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LEAVES
of
GRASS.

Washington, D. C.
1871.

NEW-YORK: J. S. REDFIELD, PUBLISHER, 140 Fulton St., (up stairs.)

Walt Whitman


LEAVES

By B. W. Waferd
of Dec 5th 1871

GRASS.

Washington, D. C.

1871.

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INSCRIPTIONS.

ONE'S-SELF I SING.

¹ ONE'S-SELF I sing—a simple, separate Person ;
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word *En-masse*.

² 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.

³ Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful—for freest action form'd, under the laws di-
vine,
The Modern Man I sing.

AS I PONDER'D IN SILENCE.

1

As I ponder'd in silence,
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
A phantom arose before me, with distrustful aspect,
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,

The genius of poets of old lands,
 As to me directing like flame its eyes,
 With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
 And menaeing voice, *What singest thou?* it said;
Know'st thou not, there is but one theme for ever-enduring
bards?

And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles.
The making of perfect soldiers?

2

Be it so, then I answer'd,
I too, haughty Shade, also sing war—and a longer and
greater one than any,
Waged in my book with varying fortune—with flight, ad-
vance, and retreat—Victory deferr'd and wavering,
(Yet, methinks, certain, or as good as certain, at the last,)
—The field the world;
For life and death—for the Body, and for the eternal Soul,
Lo! I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,
I, above all, promote brave soldiers.



IN CABIN'D SHIPS AT SEA.

1

In cabin'd ships, at sea,
 The boundless blue on every side expanding,
 With whistling winds and music of the waves—the
 large imperious waves—In such,
 Or some lone bark, buoy'd on the dense marine,
 Where, joyous, full of faith, spreading white sails,
 She cleaves the ether, mid the sparkle and the foam of
 day, or under many a star at night,
 By sailors young and old, haply will I, a reminiscence
 of the land, be read,
 In full rapport at last.

2

*Here are our thoughts—voyagers' thoughts,
 Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by
 them be said ;
 The sky o'erarches here—we feel the undulating deck be-
 neath our feet,
 We feel the long pulsation—ebb and flow of endless mo-
 tion ;
 The tones of unseen mystery—the vague and vast sugges-
 tions of the briny world—the liquid-flowing sylla-
 bles,
 The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melan-
 choly rhythm,
 The boundless vista, and the horizon far and dim, are all
 here,
 And this is Ocean's poem.*

3

Then falter not, O book! fulfil your destiny!
 You, not a reminiscence of the land alone,
 You too, as a lone bark, cleaving the ether—purpos'd I
 know not whither—yet ever full of faith,
 Consort to every ship that sails—sail you!
 Bear forth to them, folded, my love—(Dear mariners!
 for you I fold it here, in every leaf ;)
 Speed on, my Book! spread your white sails, my little
 bark, athwart the imperious waves!
 Chant on—sail on—bear o'er the boundless blue, from
 me, to every shore,
 This song for mariners and all their ships.

 TO FOREIGN LANDS.

I HEARD that you ask'd for something to prove this
 puzzle, the New World,
 And to define America, her athletic Democracy ;
 Therefore I send you my poems, that you behold in
 them what you wanted.

TO A HISTORIAN.

You who celebrate by-gones !
 Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the
 races—the life that has exhibited itself ;
 Who have treated of man as the creature of politics,
 aggregates, rulers and priests ;
 I, habitan of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is
 in himself, in his own rights,
 Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited
 itself, (the great pride of man in himself ;)
 Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,
 I project the history of the future.



FOR HIM I SING.

FOR him I sing,
 I raise the Present on the Past,
 (As some perennial tree, out of its roots, the present on
 the past :)
 With time and space I him dilate—and fuse the im-
 mortal laws,
 To make himself, by them, the law unto himself.



WHEN I READ THE BOOK.

WHEN I read the book, the biography famous,
 And is this, then, (said I,) what the author calls a
 man's life ?
 And so will some one, when I am dead and gone, write
 my life ?

(As if any man really knew aught of my life ;
 Why, even I myself, I often think, know little or nothing
 of my real life ;
 Only a few hints—a few diffused, faint clues and indications,
 I seek, for my own use, to trace out here.)

BEGINNING MY STUDIES.

BEGINNING my studies, the first step pleas'd me so
 much,
 The mere fact, consciousness—these forms—the power
 of motion,
 The least insect or animal—the senses—eyesight—
 love ;
 The first step, I say, aw'd me and pleas'd me so much,
 I have hardly gone, and hardly wish'd to go, any farther,
 But stop and loiter all the time, to sing it in extatic
 songs.

· TO THEE, OLD CAUSE !

¹ To thee, old Cause !
 Thou peerless, passionate, good cause !
 Thou stern, remorseless, sweet Idea !
 Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands !
 After a strange, sad war—great war for thee,
 (I think all war through time was really fought, and
 ever will be really fought, for thee ;)
 These chants for thee—the eternal march of thee.

² Thou orb of many orbs !
 Thou seething principle ! Thou well-kept, latent germ !
 Thou centre !

Around the idea of thee the strange sad war revolving,
With all its angry and vehement play of causes,
(With yet unknown results to come, for thrice a thousand years,)
These recitatives for thee—my Book and the War are
one,
Merged in its spirit I and mine—as the contest hinged
on thee,
As a wheel on its axis turns, this Book, unwitting to
itself,
Around the Idea of thee.

STARTING FROM PAUMANOK.

1

¹ STARTING from fish-shape Paumanok, where I was
born,
Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother ;
After roaming many lands—lover of populous pave-
ments ;
Dweller in Mannahatta, my city—or on southern sa-
vannas ;
Or a soldier camp'd, or carrying my knapsack and gun
—or a miner in California ;
Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat,
my drink from the spring ;
Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep re-
cess,
Far from the clank of crowds, intervals passing, rapt
and happy ;
Aware of the fresh free giver, the flowing Missouri—
aware of mighty Niagara ;
Aware of the buffalo herds, grazing the plains—the
hirsute and strong-breasted bull ;
Of earth, rocks, Fifth-month flowers, experienced—
stars, rain, snow, my amaze ;
Having studied the mocking-bird's tones, and the
mountain-hawk's,
And heard at dusk the unrival'd one, the hermit thrush
from the swamp-cedars,
Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New
World.

2

² Victory, union, faith, identity, time,
The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,
Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

³ This, then, is life ;
Here is what has come to the surface after so many
throes and convulsions.

⁴ How curious ! how real !
Underfoot the divine soil—overhead the sun.

⁵ See, revolving, the globe ;
The ancestor-continent, away, group'd together ;
The present and future continents, north and south,
with the isthmus between.

⁶ See, vast, trackless spaces ;
As in a dream, they change, they swiftly fill ;
Countless masses debouch upon them ;
They are now cover'd with the foremost people, arts,
institutions, known.

⁷ See, projected, through time,
For me, an audience interminable.

⁸ With firm and regular step they wend—they never stop,
Successions of men, Americanos, a hundred millions ;
One generation playing its part, and passing on ;
Another generation playing its part, and passing on in
its turn,
With faces turn'd sideways or backward towards me, to
listen,
With eyes retrospective towards me.

3

⁹ Americanos ! conquerors ! marches humanitarian ;
Foremost ! century marches ! Libertad ! masses !
For you a programme of chants.

¹⁰ Chants of the prairies ;
 Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and down to
 the Mexican sea ;
 Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and
 Minnesota ;
 Chants going forth from the centre, from Kansas, and
 thence, equi-distant,
 Shooting in pulses of fire, ceaseless, to vivify all.

4

¹¹ In the Year 80 of The States,
 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-six years old, in perfect health, begin,
 Hoping to cease not till death.

¹² 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 now without check, with original energy.

5

¹³ Take my leaves, America ! take them, South, and take
 them, North !
 Make welcome for them everywhere, for they are your
 own offspring ;
 Surround them, East and West ! for they would sur-
 round you ;
 And you precedents ! connect lovingly with them, for
 they connect lovingly with you.

¹⁴ I conn'd old times ;
 I sat studying at the feet of the great masters :
 Now, if eligible, O that the great masters might return
 and study me !

¹⁵ In the name of These States, shall I scorn the antique?
 Why These are the children of the antique, to justify it.

6

¹⁶ Dead poets, philosophs, priests,
 Martyrs, artists, inventors, governments long since,
 Language-shapers, on other shores,
 Nations once powerful, now reduced, withdrawn, or desolate,
 I dare not proceed till I respectfully credit what you
 have left, wafted hither :
 I have perused it—own it is admirable, (moving awhile
 among it ;)
 Think nothing can ever be greater—nothing can ever
 deserve more than it deserves ;
 Regarding it all intently a long while—then dismissing
 it,
 I stand in my place, with my own day, here.

¹⁷ Here lands female and male ;
 Here the heir-ship and heiress-ship of the world—here
 the flame of materials ;
 Here Spirituality, the translatress, the openly-avow'd,
 The ever-tending, the finale of visible forms ;
 The satisfier, after due long-waiting, now advancing,
 Yes, here comes my mistress, the Soul.

7

¹⁸ The SOUL :
 Forever and forever—longer than soil is brown and
 solid—longer than water ebbs and flows.

¹⁹ I will make the poems of materials, for I think they
 are to be the most spiritual poems ;
 And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
 For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems
 of my Soul, and of immortality.

²⁰ I will make a song for These States, that no one State
may under any circumstances be subjected to
another State ;

And I will make a song that there shall be comity by
day and by night between all The States, and
between any two of them ;

And I will make a song for the ears of the President,
full of weapons with menacing points,

And behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces :

—And a song make I, of the One form'd out of all ;

The fang'd and glittering One whose head is over all ;

Resolute, warlike One, including and over all ;

(However high the head of any else, that head is over
all.)

²¹ I will acknowledge contemporary lands ;

I will trail the whole geography of the globe, and sa-
lute courteously every city large and small ;

And employments ! I will put in my poems, that with
you is heroism, upon land and sea ;

And I will report all heroism from an American point
of view.

²² I will sing the song of companionship ;

I will show what alone must finally compact These ;

I believe These are to found their own ideal of manly
love, indicating it in me ;

I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that
were threatening to consume me ;

I will lift what has too long kept down those smoulder-
ing fires ;

I will give them complete abandonment ;

I will write the evangel-poem of comrades, and of love ;

(For who but I should understand love, with all its sor-
row and joy ?

And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?)

8

²³ I am the credulous man of qualities, ages, races ;

I advance from the people in their own spirit ;

Here is what sings unrestricted faith.

²⁴ Omnes! Omnes! let others ignore what they may ;
 I make the poem of evil also—I commemorate that part
 also ;
 I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation
 is—And I say there is in fact no evil ;
 (Or if there is, I say it is just as important to you, to
 the land, or to me, as anything else.)

²⁵ I too, following many, and follow'd by many, inau-
 gurate a Religion—I descend into the arena ;
 (It may be I am destin'd to utter the loudest cries there,
 the winner's pealing shouts ;
 Who knows? they may rise from me yet, and soar above
 every thing.)

²⁶ Each is not for its own sake ;
 I say the whole earth, and all the stars in the sky, are
 for Religion's sake.

²⁷ I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough ;
 None has ever yet adored or worship'd half enough ;
 None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and
 how certain the future is.

²⁸ I say that the real and permanent grandeur of These
 States must be their Religion ;
 Otherwise there is no real and permanent grandeur :
 (Nor character, nor life worthy the name, without Reli-
 gion ;
 Nor land, nor man or woman, without Religion.)

9

²⁹ What are you doing, young man ?
 Are you so earnest—so given up to literature, science,
 art, amours ?
 These ostensible realities, politics, points ?
 Your ambition or business, whatever it may be ?

³⁰ It is well—Against such I say not a word—I am
 their poet also ;

But behold! such swiftly subside—burnt up for Religion's sake ;
 For not all matter is fuel to heat, impalpable flame, the
 essential life of the earth,
 Any more than such are to Religion.

10

³¹ What do you seek, so pensive and silent?
 What do you need, Camerado?
 Dear son! do you think it is love?

³² Listen, dear son—listen, America, daughter or son!
 It is a painful thing to love a man or woman to excess
 —and yet it satisfies—it is great ;
 But there is something else very great—it makes the
 whole coincide ;
 It, magnificent, beyond materials, with continuous
 hands, sweeps and provides for all.

11

³³ Know you! solely to drop in the earth the germs of
 a greater Religion,
 The following chants, each for its kind, I sing.

³⁴ My comrade!
 For you, to share with me, two greatneses—and a third
 one, rising inclusive and more resplendent,
 The greatness of Love and Democracy—and the great-
 ness of Religion.

³⁵ Melange mine own! the unseen and the seen ;
 Mysterious ocean where the streams empty ;
 Prophetic spirit of materials shifting and flickering
 around me ;
 Living beings, identities, now doubtless near us, in the
 air, that we know not of ;
 Contact daily and hourly that will not release me ;
 These selecting—these, in hints, demanded of me.

³⁶ Not he, with a daily kiss, onward from childhood
 kissing me,
 Has winded and twisted around me that which holds
 me to him,
 Any more than I am held to the heavens, to the spir-
 itual world,
 And to the identities of the Gods, my lovers, faithful
 and true,
 After what they have done to me, suggesting themes.

³⁷ O such themes! Equalities!
 O amazement of things! O divine average!
 O warblings under the sun—usher'd, as now, or at noon,
 or setting!
 O strain, musical, flowing through ages—now reaching
 hither!
 I take to your reckless and composite chords—I add to
 them, and cheerfully pass them forward.

12

²⁸ As I have walk'd in Alabama my morning walk,
 I have seen where the she-bird, the mocking-bird, sat
 on her nest in the briars, hatching her brood.

³⁹ I have seen the he-bird also ;
 I have paused to hear him, near at hand, inflating his
 throat, and joyfully singing.

⁴⁰ And while I paused, it came to me that what he
 really sang for was not there only,
 Nor for his mate, nor himself only, nor all sent back by
 the echoes ;
 But subtle, clandestine, away beyond,
 A charge transmitted, and gift occult, for those being
 born.

13

⁴¹ Democracy !
 Near at hand to you a throat is now inflating itself and
 joyfully singing.

⁴² Ma femme !

For the brood beyond us and of us,
For those who belong here, and those to come,
I, exultant, to be ready for them, will now shake out
carols stronger and haughtier than have ever yet
been heard upon earth.

⁴³ I will make the songs of passion, to give them their
way,
And your songs, outlaw'd offenders—for I scan you
with kindred eyes, and carry you with me the
same as any.

⁴⁴ I will make the true poem of riches,
To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres,
and goes forward, and is not dropt by death.

⁴⁵ I will effuse egotism, and show it underlying all—and
I will be the bard of personality ;
And I will show of male and female that either is but
the equal of the other ;
And sexual organs and acts ! do you concentrate in me
—for I am determin'd to tell you with courageous
clear voice, to prove you illustrious ;
And I will show that there is no imperfection in the
present—and can be none in the future ;
And I will show that whatever happens to anybody, it
may be turn'd to beautiful results—and I will
show that nothing can happen more beautiful
than death ;
And I will thread a thread through my poems that time
and events are compact,
And that all the things of the universe are perfect mira-
cles, each as profound as any.

⁴⁶ I will not make poems with reference to parts ;
But I will make leaves, poems, poemets, songs, says,
thoughts, with reference to ensemble :
And I will not sing with reference to a day, but with
reference to all days ;
And I will not make a poem, nor the least part of a
poem, but has reference to the Soul ;

(Because, having look'd at the objects of the universe,
I find there is no one, nor any particle of one,
but has reference to the Soul.)

14

⁴⁷ Was somebody asking to see the Soul?
See! your own shape and countenance—persons, sub-
stances, beasts, the trees, the running rivers, the
rocks and sands.

⁴⁸ All hold spiritual joys, and afterwards loosen them:
How can the real body ever die, and be buried?

⁴⁹ Of your real body, and any man's or woman's real body,
Item for item, it will elude the hands of the corpse-
cleaners, and pass to fitting spheres,
Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of
birth to the moment of death.

⁵⁰ Not the types set up by the printer return their im-
pression, the meaning, the main concern,
Any more than a man's substance and life, or a wo-
man's substance and life, return in the body and
the Soul,
Indifferently before death and after death.

⁵¹ Behold! the body includes and is the meaning, the
main concern—and includes and is the Soul;
Whoever you are! how superb and how divine is your
body, or any part of it.

15

⁵² Whoever you are! to you endless announcements.

⁵³ Daughter of the lands, did you wait for your poet?
Did you wait for one with a flowing mouth and indica-
tive hand?

⁵⁴ Toward the male of The States, and toward the fe-
male of The States,
Live words—words to the lands.

⁵⁵ O the lands! interlink'd, food-yielding lands!
 Land of coal and iron! Land of gold! Lands of cotton, sugar, rice!
 Land of wheat, beef, pork! Land of wool and hemp!
 Land of the apple and grape!
 Land of the pastoral plains, the grass-fields of the world!
 Land of those sweet-air'd interminable plateaus!
 Land of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of adobie!
 Lands where the northwest Columbia winds, and where the southwest Colorado winds!
 Land of the eastern Chesapeake! Land of the Delaware!
 Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan!
 Land of the Old Thirteen! Massachusetts land! Land of Vermont and Connecticut!
 Land of the ocean shores! Land of sierras and peaks!
 Land of boatmen and sailors! Fishermen's land!
 Inextricable lands! the clutch'd together! the passionate ones!
 The side by side! the elder and younger brothers! the bony-limb'd!
 The great women's land! the feminine! the experienced sisters and the inexperienced sisters!
 Far breath'd land! Arctic braced! Mexican breez'd!
 the diverse! the compact!
 The Pennsylvanian! the Virginian! the double Carolinian!
 O all and each well-loved by me! my intrepid nations!
 O I at any rate include you all with perfect love!
 I cannot be discharged from you! not from one, any sooner than another!
 O Death! O for all that, I am yet of you, unseen, this hour, with irrepressible love,
 Walking New England, a friend, a traveler,
 Splashing my bare feet in the edge of the summer ripples, on Paumanok's sands,
 Crossing the prairies—dwelling again in Chicago—dwelling in every town,
 Observing shows, births, improvements, structures, arts,

Listening to the orators and the oratresses in public
 halls,
 Of and through The States, as during life—each man
 and woman my neighbor,
 The Louisianian, the Georgian, as near to me, and I as
 near to him and her,
 The Mississippian and Arkansian yet with me—and I
 yet with any of them ;
 Yet upon the plains west of the spinal river—yet in my
 house of adobie,
 Yet returning eastward—yet in the Sea-Side State, or
 in Maryland,
 Yet Kanadian, cheerily braving the winter—the snow
 and ice welcome to me,
 Yet a true son either of Maine, or of the Granite State,
 or of the Narragansett Bay State, or of the
 Empire State ;
 Yet sailing to other shores to annex the same—yet
 welcoming every new brother ;
 Hereby applying these leaves to the new ones, from
 the hour they unite with the old ones ;
 Coming among the new ones myself, to be their com-
 panion and equal—coming personally to you
 now ;
 Enjoining you to acts, characters, spectacles, with me.

16

⁵⁶ With me, with firm holding—yet haste, haste on.

⁵⁷ For your life, adhere to me !

Of all the men of the earth, I only can unloose you
 and toughen you ;

I may have to be persuaded many times before I con-
 sent to give myself really to you—but what of
 that ?

Must not Nature be persuaded many times ?

⁵⁸ No dainty dolce affettuoso I ;

Bearded, sun-burnt, gray-neck'd, forbidding, I have
 arrived,

To be wrestled with as I pass, for the solid prizes of
the universe ;
For such I afford whoever can persevere to win them.

17

⁵⁹ On my way a moment I pause ;
Here for you! and here for America!
Still the Present I raise aloft—Still the Future of The
States I harbinge, glad and sublime ;
And for the Past, I pronounce what the air holds of
the red aborigines.

⁶⁰ The red aborigines!
Leaving natural breaths, sounds of rain and winds,
calls as of birds and animals in the woods,
syllabled to us for names ;
Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez,
Chattahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco,
Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-
Walla ;
Leaving such to The States, they melt, they depart,
charging the water and the land with names.

18

⁶¹ O expanding and swift! O henceforth,
Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and
audacious ;
A world primal again—Vistas of glory, incessant and
branching ;
A new race, dominating previous ones, and grander
far—with new contests,
New politics, new literatures and religions, new in-
ventions and arts.

⁶² These! my voice announcing—I will sleep no more,
but arise ;
You oceans that have been calm within me! how I
feel you, fathomless, stirring, preparing unpre-
cedented waves and storms.

19

- ⁶³ See! steamers steaming through my poems!
 See, in my poems immigrants continually coming and landing ;
 See, in arriere, the wigwam, the trail, the hunter's hut, the flat-boat, the maize-leaf, the claim, the rude fence, and the backwoods village ;
 See, on the one side the Western Sea, and on the other the Eastern Sea, how they advance and retreat upon my poems, as upon their own shores.
- See, pastures and forests in my poems—See, animals, wild and tame—See, beyond the Kansas, countless herds of buffalo, feeding on short curly grass ;
 See, in my poems, cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved streets, with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless vehicles, and commerce ;
 See, the many-cylinder'd steam printing-press—See, the electric telegraph, stretching across the Continent, from the Western Sea to Manhattan ;
 See, through Atlantica's depths, pulses American, Europe reaching—pulses of Europe, duly return'd ;
 See, the strong and quick locomotive, as it departs, panting, blowing the steam-whistle ;
 See, ploughmen, ploughing farms—See, miners, digging mines—See, the numberless factories ;
 See, mechanics, busy at their benches, with tools—See from among them, superior judges, philosophers, Presidents, emerge, drest in working dresses ;
 See, lounging through the shops and fields of The States, me, well-belov'd, close-held by day and night ;
 Hear the loud echoes of my songs there! Read the hints come at last.

⁶⁴ O Camerado close !

O you and me at last—and us two only.

⁶⁵ O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly !

O something extatic and undemonstrable ! O music
wild !

O now I triumph—and you shall also ;

O hand in hand—O wholesome pleasure—O one more
desirer and lover !

O to haste, firm holding—to haste, haste on, with me.



THE SHIP STARTING.

Lo ! THE unbounded sea !

On its breast a Ship starting, spreading all her sails—
an ample Ship, carrying even her moonsails ;

The pennant is flying aloft, as she speeds, she speeds
so stately—below, emulous waves press forward,

They surround the Ship, with shining curving motions,
and foam.

UNFOLDED OUT OF THE FOLDS.

- UNFOLDED out of the folds of the woman, man comes unfolded, and is always to come unfolded ;
- Unfolded only out of the superbest woman of the earth, is to come the superbest man of the earth ;
- Unfolded out of the friendliest woman, is to come the friendliest man ;
- Unfolded only out of the perfect body of a woman, can a man be form'd of perfect body ;
- Unfolded only out of the inimitable poem of the woman, can come the poems of man—(only thence have my poems come ;)
- Unfolded out of the strong and arrogant woman I love, only thence can appear the strong and arrogant man I love ;
- Unfolded by brawny embraces from the well-muscled woman I love, only thence come the brawny embraces of the man ;
- Unfolded out of the folds of the woman's brain, come all the folds of the man's brain, duly obedient ;
- Unfolded out of the justice of the woman, all justice is unfolded ;
- Unfolded out of the sympathy of the woman is all sympathy :
- A man is a great thing upon the earth, and through eternity—but every jot of the greatness of man is unfolded out of woman,
- First the man is shaped in the woman, he can then be shaped in himself.



TO YOU.

STRANGER ! if you, passing, meet me, and desire to speak
to me, why should you not speak to me ?
And why should I not speak to you ?

WALT WHITMAN.



1

¹ I CELEBRATE myself ;
And what I assume you shall assume ;
For every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to
you.

² I loafe and invite my Soul ;
I lean and loafe at my ease, observing a spear of sum-
mer grass.

³ Houses and rooms are full of perfumes—the shelves
are crowded with perfumes ;
I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it ;
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall
not let it.

⁴ The atmosphere is not a perfume—it has no taste of
the distillation—it is odorless ;
It is for my mouth forever—I am in love with it ;
I will go to the bank by the wood, and become undis-
guised and naked ;
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

2

⁵ The smoke of my own breath ;
Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread,
crotch and vine ;
My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart,
the passing of blood and air through my lungs ;

The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the
 shore, and dark-color'd sea-rocks, and of hay in
 the barn ;
 The sound of the belch'd words of my voice, words
 loos'd to the eddies of the wind ;
 A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around
 of arms ;
 The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple
 boughs wag ;
 The delight alone, or in the rush of the streets, or along
 the fields and hill-sides ;
 The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me
 rising from bed and meeting the sun.

⁶ Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much ? have you
 reckon'd the earth much ?
 Have you practis'd so long to learn to read ?
 Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of
 poems ?

⁷ Stop this day and night with me, and you shall pos-
 sess the origin of all poems ;
 You shall possess the good of the earth and sun—
 (there are millions of suns left ;)
 You shall no longer take things at second or third
 hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead,
 nor feed on the spectres in books ;
 You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take
 things from me :
 You shall listen to all sides, and filter them from your-
 self.

3

⁸ I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk
 of the beginning and the end ;
 But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

⁹ There was never any more inception than there is
 now,
 Nor any more youth or age than there is now ;

And will never be any more perfection than there is
now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

¹⁰ Urge, and urge, and urge ;
Always the procreant urge of the world.

¹¹ Out of the dimness opposite equals advance—always
substance and increase, always sex ;
Always a knit of identity—always distinction—always a
breed of life.

¹² To elaborate is no avail—learn'd and unlearn'd feel
that it is so.

¹³ Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights,
well entretied, braced in the beams,
Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,
I and this mystery, here we stand.

¹⁴ Clear and sweet is my Soul, and clear and sweet is all
that is not my Soul.

¹⁵ Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by
the seen,
Till that becomes unseen, and receives proof in its
turn.

¹⁶ Showing the best, and dividing it from the worst,
age vexes age ;
Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things,
while they discuss I am silent, and go bathe and
admire myself.

¹⁷ Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of
any man hearty and clean ;
Not an inch, nor a particle of an inch, is vile, and none
shall be less familiar than the rest.

¹⁸ I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing ;
 As the hugging and loving Bed-fellow sleeps at my side
 through the night, and withdraws at the peep of
 the day, with stealthy tread,
 Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels, swelling
 the house with their plenty,
 Shall I postpone my acceptation and realization, and
 scream at my eyes,
 That they turn from gazing after and down the road,
 And forthwith cipher and show me a cent,
 Exactly the contents of one, and exactly the contents of
 two, and which is ahead ?

4

¹⁹ Trippers and askers surround me ;
 People I meet—the effect upon me of my early life, or
 the ward and city I live in, or the nation,
 The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies,
 authors old and new,
 My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,
 The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman
 I love,
 The sickness of one of my folks, or of myself, or ill-
 doing, or loss or lack of money,* or depressions
 or exaltations ;
 Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of
 doubtful news, the fitful events ;
 These come to me days and nights, and go from me
 again,
 But they are not the Me myself.

²⁰ Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I
 am ;
 Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, uni-
 tary ;
 Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable
 certain rest,
 Looking with side-curved head, curious what will come
 next ;

Both in and out of the game, and watching and wondering at it.

²¹ Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with linguists and contenders ;
I have no mockings or arguments—I witness and wait.

5

²² I believe in you, my Soul—the other I am must not abase itself to you ;
And you must not be abased to the other.

²³ Loafe with me on the grass—loose the stop from your throat ;
Not words, not music or rhyme I want—not custom or lecture, not even the best ;
Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.

²⁴ I mind how once we lay, such a transparent summer morning ;
How you settled your head athwart my hips, and gently turn'd over upon me,
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart,
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.

²⁵ Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth ;
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own ;
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers,
and the women my sisters and lovers ;
And that a kelson of the creation is love ;
And limitless are leaves, stiff or drooping in the fields ;
And brown ants in the little wells beneath them ;
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, and heap'd stones,
elder, mullen and poke-weed.

6

²⁶ A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with
full hands ;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it
is, any more than he.

²⁷ I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of
hopeful green stuff woven.

²⁸ Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer, designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that
we may see and remark, and say, *Whose?*

²⁹ Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced
babe of the vegetation.

³⁰ Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic ;
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and nar-
row zones,
Growing among black folks as among white ;
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the
same, I receive them the same.

³¹ And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of
graves.

³² Tenderly will I use you, curling grass ;
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young
men ;
It may be if I had known them I would have loved
them ;
It may be you are from old people, and from women,
and from offspring taken soon out of their
mothers' laps ;
And here you are the mothers' laps.

³³ This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of
old mothers ;
Darker than the colorless beards of old men ;
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

³⁴ O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues!
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of
mouths for nothing.

³⁵ I wish I could translate the hints about the dead
young men and women,
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the
offspring taken soon out of their laps.

³⁶ What do you think has become of the young and
old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and
children?

³⁷ They are alive and well somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death;
And if ever there was, it led forward life, and does not
wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

³⁸ All goes onward and outward—nothing collapses;
And to die is different from what any one supposed,
and luckier.

7

³⁹ Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her, it is just as lucky to die,
and I know it.

⁴⁰ I pass death with the dying, and birth with the new-
wash'd babe, and am not contain'd between my
hat and boots;
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike, and every
one good;
The earth good, and the stars good, and their adjuncts
all good.

⁴¹ I am not an earth, nor an adjunct of an earth;
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as
immortal and fathomless as myself;
(They do not know how immortal, but I know.)

⁴² Every kind for itself and its own—for me mine, male
 and female ;
 For me those that have been boys, and that love
 women ;
 For me the man that is proud, and feels how it stings
 to be slighted ;
 For me the sweet-heart and the old maid—for me
 mothers, and the mothers of mothers ;
 For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears ;
 For me children, and the begetters of children.

⁴³ Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale, nor
 discarded ;
 I see through the broadcloth and gingham, whether
 or no ;
 And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and
 cannot be shaken away.

8

⁴⁴ The little one sleeps in its cradle ;
 I lift the gauze, and look a long time, and silently
 brush away flies with my hand.

⁴⁵ The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up
 the bushy hill ;
 I peeringly view them from the top.

⁴⁶ The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bed-
 room ;
 I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair—I note
 where the pistol has fallen.

⁴⁷ The blab of the pave, the tires of carts, sluff of boot-
 soles, talk of the promenaders ;
 The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating
 thumb, the clank of the shod horses on the
 granite floor ;
 The snow-sleighs, the clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of
 snow-balls ;

The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd
 mobs ;
 The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside, borne
 to the hospital ;
 The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows
 and fall ;
 The excited crowd, the policeman with his star, quickly
 working his passage to the centre of the crowd ;
 The impassive stones that receive and return so many
 echoes ;
 What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sun-
 struck, or in fits ;
 What exclamations of women taken suddenly, who
 hurry home and give birth to babes ;
 What living and buried speech is always vibrating
 here—what howls restrain'd by decorum ;
 Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made,
 acceptances, rejections with convex lips ;
 I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I
 come, and I depart.

9

⁴⁸ The big doors of the country barn stand open and
 ready ;
 The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-
 drawn wagon ;
 The clear light plays on the brown gray and green
 intertinged ;
 The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.

⁴⁹ I am there—I help—I came stretch'd atop of the
 load ;
 I felt its soft jolts—one leg reclined on the other ;
 I jump from the cross-beams, and seize the clover and
 timothy,
 And roll head over heels, and tangle my hair full of
 wisps.

10

⁵⁰ 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.

⁵¹ The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails—she cuts
 the sparkle and seud ;
 My eyes settle the land—I bend at her prow, or shout
 joycously from the deck.

⁵² 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.)

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ The runaway slave came to my house and stopt out-
 side ;
 I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the wood-
 pile ;
 Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him
 limpsy 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.)

11

- ⁵⁵ Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore ;
 Twenty-eight young men, and all so friendly :
 Twenty-eight years of womanly life, and all so lone-
 some.
- ⁵⁶ She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank ;
 She hides, handsome and richly drest, aft the blinds of
 the window.
- ⁵⁷ Which of the young men does she like the best ?
 Ah, the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.
- ⁵⁸ Where are you off to, lady ? for I see you ;
 You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in
 your room.
- ⁵⁹ Dancing and laughing along the beach came the
 twenty-ninth bather ;
 The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved
 them.
- ⁶⁰ The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it
 ran from their long hair :
 Little streams pass'd all over their bodies.
- ⁶¹ An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies ;
 It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.

⁶² The young men float on their backs—their white bellies bulge to the sun—they do not ask who seizes fast to them ;
 They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending arch ;
 They do not think whom they souse with spray.

12

⁶³ The butcher-boy puts off his killing clothes, or sharpens his knife at the stall in the market ;
 I loiter, enjoying his repartee, and his shuffle and break-down.

⁶⁴ Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil ;
 Each has his main-sledge—they are all out—(there is a great heat in the fire.)

⁶⁵ From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements ;
 The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive arms ;
 Over-hand the hammers swing—over-hand so slow—over-hand so sure :
 They do not hasten—each man hits in his place.

13

⁶⁶ The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses—the block swags underneath on its tied-over chain ;
 The negro that drives the dray of the stone-yard—steady and tall he stands, pois'd on one leg on the string-piece ;
 His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast, and loosens over his hip-band ;
 His glance is calm and commanding—he tosses the slouch of his hat away from his forehead ;
 The sun falls on his crispy hair and moustache—falls on the black of his polish'd and perfect limbs.

⁶⁷ I behold the picturesque giant, and love him—and I
do not stop there ;
I go with the team also.

⁶⁸ In me the caresser of life wherever moving—back-
ward as well as forward slueing ;
To niches aside and junior bending.

⁶⁹ Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain, or halt in the
leafy shade! what is that you express in your
eyes?
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in
my life.

⁷⁰ My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck, on
my distant and day-long ramble ;
They rise together—they slowly circle around.

⁷¹ I believe in those wing'd purposes,
And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me,
And consider green and violet, and the tufted crown,
intentional ;
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is
not something else ;
And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet
trills pretty well to me ;
And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of
me.

14

⁷² The wild gander leads his flock through the cool
night ;
Ya-honk! he says, and sounds it down to me like an
invitation ;
(The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listen
close ;
I find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry
sky.)

⁷³ The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the eat on the
house-sill, the chickadee, the prairie-dog,
The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,
The brood of the turkey-hen, and she with her half-
spread wings ;
I see in them and myself the same old law.

⁷⁴ The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred
affections ;
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

⁷⁵ I am enamour'd of growing out-doors,
Of men that live among cattle, or taste of the ocean or
woods,
Of the builders and steerers of ships, and the wielders
of axes and mauls, and the drivers of horses ;
I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

⁷⁶ What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me ;
Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns ;
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will
take me ;
Not asking the sky to come down to my good will ;
Scattering it freely forever.

15

⁷⁷ The pure contralto sings in the organ loft ;
The carpenter dresses his plank—the tongue of his
foreplane whistles its wild ascending lisp ;
The married and unmarried children ride home to their
Thanksgiving dinner ;
The pilot seizes the king-pin—he heaves down with a
strong arm ;
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat—lance and
harpoon are ready ;
The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches ;
The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at the
altar ;
The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of
the big wheel ;

The farmer stops by the bars, as he walks on a First-day loafe, and looks at the oats and rye ;
The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum, a confirm'd case,
(He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bed-room ;)
The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,
He turns his quid of tobacco, while his eyes blurr with the manuscript ;
The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,
What is removed drops horribly in a pail ;
The quadron girl is sold at the auction-stand—the drunkard nods by the bar-room stove ;
The machinist rolls up his sleeves—the policeman travels his beat—the gate-keeper marks who pass ;
The young fellow drives the express-wagon—(I love him, though I do not know him ;)
The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race ;
The western turkey-shooting draws old and young—some lean on their rifles, some sit on logs,
Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position, levels his piece ;
The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee ;
As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the overseer views them from his saddle ;
The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their partners, the dancers bow to each other ;
The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret, and harks to the musical rain ;
The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron ;
The squaw, wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth, is offering moccasins and bead-bags for sale ;
The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes bent sideways ;
As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat, the plank is thrown for the shore-going passengers ;

- The young sister holds out the skein, while the elder sister winds it off in a ball, and stops now and then for the knots ;
- The one-year wife is recovering and happy, having a week ago borne her first child ;
- The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine, or in the factory or mill ;
- The nine months' gone is in the parturition chamber, her faintness and pains are advancing ;
- The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer—the reporter's lead flies swiftly over the note-book—the sign-painter is lettering with red and gold ;
- The canal boy trots on the tow-path—the book-keeper counts at his desk—the shoemaker waxes his thread ;
- The conductor beats time for the band, and all the performers follow him ;
- The child is baptized—the convert is making his first professions ;
- The regatta is spread on the bay—the race is begun—how the white sails sparkle !
- The drover, watching his drove, sings out to them that would stray ;
- The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling about the odd cent ;)
- The camera and plate are prepared, the lady must sit for her daguerreotype ;
- The bride unrumples her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock moves slowly ;
- The opium-cater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips ;
- The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck ;
- The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other ;
- (Miserable ! I do not laugh at your oaths, nor jeer you ;)
- The President, holding a cabinet council, is surrounded by the Great Secretaries ;
- On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms ;

The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of hal-
ibut in the hold ;
The Missourian crosses the plains, toting his wares and
his cattle ;
As the fare-collector goes through the train, he gives
notice by the jingling of loose change ;
The floor-men are laying the floor—the tinner's are
tinning the roof—the masons are calling for
mortar ;
In single file, each shouldering his hod, pass onward
the laborers ;
Seasons pursuing each other, the indescribable crowd is
gather'd—it is the Fourth of Seventh-month—
(What salutes of cannon and small arms!)
Seasons pursuing each other, the plougher ploughs, the
mower mows, and the winter-grain falls in the
ground ;
Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by
the hole in the frozen surface ;
The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter
strikes deep with his axe ;
Flatboatmen make fast, towards dusk, near the cotton-
wood or pekan-trees ;
Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river,
or through those drain'd by the Tennessee, or
through those of the Arkansaw ;
Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chatta-
hooche or Altamahaw ;
Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and
great-grandsons around them ;
In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and
trappers after their day's sport ;
The city sleeps, and the country sleeps ;
The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their
time ;
The old husband sleeps by his wife, and the young hus-
band sleeps by his wife ;
And these one and all tend inward to me, and I tend
outward to them ;
And such as it is to be of these, more or less, I am.

16

⁷⁸ 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 Great Nation, the nation of many nations,
the smallest the same, and the largest the same ;

A southerner soon as a northerner—a planter non-
chalant 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 stern-
est 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-west-
erners, (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 thought-
fullest ;

A novice beginning, yet experient of myriads of sea-
sons ;

Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and reli-
gion ;

A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker ;
A prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

⁷⁹ I resist anything better than my own diversity ;

I breathe the air, but leave plenty after me,
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

⁸⁰ (The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place ;
The suns I see, and the suns I cannot see, are in their
place ;
The palpable is in its place, and the impalpable is in its
place.)

17

⁸¹ These are the thoughts of all men in all ages and
lands—they are not original with me ;
If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing,
or next to nothing ;
If they are not the riddle, and the untying of the riddle,
they are nothing ;
If they are not just as close as they are distant, they are
nothing.

⁸² This is the grass that grows wherever the land is, and
the water is ;
This is the common air that bathes the globe.

18

⁸³ With music strong I come—with my cornets and my
drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only—I play
great marches for conquer'd and slain persons.

⁸⁴ Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall—battles are lost in the same
spirit in which they are won.

⁸⁵ I beat and pound for the dead ;
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest
for them.

⁸⁶ Vivas to those who have fail'd !
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea !
And to those themselves who sank in the sea !

And to all generals that lost engagements! and all overcome heroes!
 And the numberless unknown heroes, equal to the greatest heroes known.

19

⁸⁷ This is the meal equally set—this is the meat for natural hunger;
 It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous—I make appointments with all;
 I will not have a single person slighted or left away;
 The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited;
 The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited—the venerealee is invited:
 There shall be no difference between them and the rest.

⁸⁸ This is the press of a bashful hand—this is the float and odor of hair;
 This is the touch of my lips to yours—this is the murmur of yearning;
 This is the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face;
 This is the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.

⁸⁹ Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?
 Well, I have—for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of a rock has.

⁹⁰ Do you take it I would astonish?
 Does the daylight astonish? Does the early redstart, twittering through the woods?
 Do I astonish more than they?

⁹¹ This hour I tell things in confidence;
 I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

20

⁹² Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;
 How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

⁹³ What is a man, anyhow? What am I? What are you?

⁹⁴ All I mark as my own, you shall offset it with your own;
Else it were time lost listening to me.

⁹⁵ I do not snivel that snivel the world over,
That months are vacuums, and the ground but wallow
and filth ;
That life is a suck and a sell, and nothing remains at
the end but threadbare crape, and tears.

⁹⁶ Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for
invalids—conformity goes to the fourth-remov'd ;
I wear my hat as I please, indoors or out.

⁹⁷ Why should I pray? Why should I venerate and be
ceremonious?

⁹⁸ Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair,
counsell'd with doctors, and calculated close,
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

⁹⁹ In all people I see myself—none more, and not one a
barley-corn less ;
And the good or bad I say of myself, I say of them.

¹⁰⁰ And I know I am solid and sound ;
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetu-
ally flow ;
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing
means.

¹⁰¹ I know I am deathless ;
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by the car-
penter's compass ;
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with
a burnt stick at night.

¹⁰² I know I am august ;

I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood ;

I see that the elementary laws never apologize ;
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all.)

¹⁰³ I exist as I am—that is enough ;
If no other in the world be aware, I sit content ;
And if each and all be aware, I sit content.

¹⁰⁴ One world is aware, and by far the largest to me,
and that is myself ;
And whether I come to my own to-day, or in ten thousand or ten million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

¹⁰⁵ My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite ;
I laugh at what you call dissolution ;
And I know the amplitude of time.

21

¹⁰⁶ I am the poet of the Body ;
And I am the poet of the Soul.

¹⁰⁷ 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.

¹⁰⁸ 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.

¹⁰⁹ I chant the chant of dilation or pride ;
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough ;
I show that size is only development.

¹¹⁰ 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.

¹¹¹ I am he that walks with the tender and growing night ;
I call to the earth and sea, half-held by the night.

¹¹² 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.

¹¹³ Smile, O voluptuous, cool-breath'd earth !
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees ;
Earth of 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 !

¹¹⁴ Prodigal, you have given me love ! Therefore I to you give love !
O unspeakable, passionate love !

22

¹¹⁵ You sea ! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean ;
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers ;
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me ;
We must have a turn together—I undress—hurry me out of sight of the land ;
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse ;
Dash me with amorous wet—I can repay you.

¹¹⁶ Sea of stretch'd ground-swells !

Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths!
 Sea of the brine of life! sea of unshovell'd yet always-
 ready graves!
 Howler and scooper of storms! capricious and dainty
 sea!
 I am integral with you—I too am of one phase, and of
 all phases.

¹¹⁷ Partaker of influx and efflux I—extoller of hate and
 conciliation;
 Extoller of amies, and those that sleep in each others'
 arms.

¹¹⁸ I am he attesting sympathy;
 (Shall I make my list of things in the house, and skip
 the house that supports them?)

¹¹⁹ I am not the poet of goodness only—I do not decline
 to be the poet of wickedness also.

¹²⁰ Washes and razors for foofoos—for me freckles and
 a bristling beard.

¹²¹ What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?
 Evil propels me, and reform of evil propels me—I stand
 indifferent;
 My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait;
 I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

¹²² Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging
 pregnancy?
 Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd
 over and rectified?

¹²³ I find one side a balance, and the antipodal side a
 balance;
 Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine;
 Thoughts and deeds of the present, our rouse and early
 start.

¹²⁴ This minute that comes to me over the past decilions,
There is no better than it and now.

¹²⁵ What behaved well in the past, or behaves well to-day, is not such a wonder ;
The wonder is, always and always, how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

23

¹²⁶ Endless unfolding of words of ages !
And mine a word of the modern—the word *En-Masse*.

¹²⁷ A word of the faith that never balks ;
Here or henceforward, it is all the same to me—I accept Time, absolutely.

¹²⁸ It alone is without flaw—it rounds and completes all ;
That mystic, baffling wonder I love, alone completes all.

¹²⁹ I accept reality, and dare not question it ;
Materialism first and last imbuing.

¹³⁰ Hurrah for positive science ! long live exact demonstration !
Fetch stonecrop, mixt with cedar and branches of lilac ;
This is the lexicographer—this the chemist—this made a grammar of the old cartouches ;
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas ;
This is the geologist—this works with the scalpel—and this is a mathematician.

¹³¹ Gentlemen ! to you the first honors always :
Your facts are useful and real—and yet they are not my dwelling ;
(I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.)

¹³² Less the reminders of properties told, my words ;
 And more the reminders, they, of life untold, and of
 freedom and extrication,
 And make short account of neuters and geldings, and
 favor men and women fully equipt,
 And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives,
 and them that plot and conspire.

24

¹³³ Walt Whitman am I, a Kosmos, of mighty Manhat-
 tan the son,
 Turbulent, fleshy and sensual, eating, drinking and
 breeding ;
 No sentimentalist—no stander above men and women,
 or apart from them ;
 No more modest than immodest.

¹³⁴ Unscrew the locks from the doors!
 Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

¹³⁵ Whoever degrades another degrades me ;
 And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

¹³⁶ Through me the afflatus surging and surging—
 through me the current and index.

¹³⁷ I speak the pass-word primeval—I give the sign of
 democracy ;
 By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have
 their counterpart of on the same terms.

¹³⁸ Through me many long dumb voices ;
 Voices of the interminable generations of slaves ;
 Voices of prostitutes, and of deform'd persons ;
 Voices of the diseas'd and despairing, and of thieves
 and dwarfs ;
 Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,
 And of the threads that connect the stars—and of
 wombs, and of the father-stuff,
 And of the rights of them the others are down upon ;

Of the trivial, flat, foolish, despised,
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

¹³⁹ Through me forbidden voices ;
Voices of sexes and lusts—voices veil'd, and I remove
the veil ;
Voices indecent, by me clarified and transfigur'd.

¹⁴⁰ I do not press my fingers across my mouth ;
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the
head and heart ;
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

¹⁴¹ I believe in the flesh and the appetites ;
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part
and tag of me is a miracle.

¹⁴² Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy what-
ever I touch or am touch'd from ;
The scent of these arm-pits, aroma finer than prayer ;
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the
creeds.

¹⁴³ If I worship one thing more than another, it shall
be the spread of my own body, or any part of it.

¹⁴⁴ Translucent mould of me, it shall be you !
Shaded ledges and rests, it shall be you !
Firm masculine colter, it shall be you.

¹⁴⁵ Whatever goes to the tith of me, it shall be you !
You my rich blood ! Your milky stream, pale strippings
of my life.

¹⁴⁶ Breast that presses against other breasts, it shall be
you !
My brain, it shall be your occult convolutions.

¹⁴⁷ Root of wash'd sweet flag ! timorous pond-snipe !
nest of guarded duplicate eggs ! it shall be you !

Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be
you!

Trickling sap of maple! fibre of manly wheat! it shall
be you!

¹⁴⁸ Sun so generous, it shall be you!

Vapors lighting and shading my face, it shall be you!

You sweaty brooks and dews, it shall be you!

Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me, it
shall be you!

Broad, muscular fields! branches of live oak! loving
lounger in my winding paths! it shall be you!

Hands I have taken—face I have kiss'd—mortal I have
ever touch'd! it shall be you.

¹⁴⁹ I dote on myself—there is that lot of me, and all so
luscious;

Each moment, and whatever happens, thrills me with
joy.

¹⁵⁰ O I am wonderful!

I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the
cause of my faintest wish;

Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause
of the friendship I take again.

¹⁵¹ That I walk up my stoop! I pause to consider if it
really be;

A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than
the metaphysics of books.

¹⁵² To behold the day-break!

The little light fades the immense and diaphanous
shadows;

The air tastes good to my palate.

¹⁵³ Hefts of the moving world, at innocent gambols,
silently rising, freshly exuding,

Scooting obliquely high and low.

¹⁵⁴ Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous
prongs ;
Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.

¹⁵⁵ The earth by the sky staid with—the daily close of
their junction ;
The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over
my head ;
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be
master !

25

¹⁵⁶ Dazzling and tremendous, how quick the sun-rise
would kill me,
If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of
me.

¹⁵⁷ We also ascend, dazzling and tremendous as the
sun ;
We found our own, O my Soul, in the calm and cool
of the daybreak.

¹⁵⁸ My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach ;
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds, and
volumes of worlds.

¹⁵⁹ Speech is the twin of my vision—it is unequal to
measure itself ;
It provokes me forever ;
It says sarcastically, *Walt, you contain enough—why
don't you let it out, then ?*

¹⁶⁰ Come now, I will not be tantalized—you conceive
too much of articulation.

¹⁶¹ Do you not know, O speech, how the buds beneath
you are folded ?
Waiting in gloom, protected by frost ;
The dirt receding before my prophetic screams ;
I underlying causes, to balance them at last ;

My knowledge my live parts—it keeping tally with the
meaning of things.

HAPPINESS—which, whoever hears me, let him or her set
out in search of this day.

¹⁶² My final merit I refuse you—I refuse putting from
me what I really am ;

Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me ;
I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking to-
ward you.

¹⁶³ Writing and talk do not prove me ;

I carry the plenum of proof, and everything else, in my
face ;

With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skept-
tic.

26

¹⁶⁴ I think I will do nothing now but listen,

To accrue what I hear into myself—to let sounds con-
tribute toward me.

¹⁶⁵ I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat,
gossip of flames, clack of sticks cooking my
meals ;

I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human
voice ;

I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or
following ;

Sounds of the city, and sounds out of the city—sounds
of the day and night ;

Talkative young ones to those that like them—the loud
laugh of work-people at their meals ;

The angry base of disjointed friendship—the faint tones
of the sick ;

The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips
pronouncing a death-sentence ;

The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the
wharves—the refrain of the anchor-lifters ;

The ring of alarm-bells—the cry of fire—the whirr of
 swift-streaking engines and hose-carts, with pre-
 monitory tinkles, and color'd lights ;
 The steam-whistle—the solid roll of the train of ap-
 proaching cars ;
 The slow-march play'd at the head of the association,
 marching two and two ;
 (They go to guard some corpse—the flag-tops are
 draped with black muslin.)

¹⁶⁶ I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's
 complaint ;)
 I hear the key'd cornet—it glides quickly in through
 my ears ;
 It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and
 breast.

¹⁶⁷ I hear the chorus—it is a grand opera ;
 Ah, this indeed is music ! This suits me.

¹⁶⁸ A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me ;
 The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me
 full.

¹⁶⁹ I hear the train'd soprano—(what work, with hers,
 is this ?)
 The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies ;
 It wrenches such ardors from me, I did not know I
 possess'd them ;
 It sails me—I dab with bare feet—they are lick'd by
 the indolent waves ;
 I am exposed, cut by bitter and angry hail—I lose my
 breath,
 Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throt-
 tled in fakes of death ;
 At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
 And that we call BEING.

27

¹⁷⁰ To be, in any form — what is that?
 (Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back
 thither ;)
 If nothing lay more develop'd, the quahaug in its cal-
 lous shell were enough.

¹⁷¹ Mine is no callous shell ;
 I have instant conductors all over me, whether I pass
 or stop ;
 They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through-
 me.

¹⁷² I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am
 happy ;
 To touch my person to some one else's is about as much
 as I can stand.

28

¹⁷³ Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new iden-
 tity,
 Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,
 Treacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help
 them,
 My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what
 is hardly different from myself ;
 On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,
 Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,
 Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,
 Depriving me of my best, as for a purpose,
 Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,
 Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight
 and pasture-fields,
 Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,
 They bribed to swap off with touch, and go and graze
 at the edges of me ;
 No consideration, no regard for my draining strength
 or my anger ;
 Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a
 while,

Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry
me.

¹⁷⁴ The sentries desert every other part of me ;
They have left me helpless to a red marauder ;
They all come to the headland, to witness and assist
against me.

¹⁷⁵ I am given up by traitors ;
I talk wildly--I have lost my wits—I and nobody else
am the greatest traitor ;
I went myself first to the headland—my own hands car-
ried me there.

¹⁷⁶ You villain touch! what are you doing? My breath
is tight in its throat ;
Unclench your floodgates! you are too much for me.

29

¹⁷⁷ Blind, loving, wrestling touch! sheath'd, hooded,
sharp-tooth'd touch!
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?

¹⁷⁸ Parting, track'd by arriving—perpetual payment of
perpetual loan ;
Rich, showering rain, and recompense richer after-
ward.

¹⁷⁹ Sprouts take and accumulate—stand by the curb
prolific and vital :
Landscapes, projected, masculine, full-sized and golden.

30

¹⁸⁰ All truths wait in all things ;
They neither hasten their own delivery, nor resist it ;
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon ;
The insignificant is as big to me as any ;
(What is less or more than a touch?)

¹⁸¹ Logic and sermons never convince ;
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

¹⁸² Only what proves itself to every man and woman is
so ;
Only what nobody denies is so.

¹⁸³ A minute and a drop of me settle my brain ;
I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and
lamps,
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or
woman,
And a summit and flower there is the feeling they have
for each other,
And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson
until it becomes omnific,
And until every one shall delight us, and we them.

31

¹⁸⁴ 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,
And I could come every afternoon of my life to look at
the farmer's girl boiling her iron tea-kettle and
baking short-cake.

¹⁸⁵ 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 good reasons,
 And call anything close again, when I desire it.

¹⁸⁶ 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 nest in the fissure of
 the cliff.

32

¹⁸⁷ I think I could turn and live with animals, they are
 so placid and self-contain'd ;
 I stand and look at them long and long.

¹⁸⁸ They do not sweat and whine about their condition ;
 They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their
 sins ;
 They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God ;
 Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the
 mania of owning things ;
 Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived
 thousands of years ago ;
 Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole
 earth.

¹⁸⁹ So they show their relations to me, and I accept
 them ;
 They bring me tokens of myself—they evince them
 plainly in their possession.

¹⁹⁰ I wonder where they get those tokens :
 Did I pass that way huge times ago, and negligently
 drop them ?
 Myself moving forward then and now and forever,
 Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,
 Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among
 them ;
 Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remem-
 brancers ;
 Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him
 on brotherly terms.

¹⁹¹ A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive
 to my caresses,
 Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,
 Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,
 Eyes full of sparkling wickedness—ears finely cut, flex-
 ibly moving.

¹⁹² His nostrils dilate, as my heels embrace him ;
 His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure, as we race
 around and return.

¹⁹³ I but use you a moment, then I resign you, stallion ;
 Why do I need your paces, when I myself out-gallop
 them ?
 Even, as I stand or sit, passing faster than you.

33

¹⁹⁴ O swift wind ! O space and time ! now I see it is
 true, what I guessed 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.

¹⁹⁵ My ties and ballasts leave me—I travel—I sail—my
 elbows rest in the sea-gaps ;
 I skirt the sierras—my palms cover continents ;
 I am afoot with my vision.

- ¹⁰⁸ 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, hold-
ing 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-month eve—where
the great gold-bug drops through the dark ;
Where flails keep time on the barn floor ;
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 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 scattered—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 women, the homely as well as the hand-
some ;
Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet
and talks melodiously ;
Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the white-wash'd
church ;
Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Metho-
dist preacher, or any preacher—impress'd seri-
ously at the camp-meeting :
Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the
whole forenoon—flattering the flesh of my nose
on the thick plate-glass ;
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up
to the clouds,
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 Judea, 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.

¹⁹⁷ I visit the orchards of spheres, and look at the
 product :
 And look at quintillions ripen'd, and look at quintillions
 green.

¹⁹⁸ I fly the flight of the fluid and swallowing soul ;
 My course runs below the soundings of plummets.

¹⁹⁹ I help myself to material and immaterial ;
 No guard can shut me off, nor law prevent me.

²⁰⁰ I anchor my ship for a little while only ;
 My messengers continually cruise away, or bring their
 returns to me.

²⁰¹ I go hunting polar furs and the seal—leaping chasms
 with a pike-pointed staff—clinging to topples of
 brittle and blue.

²⁰² 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.)

²⁰³ I am a free companion—I bivouac by invading
 watchfires.

²⁰⁴ I turn the bridegroom out of bed, and stay with the
 bride myself ;
 I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

²⁰⁵ 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.

²⁰⁶ 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 one 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—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 unshaved 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.

²⁰⁷ The disdain and calmness of olden martyrs ;
 The mother, 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.

²⁰⁸ 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.

²⁰⁹ Agonies are one of my changes of garments ;
 I do not ask the wounded person how he feels—I my-
 self become the wounded person ;
 My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and
 observe.

²¹⁰ 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.

²¹¹ 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.

²¹² Distant and dead resuscitate ;
 They show as the dial or move as the hands of me—
 I am the clock myself.

²¹³ I am an old artillerist—I tell of my fort's bombardment ;

I am there again.

²¹⁴ Again the long roll of the drummers ;

Again the attacking cannon, mortars ;

Again, to my listening ears, the cannon responsive.

²¹⁵ I take part—I see and hear the whole ;

The cries, curses, roar—the plaudits for well-aim'd shots ;

The ambulanza 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.

²¹⁶ Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general—he furiously waves with his hand ;

He gasps through the clot, *Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments.*

34

²¹⁷ Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth ;

(I tell not the fall of Alamo,

Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,

The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo ;)

'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men.

²¹⁸ Retreating, they had form'd in a hollow square, with their baggage for breastworks ;

Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times their number, was the price they took in advance ;

Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone ;

They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their arms, and march'd back prisoners of war.

²¹⁹ They were the glory of the race of rangers ;
 Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,
 Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,
 Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,
 Not a single one over thirty years of age.

²²⁰ The second First-day morning they were brought
 out in squads, and massacred—it was beautiful
 early summer ;
 The work commenced about five o'clock, and was over
 by eight.

²²¹ None obey'd the command to kneel ;
 Some made a mad and helpless rush—some stood stark
 and straight ;
 A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart—the living
 and dead lay together ;
 The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt—the newcomers
 saw them there ;
 Some, half-kill'd, attempted to crawl away ;
 These were despatch'd with bayonets, or batter'd with
 the blunts of muskets ;
 A youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his assassin till
 two more came to release him ;
 The three were all torn, and cover'd with the boy's
 blood.

²²² At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies :
 That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and
 twelve young men.

²²³ Would you hear of an old-fashion'd sea-fight?
 Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and
 stars?
 List to the story as my grandmother's father, the sailor,
 told it to me.

²²⁴ 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.

²²⁵ We closed with him—the yards entangled—the cannon touch'd ;
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

²²⁶ 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.

²²⁷ 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 after-hold, to give them a chance for themselves.

²²⁸ 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.

²²⁹ Our frigate takes fire ;
The other asks if we demand quarter ?
If our colors are struck, and the fighting is done ?

²³⁰ 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.

²³¹ Only three guns are in use ;
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's main-mast ;
Two, well served with grape and canister, silence his musketry and clear his decks.

²³² The tops alone second the fire of this little battery,
 especially the main-top ;
 They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

²³³ Not a moment's cease ;
 The leaks gain fast on the pumps—the fire eats toward
 the powder-magazine.

²³⁴ One of the pumps has been shot away—it is gene-
 rally thought we are sinking.

²³⁵ 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-lan-
 terns.

²³⁶ Toward twelve at night, there in the beams of the
 moon, they surrender to us.

36

²³⁷ Stretch'd and still lies the midnight ;
 Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the dark-
 ness ;
 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,
 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.

37

²³⁸ O Christ ! This is mastering me !
 In at the conquer'd doors they crowd. I am possess'd.

²³⁹ I embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering ;
 See myself in prison shaped like another man,
 And feel the dull unintermitted pain.

²⁴⁰ For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their car-
 bines and keep watch ;
 It is I let out in the morning, and barr'd at night.

²⁴¹ Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail, but I am
 handcuff'd to him and walk by his side ;
 (I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one,
 with sweat on my twitching lips.)

²⁴² Not a youngster is taken for larceny, but I go up
 too, and am tried and sentenced.

²⁴³ Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp, but I also
 lie at the last gasp ;
 My face is ash-color'd—my sinews gnarl—away from
 me people retreat.

²⁴⁴ Askers embody themselves in me, and I am embo-
 died in them ;
 I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.

38

²⁴⁵ Enough! enough! enough!
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!
Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers,
dreams, gaping;
I discover myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

²⁴⁶ That I could forget the mockers and insults!
That I could forget the trickling tears, and the blows
of the bludgeons and hammers!
That I could look with a separate look on my own cru-
cifixion and bloody crowning.

²⁴⁷ I remember now;
I resume the overstaid fraction;
The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to
it, or to any graves;
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

²⁴⁸ I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one
of an average unending procession;
Inland and sea-coast we go, and we pass all boundary
lines;
Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole
earth;
The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thou-
sands of years.

²⁴⁹ Eleves, I salute you! come forward!
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

39

²⁵⁰ The friendly and flowing savage, Who is he?
Is he waiting for civilization, or past it, and master-
ing it?

²⁵¹ Is he some south-westerner, rais'd out-doors? Is he
Kanadian?

Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon,
California? the mountains? prairie-life, bush-
life? or from the sea?

²⁵² Wherever he goes, men and women accept and de-
sire him ;
They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to
them, stay with them.

²⁵³ Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as
grass, uncomb'd head, laughter, and naiveté,
Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes
and emanations ;
They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers ;
They are wafted with the odor of his body or breath—
they fly out of the glance of his eyes.

40

²⁵⁴ Flaunt of the sunshine, I need not your bask,—lie
over!
You light surfaces only—I force surfaces and depths
also.

²⁵⁵ Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands ;
Say, old Top-knot! what do you want?

²⁵⁶ Man or woman! I might tell how I like you, but
cannot ;
And might tell what it is in me, and what it is in you,
but cannot ;
And might tell that pining I have—that pulse of my
nights and days.

²⁵⁷ Behold! I do not give lectures, or a little charity ;
When I give, I give myself.

²⁵⁸ You there, impotent, loose in the knees !
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you ;
Spread your palms, and lift the flaps of your pockets ;

I am not to be denied—I compel—I have stores plenty
and to spare ;
And anything I have I bestow.

²⁵³ I do not ask who you are—that is not so important
to me ;
You can do nothing, and be nothing, but what I will
infolcl you.

²⁶⁰ To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean ;
On his right check I put the family kiss,
And in my soul I swear, I never will deny him.

²⁶¹ On women fit for conception I start bigger and
nimblcr babes ;
(This day I am jctting the stuff of far more arrogant
republics.)

²⁶² To any one dying—thither I speed, and twist the
knob of the door ;
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed ;
Let the physician and the priest go home.

²⁶³ I seize the descending man, and raise him with re-
sistless will.

²⁶⁴ O despairer, here is my neck ;
By God! you shall not go down! Hang your whole
weight upon me.

²⁶⁵ I dilate you with tremendous breath—I buoy you
up ;
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

²⁶⁶ Sleep! I and they keep guard all night ;
Not doubt—not decease shall dare to lay finger upon
you ;
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to
myself ;

And when you rise in the morning you will find what I
tell you is so.

41

²⁶⁷ I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on
their backs ;
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed
help.

²⁶⁸ I heard what was said of the universe ;
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years :
It is middling well as far as it goes,—But is that all ?

²⁶⁹ Magnifying and applying come I,
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his
grandson ;
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf,
the crucifix engraved,
With Odin, and the hideous-faced Mexitli, and every
idol and image ;
Taking them all for what they are worth, and not a cent
more ;
Admitting they were alive and did the work of their
days ;
(They bore mites, as for unfledg'd birds, who have now
to rise and fly and sing for themselves ;))
Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in
myself—bestowing them freely on each man and
woman I see ;
Discovering as much, or more, in a framer framing a
house ;
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up
sleeves, driving the mallet and chisel ;
Not objecting to special revelations—considering a curl
of smoke, or a hair on the back of my hand, just
as curious as any revelation ;

Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes
 no less to me than the Gods of the antique wars ;
 Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,
 Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths—
 their white foreheads whole and unhurt out of
 the flames :
 By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding
 for every person born ;
 Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three
 lusty angels with shirts bagg'd out at their waists ;
 The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins
 past and to come,
 Selling all he possesses, traveling on foot to fee lawyers
 for his brother, and sit by him while he is tried
 for forgery ;
 What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square
 rod about me, and not filling the square rod
 then ;
 The bull and the bug never worship'd half enough ;
 Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd ;
 The supernatural of no account—myself waiting my
 time to be one of the Supremes ;
 The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much
 good as the best, and be as prodigious :
 By my life-lumps ! becoming already a creator ;
 Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of
 the shadows.

42

²⁷⁰ A call in the midst of the crowd ;
 My own voice, orotund, sweeping, and final.

²⁷¹ Come my children ;
 Come my boys and girls, my women, household, and
 intimates ;
 Now the performer launches his nerve—he has pass'd
 his prelude on the reeds within.

²⁷² Easily written, loose-finger'd chords ! I feel the thrum
 of your climax and close.

²⁷³ My head slues round on my neck ;
 Music rolls, but not from the organ ;
 Folks are around me, but they are no household of
 mine.

²⁷⁴ Ever the hard, unsunk ground ;
 Ever the eaters and drinkers—ever the upward and
 downward sun—ever the air and the ceaseless
 tides ;
 Ever myself and my neighbors, refreshing, wicked, real ;
 Ever the old inexplicable query—ever that thorn'd
 thumb—that breath of itches and thirsts ;
 Ever the vexer's *hoot ! hoot !* till we find where the sly
 one hides, and bring him forth ;
 Ever love—ever the sobbing liquid of life ;
 Ever the bandage under the chin—ever the tressels of
 death.

²⁷⁵ Here and there, with dimes on the eyes, walking ;
 To feed the greed of the belly, the brains liberally
 spooning ;
 Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never
 once going ;
 Many sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff
 for payment receiving ;
 A few idly owning, and they the wheat continually
 claiming.

²⁷⁶ This is the city, and I am one of the citizens ;
 Whatever interests the rest interests me—politics, wars,
 markets, newspapers, schools,
 Benevolent societies, improvements, banks, tariffs,
 steamships, factories, stocks, stores, real estate,
 and personal estate.

²⁷⁷ The little plentiful mannikins, skipping around in
 collars and tail'd coats,
 I am aware who they are—(they are positively not
 worms or fleas.)

²⁷⁸ I acknowledge the duplicates of myself—the weakest
and shallowest is deathless with me ;
What I do and say, the same waits for them ;
Every thought that flounders in me, the same flounders
in them.

²⁷⁹ I know perfectly well my own egotism ;
I know my omnivorous lines, and will not write any
less ;
And would fetch you, whoever you are, flush with
myself.

²⁸⁰ No words of routine are mine,
But abruptly to question, to leap beyond, yet nearer
bring :
This printed and bound book—but the printer, and the
printing-office boy ?
The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend
close and solid in your arms ?
The black ship, mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in
her turrets—but the pluck of the captain and
engineers ?
In the houses, the dishes and fare and furniture—but
the host and hostess, and the look out of their
eyes ?
The sky up there—yet here, or next door, or across the
way ?
The saints and sages in history—but you yourself ?
Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human
brain,
And what is reason ? and what is love ? and what is life ?

43.

²⁸¹ I do not despise you, priests ;
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 fetish of the first rock or stump, powwowing
 with sticks in the circle of obis,
 Helping the lama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of
 the idols,
 Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic proces-
 sion—rapt and austere in the woods, a gymnec-
 sophist,
 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 cruci-
 fied, 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.

²⁸² One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang, I turn
 and talk, like a man leaving charges before a
 journey.

²⁸³ 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.

²⁸⁴ How the flukes splash!
 How they contort, rapid as lightning, with spasms, and
 spouts of blood!

²⁸⁵ 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.

²⁸⁶ I do not know what is untried and afterward ;
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

²⁸⁷ Each who passes is consider'd—each who stops is consider'd—not a single one can it fail.

²⁸⁸ 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, tubereled 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 anything in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth,
Nor anything in the myriads of spheres—nor one of the myriads of myriads that inhabit them,
Nor the present—nor the least wisp that is known.

44

²⁸⁹ It is time to explain myself—Let us stand up.

²⁹⁰ What is known I strip away ;
I launch all men and women forward with me into THE .
UNKNOWN.

²⁹¹ The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate ?

²⁹² We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers ;
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

²⁹³ Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

²⁹⁴ I do not call one greater and one smaller ;
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

²⁹⁵ Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my
brother, my sister?
I am sorry for you—they are not murderous or jealous
upon me ;
All has been gentle with me—I keep no account with
lamentation ;
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

²⁹⁶ I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an en-
closer of things to be.

²⁹⁷ My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs ;
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches be-
tween the steps ;
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

²⁹⁸ Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me ;
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing—I know I was
even there ;
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the leth-
argic mist,
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid
carbon.

²⁹⁹ Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

³⁰⁰ Immense have been the preparations for me,
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

³⁰¹ Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like
cheerful boatmen ;
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings ;
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

³⁰² Before I was born out of my mother, generations
 guided me ;
 My embryo has never been torpid—nothing could over-
 lay it.

³⁰³ For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
 The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
 Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,
 Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths, and
 deposited it with care.

³⁰⁴ All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete
 and delight me ;
 Now on this spot I stand with my robust Soul.

45

³⁰⁵ O span of youth ! Ever-push'd elasticity !
 O manhood, balanced, florid, and full.

³⁰⁶ My lovers suffocate me !
 Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,
 Jostling me through streets and public halls—coming
 naked to me at night,
 Crying by day *Ahoy!* from the rocks of the river—
 swinging and chirping over my head,
 Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled under-
 brush,
 Lighting on every moment of my life,
 Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses,
 Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts, and
 giving them to be mine.

³⁰⁷ Old age superbly rising ! O welcome, ineffable grace
 of dying days !

³⁰⁸ Every condition promulges not only itself—it pro-
 mulges what grows after and out of itself,
 And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

³⁰⁹ I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled
 systems,

And all I see, multiplied as high as I can cipher, edge
but the rim of the farther systems.

³¹⁰ Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always ex-
panding,
Outward and outward, and forever outward.

³¹¹ My sun has his sun, and round him obediently
wheels,
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest
inside them.

³¹² There is no stoppage, and never can be stoppage ;
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their
surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a
pallid float, it would not avail in the long run ;
We should surely bring up again where we now stand,
And as surely go as much farther—and then farther and
farther.

³¹³ A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic
leagues, do not hazard the span, or make it im-
patient ;
They are but parts—anything is but a part.

³¹⁴ See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that ;
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

³¹⁵ My rendezvous is appointed—it is certain ;
The Lord will be there, and wait till I come, on perfect
terms ;
(The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine,
will be there.)

46

³¹⁶ I know I have the best of time and space, and was
never measured, and never will be measured.

³¹⁷ I tramp a perpetual journey—(come listen all !)
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff
cut from the woods ;

No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair ;
 I have no chair, no church, no philosophy ;
 I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, or exchange ;
 But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a
 knoll,
 My left hand hooking you round the waist,
 My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents,
 and a plain public road.

³¹⁸ Not I—not any one else, can travel that road for
 you,
 You must travel it for yourself.

³¹⁹ It is not far—it is within reach ;
 Perhaps you have been on it since you were born, and
 did not know ;
 Perhaps it is every where on water and on land.

³²⁰ Shoulder your duds, dear son, and I will mine, and
 let us hasten forth,
 Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as
 we go.

³²¹ If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff
 of your hand on my hip,
 And in due time you shall repay the same service to
 me ;
 For after we start, we never lie by again.

³²² This day before dawn I ascended a hill, and look'd at
 the crowded heaven,
 And I said to my Spirit, *When we become the enfolders
 of those orbs, and the pleasure and knowledge of
 everything in them, shall we be fill'd and satisfied
 then?*
 And my Spirit said, *No, we but level that lift, to pass and
 continue beyond.*

³²³ You are also asking me questions, and I hear you ;
 I answer that I cannot answer—you must find out for
 yourself.

³²⁴ Sit a while, dear son ;

Here are biscuits to eat, and here is milk to drink ;

But as soon as you sleep, and renew yourself in sweet
clothes, I kiss you with a good-bye kiss, and open
the gate for your egress hence.

³²⁵ Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams ;
Now I wash the gum from your eyes ;

You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light, and
of every moment of your life.

³²⁶ Long have you timidly waded, holding a plank by
the shore ;

Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,

To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to
me, shout, and laughingly dash with your hair.

47

³²⁷ 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.

³²⁸ 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.

³²⁹ 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.

³³⁰ 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.

³³¹ I swear I will never again mention love or death in-
 side 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.

³³² If you would understand me, go to the heights or
 water-shore ;
 The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or mo-
 tion of waves a key ;
 The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.

³³³ No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,
 But roughs and little children better than they.

³³⁴ 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.

³³⁵ 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 the solemn night (it may be their last,) those that
 know me, seek me.

³³⁶ 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

³³⁷ 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.

³³⁸ 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.)

³³⁹ I hear and behold God in every object, yet under-
 stand God not in the least,
 Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful
 than myself.

³⁴⁰ 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 that
wheresoe'er I go,
Others will punctually come forever and ever.

49

³⁴¹ And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortal-
ity, it is idle to try to alarm me.

³⁴² To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes;
I see the elder-hand, pressing, receiving, supporting ;
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

³⁴³ And as to you, Corpse, I think you are good manure
—but that does not offend me ;
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,
I reach to the leafy lips—I reach to the polish'd breasts
of melons.

³⁴⁴ And as to you Life, I reckon you are the leavings of
many deaths ;
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times
before.)

³⁴⁵ I hear you whispering there, O stars of heaven ;
O suns ! O grass of graves ! O perpetual transfers and
promotions !
If you do not say anything, how can I say anything ?

³⁴⁶ Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest,
Of the moon that descends the steps of the souging
twilight,
Toss, sparkles of day and dusk ! toss on the black stems
that decay in the muck !
Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.

³⁴⁷ I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night ;
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams
reflected ;
And debouch to the steady and central from the off-
spring great or small.

50

³⁴⁸ There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but
I know it is in me.

³⁴⁹ Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body
becomes ;
I sleep—I sleep long.

³⁵⁰ I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word
unsaid ;
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

³⁵¹ Something it swings on more than the earth I swing
on ;
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes
me.

³⁵² Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for
my brothers and sisters.

³⁵³ Do you see, O my brothers and sisters ?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is
eternal life—it is HAPPINESS.

51

³⁵⁴ The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emp-
tied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

³⁵⁵ Listener up there! Here, you! What have you to
confide to me ?
Look in my face, while I snuff the sidle of evening ;
Talk honestly—no one else hears you, and I stay only a
minute longer.

³⁵⁶ Do I contradict myself ?
Very well, then, I contradict myself ;
(I am large—I contain multitudes.)

³⁵⁷ I concentrate toward them that are nigh—I wait on
the door-slab.

³⁵⁸ Who has done his day's work? Who will soonest be
through with his supper?

Who wishes to walk with me?

³⁵⁹ Will you speak before I am gone? Will you prove
already too late?

52

³⁶⁰ The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me—he
complains of my gab and my loitering.

³⁶¹ I too am not a bit tamed—I too am untranslatable ;
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

³⁶² 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.

³⁶³ I depart as air—I shake my white locks at the run-
away sun ;
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

³⁶⁴ I bequeathe myself to the dirt, to grow from the
grass I love ;
If you want me again, look for me under your boot-
soles.

³⁶⁵ You will hardly know who I am, or what I mean ;
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

³⁶⁶ Failing to fetch me at first, keep encouraged ;
Missing me one place, search another ;
I stop somewhere, waiting for you.

LAWS FOR CREATIONS.

¹ LAWS for Creations,

For strong artists and leaders—for fresh broods of
 teachers, and perfect literats for America,
 For noble savans, and coming musicians.

² All must have reference to the ensemble of the world,
 and the compact truth of the world ;
 There shall be no subject too pronounced—All works
 shall illustrate the divine law of indirections

³ What do you suppose Creation is?

What do you suppose will satisfy the Soul, except to
 walk free, and own no superior?

What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hun-
 dred ways, but that man or woman is as good as
 God?

And that there is no God any more divine than Your-
 self?

And that that is what the oldest and newest myths
 finally mean?

And that you or any one must approach Creations
 through such laws?



VISOR'D.

A MASK—a perpetual natural disguiser of herself,
 Concealing her face, concealing her form,
 Changes and transformations every hour, every mo-
 ment,
 Falling upon her even when she sleeps.

CHILDREN OF ADAM.

TO THE GARDEN, THE WORLD.

To THE garden, the world, anew ascending,
Potent mates, daughters, sons, preluding,
The love, the life of their bodies, meaning and being,
Curious, here behold my resurrection, after slumber ;
The revolving cycles, in their wide sweep, having brought
me again,
Amorous, mature—all beautiful to me—all wondrous ;
My limbs, and the quivering fire that ever plays through
them, for reasons, most wondrous ;
Existing, I peer and penetrate still,
Content with the present—content with the past,
By my side, or back of me, Eve following,
Or in front, and I following her just the same.

FROM PENT-UP ACHING RIVERS.

FROM pent-up, aching rivers ;
From that of myself, without which I were nothing ;
From what I am determin'd to make illustrious, even
if I stand sole among men ;
From my own voice resonant—singing the phallus,
Singing the song of procreation,

Singing the need of superb children, and therein superb
 grown people,
 Singing the muscular urge and the blending,
 Singing the bedfellow's song, (O resistless yearning!
 O for any and each, the body correlative attracting!
 O for you, whoever you are, your correlative body! O
 it, more than all else, you delighting!)
 —From the hungry gnaw that eats me night and
 day;
 From native moments—from bashful pains—singing
 them;
 Singing something yet unfound, though I have dili-
 gently sought it, many a long year;
 Singing the true song of the Soul, fitful, at random;
 Singing what, to the Soul, entirely redeem'd her, the
 faithful one, even the prostitute, who detain'd
 me when I went to the city;
 Singing the song of prostitutes;
 Renascent with grossest Nature, or among animals;
 Of that—of them, and what goes with them, my poems
 informing;
 Of the smell of apples and lemons—of the pairing of
 birds,
 Of the wet of woods—of the lapping of waves,
 Of the mad pushes of waves upon the land—I them
 chanting;
 The overture lightly sounding—the strain anticipat-
 ing;
 The welcome nearness—the sight of the perfect body;
 The swimmer swimming naked in the bath, or motion-
 less on his back lying and floating;
 The female form approaching—I, pensive, love-flesh
 tremulous, aching;
 The divine list, for myself or you, or for any one, mak-
 ing;
 The face—the limbs—the index from head to foot, and
 what it arouses;
 The mystic deliria—the madness amorous—the utter
 abandonment;
 (Hark close, and still, what I now whisper to you,
 I love you—O you entirely possess me,

O I wish that you and I escape from the rest, and go
 utterly off—O free and lawless,
 Two hawks in the air—two fishes swimming in the sea
 not more lawless than we ;)

—The furious storm through me carcering—I passion-
 ately trembling ;

The oath of the inseparableness of two together—of the
 woman that loves me, and whom I love more
 than my life—that oath swearing ;

(O I willingly stake all, for you !
 O let me be lost, if it must be so !
 O you and I—what is it to us what the rest do or
 think ?

What is all else to us ? only that we enjoy each other,
 and exhaust each other, if it must be so :)

—From the master—the pilot I yield the vessel to ;
 The general commanding me, commanding all—from
 him permission taking ;

From time the programme hastening, (I have loiter'd
 too long, as to is ;)

From sex—From the warp and from the woof ;
 (To talk to the perfect girl who understands me,
 To waft to her these from my own lips—to effuse them
 from my own body ;)

From privacy—from frequent repinings alone ;
 From plenty of persons near, and yet the right person
 not near ;

From the soft sliding of hands over me, and thrusting
 of fingers through my hair and beard ;

From the long sustain'd kiss upon the mouth or
 bosom ;

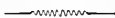
From the close pressure that makes me or any man
 drunk, fainting with excess ;

From what the divine husband knows—from the work
 of fatherhood ;

From exultation, victory, and relief—from the bedfel-
 low's embrace in the night ;

From the act-poems of eyes, hands, hips, and bosoms,
 From the cling of the trembling arm,
 From the bending curve and the clinch,
 From side by side, the pliant coverlid off-throwing,

From the one so unwilling to have me leave—and me
 just as unwilling to leave,
 (Yet a moment, O tender waiter, and I return ;)
 —From the hour of shining stars and dropping dews,
 From the night, a moment, I, emerging, flitting out,
 Celebrate you, act divine—and you, children prepared
 for,
 And you, stalwart loins.



I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC.

1

¹ I SING the Body electric ;
 The armies of those I love engirth me, and I engirth
 them ;
 They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to
 them,
 And discorrupt them, and charge them full with the
 charge of the Soul.

² Was it doubted that those who corrupt their own
 bodies conceal themselves ?
 And if those who defile the living are as bad as they
 who defile the dead ?
 And if the body does not do as much as the Soul ?
 And if the body were not the Soul, what is the Soul ?

2

³ The love of the Body of man or woman balks ac-
 count—the body itself balks account ;
 That of the male is perfect, and that of the female is
 perfect.

⁴ The expression of the face balks account ;

But the expression of a well-made man appears not
 only in his face ;
 It is in his limbs and joints also, it is curiously in the
 joints of his hips and wrists ;
 It is in his walk, the carriage of his neck, the flex of his
 waist and knees—dress does not hide him ;
 The strong, sweet, supple quality he has, strikes through
 the cotton and flannel ;
 To see him pass conveys as much as the best poem,
 perhaps more ;
 You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck
 and shoulder-side.

⁵ The sprawl and fulness of babes, the bosoms and
 heads of women, the folds of their dress, their
 style as we pass in the street, the contour of
 their shape downwards,

The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he
 swims through the transparent green-shine, or
 lies with his face up, and rolls silently to and fro
 in the heave of the water,

The bending forward and backward of rowers in row-
 boats—the horseman in his saddle,

Girls, mothers, house-keepers, in all their performances,
 The group of laborers seated at noon-time with their
 open dinner-kettles, and their wives waiting,

The female soothing a child—the farmer's daughter in
 the garden or cow-yard,

The young fellow hoeing corn—the sleigh-driver guiding
 his six horses through the crowd,

The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice-boys, quite
 grown, lusty, good-natured, native-born, out on
 the vacant lot at sun-down, after work,

The coats and caps thrown down, the embrace of love
 and resistance,

The upper-hold and under-hold, the hair rumpled over
 and blinding the eyes ;

The march of firemen in their own costumes, the play
 of masculine muscle through clean-setting trow-
 sers and waist-straps,

The slow return from the fire, the pause when the bell strikes suddenly again, and the listening on the alert,
 The natural, perfect, varied attitudes—the bent head, the curv'd neck, and the counting ;
 Such-like I love—I loosen myself, pass freely, am at the mother's breast with the little child,
 Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line with the firemen, and pause, listen, and count.

3

⁶ I knew a man, a common farmer—the father of five sons ;
 And in them were the fathers of sons—and in them were the fathers of sons.

⁷ This man was of wonderful vigor, calmness, beauty of person ;
 The shape of his head, the pale yellow and white of his hair and beard, and the immeasurable meaning of his black eyes—the richness and breadth of his manners,
 These I used to go and visit him to see—he was wise also ;
 He was six feet tall, he was over eighty years old—his sons were massive, clean, bearded, tan-faced, handsome ;
 They and his daughters loved him--all who saw him loved him ;
 They did not love him by allowance—they loved him with personal love ;
 He drank water only—the blood show'd like scarlet through the clear-brown skin of his face ;
 He was a frequent gunner and fisher—he sail'd his boat himself—he had a fine one presented to him by a ship-joiner—he had fowling-pieces, presented to him by men that loved him ;
 When he went with his five sons and many grand-sons to hunt or fish, you would pick him out as the most beautiful and vigorous of the gang,

You would wish long and long to be with him—you
would wish to sit by him in the boat, that you
and he might touch each other.

4

⁸ I have perceiv'd that to be with those I like is enough,
To stop in company with the rest at evening is enough,
To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing,
laughing flesh is enough,
To pass among them, or touch any one, or rest my arm
ever so lightly round his or her neck for a mo-
ment—what is this, then?
I do not ask any more delight—I swim in it, as in a sea.

⁹ There is something in staying close to men and women,
and looking on them, and in the contact and
odor of them, that pleases the soul well ;
All things please the soul—but these please the soul
well.

5

¹⁰ This is the female form ;
A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot ;
It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction !
I am drawn by its breath as if I were no more than a
helpless vapor—all falls aside but myself and it ;
Books, art, religion, time, the visible and solid earth,
the atmosphere and the clouds, and what was
expected of heaven or fear'd of hell, are now
consumed ;
Mad filaments, ungovernable shoots play out of it—the
response likewise ungovernable ;
Hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs, negligent falling hands,
all diffused—mine too diffused ;
Ebb stung by the flow, and flow stung by the ebb—
love-flesh swelling and deliciously aching ;
Limitless limpid jets of love hot and enormous, quiver-
ing jelly of love, white-blow and delirious juice ;
Bridegroom night of love, working surely and softly
into the prostrate dawn ;

Undulating into the willing and yielding day,
Lost in the cleave of the clasping and sweet-flesh'd day.

¹¹ This is the nucleus—after the child is born of woman,
the man is born of woman ;
This is the bath of birth—this is the merge of small
and large, and the outlet again.

¹² Be not ashamed, women—your privilege encloses the
rest, and is the exit of the rest ;
You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of
the soul.

¹³ The female contains all qualities, and tempers them
—she is in her place, and moves with perfect
balance ;
She is all things duly veil'd—she is both passive and
active ;
She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons
as well as daughters.

¹⁴ As I see my soul reflected in nature ;
As I see through a mist, one with inexpressible com-
pleteness and beauty,
See the bent head, and arms folded over the breast—
the female I see.

6

¹⁵ The male is not less the soul, nor more—he too is in
his place ;
He too is all qualities—he is action and power ;
The flush of the known universe is in him ;
Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance be-
come him well ;
The wildest largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sor-
row that is utmost, become him well—pride is
for him ;
The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent
to the soul ;
Knowledge becomes him—he likes it always—he brings
everything to the test of himself ;

Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail, he
strikes soundings at last only here ;
(Where else does he strike soundings, except here?)

¹⁶ The man's body is sacred, and the woman's body is
sacred ;

No matter who it is, it is sacred ;

Is it a slave? Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants
just landed on the wharf?

Each belongs here or anywhere, just as much as the
well-off—just as much as you ;

Each has his or her place in the procession.

¹⁷ (All is a procession ;

The universe is a procession, with measured and beau-
tiful motion.)

¹⁸ Do you know so much yourself, that you call the slave
or the dull-face ignorant?

Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight, and
he or she has no right to a sight?

Do you think matter has cohered together from its dif-
fuse float—and the soil is on the surface, and
water runs, and vegetation sprouts,

For you only, and not for him and her?

7

¹⁹ A man's Body at auction ;

I help the auctioneer—the sloven does not half know
his business.

²⁰ Gentlemen, look on this wonder!

Whatever the bids of the bidders, they cannot be high
enough for it ;

For it the globe lay preparing quintillions of years,
without one animal or plant ;

For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll'd.

²¹ In this head the all-baffling brain ;

In it and below it, the makings of heroes.

²² Examine these limbs, red, black, or white—they are
so cunning in tendon and nerve ;
They shall be stript, that you may see them.

²³ Exquisite senses, life-lit eyes, pluck, volition,
Flakes of breast-muscle, pliant back-bone and neck, flesh
not flabby, good-sized arms and legs,
And wonders within there yet.

²⁴ Within there runs blood,
The same old blood !
The same red-running blood !
There swells and jets a heart—there all passions, de-
sires, reachings, aspirations ;
Do you think they are not there because they are not
express'd in parlors and lecture-rooms ?

²⁵ This is not only one man—this is the father of those
who shall be fathers in their turns ;
In him the start of populous states and rich republics ;
Of him countless immortal lives, with countless embod-
iments and enjoyments.

²⁶ How do you know who shall come from the offspring
of his offspring through the centuries ?
Who might you find you have come from yourself, if
you could trace back through the centuries ?

8

²⁷ A woman's Body at auction !
She too is not only herself—she is the teeming mother
of mothers ;
She is the bearer of them that shall grow and be mates
to the mothers.

²⁸ Have you ever loved the Body of a woman ?
Have you ever loved the Body of a man ?
Your father—where is your father ?
Your mother—is she living ? have you been much with
her ? and has she been much with you ?

—Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all,
in all nations and times, all over the earth?

²⁹ If any thing is sacred, the human body is sacred,
And the glory and sweet of a man, is the token of man-
hood untainted ;

And in man or woman, a clean, strong, firm-fibred body,
is beautiful as the most beautiful face.

³⁰ Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live
body? or the fool that corrupted her own live body?
For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal
themselves.

9

³¹ O my Body! I dare not desert the likes of you in
other men and women, nor the likes of the parts
of you ;

I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the
likes of the Soul, (and that they are the Soul ;)

I believe the likes of you shall stand or fall with my
poems—and that they are poems,

Man's, woman's, child's, youth's, wife's, husband's,
mother's, father's, young man's, young woman's
poems ;

Head, neck, hair, ears, drop and tympan of the ears,
Eyes, eye-fringes, iris of the eye, eye-brows, and the
waking or sleeping of the lids,

Mouth, tongue, lips, teeth, roof of the mouth, jaws, and
the jaw-hinges,

Nose, nostrils of the nose, and the partition,

Cheeks, temples, forehead, chin, throat, back of the
neck, neck-slue,

Strong shoulders, manly beard, scapula, hind-shoulders,
and the ample side-round of the chest.

Upper-arm, arm-pit, elbow-socket, lower-arm, arm-
sinews, arm-bones,

Wrist and wrist-joints, hand, palm, knuckles, thumb,
fore-finger, finger-balls, finger-joints, finger-nails,

Broad breast-front, curling hair of the breast, breast-
bone, breast-side,

Ribs, belly, back-bone, joints of the back-bone,
 Hips, hip-sockets, hip-strength; inward and outward
 round, man-balls, man-root,
 Strong set of thighs, well carrying the trunk above;
 Leg-fibres, knee, knee-pan; upper-leg, under leg,
 Ankles, instep, foot-ball, toes, toe-joints, the heel;
 All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the belongings of
 my or your body, or of any one's body, male or
 female,
 The lung-sponges, the stomach-sac, the bowels sweet
 and clean,
 The brain in its folds inside the skull-frame,
 Sympathies, heart-valves, palate-valves, sexuality, ma-
 ternity,
 Womanhood, and all that is a woman—and the man
 that comes from woman,
 The womb, the teats, nipples, breast-milk, tears, laugh-
 ter, weeping, love-looks, love-perturbations and
 risings,
 The voice, articulation, language, whispering, shouting
 aloud,
 Food, drink, pulse, digestion, sweat, sleep, walking,
 swimming,
 Poise on the hips, leaping, reclining, embracing, arm-
 curving and tightening,
 The continual changes of the flex of the mouth, and
 around the eyes,
 The skin, the sun-burnt shade, freckles, hair,
 The curious sympathy one feels, when feeling with the
 hand the naked meat of the body,
 The circling rivers, the breath, and breathing it in and out,
 The beauty of the waist, and thence of the hips, and
 thence downward toward the knees,
 The thin red jellies within you, or within me—the bones,
 and the marrow in the bones,
 The exquisite realization of health;
 O I say, these are not the parts and poems of the Body
 only, but of the Soul,
 O I say now these are the Soul!

A WOMAN WAITS FOR ME.

¹ A WOMAN waits for me—she contains all, nothing is lacking,
Yet all were lacking, if sex were lacking, or if the moisture of the right man were lacking.

² Sex contains all,
Bodies, Souls, meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations,
Songs, commands, health, pride, the maternal mystery, the seminal milk ;
All hopes, benefactions, bestowals,
All the passions, loves, beauties, delights of the earth,
All the governments, judges, gods, follow'd persons of the earth,
These are contain'd in sex, as parts of itself, and justifications of itself.

³ Without shame the man I like knows and avows the deliciousness of his sex,
Without shame the woman I like knows and avows here.

⁴ Now I will dismiss myself from impassive women,
I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women that are warm-blooded and sufficient for me ;
I see that they understand me, and do not deny me ;
I see that they are worthy of me—I will be the robust husband of those women.

⁵ They are not one jot less than I am,
They are tann'd in the face by shining suns and blowing winds,
Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and strength,
They know how to swim, row, ride, wrestle, shoot, run, strike, retreat, advance, resist, defend themselves,

They are ultimate in their own right—they are calm,
clear, well-possess'd of themselves.

⁶ I draw you close to me, you women!
I cannot let you go, I would do you good,
I am for you, and you are for me, not only for our own
sake, but for others' sakes;
Envelop'd in you sleep greater heroes and bards,
They refuse to awake at the touch of any man but me.

⁷ It is I, you women—I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable—but I love you,
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for
These States—I press with slow rude muscle,
I brace myself effectually—I listen to no entreaties,
I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long
accumulated within me.

⁸ Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself,
In you I wrap a thousand onward years,
On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and
America,
The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and ath-
letic girls, new artists, musicians, and singers,
The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their
turn,
I shall demand perfect men and women out of my love-
spendings,
I shall expect them to interpenetrate with others, as I
and you interpenetrate now,
I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of
them, as I count on the fruits of the gushing
showers I give now,
I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death,
immortality, I plant so lovingly now.

SPONTANEOUS ME.

SPONTANEOUS me, Nature,
 The loving day, the mounting sun, the friend I am
 happy with,
 The arm of my friend hanging idly over my shoulder,
 The hill-side whiten'd with blossoms of the mountain
 ash,
 The same, late in autumn—the hues of red, yellow,
 drab, purple, and light and dark green,
 The rich coverlid of the grass—animals and birds—
 the private untrimm'd bank—the primitive ap-
 ples—the pebble-stones,
 Beautiful dripping fragments—the negligent list of one
 after another, as I happen to call them to me, or
 think of them,
 The real poems, (what we call poems being merely pic-
 tures,)
 The poems of the privacy of the night, and of men like
 me,
 This poem, drooping shy and unseen, that I always
 carry, and that all men carry,
 (Know, once for all, avow'd on purpose, wherever are
 men like me, are our lusty, lurking, masculine
 poems ;)
 Love-thoughts, love-juice, love-odor, love-yielding, love-
 climbers, and the climbing sap,
 Arms and hands of love—lips of love—phallic thumb
 of love—breasts of love—bellies press'd and
 glued together with love,
 Earth of chaste love—life that is only life after love,
 The body of my love—the body of the woman I love—
 the body of the man—the body of the earth,
 Soft forenoon airs that blow from the south-west,
 The hairy wild-bee that murmurs and hankers up and
 down—that gripes the full-grown lady-flower,
 curves upon her with amorous firm legs, takes
 his will of her, and holds himself tremulous and
 tight till he is satisfied,

The wet of woods through the early hours,
 Two sleepers at night lying close together as they sleep,
 one with an arm slanting down across and below
 the waist of the other,
 The smell of apples, aromas from crush'd sage-plant,
 mint, birch-bark,
 The boy's longings, the glow and pressure as he con-
 fides to me what he was dreaming,
 The dead leaf whirling its spiral whirl, and falling still
 and content to the ground,
 The no-form'd stings that sights, people, objects, sting
 me with,
 The hubb'd sting of myself, stinging me as much as it
 ever can any one,
 The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only
 privileged feelers may be intimate where they
 are,
 The curious roamer, the hand, roaming all over the
 body—the bashful withdrawing of flesh where
 the fingers soothingly pause and edge them-
 selves,
 The limpid liquid within the young man,
 The vexed corrosion, so pensive and so painful,
 The torment—the irritable tide that will not be at rest,
 The like of the same I feel—the like of the same in
 others,
 The young man that flushes and flushes, and the young
 woman that flushes and flushes,
 The young man that wakes, deep at night, the hot
 hand seeking to repress what would master
 him ;
 The mystic amorous night—the strange half-welcome
 pangs, visions, sweats,
 The pulse pounding through palms and trembling en-
 circling fingers—the young man all color'd, red,
 ashamed, angry ;
 The souse upon me of my lover the sea, as I lie willing
 and naked,
 The merriment of the twin-babes that crawl over the
 grass in the sun, the mother never turning her
 vigilant eyes from them,

The walnut-trunk, the walnut-husks, and the ripening
 or ripen'd long-round walnuts ;
 The continence of vegetables, birds, animals,
 The consequent meanness of me should I skulk or find
 myself indecent, while birds and animals never
 once skulk or find themselves indecent ;
 The great chastity of paternity, to match the great
 chastity of maternity,
 The oath of procreation I have sworn—my Adamic and
 fresh daughters,
 The greed that eats me day and night with hungry
 gnaw, till I saturate what shall produce boys to
 fill my place when I am through,
 The wholesome relief, repose, content ;
 And this bunch, pluck'd at random from myself ;
 It has done its work—I toss it carelessly to fall where
 it may.



ONE HOUR TO MADNESS AND JOY.

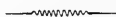
¹ ONE hour to madness and joy!
 O furious ! O confine me not !
 (What is this that frees me so in storms ?
 What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds
 mean ?)

² O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other
 man !
 O savage and tender achings !
 (I bequeath them to you, my children,
 I tell them to you, for reasons, O bridegroom and bride.)

³ O to be yielded to you, whoever you are, and you to
 be yielded to me, in defiance of the world !
 O to return to Paradise ! O bashful and feminine !
 O to draw you to me—to plant on you for the first time
 the lips of a deterrain'd man !

⁴ O the puzzle—the thrice-tied knot—the deep and dark
 pool! O all untied and illumin'd!
 O to speed where there is space enough and air enough
 at last!
 O to be absolv'd from previous ties and conventions—I
 from mine, and you from yours!
 O to find a new unthought-of nonchalance with the best
 of nature!
 O to have the gag remov'd from one's mouth!
 O to have the feeling, to-day or any day, I am sufficient
 as I am!

⁵ O something unprov'd! something in a trance!
 O madness amorous! O trembling!
 O to escape utterly from others' anchors and holds!
 To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dan-
 gerous!
 To court destruction with taunts—with invitations!
 To ascend—to leap to the heavens of the love indicated
 to me!
 To rise thither with my inebriate Soul!
 To be lost, if it must be so!
 To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness
 and freedom!
 With one brief hour of madness and joy.



WE TWO—HOW LONG WE WERE FOOL'D.

WE two—how long we were fool'd!
 Now transmuted, we swiftly escape, as Nature escapes;
 We are Nature—long have we been absent, but now we
 return;
 We become plants, leaves, foliage, roots, bark;
 We are bedded in the ground—we are rocks;
 We are oaks—we grow in the openings side by side;
 We browse—we are two among the wild herds, spon-
 taneous as any;

We are two fishes swimming in the sea together ;
 We are what the locust blossoms are—we drop scent
 around the lanes, mornings and evenings ;
 We are also the coarse smut of beasts, vegetables,
 minerals ;
 We are two predatory hawks—we soar above, and look
 down ;
 We are two resplendent suns—we it is who balance
 ourselves, orbic and stellar—we are as two
 comets ;
 We prowl fang'd and four-footed in the woods—we
 spring on prey ;
 We are two clouds, forenoons and afternoons, driving
 overhead ;
 We are seas mingling—we are two of those cheerful
 waves, rolling over each other, and interwetting
 each other ;
 We are what the atmosphere is, transparent, receptive,
 pervious, impervious :
 We are snow, rain, cold, darkness—we are each product
 and influence of the globe ;
 We have circled and circled till we have arrived home
 again—we two have ;
 We have voided all but freedom, and all but our own
 joy.



OUT OF THE ROLLING OCEAN, THE CROWD.

1

Out of the rolling ocean, the crowd, came a drop gently
 to me,
 Whispering, *I love you, before long I die,*
I have travel'd a long way, merely to look on you, to touch
 you,
For I could not die till I once look'd on you,
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.

2

(Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe ;
 Return in peace to the ocean, my love ;
 I too am part of that ocean, my love—we are not so
 much separated ;
 Behold the great rondure—the cohesion of all, how per-
 fect !
 But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate
 us,
 As for an hour, carrying us diverse—yet cannot carry
 us diverse for ever ;
 Be not impatient—a little space—Know, you, I salute
 the air, the ocean and the land,
 Every day, at sundown, for your dear sake, my love.)

 NATIVE MOMENTS.

NATIVE moments! when you come upon me—Ah you
 are here now!
 Give me now libidinous joys only!
 Give me the drench of my passions! Give me life
 coarse and rank!
 To-day, I go consort with nature's darlings—to-night
 too ;
 I am for those who believe in loose delights—I share
 the midnight orgies of young men ;
 I dance with the dancers, and drink with the drinkers ;
 The echoes ring with our indecent calls ;
 I take for my love some prostitute—I pick out some low
 person for my dearest friend,
 He shall be lawless, rude, illiterate—he shall be one
 condemn'd by others for deeds done ;
 I will play a part no longer—Why should I exile myself
 from my companions ?
 O you shunn'd persons! I at least do not shun you,
 I come forthwith in your midst—I will be your poet,
 I will be more to you than to any of the rest.

ONCE I PASS'D THROUGH A POPULOUS CITY.

ONCE I pass'd through a populous city, imprinting my
 brain, for future use, with its shows, architec-
 ture, customs, and traditions ;
 Yet now, of all that city, I remember only a woman I
 casually met there, who detain'd me for love of
 me ;
 Day by day and night by night we were together,—All
 else has long been forgotten by me ;
 I remember, I say, only that woman who passionately
 clung to me ;
 Again we wander—we love—we separate again ;
 Again she holds me by the hand—I must not go !
 I see her close beside me, with silent lips, sad and trem-
 ulous.

FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES.

FACING west, from California's shores,
 Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
 I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of
 maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,
 Look off the shores of my Western Sea—the circle
 almost circled ;
 For, starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales
 of Kashmere,
 From Asia—from the north—from the God, the sage,
 and the hero,
 From the south—from the flowery peninsulas, and the
 spice islands ;
 Long having wander'd since—round the earth having
 wander'd,
 Now I face home again—very pleas'd and joyous ;
 (But where is what I started for, so long ago ?
 And why is it yet unfound ?)

AGES AND AGES, RETURNING AT INTERVALS.

AGES and ages, returning at intervals,
 Undestroy'd, wandering immortal,
 Lusty, phallic, with the potent original loins, perfectly
 sweet,
 I, chanter of Adamic songs,
 Through the new garden, the West, the great cities
 calling,
 Deliriate, thus prelude what is generated, offering these,
 offering myself,
 Bathing myself, bathing my songs in Sex,
 Offspring of my loins.

O HYMEN! O HYMENE!

O HYMEN! O hymence!
 Why do you tantalize me thus?
 O why sting me for a swift moment only?
 Why can you not continue? O why do you now cease?
 Is it because, if you continued beyond the swift mo-
 ment, you would soon certainly kill me?

AS ADAM, EARLY IN THE MORNING.

As Adam, early in the morning,
 Walking forth from the bower, refresh'd with sleep;
 Behold me where I pass—hear my voice—approach,
 Touch me—touch the palm of your hand to my Body
 as I pass;
 Be not afraid of my Body.

I Heard You, Solemn-sweet Pipes of the Organ.

I HEARD you, solemn-sweet pipes of the organ, as last
 Sunday morn I pass'd the church ;
 Winds of autumn !—as I walk'd the woods at dusk, I
 heard your long-stretch'd sighs, up above, so
 mournful ;
 I heard the perfect Italian tenor, singing at the opera
 —I heard the soprano in the midst of the quartet
 singing ;
 ... Heart of my love !—you too I heard, murmuring
 low, through one of the wrists around my head ;
 Heard the pulse of you, when all was still, ringing little
 bells last night under my ear.



I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH LOVE.

I AM he that aches with amorous love ;
 Does the earth gravitate ? Does not all matter, aching,
 attract all matter ?
 So the Body of me, to all I meet, or know.

TO HIM THAT WAS CRUCIFIED.

My spirit to yours, dear brother ;
 Do not mind because many, sounding your name, do
 not understand you ;
 I do not sound your name, but I understand you, (there
 are others also ;)
 I specify you with joy, O my comrade, to salute you,
 and to salute those who are with you, before and
 since—and those to-come also,
 That we all labor together, transmitting the same
 charge and succession ;
 We few, equals, indifferent of lands, indifferent of
 times ;
 We, enclosers of all continents, all castes—allowers of
 all theologies,
 Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport of men,
 We walk silent among disputes and assertions, but
 reject not the disputers, nor any thing that is
 asserted ;
 We hear the bawling and din—we are reach'd at by
 divisions, jealousies, recriminations on every
 side,
 They close preemptorily upon us, to surround us, my
 comrade,
 Yet we walk unheld, free, the whole earth over, jour-
 neying up and down, till we make our inefface-
 able mark upon time and the diverse eras,
 Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and wo-
 men of races, ages to come, may prove brethren
 and lovers, as we are.



PERFECTIONS.

ONLY themselves understand themselves, and the like
 of themselves,
 As Souls only understand Souls.

CALAMUS.



IN PATHS UNTRODDEN.

In paths untrodden,
In the growth by margins of pond-waters,
Escaped from the life that exhibits itself,
From all the standards hitherto publish'd—from the
pleasures, profits, eruditions, conformities,
Which too long I was offering to feed my soul ;
Clear to me, now, standards not yet publish'd—clear to
me that my Soul,
That the Soul of the man I speak for, feeds, rejoices
most in comrades ;
Here, by myself, away from the clank of the world,
Tallying and talk'd to here by tongues aromatic,
No longer abash'd—for in this secluded spot I can re-
spond as I would not dare elsewhere,
Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself, yet
contains all the rest,
Resolv'd to sing no songs to-day but those of manly
attachment,
Projecting them along that substantial life,
Bequeathing, hence, types of athletic love,
Afternoon, this delicious Ninth-month, in my forty-first
year,
I proceed, for all who are, or have been, young men,
To tell the secret of my nights and days,
To celebrate the need of comrades.

SCENTED HERBAGE OF MY BREAST.

SCENTED herbage of my breast,
 Leaves from you I yield, I write, to be perused best
 afterwards,
 Tomb-leaves, body-leaves, growing up above me, above
 death,
 Perennial roots, tall leaves—O the winter shall not
 freeze you, delicate leaves,
 Every year shall you bloom again—Out from where you
 retired, you shall emerge again ;
 O I do not know whether many, passing by, will dis-
 cover you, or inhale your faint odor—but I be-
 lieve a few will ;
 O slender leaves ! O blossoms of my blood ! I permit
 you to tell, in your own way, of the heart that
 is under you ;
 O burning and throbbing—surely all will one day be
 accomplish'd ;
 O I do not know what you mean, there underneath
 yourselves—you are not happiness,
 You are often more bitter than I can bear—you burn
 and sting me,
 Yet you are very beautiful to me, you faint-tinged
 roots—you make me think of Death,
 Death is beautiful from you—(what indeed is finally
 beautiful, except Death and Love ?)
 —O I think it is not for life I am chanting here my
 chant of lovers—I think it must be for Death,
 For how calm, how solemn it grows, to ascend to the
 atmosphere of lovers,
 Death or life I am then indifferent—my Soul declines
 to prefer,
 I am not sure but the high Soul of lovers welcomes
 death most ;
 Indeed, O Death, I think now these leaves mean pre-
 cisely the same as you mean ;
 Grow up taller, sweet leaves, that I may see ! grow up
 out of my breast !

Spring away from the conceal'd heart there!
Do not fold yourself so in your pink-tinged roots, timid
leaves!
Do not remain down there so ashamed, herbage of my
breast!
Come, I am determin'd to unbare this broad breast of
mine—I have long enough stifled and choked:
—Emblematic and capricious blades, I leave you—now
you serve me not;
Away! I will say what I have to say, by itself,
I will escape from the sham that was proposed to me,
I will sound myself and comrades only—I will never
again utter a call, only their call,
I will raise, with it, immortal reverberations through
The States,
I will give an example to lovers, to take permanent
shape and will through The States;
Through me shall the words be said to make death
exhilarating;
Give me your tone therefore, O Death, that I may ac-
cord with it,
Give me yourself—for I see that you belong to me now
above all, and are folded inseparably together—
you Love and Death are;
Nor will I allow you to balk me any more with what I
was calling life,
For now it is convey'd to me that you are the purports
essential,
That you hide in these shifting forms of life, for reasons
—and that they are mainly for you,
That you, beyond them, come forth, to remain, the real
reality,
That behind the mask of materials you patiently wait,
no matter how long,
That you will one day, perhaps, take control of all,
That you will perhaps dissipate this entire show of
appearance,
That may-be you are what it is all for—but it does not
last so very long;
But you will last very long.

Whoever you are, Holding me now in Hand.

¹ WHOEVER you are, holding me now in hand,
Without one thing, all will be useless,
I give you fair warning, before you attempt me further,
I am not what you supposed, but far different.

² Who is he that would become my follower?
Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?

³ The way is suspicious—the result uncertain, perhaps
destructive;
You would have to give up all else—I alone would expect
to be your God, sole and exclusive,
Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting,
The whole past theory of your life, and all conformity
to the lives around you, would have to be abandon'd;
Therefore release me now, before troubling yourself any
further—Let go your hand from my shoulders,
Put me down, and depart on your way.

⁴ Or else, by stealth, in some wood, for trial,
Or back of a rock, in the open air,
(For in any roof'd room of a house I emerge not—nor
in company,
And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a gawk, or unborn,
or dead,)
But just possibly with you on a high hill—first watching
lest any person, for miles around, approach
unawares,
Or possibly with you sailing at sea, or on the beach of
the sea, or some quiet island,
Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you,
With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss, or the new husband's
kiss,
For I am the new husband, and I am the comrade.

⁵ Or, if you will, thrusting me beneath your clothing,

Where I may feel the throbs of your heart, or rest upon
 your hip,
 Carry me when you go forth over land or sea ;
 For thus, merely touching you, is enough—is best,
 And thus, touching you, would I silently sleep and be
 carried eternally.

⁶ But these leaves conning, you con at peril,
 For these leaves, and me, you will not understand,
 They will elude you at first, and still more afterward—
 I will certainly elude you,
 Even while you should think you had unquestionably
 caught me, behold !
 Already you see I have escaped from you.

⁷ For it is not for what I have put into it that I have
 written this book,
 Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it,
 Nor do those know me best who admire me, and vaunt-
 ingly praise me,
 Nor will the candidates for my love, (unless at most a
 very few,) prove victorious,
 Nor will my poems do good only—they will do just as
 much evil, perhaps more ;
 For all is useless without that which you may guess at
 many times and not hit—that which I hinted at ;
 Therefore release me, and depart on your way.

THESE I, SINGING IN SPRING.

THESE, I, singing in spring, collect for lovers,
 (For who but I should understand lovers, and all their
 sorrow and joy ?
 And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?)
 Collecting, I traverse the garden, the world—but soon
 I pass the gates,

Now along the pond-side—now wading in a little, fear-
ing not the wet,
Now by the post-and-rail fences, where the old stones
thrown there, pick'd from the fields, have accu-
mulated,
(Wild-flowers and vines and weeds come up through
the stones, and partly cover them—Beyond these
I pass,)
Far, far in the forest, before I think where I go,
Solitary, smelling the earthy smell, stopping now and
then in the silence,
Alone I had thought—yet soon a troop gathers around
me,
Some walk by my side, and some behind, and some em-
brace my arms or neck,
They, the spirits of dear friends, dead or alive—thicker
they come, a great crowd, and I in the middle,
Collecting, dispensing, singing in spring, there I wander
with them,
Plucking something for tokens—tossing toward whoever
is near me ;
Here! lilac, with a branch of pine,
Here, out of my pocket, some moss which I pull'd off a
live-oak in Florida, as it hung trailing down,
Here, some pinks and laurel leaves, and a handful of
sage,
And here what I now draw from the water, wading in
the pond-side,
(O here I last saw him that tenderly loves me—and re-
turns again, never to separate from me,
And this, O this shall henceforth be the token of com-
rades—this Calamus-root shall,
Interchange it, youths, with each other! Let none
render it back!)
And twigs of maple, and a bunch of wild orange, and
chestnut,
And stems of currants, and plum-blows, and the aro-
matic cedar :
These, I, compass'd around by a thick cloud of spirits,
Wandering, point to, or touch as I pass, or throw them
loosely from me,

Indicating to each one what he shall have—giving something to each ;
 But what I drew from the water by the pond-side, that I reserve,
 I will give of it—but only to them that love, as I myself am capable of loving.



A SONG.

1

COME, I will make the continent indissoluble ;
 I will make the most splendid race the sun ever yet shone upon ;
 I will make divine magnetic lands,
 With the love of comrades,
 With the life-long love of comrades.

2

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.

3

For you these, from me, O Democracy, to serve you, ma femme !
 For you ! for you, I am trilling these songs,
 In the love of comrades,
 In the high-towering love of comrades.

NOT HEAVING FROM MY RIBB'D BREAST ONLY.

Not heaving from my ribb'd breast only ;
 Not in sighs at night, in rage, dissatisfied with myself ;
 Not in those long-drawn, ill-suppress'd sighs ;
 Not in many an oath and promise broken ;
 Not in my wilful and savage soul's volition ;
 Not in the subtle nourishment of the air ;
 Not in this beating and pounding at my temples and
 wrists ;
 Not in the curious systole and diastole within, which
 will one day cease ;
 Not in many a hungry wish, told to the skies only ;
 Not in cries, laughter, defiances, thrown from me when
 alone, far in the wilds ;
 Not in husky pantings through clench'd teeth ;
 Not in sounded and resounded words—chattering words,
 echoes, dead words ;
 Not in the murmurs of my dreams while I sleep,
 Nor the other murmurs of these incredible dreams of
 every day ;
 Nor in the limbs and senses of my body, that take you
 and dismiss you continually—Not there ;
 Not in any or all of them, O adhesiveness ! O pulse of
 my life !
 Need I that you exist and show yourself, any more than
 in these songs.

OF THE TERRIBLE DOUBT OF APPEARANCES.

Of the terrible doubt of appearances,
 Of the uncertainty after all—that we may be deluded,
 That may-be reliance and hope are but speculations
 after all,
 That may-be identity beyond the grave is a beautiful
 fable only,

May-be the things I perceive—the animals, plants, men,
 hills, shining and flowing waters,
 The skies of day and night—colors, densities, forms—
 May-be these are, (as doubtless they are,) only
 apparitions, and the real something has yet to be
 known ;
 (How often they dart out of themselves, as if to con-
 found me and mock me !
 How often I think neither I know, nor any man knows,
 aught of them ;)
 May-be seeming to me what they are, (as doubtless they
 indeed but seem,) as from my present point of
 view—And might prove, (as of course they
 would,) naught of what they appear, or naught
 any how, from entirely changed points of view ;
 —To me, these, and the like of these, are curiously an-
 swer'd by my lovers, my dear friends ;
 When he whom I love travels with me, or sits a long
 while holding me by the hand,
 When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that
 words and reason hold not, surround us and
 pervade us,
 Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom
 —I am silent—I require nothing further,
 I cannot answer the question of appearances, or that
 of identity beyond the grave ;
 But I walk or sit indifferent—I am satisfied,
 He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.

The Base of all Metaphysics.

¹ AND now, gentlemen,
 A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,
 As base, and finale too, for all metaphysics.

² (So, to the students, the old professor,
 At the close of his crowded course.)

3 Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and
 Germanic systems,
 Kant having studied and stated—Fichte and Schelling
 and Hegel,
 Stated the lore of Plato—and Socrates, greater than
 Plato,
 And greater than Socrates sought and stated—Christ
 divine having studied long,
 I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic
 systems,
 See the philosophies all—Christian churches and tenets
 see,
 Yet underneath Socrates clearly see—and underneath
 Christ the divine I see,
 The dear love of man for his comrade—the attraction
 of friend to friend,
 Of the well-married husband and wife—of children and
 parents,
 Of city for city, and land for land.

RECORDERS AGES HENCE.

RECORDERS ages hence !
 Come, I will take you down underneath this impassive
 exterior—I will tell you what to say of me ;
 Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of
 the tenderest lover,
 The friend, the lover's portrait, of whom his friend, his
 lover, was fondest,
 Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measure-
 less ocean of love within him—and freely pour'd
 it forth,
 Who often walk'd lonesome walks, thinking of his dear
 friends, his lovers,
 Who pensive, away from one he lov'd, often lay sleep-
 less and dissatisfied at night,

Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest the one he
 lov'd might secretly be indifferent to him,
 Whose happiest days were far away, through fields, in
 woods, on hills, he and another, wandering hand
 in hand, they twain, apart from other men,
 Who oft as he saunter'd the streets, curv'd with his
 arm the shoulder of his friend—while the arm
 of his friend rested upon him also.

WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY.

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how my name
 had been receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol,
 still it was not a happy night for me that fol-
 low'd ;
 And else, when I carous'd, or when my plans were
 accomplish'd, still I was not happy ;
 But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of per-
 fect health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe
 breath of autumn,
 When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and
 disappear in the morning light,
 When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undress-
 ing, bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and
 saw the sun rise,
 And when I thought how my dear friend, my lover, was
 on his way coming, O then I was happy ;
 O then each breath tasted sweeter—and all that day my
 food nourish'd me more—and the beautiful day
 pass'd well,
 And the next came with equal joy—and with the next,
 at evening, came my friend ;
 And that night, while all was still, I heard the waters
 roll slowly continually up the shores,
 I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands, as
 directed to me, whispering, to congratulate me,

For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the
 same cover in the cool night,
 In the stillness, in the autumn moonbeams, his face was
 inclined toward me,
 And his arm lay lightly around my breast—and that
 night I was happy.

Are You the New Person drawn toward Me?

ARE you the new person drawn toward me?
 To begin with, take warning—I am surely far different
 from what you suppose ;
 Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal?
 Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover?
 Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd
 satisfaction?
 Do you think I am trusty and faithful?
 Do you see no further than this façade—this smooth
 and tolerant manner of me?
 Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground to-
 ward a real heroic man?
 Have you no thought, O dreamer, that it may be all
 maya, illusion?

Roots and Leaves Themselves Alone.

Roots and leaves themselves alone are these ;
 Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods,
 and from the pond-side,
 Breast-sorrel and pinks of love—fingers that wind
 around tighter than vines,
 Gushes from the throats of birds, hid in the foliage of
 trees, as the sun is risen ;

Breezes of land and love—breezes set from living shores out to you on the living sea—to you, O sailors!

Frost-mellow'd berries, and Third-month twigs, offer'd fresh to young persons wandering out in the fields when the winter breaks up,

Love-buds, put before you and within you, whcever you are,

Buds to be unfolded on the old terms ;

If you bring the warmth of the sun to them, they will open, and bring form, color, perfume, to you ;

If you become the alimnt and the wet, they will become flowers, fruits, tall branches and trees.



Not Heat Flames up and Consumes.

Nor heat flames up and consumes,

Not sea-waves hurry in and out,

Not the air, delicious and dry, the air of the ripe summer, bears lightly along white down-balls of myriads of seeds,

Wafted, sailing gracefully, to drop where they may ;

Not these—O none of these, more than the flames of me, consuming, burning for his love whom I love!

O none, more than I, hurrying in and out :

—Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never give up? O I the same ;

O nor down-balls, nor perfumes, nor the high, rain-emitting clouds, are borne through the open air,

Any more than my Soul is borne through the open air,

Wafted in all directions, O love, for friendship, for you.

Trickle, Drops.

TRICKLE, drops! my blue veins leaving!
 O drops of me! trickle, slow drops,
 Candid, from me falling—drip, bleeding drops,
 From wounds made to free you whence you were
 prison'd,
 From my face—from my forehead and lips,
 From my breast—from within where I was conceal'd—
 press forth, red drops—confession drops ;
 Stain every page—stain every song I sing, every word
 I say, bloody drops ;
 Let them know your scarlet heat—let them glisten ;
 Saturate them with yourself, all ashamed and wet ;
 Glow upon all I have written, or shall write, bleeding
 drops ;
 Let it all be seen in your light, blushing drops.



City of Orgies.

CITY of orgies, walks and joys!
 City whom that I have lived and sung in your midst
 will one day make you illustrious,
 Not the pageants of you—not your shifting tableaux,
 your spectacles, repay me ;
 Not the interminable rows of your houses—nor the
 ships at the wharves,
 Nor the processions in the streets, nor the bright win-
 dows, with goods in them ;
 Nor to converse with learn'd persons, or bear my share
 in the soiree or feast ;
 Not those—but, as I pass, O Manhattan! your frequent
 and swift flash of eyes offering me love,
 Offering response to my own—these repay me ;
 Lovers, continual lovers, only repay me.

Behold this Swarthy Face.

BEHOLD this swarthy face—these gray eyes,
 This beard—the white wool, unclipt upon my neck,
 My brown hands, and the silent manner of me, without
 charm ;
 Yet comes one, a Manhattanesse, and ever at parting,
 kisses me lightly on the lips with robust love,
 And I, on the 'crossing of the street, or on the ship's
 deck, give a kiss in return ;
 We observe that salute of American comrades, land and
 sea,
 We are those two natural and nonchalant persons.

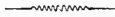


I saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing.

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,
 And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of
 myself ;
 But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves, stand-
 ing alone there, without its friend, its lover 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.

TO A STRANGER.

PASSING stranger! you do not know how longingly I
 look upon you,
 You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking, (it
 comes to me, as of a dream,)
 I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,
 All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate,
 chaste, matured,
 You grew up with me, were a boy with me, or a girl
 with me,
 I ate with you, and slept with you—your body has be-
 come not yours only, nor left my body mine only,
 You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as
 we pass—you take of my beard, breast, hands,
 in return,
 I am not to speak to you—I am to think of you when I
 sit alone, or wake at night alone,
 I am to wait—I do not doubt I am to meet you again,
 I am to see to it that I do not lose you.



This Moment, Yearning and Thoughtful.

THIS moment yearning and thoughtful, sitting alone,
 It seems to me there are other men in other lands,
 yearning and thoughtful ;
 It seems to me I can look over and behold them, in
 Germany, Italy, France, Spain—or far, far away,
 in China, or in Russia or India—talking other
 dialects ;
 And it seems to me if I could know those men, I should
 become attached to them, as I do to men in my
 own lands ;
 O I know we should be brethren and lovers,
 I know I should be happy with them.

I Hear it was Charged Against Me.

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions ;
 But really I am neither for nor against institutions ;
 (What indeed have I in common with them?—Or what with the destruction of them?)
 Only I will establish in the Mannahatta, and in every city of These States, inland and seaboard,
 And in the fields and woods, and above every keel, little or large, that dents the water,
 Without edifices, or rules, or trustees, or any argument,
 The institution of the dear love of comrades.

The Prairie-Grass Dividing.

THE prairie-grass dividing—its special odor breathing,
 I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,
 Demand the most copious and close companionship of men,
 Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings,
 Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh, nutritious,
 Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command—leading, not following,
 Those with a never-quell'd audacity—those with sweet and lusty flesh, clear of taint,
 Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents and Governors, as to say, *Who are you?*
 Those of earth-born passion, simple, never-constrain'd, never obedient,
 Those of inland America.

We Two Boys Together Clinging.

WE two boys together clinging,
 One the other never leaving,
 Up and down the roads going—North and South excursions making,
 Power enjoying—elbows stretching—fingers clutching,
 Arm'd and fearless—eating, drinking, sleeping, loving,
 No law less than ourselves owning—sailing, soldiering,
 thieving, threatening,
 Misers, menials, priests alarming—air breathing, water
 drinking, on the turf or the sea-beach dancing,
 Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes mocking, feebleness chasing,
 Fulfilling our foray.



A PROMISE TO CALIFORNIA.

A PROMISE to California,
 Also to the great Pastoral Plains, and for Oregon :
 Sojourning east a while longer, soon I travel toward
 you, to remain, to teach robust American love ;
 For I know very well that I and robust love belong
 among you, inland, and along the Western Sea ;
 For These States tend inland, and toward the Western
 Sea—and I will also.



HERE THE FRAILEST LEAVES OF ME.

HERE the frailest leaves of me, and yet my strongest-
 lasting :
 Here I shade and hide my thoughts—I myself do not
 expose them,
 And yet they expose me more than all my other poems.

When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame.

WHEN I peruse the conquer'd fame of heroes, and the
 victories of mighty generals, I do not envy the
 generals,
 Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his
 great house ;
 But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it
 was with them,
 How through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging,
 long and long,
 Through youth, and through middle and old age, how
 unflinching, how affectionate and faithful they
 were,
 Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away, fill'd with the
 bitterest envy.



WHAT THINK YOU I TAKE MY PEN IN HAND ?

WHAT think you I take my pen in hand to record ?
 The battle-ship, perfect-model'd, majestic, that I saw
 pass the offing to-day under full sail ?
 The splendors of the past day ? Or the splendor of the
 night that envelops me ?
 Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city
 spread around me ?—No ;
 But I record of two simple men I saw to-day, on the
 pier, in the midst of the crowd, parting the part-
 ing of dear friends ;
 The one to remain hung on the other's neck, and pas-
 sionately kiss'd him,
 While the one to depart, tightly prest the one to remain
 in his arms.

A GLIMPSE.

A GLIMPSE, through an interstice caught,
 Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room,
 around the stove, late of a winter night—And I
 unremark'd, seated in a corner ;
 Of a youth who loves me, and whom I love, silently ap-
 proaching, and seating himself near, that he may
 hold me by the hand ;
 A long while, amid the noises of coming and going—of
 drinking and oath and smutty jest,
 There we two, content, happy in being together, speak-
 ing little, perhaps not a word.

NO LABOR-SAVING MACHINE.

No labor-saving machine,
 Nor discovery have I made ;
 Nor will I be able to leave behind me any wealthy be-
 quest to found a hospital or library,
 Nor reminiscence of any deed of courage, for America,
 Nor literary success, nor intellect—nor book for the
 book-shelf ;
 Only a few carols, vibrating through the air, I have,
 For comrades and lovers.

A LEAF FOR HAND IN HAND.

A LEAF for hand in hand!
 You natural persons old and young !
 You on the Mississippi, and on all the branches and
 bayous of the Mississippi !
 You friendly boatmen and mechanics ! You roughs !
 You twain ! And all processions moving along the
 streets !
 I wish to infuse myself among you till I see it com-
 mon for you to walk hand in hand !

TO THE EAST AND TO THE WEST.

To the East and to the West ;
 To the man of the Seaside State, and of Pennsylvania,
 To the Kanadian of the North—to the Southerner I
 love ;
 These, with perfect trust, to depict you as myself—
 the germs are in all men ;
 I believe the main purport of These States is to found
 a superb friendship, exalté, previously unknown,
 Because I perceive it waits, and has been always wait-
 ing, latent in all men.

EARTH! MY LIKENESS!

EARTH! my likeness!
 Though you look so impassive, ample and spheric
 there,
 I now suspect that is not all ;
 I now suspect there is something fierce in you, eligible
 to burst forth ;
 For an athlete is enamour'd of me—and I of him ;
 But toward him there is something fierce and terrible
 in me, eligible to burst forth,
 I dare not tell it in words—not even in these songs.

I DREAM'D IN A DREAM.

I DREAM'D in a dream, I saw a city invincible to the
 attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth ;
 I dream'd that was the new City of Friends ;
 Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust
 love—it led the rest ;
 It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of
 that city,
 And in all their looks and words.

FAST ANCHOR'D, ETERNAL, O LOVE!

FAST-ANCHOR'D, eternal, O love! O woman I love!
 O bride! O wife! more resistless than I can tell, the
 thought of you!
 —Then separate, as disembodied, or another born,
 Ethereal, the last athletic reality, my consolation;
 I ascend—I float in the regions of your love, O man,
 O sharer of my roving life.



Sometimes with One I Love.

SOMETIMES with one I love, I fill myself with rage, for
 fear I effuse unreturn'd love;
 But now I think there is no unreturn'd love—the pay
 is certain, one way or another;
 (I loved a certain person ardently, and my love was
 not return'd;
 Yet out of that, I have written these songs.)



That Shadow, my Likeness.

THAT shadow, my likeness, that goes to and fro, seek-
 ing a livelihood, chattering, chaffering;
 How often I find myself standing and looking at it
 where it flits;
 How often I question and doubt whether that is really
 me;
 —But in these, and among my lovers, and caroling my
 songs,
 O I never doubt whether that is really me.

AMONG THE MULTITUDE.

¹ AMONG the men and women, the multitude,
 I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine
 signs,
 Acknowledging none else—not parent, wife, husband,
 brother, child, any nearer than I am ;
 Some are baffled—But that one is not—that one knows
 me.

² Ah, lover and perfect equal !
 I meant that you should discover me so, by my faint
 indirections ;
 And I, when I meet you, mean to discover you by the
 like in you.



TO A WESTERN BOY.

O BOY of the West !
 To you many things to absorb, I teach, to help you
 become elevel of mine :
 Yet if blood like mine circle not in your veins ;
 If you be not silently selected by lovers, and do not
 silently select lovers,
 Of what use is it that you seek to become elevel of mine ?



O YOU WHOM I OFTEN AND SILENTLY COME.

O YOU whom I often and silently come where you are,
 that I may be with you ;
 As I walk by your side, or sit near, or remain in the
 same room with you,
 Little you know the subtle electric fire that for your
 sake is playing within me.

Full of Life, Now.

¹ FULL of life, now, compact, visible,
I, forty years old the Eighty-third Year of The States,
To one a century hence, or any number of centuries
 hence,
To you, yet unborn, these, seeking you.

² When you read these, I, that was visible, am become
 invisible ;
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems,
 seeking me ;
Fancying how happy you were, if I could be with you,
 and become your comrade ;
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I
 am now with you.)

SALUT AU MONDE !

1

¹ O TAKE my hand, Walt Whitman !
Such gliding wonders ! such sights and sounds !
Such join'd unended links, each hook'd to the next !
Each answering all—each sharing the earth with all.

² What widens within you, Walt Whitman ?
What waves and soils exuding ?
What climes ? what persons and lands are here ?
Who are the infants ? some playing, some slumbering ?
Who are the girls ? who are the married women ?
Who are the groups of old men going slowly with their
arms about each other's necks ?
What rivers are these ? what forests and fruits are
these ?
What are the mountains call'd that rise so high in the
mists ?
What myriads of dwellings are they, fill'd with dwellers ?

2

³ Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens ;
Asia, Africa, Europe, are to the east—America is pro-
vided for in the west ;
Banding the bulge of the earth winds the hot equator,
Curiously north and south turn the axis-ends ;
Within me is the longest day—the sun wheels in slant-
ing rings—it does not set for months ;

Stretch'd in due time within me the midnight sun just
 rises above the horizon, and sinks again ;
 Within me zones, seas, cataracts, plants, volcanoes,
 groups,
 Malaysia, Polynesia, and the great West Indian islands.

3

⁴ What do you hear, Walt Whitman ?

⁵ I hear the workman singing, and the farmer's wife
 singing ;

I hear in the distance the sounds of children, and of
 animals early in the day ;

I hear quick rifle-cracks from the riflemen of East Ten-
 nessee and Kentucky, hunting on hills ;

I hear emulous shouts of Australians, pursuing the wild
 horse ;

I hear the Spanish dance, with castanets, in the chestnut
 shade, to the rebeck and guitar ;

I hear continual echoes from the Thames ;

I hear fierce French liberty songs ;

I hear of the Italian boat-sculler the musical recitative
 of old poems ;

I hear the Virginia plantation-chorus of negroes, of a
 harvest night, in the glare of pine-knots ;

I hear the strong baritone of the 'long-shore-men of
 Mannahatta ;

I hear the stevedores unlading the cargoes, and singing ;

I hear the screams of the water-fowl of solitary north-
 west lakes ;

I hear the rustling pattering of locusts, as they strike
 the grain and grass with the showers of their
 terrible clouds ;

I hear the Coptic refrain, toward sundown, pensively
 falling on the breast of the black venerable vast
 mother, the Nile ;

I hear the bugles of raft-tenders on the streams of
 Kanada ;

I hear the chirp of the Mexican muleteer, and the
 bells of the mule ;

- I hear the Arab muezzin, calling from the top of the mosque ;
- I hear the Christian priests at the altars of their churches—I hear the responsive base and soprano ;
- I hear the wail of utter despair of the white-hair'd Irish grand-parents, when they learn the death of their grandson ;
- I hear the cry of the Cossack, and the sailor's voice, putting to sea at Okotsk ;
- I hear the wheeze of the slave-coffe, as the slaves march on—as the husky gangs pass on by twos and threes, fasten'd together with wrist-chains and ankle-chains ;
- I hear the entreaties of women tied up for punishment—I hear the sibilant whisk of thongs through the air ;
- I hear the Hebrew reading his records and psalms ;
- I hear the rhythmic myths of the Greeks, and the strong legends of the Romans ;
- I hear the tale of the divine life and bloody death of the beautiful God—the Christ ;
- I hear the Hindoo teaching his favorite pupil the loves, wars, adages, transmitted safely to this day, from poets who wrote three thousand years ago.

4

- ⁶ What do you see, Walt Whitman?
Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you?
- ⁷ I see a great round wonder rolling through the air ;
I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins, grave-yards, jails, factories, palaces, hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of nomads, upon the surface ;
I see the shaded part on one side, where the sleepers are sleeping—and the sun-lit part on the other side,
I see the curious silent change of the light and shade,

I see distant lands, as real and near to the inhabitants
of them, as my land is to me.

⁸ I see plenteous waters ;

I see mountain peaks—I see the sierras of Andes and
Alleghanies, where they range ;

I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shahs, Altays,
Ghauts ;

I see the giant pinnacles of Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,

I see the Rocky Mountains, and the Peak of Winds ;

I see the Styrian Alps, and the Karnac Alps ;

I see the Pyrenees, Balks, Carpathians—and to the
north the Dofrafields, and off at sea Mount
Hecla ;

I see Vesuvius and Etna—I see the Anahuacs ;

I see the Mountains of the Moon, and the Snow
Mountains, and the Red Mountains of Mada-
gascar ;

I see the Vermont hills, and the long string of Cor-
dilleras ;

I see the vast deserts of Western America ;

I see the Lybian, Arabian, and Asiatic deserts ;

I see huge dreadful Arctic and Antarctic icebergs ;

I see the superior oceans and the inferior ones—the
Atlantic and Pacific, the sea of Mexico, the
Brazilian sea, and the sea of Peru,

The Japan waters, those of Hindostan, the China Sea,
and the Gulf of Guinea,

The spread of the Baltic, Caspian, Bothnia, the British
shores, and the Bay of Biscay,

The clear-sunn'd Mediterranean, and from one to an-
other of its islands,

The inland fresh-tasted seas of North America,

The White Sea, and the sea around Greenland.

⁹ I behold the mariners of the world ;

Some are in storms—some in the night, with the
watch on the look-out ;

Some drifting helplessly—some with contagious dis-
cases.

- ¹⁰ I behold the sail and steamships of the world, some in clusters in port, some on their voyages ;
 Some double the Cape of Storms—some Cape Verde, —others Cape Guardafui, Bon, or Bajadore ;
 Others Dondra Head—others pass the Straits of Sunda—others Cape Lopatka—others Behring's Straits ;
 Others Cape Horn—others sail the Gulf of Mexico, or along Cuba or Hayti—others Hudson's Bay or Baffin's Bay ;
 Others pass the Straits of Dover—others enter the Wash—others the Firth of Solway—others round Cape Clear—others the Land's End ;
 Others traverse the Zuyder Zee, or the Scheld ;
 Others add to the exits and entrances at Sandy Hook ;
 Others to the comers and goers at Gibraltar, or the Dardanelles ;
 Others sternly push their way through the northern winter-packs ;
 Others descend or ascend the Obi or the Lena ;
 Others the Niger or the Congo—others the Indus, the Burampooter and Cambodia ;
 Others wait at the wharves of Manhattan, steam'd up, ready to start ;
 Wait, swift and swarthy, in the ports of Australia ;
 Wait at Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, Marseilles, Lisbon, Naples, Hamburg, Bremen, Bordeaux, the Hague, Copenhagen ;
 Wait at Valparaiso, Rio Janeiro, Panama ;
 Wait at their moorings at Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, Galveston, San Francisco.

5.

- ¹¹ I see the tracks of the rail-roads of the earth ;
 I see them welding State to State, city to city, through North America ;
 I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe ;
 I see them in Asia and in Africa.

- ¹² I see the electric telegraphs of the earth ;
 I see the filaments of the news of the wars, deaths,
 losses, gains, passions, of my race.
- ¹³ I see the long river-stripes of the earth ;
 I see where the Mississippi flows—I see where the Co-
 lumbia flows ;
 I see the Great River, and the Falls of Niagara ;
 I see the Amazon and the Paraguay ;
 I see the four great rivers of China, the Amour, the
 Yellow River, the Yiang-tse, and the Pearl ;
 I see where the Seine flows, and where the Danube,
 the Loire, the Rhone, and the Guadalquivir
 flow ;
 I see the windings of the Volga, the Dnieper, the
 Oder ;
 I see the Tuscan going down the Arno, and the Vene-
 tian along the Po ;
 I see the Greek seaman sailing out of Egina bay.

6

- ¹⁴ I see the site of the old empire of Assyria, and that
 of Persia, and that of India ;
 I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of
 Saukara.
- ¹⁵ I see the place of the idea of the Deity incarnated by
 avatars in human forms ;
 I see the spots of the successions of priests on the earth
 —oracles, sacrificers, brahmins, sabians, lamas,
 monks, muftis, exhorters ;
 I see where druids walked the groves of Mena—I see
 the mistletoe and vervain ;
 I see the temples of the deaths of the bodies of Gods—
 I see the old signifiers.
- ¹⁶ I see Christ once more eating the bread of his last
 supper, in the midst of youths and old persons ;
 I see where the strong divine young man, the Hercules,
 toil'd faithfully and long, and then died ;

I see the place of the innocent rich life and hapless fate
of the beautiful nocturnal son, the full-limb'd
Bacchus ;

I see Kneph, blooming, drest in blue, with the crown
of feathers on his head ;

I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well-beloved, saying
to the people, *Do not weep for me,*

*This is not my true country, I have lived banish'd from
my true country—I now go back there,*

*I return to the celestial sphere, where every one goes in his
turn.*

7

¹⁷ I see the battle-fields of the earth—grass grows upon
them, and blossoms and corn ;

I see the tracks of ancient and modern expeditions.

¹⁸ I see the nameless masonries, venerable messages of
the unknown events, heroes, records of the earth.

¹⁹ I see the places of the sagas ;

I see pine-trees and fir-trees torn by northern blasts ;

I see granite boulders and cliffs—I see green meadows
and lakes ;

I see the burial-cairns of Scandinavian warriors ;

I see them raised high with stones, by the marge of
restless oceans, that the dead men's spirits, when
they wearied of their quiet graves, might rise up
through the mounds, and gaze on the tossing bil-
lows, and be refresh'd by storms, immensity, lib-
erty, action.

²⁰ I see the steppes of Asia ;

I see the tumuli of Mongolia—I see the tents of Kal-
mucks and Baskirs ;

I see the nomadic tribes, with herds of oxen and cows ;

I see the table-lands notch'd with ravines—I see the
jungles and deserts ;

I see the camel, the wild steed, the bustard, the fat-
tail'd sheep, the antelope, and the burrowing
wolf.

²¹ I see the high-lands of Abyssinia ;
 I see flocks of goats feeding, and see the fig-tree, tamarind, date,
 And see fields of teff-wheat, and see the places of verdure and gold.

²² I see the Brazilian vaquero ;
 I see the Bolivian ascending Mount Sorata ;
 I see the Wacho crossing the plains—I see the incomparable rider of horses with his lasso on his arm ;
 I see over the pampas the pursuit of wild cattle for their hides.

8

²³ I see little and large sea-dots, some inhabited, some uninhabited ;
 I see two boats with nets, lying off the shore of Pamanok, quite still ;
 I see ten fishermen waiting—they discover now a thick school of mossbonkers—they drop the join'd seine-ends in the water,
 The boats separate—they diverge and row off, each on its rounding course to the beach, enclosing the mossbonkers ;
 The net is drawn in by a windlass by those who stop ashore,
 Some of the fishermen lounge in their boats—others stand negligently ankle-deep in the water, pois'd on strong legs ;
 The boats are partly drawn up—the water slaps against them ;
 On the sand, in heaps and winrows, well out from the water, lie the green-back'd spotted mossbonkers.

9

²⁴ I see the despondent red man in the west, lingering about the banks of Moingo, and about Lake Pepin ;

He has heard the quail and beheld the honey-bee, and sadly prepared to depart.

²⁵ I see the regions of snow and ice ;
 I see the sharp-eyed Samoiede and the Finn ;
 I see the seal-seeker in his boat, poisoning his lance ;
 I see the Siberian on his slight-built sledge, drawn by dogs ;
 I see the porpoise-hunters—I see the whale-crews of the South Pacific and the North Atlantic ;
 I see the cliffs, glaciers, torrents, valleys, of Switzerland—
 —I mark the long winters, and the isolation.

²⁶ I see the cities of the earth, and make myself at random a part of them ;
 I am a real Parisian ;
 I am a habitant of Vienna, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Constantinople ;
 I am of Adelaide, Sidney, Melbourne ;
 I am of London, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, Limerick ;
 I am of Madrid, Cadiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Brussels, Berne, Frankfort, Stuttgart, Turin, Florence ;
 I belong in Moscow, Cracow, Warsaw—or northward in Christiania or Stockholm—or in Siberian Irkutsk—or in some street in Iceland ;
 I descend upon all those cities, and rise from them again.

10

²⁷ I see vapors exhaling from unexplored countries ;
 I see the savage types, the bow and arrow, the poison'd splint, the fetish, and the obi.

²⁸ I see African and Asiatic towns ;
 I see Algiers, Tripoli, Derne, Mogadore, Timbuctoo, Monrovia ;
 I see the swarms of Pekin, Canton, Benares, Delhi, Calcutta, Yedo ;
 I see the Kruman in his hut, and the Dahoman and Ashantee-man in their huts ;

I see the Turk smoking opium in Aleppo ;
 I see the picturesque crowds at the fairs of Khiva, and
 those of Herat ;
 I see Teheran—I see Muscat and Medina, and the inter-
 vening sands—I see the caravans toiling onward ;
 I see Egypt and the Egyptians—I see the pyramids and
 obelisks ;
 I look on chisel'd histories, songs, philosophies, cut in
 slabs of sand-stone, or on granite-blocks ;
 I see at Memphis mummy-pits, containing mummies,
 embalm'd, swathed in linen cloth, lying there
 many centuries ;
 I look on the fall'n Theban, the large-ball'd eyes, the
 side-drooping neck, the hands folded across the
 breast.

²⁹ I see the menials of the earth, laboring ;
 I see the prisoners in the prisons ;
 I see the defective human bodies of the earth ;
 I see the blind, the deaf and dumb, idiots, hunchbacks,
 lunatics ;
 I see the pirates, thieves, betrayers, murderers, slave-
 makers of the earth ;
 I see the helpless infants, and the helpless old men and
 women.

³⁰ I see male and female everywhere ;
 I see the serene brotherhood of philosophs ;
 I see the constructiveness of my race ;
 I see the results of the perseverance and industry of
 my race ;
 I see ranks, colors, barbarisms, civilizations—I go
 among them—I mix indiscriminately,
 And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth.

11

³¹ You, whoever you are !
 You daughter or son of England !
 You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires ! you Russ
 in Russia !

- You dim-descended, black, divine-soul'd African, large,
fine-headed, nobly-form'd, superbly destin'd, on
equal terms with me!
- You Norwegian! Swede! Dane! Icelander! you Prus-
sian!
- You Spaniard of Spain! you Portuguese!
- You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France!
- You Belge! you liberty-lover of the Netherlands!
- You sturdy Austrian! you Lombard! Hun! Bohemian!
farmer of Styria!
- You neighbor of the Danube!
- You working-man of the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Weser!
you working-woman too!
- You Sardinian! you Bavarian! Swabian! Saxon! Wal-
lachian! Bulgarian!
- You citizen of Prague! Roman! Neapolitan! Greek!
- You lithe matador in the arena at Seville!
- You mountaineer living lawlessly on the Taurus or
Caucasus!
- You Bokh horse-herd, watching your mares and stal-
lions feeding!
- You beautiful-bodied Persian, at full speed in the sad-
dle, shooting arrows to the mark!
- You Chinaman and Chinawoman of China! you Tartar
of Tartary!
- You women of the earth subordinated at your tasks!
- You Jew journeying in your old age through every risk,
to stand once on Syrian ground!
- You other Jews waiting in all lands for your Messiah!
- You thoughtful Armenian, pondering by some stream
of the Euphrates! you peering amid the ruins
of Ninevah! you ascending Mount Ararat!
- You foot-worn pilgrim welcoming the far-away sparkle
of the minarets of Mecca!
- You sheiks along the stretch from Suez to Bab-el-man-
deb, ruling your families and tribes!
- You olive-grower tending your fruit on fields of Naz-
areth, Damascus, or Lake Tiberias!
- You Thibet trader on the wide inland, or bargaining
in the shops of Lassa!

You Japanese man or woman! you liver in Madagasc-
 car, Ceylon, Sumatra, Borneo!
 All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia,
 indifferent of place!
 All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagocs
 of the sea!
 And you of centuries hence, when you listen to me!
 And you, each and everywhere, whom I specify not, but
 include just the same!
 Health to you! Good will to you all—from me and
 America sent.

³² Each of us inevitable;
 Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right
 upon the earth;
 Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth;
 Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

12

³³ You Hottentot with clicking palate! You woolly-
 hair'd hordes!
 You own'd persons, dropping sweat-drops or blood-
 drops!
 You human forms with the fathomless ever-impressive
 countenances of brutes!
 I dare not refuse you—the scope of the world, and of
 time and space, are upon me.

³⁴ You poor koboo whom the meanest of the rest look
 down upon, for all your glimmering language
 and spirituality!
 You low expiring aborigines of the hills of Utah, Ore-
 gon, California!
 You dwarf'd Kamtschatkan, Greenlander, Lapp!
 You Austral negro, naked, red, sooty, with protrusive
 lip, grovelling, seeking your food!
 You Caffre, Berber, Soudanese!
 You haggard, uncouth, untutor'd, Bedowee!
 You plague-swarms in Madras, Nankin, Kaubul, Cairo!
 You bather bathing in the Ganges!

You benighted roamer of Amazonia! you Patagonian!
you Fejee-man!

You peon of Mexico! you slave of Carolina, Texas,
Tennessee!

I do not prefer others so very much before you either;
I do not say one word against you, away back there,
where you stand;

(You will come forward in due time to my side.)

³⁵ My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determina-
tion around the whole earth;

I have look'd for equals and lovers, and found them
ready for me in all lands;

I think some divine rapport has equalized me with
them.

13

³⁶ O vapors! I think I have risen with you, and moved
away to distant continents, and fallen down there,
for reasons;

I think I have blown with you, O winds;

O waters, I have finger'd every shore with you.

³⁷ I have run through what any river or strait of the
globe has run through;

I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas, and
on the high embedded rocks, to cry thence.

³⁸ *Salut au monde!*

What cities the light or warmth penetrates, I penetrate
those cities myself;

All islands to which birds wing their way, I wing my
way myself.

³⁹ Toward all,

I raise high the perpendicular hand—I make the signal,
To remain after me in sight forever,

For all the haunts and homes of men.

A CHILD'S AMAZE.

SILENT and amazed, even when a little boy,
 I remember I heard the preacher every Sunday put
 God in his statements,
 As contending against some being or influence.

THE RUNNER.

ON a flat road runs the well-train'd runner ;
 He is lean and sinewy, with muscular legs ;
 He is thinly clothed—he leans forward as he runs,
 With lightly closed fists, and arms partially rais'd.

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

WOMEN sit, or move to and fro—some old, some young ;
 The young are beautiful—but the old are more beauti-
 ful than the young.

MOTHER AND BABE.

I SEE the sleeping babe, nestling the breast of its mother ;
 The sleeping mother and babe—hush'd, I study them
 long and long.

THOUGHT.

OF obedience, faith, adhesiveness ;
 As I stand aloof and look, there is to me something
 profoundly affecting in large masses of men, fol-
 lowing the lead of those who do not believe in
 men.

AMERICAN FEUILLAGE.

- AMERICA always !
Always our own feuillage !
Always Florida's green peninsula ! Always the priceless
delta of Louisiana ! Always the cotton-fields of
Alabama and Texas !
Always California's golden hills and hollows—and the
silver mountains of New Mexico ! Always soft-
breath'd Cuba !
Always the vast slope drain'd by the Southern Sea—
inseparable with the slopes drain'd by the East-
ern and Western Seas ;
The area the eighty-third year of These States—the
three and a half millions of square miles ;
The eighteen thousand miles of sea-coast and bay-coast
on the main—the thirty thousand miles of river
navigation,
The seven millions of distinct families, and the same
number of dwellings—Always these, and more,
branching forth into numberless branches ;
Always the free range and diversity ! always the conti-
nent of Democracy !
Always the prairies, pastures, forests, vast cities, trav-
elers, Kanada, the snows ;
Always these compact lands—lands tied at the hips
with the belt stringing the huge oval lakes ;
Always the West, with strong native persons—the in-
creasing density there—the habitans, friendly,
threatening, ironical, scorning invaders ;
All sights, South, North, East—all deeds, promiscu-
ously done at all times,

All characters, movements, growths—a few noticed,
 myriads unnoticed,
Through Mannahatta's streets I walking, these things
 gathering ;
On interior rivers, by night, in the glare of pine knots,
 steamboats wooding up ;
Sunlight by day on the valley of the Susquehanna, and
 on the valleys of the Potomac and Rappahannock,
 and the valleys of the Roanoke and Delaware ;
In their northerly wilds, beasts of prey haunting the
 Adirondacks, the hills—or lapping the Saginaw
 waters to drink ;
In a lonesome inlet, a sheldrake, lost from the flock,
 sitting on the water, rocking silently ;
In farmers' barns, oxen in the stable, their harvest labor
 done—they rest standing—they are too tired ;
Afar on arctic ice, the she-walrus lying drowsily, while
 her cubs play around ;
The hawk sailing where men have not yet sail'd—the
 farthest polar sea, ripply, crystalline, open, be-
 yond the floes ;
White drift spooning ahead, where the ship in the tem-
 pest dashes ;
On solid land, what is done in cities, as the bells all
 strike midnight together ;
In primitive woods, the sounds there also sounding—
 the howl of the wolf, the scream of the panther,
 and the hoarse bellow of the elk ;
In winter beneath the hard blue ice of Moosehead Lake
 —in summer visible through the clear waters,
 the great trout swimming ;
In lower latitudes, in warmer air, in the Carolinas, the
 large black buzzard floating slowly, high beyond
 the tree tops,
Below, the red cedar, festoon'd with tylandria—the
 pines and cypresses, growing out of the white
 sand that spreads far and flat ;
Rude boats descending the big Pedee—climbing plants,
 parasites, with color'd flowers and berries, envel-
 oping huge trees,

- The waving drapery on the live oak, trailing long and low, noiselessly waved by the wind ;
- The camp of Georgia wagoners, just after dark—the supper-fires, and the cooking and eating by whites and negroes,
- Thirty or forty great wagons—the mules, cattle, horses, feeding from troughs,
- The shadows, gleams, up under the leaves of the old sycamore-trees—the flames—with the black smoke from the pitch-pine, curling and rising ;
- Southern fishermen fishing—the sounds and inlets of North Carolina's coast—the shad-fishery and the herring-fishery—the large sweep-scines—the windlasses on shore work'd by horses—the clearing, curing, and packing-houses ;
- Deep in the forest, in piney woods, turpentine dropping from the incisions in the trees—There are the turpentine works,
- There are the negroes at work, in good health—the ground in all directions is cover'd with pine straw :
- In Tennessee and Kentucky, slaves busy in the coal-ings, at the forge, by the furnace-blaze, or at the corn-shucking ;
- In Virginia, the planter's son returning after a long absence, joyfully welcom'd and kiss'd by the aged mulatto nurse ;
- On rivers, boatmen safely moor'd at night-fall, in their boats, under shelter of high banks,
- Some of the younger men dance to the sound of the banjo or fiddle—others sit on the gunwale, smoking and talking ;
- Late in the afternoon, the mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing in the Great Dismal Swamp—there are the greenish waters, the resinous odor, the plenteous moss, the cypress tree, and the juniper tree ;
- Northward, young men of Mannahatta—the target company from an excursion returning home at evening—the musket-muzzles all bear bunches of flowers presented by women ;

Children at play—or on his father's lap a young boy
 fallen asleep, (how his lips move! how he smiles
 in his sleep!)
 The scout riding on horseback over the plains west of
 the Mississippi—he ascends a knoll and sweeps
 his eye around;
 California life—the miner, bearded, dress'd in his rude
 costume—the stanch California friendship—the
 sweet air—the graves one, in passing, meets,
 solitary, just aside the horse-path;
 Down in Texas, the cotton-field, the negro-cabins—
 drivers driving mules or oxen before rude carts—
 cotton bales piled on banks and wharves;
 Encircling all, vast-darting, up and wide, the American
 Soul, with equal hemispheres—one Love, one
 Dilation or Pride;
 —In arriere, the peace-talk with the Iroquois, the abo-
 rigines—the calumet, the pipe of good-will, arbi-
 tration, and indorsement,
 The sachem blowing the smoke first toward the sun and
 then toward the earth,
 The drama of the scalp-dance enacted with painted
 faces and guttural exclamations,
 The setting out of the war-party—the long and stealthy
 march,
 The single-file—the swinging hatchets—the surprise
 and slaughter of enemies;
 —All the acts, scenes, ways, persons, attitudes of These
 States—reminiscences, all institutions,
 All These States, compact—Every square mile of These
 States, without excepting a particle—you also—
 me also,
 Me pleas'd, rambling in lanes and country fields, Pau-
 manok's fields,
 Me, observing the spiral flight of two little yellow but-
 terflies, shuffling between each other, ascending
 high in the air;
 The darting swallow, the destroyer of insects—the fall
 traveler southward, but returning northward
 early in the spring;

- The country boy at the close of the day, driving the herd of cows, and shouting to them as they loiter to browse by the road-side ;
- The city wharf—Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, San Francisco,
- The departing ships, when the sailors heave at the capstan ;
- Evening—me in my room—the setting sun,
- The setting summer sun shining in my open window, showing the swarm of flies, suspended, balancing in the air in the centre of the room, darting athwart, up and down, casting swift shadows in specks on the opposite wall, where the shine is ;
- The athletic American matron speaking in public to crowds of listeners ;
- Males, females, immigrants, combinations—the copiousness—the individuality of The States, each for itself—the money-makers ;
- Factories, machinery, the mechanical forces—the windlass, lever, pulley—All certainties,
- The certainty of space, increase, freedom, futurity,
- In space, the sporades, the scatter'd islands, the stars—on the firm earth, the lands, my lands ;
- O lands! all so dear to me—what you are, (whatever it is,) I become a part of that, whatever it is ;
- Southward there, I screaming, with wings slow flapping, with the myriads of gulls wintering along the coasts of Florida—or in Louisiana, with pelicans breeding ;
- Otherways, there, atwixt the banks of the Arkansaw, the Rio Grande, the Nueces, the Brazos, the Tombigbee, the Red River, the Saskatchewan, or the Osage, I with the spring waters laughing and skipping and running ;
- Northward, on the sands, on some shallow bay of Pamanok, I, with parties of snowy herons wading in the wet to seek worms and aquatic plants ;
- Retreating, triumphantly twittering, the king-bird, from piercing the crow with its bill, for amusement—And I triumphantly twittering ;

The migrating flock of wild geese alighting in autumn to refresh themselves—the body of the flock feed—the sentinels outside move around with erect heads watching, and are from time to time reliev'd by other sentinels—And I feeding and taking turns with the rest ;

In Kanadian forests, the moose, large as an ox, corner'd by hunters, rising desperately on his hind-feet, and plunging with his fore-feet, the hoofs as sharp as knives—And I, plunging at the hunters, corner'd and desperate ;

In the Mannahatta, streets, piers, shipping, store-houses, and the countless workmen working in the shops, And I too of the Mannahatta, singing thereof—and no less in myself than the whole of the Mannahatta in itself,

Singing the song of These, my ever-united lands—my body no more inevitably united, part to part, and made one identity, any more than my lands are inevitably united, and made ONE IDENTITY ;

Nativities, climates, the grass of the great Pastoral Plains ;

Cities, labors, death, animals, products, war, good and evil—these me,

These affording, in all their particulars, endless feuillage to me and to America, how can I do less than pass the clew of the union of them, to afford the like to you ?

Whoever you are ! how can I but offer you divine leaves, that you also be eligible as I am ?

How can I but, as here, chanting, invite you for yourself to collect bouquets of the incomparable feuillage of These States ?

SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE.



1

¹ WEAPON, shapely, naked, wan!
Head from the mother's bowels drawn!
Wooded flesh and metal bone! limb only one, and lip
 only one!
Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown! helve produced from
 a little seed sown!
Resting the grass amid and upon,
To be lean'd, and to lean on.

² Strong shapes, and attributes of strong shapes—mas-
 culine trades, sights and sounds;
Long varied train of an emblem, dabs of music;
Fingers of the organist skipping staccato over the keys
 of the great organ.

2

³ Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind;
Welcome are lands of pine and oak;
Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig;
Welcome are lands of gold;
Welcome are lands of wheat and maize—welcome those
 of the grape;
Welcome are lands of sugar and rice;
Welcome the cotton-lands—welcome those of the white
 potato and sweet potato;
Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies;

Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings ;
 Welcome the measureless grazing-lands—welcome the teeming soil of orchards, flax, honey, hemp ;
 Welcome just as much the other more hard-faced lands ;
 Lands rich as lands of gold, or wheat and fruit lands ;
 Lands of mines, lands of the manly and rugged ores ;
 Lands of coal, copper, lead, tin, zinc ;
 LANDS OF IRON! lands of the make of the axe!

3

⁴ The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it ;
 The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space clear'd for a garden,
 The irregular tapping of rain down on the leaves, after the storm is lull'd,
 The wailing and moaning at intervals, the thought of the sea,
 The thought of ships struck in the storm, and put on their beam ends, and the cutting away of masts ;
 The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd houses and barns ;
 The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a venture of men, families, goods,
 The disembarkation, the founding of a new city,
 The voyage of those who sought a New England and found it—the outset anywhere,
 The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa, Willamette,
 The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-bags ;
 The beauty of all adventurous and daring persons,
 The beauty of wood-boys and wood-men, with their clear untrimm'd faces,
 The beauty of independence, departure, actions that rely on themselves,
 The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies, the boundless impatience of restraint,
 The loose drift of character, the inking through random types, the solidification ;

The butcher in the slaughter-house, the hands aboard
schooners and sloops, the raftsmen, the picuener,
Lumbermen in their winter camp, day-break in the
woods, stripes of snow on the limbs of trees, the
occasional snapping,

The glad clear sound of one's own voice, the merry
song, the natural life of the woods, the strong
day's work,

The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the
talk, the bed of hemlock boughs, and the bear-
skin ;

—The house-builder at work in cities or anywhere,
The preparatory jointing, squaring, sawing, mortising,
The hoist-up of beams, the push of them in their places,
laying them regular,

Setting the studs by their tenons in the mortises, accord-
ing as they were prepared,

The blows of mallets and hammers, the attitudes of the
men, their curv'd limbs,

Bending, standing, astride the beams, driving in pins,
holding on by posts and braces,

The hook'd arm over the plate, the other arm wielding
the axe,

The floor-men forcing the planks close, to be nail'd,
Their postures bringing their weapons downward on
the bearers,

The echoes resounding through the vacant building ;
The huge store-house carried up in the city, well under
way,

The six framing-men, two in the middle, and two at
each end, carefully bearing on their shoulders a
heavy stick for a cross-beam,

The crowded line of masons with trowels in their right
hands, rapidly laying the long side-wall, two
hundred feet from front to rear,

The flexible rise and fall of backs, the continual click
of the trowels striking the bricks,

The bricks, one after another, each laid so workman-
like in its place, and set with a knock of the
trowel-handle,

The piles of materials, the mortar on the mortar-boards,
and the steady replenishing by the hod-men ;
—Spar-makers in the spar-yard, the swarming row of
well-grown apprentices,
The swing of their axes on the square-hew'd log,
shaping it toward the shape of a mast,
The brisk short crackle of the steel driven slantingly
into the pine,
The butter-color'd chips flying off in great flakes and
slivers,
The limber motion of brawny young arms and hips in
easy costumes ;
The constructor of wharves, bridges, piers, buik-heads,
floats, stays against the sea ;
—The city fireman—the fire that suddenly bursts forth
in the close-pack'd square,
The arriving engines, the hoarse shouts, the nimble
stepping and daring,
The strong command through the fire-trumpets, the
falling in line, the rise and fall of the arms
forcing the water,
The slender, spasmic, blue-white jets—the bringing
to bear of the hooks and ladders, and their
execution,
The crash and cut away of connecting wood-work, or
through floors, if the fire smoulders under them,
The crowd with their lit faces, watching—the glare
and dense shadows ;
—The forger at his forge-furnace, and the user of iron
after him,
The maker of the axe large and small, and the welder
and temperer,
The chooser breathing his breath on the cold steel,
and trying the edge with his thumb,
The one who clean-shapes the handle, and sets it firmly
in the socket ;
The shadowy processions of the portraits of the past
users also,
The primal patient mechanics, the architects and en-
gineers,
The far-off Assyrian edifice and Mizra edifice,

The Roman lictors preceding the consuls,
 The antique European warrior with his axe in combat,
 The uplifted arm, the clatter of blows on the helmeted
 head,
 The death-howl, the limpsey tumbling body, the rush
 of friend and foe thither,
 The siege of revolted lieges determin'd for liberty,
 The summons to surrender, the battering at castle gates,
 the truce and parley ;
 The sack of an old city in its time,
 The bursting in of mercenaries and bigots tumultuously
 and disorderly,
 Roar, flames, blood, drunkenness, madness,
 Goods freely rifled from houses and temples, screams of
 women in the gripe of brigands,
 Craft and thievery of camp-followers, men running, old
 persons despairing,
 The hell of war, the cruelties of creeds,
 The list of all executive deeds and words, just or unjust,
 The power of personality, just or unjust.

4

⁵ Muscle and pluck forever!

What invigorates life, invigorates death,
 And the dead advance as much as the living advance,
 And the future is no more uncertain than the present,
 And the roughness of the earth and of man encloses as
 much as the delicatessen of the earth and of man,
 And nothing endures but personal qualities.

⁶ What do you think endures ?

Do you think the great city endures ?

Or a teeming manufacturing state ? or a prepared con-
 stitution ? or the best built steamships ?

Or hotels of granite and iron ? or any chef-d'œuvres of
 engineering, forts, armaments ?

⁷ Away ! These are not to be cherish'd for themselves ;
 They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians
 play for them ;

The show passes, all does well enough of course,
All does very well till one flash of defiance.

⁸ The great city is that which has the greatest man or
woman ;
If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in
the whole world.

5

⁹ The place where the great city stands is not the
place of stretch'd wharves, docks, manufactures,
deposits of produce,
Nor the place of ceaseless salutes of new comers, or the
anchor-lifters of the departing,
Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings, or
shops selling goods from the rest of the earth,
Nor the place of the best libraries and schools—nor the
place where money is plentiest,
Nor the place of the most numerous population.

¹⁰ Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of
orators and bards ;
Where the city stands that is beloved by these, and
loves them in return, and understands them ;
Where no monuments exist to heroes, but in the com-
mon words and deeds ;
Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place ;
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws ;
Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases ;
Where the populace rise at once against the never-
ending audacity of elected persons ;
Where fierce men and women pour forth, as the sea to
the whistle of death pours its sweeping and un-
riptide waves ;
Where outside authority enters always after the preced-
ence of inside authority ;
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal—and
President, Mayor, Governor, and what not, are
agents for pay ;
Where children are taught to be laws to themselves,
and to depend on themselves ;

Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs ;
 Where speculations on the Soul are encouraged ;
 Where women walk in public processions in the streets,
 the same as the men,
 Where they enter the public assembly and take places
 the same as the men ;
 Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands ;
 Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands ;
 Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands ;
 Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,
 There the great city stands.

6

¹¹ How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!
 How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels
 before a man's or woman's look !

¹² All waits, or goes by default, till a strong being ap-
 pears ;
 A strong being is the proof of the race, and of the abil-
 ity of the universe ;
 When he or she appears, materials are overaw'd,
 The dispute on the Soul stops,
 The old customs and phrases are confronted, turn'd
 back, or laid away.

¹³ What is your money-making now? what can it do now?
 What is your respectability now?
 What are your theology, tuition, society, traditions,
 statute-books, now?
 Where are your jibes of being now?
 Where are your cavils about the Soul now ?

7

¹⁴ A sterile landscape covers the ore—there is as good
 as the best, for all the forbidding appearance ;
 There is the mine, there are the miners ;
 The forge-furnace is there, the melt is accomplish'd ;
 the hammers-men are at hand with their tongs
 and hammers ;
 What always served, and always serves, is at hand.

¹⁵ Than this, nothing has better served—it has served all :
 Served the fluent-tongued and subtle-sensed Greek, and
 long ere the Greek :
 Served in building the buildings that last longer than
 any ;
 Served the Hebrew, the Persian, the most ancient Hin-
 dostanee ;
 Served the mound-raiser on the Mississippi—served
 those whose relics remain in Central America ;
 Served Albic temples in woods or on plains, with un-
 hewn pillars, and the druids ;
 Served the artificial clefts, vast, high, silent, on the
 snow-cover'd hills of Scandinavia ;
 Served those who, time out of mind, made on the gran-
 ite walls rough sketches of the sun, moon, stars,
 ships, ocean-waves ;
 Served the paths of the irruptions of the Goths—served
 the pastoral tribes and nomads ;
 Served the long, long distant Kelt—served the hardy
 pirates of the Baltic ;
 Served before any of those, the venerable and harmless
 men of Ethiopia ;
 Served the making of helms for the galleys of pleasure,
 and the making of those for war ;
 Served all great works on land, and all great works on
 the sea ;
 For the mediæval ages, and before the mediæval ages ;
 Served not the living only, then as now, but served the
 dead.

8

¹⁶ I see the European headsman ;
 He stands mask'd, clothed in red, with huge legs, and
 strong naked arms,
 And leans on a ponderous axe.

¹⁷ (Whom have you slaughter'd lately, European heads-
 man ?
 Whose is that blood upon you, so wet and sticky ?)

¹⁸ I see the clear sunsets of the martyrs ;

I see from the scaffolds the descending ghosts,
 Ghosts of dead lords, uncrown'd ladies, impeach'd min-
 isters, rejected kings,
 Rivals, traitors, poisoners, disgraced chieftains, and the
 rest.

¹⁹ I see those who in any land have died for the good
 cause ;
 The seed is spare, nevertheless the crop shall never run
 out ;
 (Mind you, O foreign kings, O priests, the crop shall
 never run out.)

²⁰ I see the blood wash'd entirely away from the axe ;
 Both blade and helve are clean ;
 They spirt no more the blood of European nobles—
 they clasp no more the necks of queens.

²¹ I see the headsman withdraw and become useless ;
 I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy—I see no
 longer any axe upon it ;
 I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of
 my own race—the newest, largest race.

9

²² (America! I do not vaunt my love for you ;
 I have what I have.)

²³ The axe leaps!
 The solid forest gives fluid utterances ;
 They tumble forth, they rise and form,
 Hut, tent, landing, survey,
 Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade,
 Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, jamb, lath, panel, gable,
 Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ, exhibition-
 house, library,
 Cornice, trellis, pilaster, balcony, window, shutter, tur-
 ret, porch,
 Hoe, rake, pitch-fork, pencil, wagon, staff, saw, jack-
 plane, mallet, wedge, rounce,

Chair, tub, hoop, table, wicket, vane, sash, floor,
 Work-box, chest, string'd instrument, boat, frame, and
 what not,
 Capitols of States, and capitol of the nation of States,
 Long stately rows in avenues, hospitals for orphans, or
 for the poor or sick,
 Manhattan steamboats and clippers, taking the measure
 of all seas.

²⁴ The shapes arise!

Shapes of the using of axes anyhow, and the users, and
 all that neighbors them,
 Cutters down of wood, and haulers of it to the Penob-
 scot or Kennebec,
 Dwellers in cabins among the Californian mountains, or
 by the little lakes, or on the Columbia,
 Dwellers south on the banks of the Gila or Rio Grande
 —friendly gatherings, the characters and fun,
 Dwellers up north in Minnesota and by the Yellowstone
 river—dwellers on coasts and off coasts,
 Seal-fishers, whalers, arctic seamen breaking passages
 through the ice.

²⁵ The shapes arise!

Shapes of factories, arsenals, foundries, markets ;
 Shapes of the two-threaded tracks of railroads ;
 Shapes of the sleepers of bridges, vast frameworks,
 girders, arches ;
 Shapes of the fleets of barges, tows, lake and canal craft,
 river craft.

²⁶ The shapes arise!

Ship-yards and dry-docks along the Eastern and West-
 ern Seas, and in many a bay and by-place,
 The live-oak kelsons, the pine planks, the spars, the
 hackmatack-roots for knees,
 The ships themselves on their ways, the tiers of scaf-
 folds, the workmen busy outside and inside,
 The tools lying around, the great auger and little auger,
 the adze, bolt, line, square, gouge, and bead-
 plane.

10

²⁷ The shapes arise!

The shape measur'd, saw'd, jack'd, join'd, stain'd,
 The coffin-shape for the dead to lie within in his shroud;
 The shape got out in posts, in the bedstead posts, in
 the posts of the bride's bed ;
 The shape of the little trough, the shape of the rockers
 beneath, the shape of the babe's cradle ;
 The shape of the floor-planks, the floor-planks for
 dancers' feet ;
 The shape of the planks of the family home, the home
 of the friendly parents and children,
 The shape of the roof of the home of the happy young
 man and woman—the roof over the well-married
 young man and woman,
 The roof over the supper joyously cook'd by the chaste
 wife, and joyously eaten by the chaste husband,
 content after his day's work.

²⁸ The shapes arise!

The shape of the prisoner's place in the court-room, and
 of him or her seated in the place ;
 The shape of the liquor-bar lean'd against by the young
 rum-drinker and the old rum-drinker ;
 The shape of the shamed and angry stairs, trod by
 sneaking footsteps ;
 The shape of the sly settee, and the adulterous un-
 wholesome couple ;
 The shape of the gambling-board with its devilish win-
 nings and losings ;
 The shape of the step-ladder for the convicted and sen-
 tenced murderer, the murderer with haggard
 face and pinion'd arms,
 The sheriff at hand with his deputies, the silent and
 white-lipp'd crowd, the dangling of the rope.

²⁹ The shapes arise!

Shapes of doors giving many exits and entrances ;
 The door passing the dissever'd friend, flush'd and in
 haste ;
 The door that admits good news and bad news ;

The door whence the son left home, confident and
 puff'd up ;
 The door he enter'd again from a long and scandalous
 absence, diseas'd, broken down, without inno-
 cence, without means.

11

³⁰ Her shape arises,
 She, less guarded than ever, yet more guarded than
 ever ;
 The gross and soil'd she moves among do not make her
 gross and soil'd ;
 She knows the thoughts as she passes—nothing is con-
 ceal'd from her ;
 She is none the less considerate or friendly therefor ;
 She is the best belov'd—it is without exception—she
 has no reason to fear, and she does not fear ;
 Oaths, quarrels, hiccupp'd songs, smutty expressions,
 are idle to her as she passes ;
 She is silent—she is possess'd of herself—they do not
 offend her ;
 She receives them as the laws of nature receive them
 —she is strong,
 She too is a law of nature—there is no law stronger
 than she is.

12

³¹ The main shapes arise !
 Shapes of Democracy, total—result of centuries ;
 Shapes, ever projecting other shapes ;
 Shapes of turbulent manly cities ;
 Shapes of the friends and home-givers of the whole
 earth,
 Shapes bracing the earth, and braced with the whole
 earth.

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD.



1

¹ Aroot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I
choose.

² Henceforth I ask not good-fortune—I myself am good-
fortune ;
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more,
need nothing,
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

³ The earth—that is sufficient ;
I do not want the constellations any nearer ;
I know they are very well where they are ;
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

⁴ (Still here I carry my old delicious burdens ;
I carry them, men and women—I carry them with me
wherever I go ;
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them ;
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

2

⁵ You road I enter upon and look around ! I believe
you are not all that is here ;
I believe that much unseen is also here.

6^o Here the profound lesson of reception, neither prefer-
 ence or denial ;
 The black with his woolly head, the felon, the discas'd,
 the illiterate person, are not denied ;
 The birth, the hasting after the physician, the beggar's
 tramp, the drunkard's stagger, the laughing party
 of mechanics,
 The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop,
 the eloping couple,
 The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of fur-
 niture into the town, the return back from the
 town,
 They pass—I also pass—anything passes—none can be
 interdicted ;
 None but are accepted—none but are dear to me.

3

7^o You air that serves me with breath to speak !
 You objects that call from diffusion my meanings, and
 give them shape !
 You light that wraps me and all things in delicate
 equable showers !
 You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the road-
 sides !
 I think you are latent with unseen existences—you are
 so dear to me.

8^o You flagg'd walks of the cities ! you strong curbs at
 the edges !
 You ferries ! you planks and posts of wharves ! you
 timber-lined sides ! you distant ships !
 You rows of houses ! you window-pierc'd façades ! you
 roofs !
 You porches and entrances ! you copings and iron
 guards !
 You windows whose transparent shells might expose so
 much !
 You doors and ascending steps ! you arches !
 You gray stones of interminable pavements ! you trod-
 den crossings !

From all that has been near you, I believe you have imparted to yourselves, and now would impart the same secretly to me ;
 From the living and the dead I think you have peopled your impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

4

⁹ The earth expanding right hand and left hand,
 The picture alive, every part in its best light,
 The music falling in where it is wanted, and stopping
 where it is not wanted,
 The cheerful voice of the public road—the gay fresh sentiment of the road.

¹⁰ O highway I travel! O public road! do you say to me, *Do not leave me?*
 Do you say, *Venture not? If you leave me, you are lost?*
 Do you say, *I am already prepared—I am well-beaten and undenied—adhere to me?*

¹¹ O public road! I say back, I am not afraid to leave you—yet I love you ;
 You express me better than I can express myself ;
 You shall be more to me than my poem.

¹² I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open air, and all great poems also ;
 I think I could stop here myself, and do miracles ;
 (My judgments, thoughts, I henceforth try by the open air, the road ;)
 I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and whoever beholds me shall like me ;
 I think whoever I see must be happy.

5

¹³ From this hour, freedom!
 From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
 Going where I list, my own master, total and absolute,

Listening to others, and considering well what they say,
 Pausing, searching; receiving, contemplating,
 Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of
 the holds that would hold me.

¹⁴ I inhale great draughts of space ;
 The east and the west are mine, and the north and the
 south are mine.

¹⁵ I am larger, better than I thought ;
 I did not know I held so much goodness.

¹⁶ All seems beautiful to me ,
 I can repeat over to men and women, You have done
 such good to me, I would do the same to you.

¹⁷ I will recruit for myself and you as I go ;
 I will scatter myself among men and women as I go ;
 I will toss the new gladness and roughness among
 them ;
 Whoever denies me, it shall not trouble me ;
 Whoever accepts me, he or she shall be blessed, and
 shall bless me.

6

¹⁸ Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear, it
 would not amaze me ;
 Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd,
 it would not astonish me.

¹⁹ Now I see the secret of the making of the best per-
 sons,
 It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with
 the earth.

²⁰ Here a great personal deed has room ;
 A great deed seizes upon the hearts of the whole race
 of men,
 Its effusion of strength and will overwhelms law, and
 mocks all authority and all argument against it.

²¹ Here is the test of wisdom ;
 Wisdom is not finally tested in schools ;
 Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it, to another not having it ;
 Wisdom is of the Soul, is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof,
 Applies to all stages and objects and qualities, and is content,
 Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and the excellence of things ;
 Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes it out of the Soul.

²² Now I reëxamine philosophies and religions,
 They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at all under the spacious clouds, and along the landscape and flowing currents.

²³ Here is realization ;
 Here is a man tallied—he realizes here what he has in him ;
 The past, the future, majesty, love—if they are vacant of you, you are vacant of them.

²⁴ Only the kernel of every object nourishes ;
 Where is he who tears off the husks for you and me ?
 Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelopes for you and me ?

²⁵ Here is adhesiveness—it is not previously fashion'd—it is apropos ;
 Do you know what it is, as you pass, to be loved by strangers ?
 Do you know the talk of those turning eye-balls ?

7

²⁶ Here is the efflux of the Soul ;
 The efflux of the Soul comes from within, through embower'd gates, ever provoking questions :
 These yearnings, why are they ? These thoughts in the darkness, why are they ?

Why are there men and women that while they are
 nigh me, the sun-light expands my blood?
 Why, when they leave me, do my pennants of joy sink
 flat and lank?
 Why are there trees I never walk under, but large and
 melodious thoughts descend upon me?
 (I think they hang there winter and summer on those
 trees, and always drop fruit as I pass;)
 What is it I interchange so suddenly with strangers?
 What with some driver, as I ride on the seat by his
 side?
 What with some fisherman, drawing his seine by the
 shore, as I walk by, and pause?
 What gives me to be free to a woman's or man's good-
 will? What gives them to be free to mine?

8

²⁷ The efflux of the Soul is happiness—here is happi-
 ness ;
 I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times ;
 Now it flows unto us—we are rightly charged.

²⁸ Here rises the fluid and attaching character ;
 The fluid and attaching character is the freshness and
 sweetness of man and woman ;
 (The herbs of the morning sprout no fresher and sweeter
 every day out of the roots of themselves, than it
 sprouts fresh and sweet continually out of itself.)

²⁹ Toward the fluid and attaching character exudes the
 sweat of the love of young and old ;
 From it falls distill'd the charm that mocks beauty and
 attainments ;
 Toward it heaves the shuddering longing ache of contact.

9

³⁰ Allons! whoever you are, come travel with me!
 Traveling with me, you find what never tires.

³¹ The earth never tires ;
 The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first—
 Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first ;
 Be not discouraged—keep on—there are divine things,
 well envelop'd ;
 I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful
 than words can tell.

³² Allons! we must not stop here!
 However sweet these laid-up stores—however convenient
 this dwelling, we cannot remain here ;
 However shelter'd this port, and however calm these
 waters, we must not anchor here ;
 However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us, we
 are permitted to receive it but a little while.

10

³³ Allons! the inducements shall be greater ;
 We will sail pathless and wild seas ;
 We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the
 Yankee clipper speeds by under full sail.

³⁴ Allons! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements!
 Health, defiance, gayety, self-esteem, curiosity ;
 Allons! from all formules!
 From your formules, O bat-eyed and materialistic
 priests!

³⁵ The stale cadaver blocks up the passage—the burial
 waits no longer.

³⁶ Allons! yet take warning!
 He traveling with me needs the best blood, thews, en-
 durance ;
 None may come to the trial, till he or she bring courage
 and health.

³⁷ Come not here if you have already spent the best of
 yourself ;
 Only those may come, who come in sweet and deter-
 min'd bodies ;

No diseas'd person—no rum-drinker or venereal taint
is permitted here.

²⁸ I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes,
rhymes ;
We convince by our presence.

11

²⁹ Listen! I will be honest with you ;
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough
new prizes ;
These are the days that must happen to you :

⁴⁰ You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or
achieve,
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd—
you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction, before
you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mock-
ings of those who remain behind you ;
What beckonings of love you receive, you shall only
answer with passionate kisses of parting,
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their
reach'd hands toward you.

12

⁴¹ Allons! after the GREAT COMPANIONS! and to belong
to them!

They too are on the road! they are the swift and ma-
jestic men! they are the greatest women.

⁴² Over that which hinder'd them—over that which re-
tarded—passing impediments large or small,
Committers of crimes, committers of many beautiful
virtues,

Enjoyers of calms of seas, and storms of seas,
Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land,
Habitué's of many distant countries, habitué's of far-
distant dwellings,

Trusters of men and women, observers of cities, solitary
 toilers,
 Pausers and contemplators of tufts, blossoms, shells of
 the shore,
 Dancers at wedding-dances, kissers of brides, tender
 helpers of children, bearers of children,
 Soldiers of revolts, standers by gaping graves, lowerers
 down of coffins,
 Journeymen over consecutive seasons, over the years—
 the curious years, each emerging from that which
 preceded it,
 Journeymen as with companions, namely, their own
 diverse phases,
 Forth-steppers from the latent unrealized baby-days,
 Journeymen gayly with their own youth—Journeymen
 with their bearded and well-grain'd manhood,
 Journeymen with their womanhood, ample, unsurpass'd,
 content,
 Journeymen with their own sublime old age of manhood
 or womanhood,
 Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty
 breadth of the universe,
 Old age, flowing free with the delicious near-by freedom
 of death.

13

" Allons! to that which is endless, as it was begin-
 ningless,
 To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights,
 To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days and
 nights they tend to,
 Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys ;
 To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it
 and pass it,
 To conceive no time, however distant, but what you
 may reach it and pass it,
 To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits
 for you—however long, but it stretches and waits
 for you ;
 To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go
 thither,

- To see no possession but you may possess it—enjoying
all without labor or purchase—abstracting the
feast, yet not abstracting one particle of it ;
- To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich man's
elegant villa, and the chaste blessings of the well-
married couple, and the fruits of orchards and
flowers of gardens,
- To take to your use out of the compact cities as you
pass through,
- To carry buildings and streets with you afterward
wherever you go,
- To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you
encounter them—to gather the love out of their
hearts,
- To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that
you leave them behind you,
- To know the universe itself as a road—as many roads—
as roads for traveling souls.

14

- ⁴⁴ The Soul travels ;
The body does not travel as much as the soul ;
The body has just as great a work as the soul, and parts
away at last for the journeys of the soul.
- ⁴⁵ All parts away for the progress of souls ;
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments,—all
that was or is apparent upon this globe or any
globe, falls into niches and corners before the
procession of Souls along the grand roads of the
universe.
- ⁴⁶ Of the progress of the souls of men and women along
the grand roads of the universe, all other progress
is the needed emblem and sustenance.
- ⁴⁷ Forever alive, forever forward,
Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad, turbulent,
feeble, dissatisfied,
Desperate, proud, fond, sick, accepted by men, rejected
by men,

They go! they go! I know that they go, but I know
 not where they go;
 But I know that they go toward the best—toward some-
 thing great.

15

⁴⁸ Allons! whoever you are! come forth!
 You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the
 house, though you built it, or though it has been
 built for you.

⁴⁹ Allons! out of the dark confinement!
 It is useless to protest—I know all, and expose it.

⁵⁰ Behold, through you as bad as the rest,
 Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of
 people,
 Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd
 and trimm'd faces,
 Behold a secret silent loathing and despair.

⁵¹ No husband, no wife, no friend, trusted to hear the
 confession;
 Another self, a duplicate of every one, skulking and
 hiding it goes,
 Formless and wordless through the streets of the cities,
 polite and bland in the parlors,
 In the cars of rail-roads, in steamboats, in the public
 assembly,
 Home to the houses of men and women, at the table, in
 the bed-room, everywhere,
 Smartly attired, countenance smiling, form upright,
 death under the breast-bones, hell under the
 skull-bones,
 Under the broadcloth and gloves, under the ribbons
 and artificial flowers,
 Keeping fair with the customs, speaking not a syllable
 of itself,
 Speaking of anything else, but never of itself.

16

⁵² Allons! through struggles and wars!
The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

⁵³ Have the past struggles succeeded?
What has succeeded? yourself? your nation? nature?
Now understand me well—It is provided in the essence
of things, that from any fruition of success, no
matter what, shall come forth something to make
a greater struggle necessary.

⁵⁴ My call is the call of battle—I nourish active rebel-
lion;
He going with me must go well arm'd;
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty,
angry enemies, desertions.

17

⁵⁵ Allons! the road is before us!
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well.

⁵⁶ Allons! be not detain'd!
Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the
book on the shelf unopen'd!
Let the tools remain in the workshop! let the money
remain unearn'd!
Let the school stand! mind not^t the cry of the teacher!
Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the lawyer
plead in the court, and the judge expound the
law.

⁵⁷ Mon enfant! I give you my hand!
I give you my love, more precious than money,
I give you myself, before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with
me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

LEAVES OF GRASS.

I SIT AND LOOK OUT.

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world,
and upon all oppression and shame ;
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at an-
guish with themselves, remorseful after deeds
done ;
I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children,
dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate ;
I see the wife misused by her husband—I see the
treacherous seducer of young women ;
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love,
attempted to be hid—I see these sights on the
earth ;
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny—I see
martyrs and prisoners ;
I observe a famine at sea—I observe the sailors casting
lots who shall be kill'd, to preserve the lives of
the rest ;
I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant
persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon ne-
groes, and the like ;
All these—All the meanness and agony without end, I
sitting, look out upon,
See, hear, and am silent.

ME IMPERTURBE.

ME imperturbe, 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 private, or public, or menial, or solitary—all these
 subordinate, (I am eternally equal with the best
 —I am not subordinate ;)
 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 !
 O to confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents,
 rebuffs, as the trees and animals do.



As I Lay with my Head in your Lap, Camerado.

As I lay with my head in your lap, Camerado,
 The confession I made I resume—what I said to you
 and the open air I resume :
 I know I am restless, and make others so ;
 I know my words are weapons, full of danger, full of
 death ;
 (Indeed I am myself the real soldier ;
 It is not he, there, with his bayonet, and not the red-
 striped artilleryman ;)
 For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws,
 to unsettle them ;
 I am more resolute because all have denied me, than I
 could ever have been had all accepted me ;
 I heed not, and have never heeded, either experience,
 cautions, majorities, nor ridicule ;
 And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing
 to me ;
 And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing
 to me ;
 . . . Dear camerado ! I confess I have urged you onward
 with me, and still urge you, without the least
 idea what is our destination,
 Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and
 defeated.

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY.

1

¹ FLOOD-TIDE below me! I watch you face to face;
Clouds of the west! sun there half an hour high! I see
you also face to face.

² Crowds of men and women attired in the usual cos-
tumes! 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 medita-
tions, than you might suppose.

2

³ The impalpable sustenance of me from all things, at
all hours of the day;
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme—myself disin-
tegrated, 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 pas-
sage 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.

⁴ 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

⁵ It avails not, neither time or place—distance avails
 not ;
 I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or
 ever so many generations hence ;
 I project myself—also I return—I am with you, and
 know how it is.

⁶ 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-stem'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

⁷ I too many and many a time cross'd the river, the sun
 half an hour high ;

I watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls—I saw them
 high in the air, floating with motionless wings,
 oscillating their bodies,
 I saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their
 bodies, and left the rest in strong shadow,
 I saw the slow-wheeling circles, and the gradual edging
 toward the south.

^s I too 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 sun-lit 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 arriving
 ships,
 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 sun-set,
 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 store-houses 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

⁹ These, and all else, were to me the same as they are
to you ;
I project myself a moment to tell you—also I return.

¹⁰ I loved well those cities ;
I 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 to-day and to-
night.)

5

¹¹ What is it, then, between us ?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years
between us ?

¹² Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and
place avails not.

6

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

7

¹⁵ It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,
The dark threw 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 meagre ? would not people laugh at
me ?

¹⁶ It is not 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.

8

¹⁷ But I was Manhattanese, friendly and proud !
I 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.

9

¹⁸ Closer yet I approach you ;
 What thought you have of me, 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.

¹⁹ Who was to know what should come home to me ?
 Who knows but I am enjoying this ?
 Who knows but I am as good as looking at you now,
 for all you cannot see me ?

²⁰ It is not you alone, nor I alone ;
 Not a few races, nor a few generations, nor a few cen-
 turies ;
 It is that each came, or comes, or shall come, from its
 due emission,
 From the general centre of all, and forming a part
 of all :
 Everything indicates—the smallest does, and the largest
 does ;
 A necessary film envelopes all, and envelops the Soul
 for a proper time.

10

²¹ Now I am curious what sight can ever be more
 stately and admirable to me than my mast-
 hemm'd Manhattan,
 My river and sun-set, and my scallop-edg'd waves of
 flood-tide,
 The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in
 the twilight, and the belated lighter ;
 Curious 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 ;
 Curious 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.

²² 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?

What the push of reading could not start, is started by me personally, is it not?

11

²³ 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 sun-set! 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 highest 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 sun-lit 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.

12

²⁴ We descend upon you and all things—we arrest you
 all ;
 We realize the soul only by you, you faithful solids
 and fluids ;
 Through you color, form, location, sublimity, ideality ;
 Through you every proof, comparison, and all the sug-
 gestions and determinations of ourselves.

²⁵ You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beau-
 tiful ministers! you novices!
 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.

WITH ANTECEDENTS.

1

¹ WITH antecedents ;

With my fathers and mothers, and the accumulations
of past ages ;

With all which, had it not been, I would not now be
here, as I am :

With Egypt, India, Phenicia, Greece and Rome ;

With the Kelt, the Scandinavian, the Alb, and the
Saxon ;

With antique maritime ventures,—with laws, artizan-
ship, wars and journeys ;

With the poet, the skald, the saga, the myth, and the
oracle ;

With the sale of slaves—with enthusiasts—with the
troubadour, the crusader, and the monk ;

With those old continents whence we have come to this
new continent ;

With the fading kingdoms and kings over there ;

With the fading religions and priests ;

With the small shores we look back to from our own
large and present shores ;

With countless years drawing themselves onward, and
arrived at these years ;

You and Me arrived—America arrived, and making
this year ;

This year! sending itself ahead countless years to come.

2

² O but it is not the years—it is I—it is You ;

We touch all laws, and tally all antecedents ;

We are the skald, the oracle, the monk, and the knight
—we easily include them, and more ;

We stand amid time, beginningless and endless—we
stand amid evil and good ;

All swings around us—there is as much darkness as
light ;

The very sun swings itself and its system of planets
around us ;

Its sun, and its again, all swing around us.

³ As for me, (torn, stormy, even as I, amid these vehement days,)

I have the idea of all, and am all, and believe in all ;
I believe materialism is true, and spiritualism is true—
I reject no part.

⁴ Have I forgotten any part?

Come to me, whoever and whatever, till I give you recognition.

⁵ I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrews ;
I adopt each theory, myth, god, and demi-god ;
I see that the old accounts, bibles, genealogies, are true,
without exception ;

I assert that all past days were what they should have
been ;

And that they could no-how have been better than they
were,

And that to-day is what it should be—and that Amer-
ica is,

And that to-day and America could no-how be better
than they are.

3

⁶ In the name of These States, and in your and my
name, the Past,

And in the name of These States, and in your and my
name, the Present time.

⁷ I know that the past was great, and the future will be
great,

And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present
time,

(For the sake of him I typify—for the common average
man's sake—your sake, if you are he ;)

And that where I am, or you are, this present day, there
is the centre of all days, all races,

And there is the meaning, to us, of all that has ever
come of races and days, or ever will come.

THE ANSWERER.

NOW LIST TO MY MORNING'S ROMANZA.

1

Now list to my morning's romanza—I tell the signs
of the Auswerer ;
To the cities and farms I sing, as they spread in the
sunshine before me.

² A young man comes to me bearing a message from
his brother ;
How shall the young man know the whether and when
of his brother ?
Tell him to send me the signs.

³ And I stand before the young man face to face, and
take his right hand in my left hand, and his left
hand in my right hand,
And I answer for his brother, and for men, and I an-
swer for him that answers for all, and send these
signs.

2

⁴ Him all wait for—him all yield up to—his word is
decisive and final,
Him they accept, in him lave, in him perceive them-
selves, as amid light,
Him they immerse, and he immerses them.

⁵ Beautiful women, the haughtiest nations, laws, the
 landscape, people, animals,
 The profound earth and its attributes, and the unquiet
 ocean, (so tell I my morning's romanza ;)
 All enjoyments and properties, and money, and what-
 ever money will buy,
 The best farms—others toiling and planting, and he
 unavoidably reaps,
 The noblest and costliest cities—others grading and
 building, and he domiciles there ;
 Nothing for any one, but what is for him—near and far
 are for him, the ships in the offing,
 The perpetual shows and marches on land, are for him,
 if they are for any body.

⁶ He puts things in their attitudes ;
 He puts to-day out of himself, with plasticity and love ;
 He places his own city, times, reminiscences, parents,
 brothers and sisters, associations, employment,
 politics, so that the rest never shame them after-
 ward, nor assume to command them.

⁷ He is the answerer ;
 What can be answer'd he answers—and what cannot be
 answer'd, he shows how it cannot be answer'd.

3

⁸ A man is a summons and challenge ;
 (It is vain to skulk—Do you hear that mocking and
 laughter? Do you hear the ironical echoes?)

⁹ Books, friendships, philosophers, priests, action, plea-
 sure, pride, beat up and down, seeking to give
 satisfaction ;
 He indicates the satisfaction, and indicates them that
 beat up and down also.

¹⁰ Whichever the sex, whatever the season or place, he
 may go freshly and gently and safely, by day or
 by night ;

He has the pass-key of hearts—to him the response of
the prying of hands on the knobs.

¹¹ His welcome is universal—the flow of beauty is not
more welcome or universal than he is ;
The person he favors by day, or sleeps with at night, is
blessed.

4

¹² Every existence has its idiom—everything has an
idiom and tongue ;
He resolves all tongues into his own, and bestows it
upon men, and any man translates, and any man
translates himself also ;
One part does not counteract another part—he is the
joiner—he sees how they join.

¹³ He says indifferently and alike, *How are you, friend?*
to the President at his levee,
And he says, *Good-day, my brother!* to Cudge that hoes
in the-sugar-field,
And both understand him, and know that his speech is
right.

¹⁴ He walks with perfect ease in the Capitol,
He walks among the Congress, and one Representative
says to another, *Here is our equal, appearing and
new.*

¹⁵ Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic,
And the soldiers suppose him to be a soldier, and the
sailors that he has follow'd the sea,
And the authors take him for an author, and the artists
for an artist,
And the laborers perceive he could labor with them and
love them ;
No matter what the work is, that he is the one to fol-
low it, or has follow'd it,
No matter what the nation, that he might find his
brothers and sisters there.

¹⁶ The English believe he comes of their English stock,
A Jew to the Jew he seems—a Russ to the Russ—usual
and near, removed from none.

¹⁷ Whoever he looks at in the traveler's coffee-house
claims him,

The Italian or Frenchman is sure, and the German is
sure, and the Spaniard is sure, and the island
Cuban is sure ;

The engineer, the deck-hand on the great lakes, or on
the Mississippi, or St. Lawrence, or Sacramento,
or Hudson, or Paumanok Sound, claims him.

¹⁸ The gentleman of perfect blood acknowledges his
perfect blood ;

The insulter, the prostitute, the angry person, the
beggar, see themselves in the ways of him—he
strangely transmutes them,

They are not vile any more—they hardly know them-
selves, they are so grown.



THE INDICATIONS.

¹ THE indications, and tally of time ;

Perfect sanity shows the master among philosophs ;

Time, always without flaw, indicates itself in parts ;

What always indicates the poet, is the crowd of the
pleasant company of singers, and their words ;

The words of the singers are the hours or minutes of
the light or dark—but the words of the maker
of poems are the general light and dark ;

The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immor-
tality,

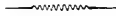
His insight and power encircle things and the human
race,

He is the glory and extract thus far, of things, and of
the human race.

- ² The singers do not beget—only the POET begets ;
 The singers are welcom'd, understood, appear often
 enough—but rare has the day been, likewise the
 spot, of the birth of the maker of poems, the
 Answerer,
 (Not every century, or every five centuries, has con-
 tain'd such a day, for all its names.)
- ³ The singers of successive hours of centuries may have
 ostensible names, but the name of each of them
 is one of the singers,
 The name of each is, eye-singer, ear-singer, head-
 singer, sweet-singer, echo-singer, parlor-singer,
 love-singer, or something else.
- ⁴ All this time, and at all times, wait the words of true
 poems ;
 The words of true poems do not merely please,
 The true poets are not followers of beauty, but the
 august masters of beauty ;
 The greatness of sons is the exuding of the greatness
 of mothers and fathers,
 The words of poems are the tuft and final applause of
 science.
- ⁵ Divine instinct, breadth of vision, the law of reason,
 health, rudeness of body, withdrawnness,
 Gayety, sun-tan, air-sweetness—such are some of the
 words of poems.
- ⁶ The sailor and traveler underlie the maker of poems,
 the answerer ;
 The builder, geometer, chemist, anatomist, phrenolo-
 gist, artist—all these underlie the maker of
 poems, the answerer.
- ⁷ The words of the true poems give you more than
 poems,
 They give you to form for yourself, poems, religions,
 politics, war, peace, behavior, histories, essays,
 romances, and everything else,

They balance ranks, colors, races, creeds, and the
sexes,
They do not seek beauty—they are sought,
Forever touching them, or close upon them, follows
beauty, longing, fain, love-sick.

⁸ They prepare for death—yet are they not the finish,
but rather the outset,
They bring none to his or her terminus, or to be con-
tent and full ;
Whom they take, they take into space, to behold the
birth of stars, to learn one of the meanings,
To launch off with absolute faith—to sweep through the
ceaseless rings, and never be quiet again.



POETS TO COME.

¹ POETS to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
Not to-day is to justify me, and answer what I am
for ;
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental,
greater than before known,
Arouse! Arouse—for you must justify me—you must
answer.

² 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.

³ I am a man who, sauntering along, without fully stop-
ping, 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.

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 ploughboy's, on his way in
the morning, or at the 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 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.

THE CITY DEAD-HOUSE.

By the City Dead-House, by the gate,
 As idly sauntering, wending my way from the clangor,
 I curious pause—for lo! an outcast form, a poor dead
 prostitute brought ;
 Her corpse they deposit unclaim'd—it lies on the damp
 brick pavement ;
 The divine woman, her body—I see the Body—I look
 on it alone,
 That house once full of passion and beauty—all else I
 notice not ;
 Nor stillness so cold, nor running water from faucet,
 nor odors morbidic impress me ;
 But the house alone—that wondrous house—that deli-
 cate fair house—that ruin !
 That immortal house, more than all the rows of dwell-
 ings ever built !
 Or white-domed Capitol itself, with majestic figure sur-
 mounted—or all the old high-spired cathedrals ;
 That little house alone, more than them all—poor, des-
 perate house !
 Fair, fearful wreck ! tenement of a Soul ! itself a Soul !
 Unclaim'd, avoided house ! take one breath from my
 tremulous lips ;
 Take one tear, dropt aside as I go, for thought of you,
 Dead house of love ! house of madness and sin, crum-
 bled ! crush'd !
 House of life—erewhile talking and laughing—but ah,
 poor house ! dead, even then ;
 Months, years, an echoing, garnish'd house—but dead,
 dead, dead.

 A FARM PICTURE.

THROUGH the ample open door of the peaceful country
 barn,
 A sun-lit pasture field, with cattle and horses feeding ;
 And haze, and vista, and the far horizon, fading away.

CAROL OF OCCUPATIONS.

1

¹ COME closer to me ;
Push close, my lovers, and take the best I possess ;
Yield closer and closer, and give me the best you possess.

² This is unfinish'd business with me—How is it with you ?
(I was chill'd with the cold types, cylinder, wet paper between us.)

³ Male and Female !
I pass so poorly with paper and types, I must pass with the contact of bodies and souls.

⁴ American masses !
I do not thank you for liking me as I am, and liking the touch of me—I know that it is good for you to do so.

2

⁵ This is the carol of occupations ;
In the labor of engines and trades, and the labor of fields, I find the developments,
And find the eternal meanings.

⁶ Workmen and Workwomen!

Were all educations, practical and ornamental, well display'd out of me, what would it amount to?

Were I as the head teacher, charitable proprietor, wise statesman, what would it amount to?

Were I to you as the boss employing and paying you, would that satisfy you?

⁷ The learn'd, virtuous, benevolent, and the usual terms;
A man like me, and never the usual terms.

⁸ Neither a servant nor a master am I;

I take no sooner a large price than a small price—I will have my own, whoever enjoys me;

I will be even with you, and you shall be even with me.

⁹ If you stand at work in a shop, I stand as nigh as the nighest in the same shop;

If you bestow gifts on your brother or dearest friend, I demand as good as your brother or dearest friend;

If your lover, husband, wife, is welcome by day or night, I must be personally as welcome;

If you become degraded, criminal, ill, then I become so for your sake;

If you remember your foolish and outlaw'd deeds, do you think I cannot remember my own foolish and outlaw'd deeds?

If you carouse at the table, I carouse at the opposite side of the table;

If you meet some stranger in the streets, and love him or her—why I often meet strangers in the street, and love them.

¹⁰ Why, what have you thought of yourself?

Is it you then that thought yourself less?

Is it you that thought the President greater than you?
Or the rich better off than you? or the educated wiser than you?

¹¹ Because you are greasy or pimpled, or that you were once drunk, or a thief,

Or diseas'd, or rheumatic, or a prostitute—or are so now;
 Or from frivolity or impotence, or that you are no
 scholar, and never saw your name in print,
 Do you give in that you are any less immortal?

3

¹² Souls of men and women! it is not you I call unseen,
 unheard, untouchable and untouching;
 It is not you I go argue pro and con about, and to
 settle whether you are alive or no;
 I own publicly who you are, if nobody else owns.

¹³ Grown, half-grown, and babe, of this country and
 every country, in-doors and out-doors, one just
 as much as the other, I see,
 And all else behind or through them.

¹⁴ The wife—and she is not one jot less than the
 husband;
 The daughter—and she is just as good as the son;
 The mother—and she is every bit as much as the
 father.

¹⁵ Offspring of ignorant and poor, boys apprenticed to
 trades,
 Young fellows working on farms, and old fellows work-
 ing on farms,
 Sailor-men, merchant-men, coasters, immigrants,
 All these I see—but nigher and farther the same I
 see;
 None shall escape me, and none shall wish to escape
 me.

¹⁶ I bring what you much need, yet always have,
 Not money, amours, dress, eating, but as good;
 I send no agent or medium, offer no representative of
 value, but offer the value itself.

¹⁷ There is something that comes home to one now
 and perpetually;

It is not what is printed, preach'd, discuss'd—it eludes
 discussion and print ;
 It is not to be put in a book—it is not in this book ;
 It is for you, whoever you are—it is no farther from
 you than your hearing and sight are from you ;
 It is hinted by nearest, commonest, readicst—it is ever
 provoked by them.

¹⁸ You may read in many languages, yet read nothing
 about it ;
 You may read the President's Message, and read noth-
 ing about it there ;
 Nothing in the reports from the State department or
 Treasury department, or in the daily papers or
 the weekly papers,
 Or in the census or revenue returns, prices current, or
 any accounts of stock.

4

¹⁹ The sun and stars that float in the open air ;
 The apple-shaped earth, and we upon it—surely the
 drift of them is something grand !
 I do not know what it is, except that it is grand, and
 that it is happiness,
 And that the enclosing purport of us here is not a
 speculation, or bon-mot, or reconnoissance,
 And that it is not something which by luck may turn
 out well for us, and without luck must be a failure
 for us,
 And not something which may yet be retracted in a
 certain contingency.

²⁰ The light and shade, the curious sense of body and
 identity, the greed that with perfect complais-
 ance devours all things, the endless pride and
 out-stretching of man, unspeakable joys and
 sorrows,
 The wonder every one sees in every one else he sees,
 and the wonders that fill each minute of time
 forever,

What have you reckon'd them for, camarado?
 Have you reckon'd them for a trade, or farm-work? or
 for the profits of a store?
 Or to achieve yourself a position? or to fill a gentle-
 man's leisure, or a lady's leisure?

²¹ Have you reckon'd the landscape took substance and
 form that it might be painted in a picture?
 Or men and women that they might be written of, and
 songs sung?
 Or the attraction of gravity, and the great laws and
 harmonious combinations, and the fluids of the
 air, as subjects for the savans?
 Or the brown land and the blue sea for maps and
 charts?
 Or the stars to be put in constellations and named
 fancy names?
 Or that the growth of seeds is for agricultural tables,
 or agriculture itself?

²² Old institutions—these arts, libraries, legends, col-
 lections, and the practice handed along in man-
 ufactures—will we rate them so high?
 Will we rate our cash and business high?—I have no
 objection;
 I rate them as high as the highest—then a child born
 of a woman and man I rate beyond all rate.

²³ We thought our Union grand, and our Constitution
 grand;
 I do not say they are not grand and good, for they are;
 I am this day just as much in love with them as you;
 Then I am in love with you, and with all my fellows
 upon the earth.

²⁴ We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say^e
 they are not divine;
 I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out
 of you still;
 It is not they who give the life—it is you who give the
 life;

Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth, than they are shed out of you.

5

²⁵ When the psalm sings instead of the singer ;
 When the script preaches, instead of the preacher ;
 When the pulpit descends and goes, instead of the carver that carved the supporting desk ;
 When I can touch the body of books, by night or by day, and when they touch my body back again ;
 When a university course convinces, like a slumbering woman and child convince ;
 When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the night-watchman's daughter ;
 When warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite, and are my friendly companions ;
 I intend to reach them my hand, and make as much of them as I do of men and women like you.

²⁶ The sum of all known reverence I add up in you, whoever you are ;
 The President is there in the White House for you—it is not you who are here for him ;
 The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you—not you here for them ;
 The Congress convenes every Twelfth-month for you ;
 Laws, courts, the forming of States, the charters of cities, the going and coming of commerce and mails, are all for you.

²⁷ List close, my scholars dear !
 All doctrines, all politics and civilization, exurge from you ;
 All sculpture and monuments, and anything inscribed anywhere, are tallied in you ;
 The gist of histories and statistics as far back as the records reach, is in you this hour, and myths and tales the same ;
 If you were not breathing and walking here, where would they all be ?

The most renown'd poems would be ashes, orations and
plays would be vacuums.

²⁸ All architecture is what you do to it when you look
upon it ;
(Did you think it was in the white or gray stone ? or
the lines of the arches and cornices ?)

²⁹ All music is what awakes from you, when you are
reminded by the instruments ;
It is not the violins and the cornets—it is not the oboe
nor the beating drums, nor the score of the
baritone singer singing his sweet romanza—nor
that of the men's chorus, nor that of the women's
chorus,
It is nearer and farther than they.

6

³⁰ Will the whole come back then ?
Can each see signs of the best by a look in the looking-
glass ? is there nothing greater or more ?
Does all sit there with you, with the mystic, unseen
Soul ?

³¹ Strange and hard that paradox true I give ;
Objects gross and the unseen Soul are one.

³² House-building, measuring, sawing the boards ;
Blacksmithing, glass-blowing, nail-making, coopering,
tin-roofing, shingle-dressing,
Ship-joining, dock-building, fish-curing, ferrying, flag-
ging of side-walks by flaggers,
The pump, the pile-driver, the great derrick, the coal-
kiln and brick-kiln,
Coal-mines, and all that is down there,—the lamps in
the darkness, echoes, songs, what meditations,
what vast native thoughts looking through
smutch'd faces,

- Iron-works, forge-fires in the mountains, or by the river-banks—men around feeling the melt with huge crowbars—lumps of ore, the due combining of ore, limestone, coal—the blast-furnace and the puddling-furnace, the loup-lump at the bottom of the melt at last—the rolling-mill, the stumpy bars of pig-iron, the strong, clean-shaped T-rail for railroads ;
- Oil-works, silk-works, white-lead-works, the sugar-house, steam-saws, the great mills and factories ;
- Stone-cutting, shapely trimmings for façades, or window or door-lintels—the mallet, the tooth-chisel, the jib to protect the thumb,
- Oakum, the oakum-chisel, the caulking-iron—the kettle of boiling vault-cement, and the fire under the kettle,
- The cotton-bale, the stevedore's hook, the saw and buck of the sawyer, the mould of the moulder, the working-knife of the butcher, the ice-saw, and all the work with ice,
- The implements for daguerreotyping—the tools of the rigger, grappler, sail-maker, block-maker,
- Goods of gutta-percha, papier-maché, colors, brushes, brush-making, glazier's implements,
- The vincer and glue-pot, the confectioner's ornaments, the decanter and glasses, the shears and flat-iron,
- The awl and knee-strap, the pint measure and quart measure, the counter and stool, the writing-pen of quill or metal—the making of all sorts of edged tools,
- The brewery, brewing, the malt, the vats, every thing that is done by brewers, also by wine-makers, also vinegar-makers,
- Leather-dressing, coach-making, boiler-making, rope-twisting, distilling, sign-painting, lime-burning, cotton-picking — electro-plating, electrotyping, stereotyping,
- Stave-machines, planing-machines, reaping-machines, ploughing-machines, thrashing-machines, steam wagons,

The cart of the carman, the omnibus, the ponderous
 dray ;
 Pyrotechny, letting off color'd fire-works at night, fancy
 figures and jets ;
 Beef on the butcher's stall, the slaughter-house of the
 butcher, the butcher in his killing-clothes,
 The pens of live pork, the killing-hammer, the hog-
 hook, the scalding tub, gutting, the cutter's
 cleaver, the packer's maul, and the plenteous
 winter-work of pork-packing ;
 Flour-works, grinding of wheat, rye, maize, rice—the
 barrels and the half and quarter barrels, the
 loaded barges, the high piles on wharves and
 levees ;
 The men, and the work of the men, on railroads,
 coasters, fish-boats, canals ;
 The daily routine of your own or any man's life—the
 shop, yard, store, or factory ;
 These shows all near you by day and night—workman !
 whoever you are, your daily life !
 In that and them the heft of the heaviest—in them far
 more than you estimated, and far less also ;
 In them realities for you and me—in them poems for
 you and me ;
 In them, not yourself—you and your Soul enclose all
 things, regardless of estimation ;
 In them the development good—in them, all themes
 and hints.

³³ I do not affirm what you see beyond is futile—I do
 not advise you to stop ;
 I do not say leadings you thought great are not great ;
 But I say that none lead to greater, than those lead to.

7

³⁴ Will you seek afar off? you surely come back at
 last,
 In things best known to you, finding the best, or as
 good as the best,
 In folks nearest to you finding the sweetest, strongest,
 lovingest ;

Happiness, knowledge, not in another place, but this
 place—not for another hour, but this hour ;
 Man in the first you see or touch—always in friend,
 brother, nighest neighbor—Woman in mother,
 lover, wife ;
 The popular tastes and employments taking precedence
 in poems or any where,
 You workwomen and workmen of These States having
 your own divine and strong life,
 And all else giving place to men and women like you.

THOUGHTS.

1

Of ownership—As if one fit to own things could not at
 pleasure enter upon all, and incorporate them
 into himself or herself.

2

Of waters, forests, hills ;
 Of the earth at large, whispering through medium of
 me ;
 Of vista—Suppose some sight in arriere, through the
 formative chaos, presuming the growth, fulness,
 life, now attain'd on the journey ;
 (But I see the road continued, and the journey ever
 continued ;)
 —Of what was once lacking on earth, and in due time
 has become supplied—And of what will yet be
 supplied,
 Because all I see and know, I believe to have purport
 in what will yet be supplied.

THE SLEEPERS.

1

¹ I WANDER all night in my vision,
Stepping with light feet, swiftly and noiselessly step-
ping and stopping,
Bending with open eyes over the shut eyes of sleepers,
Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted,
contradictory,
Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping.

² How solemn they look there, stretch'd and still!
How quiet they breathe, the little children in their
cradles!

³ The wretched features of ennuyés, the white features
of corpses, the livid faces of drunkards, the sick-
gray faces of onanists,
The gash'd bodies on battle-fields, the insane in their
strong-door'd rooms, the sacred idiots, the new-
born emerging from gates, and the dying emerg-
ing from gates,
The night pervades them and infolds them.

⁴ The married couple sleep calmly in their bed—he
with his palm on the hip of the wife, and she
with her palm on the hip of the husband,
The sisters sleep lovingly side by side in their bed,
The men sleep lovingly side by side in theirs,
And the mother sleeps, with her little child carefully
wrapt.

⁵ The blind sleep, and the deaf and dumb sleep,
The prisoner sleeps well in the prison—the run-away
son sleeps ;
The murderer that is to be hung next day—how does
he sleep ?
And the murder'd person—how does he sleep ?

⁶ The female that loves unrequited sleeps,
And the male that loves unrequited sleeps,
The head of the money-maker that plotted all day
sleeps,
And the enraged and treacherous dispositions—all, all
sleep.

2

⁷ I stand in the dark with drooping eyes by the worst-
suffering and the most restless,
I pass my hands soothingly to and fro a few inches
from them,
The restless sink in their beds—they fitfully sleep.

⁸ Now I pierce the darkness—new beings appear,
The earth recedes from me into the night,
I saw that it was beautiful, and I see that what is not
the earth is beautiful.

⁹ I go from bedside to bedside—I sleep close with the
other sleepers, each in turn,
I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dream-
ers,
And I become the other dreamers.

3

¹⁰ I am a dance—Play up, there ! the fit is whirling me
fast !

¹¹ I am the ever-laughing—it is new moon and twi-
light,

I see the hiding of douceurs—I see nimble ghosts
 whichever way I look,
 Cache, and cache again, deep in the ground and sea,
 and where it is neither ground or sea.

¹² Well do they do their jobs, those journeymen divine,
 Only from me can they hide nothing, and would not if
 they could,
 I reckon I am their boss, and they make me a pet
 besides,
 And surround me and lead me, and run ahead when I
 walk,
 To lift their cunning covers, to signify me with stretch'd
 arms, and resume the way;
 Onward we move! a gay gang of blackguards! with
 mirth-shouting music, and wild-flapping pennants
 of joy!

4

¹³ I am the actor, the actress, the voter, the politician;
 The emigrant and the exile, the criminal that stood in
 the box,
 He who has been famous, and he who shall be famous
 after to-day,
 The stammerer, the well-form'd person, the wasted or
 feeble person.

5

¹⁴ I am she who adorn'd herself and folded her hair
 expectantly,
 My truant lover has come, and it is dark.

¹⁵ Double yourself and receive me, darkness!
 Receive me and my lover too—he will not let me go
 without him.

¹⁶ I roll myself upon you, as upon a bed—I resign my-
 self to the dusk.

6

¹⁷ He whom I call answers me, and takes the place of
my lover,
He rises with me silently from the bed.

¹⁸ Darkness! you are gentler than my lover—his flesh
was sweaty and panting,
I feel the hot moisture yet that he left me.

¹⁹ My hands are spread forth, I pass them in all direc-
tions,
I would sound up the shadowy shore to which you are
journeying.

²⁰ Be careful, darkness! already, what was it touch'd
me?
I thought my lover had gone, else darkness and he are
one,
I hear the heart-beat—I follow, I fade away.

7

²¹ O hot-check'd and blushing! O foolish hectic!
O for pity's sake, no one must see me now! my clothes
were stolen while I was abed,
Now I am thrust forth, where shall I run?

²² Pier that I saw dimly last night, when I look'd from
the windows!
Pier out from the main, let me catch myself with you,
and stay—I will not chafe you,
I feel ashamed to go naked about the world.

²³ I am curious to know where my feet stand—and what
this is flooding me, childhood or manhood—and
the hunger that crosses the bridge between.

8

²⁴ The cloth laps a first sweet eating and drinking,
Laps life-swelling yolks—laps ear of rose-corn, milky
and just ripen'd;

The white teeth stay, and the boss-tooth advances in
darkness,
And liquor is spill'd on lips and bosoms by touching
glasses, and the best liquor afterward.

9

²⁵ I descend my western course, my sinews are flaccid,
Perfume and youth course through me, and I am their
wake.

²⁶ It is my face yellow and wrinkled, instead of the old
woman's,
I sit low in a straw-bottom chair, and carefully darn
my grandson's stockings.

²⁷ It is I too, the sleepless widow, looking out on the
winter midnight,
I see the sparkles of starshine on the icy and pallid
earth.

²⁸ A shroud I see, and I am the shroud—I wrap a body,
and lie in the coffin,
It is dark here under ground—it is not evil or pain here
—it is blank here, for reasons.

²⁹ It seems to me that everything in the light and air
ought to be happy,
Whoever is not in his coffin and the dark grave, let him
know he has enough.

10

³⁰ I see a beautiful gigantic swimmer, swimming naked
through the eddies of the sea,
His brown hair lies close and even to his head—he
strikes out with courageous arms—he urges him-
self with his legs,
I see his white body—I see his undaunted eyes,
I hate the swift-running eddies that would dash him
head-foremost on the rocks.

³¹ What are you doing, you ruffianly red-trickled waves?
Will you kill the courageous giant? Will you kill him
in the prime of his middle age?

³² Steady and long he struggles,
He is baffled, bang'd, bruis'd—he holds out while his
strength holds out,
The slapping eddies are spotted with his blood—they
bear him away—they roll him, swing him, turn
him,
His beautiful body is borne in the circling eddies, it is
continually bruis'd on rocks,
Swiftly and out of sight is borne the brave corpse.

11

³³ I turn, but do not extricate myself,
Confused, a past-reading, another, but with darkness
yet.

³⁴ The beach is cut by the razory ice-wind—the wreck-
guns sound,
The tempest lulls—the moon comes floundering through
the drifts.

³⁵ I look where the ship helplessly heads end on—I hear
the burst as she strikes—I hear the howls of
dismay—they grow fainter and fainter.

³⁶ I cannot aid with my wringing fingers,
I can but rush to the surf, and let it drench me and
freeze upon me.

³⁷ I search with the crowd—not one of the company is
wash'd to us alive;
In the morning I help pick up the dead and lay them
in rows in a barn.

12

³⁸ Now of the older war-days, the defeat at Brooklyn,

Washington stands inside the lines—he stands on the
intrench'd hills, amid a crowd of officers,
His face is cold and damp—he cannot repress the weep-
ing drops,
He lifts the glass perpetually to his eyes—the color is
blanch'd from his cheeks,
He sees the slaughter of the southern braves confided
to him by their parents.

³⁹ The same, at last and at last, when peace is declared,
He stands in the room of the old tavern—the well-
belov'd soldiers all pass through,
The officers speechless and slow draw near in their
turns,
The chief encircles their necks with his arm, and kisses
them on the cheek,
He kisses lightly the wet cheeks one after another—he
shakes hands, and bids good-by to the army.

13

⁴⁰ Now I tell what my mother told me to-day as we sat
at dinner together,
Of when she was a nearly grown girl, living home with
her parents on the old homestead.

⁴¹ A red squaw came one breakfast time to the old
homestead,
On her back she carried a bundle of rushes for rush-
bottoming chairs,
Her hair, straight, shiny, coarse, black, profuse, half-
envelop'd her face,
Her step was free and elastic, and her voice sounded
exquisitely as she spoke.

⁴² My mother look'd in delight and amazement at the
stranger,
She look'd at the freshness of her tall-borne face, and
full and pliant limbs,
The more she look'd upon her, she loved her,

Never before had she seen such wonderful beauty and
 purity,
 She made her sit on a bench by the jamb of the fire-
 place—she cook'd food for her,
 She had no work to give her, but she gave her remem-
 brance and fondness.

⁴³ The red squaw staid all the forenoon, and toward the
 middle of the afternoon she went away,
 O my mother was loth to have her go away!
 All the week she thought of her—she watch'd for her
 many a month,
 She remember'd her many a winter and many a summer,
 But the red squaw never came, nor was heard of there
 again.

14

⁴⁴ Now Lucifer was not dead—or if he was, I am his
 sorrowful terrible heir;
 I have been wrong'd—I am oppress'd—I hate him that
 oppresses me,
 I will either destroy him, or he shall release me.

⁴⁵ Damn him! how he does defile me!
 How he informs against my brother and sister, and
 takes pay for their blood!
 How he laughs when I look down the bend, after the
 steamboat that carries away my woman!

⁴⁶ Now the vast dusk bulk that is the whale's bulk, it
 seems mine;
 Warily, sportsman! though I lie so sleepy and slug-
 gish, the tap of my flukes is death.

15

⁴⁷ A show of the summer softness! a contact of some-
 thing unseen! an amour of the light and air!
 I am jealous, and overwhelm'd with friendliness,
 And will go gallivant with the light and air myself,

And have an unseen something to be in contact with them also.

⁴⁸ O love and summer! you are in the dreams, and in me!
Autumn and winter are in the dreams—the farmer goes with his thrift,
The doves and crops increase, and the barns are well-fill'd.

16

⁴⁹ Elements merge in the night—ships make tacks in the dreams,
The sailor sails—the exile returns home,
The fugitive returns unharm'd—the immigrant is back beyond months and years,
The poor Irishman lives in the simple house of his childhood, with the well-known neighbors and faces,
They warmly welcome him—he is barefoot again, he forgets he is well off;
The Dutchman voyages home, and the Scotchman and Welshman voyage home, and the native of the Mediterranean voyages home,
To every port of England, France, Spain, enter well-fill'd ships,
The Swiss foots it toward his hills—the Prussian goes his way, the Hungarian his way, and the Pole his way,
The Swede returns, and the Dane and Norwegian return.

17

⁵⁰ The homeward bound, and the outward bound,
The beautiful lost swimmer, the ennuyé, the onanist, the female that loves unrequited, the money-maker,
The actor and actress, those through with their parts, and those waiting to commence,

The affectionate boy, the husband and wife, the voter,
 the nominee that is chosen, and the nominee that
 has fail'd,
 The great already known, and the great any time after
 to-day,
 The stammerer, the sick, the perfect-form'd, the homely,
 The criminal that stood in the box, the judge that sat
 and sentenced him, the fluent lawyers, the jury,
 the audience,
 The laugher and weeper, the dancer, the midnight
 widow, the red squaw,
 The consumptive, the erysipelite, the idiot, he that is
 wrong'd,
 The antipodes, and every one between this and them in
 the dark,
 I swear they are averaged now—one is no better than
 the other,
 The night and sleep have liken'd them and restored
 them.

⁵¹ I swear they are all beautiful ;
 Every one that sleeps is beautiful—everything in the
 dim light is beautiful,
 The wildest and bloodiest is over, and all is peace.

18

⁵² Peace is always beautiful,
 The myth of heaven indicates peace and night.

⁵³ The myth of heaven indicates the Soul ;
 The Soul is always beautiful—it appears more or it
 appears less—it comes, or it lags behind,
 It comes from its embower'd garden, and looks pleas-
 antly on itself, and encloses the world,
 Perfect and clean the genitals previously jetting, and
 perfect and clean the womb cohering,
 The head well-grown, proportion'd and plumb, and the
 bowels and joints proportion'd and plumb.

19

⁵⁴ The Soul is always beautiful,
 The universe is duly in order, everything is in its place,
 What has arrived is in its place, and what waits is in
 its place ;
 The twisted skull waits, the watery or rotten blood
 waits,
 The child of the glutton or venerealee waits long, and
 the child of the drunkard waits long, and the
 drunkard himself waits long,
 The sleepers that lived and died wait—the far advanced
 are to go on in their turns, and the far behind
 are to come on in their turns,
 The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall
 flow and unite—they unite now.

20

⁵⁵ The sleepers are very beautiful as they lie unclothed,
 They flow hand in hand over the whole earth, from
 east to west, as they lie unclothed,
 The Asiatic and African are hand in hand—the Euro-
 pean and American are hand in hand,
 Learn'd and unlearn'd are hand in hand, and male and
 female are hand in hand,
 The bare arm of the girl crosses the bare breast of her
 lover—they press close without lust—his lips
 press her neck,
 The father holds his grown or ungrown son in his arms
 with measureless love, and the son holds the
 father in his arms with measureless love,
 The white hair of the mother shines on the white wrist
 of the daughter,
 The breath of the boy goes with the breath of the man,
 friend is inarm'd by friend,
 The scholar kisses the teacher, and the teacher kisses
 the scholar—the wrong'd is made right,
 The call of the slave is one with the master's call, and
 the master salutes the slave,

The felon steps forth from the prison—the insane becomes sane—the suffering of sick persons is reliev'd,

The sweatings and fevers stop—the throat that was unsound is sound—the lungs of the consumptive are resumed—the poor distress'd head is free,

The joints of the rheumatic move as smoothly as ever, and smoother than ever,

Stiflings and passages open—the paralyzed become supple,

The swell'd and convuls'd and congested awake to themselves in condition,

They pass the invigoration of the night, and the chemistry of the night, and awake.

21

⁵⁶ I too pass from the night,
I stay a while away, O night, but I return to you again,
and love you.

⁵⁷ Why should I be afraid to trust myself to you?
I am not afraid—I have been well brought forward by
you ;
I love the rich running day, but I do not desert her in
whom I lay so long,
I know not how I came of you, and I know not where
I go with you—but I know I came well, and shall
go well.

⁵⁸ I will stop only a time with the night, and rise be-
times ;
I will duly pass the day, O my mother, and duly return
to you.

CAROL OF WORDS.



1

¹ EARTH, round, rolling, compact—suns, moons, animals—all these are words to be said ;
Watery, vegetable, sauroid advances—beings, premonitions, lispings of the future,
Behold! these are vast words to be said.

² Were you thinking that those were the words—those upright lines? those curves, angles, dots?
No, those are not the words—the substantial words are in the ground and sea,
They are in the air—they are in you.

³ Were you thinking that those were the words—those delicious sounds out of your friends' mouths?
No, the real words are more delicious than they.

⁴ Human bodies are words, myriads of words ;
In the best poems re-appears the body, man's or woman's, well-shaped, natural, gay,
Every part able, active, receptive, without shame or the need of shame.

2

⁵ Air, soil, water, fire—these are words ;
I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate with theirs—my name is nothing to them ;

Though it were told in the three thousand languages,
 what would air, soil, water, fire, know of my
 name?

⁶ A healthy presence, a friendly or commanding ges-
 ture, are words, sayings, meanings ;
 The charms that go with the mere looks of some men
 and women, are sayings and meanings also.

3

⁷ The workmanship of souls is by the inaudible words
 of the earth ;
 The great masters know the earth's words, and use
 them more than the audible words.

⁸ Amelioration is one of the earth's words ;
 The earth neither lags nor hastens ;
 It has all attributes, growths, effects, latent in itself
 from the jump ;
 It is not half beautiful only—defects and excrescences
 show just as much as perfections show.

⁹ The earth does not withhold, it is generous enough ;
 The truths of the earth continually wait, they are not
 so conceal'd either ;
 They are calm, subtle, untransmissible by print ;
 They are imbued through all things, conveying them-
 selves willingly,
 Conveying a sentiment and invitation of the earth—I
 utter and utter,
 I speak not, yet if you hear me not, of what avail am I
 to you?
 To bear—to better—lacking these, of what avail am I?

4

¹⁰ Accouche ! Accouchez !
 Will you rot your own fruit in yourself there ?
 Will you squat and stifle there ?

¹¹ The earth does not argue,

Is not pathetic, has no arrangements,
 Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise,
 Makes no discriminations, has no conceivable failures,
 Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out,
 Of all the powers, objects, states, it notifies, shuts none
 out.

5

¹² The earth does not exhibit itself, nor refuse to exhibit itself—possesses still underneath ;
 Underneath the ostensible sounds, the august chorus
 of heroes, the wail of slaves,
 Persuasions of lovers, curses, gasps of the dying,
 laughter of young people, accents of bargain-
 ers,
 Underneath these, possessing the words that never
 fail.

¹³ To her children, the words of the eloquent dumb
 great mother never fail ;
 The true words do not fail, for motion does not fail,
 and reflection does not fail ;
 Also the day and night do not fail, and the voyage we
 pursue does not fail.

6

¹⁴ Of the interminable sisters,
 Of the ceaseless cotillions of sisters,
 Of the centripetal and centrifugal sisters, the elder and
 younger sisters,
 The beautiful sister we know dances on with the rest.

¹⁵ With her ample back towards every beholder,
 With the fascinations of youth, and the equal fascina-
 tions of age,
 Sits she whom I too love like the rest—sits undis-
 turb'd,
 Holding up in her hand what has the character of a
 mirror, while her eyes glance back from it,

Glance as she sits, inviting none, denying none,
 Holding a mirror day and night tirelessly before her
 own face.

7

¹⁶ Seen at hand, or seen at a distance,
 Duly the twenty-four appear in public every day,
 Duly approach and pass with their companions, or a
 companion,
 Looking from no countenances of their own, but from
 the countenances of those who are with them,
 From the countenances of children or women, or the
 manly countenance,
 From the open countenances of animals, or from inani-
 mate things,
 From the landscape or waters, or from the exquisite
 apparition of the sky,
 From our countenances, mine and yours, faithfully re-
 turning them,
 Every day in public appearing without fail, but never
 twice with the same companions.

8

¹⁷ Embracing man, embracing all, proceed the three
 hundred and sixty-five resistlessly round the
 sun ;
 Embracing all, soothing, supporting, follow close three
 hundred and sixty-five offsets of the first, sure
 and necessary as they

9

¹⁸ Tumbling on steadily, nothing dreading,
 Sunshine, storm, cold, heat, forever withstanding, pass-
 ing, carrying,
 The Soul's realization and determination still inherit-
 ing,
 The fluid vacuum around and ahead still entering and
 dividing,

No balk retarding, no anchor anchoring, on no rock
 striking,
 Swift, glad, content, unbereav'd, nothing losing,
 Of all able and ready at any time to give strict ac-
 count,
 The divine ship sails the divine sea.

10

¹⁹ Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especi-
 ally for you ;
 The divine ship sails the divine sea for you.

²⁰ Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the
 earth is solid and liquid,
 You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in
 the sky,
 For none more than you are the present and the past,
 For none more than you is immortality.

11

²¹ Each man to himself, and each woman to herself,
 such is the word of the past and present, and
 the word of immortality ;
 No one can acquire for another—not one!
 Not one can grow for another—not one!

²² The song is to the singer, and comes back most to
 him ;
 The teaching is to the teacher, and comes back most to
 him ;
 The murder is to the murderer, and comes back most
 to him ;
 The theft is to the thief, and comes back most to him ;
 The love is to the lover, and comes back most to him ;
 The gift is to the giver, and comes back most to him—
 it cannot fail ;
 The oration is to the orator, the acting is to the actor
 and actress, not to the audience ;
 And no man understands any greatness or goodness
 but his own, or the indication of his own.

12

²³ I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or
her who shall be complete !

I swear the earth remains jagged and broken only to
him or her who remains jagged and broken !

²⁴ I swear there is no greatness or power that does not
emulate those of the earth !

I swear there can be no theory of any account, unless it
corroborate the theory of the earth !

No politics, art, religion, behavior, or what not, is of
account, unless it compare with the amplitude of
the earth,

Unless it face the exactness, vitality, impartiality, recti-
tude of the earth.

13

²⁵ I swear I begin to see love with sweeter spasms than
that which responds love !

It is that which contains itself—which never invites,
and never refuses.

²⁶ I swear I begin to see little or nothing in audible
words !

I swear I think all merges toward the presentation of
the unspoken meanings of the earth !

Toward him who sings the songs of the Body, and of
the truths of the earth ;

Toward him who makes the dictionaries of words that
print cannot touch.

14

²⁷ I swear I see what is better than to tell the best ;
It is always to leave the best untold.

²⁸ When I undertake to tell the best, I find I cannot,
My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots,
My breath will not be obedient to its organs,
I become a dumb man.

²⁹ The best of the earth cannot be told anyhow—all or
 any is best ;
 It is not what you anticipated—it is cheaper, easier,
 nearer ;
 Things are not dismiss'd from the places they held
 before ;
 The earth is just as positive and direct as it was before ;
 Facts, religions, improvements, politics, trades, are as
 real as before ;
 But the Soul is also real,—it too is positive and direct ;
 No reasoning, no proof has establish'd it,
 Undeniable growth has establish'd it.

15

³⁰ This is a poem—a carol of words—these are hints of
 meanings,
 These are to echo the tones of Souls, and the phrases
 of Souls ;
 If they did not echo the phrases of Souls, what were
 they then ?
 If they had not reference to you in especial, what were
 they then ?

³¹ I swear I will never henceforth have to do with the
 faith that tells the best !
 I will have to do only with that faith that leaves the
 best untold.

16

³² Say on, sayers !
 Delve ! mould ! pile the words of the earth !
 Work on—(it is materials you must bring, not breaths ;))
 Work on, age after age ! nothing is to be lost ;
 It may have to wait long, but it will certainly come in
 use ;
 When the materials are all-prepared, the architects
 shall appear.

³³ I swear to you the architects shall appear without
 fail ! I announce them and lead them ;

I swear to you they will understand you, and justify
 you ;
 I swear to you the greatest among them shall be he
 who best knows you, and encloses all, and is
 faithful to all ;
 I swear to you, he and the rest shall not forget you—
 they shall perceive that you are not an iota less
 than they ;
 I swear to you, you shall be glorified in them.



Ah Poverties, Wincings, and Sulky Retreats.

Ah poverties, wincings, and sulky retreats !
 Ah you foes that in conflict have overcome me !
 (For what is my life, or any man's life, but a conflict
 with foes—the old, the incessant war?)
 You degradations—you tussle with passions and appe-
 tites ;
 You smarts from dissatisfied friendships, (ah wounds,
 the sharpest of all ;))
 You toil of painful and choked articulations—you mean-
 nesses ;
 You shallow tongue-talks at tables, (my tongue the
 shallowest of any ;))
 You broken resolutions, you racking angers, you smoth-
 er'd ennui ;
 Ah, think not you finally triumph—My real self has yet
 to come forth ;
 It shall yet march forth o'ermastering, till all lies be-
 neath me ;
 It shall yet stand up the soldier of unquestion'd victory.

LEAVES OF GRASS.

A BOSTON BALLAD.

(1854.)

¹ To get betimes in Boston town, I rose this morning
early ;
Here's a good place at the corner—I must stand and
see the show.

² Clear the way there, Jonathan!
Way for the President's marshal! Way for the govern-
ment cannon!
Way for the Federal foot and dragoons—and the appa-
ritions copiously tumbling.

³ I love to look on the stars and stripes—I hope the
fifes will play Yankee Doodle.

⁴ How bright shine the cutlasses of the foremost troops!
Every man holds his revolver, marching stiff through
Boston town.

⁵ A fog follows—antiques of the same come limping,
Some appear wooden-legged, and some appear ban-
daged and bloodless.

⁶ Why this is indeed a show! It has called the dead out
of the earth!
The old grave-yards of the hills have hurried to see!
Phantoms! phantoms countless by flank and rear!
Cock'd hats of mothy mould! crutches made of mist!
Arms in slings! old men leaning on young men's shoul-
ders!

⁷ What troubles you, Yankee phantoms? What is all
this chattering of bare gums?

Does the ague convulse your limbs? Do you mistake
your crutches for fire-locks, and level them?

⁸ If you blind your eyes with tears, you will not see the
President's marshal;

If you groan such groans, you might balk the govern-
ment cannon.

⁹ For shame old maniacs! Bring down those toss'd
arms, and let your white hair be;

Here gape your great grand-sons—their wives gaze at
them from the windows,

See how well dress'd—see how orderly they conduct
themselves.

¹⁰ Worse and worse! Can't you stand it? Are you
retreating?

Is this hour with the living too dead for you?

¹¹ Retreat then! Pell-mell!

To your graves! Back! back to the hills, old limpers!
I do not think you belong here, anyhow.

¹² But there is one thing that belongs here—shall I tell
you what it is, gentlemen of Boston?

¹³ I will whisper it to the Mayor—he shall send a com-
mittee to England;

They shall get a grant from the Parliament, go with a
cart to the royal vault—haste!

Dig out King George's coffin, unwrap him quick from
the grave-clothes, box up his bones for a journey;

Find a swift Yankee clipper—here is freight for you,
black-bellied clipper,

Up with your anchor! shake out your sails! steer
straight toward Boston-bay.

¹⁴ Now call for the President's marshal again, bring out
the government cannon,

Fetch home the roarers from Congress, make another
procession, guard it with foot and dragoons.

¹⁵ This centre-piece for them :

Look! all orderly citizens—look from the windows,
women!

¹⁶ The committee open the box, set up the regal ribs,
glue those that will not stay,

Clap the skull on top of the ribs, and clap a crown on
top of the skull.

¹⁷ You have got your revenge, old buster! The crown
is come to its own, and more than its own.

¹⁸ Stick your hands in your pockets, Jonathan—you are
a made man from this day ;

You are mighty cute—and here is one of your bargains.



YEAR OF METEORS.

(1859-60.)

YEAR of meteors! brooding year!

I would bind in words retrospective, some of your deeds
and signs ;

I would sing your contest for the 19th Presidentiad ;

I would sing how an old man, tall, with white hair,
mounted the scaffold in Virginia ;

(I was at hand—silent I stood, with teeth shut close—I
watch'd ;

I stood very near you, old man, when cool and indiffer-
ent, but trembling with age and your unheal'd
wounds, you mounted the scaffold ;)

—I would sing in my copious song your census returns
of The States,

The tables of population and products—I would sing of
your ships and their cargoes,

The proud black ships of Manhattan, arriving, some
 fil'd with immigrants, some from the isthmus
 with cargoes of gold ;
 Songs thereof would I sing—to all that hitherward
 comes would I welcome give ;
 And you would I sing, fair stripling! welcome to you
 from me, sweet boy of England!
 Remember you surging Manhattan's crowds, as you
 pass'd with your cortege of nobles?
 There in the crowds stood I, and singled you out with
 attachment ;
 I know not why, but I loved you . . . (and so go forth
 little song,
 Far over sea speed like an arrow, carrying my love all
 folded,
 And find in his palace the youth I love, and drop these
 lines at his feet ;)

—Nor forget I to sing of the wonder, the ship as she
 swam up my bay,
 Well-shaped and stately the Great Eastern swam up my
 bay, she was 600 feet long,
 Her, moving swiftly, surrounded by myriads of small
 craft, I forget not to sing ;
 —Nor the comet that came unannounced, out of the
 north, flaring in heaven ;
 Nor the strange huge meteor procession, dazzling and
 clear, shooting over our heads,
 (A moment, a moment long, it sail'd its balls of un-
 earthly light over our heads,
 Then departed, dropt in the night, and was gone ;)

—Of such, and fitful as they, I sing—with gleams from
 them would I gleam and patch these chants ;
 Your chants, O year all mottled with evil and good!
 year of forebodings! year of the youth I love!
 Year of comets and meteors transient and strange!—lo!
 even here, one equally transient and strange!
 As I flit through you hastily, soon to fall and be gone,
 what is this book,
 What am I myself but one of your meteors?

A BROADWAY PAGEANT.

RECEPTION JAPANESE EMBASSY, JUNE, 1860.

1

¹ OVER the western sea, hither from Nippon come,
Courteous, the swart-cheek'd, two-sworded envoys,
Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-headed,
 impassive,
Ride to-day through Manhattan.

² Libertad!
I do not know whether others behold what I behold,
In the procession, along with the nobles of Asia, the
 errand-bearers,
Bringing up the rear, hovering above, around, or in the
 ranks marching ;
But I will sing you a song of what I behold, Libertad.

2

³ When million-footed Manhattan, unpent, descends to
 her pavements ;
When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me with the
 proud roar I love ;
When the round-mouth'd guns, out of the smoke and
 smell I love, spit their salutes ;

When the fire-flashing guns have fully alerted me—
 when heaven-clouds canopy my city with a
 delicate thin haze ;
 When, gorgeous, the countless straight stems, the for-
 ests at the wharves, thicken with colors ;
 When every ship, richly drest, carries her flag at the
 peak ;
 When pennants trail, and street-festoons hang from the
 windows ;
 When Broadway is entirely given up to foot-passengers
 and foot-standers—when the mass is densest ;
 When the façades of the houses are alive with people—
 when eyes gaze, riveted, tens of thousands at a
 time ;
 When the guests from the islands advance—when the
 pageant moves forward, visible ;
 When the summons is made—when the answer that
 waited thousands of years, answers ;
 I too, arising, answering, descend to the pavements,
 merge with the crowd, and gaze with them.

3

⁴ Superb-faced Manhattan!
 Comrade Americanos!—to us, then, at last, the Orient
 comes.

⁵ To us, my city,
 Where our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on
 opposite sides—to walk in the space between,
 To-day our Antipodes comes.

⁶ The Originatress comes,
 The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the
 race of eld,
 Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with
 passion,
 Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments,
 With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and glittering
 eyes,
 The race of Brahma comes!

4

⁷ See, my cantabile! these, and more, are flashing to us
 from the procession ;
 As it moves, changing, a kaleidoscope divine it moves,
 changing, before us.

⁸ For not the envoys, nor the tann'd Japanee from his
 island only ;
 Lithe and silent, the Hindoo appears—the Asiatic con-
 tinent itself appears—the Past, the dead,
 The murky night-morning of wonder and fable, inscru-
 table,
 The envelop'd mysteries, the old and unknown hive-
 bees,
 The North—the sweltering South—eastern Assyria—
 the Hebrews—the Ancient of Ancients,
 Vast desolated cities—the gliding Present—all of these,
 and more, are in the pageant-procession.

⁹ Geography, the world, is in it ;
 The Great Sea, the brood of islands, Polynesia, the
 coast beyond ;
 The coast you, henceforth, are facing—you Libertad!
 from your Western golden shores
 The countries there, with their populations—the mil-
 lions en-masse, are curiously here ;
 The swarming market places—the temples, with idols
 ranged along the sides, or at the end—bonze,
 brahmin, and lama ;
 The mandarin, farmer, merchant, mechanic, and fisher-
 man ;
 The singing-girl and the dancing-girl—the ecstatic
 person—the secluded Emperors,
 Confucius himself—the great poets and heroes—the
 warriors, the castes, all,
 Trooping up, crowding from all directions—from the
 Altay mountains,
 From Thibet—from the four winding and far-flowing
 rivers of China,
 From the Southern peninsulas, and the demi-conti-
 nental islands—from Malaysia ;

These, and whatever belongs to them, palpable, show
 forth to me, and are seiz'd by me,
 And I am seiz'd by them, and friendlily held by them,
 Till, as here, them all I chant, Libertad ! for themselves
 and for you.

5

¹⁰ For I too, raising my voice, join the ranks of this
 pageant ;
 I am the chanter—I chant aloud over the pageant ;
 I chant the world on my Western Sea ;
 I chant, copious, the islands beyond, thick as stars in
 the sky ;
 I chant the new empire, grander than any before—As
 in a vision it comes to me ;
 I chant America, the Mistress—I chant a greater su-
 premacy ;
 I chant, projected, a thousand blooming cities yet, in
 time, on those groups of sea-islands ;
 I chant my sail-ships and steam-ships threading the
 archipelagoes ;
 I chant my stars and stripes fluttering in the wind ;
 I chant commerce opening, the sleep of ages having
 done its work—races, reborn, refresh'd ;
 Lives, works, resumed—The object I know not—but
 the old, the Asiatic, renew'd, as it must be,
 Commencing from this day, surrounded by the world.

6

¹¹ And you, Libertad of the world !
 You shall sit in the middle, well-poised, thousands of
 years ;
 As to-day, from one side, the nobles of Asia come to
 you ;
 As to-morrow, from the other side, the Queen of Eng-
 land sends her eldest son to you.

7

¹² The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed,
 The ring is circled, the journey is done ;

The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd—nevertheless the perfume pours copiously out of the whole box.

8

¹³ Young Libertad!

With the venerable Asia, the all-mother,

Be considerate with her, now and ever, hot Libertad—
for you are all;

Bend your proud neck to the long-off mother, now
sending messages over the archipelagoes to you;

Bend your proud neck low for once, young Libertad.

9

¹⁴ Were the children straying westward so long? so
wide the tramping?

Were the precedent dim ages debouching westward
from Paradise so long?

Were the centuries steadily footing it that way, all the
while unknown, for you, for reasons?

¹⁵ They are justified—they are accomplish'd—they shall
now be turn'd the other way also, to travel to-
ward you thence;

They shall now also march obediently eastward, for
your sake, Libertad.

SUGGESTIONS.

1

THAT whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person
—That is finally right.

2

That the human shape or face is so great, it must never
be made ridiculous ;

That for ornaments nothing outré can be allowed,

That anything is most beautiful without ornament ;

That exaggerations will be sternly revenged in your
own physiology, and in other persons' physi-
ology also ;

That clean-shaped children can be jettied and conceiv'd
only where natural forms prevail in public, and
the human face and form are never caricatured ;

And that genius need never more be turn'd to ro-
mances,

(For facts properly told, how mean appear all ro-
mances.)

3.

I have said many times that materials and the Soul are
great, and that all depends on physique ;

Now I reverse what I said, and suggest that all depends
on the æsthetic, or intellectual,

And that criticism is great—and that refinement is
greatest of all ;

And that the mind governs—and that all depends on
the mind.

4

With one man or woman—(no matter which one—I
even pick out the lowest,)

With him or her I now suggest the whole law ;

And that every right, in politics or what-not, shall be
eligible to that one man or woman, on the same
terms as any.

GREAT ARE THE MYTHS.

1

¹ GREAT are the myths—I too delight in them ;
Great are Adam and Eve—I too look back and accept
them ;

Great the risen and fallen nations, and their poets,
women, sages, inventors, rulers, warriors, and
priests.

² Great is Liberty! great is Equality! I am their fol-
lower ;

Helmsmen of nations, choose your craft! where you
sail, I sail,

I weather it out with you, or sink with you.

³ Great is Youth—equally great is Old Age—great are
the Day and Night ;

Great is Wealth—great is Poverty—great is Expres-
sion—great is Silence.

⁴ Youth, large, lusty, loving—Youth, full of grace, force,
fascination!

Do you know that Old Age may come after you, with
equal grace, force, fascination?

⁵ Day, full-blown and splendid—Day of the immense
sun, action, ambition, laughter,

The Night follows close, with millions of suns, and
sleep, and restoring darkness.

6 Wealth, with the flush hand, fine clothes, hospitality ;
 But then the Soul's wealth, which is candor, knowledge, pride, enfolding love ;
 (Who goes for men and women showing Poverty richer than wealth ?)

7 Expression of speech ! in what is written or said, forget not that Silence is also expressive,
 That anguish as hot as the hottest, and contempt as cold as the coldest, may be without words.

2

8 Great is the Earth, and the way it became what it is ;
 Do you imagine it has stopt at this ? the increase abandon'd ?

Understand then that it goes as far onward from this, as this is from the times when it lay in covering waters and gases, before man had appear'd.

9 Great is the quality of Truth in man ;
 The quality of truth in man supports itself through all changes,
 It is inevitably in the man—he and it are in love, and never leave each other.

10 The truth in man is no dictum, it is vital as eyesight ;
 If there be any Soul, there is truth—if there be man or woman there is truth—if there be physical or moral, there is truth ;
 If there be equilibrium or volition, there is truth—if there be things at all upon the earth, there is truth.

11 O truth of the earth ! I am determin'd to press my way toward you ;
 Sound your voice ! I scale mountains, or dive in the sea after you.

3

¹² Great is Language—it is the mightiest of the sciences,
 It is the fulness, color, form, diversity of the earth, and
 of men and women, and of all qualities and processes ;
 It is greater than wealth—it is greater than buildings,
 ships, religions, paintings, music.

¹³ Great is the English speech—what speech is so great
 as the English ?
 Great is the English brood—what brood has so vast a
 destiny as the English ?
 It is the mother of the brood that must rule the earth
 with the new rule ;
 The new rule shall rule as the Soul rules, and as the
 love, justice, equality in the Soul rule.

¹⁴ Great is Law—great are the few old land-marks of
 the law,
 They are the same in all times, and shall not be disturb'd.

4

¹⁵ Great is Justice !
 Justice is not settled by legislators and laws—it is in
 the Soul ;
 It cannot be varied by statutes, any more than love,
 pride, the attraction of gravity, can ;
 It is immutable—it does not depend on majorities—
 majorities or what not, come at last before the
 same passionless and exact tribunal.

¹⁶ For justice are the grand natural lawyers, and perfect
 judges—is it in their Souls ;
 It is well assorted—they have not studied for nothing
 —the great includes the less ;
 They rule on the highest grounds—they oversee all
 eras, states, administrations.

¹⁷ The perfect judge fears nothing—he could go front to front before God ;
 Before the perfect judge all shall stand back—life and death shall stand back—heaven and hell shall stand back.

5

¹⁸ Great is Life, real and mystical, wherever and whoever ;
 Great is Death—sure as life holds all parts together, Death holds all parts together.

¹⁹ Has Life much purport ?—Ah, Death has the greatest purport.



Thought.

OF persons arrived at high positions, ceremonies, wealth, scholarships, and the like ;
 To me, all that those persons have arrived at, sinks away from them, except as it results to their Bodies and Souls,
 So that often to me they appear gaunt and naked ;
 And often, to me, each one mocks the others, and mocks himself or herself,
 And of each one, the core of life, namely happiness, is full of the rotten excrement of maggots,
 And often, to me, those men and women pass unwittingly the true realities of life, and go toward false realities,
 And often, to me, they are alive after what custom has served them, but nothing more,
 And often, to me, they are sad, hasty, unwaked sonnambules, walking the dusk.

LEAVES OF GRASS.

THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH.

¹ 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.

² 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 phoebe-
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 barn-yard, 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.

³ 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 out-
 house of the tavern, whence he had lately risen,
 And the school-mistress 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 fur-
 niture—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, three 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.



LONGINGS FOR HOME.

O MAGNET-SOUTH! O glistening, perfumed South! My
 South!
 O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse, and love! Good
 and evil! O all dear to me!
 O dear to me my birth-things—All moving things, and
 the trees where I was born—the grains, plants,
 rivers ;
 Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they
 flow, distant, over flats of silvery sands, or
 through swamps ;
 Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw,
 the Pedee, the Tombigbee, the Santee, the Coosa,
 and the Sabine ;
 O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my Soul
 to haunt their banks again ;
 Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes—I float
 on the Okeechobee—I cross the hummock land,
 or through pleasant openings, or dense forests ;

I see the parrots in the woods—I see the papaw tree
 and the blossoming titi ;
 Again, sailing in my coaster, on deck, I coast off
 Georgia—I coast up the Carolinas,
 I see where the live-oak is growing—I see where the
 yellow-pine, the scented bay-tree, the lemon and
 orange, the cypress, the graceful palmetto ;
 I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico Sound
 through an inlet, and dart my vision inland ;
 O the cotton plant! the growing fields of rice, sugar,
 hemp !
 The cactus, guarded with thorns—the laurel-tree, with
 large white flowers ;
 The range afar—the richness and barrenness—the old
 woods charged with mistletoe and trailing moss,
 The piney odor and the gloom—the awful natural still-
 ness, (Here in these dense swamps the freebooter
 carries his gun, and the fugitive slave has his
 conceal'd hut ;))
 O the strange fascination of these half-known, half-
 impassable swamps, infested by reptiles, resound-
 ing with the bellow of the alligator, the sad
 noises of the night-owl and the wild-cat, and the
 whirr of the rattlesnake ;
 The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the
 forenoon—singing through the moon-lit night,
 The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the
 opossum ;
 A Tennessee corn-field—the tall, graceful, long-leav'd
 corn—slender, flapping, bright green, with tas-
 sels—with beautiful ears, each well-sheath'd in
 its husk ;
 An Arkansas prairie—a sleeping lake, or still bayou ;
 O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs—I can stand
 them not—I will depart ;
 O to be a Virginian, where I grew up! O to be a Caro-
 linian !
 O longings irrepressible! O I will go back to old Ten-
 nessee, and never wander more !

THINK OF THE SOUL.

- ¹ THINK of the Soul ;
 I swear to you that body of yours gives proportions to
 your Soul somehow to live in other spheres ;
 I do not know how, but I know it is so.
- ² Think of loving and being loved ;
 I swear to you, whoever you are, you can interfuse your-
 self with such things that everybody that sees
 you shall look longingly upon you.
- ³ Think of the past ;
 I warn you that in a little while others will find their
 past in you and your times.
- ⁴ The race is never separated—nor man nor woman
 escapes ;
 All is inextricable—things, spirits, Nature, nations, you
 too—from precedents you come.
- ⁵ Recall the ever-welcome defiers, (The mothers pre-
 cede them ;)
 Recall the sages, poets, saviors, inventors, lawgivers, of
 the earth ;
 Recall Christ, brother of rejected persons—brother of
 slaves, felons, idiots, and of insane and diseas'd
 persons.
- ⁶ Think of the time when you were not yet born ;
 Think of times you stood at the side of the dying ;
 Think of the time when your own body will be dying.
- ⁷ Think of spiritual results,
 Sure as the earth swims through the heavens, does every
 one of its objects pass into spiritual results.
- ⁸ Think of manhood, and you to be a man ;
 Do you count manhood, and the sweet of manhood,
 nothing?

⁹ Think of womanhood, and you to be a woman ;
 The creation is womanhood ;
 Have I not said that womanhood involves all ?
 Have I not told how the universe has nothing better
 than the best womanhood ?

You Felons on Trial in Courts.

¹ You felons on trial in courts ;
 You convicts in prison-cells—you sentenced assassins,
 chain'd and hand-cuff'd with iron ;
 Who am I, too, that I am not on trial, or in prison ?
 Me, ruthless and devilish as any, that my wrists are not
 chain'd with iron, or my ankles with iron ?

² You prostitutes flaunting over the trottoirs, or ob-
 scene in your rooms,
 Who am I, that I should call you more obscene than
 myself ?

³ O culpable !
 I acknowledge—I exposé !
 (O admirers ! praise not me ! compliment not me ! you
 make me wince,
 I see what you do not—I know what you do not.)

⁴ Inside these breast-bones I lie smutch'd and choked ;
 Beneath this face that appears so impassive, hell's tides
 continually run ;
 Lusts and wickedness are acceptable to me ;
 I walk with delinquents with passionate love ;
 I feel I am of them—I belong to those convicts and
 prostitutes myself,
 And henceforth I will not deny them—for how can I
 deny myself ?

To a Common Prostitute.

- ¹ BE composed—be at ease with me—I am Walt Whitman, liberal and lusty as Nature ;
 Not till the sun excludes you, do I exclude you ;
 Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you, and the
 leaves to rustle for you, do my words refuse to
 glisten and rustle for you.
- ² My girl, I appoint with you an appointment—and I
 charge you that you make preparation to be
 worthy to meet me,
 And I charge you that you be patient and perfect till I
 come.
- ³ Till then, I salute you with a significant look, that
 you do not forget me.



I was Looking a Long While.

I WAS looking a long while for a clue to the history of
 the past for myself, and for these chants—and
 now I have found it ;
 It is not in those paged fables in the libraries, (them I
 neither accept nor reject ;)
 It is no more in the legends than in all else ;
 It is in the present—it is this earth to-day ;
 It is in Democracy—(the purport and aim of all the
 past ;)
 It is the life of one man or one woman to-day—the av-
 erage man of to-day ;
 It is in languages, social customs, literatures, arts ;
 It is in the broad show of artificial things, ships, ma-
 chinery, politics, creeds, modern improvements,
 and the interchange of nations,
 All for the average man of to-day.

To a President.

ALL you are doing and saying is to America dangled
 mirages ;
 You have not learn'd of Nature—of the politics of Na-
 ture, you have not learn'd the great amplitude,
 rectitude, impartiality ;
 You have not seen that only such as they are for These
 States,
 And that what is less than they, must sooner or later
 lift off from These States.



TO THE STATES,

To Identify the 16th, 17th, or 18th Presidentiad.

Why reclining, interrogating? Why myself and all
 drowsing?
 What deepening twilight! scum floating atop of the
 waters!
 Who are they, as bats and night-dogs, askant in the
 Capitol?
 What a filthy Presidentiad! (O south, your torrid suns!
 O north, your arctic freezings!)
 Are those really Congressmen? are those the great
 Judges? is that the President?
 Then I will sleep awhile yet—for I see that These States
 sleep, for reasons ;
 (With gathering murk—with muttering thunder and
 lambent shoots, we all duly awake,
 South, north, east, west, inland and seaboard, we will
 surely awake.)

DRUM-TAPS.



*Aroused and angry,
I 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.*



DRUM-TAPS.

1

¹ FIRST, O songs, for a prelude,
Lightly strike on the stretch'd tympanum, pride and joy
in my city,
How she led the rest to arms—how she gave the cue,
How at once with lithe limbs, unwaiting a moment, she
sprang ;
(O superb ! O Manhattan, my own, my peerless !
O strongest you in the hour of danger, in crisis ! O
truer than steel !)
How you sprang ! how you threw off the costumes of
peace with indifferent hand ;
How your soft opera-music changed, and the drum and
fife were heard in their stead ;
How you led to the war, (that shall serve for our pre-
lude, songs of soldiers,)
How Manhattan drum-taps led.

2

² Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading ;
 Forty years as a pageant—till unawares, the Lady of
 this teeming and turbulent city,
 Sleepless, amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable
 wealth,
 With her million children around her—suddenly,
 At dead of night, at news from the south,
 Incens'd, struck with clench'd hand the pavement.

³ A shock electric—the night sustain'd it ;
 Till with ominous hum, our hive at day-break pour'd
 cut its myriads.

⁴ From the houses then, and the workshops, and
 through all the doorways,
 Leapt they tumultuous—and lo ! Manhattan arming.

3

⁵ To the drum-taps prompt,
 The young men falling in and arming ;
 The mechanics arming, (the trowel, the jack-plane, the
 blacksmith's hammer, tost aside with precipita-
 tion ;)
 The lawyer leaving his office, and arming—the judge
 leaving the court ;
 The driver deserting his wagon in the street, jumping
 down, throwing the reins abruptly down on the
 horses' backs ;
 The salesman leaving the store—the boss, book-keeper,
 porter, all leaving ;
 Squads gather everywhere by common consent, and
 arm ;
 The new recruits, even boys—the old men show them
 how to wear their accoutrements—they buckle
 the straps carefully ;
 Outdoors arming—indoors arming—the flash of the
 musket-barrels ;
 The white tents cluster in camps—the arm'd sentries
 around—the sunrise cannon, and again at sunset ;

Arm'd regiments arrive every day, pass through the
 city, and embark from the wharves ;
 (How good they look, as they tramp down to the river,
 sweaty, with their guns on their shoulders !
 How I love them ! how I could hug them, with their
 brown faces, and their clothes and knapsacks
 cover'd with dust !)
 The blood of the city up—arm'd ! arm'd ! the cry
 everywhere ;
 The flags flung out from the steeples of churches, and
 from all the public buildings and stores ;
 The tearful parting—the mother kisses her son—the
 son kisses his mother ;
 (Loth is the mother to part—yet not a word does she
 speak to detain him ;)
 The tumultuous escort—the ranks of policemen preced-
 ing, clearing the way ;
 The unpent enthusiasm—the wild cheers of the crowd
 for their favorites ;
 The artillery—the silent cannons, bright as gold, drawn
 along, rumble lightly over the stones ;
 (Silent cannons—soon to cease your silence !
 Soon, unlimber'd, to begin the red business ;)
 All the mutter of preparation—all the determin'd
 arming ;
 The hospital service—the lint, bandages, and medi-
 cines ;
 The women volunteering for nurses—the work begun
 for, in earnest—no mere parade now ;
 War ! an arm'd race is advancing !—the welcome for
 battle—no turning away ;
 War ! be it weeks, months, or years—an arm'd race is
 advancing to welcome it.

4

⁶ Mannahatta a-march !—and it's O to sing it well !
 It's O for a manly life in the camp !

⁷ And the sturdy artillery !
 The guns, bright as gold—the work for giants—to serve
 well the guns :

Unlimber them! no more, as the past forty years, for
salutes for courtesies merely;
Put in something else now besides powder and wadding.

5

° And you, Lady of Ships! you Mannahatta!
Old matron of this proud, friendly, turbulent city!
Often in peace and wealth you were pensive, or covertly
frown'd amid all your children;
But now you smile with joy, exulting old Mannahatta!

1861.

ARM'd year! year of the struggle!
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you,
terrible year!
Not you as some pale poetling, seated at a desk, lisping
cadenzas piano;
But as a strong man, erect, clothed in blue clothes, ad-
vancing, carrying a rifle on your shoulder,
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands
—with a knife in the belt at your side,
As I heard you shouting loud—your sonorous voice
ringing across the continent;
Your masculine voice, O year, as rising amid the great
cities,
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you, as one of the
workmen, the dwellers in Manhattan;
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois
and Indiana,
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait, and de-
scending the Alleghanies;
Or down from the great lakes, or in Pennsylvania, or on
deck along the Ohio river;
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers,
or at Chattanooga on the mountain top,

Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs, clothed
 in blue, bearing weapons, robust year ;
 Heard your determin'd voice, launch'd forth again and
 again ;
 Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-
 lipp'd cannon,
 I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.



BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

1

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.

2

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 specu-
 lators—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 be-
 fore the judge ?
 Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder
 blow.

3

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.



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 Michi-
 gan 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 insepa-
 rable,
 And then the song of each member of These States.

RISE, O DAYS, FROM YOUR FATHOMLESS DEEPS.

RISE, O days, from your fathomless deeps, till you
 loftier, fiercer sweep!
 Long for my soul, hungering gymnastic, I devour'd
 what the earth gave me ;
 Long I roam'd the woods of the north—long I watch'd
 Niagara pouring ;
 I travel'd the prairies over, and slept on their breast—
 I cross'd the Nevadas, I cross'd the plateaus ;
 I ascended the towering rocks along the Pacific, I sail'd
 out to sea ;
 I sail'd through the storm, I was refresh'd by the storm ;
 I watch'd with joy the threatening maws of the waves ;
 I mark'd the white combs where they career'd so high,
 curling over ;
 I heard the wind piping, I saw the black clouds ;
 Saw from below what arose and mounted, (O superb! O
 wild as my heart, and powerful!)
 Heard the continuous thunder, as it bellow'd after the
 lightning ;
 Noted the slender and jagged threads of lightning, as
 sudden and fast amid the din they chased each
 other across the sky ;
 —These, and such as these, I, elate, saw—saw with
 wonder, yet pensive and masterful ;
 All the menacing might of the globe uprisen around
 me ;
 Yet there with my soul I fed—I fed content, super-
 cilious.

2

'Twas well, O soul! 'twas a good preparation you gave
 me!
 Now we advance our latent and ampler hunger to fill ;
 Now we go forth to receive what the earth and the sea
 never gave us ;
 Not through the mighty woods we go, but through the
 mightier cities ;

Something for us is pouring now, more than Niagara
 pouring ;
 Torrents of men, (sources and rills of the Northwest,
 are you indeed inexhaustible?)
 What, to pavements and homesteads here—what were
 those storms of the mountains and sea?
 What, to passions I witness around me to-day? Was
 the sea risen?
 Was the wind piping the pipe of death under the black
 clouds?
 Lo! from deeps more unfathomable, something more
 deadly and savage ;
 Manhattan, rising, advancing with menacing front—
 Cincinnati, Chicago, unchain'd ;
 —What was that swell I saw on the ocean? behold
 what comes here!
 How it climbs with daring feet and hands! how it
 dashes!
 How the true thunder bellows after the lightning! how
 bright the flashes of lightning!
 How DEMOCRACY, with desperate vengeful port strides
 on, shown through the dark by those flashes of
 lightning!
 (Yet a mournful wail and low sob I fancied I heard
 through the dark,
 In a lull of the deafening confusion.)

3

Thunder on! stride on, Democracy! strike with venge-
 ful stroke!
 And do you rise higher than ever yet, O days, O cities!
 Crash heavier, heavier yet, O storms! you have done me
 good ;
 My soul, prepared in the mountains, absorbs your im-
 mortal strong nutriment ;
 —Long had I walk'd my cities, my country roads,
 through farms, only half satisfied ;
 One doubt, nauseous, undulating like a snake, crawl'd
 on the ground before me,

Continually preceding my steps, turning upon me oft,
 ironically hissing low ;
 —The cities I loved so well, I abandon'd and left—I
 sped to the certainties suitable to me ;
 Hungering, hungering, hungering, for primal energies,
 and Nature's dauntlessness,
 I refresh'd myself with it only, I could relish it only ;
 I waited the bursting forth of the pent fire—on the
 water and air I waited long ;
 —But now I no longer wait—I am fully satisfied—I am
 gluttoned ;
 I have witness'd the true lightning—I have witness'd
 my cities electric ;
 I have lived to behold man burst forth, and warlike
 America rise ;
 Hence I will seek no more the food of the northern sol-
 itary wilds,
 No more on the mountains roam, or sail the stormy sea.

CITY OF SHIPS.

CITY of ships!
 (O the black ships! O the fierce ships!
 O the beautiful, sharp-bow'd steam-ships and sail-ships!)
 City of the world! (for all races are here ;
 All the lands of the earth make contributions here ;)
 City of the sea! city of hurried and glittering tides!
 City whose gleeful tides continually rush or recede,
 whirling in and out, with eddies and foam!
 City of wharves and stores! city of tall façades of mar-
 ble and iron!
 Proud and passionate city! mettlesome, mad, extrava-
 gant city!
 Spring up, O city! not for peace alone, but be indeed
 yourself, warlike!
 Fear not! submit to no models but your own, O city!
 Behold me! incarnate me, as I have incarnated you!

I have rejected nothing you offer'd me—whom you
 adopted, I have adopted ;
 Good or bad, I never question you—I love all—I do not
 condemn anything ;
 I chant and celebrate all that is yours—yet peace no
 more ;
 In peace I chanted peace, but now the drum of war is
 mine ;
 War, red war, is my song through your streets, O city !



THE CENTENARIAN'S STORY.

VOLUNTEER OF 1861-2.

(At Washington Park, Brooklyn, assisting the Centenarian.)

¹ Give me your hand, old Revolutionary ;
 The hill-top is nigh—but a few steps, (make room, gentlemen ;)
 Up the path you have follow'd me well, spite of your
 hundred and extra years ;
 You can walk, old man, though your eyes are almost
 done ;
 Your faculties serve you, and presently I must have
 them serve me.

² Rest, while I tell what the crowd around us means ;
 On the plain below, recruits are drilling and exercising ;
 There is the camp—one regiment departs to-morrow ;
 Do you hear the officers giving the orders ?
 Do you hear the clank of the muskets ?

³ Why, what comes over you now, old man ?
 Why do you tremble, and clutch my hand so convulsively ?
 The troops are but drilling—they are yet surrounded
 with smiles ;

Around them, at hand, the well-drest friends, and the
 women ;
 While splendid and warm the afternoon sun shines
 down ;
 Green the midsummer verdure, and fresh blows the
 dallying breeze,
 O'er proud and peaceful cities, and arm of the sea be-
 tween.

⁴ But drill and parade are over—they march back to
 quarters ;
 Only hear that approval of hands! hear what a clap-
 ping!

⁵ As wending, the crowds now part and disperse—but
 we, old man,
 Not for nothing have I brought you hither—we must
 remain ;
 You to speak in your turn, and I to listen and tell.

THE CENTENARIAN.

⁶ When I clutch'd your hand, it was not with terror ;
 But suddenly, pouring about me here, on every side,
 And below there where the boys were drilling, and up
 the slopes they ran,
 And where tents are pitch'd, and wherever you see,
 south and south-east and south-west,
 Over hills, across lowlands, and in the skirts of woods,
 And along the shores, in mire (now fill'd over), came
 again, and suddenly raged,
 As eighty-five years a-gone, no mere parade receiv'd
 with applause of friends,
 But a battle, which I took part in myself—aye, long ago
 as it is, I took part in it,
 Walking then this hill-top, this same ground.

⁷ Aye, this is the ground ;
 My blind eyes, even as I speak, behold it re-peopled
 from graves ;

The years recede, pavements and stately houses disappear ;
 Rude forts appear again, the old hoop'd guns are mounted ;
 I see the lines of rais'd earth stretching from river to bay ;
 I mark the vista of waters, I mark the uplands and slopes :
 Here we lay encamp'd—it was this time in summer also.

⁸ As I talk, I remember all—I remember the Declaration ;
 It was read here—the whole army paraded—it was read to us here ;
 By his staff surrounded, the General stood in the middle—he held up his unsheath'd sword,
 It glitter'd in the sun in full sight of the army.

⁹ 'Twas a bold act then ;
 The English war-ships had just arrived—the king had sent them from over the sea ;
 We could watch down the lower bay where they lay at anchor,
 And the transports, swarming with soldiers.

¹⁰ A few days more, and they landed—and then the battle.

¹¹ Twenty thousand were brought against us,
 A veteran force, furnish'd with good artillery.

¹² I tell not now the whole of the battle ;
 But one brigade, early in the forenoon, order'd forward to engage the red-coats ;
 Of that brigade I tell, and how steadily it march'd,
 And how long and how well it stood, confronting death.

¹³ Who do you think that was, marching steadily, sternly confronting death ?
 It was the brigade of the youngest men, two thousand strong,

Rais'd in Virginia and Maryland, and many of them known personally to the General.

¹⁴ Jauntily forward they went with quick step toward
Gowannus' waters ;
Till of a sudden, unlook'd for, by defiles through the
woods, gain'd at night,
The British advancing, wedging in from the east,
fiercely playing their guns,
That brigade of the youngest was cut off, and at the
enemy's mercy.

¹⁵ The General watch'd them from this hill ;
They made repeated desperate attempts to burst their
environment ;
Then drew close together, very compact, their flag
flying in the middle ;
But O from the hills how the cannon were thinning and
thinning them !

¹⁶ It sickens me yet, that slaughter !
I saw the moisture gather in drops on the face of the
General ;
I saw how he wrung his hands in anguish.

¹⁷ Meanwhile the British maneuver'd to draw us out
for a pitch'd battle ;
But we dared not trust the chances of a pitch'd battle.

¹⁸ We fought the fight in detachments ;
Sallying forth, we fought at several points—but in each
the luck was against us ;
Our foe advancing, steadily getting the best of it, push'd
us back to the works on this hill ;
Till we turn'd, menacing, here, and then he left us.

¹⁹ That was the going out of the brigade of the young-
- est men, two thousand strong ;
Few return'd—nearly all remain in Brooklyn.

²⁰ That, and here, my General's first battle ;

No women looking on, nor sunshine to bask in—it did
not conclude with applause ;
Nobody clapp'd hands here then.

²¹ But in darkness, in mist, on the ground, under a chill
rain,
Wearied that night we lay, foil'd and sullen ;
While scornfully laugh'd many an arrogant lord, off
against us encamp'd,
Quite within hearing, feasting, klinking wine-glasses
together over their victory.

²² So, dull and damp, and another day ;
But the night of that, mist lifting, rain ceasing,
Silent as a ghost, while they thought they were sure of
him, my General retreated.

²³ I saw him at the river-side,
Down by the ferry, lit by torches, hastening the embar-
cation ;
My General waited till the soldiers and wounded were
all pass'd over ;
And then, (it was just ere sunrise,) these eyes rested on
him for the last time.

²⁴ Every one else seem'd fill'd with gloom ;
Many no doubt thought of capitulation.

²⁵ But when my General pass'd me,
As he stood in his boat, and look'd toward the coming
sun,
I saw something different from capitulation.

TERMINUS.

²⁶ Enough—the Centenarian's story ends ;
The two, the past and present, have interchanged ;
I myself, as connector, as chansonnier of a great future,
am now speaking.

²⁷ And is this the ground Washington trod ?
 And these waters I listlessly daily cross, are these the
 waters he cross'd,
 As resolute in defeat, as other generals in their proudest
 triumphs ?

²⁸ It is well—a lesson like that, always comes good ;
 I must copy the story, and send it eastward and west-
 ward ;
 I must preserve that look, as it beam'd on you, rivers
 of Brooklyn.

²⁹ See! as the annual round returns, the phantoms
 return ;
 It is the 27th of August, and the British have landed ;
 The battle begins, and goes against us—behold ! through
 the smoke, Washington's face ;
 The brigade of Virginia and Maryland have march'd
 forth to intercept the enemy ;
 They are cut off—murderous artillery from the hills
 plays upon them ;
 Rank after rank falls, while over them silently droops
 the flag,
 Baptized that day in many a young man's bloody
 wounds,
 In death, defeat, and sisters', mothers' tears.

³⁰ Ah, hills and slopes of Brooklyn ! I perceive you are
 more valuable than your owners supposed ;
 Ah, river ! henceforth you will be illumin'd to me at
 sunrise with something besides the sun.

³¹ Encampments new ! in the midst of you stands an
 encampment very old ;
 Stands forever the camp of the dead brigade.

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 ;
Glistening 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.

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 gaily in the wind.

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.



By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame.

By the bivouac's fitful flame,
 A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and
 slow ;—but first I note,
 The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods'
 dim outline,
 The darkness, lit by spots of kindled fire—the silence ;
 Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving ;
 The shrubs and trees, (as I left my eyes they seem to
 be stealthily watching me ;)
 While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and
 wondrous thoughts,
 Of life and death—of home and the past and loved,
 and of those that are far away ;
 A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the
 ground,
 By the bivouac's fitful flame.

Come Up from the Fields, Father.

1

¹ 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.

2

² 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 ?)

³ 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.

3

⁴ 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.

⁵ Fast as she can she hurries—something ominous—
her steps trembling ;
She does not tarry to smooth her hair, nor adjust her
cap.

⁶ 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 ;

Sentences broken—*gun-shot wound in the breast, cavalry
 skirmish, taken to hospital,*

At present low, but will soon be better.

4

⁷ 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.

⁸ *Grieve not so, dear mother,* (the just-grown daughter
 speaks through her sobs ;

The little sisters huddle around, speechless and dis-
 may'd ;)

See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.

5

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ But the mother needs to be better ;

She, with thin form, presently drest in black ;

By day her meals untouch'd—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.

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 up-
 ward 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 de-
 posited ;
 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.



A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST, AND THE ROAD UNKNOWN.

A MARCH in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown ;
 A route through a heavy wood, with muffled steps in
 the darkness ;
 Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant
 retreating ;
 Till after midnight glimmer upon us, the lights of a
 dim-lighted building ;
 We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by
 the dim-lighted building ;
 'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads—'tis now
 an impromptu hospital ;
 —Entering but for a minute, I see a sight beyond all
 the pictures and poems ever made :
 Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving
 candles and lamps,
 And by one great pitchy torch, stationary, with wild red
 flame, and clouds of smoke ;
 By these, crowds, groups of forms, vaguely I see, on the
 floor, some in the pews laid down ;

At my feet more distinctly, a soldier, a mere lad, in
 danger of bleeding to death, (he is shot in the
 abdomen ;)
 I staunch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face
 is white as a lily ;)
 Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene,
 fain to absorb it all ;
 Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in
 obscurity, some of them dead ;
 Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell
 of ether, the odor of blood ;
 The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms of soldiers
 —the yard outside also fill'd ;
 Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers,
 some in the death-spasm sweating ;
 An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders
 or calls ;
 The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the
 glint of the torches ;
 These I resume as I chant—I see again the forms, I
 smell the odor ;
 Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men,*
Fall in ;
 But first I bend to the dying lad—his eyes open—a
 half-smile gives he me ;
 Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to
 the darkness,
 Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in
 the ranks,
 The unknown road still marching.



A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAY-BREAK GREY
 AND DIM.

¹ A SIGHT in camp in the day-break grey and dim,
 As from my tent I emerge so early, sleepless,
 As slow I walk in the cool fresh air, the path near by
 the hospital tent,

Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out
 there, untended lying,
 Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woollen
 blanket,
 Grey and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.

² Curious, I halt, and silent stand ;
 Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest,
 the first, just lift the blanket :
 Who are you, elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-
 grey'd hair, and flesh all sunken about the eyes?
 Who are you, my dear comrade ?

³ Then to the second I step—And who are you, my
 child and darling ?
 Who are you, sweet boy, with cheeks yet blooming ?

⁴ Then to the third—a face nor child, nor old, very
 calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory ;
 Young man, I think I know you—I think this face of
 yours is the face of the Christ himself ;
 Dead and divine, and brother of all, and here again he
 lies.

NOT THE PILOT.

Not the pilot has charged himself to bring his ship
 into port, though beaten back, and many times
 baffled ;
 Not the path-finder, penetrating inland, weary and
 long,
 By deserts parch'd, snows-chill'd, rivers wet, perseveres
 till he reaches his destination,
 More than I have charged myself, heeded or unheeded,
 to compose a free march for These States,
 To be exhilarating music to them—a battle-call, rousing
 to arms, if need be—years, centuries hence.

AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS.

¹ AS TOILSOME I wander'd Virginia's woods,
 To the music of rustling leaves, kick'd by my feet, (for
 'twas autumn,)
 I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier,
 Mortally wounded he, and buried on the retreat, (easily
 all could I understand ;))
 The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose
 —yet this sign left,
 On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree by the grave,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.

² Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering ;
 Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene
 of life ;
 Yet at times through changeful season and scene, ab-
 rupt, alone, or in the crowded street,
 Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave—comes
 the inscription rude in Virginia's woods,
Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.



YEAR THAT TREMBLED AND REEL'D BENEATH ME.

YEAR that trembled and reel'd beneath me !
 Your summer wind was warm enough—yet the air I
 breathed froze me ;
 A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd
 me ;
 Must I change my triumphant songs ? said I to my-
 self ;
 Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the baf-
 fled ?
 And sullen hymns of defeat ?

THE DRESSER.

1

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 ;
 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

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.)

³ 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,
 In nature's reverie sad, with hinged knees returning, I
 enter the doors—(while for you up there,
 Whoever you are, follow me without noise, and be of
 strong heart.)

3

⁴ 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.

⁵ I onward go, I stop,
 With hinged knees and steady hand, to dress wounds ;
 I am firm with each—the pangs are sharp, yet unavoi-
 dable ;
 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.)

4

⁶ 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.)

⁷ 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.)

⁸ I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep ;
 But a day or two more—for see, the frame all wasted
 already, and sinking,
 And the yellow-blue countenance see.

⁹ I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bul-
 let 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.

¹⁰ I am faithful, I do not give out ;
 The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdo-
 men,
 These and more I dress with impassive hand—(yet deep
 in my breast a fire, a burning flame.)

5

¹¹ 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.)

LONG, TOO LONG, O LAND.

LONG, too long, O land,
 Traveling roads all even and peaceful, you lean'd from
 joys and prosperity only ;
 But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish—ad-
 vancing, grappling with direst fate, and recoiling
 not ;
 And now to conceive, and show to the world, what your
 children en-masse really are ;
 (For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your
 children en-masse really are?)



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 flow-
 ers, 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, reliev'd, 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 cease-
 less 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 glutt'd, 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 in-
 cessant and endless along the trottoirs !
 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 Manhat-
 tan !
 Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give
 me the sound of the trumpets and drums !
 (The soldiers in companies or regiments—some, start-
 ing 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 the wharves heavy-fringed
 with the black ships!
 O such for me! O an intense life! O 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 torch-light 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 the
 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
 —with varied chorus, and light of the sparkling
 eyes;
 Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.



DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS.

1

THE last sunbeam
 Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,
 On the pavement here—and there beyond, it is looking,
 Down a new-made double grave.

2

Lo! the moon ascending!
 Up from the east, the silvery round moon;
 Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon;
 Immense and silent moon.

3

I see a sad procession,
 And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles;

All the channels of the city streets they're flooding,
As with voices and with tears.

4

I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring ;
And every blow of the great convulsive drums,
Strikes me through and through.

5

For the son is brought with the father ;
(In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell ;
Two veterans, son and father, dropt together,
And the double grave awaits them.)

6

Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive ;
And the day-light o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

7

In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd ;
('Tis some mother's large, transparent face,
In heaven brighter growing.)

8

O strong dead-march, you please me !
O moon immense, with your silvery face you soothe me !
O my soldiers twain ! O my veterans, passing to burial !
What I have I also give you.

9

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music ;
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHECIC A VOICE.

¹ OVER the carnage rose prophetic a voice,
 Be not dishearten'd—Affection shall solve the problems
 of Freedom yet ;
 Those who love each other shall become invincible—
 they shall yet make Columbia victorious.

² Sons of the Mother of All! you shall yet be victo-
 rious!
 You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the re-
 mainder of the earth.

³ No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers ;
 If need be, a thousand shall sternly immolate them-
 selves for one.

⁴ One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's com-
 rade ;
 From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another, an
 Oregonese, shall be friends triune,
 More precious to each other than all the riches of the
 earth.

⁵ To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come ;
 Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted
 beyond death.

⁶ It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see
 manly affection ;
 The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face
 lightly ;
 The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,
 The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.

⁷ These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops
 of iron ;
 I, extatic, O partners! O lands! with the love of lovers
 tie you.

^s (Were you looking to be held together by the lawyers?
Or by an agreement on a paper? or by arms?
—Nay—nor the world, nor any living thing, will so
cohere.)

THE ARTILLERYMAN'S VISION.

WHILE my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars
are over long,
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the va-
cant midnight passes,
And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear,
just hear, the breath of my infant,
There in the room, as I wake from sleep, this vision
presses upon me :
The engagement opens there and then, in fantasy unreal;
The skirmishers begin—they crawl cautiously ahead—
I hear the irregular snap! snap!
I hear the sounds of the different missiles—the short
t-h-t! t-h-t! of the rifle balls ;
I see the shells exploding, leaving small white clouds—
I hear the great shells shrieking as they pass ;
The grape, like the hum and whirr of wind through the
trees, (quick, tumultuous, now the contest rages!)
All the scenes at the batteries themselves rise in detail
before me again ;
The crashing and smoking—the pride of the men in
their pieces ;
The chief gunner ranges and sights his piece, and se-
lects a fuse of the right time ;
After firing, I see him lean aside, and look eagerly off
to note the effect ;
—Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging—
(the young colonel leads himself this time, with
brandish'd sword ;)
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly
fill'd up, no delay ;)

I breathe the suffocating smoke—then the flat clouds
 hover low, concealing all ;
 Now a strange lull comes for a few seconds, not a shot
 fired on either side ;
 Then resumed, the chaos louder than ever, with eager
 calls, and orders of officers ;
 While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts
 to my ears a shout of applause, (some special
 success ;)
 And ever the sound of the cannon, far or near, (rousing,
 even in dreams, a devilish exultation, and all the
 old mad joy, in the depths of my soul ;)
 And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions—
 batteries, cavalry, moving hither and thither ;
 (The falling, dying, I heed not—the wounded, dripping
 and red, I heed not—some to the rear are hob-
 bling ;)
 Grime, heat, rush—aid-de-camps galloping by, or on a
 full run ;
 With the patter of small arms, the warning *s-s-t* of the
 rifles, (these in my vision I hear or see,)
 And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-
 color'd rockets.

I SAW OLD GENERAL AT BAY.

I saw old General at bay ;
 (Old as he was, his grey eyes yet shone out in battle
 like stars ;)
 His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his
 works ;
 He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines—a
 desperate emergency ;
 I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks—
 but two or three were selected ;
 I saw them receive their orders aside—they listen'd
 with care—the adjutant was very grave ;
 I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their
 lives.

O TAN-FACED PRAIRIE-BOY.

O TAN-FACED prairie-boy!
 Before you came to camp, came many a welcome gift;
 Praises and presents came, and nourishing food—till at
 last, among the recruits,
 You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but look'd
 on each other,
 When lo! more than all the gifts of the world, you
 gave me.



LOOK DOWN FAIR MOON.

Look down, fair moon, and bathe this scene;
 Pour softly down night's nimbus floods, on faces ghast-
 ly, swollen, purple;
 On the dead, on their backs, with their arms toss'd
 wide,
 Pour down your unstinted nimbus, sacred moon.



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, inces-
 santly 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;
 I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white
 face in the coffin.

SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE.

(Washington City, 1865.)

SPIRIT whose work is done ! spirit of dreadful hours !
 Ere, departing, fade from my eyes your forests of bayo-
 nets ;
 Spirit of gloomiest fears and doubts, (yet onward ever
 unfaltering pressing ;)
 Spirit of many a solemn day, and many a savage scene !
 Electric spirit !
 That with muttering voice, through the war now closed,
 like a tireless phantom flitted,
 Rousing the land with breath of flame, while you beat
 and beat the drum ;
 —Now, as the sound of the drum, hollow and harsh to
 the last, reverberates round me ;
 As your ranks, your immortal ranks, return, return
 from the battles ;
 While the muskets of the young men yet lean over their
 shoulders ;
 While I look on the bayonets bristling over their shoul-
 ders ;
 While those slanted bayonets, whole forests of them,
 appearing in the distance, approach and pass
 on, returning homeward,
 Moving with steady motion, swaying to and fro, to the
 right and left,
 Evenly, lightly rising and falling, as the steps keep
 time :
 —Spirit of hours I knew, all hectic red one day, but
 pale as death next day ;
 Touch my mouth, ere you depart—press my lips close !
 Leave me your pulses of rage ! bequeath them to me !
 fill me with currents convulsive !
 Let them scorch and blister out of my chants, when you
 are gone ;
 Let them identify you to the future, in these songs.

HOW SOLEMN, AS ONE BY ONE.

(Washington City, 1865.)

How solemn, as one by one,
 As the ranks returning, all worn and sweaty—as the
 men file by where I stand ;
 As the faces, the masks appear—as I glance at the faces,
 studying the masks ;
 (As I glance upward out of this page, studying you,
 dear friend, whoever you are ;))
 How solemn the thought of my whispering soul, to each
 in the ranks, and to you ;
 I see behind each mask, that wonder, a kindred soul ;
 O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear
 friend,
 Nor the bayonet stab what you really are :
 ... The soul ! yourself I see, great as any, good as the
 best,
 Waiting, secure and content, which the bullet could
 never kill,
 Nor the bayonet stab, O friend !



Not Youth Pertains to Me.

Nor youth pertains to me,
 Nor delicatessen—I cannot beguile the time with talk ;
 Awkward in the parlor, neither a dancer nor elegant ;
 In the learn'd coterie sitting constrain'd and still—for
 learning inures not to me ;
 Beauty, knowledge, inure not to me—yet there are two
 or three things inure to me ;
 I have nourish'd the wounded, and sooth'd many a
 dying soldier,
 And at intervals, waiting, or in the midst of camp,
 Composed these songs.

TO THE LEAVEN'D SOIL THEY TROD.

To the leaven'd soil they trod, calling, I sing, for the
 last ;
 (Not cities, nor man alone, nor war, nor the dead,
 But forth from my tent emerging for good—loosing,
 untying the tent-ropes ;) .
 In the freshness, the forenoon air, in the far-stretching
 circuits and vistas, again to peace restored,
 To the fiery fields emanative, and the endless vistas
 beyond—to the south and the north ;
 To the leaven'd soil of the general western world, to
 attest my songs,
 (To the average earth, the wordless earth, witness of
 war and peace,)
 To the Alleghanian hills, and the tireless Mississippi,
 To the rocks I, calling, sing, and all the trees in the
 woods,
 To the plain of the poems of heroes, to the prairie
 spreading wide,
 To the far-off sea, and the unseen winds, and the sane
 impalpable air ;
 . . . And responding, they answer all, (but not in words,)
 The average earth, the witness of war and peace,
 acknowledges mutely ;
 The prairie draws me close, as the father, to bosom
 broad, the son ;
 The Northern ice and rain, that began me, nourish me
 to the end ;
 But the hot sun of the South is to ripen my songs.

LEAVES OF GRASS.



FACES.

1

- ¹ SAUNTERING the pavement, or riding the country by-road—lo! such faces!
Faces of friendship, precision, caution, suavity, ideal-ity ;
The spiritual, prescient face—the always welcome, common, benevolent face,
The face of the singing of music—the grand faces of natural lawyers and judges, broad at the back-top ;
The faces of hunters and fishers, bulged at the brows —the shaved blanch'd faces of orthodox citizens ;
The pure, extravagant, yearning, questioning artist's face ;
The ugly face of some beautiful Soul, the handsome detested or despised face ;
The sacred faces of infants, the illuminated face of the mother of many children ;
The face of an amour, the face of veneration ;
The face as of a dream, the face of an immobile rock ;
The face withdrawn of its good and bad, a castrated face ;
A wild hawk, his wings clipp'd by the clipper ;
A stallion that yielded at last to the thongs and knife of the gelder.

² Sauntering the pavement, thus, or crossing the ceaseless ferry, faces, and faces, and faces :
I see them, and complain not, and am content with all.

2

³ Do you suppose I could be content with all, if I thought them their own finale ?

⁴ This now is too lamentable a face for a man ;
Some abject louse, asking leave to be—cringing for it ;
Some milk-nosed maggot, blessing what lets it wrig to its hole.

⁵ This face is a dog's snout, sniffing for garbage ;
Snakes nest in that mouth—I hear the sibilant threat.

⁶ This face is a haze more chill than the arctic sea ;
Its sleepy and wobbling icebergs crunch as they go.

⁷ This is a face of bitter herbs—this an emetic—they need no label ;
And more of the drug-shelf, laudanum, caoutchouc, or hog's-lard.

⁸ This face is an epilepsy, its wordless tongue gives out the unearthly cry,
Its veins down the neck distend, its eyes roll till they show nothing but their whites,
Its teeth grit, the palms of the hands are cut by the turn'd-in nails,
The man falls struggling and foaming to the ground while he speculates well.

⁹ This face is bitten by vermin and worms,
And this is some murderer's knife, with a half-pull'd scabbard.

¹⁰ This face owes to the sexton his dismalest fee ;
An unceasing death-bell tolls there.

3

¹¹ Those then are really men—the bosses and tufts of
the great round globe!

¹² Features of my equals, would you trick me with your
creas'd and cadaverous march?
Well, you cannot trick me.

¹³ I see your rounded, never-erased flow ;
I see neath the rims of your haggard and mean dis-
guises.

¹⁴ Splay and twist as you like—poke with the tangling
fores of fishes or rats ;
You'll be unmuzzled, you certainly will.

¹⁵ I saw the face of the most smear'd and slobbering
idiot they had at the asylum ;
And I knew for my consolation what they knew not ;
I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my
brother,
The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen ten-
ement ;
And I shall look again in a score or two of ages,
And I shall meet the real landlord, perfect and un-
harm'd, every inch as good as myself.

4

¹⁶ The Lord advances, and yet advances ;
Always the shadow in front—always the reach'd hand,
bringing up the laggards.

¹⁷ Out of this face emerge banners and horses—O su-
perb ! I see what is coming ;
I see the high pioneer-caps—I see the staves of runners
clearing the way,
I hear victorious drums.

¹⁸ This face is a life-boat ;
 This is the face commanding and bearded, it asks no
 odds of the rest ;
 This face is flavor'd fruit, ready for eating ;
 This face of a healthy honest boy is the programme of
 all good.

¹⁹ These faces bear testimony, slumbering or awake ;
 They show their descent from the Master himself.

²⁰ Off the word I have spoken I except not one—red,
 white, black, are all deific ;
 In each house is the ovum—it comes forth after a thou-
 sand years.

²¹ Spots or cracks at the windows do not disturb me ;
 Tall and sufficient stand behind, and make signs to me ;
 I read the promise, and patiently wait.

²² This is a full-grown lily's face,
 She speaks to the limber-hipp'd man near the garden
 pickets,
*Come here, she blushing cries—Come nigh to me, lim-
 ber-hipp'd man,*
Stand at my side till I lean as high as I can upon you,
Fill me with albescent honey, bend down to me,
*Rub to me with your chafing beard, rub to my breast and
 shoulders.*

5

²³ The old face of the mother of many children !
 Whist! I am fully content.

²⁴ Lull'd and late is the smoke of the First-day morning,
 It hangs low over the rows of trees by the fences,
 It hangs thin by the sassafras, the wild-cherry, and the
 cat-brier under them.

²⁵ I saw the rich ladies in full dress at the soiree,
 I heard what the singers were singing so long,

Heard who sprang in crimson youth from the white
froth and the water-blue.

²⁶ Behold a woman!

She looks out from her quaker cap—her face is clearer
and more beautiful than the sky.

²⁷ She sits in an arm-chair, under the shaded perch of
the farm-house,

The sun just shines on her old white head.

²⁸ Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen,

Her grandsons raised the flax, and her granddaugh-
ters spun it with the distaff and the wheel.

²⁹ The melodious character of the earth,

The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go, and
does not wish to go,

The justified mother of men.



MANHATTAN'S STREETS I SAUNTER'D,
PONDERING.

1

¹ MANHATTAN'S streets I saunter'd, pondering,
On time, space, reality—on such as these, and abreast
with them, prudence.

2

After all, the last explanation remains to be made
about prudence;
Little and large alike drop quietly aside from the pru-
dence that suits immortality.

³ The Soul is of itself;

All verges to it—all has reference to what ensues;

All that a person does, says, thinks, is of consequence;

Not a move can a man or woman make, that affects him or her in a day, month, any part of the direct life-time, or the hour of death, but the same affects him or her onward afterward through the indirect life-time.

3

⁴ The indirect is just as much as the direct,
The spirit receives from the body just as much as it
gives to the body, if not more.

Not one word or deed—not venereal sore, discoloration, privacy of the onanist, putridity of gluttons or rum-drinkers, speculation, cunning, betrayal, murder, seduction, prostitution, but has results beyond death, as really as before death.

4

⁶ Charity and personal force are the only investments worth anything.

⁷ No specification is necessary—all that a male or female does, that is vigorous, benevolent, clean, is so much profit to him or her, in the unshakable order of the universe, and through the whole scope of it, forever.

5

⁸ Who has been wise, receives interest,
Savage, felon, President, judge, farmer, sailor, mechanic, literat, young, old, it is the same,
The interest will come round—all will come round.

⁹ Singly, wholly, to affect now, affected their time, will forever affect, all of the past, and all of the present, and all of the future,
All the brave actions of war and peace,

- All help given to relatives, strangers, the poor, old,
sorrowful, young children, widows, the sick, and
to shunn'd persons,
All furtherance of fugitives, and of the escape of slaves,
All self-denial that stood steady and aloof on wrecks,
and saw others fill the seats of the boats,
All offering of substance or life for the good old cause,
or for a friend's sake, or opinion's sake,
All pains of enthusiasts, scoff'd at by their neighbors,
All the limitless sweet love and precious suffering of
mothers,
All honest men baffled in strifes recorded or unre-
corded,
All the grandeur and good of ancient nations whose
fragments we inherit,
All the good of the dozens of ancient nations un-
known to us by name, date, location.
All that was ever manfully begun, whether it suc-
ceeded or no,
All suggestions of the divine mind of man, or the
divinity of his mouth, or the shaping of his great
hands ;
All that is well thought or said this day on any part
of the globe—or on any of the wandering stars,
or on any of the fix'd stars, by those there as
we are here ;
All that is henceforth to be thought or done by you,
whoever you are, or by any one ;
These inure, have inured, shall inure, to the identities
from which they sprang, or shall spring.

6

- ¹⁰ Did you guess anything lived only its moment?
The world does not so exist—no parts palpable or im-
palpable so exist ;
No consummation exists without being from some
long previous consummation—and that from
some other,
Without the farthest conceivable one coming a bit
nearer the beginning than any.

7

¹¹ Whatever satisfies Souls is true ;
 Prudence entirely satisfies the craving and glut of
 Souls ;
 Itself only finally satisfies the Soul ;
 The Soul has that measureless pride which revolts from
 every lesson but its own.

8

¹² Now I give you an inkling ;
 Now I breathe the word of the prudence that walks
 abreast with time, space, reality,
 That answers the pride which refuses every lesson but
 its own.

¹³ What is prudence, is indivisible,
 Declines to separate one part of life from every part,
 Divides not the righteous from the unrighteous, or the
 living from the dead,
 Matches every thought or act by its correlative,
 Knows no possible forgiveness, or deputed atonement,
 Knows that the young man who composedly peril'd
 his life and lost it, has done exceedingly well
 for himself, without doubt,
 That he who never peril'd his life, but retains it to old
 age in riches and ease, has probably achiev'd
 nothing for himself worth mentioning ;
 Knows that only that person has really learn'd, who
 has learn'd to prefer results,
 Who favors Body and Soul the same,
 Who perceives the indirect assuredly following the
 direct,
 Who in his spirit in any emergency whatever neither
 hurries or avoids death.

All is Truth.

¹ O ME, man of slack faith so long !
 Standing aloof—denying portions so long ;
 Only aware to-day of compact, all-diffused truth ;
 Discovering to-day there is no lie, or form of lie, and
 can be none, but grows as inevitably upon itself
 as the truth does upon itself,
 Or as any law of the earth, or any natural production
 of the earth does.

² (This is curious, and may not be realized immediately
 —But it must be realized ;
 I feel in myself that I represent falsehoods equally with
 the rest,
 And that the universe does.)

³ Where has fail'd a perfect return, indifferent of lies or
 the truth ?
 Is it upon the ground, or in water or fire ? or in the
 spirit of man ? or in the meat and blood ?

⁴ Meditating among liars, and retreating sternly into
 myself, I see that there are really no liars or lies
 after all,
 And that nothing fails its perfect return—And that
 what are called lies are perfect returns,
 And that each thing exactly represents itself, and what
 has preceded it,
 And that the truth includes all, and is compact, just as
 much as space is compact,
 And that there is no flaw or vacuum in the amount of
 the truth—but that all is truth without excep-
 tion ;
 And henceforth I will go celebrate anything I see or
 am,
 And sing and laugh, and deny nothing.

Voices.

¹ Now I make a leaf of Voices—for I have found nothing
mightier than they are,
And I have found that no word spoken, but is beautiful,
in its place.

² O what is it in me that makes me tremble so at voices?
Surely, whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or
her I shall follow,
As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps,
anywhere around the globe.

³ All waits for the right voices ;
Where is the practis'd and perfect organ? Where is
the develop'd Soul?
For I see every word utter'd thence, has deeper, sweeter,
new sounds, impossible on less terms.

⁴ I see brains and lips closed—tympan and temples
unstruck,
Until that comes which has the quality to strike and to
unclose,
Until that comes which has the quality to bring forth
what lies slumbering, forever ready, in all words.

MARCHES NOW THE WAR IS
OVER.

AS I SAT ALONE BY BLUE ONTARIO'S SHORE.

1

¹ As I a sat alone, by blue Ontario's shore,
As I mused of these mighty days, and of peace return'd,
and the dead that return no more,
A Phantom, gigantic, superb, with stern visage, accosted
me ;
*Chant me the poem, it said, that comes from the soul of
America—chant me the carol of victory ;
And strike up the marches of Libertad—marches more
powerful yet ;
And sing me before you go, the song of the throes of
Democracy.*

² (Democracy—the destin'd conqueror—yet treacherous
lip-smiles everywhere,
And Death and infidelity at every step.)

2

³ A Nation announcing itself,
I myself make the only growth by which I can be ap-
preciated,
I reject none, accept all, then reproduce all in my own
forms.

4 A breed whose proof is in time and deeds ;
 What we are, we are—nativity is answer enough to
 objections ;
 We wield ourselves as a weapon is wielded,
 We are powerful and tremendous in ourselves,
 We are executive in ourselves—We are sufficient in the
 variety of ourselves,
 We are the most beautiful to ourselves, and in ourselves ;
 We stand self-pois'd in the middle, branching thence
 over the world ;
 From Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas, laughing attacks
 to scorn.

5 Nothing is sinful to us outside of ourselves,
 Whatever appears, whatever does not appear, we are
 beautiful or sinful in ourselves only.

6 (O mother ! O sisters dear !
 If we are lost, no victor else has destroy'd us ;
 It is by ourselves we go down to eternal night.)

3

7 Have you thought there could be but a single
 Supreme ?
 There^b can be any number of Supremes—One does not
 countervail another, any more than one eyesight
 countervails another, or one life countervails
 another.

8 All is eligible to all,
 All is for individuals—All is for you,
 No condition is prohibited—not God's, or any.

9 All comes by the body—only health puts you rapport
 with the universe.

10 Produce great persons, the rest follows.

4

¹¹ America isolated I sing ;
I say that works made here in the spirit of other lands,
are so much poison in The States.

¹² (How dare such insects as we see assume to write
poems for America ?
For our victorious armies, and the offspring following
the armies ?)

¹³ Piety and conformity to them that like .
Peace, obesity, allegiance, to them that like !
I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations,
Crying, Leap from your seats, and contend for your
lives !

¹⁴ I am he who walks the States with a barb'd tongue,
questioning every one I meet ;
Who are you, that wanted only to be told what you
knew before ?
Who are you, that wanted only a book to join you in
your nonsense ?

¹⁵ (With pangs and cries, as thine own, O bearer of
many children !
These clamors wild, to a race of pride I give.)

¹⁶ O lands ! would you be freer than all that has ever
been before ?
If you would be freer than all that has been before,
come listen to me.

¹⁷ Fear grace—Fear elegance, civilization, delicatessen,
Fear the mellow sweet, the sucking of honey-juice ;
Beware the advancing mortal ripening of nature,
Beware what precedes the decay of the ruggedness of
states and men.

¹⁸ Ages, precedents, have long been accumulating undi-
rected materials,
America brings builders, and brings its own styles.

¹⁹ The immortal poets of Asia and Europe have done
their work, and pass'd to other spheres,
A work remains, the work of surpassing all they have
done.

²⁰ America, curious toward foreign characters, stands
by its own at all hazards,
Stands removed, spacious, composite, sound—initiates
the true use of precedents,
Does not repel them, or the past, or what they have
produced under their forms,
Takes the lesson with calmness, perceives the corpse
slowly borne from the house,
Perceives that it waits a little while in the door—that
it was fittest for its days,
That its life has descended to the stalwart and well-
shaped heir who approaches,
And that he shall be fittest for his days.

²¹ Any period, one nation must lead,
One land must be the promise and reliance of the
future.

²² These States are the amplest poem,
Here is not merely a nation, but a teeming nation of
nations,
Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast
doings of the day and night,
Here is what moves in magnificent masses, careless of
particulars,
Here are the roughs, beards, friendliness, combative-
ness, the Soul loves,
Here the flowing trains—here the crowds, equality,
diversity, the Soul loves.

6

²³ Land of lands, and bards to corroborate!
 Of them, standing among them, one lifts to the light his
 west-bred face,
 To him the hereditary countenance bequeath'd, both
 mother's and father's,
 His first parts substances, earth, water, animals, trees,
 Built of the common stock, having room for far and
 near,
 Used to dispense with other lands, incarnating this
 land,
 Attracting it Body and Soul to himself, hanging on its
 neck with incomparable love,
 Plunging his seminal muscle into its merits and de-
 merits,
 Making its cities, beginnings, events, diversities, wars,
 vocal in him,
 Making its rivers, lakes, bays, embouchure in him,
 Mississippi with yearly freshets and changing chutes—
 Columbia, Niagara, Hudson, spending them-
 selves lovingly in him,
 If the Atlantic coast stretch, or the Pacific coast stretch,
 he stretching with them north or south,
 Spanning between them; east and west, and touching
 whatever is between them,
 Growths growing from him to offset the growth of
 pine, cedar, hemlock, live-oak, locust, chestnut,
 hickory, cotton-wood, orange, magnolia,
 Tangles as tangled in him as any cane-brake or swamp,
 He likening sides and peaks of mountains, forests
 coated with northern transparent ice,
 Off him pasturage sweet and natural as savanna, up-
 land, prairie,
 Through him flights, whirls, screams, answering those
 of the fish-hawk, mocking-bird, night-heron, and
 eagle;
 His spirit surrounding his country's spirit, unclosed to
 good and evil,
 Surrounding the essences of real things, old times and
 present times,

Surrounding just found shores, islands, tribes of red
aborigines,
Weather-beaten vessels, landings, settlements, embryo
stature and muscle,
The haughty defiance of the Year 1—war, peace, the
formation of the Constitution,
The separate States, the simple, elastic scheme, the im-
migrants,
The Union, always swarming with blatherers, and
always sure and impregnable,
The unsurvey'd interior, log-houses, clearings, wild
animals, hunters, trappers ;
Surrounding the multiform agriculture, mines, tem-
perature, the gestation of new States,
Congress convening every Twelfth-month, the mem-
bers duly coming up from the uttermost parts ;
Surrounding the noble character of mechanics and
farmers, especially the young men,
Responding their manners, speech, dress, friendships—
the gait they have of persons who never knew
how it felt to stand in the presence of superiors,
The freshness and candor of their physiognomy, the
copiousness and decision of their phrenology,
The picturesque looseness of their carriage, their fierce-
ness when wrong'd,
The fluency of their speech, their delight in music, their
curiosity, good temper, and open-handedness—
the whole composite make,
The prevailing ardor and enterprise, the large amative-
ness,
The perfect equality of the female with the male, the
fluid movement of the population,
The superior marine, free commerce, fisheries, whaling,
gold-digging,
Wharf-hemm'd cities, railroad and steamboat lines, in-
tersecting all points,
Factories, mercantile life, labor-saving machinery, the
north-east, north-west, south-west,
Manhattan firemen, the Yankee swap, southern planta-
tion life,

Slavery—the murderous, treacherous conspiracy to raise
 it upon the ruins of all the rest ;
 On and on to the grapple with it—Assassin! then your
 life or ours be the stake—and respite no more.

7

⁵⁴ (Lo! high toward heaven, this day,
 Libertad! from the conqueress' field return'd,
 I mark the new aureola around your head ;
 No more of soft astral, but dazzling and fierce,
 With war's flames, and the lambent lightnings playing,
 And your port immovable where you stand ;
 With still the inextinguishable glance, and the clench'd
 and lifted fist,
 And your foot on the neck of the menacing one, the
 scorner, utterly crush'd beneath you ;
 The menacing, arrogant one, that strode and advanced
 with his senseless scorn, bearing the murderous
 knife ;
 —Lo! the wide swelling one, the braggart, that would
 yesterday do so much !
 To-day a carrion dead and damn'd, the despised of all
 the earth !
 An offal rank, to the dunghill maggots spurn'd.)

8

⁵⁵ Others take finish, but the Republic is ever construc-
 tive, and ever keeps vista ;
 Others adorn the past—but you, O days of the present,
 I adorn you !
 O days of the future, I believe in you ! I isolate myself
 for your sake ;
 O America, because you build for mankind, I build for
 you !
 O well-beloved stone-cutters ! I lead them who plan with
 decision and science,
 I lead the present with friendly hand toward the fu-
 ture.

²⁶ Bravas to all impulses sending sane children to the
 next age!
 But damn that which spends itself, with no thought of
 the stain, pains, dismay, feebleness, it is be-
 queathing.

9

²⁷ I listened to the Phantom by Ontario's shore,
 I heard the voice arising, demanding bards;
 By them, all native and grand—by them alone can The
 States be fused into the compact organism of a
 Nation.

²⁸ To hold men together by paper and seal, or by com-
 pulsion, is no account;
 That only holds men together which aggregates all in
 a living principle, as the hold of the limbs of the
 body, or the fibres of plants.

²⁹ Of all races and eras, These States, with veins full of
 poetical stuff, most need poets, and are to have
 the greatest, and use them the greatest;
 Their Presidents shall not be their common referee so
 much as their poets shall.

³⁰ (Soul of love, and tongue of fire!
 Eye to pierce the deepest deeps, and sweep the world!
 —Ah, mother! prolific and full in all besides—yet how
 long barren, barren?)

10

³¹ Of These States, the poet is the equable man,
 Not in him, but off from him, things are grotesque,
 eccentric, fail of their full returns,
 Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its place is
 bad,
 He bestows on every object or quality its fit proportion,
 neither more nor less,
 He is the arbiter of the diverse, he is the key,
 He is the equalizer of his age and land,

He supplies what wants supplying—he checks what
wants checking,
In peace, out of him speaks the spirit of peace, large,
rich, thrifty, building populous towns, encour-
aging agriculture, arts, commerce, lighting the
study of man, the Soul, health, immortality, gov-
ernment ;
In war, he is the best backer of the war—he fetches
artillery as good as the engineer's—he can make
every word he speaks draw blood ;
The years straying toward infidelity, he withholds by
his steady faith,
He is no arguer, he is judgment—(Nature accepts him
absolutely ;)
He judges not as the judge judges, but as the sun fall-
ing round a helpless thing ;
As he sees the farthest, he has the most faith,
His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,
In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent,
He sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and
denouement,
He sees eternity in men and women—he does not see
men and women as dreams or dots.

³² For the great Idea, the idea of perfect and free indi-
viduals,
For that idea, the bard walks in advance, leader of
leaders,
The attitude of him cheers up slaves, and horrifies
foreign despots.

³³ Without extinction is Liberty! without retrograde is
Equality!
They live in the feelings of young men, and the best
women ;
Not for nothing have the indomitable heads of the earth
been always ready to fall for Liberty.

11

³⁴ For the great Idea!
That, O my brethren—that is the mission of Poets.

³⁵ Songs of stern defiance, ever ready,
 Songs of the rapid arming, and the march,
 The flag of peace quick-folded, and instead, the flag we
 know,
 Warlike flag of the great Idea.

³⁶ (Angry cloth I saw there leaping !
 I stand again in leaden rain, your flapping folds saluting;
 I sing you 'over all, flying, beckoning through the fight
 —O the hard-contested fight!
 O the cannons ope their rosy-flashing muzzles! the
 hurtled balls scream !
 The battle-front forms amid the smoke—the volleys
 pour incessant from the line ;
 Hark! the ringing word, *Charge!*—now the tussle, and
 the furious maddening yells ;
 Now the corpses tumble curl'd upon the ground,
 Cold, cold in death, for precious life of you,
 Angry cloth I saw there leaping.)

12

³⁷ Are you he who would assume a place to teach, or be
 a poet here in The States ?
 The place is august—the terms obdurate.

³⁸ Who would assume to teach here, may well prepare
 himself, body and mind,
 He may well survey, ponder, arm, fortify, harden, make
 lithe, himself,
 He shall surely be question'd beforehand by me with
 many and stern questions.

³⁹ Who are you, indeed, who would talk or sing to
 America ?
 Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men ?
 Have you learn'd the physiology, phrenology, politics,
 geography, pride, freedom, friendship, of the
 land ? its substratums and objects ?

Have you consider'd the organic compact of the first day of the first year of Independence, sign'd by the Commissioners, ratified by The States, and read by Washington at the head of the army?

Have you possess'd yourself of the Federal Constitution? Do you see who have left all feudal processes and poems behind them, and assumed the poems and processes of Democracy?

Are you faithful to things? do you teach as the land and sea, the bodies of men, womanhood, amateness, angers, teach?

Have you sped through fleeting customs, popularities? Can you hold your hand against all seductions, follies, whirls, fierce contentions? are you very strong? are you really of the whole people?

Are you not of some coterie? some school or mere religion?

Are you done with reviews and criticisms of life? animating now to life itself?

Have you vivified yourself from the maternity of These States?

Have you too the old, ever-fresh, forbearance and impartiality?

Do you hold the like love for those hardening to maturity; for the last-born? little and big? and for the errant?

⁴⁰ What is this you bring my America?

Is it uniform with my country?

Is it not something that has been better told or done before?

Have you not imported this, or the spirit of it, in some ship?

Is it not a mere tale? a rhyme? a prettiness? is the good old cause in it?

Has it not dangled long at the heels of the poets, politicians, literats, of enemies' lands?

Does it not assume that what is notoriously gone is still here?

Does it answer universal needs? will it improve manners?

- Does it sound, with trumpet-voice, the proud victory of
the Union, in that secession war?
Can your performance face the open fields and the sea-
side?
Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air—to appear
again in my strength, gait, face?
Have real employments contributed to it? original
makers—not mere amanuenses?
Does it meet modern discoveries, calibers, facts, face to
face?
What does it mean to me? to American persons, pro-
gresses, cities? Chicago, Kanada, Arkansas? the
planter, Yankee, Georgian, native, immigrant,
sailors, squatters, old States, new States?
Does it encompass all The States, and the unexcep-
tional rights of all the men and women of the
earth? (the genital impulse of These States;)
Does it see behind the apparent custodians, the real
custodians, standing, menacing, silent—the me-
chanics, Manhattanese, western men, southerners,
significant alike in their apathy, and in the
promptness of their love?
Does it see what finally befalls, and has always finally
befallen, each temporizer, patcher, outsider, par-
tialist, alarmist, infidel, who has ever ask'd any-
thing of America?
What mocking and scornful negligence?
The track strew'd with the dust of skeletons;
By the roadside others disdainfully toss'd.

13

- ⁴¹ Rhymes and rhymer pass away—poems distill'd
from foreign poems pass away,
The swarms of reflectors and the polite pass, and leave
ashes;
Admirers, importers, obedient persons, make but the
soil of literature;
America justifies itself, give it time—no disguise can
deceive it, or conceal from it—it is impassive
enough,

Only toward the likes of itself will it advance to meet
them,

If its poets appear, it will in due time advance to meet
them—there is no fear of mistake,

(The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferr'd, till his
country absorbs him as affectionately as he has
absorb'd it.)

⁴² He masters whose spirit masters—he tastes sweetest
who results sweetest in the long run ;

The blood of the brawn beloved of time is unconstraint;

In the need of poems, philosophy, politics, manners,
engineering, an appropriate native grand-opera,
shipcraft, any craft, he or she is greatest who
contributes the greatest original practical ex-
ample.

⁴³ Already a nonchalant breed, silently emerging, ap-
pears on the streets,

People's lips salute only doers, lovers, satisfiers, positive
knowers ;

There will shortly be no more priests—I say their work
is done,

Death is without emergencies here, but life is perpet-
ual emergencies here,

Are your body, days, manners, superb? after death
you shall be superb ;

Justice, health, self-esteem, clear the way with irresist-
ible power ;

How dare you place anything before a man ?

14

⁴⁴ Fall behind me, States !

A man before all—myself, typical, before all.

⁴⁵ Give me the pay I have served for !

Give me to sing the song of the great Idea ! take all
the rest ;

I have loved the earth, sun, animals—I have despised
riches,

I have given alms to every one that ask'd, stood up for
 the stupid and crazy, devoted my income and
 labor to others,
 I have hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had
 patience and indulgence toward the people,
 taken off my hat to nothing known or unknown,
 I have gone freely with powerful uneducated persons,
 and with the young, and with the mothers of
 families,
 I have read these leaves to myself in the open air—I
 have tried them by trees, stars, rivers,
 I have dismiss'd whatever insulted my own Soul or
 defiled my Body,
 I have claim'd nothing to myself which I have not
 carefully claim'd for others on the same terms,
 I have sped to the camps, and comrades found and
 accepted from every State ;
 (In war of you, as well as peace, my suit is good, Amer-
 ica—sadly I boast ;
 Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd, to
 breathe his last ;
 This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd,
 restored,
 To life recalling many a prostrate form :)
 —I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth
 of the taste of myself,
 I reject none, I permit all.

⁴⁶ (Say, O mother! have I not to your thought been
 faithful?
 Have I not, through life, kept you and yours before
 me?)

⁴⁷ I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things!
 It is not the earth, it is not America, who is so great,
 It is I who am great, or to be great—it is you up there,
 or any one ;
 It is to walk rapidly through civilizations, governments,
 theories,

Through poems, pageants, shows, to form great individuals.

⁴⁸ Underneath all, individuals!

I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals,

The American compact is altogether with individuals,
The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,

The whole theory of the universe is directed to one single individual—namely, to You.

⁴⁹ (Mother! with subtle sense severe—with the naked sword in your hand,

I saw you at last refuse to treat but directly with individuals.)

16

⁵⁰ Underneath all, nativity,

I swear I will stand by my own nativity—pious or impious, so be it ;

I swear I am charm'd with nothing except nativity,
Men, women, cities, nations, are only beautiful from nativity.

⁵¹ Underneath all is the need of the expression of love for men and women,

I swear I have seen enough of mean and impotent modes of expressing love for men and women,
After this day I take my own modes of expressing love for men and women.

⁵² I swear I will have each quality of my race in myself,

(Talk as you like, he only suits These States whose manners favor the audacity and sublime turbulence of The States.)

⁵³ Underneath the lessons of things, spirits, Nature, governments, ownerships, I swear I perceive other lessons,

Underneath all, to me is myself—to you, yourself—(the same monotonous old song.)

17

⁶⁴ O I see now, flashing, that this America is only you
and me,
Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me,
Its crimes, lies, thefts, defections, slavery, are you and
me,
Its Congress is you and me—the officers, capitol, ar-
mies, ships, are you and me,
Its endless gestations of new States are you and me,
The war—that war so bloody and grim—the war I will
henceforth forget—was you and me,
Natural and artificial are you and me,
Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and
me,
Past, present, future, are you and me.

18

⁶⁵ I swear I dare not shirk any part of myself,
Not any part of America, good or bad,
Not the promulgation of Liberty—not to cheer up slaves
and horrify foreign despots,
Not to build for that which builds for mankind,
Not to balance ranks, complexions, creeds, and the
sexes,
Not to justify science, nor the march of equality,
Nor to feed the arrogant blood of the brawn beloved
of time.

⁶⁶ I swear I am for those that have never been mas-
ter'd!
For men and women whose tempers have never been
master'd,
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never
master.

⁵⁷ I swear I am for those who walk abreast with the
whole earth!

Who inaugurate one, to inaugurate all.

⁵⁸ I swear I will not be outfaced by irrational things!
I will penetrate what it is in them that is sarcastic upon
me!

I will make cities and civilizations defer to me!

This is what I have learnt from America—it is the
amount—and it I teach again.

⁵⁹ (Democracy! while weapons were everywhere aim'd
at your breast,

I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children—
saw in dreams your dilating form;

Saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.)

19

⁶⁰ I will confront these shows of the day and night!

I will know if I am to be less than they!

I will see if I am not as majestic as they!

I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they!

I will see if I am to be less generous than they!

⁶¹ I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and
ships have meaning!

I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for
themselves, and I am not to be enough for my-
self.

20

⁶² I match my spirit against yours, you orbs, growths,
mountains, brutes,

Copious as you are, I absorb you all in myself, and be-
come the master myself.

⁶³ America isolated, yet embodying all, what is it finally
except myself?

These States—what are they except myself?

⁶⁴ I know now why the earth is gross, tantalizing,
wicked—it is for my sake,
I take you to be mine, you beautiful, terrible, rude
forms.

⁶⁵ (Mother! bend down, bend close to me your face!
I know not what these plots and wars, and deferments
are for;
I know not fruition's success—but I know that through
war and peace your work goes on, and must yet
go on.)

21

⁶⁶ Thus, by blue Ontario's shore,
While the winds fann'd me, and the waves came troop-
ing toward me,
I thrill'd with the Power's pulsations—and the charm
of my theme was upon me,
Till the tissues that held me, parted their ties upon
me.

⁶⁷ And I saw the free Souls of poets;
The loftiest bards of past ages strode before me,
Strange, large men, long unwoke, undisclosed, were
disclosed to me.

22

⁶⁸ O my rapt verse, my call—mock me not!
Not for the bards of the past—not to invoke them have
I launch'd you forth,
Not to call even those lofty bards here by Ontario's
shores,
Have I sung, so capricious and loud, my savage song.

⁶⁹ Bards for my own land, only, I invoke;
(For the war, the war is over—the field is clear'd,)
Till they strike up marches henceforth triumphant and
onward,
To cheer, O mother, your boundless, expectant soul.

⁷⁰ Bards grand as these days so grand!
 Bards of the great Idea! Bards of the peaceful inven-
 tions! (for the war, the war is over!)
 Yet Bards of the latent armies—a million soldiers wait-
 ing over-ready,
 Bards towering like hills—(no more these dots, these
 pigmies, these little piping straws, these gnats,
 that fill the hour, to pass for poets;))
 Bards with songs as from burning coals, or the light-
 ning's fork'd stripes!
 Ample Ohio's bards—bards for California! inland
 bards—bards of the war;
 (As a wheel turns on its axle, so I find my chants turn-
 ing finally on the war;))
 Bards of pride! Bards tallying the ocean's roar, and
 the swooping eagle's scream!
 You, by my charm, I invoke!



PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

1

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!

2

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!

3

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!

4

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied, over there
beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden, and the
lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

5

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!

6

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains
steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing, as we go, the
unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

7

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 up-
heaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

8

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!

9

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!

10

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!

11

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!

12

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!

13

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!

14

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!

15

All the pulses of the world,
 Falling in, they beat for us, with the western move-
 ment beat;
 Holding single or together, steady moving, to the front,
 all for us,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

16

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!

17

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!

18

I too with my soul and body,
 We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
 Through these shores, amid the shadows, with the ap-
 paritions pressing,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

19

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!

20

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!

21

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!

22

Minstrels latent on the prairies!
 (Shrouded bards of other lands! you may sleep—you
 have done your work;)
 Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and
 tramp amid us,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

23

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 en-
 joyment,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

24

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 !

25

Has the night descended ?
 Was the road of late so toilsome ? did we stop discour-
 aged, nodding on our way ?
 Yet a passing hour I yield you, in your tracks to pause
 oblivious,
 Pioneers ! O pioneers !

26

Till with sound of trumpet,
 Far, far off the day-break 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 !

RESPONDEZ !

RESPONDEZ! Respondez!

(The war is completed—the price is paid—the title is settled beyond recall ;)

Let every one answer! let those who sleep be waked!
let none evade!

Must we still go on with our affectations and sneaking?
Let me bring this to a close—I pronounce openly for
a new distribution of roles ;

Let that which stood in front go behind! and let that
which was behind advance to the front and
speak ;

Let murderers, bigots, fools, unclean persons, offer new
propositions!

Let the old propositions be postponed!

Let faces and theories be turn'd inside out! let mean-
ings be freely criminal, as well as results!

Let there be no suggestion above the suggestion of
drudgery!

Let none be pointed toward his destination! (Say! do
you know your destination?)

Let men and women be mock'd with bodies and mock'd
with Souls!

Let the love that waits in them, wait! let it die, or pass
still-born to other spheres!

Let the sympathy that waits in every man, wait! or let
it also pass, a dwarf, to other spheres!

Let contradictions prevail! let one thing contradict
another! and let one line of my poems contra-
dict another!

Let the people sprawl with yearning, aimless hands!
let their tongues be broken! let their eyes be
discouraged! let none descend into their hearts
with the fresh lusciousness of love!

(Stifled, O days! O lands! in every public and private
corruption!

Smother'd in thievery, impotence, shamelessness, moun-
tain-high ;

Brazen effrontery, scheming, rolling like ocean's waves
around and upon you, O my days! my lands!

- For not even those thunderstorms, nor fiercest lightnings of the war, have purified the atmosphere ;)
- Let the theory of America still be management, caste, comparison ! (Say ! what other theory would you ?)
- Let them that distrust birth and death still lead the rest ! (Say ! why shall they not lead you ?)
- Let the crust of hell be neared and trod on ! let the days be darker than the nights ! let slumber bring less slumber than waking time brings !
- Let the world never appear to him or her for whom it was all made !
- Let the heart of the young man still exile itself from the heart of the old man ! and let the heart of the old man be exiled from that of the young man !
- Let the sun and moon go ! let scenery take the applause of the audience ! let there be apathy under the stars !
- Let freedom prove no man's inalienable right ! every one who can tyrannize, let him tyrannize to his satisfaction !
- Let none but infidels be countenanced !
- Let the eminence of meanness, treachery, sarcasm, hate, greed, indecency, impotence, lust, be taken for granted above all ! let writers, judges, governments, households, religions, philosophies, take such for granted above all !
- Let the worst men beget children out of the worst women !
- Let the priest still play at immortality !
- Let death be inaugurated !
- Let nothing remain but the ashes of teachers, artists, moralists, lawyers, and learn'd and polite persons !
- Let him who is without my poems be assassinated !
- Let the cow, the horse, the camel, the garden-bee—let the mud-fish, the lobster, the mussel, eel, the sting-ray, and the grunting pig-fish—let these, and the like of these, be put on a perfect equality with man and woman !

- Let churches accommodate serpents, vermin, and the corpses of those who have died of the most filthy of diseases!
- Let marriage slip down among fools, and be for none but fools!
- Let men among themselves talk and think forever obscenely of women! and let women among themselves talk and think obscenely of men!
- Let us all, without missing one, be exposed in public, naked, monthly, at the peril of our lives! let our bodies be freely handled and examined by whoever chooses!
- Let nothing but copies at second hand be permitted to exist upon the earth!
- Let the earth desert God, nor let there ever henceforth be mention'd the name of God!
- Let there be no God!
- Let there be money, business, imports, exports, custom, authority, precedents, pallor, dyspepsia, smut, ignorance, unbelief!
- Let judges and criminals be transposed! let the prison-keepers be put in prison! let those that were prisoners take the keys! (Say! why might they not just as well be transposed?)
- Let the slaves be masters! let the masters become slaves!
- Let the reformers descend from the stands where they are forever bawling! let an idiot or insane person appear on each of the stands!
- Let the Asiatic, the African, the European, the American, and the Australian, go armed against the murderous stealthiness of each other! let them sleep armed! let none believe in good will!
- Let there be no unfashionable wisdom! let such be scorn'd and derided off from the earth!
- Let a floating cloud in the sky—let a wave of the sea—let growing mint, spinach, onions, tomatoes—let these be exhibited as shows, at a great price for admission!
- Let all the men of These States stand aside for a few smouchers! let the few seize on what they choose! let the rest gawk, giggle, starve, obey!

- Let shadows be furnish'd with genitals! let substances
be deprived of their genitals!
- Let there be wealthy and immense cities—but still
through any of them, not a single poet, savior,
knower, lover!
- Let the infidels of These States laugh all faith away!
If one man be found who has faith, let the rest set upon
him!
- Let them affright faith! let them destroy the power of
breeding faith!
- Let the she-harlots and the he-harlots be prudent! let
them dance on, while seeming lasts! (O seeming!
seeming! seeming!)
- Let the preachers recite creeds! let them still teach
only what they have been taught!
- Let insanity still have charge of sanity!
- Let books take the place of trees, animals, rivers, clouds!
- Let the daub'd portraits of heroes supersede heroes!
- Let the manhood of man never take steps after itself!
- Let it take steps after eunuchs, and after consumptive
and genteel persons!
- Let the white person again tread the black person
under his heel! (Say! which is trodden under
heel, after all?)
- Let the reflections of the things of the world be studied
in mirrors! let the things themselves still con-
tinue unstudied!
- Let a man seek pleasure everywhere except in himself!
- Let a woman seek happiness everywhere except in
herself!
- (What real happiness have you had one single hour
through your whole life?)
- Let the limited years of life do nothing for the limitless
years of death! (What do you suppose death
will do, then?)

TURN O LIBERTAD.

TURN, O Libertad, for the war is over,
 (From it and all henceforth expanding, doubting no
 more, resolute, sweeping the world,)
 Turn from lands retrospective, recording proofs of the
 past ;
 From the singers that sing the trailing glories of the
 past ;
 From the chants of the feudal world—the triumphs of
 kings, slavery, caste ;
 Turn to the world, the triumphs reserv'd and to come—
 give up that backward world ;
 Leave to the singers of hitherto—give them the trailing
 past ;
 But what remains, remains for singers for you—wars
 to come are for you ;
 (Lo ! how the wars of the past have duly inured to you
 —and the wars of the present also inure :)
 —Then turn, and be not alarm'd, O Libertad—turn
 your undying face,
 To where the future, greater than all the past,
 Is swiftly, surely preparing for you.

ADIEU TO A SOLDIER.

¹ ADIEU, O soldier !
 You of the rude campaigning, (which we shared,)
 The rapid march, the life of the camp,
 The hot contention of opposing fronts—the long
 manœuver,
 Red battles with their slaughter,—the stimulus—the
 strong, terrific game,
 Spell of all brave and manly hearts—the trains of Time
 through you, and like of you, all fill'd,
 With war, and war's expression.

² Adieu, dear comrade!

Your mission is fulfill'd—but I, more warlike,
Myself, and this contentious soul of mine,

Still on our own campaigning bound,
Through untried roads, with ambushes, opponents
lined,

Through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis—often
baffled,

Here marching, ever marching on, a war fight out—
aye here,

To fiercer, weightier battles give expression.



As I Walk These Broad, Majestic Days.

¹ As I walk these broad, majestic days of peace,
(For the war, the struggle of blood finish'd, wherein, O
terrific Ideal!

Against vast odds, having gloriously won,
Now thou stridest on—yet perhaps in time toward
denser wars,

Perhaps to engage in time in still more dreadful con-
tests, dangers,

Longer campaigns and crises, labors beyond all others ;)
—As I walk, solitary, unattended,

Around me I hear that eclat of the world—politics,
produce,

The announcements of recognized things—science,
The approved growth of cities, and the spread of inven-
tions.

² I see the ships, (they will last a few years,)

The vast factories, with their foremen and workmen,
And hear the indorsement of all, and do not object to
it.

³ But I too announce solid things ;

Science, ships, politics, cities, factories, are not nothing
—I watch them,

Like a grand procession, to music of distant bugles,
 pouring, triumphantly moving—and grander
 heaving in sight ;
 They stand for realities—all is as it should be.

⁴ Then my realities ;
 What else is so real as mine ?
 Libertad, and the divine average—Freedom to every
 slave on the face of the earth,
 The rapt promises and luminé of seers—the spiritual
 world—these centuries-lasting songs,
 And our visions, the visions of poets, the most solid
 announcements of any.

⁵ For we support all, fuse all,
 After the rest is done and gone, we remain ;
 There is no final reliance but upon us ;
 Democracy rests finally upon us, (I, my brethren, be-
 gin it,)
 And our visions sweep through eternity.



WEAVE IN, WEAVE IN, MY HARDY LIFE.

WEAVE in ! weave in, my hardy life !
 Weave yet a soldier strong and full, for great campaigns
 to come ;
 Weave in red blood ! weave sinews in, like ropes ! the
 senses, sight weave in !
 Weave lasting sure ! weave day and night the web, the
 warp, incessant weave ! tire not !
 (We know not what the use, O life ! nor know the aim,
 the end—nor really aught we know ;
 But know the work, the need goes on, and shall go on
 —the death-envelop'd march of peace as well as
 war goes on ;)
 For great campaigns of peace the same, the wiry threads
 to weave ;
 We know not why or what, yet weave, forever weave.

RACE OF VETERANS.

RACE of veterans! Race of victors!
 Race of the soil, ready for conflict! race of the conquering march!
 (No more credulity's race, abiding-temper'd race ;)
 Race henceforth owning no law but the law of itself ;
 Race of passion and the storm.



O SUN OF REAL PEACE.

O SUN of real peace! O hastening light!
 O free and extatic! O what I here, preparing, warble for!
 O the sun of the world will ascend, dazzling, and take his height—and you too, O my Ideal, will surely ascend!
 O so amazing and broad—up there resplendent, darting and burning!
 O vision prophetic, stagger'd with weight of light! with pouring glories!
 O lips of my soul, already becoming powerless!
 O ample and grand Presidentiads! Now the war, the war is over!
 New history! new heroes! I project you!
 Visions of poets! only you really last! sweep on! sweep on!
 O heights too swift and dizzy yet!
 O purged and luminous! you threaten me more than I can stand!
 (I must not venture—the ground under my feet menaces me—it will not support me :
 O future too immense,)—O present, I return, while yet I may, to you.

LEAVES OF GRASS.



THIS COMPOST.

1.

¹ SOMETHING startles me where I thought I was safest ;
I withdraw from the still woods I loved ;
I will not go now on the pastures to walk ;
I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my
lover the sea ;
I will not touch my flesh to the earth, as to other flesh,
to renew me.

² O how can it be that the ground does not sicken ?
How can you be alive, you growths of spring ?
How can you furnish health, you blood of herbs, roots,
orchards, grain ?
Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses
within you ?
Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour
dead ?

³ Where have you disposed of their carcasses ?
Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations ;
Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat ?
I do not see any of it upon you to-day—or perhaps I am
deceiv'd ;
I will run a furrow with my plough—I will press my
spade through the sod, and turn it up under-
neath ;
I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

2

⁴ Behold this compost! behold it well!
Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick per-
son—Yet behold!
The grass of spring covers the prairies,
The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the
garden,
The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,
The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,
The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage
out of its graves,
The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mul-
berry-tree,
The he-birds carol mornings and evenings, while the
she-birds sit on their nests,
The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,
The new-born of animals appear—the calf is dropt from
the cow, the colt from the mare,
Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark
green leaves,
Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk—the lilacs
bloom in the door-yards;
The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above
all those strata of sour dead.

⁵ What chemistry!
That the winds are really not infectious,
That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of
the sea, which is so amorous after me,
That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over
with its tongues,
That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have
deposited themselves in it,
That all is clean forever and forever,
That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,
That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,
That the fruits of the apple-orchard, and of the orange-
orchard—that melons, grapes, peaches, plums,
will none of them poison me,
That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any
disease,

Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what was once a catching disease.

3

⁶ Now I am terrified at the Earth! it is that calm and patient,
 It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,
 It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such
 endless successions of diseas'd corpses,
 It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor,
 It renews with such unwitting looks, its prodigal, annual, sumptuous crops,
 It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last.

UNNAMED LANDS.

¹ NATIONS ten thousand years before These States, and many times ten thousand years before These States;

Garner'd clusters of ages, that men and women like us grew up and travel'd their course, and pass'd on;
 What vast-built cities—what orderly republics—what pastoral tribes and nomads;
 What histories, rulers, heroes, perhaps transcending all others;

What laws, customs, wealth, arts, traditions;
 What sort of marriage—what costumes—what physiology and phrenology;

What of liberty and slavery among them—what they thought of death and the soul;

Who were witty and wise—who beautiful and poetic—who brutish and undevelop'd;

Not a mark, not a record remains—And yet all remains.

² O I know that those men and women were not for nothing, any more than we are for nothing;

I know that they belong to the scheme of the world
every bit as much as we now belong to it, and as
all will henceforth belong to it.

³ Afar they stand—yet near to me they stand,
Some with oval countenances, learn'd and calm,
Some naked and savage—Some like huge collections of
insects,
Some in tents—herdsmen, patriarchs, tribes, horsemen,
Some prowling through woods—Some living peaceably
on farms, laboring, reaping, filling barns,
Some traversing paved avenues, amid temples, palaces,
factories, libraries, shows, courts, theatres, won-
derful monuments.

⁴ Are those billions of men really gone?
Are those women of the old experience of the earth
gone?
Do their lives, cities, arts, rest only with us?
Did they achieve nothing for good, for themselves?

⁵ I believe of all those billions of men and women that
fill'd the unnamed lands, every one exists this
hour, here or elsewhere; invisible to us, in exact
proportion to what he or she grew from in life,
and out of what he or she did, felt, became, loved,
sinn'd, in life.

⁶ I believe that was not the end of those nations, or any
person of them, any more than this shall be the
end of my nation, or of me;

Of their languages, governments, marriage, literature,
products, games, wars, manners, crimes, prisons,
slaves, heroes, poets, I suspect their results
curiously await in the yet unseen world—coun-
terparts of what accrued to them in the seen
world,

I suspect I shall meet them there,
I suspect I shall there find each old particular of those
unnamed lands.

MANNAHATTA.

¹ I WAS asking for something specific and perfect for
my city,
Whereupon, lo! upsprang the aboriginal name!

² NOW I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid,
sane, unruly, musical, self-sufficient ;
I see that the word of my city is that word up there,
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays,
superb, with tall and wonderful spires,
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and
steamships—an island sixteen miles long, solid-
founded,

Numberless crowded streets—high growths of iron,
slender, strong, light, splendidly uprising to-
ward clear skies ;

Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sun-
down,

The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger ad-
joining islands, the heights, the villas,

The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the light-
ers, the ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers, well-
model'd ;

The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business
—the houses of business of the ship-merchants,
and money-brokers—the river-streets ;

Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a
week ;

The carts hauling goods—the manly race of drivers of
horses—the brown-faced sailors ;

The summer-air, the bright sun shining, and the sail-
ing clouds aloft ;

The winter snows, the sleigh-bells—the broken ice in
the river, passing along, up or down, with the
flood-tide or ebb-tide ;

The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd,
beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes ;

Trottoirs throng'd—vehicles—Broadway—the women—
the shops and shows,

The parades, processions, bugles playing, flags flying,
 drums beating ;
 A million people — manners free and superb—open
 voices—hospitality—the most courageous and
 friendly young men ;
 The free city ! no slaves ! no owners of slaves !
 The beautiful city, the city of hurried and sparkling
 waters ! the city of spires and masts !
 The city nested in bays ! my city !
 The city of such women, I am mad to be with them !
 I will return after death to be with them !
 The city of such young men, I swear I cannot live
 happy, without I often go talk, walk, eat, drink,
 sleep, with them !



OLD IRELAND.

¹ FAR hence, amid an isle of wondrous beauty,
 Crouching over a grave, an ancient sorrowful mother,
 Once a queen—now lean and tatter'd, seated on the
 ground,
 Her old white hair drooping dishevel'd round her shoul-
 ders ;
 At her feet fallen an unused royal harp,
 Long silent—she too long silent—mourning her shroud-
 ed hope and heir ;
 Of all the earth her heart most full of sorrow, because
 most full of love.

² Yet a word, ancient mother ;
 You need crouch there no longer on the cold ground,
 with forehead between your knees ;
 O you need not sit there, veil'd in your old white hair,
 so dishevel'd ;
 For know you, the one you mourn is not in that grave ;
 It was an illusion—the heir, the son you love, was not
 really dead ;

The Lord is not dead—he is risen again, young and strong, in another country ;
 Even while you wept there by your fallen harp, by the grave,
 What you wept for, was translated, pass'd from the grave,
 The winds favor'd, and the sea sail'd it,
 And now with rosy and new blood,
 Moves to-day in a new country.

TO ORATISTS.

¹ To ORATISTS—to male or female,
 Vocalism, measure, concentration, determination, and
 the divine power to use words.

² Are you full-lung'd and limber-lipp'd from long trial ?
 from vigorous practice ? from physique ?
 Do you move in these broad lands as broad as they ?
 Come duly to the divine power to use words ?

³ For only at last, after many years—after chastity,
 friendship, procreation, prudence, and nakedness ;
 After treading ground and breasting river and lake ;
 After a loosen'd throat—after absorbing eras, tempera-
 ments, races—after knowledge, freedom, crimes ;
 After complete faith—after clarifyings, elevations, and
 removing obstructions ;
 After these, and more, it is just possible there comes to
 a man, a woman, the divine power to use words.

⁴ Then toward that man or that woman, swiftly hasten
 all—None refuse, all attend ;
 Armies, ships, antiquities, the dead, libraries, paintings,
 machines, cities, hate, despair, amity, pain, theft,
 murder, aspiration, form in close ranks ;

They debouch as they are wanted to march obediently
through the mouth of that man, or that woman.

⁵ O I see arise orators fit for inland America ;
And I see it is as slow to become an orator as to be-
come a man ;
And I see that all power is folded in a great vocalism.

⁶ Of a great vocalism, the merciless light thereof shall
pour, and the storm rage,
Every flash shall be a revelation, an insult,
The glaring flame on depths, on heights, on suns, on
stars,
On the interior and exterior of man or woman,
On the laws of Nature—on passive materials,
On what you called death—(and what to you therefore
was death,
As far as there can be death.)



SOLID, IRONICAL, ROLLING ORB.

SOLID, ironical, rolling orb!
Master of all, and matter of fact!—at last I accept your
terms ;
Bringing to practical, vulgar tests, of all my ideal
dreams,
And of me, as lover and hero.

BATHED IN WAR'S PERFUME.

BATHED IN WAR'S PERFUME.

BATHED in war's perfume—delicate flag!
(Should the days needing armies, needing fleets, come
again,)
O to hear you call the sailors and the soldiers! flag like
a beautiful woman!
O to hear the tramp, tramp, of a million answering
men! O the ships they arm with joy!
O to see you leap and beckon from the tall masts of
ships!
O to see you peering down on the sailors on the decks!
Flag like the eyes of women.

DELICATE CLUSTER.

DELICATE cluster! flag of teeming life!
Covering all my lands! all my sea-shores lining!
Flag of death! (how I watch'd you through the smoke
of battle pressing!
How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth defiant!)
Flag cerulean! sunny flag! with the orbs of night dap-
pled!
Ah my silvery beauty! ah my woolly white and crim-
son!
Ah to sing the song of you, my matron mighty!
My sacred one, my mother.

SONG OF THE BANNER AT DAY-BREAK.

—
 POET.

¹ O A new song, a free song,
 Flapping, flapping, flapping, flapping, by sounds, by
 voices clearer,
 By the wind's voice and that of the drum,
 By the banner's voice, and child's voice, and sea's voice,
 and father's voice,
 Low on the ground and high in the air,
 On the ground where father and child stand,
 In the upward air where their eyes turn,
 Where the banner at day-break is flapping.

² Words! book-words! what are you?
 Words no more, for hearken and see,
 My song is there in the open air—and I must sing,
 With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

³ I'll weave the chord and twine in,
 Man's desire and babe's desire—I'll twine them in, I'll
 put in life ;
 I'll put the bayonet's flashing point—I'll let bullets and
 slugs whizz ;
 (As one carrying a symbol and menace, far into the
 future,
 Crying with trumpet voice, *Arouse and beware! Beware
 and arouse!*)
 I'll pour the verse with streams of blood, full of voli-
 tion, full of joy ;
 Then loosen, launch forth, to go and compete,
 With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

PENNANT.

⁴ Come up here, bard, bard ;
 Come up here, soul, soul ;
 Come up here, dear little child,
 To fly in the clouds and winds with me, and play with
 the measureless light.

CHILD.

⁵ Father, what is that in the sky beckoning to me with
 long finger?
 And what does it say to me all the while?

FATHER.

⁶ Nothing, my babe, you see in the sky ;
 And nothing at all to you it says. But look you, my
 babe,
 Look at these dazzling things in the houses, and see
 you the money-shops opening ;
 And see you the vehicles preparing to crawl along the
 streets with goods :
 These! ah, these! how valued and toil'd for, these!
 How envied by all the earth!

POET.

⁷ Fresh and rosy red, the sun is mounting high ;
 On floats the sea in distant blue, careering through its
 channels ;
 On floats the wind over the breast of the sea, setting in
 toward land ;
 The great steady wind from west and west-by-south,
 Floating so buoyant, with milk-white foam on the
 waters.

⁸ But I am not the sea, nor the red sun ;
 I am not the wind, with girlish laughter ;
 Not the immense wind which strengthens—not the wind
 which lashes ;
 Not the spirit that ever lashes its own body to terror
 and death ;
 But I am that which unseen comes and sings, sings,
 sings,
 Which babbles in brooks and scoots in showers on the
 land,
 Which the birds know in the woods, mornings and
 evenings,

And the shore-sands know, and the hissing wave, and
 that banner and pennant,
 Aloft there flapping and flapping.

CHILD.

9 O father, it is alive—it is full of people—it has children!
 O now it seems to me it is talking to its children!
 I hear it—it talks to me—O it is wonderful!
 O it stretches—it spreads and runs so fast! O my
 father,
 It is so broad, it covers the whole sky!

FATHER.

10 Cease, cease, my foolish babe,
 What you are saying is sorrowful to me—much it displeases me;
 Behold with the rest, again I say—behold not banners
 and pennants aloft;
 But the well-prepared pavements behold—and mark the
 solid-wall'd houses.

BANNER AND PENNANT.

11 Speak to the child, O bard, out of Manhattan;
 (The war is over—yet never over out of it, we are
 born to real life and identity;)
 Speak to our children all, or north or south of Man-
 hattan,
 Where our factory-engines hum, where our miners
 delve the ground,
 Where our hoarse Niagara rumbles, where our prairie-
 plows are plowing;
 Speak, O bard! point this day, leaving all the rest, to
 us over all—and yet we know not why;
 For what are we, mere strips of cloth, profiting nothing,
 Only flapping in the wind?

POET.

¹² I hear and see not strips of cloth alone ;
I hear again the tramp of armies, I hear the challenging
sentry ;
I hear the jubilant shouts of millions of men—I hear
LIBERTY !
I hear the drums beat, and the trumpets yet blowing ;
I myself move abroad, swift-rising, flying then ;
I use the wings of the land-bird, and use the wings of
the sea-bird, and look down as from a height ;
I do not deny the precious results of peace—I see pop-
ulous cities, with wealth incalculable ;
I see numberless farms—I see the farmers working in
their fields or barns ;
I see mechanics working—I see buildings everywhere
founded, going up, or finish'd ;
I see trains of cars swiftly speeding along railroad
tracks, drawn by the locomotives ;
I see the stores, depots, of Boston, Baltimore, Charles-
ton, New Orleans ;
I see far in the west the immense area of grain—I
dwell awhile, hovering ;
I pass to the lumber forests of the north, and again to
the southern plantation, and again to California ;
Sweeping the whole, I see the countless profit, the busy
gatherings, earned wages ;
See the identity formed out of thirty-eight spacious and
haughty States. (and many more to come ;))
See forts on the shores of harbors—see ships sailing in
and out ;
Then over all, (aye! aye!) my little and lengthen'd
pennant shaped like a sword,
Runs swiftly up, indicating war and defiance—And now
the halyards have rais'd it,
Side of my banner broad and blue—side of my starry
banner,
Discarding peace over all the sea and land.

BANNER AND PENNANT.

¹³ Yet louder, higher, stronger, bard ! yet farther, wider
 cleave !
 No longer let our children deem us riches and peace
 alone ;
 We may be terror and carnage, and are so now ;
 Not now are we any one of these spacious and haughty
 States, (nor any five, nor ten ;)
 Nor market nor depot are we, nor money-bank in the
 city ;
 But these, and all, and the brown and spreading land,
 and the mines below, are ours ;
 And the shores of the sea are ours, and the rivers great
 and small ;
 And the fields they moisten are ours, and the crops and
 the fruits are ours ;
 Bays and channels, and ships sailing in and out, are
 ours—and we over all,
 Over the area spread below, the three or four millions
 of square miles—the capitals,
 The forty millions of people—O bard ! in life and death
 supreme,
 We, even we, henceforth flaunt out masterful, high up,
 above,
 Not for the present alone, for a thousand years, chant-
 ing through you,
 This song to the soul of one poor little child.

CHILD.

¹⁴ O my father, I like not the houses ;
 They will never to me be anything—nor do I like
 money ;
 But to mount up there I would like, O father dear—
 that banner I like ;
 That pennant I would be, and must be.

FATHER.

¹⁵ Child of mine, you fill me with anguish ;
 To be that pennant would be too fearful ;

Little you know what it is this day, and after this day,
 forever ;
 It is to gain nothing, but risk and defy everything ;
 Forward to stand in front of wars—and O, such wars !
 —what have you to do with them ?
 With passions of demons, slaughter, premature death ?

POET.

¹⁶ Demons and death then I sing ;
 Put in all, aye all, will I—sword-shaped pennant for
 war, and banner so broad and blue,
 And a pleasure new and extatic, and the prattled yearning
 of children,
 Blent with the sounds of the peaceful land, and the
 liquid wash of the sea ;
 And the black ships, fighting on the sea, enveloped in
 smoke ;
 And the icy cool of the far, far north, with rustling
 cedars and pines ;
 And the whirr of drums, and the sound of soldiers
 marching, and the hot sun shining south ;
 And the beach-waves combing over the beach on my
 eastern shore, and my western shore the same ;
 And all between those shores, and my ever running
 Mississippi, with bends and chutes ;
 And my Illinois fields, and my Kansas fields, and my
 fields of Missouri ;
 The CONTINENT—devoting the whole identity, without
 reserving an atom,
 Pour in ! whelm that which asks, which sings, with all,
 and the yield of all.

BANNER AND PENNANT.

¹⁷ Aye all ! for ever, for all !
 From sea to sea, north and south, east and west,
 (The war is completed, the price is paid, the title is
 settled beyond recall ;)
 Fusing and holding, claiming, devouring the whole ;
 No more with tender lip, nor musical labial sound,

But, out of the night emerging for good, our voice per-
suasive no more,
Croaking like crows here in the wind.

POET.

(*Finale.*)

¹⁸ My limbs, my veins dilate ;
The blood of the world has fill'd me full—my theme is
clear at last :
—Banner so broad, advancing out of the night, I sing
you haughty and resolute ;
I burst through where I waited long, too long, deafen'd
and blinded ;
My sight, my hearing and tongue, are come to me, (a
little child taught me ;)
I hear from above, O pennant of war, your ironical call
and demand ;
Insensate ! insensate ! (yet I at any rate chant you,) O
banner !
Not houses of peace indeed are you, nor any nor all
their prosperity, (if need be, you shall again
have every one of those houses to destroy them ;
You thought not to destroy those valuable houses,
standing fast, full of comfort, built with money ;
May they stand fast, then ? Not an hour, except you,
above them and all, stand fast ;) —
—O banner ! not money so precious are you, not farm
produce you, nor the material good nutriment,
Nor excellent stores, nor landed on wharves from the
ships ;
Not the superb ships, with sail-power or steam-power,
fetching and carrying cargoes,
Nor machinery, vehicles, trade, nor revenues,—But
you, as henceforth I see you,
Running up out of the night, bringing your cluster of
stars, (ever-enlarging stars ;) —
Divider of day-break you, cutting the air, touch'd by
the sun, measuring the sky,
(Passionately seen and yearn'd for by one poor little
child,

While others remain busy, or smartly talking, forever
 teaching thrift, thrift ;)
 O you up there! O pennant! where you undulate like
 a snake, hissing so curious,
 Out of reach—an idea only—yet furiously fought for,
 risking bloody death—loved by me!
 So loved! O you banner leading the day, with stars
 brought from the night!
 Valueless, object of eyes, over all and demanding all—
 (absolute owner of ALL)—O banner and pennant!
 I too leave the rest—great as it is, it is nothing—houses,
 machines are nothing—I see them not ;
 I see but you, O warlike pennant! O banner so broad,
 with stripes, I sing you only,
 Flapping up there in the wind.



ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLORS.

(A Reminiscence of 1864.)

1

Who are you, dusky woman, so ancient, hardly human,
 With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare
 bony feet?
 Why, rising by the roadside here, do you the colors
 greet?

2

('Tis while our army lines Carolina's sand and pines,
 Forth from thy hovel door, thou, Ethiopia, com'st to me,
 As, under doughty Sherman, I march toward the sea.)

3

*Me, master, years a hundred, since from my parents sun-
 der'd,
 A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught ;
 Then hither me, across the sea, the cruel slaver brought.*

4

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,
 Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her
 darkling eye,
 And curtseys to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

5

What is it, fateful woman—so bleak, hardly human?
 Why wag your head, with turban bound—yellow, red
 and green?
 Are the things so strange and marvelous, you see or
 have seen?



Lo! Victress on the Peaks!

Lo! Victress on the peaks!
 Where thou, with mighty brow, regarding the world,
 (The world, O Libertad, that vainly conspired against
 thee ;)
 Out of its countless, beleaguering toils, after thwarting
 them all ;
 Dominant, with the dazzling sun around thee,
 Flauntest now unharm'd, in immortal soundness and
 bloom—lo! in these hours supreme,
 No poem proud, I, chanting, bring to thee—nor mas-
 tery's rapturous verse ;
 But a book, containing night's darkness, and blood-
 dripping wounds,
 And psalms of the dead.



World, Take Good Notice.

WORLD, take good notice, silver stars fading,
 Milky hue ript, weft of white detaching,
 Coals thirty-eight, baleful and burning,
 Scarlet, significant, hands off warning,
 Now and henceforth flaunt from these shores.

Thick-Sprinkled Bunting.

THICK-SPRINKLED bunting! Flag of stars!
Long yet your road, fateful flag!—long yet your road,
and lined with bloody death!
For the prize I see at issue, at last is the world!
All its ships and shores I see, interwoven with your
threads, greedy banner!
—Dream'd again the flags of kings, highest borne, to
flaunt unrival'd?
O hasten, flag of man! O with sure and steady step,
passing highest flags of kings,
Walk supreme to the heavens, mighty symbol—run up
above them all,
Flag of stars! thick-sprinkled bunting!

A HAND-MIRROR.

HOLD it up sternly! See this it sends back! (Who is it?
 Is it you?)
 Outside fair costume—within ashes and filth,
 No more a flashing eye—no more a sonorous voice or
 springy step;
 Now some slave's eye, voice, hands, step,
 A drunkard's breath, unwholesome eater's face, vene-
 ree's flesh,
 Lungs rotting away piecemeal, stomach sour and can-
 kerous,
 Joints rheumatic, bowels clogged with abomination,
 Blood circulating dark and poisonous streams,
 Words babble, hearing and touch callous,
 No brain, no heart left—no magnetism of sex;
 Such, from one look in this looking-glass ere you go
 hence,
 Such a result so soon—and from such a beginning!



Germ's.

Forms, qualities, lives, humanity, language, thoughts,
 The ones known, and the ones unknown—the ones on
 the stars,
 The stars themselves, some shaped, others unshaped,
 Wonders as of those countries—the soil, trees, cities,
 inhabitants, whatever they may be,
 Splendid suns, the moons and rings, the countless com-
 binations and effects;
 Such-like, and as good as such-like, visible here or any-
 where, stand provided for in a handful of space,
 which I extend my arm and half enclose with my
 hand;
 That contains the start of each and all—the virtue, the
 germs of all.

LEAVES OF GRASS.

O ME! O LIFE!

O ME! O life! . . . of the questions of these recurring ;
Of the endless trains of the faithless—of cities fill'd with
the foolish ;
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more
foolish than I, and who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light—of the objects mean
—of the struggle ever renew'd ;
Of the poor results of all—of the plodding and sordid
crowds I see around me ;
Of the empty and useless years of the rest—with the
rest me intertwined ;
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good
amid these, O me, O life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists, and identity ;
That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute
a verse.

THOUGHTS.

OF Public Opinion ;
Of a calm and cool fiat, sooner or later, (How impas-
sive! How certain and final!)
Of the President with pale face, asking secretly to him-
self, *What will the people say at last?*

- Of the frivolous Judge—Of the corrupt Congressman,
Governor, Mayor—Of such as these, standing
helpless and exposed ;
- Of the mumbling and screaming priest—(soon, soon
deserted ;)
- Of the lessening, year by year, of venerableness, and of
the dicta of officers, statutes, pulpits, schools ;
- Of the rising forever taller and stronger and broader,
of the intuitions of men and women, and of self-
esteem, and of personality ;
- Of the New World—Of the Democracies, resplendent,
en-masse ;
- Of the conformity of politics, armies, navies, to them
and to me,
- Of the shining sun by them—Of the inherent light,
greater than the rest,
- Of the envelopment of all by them, and of the effusion
of all from them.



BEGINNERS.

- How they are provided for upon the earth, (appearing
at intervals ;)
- How dear and dreadful they are to the earth ;
- How they inure to themselves as much as to any—
What a paradox appears, their age ;
- How people respond to them, yet know them not ;
- How there is something relentless in their fate, all
times ;
- How all times mischoose the objects of their adulation
and reward,
- And how the same inexorable price must still be paid
for the same great purchase.

SONGS OF INSURRECTION.

STILL THOUGH THE ONE I SING.

STILL, though the one I sing,
(One, yet of contradictions made,) I dedicate to Nation-
ality,
I leave in him Revolt, (O latent right of insurrection ! O
quenchless, indispensable fire !)

TO A FOIL'D EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONAIRE.

1

¹ COURAGE yet ! my brother or my sister !
Keep on ! Liberty is to be subserv'd, whatever occurs ;
That is nothing, that is quell'd by one or two failures,
or any number of failures,
Or by the indifference or ingratitude of the people, or
by any unfaithfulness,
Or the show of the tushes of power, soldiers, cannon,
penal statutes.

² Revolt ! and still revolt ! revolt !
 What we believe in waits latent forever through all
 the continents, and all the islands and archi-
 pelagos of the sea ;
 What we believe in invites no one, promises nothing,
 sits in calmness and light, is positive and com-
 posed, knows no discouragement,
 Waiting patiently, waiting its time.

³ (Not songs of loyalty alone are these,
 But songs of insurrection also ;
 For I am the sworn poet of every dauntless rebel, the
 world over,
 And he going with me leaves peace and routine behind
 him,
 And stakes his life, to be lost at any moment.)

2

⁴ Revolt ! and the downfall of tyrants !
 The battle rages with many a loud alarm, and frequent
 advance and retreat,
 The infidel triumphs—or supposes he triumphs,
 Then the prison, scaffold, garrote, hand-cuffs, iron neck-
 lace and anklet, lead-balls, do their work,
 The named and unnamed heroes pass to other spheres,
 The great speakers and writers are exiled—they lie sick
 in distant lands,
 The cause is asleep—the strongest throats are still,
 choked with their own blood,
 The young men droop their eyelashes toward the ground
 when they meet ;
 —But for all this, liberty has not gone out of the place,
 nor the infidel enter'd into full possession.

⁵ When liberty goes out of a place, it is not the first to
 go, nor the second or third to go,
 It waits for all the rest to go—it is the last.

⁶ When there are no more memories of heroes and
 martyrs,

And when all life, and all the souls of men and women
 are discharged from any part of the earth,
 Then only shall liberty, or the idea of liberty, be dis-
 charged from that part of the earth,
 And the infidel come into full possession.

3

⁷ Then courage! European revolter! revoltress!
 For, till all ceases, neither must you cease.

⁸ I do not know what you are for, (I do not know what
 I am for myself, nor what anything is for,)
 But I will search carefully for it even in being foil'd,
 In defeat, poverty, misconception, imprisonment—for
 they too are great.

⁹ Revolt! and the bullet for tyrants!
 Did we think victory great?
 So it is—But now it seems to me, when it cannot be
 help'd, that defeat is great,
 And that death and dismay are great.

FRANCE,

The 18th Year of These States.

1

¹ A GREAT year and place;
 A harsh, discordant, natal scream out-sounding, to
 touch the mother's heart closer than any yet.

² I walk'd the shores of my Eastern Sea,
 Heard over the waves the little voice,
 Saw the divine infant, where she woke, mournfully wail-
 ing, amid the roar of cannon, curses, shouts,
 crash of falling buildings;

Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running
 —nor from the single corpses, nor those in heaps,
 nor those borne away in the tumbrils ;
 Was not so desperate at the battues of death—was not
 so shock'd at the repeated fusillades of the guns.

2

³ Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-
 accrued retribution ?
 Could I wish humanity different ?
 Could I wish the people made of wood and stone ?
 Or that there be no justice in destiny or time ?

3

⁴ O Liberty ! O mate for me !
 Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in re-
 serve, to fetch them out in case of need ;
 Here too, though long repress, can never be destroy'd ;
 Here too could rise at last, murdering and extatic ;
 Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

4

⁵ Hence I sign this salute over the sea,
 And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,
 But remember the little voice that I heard wailing—and
 wait with perfect trust, no matter how long ;
 And from to-day, sad and cogent, I maintain the be-
 queath'd cause, as for all lands,
 And I send these words to Paris with my love,
 And I guess some chansonniers there will understand
 them,
 For I guess there is latent music yet in France—floods
 of it ;
 O I hear already the bustle of instruments—they will
 soon be drowning all that would interrupt them ;
 O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free
 march,
 It reaches hither—it swells me to joyful madness,
 I will run transpose it in words, to justify it,
 I will yet sing a song for you, MA FEMME.

EUROPE,

The 72d and 73d Years of These States.

¹ SUDDENLY, out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of slaves,
Like lightning it le'pt forth, half startled at itself,
Its feet upon the ashes and the rags—its hands tight to
the throats of kings.

² O hope and faith!
O aching close of exiled patriots' lives!
O many a sicken'd heart!
Turn back unto this day, and make yourselves afresh.

³ And you, paid to defile the People! you liars, mark!
Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts,
For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming
from his simplicity the poor man's wages,
For many a promise sworn by royal lips, and broken,
and laugh'd at in the breaking,
Then in their power, not for all these, did the blows
strike revenge, or the heads of the nobles fall;
The People scorn'd the ferocity of kings.

2

⁴ But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction,
and the frighten'd monarchs come back;
Each comes in state, with his train—hangman, priest,
tax-gatherer,
Soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer, and sycophant.

⁵ Yet behind all, lowering, stealing—lo, a Shape,
Vague as the night, draped interminably, head, front
and form, in scarlet folds,
Whose face and eyes none may see,

Out of its robes only this—the red robes, lifted by the
arm,
One finger, crook'd, pointed high over the top, like the
head of a snake appears.

3

⁶ Meanwhile, corpses lie in new-made graves—bloody
corpses of young men ;
The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of
princes are flying, the creatures of power laugh
aloud,
And all these things bear fruits—and they are good.

⁷ Those corpses of young men,
Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets—those hearts
pierc'd by the gray lead,
Cold and motionless as they seem, live elsewhere with
unslaughter'd vitality.

⁸ They live in other young men, O kings !
They live in brothers, again ready to defy you !
They were purified by death—they were taught and
exalted.

⁹ Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom, but grows
seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed,
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains
and the snows nourish.

¹⁰ Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants
let loose,
But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, coun-
seling, cautioning.

4

¹¹ Liberty ! let others despair of you ! I never despair
of you.

¹² Is the house shut ? Is the master away ?
Nevertheless, be ready—be not weary of watching ;
He will soon return—his messengers come anon.

Walt Whitman's Caution.

To The States, or any one of them, or any city of The
States, *Resist much, obey little* ;
Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved ;
Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city, of this earth,
ever afterward resumes its liberty.

To a Certain Cantatrice.

HERE, take this gift !
I was reserving it for some hero, speaker, or General,
One who should serve the good old cause, the great
Idea, the progress and freedom of the race ;
Some brave confronter of despots—some daring rebel ;
—But I see that what I was reserving, belongs to you
just as much as to any.

LEAVES OF GRASS.

TO YOU.

¹ WHOEVER you are, I fear you are walking the walks of
dreams,

I fear these supposed realities are to melt from under
your feet and hands ;

Even now, your features, joys, speech, house, trade,
manners, troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dissi-
pate away from you,

Your true Soul and Body appear before me,

They stand forth out of affairs—out of commerce, shops,
law, science, work, farms, clothes, the house,
medicine, print, buying, selling, eating, drinking,
suffering, dying.

² Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you,
that you be my poem ;

I whisper with my lips close to your ear,

I have loved many women and men, but I love none
better than you.

³ O I have been dilatory and dumb ;

I should have made my way straight to you long ago ;

I should have blabb'd nothing but you, I should have
chanted nothing but you.

⁴ I will leave all, and come and make the hymns of you ;

None have understood you, but I understand you ;

None have done justice to you—you have not done
justice to yourself ;

None but have found you imperfect—I only find no
imperfection in you ;

None but would subordinate you—I only am he who
will never consent to subordinate you ;

I only am he who places over you no master, owner,
better, God, beyond what waits intrinsically in
yourself.

⁵ Painters have painted their swarming groups, and the
centre figure of all ;

From the head of the centre figure spreading a nimbus
of gold-color'd light ;

But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head with-
out its nimbus of gold-color'd light ;

From my hand, from the brain of every man and woman
it streams, effulgently flowing forever.

⁶ O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you !
You have not known what you are—you have slumber'd
upon yourself all your life ;

Your eye-lids have been the same as closed most of the
time ;

What you have done returns already in mockeries ;

(Your thrift, knowledge, prayers, if they do not return
in mockeries, what is their return ?)

⁷ The mockeries are not you ;

Underneath them, and within them, I see you lurk ;

I pursue you where none else has pursued you ;

Silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the
accustom'd routine, if these conceal you from
others, or from yourself, they do not conceal you
from me ;

The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure com-
plexion, if these balk others, they do not balk
me,

The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness,
greed, premature death, all these I part aside.

⁸ There is no endowment in man or woman that is not
tallied in you ;

There is no virtue, no beauty, in man or woman, but as
good is in you ;

No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in
you ;

No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure
waits for you.

⁹ As for me, I give nothing to any one, except I give
the like carefully to you ;

I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God, sooner
than I sing the songs of the glory of you.

¹⁰ Whoever you are ! claim your own at any hazard !
These shows of the east and west are tame, compared
to you ;

These immense meadows—these interminable rivers—
you are immense and interminable as they ;

These furies, elements, storms, motions of Nature,
throes of apparent dissolution—you are he or
she who is master or mistress over them,

Master or mistress in your own right over Nature, ele-
ments, pain, passion, dissolution.

¹¹ The hopples fall from your ankles—you find an un-
failing sufficiency ;

Old or young, male or female, rude, low, rejected by
the rest, whatever you are promulges itself ;

Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are pro-
vided, nothing is scant ;

Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, cunning,
what you are picks its way.

SONGS OF PARTING.

AS THE TIME DRAWS NIGH.

1

¹ As the time draws nigh, glooming, a cloud,
A dread beyond, of I know not what, darkens me.

² I shall go forth,
I shall traverse The States awhile—but I cannot tell
whither or how long ;
Perhaps soon, some day or night while I am singing,
my voice will suddenly cease.

2

³ O book, O chants ! must all then amount to but this ?
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us ? . . .
And yet it is enough, O soul !
O soul ! we have positively appear'd—that is enough.

YEARS OF THE MODERN.

YEARS of the modern ! years of the unperform'd !
Your horizon rises—I see it parting away for more
august dramas ;
I see not America only—I see not only Liberty's nation,
but other nations preparing ;

I see tremendous entrances and exits—I see new combinations—I see the solidarity of races ;
 I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage ;
 (Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts? are the acts suitable to them closed?)
 I see Freedom, completely arm'd, and victorious, and very haughty, with Law on one side, and Peace on the other,
 A stupendous Trio, all issuing forth against the idea of caste ;
 —What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach ?
 I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions ;
 I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken
 I see the landmarks of European kings removed ;
 I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all others give way ;)
 —Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day ;
 Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God ;
 Lo! how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest ;
 His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere—he colonizes the Pacific, the archipelagoes ;
 With the steam-ship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale engines of war,
 With these, and the world-spreading factories, he interlinks all geography, all lands ;
 —What whispers are these, O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the seas ?
 Are all nations communing? is there going to be but one heart to the globe?
 Is humanity forming, en-masse?—for lo! tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim ;
 The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war ;
 No one knows what will happen next—such portents fill the days and nights ;

Years prophetic! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly
 try to pierce it, is full of phantoms ;
 Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes
 around me ;
 This incredible rush and heat—this strange extatic
 fever of dreams, O years !
 Your dreams, O years, how they penetrate through me !
 (I know not whether I sleep or wake !)
 The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring
 in shadow behind me,
 The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, ad-
 vance upon me.

THOUGHTS.

1

Or these years I sing,
 How they pass and have pass'd, through convuls'd
 pains, as through parturitions ;
 How America illustrates birth, muscular youth, the
 promise, the sure fulfillment, the Absolute Suc-
 cess, despite of people—Illustrates evil as well as
 good ;
 How many hold despairingly yet to the models de-
 parted, caste, myths, obedience, compulsion, and
 to infidelity ;
 How few see the arrived models, the Athletes, the
 Western States—or see freedom or spirituality—
 or hold any faith in results,
 (But I see the Athletes—and I see the results of the war
 glorious and inevitable—and they again leading
 to other results ;))
 How the great cities appear—How the Democratic
 masses, turbulent, wilful, as I love them ;
 How the whirl, the contest, the wrestle of evil with
 good, the sounding and resounding, keep on
 and on ;

How society waits uniform'd, and is for a while between
 things ended and things begun ;
 How America is the continent of glories, and of the
 'triumph of freedom, and of the Democracies,
 and of the fruits of society, and of all that is
 begun ;
 And how The States are complete in themselves—And
 how all triumphs and glories are complete in
 themselves, to lead onward,
 And how these of mine, and of The States, will in their
 turn be convuls'd, and serve other parturitions
 and transitions,
 And how all people, sights, combinations, the Demo-
 cratic masses, too, serve—and how every fact,
 and war itself, with all its horrors, serves,
 And how now, or at any time, each serves the exquisite
 transition of death.

2

Of seeds dropping into the ground—of birth,
 Of the steady concentration of America, inland, upward,
 to impregnable and swarming places,
 Of what Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and the rest, are to be,
 Of what a few years will show there in Nebraska, Col-
 orado, Nevada, and the rest ;
 (Or afar, mounting the Northern Pacific to Sitka or
 Aliaska ;)
 Of what the feuillage of America is the preparation for
 —and of what all sights, North, South, East and
 West, are ;
 Of This Union, soak'd, welded in blood—of the solemn
 price paid—of the unnamed lost, ever present in
 my mind ;
 —Of the temporary use of materials, for identity's sake,
 Of the present, passing, departing—of the growth of
 completer men than any yet,
 Of myself, soon, perhaps, closing up my songs by these
 shores,
 Of California, of Oregon—and of me journeying to live
 and sing there ;

Of the Western Sea—of the spread inland between it
and the spinal river,
Of the great pastoral area, athletic and feminine,
Of all sloping down there where the fresh free giver,
the mother, the Mississippi flows,
Of future women there—of happiness in those high
plateaus, ranging three thousand miles, warm
and cold ;
Of mighty inland cities yet unsurvey'd and unsus-
pected, (as I am also, and as it must be ;))
Of the new and good names—of the modern develop-
ments—of inalienable homesteads ;
Of a free and original life there—of simple diet and
clean and sweet blood ;
Of litness, majestic faces, clear eyes, and perfect
physique there ;
Of immense spiritual results, future years, far west,
each side of the Anahuacs ;
Of these leaves, well understood there, (being made for
that area ;))
Of the native scorn of grossness and gain there ;
(O it lurks in me night and day—What is gain, after
all, to savageness and freedom ?)



Song at Sunset.

¹ SPLENDOR of ended day, floating and filling me !
Hour prophetic—hour resuming the past !
Inflating my throat—you, divine average !
You, Earth and Life, till the last ray gleams, I sing.

² Open mouth of my Soul, uttering gladness,
Eyes of my Soul, seeing perfection,
Natural life of me, faithfully praising things ;
Corroborating forever the triumph of things.

³ Illustrious every one!

Illustrious what we name space—sphere of unnumber'd spirits ;

Illustrious the mystery of motion, in all beings, even the tiniest insect ;

Illustrious the attribute of speech—the senses—the body ;

Illustrious the passing light! Illustrious the pale reflection on the new moon in the western sky!

Illustrious whatever I see, or hear, or touch, to the last.

⁴ Good in all,

In the satisfaction and aplomb of animals,

In the annual return of the seasons,

In the hilarity of youth,

In the strength and flush of manhood,

In the grandeur and exquisiteness of old age,

In the superb vistas of Death.

⁵ Wonderful to depart ;

Wonderful to be here!

The heart, to jet the all-alike and innocent blood!

To breathe the air, how delicious!

To speak! to walk! to seize something by the hand!

To prepare for sleep, for bed—to look on my rose-color'd flesh ;

To be conscious of my body, so satisfied, so large ;

To be this incredible God I am ;

To have gone forth among other Gods—these men and women I love.

⁶ Wonderful how I celebrate you and myself!

How my thoughts play subtly at the spectacles around!

How the clouds pass silently overhead!

How the earth darts on and on! and how the sun, moon, stars, dart on and on!

How the water sports and sings! (Surely it is alive!)

How the trees rise and stand up—with strong trunks—with branches and leaves!

(Surely there is something more in each of the trees—some living Soul.)

7 O amazement of things! even the least particle!
 O spirituality of things!
 O strain musical, flowing through ages and continents
 —now reaching me and America!
 I take your strong chords—I intersperse them, and
 cheerfully pass them forward.

8 I too carol the sun, usher'd, or at noon, or, as now,
 setting,
 I too throb to the brain and beauty of the earth, and
 of all the growths of the earth,
 I too have felt the resistless call of myself.

9 As I sail'd down the Mississippi,
 As I wander'd over the prairies,
 As I have lived—As I have look'd through my windows,
 my eyes,
 As I went forth in the morning—As I beheld the light
 breaking in the east;
 As I bathed on the beach of the Eastern Sea, and again
 on the beach of the Western Sea;
 As I roam'd the streets of inland Chicago—whatever
 streets I have roam'd;
 Or cities, or silent woods, or peace, or even amid the
 sights of war;
 Wherever I have been, I have charged myself with con-
 tentment and triumph.

10 I sing the Equalities, modern or old,
 I sing the endless finales of things;
 I say Nature continues—Glory continues;
 I praise with electric voice;
 For I do not see one imperfection in the universe;
 And I do not see one cause or result lamentable at last
 in the universe.

11 O setting sun! though the time has come,
 I still warble under you, if none else does, unmitigated
 adoration.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER.

WHEN I heard the learn'd astronomer ;
 When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
 before me ;
 When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add,
 divide, and measure them ;
 When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lec-
 tured with much applause in the lecture-room,
 How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick ;
 Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,
 In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
 Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

 TO RICH GIVERS.

WHAT you give me, I cheerfully accept,
 A little sustenance, a hut and garden, a little money—
 these, as I rendezvous with my poems ;
 A traveler's lodging and breakfast as I journey through
 The States—Why should I be ashamed to own
 such gifts ? Why to advertise for them ?
 For I myself am not one who bestows nothing upon
 man and woman ;
 For I bestow upon any man or woman the entrance to
 all the gifts of the universe.

 THOUGHT.

OF what I write from myself—As if that were not the
 resumé ;
 Of Histories—As if such, however complete, were not
 less complete than the preceding poems ;
 As if those shreds, the records of nations, could possibly
 be as lasting as the preceding poems ;
 As if here were not the amount of all nations, and of all
 the lives of heroes.

SO LONG!

1

¹ To conclude—I announce what comes after me ;
I announce mightier offspring, orators, days, and then,
for the present, depart.

² I remember I said, before my leaves sprang at all,
I would raise my voice jocund and strong, with reference
to consummations.

³ When America does what was promis'd,
When there are plentiful athletic bards, inland and
seaboard,
When through These States walk a hundred millions of
superb persons,
When the rest part away for superb persons, and con-
tribute to them,
When breeds of the most perfect mothers denote
America,
Then to me and mine our due fruition.

⁴ I have press'd through in my own right,
I have sung the Body and the Soul—War and Peace
have I sung,
And the songs of Life and of Birth—and shown that
there are many births :
I have offer'd my style to every one—I have journey'd
with confident step ;
While my pleasure is yet at the full, I whisper, *So long!*
And take the young woman's hand, and the young
man's hand, for the last time.

2

⁵ I announce natural persons to arise ;
I announce justice triumphant ;

I announce uncompromising liberty and equality ;
 I announce the justification of candor, and the justification
 of pride.

⁶ I announce that the identity of These States is a
 single identity only ;
 I announce the Union more and more compact, indis-
 soluble ;
 I announce splendors and majesties to make all the
 previous politics of the earth insignificant.

⁷ I announce adhesiveness—I say it shall be limitless,
 unloosen'd ;
 I say you shall yet find the friend you were looking for.

⁸ I announce a man or woman coming—perhaps you
 are the one, (*So long!*)
 I announce the great individual, fluid as Nature, chaste,
 affectionate, compassionate, fully armed.

⁹ I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement,
 spiritual, bold ;
 I announce an end that shall lightly and joyfully meet
 its translation ;
 I announce myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-
 blooded ;
 I announce a race of splendid and savage old men.

3

¹⁰ O thicker and faster ! (*So long!*)
 O crowding too close upon me ;
 I foresee too much—it means more than I thought ;
 It appears to me I am dying.

¹¹ Hasten throat, and sound your last !
 Salute me—salute the days once more. Peal the old
 cry once more.

¹² Screaming electric, the atmosphere using,
 At random glancing, each as I notice absorbing,

Swiftly on, but a little while alighting,
 Curious envelop'd messages delivering,
 Sparkles hot, seed ethereal, down in the dirt dropping,
 Myself unknowing, my commission obeying, to question
 it never daring,
 To ages, and ages yet, the growth of the seed leaving,
 To troops out of me, out of the army, the war arising—
 they the tasks I have set promulging,
 To women certain whispers of myself bequeathing—
 their affection me more clearly explaining,
 To young men my problems offering—no dallier I—I
 the muscle of their brains trying,
 So I pass—a little time vocal, visible, contrary ;
 Afterward, a melodious echo, passionately bent for—
 (death making me really undying ;)
 The best of me then when no longer visible—for toward
 that I have been incessantly preparing.

¹³ What is there more, that I lag and pause, and crouch
 extended with unshut mouth ?
 Is there a single final farewell ?

4

¹⁴ My songs cease—I abandon them ;
 From behind the screen where I hid, I advance person-
 ally, solely to you.

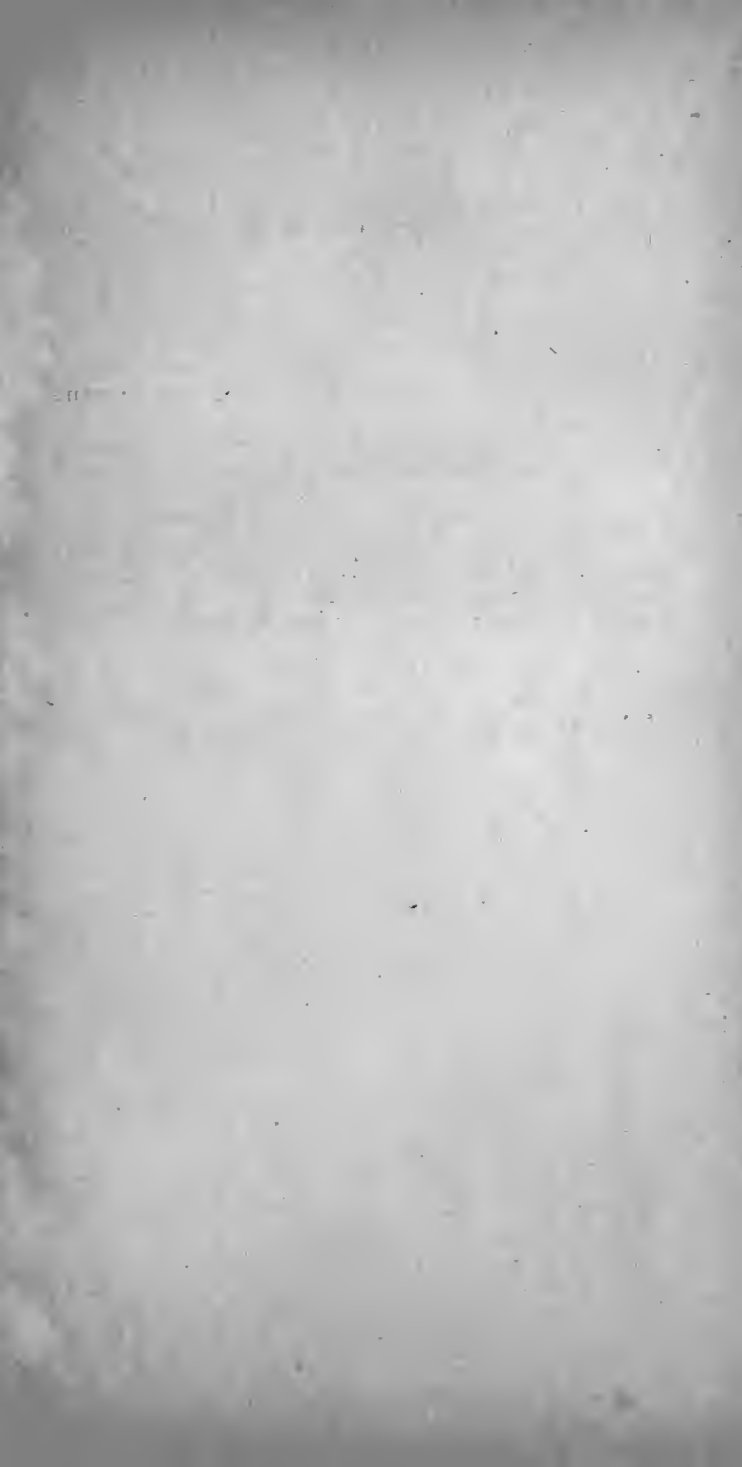
¹⁵ Camerado ! This is no book ;
 Who touches this, touches a man ;
 (Is it night ? Are we here alone ?)
 It is I you hold, and who holds you ;
 I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls
 me forth.

¹⁶ O how your fingers drowse me !
 Your breath falls around me like dew—your pulse lulls
 the tympan of my ears ;
 I feel immersed from head to foot ;
 Delicious—enough.

¹⁷ Enough, O deed impromptu and secret!
Enough, O gliding present! Enough, O summ'd-up
past!

5

¹⁸ Dear friend, whoever you are, take this kiss,
I give it especially to you—Do not forget me;
I feel like one who has done work for the day, to retire
awhile;
I receive now again of my many translations—from my
avataras ascending—while others doubtless await
me;
An unknown sphere, more real than I dream'd, more
direct, darts awakening rays about me—*So long!*
Remember my words—I may again return,
I love you—I depart from materials;
I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.



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PASSAGE

to

INDIA.

Washington, D. C.

1871.

NEW-YORK: J. S. REDFIELD, PUBLISHER, 140 Fulton St., (up stairs.)

OH, J. SULLIVAN.

OH, J. Sullivan! Oh, J. L. Sullivan!
Oh, John Lycurgus Sullivan, all hail!!
Thou bottomless infinitude! Thou god! Thou
you!
Thou Zeus with all-compelling Land!
Thou glory of the mighty Occident! Thou
Heaven-born!
Thou Athens-bred! Thou light of the Acrop-
olis! Thou son of a gambolier!
Fifty-nine inches art thou round thy ribs;
twice twain knuckles hast thou, and
again twice twain.
Thou scatterest men's teeth like antelopes at
play.
Thou straightenest thine arm, and systems
rock and eye-balls change their hue.
Oh, thou grim granulator! Thou soul-re-
mover! Thou lightsome excoriator!
Thou cooing dove! Thou droll, droll John!
Thou buster!
Oh, you! Oh, me, too! Oh, me some more!
Oh, thunder!!!
—*Walt Whitman (per J. P. L.), in "Life's
Verses."*

Walt Whitman

LEAVES OF GRASS.

Benj. W. Washburn
Dec 5 - 1871

PASSAGE

to

INDIA.

*Gliding o'er all, through all,
Through Nature, Time, and Space,
As a Ship on the waters advancing,
The Voyage of the Soul—not Life alone,
Death—many Deaths, I sing.*

Washington, D. C.

1871.

 See ADVERTISEMENT at end of this Volume.

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PASSAGE TO INDIA.

1

¹ SINGING my days,
Singing the gréat 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!

² 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

³ Passage, O soul, to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic—the primitive fables.

⁴ 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!
 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

⁵ 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 mar-
 riage,
 The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
 The lands to be welded together.

⁶ (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

⁷ 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 Euge-
 nie'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.

⁸ In one, again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul,
the same,)

I see over my own continent the Pacific Railroad, sur-
mounting 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 gro-
tesque shapes—the buttes ;

I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions—the bar-
ren, 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 be-
hold enchanting mirages of waters and meadows ;

Marking through these, and after all, in duplicate slen-
der lines,

Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land
travel,

Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,

The road between Europe and Asia.

⁹ (Ah Genoese, thy dream ! thy dream !

Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,

The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream !)

5

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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 de 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

¹² O, vast Rondure, swimming in space!

Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty!

Alternate light and day, and the teeming, spiritual
darkness;

Unspeakable, high processions of sun and moon, and
countless stars, above;

Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, moun-
tains, trees;

With inscrutable purpose—some hidden, prophetic
intention;

Now, first, it seems, my thought begins to span thee.

¹³ Down from the gardens of Asia, descending, radiat-
ing,

Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after
them,

Wandering, yearning, curious—with restless explo-
rations,

With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish—with
 never-happy hearts,
 With that sad, incessant refrain, *Wherefore, unsatisfied*
Soul? and, Whither, O mocking Life?

¹⁴ 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.)

¹⁵ Yet, soul, be sure the first intent remains—and shall
 be carried out;
 (Perhaps even now the time has arrived.)

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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

¹⁸ 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 ;)
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

¹⁹ Passage to India!

Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of man,
The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

²⁰ 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, resum-
ing 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

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ (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

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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

²⁷ 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 extasy 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.

²⁸ With laugh, and many a kiss,
(Let others deprecate—let others weep for sin, remorse,
humiliation;)
O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee.

²⁹ Ah, more than any priest, O soul, we too believe in
God;
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ O Thou transcendant !
 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 Com-
 rade 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 ?

³² 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.

³³ 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, per-
 fection, strength ?

What cheerful willingness, for others' sake, to give up
 all?
 For others' sake to suffer all?

³⁴ 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

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ 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

³⁷ 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!

²⁸ O sun and moon, and all you stars! Sirius and
 Jupiter!
 Passage to you!

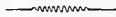
³⁰ Passage—immediate passage! the blood burns in my
 veins!
 Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
 Cut the hawser's—haul out—shake out every sail!
 Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long
 enough?
 Have we not grovell'd here long enough, eating and
 drinking like mere brutes?
 Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books
 long enough?

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ 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!

THOUGHT.

As I sit with others, at a great feast, suddenly, while
 the music is playing,
 To my mind, (whence it comes I know not,) spectral, in
 mist, of a wreck at sea ;
 Of certain ships—how they sail from port with flying
 streamers, and wafted kisses—and that is the
 last of them !
 Of the solemn and murky mystery about the fate of the
 President ;
 Of the flower of the marine science of fifty generations,
 founder'd off the Northeast coast, and going
 down—Of the steamship Arctic going down,
 Of the veil'd tableau—Women gather'd together on
 deck, pale, heroic, waiting the moment that
 draws so close—O the moment !
 A huge sob—A few bubbles—the white foam spirting
 up—And then the women gone,
 Sinking there, while the passionless wet flows on—And
 I now pondering, Are those women indeed gone ?
 Are Souls drown'd and destroy'd so ?
 Is only matter triumphant ?



O LIVING ALWAYS—ALWAYS DYING !

O LIVING always—always dying !
 O the burials of me, past and present !
 O me, while I stride ahead, material, visible, imperious
 as ever !
 O me, what I was for years, now dead, (I lament not—
 I am content ;))
 O to disengage myself from those corpses of me, which
 I turn and look at, where I cast them !
 To pass on, (O living ! always living !) and leave the
 corpses behind !

PROUD MUSIC OF THE STORM.



1

¹ Proud music of the storm!

Blast that careers so free, whistling across the prairies!
Strong hum of forest tree-tops! Wind of the mountains!

Personified dim shapes! you hidden orchestras!
You serenades of phantoms, with instruments alert,
Blending, with Nature's rhythmus, all the tongues of nations;

You chords left as by vast composers! you choruses!
You formless, free, religious dances! you from the Orient!

You undertone of rivers, roar of pouring cataracts;
You sounds from distant guns, with galloping cavalry!
Echoes of camps, with all the different bugle-calls!
Trooping tumultuous, filling the midnight late, bending
me powerless,

Entering my lonesome slumber-chamber—Why have
you seiz'd me?

2

² Come forward, O my Soul, and let the rest retire;
Listen—lose not—it is toward thee they tend;
Parting the midnight, entering my slumber-chamber,
For thee they sing and dance, O Soul.

³ A festival song!

The duet of the bridegroom and the bride—a marriage-
march,
With lips of love, and hearts of lovers, fill'd to the brim
with love ;
The red-flush'd cheeks, and perfumes—the cortege
swarming, full of friendly faces, young and old,
To flutes' clear notes, and sounding harps' cantabile.

3

⁴ Now loud approaching drums!

Victoria! see'st thou in powder-smoke the banners torn
but flying? the rout of the baffled?
Hearest those shouts of a conquering army?

⁵ (Ah, Soul, the sobs of women—the wounded groaning
in agony,

The hiss and crackle of flames—the blacken'd ruins—
the embers of cities,
The dirge and desolation of mankind.)

4

⁶ Now airs antique and medieval fill me!

I see and hear old harpers with their harps, at Welsh
festivals :

I hear the minnesingers, singing their lays of love,

I hear the minstrels, gleemen, troubadours, of the feudal
ages.

5

⁷ Now the great organ sounds,

Tremulous—while underneath, (as the hid footholds of
the earth,

On which arising, rest, and leaping forth, depend,

All shapes of beauty, grace and strength—all hues we
know,

Green blades of grass, and warbling birds—children
that gambol and play—the clouds of heaven
above,)

The strong base stands, and its pulsations intermits
 not,
 Bathing, supporting, merging all the rest—maternity
 of all the rest ;
 And with it every instrument in multitudes,
 The players playing—all the world's musicians,
 The solemn hymns and masses, rousing adoration,
 All passionate heart-chants, sorrowful appeals,
 The measureless sweet vocalists of ages,
 And for their solvent setting, Earth's own diapason,
 Of winds and woods and mighty ocean waves ;
 A new composite orchestra—binder of years and climes
 —ten-fold renewer,
 As of the far-back days the poets tell—the Paradiiso,
 The straying thence, the separation long, but now the
 wandering done,
 The journey done, the Journeyman come home,
 And Man and Art, with Nature fused again.

6

⁸ Tutti! for Earth and Heaven!
 The Almighty Leader now for me, for once, has signal'd
 with his wand.

⁹ The manly strophe of the husbands of the world,
 And all the wives responding.

¹⁰ The tongues of violins!
 (I think, O tongues, ye tell this heart, that cannot tell
 itself ;
 This brooding, yearning heart, that cannot tell itself.)

7

¹¹ Ah, from a little child,
 Thou knowest, Soul, how to me all sounds became
 music ;
 My mother's voice, in lullaby or hymn ;
 (The voice—O tender voices—memory's loving voices !
 Last miracle of all—O dearest mother's, sister's, voices;)

The rain, the growing corn, the breeze among the
 long-leav'd corn,
 The measur'd sea-surf, beating on the sand,
 The twittering bird, the hawk's sharp scream,
 The wild-fowl's notes at night, as flying low, migrating
 north or south,
 The psalm in the country church, or mid the clustering
 trees, the open air camp-meeting,
 The fiddler in the tavern—the glee, the long-strung
 sailor-song,
 The loving cattle, bleating sheep—the crowing cock at
 dawn.

8

¹² All songs of current lands come sounding 'round me,
 The German airs of friendship, wine and love,
 Irish ballads, merry jigs and dances—English warbles,
 Chansons of France, Scotch tunes—and o'er the rest,
 Italia's peerless compositions.

¹³ Across the stage, with pallor on her face, yet lurid
 passion,
 Stalks Norma, brandishing the dagger in her hand.

¹⁴ I see poor crazed Lucia's eyes' unnatural gleam ;
 Her hair down her back falls loose and dishevell'd.

¹⁵ I see where Ernani, walking the bridal garden,
 Amid the scent of night-roses, radiant, holding his
 bride by the hand,
 Hears the infernal call, the death-pledge of the horn.

¹⁶ To crossing swords, and grey hairs bared to heaven,
 The clear, electric base and baritone of the world,
 The trombone duo—Libertad forever !

¹⁷ From Spanish chestnut trees' dense shade,
 By old and heavy convent walls, a wailing song,
 Song of lost love—the torch of youth and life quench'd
 in despair,
 Song of the dying swan—Fernando's heart is breaking.

¹⁸ Awaking from her woes at last, retriev'd Amina
sings ;
Copious as stars, and glad as morning light, the tor-
rents of her joy.

¹⁹ (The teeming lady comes !
The lustrious orb—Venus contralto—the blooming
mother,
Sister of loftiest gods—Alboni's self I hear.)

9

²⁰ I hear those odes, symphonies, operas ;
I hear in the *William Tell*, the music of an arous'd and
angry people ;
I hear Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, the *Prophet*, or *Robert* ;
Gounod's *Faust*, or Mozart's *Don Juan*.

10

²¹ I hear the dance-music of all nations,
The waltz, (some delicious measure, lapsing, bathing me
in bliss ;)
The bolero, to tinkling guitars and clattering castanets.

²² I see religious dances old and new,
I hear the sound of the Hebrew lyre,
I see the Crusaders marching, bearing the cross on
high, to the martial clang of cymbals ;
I hear dervishes monotonously chanting, interspers'd
with frantic shouts, as they spin around, turning
always towards Mecca ;
I see the rapt religious dances of the Persians and the
Arabs ;
Again, at Eleusis, home of Ceres, I see the modern
Greeks dancing,
I hear them clapping their hands, as they bend their
bodies,
I hear the metrical shuffling of their feet.

²³ I see again the wild old Corybantian dance, the performers wounding each other ;
I see the Roman youth, to the shrill sound of flageolets,
throwing and catching their weapons,
As they fall on their knees, and rise again.

²⁴ I hear from the Mussulman mosque the muezzin calling ;
I see the worshippers within, (nor form, nor sermon,
argument, nor word,
But silent, strange, devout—rais'd, glowing heads—
extatic faces.)

11

²⁵ I hear the Egyptian harp of many strings,
The primitive chants of the Nile boatmen ;
The sacred imperial hymns of China,
To the delicate sounds of the king, (the stricken wood
and stone ;)
Or to Hindu flutes, and the fretting twang of the vina,
A band of bayaderes.

12

²⁶ Now Asia, Africa leave me—Europe, seizing, inflates
me ;
To organs huge, and bands, I hear as from vast courses of voices,
Luther's strong hymn, *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott* ;
Rossini's *Stabat Mater dolorosa* ;
Or, floating in some high cathedral dim, with gorgeous
color'd windows,
The passionate *Agnus Dei*, or *Gloria in Excelsis*.

13

²⁷ Composers ! mighty maestros !
And you, sweet singers of old lands—Soprani ! Tenori !
Bassi !
To you a new bard, carolling free in the west,
Obeisant, sends his love.

²⁸ (Such led to thee, O Soul!
 All senses, shows and objects, lead to thee,
 But now, it seems to me, sound leads o'er all the
 rest.)

14

²⁹ I hear the annual singing of the children in St. Paul's
 Cathedral ;
 Or, under the high roof of some colossal hall, the sym-
 phonies, oratorios of Beethoven, Handel, or
 Haydn ;
 The *Creation*, in billows of godhood laves me.

³⁰ Give me to hold all sounds, (I, madly struggling,
 cry,)
 Fill me with all the voices of the universe,
 Endow me with their throbbings—Nature's also,
 The tempests, waters, winds—operas and chants—
 marches and dances,
 Utter—pour in—for I would take them all.

15

³¹ Then I woke softly,
 And pausing, questioning awhile the music of my
 dream,
 And questioning all those reminiscences—the tempest
 in its fury,
 And all the songs of sopranos and tenors,
 And those rapt oriental dances, of religious fervor,
 And the sweet varied instruments, and the diapason of
 organs,
 And all the artless plaints of love, and grief and
 death,
 I said to my silent, curious Soul, out of the bed of the
 slumber-chamber,
 Come, for I have found the clue I sought so long,
 Let us go forth refresh'd amid the day,
 Cheerfully tallying life, walking the world, the real,
 Nourish'd henceforth by our celestial dream.

³² And I said, moreover,
Haply, what thou hast heard, O Soul, was not the sound
of winds,
Nor dream of raging storm, nor sea-hawk's flapping
wings, nor harsh scream,
Nor vocalism of sun-bright Italy,
Nor German organ majestic—nor vast concourse of
voices—nor layers of harmonies ;
Nor strophes of husbands and wives—nor sound of
marching soldiers,
Nor flutes, nor harps, nor the bugle-calls of camps ;
But, to a new rhythmus fitted for thee,
Poems, bridging the way from Life to Death, vaguely
wafted in night air, uncaught, unwritten,
Which, let us go forth in the bold day, and write.

ASHES OF SOLDIERS.

*Again a verse for sake of you,
You soldiers in the ranks—you Volunteers,
Who bravely fighting, silent fell.
To fill unmention'd graves.*

ASHES OF SOLDIERS.

¹ ASHES of soldiers !

As I muse, retrospective, murmuring a chant in thought,
Lo! the war resumes—again to my sense your shapes,
And again the advance of armies.

² Noiseless as mists and vapors,
From their graves in the trenches ascending,
From the cemeteries all through Virginia and Tennessee,
From every point of the compass, out of the countless
unnamed graves,
In wafted clouds, in myriads large, or squads of twos
or threes, or single ones, they come,
And silently gather round me,

³ Now sound no note, O trumpeters!
Not at the head of my cavalry, parading on spirited
horses,
With sabres drawn and glistening, and carbines by
their thighs—(ah, my brave horsemen !

My handsome, tan-faced horsemen! what life, what joy
and pride,
With all the perils, were yours!)

⁴ Nor you drummers—neither at reveille, at dawn,
Nor the long roll alarming the camp—nor even the
muffled beat for a burial;
Nothing from you, this time, O drummers, bearing my
warlike drums.

⁵ But aside from these, and the marts of wealth, and
the crowded promenade,
Admitting around me comrades close, unseen by the
rest, and voiceless,
The slain elate and alive again—the dust and debris
alive,
I chant this chant of my silent soul, in the name of all
dead soldiers.

⁶ Faces so pale, with wondrous eyes, very dear, gather
closer yet;
Draw close, but speak not.

⁷ Phantoms of countless lost!
Invisible to the rest, henceforth become my compan-
ions!
Follow me ever! desert me not, while I live.

⁸ Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living! sweet
are the musical voices sounding!
But sweet, ah sweet, are the dead, with their silent eyes.

⁹ Dearest comrades! all is over and long gone;
But love is not over—and what love, O comrades!
Perfume from battle-fields rising—up from fœtor
arising.

¹⁰ Perfume therefore my chant, O love! immortal Love!
Give me to bathe the memories of all dead soldiers,
Shroud them, embalm them, cover them all over with
tender pride.

¹¹ Perfume all! make all wholesome!
 Make these ashes to nourish and blossom,
 O love! O chant! solve all, fructify all with the last
 chemistry.

¹² Give me exhaustless—make me a fountain,
 That I exhale love from me wherever I go, like a moist
 perennial dew,
 For the ashes of all dead soldiers.



IN MIDNIGHT SLEEP.

1

IN midnight sleep, of many a face of anguish,
 Of the look at first of the mortally wounded—of that
 indescribable look;
 Of the dead on their backs, with arms extended wide,
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

2

Of scenes of nature, fields and mountains;
 Of skies, so beautiful after a storm—and at night the
 moon so unearthly bright,
 Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the
 trenches and gather the heaps,
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

3

Long, long have they pass'd—faces and trenches and
 fields;
 Where through the carnage I moved with a callous com-
 posure—or away from the fallen,
 Onward I sped at the time—But now of their forms at
 night,
 I dream, I dream, I dream.

CAMPS OF GREEN.

¹ Not alone those camps of white, O soldiers,
 When, as order'd forward, after a long march,
 Footsore and weary, soon as the light lessen'd, we
 halted for the night ;
 Some of us so fatigued, carrying the gun and knapsack,
 dropping asleep in our tracks ;
 Others pitching the little tents, and the fires lit up
 began to sparkle ;
 Outposts of pickets posted, surrounding, alert through
 the dark,
 And a word provided for countersign, careful for safety ;
 Till to the call of the drummers at daybreak loudly
 beating the drums,
 We rose up refresh'd, the night and sleep pass'd over,
 and resumed our journey,
 Or proceeded to battle.

² Lo! the camps of the tents of green,
 Which the days of peace keep filling, and the days of
 war keep filling,
 With a mystic army, (is it too order'd forward? is it
 too only halting awhile,
 Till night and sleep pass over?)

³ Now in those camps of green—in their tents dotting
 the world ;
 In the parents, children, husbands, wives, in them—in
 the old and young,
 Sleeping under the sunlight, sleeping under the moon-
 light, content and silent there at last,
 Behold the mighty bivouac-field, and waiting-camp of
 all,
 Of corps and generals all, and the President over the
 corps and generals all,
 And of each of us, O soldiers, and of each and all in
 the ranks we fought,
 (There without hatred we shall all meet.)

4 For presently, O soldiers, we too camp in our place in
 the bivouac-camps of green ;
 But we need not provide for outposts, nor word for the
 countersign,
 Nor drummer to beat the morning drum.

TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN.

DID you ask dulcet rhymes from me ?
 Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing
 rhymes ?
 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' harsh rattle is to me sweet music—I
 love well the martial dirge,
 With slow wail, and convulsive throb, leading the offi-
 cer'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.

PENSIVE ON HER DEAD GAZING, I HEARD THE
 MOTHER OF ALL.

PENSIVE, on her dead gazing, I heard the Mother of All,
 Desperate, on the torn bodies, on the forms covering
 the battle-fields gazing ;
 (As the last gun ceased—but the scent of the powder-
 smoke linger'd ;))
 As she call'd to her earth with mournful voice while she
 stalk'd :

Absorb them well, O my earth, she cried—I charge you,
lose not my sons! lose not an atom;
And you streams, absorb them well, taking their dear
blood;
And you local spots, and you airs that swim above
lightly,
And all you essences of soil and growth—and you, my
rivers' depths;
And you, mountain sides—and the woods where my
dear children's blood, trickling, reddened;
And you trees, down in your roots, to bequeath to all
future trees,
My dead absorb—my young men's beautiful bodies
absorb—and their precious, precious, precious
blood;
Which holding in trust for me, faithfully back again
give me, many a year hence,
In unseen essence and odor of surface and grass, centu-
ries hence;
In blowing airs from the fields, back again give me my
darlings—give my immortal heroes;
Exhale me them centuries hence—breathe me their
breath—let not an atom be lost;
O years and graves! O air and soil! O my dead, an
aroma sweet!
Exhale them perennial, sweet death, years, centuries
hence.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S BURIAL HYMN.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOOR-
YARD BLOOM'D.

1

¹ WHEN lilacs last in the door-yard 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.

² O 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

³ 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

⁴ In the door-yard 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 door-yard,
 With delicate-color'd blossoms, and heart-shaped leaves
 of rich green,
 A sprig, with its flower, I break.

4

⁵ In the swamp, in secluded recesses,
 A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

⁶ Solitary, the thrush,
 The hermit, withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settle-
 ments,
 Sings by himself a song.

⁷ Song of the bleeding throat!
 Death's outlet song of life—(for well, dear brother, I
 know,
 If thou wast not gifted to sing, thou would'st surely
 die.)

5

⁸ 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
 debris ;)
 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 uprising ;
 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

⁹ 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 unbarred heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the
sombre 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

¹⁰ (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
for you, O sane and sacred death.

¹¹ 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

¹² O western orb, sailing the heaven!
 Now I know what you must have meant, as a month
 since we walk'd,
 As we walk'd up and down in the dark blue so mystic,
 As we 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 some-
 thing, I know not what, kept me from sleep ;)
 As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the
 west, ere you went, 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

¹³ 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 de-
 tain'd me ;
 The star, my departing comrade, holds and detains me.

10

¹⁴ 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 ?

¹⁵ Sea-winds, blown from east and west,
Blown from the eastern sea, and blown from the west-
ern sea, till there on the prairies meeting :
These, and with these, and the breath of my chant,
I perfume the grave of him I love.

11

¹⁶ 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 ?

¹⁷ 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, indo-
lent, 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

¹⁸ Lo ! body and soul ! this land !
Mighty 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 Mis-
souri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies, cover'd with grass
and corn.

¹⁹ 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

²⁰ 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.

²¹ Sing on, dearest brother—warble your reedy song;
 Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

²² 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

²³ 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 farmer preparing his 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 pass-
 ing, 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 throb'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 knowl-
edge of death.

15

²⁴ 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 hold-
ing 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.

²⁵ 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 what seem'd the carol of death, and a
verse for him I love.

²⁶ From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars, and the ghostly pines so
still,
Came the carol of the bird.

²⁷ 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.

DEATH CAROL.

16

- ²⁸ *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.*
- ²⁹ *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.*
- ³⁰ *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.*
- ³¹ *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.*
- ³² *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.*
- ³³ *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.*
- ³⁴ *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!*

17

³⁵ To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure, deliberate notes, spreading, filling the night.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.

18

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men—I saw them ;
I saw the debris and debris of all the dead 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.

19

⁴⁰ 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 fall-
 ing, 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 door-yard, blooming, returning
 with spring.

⁴¹ 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.

20

⁴² Yet each I keep, and all, retrievements out of the
 night ;
 The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
 And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
 With the lustrous and drooping star, with the counte-
 nance full of woe,
 With the lilac tall, and its blossoms of mastering odor ;
 With the holders holding my hand, nearing the call of
 the bird,
 Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory
 ever I 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.

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

1

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 :
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

2

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.

3

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.

HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY.

(May 4, 1865.)

1

HUSH'D be the camps to day ;
 And, soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons ;
 And each with musing soul retire, to celebrate,
 Our dear commander's death.

² No more for him life's stormy conflicts ;
 Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events,
 Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

2

³ But sing, poet, in our name ;
 Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in
 camps, know it truly.

⁴ As they invault the coffin there ;
 Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—
 one verse,
 For the heavy hearts of soldiers.



THIS DUST WAS ONCE THE MAN.

THIS dust was once the Man,
 Gentle, plain, just and resolute—under whose cautious
 hand,
 Against the foulest crime in history known in any land
 or age,
 Was saved the Union of These States.

POEM OF JOYS.

1

¹ O to make the most jubilant poem!
Even to set off these, and merge with these, the carols
of Death.

O full of music! full of manhood, womanhood, in-
fancy!

Full of common employments! full of grain and trees.

² O for the voices of animals! O for the swiftness and
balance of fishes!

O for the dropping of rain-drops in a poem!

O for the sunshine, and motion of waves in a poem.

³ O the joy of my spirit! it is uncaged! it darts like
lightning!

It is not enough to have this globe, or a certain time—
I will have thousands of globes, and all time.

2

⁴ O the engineer's joys!

To go with a locomotive!

To hear the hiss of steam—the merry shriek—the
steam-whistle—the laughing locomotive!

To push with resistless way, and speed off in the dis-
tance.

⁵ O the gleesome saunter over fields and hill-sides!

The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds—the
moist fresh stillness of the woods,
The exquisite smell of the earth at day-break, and
all through the forenoon.

⁶ O the horseman's and horsewoman's joys!
The saddle—the gallop—the pressure upon the seat—
the cool gurgling by the ears and hair.

3

⁷ O the fireman's joys!
I hear the alarm at dead of night,
I hear bells—shouts!—I pass the crowd—I run!
The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

⁸ O the joy of the strong-brawn'd fighter, towering in
the arena, in perfect condition, conscious of
power, thirsting to meet his opponent.

⁹ O the joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only
the human Soul is capable of generating and
emitting in steady and limitless floods.

4

¹⁰ O the mother's joys!
The watching—the endurance—the precious love—the
anguish—the patiently yielded life.

¹¹ O the joy of increase, growth, recuperation;
The joy of soothing and pacifying—the joy of concord
and harmony.

¹² O to go back to the place where I was born!
To hear the birds sing once more!
To ramble about the house and barn, and over the
fields, once more,
And through the orchard and along the old lanes once
more.

5

¹³ O male and female!

O the presence of women ! (I swear there is nothing more exquisite to me than the mere presence of women ;)

O for the girl, my mate ! O for the happiness with my mate !

O the young man as I pass ! O I am sick after the friendship of him who, I fear, is indifferent to me.

¹⁴ O the streets of cities !

The flitting faces—the expressions, eyes, feet, costumes !

O I cannot tell how welcome they are to me.

6

¹⁵ O to have been brought up on bays, lagoons, creeks, or along the coast !

O to continue and be employ'd there all my life !

O the briny and damp smell—the shore—the salt weeds exposed at low water,

The work of fishermen—the work of the eel-fisher and clam-fisher.

¹⁶ O it is I !

I come with my clam-rake and spade ! I come with my eel-spear ;

Is the tide out ? I join the group of clam-diggers on the flats,

I laugh and work with them—I joke at my work, like a mettlesome young man.

¹⁷ In winter I take my eel-basket and eel-spear and travel out on foot on the ice—I have a small axe to cut holes in the ice ;

Behold me, well-clothed, going gaily, or returning in the afternoon—my brood of tough boys accompanying me,

My brood of grown and part-grown boys, who love to be with no one else so well as they love to be with me,

By day to work with me, and by night to sleep with me.

¹⁸ Or, another time, in warm weather, out in a boat, to lift the lobster-pots, where they are sunk with heavy stones, (I know the buoys ;)
 O the sweetness of the Fifth-month morning upon the water, as I row, just before sunrise, toward the buoys ;
 I pull the wicker pots up slantingly—the dark green lobsters are desperate with their claws, as I take them out—I insert wooden pegs in the joints of their pincers,
 I go to all the places, one after another, and then row back to the shore,
 There, in a huge kettle of boiling water, the lobsters shall be boil'd till their color becomes scarlet.

¹⁹ Or, another time, mackerel-taking,
 Voracious, mad for the hook, near the surface, they seem to fill the water for miles :
 Or, another time, fishing for rock-fish in Chesapeake Bay—I one of the brown-faced crew :
 Or, another time, trailing for blue-fish off Paumanok, I stand with braced body,
 My left foot is on the gunwale—my right arm throws the coils of slender rope,
 In sight around me the quick veering and darting of fifty skiffs, my companions.

7

²⁰ O boating on the rivers !
 The voyage down the Niagara, (the St. Lawrence,)—the superb scenery—the steamers,
 The ships sailing—the Thousand Islands—the occasional timber-raft, and the raftsmen with long-reaching sweep-oars,
 The little huts on the rafts, and the stream of smoke when they cook supper at evening.

²¹ O something pernicious and dread !
 Something far away from a puny and pious life !
 Something unproved ! Something in a trance !

Something escaped from the anchorage, and driving free.

²² O to work in mines, or forging iron!
 Foundry casting—the foundry itself—the rude high
 roof—the ample and shadow'd space,
 The furnaœ—the hot liquid pour'd out and running.

8

²³ O to resume the joys of the soldier :
 To feel the presence of a brave general! to feel his sym-
 pathy!
 To behold his calmness! to be warm'd in the rays of his
 smile!
 To go to battle! to hear the bugles play, and the drums
 beat!
 To hear the crash of artillery! to see the glittering of
 the bayonets and musket-barrels in the sun!
 To see men fall and die, and not complain!
 To taste the savage taste of blood! to be so devilish!
 To gloat so over the wounds and deaths of the enemy.

9

²⁴ O the whaleman's joys! O I cruise my old cruise
 again!
 I feel the ship's motion under me—I feel the Atlantic
 breezes fanning me,
 I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head—
There—she blows!
 —Again I spring up the rigging, to look with the rest
 —We see—we descend, wild with excitement,
 I leap in the lower'd boat—We row toward our prey,
 where he lies,
 We approach, stealthy and silent—I see the mountain-
 ous mass, lethargic, basking,
 I see the harpooneer standing up—I see the weapon
 dart from his vigorous arm :
 O swift, again, now, far out in the ocean, the wounded
 whale, settling, running to windward, tows me ;

—Again I see him rise to breathe—We row close
 again,
 I see a lance driven through his side, press'd deep,
 turn'd in the wound,
 Again we back off—I see him settle again—the life is
 leaving him fast,
 As he rises, he spouts blood—I see him swim in circles
 narrower and narrower, swiftly cutting the water
 —I see him die ;
 He gives one convulsive leap in the centre of the circle,
 and then falls flat and still in the bloody foam.

10

²⁵ O the old manhood of me, my joy !
 My children and grand-children—my white hair and
 beard,
 My largeness, calmness, majesty, out of the long stretch
 of my life.

²⁶ O the ripen'd joy of womanhood !
 O perfect happiness at last !
 I am more than eighty years of age—my hair, too, is
 pure white—I am the most venerable mother ;
 How clear is my mind ! how all people draw nigh to
 me !
 What attractions are these, beyond any before ? what
 bloom, more than the bloom of youth ?
 What beauty is this that descends upon me, and rises
 out of me ?

²⁷ O the orator's joys !
 To inflate the chest—to roll the thunder of the voice
 out from the ribs and throat,
 To make the people rage, weep, hate, desire, with your-
 self,
 To lead America—to quell America with a great tongue.

²⁸ O the joy of my soul leaning pois'd on itself—receiv-
 ing identity through materials, and loving them
 —observing characters, and absorbing them ;

O my soul, vibrated back to me, from them—from
 facts, sight, hearing, touch, my phrenology,
 reason, articulation, comparison, memory, and
 the like ;
 The real life of my senses and flesh, transcending my
 senses and flesh ;
 My body, done with materials—my sight, done with
 my material eyes ;
 Proved to me this day, beyond cavil, that it is not my
 material eyes which finally see,
 Nor my material body which finally loves, walks, laughs,
 shouts, embraces, procreates.

11

²⁹ O the farmer's joys !
 Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Kanadian's, Io-
 wan's, Kansian's, Missouriian's, Oregonese' joys ;
 To rise at peep of day, and pass forth nimbly to work,
 To plow land in the fall for winter-sown crops,
 To plough land in the spring for maize,
 To train orchards—to graft the trees—to gather apples
 in the fall.

³⁰ O the pleasure with trees !
 The orchard—the forest—the oak, cedar, pine, pekan-
 tree,
 The honey-locust, black-walnut, cottonwood, and mag-
 nolia.

12

³¹ O Death ! the voyage of Death !
 The beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing
 a few moments, for reasons ;
 Myself, discharging my excrementitious body, to be
 burn'd, or render'd to powder, or buried,
 My real body doubtless left to me for other spheres,
 My voided body, nothing more to me, returning to the
 purifications, further offices, eternal uses of the
 earth.

13

³² O to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place
along shore!

To splash the water! to walk ankle-deep—to race naked
along the shore.

³³ O to realize space!

The plenteousness of all—that there are no bounds;
To emerge, and be of the sky—of the sun and moon,
and the flying clouds, as one with them.

³⁴ O the joy of a manly self-hood!

Personality—to be servile to none—to defer to none—
not to any tyrant, known or unknown,

To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,
To look with calm gaze, or with a flashing eye,

To speak with a full and sonorous voice, out of a broad
chest,

To confront with your personality all the other person-
alities of the earth.

14

³⁵ Know'st thou the excellent joys of youth?

Joy of the dear companions, and of the merry word,
and laughing face?

Joy of the glad, light-beaming day—joy of the wide-
breath'd games?

Joy of sweet music—joy of the lighted ball-room, and
the dancers?

Joy of the friendly, plenteous dinner—the strong
carouse, and drinking?

15

³⁶ Yet, O my soul supreme!

Know'st thou the joys of pensive thought?

Joy of the free and lonesome heart—the tender,
gloomy heart?

Joy of the solitary walk—the spirit bowed yet proud—
the suffering and the struggle?

The agonistic throes, the extasies—joys of the solemn musings, day or night?
 Joys of the thought of Death—the great spheres Time and Space?
 Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals—the Divine Wife—the sweet, eternal, perfect Comrade?
 Joys all thine own, undying one—joys worthy thee, O Soul.

16

³⁷ O, while I live, to be the ruler of life—not a slave,
 To meet life as a powerful conqueror,
 No fumes—no ennui—no more complaints, or scornful criticisms.

³⁸ O me repellent and ugly!
 To these proud laws of the air, the water, and the ground, proving my interior Soul impregnable,
 And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me.

³⁹ O to attract by more than attraction!
 How it is I know not—yet behold! the something which obeys none of the rest,
 It is offensive, never defensive—yet how magnetic it draws.

17

⁴⁰ O joy of suffering!
 To struggle against great odds! to meet enemies undaunted!
 To be entirely alone with them! to find how much one can stand!
 To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, death, face to face!
 To mount the scaffold! to advance to the muzzles of guns with perfect nonchalance!
 To be indeed a God!

18

⁴¹ O, to sail to sea in a ship!
To leave this steady, unendurable land!
To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the side-
walks and the houses;
To leave you, O you solid motionless land, and entering
a ship,
To sail, and sail, and sail!

19

⁴² O to have my life henceforth a poem of new joys!
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on,
float on,
To be a sailor of the world, bound for all ports,
A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun
and air,)
A swift and swelling ship, full of rich words—full of
joys.

TO THINK OF TIME.

¹ To think of time—of all that retrospection!
To think of to-day, and the ages continued hencefor-
ward!

² Have you guess'd you yourself would not continue?
Have you dreaded these earth-beetles?
Have you fear'd the future would be nothing to you?

³ Is to-day nothing? Is the beginningless past noth-
ing?
If the future is nothing, they are just as surely nothing.

⁴ To think that the sun rose in the east! that men and
women were flexible, real, alive! that everything
was alive!
To think that you and I did not see, feel, think, nor
bear our part!
To think that we are now here, and bear our part!

2

⁵ Not a day passes—not a minute or second, without an
accouchement!
Not a day passes—not a minute or second, without a
corpse!

⁶ The dull nights go over, and the dull days also,
The soreness of lying so much in bed goes over,
The physician, after long putting off, gives the silent
and terrible look for an answer,

The children come hurried and weeping, and the brothers
 and sisters are sent for,
 Medicines stand unused on the shelf—(the camphor-
 smell has long pervaded the rooms,)
 The faithful hand of the living does not desert the hand
 of the dying,
 The twitching lips press lightly on the forehead of the
 dying,
 The breath ceases, and the pulse of the heart ceases,
 The corpse stretches on the bed, and the living look
 upon it,
 It is palpable as the living are palpable.

⁷ The living look upon the corpse with their eye-sight,
 But without eye-sight lingers a different living, and
 looks curiously on the corpse.

3

⁸ To think the thought of Death, merged in the thought
 of materials!

To think that the rivers will flow, and the snow fall,
 and fruits ripen, and act upon others as upon us
 now—yet not act upon us!

To think of all these wonders of city and country, and
 others taking great interest in them—and we
 taking no interest in them!

⁹ To think how eager we are in building our houses!
 To think others shall be just as eager, and we quite
 indifferent!

¹⁰ (I see one building the house that serves him a few
 years, or seventy or eighty years at most,
 I see one building the house that serves him longer
 than that.)

¹¹ Slow-moving and black lines creep over the whole
 earth—they never cease—they are the burial
 lines,
 He that was President was buried, and he that is now
 President shall surely be buried.

4

- ¹² A reminiscence of the vulgar fate,
 A frequent sample of the life and death of workmen,
 Each after his kind :
 Cold dash of waves at the ferry-wharf—posh and ice in
 the river, half-frozen mud in the streets, a gray
 discouraged sky overhead, the short last daylight
 of Twelfth-month,
 A hearse and stages—other vehicles give place—the
 funeral of an old Broadway stage-driver, the
 cortege mostly drivers.
- ¹³ Steady the trot to the cemetery, duly rattles the
 death-bell, the gate is pass'd, the new-dug grave
 is halted at, the living alight, the hearse uncloses,
 The coffin is pass'd out, lower'd and settled, the whip is
 laid on the coffin, the earth is swiftly shovel'd in,
 The mound above is flatted with the spades—silence,
 A minute—no one moves or speaks—it is done,
 He is decently put away—is there anything more ?
- ¹⁴ He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-temper'd,
 not bad-looking, able to take his own part, witty,
 sensitive to a slight, ready with life or death for
 a friend, fond of women, gambled, ate hearty,
 drank hearty, had known what it was to be flush,
 grew low-spirited toward the last, sicken'd, was
 help'd by a contribution, died, aged forty-one
 years—and that was his funeral.
- ¹⁵ Thumb extended, finger uplifted, apron, cape, gloves,
 strap, wet-weather clothes, whip carefully chosen,
 boss, spotter, starter, hostler, somebody loafing
 on you, you loafing on somebody, headway, man
 before and man behind, good day's work, bad
 day's work, pet stock, mean stock, first out, last
 out, turning-in at night ;
 To think that these are so much and so nigh to other
 drivers—and he there takes no interest in them !

5

¹⁶ The markets, the government, the working-man's wages—to think what account they are through our nights and days!

To think that other working-men will make just as great account of them—yet we make little or no account!

¹⁷ The vulgar and the refined—what you call sin, and what you call goodness—to think how wide a difference!

To think the difference will still continue to others, yet we lie beyond the difference.

¹⁸ To think how much pleasure there is!

Have you pleasure from looking at the sky? have you pleasure from poems?

Do you enjoy yourself in the city? or engaged in business? or planning a nomination and election? or with your wife and family?

Or with your mother and sisters? or in womanly housework? or the beautiful maternal cares?

—These also flow onward to others—you and I flow onward,

But in due time, you and I shall take less interest in them.

¹⁹ Your farm, profits, crops,—to think how engross'd you are!

To think there will still be farms, profits, crops—yet for you, of what avail?

6

²⁰ What will be, will be well—for what is, is well,
To take interest is well, and not to take interest shall be well.

²¹ The sky continues beautiful,
The pleasure of men with women shall never be sated,
nor the pleasure of women with men, nor the pleasure from poems,

The domestic joys, the daily housework or business, the building of houses—these are not phantasms—they have weight, form, location ;
 Farms, profits, crops, markets, wages, government, are none of them phantasms,
 The difference between sin and goodness is no delusion,
 The earth is not an echo—man and his life, and all the things of his life, are well-consider'd.

²² You are not thrown to the winds—you gather certainly and safely around yourself ;
 Yourself ! Yourself ! Yourself, forever and ever !

7

²³ It is not to diffuse you that you were born of your mother and father—it is to identify you ;
 It is not that you should be undecided, but that you should be decided ;
 Something long preparing and formless is arrived and form'd in you,
 You are henceforth secure, whatever comes or goes.

²⁴ The threads that were spun are gather'd, the weft crosses the warp, the pattern is systematic.

²⁵ The preparations have every one been justified,
 The orchestra have sufficiently tuned their instruments—the baton has given the signal.

²⁶ The guest that was coming—he waited long, for reasons—he is now housed,
 He is one of those who are beautiful and happy—he is one of those that to look upon and be with is enough.

²⁷ The law of the past cannot be eluded,
 The law of the present and future cannot be eluded,
 The law of the living cannot be eluded—it is eternal,
 The law of promotion and transformation cannot be eluded,

The law of heroes and good-doers cannot be eluded,
 The law of drunkards, informers, mean persons—not
 one iota thereof can be eluded.

8

²⁸ Slow moving and black lines go ceaselessly over the
 earth,

Northerner goes carried, and Southerner goes carried,
 and they on the Atlantic side, and they on the
 Pacific, and they between, and all through the
 Mississippi country, and all over the earth.

²⁹ The great masters and kosmos are well as they go—
 the heroes and good-doers are well,

The known leaders and inventors, and the rich owners
 and pious and distinguish'd, may be well,
 But there is more account than that—there is strict
 account of all.

³⁰ The interminable hordes of the ignorant and wicked
 are not nothing,

The barbarians of Africa and Asia are not nothing,
 The common people of Europe are not nothing—the
 American aborigines are not nothing,

The infected in the immigrant hospital are not nothing
 —the murderer or mean person is not nothing,

The perpetual successions of shallow people are not
 nothing as they go,

The lowest prostitute is not nothing—the mocker of
 religion is not nothing as he goes.

9

³¹ Of and in all these things,

I have dream'd that we are not to be changed so much,
 nor the law of us changed,

I have dream'd that heroes and good-doers shall be
 under the present and past law,

And that murderers, drunkards, liars, shall be under
 the present and past law,

For I have dream'd that the law they are under now is
 enough.

³² If otherwise, all came but to ashes of dung,
 If maggots and rats ended us, then Alarum! for we are
 betray'd!
 Then indeed suspicion of death.

³³ Do you suspect death? If I were to suspect death, I
 should die now,
 Do you think I could walk pleasantly and well-suited
 toward annihilation?

10

³⁴ Pleasantly and well-suited I walk,
 Whither I walk I cannot define, but I know it is good,
 The whole universe indicates that it is good,
 The past and the present indicate that it is good.

³⁵ How beautiful and perfect are the animals!
 How perfect the earth, and the minutest thing upon it!
 What is called good is perfect, and what is called bad is
 just as perfect,
 The vegetables and minerals are all perfect, and the
 imponderable fluids are perfect;
 Slowly and surely they have pass'd on to this, and
 slowly and surely they yet pass on.

11

³⁶ I swear I think now that everything without excep-
 tion has an eternal Soul!
 The trees have, rooted in the ground! the weeds of the
 sea have! the animals!

³⁷ I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!
 That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous
 float is for it, and the cohering is for it;
 And all preparation is for it! and identity is for it! and
 life and materials are altogether for it!

CHANTING THE SQUARE DEIFIC.

1

CHANTING the square deific, out of the One advancing,
 out of the sides ;
 Out of the old and new—out of the square entirely
 divine,
 Solid, four-sided, (all the sides needed)...from this
 side JEHOVAH am I,
 Old Brahm I, and I Saturnius am ;
 Not Time affects me—I am Time, old, modern as any ;
 Unpersuadable, relentless, executing righteous judg-
 ments ;
 As the Earth, the Father, the brown old Kronos, with
 laws,
 Aged beyond computation—yet ever new—ever with
 those mighty laws rolling,
 Relentless, I forgive no man—whoever sins, dies—I will
 have that man's life ;
 Therefore let none expect mercy—Have the seasons,
 gravitation, the appointed days, mercy?—No
 more have I ;
 But as the seasons, and gravitation—and as all the
 appointed days, that forgive not,
 I dispense from this side judgments inexorable, without
 the least remorse.

2

Consolator most mild, the promis'd one advancing,
 With gentle hand extended—the mightier Gōd am I,
 Foretold by prophets and poets, in their most rapt
 prophecies and poems ;
 From this side, lo ! the Lord CHRIST gazes—lo ! Hermes
 I—lo ! mine is Hercules' face ;
 All sorrow, labor, suffering, I, tallying it, absorb in my-
 self ;
 Many times have I been rejected, taunted, put in prison,
 and crucified—and many times shall be again ;

All the world have I given up for my dear brothers'
 and sisters' sake—for the soul's sake ;
 Wending my way through the homes of men, rich or
 poor, with the kiss of affection ;
 For I am affection—I am the cheer-bringing God, with
 hope, and all-enclosing Charity ;
 (Conqueror yet—for before me all the armies and sol-
 diers of the earth shall yet bow—and all the
 weapons of war become impotent :)
 With indulgent words, as to children—with fresh and
 sane words, mine only ;
 Young and strong I pass, knowing well I am destin'd
 myself to an early death :
 But my Charity has no death—my Wisdom dies not,
 neither early nor late,
 And my sweet Love, bequeath'd here and elsewhere,
 never dies.

3

Aloof, dissatisfied, plotting revolt,
 Comrade of criminals, brother of slaves,
 Crafty, despised, a drudge, ignorant,
 With sudra face and worn brow, black, but in the depths
 of my heart, proud as any ;
 Lifted, now and always, against whoever, scorning,
 assumes to rule me ;
 Morose, full of guile, full of reminiscences, brooding,
 with many wiles,
 (Though it was thought I was baffled and dispell'd,
 and my wiles done—but that will never be ;)
 Defiant, I, SATAN, still live—still utter words—in new
 lands duly appearing, (and old ones also ;)
 Permanent here, from my side, warlike, equal with any,
 real as any,
 Nor time, nor change, shall ever change me or my words.

4

Santa SPIRITA, breather, life,
 Beyond the light, lighter than light,

Beyond the flames of hell—joyous, leaping easily above
 hell ;
 Beyond Paradise—perfumed solely with mine own
 perfume ;
 Including all life on earth—touching, including God—
 including Saviour and Satan ;
 Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me, what were all ?
 what were God ?)
 Essence of forms—life of the real identities, permanent,
 positive, (namely the unseen,)
 Life of the great round world, the sun and stars, and of
 man—I, the general Soul,
 Here the square finishing, the solid, I the most solid,
 Breathe my breath also through these songs.

WHISPERS
OF
HEAVENLY DEATH.

WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH.

¹ WHISPERS of heavenly death, murmur'd I hear ;
Labial gossip of night—sibilant chorals ;
Footsteps gently ascending—mystical breezes, wafted
soft and low ;
Ripples of unseen rivers—tides of a current, flowing,
forever flowing ;
(Or is it the plashing of tears ? the measureless waters
of human tears ?)

² I see, just see, skyward, great cloud-masses ;
Mournfully, slowly they roll, silently swelling and mixing ;
With, at times, a half-dimm'd, sadden'd, far-off star,
Appearing and disappearing.

³ (Some parturition, rather—some solemn, immortal
birth :
On the frontiers, to eyes impenetrable,
Some Soul is passing over.)

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?

2

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.

3

I know it not, O Soul;
Nor dost thou—all is a blank before us;
All waits, undream'd of, in that region—that inaccessi-
ble land.

4

Till, when the ties loosen,
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds, bound
us.

5

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.



OF HIM I LOVE DAY AND NIGHT.

OF him I love day and night, I dream'd I heard he was
dead;
And I dream'd I went where they had buried him I
love—but he was not in that place;
And I dream'd I wander'd, searching among burial-
places, to find him;

And I found that every place was a burial place ;
 The houses full of life were equally full of death, (this
 house is now ;)
 The streets, the shipping, the places of amusement, the
 Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, the Mannahatta,
 were as full of the dead as of the living,
 And fuller, O vastly fuller, of the dead than of the
 living ;
 —And what I dream'd I will henceforth tell to every
 person and age,
 And I stand henceforth bound to what I dream'd ;
 And now I am willing to disregard burial-places, and
 dispense with them ;
 And if the memorials of the dead were put up indiffer-
 ently everywhere, even in the room where I eat
 or sleep, I should be satisfied ;
 And if the corpse of any one I love, or if my own corpse,
 be duly render'd to powder, and pour'd in the
 sea, I shall be satisfied ;
 Or if it be distributed to the winds, I shall be satisfied.

ASSURANCES.

I NEED no assurances—I am a man who is preoccupied,
 of his own Soul ;
 I do not doubt that from under the feet, and beside the
 hands and face I am cognizant of, are now look-
 ing faces I am not cognizant of—calm and actual
 faces ;
 I do not doubt but the majesty and beauty of the world
 are latent in any iota of the world ;
 I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes
 are limitless—in vain I try to think how limitless ;
 I do not doubt that the orbs, and the systems of orbs,
 play their swift sports through the air on pur-
 pose—and that I shall one day be eligible to do
 as much as they, and more than they ;

- I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep on and on,
millions of years ;
- I do not doubt interiors have their interiors, and exteriors
have their exteriors—and that the eye-sight
has another eye-sight, and the hearing another
hearing, and the voice another voice ;
- I do not doubt that the passionately-wept deaths of
young men are provided for—and that the deaths
of young women, and the deaths of little children,
are provided for ;
- (Did you think Life was so well provided for—and
Death, the purport of all Life, is not well pro-
vided for ?)
- I do not doubt that wrecks at sea, no matter what the
horrors of them—no matter whose wife, child,
husband, father, lover, has gone down, are pro-
vided for, to the minutest points ;
- I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen, any
where, at any time, is provided for, in the inher-
ences of things ;
- I do not think Life provides for all, and for Time and
Space—but I believe Heavenly Death provides
for all.



YET, YET, YE DOWNCAST HOURS.

1

YET, yet, ye downcast hours, I know ye also ;
Weights of lead, how ye clog and cling at my ankles !
Earth to a chamber of mourning turns—I hear the
o'erweening, mocking voice,
*Matter is conqueror—matter, triumphant only, continues
onward.*

2

Despairing cries float ceaselessly toward me,
The call of my nearest lover, putting forth, alarm'd,
uncertain,

*The Sea I am quickly to sail, come tell me,
Come tell me where I am speeding—tell me my destination.*

3

I understand your anguish, but I cannot help you,
I approach, hear, behold—the sad mouth, the look out
of the eyes, your mute inquiry,
Whither I go from the bed I recline on, come tell me :
Old age, alarm'd, uncertain—A young woman's voice,
appealing to me for comfort ;
A young man's voice, *Shall I not escape ?*

QUICKSAND YEARS.

QUICKSAND years that whirl me I know not whither,
Your schemes, politics, fail—lines give way—substances
mock and elude me ;
Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess'd
Soul, eludes not ;
One's-self must never give way—that is the final sub-
stance—that out of all is sure ;
Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life—what at last
finally remains ?
When shows break up, what but One's-Self is sure ?

THAT MUSIC ALWAYS ROUND ME.

THAT music always round me, unceasing, unbeginning
—yet long untaught I did not hear ;
But now the chorus I hear, and am elated ;
A tenor, strong, ascending, with power and health, with
glad notes of day-break I hear,
A soprano, at intervals, sailing buoyantly over the tops
of immense waves,

A transparent base, shuddering lusciously under and
 through the universe,
 The triumphant tutti—the funeral wailings, with sweet
 flutes and violins—all these I fill myself with ;
 I hear not the volumes of sound merely—I am moved
 by the exquisite meanings,
 I listen to the different voices winding in and out,
 striving, contending with fiery vehemence to
 excel each other in emotion ;
 I do not think the performers know themselves—but
 now I think I begin to know them.



AS IF A PHANTOM CARESS'D ME.

As if a phantom caress'd me,
 I thought I was not alone, walking here by the shore ;
 But the one I thought was with me, as now I walk by
 the shore—the one I loved, that caress'd me,
 As I lean and look through the glimmering light—that
 one has utterly disappear'd,
 And those appear that are hateful to me, and mock me.



HERE, SAILOR !

WHAT ship, puzzled at sea, cons for the true reckon-
 ing?
 Or, coming in, to avoid the bars, and follow the chan-
 nel, a perfect pilot needs?
 Here, sailor! Here, ship! take aboard the most perfect
 pilot,
 Whom, in a little boat, putting off, and rowing, I,
 hailing you, offer.

A NOISELESS, PATIENT SPIDER.

¹ 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.

² And you, O my Soul, where you stand,
 Surrounded, surrounded, 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.



THE LAST INVOCATION.

1

At the last, tenderly,
 From the walls of the powerful, fortress'd house,
 From the clasp of the knitted locks—from the keep of
 the well-closed doors,
 Let me be wafted.

2

Let me glide noiselessly forth ;
 With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a
 whisper,
 Set ope the doors, O Soul !

3

Tenderly ! be not impatient !
 (Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh !
 Strong is your hold, O love.)

AS I WATCH'D THE PLOUGHMAN PLOUGH-
ING.

As I watch'd the ploughman ploughing,
Or the sower sowing in the fields—or the harvester
harvesting,
I saw there too, O life and death, your analogies :
(Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest accord-
ing.)



PENSIVE AND FALTERING.

PENSIVE and faltering,
The words, *the dead*, I write ;
For living are the Dead ;
(Haply the only living, only real,
And I the apparition—I the spectre.)

SEA-SHORE MEMORIES.

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING.

1

¹ 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, bare-
 headed, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows, twining and twist-
 ing as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briars 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 sickness and love, there
 in the transparent 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.

2

² Once, Paumanok,
 When the snows had melted—when the lilac-scent was
 in the air, and the Fifth-month grass was
 growing,
 Up this sea-shore, in some briers,
 Two 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.

3

³ *Shine! shine! shine!*
Pour down your warmth, great Sun!
While we bask—we two together.

⁴ *Two together!*
Winds blow South, or winds blow North,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

4

⁵ 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.

5

*7 Blow! blow! blow!
 Blow up, sea-winds, along Paumanok's shore!
 I wait and I wait, till you blow my mate to me.*

6

*8 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.*

*9 He call'd on his mate ;
 He pour'd forth the meanings which I, of all men, know.*

*10 Yes, my brother, I know ;
 The rest might not—but I have treasur'd every note ;
 For once, and 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.*

*11 Listen'd, to keep, to sing—now translating the notes,
 Following you, my brother.*

¹² *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.

¹³ *Low hangs the moon—it rose late;*
O it is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

¹⁴ *O madly the sea pushes, pushes upon the land,*
With love—with love.

¹⁵ *O night! do I not see my love fluttering out there among*
the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

¹⁶ *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.

¹⁷ *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.

¹⁸ *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.

¹⁹ *O rising stars!*
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with
some of you.

²⁰ *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.

²¹ *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.*

²² *But soft ! sink low ;
Soft ! let me just murmur ;
And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised 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 imme-
 diately to me.*

²³ *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.*

²⁴ *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.*

²⁵ *O darkness ! O in vain !
O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

²⁶ *O brown halo in the sky, near the moon, drooping upon
 the sea !
O troubled reflection in the sea !
O throat ! O throbbing heart !
O all—and I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

²⁷ *Yet I murmur, murmur on !
O murmurs—you yourselves make me continue to sing, I
 know not why.*

²⁸ *O past ! O life ! O songs of joy !
 In the air—in the woods—over fields ;
 Loved ! loved ! loved ! loved ! loved !
 But my love no more, no more with me !
 We two together no more.*

8

²⁹ 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, droop-
 ing, the face of the sea almost touching ;
 The boy extatic—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 deposit-
 ing,
 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 outseting bard of love.

9

³⁰ Demon or bird ! (said the boy's soul,)
 Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it mostly
 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.

³¹ O you singer, solitary, singing by yourself—project-
ing me ;
O solitary me, listening—never more shall I cease per-
petuating you ;
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverbera-
tions,
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.

³² O give me the clew ! (it lurks in the night here some-
where ;)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more !
O a word ! O what is my destination ? (I fear it is hence-
forth chaos ;)
O how joys, dreads, convolutions, human shapes, and all
shapes, spring as from graves around me !
O phantoms ! you cover all the land and all the sea !
O I cannot see in the dimness whether you smile or
frown upon me ;
O vapor, a look, a word ! O well-beloved !
O you dear women's and men's phantoms !

³³ 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 ?

10

³⁴ Whereto answering, the sea,
 Delaying not, hurrying not,
 Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly be-
 fore daybreak,
 Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word DEATH ;
 And again Death—ever 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.

³⁵ 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,
 The sea whisper'd me.



ELEMENTAL DRIFTS.

1

¹ ELEMENTAL drifts !
 How I wish I could impress others as you have just
 been impressing me!

² As I ebb'd with an ebb of the ocean of life,
 As I wended the shores I know,

As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you,
 Paumanok,
 Where they rustle up, hoarse and sibilant,
 Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her
 castaways,
 I, musing, late in the autumn day, gazing off south-
 ward,
 Alone, held by this eternal Self of me, out of the pride
 of which I utter my poems,
 Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines under-
 foot,
 In the rim, the sediment, that stands for all the water
 and all the land of the globe.

³ Fascinated, my eyes, reverting from the south, dropt,
 to follow those slender winnows,
 Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-
 gluten,
 Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce,
 left by the tide :
 Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other
 side of me,
 Paumanok, there and then, as I thought the old
 thought of likenesses,
 These you presented to me, you fish-shaped island,
 As I wended the shores I know,
 As I walk'd with that eternal Self of me, seeking types.

2

⁴ As I wend to the shores I know not,
 As I list to the dirge, the voices of men and women
 wreck'd,
 As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon
 me,
 As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and
 closer,
 I, too, but signify, at the utmost, a little wash'd-up
 drift,
 A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
 Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and
 drift.

⁵ O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth,
 Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my
 mouth,
 Aware now, that, amid all that blab whose echoes recoil
 upon me, I have not once had the least idea
 who or what I am,
 But that before all my insolent poems the real ME
 stands yet untouch'd, unfold, altogether un-
 reach'd,
 Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory
 signs and bows,
 With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I
 have written,
 Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand
 beneath.

⁶ Now I perceive I have not understood anything—not
 a single object—and that no man ever can.

⁷ I perceive Nature, here in sight of the sea, is taking
 advantage of me, to dart upon me, and sting me,
 Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

3

⁸ You oceans both! I close with you ;
 We murmur alike reproachfully, rolling our sands and
 drift, knowing not why,
 These little shreds indeed, standing for you and me
 and all.

⁹ You friable shore, with trails of debris !
 You fish-shaped island ! I take what is underfoot ;
 What is yours is mine, my father.

¹⁰ I too Paumanok,
 I too have bubbled up, floated the measureless float,
 and been wash'd on your shores ;
 I too am but a trail of drift and debris,
 I too leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped
 island.

¹¹ I throw myself upon your breast, my father,
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me,
I hold you so firm, till you answer me something.

¹² Kiss me, my father,
Touch me with your lips, as I touch those I love,
Breathe to me, while I hold you close, the secret of the
murmuring I envy.

4

¹³ Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)
Cease not your moaning, you fierce old mother,
Endlessly cry for your castaways—but fear not, deny
not me,
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet, as I
touch you, or gather from you.

¹⁴ I mean tenderly by you and all,
I gather for myself, and for this phantom, looking down
where we lead, and following me and mine.

¹⁵ Me and mine!
We, loose winrows, little corpses,
Froth, snowy white, and bubbles,
(See! from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last!
See—the prismatic colors, glistening and rolling!)
Tufts of straw, sands, fragments,
Buoy'd hither from many moods, one contradicting
another,
From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell;
Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of
liquid or soil;
Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented
and thrown;
A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves
floating, drifted at random;
Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature;
Just as much, whence we come, that blare of the cloud-
trumpets;

We, capricious, brought hither, we know not whence,
 spread out before you,
 You, up there, walking or sitting,
 Whoever you are—we too lie in drifts at your feet.

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!

ABOARD, AT A SHIP'S HELM.

¹ ABOARD, at a ship's helm,
 A young steersman, steering with care.

² A bell through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
 An ocean-bell—O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

³ O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing,
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

⁴ For, as on the alert, O steersman, you mind the bell's admonition,
The bows turn,—the freighted ship, tacking, speeds away under her gray sails,
The beautiful and noble ship, with all her precious wealth, speeds away gaily and safe.

⁵ But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!
O ship of the body—ship of the soul—voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.

ON THE BEACH, AT NIGHT.

1

¹ On the beach, at night,
Stands a child, with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

² Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses spreading,
Lower, sullen and fast, athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends, large and calm, the lord-star Jupiter;
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate brothers, the Pleiades.

2

³ From the beach, the child, holding the hand of her father,
Those burial-clouds that lower, victorious, soon to devour all,
Watching, silently weeps.

⁴ Weep not, child,
 Weep not, my darling,
 With these kisses let me remove your tears ;
 The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
 They shall not long possess the sky—shall devour the
 stars only in apparition :
 Jupiter shall emerge—be patient—watch again another
 night—the Pleiades shall emerge,
 They are immortal—all those stars, both silvery and
 golden, shall shine out again,
 The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again
 —they endure ;
 The vast immortal suns, and the long-enduring pensive
 moons, shall again shine.

3

⁵ Then, dearest child, mournest thou only for Jupiter?
 Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

⁶ Something there is,
 (With my lips soothing thee, adding, I whisper,
 I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indi-
 rection,)
 Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
 (Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing
 away,)
 Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous
 Jupiter,
 Longer than sun, or any revolving satellite,
 Or the radiant brothers, the Pleiades.



THE WORLD BELOW THE BRINE.

THE world below the brine ;
 Forests at the bottom of the sea—the branches and
 leaves,
 Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds—
 the thick tangle, the openings, and the pink turf,

Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white,
 and gold—the play of light through the water,
 Dumb swimmers there among the rocks—coral, gluten,
 grass, rushes—and the aliment of the swimmers,
 Sluggish existences grazing there, suspended, or slowly
 crawling close to the bottom,
 The sperm-whale at the surface, blowing air and spray,
 or disporting with his flukes,
 The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy
 sea-leopard, and the sting-ray ;
 Passions there—wars, pursuits, tribes—sight in those
 ocean-depths—breathing that thick-breathing
 air, as so many do ;
 The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle
 air breathed by beings like us, who walk this
 sphere ;
 The change onward from ours, to that of beings who
 walk other spheres.



ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE.

¹ On the beach at night alone,
 As the old mother sways her to and fro, singing her
 husky song,
 As I watch the bright stars shining—I think a thought
 of the clef of the universes, and of the future.

² A VAST SIMILITUDE interlocks all,
 All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons,
 planets, comets, asteroids,
 All the substances of the same, and all that is spiritual
 upon the same,
 All distances of place, however wide,
 All distances of time—all inanimate forms,
 All Souls—all living bodies, though they be ever so
 different, or in different worlds,
 All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes—the
 fishes, the brutes,

All men and women—me also ;
All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, languages ;
All identities that have existed, or may exist, on this
globe, or any globe ;
All lives and deaths—all of the past, present, future ;
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd,
and shall forever span them, and compactly hold
them, and enclose them.

LEAVES OF GRASS.

A CAROL OF HARVEST, FOR 1867.

1

¹ A SONG of the good green grass!
A song no more of the city streets;
A song of farms—a song of the soil of fields.

² A song with the smell of sun-dried hay, where the
nimble pitchers handle the pitch-fork;
A song tasting of new wheat, and of fresh-husk'd maize.

2

³ For the lands, and for these passionate days, and for
myself,
Now I awhile return to thee, O soil of Autumn fields,
Reclining on thy breast, giving myself to thee,
Answering the pulses of thy sane and equable heart,
Tuning a verse for thee.

⁴ O Earth, that hast no voice, confide to me a voice!
O harvest of my lands! O boundless summer growths!
O lavish, brown, parturient earth! O infinite, teeming
womb!
A verse to seek, to see, to narrate thee.

3

⁵ Ever upon this stage,
 Is acted God's calm, annual drama,
 Gorgeous processions, songs of birds,
 Sunrise, that fullest feeds and freshens most the soul,
 The heaving sea, the waves upon the shore, the musical,
 strong waves,
 The woods, the stalwart trees, the slender, tapering
 trees,
 The flowers, the grass, the lilliput, countless armies of
 the grass,
 The heat, the showers, the measureless pasturages,
 The scenery of the snows, the winds' free orchestra,
 The stretching, light-hung roof of clouds—the clear
 cerulean, and the bulging, silvery fringes,
 The high dilating stars, the placid, beckoning stars,
 The moving flocks and herds, the plains and emerald
 meadows,
 The shows of all the varied lands, and all the growths
 and products.

4

⁶ Fecund America! To day,
 Thou art all over set in births and joys!
 Thou groan'st with riches! thy wealth clothes thee as
 with a swathing garment!
 Thou laughest loud with ache of great possessions!
 A myriad-twining life, like interlacing vines, binds all
 thy vast demesne!
 As some huge ship, freighted to water's edge, thou
 ridest into port!
 As rain falls from the heaven, and vapors rise from
 earth, so have the precious values fallen upon
 thee, and risen out of thee!
 Thou envy of the globe! thou miracle!
 Thou, bathed, choked, swimming in plenty!
 Thou lucky Mistress of the tranquil barns!
 Thou Prairie Dame that sittest in the middle, and
 lookest out upon thy world, and lookest East,
 and lookest West!

Dispensatress, that by a word givest a thousand miles
—that giv'st a million farms, and missest nothing!

Thou All-Acceptress—thou Hospitable—(thou only art
hospitable, as God is hospitable.)

5

⁷ When late I sang, sad was my voice ;
Sad were the shows around me, with deafening noises
of hatred, and smoke of conflict ;
In the midst of the armies, the Heroes, I stood,
Or pass'd with slow step through the wounded and
dying.

⁸ But now I sing not War,
Nor the measur'd march of soldiers, nor the tents of
camps,
Nor the regiments hastily coming up, deploying in line
of battle.

⁹ No more the dead and wounded ;
No more the sad, unnatural shows of War.

¹⁰ Ask'd room those flush'd immortal ranks ? the first
forth-stepping armies ?
Ask room, alas, the ghastly ranks—the armies dread
that follow'd.

6

¹¹ (Pass—pass, ye proud brigades !
So handsome, dress'd in blue—with your tramping,
sinewy legs ;
With your shoulders young and strong—with your
knapsacks and your muskets ;
—How elate I stood and watch'd you, where, starting
off, you march'd !

¹² Pass ;—then rattle, drums, again !
Scream, you steamers on the river, out of whistles loud
and shrill, your salutes !

For an army heaves in sight—O another gathering
 army!
 Swarming, trailing on the rear—O you dread, accruing
 army!
 O you regiments so piteous, with your mortal diarrhœa!
 with your fever!
 O my land's maimed darlings! with the plenteous bloody
 bandage and the crutch!
 Lo! your pallid army follow'd!

7

¹³ But on these days of brightness,
 On the far-stretching beauteous landscape, the roads
 and lanes, the high-piled farm-wagons, and the
 fruits and barns,
 Shall the dead intrude?

¹⁴ Ah, the dead to me mar not—they fit well in Na-
 ture ;
 They fit very well in the landscape, under the trees and
 grass,
 And along the edge of the sky, in the horizon's far
 margin.

¹⁵ Nor do I forget you, departed ;
 Nor in winter or summer, my lost ones ;
 But most, in the open air, as now, when my soul is
 rapt and at peace—like pleasing phantoms,
 Your dear memories, rising, glide silently by me.

8

¹⁶ I saw the day, the return of the Heroes ;
 (Yet the Heroes never surpass'd, shall never return ;
 Them, that day, I saw not.)

¹⁷ I saw the interminable Corps—I saw the processions
 of armies,
 I saw them approaching, defiling by, with divisions,
 Streaming northward, their work done, camping awhile
 in clusters of mighty camps.

¹⁸ No holiday soldiers!—youthful, yet veterans ;
 Worn, swart, handsome, strong, of the stock of home-
 stead and workshop,
 Harden'd of many a long campaign and sweaty march,
 Inured on many a hard-fought, bloody field.

9

¹⁹ A pause—the armies wait ;
 A million flush'd, embattled conquerors wait ;
 The world, too, waits—then, soft as breaking night, and
 sure as dawn,
 They melt—they disappear.

²⁰ Exult, indeed, O lands! victorious lands!
 Not there your victory, on those red, shuddering fields ;
 But here and hence your victory.

²¹ Melt, melt away, ye armies! disperse, ye blue-clad
 soldiers!
 Resolve ye back again—give up, for good, your deadly
 arms ;
 Other the arms, the fields henceforth for you, or South
 or North, or East or West,
 With saner wars—sweet wars—life-giving wars.

10

²² Loud, O my throat, and clear, O soul!
 The season of thanks, and the voice of full-yielding ;
 The chant of joy and power for boundless fertility.

²³ All till'd and untill'd fields expand before me ;
 I see the true arenas of my race—or first, or last,
 Man's innocent and strong arenas.

²⁴ I see the Heroes at other toils ;
 I see, well-wielded in their hands, the better weapons.

11

²⁵ I see where America, Mother of All,
Well-pleased, with full-spanning eye, gazes forth, dwells
long,
And counts the varied gathering of the products.

²⁶ Busy the far, the sunlit panorama ;
Prairie, orchard, and yellow grain of the North,
Cotton and rice of the South, and Louisianian cane ;
Open, unseeded fallows, rich fields of clover and tim-
othy,
Kine and horses feeding, and droves of sheep and
swine,
And many a stately river flowing, and many a jocund
brook,
And healthy uplands with their herby-perfumed breezes,
And the good green grass—that delicate miracle, the
ever-recurring grass.

12

²⁷ Toil on, Heroes ! harvest the products !
Not alone on those warlike fields, the Mother of All,
With dilated form and lambent eyes, watch'd you.

²⁸ Toil on, Hercules ! toil well ! Handle the weapons
well !
The Mother of All—yet here, as ever, she watches
you.

²⁹ Well-pleased, America, thou beholdest,
Over the fields of the West, those crawling monsters,
The human-divine inventions, the labor-saving imple-
ments :
Beholdest, moving in every direction, imbued as with
life, the revolving hay-rakes,
The steam-power reaping-machines, and the horse-power
machines,

The engines, thrashers of grain, and cleaners of grain,
 well separating the straw—the nimble work of
 the patent pitch-fork ;
 Beholdest the newer saw-mill, the southern cotton-gin,
 and the rice-cleanser.

³⁰ Beneath thy look, O Maternal,
 With these, and else, and with their own strong hands,
 the Heroes harvest.

³¹ All gather, and all harvest ;
 (Yet but for thee, O Powerful! not a scythe might
 swing, as now, in security ;
 Not a maize-stalk dangle, as now, its silken tassels in
 peace.)

14

³² Under Thee only they harvest—even but a wisp of
 hay, under thy great face, only ;
 Harvest the wheat of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin—every
 barbed spear, under thee ;
 Harvest the maize of Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee—
 each ear in its light-green sheath,
 Gather the hay to its myriad mows, in the odorous,
 tranquil barns,
 Oats to their bins—the white potato, the buckwheat of
 Michigan, to theirs ;
 Gather the cotton in Mississippi or Alabama—dig and
 hoard the golden, the sweet potato of Georgia
 and the Carolinas,
 Clip the wool of California or Pennsylvania,
 Cut the flax in the Middle States, or hemp, or tobacco
 in the Borders,
 Pick the pea and the bean, or pull apples from the
 trees, or bunches of grapes from the vines,
 Or aught that ripens in all These States, or North or
 South,
 Under the beaming sun, and under Thee.

THE SINGER IN THE PRISON.

1

*O sight of shame, and pain, and dole!
O fearful thought—a convict Soul!*

RANG the refrain along the hall, the prison,
Rose to the roof, the vaults of heaven above,
Pouring in floods of melody, in tones so pensive, sweet
and strong, the like whereof was never heard,
Reaching the far-off sentry, and the armed guards, who
ceas'd their pacing,
Making the hearer's pulses stop for extasy and awe.

2

*O sight of pity, gloom, and dole!
O pardon me, a hapless Soul!*

The sun was low in the west one winter day,
When down a narrow aisle, amid the thieves and out-
laws of the land,
(There by the hundreds seated, sear-faced murderers,
wily counterfeiters,
Gather'd to Sunday church in prison walls—the keep-
ers round,
Plenteous, well-arm'd, watching, with vigilant eyes,)
All that dark, cankerous blotch, a nation's criminal
mass,
Calmly a Lady walk'd, holding a little innocent child
by either hand,
Whom, seating on their stools beside her on the plat-
form,
She, first precluding with the instrument, a low and
musical prelude,
In voice surpassing all, sang forth a quaint old
hymn.

3

THE HYMN.

A Soul, confined by bars and bands,
 Cries, Help! O help! and wrings her hands;
 Blinded her eyes—bleeding her breast,
 Nor pardon finds, nor balm of rest.

*O sight of shame, and pain, and dole!
 O fearful thought—a convict Soul!*

Ceaseless, she paces to and fro;
 O heart-sick days! O nights of wo!
 Nor hand of friend, nor loving face;
 Nor favor comes, nor word of grace,

*O sight of pity, gloom, and dole!
 O pardon me, a hapless Soul!*

It was not I that sinn'd the sin,
 The ruthless Body dragg'd me in;
 Though long I strove courageously,
 The Body was too much for me.

*O Life! no life, but bitter dole!
 O burning, beaten, baffled Soul!*

(Dear prison'd Soul, bear up a space,
 For soon or late the certain grace;
 To set thee free, and bear thee home,
 The Heavenly Pardoner, Death shall come.

*Convict no more—nor shame, nor dole!
 Depart! a God-enfranchis'd Soul!*

4

The singer ceas'd;
 One glance swept from her clear, calm eyes, o'er all
 those up-turn'd faces;
 Strange sea of prison faces—a thousand varied, crafty,
 brutal, seam'd and beauteous faces;

Then rising, passing back along the narrow aisle between them,
 While her gown touch'd them, rustling in the silence,
 She vanish'd with her children in the dusk.

5

While upon all, convicts and armed keepers, ere they stirr'd,
 (Convict forgetting prison, keeper his loaded pistol,)
 A hush and pause fell down, a wondrous minute,
 With deep, half-stifled sobs, and sound of bad men bow'd,
 and moved to weeping,
 And youth's convulsive breathings, memories of home,
 The mother's voice in lullaby, the sister's care, the happy childhood,
 The long-pent spirit rous'd to reminiscence ;
 —A wondrous minute then—But after, in the solitary night,
 to many, many there,
 Years after—even in the hour of death—the sad refrain
 —the tune, the voice, the words,
 Resumed—the large, calm Lady walks the narrow aisle,
 The wailing melody again—the singer in the prison sings :

*O sight of shame, and pain, and dole !
 O fearful thought—a convict Soul !*

 WARBLE FOR LILAC TIME.

WARBLE me now, for joy of Lilac-time,
 Sort me, O tongue and lips, for Nature's sake, and sweet life's sake—and death's the same as life's,
 Souvenirs of earliest summer—birds' eggs, and the first berries ;
 Gather the welcome signs, (as children, with pebbles, or stringing shells ;)
 Put in April and May—the hylas croaking in the ponds
 —the elastic air,

Bees, butterflies, the sparrow with its simple notes,
 Blue-bird, and darting swallow—nor forget the high-
 hole flashing his golden wings,
 The tranquil sunny haze, the clinging smoke, the vapor,
 Spiritual, airy insects, humming on gossamer wings,
 Shimmer of waters, with fish in them—the cerulean
 above ;

All that is jocund and sparkling—the brooks running,
 The maple woods, the crisp February days, and the
 sugar-making ;

The robin, where he hops, bright-eyed, brown-breasted,
 With musical clear call at sunrise, and again at sunset,
 Or flitting among the trees of the apple-orchard, build-
 ing the nest of his mate ;

The melted snow of March—the willow sending forth
 its yellow-green sprouts ;

—For spring-time is here! the summer is here! and
 what is this in it and from it?

Thou, Soul, unloosen'd—the restlessness after I know
 not what ;

Come! let us lag here no longer—let us be up and
 away!

O for another world! O if one could but fly like a
 bird!

O to escape—to sail forth, as in a ship!

To glide with thee, O Soul, o'er all, in all, as a ship o'er
 the waters!

—Gathering these hints, these preludes—the blue sky,
 the grass, the morning drops of dew ;

(With additional songs—every spring will I now strike
 up additional songs,

Nor ever again forget, these tender days, the chants of
 Death as well as Life ;)

The lilac-scent, the bushes, and the dark green, heart-
 shaped leaves,

Wood violets, the little delicate pale blossoms called
 innocence,

Samples and sorts not for themselves alone, but for
 their atmosphere,

To tally, drench'd with them, tested by them,

Cities and artificial life, and all their sights and scenes,

My mind henceforth, and all its meditations—my recitatives,
 My land, my age, my race, for once to serve in songs,
 (Sprouts, tokens ever of death indeed the same as life,)
 To grace the bush I love—to sing with the birds,
 A warble for joy of Lilac-time.



WHO LEARNS MY LESSON COMPLETE ?

- ¹ Who learns my lesson complete ?
 Boss, journeyman, apprentice—churchman and atheist,
 The stupid and the wise thinker—parents and offspring
 —merchant, clerk, porter and customer,
 Editor, author, artist, and schoolboy—Draw nigh and
 commence ;
 It is no lesson—it lets down the bars to a good lesson,
 And that to another, and every one to another still.
- ² The great laws take and effuse without argument ;
 I am of the same style, for I am their friend,
 I love them quits and quits—I do not halt, and make
 salaams.
- ³ I lie abstracted, and hear beautiful tales of things,
 and the reasons of things ;
 They are so beautiful, I nudge myself to listen.
- ⁴ I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot say
 it to myself—it is very wonderful.
- ⁵ It is no small matter, this round and delicious globe,
 moving so exactly in its orbit forever and ever,
 without one jolt, or the untruth of a single
 second ;
 I do not think it was made in six days, nor in ten
 thousand years, nor ten billions of years,
 Nor plann'd and built one thing after another, as an
 architect plans and builds a house.

⁶ I do not think seventy years is the time of a man or
 woman,
 Nor that seventy millions of years is the time of a man
 or woman,
 Nor that years will ever stop the existence of me, or
 any one else.

⁷ Is it wonderful that I should be immortal? as every
 one is immortal ;
 I know it is wonderful, but my eyesight is equally won-
 derful, and how I was conceived in my mother's
 womb is equally wonderful ;
 And pass'd from a babe, in the creeping trance of a
 couple of summers and winters, to articulate and
 walk—All this is equally wonderful.

⁸ And that my Soul embraces you this hour, and we
 affect each other without ever seeing each other,
 and never perhaps to see each other, is every bit
 as wonderful.

⁹ And that I can think such thoughts as these, is just
 as wonderful ;
 And that I can remind you, and you think them, and
 know them to be true, is just as wonderful.

¹⁰ And that the moon spins round the earth, and on
 with the earth, is equally wonderful,
 And that they balance themselves with the sun and
 stars, is equally wonderful.



THOUGHT.

OF Justice—As if Justice could be anything but the
 same ample law, expounded by natural judges
 and saviors,
 As if it might be this thing or that thing, according to
 decisions.

MYSELF AND MINE.

¹ MYSELF and mine gymnastic ever,
 To stand the cold or heat—to take good aim with a
 gun—to sail a boat—to manage horses—to be-
 get superb children,
 To speak readily and clearly—to feel at home among
 common people,
 And to hold our own in terrible positions, on land and
 sea.

² Not for an embroiderer ;
 (There will always be plenty of embroiderers—I wel-
 come them also ;)
 But for the fibre of things, and for inherent men and
 women.

³ Not to chisel ornaments,
 But to chisel with free stroke the heads and limbs of
 plenteous Supreme Gods, that The States may
 realize them, walking and talking.

⁴ Let me have my own way ;
 Let others promulge the laws—I will make no account
 of the laws ;
 Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace—I
 hold up agitation and conflict ;
 I praise no eminent man—I rebuke to his face the one
 that was thought most worthy.

⁵ (Who are you ? you mean devil ! And what are you
 secretly guilty of, all your life ?
 Will you turn aside all your life ? Will you grub and
 chatter all your life ?)

⁶ (And who are you—blabbing by rote, years, pages,
 languages, reminiscences,
 Unwitting to-day that you do not know how to speak a
 single word ?)

⁷ Let others finish specimens—I never finish specimens ;
I shower them by exhaustless laws, as Nature does,
fresh and modern continually.

⁸ I give nothing as duties ;
What others give as duties, I give as living impulses ;
(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)

⁹ Let others dispose of questions—I dispose of nothing
—I arouse unanswerable questions ;
Who are they I see and touch, and what about them ?
What about these likes of myself, that draw me so close
by tender directions and indirections ?

¹⁰ I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my
friends, but listen to my enemies—as I myself
do ;

I charge you, too, forever, reject those who would ex-
pound me—for I cannot expound myself ;

I charge that there be no theory or school founded out
of me ;

I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

¹¹ After me, vista !

O, I see life is not short, but immeasurably long ;

I henceforth tread the world, chaste, temperate, an
early riser, a steady grower,

Every hour the semen of centuries—and still of centu-
ries.

¹² I will follow up these continual lessons of the air,
water, earth ;

I perceive I have no time to lose.

TO OLD AGE.

I SEE in you the estuary that enlarges and spreads itself
grandly as it pours in the great Sea.

MIRACLES.

¹ 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 my mother,
 Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
 Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive, of a sum-
 mer forenoon,
 Or animals feeding in the fields,
 Or birds—or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
 Or the wonderfulness of the sun-down—or of stars
 shining so quiet and bright,
 Or the exquisite, delicate, thin curve of the new moon
 in spring;
 Or whether I go among those I like best, and that like
 me best—mechanics, boatmen, farmers,
 Or among the savans—or to the soiree—or to the
 opera,
 Or stand a long while looking at the movements of
 machinery,
 Or behold children at their sports,
 Or the admirable sight of the perfect old man, or the
 perfect old woman,
 Or the sick in hospitals, or the dead carried to burial,
 Or my own eyes and figure in the glass;
 These, with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
 The whole referring—yet each distinct, and in its
 place.

² To me, every hour of the light and dark is a mir-
 acle,
 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 ;
 Every spear of grass—the frames, limbs, organs, of men
 and women, and all that concerns them,
 All these to me are unspeakably perfect miracles.

³ 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 ?



SPARKLES FROM THE WHEEL.

1

WHERE the city's ceaseless crowd moves on, the live-
 long day,
 Withdrawn, I join a group of children watching—I
 pause aside with them.

By the curb, toward the edge of the flagging,
 A knife-grinder works at his wheel, sharpening a great
 knife ;
 Bending over, he carefully holds it to the stone—by
 foot and knee,
 With measur'd tread, he turns rapidly—As he presses
 with light but firm hand,
 Forth issue, then, in copious golden jets,
 Sparkles from the wheel.

2

The scene, and all its belongings—how they seize and
 affect me !
 The sad, sharp-chinn'd old man, with worn clothes, and
 broad shoulder-band of leather ;
 Myself, effusing and fluid—a phantom curiously float-
 ing—now here absorb'd and arrested ;

The group, (an unminded point, set in a vast surrounding ;)
 The attentive, quiet children—the loud, proud, restive
 base of the streets ;
 The low, hoarse purr of the whirling stone—the light-
 press'd blade,
 Diffusing, dropping, sideways-darting, in tiny showers
 of gold,
 Sparkles from the wheel.

EXCELSIOR.

Who has gone farthest? For lo! have not I gone farther?
 And who has been just? For I would be the most just
 person of the earth ;
 And who most cautious? For I would be more cau-
 tious ;
 And who has been happiest? O I think it is I! I think
 no one was ever happier than I ;
 And who has lavish'd all? For I lavish constantly the
 best I have ;
 And who has been firmest? For I would be firmer ;
 And who proudest? For I think I have reason to be
 the proudest son alive—for I am the son of the
 brawny and tall-topt city ;
 And who has been bold and true? For I would be the
 boldest and truest being of the universe ;
 And who benevolent? For I would show more benevo-
 lence than all the rest ;
 And who has projected beautiful words through the
 longest time? Have I not outvied him? have I
 not said the words that shall stretch through
 longer time?
 And who has receiv'd the love of the most friends? For
 I know what it is to receive the passionate love
 of many friends ;

And who possesses a perfect and enamour'd body? For
 I do not believe any one possesses a more perfect
 or enamour'd body than mine ;
 And who thinks the amplest thoughts? For I will sur-
 round those thoughts ;
 And who has made hymns fit for the earth? For I am
 mad with devouring extasy to make joyous hymns
 for the whole earth!



MEDIUMS.

THEY shall arise in the States
 They shall report Nature, laws, physiology, and happi-
 ness ;
 They shall illustrate Democracy and the kosmos ;
 They shall be alimentive, amative, perceptive ;
 They shall be complete women and men—their pose
 brawny and supple, their drink water, their
 blood clean and clear ;
 They shall enjoy materialism and the sight of products
 —they shall enjoy the sight of the beef, lumber,
 bread-stuffs, of Chicago, the great city ;
 They shall train themselves to go in public to become
 orators and oratresses ;
 Strong and sweet shall their tongues be—poems and
 materials of poems shall come from their lives—
 they shall be makers and finders ;
 Of them, and of their works, shall emerge divine con-
 veyers, to convey gospels ;
 Characters, events, retrospections, shall be convey'd in
 gospels—Trees, animals, waters, shall be con-
 vey'd,
 Death, the future, the invisible faith, shall all be con-
 vey'd.

KOSMOS.

- Who includes diversity, and is Nature,
 Who is the amplitude of the earth, and the coarseness
 and sexuality of the earth, and the great charity
 of the earth, and the equilibrium also,
 Who has not look'd forth from the windows, the eyes,
 for nothing, or whose brain held audience with
 messengers for nothing ;
 Who contains believers and disbelievers—Who is the
 most majestic lover ;
 Who holds duly his or her triune proportion of real-
 ism, spiritualism, and of the æsthetic, or intel-
 lectual,
 Who, having consider'd the Body, finds all its organs
 and parts good ;
 Who, out of the theory of the earth, and of his or her
 body, understands by subtle analogies all other
 theories,
 The theory of a city, a poem, and of the large politics
 of These States ;
 Who believes not only in our globe, with its sun and
 moon, but in other globes, with their suns and
 moons ;
 Who, constructing the house of himself or herself, not
 for a day, but for all time, sees races, eras, dates,
 generations,
 The past, the future, dwelling there, like space, insepa-
 rable together.



TO A PUPIL.

- ¹ Is reform needed? Is it through you?
 The greater the reform needed, the greater the person-
 ality you need to accomplish it.
- ² You! do you not see how it would serve to have eyes,
 blood, complexion, clean and sweet?

Do you not see how it would serve to have such a Body
and Soul, that when you enter the crowd, an
atmosphere of desire and command enters with
you, and every one is impress'd with your per-
sonality?

³ O the magnet! the flesh over and over!
Go, dear friend! if need be, give up all else, and com-
mence to-day to inure yourself to pluck, reality,
self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness;
Rest not, till you rivet and publish yourself of your
own personality.

WHAT AM I, AFTER ALL.

¹ WHAT am I, after all, but a child, pleas'd with the
sound of my own name? repeating it over and
over;
I stand apart to hear—it never tires me.

² To you, your name also;
Did you think there was nothing but two or three pro-
nunciations in the sound of your name?

OTHERS MAY PRAISE WHAT THEY LIKE.

OTHERS may praise what they like;
But I, from the banks of the running Missouri, praise
nothing, in art, or aught else,
Till it has well inhaled the atmosphere of this river—
also the western prairie-scent,
And fully exudes it again.

BROTHER OF ALL, WITH GENEROUS HAND.

(G. P., Buried February, 1870.)

1

¹ BROTHER of all, with generous hand,
 Of thee, pondering on thee, as o'er thy tomb, I and my
 Soul,
 A thought to launch in memory of thee,
 A burial verse for thee.

² What may we chant, O thou within this tomb?
 What tablets, pictures, hang for thee, O millionaire?
 —The life thou lived'st we know not,
 But that thou walk'dst thy years in barter, 'mid the
 haunts of brokers;
 Nor heroism thine, nor war, nor glory.

³ Yet lingering, yearning, joining soul with thine,
 If not thy past we chant, we chant the future,
 Select, adorn the future.

2

⁴ Lo, Soul, the graves of heroes!
 The pride of lands—the gratitudes of men,
 The statues of the manifold famous dead, Old World
 and New,
 The kings, inventors, generals, poets, (stretch wide thy
 vision, Soul,)
 The excellent rulers of the races, great discoverers,
 sailors,
 Marble and brass select from them, with pictures,
 scenes,
 (The histories of the lands, the races, bodied there,
 In what they've built for, graced and graved,
 Monuments to their heroes.)

3

⁵ Silent, my Soul,
With drooping lids, as waiting, ponder'd,
Turning from all the samples, all the monuments of
heroes.

⁶ While through the interior vistas,
Noiseless uprose, phantasmic, (as, by night, Auroras of
the North,)
Lambent tableaux, prophetic, bodiless scenes,
Spiritual projections.

⁷ In one, among the city streets, a laborer's home ap-
pear'd,
After his day's work done, cleanly, sweet-air'd, the gas-
light burning,
The carpet swept, and a fire in the cheerful stove.

⁸ In one, the sacred parturition scene,
A happy, painless mother birth'd a perfect child.

⁹ In one, at a bounteous morning meal,
Sat peaceful parents, with contented sons.

¹⁰ In one, by twos and threes, young people,
Hundreds centering, walk'd the paths and streets
and roads,
Toward a tall-domed school.

¹¹ In one a trio, beautiful,
Grandmother, loving daughter, loving daughter's
daughter, sat,
Chatting and sewing.

¹² In one, along a suite of noble rooms,
'Mid plenteous books and journals, paintings on the
walls, fine statuettes,
Were groups of friendly journeymen, mechanics, young
and old,
Reading, conversing.

¹³ All, all the shows of laboring life,
 City and country, women's, men's and children's,
 Their wants provided for, hued in the sun, and tinged
 for once with joy,
 Marriage, the street, the factory, farm, the house-room,
 lodging-room,
 Labor and toil, the bath, gymnasium, play-ground,
 library, college,
 The student, boy or girl, led forward to be taught;
 The sick cared for, the shoeless shod—the orphan
 father'd and mother'd,
 The hungry fed, the houseless housed;
 (The intentions perfect and divine,
 The workings, details, haply human.)

4

¹⁴ O thou within this tomb,
 From thee, such scenes—thou stintless, lavish Giver,
 Tallying the gifts of Earth—large as the Earth,
 Thy name an Earth, with mountains, fields and rivers.

¹⁵ Nor by your streams alone, you rivers,
 By you, your banks, Connecticut,
 By you, and all your teeming life, Old Thames,
 By you, Potomac, laving the ground Washington trod
 —by you Patapsco,
 You, Hudson—you, endless Mississippi—not by you
 alone,
 But to the high seas launch, my thought, his memory.

.5

¹⁶ Lo, Soul, by this tomb's lambency,
 The darkness of the arrogant standards of the world,
 With all its flaunting aims, ambitions, pleasures.

¹⁷ (Old, commonplace, and rusty saws,
 The rich, the gay, the supercilious, smiled at long,
 Now, piercing to the marrow in my bones,
 Fused with each drop my heart's blood jets,
 Swim in ineffable meaning.)

¹⁸ Lo, Soul, the sphere requireth, portioneth,
 To each his share, his measure,
 The moderate to the moderate, the ample to the
 ample.

¹⁹ Lo, Soul, see'st thou not, plain as the sun,
 The only real wealth of wealth in generosity,
 The only life of life in goodness?



NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES.

¹ 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.

² Now I absorb immortality and peace,
 I admire death, and test propositions.

³ How plenteous ! How spiritual ! How resumé !
 The same Old Man and Soul—the same old aspirations,
 and the same content.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.



ON JOURNEYS THROUGH THE STATES.

¹ On journeys through the States we start,
 (Ay, through the world—urged by these songs,
 Sailing henceforth to every land—to every sea ;)
 We, willing learners of all, teachers of all, and lovers
 of all.

² We have watch'd the seasons dispensing themselves,
 and passing on,
 We have said, Why should not a man or woman do as
 much as the seasons, and effuse as much ?

³ We dwell a while in every city and town ;
 We pass through Kanada, the north-east, the vast valley
 of the Mississippi, and the Southern States ;
 We confer on equal terms with each of The States,
 We make trial of ourselves, and invite men and women
 to hear ;
 We say to ourselves, Remember, fear not, be candid,
 promulge the body and the Soul ;
 Dwell a while and pass on—Be copious, temperate,
 chaste, magnetic,
 And what you effuse may then return as the seasons
 return,
 And may be just as much as the seasons.

SAVANTISM.

THITHER, AS I look, I see each result and glory retracing
 itself and nestling close, always obligated ;
 Thither hours, months, years—thither trades, compacts,
 establishments, even the most minute ;
 Thither every-day life, speech, utensils, politics, per-
 sons, estates ;
 Thither we also, I with my leaves and songs, trustful,
 admirant,
 As a father, to his father going, takes his children
 along with him.

LOCATIONS AND TIMES.

LOCATIONS and times—what is it in me that meets them
 all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at
 home ?
 Forms, colors, densities, odors—what is it in me that
 corresponds with them ?

THOUGHT.

OF Equality—As if it harm'd me, giving others the
 same chances and rights as myself—As if it
 were not indispensable to my own rights that
 others possess the same.

OFFERINGS.

A THOUSAND perfect men and women appear,
 Around each gathers a cluster of friends, and gay chil-
 dren and youths, with offerings.

TESTS.

ALL submit to them, where they sit, inner, secure,
unapproachable to analysis, in the Soul ;
Not traditions—not the outer authorities are the judges
—they are the judges of outer authorities, and
of all traditions ;
They corroborate as they go, only whatever corrob-
orates themselves, and touches themselves ;
For all that, they have it forever in themselves to cor-
roborate far and near, without one exception.

THE TORCH.

ON my northwest coast in the midst of the night, a
fishermen's group stands watching ;
Out on the lake, that expands before them, others are
spearing salmon ;
The canoe, a dim shadowy thing, moves across the
black water,
Bearing a Torch a-blaze at the prow.

GODS.

1

THOUGHT of the Infinite—the All!
Be thou my God.

2

Lover Divine, and Perfect Comrade!
Waiting, content, invisible yet, but certain,
Be thou my God.

3

Thou—thou, the Ideal Man!
Fair, able, beautiful, content, and loving,
Complete in Body, and dilate in Spirit,
Be thou my God.

4

O Death—(for Life has served its turn ;)
Opener and usher to the heavenly mansion!
Be thou my God.

5

Aught, aught, of mightiest, best, I see, conceive, or
know,
(To break the stagnant tie—thee, thee to free, O Soul.)
Be thou my God.

Or thee, Old Cause, whene'er advancing ;
All great Ideas, the races' aspirations,
All that exalts, releases thee, my Soul!
All heroisms, deeds of rapt enthusiasts,
Be ye my Gods!

7

Or Time and Space!
Or shape of Earth, divine and wondrous!
Or shape in I myself—or some fair shape, I, viewing,
worship,
Or lustrous orb of Sun, or star by night :
Be ye my Gods.

TO ONE SHORTLY TO DIE.

1

¹ FROM all the rest I single out you, having a message
for you :
You are to die—Let others tell you what they please, I
cannot prevaricate,
I am exact and merciless, but I love you—There is no
escape for you.

² Softly I lay my right hand upon you—you just feel it,
I do not argue—I bend my head close, and half en-
velop it,
I sit quietly by—I remain faithful,
I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor,
I absolve you from all except yourself, spiritual, bodily
—that is eternal—you yourself will surely escape,
The corpse you will leave will be but excrementitious.

2

³ The sun bursts through in unlooked-for directions!
Strong thoughts fill you, and confidence—you smile!
You forget you are sick, as I forget you are sick,
You do not see the medicines—you do not mind the
weeping friends—I am with you,
I exclude others from you—there is nothing to be com-
miserated,
I do not commiserate—I congratulate you.



LESSONS.

THERE are who teach only the sweet lessons of peace
and safety ;
But I teach lessons of war and death to those I love,
That they readily meet invasions, when they come.

NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE.

NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE.

Now finale to the shore !
Now, land and life, finale, and farewell !
Now Voyager depart ! (much, much for thee is yet in
store ;))
Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the seas,
Cautiously cruising, studying the charts,
Duly again to port, and hawser's tie, returning :
—But now obey thy cherish'd, secret wish,
Embrace thy friends—leave all in order ;
To port, and hawser's tie, no more returning,
Depart upon thy endless cruise, old Sailor !

SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS, &c.

SHUT not your doors to me, proud libraries,
For that which was lacking on all your well-fill'd
shelves, yet needed most, I bring ;
Forth from the army, the war emerging—a book I
have made,
The words of my book nothing—the drift of it every-
thing ;

A book separate, not link'd with the rest, nor felt by
 the intellect,
 But you, ye untold latencies, will thrill to every page ;
 Through Space and Time fused in a chant, and the
 flowing, eternal Identity,
 To Nature, encompassing these, encompassing God—
 to the joyous, electric All,
 To the sense of Death—and accepting, exulting in
 Death, in its turn, the same as life,
 The entrance of Man I sing.

THOUGHT.

As they draw to a close,
 Of what underlies the precedent songs—of my aims in
 them ;
 Of the seed I have sought to plant in them ;
 Of joy, sweet joy, through many a year, in them ;
 (For them—for them have I lived—In them my work
 is done ;)
 Of many an aspiration fond—of many a dream and
 plan,
 Of you, O mystery great!—to place on record faith in
 you, O death !
 —To compact you, ye parted, diverse lives !
 To put rapport the mountains, and rocks, and streams,
 And the winds of the north, and the forests of oak and
 pine,
 With you, O soul of man.

THE UNTOLD WANT.

THE untold want, by life and land ne'er granted,
 Now, Voyager, sail thou forth, to seek and find.

PORTALS.

WHAT are those of the known, but to ascend and enter
the Unknown?
And what are those of life, but for Death?

THESE CAROLS.

THESE Carols, sung to cheer my passage through the
world I see,
For completion, I dedicate to the Invisible World.

THIS DAY, O SOUL.

THIS day, O Soul, I give you a wondrous mirror;
Long in the dark, in tarnish and cloud it lay—But the
cloud has pass'd, and the tarnish gone;
... Behold, O Soul! it is now a clean and bright mir-
ror,
Faithfully showing you all the things of the world.

WHAT PLACE IS BESIEGED?

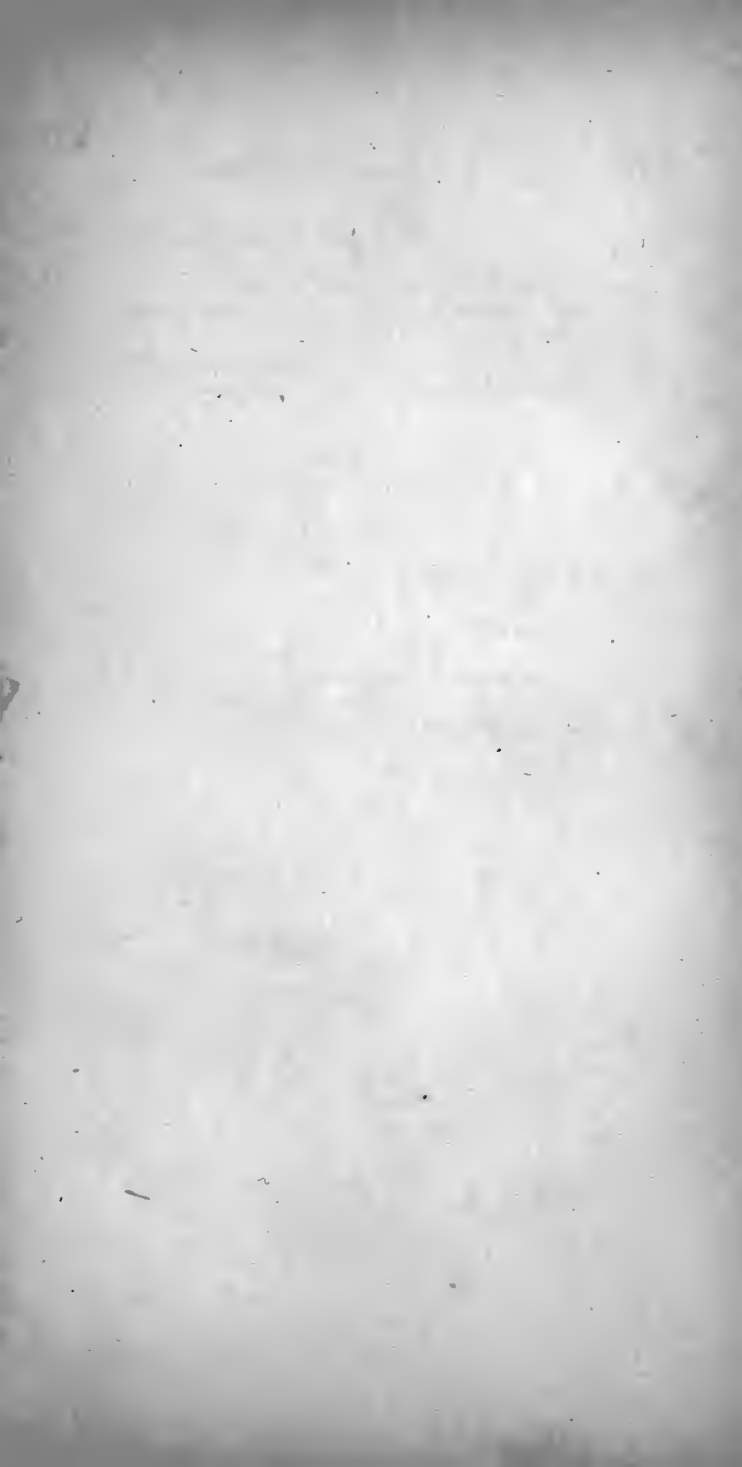
WHAT place is besieged, and vainly tries to raise the
siege?
Lo! I send to that place a commander, swift, brave,
immortal;
And with him horse and foot—and parks of artil-
lery,
And artillery-men, the deadliest that ever fired gun.

TO THE READER AT PARTING.

Now, dearest comrade, lift me to your face,
We must separate awhile—Here! take from my lips
 this kiss ;
Whoever you are, I give it especially to you ;
So long!—And I hope we shall meet again.

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!



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DEMOCRATIC VISTAS.

AMERICA, filling the present with greatest deeds and problems, cheerfully accepting the past, including Feudalism, (as, indeed, the present is but the legitimate birth of the past, including feudalism,) counts, as I reckon, for her justification and success, (for who, as yet, dare claim success?) almost entirely on the future. Nor is that hope unwarranted. To-day, ahead, though dimly yet, we see, in vistas, a copious, sane, gigantic offspring.

For our New World I consider far less important for what it has done, or what it is, than for results to come. Sole among nationalities, These States have assumed the task to put in forms of lasting power and practicality, on areas of amplitude rivaling the operations of the physical kosmos, the moral and political speculations of ages, long, long deferred, the Democratic Republican principle, and the theory of development and perfection by voluntary standards, and self-suppliance. Who else, indeed, except the United States, in history, so far, have accepted in unwitting faith, and, as we now see, stand, act upon, and go security for, these things?

But let me strike at once the key-note of my purpose in the following strain. First premising that, though passages of it have been written at widely different times, (it is, in fact, a collection of memoranda, perhaps for future designers, comprehenders,) and though it may be open to the charge of one part contradicting another—for there are opposite sides to the great question of Democracy, as to every great question—I feel

the parts harmoniously blended in my own realization and convictions, and present them to be read only in such oneness, each page modified and tempered by the others. Bear in mind, too, that they are not the result of studying up in political economy, but of the ordinary sense, observing, wandering among men, These States, these stirring years of war and peace. I will not gloss over the appalling dangers of universal suffrage in the United States. In fact, it is to admit and face these dangers I am writing. To him or her within whose thought rages the battle, advancing, retreating, between Democracy's convictions, aspirations, and the People's crudeness, vice, caprices, I mainly write this book.

I shall use the words America and Democracy as convertible terms. Not an ordinary one is the issue. The United States are destined either to surmount the gorgeous history of Feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time. Not the least doubtful am I on any prospects of their material success. The triumphant future of their business, geographic, and productive departments, on larger scales and in more varieties than ever, is certain. In those respects the Republic must soon (if she does not already) outstrip all examples hitherto afforded, and dominate the world.*

* "From a territorial area of less than nine hundred thousand square miles, the Union has expanded into over four millions and a half—fifteen times larger than that of Great Britain and France combined—with a shore-line, including Alaska, equal to the entire circumference of the earth, and with a domain within these lines far wider than that of the Romans in their proudest days of conquest and renown. With a river, lake, and coastwise commerce estimated at over two thousand millions of dollars per year; with a railway traffic of four to six thousand millions per year, and the annual domestic exchanges of the country running up to nearly ten thousand millions per year; with over two thousand millions of dollars invested in manufacturing, mechanical, and mining industry; with over five hundred millions of acres of land in actual occupancy, valued, with their appurtenances, at over seven thousand millions of dollars, and producing annually crops valued at over three thousand millions of dollars; with a realm which, if the density of Belgium's

Admitting all this, with the priceless value of our political institutions, general suffrage (and cheerfully acknowledging the latest, widest opening of the doors,) I say that, far deeper than these, what finally and only is to make of our Western World a Nationality superior to any hitherto known, and outtopping the past, must be vigorous, yet unsuspected Literatures, perfect personalities and sociologies, original, transcendental, and expressing (what, in highest sense, are not yet expressed at all,) Democracy and the Modern. With these, and out of these, I promulge new races of Teachers, and of perfect Women, indispensable to endow the birth-stock of a New World. For Feudalism, caste, the Ecclesiastic traditions, though palpably retreating from political institutions, still hold essentially, by their spirit, even in this country, entire possession of the more important fields, indeed the very subsoil, of education, and of social standards and Literature.

I say that Democracy can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it founds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of arts, 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, and 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 pres-

population were possible, would be vast enough to include all the present inhabitants of the world; and with equal rights guaranteed to even the poorest and humblest of our forty millions of people—we can, with a manly pride akin to that which distinguished the palmyest days of Rome, claim," &c., &c., &c. — *Vice-President Colfax's Speech, July 4, 1870.*

ent 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 and schools, manners, costumes, and, as its grandest result, accomplishing, (what neither the schools nor the churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplished, 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 know how to read and write, and may all possess the right to vote—and yet the main things may be entirely lacking?—(and this to supply or suggest them.)

Viewed, 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 swayed 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 old nations of the earth, two special lands, petty in themselves, yet inexpressibly 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 powerfully 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 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, principle, even literary style, fit for the time, put in shape by some great Literatus, and projected among man-

* See, for hereditaments, specimens, Walter Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, Percy's *Collection*, Ellis's *Early English Metrical Romances*, the *European Continental Poems* of Walter of Aquitania, and the *Nibelungen*, of pagan stock, but monkish-feudal redaction; the *history of the Troubadours*, by Fauriel; even the far, far-back cumbrous old Hindu epics, as indicating the Asian eggs, out of which European chivalry was hatched; Ticknor's chapters on the *Cid*, and on the Spanish poems and poets of Calderon's time. Then always, and, of course, as the superbest, poetic culmination-expression of Feudalism, the Shakspearean dramas, in the attitudes, dialogue, characters, &c., of the princes, lords and gentlemen, the pervading atmosphere, the implied and expressed standard of manners, the high port and proud stomach, the regal embroidery of style, &c.

kind, 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, philosophers, 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 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, nor 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 unparalleled.

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 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 owned or received, 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 definite distinctions in vast, indefinite, spiritual, emotional power.

It may be claimed, (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 asked, Are these not better, indeed, for America, than any utterances even of greatest rhapsode, 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 those and on all things, as the feet stand on the ground,) is addressed to the loftiest, to itself alone.

Out of such considerations, such truths, arises for treatment in these Vistas the important question of Character, of an American stock-personality, with Literatures and Arts for outlets and return-expressions, and, of course, to correspond, within outlines common to all. To these, the main affair, the thinkers of the United States, in general so acute, have either given feeblest attention, or have remained, and remain, in a state of somnolence.

For my part, I would alarm and caution even the political and business reader, and to the utmost extent, against the prevailing delusion that the establishment of free political institutions, and plentiful intellectual smartness, with general good order, physical plenty, industry, &c., (desirable and precious advantages as they all are,) do, of themselves, determine and yield to our experiment of Democracy the fruitage of success. With such advantages at present fully, or almost fully, possessed—the Union just issued, victorious, from the struggle with the only foes it need ever fear, (namely, those within itself, the interior ones,) and with unprecedented materialistic advancement—Society, in These States, is cankered, crude, superstitious, and rotten. Political, or law-made society is, and private, or voluntary society, is also. In any vigor, the element of the moral conscience, the most important, the vertebræ, to State or man, seems to me either entirely lacking or seriously enfeebled or ungrown.

I say we had best look our time and lands searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of The States are not honestly believed in, (for all this hectic glow, and these melo-dramatic screamings,) nor is Humanity itself believed in. What penetrating eye does not everywhere see through the mask? The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. The men believe not in the women, nor the women in the men. A scornful superciliousness rules in literature. The aim of all the *litterateurs* is to find something to make fun of. A lot of churches, sects, &c., the most dismal phantasms I know, usurp the name of religion. Conversation is a mass of badinage. From deceit in the spirit, the mother of all false deeds, the offspring is already incalculable. An acute and candid person, in the Revenue Department in Washington, who is led by the course of his employment to regularly visit the cities, North, South, and West, to investigate frauds, has talked much with

me (1869-70) about his discoveries. The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The whole of the official services of America, National, State, and Municipal, in all their branches and departments, except the Judiciary, are steeped, saturated in corruption, bribery, falsehood, mal-administration; and the Judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. In fashionable life, flippancy, tepid amours, weak infidelism, small aims, or no aims at all, only to kill time. In business, (this all-devouring modern word, business,) the one sole object is, by any means, pecuniary gain. The magician's serpent in the fable ate up all the other serpents; and money-making is our magician's serpent, remaining to-day sole master of the field. The best class we show, is but a mob of fashionably-dressed speculators and vulgarians. True, indeed, behind this fantastic farce, enacted on the visible stage of society, solid things and stupendous labors are to be discovered, existing crudely and going on in the background, to advance and tell themselves in time. Yet the truths are none the less terrible. I say that our New World Democracy, however great a success in uplifting the masses out of their sloughs, in materialistic development, products, and in a certain highly-deceptive superficial popular intellectuality, is, so far, an almost complete failure in its social aspects, in any superb general personal character, and in really grand religious, moral, literary, and esthetic results. In vain do we march with unprecedented strides to empire so colossal, outvying the antique, beyond Alexander's, beyond the proudest sway of Rome. In vain do we annex Texas, California, Alaska, and reach north for Canada and south for Cuba. It is as if we were somehow being endowed with a vast and more and more thoroughly-appointed body, and then left with little or no soul.

Let me illustrate further, as I write, with current observations, localities, &c. The subject is important, and will bear repetition. After an absence, I am now (Sep-

tember, 1870,) again in New York City and Brooklyn, on a few weeks' vacation. The splendor, picturesqueness, and oceanic amplitude and rush of these great cities, the unsurpassed situation, rivers and bay, sparkling seattides, costly and lofty new buildings, the façades of marble and iron, of original grandeur and elegance of design, with the masses of gay color, the preponderance of white and blue, the flags flying, the endless ships, the tumultuous streets, Broadway, the heavy, low, musical roar, hardly ever intermitted, even at night; the jobbers' houses, the rich shops, the wharves, the great Central Park, and the Brooklyn Park of Hills, (as I wander among them this beautiful fall weather, musing, watching, absorbing,)—the assemblages of the citizens in their groups, conversations, trade, evening amusements, or along the by-quarters—these, I say, and the like of these, completely satisfy my senses of power, fullness, motion, &c., and give me, through such senses and appetites, and through my esthetic conscience, a continued exaltation and absolute fulfilment. Always, and more and more, as I cross the East and North rivers, the ferries, or with the pilots in their pilot-houses, or pass an hour in Wall street, or the gold exchange, I realize, (if we must admit such partialisms,) that not Nature alone is great in her fields of freedom and the open air, in her storms, the shows of night and day, the mountains, forests, seas—but in the artificial, the work of man too is equally great—in this profusion of teeming humanity, in these ingenuities, streets, goods, houses, ships—these seething, hurrying, feverish crowds of men, their complicated business genius, (not least among the geniuses,) and all this mighty, many-threaded wealth and industry concentrated here.

But sternly discarding, shutting our eyes to the glow and grandeur of the general effect, coming down to what is of the only real importance, Personalities, and examining minutely, we question, we ask, Are there, indeed, *Men* here worthy the name? Are there athletes? Are there perfect women, to match the generous material luxuriance? Is there a pervading atmosphere of beautiful manners? Are there crops of fine youths, and ma-

jestic old persons? Are there arts worthy Freedom, and a rich people? Is there a great moral and religious civilization—the only justification of a great material one?

Confess that rather to severe eyes, using the moral microscope upon humanity, a sort of dry and flat Sahara appears, these cities, crowded with petty grotesques, malformations, phantoms, playing meaningless antics. Confess that everywhere, in shop, street, church, theatre, bar-room, official chair, are pervading flippancy and vulgarity, low cunning, infidelity—everywhere, the youth puny, impudent, foppish, prematurely ripe—everywhere an abnormal libidinousness, unhealthy forms, male, female, painted, padded, dyed, chignoned, muddy complexions, bad blood, the capacity for good motherhood deceasing or deceased, shallow notions of beauty, with a range of manners, or rather lack of manners, (considering the advantages enjoyed,) probably the meanest to be seen in the world.*

Of all this, and these lamentable conditions, to breathe into them the breath recuperative of sane and heroic life, I say a new founded Literature, not merely to copy and reflect existing surfaces, or pander to what is called taste—not only to amuse, pass away time, celebrate the beautiful, the refined, the past, or exhibit technical,

*Of these rapidly-sketched portraitures, hiatuses, the two which seem to me most serious are, for one, the condition, absence, or perhaps the singular abeyance, of moral, conscientious fibre all through American society; and, for another, the appalling depletion of women in their powers of sane athletic maternity, their crowning attribute, and ever making the woman, in loftiest spheres, superior to the man.

I have sometimes thought, indeed, that the sole avenue and means of a reconstructed sociology depended, primarily, on a new birth, elevation, expansion, invigoration of woman, affording, for races to come, (as the conditions that antedate birth are indispensable,) a perfect motherhood. Great, great, indeed far greater than they know, is the sphere of woman. But doubtless the question of such new sociology all goes together, includes many varied and complex influences and premises, and the man as well as the woman, and the woman as well as the man.

rhythmic, or grammatical dexterity—but a Literature underlying life, religious, consistent with science, handling the elements and forces with competent power, teaching and training men—and, as perhaps the most precious of its results, achieving the entire redemption of woman out of these incredible holds and webs of silliness, millinery, and every kind of dyspeptic depletion—and thus insuring to The States a strong and sweet Female Race, a race of perfect Mothers—is what is needed.

And now, in the full conception of these facts and points, and all that they infer, pro and con—with yet unshaken faith in the elements of the American masses, the composites, of both sexes, and even considered as individuals—and ever recognizing in them the broadest bases of the best literary and esthetic appreciation—I proceed with my speculations, Vistas.

First, let us see what we can make out of a brief, general, sentimental consideration of political Democracy, and whence it has arisen, with regard to some of its current features, as an aggregate, and as the basic structure of our future literature and authorship. We shall, it is true, quickly and continually find the origin-idea of the singleness of man, individualism, asserting itself, and cropping forth, even from the opposite ideas. But the mass, or lump character, for imperative reasons, is to be ever carefully weighed, borne in mind, and provided for. Only from it, and from its proper regulation and potency, comes the other, comes the chance of Individualism. The two are contradictory, but our task is to reconcile them.*

* The question hinted here is one which time only can answer. Must not the virtue of modern Individualism, continually enlarging, usurping all, seriously affect, perhaps keep down entirely, in America, the like of the ancient virtue of Patriotism, the fervid and absorbing love of general country? I have no doubt myself that the two will merge, and will mutually profit and brace each other, and that from them a greater product, a third, will arise. But I feel that at present they and their oppositions form a serious problem and paradox in the United States.

The political history of the past may be summed up as having grown out of what underlies the words Order, Safety, Caste, and especially out of the need of some prompt deciding Authority, and of Cohesion, at all cost. Leaping time, we come to the period within the memory of people now living, when, as from some lair where they had slumbered long, accumulating wrath, sprang up and are yet active, (1790, and on even to the present, 1870,) those noisy eruptions, destructive iconoclasms, a fierce sense of wrongs, and amid which moves the Form, well known in modern history, in the old world, stained with much blood, and marked by savage reactionary clamors and demands. These bear, mostly, as on one enclosing point of need.

For after the rest is said—after the many time-honored and really true things for subordination, experience, rights of property, &c., have been listened to and acquiesced in—after the valuable and well-settled statement of our duties and relations in society is thoroughly conned over and exhausted—it remains to bring forward and modify everything else with the idea of that Something a man is, (last precious consolation of the drudging poor,) standing apart from all else, divine in his own right, and a woman in hers, sole and untouchable by any canons of authority, or any rule derived from precedent, state-safety, the acts of legislatures, or even from what is called religion, modesty, or art.

The radiation of this truth is the key of the most significant doings of our immediately preceding three centuries, and has been the political genesis and life of America. Advancing visibly, it still more advances invisibly. Underneath the fluctuations of the expressions of society, as well as the movements of the politics of the leading nations of the world, we see steadily pressing ahead, and strengthening itself, even in the midst of immense tendencies toward aggregation, this image of completeness in separatism, of individual personal dignity, of a single person, either male or female, characterized in the main, not from extrinsic acquirements or position, but in the pride of himself or herself alone; and, as an eventual conclusion and summing up, (or

else the entire scheme of things is aimless, a cheat, a crash,) the simple idea that the last, best dependence is to be upon Humanity itself, and its own inherent, normal, full-grown qualities, without any superstitious support whatever. This idea of perfect individualism it is indeed that deepest tinge and gives character to the idea of the Aggregate. For it is mainly or altogether to serve independent separatism that we favor a strong generalization, consolidation. As it is to give the best vitality and freedom to the rights of the States, (every bit as important as the right of Nationality, the union,) that we insist on the identity of the Union at all hazards.

The purpose of Democracy—supplanting old belief in the necessary absoluteness of established dynastic rulership, temporal, ecclesiastical, and scholastic, as furnishing the only security against chaos, crime, and ignorance—is, through many transmigrations, and amid endless ridicules, arguments, and ostensible failures, to illustrate, at all hazards, this doctrine or theory that man, properly trained in sanest, highest freedom, may and must become a law, and series of laws, unto himself, surrounding and providing for, not only his own personal control, but all his relations to other individuals, and to the State; and that, while other theories, as in the past histories of nations, have proved wise enough, and indispensable perhaps for their conditions, *this*, as matters now stand in our civilized world, is the only Scheme worth working from, as warranting results like those of Nature's laws, reliable, when once established, to carry on themselves.

The argument of the matter is extensive, and, we admit, by no means all on one side. What we shall offer will be far, far from sufficient. But while leaving unsaid much that should properly even prepare the way for the treatment of this many-sided question of political liberty, equality, or republicanism—leaving the whole history and consideration of the Feudal Plan and its products, embodying Humanity, its politics and civilization, through the retrospect of past time, (which Plan and products, indeed, make up all of the past, and a major part of the present)—Leaving unanswered, at

least by any specific and local answer, many a well-wrought argument and instance, and many a conscientious declamatory cry and warning—as, very lately, from an eminent and venerable person abroad*—things, problems, full of doubt, dread, suspense, (not new to me, but old occupiers of many an anxious hour in city's din, or night's silence,) we still may give a page or so, whose drift is opportune. Time alone can finally answer these things. But as a substitute in passing, let us, even if fragmentarily, throw forth a short direct or indirect suggestion of the premises of that other Plan, in the new spirit, under the new forms, started here in our America.

As to the political section of Democracy, which introduces and breaks ground for further and vaster sections, few probably are the minds, even in These Republican States, that fully comprehend the aptness of that phrase, "THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE," which we inherit from the lips of Abraham Lincoln; a formula whose verbal shape is homely wit, but whose scope includes both the totality and all minutiae of the lesson.

The People! Like our huge earth itself, which, to ordinary scansion, is full of vulgar contradictions and offence, Man, viewed in the lump, displeases, and is a constant puzzle and affront to the merely educated classes. The rare, cosmical, artist-mind, lit with the Infinite, alone confronts his manifold and oceanic qualities, but taste, intelligence and culture, (so-called,) have been against the masses, and remain so. There is plenty of glamour about the most damnable crimes and

* "SHOOTING NIAGARA."—I was at first roused to much anger and abuse by this Essay from Mr. Carlyle, so insulting to the theory of America—but happening to think afterwards how I had more than once been in the like mood, during which his essay was evidently cast, and seen persons and things in the same light, (indeed some might say there are signs of the same feeling in this book)—I have since read it again, not only as a study, expressing as it does certain judgments from the highest Feudal point of view, but have read it with respect, as coming from an earnest soul, and as contributing certain sharp-cutting metallic grains, which, if not gold or silver, may be good hard, honest iron.

hoggish meannesses, special and general, of the Feudal and dynastic world over there, with its *personnel* of lords and queens and courts, so well-dressed and so handsome. But the People are ungrammatical, untidy, and their sins gaunt and ill-bred.

Literature, strictly considered, has never recognized the People, and, whatever may be said, does not to-day. Speaking generally, the tendencies of literature, as hitherto pursued, have been to make mostly critical and querulous men. It seems as if, so far, there were some natural repugnance between a literary and professional life, and the rude rank spirit of the Democracies. There is, in later literature, a treatment of benevolence, a charity business, rife enough it is true; but I know nothing more rare, even in this country, than a fit scientific estimate and reverent appreciation of the People—of their measureless wealth of latent power and capacity, their vast, artistic contrasts of lights and shades—with, in America, their entire reliability in emergencies, and a certain breadth of historic grandeur, of peace or war, far surpassing all the vaunted samples of book-heroes, or any *haut ton* coteries, in all the records of the world.

The movements of the late Secession war, and their results, to any sense that studies well and comprehends them, show that Popular Democracy, whatever its faults and dangers, practically justifies itself beyond the proudest claims and wildest hopes of its enthusiasts. Probably no future age can know, but I well know, how the gist of this fiercest and most resolute of the world's warlike contentions resided exclusively in the unnamed, unknown rank and file; and how the brunt of its labor of death was, to all essential purposes, Volunteered. The People, of their own choice, fighting, dying for their own idea, insolently attacked by the Secession-Slave-Power, and its very existence imperiled. Descending to detail, entering any of the armies, and mixing with the private soldiers, we see and have seen august spectacles. We have seen the alacrity with which the American-born populace, the peaceablest and most good-natured race in the world, and the most personally independent and intelligent, and the least fitted to submit

to the irksomeness and exasperation of regimental discipline, sprang, at the first tap of the drum, to arms—not for gain, nor even glory, nor to repel invasion—but for an emblem, a mere abstraction—for the life, *the safety of the Flag*. We have seen the unequalled docility and obedience of these soldiers. We have seen them tried long and long by hopelessness, mismanagement, and by defeat; have seen the incredible slaughter toward or through which the armies, (as at first Fredericksburg, and afterward at the Wilderness,) still unhesitatingly obeyed orders to advance. We have seen them in trench, or crouching behind breastwork, or tramping in deep mud, or amid pouring rain or thick-falling snow, or under forced marches in hottest summer (as on the road to get to Gettysburg)—vast suffocating swarms, divisions, corps, with every single man so grimed and black with sweat and dust, his own mother would not have known him—his clothes all dirty, stained and torn, with sour, accumulated sweat for perfume—many a comrade, perhaps a brother, sun-struck, staggering out, dying, by the roadside, of exhaustion—yet the great bulk bearing steadily on, cheery enough, hollow-bellied from hunger, but sinewy with unconquerable resolution.

We have seen this race proved by wholesale by drearier, yet more fearful tests—the wound, the amputation, the shattered face or limb, the slow, hot fever, long, impatient anchorage in bed, and all the forms of maiming, operation and disease. Alas! America we have seen, though only in her early youth, already to hospital brought. There have we watched these soldiers, many of them only boys in years—marked their decorum, their religious nature and fortitude, and their sweet affection. Wholesale, truly. For at the front, and through the camps, in countless tents, stood the regimental, brigade and division hospitals; while everywhere amid the land, in or near cities, rose clusters of huge, white-washed, crowded, one-story wooden barracks, (Washington City alone, with its suburbs, at one period, containing in her Army hospitals of this kind, 50,000 wounded and sick men)—and there ruled Agony with bitter scourge, yet seldom brought a cry;

and there stalked Death by day and night along the narrow aisles between the rows of cots, or by the blankets on the ground, and touched lightly many a poor sufferer, often with blessed, welcome touch.

I know not whether I shall be understood, but I realize that it is finally from what I learned personally mixing in such scenes that I am now penning these pages. One night in the gloomiest period of the war, in the Patent Office Hospital in Washington City, as I stood by the bedside of a Pennsylvania soldier, who lay, conscious of quick approaching death, yet perfectly calm, and with noble, spiritual manner, the veteran surgeon, turning aside, said to me, that though he had witnessed many, many deaths of soldiers, and had been a worker at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, &c., he had not seen yet the first case of man or boy that met the approach of dissolution with cowardly qualms or terror. My own observation fully bears out the remark.

What have we here, if not, towering above all talk and argument, the plentifully-supplied, last-needed proof of Democracy, in its personalities? Curiously enough, too, the proof on this point comes, I should say, every bit as much from the South, as from the North. Although I have spoken only of the latter, yet I deliberately include all. Grand, common stock! to me the accomplished and convincing growth, prophetic of the future; proof undeniable to sharpest sense, of perfect beauty, tenderness and pluck, that never Feudal lord, nor Greek, nor Roman breed, yet rivaled. Let no tongue ever speak in disparagement of the American races, North or South, to one who has been through the war in the great army hospitals.

Meantime, general Humanity, (for to that we return, as, for our purposes, what it really is, to bear in mind,) has always, in every department, been full of perverse maleficence, and is so yet. In downcast hours the Soul thinks it always will be—but soon recovers from such sickly moods. I, as Democrat, see clearly enough, (as already illustrated,) the crude, defective streaks in all the strata of the common people; the specimens and vast collections of the ignorant, the credulous, the unfit

and uncouth, the incapable, and the very low and poor. The eminent person just mentioned, sneeringly asks whether we expect to elevate and improve a Nation's politics by absorbing such morbid collections and qualities therein. The point is a formidable one, and there will doubtless always be numbers of solid and reflective citizens who will never get over it. Our answer is general, and is involved in the scope and letter of this essay. We believe the ulterior object of political and all other government, (having, of course, provided for the police, the safety of life, property, and for the basic statute and common law, and their administration, always first in order,) to be, among the rest, not merely to rule, to repress disorder, &c., but to develop, to open up to cultivation, to encourage the possibilities of all beneficent and manly outcroppage, and of that aspiration for independence, and the pride and self-respect latent in all characters. (Or, if there be exceptions, we cannot, fixing our eyes on them alone, make theirs the rule for all.)

I say the mission of government, henceforth, in civilized lands, is not repression alone, and not authority alone, not even of law, nor by that favorite standard of the eminent writer, the rule of the best men, the born heroes and captains of the race, (as if such ever, or one time out of a hundred, got into the big places, elective or dynastic!)—but, higher than the highest arbitrary rule, to train communities through all their grades, beginning with individuals and ending there again, to rule themselves.

What Christ appeared for in the moral-spiritual field for Human-kind, namely, that in respect to the absolute Soul, there is in the possession of such by each single individual, something so transcendent, so incapable of gradations, (like life,) that, to that extent, it places all beings on a common level, utterly regardless of the distinctions of intellect, virtue, station, or any height or lowliness whatever—is tallied in like manner, in this other field, by Democracy's rule that men, the Nation, as a common aggregate of living identities, affording in each a separate and complete subject for freedom, worldly thrift and happiness, and for a fair chance for

growth, and for protection in citizenship, &c., must, to the political extent of the suffrage or vote, if no further, be placed, in each and in the whole, on one broad, primary, universal, common platform.

The purpose is not altogether direct ; perhaps it is more indirect. For it is not that Democracy is of exhaustive account, in itself. Perhaps, indeed, it is, (like Nature,) of no account in itself. It is that, as we see, it is the best, perhaps only, fit and full means, formulator, general caller-forth, trainer, for the million, not for grand material personalities only, but for immortal souls. To be a voter with the rest is not so much ; and this, like every institute, will have its imperfections. But to become an enfranchised man, and now, impediments removed, to stand and start without humiliation, and equal with the rest ; to commence, or have the road cleared to commence, the grand experiment of development, whose end, (perhaps requiring several generations,) may be the forming of a full-grown man or woman—that is something. To ballast the State is also secured, and in our times is to be secured, in no other way.

We do not, (at any rate I do not,) put it either on the ground that the People, the masses, even the best of them, are, in their latent or exhibited qualities, essentially sensible and good—nor on the ground of their rights ; but that, good or bad, rights or no rights, the Democratic formula is the only safe and preservative one for coming times. We endow the masses with the suffrage for their own sake, no doubt ; then, perhaps still more, from another point of view, for community's sake. Leaving the rest to the sentimentalists, we present Freedom as sufficient in its scientific aspects, cold as ice, reasoning, deductive, clear and passionless as crystal.

Democracy too is law, and of the strictest, amplest kind. Many suppose, (and often in its own ranks the error,) that it means a throwing aside of law, and running riot. But, briefly, it is the superior law, not alone that of physical force, the body, which, adding to, it supersedes with that of the spirit. Law is the unshaka-

ble order of the universe forever ; and the law over all, and law of laws, is the law of successions ; that of the superior law, in time, gradually supplanting and overwhelming the inferior one. (While, for myself, I would cheerfully agree—first covenanting that the formative tendencies shall be administered in favor, or, at least not against it, and that this reservation be closely construed—that until the individual or community show due signs, or be so minor and fractional as not to endanger the State, the condition of authoritative tutelage may continue, and self-government must abide its time.)

—Nor is the esthetic point, always an important one, without fascination for highest aiming souls. The common ambition strains for elevations, to become some privileged exclusive. The master sees greatness and health in being part of the mass. Nothing will do as well as common ground. Would you have in yourself the divine, vast, general law ? Then merge yourself in it.

And, topping Democracy, this most alluring record, that it alone can bind, and ever seeks to bind, all nations, all men, of however various and distant lands, into a brotherhood, a family. It is the old, yet ever-modern dream of Earth, out of her eldest and her youngest, her fond philosophers and poets. Not that half only, Individualism, which isolates. There is another half, which is Adhesiveness or Love, that fuses, ties and aggregates, making the races comrades, and fraternizing all. Both are to be vitalized by Religion, (sole worthiest elevator of man or State,) breathing into the proud, material tissues, the breath of life. For I say at the core of Democracy, finally, is the Religious element. All the Religions, old and new, are there. Nor may the Scheme step forth, clothed in resplendent beauty and command, till these, bearing the best, the latest fruit, the Spiritual, the aspirational, shall fully appear.

A portion of our pages we might indite with reference toward Europe, especially the British part of it, more than our own land, and thus, perhaps not abso-

lutely needed for the home reader. But the whole question hangs together, and fastens and links all peoples. The Liberalist of to-day has this advantage over antique or medieval times, that his doctrine seeks not only to universalize, but to individualize. Then the great word Solidarity has arisen.

I say of all dangers to a Nation, as things exist in our day, there can be no greater one than having certain portions of the people set off from the rest by a line drawn—they not privileged as others, but degraded, humiliated, made of no account. Much quackery teems, of course, even on Democracy's side, yet does not really affect the orbic quality of the matter. To work in, if we may so term it, and justify God, his divine aggregate, the People, (or, the veritable horned and sharp-tailed Devil, *his* aggregate, if there be who convulsively insist upon it,)—this, I say, is what Democracy is for; and this is what our America means, and is doing—may I not say, has done? If not, she means nothing more, and does nothing more, than any other land. And as, by virtue of its kosmical, antiseptic power, Nature's stomach is fully strong enough not only to digest the morbid matter always presented, not to be turned aside, and perhaps, indeed, intuitively gravitating thither—but even to change such contributions into nutriment for highest use and life—so American Democracy's. That is the lesson we, these days, send over to European lands by every western breeze.

And, truly, whatever may be said in the way of abstract argument, for or against the theory of a wider democratizing of institutions in any civilized country, much trouble might well be saved to all European lands by recognizing this palpable fact, (for a palpable fact it is,) that some form of such democratizing is about the only resource now left. *That*, or chronic dissatisfaction continued, mutterings which grow annually louder and louder, till, in due course, and pretty swiftly in most cases, the inevitable crisis, crash, dynastic ruin. Anything worthy to be called statesmanship in the Old World, I should say, among the advanced students,

adepts, or men of any brains, does not debate to-day whether to hold on, attempting to lean back and monarchize, or to look forward and democratize—but *how*, and in what degree and part, most prudently to democratize. The difficulties of the transfer may be fearful; perhaps none here in our America can truly know them. I, for one, fully acknowledge them, and sympathize deeply. But there is Time, and must be Faith; and Opportunities, though gradual and slow, will everywhere abroad be born.

There is (turning home again,) a thought, or fact, I must not forget—subtle and vast, dear to America, twin-sister of its Democracy—so ligatured indeed to it, that either's death, if not the other's also, would make that other live out life, dragging a corpse, a loathsome horrid tag and burden forever at its feet. What the idea of Messiah was to the ancient race of Israel, through storm and calm, through public glory and their name's humiliation, tenacious, refusing to be argued with, shedding all shafts of ridicule and disbelief, undestroyed by captivities, battles, deaths—for neither the scalding blood of war, nor the rotted ichor of peace could ever wash it out, nor has yet—a great Idea, bedded in Judah's heart—source of the loftiest Poetry the world yet knows—continuing on the same, though all else varies—the spinal thread of the incredible romance of that people's career along five thousand years,—So runs this thought, this fact, amid our own land's race and history. It is the thought of Oneness, averaging, including all; of Identity—the indissoluble sacred Union of These States.

The eager and often inconsiderate appeals of reformers and revolutionists are indispensable to counterbalance the inertness and fossilism making so large a part of human institutions. The latter will always take care of themselves—the danger being that they rapidly tend to ossify us. The former is to be treated with indulgence, and even respect. As circulation to air, so is agitation and a plentiful degree of speculative license

to political and moral sanity. Indirectly, but surely, goodness, virtue, law, (of the very best,) follow Freedom. These, to Democracy, are what the keel is to the ship, or saltness to the ocean.

The true gravitation-hold of Liberalism in the United States will be a more universal ownership of property, general homesteads, general comfort—a vast, intertwining reticulation of wealth. As the human frame, or, indeed, any object in this manifold Universe, is best kept together by the simple miracle of its own cohesion, and the necessity, exercise and profit thereof, so a great and varied Nationality, occupying millions of square miles, were firmest held and knit by the principle of the safety and endurance of the aggregate of its middling property owners.

So that, from another point of view, ungracious as it may sound, and a paradox after what we have been saying, Democracy looks with suspicious, ill-satisfied eye upon the very poor, the ignorant, and on those out of business. She asks for men and women with occupations, well-off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank—and with some cravings for literature, too; and must have them, and hastens to make them. Luckily, the seed is already well-sown, and has taken ineradicable root.*

—Huge and mighty are our Days, our republican lands—and most in their rapid shiftings, their changes, all in the interest of the Cause. As I write this pass-

* For fear of mistake, I may as well distinctly announce, as cheerfully included in the model and standard of These Vistas, a practical, stirring, worldly, money-making, even materialistic character. It is undeniable that our farms, stores, offices, dry-goods, coal and groceries, enginery, cash-accounts, trades, earnings, markets, &c., should be attended to in earnest, and actively pursued, just as if they had a real and permanent existence. I perceive clearly that the extreme business energy, and this almost maniacal appetite for wealth prevalent in the United States, are vital parts of amelioration and progress, and perhaps indispensably needed to prepare the very results I demand. My theory includes riches, and the getting of riches, and the amplest products, power, activity, inventions, movements, &c. Upon these, as upon substrata, I raise the edifice designed in These Vistas.

age, (November, 1863,) the din of disputation rages around me. Acrid the temper of the parties, vital the pending questions. Congress convenes ; the President sends his Message ; Reconstruction is still in abeyance ; the nominations and the contest for the twenty-first Presidential draw close, with loudest threat and bustle. Of these, and all the like of these, the eventuations I know not ; but well I know that behind them, and whatever their eventuations, the really vital things remain safe and certain, and all the needed work goes on. Time, with soon or later superciliousness, disposes of Presidents, Congressmen, party platforms, and such. Anon, it clears the stage of each and any mortal shred that thinks itself so potent to its day ; and at and after which, (with precious, golden exceptions once or twice in a century,) all that relates to sir potency is flung to moulder in a burial-vault, and no one bothers himself the least bit about it afterward. But the People ever remains, tendencies continue, and all the idiocratic transfers in unbroken chain go on. In a few years the dominion-heart of America will be far inland, toward the West. Our future National Capitol may not be where the present one is. It is possible, nay likely, that in less than fifty years, it will migrate a thousand or two miles, will be re-founded, and every thing belonging to it made on a different plan, original, far more superb. The main social, political spine-character of The States will probably run along the Ohio, Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and west and north of them, including Canada. Those regions, with the group of powerful brothers toward the Pacific, (destined to the mastership of that sea and its countless Paradises of islands,) will compact and settle the traits of America, with all the old retained, but more expanded, grafted on newer, hardier, purely native stock. A giant growth, composite from the rest, getting their contribution, absorbing it, to make it more illustrious. From the North, Intellect, the sun of things—also the idea of unswayable Justice, anchor amid the last, the wildest tempests. From the South, the living Soul, the animus of good and bad, haughtily admitting no demonstration but its

own. While from the West itself comes solid Personality, with blood and brawn, and the deep quality of all-accepting fusion.

Political Democracy, as it exists and practically works in America, with all its threatening evils, supplies a training-school for making grand young men. It is life's gymnasium, not of good only, but of all. We try often, though we fall back often. A brave delight, fit for freedom's athletes, fills these arenas, and fully satisfies, out of the action in them, irrespective of success. Whatever we do not attain, we at any rate attain the experiences of the fight, the hardening of the strong campaign, and throb with currents of attempt at least. Time is ample. Let the victors come after us. Not for nothing does evil play its part among men. Judging from the main portions of the history of the world, so far, justice is always in jeopardy, peace walks amid hourly pitfalls, and of slavery, misery, meanness, the craft of tyrants and the credulity of the populace, in some of their protean forms, no voice can at any time say, They are not. The clouds break a little, and the sun shines out—but soon and certain the lowering darkness falls again, as if to last forever. Yet is there an immortal courage and prophecy in every sane soul that cannot, must not, under any circumstances, capitulate. *Vive*, the attack—the perennial assault! *Vive*, the unpopular cause—the spirit that audaciously aims—the never-abandoned efforts, pursued the same amid opposing proofs and precedents.

—Once, before the war, (Alas! I dare not say how many times the mood has come!) I, too, was filled with doubt and gloom. A foreigner, an acute and good man, had impressively said to me, that day—putting in form, indeed, my own observations: I have traveled much in the United States, and watched their politicians, and listened to the speeches of the candidates, and read the journals, and gone into the public houses, and heard the unguarded talk of men. And I have found your vaunted America honey-combed from top to toe with infidelism, even to itself and its own programme. I

have marked the brazen hell-faces of secession and slavery gazing defiantly from all the windows and doorways. I have everywhere found, primarily, thieves and scalliwags arranging the nominations to offices, and sometimes filling the offices themselves. I have found the North just as full of bad stuff as the South. Of the holders of public office in the Nation, or in the States, or their municipalities, I have found that not one in a hundred has been chosen by any spontaneous selection of the outsiders, the people, but all have been nominated and put through by little or large caucuses of the politicians, and have got in by corrupt rings and electioneering, not capacity or desert. I have noticed how the millions of sturdy farmers and mechanics are thus the helpless supple-jacks of comparatively few politicians. And I have noticed more and more, the alarming spectacle of parties usurping the Government, and openly and shamelessly wielding it for party purposes.

Sad, serious, deep truths. Yet are there other, still deeper, amply confronting, dominating truths. Over those politicians and great and little rings, and over all their insolence and wiles, and over the powerfulest parties, looms a Power, too sluggish may-be, but ever holding decisions and decrees in hand, ready, with stern process, to execute them as soon as plainly needed, and at times, indeed, summarily crushing to atoms the mightiest parties, even in the hour of their pride.

In saner hours far different are the amounts of these things from what, at first sight, they appear. Though it is no doubt important who is elected President or Governor, Mayor or Legislator, (and full of dismay when incompetent or vile ones get elected, as they sometimes do,) there are other, quieter contingencies, infinitely more important. Shams, &c., will always be the show, like ocean's scum; enough, if waters deep and clear make up the rest. Enough, that while the piled embroidered shoddy gaud and fraud spreads to the superficial eye, the hidden warp and weft are genuine, and will wear forever. Enough, in short, that the race, the land which could raise such as the late Rebellion, could also put it down.

The average man of a land at last only is important. He, in These States, remains immortal owner and boss, deriving good uses, somehow, out of any sort of servant in office, even the basest; because, (certain universal requisites, and their settled regularity and protection, being first secured,) a Nation like ours, in a sort of geological formation state, trying continually new experiments, choosing new delegations, is not served by the best men only, but sometimes more by those that provoke it—by the combats they arouse. Thus national rage, fury, discussion, &c., better than content. Thus, also, the warning signals, invaluable for after times.

What is more dramatic than the spectacle we have seen repeated, and doubtless long shall see—the popular judgment taking the successful candidates on trial in the offices—standing off, as it were, and observing them and their doings for a while, and always giving, finally, the fit, exactly due reward?

I think, after all, the sublimest part of political history, and its culmination, is currently issuing from the American people. I know nothing grander, better exercise, better digestion, more positive proof of the past, the triumphant result of faith in humankind, than a well-contested American national election.

Then still the thought returns, (like the thread-passage in overtures,) giving the key and echo to these pages. When I pass to and fro, different latitudes, different seasons, beholding the crowds of the great cities, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, New Orleans, Baltimore—when I mix with these interminable swarms of alert, turbulent, good-natured, independent citizens, mechanics, clerks, young persons—at the idea of this mass of men, so fresh and free, so loving and so proud, a singular awe falls upon me. I feel, with dejection and amazement, that among our geniuses and talented writers or speakers, few or none have yet really spoken to this people, or created a single image-making work that could be called for them—or absorbed the central spirit and the idiosyncrasies which are theirs, and which, thus,

in highest ranges, so far remain entirely uncelebrated, unexpressed.

Dominion strong is the body's ; dominion stronger is the mind's. What has filled, and fills to-day our intellect, our fancy, furnishing the standards therein, is yet foreign. The great poems, Shakespeare included, are poisonous to the idea of the pride and dignity of the common people, the life-blood of Democracy. The models of our literature, as we get it from other lands, ultramarine, have had their birth in courts, and basked and grown in castle sunshine ; all smells of princes' favors. Of workers of a certain sort, we have, indeed, plenty, contributing after their kind ; many elegant, many learned, all complacent. But, touched by the National test, or tried by the standards of Democratic personality, they wither to ashes. I say I have not seen a single writer, artist, lecturer, or what not, that has confronted the voiceless but ever erect and active, pervading, underlying will and typic Aspiration of the land, in a spirit kindred to itself. Do you call those genteel little creatures American poets ? Do you term that perpetual, pistareen, paste-pot work, American art, American drama, taste, verse ? I think I hear, echoed as from some mountain-top afar in the West, the scornful laugh of the Genius of These States.

—Democracy, in silence, biding its time, ponders its own ideals, not of Literature and Art only—not of men only, but of women. The idea of the women of America, (extricated from this daze, this fossil and unhealthy air which hangs about the word Lady,) developed, raised to become the robust equals, workers, and, it may be, even practical and political deciders with the men—greater than man, we may admit, through their divine maternity, always their towering, emblematical attribute—but great, at any rate, as man, in all departments ; or, rather, capable of being so, soon as they realize it, and can bring themselves to give up toys and fictions, and launch forth, as men do, amid real, independent, stormy life.

—Then, as toward our thought's finale, (and, in that,

overarching the true scholar's lesson,) we have to say there can be no complete or epical presentation of Democracy in the aggregate, or any thing like it, at this day, because its doctrines will only be effectually incarnated in any one branch, when, in all, their spirit is at the root and centre. Far, far, indeed, stretch, in distance, our vistas! How much is still to be disentangled, freed! How long it takes to make this world see that it is, in itself, the final authority and reliance!

Did you, too, O friend, suppose Democracy was only for elections, for politics, and for a party name? I say Democracy is only of use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruits in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between men, and their beliefs—in Religion, Literature, colleges, and schools—Democracy in all public and private life, and in the Army and Navy.* I have intimated that, as a paramount scheme, it has yet few or no full realizers and believers. I do not see, either, that it owes any serious thanks to noted propagandists or champions, or has been essentially helped, though often harmed, by them. It has been and is carried on by all the moral forces, and by trade, finance, machinery, intercommunications, and, in fact, by all the developments of history, and can no more be stopped than the tides, or the earth in its orbit. Doubtless, also, it resides, crude and latent, well down in the hearts of the fair average of the American-born people, mainly in the agricultural regions. But it is not yet, there or anywhere, the fully-received, the fervid, the absolute faith.

I submit, therefore, that the fruition of Democracy, on aught like a grand scale, resides altogether in the future. As, under any profound and comprehensive view of the gorgeous-composite Feudal world, we see

* The whole present system of the officering and *personnel* of the Army and Navy of These States, and the spirit and letter of their trebly-aristocratic rules and regulations, is a monstrous exotic, a nuisance and revolt, and belong here just as much as orders of nobility, or the Pope's council of Cardinals. I say if the present theory of our Army and Navy is sensible and true, then the rest of America is an unmitigated fraud.

in it, through the long ages and cycles of ages, the results of a deep, integral, human and divine principle, or fountain, from which issued laws, ecclesia, manners, institutes, costumes, personalities, poems, (hitherto unequalled,) faithfully partaking of their source, and indeed only arising either to betoken it, or to furnish parts of that varied-flowing display, whose centre was one and absolute—so, long ages hence, shall the due historian or critic make at least an equal retrospect, an equal History for the Democratic principle. It, too, must be adorned, credited with its results—then, when it, with imperial power, through amplest time, has dominated mankind—has been the source and test of all the moral, esthetic, social, political, and religious expressions and institutes of the civilized world—has begotten them in spirit and in form, and carried them to its own unprecedented heights—has had, (it is possible,) monasties and ascetics, more numerous, more devout than the monks and priests of all previous creeds—has swayed the ages with a breadth and rectitude tallying Nature's own—has fashioned, systematized, and triumphantly finished and carried out, in its own interest, and with unparalleled success, a New Earth and a New Man.

—Thus we presume to write, as it were, upon things that exist not, and travel by maps yet unmade, and a blank. But the throes of birth are upon us; and we have something of this advantage in seasons of strong formations, doubts, suspense—for then the afflatus of such themes haply may fall upon us, more or less; and then, hot from surrounding war and revolution, our speech, though without polished coherence, and a failure by the standard called criticism, comes forth, real at least, as the lightnings.

And may-be we, these days, have, too, our own reward—(for there are yet some, in all lands, worthy to be so encouraged.) Though not for us the joy of entering at the last the conquered city—nor ours the chance ever to see with our own eyes the peerless power and splendid *eclat* of the Democratic principle, arrived at meridian, filling the world with effulgence and majesty far beyond those of past history's kings,

or all dynastic sway—there is yet, to whoever is eligible among us, the prophetic vision, the joy of being tossed in the brave turmoil of these times—the promulgation and the path, obedient, lowly reverent to the voice, the gesture of the god, or holy ghost, which others see not, hear not—with the proud consciousness that amid whatever clouds, seductions, or heart-wearying postponements, we have never deserted, never despaired, never abandoned the Faith.

So much contributed, to be conned well, to help prepare and brace our edifice, our plann'd Idea—we still proceed to give it in another of its aspects—perhaps the main, the high façade of all. For to Democracy, the leveler, the unyielding principle of the average, is surely joined another principle, equally unyielding, closely tracking the first, indispensable to it, opposite, (as the sexes are opposite,) and whose existence, confronting and ever modifying the other, often clashing, paradoxical, yet neither of highest avail without the other, plainly supplies to these grand cosmic politics of ours, and to the launched forth mortal dangers of Republicanism, to-day or any day, the counterpart and offset, whereby Nature restrains the deadly original relentlessness of all her first-class laws. This second principle is Individuality, the pride and centripetal isolation of a human being in himself,—Identity—Personalism. Whatever the name, its acceptance and thorough infusion through the organizations of political commonalty now shooting Aurora-like about the world, are of utmost importance, as the principle itself is needed for very life's sake. It forms, in a sort, or is to form, the compensating balance-wheel of the successful working machinery of aggregate America.

—And, if we think of it, what does civilization itself rest upon—and what object has it, with its religions, arts, schools, &c., but rich, luxuriant, varied Personalism? To that, all bends; and it is because toward such result Democracy alone, on anything like Nature's scale, breaks up the limitless fallows of humankind, and plants

the seed, and gives fair play, that its claims now precede the rest.

The Literature, Songs, Esthetics, &c., of a country are of importance principally because they furnish the materials and suggestions of Personality for the women and men of that country, and enforce them in a thousand effective ways.*

As the topmost claim of a strong consolidating of the Nationality of These States, is, that only by such powerful compaction can the separate States secure that full and free swing within their spheres, which is becoming to them, each after its kind, so will Individuality, with unimpeded branchings, flourish best under imperial Republican forms.

—Assuming Democracy to be at present in its embryo

* After the rest is satiated, all interest culminates in the field of Persons, and never flags there. Accordingly in this field have the great poets and Literatures signally toiled. They too, in all ages, all lands, have been creators, fashioning, making types of men and women, as Adam and Eve are made in the divine fable. Behold, shaped, bred by Orientalism, Feudalism, through their long growth and culmination, and breeding back in return, (When shall we have an equal series, typical of Democracy?)—Behold, commencing in primal Asia, (apparently formulated, in what beginning we know, in the gods of the mythologies, and coming down thence,) a few samples out of the countless product, bequeathed to the moderns, bequeathed to America as studies. For the men, Yudishtira, Rama, Arjuna, Solomon, most of the Old and New Testament characters; Achilles, Ulysses, Theseus, Prometheus, Hercules, Æneas, St. John, Plutarch's heroes; the Merlin of Celtic bards, the Cid, Arthur and his knights, Siegfried and Hagen in the Niebelungen; Roland and Oliver; Roustam in the Shah-Nehmah; and so on to Milton's Satan, Cervantes' Don Quixote, Shakespeare's Hamlet, Richard II., Lear, Marc Antony, &c., and the modern Faust. These, I say, are models, combined, adjusted to other standards than America's, but of priceless value to her and hers.

Among women, the goddesses of the Egyptian, Indian and Greek mythologies, certain Bible characters, especially the Holy Mother; Cleopatra, Penelope; the portraits of Brunhelde and Chriemhilde in the Niebelungen; Oriana, Una, &c.; the modern Consuelo, Walter Scott's Jeanie and Effie Deans, &c., &c. (Woman, portrayed or outlined at her best, or as perfect human Mother, does not yet, it seems to me, fully appear in Literature.)

condition, and that the only large and satisfactory justification of it resides in the future, mainly through the copious production of perfect characters among the people, and through the advent of a sane and pervading Religiousness, it is with regard to the atmosphere and spaciousness fit for such characters, and of certain nutriment and cartoon-draftings proper for them, and indicating them, for New World purposes, that I continue the present statement—an exploration, as of new ground, wherein, like other primitive surveyors, I must do the best I can, leaving it to those who come after me to do much better. The service, in fact, if any, must be to merely break a sort of first path or track, no matter how rude and ungeometrical.

We have frequently printed the word Democracy. Yet I cannot too often repeat that it is a word the real gist of which still sleeps, quite unawakened, notwithstanding the resonance and the many angry tempests, out of which its syllables have come, from pen or tongue. It is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten, because that history has yet to be enacted. It is, in some sort, younger brother of another great and often-used word, Nature, whose history also waits unwritten.

As I perceive, the tendencies of our day, in The States, (and I entirely respect them,) are toward those vast and sweeping movements, influences, moral and physical, of humanity, now and always current over the planet, on the scale of the impulses of the elements. Then it is also good to reduce the whole matter to the consideration of a single self, a man, a woman, on permanent grounds. Even for the treatment of the universal, in politics, metaphysics, or anything, sooner or later we come down to one single, solitary Soul.

There is, in sanest hours, a consciousness, a thought that rises, independent, lifted out from all else, calm, like the stars, shining eternal. This is the thought of Identity—yours for you, whoever you are, as mine for me. Miracle of miracles, beyond statement, most spiritual and vaguest of earth's dreams, yet hardest basic fact, and only entrance to all facts. In such devout

hours, in the midst of the significant wonders of heaven and earth, (significant only because of the Me in the centre,) creeds, conventions, fall away and become of no account before this simple idea. Under the luminousness of real vision, it alone takes possession, takes value. Like the shadowy dwarf in the fable, once liberated and looked upon, it expands over the whole earth, and spreads to the roof of heaven.

The quality of BEING, in the object's self, according to its own central idea and purpose, and of growing therefrom and thereto—not criticism by other standards, and adjustments thereto—is the lesson of Nature. True, the full man wisely gathers, culls, absorbs; but if, engaged disproportionately in that, he slights or overlays the precious idiocrasy and special nativity and intention that he is, the man's self, the main thing, is a failure, however wide his general cultivation. Thus, in our times, refinement and delicatesss are not only attended to sufficiently, but threaten to eat us up, like a cancer. Already, the Democratic genius watches, ill-pleased, these tendencies. Provision for a little healthy rudeness, savage virtue, justification of what one has in one's self, whatever it is, is demanded. Negative qualities, even deficiencies, would be a relief. Singleness and normal simplicity, and separation, amid this more and more complex, more and more artificialized, state of society—how pensively we yearn for them! how we would welcome their return!

In some such direction, then—at any rate enough to preserve the balance—we feel called upon to throw what weight we can, not for absolute reasons, but current ones. To prune, gather, trim, conform, and ever cram and stuff, is the pressure of our days. While aware that much can be said even in behalf of all this, we perceive that we have not now to consider the question of what is demanded to serve a half-starved and barbarous nation, or set of nations, but what is most applicable, most pertinent, for numerous congeries of conventional, over-corpulent societies already becoming stifled and rotten with flatulent, infidelistic literature, and polite conformity and art.

In addition to established sciences, we suggest a science as it were of healthy average Personalism, on original-universal grounds, the object of which should be to raise up and supply through The States a copious race of superb American men and women, cheerful, religious, ahead of any yet known.

America, leaving out her politics, has yet morally originated nothing. She seems singularly unaware that the models of persons, books, manners, &c., appropriate for former conditions and for European lands, are but exiles and exotics here. No current of her life, as shown on the surfaces of what is authoritatively called her Society, accepts or runs into moral, social, or esthetic Democracy; but all the currents set squarely against it. Never, in the Old World, was thoroughly upholstered Exterior Appearance and show, mental and other, built entirely on the idea of caste, and on the sufficiency of mere outside Acquisition—never were Glibness, verbal Intellect, more the test, the emulation—more loftily elevated as head and sample—than they are on the surface of our Republican States this day. The writers of a time hint the mottoes of its gods. The word of the modern, say these voices, is the word Culture.

We find ourselves abruptly in close quarters with the enemy. This word Culture, or what it has come to represent, involves, by contrast, our whole theme, and has been, indeed, the spur, urging us to engagement. Certain questions arise.

As now taught, accepted and carried out, are not the processes of Culture rapidly creating a class of supercilious infidels, who believe in nothing? Shall a man lose himself in countless masses of adjustments, and be so shaped with reference to this, that, and the other, that the simply good and healthy and brave parts of him are reduced and clipped away, like the bordering of box in a garden? You can cultivate corn and roses and orchards—but who shall cultivate the primaeval forests, the mountain peaks, the ocean, and the tumbling gorgeousness of the clouds? Lastly—Is the readily-given reply that Culture only seeks to help,

systematize, and put in attitude, the elements of fertility and power, a conclusive reply?

I do not so much object to the name, or word, but I should certainly insist, for the purposes of These States, on a radical change of category, in the distribution of precedence. I should demand a programme of Culture, drawn out, not for a single class alone, or for the parlors or lecture-rooms, but with an eye to practical life, the West, the working-men, the facts of farms and jackplanes and engineers, and of the broad range of the women also of the middle and working strata, and with reference to the perfect equality of women, and of a grand and powerful motherhood. I should demand of this programme or theory a scope generous enough to include the widest human area. It must have for its spinal meaning the formation of a typical Personality of character, eligible to the uses of the high average of men—and *not* restricted by conditions ineligible to the masses.

The best culture will always be that of the manly and courageous instincts, and loving perceptions, and of self-respect—aiming to form, over this continent, an Idiocracy of Universalism, which, true child of America, will bring joy to its mother, returning to her in her own spirit, recruiting myriads of men, able, natural, perceptive, tolerant, devout, real men, alive and full, believers in her, America, and with some definite instinct why and for what she has arisen, most vast, most formidable of historic births, and is, now and here, with wonderful step, journeying through Time.

The problem, as it seems to me, presented to the New World, is, under permanent law and order, and after preserving cohesion, (ensemble-Individuality,) at all hazards, to vitalize man's free play of special Personalism, recognizing in it something that calls ever more to be considered, fed, and adopted as the substratum for the best that belongs to us, (government indeed is for it,) including the new esthetics of our future.

To formulate beyond this present vagueness—to help line and put before us, the species, or a specimen of the

species, of the Democratic ethnology of the future, is a work toward which the Genius of our land, with peculiar encouragement, invites her well-wishers. Already, certain limnings, more or less grotesque, more or less fading and watery, have appeared. We too, (repressing doubts and qualms,) will try our hand.

Attempting then, however crudely, a basic model or portrait of Personality, for general use for the manliness of The States, (and doubtless that is most useful which is most simple, comprehensive for all, and toned low enough,) we should prepare the canvas well beforehand. Parentage must consider itself in advance. (Will the time hasten when fatherhood and motherhood shall become a science—and the noblest science?) To our model a clear-blooded, strong-fibred physique, is indispensable; the questions of food, drink, air, exercise, assimilation, digestion, can never be intermitted. Out of these we descry a well-begotten Selfhood—in youth, fresh, ardent, emotional, aspiring, full of adventure; at maturity, brave, perceptive, under control, neither too talkative nor too reticent, neither flippant nor sombre; of the bodily figure, the movements easy, the complexion showing the best blood, somewhat flushed, breast expanded, an erect attitude, a voice whose sound outvies music, eyes of calm and steady gaze, yet capable also of flashing—and a general presence that holds its own in the company of the highest. For it is native Personality, and that alone, that endows a man to stand before Presidents or Generals, or in any distinguished collection, with *aplomb*; and *not* Culture, or any knowledge or intellect whatever.

With regard to the mental-educational part of our model, enlargement of intellect, stores of cephalic knowledge, &c., the concentration thitherward of all the customs of our age, especially in America, is so overweening, and provides so fully for that part, that, important and necessary as it is, it really needs nothing from us here—except, indeed, a phrase of warning and restraint.

Manners, costumes, too, though important, we need not dwell upon here. Like beauty, grace of motion,

&c., they are results. Causes, original things, being attended to, the right manners unerringly follow. Much is said, among artists, of the grand style, as if it were a thing by itself. When a man, artist or whoever, has health, pride, acuteness, noble aspirations, he has the motive-elements of the grandest style. The rest is but manipulation, (yet that is no small matter.)

—Leaving still unspecified several sterling parts of any model fit for the future Personality of America, I must not fail, again and ever, to pronounce myself on one, probably the least attended to in modern times—a hiatus, indeed, threatening its gloomiest consequences after us. I mean the simple, unsophisticated Conscience, the primary moral element. If I were asked to specify in what quarter lie the grounds of darkest dread, respecting the America of our hopes, I should have to point to this particular. I should demand the invariable application to Individuality, this day, and any day, of that old, ever-true plumb-rule of persons, eras, nations. Our triumphant modern Civilizee, with his all-schooling and his wondrous appliances, will still show himself but an amputation while this deficiency remains.

Beyond, (assuming a more hopeful tone,) the vertebration of the manly and womanly Personalism of our Western World, can only be, and is, indeed, to be, (I hope,) its all penetrating Religiousness. The architecture of Individuality will ever prove various, with countless different combinations; but here they rise as into common pinnacles, some higher, some less high, only all pointing upward.

Indeed, the ripeness of Religion is doubtless to be looked for in this field of Individuality, and is a result that no organization or church can ever achieve. As history is poorly retained by what the technists call history, and is not given out from their pages, except the learner has in himself the sense of the well-wrapt, never yet written, perhaps impossible to be written, history—so Religion, although casually arrested, and, after a fashion, preserved in the churches and creeds, does not depend at all upon them, but is a part of the identified

Soul, which, when greatest, knows not Bibles in the old way, but in new ways—the identified Soul, which can really confront Religion when it extricates itself entirely from the churches, and not before.

Personalism fuses this, and favors it. I should say, indeed, that only in the perfect uncontamination and solitariness of Individuality may the spirituality of Religion positively come forth at all. Only here, and on such terms, the meditation, the devout ecstacy, the soaring flight. Only here, communion with the mysteries, the eternal problems, Whence? whither? Alone, and identity, and the mood—and the Soul emerges, and all statements, churches, sermons, melt away like vapors. Alone, and silent thought, and awe, and aspiration—and then the interior consciousness, like a hitherto unseen inscription, in magic ink, beams out its wondrous lines to the sense. Bibles may convey, and priests expound, but it is exclusively for the noiseless operation of one's isolated Self, to enter the pure ether of veneration, reach the divine levels, and commune with the unutterable.

To practically enter into Politics is an important part of American personalism. To every young man, North and South, earnestly studying these things, I should here, as an offset to what I have said in former pages, now also say, that may-be to views of very largest scope, after all, perhaps the political, (and perhaps literary and sociological,) America goes best about its development its own way—sometimes, to temporary sight, appalling enough. It is the fashion among dilettants and fops to decry the whole formulation and *personnel* of the active politics of America, as beyond redemption, and to be carefully kept away from. See you that you do not fall into this error. America, it may be, is doing very well, upon the whole, notwithstanding these antics of the parties and their leaders, these half-brained nominees, and the many ignorant ballots, and many elected failures and blatherers. It is the dilettants, and all who shirk their duty, who are not doing well. As for you, I advise you to enter more

strongly yet into politics. I advise every young man to do so. Always inform yourself; always do the best you can; always vote. Disengage yourself from parties. They have been useful, and to some extent remain so; but the floating, uncommitted electors, farmers, clerks, mechanics, the masters of parties—watching aloof, inclining victory this side or that side—such are the ones most needed, present and future. For America, if eligible at all to downfall and ruin, is eligible within herself, not without; for I see clearly that the combined foreign world could not beat her down. But these savage, wolfish parties alarm me. Owing no law but their own will, more and more combative, less and less tolerant of the idea of ensemble and of equal brotherhood, the perfect equality of the States, the ever-overarching American ideas, it behooves you to convey yourself implicitly to no party, nor submit blindly to their dictators, but steadily hold yourself judge and master over all of them.

—So much, (hastily tossed together, and leaving far more unsaid,) for an ideal, or intimations of an ideal, toward American manhood. But the other sex, in our land, requires at least a basis of suggestion.

I have seen a young American woman, one of a large family of daughters, who, some years since, migrated from her meagre country home to one of the northern cities, to gain her own support. She soon became an expert seamstress, but finding the employment too confining for her health and comfort, she went boldly to work, for others, to house-keep, cook, clean, &c. After trying several places, she fell upon one where she was suited. She has told me that she finds nothing degrading in her position; it is not inconsistent with personal dignity, self-respect, and the respect of others. She confers benefits and receives them. She has good health; her presence itself is healthy and bracing; her character is unstained; she has made herself understood, and preserves her independence, and has been able to help her parents and educate and get places for her sisters; and her course of life is not without oppor-

tunities for mental improvement, and of much quiet, uncosting happiness and love.

I have seen another woman who, from taste and necessity conjoined, has gone into practical affairs, carries on a mechanical business, partly works at it herself, dashes out more and more into real hardy life, is not abashed by the coarseness of the contact, knows how to be firm and silent at the same time, holds her own with unvarying coolness and decorum, and will compare, any day, with superior carpenters, farmers, and even boatmen and drivers. For all that, she has not lost the charm of the womanly nature, but preserves and bears it fully, though through such rugged presentation.

Then there is the wife of a mechanic, mother of two children, a woman of merely passable English education, but of fine wit, with all her sex's grace and intuitions, who exhibits, indeed, such a noble female Personality, that I am fain to record it here. Never abnegating her own proper independence, but always genially preserving it, and what belongs to it—cooking, washing, child-nursing, house-tending, she beams sunshine out of all these duties, and makes them illustrious. Physiologically sweet and sound, loving work, practical, she yet knows that there are intervals, however few, devoted to recreation, music, leisure, hospitality—and affords such intervals. Whatever she does, and wherever she is, that charm, that indescribable perfume of genuine womanhood, attends her, goes with her, exhales from her, which belongs of right to all the sex, and is, or ought to be, the invariable atmosphere and common aureola of old as well as young.

My mother has described to me a resplendent person, down on Long Island, whom she knew years ago, in early days. She was known by the name of the Peacemaker. She was well toward eighty years old, of happy and sunny temperament, had always lived on a farm, was very neighborly, sensible and discreet, an invariable and welcomed favorite, especially with young married women. She had numerous children and grandchildren. She was uneducated, but possessed a native

dignity. She had come to be a tacitly agreed upon domestic regulator, judge, settler of difficulties, shepherdess, and reconciler in the land. She was a sight to draw near and look upon, with her large figure, her profuse snow-white hair, dark eyes, clear complexion, sweet breath, and peculiar personal magnetism.

The foregoing portraits, I admit, are frightfully out of line from these imported models of womanly Personality—the stock feminine characters of the current novelists, or of the foreign court poems, (Ophelias, Enids, Princesses, or Ladies of one thing or another,) which fill the envying dreams of so many poor girls, and are accepted by our young men, too, as supreme ideals of feminine excellence to be sought after. But I present mine just for a change.

Then there are mutterings, (we will not now stop to heed them here, but they must be heeded,) of something more revolutionary. The day is coming when the deep questions of woman's entrance amid the arenas of practical life, politics, trades, &c., will not only be argued all around us, but may be put to decision, and real experiment.

—Of course, in These States, for both man and woman, we must entirely recast the types of highest Personality from what the Oriental, Feudal, Ecclesiastical worlds bequeath us, and which yet fully possess the imaginative and esthetic fields of the United States, pictorial and melodramatic, not without use as studies, but making sad work, and forming a strange anachronism upon the scenes and exigencies around us.

Of course, the old, undying elements remain. The task is, to successfully adjust them to new combinations, our own days. Nor is this so incredible. I can conceive a community, to-day and here, in which, on a sufficient scale, the perfect Personalities, without noise, meet; say in some pleasant Western settlement or town, where a couple of hundred best men and women, of ordinary worldly status, have by luck been drawn together, with nothing extra of genius or wealth, but virtuous, chaste, industrious, cheerful, resolute, friendly,

and devout. I can conceive such a community organized in running order, powers judiciously delegated, farming, building, trade, courts, mails, schools, elections, all attended to; and then the rest of life, the main thing, freely branching and blossoming in each individual, and bearing golden fruit. I can see there, in every young and old man, after his kind, and in every woman after hers, a true Personality, developed, exercised proportionately in body, mind, and spirit. I can imagine this case as one not necessarily rare or difficult, but in buoyant accordance with the municipal and general requirements of our times. And I can realize in it the culmination of something better than any stereotyped *eclat* of history or poems. Perhaps, unsung, undramatized, unput in essays or biographies—perhaps even some such community already exists, in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, or somewhere, practically fulfilling itself, and thus outvying, in cheapest vulgar life, all that has been hitherto shown in best ideal pictures.

In short, and to sum up, America, betaking herself to formative action, (as it is about time for more solid achievement and less windy promise,) must, for her purposes, cease to recognize a theory of character grown of Feudal aristocracies, or formed by merely esthetic or literary standards, or from any ultramarine, full-dress formulas of culture, polish, caste, &c., and must sternly promulgate her own new standard, yet old enough, and accepting the old, the perennial, elements, and combining them into groups, unities, appropriate to the modern, the democratic, the West, and to the practical occasions and needs of our own cities, and of the agricultural regions. Ever the most precious in the common. Ever the fresh breeze of field, or hill, or lake, is more than any palpitation of fans, though of ivory, and redolent with perfume; and the air is more than the costliest perfumes.

And now, for fear of mistake, we may not intermit to beg our absolution from all that genuinely is, or goes along with, even Culture. Pardon us, venerable shade! if we have seemed to speak lightly of your office. The whole civilization of the earth, we know, is yours, with

all the glory and the light thereof. It is, indeed, in your own spirit, and seeking to tally the loftiest teachings of it, that we aim these poor utterances. For you, too, mighty minister! know that there is something greater than you, namely, the fresh, eternal qualities of Being. From them, and by them, as you, at your best, we, too, after our fashion, when art and conventions fail, evoke the last, the needed help, to vitalize our country and our days.

Thus we pronounce not so much against the principle of Culture; we only supervise it, and promulge along with it, as deep, perhaps a deeper, principle. As we have shown, the New World, including in itself the all-leveling aggregate of Democracy, we show it also including the all-varied, all-permitting, all-free theorem of Individuality, and erecting therefor a lofty and hitherto unoccupied framework or platform, broad enough for all, eligible to every farmer and mechanic—to the female equally with the male—a towering Selfhood, not physically perfect only—not satisfied with the mere mind's and learning's stores, but Religious, possessing the idea of the Infinite, (rudder and compass sure amid this troublous voyage, o'er darkest, wildest wave, through stormiest wind, of man's or nation's progress,)—realizing, above the rest, that known humanity, in deepest sense, is fair adhesion to Itself, for purposes beyond—and that, finally, the Personality of mortal life is most important with reference to the immortal, the Unknown, the Spiritual, the only permanently real, which, as the ocean waits for and receives the rivers, waits for us each and all.

Much is there, yet, demanding line and outline in our Vistas, not only on these topics, but others quite unwritten. Indeed, we could talk the matter, and expand it, through lifetime. But it is necessary to return to our original premises. In view of them, we have again pointedly to confess that all the objective grandeurs of the World, for highest purposes, yield themselves up, and depend on mentality alone. Here, and here only, all balances, all rests. For the mind, which alone builds

the permanent edifice, haughtily builds it to itself. By it, with what follows it, are conveyed to mortal sense the culminations of the materialistic, the known, and a prophecy of the unknown. To take expression, to incarnate, to endow a Literature with grand and archetypal models—to fill with pride and love the utmost capacity, and to achieve spiritual meanings, and suggest the future—these, and these only, satisfy the soul. We must not say one word against real materials; but the wise know that they do not become real till touched by emotions, the mind. Did we call the latter imponderable? Ah, let us rather proclaim that the slightest song-tune, the countless ephemera of passions aroused by orators and tale-tellers, are more dense, more weighty than the engines there in the great factories, or the granite blocks in their foundations.

—Approaching thus the momentous spaces, and considering with reference to a new and greater Personalism, the needs and possibilities of American imaginative literature, through the medium-light of what we have already broached, it will at once be appreciated that a vast gulf of difference separates the present accepted condition of these spaces, inclusive of what is floating in them, from any condition adjusted to, or fit for, the world, the America, there sought to be indicated, and the copious races of complete men and women, down along these Vistas crudely outlined.

It is, in some sort, no less a difference than lies between that long-continued nebular state and vagueness of the astronomical worlds, compared with the subsequent state, the definitely-formed worlds themselves, duly compacted, clustering in systems, hung up there, chandeliers of the universe, beholding and mutually lit by each other's lights, serving for ground of all substantial foothold, all vulgar uses—yet serving still more as an undying chain and echelon of spiritual proofs and shows. A boundless field to fill! A new Creation, with needed orbic works launched forth, to revolve in free and lawful circuits—to move, self-poised, through the ether, and shine, like heaven's own suns! With such, and nothing less, we suggest that New World Litera-

ture, fit to rise upon, cohere, and signalize, in time, These States.

What, however, do we more definitely mean by New World Literature? Are we not doing well enough here already? Are not the United States this day busily using, working, more printer's type, more presses, than any other country? uttering and absorbing more publications than any other? Do not our publishers fatten quicker and deeper? (helping themselves, under shelter of a delusive and sneaking law, or rather absence of law, to most of their forage, poetical, pictorial, historical, romantic, even comic, without money and without price—and fiercely resisting even the timidest proposal to pay for it.)

Many will come under this delusion—but my purpose is to dispel it. I say that a nation may hold and circulate rivers and oceans of very readable print, journals, magazines, novels, library-books, "poetry," &c.—such as The States to-day possess and circulate—of unquestionable aid and value—hundreds of new volumes annually composed and brought out here, respectable enough, indeed unsurpassed in smartness and erudition—with further hundreds, or rather millions, (as by free forage, or theft, aforementioned,) also thrown into the market,—And yet, all the while, the said nation, land, strictly speaking, may possess no literature at all.

Repeating our inquiry, What, then, do we mean by real literature? especially, the American literature of the future? Hard questions to meet. The clues are inferential, and turn us to the past. At best, we can only offer suggestions, comparisons, circuits.

—It must still be reiterated, as, for the purpose of these Memoranda, the deep lesson of History and Time, that all else in the contributions of a nation or age, through its politics, materials, heroic personalities, military eclat, &c., remains crude, and defers, in any close and thorough-going estimate, until vitalized by national, original archetypes in literature. They only put the nation in form, finally tell anything, prove, complete anything—perpetuate anything. Without doubt, some

of the richest and most powerful and populous communities of the antique world, and some of the grandest personalities and events, have, to after and present times, left themselves entirely unbeckoned. Doubtless, greater than any that have come down to us, were among those lands, heroisms, persons, that have not come down to us at all, even by name, date, or location. Others have arrived safely, as from voyages over wide, centuries-stretching seas. The little ships, the miracles that have buoyed them, and by incredible chances safely conveyed them, (or the best of them, their meaning and essence,) over long wastes, darkness, lethargy, ignorance, &c., have been a few inscriptions—a few immortal compositions, small in size, yet compassing what measureless values of reminiscence, contemporary portraitures, manners, idioms and beliefs, with deepest inference, hint and thought, to tie and touch forever the old, new body, and the old, new soul. These! and still these! bearing the freight so dear—dearer than pride—dearer than love. All the best experience of humanity, folded, saved, freighted to us here! Some of these tiny ships we call Old and New Testament, Homer, Eschylus, Plato, Juvenal, &c. Precious minims! I think, if we were forced to choose, rather than have you, and the likes of you, and what belongs to, and has grown of you, blotted out and gone, we could better afford, appalling as that would be, to lose all actual ships, this day fastened by wharf, or floating on wave, and see them, with all their cargoes, scuttled and sent to the bottom.

Gathered by geniuses of city, race, or age, and put by them in highest of art's forms, namely, the literary form, the peculiar combinations, and the outshows of that city, age, or race, its particular modes of the universal attributes and passions, its faiths, heroes, lovers and gods, wars, traditions, struggles, crimes, emotions, joys, (or the subtle spirit of these,) having been passed on to us to illumine our own selfhood, and its experiences—what they supply, indispensable and highest, if taken away, nothing else in all the world's boundless store-houses could make up to us, or ever again return.

For us, along the great highways of time, those monuments stand—those forms of majesty and beauty. For us those beacons burn through all the nights. Unknown Egyptians, graving hieroglyphs; Hindus, with hymn and apothegm and endless epic; Hebrew prophet, with spirituality, as in flashes of lightning, conscience, like red-hot iron, plaintive songs and screams of vengeance for tyrannies and enslavement; Christ, with bent head, brooding love and peace, like a dove; Greek, creating eternal shapes of physical and esthetic proportion; Roman, lord of satire, the sword, and the codex;—of the figures, some far-off and veiled, others nearer and visible; Dante, stalking with lean form, nothing but fibre, not a grain of superfluous flesh; Angelo, and the great painters, architects, musicians; rich Shakespeare, luxuriant as the sun, artist and singer of Feudalism in its sunset, with all the gorgeous colors, owner thereof, and using them at will;—and so to such as German Kant and Hegel, where they, though near us, leaping over the ages, sit again, impassive, imperturbable, like the Egyptian gods. Of these, and the like of these, is it too much, indeed, to return to our favorite figure, and view them as orbs and systems of orbs, moving in free paths in the spaces of that other heaven, the kosmic intellect, the Soul?

Ye powerful and resplendent ones! ye were, in your atmospheres, grown not for America, but rather for her foes, the Feudal and the old—while our genius is Democratic and modern. Yet could ye, indeed, but breathe your breath of life into our New World's nostrils—not to enslave us, as now, but, for our needs, to breed a spirit like your own—perhaps, (dare we to say it?) to dominate, even destroy, what you yourselves have left! On your plane, and no less, but even higher and wider, will I mete and measure for our wants to-day and here. I demand races of orbic bards, with unconditional, uncompromising sway. Come forth, sweet democratic despots of the west!

By points and specimens like these we, in reflection, token what we mean by any land's or people's genuine

literature. And thus compared and tested, judging amid the influence of loftiest products only, what do our current copious fields of print, covering, in manifold forms, the United States, better, for an analogy, present, than, as in certain regions of the sea, those spreading, undulating masses of squid, through which the whale, swimming with head half out, feeds?

Not but that doubtless our current so-called literature, (like an endless supply of small coin,) performs a certain service, and may-be, too, the service needed for the time, (the preparation service, as children learn to spell.) Everybody reads, and truly nearly everybody writes, either books, or for the magazines or journals. The matter has magnitude, too, after a sort. There is something impressive about the huge editions of the dailies and weeklies, the mountain-stacks of white paper piled in the press-vaults, and the proud, crashing, ten-cylinder presses, which I can stand and watch any time by the half hour. Then, (though The States in the field of Imagination present not a single first-class work, not a single great *Literatus*,) the main objects, to amuse, to titillate, to pass away time, to circulate the news and rumors of news, to rhyme and read rhyme, are yet attained, and on a scale of infinity. To-day, in books, in the rivalry of writers, especially novelists, success, (so-called,) is for him or her who strikes the mean flat average, the sensational appetite for stimulus, incident, &c., and depicts, to the common calibre, sensual, exterior life. To such, or the luckiest of them, as we see, the audiences are limitless and profitable; but they cease presently. While, this day or any day, to workmen, portraying interior or spiritual life, the audiences were limited, and often laggard—but they last forever.

—Compared with the past, our modern science soars, and our journals serve; but ideal and even ordinary romantic literature does not, I think, substantially advance. Behold the prolific brood of the contemporary novel, magazine-tale, theatre-play, &c. The same endless thread of tangled and superlative love-story, inherited, apparently, from the *Amadis* and *Palmerins* of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries over there in Eu-

rope. The costumes and associations are brought down to date, the seasoning is hotter and more varied, the dragons and ogres are left out—but the *thing*, I should say, has not advanced—is just as sensational, just as strained—remains about the same, nor more, nor less.

—What is the reason, our time, our lands, that we see no fresh local courage, sanity, of our own—the Mississippi, stalwart Western men, real mental and physical facts, Southerners, &c., in the body of our literature? especially the poetic part of it. But always, instead, a parcel of dandies and ennuyees, dapper little gentlemen from abroad, who flood us with their thin sentiment of parlors, parasols, piano-songs, tinkling rhymes, the five-hundredth importation, or whimpering and crying about something, chasing one aborted conceit after another, and forever occupied in dyspeptic amours with dyspeptic women.

While, current and novel, the grandest events and revolutions, and stormiest passions of history, are crossing to-day with unparalleled rapidity and magnificence over the stages of our own and all the continents, offering new materials, opening new vistas, with largest needs, inviting the daring launching forth of conceptions in Literature, inspired by them, soaring in highest regions, serving Art in its highest, (which is only the other name for serving God, and serving Humanity,) where is the man of letters, where is the book, with any nobler aim than to follow in the old track, repeat what has been said before—and, as its utmost triumph, sell well, and be erudite or elegant?

Mark the roads, the processes, through which These States have arrived, standing easy, ever-equal, ever-compact, in their range, to-day. European adventures? the most antique? Asiatic or African? old history—miracles—romances? Rather, our own unquestioned facts. They hasten, incredible, blazing bright as fire. From the deeds and days of Columbus down to the present, and including the present—and especially the late Secession war—when I con them, I feel, every leaf, like stopping to see if I have not made

a mistake, and fallen upon the splendid figments of some dream.

But it is no dream. We stand, live, move, in the huge flow of our age's materialism—in its spirituality. We have had founded for us the most positive of lands. The founders have passed to other spheres—But what are these terrible duties they have left us?

Their politics the United States have, in my opinion, with all their faults, already substantially established, for good, on their own native, sound, long-vista'd principles, never to be overturned, offering a sure basis for all the rest. With that, their future religious forms, sociology, literature, teachers, schools, costumes, &c., are of course to make a compact whole, uniform, on tallying principles. For how can we remain, divided, contradicting ourselves, this way? * I say we can only attain harmony and stability by consulting ensemble, and the ethic purports, and faithfully building upon them.

For the New World, indeed, after two grand stages of preparation-strata, I perceive that now, a third stage, being ready for, (and without which the other two were useless,) with unmistakable signs appears. The First Stage was the planning and putting on record the political foundation rights of immense masses of people—indeed all people—in the organization of Republican National, State, and Municipal governments, all constructed with reference to each, and each to all. This is the American programme, not for classes, but for universal man, and is embodied in the compacts of the

* Note, to-day, an instructive, curious spectacle and conflict. Science, (twin, in its fields, of Democracy in its)—Science, testing absolutely all thoughts, all works, has already burst well upon the world—a Sun, mounting, most illuminating, most glorious—surely never again to set. But against it, deeply entrenched, holding possession, yet remains, (not only through the churches and schools, but by imaginative literature, and unregenerate poetry,) the fossil theology of the mythic-materialistic, superstitious, untaught and credulous, fable-loving, primitive ages of humanity.

Declaration of Independence, and, as it began and has now grown, with its amendments, the Federal Constitution—and in the State governments, with all their interiors, and with general suffrage; those having the sense not only of what is in themselves, but that their certain several things started, planted, hundreds of others, in the same direction, duly arise and follow. The Second Stage relates to material prosperity, wealth, produce, labor-saving machines, iron, cotton, local, State and continental railways, intercommunication and trade with all lands, steamships, mining, general employment, organization of great cities, cheap appliances for comfort, numberless technical schools, books, newspapers, a currency for money circulation, &c. The Third Stage, rising out of the previous ones, to make them and all illustrious, I, now, for one, promulge, announcing a native Expression Spirit, getting into form, adult, and through mentality, for These States, self-contained, different from others, more expansive, more rich and free, to be evidenced by original authors and poets to come, by American personalities, plenty of them, male and female, traversing the States, none excepted—and by native superber tableaux and growths of language, songs, operas, orations, lectures, architecture—and by a sublime and serious Religious Democracy sternly taking command, dissolving the old, sloughing off surfaces, and from its own interior and vital principles, entirely reconstructing Society.

—For America, type of progress, and of essential faith in Man—above all his errors and wickedness—few suspect how deep, how deep it really strikes. The world evidently supposes, and we have evidently supposed so too, that The States are merely to achieve the equal franchise, an elective government—to inaugurate the respectability of labor, and become a nation of practical operatives, law-abiding, orderly and well-off. Yes, those are indeed parts of the tasks of America; but they not only do not exhaust the progressive conception, but rather arise, teeming with it, as the mediums of deeper, higher progress. Daughter of a physical revolution—Mother of the true revolutions, which are

of the interior life, and of the arts. For so long as the spirit is not changed, any change of appearance is of no avail.

—The old men, I remember as a boy, were always talking of American Independence. What is independence? Freedom from all laws or bonds except those of one's own being, controlled by the universal ones. To lands, to man, to woman, what is there at last to each, but the inherent soul, nativity, idiocrasy, free, highest-poised, soaring its own flight, following out itself?

—At present, These States, in their theology and social standards, &c., (of greater importance than their political institutions,) are entirely held possession of by foreign lands. We see the sons and daughters of the New World, ignorant of its genius, not yet inaugurating the native, the universal, and the near, still importing the distant, the partial, and the dead. We see London, Paris, Italy—not original, superb, as where they belong—but second-hand here where they do not belong. We see the shreds of Hebrews, Romans, Greeks; but where, on her own soil, do we see, in any faithful, highest, proud expression, America herself? I sometimes question whether she has a corner in her own house.

Not but that in one sense, and a very grand one, good theology, good Art, or good Literature, has certain features shared in common. The combination fraternizes, ties the races—is, in many particulars, under laws applicable indifferently to all, irrespective of climate or date, and, from whatever source, appeals to emotions, pride, love, spirituality, common to humankind. Nevertheless, they touch a man closest, (perhaps only actually touch him,) even in these, in their expression through autochthonic lights and shades, flavors, fondnesses, aversions, specific incidents, illustrations, out of his own nationality, geography, surroundings, antecedents, &c. The spirit and the form are one, and depend far more on association, identity and place, than is supposed. Subtly interwoven with the materiality and personality of a land, a race—Teuton, Turk, Californian, or what not—there is always something—I can hardly tell what

it is,—History but describes the results of it,—it is the same as the untellable look of some human faces. Nature, too, in her stolid forms, is full of it—but to most it is there a secret. This something is rooted in the invisible roots, the profoundest meanings of that place, race, or nationality ; and to absorb and again effuse it, uttering words and products as from its midst, and carrying it into highest regions, is the work, or a main part of the work, of any country's true author, poet, historian, lecturer, and perhaps even priest and philosopher. Here, and here only, are the foundations for our really valuable and permanent verse, drama, &c.

But at present, (judged by any higher scale than that which finds the chief ends of existence to be to feverishly make money during one-half of it, and by some "amusement," or perhaps foreign travel, flippantly kill time, the other half,) and considered with reference to purposes of patriotism, health, a noble Personality, religion, and the democratic adjustments, all these swarms of poems, dramatic plays, resultant so far from American intellect, and the formulation of our best ideas, are useless and a mockery. They strengthen and nourish no one, express nothing characteristic, give decision and purpose to no one, and suffice only the lowest level of vacant minds.

Of the question, indeed, of what is called the Drama, or dramatic presentation in the United States, as now put forth at the theatres, I should say it deserves to be treated with the same gravity, and on a par with the questions of ornamental confectionery at public dinners, or the arrangement of curtains and hangings in a ball-room—nor more, nor less.

Of the other, I will not insult the reader's intelligence, (once really entering into the atmosphere of these Vistas,) by supposing it necessary to show, in detail, why the copious dribble, either of our little or well-known rhymesters, does not fulfil, in any respect, the needs and august occasions of this land. America demands a Poetry that is bold, modern, and all-surrounding and kosmical, as she is herself. It must in no respect ignore science or the modern, but inspire itself

with science and the modern. It must bend its vision toward the future, more than the past. Like America, it must extricate itself from even the greatest models of the past, and, while courteous to them, must have entire faith in itself and products out of its own original spirit only. Like her, it must place in the van, and hold up at all hazards, the banner of the divine pride of man in himself, (the radical foundation of the new religion.) Long enough have the People been listening to poems in which common Humanity, deferential, bends low, humiliated, acknowledging superiors. But America listens to no such poems. Erect, inflated, and fully self-esteeming be the chant; and then America will listen with pleased ears.

—Nor may the genuine gold, the gems, when brought to light at last, be probably ushered forth from any of the quarters currently counted on. To-day, doubtless, the infant Genius of American poetic expression, (eluding those highly-refined imported and gilt-edged themes, and sentimental and butterfly flights, pleasant to New York, Boston, and Philadelphia publishers—causing tender spasms in the coteries, and warranted not to chafe the sensitive cuticle of the most exquisitely artificial gossamer delicacy,) lies sleeping far away, happily unrecognized and uninjured by the coteries, the art-writers, the talkers and critics of the saloons, or the lecturers in the colleges—lies sleeping, aside, unreckoning itself, in some Western idiom, or native Michigan or Tennessee repartee, or stump-speech—or in Kentucky or Georgia or the Carolinas—or in some slang or local song or allusion of the Manhattan, Boston, Philadelphia or Baltimore mechanic—or up in the Maine woods—or off in the hut of the California miner, or crossing the Rocky mountains, or along the Pacific railroad—or on the breasts of the young farmers of the Northwest, or Canada, or boatmen of the lakes. Rude and coarse nursing-beds these; but only from such beginnings and stocks, indigenous here, may haply arrive, be grafted, and sprout, in time, flowers of genuine American aroma, and fruits truly and fully our own.

—I say it were a standing disgrace to These States—

I say it were a disgrace to any nation, distinguished above others by the variety and vastness of its territories, its materials, its inventive activity, and the splendid practicality of its people, not to rise and soar above others also in its original styles in literature and art, and its own supply of intellectual and esthetic masterpieces, archetypal, and consistent with itself. I know not a land except ours that has not, to some extent, however small, made its title clear. The Scotch have their born ballads, tunes subtly expressing their past and present, and expressing character. The Irish have theirs. England, Italy, France, Spain, theirs. What has America? With exhaustless mines of the richest ore of epic, lyric, tale, tune, picture, &c., in the Four Years' War; with, indeed, I sometimes think, the richest masses of material ever afforded a nation, more variegated, and on a larger scale—the first sign of proportionate, native, imaginative Soul, and first-class works to match, is, (I cannot too often repeat,) so far wanting.

When the hundredth year of this Union arrives, there will be some Forty to Fifty great States, among them Canada and Cuba. The population will be sixty or seventy millions. The Pacific will be ours, and the Atlantic mainly ours. There will be daily electric communication with every part of the globe. What an age! What a land! Where, elsewhere, one so great? The Individuality of one nation must then, as always, lead the world. Can there be any doubt who the leader ought to be? Bear in mind, though, that nothing less than the mightiest original non-subordinated SOUL has ever really, gloriously led, or ever can lead. (This Soul—its other name, in these Vistas, is LITERATURE.)

In fond fancy leaping those hundred years ahead, let us survey America's works, poems, philosophies, fulfilling prophecies, and giving form and decision to best ideals. Much that is now undreamed of, we might then perhaps see established, luxuriantly cropping forth, richness, vigor of letters and of artistic expression, in whose products character will be a main requirement, and not merely erudition or elegance.

Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man—which, hard to define, underlies the lessons and ideals of the profound saviours of every land and age, and which seems to promise, when thoroughly developed, cultivated and recognized in manners and Literature, the most substantial hope and safety of the future of These States, will then be fully expressed.*

A strong-fibred Joyousness, and Faith, and the sense of Health *al fresco*, may well enter into the preparation of future noble American authorship. Part of the test of a great Literatus shall be the absence in him of the idea of the covert, the artificial, the lurid, the maleficent, the devil, the grim estimates inherited from the Puritans, hell, natural depravity, and the like. The great Literatus will be known, among the rest, by his cheerful simplicity, his adherence to natural standards, his limitless faith in God, his reverence, and by the absence in him of doubt, ennui, burlesque, persiflage, or any strained and temporary fashion.

Nor must I fail, again and yet again, to clinch, reiterate more plainly still, (O that indeed such survey as we fancy, may show in time this part completed also!) the lofty aim, surely the proudest and the purest, in whose service the future Literatus, of whatever field, may gladly labor. As we have intimated, offsetting the

* It is to the development, identification, and general prevalence of that fervid comradeship, (the adhesive love, at least rivaling the amative love hitherto possessing imaginative literature, if not going beyond it,) that I look for the counterbalance and offset of our materialistic and vulgar American Democracy, and for the spiritualization thereof. Many will say it is a dream, and will not follow my inferences; but I confidently expect a time when there will be seen, running like a half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visible worldly interests of America, threads of manly friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and life-long, carried to degrees hitherto unknown—not only giving tone to individual character, and making it unprecedentedly emotional, muscular, heroic, and refined, but having deepest relations to general politics. I say Democracy infers such loving comradeship, as its most inevitable twin or counterpart, without which it will be incomplete, in vain, and incapable of perpetuating itself.

material civilization of our race, our Nationality, its wealth, territories, factories, population, luxuries, products, trade, and military and naval strength, and breathing breath of life into all these, and more, must be its Moral Civilization—the formulation, expression, and aidancy whereof, is the very highest height of literature. And still within this wheel, revolves another wheel. The climax of this loftiest range of modern civilization, giving finish and hue, and rising above all the gorgeous shows and results of wealth, intellect, power, and art, as such—above even theology and religious fervor—is to be its development, from the eternal bases, and the fit expression, of absolute Conscience, moral soundness, Justice. I say there is nothing else higher, for Nation, Individual, or for Literature, than the idea, and practical realization and expression of the idea, of Conscience, kept at topmost mark, absolute in itself, well cultivated, uncontaminated by the manifold weeds, the cheats, changes, and vulgarities of the fashions of the world. Even in religious fervor there is a touch of animal heat. But moral conscientiousness, crystalline, without flaw, not Godlike only, entirely Human, awes and enchants me forever. Great is emotional Love, even in the order of the rational universe. But, if we must make gradations, I am clear there is something greater. Power, love, veneration, products, genius, esthetics, tried by subtlest comparisons, analyses, and in serenest moods, somewhere fail, somehow become vain. Then noiseless, with flowing steps, the lord, the sun, the last Ideal comes. By the names Right, Justice, Truth, we suggest, but do not describe it. To the world of men it remains a dream, an idea as they call it. But no dream is it to the wise—but the proudest, almost only solid lasting thing of all.

I say, again and forever, the triumph of America's democratic formulæ is to be the inauguration, growth, acceptance, and unmistakable supremacy among individuals, cities, States, and the Nation, of moral Conscience. Its analogy in the material universe is what holds together this world, and every object upon it, and carries its dynamics on forever sure and safe. Its lack,

and the persistent shirking of it, as in life, sociology, literature, politics, business, and even sermonizing, these times, or any times, still leaves the abysm, the mortal flaw and smutch, mocking civilization to-day, with all its unquestioned triumphs, and all the civilization so far known. Such is the thought I would especially bequeath to any earnest persons, students of these Vistas, and following after me.*

Present Literature, while magnificently fulfilling certain popular demands, with plenteous knowledge and verbal smartness, is profoundly sophisticated, insane, and its very joy is morbid. It needs retain the knowledge, and fulfil the demands, but needs to purge itself; or rather needs to be born again, become unsophisticated, and become sane. It needs tally and express Nature, and the spirit of Nature, and to know and obey the standards. I say the question of Nature, largely considered, involves the questions of the esthetic, the emotional, and the religious—and involves happiness. A fitly born and bred race, growing up in right condi-

* I am reminded as I write that out of this very Conscience, or idea of Conscience, of intense moral right, and in its name and strained construction, the worst fanaticisms, wars, persecutions, murders, &c. have yet, in all lands, been broached, and have come to their devilish fruition. Much is to be said—but I may say here, and in response, that side by side with the unflagging stimulation of the elements of Religion and Conscience must henceforth move with equal sway, science, absolute reason, and the general proportionate development of the whole man. These scientific facts, deductions, are divine too—precious counted parts of moral civilization, and, with physical health, indispensable to it, to prevent fanaticism. For Abstract Religion, I perceive, is easily led astray, ever credulous, and is capable of devouring, remorseless, like fire and flame. Conscience, too, isolated from all else, and from the emotional nature, may but attain the beauty and purity of glacial, snowy ice. We want, for These States, for the general character, a cheerful, religious fervor, enlivened with the ever-present modifications of the human emotions, friendship, benevolence, with a fair field for scientific inquiry, the right of individual judgment, and always the cooling influences of material Nature. We want not again either the religious fervor of the Spanish Inquisition, nor the morality of the New England Puritans.

tions of out-door as much as in-door harmony, activity, and development, would probably, from and in those conditions, find it enough merely *to live*—and would, in their relations to the sky, air, water, trees, &c., and to the countless common shows, and in the fact of Life itself, discover and achieve happiness—with Being suffused night and day by wholesome extasy, surpassing all the pleasures that wealth, amusement, and even gratified intellect, erudition, or the sense of art, can give.

In the prophetic literature of These States, Nature, true Nature, and the true idea of Nature, long absent, must, above all, become fully restored, enlarged, and must furnish the pervading atmosphere to poems, and the test of all high literary and esthetic compositions. I do not mean the smooth walks, trimm'd hedges, butterflies, poseys and nightingales of the English poets, but the whole Orb, with its geologic history, the Kosmos, carrying fire and snow, that rolls through the illimitable areas, light as a feather, though weighing billions of tons. Furthermore, as by what we now partially call Nature is intended, at most, only what is entertainable by the physical conscience, the lessons of the esthetic, the sense of matter, and of good animal health—on these it must be distinctly accumulated, incorporated, that man, comprehending these, has, in towering super-addition, the Moral and Spiritual Consciences, indicating his destination beyond the ostensible, the mortal.

To the heights of such estimate of Nature indeed ascending, we proceed to make observations for our Vistas, breathing rarest air. What is, I believe called Idealism seems to me to suggest, (guarding against extravagance, and ever modified even by its opposite,) the course of inquiry and desert of favor for our New World metaphysics, their foundation of and in literature, giving hue to all.*

* The culmination and fruit of literary artistic expression, and its final fields of pleasure for the human soul, are in Metaphysics, including the mysteries of the spiritual world, the soul itself, and the question of the immortal continuation of our identity. In all ages, the mind of man has brought up here—and always will.

The elevating and etherealizing ideas of the Unknown and of Unreality must be brought forward with au-

Here, at least, of whatever race or era, we stand on common ground. Applause, too, is unanimous, antique or modern. Those authors who work well in this field—though their reward, instead of a handsome percentage, or royalty, may be but simply the laurel-crown of the victors in the great Olympic games—will be dearest to humanity, and their works, however esthetically defective, will be treasured forever. The altitude of literature and poetry has always been Religion—and always will be. The Indian Vedas, the Naçkas of Zoroaster, The Talmud of the Jews, the Old Testament also, the Gospel of Christ and his disciples, Plato's works, the Koran of Mohammed, the Edda of Snorro, and so on toward our own day, to Swedenborg, and to the invaluable contributions of Leibnitz, Kant and Hegel,—these, with such poems only in which, (while singing well of persons and events, of the passions of man, and the shows of the material universe,) the religious tone, the consciousness of mystery, the recognition of the future, of the unknown, of Deity, over and under all, and of the divine purpose, are never absent, but indirectly give tone to all—exhibit literature's real heights and elevations, towering up like the great mountains of the earth.

Standing on this ground—the last, the highest, only permanent ground—and sternly criticising, from it, all works, either of the literary, or any Art, we have peremptorily to dismiss every pretensive production, however fine its esthetic or intellectual points, which violates, or ignores, or even does not celebrate, the central Divine Idea of All, suffusing universe, of eternal trains of purpose, in the development, by however slow degrees, of the physical, moral, and spiritual Kosmos. I say he has studied, meditated to no profit, whatever may be his mere erudition, who has not absorbed this simple consciousness and faith. It is not entirely new—but it is for America to elaborate it, and look to build upon and expand from it, with uncompromising reliance. Above the doors of teaching the inscription is to appear, Though little or nothing can be absolutely known, perceived, except from a point of view which is evanescent, yet we know at least one permanency, that Time and Space, in the will of God, furnish successive chains, completions of material births and beginnings, solve all discrepancies, fears and doubts, and eventually fulfil happiness—and that the prophecy of those births, namely Spiritual results, throws the true arch over all teaching, all science. The local considerations of sin, disease, deformity, ignorance, death, &c., and their measurement by superficial mind, and ordinary legislation and theology, are to be met by Science, boldly accepting, promulgating this faith, and planting the seeds of superber laws—of the explication of the physical universe through the spiritual—and clearing the way for a Religion, sweet and unimpugnably alike to little child or great savañ.

thority, as they are the legitimate heirs of the known, and of reality, and at least as great as their parents. Fearless of scoffing, and of the ostent, let us take our stand, our ground, and never desert it, to confront the growing excess and arrogance of Realism. To the cry, now victorious—the cry of Sense, science, flesh, incomes, farms, merchandise, logic, intellect, demonstrations, solid perpetuities, buildings of brick and iron, or even the facts of the shows of trees, earth, rocks, &c., fear not my brethren, my sisters, to sound out with equally determined voice, that conviction brooding within the recesses of every envisioned soul—Illusions! apparitions! figments all! True, we must not condemn the show, neither absolutely deny it, for the indispensability of its meanings; but how clearly we see that, migrate in soul to what we can already conceive of superior and spiritual points of view, and, palpable as it seems under present relations, it all and several might, nay certainly would, fall apart and vanish.

—I hail with joy the oceanic, variegated, intense practical energy, the demand for facts, even the business materialism of the current age, Our States. But wo to the age or land in which these things, movements, stopping at themselves, do not tend to ideas. As fuel to flame, and flame to the heavens, so must wealth, science, materialism, unerringly feed the highest mind, the soul. Infinitude the flight: fathomless the mystery. Man, so diminutive, dilates beyond the sensible universe, competes with, outcopes Space and Time, meditating even one great idea. Thus, and thus only, does a human being, his spirit, ascend above, and justify, objective Nature, which, probably nothing in itself, is incredibly and divinely serviceable, indispensable, real, here. And as the purport of objective Nature is doubtless folded, hidden, somewhere here—As somewhere here is what this globe and its manifold forms, and the light of day, and night's darkness, and life itself, with all its experiences, are for—it is here the great Literature, especially verse, must get its inspiration and throbbing blood. Then may we attain to a poetry worthy

the immortal soul of man, and which while absorbing materials, and, in their own sense, the shows of Nature, will, above all, have, both directly and indirectly, a freeing, fluidizing, expanding, religious character, exulting with science, fructifying the moral elements, and stimulating aspirations, and meditations on the unknown.

The process, so far, is indirect and peculiar, and though it may be suggested, cannot be defined. Observing, rapport, and with intuition, the shows and forms presented by Nature, the sensuous luxuriance, the beautiful in living men and women, the actual play of passions, in history and life—and, above all, from those developments either in Nature or human personality in which power, (dearest of all to the sense of the artist,) transacts itself—Out of these, and seizing what is in them, the poet, the esthetic worker in any field, by the divine magic of his genius, projects them, their analogies, by curious removes, indirections, in Literature and Art. (No useless attempt to repeat the material creation, by daguerreotyping the exact likeness by mortal mental means.) This is the image-making faculty, coping with material creation, and rivaling, almost triumphing over it. This alone, when all the other parts of a specimen of literature or art are ready and waiting, can breathe into it the breath of life, and endow it with Identity.

“The true question to ask,” says the Librarian of Congress in a paper read before the Social Science Convention at New York, October, 1869, “The true question to ask respecting a book, is, *Has it helped any human Soul?*” This is the hint, statement, not only of the great Literatus, his book, but of every great Artist.

It may be that all works of art are to be first tried by their art qualities, their image-forming talent, and their dramatic, pictorial, plot-constructing, euphonious and other talents. Then, whenever claiming to be first-class works, they are to be strictly and sternly tried by their foundation in, and radiation, in the highest sense, and always indirectly, of the ethic principles, and eligibility to free, arouse, dilate.

As within the purposes of the Kosmos, and vivifying

all meteorology, and all the congeries of the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds—all the physical growth and development of man, and all the history of the race in politics, religions, wars, &c., there is a moral purpose, a visible or invisible intention, certainly underlying all—its results and proof needing to be patiently waited for—needing intuition, faith, idiosyncrasy, to its realization, which many, and especially the intellectual, do not have—so in the product, or congeries of the product, of the greatest *Literatus*. This is the last, profoundest measure and test of a first-class literary or esthetic achievement, and when understood and put in force must fain, I say, lead to works, books, nobler than any hitherto known. Lo! Nature, (the only complete, actual poem,) existing calmly in the divine scheme, containing all, content, careless of the criticisms of a day, or these endless and wordy chatterers. And lo! to the consciousness of the soul, the permanent Identity, the thought, the something, before which the magnitude even of Democracy, Art, Literature, &c., dwindles, becomes partial, measurable—something that fully satisfies, (which those do not.) That something is the All, and the idea of All, with the accompanying idea of Eternity, and of itself, the Soul, buoyant, indestructible, sailing space forever, visiting every region, as a ship the sea. And again lo! the pulsations in all matter, all spirit, throbbing forever—the eternal beats, eternal systole and diastole of life in things—wherefrom I feel and know that death is not the ending, as was thought, but rather the real beginning—and that nothing ever is or can be lost, nor ever die, nor soul, nor matter.

—I say in the future of These States must therefore arise Poets immenser far, and make great poems of Death. The poems of Life are great, but there must be the poems of the purports of life, not only in itself, but beyond itself. I have eulogized Homer, the sacred bards of Jewry, Eschylus, Juvenal, Shakespeare, &c., and acknowledged their inestimable value. But, (with perhaps the exception, in some, not all respects, of the second mentioned,) I say there must, for future and

Democratic purposes, appear poets, (dare I to say so?) of higher class even than any of those—poets not only possessed of the religious fire and abandon of Isaiah, luxuriant in the epic talent of Homer, or for characters as Shakespeare, but consistent with the Hegelian formulas, and consistent with modern science. America needs, and the world needs, a class of bards who will, now and ever, so link and tally the rational physical being of man, with the ensembles of Time and Space, and with this vast and multiform show, Nature, surrounding him, ever tantalizing him, equally a part, and yet not a part of him, as to essentially harmonize, satisfy, and put at rest. Faith, very old, now scared away by science, must be restored, brought back, by the same power that caused her departure—restored with new sway, deeper, wider, higher than ever. Surely, this universal ennui, this coward fear, this shuddering at death, these low, degrading views, are not always to rule the spirit pervading future society, as it has the past, and does the present. What the Roman Lucretius sought most nobly, yet all too blindly, negatively to do for his age and its successors, must be done positively by some great coming Literatus, especially Poet, who, while remaining fully poet, will absorb whatever science indicates, with spiritualism, and out of them, and out of his own genius, will compose the great Poem of Death. Then will man indeed confront Nature, and confront Time and Space, both with science and *con amore*, and take his right place, prepared for life, master of fortune and misfortune. And then that which was long wanted will be supplied, and the ship that had it not before in all her voyages, will have an anchor.

There are still other standards, suggestions, for products of high literatuses. That which really balances and conserves the social and political world is not so much legislation, police, treaties, and dread of punishment, as the latent eternal intuitional sense, in humanity, of fairness, manliness, decorum, &c. Indeed, the perennial regulation, control and oversight, by self-suppliance, is *sine qua non* to Democracy; and a highest,

widest aim of Democratic literature may well be to bring forth, cultivate, brace and strengthen this sense in individuals and society. A strong mastership of the general inferior self by the superior self, is to be aided, secured, indirectly but surely, by the literatus, in his works, shaping, for individual or aggregate Democracy, a great passionate Body, in and along with which goes a great masterful Spirit.

And still, providing for contingencies, I fain confront the fact, the need of powerful native philosophers and orators and bards, These States, as rallying points to come, in times of danger, and to fend off ruin and defection. For history is long, long, long. Shift and turn the combinations of the statement as we may, the problem of the future of America is in certain respects as dark as it is vast. Pride, competition, segregation, vicious wilfulness, and license beyond example, brood already upon us. Unwieldy and immense, who shall hold in behemoth? who bridle leviathan? Flaunt it as we choose, athwart and over the roads of our progress loom huge uncertainty, and dreadful, threatening gloom. It is useless to deny it: Democracy grows rankly up the thickest, noxious, deadliest plants and fruits of all—brings worse and worse invaders—needs newer, larger, stronger, keener compensations and compellers.

Our lands, embracing so much, (embracing indeed the whole, rejecting none,) hold in their breast that flame also, capable of consuming themselves, consuming us all. Short as the span of our national life has been, already have death and downfall crowded close upon us—and will again crowd close, no doubt, even if warded off. Ages to come may never know, but I know, how narrowly, during the late Secession war—and more than once, and more than twice or thrice—our Nationality, (wherein bound up, as in a ship in a storm, depended, and yet depend, all our best life, all hope, all value,) just grazed, just by a hair escaped destruction. Alas! to think of them! the agony and bloody sweat of certain of those hours! those cruel, sharp, suspended crises!

Even to-day, amid these whirls, incredible flippancy, the blind fury of parties, infidelity, entire lack of first-class captains and leaders, added to the plentiful meanness and vulgarity of the ostensible masses—that problem, the Labor Question, beginning to open like a yawning gulf, rapidly widening every year*—what prospect have we? We sail a dangerous sea of seething currents, cross and under-currents, vortices—all so dark, untried—and whither shall we turn?

It seems as if the Almighty had spread before this Nation charts of imperial destinies, dazzling as the sun, yet with lines of blood, and many a deep intestine difficulty, and human aggregate of cankerous imperfection,—saying, Lo! the roads, the only plans of development,

* THE LABOR QUESTION.—The immense problem of the relation, adjustment, conflict, between Labor and its status and pay, on the one side, and the Capital of employers on the other side—looming up over These States like an ominous, limitless, murky cloud, perhaps before long to overshadow us all;—the many thousands of decent working-people, through the cities and elsewhere, trying to keep up a good appearance, but living by daily toil, from hand to mouth, with nothing ahead, and no owned homes—the increasing aggregation of capital in the hands of a few—the chaotic confusion of labor in the Southern States, consequent on the abrogation of slavery—the Asiatic immigration on our Pacific side—the advent of new machinery, dispensing more and more with hand-work—the growing, alarming spectacle of countless squads of vagabond children, roaming everywhere the streets and wharves of the great cities, getting trained for thievery and prostitution—the hideousness and squalor of certain quarters of the cities—the advent of late years, and increasing frequency, of these pompous, nauseous, outside shows of vulgar wealth—(What a chance for a new Juvenal!)—wealth acquired perhaps by some quack, some measureless financial rogue, triply brazen in impudence, only shielding himself by his money from a shaved head, a striped dress, and a felon's cell;—and then, below all, the plausible, sugar-coated, but abnormal and sooner or later inevitably ruinous delusion and loss, of our system of inflated paper-money currency, (cause of all conceivable swindles, false standards of value, and principal breeder and bottom of these enormous fortunes for the few, and of poverty for the million)—with that other plausible and sugar-coated delusion, the theory and practice of a protective tariff, still clung to by many;—such, with plenty more, stretching themselves through many a long year, for solution, stand as huge impedimenta of America's progress.

long, and varied with all terrible balks and ebullitions. You said in your soul, I will be empire of empires, overshadowing all else, past and present, putting the history of old-world dynasties, conquests, behind me, as of no account—making a new history, the history of Democracy, making old history a dwarf—I alone inaugurating largeness, culminating Time. If these, O lands of America, are indeed the prizes, the determinations of your Soul, be it so. But behold the cost, and already specimens of the cost. Behold, the anguish of suspense, existence itself wavering in the balance, uncertain whether to rise or fall; already, close behind you or around you, thick winrows of corpses on battlefields, countless maimed and sick in hospitals, treachery among Generals, folly in the Executive and Legislative departments, schemers, thieves everywhere—cant, credulity, make-believe everywhere. Thought you greatness was to ripen for you, like a pear? If you would have greatness, know that you must conquer it through ages, centuries—must pay for it with a proportionate price. For you too, as for all lands, the struggle, the traitor, the wily person in office, scrofulous wealth, the surfeit of prosperity, the demonism of greed, the hell of passion, the decay of faith, the long postponement, the fossil-like lethargy, the ceaseless need of revolutions, prophets, thunderstorms, deaths, births, new projections and invigorations of ideas and men.

Yet I have dreamed, merged in that hidden-tangled problem of our fate, whose long unraveling stretches mysteriously through time—dreamed out, portrayed, hinted already—a little or a larger Band—a band of brave and true, unprecedented yet—armed and equipt at every point—the members separated, it may be, by different dates and States, or south, or north, or east, or west—Pacific or Atlantic—a year, a century here, and other centuries there—but always one, compact in Soul, conscience-conserving, God-inculcating, inspired achievers, not only in Literature, the greatest art, but achievers in all art—a new, undying order, dynasty, from age to age transmitted—a band, a class, at least

as fit to cope with current years, our dangers, needs, as those who, for their times, so long, so well, in armor or in cowl, upheld, and made illustrious, the Feudal, priestly world. To offset Chivalry, indeed, those vanished countless knights, and the old altars, abbeys, all their priests, ages and strings of ages, a knightlier and more sacred cause to-day demands, and shall supply, in a New World, to larger, grander work, more than the counterpart and tally of them.

Arrived now, definitely, at an apex for These Vistas, I confess that the promulgation and belief in such a class or institution—a new and greater *Literatus Order*—its possibility, (nay certainty,) underlies these entire speculations—and that the rest, the other parts, as superstructures, are all founded upon it. It really seems to me the condition, not only of our future national development, but of our perpetuation. In the highly artificial and materialistic bases of modern civilization, with the corresponding arrangements and methods of living, the force-infusion of intellect alone, the depraving influences of riches just as much as poverty, the absence of all high ideals in character—with the long series of tendencies, shapings, which few are strong enough to resist, and which now seem, with steam-engine speed, to be everywhere turning out the generations of humanity like uniform iron castings—all of which, as compared with the Feudal ages, we can yet do nothing better than accept, make the best of, and even welcome, upon the whole, for their oceanic practical grandeur, and their restless wholesale kneading of the masses—I say of all this tremendous and dominant play of solely materialistic bearings upon current life in the United States, with the results as already seen, accumulating, and reaching far into the future, that they must either be confronted and met by at least an equally subtle and tremendous force-infusion for purposes of Spiritualization, for the pure conscience, for genuine esthetics, and for absolute and primal Manliness and Womanliness—or else our modern civilization, with all its improvements, is in vain, and we are

on the road to a destiny, a status, equivalent, in this real world, to that of the fabled damned.

—To furnish, therefore, something like escape and foil and remedy—to restrain, with gentle but sufficient hand, the terrors of materialistic, intellectual, and democratic civilization—to ascend to more ethereal, yet just as real, atmospheres—to invoke and set forth ineffable portraits of Personal Perfection, (the true, final aim of all,) I say my eyes are fain to behold, though with straining sight—and my spirit to prophecy—far down the vistas of These States, that Order, Class, superber, far more efficient than any hitherto, arising. I say we must enlarge and entirely recast the theory of noble authorship, and conceive and put up as our model, a *Literatus*—groups, series of *Literatuses*—not only consistent with modern science, practical, political, full of the arts, of highest erudition—not only possessed by, and possessors of, Democracy even—but with the equal of the burning fire and extasy of Conscience, which have brought down to us, over and through the centuries, that chain of old unparalleled Judean prophets, with their flashes of power, wisdom, and poetic beauty, lawless as lightning, indefinite—yet power, wisdom, beauty, above all mere art, and surely, in some respects, above all else we know of mere literature.

Prospecting thus the coming unsped days, and that new Order in them—marking the endless train of exercise, development, unwind, in Nation as in man, which life is for—we now proceed to note, as on the hopeful terraces or platforms of our history, to be enacted, not only amid peaceful growth, but amid all perturbations, and after not a few departures, filling the vistas then, certain most coveted, stately arrivals.

—A few years, and there will be an appropriate native grand Opera, the lusty and wide-lipp'd offspring of Italian methods. Yet it will be no mere imitation, nor follow precedents, any more than Nature follows precedents. Vast oval halls will be constructed, on acoustic principles, in cities, where companies of musicians will perform lyrical pieces, born to the people of These

States; and the people will make perfect music a part of their lives. Every phase, every trade will have its songs, beautifying those trades. Men on the land will have theirs, and men on the water theirs. Who now is ready to begin that work for America, of composing music fit for us—songs, choruses, symphonies, operas, oratorios, fully identified with the body and soul of The States? music complete in all its appointments, but in some fresh, courageous, melodious, undeniable styles—as all that is ever to permanently satisfy us must be. The composers to make such music are to learn everything that can be possibly learned in the schools and traditions of their art, and then calmly dismiss all traditions from them.

Also, a great breed of orators will one day spread over The United States, and be continued. Blessed are the people where, (the nation's Unity and Identity preserved at all hazards,) strong emergencies, throes, occur. Strong emergencies will continually occur in America, and will be provided for. Such orators are wanted as have never yet been heard upon the earth. What specimens have we had where even the physical capacities of the voice have been fully accomplished? I think there would be in the human voice, thoroughly practised and brought out, more seductive pathos than in any organ or any orchestra of stringed instruments, and a ring more impressive than that of artillery.

Also, in a few years, there will be, in the cities of These States, immense Museums, with suites of halls, containing samples and illustrations from all the places and peoples of the earth, old and new. In these halls, in the presence of these illustrations, the noblest savans will deliver lectures to thousands of young men and women, on history, natural history, the sciences, &c. History itself will get released from being that false and distant thing, that fetish it has been. It will become a friend, a venerable teacher, a live being, with hands, voice, presence. It will be disgraceful to a young person not to know chronology, geography, poems, heroes, deeds, and all the former nations, and

present ones also—and it will be disgraceful in a teacher to teach any less or more than he believes.

—We see, fore-indicated, amid these prospects and hopes, new law-forces of spoken and written language—not merely the pedagogue-forms, correct, regular, familiar with precedents, made for matters of outside propriety, fine words, thoughts definitely told out—but a language fanned by the breath of Nature, which leaps overhead, cares mostly for impetus and effects, and for what it plants and invigorates to grow—tallies life and character, and seldomer tells a thing than suggests or necessitates it. In fact, a new theory of literary composition for imaginative works of the very first class, and especially for highest poems, is the sole course open to These States.

Books are to be called for, and supplied, on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-sleep, but, in highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay—the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or framework. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. That were to make a nation of supple and athletic minds, well-trained, intuitive, used to depend on themselves, and not on a few coteries of writers.

—Investigating here, we see, not that it is a little thing we have, in having the bequeathed libraries, countless shelves of volumes, records, &c.; yet how serious the danger, depending entirely on them, of the bloodless vein, the nerveless arm, the false application, at second or third hand. After all, we see Life, not bred, (at least in its more modern and essential parts,) in those great old Libraries, nor America nor Democracy favored nor applauded there. We see that the real interest of this People of ours in the Theology, History, Poetry, Politics, and Personal Models of the past, (of British islands, for instance, and indeed all the past,) is not necessarily to mould ourselves or our literature upon them, but to attain fuller, more definite

comparisons, warnings, and the insight to ourselves, our own present, and our own far grander, different, future history, Religion, social customs, &c.

—We see that almost everything that has been written, sung, or stated, of old, with reference to humanity under the Feudal and Oriental institutes, religions, and for other lands, needs to be re-written, re-sung, re-stated, in terms consistent with the institution of These States, and to come in range and obedient uniformity with them.

We see, as in the universes of the material Kosmos, after meteorological, vegetable, and animal cycles, man at last arises, born through them, to prove them, concentrate them, to turn upon them with wonder and love—to command them, adorn them, and carry them upward into superior realms—so out of the series of the preceding social and political universes, now arise These States—their main purport being not in the newness and importance of their politics or inventions, but in new, grander, more advanced Religions, Literatures, and Art.

We see that while many were supposing things established and completed, really the grandest things always remain ; and discover that the work of the New World is not ended, but only fairly begun.

We see our land, America, her Literature, Esthetics, &c., as, substantially, the getting in form, or effusement and statement, of deepest basic elements and loftiest final meanings, of History and Man—and the portrayal, (under the eternal laws and conditions of beauty,) of our own physiognomy, the subjective tie and expression of the objective, as from our own combination, continuation and points of view—and the deposit and record of the national mentality, character, appeals, heroism, wars, and even liberties—where these, and all, culminate in native formulation, to be perpetuated ;—and not having which native, first-class formulation, she will flounder about, and her other, however imposing, eminent greatness, prove merely a passing gleam ; but truly having which, she will understand herself, live nobly, nobly contribute, emanate, and, swinging, poised

safely on herself, illumined and illuming, become a full-formed world, and divine Mother not only of material but spiritual worlds, in ceaseless succession through Time.

Finally, we have to admit, we see, even to-day, and in all these things, the born Democratic taste and will of The United States, regardless of precedent, or of any authority but their own, beginning to arrive, seeking place—which, in due time, they will fully occupy. At first, of course, under current prevalences of theology, conventions, criticism, &c., all appears impracticable—takes chances to be denied and misunderstood. Therewith, of course, murmurers, puzzled persons, supercilious inquirers, (with a mighty stir and noise among these windy little gentlemen that swarm in literature, in the magazines.) But America, advancing steadily, evil as well as good, penetrating deep, without one thought of retraction, ascending, expanding, keeps her course, hundreds, thousands of years.

GENERAL NOTES.

"SOCIETY."—I have myself little or no hope from what is technically called "Society" in our American cities. New York, of which place I have spoken so sharply, still promises something, in time, out of its tremendous and varied materials, with a certain superiority of intuitions, and the advantage of constant agitation, and ever new and rapid dealings of the cards. Of Boston, with its circles of social mummies, swathed in cerements harder than brass—its bloodless religion, (Unitarianism,) its complacent vanity of scientism and literature, lots of grammatical correctness, mere knowledge, (always wearisome, in itself)—its zealous abstractions, ghosts of reforms—I should say, (ever admitting its business powers, its sharp, almost demoniac, intellect, and no lack, in its own way, of courage and generosity)—there is, at present, little of cheering, satisfying sign. In the West, California, &c., "society" is yet unformed, peurile, seemingly unconscious of anything above a driving business, or to liberally spend the money made by it in the usual rounds and shows.

Then there is, to the humorous observer of American attempts at fashion, according to the models of foreign courts and saloons, quite a comic side—particularly visible at Washington City,—a sort of high life below stairs business. As if any farce could be funnier, for instance, than the scenes of the crowds, winter nights, meandering around our Presidents and their wives, Cabinet officers, western or other Senators, Representatives, &c.; born of good laboring, mechanic, or farmer stock and antecedents, attempting those full-dress receptions, finesse of parlors, foreign ceremonies, etiquettes, &c.

Indeed, considered with any sense of propriety, or any sense at all, the whole of this illy-played fashionable play and display, with their absorption of the best part of our wealthier citizens' time, money, energies, &c., is ridiculously out of place in the United States. As if our proper man and woman, (far, far greater words than "gentleman" and "lady,") could still fail to see, and presently achieve, not this spectral business, but something truly noble, active, sane, American—by modes, perfections of character, manners, costumes, social relations, &c., adjusted to standards, far, far different from those!

—Eminent and liberal foreigners, British or continental, must at times have their faith fearfully tried by what they see of our New World personalities. The shallowest and least American persons seem surest to push abroad and call without fail on well-known foreigners, who are doubtless affected with indescribable qualms by these queer ones. Then, more than half of our authors and writers evidently think it a great thing to be "aristocratic," and sneer at progress, democracy, revolution, &c. If some international literary Snobs' Gallery were established, it is certain that America could contribute at least her full share of the portraits, and some very distinguished ones. Observe that the most impudent slanders, low insults, &c., on the great revolutionary authors, leaders, poets, &c., of Europe, have their origin and main circulation in certain circles here. The treatment of Victor Hugo living, and Byron dead, are samples. Both deserving so well of America; and both persistently attempted to be soiled here by unclean birds, male and female.

—Meanwhile, I must still offset the like of the foregoing, and all it infers, by the recognition of the fact, that while the surfaces of current society here show so much that is dismal, noisome and vapory, there are, beyond question, inexhaustible supplies, as of true gold ore, in the mines of America's general humanity. Let us, not ignoring the dross, give fit stress to these precious, immortal values also. Let it be distinctly admitted, that—whatever may be said of our fashionable society, and of any foul fractions and episodes—only here in America, out of the long history, and manifold presentations of the ages, has at last arisen, and now stands, what never before took positive form and sway, **THE PEOPLE**—and that, viewed en-masse, and while fully acknowledging deficiencies, dangers, faults, this People, inchoate, latent, not yet come to majority, nor to its own religious, literary or esthetic expression, yet affords, to-day, an exultant justification of all the faith, all the hopes and prayers and prophecies of good men through the past—the stablest, solidest-based government of the world—the most assured in a future—the beaming Pharos to whose perennial light all earnest eyes, the world over, are tending—And that already, in and from it, the Democratic principle, having been mortally tried by severest tests, fatalities, of war and peace, now issues from the trial, unharmed, trebly-invigorated, perhaps to commence forthwith its finally triumphant march around the globe.

BRITISH LITERATURE.—To avoid mistake, I would say that I not only commend the study of this literature, but wish our sources of supply and comparison vastly enlarged. American students may well derive from all former lands—from forenoon Greece and Rome, down to the perturbed mediæval times, the Crusades, and so to Italy, the German intellect—all the older literatures, and all the newer ones—from witty and warlike France, and markedly, and in many ways, and at many different periods,

from the enterprise and soul of the great Spanish race—bearing ourselves always courteous, always deferential, indebted beyond measure to the mother-world, to all its nations dead, as all its nations living—the offspring, this America of ours, the Daughter, not by any means of the British isles exclusively, but of the Continent, and all continents. Indeed, it is time we should realize and fully fructify those germs we also hold from Italy, France, Spain, especially in the best imaginative productions of those lands, which are, in many ways, loftier and subtler than the English, or British, and indispensable to complete our service, proportions, education, reminiscences, &c. . . . The British element These States hold, and have always held, enormously beyond its fit proportions. I have already spoken of Shakespeare. He seems to me of astral genius, first class, entirely fit for feudalism. His contributions, especially to the literature of the passions, are immense, forever dear to humanity—and his name is always to be revered in America. But there is much in him that is offensive to Democracy. He is not only the tally of Feudalism, but I should say Shakespeare is incarnated, uncompromising Feudalism, in literature. Then one seems to detect something in him—I hardly know how to describe it—even amid the dazzle of his genius; and, in inferior manifestations, it is found in nearly all leading British authors. (Perhaps we will have to import the words Snob, Snobbish, &c., after all.) While of the great poems of Asian antiquity, the Indian epics, the Book of Job, the Ionian Iliad, the unsurpassedly simple, loving, perfect idyls of the life and death of Christ, in the New Testament, (indeed Homer and the Biblical utterances intertwine familiarly with us, in the main.) and along down, of most of the characteristic imaginative or romantic relics of the continent, as the Cid, Cervantes Don Quixote, &c., I should say they substantially adjust themselves to us, and, far off as they are, accord curiously with our bed and board, today, in 1870, in Brooklyn, Washington, Canada, Ohio, Texas, California—and with our notions, both of seriousness and of fun, and our standards of heroism, manliness, and even the Democratic requirements—those requirements are not only not fulfilled in the Shakesperean productions, but are insulted on every page.

I add that—while England is among the greatest of lands in political freedom, or the idea of it, and in stalwart personal character, &c.—the spirit of English literature is not great, at least is not greatest—and its products are no models for us. With the exception of Shakespeare, there is no first-class genius, or approaching to first-class, in that literature—which, with a truly vast amount of value, and of artificial beauty, (largely from the classics,) is almost always material, sensual, not spiritual—almost always congests, makes plethoric, not frees, expands, dilates—is cold, anti-Democratic, loves to be sluggish and stately, and shows much of that characteristic of vulgar persons, the dread of saying or doing something not at all improper in itself, but unconventional, and that may be laughed at. In its best, the sombre per-

vades it;—it is moody, melancholy, and, to give it its due, expresses, in characters and plots, those qualities, in an unrivaled manner. Yet not as the black thunderstorms, and in great normal, crashing passions, as of the Greek dramatists—clearing the air, refreshing afterward, bracing with power; but as in Hamlet, moping, sick, uncertain, and leaving ever after a secret taste for the blues, the morbid fascination, the luxury of wo. . . . (I cannot dismiss English, or British imaginative literature without the cheerful name of Walter Scott. In my opinion he deserves to stand next to Shakespeare. Both are, in their best and absolute quality, continental, not British—both teeming, luxuriant, true to their lands and origin, namely feudality, yet ascending into universalism. Then, I should say, both deserve to be finally considered and construed as shining suns, whom it were ungracious to pick spots upon.)

I strongly recommend all the young men and young women of the United States to whom it may be eligible, to overhaul the well-freighted fleets, the literatures of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, so full of those elements of freedom, self possession, gay-heartedness, subtlety, dilation, needed in preparations for the future of The States. I only wish we could have really good translations. I rejoice at the feeling for Oriental researches and poetry, and hope it will go on.

THE LATE WAR.—The Secession War in the United States appears to me as the last great material and military outcropping of the Feudal spirit, in our New World history, society, &c. Though it was not certain, hardly probable, that the effort for founding a Slave-Holding power, by breaking up the Union, should be successful, it was urged on by indomitable passion, pride and will. The signal downfall of this effort, the abolition of Slavery, and the extirpation of the Slaveholding Class, (cut out and thrown away like a tumor by surgical operation,) makes incomparably the longest advance for Radical Democracy, utterly removing its only really dangerous impediment, and insuring its progress in the United States—and thence, of course, over the world. . . . (Our immediate years witness the solution of three vast, life-threatening calculi, in different parts of the world—the removal of serfdom in Russia, slavery in the United States, and of the meanest of Imperialisms in France.)

Of the Secession War itself, we know, in the ostent, what has been done. The numbers of the dead and wounded can be told, or approximated, the debt posted and put on record, the material events narrated, &c. Meantime, the war being over, elections go on, laws are passed, political parties struggle, issue their platforms, &c., just the same as before. But immensest results of the War—not only in Politics, but in Literature, Poems, and Sociology—are doubtless waiting yet unformed, in the future. How long they will wait I cannot tell. The pageant of History's retrospect shows us, ages since, all Europe marching on the Cru-

sades, those wondrous armed uprisings of the People, stirred by a mere idea, to grandest attempt—and, when once baffled in it, returning, at intervals, twice, thrice, and again. An unsurpassed series of revolutionary events, influences. Yet it took over two hundred years for the seeds of the Crusades to germinate before beginning even to sprout. Two hundred years they lay, sleeping, not dead, but dormant in the ground. Then, out of them, unerringly, arts, travel, navigation, politics, literature, freedom, inventions, the spirit of adventure, inquiry, all arose, grew, and steadily sped on to what we see at present. Far back there, that huge agitation-struggle of the Crusades, stands, as undoubtedly the embryo, the start, of the high preëminence of experiment, civilization and enterprise which the European nations have since sustained, and of which These States are the heirs.

GENERAL SUFFRAGE, ELECTIONS, &c.—It still remains doubtful to me whether these will ever secure, officially, the best wit and capacity—whether, through them, the first-class genius of America will ever personally appear in the high political stations, the Presidency, Congress, the leading State offices, &c. Those offices, or the candidacy for them, arranged, won, by caucusing, money, the favoritism or pecuniary interest of rings, the superior manipulation of the ins over the outs, or the outs over the ins, are, indeed, at best, the mere business agencies of the people, are useful as formulating, neither the best and highest, but the average of the public judgment, sense, justice, (or sometimes want of judgment, sense, justice.) We elect Presidents, Congressmen, &c., not so much to have them consider and decide for us, but as surest practical means of expressing the will of majorities on mooted questions, measures, &c.

As to general suffrage, after all, since we have gone so far, the more general it is, the better. I favor the widest opening of the doors. Let the ventilation and area be wide enough, and all is safe. We can never have a born penitentiary-bird, or panel-thief, or lowest gambling-hell or groggery keeper, for President—though such may not only emulate, but get, high offices from localities—even from the proud and wealthy city of New York.

STATE RIGHTS.—Freedom, (under the universal laws,) and the fair and uncramped play of Individuality, can only be had at all through strong-knit cohesion, identity. There are, who, talking of the rights of The States, as in separatism and independence, condemn a rigid nationality, centrality. But to my mind, the freedom, as the existence at all, of The States, pre-necessitates such a Nationality, an imperial Union. Thus, it is to serve separatism that we favor generalization, consolidation. It is to give, under the compaction of potent general law, an independent vitality and sway within their spheres, to The States singly, (really just as important a part of our scheme as the sacred Union itself,) that we insist on the preservation of our Nation-

ality forever, and at all hazards. I say neither States, nor any thing like State Rights, could permanently exist on any other terms.

LATEST FROM EUROPE.—As I send my last pages to press, (Sept. 19, 1870,) the ocean-cable, continuing its daily budget of Franco-German war-news—Louis Napoleon a prisoner, (his rascunning at an end)—the conquerors advanced on Paris—the French, assuming Republican forms—seeking to negotiate with the King of Prussia, at the head of his armies—“his Majesty,” says the despatch, “refuses to treat, on any terms, with a government risen out of Democracy.”

Let us note the words, and not forget them. The official relations of Our States, we know, are with the reigning kings, queens, &c., of the Old World. But the only deep, vast, emotional, real affinity of America is with the cause of Popular Government there—and especially in France. O that I could express, in my printed lines, the passionate yearnings, the pulses of sympathy, forever throbbing in the heart of These States, for sake of that—the eager eyes forever turned to that—watching it, struggling, appearing and disappearing, often apparently gone under, yet never to be abandoned, in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and in the British Islands.



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