occasions Morice had approached him armed with a determination that he, August, knew had been injected from without, undoubtedly by Rosalie. Whatever it had been he quickly disposed of it, but there was a possibility that she might some day undertake a rebellion; and there was added zest in the thought of how he would totally subdue her.

"It's a wonder something isn't said to you," she continued. "They're awfully strict about wheat now."

"That," August Turnbull instructed her heavily, "is a subject we needn't pursue."

The truth was that he would permit no interference with what so closely touched his comfort. He was not a horse to eat bran. His bakery—under inspection—conformed rigidly with the Government requirements; but he had no intention of spoiling his own dinners. Any necessary conservation could be effected at the expense of the riff-raff through which he had driven coming from the station. Black bread was no new experience to them.

He saw that Miss Beggs' small white teeth were crushing salted cashew nuts. Noticing her in detail for the first time he realized that

she enormously appreciated good food. Why in thunder, since she ate so heartily, didn't she get fat and rosy! She was one of the thin kind—yet not thin, he corrected himself. Graceful. Why, she must weigh a hundred and twenty-five pounds; and she wasn't tall.

The butler filled his ruby goblet from a narrow bottle of Rhine wine. It was exactly right, not sweet but full; and the man held for his choice a great platter of beef, beautifully carved into thick crimson slices; the bloodlike gravy had collected in its depression and he poured it over his meat.

"A piece of this," he told Emmy discontentedly, "would set you right up; put something in your veins besides limewater."

She became painfully upset at once and fumbled in her lap, with her face averted, as the attention of the table was momentarily directed at her. There was an uncontrollable tremor of her loose colourless mouth.

What a wife for him, August Turnbull! The stimulants and rich flavours and roast filled him with a humming vitality; he could feel his heart beat—as strong, he thought, as a bell. In a way Emmy had deceived him—she probably had always been fragile, but was careful to conceal it from him at their marriage. It was unjust to him. He wished that she would take her farcical meals in her room, and not sit here—a skeleton at the feast. Positively it made him nervous to see her—spoiled his pleasure.

It had become worse lately; he had difficulty in putting her from his mind; he imagined Emmy in conjunction with the bakery, of her slowly starving, and the thousands of loaves he produced in a day. There was something unnatural in such a situation; it was like a mockery at him.

A vision of her came to him at the most inopportune moments, lingering until it drove him into a hot rage and a pounding set up at the back of his neck.

The meat was brought back, and he had more of a sweet boiled huckleberry pudding. A salad followed, with a heavy Russian dressing. August Turnbull's breathing grew thicker, he was conscious of a familiar oppression. He assaulted it with fresh wine.

"I saw Bernard on the beach," he related; "Victorine is sick once more. Chocolate sundaes, Bernard said. She is always stuffing her self at soda-water counters or with candy. They oughtn't to allow it; the child should be made to eat at the table. When she is here she touches nothing but the dessert. When I was ten I ate everything or not at all. But there is no longer any discipline, not only with children but everywhere."

"There is a little freedom, though," Rosalie suggested.

His manner clearly showed displeasure, almost contempt, and he turned to Miss Beggs. "What do you think?" he demanded. "I understand you have been a school-teacher."

"Oh, you are quite right," she responded, "at least about children, and it is clear from them that most parents are idiotically lax." A blaze of discontent, loathing, surprisingly invaded her pallid face.

"A rod of iron," August recommended.

The contrast between his wife and Miss Beggs recurred, intensified—one an absolute wreck, and the other as solidly slender as a birch-tree. Fate had played a disgusting trick on him. In the prime of his life he was tied to a hopeless invalid. It put an unfair tension on him. Women were charming, gracious—or else they were nothing. If Emmy's money had been an assistance at first he had speedily justified its absorption in the business. She owed him, her husband, everything possible. He suddenly pictured mountains of bread, bread towering up into the clouds, fragrant and appetizing; and Emmy, a thing of bones, gazing wistfully at it. August Turnbull, with a feeling like panic, brushed the picture from his mind.

The dessert was apparently a bomb of frozen coffee, but the centre revealed a delicious creamy substance flaked with pistache. The cold sweet was exactly what he craved, and he ate it rapidly in a curious mounting excitement. With the coffee he fingered the diminutive glass of golden brandy and a long, dark roll of oily tobacco. He lighted this carefully and flooded his head with the coiling bluish smoke. Rosalie was smoking a cigarette—a habit in women which he noisily denounced. She extinguished it in an ash tray, but his anger lingered, an unreasoning exas-

peration that constricted his throat. Sharply aware of the sultriness of the evening he went hastily out to the veranda.

Morice following him with the evening paper volunteered, "I see German submarines are operating on the Atlantic coast."

His father asserted: "This country is due for a lesson. It was anxious enough to get into trouble, and now we'll find how it likes some severe instruction. All the news here is bluff—the national asset. What I hope is that business won't be entirely ruined later."

"The Germans will get the lesson," Rosalie unexpectedly declared at his shoulder.

"You don't know what you're talking about," he replied decidedly. "The German system is a marvel, one of the wonders of civilization."

She turned away, lightly singing a line from one of her late numbers: "I've a Yankee boy bound for Berlin."

Morice stirred uneasily. "They got a Danish tanker somewhere off Nantucket," he continued impotently.

August Turnbull refused to be drawn into further speech; he inhaled his cigar with a replete bodily contentment. The oppression of dinner was subsiding. His private opinion of the war was that it would end without a military decision—he regarded the German system as unsmashable—and then, with France deleted and England swamped in internal politics, he saw an alliance of common sense between Germany and the United States. The present hysteria, the sentimentality he condemned, could not continue to stand before the pressure of mercantile necessity. After all, the entire country was not made up of fools.

Morice and his wife wandered off to the boardwalk, and he, August, must have fallen asleep, for he suddenly sat up with a sensation of strangeness and dizzy vision. He rose and shook it off. It was still light, and he could see Bernard at his automobile, parked before the latter's cottage.

The younger man caught sight of August at the same moment and called: "We are going to a café with the Rathes; will you come?"

He was still slightly confused, his head full, and the ride, the gaiety of the crowd, he thought, would do him good.

"Be over for you," the other added; and later he was crowded into a rear seat between Louise, his daughter, and Caroline Rathe.

Louise was wearing the necklace of platinum and diamonds Bernard Foster had given her last Christmas. It was, August admitted to himself, a splendid present and must have cost eighteen or twenty thousand dollars. The Government had made platinum almost prohibitive. In things of this kind—the adornment of his wife, of, really, himself, the extension of his pride—Bernard was extremely generous. It was in the small affairs such as gasoline that he was prudent.

Both Caroline Rathe and Louise were handsome women handsomely dressed; he was seated in a nest of soft tulle and ruffled embroidery, of pliant swaying bodies. Their satin-shod feet had high, sharp insteps in films of black lace, and their fingers glittered with prismatic stones. Bernard was in front with the chauffeur, and Frederick Rathe occupied a small seat at the knees of the three others. He had not made his money, as had August and Bernard, but inherited it with a huge brewery. Frederick was younger than the other men too; but his manner was, if anything, curter. He said things about the present war that made even August Turnbull uneasy.

He was an unusual youth, not devoted to sports and convivial pleasures—as any one might infer, viewing his heavy frame and wealth—but something of a reader. He quoted fragments from philosophical books about the will-to-power and the *Uebermensch* that stuck like burrs in August Turnbull's memory, furnishing him with labels, backing, for many of his personally evolved convictions and experience.

They were soon descending the steps to the anteroom of the café, where the men left their hats and sticks. As they entered the brilliantly lighted space beyond a captain hurried forward. "Good-evening, gentlemen," he said servilely; "Mr. Turnbull ——"

He ushered them to a table by the rope of an open floor for dancing and removed a reserved card. There he stood attentively with a waiter at his shoulder.

"What will you have?" Frederick Rathe asked generally. "For me nothing but beer.

Not the filthy American stuff." He turned to the servants. "If you still have some of the other. You understand?"

"No beer for me!" Louise exclaimed.

"Champagne," the captain suggested.

She agreed, but Caroline had a fancy for something else. August Turnbull preferred a Scotch whisky and soda. The café was crowded; everywhere drinking multiplied in an illuminated haze of cigarettes. A slight girl in an airy slip and bare legs was executing a furious dance with a powdered youth on the open space. The girl whirled about her partner's head, a rigid shape in a flutter of white.

They stood limply answering the rattle of applause that followed. A woman in an extravagantly low-cut gown took their place, singing. There was no possibility of mistaking her allusions; August smiled broadly, but Louise and Caroline Rathe watched her with an unmoved, sharp curiosity. In the same manner they studied other women in the café; more than once August Turnbull hastily averted his gaze at the discovery that his daughter and he were intent upon the same individual.

"The U-boats are at it again," Bernard commented in a lowered voice.

"And, though it is war," Frederick added, "everyone here is squealing like a mouse. 'Ye are not great enough to know of hatred and envy,' " he quoted. " 'It is the good war which halloweth every cause.' "

"I wish you wouldn't say those things here," his wife murmured.

" 'Thou goest to women?' " he lectured her with mock solemnity. " 'Do not forget thy whip!' "

The whisky ran in a burning tide through August Turnbull's senses. His surroundings became a little blurred, out of focus; his voice sounded unfamiliar, as though it came from somewhere behind him. Fresh buckets of wine were brought, fresh polished glasses. His appetite revived, and he ordered caviar. Beyond, a girl in a snake-like dress was breaking a scarlet boiled lobster with a nut-cracker; her cigarette smoked on the table edge. Waiters passed bearing trays of steaming food, pitchers of foaming beer, colorless drinks with bobbing sliced limes, purplish sloe gin and syrupy cordials. Bernard's face was dark, and there was a splash of champagne on his dinner shirt. Louise was uncertainly humming a fragment of popular song. The table was littered with empty plates and glasses. Perversely, it made August think of Emmy, his wife, and acute dread touched him at the mockery of her wasting despair.

III

The following morning, Thursday, August Turnbull was forced to go into the city. He drove to the Turnbull Bakery in a taxi and dispatched his responsibilities in time for luncheon up town and an early afternoon train to the shore. The bakery was a consequential rectangle of brick, with the office across the front and a court resounding with the shattering din of ponderous delivery trucks. All the vehicles, August saw, bore a new temporary label advertizing still another war bread; there was, too, a subsidiary patriotic declaration: "Win the War with Wheat."

He was, as always, fascinated by the mammoth trays of bread, the enormous flood of sustenance produced as the result of his energy and ability. Each loaf was shut in a sanitary paper envelope; the popular superstition, sanitation, had contributed as much as anything to his marked success. He liked to picture himself as a great force, a granary on which the city depended for life; it pleased him to think of thousands of people, men, women and children, waiting for his loaves, or perhaps suffering through the inability to buy them.

August left a direction for a barrel of superlative flour to be sent to his cottage, and then with a curious feeling of expectancy he departed. He was unable to grasp the cause of his sudden impatience to be again at the sea. On the train, in the Pullman smoking compartment, his coat swinging on a hook beside him, the vague haste centred surprisingly about the person of Miss Beggs. At first he was annoyed by the reality and persistence of her image; then he slipped into an unquestioning consideration of her.

Never had he seen a more healthy being, and that alone, he told himself, was sufficient to account for his interest. He liked marked

physical well-being, particularly, he added, in women. A sick wife, for example, was the most futile thing imaginable; a wife should exist for the comfort and pleasure of her husband. What little Miss Beggs—her name, he now remembered from th cheques made out for her, was Meta Beggs—had said was as vigorous as herself. He realized that she had a strong, even rebellious personality. That, in her, however, should not be encouraged—an engaging submission was the becoming attitude for her sex.

He proceeded immediately into the ocean, puffing strenuously and gazing about. No women could be seen. They never had any regularity of habit, he complained silently. After dinner—a surfeit of tenderloin Bordelaise—he walked up the short incline to the boardwalk, where on one of the benches overlooking the sparkling water he saw a slight, familiar figure. It was Miss Beggs. Her eyes dwelt on him momentarily and then returned to the horizon.

"You are a great deal alone," he commented on the far end of the bench.

"It's because I choose to be," she answered sharply.

An expression of displeasure was audible in his reply, "You should have no trouble."

"I ought to explain," she continued, her slim hands clasped on shapely knees; "I mean that I can't get what I want."

"So you prefer nothing?"

She nodded.

"That's different," August Turnbull declared. "Anybody could see you're particular. Still, it's strange you haven't met—well, one that suited you."

"What good would it do me—a schoolteacher, and now a companion!"

"You might be admired for those very things."

"Yes, by old ladies, male and female. Not men. There's just one attraction for them."

"Well ——"

She turned now and faced him with a suppressed bitter energy. "Clothes," she said.

"That's nonsense!" he replied emphatically. "Dress is only incidental."

"When did you first notice me?" she demanded. "In bathing. That bathing suit cost more than any two of my dresses. It is absolutely right." August was confused by the keenness of her perception. It wasn't proper for a woman to understand such facts. He was at a loss for a reply. "Seven men spoke to me in it in one afternoon. It is no good for you to try to reassure me with platitudes; I know better. I ought to, at least."

August Turnbull was startled by the fire of resentment smouldering under her still pale exterior. Why, she was like a charged battery. If he touched her, he thought, sparks would fly. She was utterly different from Emmy, as different as a live flame from ashes.

It was evident that having at last spoken she intended to unburden herself of long-accumulated passionate words.

"All my life I've had to listen to and smile sweetly at ridiculous hypocrisies. I have had to teach them and live them too. But now I'm so sick of them I can't keep it up a month longer. I could kill someone, easily. In a world where salvation for a woman is in a pair of slippers I have to be damned. If I could have kept my hair smartly done up and worn sheer batiste do you suppose for a minute I'd be a companion to Mrs. Turnbull? I could be going out to the cafés in a landaulet."

"And looking a lot better than most that do," he commented without premeditation.

She glanced at him again, and he saw that her eyes were gray, habitually half closed, and inviting.

"I've had frightfully bad luck," she went on; "once or twice when it seemed that I was to have a chance, when it appeared brighter—everything went to pieces."

"Perhaps you want too much," he suggested.

"Perhaps," she agreed wearily; "ease and pretty clothes and—a man." She added the latter with a more musical inflection than he had yet heard.

"Of course," he proceeded importantly, "there are not a great many men. At least I haven't found them. As you say, most people are incapable of any power or decision. I always maintain it's something in the country. Now in ——" He stopped, re-began: "In Europe they are different. There a man is better understood, and women as well."

"I have never been out of America," Miss Beggs admitted.

"But you might well have been," he assured her; "you are more Continental than any one else I can think of."

He moved toward the middle of the bench, and she said quickly: "You must not misunderstand. I am not cheap nor silly. It might have been better for me." She addressed the fading light on the sea. "Silly women, too, do remarkably well. But I am not young enough to change now." She rose, gracefully drawn against space; her firm chin was elevated and her hands clenched. "I won't grow old this way and shrivel like an apple," she half cried.

It would be a pity, he told himself, watching her erect figure diminish over the boardwalk. He had a feeling of having come in contact with an extraordinarily potent force. By heaven, she positively crackled! He smiled, thinking of the misguided people who had employed her, ignorant of all that underlay that severe, prudent manner. At the same time he was flattered that she had confided in him. It was clear she recognized that he, at least, was a man. He was really sorry for her—what an invigorating influence she was!

She had spoken of being no longer young—something over thirty-five he judged—and that brought the realization that he was getting on. A few years now, ten or twelve, and life would be behind him. It was a rare and uncomfortable thought. Usually he saw himself as at the most desirable age—a young spirit tempered by wisdom and experience. But in a flash he read that his prime must depart; every hour left was priceless.

The best part of this must be dedicated to a helpless invalid; a strong current of self-pity set through him. But it was speedily lost in a more customary arrogance. August Turnbull repeated the favourite aphorisms from Frederick Rathe about the higher man. If he believed them at all, if they applied to life in general, they were equally true in connection with his home; in short—his wife. Emmy Turnbull couldn't really be called a wife. There should be a provision to release men from such bonds.

It might be that the will-to-power would release itself. In theory that was well enough, but practically there were countless small difficulties. The strands of life were so tied in, one with another. Opinion was made up of an infinite number of stupid prejudices. In short, no way presented itself of getting rid of Emmy.

His mind returned to Meta Beggs. What a woman she was! What a triumph to master her contemptuous, stubborn being!

IV

At least, August reflected with a degree of comfort at breakfast, Emmy didn't come down in the morning; she hadn't enough strength. He addressed himself to the demolishment of a ripe Cassaba melon. It melted in his mouth to the consistency of sugary water. His coffee-cup had a large flattened bowl, and pouring in the ropy cream with his free hand he lifted the silver cover of a dish set before him. It held spitted chicken livers and bacon, and gave out an irresistible odour. There were, too, potatoes chopped fine with peppers and browned; and hot delicately sweetened buns. He emptied two full spits, renewed his coffee, and finished the potatoes.

With a butter ball at the centre of a bun he casually glanced at the day's paper. The submarines, he saw, were operating farther south. A small passenger steamer, the *Veronica*, had been torpedoed outside the Delaware Capes.

A step sounded in the hall, and Louise entered the dining-room, clad all in white with the exception of a closely fitting yellow hat. After a moment Victorine, a girl small for her age, with a petulant, satiated expression, followed.

"It's a shame," Louise observed, "that with Morice and his wife in the cottage, you have to breakfast alone. I suppose all those theatrical people get up at noon."

"Not quite," Rosalie told her from the doorway.

Louise made no reply other than elevating her brows. Victorine looked at the other with an exact mirroring of her mother's disdain.

"Good morning," Morice said indistinctly, hooking the collar of his uniform. "It's a bloody nuisance," he asserted. "Why can't they copy the English jacket?"

"It is much better looking," Louise added.

"Well," Rosalie proclaimed, "I'm glad to see Morice in any; even if it means nothing more than a desk in the Quartermaster's Department."

"That is very necessary," August Turnbull spoke decidedly.

"Perhaps," she agreed.

"I think it is bad taste to raise such insinuations." Louise was severe.

"An army," August put in, "travels on its stomach. As Louise suggests—we must ask you not to discuss the question in your present tone." Morice's wife half-audibly spoke into her melon, and his face reddened. "What did I understand you to say?" he demanded.

"Oh, 'Swat the fly!' " Rosalie answered hardily.

"Not at all!" he almost shouted. "What you said was 'Swat the Kaiser!' "

"Well, swat him!"

"It was evident, also, that you did not refer to the Emperor of Germany—but to me."

"You said it," she admitted vulgarly. "If any house ever had a Hohenzollern this has."

"Shut up, Rosalie!" her husband commanded, perturbed; "you'll spoil everything."

"It might be better if she continued," Louise Foster corrected him. "Perhaps then we'd learn something of this—this beauty."

"I got good money for my face, anyhow," Rosalie asserted. "And no cash premium went with it either. As for going on, I'll go." She turned to August Turnbull: "I've been stalling round here for nearly a year with Morice scared to death trying to get a piece of change out of you. Now I'm through; I've worked hard for a season's pay, but this is slavery. What you want is an amalgamated lady bootblack and nautch dancer. You're a joke to a free white woman. I'm sorry for your wife. She ought to slip you a bichloride tablet. If it was worth while I'd turn you over to the authorities for breaking the food regulations."

She rose, unceremoniously shoving back her chair.

"For a fact, I'm tired of watching you eat. You down as much as a company of good boys on the march. Don't get black in the face; I'd be afraid to if I were you."

August Turnbull's rage beat like a hammer at the base of his head. He, too, rose, leaning forward with his napkin crumpled in a pounding fist.

"Get out of my house!" he shouted.

"That's all right enough," she replied; "the question is—is Morice coming with me? Is that khaki he has on or a Kate Greenaway suit?"

Morice looked from one to the other in obvious dismay. He had a pleasant, dull face, and a minute spiked moustache on an irresolute mouth.

"If you stay with me," she warned him further, "I'll have you out of that grocery store and into a trench."

"Pleasant for you, Morice," Louise explained.

"Things were so comfortable, Rosalie," he protested despairingly. "What in the name of sense made you stir this all up? The governor won't do a tap for us now."

His wife stood by herself, facing the inimical Turnbull front, while Morice wavered between.

"If you'll get along," the former told him, "I can make a living till you come back. We can do without any Trübner money. I'm not a lot at German, but I guess you can understand me," she again addressed August. "Not that I blame you for the change, such as it is."

"I'll have to go with her," Morice unhappily declared.

August Turnbull's face was stiff with congestion. The figures before him wavered in a sort of fog. He put out a hand, supporting himself on the back of his chair.

"Get out of my house," he repeated in a hoarse whisper.

Fortunately Morice's leave had come to an end, and Rosalie and he withdrew in at least the semblance of a normal departure. August's rage changed to an indignant surprise, and he established himself with a rigid dignity on the veranda. There, happening on a cigar that burned badly, he was reduced to a state of further self-commiseration. That is, he dwelt on the general deterioration of the world about him. There was no discipline; there was no respect; authority was laughed at. All this was the result of laxness, of the sentimentality he condemned; a firmer hand was needed everywhere.

He turned with relief to the contemplation of Meta Beggs; she was enormously satisfactory to consider. August watched her now with the greatest interest; he even sat in his wife's room while her companion moved silently and gracefully about. Miss Beggs couldn't have noticed this, for scarcely ever did her gaze meet his; she had a habit of standing lost in thought, her slimness a little drooping, as if she were weary or depressed. She was in his mind continually—Miss Beggs and Emmy, his wife.

The latter had a surprising power to disturb him; lately he had even dreamed of her starving to death in the presence of abundant food. He began to be superstitious about it, to think of her in a ridiculous nervous manner as an evil design on his peace and security. She seemed unnatural with her shrunken face bowed opposite him at the table. His feeling for her shifted subconsciously to hatred. It broke out publicly in sardonic or angry periods, under which she would shrink away, incredibly timid, from his scorn. This quality of utter helplessness gave the menace he divined in her its illusive air of unreality. She seemed—she was—entirely helpless; a prematurely aged woman, of the mildest instincts, dying of malnutrition.

Miss Beggs now merged into all his daily life, his very fibre. He regarded her in an attitude of admirable frankness. "Still it is extraordinary you haven't married."

The tide was out, it was late afternoon, and they were walking over the hard exposed sand. Whenever she came on a shell she crushed it with a sharp heel.

"There were some," she replied indifferently.

He nodded gravely. "It would have to be a special kind of man," he agreed. "An ordinary individual would be crushed by your personality. You'd need a firm hand."

Her face was inscrutable. "I have always had the misfortune to be too late," she told him.

"I wish I had known you sooner!" he exclaimed.

Her arms, in transparent sleeves, were like marble. His words crystallized an overwhelming realization of how exactly she was suited to him. The desire to shut her will in his hand increased a thousandfold.

"Yes," she said, "I would have married you. But there's no good discussing it." She breathed deeply with a sinking forward of her rounded shoulders. All her vigour seemed to have left her. "I have been worried about Mrs. Turnbull lately," she went on. "Perhaps it's my imagination—does she look weaker to you?"

"I haven't noticed," he answered brusquely.

Curiously he had never thought of Emmy as dying; she appeared eternal, without the possibility of offering him the relief of such freedom as yet remained. Freedom for—for Meta Beggs.

"The doctor was at the cottage again Thursday," she informed him. "I didn't hear what he said."

"Humbugs," August Turnbull pronounced.

A sudden caution invaded him. It would be well not to implicate himself too far with his wife's companion. She was a far shrewder woman than was common; there was such a thing as blackmail. He studied her privately. Damn it, what a pen he had been caught in! Her manner, too, changed immediately, as though she had read his feeling.

"I shall have to go back."

She spoke coldly. A moment before she had been close beside him, but now she might as well have been miles away.

## V

The fuse of the electric light in the dining-room burned out, and dinner proceeded with only the illumination of the silk-hooded candles. In the subdued glow Meta Beggs was infinitely attractive. His wife's place was empty. Miss Beggs had brought apologetic word from Emmy that she felt too weak to leave her room. A greater degree of comfort possessed August Turnbull than he had experienced for months. With no one at the table but the slim woman on the left and himself a positive geniality radiated from him. He pressed her to have more champagne—he had ordered that since she preferred it to Rhine wine—urged more duckling, and ordered the butler to leave the brandy decanter before them.

She laughed—a rare occurrence—and imi-

tated, for his intense amusement, Mrs. Frederick Rathe's extreme cutting social manner. He drank more than he intended, and when he rose his legs were insecure. He made his way toward Meta Beggs. She stood motionless, her thin lips like a thread of blood on her tense face.

"What a wife you'd make!" he muttered.

There was a discreet cough at his back, and swinging about he saw a maid in a white starched cap and high cuffs.

"Excuse me, sir," she said; "Mrs. Turnbull wants to know would you please come up to her room."

He swayed slightly, glowering at her with a hot face in which a vein throbbed persistently at his temple. Miss Beggs had disappeared.

"Very well," he agreed heavily.

Mounting the stairs he fumbled for his cigar case, and entered the chamber beyond his, clipping the end from a superlative perfecto.

Emmy was in bed, propped up on a bank of embroidered pillows. A light from one side threw the shadow of her head on a wall in an animated caricature of life.

"I didn't want to disturb you, August."

Her voice was weak and apologetic. He stood irritably beside her.

"It's hot in here." His wife at once detected whatever assaulted his complete comfort. She fell into a silence that strained his patience to the utmost.

When at last she spoke it was in a tone of voice he had never heard from her—impersonal, with at the same time a note of fear like the flutter of a bird's wing.

"The doctor has been here two or three times lately. I didn't want to bother you, and he said——"

She broke off, and her hand raised from her side in a gesture of seeking. He held it uncomfortably, wishing that the occasion would speedily end.

"August, I've—I've got to leave you."

He did not comprehend her meaning, and stood stupidly looking down at her spent face. "I'm going to die, August, almost any time now. I wanted to tell you first when we were quietly together; and then Louise and Bernard must know."

His sensations were so confused, the mere shock of such an announcement had so confounded him that he was unable to penetrate the meaning of the sudden expansion of his blood. His attention strayed from the actuality of his wife to the immaterial shadow wavering on the wall. There Emmy's profile, grotesquely enlarged and sharpened, grimaced at him. August Turnbull's feelings disentangled and grew clearer, there was a conventional memory of his wife as a young woman, the infinitely sharper realization that soon he must be free, a vision of Meta Beggs as she had been at dinner that night, and intense relief from nameless strain.

He moved through the atmosphere of suspense that followed the knowledge of Emmy's condition with a feeling of being entirely apart from his family. Out of the chaos of his emotions the sense of release was most insistent. Naturally he couldn't share it with any one else, not at present. He avoided thinking directly of Meta Beggs, partly from the shreds of the superstitious dread that had once colored his attitude toward his wife, and partly from the necessity to control what otherwise would sweep him into a resistless torrent. However, most of his impatience had vanished—a little while now, and in a discreet manner he could grasp all that he had believed so hopelessly removed.

Except for the occasions of Louise's informal presence he dined alone with Miss Beggs. They were largely silent, attacking their plates with complete satisfaction. On the day of her monthly payment he drew the cheque for a thousand dollars in place of the stipulated hundred, and gave it to her without comment. She nodded, managing to convey entire understanding and acceptance of what it forecast. Once, at the table, he called her Meta.

She deliberated a reply—he had asked her opinion about British bottled sauces—but when she answered she called him Mr. Turnbull. This, too, pleased him. She had an unerring judgment in the small affairs of deference. Dinner had been better than usual, and he realized he had eaten too much. His throat felt constricted, he had difficulty in swallowing a final gulp of coffee; the heavy odours of the dining-room almost sickened him.

"We'll get out on the beach," he said abruptly; "a little air."

They proceeded past the unremitting sprinklers on the strip of lawn to the wide gray sweep of sand. At that hour no one else was visible, and a new recklessness invaded his discomfort. "You see," he told her, "that bad luck of yours isn't going to hold."

"It seems incredible," she murmured. She added without an appearance of the least ulterior thought: "Mrs. August Turnbull."

"Exactly," he asserted.

A triumphant conviction of pleasure to come surged through him like a subtle exhilarating cordial.

"I'll take no nonsensical airs from Louise or the Rathes," he proclaimed.

"Don't let that worry you," she answered serenely.

He saw that it need not, and looked forward appreciatively to a scene in which Meta would not come off second.

Above them the long curve of the boardwalk was empty, with, behind it, the suave ornamental roofs of the cottages. A wind quartering from the shore had smoothed the ocean into the semblance of a limitless and placid lake. Minute waves ruffled along the beach with a continuous whispering, and the vault of the west, from which the sun had just withdrawn, was filled with light the color of sauterne wine.

It was inconceivable to August Turnbull that soon Emmy would be gone out of his life. He shook his thick shoulders as if by a gesture to unburden himself of her unpleasant responsibility. He smiled slightly at the memory of how he had come to fear her. It had been the result of the strain he was under; once more the vision of mountainous bread and Emmy returned. The devil was in the woman!

"What are you smiling at?" Meta asked.

"Perhaps it was because my luck, as well, has changed," he admitted. She came close up to him, quivering with emotion.

"I want everything!" she cried in a vibrant hunger; "everything! Do you understand? Are you willing? I'm starved as much as that woman up in her bed. Can you give me all the gaiety, all the silks and emeralds there are in the world?"

He patted her shoulder. "You'll look like a Christmas tree. When this damned war is over we will go to Europe, to Berlin and Munich. They have the finest streets and theatres and cafés in the world. There things are run by men for men. The food is the best of all—no French fripperies, but solid rare cuts. Drinking is an art—"

"What is that out in the water?" she idly demanded.

He gazed impatiently over the unscored tide and saw a dark infinitesimal blot.

"I have been watching it for a long while," she continued. "It's coming closer, I think."

He again took up his planning.

"We'll stay two or three years; till things get on their feet here. Turn the bakery into a company. No work, nothing but parties."

"Do look!" she repeated. "It's coming in—a little boat. I suppose it is empty."

The blot was now near enough for him to distinguish its outline. As Meta said, no one was visible. It was drifting. Against his wish his gaze fastened on the approaching boat. It hesitated, appeared to swing away, and then resumed the progress inshore.

"I believe it will float into that cut in the beach below," he told her.

His attention was divided between the craft and the image of all the pleasures he would introduce to Meta—Turnbull. It was a lucky circumstance that he had plenty of money, for he realized that she would not marry a poor man. This was not only natural but commendable. Poor men were fools, too weak for success, only the strong ate white bread and had fine women, only the masterful conquered circumstance.

"Come," she said, catching his hand; "it's almost here."

She half pulled him over the glistening wet sand to where the deeper water thrust into the beach. Her interest was now fully communicated to him.

"We must drag it safely up," he articulated, out of breath from her eagerness. The bow swept into the onward current, it moved more swiftly, and then sluggishly settled against the bottom. Painted on its blistering white side was a name, *Veronica*, and "Ten persons." There was a slight movement at the rail, and a

sharp unreasoning horror gripped August Turnbull.

"Something in it," he muttered. He wanted to turn away, to run from the beach; but a stronger curiosity dragged him forward. Not conscious of stepping through shallow water he advanced.

A hunger-ravished dead face was turned to him from the bottom, a huddle of bony joints, dried hands. There were others—all dead, starved. In a red glimmer he saw the incredible travesty of a child, a lead-colored woman, shrivelled and ageless from agony.

He fell back with a choking cry, "Emmy!"

There was a dull uproar in his head, and then a violent shock at the back of his brain. August Turnbull's body slid down into the tranquil ripples that ran along the boat's side.

1919

## 1898 — *Ernest Hemingway* — —

HEMINGWAY hails from Illinois, having been born in the Chicago suburban town of Oak Park. He was educated in the public schools where he distinguished himself as a football player and boxer. Upon graduation he accepted a post as reporter on the staff of a Kansas City newspaper. Before the United States entered the World War, Hemingway served in a French ambulance unit, later enlisting in the Italian army with which he saw active service on the Austrian front, where he was severely wounded and twice decorated for bravery in action.

After the armistice he resumed his newspaper work, first with the Toronto *Star*, and later as Paris correspondent for a Hearst syndicate. As a reporter he was not merely successful but distinguished and brilliant; socially he was widely known and popular. During this European stay he continued his active participation in sports, especially tennis, boxing, and fishing, and developed an eager interest in bullfighting, later to figure prominently in one of his novels. Since his return to the United States he has lived in Wyoming and Florida; he avoids New York, dislikes publicity, and holds himself aloof from schools and cliques. Of independent spirit, he follows the course which his genius and the demands of his art have determined for him.

Hemingway began his literary career with the publication of *Three Stories and Ten Poems* (1923), followed by *In Our Time* (1924), both issued in Paris. Then appeared in rapid succession *The Torrents of Spring* (1926), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and *Men Without Women* (1927), hailed by readers with growing enthusiasm. However, it was the widespread reception of *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) that marked Hemingway as one of the really great figures in contemporary literature. In 1932 came *Death in the Afternoon*, a story centering about bulls, bullfighting, and death; in 1933, *Winner Take Nothing*, a collection of short stories; in 1935, *Green Hills of Africa*; and in 1938, *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories*.

Hemingway is regarded by some as one of the most significant spokesmen of the post-war generation, with its hardness, irony, cynicism, and disillusionment. He

has been variously labeled as realist, naturalist, and pioneer in a "new romanticism," or as Clifton Fadiman calls it, a "violent romanticism." It goes without saying that he is more of a realist and naturalist than he is a romanticist. His method is essentially that of the reporter. He writes in a clear, incisive, and unadorned style, stripped for the most part of all dispensable elements to an almost skeleton-like spareness. It is well-adapted to his purpose, and by means of it he succeeds to a remarkable degree in conveying a sense of reality and lifelikeness. The terse, suggestive dialogue is especially effective.

The range of his characters is limited. They are for the most part simple people, with practically no interests beyond "physical sensation and emotion." Besides, they are blasé and usually bored. Because of their craving for sensation, they are particularly sensitive to violent stimuli, such as war, bullfighting, and pugilism. On the whole they are neither impressive nor attractive. They merely represent certain phases of a period which has already passed.

Hemingway has tried his hand at both the novel and the short story, and has achieved signal distinction in both forms. Although he has an ardent following, his work is by no means universally accepted. There is still marked difference of opinion as to its ultimate value. It must be admitted, however, that the acclaim of admirers has already turned him into somewhat of a legendary figure.

Hemingway's novels are *Torrents of Spring* (1926); *The Sun Also Rises* (1926); *A Farewell to Arms* (1929); *Death in the Afternoon* (1932). His short stories appear in *In Our Time* (1925); *Men Without Women* (1927); *Winner Take Nothing* (1933). *Green Hills of Africa* (1935) is a book of travel and description. For biographical and critical studies consult H. S. Canby, "Farewell to the Nineties," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 28, 1933; A. Dewing, "The Mistake About Hemingway," *North American Review*, Oct., 1931; H. Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (1934); H. Hatcher, *Creating the Modern American Novel* (1935); E. Wilson, "The Sportsman's Tragedy," *New Republic*, Dec. 14, 1927; E. J. O'Brien, *The Advance of the American Short Story* (rev. ed., 1931); R. M. Lovett, "Ernest Hemingway," *English Journal*, Oct., 1932; W. Lewis, *Men Without Art* (1934); E. Hemingway, "Monologue to the Maestro," *Esquire*, Oct., 1935; C. Fadiman, "Ernest Hemingway: an American Byron," *Nation*, Jan. 18, 1933; L. Leighton, "An Autopsy and a Prescription," *Hound and Horn*, July–Sept., 1932; T. S. Matthews, "Nothing Ever Happens to the Brave," *New Republic*, Oct. 9, 1929; M. Eastman, *Art and the Life of Action* (1934); G. Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933); R. Herrick, "What Is Dirt?," *Bookman*, Nov., 1929; L. Kirstein, "The Canon of Death," *Hound and Horn*, Jan.–March, 1933; C. J. McCole, "Ernest Hemingway, Spokesman for His Generation," *Lucifer at Large* (1937).

## A CANARY FOR ONE

THE train passed very quickly a long, red stone house with a garden and four thick palm-trees with tables under them in the shade. On the other side was the sea. Then there was a cutting through red stone and clay, and the sea was only occasionally and far below against rocks.

"I bought him in Palermo," the American lady said. "We only had an hour ashore and it was Sunday morning. The man wanted to be paid in dollars and I gave him a dollar and a half. He really sings very beautifully."

It was very hot in the train and it was very hot in the *lit salon* compartment. There was no breeze came through the open window. The American lady pulled the window-blind down and there was no more sea, even occasionally. On the other side there was glass, then the corridor, then an open window, and outside the window were dusty trees and an oiled road and flat fields of grapes, with gray-stone hills behind them.

There was smoke from many tall chimneys —coming into Marseilles, and the train slowed down and followed one track through many others into the station. The train stayed twenty-five minutes in the station at Marseilles and the American lady bought a copy of *The Daily Mail* and a half-bottle of Evian water. She walked a little way along the station platform, but she stayed near the steps of the car because at Cannes, where it stopped for twelve minutes, the train had left with no signal of departure and she had only gotten on just in time. The American lady was a little deaf and she was afraid that perhaps signals of departure were given and that she did not hear them.

The train left the station in Marseilles and there was not only the switch-yards and the factory smoke but, looking back, the town of Marseilles and the harbor with stone hills behind it and the last of the sun on the water. As it was getting dark the train passed a farmhouse burning in a field. Motorcars were stopped along the road and bedding and things from inside the farmhouse were spread in the field. Many people were watching the house burn. After it was dark the train was in Avignon. People got on and off. At the newsstand Frenchmen, returning to Paris, bought that day's French papers. On the station platform were Negro soldiers. They wore brown uniforms and were tall and their faces shone, close under the electric light. Their faces were very black and they were too tall to stare. The train left Avignon station with the Negroes standing there. A short white sergeant was with them.

Inside the *lit salon* compartment the porter had pulled down the three beds from inside the wall and prepared them for sleeping. In the night the American lady lay without sleeping because the train was a *rapide* and went very fast and she was afraid of the speed in the night. The American lady's bed was the one next to the window. The canary from Palermo, a cloth spread over his cage, was out of the draft in the corridor that went into the compartment washroom. There was a blue light outside the compartment, and all night the train went very fast and the American lady lay awake and waited for a wreck.

In the morning the train was near Paris, and after the American lady had come out from the washroom, looking very wholesome and middle-aged and American in spite of not having slept, and had taken the cloth off the bird cage and hung the cage in the sun, she went back to the restaurant-car for breakfast. When she came back to the *lit salon* compartment again, the beds had been pushed back into the wall and made into seats, the canary was shaking his feathers in the sunlight that came through the open window, and the train was much nearer Paris.

"He loves the sun," the American lady said. "He'll sing now in a little while."

The canary shook his feathers and pecked into them. "I've always loved birds," the American lady said. "I'm taking him home to my little girl. There—he's singing now."

The canary chirped and the feathers on his throat stood out, then he dropped his bill and pecked into his feathers again. The train crossed a river and passed through a very carefully tended forest. The train passed through many outside of Paris towns. There were tramcars in the towns and big advertisements for the Belle Jardinière and Dubonnet and Pernod on the walls toward the train. All that the train passed through looked as though it were before breakfast. For several minutes I had not listened to the American lady, who was talking to my wife.

"Is your husband American too?" asked the lady.

"Yes," said my wife. "We're both Americans."

"I thought you were English."

"Oh, no."

"Perhaps that was because I wore braces," I said. I had started to say suspenders and changed it to braces in the mouth, to keep my English character. The American lady did not

hear. She was really quite deaf; she read lips, and I had not looked toward her. I had looked out of the window. She went on talking to my wife.

"I'm so glad you're Americans. American men make the best husbands," the American lady was saying. "That was why we left the Continent, you know. My daughter fell in love with a man in Vevey." She stopped. "They were simply madly in love." She stopped again. "I took her away, of course."

"Did she get over it?" asked my wife.

"I don't think so," said the American lady. "She wouldn't eat anything and she wouldn't sleep at all. I've tried so very hard, but she doesn't seem to take an interest in anything. She doesn't care about things. I couldn't have her marrying a foreigner." She paused. "Some one, a very good friend, told me once, 'No foreigner can make an American girl a good husband.' "

"No," said my wife, "I suppose not."

The American lady admired my wife's travelling-coat, and it turned out that the American lady had bought her own clothes for twenty years now from the same maison de couturier in the Rue Saint Honoré. They had her measurements, and a vendeuse who knew her and her tastes picked the dresses out for her and they were sent to America. They came to the post-office near where she lived uptown in New York, and the duty was never exorbitant because they opened the dresses there in the post-office to appraise them and they were always very simple-looking and with no gold lace nor ornaments that would make the dresses look expensive. Before the present vendeuse, name Thérèse, there had been another vendeuse, named Amélie. Altogether there had only been these two in the twenty years. It had always been the same couturier. Prices, however, had gone up. The exchange, though, equalized that. They had her daughter's measurements now too. She was grown up and there was not much chance of their changing now.

The train was now coming into Paris. The fortifications were levelled but grass had not grown. There were many cars standing on tracks—brown wooden restaurant-cars and brown wooden sleeping-cars that would go to Italy at five o'clock that night, if that train still left at five; the cars were marked Paris-Rome, and cars, with seats on the roofs, that went back and forth to the suburbs with, at certain hours, people in all the seats and on the roofs, if that were the way it were still done, and passing were the white walls and many windows of houses. No one had eaten any breakfast.

"Americans make the best husbands," the American lady said to my wife. I was getting down the bags. "American men are the only men in the world to marry."

"How long ago did you leave Vevey?" asked my wife.

"Two years ago this fall. It's her, you know, that I'm taking the canary to."

"Was the man your daughter was in love with a Swiss?"

"Yes," said the American lady. "He was from a very good family in Vevey. He was going to be an engineer. They met there in Vevey. They used to go on long walks together."

"I know Vevey," said my wife. "We were there on our honeymoon."

"Were you really? That must have been lovely. I had no idea, of course, that she'd fall in love with him."

"It was a very lovely place," said my wife.

"Yes," said the American lady. "Isn't it lovely? Where did you stop there?"

"We stayed at the Trois Couronnes," said my wife.

"It's such a fine old hotel," said the American lady.

"Yes," said my wife. "We had a very fine room and in the fall the country was lovely."

"Were you there in the fall?"

"Yes," said my wife.

We were passing three cars that had been in a wreck. They were splintered open and the roofs sagged in.

"Look," I said. "There's been a wreck."

The American lady looked and saw the last car. "I was afraid of just that all night," she said. "I have terrific presentiments about things sometimes. I'll never travel on a *rapide* again at night. There must be other comfortable trains that don't go so fast."

Then the train was in the dark of the Gare

de Lyons, and then stopped and porters came up to the windows. I handed bags through the windows, and we were out on the dim longness of the platform, and the American lady put herself in charge of one of three men from Cook's who said: "Just a moment, madame, and I'll look for your name."

The porter brought a truck and piled on the baggage, and my wife said good-by and I said good-by to the American lady, whose name had been found by the man from Cook's on a typewritten page in a sheaf of typewritten pages which he replaced in his pocket.

We followed the porter with the truck down the long cement platform beside the train. At the end was a gate and a man took the tickets.

We were returning to Paris to set up separate residences.

1927

## 1888 ~ *Eugene O'Neill* ~ —

O'NEILL laid the foundations of his work as a dramatic artist during years of uncertainty, varied occupations, and vagabonding. He was born on Broadway, the son of the prominent American actor James O'Neill and his wife Ella Quinlan O'Neill. From the former he probably inherited his inclination toward the drama, from the latter his mysticism and love of beauty. For a number of years he accompanied his parents on their theatrical tours. He was educated in private schools and entered Princeton in 1906, but was suspended before the year was out and never returned. After serving as secretary of a mail-order house he began in 1909 a series of wanderings which in the course of two years took him to Honduras in search of gold, on two theatrical tours as assistant manager and member of his father's troupe, on voyages to Buenos Aires, and back to New York. His experiences as a sailor, his association with the waterfront hangers-on, and his destitute condition and reckless living made a deep impression on his mind, and are reflected in some of the plays he wrote later. After a brief period of newspaper work his health broke, and he was threatened with tuberculosis, the result of excessive strain on his physique.

The months he spent recuperating in a sanatorium mark the turning point in his life, for now that the fruitless years were behind him, he pondered deeply on the relation of his experiences to his life, and what they might mean to his future. It was during this same period that he felt the urge to write, and tried his hand at verse and plays. For a year or more he lived on the shore of Long Island Sound where he carefully built up his health through exercise and regulated routine, read classic and modern drama, wrote more than a dozen plays, and published in 1914 *Thirst and Other One-Act Plays* at his father's expense. After studying playwriting at Harvard under Professor Baker, from whom he received much encouragement, he became associated with the Provincetown Players who produced many of his early plays. Feeling that the one-act play was too limited in scope, he brought out his first long play, *Beyond the Horizon*, in 1920, and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Later his

*Anna Christie* (1922) and *Strange Interlude* (1928) were similarly rewarded. The year 1920 marked the end of his apprentice period. Since that time he has been constantly in the public eye, and has brought out many plays of startling originality.

Negatively O'Neill represents a definite reaction against the romantic glitter-and-tinsel dramatics of the time. On the positive side, the rise and development of the art theater, which freed writers and producers from the inhibiting demands of the commercial theater, made it possible for him to bring new content and form to the contemporary stage. He had seen the seamier, coarser, and more tragic aspects of life, and found in them dramatic possibilities which had been utterly ignored. Nor was he satisfied with the current stage effects. Thus, with the support of the Provincetown Players and their theaters, he was enabled to experiment in subject and form, thereby introducing many innovations in practical stagecraft. His place therefore is at the very heart of the revolt in the American drama.

Through the success of *Bound East for Cardiff* (1916) and *The Moon of the Caribbees* (1918) he gave distinct impetus to the one-act play as a dramatic medium. His fame rests, however, on the impressive list of long plays, beginning with *Beyond the Horizon* (1920) and containing such well-known titles as *The Emperor Jones* (1921), *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (1924), *Desire Under the Elms* (1925), *Strange Interlude* (1928), and *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931).

It would be exceedingly difficult to classify a man whose work is a succession of experiments. He has been called realist, naturalist, symbolist, and impressionist. Yet, contradictory as it seems, there is in him also a strain of poetry which at times approaches the romantic. To be sure he shared with his contemporaries the tendencies of his time; he was a realist in *Beyond the Horizon*, a naturalist in *Desire Under the Elms*, a symbolist in *The Great God Brown* (1926), an expressionist in *The Emperor Jones* (1921). He is greater, however, than any given movement, because he combines within himself elements of all of them. He had a new and firsthand vision of life; and to represent that vision on the stage he drew upon all available resources. A long play like *Strange Interlude*, with its nine acts, the leisureliness of the novel, the use of the soliloquy, the characters both acting their parts and saying their thoughts out loud, defies classification. It is a colossal and impressive experiment.

The main points in O'Neill's literary theory appear in various statements and letters quoted in Clark's *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and His Plays*, and may be briefly summarized. In preparation for his work he read widely in dramatic literature, including the Greeks, the Elizabethans, Ibsen, and "especially Strindberg," who influenced him very strongly. He determined early to avoid conventional dramatic technique, and expressed dissatisfaction with his *In the Zone* because it is theatrical sentimentalism. He has been a lifelong experimenter, avoiding mechanistic methods of plot construction, and trying in each case to adapt the technique

to the peculiar demands of the theme. Some critics, who did not realize what his plan and purpose were, felt that he was "bungling through ignorance."

As far as the treatment of his material is concerned, he was not satisfied with mere surface realism, and resorted to what he called super-naturalism, for "the old 'naturalism'—or 'realism,' if you prefer . . .—no longer applies." He portrayed phases of life which to many seemed questionable as dramatic or literary subject-matter. His primary interest lay in the representation of character, but that did not prevent him from striving for a symbolism which extends beyond the individual. In *The Hairy Ape*, for instance, the hero is not merely a specific human being but the symbol of mankind in general. In this way he achieves a universality which transcends the ordinary type of realism.

Influenced by the futilitarian philosophy of his time, O'Neill holds that all life is essentially unhappy. He loves life naked, stripped of all tinsel and adornments, and prefers to portray it in its stark reality. For, as he says, there is "beauty even in its (life's) ugliness." In the midst of this general unhappiness, art alone is happy. This is more true of tragedy than of mere "contentment with one's lot." To him happiness is synonymous with exaltation, an intensified feeling of the significant want of man's being and becoming, similar to the ennoblement which the Elizabethans experienced on witnessing the enactment of a tragedy.

O'Neill's world is a world of tragedy, somber and unrelieved, the result for the most part of frustration and the ironical tricks which fate plays on man. It is only in such plays as *Lazarus Laughs* (1927) and *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933) that he strikes a hopeful strain. Many of his characters are dreamers who are forced to battle maladjustment in a limited, material world, and become victims of circumstances. Many of them suffer from the negative ills of spiritual starvation, while others are subject to a more positive inability to shape and control their lives. Incidental to his essentially tragic conception of life, he offers criticism of current tendencies in the larger national life, especially in *The Great God Brown*, *Marco Millions*, and *The Hairy Ape;* but it would be straining the point to say that he is a social critic. His primary purpose is to show the transforming power of tragedy, tragedy as it enters into the lives of people apparently at the very bottom of the scale of existence, but tragedy which through its purgation of the emotions, somewhat in the Greek sense, ennobles and purifies the soul.

And it is precisely through this emphasis upon the tragic, unrelieved by humor, that O'Neill's plays fail to give permanent satisfaction. Life is compounded of gloom and light, and a representation of it should not be partial to one or the other. Furthermore it is doubtful whether his plays are completely satisfying from the point of view of technique. In the course of his endless experimentation he has introduced many innovations, the implications of which in the future development of American drama cannot be foreseen.

Only a limited number of O'Neill's long list of plays can be noted: *Thirst, and Other One-Act Plays* (1914); *Before Breakfast* (1916); *Bound East for Cardiff* (1916); *The Moon of the Caribbees, and Six Other Plays of the Sea* (1919); *Beyond the Horizon* (1920); *Gold* (1920); *The Emperor Jones, Diff'rent, The Straw* (1921); *The Hairy Ape, Anna Christie, The First Man* (1922); *All God's Chillun Got Wings, Welded* (1924); *Desire Under the Elms* (1925); *The Great God Brown* (1926); *Strange Interlude* (1928); *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1932); *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933); *Days Without End* (1934). The best collected edition is *The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* (12 vols., 1934–35). There are also *The Complete Works of Eugene O'Neill* (2 vols., 1924) and *Collected Plays* (4 vols., 1925). For biography of O'Neill consult B. H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill; the Man and His Plays* (1933); D. Karsner, *Sixteen Authors to One* (1928); B. Mantle, *American Playwrights of To-day* (1921); M. B. Mullet, "The Extraordinary Story of Eugene O'Neill," *American Magazine*, Nov., 1922; G. J. Nathan, *The Intimate Notebooks of George Jean Nathan* (1932); J. Janney, "Perfect Ending," *American Magazine*, April, 1934. For criticism of his work see R. D. Skinner, *Eugene O'Neill* (1935); T. H. Dickinson, *Playwrights of the New American Theater* (1925); J. T. Shipley, *The Art of Eugene O'Neill* (1928); T. K. Whipple, *Spokesmen* (1928); A. Woollcott, *Shouts and Murmurs* (1922); W. P. Eaton, *The Drama in English* (1930); I. Goldberg, *The Drama of Transition* (1922); H. G. Kemelman, "Eugene O'Neill and the Highbrow Melodrama," *Bookman*, Sept., 1932; M. J. Moses, *The American Dramatist* (1925); A. H. Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day* (1926); V. Geddes, *The Melodramadness of Eugene O'Neill* (1934); B. H. Clark, "Aeschylus and O'Neill," *English Journal*, Nov., 1932; P. Loving, "Eugene O'Neill," *Bookman*, Aug., 1921; S. K. Winther, *Eugene O'Neill* (1934); E. S. Sergeant, *Fire Under the Andes* (1927); A. R. Thompson, "The Dilemma of Modern Tragedy," in N. Foerster, ed., *Humanism in America* (1930); E. W. Parks, "O'Neill's Symbolism," *Sewanee Review*, Oct.–Dec., 1935.

## THE ROPE

SCENE. *The interior of an old barn situated on top of a high headland of the seacoast. In the rear, to the left, a stall in which lumber is stacked up. To the right of it, an open double doorway looking out over the ocean. Outside the doorway, the faint trace of what was once a road leading to the barn. Beyond the road, the edge of a cliff which rises sheer from the sea below. On the right of the doorway, three stalls with mangers and hayricks. The first of these is used as a woodbin and is half full of piled-up cordwood. Near this bin, a chopping-block with an ax driven into the top of it.*

*The left section of the barn contains the hayloft, which extends at a height of about twelve feet from the floor as far to the right as the middle of the doorway. The loft is bare except for a few scattered mounds of dank-looking hay. From the edge of the loft, halfway from the door, a rope about five feet long with an open running noose at the end is hanging. A rusty plow and various other farming implements, all giving evidence of long disuse, are lying on the floor near the left wall. Farther forward an old cane-bottomed chair is set back against the wall.*

*In front of the stalls on the right stands a long, roughly constructed carpenter's table, evidently homemade. Saws, a lathe, a hammer, chisel, a keg containing nails and other tools of the carpentry trade are on the table. Two benches are placed, one in front, one to the left of it.*

*The right side of the barn is a bare wall.*

*It is between six and half-past in the evening of a day in early spring. At the rising of the curtain some trailing clouds near the horizon, seen through the open doorway, are faintly tinged with gold by the first glow of the sunset. As the action progresses this reflected light gradually becomes brighter, and then slowly fades into a smoky crimson. The sea is a dark slate color. From the rocks below the headland sounds the muffled monotone of breaking waves.*

*As the curtain rises* MARY *is discovered squatting cross legged on the floor, her back propped against the right side of the doorway,*

*her face in profile. She is a skinny, overgrown girl of ten, carroty hair worn in a pigtail. She wears a shabby gingham dress. Her face is stupidly expressionless. Her hands flutter about aimlessly in relaxed, flabby gestures.*

*She is staring fixedly at a rag doll which she has propped up against the doorway opposite her. She hums shrilly to herself.*

*At a sudden noise from outside she jumps to her feet, peeks out, and quickly snatches up the doll, which she hugs fiercely to her breast. Then, after a second's fearful hesitation, she runs to the carpenter's table and crawls under it.*

*As she does so* ABRAHAM BENTLEY *appears in the doorway and stands, blinking into the shadowy barn. He is a tall, lean, stoop-shouldered old man of sixty-five. His thin legs, twisted by rheumatism, totter feebly under him as he shuffles slowly along by the aid of a thick cane. His face is gaunt, chalky-white, furrowed with wrinkles, surmounted by a shiny bald scalp fringed with scanty wisps of white hair. His eyes peer weakly from beneath bushy, black brows. His mouth is a sunken line drawn in under his large, beak-like nose. A two weeks' growth of stubby patches of beard covers his jaws and chin. He has on a threadbare brown overcoat but wears no hat.*

BENTLEY (*comes slowly into the barn, peering around him suspiciously. As he reaches the table and leans one hand on it for support,* MARY *darts from underneath and dashes out through the doorway.* BENTLEY *is startled; then shakes his cane after her*). Out o' my sight, you Papist brat! Spawn o' Satan! Spyin' on me! They set her to it. Spyin' to watch me! (*He limps to the door and looks out cautiously. Satisfied, he turns back into the barn.*) Spyin' to see—what they'll never know. (*He stands staring up at the rope and taps it testingly several times with his stick, talking to himself as he does so.*) It's tied strong—strong as death—(*He cackles with satisfaction.*) They'll see, then! They'll see! (*He laboriously creeps over to the bench and sits down wearily. He looks toward the seat and his voice quavers in a doleful chant.*) "Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out." (*He mumbles to himself for a moment—then speaks clearly.*) Spyin' on me! Spawn o' the Pit! (*He renews his chant.*) "They hunt our steps that we cannot go in our streets: our end is near, our days are fulfilled; for our end is come."

(*As he finishes* ANNIE *enters. She is a thin, slovenly, worn-out-looking woman of about forty with a drawn, pasty face. Her habitual expression is one of a dulled irritation. She talks in a high-pitched, sing-song whine. She wears a faded gingham dress and a torn sunbonnet.*)

ANNIE (*comes over to her father but warily keeps out of range of his stick*). Paw! (*He doesn't answer or appear to see her.*) Paw! you ain't fergittin' what the doctor told you when he was here last, be you? He said you was to keep still and not go a-walkin' round. Come on back to the house, Paw. It's gittin' near supper-time and you got to take your medicine b'fore it, like he says.

BENTLEY (*his eyes fixed in front of him*). "The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins."

ANNIE (*waiting resignedly until he has finished—wearily*). You better take watch on your health, Paw, and not be sneakin' up to this barn no more. Lord sakes, soon's ever my back is turned you goes sneakin' off agen. It's enough to drive a body outa their right mind.

BENTLEY. "Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter!" (*He cackles to himself.*) So is her daughter!

ANNIE (*her face flushing with anger*). And if I am, I'm glad I take after her and not you, y'old wizard! (*Scornfully.*) A fine one you be to be shoutin' Scripture in a body's ears all the livelong day—you that druv Maw to her death with your naggin', and pinchin', and miser stinginess. If you've a mind to pray, it's down in the medder you ought to go, and kneel down by her grave, and ask God to forgive you for the meanness you done to her all her life.

BENTLEY (*mumbling*). "As is the mother, so is her daughter."

ANNIE (*enraged by the repetition of this quotation*). *You* quotin' Scripture! Why, Maw wasn't cold in the earth b'fore you was down in the port courtin' agen—courtin' that harlot

that was the talk o' the whole town! And then you disgraces yourself and me by marryin' her—*her*—and bringin' her back home with you; and me still goin' every day to put flowers on Maw's grave that you'd fergotten. (*She glares at him vindictively, pausing for breath.*) And between you you'd have druv me into the grave like you done Maw if I hadn't married Pat Sweeney so's I could git away and live in peace. Then you took on so high and mighty 'cause he was a Cath'lic—*you* gittin' religion all of a moment just for spite on me 'cause I'd left—and b'cause she egged you on against me; *you* sayin' it was a sin to marry a Papist, after not bein' at Sunday meetin' yourself for more'n twenty years!

BENTLEY (*loudly*). "He will visit thine iniquity——"

ANNIE (*interrupting*). And the carryin's-on you had the six years at home after I'd left you—the shame of the whole county! Your wife, indeed, with a child she *claimed* was your'n, and her goin' with this farmer and that, and even men off the ships in the port, and you blind to it! And then when she got sick of you and ran away—only to meet her end at the hands of God a year after—she leaves you alone with that—*your* son, Luke, *she* called him—and him only five years old!

BENTLEY (*babbling*). Luke? Luke?

ANNIE (*tauntingly*). Yes, Luke! "As is the mother, so is her son"—that's what you ought to preach 'stead of puttin' curses on me. You was glad enough to git me back home agen, and Pat with me, to tend the place, and help bring up that brat of hers. (*Jealously.*) You was fond enough of him all them years—and how did he pay you back? Stole your money and ran off and left you just when he was sixteen and old enough to help. Told you to your face he'd stolen and was leavin'. He only laughed when you was took crazy and cursed him; and he only laughed harder when you hung up that silly rope there (*she points*) and told him to hang himself on it when he ever came home agen.

BENTLEY (*mumbling*). You'll see, then. You'll see!

ANNIE (*wearily—her face becoming dull and emotionless again*). I s'pose I'm a bigger fool than you be to argy with a half-witted body. But I tell you agen that Luke of yours ain't comin' back; and if he does he ain't the kind to hang himself, more's the pity. He's like her. He'd hang *you* more likely if he s'pected you had any money. So you might's well take down that ugly rope you've had tied there since he run off. He's probably dead anyway by this.

BENTLEY (*frightened*). No! No!

ANNIE. Them as bad as him comes to a sudden end. (*Irritably.*) Land sakes, Paw, here I am argyin' with your lunatic notions and the supper not ready. Come on and git your medicine. You can see no one ain't touched your old rope. Come on! You can sit 'n' read your Bible. (*He makes no movement. She comes closer to him and peers into his face—uncertainly.*) Don't you hear me? I do hope you ain't off in one of your fits when you don't know nobody. D'you know who's talkin'? This is Annie—your Annie, Paw.

BENTLEY (*bursting into senile rage*). None o' mine! Spawn o' the Pit! (*With a quick movement he hits her viciously over the arm with his stick. She gives a cry of pain and backs away from him, holding her arm.*)

ANNIE (*weeping angrily*). That's what I git for tryin' to be kind to you, you ugly old devil! (*The sound of a man's footsteps is heard from outside, and* SWEENEY *enters. He is a stocky, muscular, sandy-haired Irishman dressed in patched corduroy trousers shoved down into high laced boots, and a blue flannel shirt. The bony face of his bullet head has a pressed-in-appearance except for his heavy jaw, which sticks out pugnaciously. There is an expression of mean cunning and cupidity about his mouth and his small, round, blue eyes. He has evidently been drinking and his face is flushed and set in an angry scowl.*)

SWEENEY. Have ye no supper at all made, ye lazy slut? (*Seeing that she has been crying.*) What're you blubberin' about?

ANNIE. It's all his fault. I was tryin' to git him home but he's that set I couldn't budge him; and he hit me on the arm with his cane when I went near him.

SWEENEY. He did, did he? I'll soon learn him better. (*He advances toward* BENTLEY *threateningly.*)

ANNIE (*grasping his arm*). Don't touch him, Pat. He's in one of his fits and you might kill him.

SWEENEY. An' good riddance!

BENTLEY (*hissing*). Papist! (*Chants.*) "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him and consumed him, and made his habitation desolate."

SWEENEY (*instinctively crosses himself—then scornfully*). Spit curses on me till ye choke. It's not likely the Lord God'll be listenin' to a wicked auld sinner the like of you. (*To* ANNIE.) What's got into him to be roamin' up here? When I left for the town he looked too weak to lift a foot.

ANNIE. Oh, it's the same crazy notion he's had ever since Luke left. He wanted to make sure the rope was still here.

BENTLEY (*pointing to the rope with his stick*). He-he! Luke'll come back. Then you'll see. You'll see!

SWEENEY (*nervously*). Stop that mad cacklin', for the love of heaven! (*With a forced laugh.*) It's great laughter I should be havin' at you, mad as you are, for thinkin' that thief of a son of yours would come back to hang himself on account of your curses. It's five years he's been gone, and not a sight of him; an' you cursin' and callin' down the wrath o' God on him by day an' by night. That shows you what God thinks of your curses—an' Him deaf to you!

ANNIE. It's no use talkin' to him, Pat.

SWEENEY. I've small doubt but that Luke is hung long since—by the police. He's come to no good end, that lad. (*His eyes on the rope.*) I'll be pullin' that thing down, so I will; an' the auld loon'll stay in the house, where he belongs, then maybe. (*He reaches up for the rope as if to try and yank it down.* BENTLEY *waves his stick frantically in the air, and groans with rage.*)

ANNIE (*frightened*). Leave it alone, Pat. Look at him. He's liable to hurt himself. Leave his rope be. It don't do no harm.

SWEENEY (*reluctantly moves away*). It looks ugly hangin' there open like a mouth. (*The old man sinks back into a relieved immobility.* SWEENEY *speaks to his wife in a low tone.*) Where's the child? Get her to take him out o' this. I want a word with you he'll not be hearin'. (*She goes to the door and calls out.*) Ma-ry! Ma-ry! (*A faint, answering cry is heard and a moment later* MARY *rushes breathlessly into the barn.* SWEENEY *grabs her roughly by the arm. She shrinks away, looking at him with terrified eyes.*) You're to take your grandfather back to the house—an' see to it he stays there.

ANNIE. And give him his medicine.

SWEENEY (*as the child continues to stare at him silently with eyes stupid from fear, he shakes her impatiently*). D'you hear me, now? (*To his wife.*) It's soft-minded she is, like I've always told you, an' stupid; and you're not too firm in the head yourself at times, God help you! An' look at him! It's the curse is in the wits of your family, not mine.

ANNIE. You've been drinkin' in town or you wouldn't talk that way.

MARY (*whining*). Maw! I'm skeered!

SWEENEY (*lets go of her arm and approaches* BENTLEY). Get up out o' this, ye auld loon, an' go with Mary. She'll take you to the house. (BENTLEY *tries to hit him with the cane.*) Oho, ye would, would ye? (*He wrests the cane from the old man's hands.*) Bad cess to ye, you're the treach'rous one! Get up, now! (*He jerks the old man to his feet.*) Here, Mary, take his hand. Quick now! (*She does so tremblingly.*) Lead him to the house.

ANNIE. Go on, Paw! I'll come and git your supper in a minute.

BENTLEY (*stands stubbornly and begins to intone*). "O Lord, thou hast seen my wrong; judge thou my cause. Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me——"

SWEENEY (*pushing him toward the door.* BENTLEY *tries to resist.* MARY *pulls at his hand in a sudden fit of impish glee, and laughs shrilly*). Get on now an' stop your cursin'.

BENTLEY. "Render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands."

SWEENEY. Shut your loud quackin'! Here's your cane. (*He gives it to the old man as they come to the doorway and quickly steps back out of reach.*) An' mind you don't touch the child with it or I'll beat you to a jelly, old as ye are.

BENTLEY (*resisting* MARY'S *efforts to pull him out, stands shaking his stick at* SWEENEY *and his wife*). "Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the Lord."

MARY (*tugging at his hand and bursting again into shrill laughter*). Come on, gran'paw. (*He allows himself to be led off, right.*)

SWEENEY (*making the sign of the cross furtively—with a sigh of relief*). He's gone, thank God! What a snake's tongue he has in him! (*He sits down on the bench to the left of table.*) Come here, Annie, till I speak to you. (*She sits down on the bench in front of table.* SWEENEY *winks mysteriously.*) Well, I saw him, sure enough.

ANNIE (*stupidly*). Who?

SWEENEY (*sharply*). Who? Who but Dick Waller, the lawyer, that I went to see. (*Lowering his voice.*) An' I've found out what we was wishin' to know. (*With a laugh.*) Ye said I'd been drinkin'—which was true; but 'twas all in the plan I'd made. I've a head for strong drink, as ye know, but he hasn't. (*He winks cunningly.*) An' the whiskey loosened his tongue till he'd told all he knew.

ANNIE. He told you—about Paw's will?

SWEENEY. He did. (*Disappointedly.*) But for all the good it does us we might as well be no wiser than we was before. (*He broods for a moment in silence—then hits the table furiously with his fist.*) God's curse on the auld miser!

ANNIE. What did he tell you?

SWEENEY. Not much at the first. He's a cute one, an' he'd be askin' a fee to tell you your own name, if he could get it. His practice is all dribbled away from him lately on account of the drink. So I let on I was only payin' a friendly call, havin' known him for years. Then I asked him out to have a drop o' drink, knowin' his weakness; an' we had rashers of them, an' I payin' for it. Then I come out with it straight and asked him about the will—because the auld man was crazy an' on his last legs, I told him, an' he was the lawyer made out the will when Luke was gone. So he winked at me an' grinned—he was drunk by this—an' said: "It's no use, Pat. He left the farm to the boy." "To hell with the farm," I spoke back. "It's mortgaged to the teeth; but how about the money?" "The money?" an' he looks at me in surprise, "What money?" "The cash he has," I says. "You're crazy," he says. "There wasn't any cash—only the farm." "D'you mean to say he made no mention of money in his will?" I asked. You could have knocked me down with a feather. "He did not—on my oath," he says. (SWEENEY *leans over to his wife—indignantly.*) Now what d'you make o' that? The auld divil!

ANNIE. Maybe Waller was lyin'.

SWEENEY. He was not. I could tell by his face. He was surprised to hear me talkin' of money.

ANNIE. But the thousand dollars Paw got for the mortgage just before that woman ran away——

SWEENEY. An' that I've been slavin' me hands off to pay the int'rist on!

ANNIE. What could he have done with that? He ain't spent it. It was in twenty-dollar gold pieces he got it, I remember Mr. Keller of the bank tellin' me once.

SWEENEY. Divil a penny he's spent. Ye know as well as I do if it wasn't for my hammerin', an' sawin', an' nailin', he'd be in the poorhouse this minute—or the madhouse, more likely.

ANNIE. D'you suppose that harlot ran off with it?

SWEENEY. I do not; I know better—an' so do you. D'you not remember the letter she wrote tellin' him he could support Luke on the money he'd got on the mortgage she'd signed with him; for he'd made the farm over to her when he married her. An' where d'you suppose Luke got the hundred dollars he stole? The auld loon must have had cash with him then, an' it's only five years back.

ANNIE. He's got it hid some place in the house most likely.

SWEENEY. Maybe you're right. I'll dig in the cellar this night when he's sleepin'. He used to be down there a lot recitin' Scripture in his fits.

ANNIE. What else did Waller say?

SWEENEY. Nothin' much, except that we should put notices in the papers for Luke, an' if he didn't come back by sivin years from when he'd left—two years from now, that'd be—the courts would say he was dead an' give us the farm. Divil a lot of use it is to us

now with no money to fix it up; an' himself ruinin' it years ago by sellin' everythin' to buy that slut new clothes.

ANNIE. Don't folks break wills like his'n in the courts?

SWEENEY. Waller said 'twas no use. The auld divil was plain in his full senses when he made it, an' the courts cost money.

ANNIE (*resignedly*). There ain't nothin' we can do then.

SWEENEY. No—except wait an' pray that young thief is dead an' won't come back; an' try an' find where it is the auld man has the gold hid, if he has it yet. I'd take him by the neck an' choke him till he told it, if he wasn't your father. (*He takes a full quart flask of whiskey from the pocket of his coat and has a big drink.*) Aahh! If we'd on'y the thousand we'd stock the farm good an' I'd give up this dog's game (*he indicates the carpentry outfit scornfully*) an' we'd both work hard with a man or two to help, an' in a few years we'd be rich; for 'twas always a payin' place in the auld days.

ANNIE. Yes, yes, it was always a good farm then.

SWEENEY. He'll not last long in his senses, the doctor told me. His next attack will be very soon an' after it he'll be a real lunatic with no legal claims to anythin'. If we on'y had the money—'Twould be the divil an' all if the auld fool should forget where he put it, an' him takin' leave of his senses altogether. (*He takes another nip at the bottle and puts it back in his pocket—with a sigh.*) Ah, well, I'll save what I can an' at the end of two years, with good luck in the trade, maybe we'll have enough. (*They are both startled by the heavy footsteps of someone approaching outside. A shrill burst of* MARY'S *laughter can be heard and the deep voice of a man talking to her.*)

SWEENEY (*uneasily*). It's Mary; but who could that be with her? It's not himself. (*As he finishes speaking* LUKE *appears in the doorway, holding the dancing* MARY *by the hand. He is a tall, strapping young fellow about twenty-five with a coarse-featured, rather handsome face bronzed by the sun. What his face lacks in intelligence is partly forgiven for his good-natured, half-foolish grin, his hearty laugh, his curly dark hair, a certain devil-may-care recklessness and irresponsible youth in voice and gesture. But his mouth is weak and characterless, his brown eyes are large but shifty and acquisitive. He wears a dark blue jersey, patched blue pants, rough sailor shoes, and a gray cap. He advances into the stable with a mocking smile on his lips until he stands directly under the rope. The man and woman stare at him in petrified amazement.*)

ANNIE. Luke!

SWEENEY (*crossing himself*). Glory be to God—it's him!

MARY (*hopping up and down wildly*). It's Uncle Luke, Uncle Luke, Uncle Luke! (*She runs to her mother, who pushes her away angrily.*)

LUKE (*regarding them both with an amused grin*). Sure, it's Luke—back after five years of bummin' round the rotten old earth in ships and things. Paid off a week ago—had a bust-up—and then took a notion to come out here—bummed my way—and here I am. And you're both of you tickled to death to see me, ain't yuh?—like hell! (*He laughs and walks over to* ANNIE.) Don't yuh even want to shake flippers with your dear, long-lost brother, Annie? I remember you an' me used to git on so fine together—like hell!

ANNIE (*giving him a venomous look of hatred*). Keep your hands to yourself.

LUKE (*grinning*). You ain't changed, that's sure—on'y yuh're homlier'n ever. (*He turns to the scowling* SWEENEY.) How about you, brother Pat?

SWEENEY. I'd not lower myself to take the hand of a——

LUKE (*with a threat in his voice*). Easy goes with that talk! I'm not so soft to lick as I was when I was a kid; and don't forget it.

ANNIE (*to* MARY, *who is playing catch with a silver dollar which she has had clutched in her hand—sharply*). Mary! what have you got there? Where did you get it? Bring it here to me this minute! (MARY *presses the dollar to her breast and remains standing by the doorway in stubborn silence.*)

LUKE. Aw, let her alone! What's bitin' yuh? That's on'y a silver dollar I give her when I met her front of the house. She told me you was up here; and I give her that as a present to buy candy with. I got it in Frisco—cart-

wheels, they call 'em. There ain't none of them in these parts I ever seen, so I brung it along on the voyage.

ANNIE (*angrily*). I don't know or care where you got it—but I know you ain't come by it honest. Mary! Give that back to him this instant! (*As the child hesitates, she stamps her foot furiously.*) D'you hear me? (MARY *starts to cry softly, but comes to* LUKE *and hands him the dollar.*)

LUKE (*taking it—with a look of disgust at his half-sister*). I was right when I said you ain't changed, Annie. You're as stinkin' mean as ever. (*To* MARY, *consolingly.*) Quit bawlin', kid. You 'n' me'll go out on the edge of the cliff here and chuck some stones in the ocean same's we useter, remember? (MARY'S *tears immediately cease. She looks up at him with shining eyes, and claps her hands.*)

MARY (*pointing to the dollar he has in his hand*). Throw that! It's flat 'n' it'll skip.

LUKE (*with a grin*). That's the talk, kid. That's all it's good for—to throw away; not buryin' it like your miser folks'd tell you. Here! You take it and chuck it away. It's your'n. (*He gives her the dollar and she hops to the doorway. He turns to* PAT *with a grin.*) I'm learnin' your kid to be a sport, Tight-Wad. I hope you ain't got no objections.

MARY (*impatiently*). Come on, Uncle Luke. Watch me throw it.

LUKE. Aw right. (*To* PAT.) I'll step outside a second and give you two a chanct to git all the dirty things yuh're thinkin' about me off your chest, (*Threateningly.*) and then I'm gointer come and talk turkey to you, see? I didn't come back here for fun, and the sooner you gets that in your beans, the better.

MARY. Come on and watch me!

LUKE. Aw right, I'm comin'. (*He walks out and stands, leaning his back against the doorway, left.* MARY *is about six feet beyond him on the other side of the road. She is leaning down, peering over the edge of the cliff and laughing excitedly.*)

MARY. Can I throw it now? Can I?

LUKE. Don't git too near the edge, kid. The water's deep down there, and you'd be a drowned rat if you slipped. (*She shrinks back a step.*) You chuck it when I say three. Ready, now! (*She draws back her arm.*) One! Two! Three! (*She throws the dollar away and bends down to see it hit the water.*)

MARY (*clapping her hands and laughing*). I seen it! I seen it splash! It's deep down now, ain't it?

LUKE. Yuh betcher it is! Now watch how far I kin chuck rocks. (*He picks up a couple and goes to where she is standing. During the following conversation between* SWEENEY *and his wife he continues to play this way with* MARY. *Their voices can be heard but the words are indistinguishable.*)

SWEENEY (*glancing apprehensively toward the door—with a great sigh*). Speak of the divil an' here he is! (*Furiously.*) Flingin' away dollars, the dirty thief, an' us without——

ANNIE (*interrupting him*). Did you hear what he said? A thief like him ain't come back for no good. (*Lowering her voice.*) D'you s'pose he knows about the farm bein' left to him?

SWEENEY (*uneasily*). How could he? An' yet—I dunno—(*With sudden decision.*) You'd best lave him to me to watch out for. It's small sense you have to hide your hate from him. You're as looney as the rist of your breed. An' he needs to be blarneyed round to fool him an' find out what he's wantin'. I'll pritind to make friends with him, God roast his soul! An' do you run to the house an' break the news to the auld man; for if he seen him suddin it's likely the little wits he has left would leave him; an' the thief could take the farm from us tomorrow if himself turned a lunatic.

ANNIE (*getting up*). I'll tell him a little at a time till he knows.

SWEENEY. Be careful, now, or we'll lose the farm this night. (*She starts towards the doorway.* SWEENEY *speaks suddenly in a strange, awed voice.*) Did you see Luke when he first came in to us? He stood there with the noose of the rope almost touchin' his head. I was almost wishin'——(*He hesitates.*)

ANNIE (*viciously*). I was wishin' it was round his neck chokin' him, that's what I was—hangin' him just as Paw says.

SWEENEY. Ssshh! He might hear ye. Go along, now. He's comin' back.

MARY (*pulling at* LUKE'S *arm as he comes back to the doorway*). Lemme throw 'nother! Lemme throw 'nother!

LUKE (*enters just as* ANNIE *is going out and stops her*). Goin' to the house? Do we get any supper? I'm hungry.

ANNIE (*glaring at him but restraining her rage*). Yes.

LUKE (*jovially*). Good work! And tell the old man I'm here and I'll see him in a while. He'll be glad to see me, too—like hell! (*He comes forward.* ANNIE *goes off, right.*)

MARY (*in an angry whine, tugging at his hand*). Lemme throw 'nother. Lemme——

LUKE (*shaking her away*). There's lots of rocks, kid. Throw them. Dollars ain't so plentiful.

MARY (*screaming*). No! No! I don' wanter throw rocks. Lemme throw 'nother o' them.

SWEENEY (*severely*). Let your uncle in peace, ye brat! (*She commences to cry.*) Run help your mother now or I'll give ye a good hidin'. (MARY *runs out of the door, whimpering.* PAT *turns to* LUKE *and holds out his hand.*)

LUKE (*looking at it in amazement*). Ahoy, there! What's this?

SWEENEY (*with an ingratiating smile*). Let's let bygones be bygones. I'm harborin' no grudge agen you these past years. Ye was only a lad when ye ran away an' not to be blamed for it. I'd have taken your hand a while back, an' glad to, but for her bein' with us. She has the divil's own tongue, as ye know, an' she can't forget the rowin' you an' her used to be havin'.

LUKE (*still looking at* SWEENEY'S *hand*). So that's how the wind blows! (*With a grin.*) Well, I'll take a chanct. (*They shake hands and sit down by the table,* SWEENEY *on the front bench and* LUKE *on the left one.*)

SWEENEY (*pulls the bottle from his coat pocket—with a wink*). Will ye have a taste? It's real stuff.

LUKE. Yuh betcher I will! (*He takes a big gulp and hands the bottle back.*)

SWEENEY (*after taking a drink himself, puts bottle on table*). I wasn't wishin' herself to see it or I'd have asked ye sooner. (*There is a pause, during which each measures the other with his eyes.*)

LUKE. Say, how's the old man now?

SWEENEY (*cautiously*). Oh, the same as ivir —older an' uglier, maybe.

LUKE. I thought he might be in the bughouse by this time.

SWEENEY (*hastily*). Indeed not; he's foxy to pritind he's looney, but he's his wits with him all the time.

LUKE (*insinuatingly*). Is he as stingy with his coin as he used to be?

SWEENEY. If he owned the ocean he wouldn't give a fish a drink; but I doubt if he's any money left at all. Your mother got rid of it all I'm thinkin'. (LUKE *smiles a superior, knowing smile.*) He has on'y the farm, an' that mortgaged. I've been payin' the int'rist an' supportin' himself an' his doctor's bills by the carpentryin' these five years past.

LUKE (*with a grin*). Huh! Yuh're slow. Yuh oughter get wise to yourself.

SWEENEY (*inquisitively*). What d'ye mean by that?

LUKE (*aggravatingly*). Aw, nothin'. (*He turns around and his eyes fix themselves on the rope.*) What the hell——(*He is suddenly convulsed with laughter and slaps his thigh.*) Haha! If that don't beat the Dutch! The old nut!

SWEENEY. What?

LUKE. That rope. Say, has he had that hangin' there ever since I skipped?

SWEENEY (*smiling*). Sure; an' he thinks you'll be comin' home to hang yourself.

LUKE. Hahaha! Not this chicken! And you say he ain't crazy! Gee, that's too good to keep. I got to have a drink on that. (SWEENEY *pushes the bottle toward him. He raises it toward the rope.*) Here's how, old chum! (*He drinks.* SWEENEY *does likewise.*) Say, I'd almost forgotten about that. Remember how hot he was that day when he hung that rope up and cussed me for pinchin' the hundred? He was standin' there shakin' his stick at me, and I was laughin' 'cause he looked so funny with the spit dribblin' outa his mouth like he was a mad dog. And when I turned round and beat it he shouted after me: "Remember, when you come home again there's a rope waitin' for yuh to hang yourself on, yuh bastard!" (*He spits contemptuously.*) What a swell chanct. (*His manner changes and he frowns.*) The old slave-driver! That's a hell of a fine old man for a guy to have!

SWEENEY (*pushing the bottle toward him*). Take a sup an' forgit it. 'Twas a long time past.

LUKE. But the rope's there yet, ain't it? And he keeps it there. (*He takes a large swallow.* SWEENEY *also drinks.*) But I'll git back at him aw right, yuh wait 'n' see. I'll git every cent he's got this time.

SWEENEY (*slyly*). If he has a cent. I'm not wishful to discourage ye, but——(*He shakes his head doubtfully, at the same time fixing* LUKE *with a keen glance out of the corner of his eye.*)

LUKE (*with a cunning wink*). Aw, he's got it aw right. You watch me! (*He is beginning to show the effects of the drink he has had. He pulls out tobacco and a paper and rolls a cigarette and lights it. As he puffs he continues boastfully.*) You country jays oughter wake up and see what's goin' on. Look at me. I was green as grass when I left here, but bummin' round the world, and bein' in cities, and meetin' all kinds, and keepin' your two eyes open— that's what'll learn yuh a cute trick or two.

SWEENEY. No doubt but you're right. Us country folks is stupid in most ways. We've no chance to learn the things a travelin' lad like you'd be knowin'.

LUKE (*complacently*). Well, you watch me and I'll learn yuh. (*He snickers.*) So yuh thinks the old man's flat broke, do yuh?

SWEENEY. I do so.

LUKE. Then yuh're simple; that's what— simple! You're lettin' him kid yuh.

SWEENEY. If he has any, it's well hid, I know that. He's a sly old bird.

LUKE. And I'm a slyer bird. D'yuh hear that? I c'n beat his game any time. You watch me! (*He reaches out his hand for the bottle. They both drink again.* SWEENEY *begins to show signs of getting drunk. He hiccoughs every now and then and his voice grows uncertain and husky.*)

SWEENEY. It'd be a crafty one who'd find where he'd hidden it, sure enough.

LUKE. You watch me! I'll find it. I betcher anything yuh like I find it. You watch me! Just wait till he's asleep and I'll show yuh— ternight. (*There is a noise of shuffling footsteps outside and* ANNIE'S *whining voice raised in angry protest.*)

SWEENEY. Ssshh! It's himself comin' now. (LUKE *rises to his feet and stands, waiting in a defensive attitude, a surly expression on his face. A moment later* BENTLEY *appears in the doorway, followed by* ANNIE. *He leans against the wall, in an extraordinary state of excitement, shaking all over, gasping for breath, his eyes devouring* LUKE *from head to foot.*)

ANNIE. I couldn't do nothin' with him. When I told him *he'd* come back there was no holdin' him. He was a'most frothin' at the mouth till I let him out. (*Whiningly.*) You got to see to him, Pat, if you want any supper. I can't——

SWEENEY. Shut your mouth! We'll look after him.

ANNIE. See that you do. I'm goin' back. (*She goes off, right.* LUKE *and his father stand looking at each other. The surly expression disappears from* LUKE'S *face, which gradually expands in a broad grin.*)

LUKE (*jovially*). Hello, old sport! I s'pose yuh're tickled to pieces to see me—like hell! (*The old man stutters and stammers incoherently as if the very intensity of his desire for speech had paralyzed all power of articulation.* LUKE *turns to* PAT.) I see he ain't lost the old stick. Many a crack on the nut I used to get with that.

BENTLEY (*suddenly finding his voice—chants*). "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (*He ends up with a convulsive sob.*)

LUKE (*disapprovingly*). Yuh're still spoutin' the rotten old Word o' God same's ever, eh? Say, give us a rest on that stuff, will yuh? Come on and shake hands like a good sport. (*He holds out his hand. The old man totters over to him, stretching out a trembling hand.* LUKE *seizes it and pumps it up and down.*) That's the boy!

SWEENEY (*genuinely amazed*). Look at that, would ye—the two-faced auld liar. (BENTLEY *passes his trembling hand all over* LUKE, *feeling of his arms, his chest, his back. An expression of overwhelming joy suffuses his worn features.*)

LUKE (*grinning at* SWEENEY). Say, watch this. (*With tolerant good-humor.*) On the level I b'lieve the old boy's glad to see me at that. He looks like he was tryin' to grin; and I never seen him grin in my life, I c'n remember.

(*As* BENTLEY *attempts to feel of his face.*) Hey, cut it out! (*He pushes his hand away, but not roughly.*) I'm all here, yuh needn't worry. Yuh needn't be scared I'm a ghost. Come on and sit down before yuh fall down. Yuh ain't got your sea-legs workin' right. (*He guides the old man to the bench at left of table.*) Squat here for a spell and git your wind. (BENTLEY *sinks down on the bench.* LUKE *reaches for the bottle.*) Have a drink to my makin' port. It'll buck yuh up.

SWEENEY (*alarmed*). Be careful, Luke. It might likely end him.

LUKE (*holds the bottle up to the old man's mouth, supporting his head with the other hand.* BENTLEY *gulps, the whiskey drips over his chin, and he goes into a fit of convulsive coughing.* LUKE *laughs*). Hahaha! Went down the wrong way, did it? I'll show yuh the way to do it. (*He drinks.*) There yuh are—smooth as silk. (*He hands the bottle to* SWEENEY, *who drinks and puts it back on the table.*)

SWEENEY. He must be glad to see ye or he'd not drink. 'Tis dead against it he's been these five years past. (*Shaking his head.*) An' him cursin' you day an' night! I can't put head or tail to it. Look out he ain't meanin' some bad to ye underneath. He's crafty at pretendin'.

LUKE (*as the old man makes signs to him with his hand*). What's he after now? He's lettin' on he's lost his voice again. What d'yuh want? (BENTLEY *points with his stick to the rope. His lips move convulsively as he makes a tremendous effort to utter words.*)

BENTLEY (*mumbling incoherently*). Luke—Luke—rope—Luke—hang.

SWEENEY (*appalled*). There ye are! What did I tell you? It's to see you hang yourself he's wishin', the auld fiend!

BENTLEY (*nodding*). Yes—Luke—hang.

LUKE (*taking it as a joke—with a loud guffaw*). Hahaha! If that don't beat the Dutch! The old nanny-goat! Aw right, old sport. Anything to oblige. Hahaha! (*He takes the chair from left and places it under the rope. The old man watches him with eager eyes and seems to be trying to smile.* LUKE *stands on the chair.*)

SWEENEY. Have a care, now! I'd not be foolin' with it in your place.

LUKE. All out for the big hangin' of Luke Bentley by hisself. (*He puts the noose about his neck with an air of drunken bravado and grins at his father. The latter makes violent motions for him to go on.*) Look at him, Pat. By God he's in a hurry. Hahaha! Well, old sport, here goes nothin'. (*He makes a movement as if he were going to jump and kick the chair from under him.*)

SWEENEY (*half starts to his feet—horrified*). Luke! Are ye gone mad?

LUKE (*stands staring at his father, who is still making gestures for him to jump. A scowl slowly replaces his good-natured grin*). D'yuh really mean it—that yuh want to see me hangin' myself? (BENTLEY *nods vigorously in the affirmative.* LUKE *glares at him for a moment in silence.*) Well, I'll be damned! (*To* PAT.) An' I thought he was only kiddin'. (*He removes the rope gingerly from his neck. The old man stamps his foot and gesticulates wildly, groaning with disappointment.* LUKE *jumps to the floor and looks at his father for a second. Then his face grows white with a vicious fury.*) I'll fix your hash, you stinkin' old murderer! (*He grabs the chair by its back and swings it over his head as if he were going to crush* BENTLEY'S *skull with it. The old man cowers on the bench in abject terror.*)

SWEENEY (*jumping to his feet with a cry of alarm*). Luke! For the love of God! (LUKE *hesitates; then hurls the chair in back of him under the loft, and stands menacingly in front of his father, his hands on his hips.*)

LUKE (*grabbing* BENTLEY'S *shoulder and shaking him—hoarsely*). Yuh wanted to see me hangin' there in real earnest, didn't yuh? You'd hang me yourself if yuh could, wouldn't yuh? And you my own father! Yuh damned son-of-a-gun! Yuh would, would yuh? I'd smash your brains out for a nickel! (*He shakes the old man more and more furiously.*)

SWEENEY. Luke! Look out! You'll be killin' him next.

LUKE (*giving his father one more shake, which sends him sprawling on the floor*). Git outa here! Git outa this b'fore I kill yuh dead! (SWEENEY *rushes over and picks the terrified old man up.*) Take him outa here, Pat! (*His voice rises to a threatening roar.*) Take him outa here or I'll break every bone in his body.

(*He raises his clenched fists over his head in a frenzy of rage.*)

SWEENEY. Ssshh! Don't be roarin'! I've got him. (*He steers the whimpering, hysterical* BENTLEY *to the doorway.*) Come out o' this, now. Get down to the house! Hurry now! Ye've made enough trouble for one night! (*They disappear off right.* LUKE *flings himself on a bench, breathing heavily. He picks up the bottle and takes a long swallow.* SWEENEY *re-enters from rear. He comes over and sits down in his old place.*) Thank God he's off down to the house, scurryin' like a frightened hare as if he'd never a kink in his legs in his life. He was moanin' out loud so you could hear him a long ways. (*With a sigh.*) It's a murd'rous auld loon he is, sure enough.

LUKE (*thickly*). The damned son-of-a-gun!

SWEENEY. I thought you'd be killin' him that time with the chair.

LUKE (*violently*). Serve him damn right if I done it.

SWEENEY. An' you laughin' at him a moment sooner! I thought 'twas jokin' ye was.

LUKE (*suddenly*). So I was kiddin'; but I thought he was tryin' to kid me, too. And then I seen by the way he acted he really meant it. (*Banging the table with his fist.*) Ain't that a hell of a fine old man for yuh!

SWEENEY. He's a mean auld swine.

LUKE. He meant it aw right, too. Yuh shoulda seen him lookin' at me. (*With sudden lugubriousness.*) Ain't he a hell of a nice old man for a guy to have? Ain't he?

SWEENEY (*soothingly*). Hush! It's all over now. Don't be thinkin' about it.

LUKE (*on the verge of drunken tears*). How kin I help thinkin'—an' him my own father? After me bummin' and starvin' round the rotten earth, and workin' myself to death on ships and things—and when I come home he tries to make me bump off—wants to see me a corpse—my own father, too! Ain't he a hell of an old man to have? The rotten son-of-a-gun!

SWEENEY. It's past an' done. Forgit it. (*He slaps* LUKE *on the shoulder and pushes the bottle toward him.*) Let's take a drop more. We'll be goin' to supper soon.

LUKE (*takes a big drink—huskily*). Thanks. (*He wipes his mouth on his sleeve with a snuffle.*) But I'll tell yuh something you can put in your pipe and smoke. It ain't past and done, and it ain't goin' to be! (*More and more aggressively.*) And I ain't goin' to ferget it, either! Yuh kin betcher life on that, pal. And *he* ain't goin' to ferget it—not if he lives a million—not by a damned sight! (*With sudden fury.*) I'll fix his hash! I'll git even with him, the old skunk! You watch me! And this very night, too!

SWEENEY. How'd you mean?

LUKE. You just watch me, I tell yuh! (*Banging the table.*) I said I'd git even and I will git even—this same night, with no long waits, either! (*Frowning.*) Say, you don't stand up for him, do yuh?

SWEENEY (*spitting—vehemently*). That's child's talk. There's not a day passed I've not wished him in his grave.

LUKE (*excitedly*). Then we'll both git even on him—you 'n' me. We're pals, ain't we?

SWEENEY. Sure.

LUKE. And yuh kin have half what we gits. That's the kinda feller I am! That's fair enough, ain't it?

SWEENEY. Surely.

LUKE. I don't want no truck with this rotten farm. You kin have my share of that. I ain't made to be no damned dirt-puncher—not me! And I ain't goin' to loaf round here more'n I got to, and when I goes this time I ain't never comin' back. Not me! Not to punch dirt and milk cows. You kin have the rotten farm for all of me. What I wants is cash—regular coin yuh kin spend—not dirt. I want to show the gang a real time, and then ship away to sea agen or go bummin' agen. I want coin yuh kin throw away—same's your kid chucked that dollar of mine overboard, remember? A real dollar, too! She's a sport, aw right!

SWEENEY (*anxious to bring him back to the subject*). But where d'you think to find his money?

LUKE (*confidently*). Don't yuh fret. I'll show yuh. You watch me! I know his hidin' places. I useter spy on him when I was a kid—Maw used to make me—and I seen him many a time at his sneakin'. (*Indignantly.*) He used to hide stuff from the old lady. What d'yuh know about him—the mean skunk.

SWEENEY. That was a long time back. You don't know——

LUKE (*assertively*). But I do know, see! He's got two places. One was where I swiped the hundred.

SWEENEY. It'll not be there, then.

LUKE. No; but there's the other place; and he never knew I was wise to that. I'd have left him clean on'y I was a kid and scared to pinch more. So you watch me! We'll git even on him, you 'n' me, and go halfs, and yuh kin start the rotten farm goin' agen and I'll beat it where there's some life.

SWEENEY. But if there's no money in that place, what'll you be doin' to find out where it is, then?

LUKE. Then you 'n' me 'ull make him tell!

SWEENEY. Oho, don't think it! 'Tis not him'd be tellin'.

LUKE. Aw, say, you're simple! You watch me! I know a trick or two about makin' people tell what they don't wanter. (*He picks up the chisel from the table.*) Yuh see this? Well, if he don't answer up nice and easy we'll show him! (*A ferocious grin settles over his face.*) We'll git even on him, you 'n' me —and he'll tell where it's hid. We'll just shove this into the stove till it's red-hot and take off his shoes and socks and warm the bottoms of his feet for him. (*Savagely.*) He'll tell then—anything we wants him to tell.

SWEENEY. But Annie?

LUKE. We'll shove a rag in her mouth so's she can't yell. That's easy.

SWEENEY (*his head lolling drunkenly—with a cruel leer*). 'Twill serve him right to heat up his hoofs for him, the limpin' auld miser! —if ye don't hurt him too much.

LUKE (*with a savage scowl*). We won't hurt him—more'n enough. (*Suddenly raging.*) I'll pay him back aw right! He won't want no more people to hang themselves when I git through with him. I'll fix his hash! (*He sways to his feet, the chisel in his hand.*) Come on! Let's git to work. Sooner we starts the sooner we're rich. (SWEENEY *rises. He is steadier on his feet than* LUKE. *At this moment* MARY *appears in the doorway.*)

MARY. Maw says supper's ready. I had mine. (*She comes into the room and jumps up, trying to grab hold of the rope.*) Lift me, Uncle Luke. I wanter swing.

LUKE (*severely*). Don't yuh dare touch that rope, d'yuh hear?

MARY (*whining*). I wanter swing.

LUKE (*with a shiver*). It's bad, kid. Yuh leave it alone, take it from me.

SWEENEY. She'll get a good whalin' if I catch her jumpin' at it.

LUKE. Come on, pal. T'hell with supper. We got work to do first. (*They go to the doorway.*)

SWEENEY (*turning back to the sulking* MARY). And you stay here, d'you hear, ye brat, till we call ye—or I'll skin ye alive.

LUKE. And termorrer mornin', kid, I'll give yuh a whole handful of them shiny, bright things yuh chucked in the ocean—and yuh kin be a real sport.

MARY (*eagerly*). Gimme 'em now! Gimme 'em now, Uncle Luke. (*As he shakes his head—whiningly.*) Gimme one! Gimme one!

LUKE. Can't be done, kid. Termorrer. Me 'n' your old man is goin' to git even now—goin' to make him pay for——

SWEENEY (*interrupting—harshly*). Hist with your noise! D'you think she's no ears? Don't be talkin' so much. Come on, now.

LUKE (*permitting himself to be pulled out the doorway*). Aw right! I'm with yuh. We'll git even—you 'n' me. The damned son-of-a-gun! (*They lurch off to the right.*)

(MARY *skips to the doorway and peeps after them for a moment. Then she comes back to the center of the floor and looks around her with an air of decision. She sees the chair in under the loft and runs over to it, pulling it back and setting it on its legs directly underneath the noose of the rope. She climbs and stands on the top of the chair and grasps the noose with both her upstretched hands. Then with a shriek of delight she kicks the chair from under her and launches herself for a swing. The rope seems to part where it is fixed to the beam. A dirty gray bag tied to the end of the rope falls to the floor with a muffled, metallic thud.* MARY *sprawls forward on her hands and knees, whimpering. Straggly wisps from the pile of rank hay fall silently to the floor in a mist of dust.* MARY, *discovering she is unhurt, glances quickly around and sees the bag. She pushes herself along the floor and,*

*untying the string at the top, puts in her hand. She gives an exclamation of joy at what she feels and, turning the bag upside down, pours its contents in her lap. Giggling to herself, she gets to her feet and goes to the doorway, where she dumps what she has in her lap in a heap on the floor just inside the barn. They lie there in a glittering pile, shimmering in the faint sunset glow—fifty twenty-dollar gold pieces.* MARY *claps her hands and sings to herself: "Skip—skip—skip." Then she quickly picks up four or five and runs out to the edge of the cliff. She throws them one after another into the ocean as fast as she can and bends over to see them hit the water. Against the background of horizon clouds still tinted with blurred crimson she hops up and down in a sort of grotesque dance, clapping her hands and laughing shrilly. After the last one is thrown she rushes back into the barn to get more.)*

MARY (*picking up a handful—giggling ecstatically*). Skip! Skip! (*She turns and runs out to throw them as*

*The Curtain Falls.*)

1919

# 1876 ~ *Ole Edvart Rølvaag* ~ 1931

[The editors of this volume are indebted for the following sketch of Rølvaag's life and work to Nora O. Solum, translator of *Peder Victorious* and *The Boat of Longing*, and co-author of the authorized biography.]

OLE EDVART RØLVAAG, interpreter of the "cost of empire building" on the prairies of the American Middlewest, was born April 22, 1876, on the Island of Dønna, near the Arctic Circle in the province of Nordland, Norway. He came of a hard-working, intelligent fisher family, whose paternal line had lived in the same fisherman's cottage overlooking the cove Rølvaag for several generations. Environmental influences, which played strongly upon his sensitive nature, together with access to the district library in a nearby village, offset the deficiencies of a meager common-school education.

Until his twentieth year he, in common with most people in those parts, seemed destined to be a fisherman, and evidence points to the fact that had he followed the trade he would have become an expert in it. Six winter expeditions to the Lofoten fishing grounds, on one of which (1893) he lived through a storm of fearful violence, convinced him that this calling was a hard, uncertain, and extremely hazardous one. Early in life he had said to his mother, upon being questioned, that he wanted to be a poet. It is, however, safe to say that as a young man in Norway he hardly knew his own mind, for nothing more definite than a tormenting restlessness can be found to explain his decision to migrate to America in the summer of 1896.

Meantime, the wizardry and austerity of sea and mountain in Nordland, midnight sun and long winter gloom, tradition and legend, folklore and fairy tale, the mystic world of the supernatural, and the grim struggle for existence, had exerted a powerful influence upon his affections, mind, and character. Rølvaag's love of the sea never left him; and battling with it had taught him respect for the harsher realities of life and had put mettle into his spirit. He was always a fighting man. To these

background influences must be added that of a deep attachment to his mother. Besides creating strong ties of place, these forces fed fact and fancy alike and equipped him with the outlook which in his writings was to find expression not only in certain convictions concerning Americanization but also in his balanced realism as an interpreter of life. No true understanding of his position in American literature can be reached except upon a recognition of the double loyalties which the circumstances of his life fostered: the first to his early home and the racial heritage of his country; the second to the land of his adoption. In ultimate analysis they are one.

The experiences in the early homeland, augmented by those in the new, were to fit Rølvaag to become a spokesman for the immigrant in the American scene.

In America he began life as a farmhand in the vicinity of Elk Point, South Dakota. By the fall of 1898 he had decided to go to school, and having set out upon such a course, he worked his way through Augustana Academy at Canton, South Dakota, and through St. Olaf College, and then went on to the University of Oslo, where he completed a year of study in the spring of 1906. Records and reputation testify that he was an earnest and able student. Both as a student and as a teacher he was profoundly affected by the stern thinking of Ibsen, especially in the dramas *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*.

All through his teaching period he identified himself energetically with the work of preserving the cultural heritage of the Norwegian people among the transplanted group in this country. He wrote, edited, and lectured in its behalf, and aided organizations devoted to such efforts. He was, moreover, a student of Norwegian immigration history, instituting a course in it at St. Olaf and becoming a leader in the founding of the Norwegian American Historical Association in 1925, in which he held a secretaryship until his death in 1931.

His study of the Norwegian immigrant group and his effort to awaken it culturally made him both its critic and its interpreter. Fundamentally, his idealism derives from a deep reverence for life. This was the basic loyalty. What mattered most for any individual was a sound appreciation of life's values. As a young immigrant he observed the monotony and superficiality of life among his group because of their concern for material things and their lack of rootage. They had no genuine culture despite their churches and their schools. What were broad acres and fine houses with complacency and commonplace thinking and nothing to give glow and color and meaning to life? This was tragedy for a folk with a rich racial culture. And it was shortsighted Americanism to demand that they relinquish their inheritance.

While Rølvaag did not minimize the glory in the conquest of the frontier, he saw also its cost. His twofold background prepared him eminently to become the appraiser of both. The English-speaking pioneer had indeed been a brave soul, but the price he had paid in suffering and sacrifice for his new home could never equal that paid by the foreign-born of non-English stock. Thus his great theme, particularly in

the pioneer trilogy, became the tragedy of immigration and his contribution to thought in American letters a more penetrating social-historical insight into the cost of building the United States.

As a novelist he was interested in human portraiture, insisting that every human being is a fascinating study. He held, moreover, that the novelist must approach life with the utmost sincerity and depict it truthfully. It would not do to lie about it. He mistrusted plot and hated intrigue in story. Life as it is was interesting enough. Accepting both light and shadow as parts of life, he achieved a balanced realism. He was a sharp but understanding critic, whose crusading spirit was finely guided by deep insight and a keen sense of humor.

All of Rølvaag's books were first written in Norwegian. Those that have appeared in English are *Giants in the Earth* (1927); *Peder Victorious* (1929); *Pure Gold* (1930); *Their Father's God* (1931); *The Boat of Longing* (1933). The authorized biography is by Nora O. Solum and Theodore Jorgensen, *O. E. Rølvaag* (1939). For critical comment, consult L. Colcord, introduction to *Giants in the Earth* (1927); L. Colcord, "Rølvaag the Fisherman Shook His Fist at Fate," *American Magazine*, March, 1928; P. H. Boynton, "O. E. Rølvaag and the Conquest of the Pioneer," *English Journal*, Sept., 1929; P. H. Boynton, *The Rediscovery of the Frontier* (1931); E. I. Haugen, "Rølvaag: Norwegian American," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*, VII (1933); V. L. Parrington, introduction to school edition of *Giants in the Earth* (1929); the same reprinted in V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, III (1930); J. E. Olson, "Rølvaag's Novels of Norwegian Pioneer Life in the Dakotas," *Scandinavian Studies and Notes*, Aug., 1929; "Anomaly in American Literature," *Literary Digest*, March 10, 1928; A. H. Quinn, *American Fiction* (1936).

## *From* THE BOAT OF LONGING

The poetic quality in Rølvaag's novels has been noted by readers and pointed out by critics. It is noticeable in a marked degree in *Giants in the Earth* and *Peder Victorious*, but occurs at its best in the opening chapters of *The Boat of Longing*. Here Rølvaag describes the poignant longing of a Norwegian lad for the richer life which he feels is awaiting him beyond the water. The longing is symbolized by a mystical, imaginary boat, which bears somewhat the same relation to the story as the Holy Grail does to the legends of King Arthur and the Round Table.

### XII

THOUGH Easter fell late that year—not till April was nearly over—spring had come betimes, so that when it arrived all of the lowland and most of the mountains were bare of snow.

The day broke with splendor . . . tranquil and clear. The Westfjord lay too languid to stir in the pleasant sunshine.

Most of the crew made ready for church. Now it is a good Norwegian mile from Röstnes Harbor to where the church lies in Nordland, but that fact deterred no man, even though he might have to tramp the whole distance in sea boots.

At a couple of points the road bears well upward into the mountains. On a clear day these places will permit to the eye a view sufficiently unhindered to let it take flight. Which some let it do; others get it fixed on the scree. It all depends on the temperament they have. . . .

Per and Nils were trudging upward together.

With their approach to the heights and the whole of the magnificent panorama beginning to unfold itself to them, Per's head began fairly to seethe with ideas and he found no end of matter for talk. Nils, contrariously, walked abstracted and silent. . . . What must not the top of the mountain promise with the view thus vast and fine already here, marvelled Per.

Nils wondered, too. They then agreed upon the climb for the afternoon; that is, Per proposed and planned it; Nils simply listened and nodded assent.

They had reached the church.

There it stood, paltry, weatherbeaten, and hard-looking, with its silly little pretext of a spire, staring at an endless sea. The whole mighty ocean spread before it; and just as far as it very well could, the church had gone out to meet it.

. . . Within there was silence and the solemnity of a great festal occasion. The place was thronged with people. Men jammed the aisle from the outer door to the front pew. Beyond that point none dared go; it was not for any save the elect to approach the choir. Those farthest in front were embarrassed at being so much in the public eye. Their heads were so shrunk into their shoulders as to give their figures a hunched appearance when seen from behind.

. . . But today there rested upon the weathered countenances a look of childhood contentment, and of simple, unquestioning faith. Easter joy kindled in the blessed warmth of the spring sun. Death was vanquished, aye, death was vanquished! The thought gave comforting assurance to those who fought with it daily. God's own Son from eternity has wrestled with death and had conquered. Aye, the Son of God had conquered! Hence, no more need to fear!—

. . . On the strand below, a hungry surf kept rolling in from the mystic depths of the Arctic. It sighed heavily, and tugged tenaciously at the long-stemmed kelp and the seaweed.

. . . Sea gulls hovered above, listening awhile ere winging their way outward.

. . . The redolence of spring hung sharp in the air under the blue-vaulted heavens.

. . . The sun scattered a glitter of sifted silver upon the pearl-grey mountains.

. . . And within, under the low beams, the tones of the hymn,

"He is arisen! Glorious word!
Now reconciled is God, my Lord;
The gates of heaven are open,"

rose and fell from many throats.

Nils sat near a window through which a shaft of sunlight broke so brightly that he had at times to close his eyes. The hymn stirred him. The sermon, too. The theme, "Life's triumph over death," seemed in the simplicity of its exposition to bear him forcibly upward and onward to great heights where all was peace and contentment. When the sermon was ended and the others rose to go, Nils continued to sit in a deep reverie.

Returned to the ship, and with dinner over, Per Syv had no longer any zest for the climb. Nils didn't object; was, on the contrary, glad. Today he preferred going alone. He went to the skipper and asked leave to take the jolly-boat. By rowing to Sörland, he could shorten the distance one-half.

That Easter Sunday afternoon Nils went into the mountains alone.

Vaeröy Mountain, from the Sörland side, is not so steep as to be difficult of ascent, the trail running at a gentle diagonal across a broad expanse of grey scree, which disappears from sight far upward in the blue sky.

Nils had already got a good way up the mountainside. At the last human habitation down in the valley he had tarried a moment, fascinated by the peculiar hominess of the place. Sidling close to a wee cottage stood a tiny cote, no bigger than a dwarf's house. In front of it was a little paddock, where a shaggy ram and four sheep baked leisurely in the young spring sun. The horns of the ram came nearly level with the roof of the cote. Now and then the ram would stop chewing its cud, turn its head, and stand blinking up at the sun.

Nils had halted beside the paddock. The animals seemed to have addressed him, and so he was chatting with them in a low, warmly intimate voice.

Then he had gone on, and had by now reached a fair altitude. Stopping at intervals to have a look round, he could notice that breathing was growing easier and easier; it was as though some power were lifting him from beneath. The higher he climbed, the more majestic became the view. The mountain he was ascending, which from below had appeared to tower above all the others and to dominate them, now sank into insignificance

and seemed almost levelled out. It was, to be sure, still there—he could feel that; but the grandeur which increased mightily with the ascent quashed it down into itself.

. . . A thin cloud flitted past the sun. The day round about him grew chill and grey—the mountain below looked still smaller and meaner.

. . . Higher and higher he went. Perspiration anointed his body as with the smoothest oil, making his limbs and whole body very lithe and supple.

. . . Then the sun came back. The shine of it sent a warm, trickling sensation through him, pleasant to feel even if he was perspiring.

. . . At long last he gained the summit and infinitude. The sight oppressed him; made him feel like a speck. He breathed heavily.

. . . Off and on whiffs of air sped by from the southwest; like harbingers of summer's solar breezes they came. But Nils did not notice them; the spectacle before him bore in upon him too strongly from every direction:

Rising up to meet him in the endless reaches of the north were the Lofoten Mountains. Moskoe foremost, in the middle of the sea. The Arctic dispatched a heavy undertow up toward him to enquire what manner of fellow he might be. In the south stalked the Röst Peaks. Already in the lighter purples, they were advancing on the deeper.

. . . Two thousand feet below him spread the fretful Arctic . . . heaving . . . billowing . . . endlessly following. . . .

. . . Wisps of cloud hung low over the sea in the distance. Nils sat on a mountain boulder and stared at them. That must be Ut-Röst, the Enchanted Isle! Aye, it *was* land he saw there—drifting and dreaming!

. . . And were not those sails? Surely they were! Their shape was indistinct, but they were white—looked as though they stood veiled in mist.

. . . Nils felt small, and very strange. He gazed and gazed. He must be close to God now. Aye, the Deity could surely not be very far away. . . . His hands came folded, more reverently than they had done since childhood.

. . . As he sat there on the rock, a terrible longing gripped him, a longing to get out to the great and the sublime, to the imperishably beautiful.

. . . And he cried. Aye, he sat there crying, not knowing that he did it.

. . . And he prayed to the Being who had created all things and had made the world so wondrously big and beautiful—prayed that He would let him go out to the great and the sublime, so that he might live it.

. . . Unconsciously he stretched out his left arm and crooked his fingers; his right hand began making movements as though he were drawing the bow of his violin. Never before had he felt such a need for expression in tone. Sitting thus, swaying his head, beating time with his foot, fingering imaginary strings, it was as though mighty floodgates hitherto locked had suddenly burst open. Like an overwhelming torrent it came. And he heard tones in this mountain place, purer and stronger and more exquisite than any he had ever dreamed.

. . . He sat till the sun sank into the sea. When he went down, he walked as in a daze.

Nils sat in the jolly-boat, rowing out of Sörland Bay, clear star-night round about him.

The spell of the sublime lay over him still; yet he was busy with many thoughts.

. . . "When I get back home again," he was promising himself, "I'll go to Father and tell him frankly that I want to go to America. I'll have to say it, since I must go. And it'll be better to say it directly, once and for all. About the only way it can be done. . . . Father will take it ill when he hears it, won't answer for a while. . . . And Mother? Aye, what about Mother? When she's alone, I'll tell her. She'll see it. She understands better what it is I am struggling with. . . . After a while Father will say—'No, this you must not do, Nils. What do you want in America? We've got boats, and gear,' he will say; 'besides, we're not exactly destitute otherwise, either. What do you want to go to America for? Whom shall I get to handle the boat, if you leave? And what's to become of us two, if you desert us in our old age?' "

. . . Nils slackened his speed. He kept turning the words in his mind, examining them closely.

After a bit he found a solution:

"I'll answer: 'Father, you are now so far along in years that you ought to stop slaving your life away on the sea. You've no longer any need to. What you and Mother want to do is to hire some good girl to stay with you, one who will look after you and be kind to you. I'll send the money for paying her—aye, every month I'll send it, so you'll not require to use your own.' That's how I'll answer Father.

"And then I'll tell both of them that after a time I'll be coming home again; I've certainly no intention of staying for good—I like the sea much too well for that. But I'll have to become what I want to first." . . . The oars were still again. "Though I needn't mention that yet. . . . There can be no harm in my withholding that from Father, surely?

. . . "Nor shall my being gone make the least bit of difference—that, too, I shall tell them. It will be exactly as it would be with me at home—or, as it has been while I've been away this winter. Every week they'll have their letter, so they'll know all about me—providing, of course, that I get on fairly well.

. . . "After a couple of years I'll most likely return; and then if it's in the power of anyone on this earth to make life pleasant for others, I'll make it so for Mother and Father—I certainly will!" Nils gave a vigorous tug at the oars.

. . . "Perhaps I'd better leave in the evening, though . . . I needn't say the precise hour, of course. That's not deceiving, surely? Leastways not when they know that I'm leaving? Be easier that way."

Nils's thoughts kept running in this vein as he rowed back to the ship that night.

XIII

The joy of Jo by the Sea and Mother Anna when Nils returned from Lofoten late in April was so great that it would have done the heart of anyone good to see it. Cheer and a genial warmth now filled the cottage round which spring had already begun to hum softly.

Mother Anna trotted about full of chat and questions; prepared the food she knew Nils liked the best; stole into his bedroom early in the morning those first days to have a peep at him while he slept. It seemed almost as though it were difficult for her to believe that this strapping fellow who lay there so tanned and weathered by wind and sun was her own boy. "Dear me, how handsome and splendid he is!" she sighed as she tiptoed out again. "May Heaven bless him and make him happy!"

Four months had wrought great changes in Nils—that both the mother and father could see. The old Nils, the one they had known, was there, and yet he was not there. A newness clothed him; but it was like a diaphanous garment through which the old Nils could still be seen and recognized. His familiarity or unfamiliarity all depended on how one took him. The truth of the matter was that living among strangers had matured him greatly and made him more manlike.

But if the mother was proud and happy, then the father was even more so, though he didn't say much about it. An extraordinary impatience to be on the sea was over him—he wanted to fare it constantly, whether there was fish to be had or not. And Nils seemed pleased enough. But one never saw the father take the seat in the stern now. Oh no, that place belonged to Nils. Thereby Jo showed his son the greatest honor one fisherman can show another; because that was recognizing him as a superior. Not that Jo hadn't let Nils take charge before; but it had always been for the purpose of teaching him. Now the motive was altogether different: the father took his place in the stem as the lesser of the two. Nils, understanding, grew under the privilege. Yet he was bothered by it, too, and on one occasion when they stepped into the boat he bade his father take his place aft so that he himself could try his strength on the fore oars. Jo wouldn't hear of it! "No," said he, "handling oars will be about all I'm good for now; that's why I'm leaving the rest to you. . . . You could perhaps find a spryer man than I to assist you in the boat, if you wanted to; but you'll not find one better acquainted with these waters. And that's somewhat, too, I can tell you," he added, proudly.

Nils could feel how genuinely happy his father was, for it was seldom that he spoke this much of himself.

They seined and they trawled. Their methods failing in one part of the sea, they would move elsewhere. Every time the father hit upon a new idea, Nils would immediately say, "Aye, let's try it!" And so they did. Father and son lay there splashing and tossing exactly like two happy schoolboys on the jolliest summer holiday.

When they pulled in to shore, Mother Anna was almost certain to be standing on the beach to bid them welcome from the sea. She was like a child in her joy over having such a husband and son. Up in the cottage the coffeepot would be simmering on the hearth, waiting for them; and there was always some goody or other in reserve for them. Jo, noticing it, would chuckle contentedly, "I can't but think you intend to have us eat ourselves out of house and home, Mother!"

"Well, who cares about that?" she would counter, laughing.

Happiness like it had scarcely been known within that fisherman's cot these eighteen years—not since the memorable day when Nils was born.

. . . Then, caught up on sleep, father and son would set out again.

. . . Gradually the seam of light began to work its way upward. Spells of rain and drizzle became shorter. Days lengthened; nights grew luminous. It was as though life's purest joy had hunted out this fisherman's cot and set up his quarters there.

The spring's catch was not of the largest, and Nils complained at times. Then Jo would rebuke him, saying: "Don't complain of this fishing; it could easily be worse. As long as the boat keeps the pot boiling at home we've no right to grumble."

Matters had lasted thus for about three weeks when a change set in and a peculiar uneasiness began to take hold of the parents. Jo got it first, but he made no immediate divulgence. Then Mother Anna gave in to it. And the warranting circumstance was such a trivial one—only that chest of Nils's.

The chest was still at the quay in Vik, where Nils had left it upon his return from Lofoten. Having carried it into a corner, he had asked Jörgensen if it might stand there meanwhile. "Certainly," the merchant had said; "leave it there till next year's trip if you like. With the chest on board I'll likely get the man too!" he had jested. The skipper had evidently been well satisfied with Nils and would like to hire him again. He later said so to Jo by the Sea in the presence of several.

Then one drizzly afternoon, about three weeks after Nils's return, Jo hinted that it might be just as well to make a trip to Vik and get the chest. It wasn't so heavy but that they could manage between them. And then they'd have it . . . just the job for a day like this. Were they to fetch it by boat, it would take them a good half-day, which they couldn't afford in fair weather. Old Jo laughed as he said it.

Nils turned the proposal into a joke. "Oh no, Father. I'll not haul that empty chest over hill and dale, don't you ever think it! Wouldn't we two cut a fine figure dragging that thing! No, today I want to stay home and be lazy."

That dismissed the matter for the time being. But Jo was a man of precision, and careful of his possessions. The thought of the chest, therefore, came to his mind again and again.

Later, on a still evening when father and son lay just beyond the skerries, setting lines, a neighbor chanced to come rowing by; he was on the way to Vik with a boatload of stockfish. Resting on his oars, he greeted them and enquired about the catch. It thereupon occurred to Jo that this would be an excellent chance to get the chest home; the neighbor could toss it into his boat and set it ashore on his return—he would be passing directly by their pier, anyway. Without consulting Nils, Jo simply asked the neighbor to do them this favor.

"No," called Nils, incisively, "don't you bother about that chest! Just let it stand. I'll likely be going in by boat myself one of these days, and then I can bring it."

Jo was at a loss to understand. Why didn't Nils want the chest? Even more puzzling, What errand might he be having in Vik with the boat?

"Why must you go to Vik with the boat?" he enquired, astonished, as soon as the neighbor was out of hearing.

"Oh, I just thought it embarrassing to bother a stranger."

The father took a sidelong glance at the son in that instant and thought he looked ill at ease. A premonition flew through him. After that evening Nils was very taciturn.

Try as he would, Jo could not rid himself of the premonition. It was with him constantly, sat like a shadow back in his consciousness. Before he was aware, it had augmented greatly and darkened his whole life.

. . . He simply could not fathom what the boy might be having on his mind. . . . Did he have something bad in the chest? . . . Or what then could make him so opposed to bringing it home? He certainly must know that the chest would have to be brought sooner or later!

Now it really wasn't this which Jo feared at all. Far from it. But the suspicion which alarmed him most he resolutely said nay . . . steadfastly refused to entertain. Still it wouldn't away, the insidious thing!

. . . Where could he be wanting to go, if such was the case? The other day, when they had talked of a herring trip, Nils had declared emphatically that he wouldn't think of seining! . . . Well, there was no place else they could go. . . . And even if there were, why shouldn't he want the chest home? His agreement with Jörgensen last winter had been specific enough, hadn't it? Why then all this consideration now?

For several days Jo by the Sea went pondering the matter. Dread gripped him and grew into a terrible anxiety which tortured him night and day. And the more unreasonable the conclusion he came to, the worse and more unbearable became the fear.

Finally he brought it to Mother Anna one night after they had gone to bed. But his way was round about.

"You'd better speak to Nils about bringing the chest home," he began. "It can't stand in there all summer. And if we go out to the station later on we'll need it. . . . He'll be having some clothes in it, too, I expect?"

—Oh, the chest was safe enough, no need to fret about that, contended Mother Anna. It would get home sometime. . . . No, his clothes were home. They'd be about all he'd have in it, she guessed.

"Aye, but there'll be no harm in mentioning it. I have already reminded him twice, and I don't care to do it again. The chest can't stand there, that's certain; it's the only large travelling-chest we have, and I shouldn't like to see it ruined."

Now that Mother Anna came to think of it, she, too, found it strange. Moreover, she could so easily understand Jo's reluctance to speak of it again, especially since such a fine relationship had sprung up between the two. The man went about fairly idolizing the boy. She promised, therefore, to mention the matter to Nils.

Then at the dinner table one noon Mother Anna announced that Lorents over at Straumen would be making a trip to Vik by boat in a couple of days after a supply of flour. Why couldn't one of them run over tonight and ask him to put the chest in his boat? Then they'd get it home and be done with it.

"Now what do you want to do that for?" remonstrated Nils. "Why bother others about that miserable chest? Can't it stand where it is until we ourselves go in by boat? It's safe enough, I'm sure!"—All afternoon Nils was curt.

From then on Mother Anna grew suspicious, too. But Jo no longer doubted—the boy was keeping some secret from them. Could he actually be planning to desert them?

. . . Another circumstance helped quicken Jo's dread. He noticed that Nils never missed an opportunity to send enquiry after a letter in Vik. And he knew of at least two letters which Nils had received of late. These, together with the ones he seemed to expect, Jo, therefore, connected with the chest. Thus it came about that Jo worked himself into a gloom which no ray of light could penetrate; and despite his strong and innately reticent nature the burden became heavier than he could bear. One evening he spoke somewhat of his fears to Mother Anna, though by no means all, for he wanted to spare her as long as he could.

And then Mother Anna lay piecing facts together and trying to look at them, until at length it became quite clear to her, too, that Nils was trying to hide some secret from them.

"But," she answered, in her direct and practical way, "it surely would be strange if his companions on the trip wouldn't know it, if he means to leave us for the summer. Why not

go and ask Jörgensen in Vik tomorrow? He'll tell you, if he knows."

This was more easily said than done. But one must take the road that lay open; so next morning Jo announced that today he would make a trip to Vik.

Then came Nils's turn to be frightened.—What? Go to Vik on this fine day? When they had lines to take in? . . . The decision was certainly sudden. It nettled Nils.

But Jo set out, and Mother Anna went with Nils to help pull in the lines.

Just as Jo was leaving, he stopped to remark, "I may as well strap the chest to my back and fetch it home, then it won't need to stand in there any longer. I can manage that much of a load."

Then Nils became alarmed in earnest.

"Oh, let that chest stand there now, Father! You know I don't want you to go carrying that heavy thing alone. We don't need it yet, and I'll be responsible for getting it home." The entreaty betrayed more than a concern for the father; and both parents divined it.

"Very well," laughed Jo, bitterly, "as you please, since you insist on having it there!" He turned and was gone.

Now there is scarcely any situation more effectual for bringing two human souls close to each other than that of sitting together in a boat of a fine day. In such a circumstance the one mind finds it very easy to unfold to the other . . . the two come forth to meet, as it were—seeking understanding, finding it, and being made more calm thereby.

It was thus with mother and son that morning. Mother Anna manoeuvred the boat; Nils pulled in the lines. During the work both were too occupied for many words to pass between them.

But when they sat there in the quiet, rowing toward land, Mother Anna asked point blank:

"Are you thinking of leaving us, Nils?"

"Of leaving you?"

"Aye. Are you going away from us?"

"No. Not away from you, exactly."

"But you are going away?"

"Well, for a while I am."

"Do you intend to hire out?"

"No, that I'll not do."

Mother Anna gave a sigh of relief. Such not being his intention, it couldn't be so bad, after all.

"Is it a seining trip, perhaps?" she came back, lighter voiced.

"No, it's not that, either." A brief inner struggle. Then, baldly:

"I'm going to America."

"Where, my boy?" Mother Anna held the oars; the blur made it almost impossible for her to distinguish him, though he sat directly opposite her, aft in the boat.

"I've decided to go to America," said Nils, quietly. His face was blood red.

Neither could muster a word. A barrier of leaden inertness filled the space between them.

Then Nils manned himself.

"You see, it's this, Mother, that I must go."

"You must—!"

"Aye. . . . Because life is not in this place."

"But we're happy here," cried the mother. "And we're certainly not poor. . . . Whatever you want you can have." . . .

Nils became eager:

"It's not that, Mother. Even if we had a million and lived in a palace, I'd have to go. This to me is not life."

But then Mother Anna corrected her son, for to her his words sounded like blasphemy.

"Life not here, you say? It's wrong of you to say that, my boy. God has scarcely given a better spot to any man than the cove has been to your father and me! Especially when you are there."

Nils stopped rowing; his face puckered; then he said, penetratingly and very quietly:

"It's not that, Mother. Far from it. Nor do I quite know how to say it so you will understand. But life is not in this place—not for me—no, not the whole of it. . . . Not yet at least. . . . That's why I must go out after it. For it is that which one must find."

The silence again grew oppressive between them. She pondered deeply what he had said; as did he. Then after a little, quiveringly:

"And you'll stay over there, then?"

"Stay there? How you talk! . . . Haven't you noticed that spring returns every year? No more could I, in the long run, remain away from this place."

Another interval of silence. Mother Anna

was not crying now, but the teardrops trickled close. She rowed with even strokes. By and by her words came back:

"What is it you are going to become, then?"

Nils was glad of the question—though he couldn't tell why; nor did he know precisely what to answer. His answer getting to be tardy, she repeated:

"What is it you are going to become, then?"

"Oh—that which is highest of all."

"The highest?"

"Aye." It came very naturally.

The heart of Mother Anna swelled at the words. They made it ache as well. When she did not answer immediately, he added:

"And I want to see the most beautiful. And live that, too. . . . Then I'll come back!"

"God only grant it won't be too long for us to wait!" Veering suddenly, she brought a question from an entirely different quarter:

"Are you still thinking of Zalma?"

"Oh——"

"Do you think you will find her?"

"I have a feeling that I shall meet her."

"But she'll not be caring to come back and live our simple life now. She was plainly not of ordinary folk."

"Zalma wouldn't change. The good was in her, and that can live anywhere."

. . . When they stepped out of the boat the mother said:

"Well, you must do as you like. If you've made up your mind, you'll go; but the day of your going will break your father. . . . You are all his life, you see."

Nils gave no reply.

. . . Meanwhile Jo by the Sea stood inside at the merchant's in Vik. When all the other customers were gone, he approached the counter and began ordering small articles. He took plenty of time about each.

The procedure was, however, natural enough, for Jörgensen was a great talker.

—"Well," began Jörgensen, when Jo seemed to have got all he required, "what has Nils decided to do?"

"Nils?"

"Aye. Think he'll strike out for America?"

Jo had quite mechanically set his elbows on the counter and was leaning forward. His chin now sank into his hands. A grim, furrowed look came into his face. But not a muscle contracted.

Jörgensen had to take notice of him. The man was looking downright pathetic today.

"You're not feeling well, Jo," he said, sympathetically.

Jo did not answer immediately. After a while he said:

"No—I've been a bit poorly of late. I'm getting old, you see, and the rheumatism plagues me. . . . No, I can't say that Nils has definitely made up his mind yet. But I think likely he'll be going."

"Per Syv and he talked of it last winter, I know. And now Per comes in every day the mail arrives to look for his ticket. Too bad, Jo, that boys like Nils leave the country. With fellows like Per it doesn't make much difference. But how can you stop it? When the fledgling is grown, it will take to its wings."

"I suppose so. I suppose so," came wearily from Jo.

"Is it to Minnesota he's going?" There were no other customers in the store, and Jörgensen enjoyed talking.

"To Minnesota? . . . Aye, I expect that's the intention."

Jo by the Sea was looking so worn today, that Jörgensen advised him to consult Hoben, the physician. When Jo turned a deaf ear, Jörgensen invited him to a cup of coffee. But Jo said, "No, thanks," he'd not have anything. . . . He'd be all right in a moment . . . just felt a little achy, that was all . . . as folks did when they got along in years.

Thereupon he started homeward.

He didn't reach the cottage until almost bedtime. Nils and Mother Anna, after having waited and waited, wondering what had become of him, had finally begun to fear that some evil might have befallen him. Then just as Nils was getting ready to look for him, he arrived.

Save for the worn look on his face Jo betrayed no inner disturbance when he entered the house.

—No, thanks, he wasn't hungry. No, he'd not have any supper.

"Aren't you well?" asked Mother Anna, concerned.

"Oh, it's nothing. Just a queer feeling that

came over me out there on the road. It'll pass."

With that he went to bed.

Mother Anna looked at Nils. But Nils didn't meet her look. The accusation was plain enough, anyway.

The moment Jo was out of view of Jörgensen's buildings that day, he had sat down by the roadside. Like one death-sentenced he had sat, all his bright dreams shattered in a single blow. How could Nils cause him this sorrow? He simply could not understand. And how happy and comfortable they were in every way! He could not fathom it; no, that he could not. Nils—who was such a good boy! Did he not see that both the mother and he were growing old? And that they had no one but him? How could he bring himself to do it?

After a little the bitterness seemed to leave him and he took his eyes off the ground.

. . . And there on his knees in the heather, lay a tempest-tossed old sea dog, beseeching God to bless the child he loved beyond all measure. He prayed, he bemoaned, he implored . . . and prayed again that God in His mercy and almighty power would turn the thought of the boy away from his folly.

But no heavens opened to Jo by the Sea and no angel descended . . . no, not just then!

1933

# ~ *General Bibliography* ~

## I. *General Bibliographical References*

The student should be acquainted with the following chief sources for finding material on American literary history, biography, and criticism, aside from such general works as the *Cumulative Book Index* and *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature:*

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