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R. W. Emerson

GATEWAY SERIES

SELECT ESSAYS

OF

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

HENRY VAN DYKE

NEW YORK ·:· CINCINNATI ·:· CHICAGO

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

SELECT ESSAYS OF EMERSON.

W. P. I

PREFACE

THE qualities aimed at in the Gateway Series of English Texts are thoroughness and simplicity. But in editing these *Essays of Emerson*, I confess that in following the first aim it has been difficult, at times, to keep within sight of the second.

Emerson handles deep subjects. Even when he is talking on some apparently familiar theme, he runs off easily into a discussion of the Over-Soul or the Law of Polarity. This makes it hard to present the Essays to young readers without going into philosophical questions. I have tried to do this no oftener than necessary, and in a way that would make the subject a little clearer, instead of more obscure.

Moreover, for a preacher of self-reliance and detachment from the past, Emerson is amazingly fond of peppering his pages with quotations, allusions, and references to ancient authorities. This opens the door to a terrible number of explanatory notes, — more, I think, than could properly be made on any other author included in the list of college entrance requirements in English. I have purposely failed to use all these opportunities for making notes. But if any teacher finds that I have still made too many, it will be easy to skip the superfluous ones, and direct the scholar's attention to the substance and main plan of the Essays.

The introduction aims to give, in brief, the facts of Emerson's inheritance and life which made him always a preacher, a moralist, a modern Puritan on the lecture platform, as well as those qualities of his personal genius which made the spirit of his work so poetic, so vivid, so full of sudden flashing lights. The first of the seven pieces of his prose work here presented is called "An Oration," but it is just as much an Essay as any of the others, which also were written for public speech, and spoken before they were printed. "Friendship," "Gifts," and "Prudence" require fewer notes than the other Essays, because they are shorter, simpler, and less loaded with remote allusions. I find them none the worse on this account, for Emerson is at his best when he speaks for himself and draws his wisdom from common experience.

The Essays are used by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company, the authorized publishers of Emerson's works. The text is that of the Riverside Edition.

The outline, or analysis, which has been made of each of the Essays, is intended to present clearly to the scholar the central theme of the Essay and the way in which it is built up. This may help to give a more definite idea of the meaning and value of Emerson's teaching in regard to life and conduct, which was his chief concern.

HENRY VAN DYKE.

AVALON, August 3, 1906.

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INTRODUCTION

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803–1882), preacher, lecturer, poet, and essayist, was one of the men who made their mark upon the nineteenth century. He did nothing in the way of scientific discovery or invention; he made no original contribution to scholarship or literary criticism; he took no leading part in the building up of great institutions, schools, churches, libraries, or museums; even in politics, he had nothing to do with party councils and conventions, and never held an office in his life, (except that while he was a minister in Boston he served as a member of the School Board and chaplain of the State Senate, and when he first lived in Concord he was appointed one of the "hog-reeves" of the town). But for forty years he spoke directly and personally, through his voice and through his pen, to the men and women of his time, giving them a message for their inner life, and teaching them to break away from dull, formal, thoughtless, artificial ways of doing things, and live freely according to the laws of their own spirit. This was his mission in the world; to wake people up with clear and forceful words, and to tell them something about themselves and the world around them which would be to them like a new light in their minds, changing their way of thinking and feeling and acting.

A man who does this kind of work is called a prophet. Prophecy does not mean only, or chiefly, foretelling the future. It means bringing a message to the world in regard to truth and duty, speaking for a higher Power, and delivering to others the word which the prophet has heard in his own soul. There were several other men, besides Emerson, who wrote in English during the nineteenth century, to whom the name of "prose-prophet" may fairly be given. You will find their words still active and powerful in the world, and their ideas still influencing the thoughts and purposes of men.

Thomas Carlyle's great word was Work, — do the duty that lies nearest to you! John Ruskin's great word was Life, — there is no real wealth but in a richer, fuller, warmer heart! Matthew Arnold's great word was Culture, — know the best that has been thought and said in the world! Emerson's great word was Self-reliance, — trust yourself, be yourself, and fear not!

Emerson had many other things to say, of course; and as you read his essays and poems you will find them full of sharp and wise sayings about all kinds of persons and affairs, keen and delicate perceptions of natural beauty, shrewd comments on society and politics, and high counsels of self-control, respect for others, industry, patience, justice, and loyalty. But at the root of all his preaching and teaching lies this idea that each of us must have confidence in himself and be true to himself, because it is through the self, through the inward, personal life of thought and feeling, that the vision of truth

and beauty and goodness comes to each man directly, in flashes of spiritual light.

This is Emerson's special message, and it will help you to understand it and to measure its value, if you know something about his life and character, and the way in which he practised his own preaching.

I. Ancestry and Boyhood

Seven of Emerson's ancestors were ministers of New England churches, all Puritans of the strictest type. Among them were Peter Bulkeley who left his comfortable parish in Bedfordshire, England, to become pastor of the church in the wilderness at Concord, Massachusetts; Father Samuel Moody of Agamenticus, Maine, who was such a fearless and zealous evangelist that he would pursue wayward sinners even into the alehouse to reprove them; Joseph Emerson of Malden, "a heroic scholar," who prayed every night that no descendant of his might ever be rich; and William Emerson, the patriot preacher, who died while serving in the army of the Revolution. From such forefathers Emerson inherited Puritan qualities, independence, sincerity, sobriety, fearless loyalty to conscience, strenuous and militant virtue. His vision of the world was larger and more beautiful than theirs because he had the imagination of a poet; and his way of reasoning about life and trying to explain it was changed by the following of a philosophy which was different from theirs. But in the substance of his man-

hood, in manners and morals, Emerson was born a Puritan, and so he lived and died. To him the spirit was always more than the senses, conduct more than enjoyment, duty more than pleasure, and life a serious affair of which a strict account must be given.

His father was the Rev. William Emerson, minister of the First Church (Congregational) in Boston. Ralph was born in 1803, the fourth child in a family of eight, of whom at least three gave proof of more than ordinary powers of mind. He was brought up in a family circle where study was regarded as the next thing in importance to moral training; and after his father's death in 1811, he had to share with the rest of the household the wholesome privations and self-denials which make a bracing life for those who are poor in money and rich in spirit. At the public grammar school and the Latin school he did nothing specially worthy of note. He had an unmarried aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, who probably played a larger part in his education than all his schoolmasters. She was a woman of keen mind and intense feelings, a brilliant old maid, an original saint, clinging with both hands to the old forms of theology from which her nephew floated away, but loving the boy with a jealous passion, believing in his powers, urging him forward in his studies, and doing more than any one else to form, by action and reaction, his youthful genius and character.

II. College Life, Teaching, and the Pastorate

Emerson was fourteen years old when he entered Harvard College. He partly worked his passage by running errands as "President's freshman," and by teaching in his brother's Cambridge school. He graduated in 1821, ranking about the middle of the class. His best success was in English literature and oratory. He won a prize for declamation, and two prizes for essays, — one on *The Character of Socrates*, and the other on *The Present State of Ethical Philosophy*, — both rather dull and formal productions. He was fond of reading and writing verse, and was chosen as the class-day poet. His cheerful, quiet manner, even-tempered and not without a tranquil kind of mirth, made him a favourite with his classmates, in spite of a certain reserve. Among the college faculty his admiration was particularly given to the stately preacher and orator, Edward Everett, professor of Greek Literature. At this time the boy's ambition was to become a teacher of rhetoric and elocution.

But destiny had other things in store for him. His older brother William had opened a school for girls in Boston; and there Ralph, after his graduation, became an assistant. He did not like the work at all. The routine of the class room was distasteful to him, and he chafed under the necessity of attending to superficial duties. The life of the city seemed conventional and insincere, and its social distinctions and rivalries stupid and tire-

some. His imagination was beginning to glow, and the bonds of custom and fashion, even the sober custom and fashion of Boston in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, weighed heavily upon his poetic nature. He wished to think for himself, to live his own life, to be a leader rather than a follower of others. In this his aunt encouraged him. She urged him to seek retirement, independence, friendship with nature; to be no longer the "nursling of surrounding circumstances"; to strike out on his own course and follow the guidings of the spirit.

At that time the ministry seemed to offer the best field to a young man who was ambitious for spiritual leadership. Emerson entered the Divinity School at Cambridge in 1825 to prepare himself for the pulpit. His course was much interrupted by ill health. In 1826 he was threatened with consumption and compelled to take a long journey in the South. Returning the following year he continued his studies and preached as a candidate in various churches. In 1829 he married Miss Ellen Tucker of Concord and was installed as associate minister of the Second Church (Unitarian), in Boston. The senior minister retired soon after, and Emerson was left as the sole pastor. His thoughtful sermons, simple, direct, and elevated, pleased his congregation; the tranquil enthusiasm of his nature and the charm of his manner made him welcome in the homes of his people. At twenty-seven years of age he seemed to be well settled for life as a parish minister of the Unitarian Church.

But in 1832 his wife died, an event which greatly de-

pressed him in health and spirits. Later in the same year he came to the conviction that the Lord's Supper was not intended by Christ to be a permanent institution. Following his passion for independence and sincerity, he preached a sermon to his congregation declaring that he was not willing to celebrate the Sacrament any longer, unless they would cease to observe the outward form, dispense with the use of the elements of bread and wine, and make the rite simply an act of spiritual remembrance. Precisely what he meant by this his congregation may not have understood, but at all events they declined the proposition, and Emerson retired, not without some disappointment, from the pastoral office. He never took charge of a parish again; though he continued to preach in various pulpits, as opportunity offered, until 1847. In fact he was always a preacher, though of a singular and independent order. His chosen task in the world was to befriend and guide the inner life of man.

III. Travel, Study, and Self-discovery

The three years that followed Emerson's resignation from his church were among the most important of his life, for in them he found himself and his proper work in the world. He was not, in fact, fitted for any of the regular professions, — the ministry, law, medicine, teaching, or even journalism, — in all of which a certain conformity to rule and system is demanded and needed. He

was an exceptional man, too independent in his thoughts and feelings, too strongly convinced that the only way to be free is to make your own rules, too much enchanted with the beauty of his own intellectual visions and the joy of expressing them in his own striking, brilliant, unsystematic way, ever to find a place with other men in one of those institutions, like churches or universities, which move slowly, along fixed lines. He must mark out his own course, and mark it from day to day. He must deliver his own message to the world, not as a member of an organized body, but as an individual, a representative "single man." He was more than a Unitarian. He was a Unit.

On Christmas Day, 1832, he took passage in a sailing vessel for the Mediterranean. He travelled through Italy, visited Paris, spent two months in Scotland and England, and saw the four men that he most desired to see — Landor, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth. "The comfort of meeting such men of genius as these," he wrote, "is that they talk sincerely." His visit to Carlyle, in the lonely farmhouse at Craigenputtock, was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. Emerson secured the publication of Carlyle's first books in America. Carlyle introduced Emerson's *Essays* into England. The two men were bound together by a mutual respect deeper than a sympathy of tastes, and a community of spirit stronger than a similarity of opinions. Emerson was a sweet-tempered Carlyle, living in the sunshine. Carlyle was a militant Emerson, moving amid thunder-clouds.

The things that each most admired in the other were self-reliance, directness, moral courage.

A passage in Emerson's diary, written on his homeward voyage, strikes the keynote of his remaining life. "A man contains all that is needful to his government within himself. . . . All real good or evil that can befall him must be from himself. . . . There is a correspondence between the human soul and everything that exists in the world ; more properly, everything that is known to man. Instead of studying things without, the principles of them all may be penetrated into within him. . . . The purpose of life seems to be to acquaint man with himself. . . . The highest revelation is that God is in every man."

This is the central doctrine of a certain philosophy which has gone under different names at different times, and has expressed itself in various forms, more or less mystical, but which always comes back to two main notions: first, that the whole world of visible things is only a sort of garment which covers the real world of invisible ideas and laws and principles; and second, that each man, having a share in the universal reason which is the source of all things, may have a direct knowledge of truth through his own innate ideas and intuitive perceptions. In Emerson's day this philosophy, under the name of Transcendentalism (that is to say, a theory of life which transcends, or goes beyond, mere logic and scientific reasoning), was much talked about in New England, and many well-known men and women were

following it. A Transcendental Club was formed in 1836, of which Emerson was, for a time, a member.

It is easy to see how such a philosophy, with its assertion of the right and duty of each man to discover and measure the truth for himself, without waiting to reason it out or prove it, might lead to all kinds of wild and queer and extravagant views and practices. With these vagaries Emerson had no sympathy. His orderly nature, his strong common sense, recoiled from all practical eccentricity and irregular ways. He wished to have a free life in his thoughts and a steady, respectable life in his conduct, in accordance with the traditions and customs of New England. He did not like to be bound to any scheme or system of doctrine, however vague and misty. He said, "I wish to say what I feel and think to-day, with the proviso that perhaps to-morrow I shall contradict it all." Therefore he frequently declared that he was not to be called a Transcendentalist; at times he even made fun, mildly and in a friendly way, of the extreme followers of that philosophy. As a matter of fact he held as strongly as any of them to the idea that the native light of reason in every man is the guide to truth; but he held it with the important reservation that when this inner light shines truly and brightly it will never lead a man away from good judgment and the moral law. All through his life he navigated the transcendental sea, piloted by a clear conscience, warned off the rocks by the saving sense of humour, and kept from capsizing by a solid ballast of New England prudence.

After his return from England in 1833 he went to live with his relative, Dr. Ripley, at the Old Manse, in Concord, Massachusetts, and began his career as a lecturer in Boston. His first lectures were delivered before the Society of Natural History, and the Mechanics' Institute. In the autumn of 1835 he married Miss Lydia Jackson of Plymouth, having previously bought a spacious old house and garden at Concord. There he spent the remainder of his life; a devoted husband, a wise and tender father, a careful householder, a virtuous villager, a friendly neighbour, and, spite of all his disclaimers, the central and luminous figure among the Transcendentalists. The doctrine which in others seemed to produce all sorts of extravagances — communistic experiments at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, weird schemes of political reform, long hair on men and short hair on women — in his sane, well-balanced nature served only to lend an ideal charm to the familiar outline of a plain, orderly New England life. Some mild departures from common ways he tranquilly tested, and as tranquilly abandoned. He tried vegetarianism for a while, but gave it up when he found that it did him no particular good. An attempt to practise household equality by having the servants sit at table with the rest of the family was broken up by the dislike of his two sensible hired girls for such an inconvenient arrangement. His theory that manual labour should form part of the scholar's life was checked by the personal discovery that hard work in the fields meant poor work in the study. "The writer shall not dig," was

his practical conclusion. Intellectual independence was what he chiefly desired; and this, he found, could be attained in a manner of living not outwardly different from that of the average college professor or country minister. And yet it was to this property-holding, debt-paying, law-abiding, well-dressed, courteous-mannered citizen of Concord, that the ardent and enthusiastic turned as the prophet of the new idealism. The influence of other transcendental teachers was narrow and parochial compared with that of Emerson. Something in his imperturbable, kindly presence, his angelic look, his musical voice, his commanding style of thought and speech, announced him as the possessor of the great secret which many were seeking — the secret of a freer, deeper, more harmonious life. More and more, as his fame spread, those who wished to live in the spirit came to listen to the voice, and to sit at the feet, of the sage of Concord.

IV. Emerson the Lecturer

It was as a public lecturer that Emerson found his power, earned his living, and won his first fame. The courses of lectures that he delivered at the Masonic Temple in Boston, during the winters of 1835 and 1836, on *Great Men*, *English Literature*, and *The Philosophy of History*, were well attended and admired. They were followed by two discourses which called general attention to him as a new and strong personality. His Phi Beta

Kappa oration at Harvard College in August, 1837, on *The American Scholar*, was an eloquent appeal for independence, sincerity, realism, in the intellectual life of America. His address before the graduating class of the Divinity School at Cambridge, in 1838, was a protest against what he called "the defects of historical Christianity" and a plea for absolute self-reliance, and a new inspiration of religion. "In the soul," he said, "let redemption be sought. Wherever a man comes, there comes revolution. The old is for slaves. Go alone. Refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men. Cast conformity behind you, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity." A blaze of controversy sprang up at once about this address. Conservatives attacked him; radicals defended him. Emerson made no reply. But amid this somewhat fierce illumination he went forward steadily as a public lecturer. It was not his denials that made him popular; it was the eloquence with which he presented the positive side of his doctrine. Whatever the titles of his lectures, *Literary Ethics*, *Man the Reformer*, *The Present Age*, *The Method of Nature*, *Representative Men*, *The Conduct of Life*, their theme was always the same, "namely the infinitude of the private man." Those who thought him astray on the subject of religion, listened to him with delight when he poetized on the subject of art, politics, literature, or the household. His utterance was inspirational, like that of the ancient oracle at Delphi. There was magic in his elocution. The simplicity and

symmetry of his sentences, the modulations of his thrilling voice, the radiance of his fine face, even his slight hesitations and pauses over his manuscript, lent a strange charm to his speech. For more than a generation he went about the country lecturing in cities, towns, and villages, before learned societies, rustic lyceums, and colleges; and there was no man on the platform in America who excelled him in distinction, in authority, or in stimulating eloquence.

In 1847 Emerson visited Great Britain for the second time; was welcomed by Carlyle; lectured to appreciative audiences in Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and London; made many new friends among the best English people; paid a brief visit to Paris; and returned home in July, 1848. "I leave England," he wrote, "with increased respect for the Englishman. His stuff or substance seems to be the best in the world. I forgive him all his pride. My respect is the more generous that I have no sympathy with him, only an admiration." The impressions of this journey were embodied in a book called *English Traits*, published in 1856. It might be called "English Traits and American Confessions," for nowhere does Emerson's Americanism come out more strongly.

But the America that he loved and admired was the ideal America. For the actual conditions of social and political life in his own time he had a fine scorn. His intellectual refinement demanded a purer atmosphere, a loftier way of living. His principles were democratic, his tastes aristocratic. He did not like crowds, streets,

hotels — "the people who fill them oppress me with their excessive civility." Humanity was his hero. He loved man, but he was not fond of many men. He had grave doubts about universal suffrage. He took a sincere interest in social and political reform, but toward specific "reforms" his attitude was somewhat remote and critical. On the subject of temperance he held aloof from the intemperate denunciation of the violent prohibitionists. He was a believer in woman's rights, but he was lukewarm toward conventions in favour of woman suffrage. Even in regard to slavery he had serious hesitations about the methods of the abolitionists, and for a long time refused to be identified with them. His view was that the slaves should be bought up and liberated. But as "the irrepressible conflict" drew to a head Emerson's hesitation vanished. He said in 1856, "I think we must get rid of slavery or we must get rid of freedom." With the outbreak of the Civil War he became an ardent and powerful advocate of the cause of the Union. James Russell Lowell said, "To him more than to all other causes did the young martyrs of our Civil War owe the sustaining strength of thoughtful heroism that is so touching in every record of their lives."

V. Emerson the Author

It will not be necessary to say much of Emerson's poetry in this Introduction. That he had the spirit and

imagination of a poet is not to be doubted. Whether he fully mastered the art of writing in verse is another question. His two volumes of poems, published in 1847 and 1867, contain many passages of wonderful insight and deep feeling, some lines of great splendour, and a few poems (like *The Rhodora*, *The Snow-Storm*, *Terminus*, the *Concord Hymn*, the *Concord Ode*, and the marvellous *Threnody* on the death of his first-born boy), of high beauty and profound truth. But his prose sometimes creeps into his poems, even as his poetry, in spirit, often overflows into his prose.

His first book was a slender volume entitled *Nature*, published in 1838. It is not at all like those out-of-door books so plentiful nowadays, which give us careful observations of the ways of plants and animals. It is full of philosophical and poetical reflections about the relation of nature in general to the mind of man: "If the stars should appear but one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown!" "The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man."

With the exception of this little book, the works of Emerson, the prose-writer, are almost entirely a report of Emerson, the lecturer. His books were collected and arranged, one after another, from the manuscripts of his lectures and addresses.

His way of making a lecture was singular and altogether his own. He had the habit of keeping note-books, in

which he jotted down bits of observation about nature, stray thoughts and comparisons, reflections on his reading, and striking phrases which came to him in meditation or talk. When he had chosen a subject, he planted it in his mind and waited for ideas and illustrations to gather around it, as birds or insects might come to a plant or a flower. When a thought appeared he followed it, "as a boy might hunt a butterfly," and when it was captured, he pinned it in his "Thought-book." No doubt there were mental laws at work all the time, giving guidance and direction to the process of composition which seemed so irregular and haphazard. There is no lack of vital unity in one of Emerson's lectures or essays. You will find that it deals with a single subject, and never gets really out of sight of the proposition with which it begins. Yet it seldom gives you a complete, all-round view of the subject. It is more like a series of swift and vivid glimpses of the same object seen from different standpoints, a collection of snap-shot pictures taken in the course of a walk around some great mountain. His paragraphs are related to the central theme, but their connexion with one another is not always perfectly clear.

From the pages of his note-books he gathered the material for one of his discourses, selecting and arranging it under some such title as *Fate*, *Genius*, *Beauty*, *Manners*, *Duty*, *The Anglo-Saxon*, *The Young American*, and giving it such form and order as he thought would be most effective in the delivery. If the lecture was often repeated, as it usually was, the material was

frequently rearranged, the pages shifted, the illustrations changed. Then, after a lecture or a series of lectures had served its purpose, the material was again rearranged, and published in a volume of *Essays*.

The dates of publication of these books were as follows: *Essays* (First Series), 1841; *Essays* (Second Series), 1844; *Representative Men*, 1850; *English Traits*, 1856; *The Conduct of Life*, 1860; *Society and Solitude*, 1870; *Letters and Social Aims*, 1876.

You can easily trace in Emerson's essays the effects of his way of making lectures.

1. The material which he uses is drawn from a wide range of reading and observation. He was especially fond of poetry, philosophy, and books of anecdote and biography. He quotes from Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, George Herbert, Wordsworth, Plutarch, Grimm, St. Simon, Swedenborg, Behmen the Mystic, Plato, and the religious books of the East. His illustrations come from far and near. Now they are strange and remote, now homely and familiar. The Zodiac of Denderah; the Savoyards, who carved their pine forests into toys; the *lustrum* of silence which Pythagoras made his disciples keep; Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*, watching the drill of the English soldiers; the Egyptian legend that every man has two pairs of eyes; Empedocles and his shoe; the flat strata of the earth; a soft mushroom pushing up through the hard ground — all these allusions, and a hundred more, are found in the same volume. On his pages, close beside the Parthenon, St. Paul's, the

Sphynx, Ætna, and Vesuvius, you will read of the White Mountains, Monadnock, Katahdin, the pickerel-weed in bloom, the wild geese honking across the sky, the chickadee singing in the face of winter, the Boston State-house, Wall Street, cotton mills, railroads, Quincy granite, and so forth. Nothing is too far away to seem real to him; nothing too near to seem interesting and valuable. There is an abundance, sometimes a superabundance, of material in his essays; not always well-assorted, but all vivid and suggestive. His cabinet is not arranged in scientific or classical order, but it is full of specimens, and each one means something.

2. The structure of his essays, the way of putting the material together, does not follow any regular form or system. He aims first at holding the attention of the listener or reader; and sometimes he does this by the very abruptness of the passage from one point to another, or by the apparent strangeness of the ideas or illustrations which he suddenly brings in. It is not easy to make an outline or analysis of one of Emerson's essays. They do not seem to be constructed on a plan, but to grow out of a thought. They turn aside from uninteresting points, and omit the connecting links, and follow an attractive idea wherever it may lead. They are like a conversation with the stupid things left out. They seldom exhaust a subject, but they generally illuminate it. As a whole you may find it hard to understand them; but even in the most difficult and obscure there are bits that are bright, clear, and memorable.

3. The style of Emerson's essays is well suited to the material and the structure. It is brilliant, gem-like, sparkling. He has great freedom in the choice of words, using them sometimes in odd ways, and not always correctly. As a rule his diction is made up of terse Anglo-Saxon phrases, but now and then he likes to bring in a long stately word from the Greek or Latin, with a telling effect of contrast. Most of his sentences are short and clear. It is the paragraph that is sometimes cloudy. Every essay is full of epigrams. The effect of his style, if one reads too much of it, becomes jerky and fatiguing. What you miss is the rich, long, steady flow of sentences with varied cadence and changing music. Emerson's river is almost all rapids. The flash and sparkle of phrase after phrase wearies one, after a time. But for a short voyage nothing could be more animated and stimulating. Emerson has plenty of things to say, and he says them in as few words as possible, and every one to the point.

4. Of the teachings which you will find in Emerson's essays, I have already spoken in a general way at the beginning of this Introduction. You will be able to judge of them better for yourself when you have read the five essays which are included in this book. He offers no complete philosophy of life, and often seems to contradict himself. His great message of "self-reliance" runs through all his work and underlies all that he says. At times it is put in an extreme form, and might lead, if rashly followed, to intellectual conceit and folly. But it is balanced by other lessons of self-criticism, and modesty,

and consideration, and prudence, and reverence. He is a stimulating, inspiring, hopeful teacher of youth, correcting follies with a sharp wit; encouraging noble ambitions with eloquent words; making the face of nature luminous with the glow of his poetic imagination; and elevating life with an ideal patriotism and a broad humanity. In all his utterances one hears the serene and lofty note of a sane, thoughtful optimism, the faith that holds, amid many things that are dark, mysterious, and terrifying, the firm confidence that Good is stronger than Evil and will triumph at last everywhere. It is this note, more than anything else, that has made hundreds of thousands of the youth of America listen gladly to the teachings of Emerson, and look up to him, not only as a brilliant writer, but also as a master of the wisdom of life.

VI. The Closing Years

The latter years of Emerson's life were passed in peaceful honour at Concord. In 1866 Harvard University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, and in the following year he was elected to the Board of Overseers. In 1870 and 1871 he delivered a course of lectures, in connexion with the University, on *The Natural History of the Intellect.* He had an audience of about thirty students, and was somewhat disappointed with the results of the course. In 1872 his house was burned down. It was rebuilt by a popular subscription from his

friends and admirers while he was absent on a journey to Egypt. About this time began a failure in his mental powers, particularly his memory. But his character remained serene and unshaken in dignity. Steadily and tranquilly he finished the voyage of life, as it is described in his own poem, *Terminus*: —

> "As the bird trims her to the gale,
> I trim myself to the storm of time,
> I man the rudder, reef the sail,
> Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
> 'Lowly faithful, banish fear,
> Right onward drive unharmed;
> The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
> And every wave is charmed.'"

He died on April 27, 1882, and was buried in the quiet cemetery of Sleepy Hollow, among the trees on the edge of the village of Concord.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

ANALYSIS

Theme: *a.* The whole of human nature exists in all men, but they are divided by their different tasks. *b.* Each should bring his whole manhood to his task, and the Scholar should be not merely an intellect studying books, but *Man Thinking.* *c.* The American Scholar should be the American man thinking.

Structure: A. *Introduction.* An allusion to the occasion as an anniversary of hope for the intellectual future of America; and a general statement of the first two parts of the theme.

B. *Discussion.* I. The main influences which affect the spirit of man thinking. (1) Nature, which is the counterpart of his own soul. (2) The mind of the Past, chiefly as recorded in books. (3) Action: his own work and experience in the world. II. The duties of man thinking. All may be comprised in Self-Trust, which will (1) deliver him from cowardice, (2) keep him from being lost in the crowd, (3) put him in possession of his intellectual kingdom.

C. *Application.* The present age is marked by a new sense of the value of the common life, the dignity of the single person. America ought to realize this most clearly and live it out. The American scholar must "listen no longer to the courtly muses of Europe," but "plant himself on his own instincts," and be himself, not a copy. "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds."

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY, AT CAMBRIDGE, AUGUST 31, 1837

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

I GREET you on the recommencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labour. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours; nor for the advancement of science, like our contemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids[1] and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship[2] to the learning of

[1] Heavy eyelids.

[2] Years during which a youth is bound out to learn a trade.

other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere[1] remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith,[2] astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

In this hope I accept the topic which not only usage but the nature of our association seem to prescribe to this day, — the AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Year by year we come up hither to read one more chapter of his biography. Let us inquire what light new days and events have thrown on his character and his hopes.

It is one of those fables which out of an unknown antiquity convey an unlooked-for wisdom, that the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself; just as the hand was divided into fingers, the better to answer its end.

The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man, — present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint[3] of the joint work, whilst each other performs his.

[1] Dry, withered. [2] Directly overhead. [3] Task appointed.

The fable implies that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labour to embrace all the other labourers. But, unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered. The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk,[1] and strut about so many walking monsters, — a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.

Man is thus metamorphosed[2] into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden[3] by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship.

In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot[4] of other men's thinking.

In this view of him, as Man Thinking, the theory of

[1] Body.
[2] Changed in form.
[3] Kept under and controlled.
[4] One who repeats without understanding.

his office is contained. Him Nature solicits with all her placid, all her monitory[1] pictures; him the past instructs; him the future invites. Is not indeed every man a student, and do not all things exist for the student's behoof?[2] And, finally, is not the true scholar the only true master? But the old oracle said, "All things have two handles: beware of the wrong one." In life, too often, the scholar errs with mankind and forfeits his privilege. Let us see him in his school, and consider him in reference to the main influences he receives.

I. The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and, after sunset, Night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, conversing, beholding and beholden.[3] The scholar is he of all men whom this spectacle most engages. He must settle its value in his mind. What is nature to him? There is never a beginning, there is never an end, to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself. Therein it resembles his own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he never can find, — so entire, so boundless. Far too as her splendours shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward, without centre, without circumference, — in the mass and in the particle, Nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind. Classification begins. To the young mind every thing is individual,

[1] Warning. [2] Benefit. [3] Bound by obligations. Cf. note.

stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand;[1] and so, tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies,[2] discovering roots running under ground whereby contrary and remote things cohere[3] and flower out from one stem. It presently learns that since the dawn of history there has been a constant accumulation and classifying of facts. But what is classification but the perceiving that these objects are not chaotic, and are not foreign, but have a law which is also a law of the human mind? The astronomer discovers that geometry, a pure abstraction of the human mind, is the measure of planetary motion. The chemist finds proportions and intelligible method throughout matter; and science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts. The ambitious soul sits down before each refractory fact; one after another reduces all strange constitutions, all new powers, to their class and their law, and goes on forever to animate[4] the last fibre of organization, the outskirts of nature, by insight.

Thus to him, to this school-boy under the bending dome[5] of day, is suggested that he and it proceed from one root; one is leaf and one is flower; relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. And what is that root? Is not that the soul of his soul? A thought too bold; a

[1] *I.e.* to join three thousand things.
[2] Things contrary to the common rule.
[3] Cling together.
[4] Give a soul to.
[5] The sky.

dream too wild. Yet when this spiritual light shall have revealed the law of more earthly natures, — when he has learned to worship the soul, and to see that the natural philosophy that now is, is only the first gropings of its gigantic hand, he shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator. He shall see that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind. Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess. And, in fine, the ancient precept, "Know thyself," and the modern precept, "Study nature," become at last one maxim.

II. The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past, — in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of the influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth, — learn the amount of this influence more conveniently, — by considering their value alone.

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him

business; it went from him poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into truth. In proportion to the completeness of the distillation,[1] so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum, so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to contemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this.

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once

[1] The driving off of impurities by alternate heating and cooling.

received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence the restorers of readings, the emendators,[1] the bibliomaniacs[2] of all degrees.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit,[3] and made a satellite[4] instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed, and as yet un-

[1] One who edits a book critically.

[2] One who loves books extravagantly.

[3] The path in which a heavenly body revolves.

[4] A secondary planet, like the moon.

born. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favourite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they, — let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux[1] of the Deity is not his; — cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest[2] and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice[3] is done. Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over-influence. The literature of every nation bears me witness. The English dramatic poets have Shakespearized[4] now for two hundred years.

Undoubtedly there is a right way of reading, so it be sternly subordinated. Man Thinking must not be sub-

[1] That which flows out.
[2] Self-searching.
[3] Injury.
[4] Imitated Shakespeare.

dued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must, — when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining, — we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their ray, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is. We hear, that we may speak. The Arabian proverb says, "A fig tree, looking on a fig tree, becometh fruitful."

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer, of Marvell, of Dryden, with the most modern joy, — with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all *time* from their verses. There is some awe mixed with the joy of our surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my soul, that which I also had well-nigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose some pre-established harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any

exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know, that as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I only would say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor[1] to read well. As the proverb says, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies." There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labour and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakspeare, only that least part, — only the authentic utterances of the oracle;[2] — all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakspeare's.

Of course there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office, — to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to

[1] One who finds out new things, an original thinker.

[2] A person speaking by inspiration.

drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge are natures[1] in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns[2] and pecuniary foundations,[3] though of towns of gold, can never countervail[4] the least sentence or syllable of wit.[5] Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.

III. There goes in the world a notion that the scholar should be a recluse, a valetudinarian,[6] — as unfit for any handiwork or public labour as a penknife for an axe. The so-called "practical men" sneer at speculative men, as if, because they speculate or *see*, they could do nothing. I have heard it said that the clergy, — who are always, more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day, — are addressed as women; that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are often virtually disfranchised;[7] and indeed there are advocates for their celibacy.[8] As far as this is true of the studious classes, it is not just and wise. Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can

[1] Kinds, or qualities, of being.
[2] Academic costume.
[3] Endowment of colleges.
[4] Prevail against.
[5] Intelligence, good sense.
[6] One who is always ill.
[7] Deprived of the privilege of voting.
[8] Unmarried life.

never ripen into truth. Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind. The preamble[1] of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, is action. Only so much do I know, as I have lived. Instantly we know whose words are loaded with life, and whose not.

The world, — this shadow of the soul, or *other me*, lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I run eagerly into this resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next me, and take my place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct that so shall the dumb abyss be vocal with speech. I pierce its order; I dissipate its fear;[2] I dispose of it within the circuit of my expanding life. So much only of life as I know by experience, so much of the wilderness have I vanquished and planted, or so far have I extended my being, my dominion. I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to spare any action in which he can partake. It is pearls and rubies to his discourse. Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom. The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action past by, as a loss of power.

It is the raw material out of which the intellect

[1] That which precedes and introduces.

[2] *I.e.* the fear which it inspires.

moulds her splendid products. A strange process too, this by which experience is converted into thought, as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin. The manufacture goes forward at all hours.

The actions and events of our childhood and youth are now matters of calmest observation. They lie like fair pictures in the air. Not so with our recent actions, — with the business which we now have in hand. On this we are quite unable to speculate. Our affections as yet circulate through it. We no more feel or know it than we feel the feet, or the hand, or the brain of our body. The new deed is yet a part of life, — remains for a time immersed in our unconscious life. In some contemplative hour it detaches itself from the life like a ripe fruit, to become a thought of the mind. Instantly it is raised, transfigured; the corruptible has put on incorruption. Henceforth it is an object of beauty, however base its origin and neighbourhood. Observe too the impossibility of antedating this act. In its grub[1] state, it cannot fly, it cannot shine, it is a dull grub. But suddenly, without observation, the selfsame thing unfurls beautiful wings, and is an angel of wisdom. So is there no fact, no event, in our private history, which shall not, sooner or later, lose its adhesive, inert form, and astonish us by soaring from our body into the empyrean.[2] Cradle and infancy, school and playground, the fear of boys, and dogs, and ferules,[3] the love of little maids and berries, and

[1] The **larva**, or wingless form of an insect. [2] Highest heaven.
[3] A rod used by schoolmasters for discipline.

many another fact that once filled the whole sky, are gone already; friend and relative, profession and party, town and country, nation and world, must also soar and sing.[1]

Of course, he who has put forth his total strength in fit actions has the richest return of wisdom. I will not shut myself out of this globe of action, and transplant an oak into a flower-pot, there to hunger and pine; nor trust the revenue of some single faculty, and exhaust one vein of thought, much like those Savoyards, who, getting their livelihood by carving shepherds, shepherdesses, and smoking Dutchmen, for all Europe, went out one day to the mountain to find stock, and discovered that they had whittled up the last of their pine-trees. Authors we have, in numbers, who have written out their vein, and who, moved by a commendable prudence, sail for Greece or Palestine, follow the trapper into the prairie, or ramble round Algiers, to replenish their merchantable stock.

If it were only for a vocabulary,[2] the scholar would be covetous of action. Life is our dictionary. Years are well spent in country labours; in town; in the insight into trades and manufactures; in frank intercourse with many men and women; in science; in art; to the one end of mastering in all their facts a language by which to illustrate and embody our perceptions. I learn immediately from any speaker how much he has already lived, through the poverty or the splendour of his speech. Life lies behind us as the quarry from whence we get tiles[3]

[1] *I.e.* be changed into thoughts. [2] Stock of words.
[3] Flat pieces of stone, or baked clay.

and copestones[1] for the masonry of to-day. This is the way to learn grammar. Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the work-yard made.

But the final value of action, like that of books, and better than books, is that it is a resource. That great principle of Undulation[2] in nature, that shows itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, as yet more deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid, is known to us under the name of Polarity,[3] — these "fits of easy transmission and reflection," as Newton called them, — are the law of nature because they are the law of spirit.

The mind now thinks, now acts, and each fit reproduces the other. When the artist has exhausted his materials, when the fancy no longer paints, when thoughts are no longer apprehended and books are a weariness, — he has always the resource *to live*. Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary. The stream retreats to its source. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. Does he lack organ or medium to impart his truth? He can still fall back on this elemental force of living them. This is a total act.[4] Thinking is a

[1] Stones covering a wall. [2] Wave motion.

[3] The quality of a body by which it shows contrasted properties in opposite directions: *e.g.* a magnet attracts at one end, repels at the other.

[4] *I.e.* an act which involves the whole man.

partial act. Let the grandeur of justice shine in his affairs. Let the beauty of affection cheer his lowly roof. Those "far from fame," who dwell and act with him, will feel the force of his constitution in the doings and passages[1] of the day better than it can be measured by any public and designed display. Time shall teach him that the scholar loses no hour which the man lives. Herein he unfolds the sacred germ of his instinct, screened from influence. What is lost in seemliness is gained in strength. Not out of those on whom systems of education have exhausted their culture, comes the helpful giant to destroy the old or to build the new, but out of unhandselled[2] savage nature; out of terrible Druids and Berserkers come at last Alfred and Shakespeare.

I hear therefore with joy whatever is beginning to be said of the dignity and necessity of labour to every citizen. There is virtue yet in the hoe and the spade, for learned as well as for unlearned hands. And labour is everywhere welcome; always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgements and modes of action.

I have now spoken of the education of the scholar by nature, by books, and by action. It remains to say somewhat of his duties.

They are such as become Man Thinking. They may all be comprised in self-trust. The office of the scholar

[1] Events. [2] Ungifted, uncultured.

is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances. He plies the slow, unhonoured, and unpaid task of observation. Flamsteed and Herschel, in their glazed observatories, may catalogue the stars with the praise of all men, and the results being splendid and useful, honour is sure. But he, in his private observatory, cataloguing obscure and nebulous[1] stars of the human mind, which as yet no man has thought of as such, — watching days and months sometimes for a few facts; correcting still his old records; — must relinquish display and immediate fame. In the long period of his preparation he must betray often an ignorance and shiftlessness in popular arts, incurring the disdain of the able who shoulder him aside. Long he must stammer in his speech; often forego the living for the dead. Worse yet, he must accept, — how often! poverty and solitude. For[2] the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he takes the cross of making his own, and, of course, the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss of time, which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying and self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society. For all this loss and scorn, what offset? He is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature. He is one who raises himself from private considerations and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He

[1] Not yet consolidated. [2] Instead of.

is the world's eye. He is the world's heart. He is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism, by preserving and communicating heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history. Whatsoever oracles[1] the human heart, in all emergencies, in all solemn hours, has uttered as its commentary on the world of actions, — these he shall receive and impart. And whatsoever new verdict Reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day, — this he shall hear and promulgate.

These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. He and he only knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum,[2] some fetish[3] of a government, some ephemeral[4] trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honourable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of

[1] The sayings of one inspired. [2] Rule of propriety.
[3] Object of superstitious reverence, an African charm.
[4] Lasting for a day.

reproach, and bide his own time, — happy enough if he can satisfy himself alone that this day he has seen something truly. Success treads on every right step. For the instinct is sure, that prompts him to tell his brother what he thinks. He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated. The poet, in utter solitude remembering his spontaneous thoughts and recording them, is found to have recorded that which men in crowded cities find true for them also. The orator distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions, his want of knowledge of the persons he addresses, until he finds that he is the complement of his hearers; — that they drink his words because he fulfils for them their own nature; the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music; this is myself.

In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended.[1] Free should the scholar be, — free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, "without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution." Brave; for fear is a thing which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from

[1] Included.

ignorance. It is a shame to him if his tranquillity, amid dangerous times, arise from the presumption that like children and women his is a protected class; or if he seek a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions, hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes, and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye and search its nature, inspect its origin, — see the whelping[1] of this lion, — which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it and pass on superior. The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold is there only by sufferance, — by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.

Yes, we are the cowed, — we the trustless. It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago. As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so it is ever to so much of his attributes as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin, it is flint. They adapt themselves to it as they may; but in proportion as a man has any thing in him divine, the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form. Not he is great who can alter

[1] Birth, as of a lion's whelp.

matter, but he who can alter my state of mind. They are the kings of the world who give the colour of their present thought to all nature and all art, and persuade men by the cheerful serenity of their carrying the matter, that this thing which they do is the apple which the ages have desired to pluck, now at last ripe, and inviting nations to the harvest. The great man makes the great thing. Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table. Linnæus makes botany the most alluring of studies, and wins it from the farmer and the herb-woman; Davy, chemistry; and Cuvier, fossils. The day is always his who works in it with serenity and great aims. The unstable estimates of men crowd to him whose mind is filled with a truth, as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon.

For this self-trust, the reason is deeper than can be fathomed, — darker than can be enlightened. I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. But I have already shown the ground of my hope, in adverting to the doctrine that man is one. I believe man has been wronged; he has wronged himself. He has almost lost the light that can lead him back to his prerogatives. Men are become of no account. Men in history, men in the world of to-day, are bugs, are spawn, and are called "the mass" and "the herd." In a century, in a millennium, one or two men; that is to say, one or two approximations to the right state of every man. All the rest behold in the hero or the poet their own green and crude being, — ripened; yes, and are content

to be less, so *that* may attain to its full stature. What a testimony, full of grandeur, full of pity, is borne to the demands of his own nature, by the poor clansman, the poor partisan, who rejoices in the glory of his chief. The poor and the low find some amends to their immense moral capacity, for their acquiescence in a political and social inferiority. They are content to be brushed like flies from the path of a great person, so that justice shall be done by him to that common nature which it is the dearest desire of all to see enlarged and glorified. They sun themselves in the great man's light, and feel it to be their own element. They cast the dignity of man from their downtrod selves upon the shoulders of a hero, and will perish to add one drop of blood to make that great heart beat, those giant sinews combat and conquer. He lives for us, and we live in him.

Men such as they are, very naturally seek money or power; and power because it is as good as money, — the "spoils," so called, "of office." And why not? for they aspire to the highest, and this, in their sleep-walking, they dream is highest. Wake them and they shall quit the false good and leap to the true, and leave governments to clerks and desks. This revolution is to be wrought by the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture. The main enterprise of the world for splendour, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man. Here are the materials strewn along the ground. The private life of one man shall be a more illustrious monarchy, more formidable to its enemy, more sweet and serene in its

influence to its friend, than any kingdom in history. For a man, rightly viewed, comprehendeth the particular natures of all men. Each philosopher, each bard, each actor has only done for me, as by a delegate, what one day I can do for myself. The books which once we valued more than the apple of the eye, we have quite exhausted. What is that but saying that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe; we have been that man, and have passed on. First, one, then another, we drain all cisterns, and waxing greater by all these supplies, we crave a better and more abundant food. The man has never lived that can feed us ever. The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person who shall set a barrier on any one side to this unbounded, unboundable empire. It is one central fire, which, flaming now out of the lips of Etna, lightens the capes of Sicily, and now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men.

But I have dwelt perhaps tediously upon this abstraction of the Scholar. I ought not to delay longer to add what I have to say of nearer reference to the time and to this country.

Historically, there is thought to be a difference in the ideas which predominate over successive epochs, and there are data for marking the genius of the Classic, of

the Romantic, and now of the Reflective or Philosophical age. With the views I have intimated of the oneness or the identity of the mind through all individuals, I do not much dwell on these differences. In fact, I believe each individual passes through all three. The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the adult, reflective. I deny not however that a revolution in the leading idea may be distinctly enough traced.

Our age is bewailed as the age of Introversion.[1] Must that needs be evil? We, it seems, are critical; we are embarrassed with second thoughts; we cannot enjoy any thing for hankering to know whereof the pleasure consists; we are lined with eyes; we see with our feet; the time is infected with Hamlet's unhappiness, —

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

It is so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee nature and God, and drink truth dry? I look upon the discontent of the literary class as a mere announcement of the fact that they find themselves not in the state of mind of their fathers, and regret the coming state as untried; as a boy dreads the water before he has learned that he can swim. If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are

[1] Thought turned inward.

searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

I read with some joy of the auspicious signs of the coming days, as they glimmer already through poetry and art, through philosophy and science, through church and state.

One of these signs is the fact that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state, assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized. That which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign, — is it not? of new vigour when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the

milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body; — show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing; — and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

This idea has inspired the genius of Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, and, in a newer time, of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. This idea they have differently followed and with various success. In contrast with their writing, the style of Pope, of Johnson, of Gibbon, looks cold and pedantic. This writing is blood-warm. Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote. The near explains the far. The drop is a small ocean. A man is related to all nature. This perception of the worth of the vulgar is fruitful in discoveries. Goethe, in this very thing the most modern of the moderns, has shown us, as none ever did, the genius of the ancients.

There is one man of genius who has done much for this philosophy of life, whose literary value has never yet been rightly estimated; — I mean Emanuel Swedenborg.

The most imaginative of men, yet writing with the precision of a mathematician, he endeavoured to engraft a purely philosophical Ethics on the popular Christianity of his time. Such an attempt of course must have difficulty which no genius could surmount. But he saw and showed the connexion between nature and the affections of the soul. He pierced the emblematic or spiritual character of the visible, audible, tangible world. Especially did his shade-loving muse[1] hover over and interpret the lower parts of nature; he showed the mysterious bond that allies moral evil to the foul material forms, and has given in epical parables a theory of insanity, of beasts, of unclean and fearful things.

Another sign of our times, also marked by an analogous political movement, is the new importance given to the single person. Every thing that tends to insulate the individual, — to surround him with barriers of natural respect, so that each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state, — tends to true union as well as greatness. "I learned," said the melancholy Pestalozzi, "that no man in God's wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man." Help must come from the bosom alone. The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contribution of the past, all the hopes of the future. He must be an university of knowledges. If there be one lesson more than another which should pierce

[1] Genius, guiding spirit.

his ear, it is, The world is nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all; it is for you to dare all. Mr. President and Gentlemen, this confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar. We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. There is no work for any but the decorous and the complaisant. Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated[1] by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers[2] for the career do not yet see, that if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience, — patience; with

[1] Breathed upon and filled.

[2] The bars enclosing the space for a tournament or contest.

the shades[1] of all the good and great for company; and for solace the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world. Is it not the chief disgrace in the world, not to be an unit; — not to be reckoned one character; — not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north, or the south? Not so, brothers and friends, — please God, ours shall not be so. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. The study of letters shall be no longer a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence. The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defence and a wreath of joy around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men.

[1] Spirits.

SELF-RELIANCE

"Ne te quæsiveris extra."[1]

"Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal[2] shadows that walk by us still."

— *Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher's Honest Man's Fortune.*

"Cast the bantling on the rocks,
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat,
Wintered with the hawk and fox,
Power and speed be hands and feet."

[1] "Seek nothing outside of thyself."
[2] Determining our fates.

ANALYSIS

Theme: Each man should trust himself, and be sure that what is true for him is true for all men. To do this he must resist outward influences. (Independence is really the principal subject of the essay, for it deals much more fully with resistance to the conventionalities of the world than with reliance upon self.)

Structure: A. *Introduction.* An eminent painter writes original verses, showing that self-confidence which is the mark of genius. Every man must have it if he is to count as a person in the world.

B. *Discussion.* I. Nature teaches relf-reliance, an instinct of childhood and youth. Society tries to crush it. We must resist if we are really to live. Virtue must be natural, not conventional. We must refuse to bow to dead usages, or to follow the crowd. Be not afraid of (1) unpopularity, (2) inconsistency. Contradict yourself, but say what you think from day to day. Be loyal to yourself and conquer the world. II. What is this Self on which we must rely? A personal manifestation of the universal life, the Divine mind. God shows each man truth every day through intuitions. In order to receive and follow this light we must trust the self through which it comes, and war against artificial and superficial opinions and customs of society. III. Hindrances to self-reliance, which must be put aside: (1) False prayers and creeds. (2) Travel, in the spirit which idolizes the foreign and the remote. (3) Imitation of old models in art and literature. (4) Reliance on the progress of society, on property, or on government.

C. *Application.* The application is scattered through the essay. Almost every page is full of practical maxims. The final lesson is that "nothing can bring you peace but yourself and the triumph of principles."

SELF-RELIANCE

I READ the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense;[1] for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgement. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament[2] of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated[3] majesty. Great works of art have no more

[1] Common opinion.

[2] Intellectual heavens, in which great men shine as stars.

[3] Made foreign and strange.

affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humoured inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony.[1] The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate[2] and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It

[1] Fitness designed beforehand. [2] Having its place in the whole.

is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connexion of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos[1] and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behaviour of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these[2] have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five[3] out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty[4]

[1] The confusion of the world before order came.
[2] Children, etc. [3] Babes.
[4] The change from childhood to manhood.

and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance[1] of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlour what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat*[2] he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe[3] for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiassed, unbribable, unaffrighted inno-

[1] Freedom from care, coolness.

[2] French (*ā-klä*): brilliant success.

[3] Forgetfulness.

cence,— must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist.[1] He who would gather immortal palms[2] must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve[3] you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage[4] of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested,— "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be

[1] One who does not submit to the established creed or rule.
[2] Undying fame.
[3] Justify.
[4] Vote of approval.

such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if every thing were titular[1] and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition,[2] and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, 'Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home.' Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it, — else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the

[1] Mere names.

[2] The abolition of slavery in America.

door-post, *Whim*.[1] I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee thou foolish philanthropist that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousandfold Relief Societies; — though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world, — as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle.[2] I much prefer that it should be of a lower

[1] A sudden turn of the mind, caprice. [2] Show.

strain, so it be genuine and equal,[1] than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding.[2] I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers, —

[1] Even, uniform.

[2] *I.e.* as if it were sick.

under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man[1] you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blindman's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney,[2] and these airs of the bench[3] are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief,[4] and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by

[1] Precisely what kind of a man. [2] Lawyer paid by one side.
[3] The court which decides between the sides.
[4] As in blindman's-buff.

degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance[1] on him in the public street or in the friend's parlour. If this aversation[2] had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook[3] the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow,[4] it needs the habit of magnanimity

[1] Sideways. [2] Turning away.
[3] Endure. [4] Make ugly faces.

and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder?[1] Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgement into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and colour. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin[2] of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard[3] words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day. — 'Ah,

[1] Look backward.

[2] A malicious imp, used by nurses to frighten children.

[3] Solid, firm.

so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' — Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere.[1] Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic[2] or Alexandrian stanza; — read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt[3] actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit[4] a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of

[1] The earth.

[2] A verse in which certain letters, taken in different lines, form a word. See note.

[3] Open.

[4] Emits (singular)

actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks.[1] See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative.[2] All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed an united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honour is venerable to us because it is no ephemera.[3] It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because

[1] Short runs of a boat, beating against the wind.

[2] Increasing by successive additions.

[3] An insect which lives one day, a May-fly.

it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted [1] and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, every body in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design; — and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Cæsar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ

[1] Declared bankrupt. See note.

is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible[1] of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism,[2] of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called "the height of Rome"; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, 'Who are you, Sir?' Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead-drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact

[1] The highest possible attainment. [2] The life of monks.

comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving; — the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical,[1] but fatal.[2] If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind, — although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass

[1] A matter of caprice. [2] A matter of necessity.

away, — means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it, — one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fullness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colours which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be any thing more than a cheerful apologue[1] or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think,' 'I am,' but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there

[1] A story invented to convey a moral.

is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames[1] and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see, — painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject

[1] Old women.

remains unsaid; probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought, by what[1] I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name; — the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man.[2] All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, years, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes;*[3] for that forever

[1] As far as. [2] The way that leads to solitude, not to imitation.
[3] Grows, passes into a new state of being.

degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident[1] but agent.[2] To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride[3] all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.[4]

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution[5] of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms

[1] Relying on something else. [2] Acting from itself.
[3] Master and guide. [4] Not plastic, etc. [5] Dissolving.

which cannot help itself. The genesis [1] and maturation [2] of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: [3] let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct [4] or sanctuary! [5] So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood and I have all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechani-

[1] Origin, birth. [2] Growth to perfection.
[3] Comes to one centre. [4] An enclosed space. [5] A sacred place.

cal, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door and say, — 'Come out unto us.' But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. "What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love."

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden, courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, 'O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities.[1] I shall endeavour to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife, — but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you.[2] If you can love me for what I

[1] Nearness. See note.

[2] Any individual.

am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last.' — But so may you give these friends pain.[1] Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism;[2] and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven.[3] You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct*,

[1] This is said by a supposed objector.

[2] Opposition to all law.

[3] Our confession heard and penance prescribed.

or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbour, town, cat and dog; whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics.[1] The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent,[2] cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our

[1] Theory of morals.

[2] Owing more than they can pay.

housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlour soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it*,[1] *farms it*, *peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not 'studying a profession,' for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more but thank

[1] Drives a team, works a farm (colloquial).

and revere him;—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendour and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow[1] themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism[2] and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in

[1] Indulge.

[2] The doctrine that the world is ruled by two equal and opposing powers.

Fletcher's Bonduca, when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies, —

> "His hidden meaning lies in our endeavours;
> Our valours are our best gods."

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honours crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, 'Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey.' Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my

brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification.[1] If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating every thing to the new terminology[2] as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolized, passes for the end and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend[3] to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see, — how you can see; 'It must be somehow that you stole the light

[1] Grouping of things into classes and orders.

[2] System of names.

[3] Seem to be one with.

from us.' They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp[1] awhile and call it their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold[2] will be too strait[3] and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young and joyful, million-orbed, million-coloured, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper[4] or a valet.[5]

I have no churlish[6] objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that[7] the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater

[1] Sing with pleasure like a small bird at dawn.
[2] A place where animals are confined.
[3] Narrow.
[4] One who intrudes.
[5] A body servant.
[6] Ignorant and rude.
[7] Provided.

than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican[1] and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we

[1] The palace of the Pope in Rome.

copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous[1] half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique.[2] The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel[3] of Phidias, or trowel[4] of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante,

[1] Belonging to the moment.

[2] One who stands alone.

[3] Sculptor's tool.

[4] Mason's tool, used to spread mortar.

but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, thousand-cloven tongue,[1] deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart and thou shalt reproduce the Foreworld[2] again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For every thing that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil and a bill of exchange[3] in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad axe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you

[1] Divided into many tongues.

[2] Early world.

[3] An order for the payment of money.

struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice[1] he does not observe; the equinox[2] he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments[3] and forms some vigour of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and

[1] The moment when the sun is farthest from the equator.

[2] The moment when the sun crosses the plane of the equator.

[3] A church recognized and supported by the state.

twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac,[1] which consisted of falling back on naked valour and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Casas, "without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill and bake his bread himself."

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the

[1] Camp without tents.

water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity[1] is only phenomenal.[2] The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he see that it is accidental,—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it[3] is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire;[4] and what the man acquires, is living property, which does not wait the beck[5] of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. "Thy lot or portion of life," said the Caliph Ali, "is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking

[1] *I.e.* the unity of the wave.
[2] In appearance.
[3] His possession of it.
[4] *I.e. he* does always acquire what he is.
[5] Gesture of command.

after it." Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors[1] of God. In the

[1] In Great Britain, the highest judicial officer of the crown, keeper of the great seal.

Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shalt sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favourable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

COMPENSATION

The wings of Time are black and white,
Pied [1] with morning and with night.
Mountain tall and ocean deep
Trembling balance duly keep.
In changing moon, in tidal wave,
Glows the feud of Want and Have.
Gauge of more and less through space
Electric star and pencil plays.
The lonely Earth amid the balls [2]
That hurry through the eternal halls,
A makeweight [3] flying to the void,
Supplemental asteroid,[4]
Or compensatory spark,
Shoots across the neutral Dark.

[1] Spotted. [2] Planets.

[3] Something added to balance the scale.

[4] One of the small planets between Mars and Jupiter. (Incorrect use.)

ANALYSIS

Theme: Everything in the world is ruled by the law of a just balance; a loss in one point is a gain in another and *vice versa;* nature cannot be cheated; all that a man gets he must pay for; and all that he really pays for he gets.

Structure: A. *Introduction.* From boyhood Emerson has wished to write about this law. (1) Because of the interest of the facts which prove it, and (2) because it is often denied by preachers who postpone perfect justice and compensation to a future life. Therefore he proposes to trace, in part, the working of the law of compensation in the present life. (Note, he says this essay belongs with one on "Spiritual Laws," which follows it in the original volume.)

B. *Discussion.* I. Polarity, or action and reaction, (1) in nature, (2) in human life, (3) in the commonwealth. II. The cause of this lies (1) in the unity and (2) the moral quality of the universe. Therefore we cannot separate life into two parts and get the sensual pleasure without the sensual hurt. Illustrations of this truth from mythology and proverbs. Retribution comes (*a*) in the soul at once, but (*b*) in outward consequences it may be delayed. III. The folly of trying to escape this law. Examples of its working (*a*) in the penalty of social wrong-doing, (*b*) in the rewards of labour, (*c*) in the security of virtue, and (*d*) in the blessings of disaster and persecution. IV. But in the soul itself there is something deeper than compensation: the soul's own life. Here we may gain without any corresponding loss, because virtue, being an increase of spiritual life, is its own reward.

C. *Conclusion.* Optimism is the native faith of the soul, which finds inward peace to balance all inequalities of condition. (1) Differences of power and faculty are reduced by love, which makes all men one. (2) Calamities are turned into blessings (*a*) at once by the fact that they make room for the growth of soul, and (*b*) in the long run they lead us into larger and nobler relations with life.

COMPENSATION

EVER since I was a boy I have wished to write a discourse on Compensation;[1] for it seemed to me when very young that on this subject life was ahead of theology and the people knew more than the preachers taught. The documents too from which the doctrine is to be drawn, charmed my fancy by their endless variety, and lay always before me, even in sleep; for they are the tools in our hands, the bread in our basket, the transactions of the street, the farm and the dwelling-house; greetings, relations, debts and credits, the influence of character, the nature and endowment of all men. It seemed to me also that in it[2] might be shown men a ray of divinity, the present action of the soul of this world, clean from all vestige[3] of tradition; and so the heart of man might be bathed by an inundation of eternal love, conversing with that which he knows was always and always must be, because it really is now. It appeared moreover that if this doctrine could be stated in terms with any resemblance to those bright intuitions in which this truth is sometimes revealed to us, it would be a star in many dark hours and crooked passages in our journey, that would not suffer us to lose our way.

[1] Weighing one thing against another, making good deficiencies.
[2] The doctrine.
[3] A mark, footprint.

I was lately confirmed in these desires by hearing a sermon at church. The preacher, a man esteemed for his orthodoxy, unfolded in the ordinary manner the doctrine of the Last Judgement. He assumed that judgement is not executed in this world; that the wicked are successful; that the good are miserable; and then urged from reason and from Scripture a compensation to be made to both parties in the next life. No offence appeared to be taken by the congregation at this doctrine. As far as I could observe when the meeting broke up they separated without remark on the sermon.

Yet what was the import[1] of this teaching? What did the preacher mean by saying that the good are miserable in the present life? Was it that houses and lands, offices, wine, horses, dress, luxury, are had by unprincipled men, whilst the saints are poor and despised; and that a compensation is to be made to these last hereafter, by giving them the like gratifications another day, — bank-stock and doubloons,[2] venison and champagne? This must be the compensation intended; for what else?[3] Is it that they are to have leave to pray and praise? to love and serve men? Why, that they can do now. The legitimate inference the disciple would draw was, — 'We are to have *such* a good time as the sinners have now'; — or, to push it to its extreme import, — 'You sin now, we shall sin by and by; we would sin now, if we could; not being successful we expect our revenge to-morrow.'

[1] Meaning. [2] Spanish coins of gold; riches.
[3] Supply: "can be meant."

The fallacy[1] lay in the immense concession that the bad are successful; that justice is not done now. The blindness of the preacher consisted in deferring to the base estimate of the market[2] of what constitutes a manly success, instead of confronting and convicting the world from the truth; announcing the presence of the soul; the omnipotence of the will; and so establishing the standard of good and ill, of success and falsehood.

I find a similar base tone in the popular religious works of the day and the same doctrines assumed by the literary men when occasionally they treat the related topics. I think that our popular theology has gained in decorum,[3] and not in principle, over the superstitions it has displaced. But men are better than their theology. Their daily life gives it the lie. Every ingenuous and aspiring soul leaves the doctrine behind him in his own experience, and all men feel sometimes the falsehood which they cannot demonstrate. For men are wiser than they know. That which they hear in schools and pulpits without afterthought, if said in conversation would probably be questioned in silence. If a man dogmatize[4] in a mixed company on Providence and the divine laws, he is answered by a silence which conveys well enough to an observer the dissatisfaction of the hearer, but his incapacity to make his own statement.

I shall attempt in this and the following chapter to

[1] Deceit, false argument.

[2] The place where commercial standards rule.

[3] Outward propriety. [4] Make assertions without proof.

record some facts that indicate the path of the law of Compensation; happy beyond my expectation if I shall truly draw the smallest arc[1] of this circle.

POLARITY, or action and reaction, we meet in every part of nature; in darkness and light; in heat and cold; in the ebb and flow of waters; in male and female; in the inspiration and expiration of plants and animals; in the equation of quantity and quality in the fluids of the animal body; in the systole[2] and diastole[3] of the heart; in the undulations of fluids and of sound; in the centrifugal[4] and centripetal[5] gravity; in electricity, galvanism, and chemical affinity. Superinduce[6] magnetism at one end of a needle, the opposite magnetism takes place at the other end. If the south attracts, the north repels. To empty here, you must condense there. An inevitable dualism bisects nature, so that each thing is a half, and suggests another thing to make it whole; as, spirit, matter; man, woman; odd, even; subjective, objective; in, out; upper, under; motion, rest; yea, nay.

Whilst the world is thus dual, so is every one of its parts. The entire system of things gets represented in every particle. There is somewhat that resembles the ebb and flow of the sea, day and night, man and woman, in a single needle of the pine, in a kernel of corn, in each individual of every animal tribe. The reaction, so grand in the elements, is repeated within these small boundaries.

[1] Part of a curve. [2] Contraction. [3] Dilatation.
[4] Flying from the centre. [5] Tending to the centre. [6] Develop.

For example, in the animal kingdom the physiologist has observed that no creatures are favourites, but a certain compensation balances every gift and every defect. A surplusage[1] given to one part is paid out of a reduction from another part of the same creature. If the head and neck are enlarged, the trunk and extremities are cut short.

The theory of the mechanic forces is another example. What we gain in power is lost in time, and the converse. The periodic or compensating errors of the planets is another instance. The influences of climate and soil in political history is another. The cold climate invigorates. The barren soil does not breed fevers, crocodiles, tigers or scorpions.

The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man. Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet hath its sour; every evil its good. Every faculty which is a receiver of pleasure has an equal penalty put on its abuse. It is to answer for its moderation with its life. For every grain of wit there is a grain of folly. For every thing you have missed, you have gained something else; and for every thing you gain, you lose something. If riches increase, they are increased[2] that use them. If the gatherer gathers too much, Nature takes out of the man what she puts into his chest; swells the estate, but kills the owner. Nature hates monopolies[3] and exceptions. The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing than the

[1] Excess. [2] Supply: "in wants." [3] Exclusive privileges.

varieties of condition tend to equalize themselves. There is always some levelling circumstance that puts down the overbearing, the strong, the rich, the fortunate, substantially on the same ground with all others. Is a man too strong and fierce for society and by temper and position a bad citizen, — a morose ruffian, with a dash of the pirate in him? — Nature sends him a troop of pretty sons and daughters who are getting along in the dame's[1] classes at the village school, and love and fear for them smooths his grim scowl to courtesy. Thus she contrives to intenerate[2] the granite and felspar, takes the boar out and puts the lamb in and keeps her balance true.

The farmer imagines power and place are fine things. But the President has paid dear for his White House.[3] It has commonly cost him all his peace, and the best of his manly attributes. To preserve for a short time so conspicuous an appearance before the world, he is content to eat dust[4] before the real masters[5] who stand erect behind the throne. Or do men desire the more substantial and permanent grandeur of genius? Neither has this an immunity. He who by force of will or of thought is great and overlooks[6] thousands, has the charges of that eminence. With every influx of light comes new danger. Has he light? he must bear witness to the light, and always outrun that sympathy which gives him

[1] Schoolmistress.
[2] Soften.
[3] Popular name of the Executive Mansion at Washington.
[4] Humiliate himself.
[5] The political bosses.
[6] Superintends.

such keen satisfaction, by his fidelity to new revelations of the incessant[1] soul. He must hate father and mother, wife and child. Has he all that the world loves and admires and covets? — he must cast behind him their admiration and afflict them by faithfulness to his truth and become a byword and a hissing.

This law writes the laws of cities and nations. It is in vain to build or plot or combine against it. Things refuse to be mismanaged long. *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Though no checks to a new evil appear, the checks exist, and will appear. If the government is cruel, the governor's life is not safe. If you tax too high, the revenue will yield nothing. If you make the criminal code sanguinary,[2] juries will not convict. If the law is too mild, private vengeance comes in. If the government is a terrific democracy, the pressure is resisted by an over-charge of energy in the citizen, and life glows with a fiercer flame. The true life and satisfactions of man seem to elude the utmost rigours or felicities of condition and to establish themselves with great indifferency under all varieties of circumstances. Under all governments the influence of character remains the same, — in Turkey and in New England about alike. Under the primeval despots of Egypt, history honestly confesses that man must have been as free as culture could make him.

These appearances indicate the fact that the universe is represented in every one of its particles. Every thing

[1] Never ceasing to advance. [2] Bloody, cruel.

in nature contains all the powers of nature. Every thing is made of one hidden stuff; as the naturalist sees one type under every metamorphosis,[1] and regards a horse as a running man, a fish as a swimming man, a bird as a flying man, a tree as a rooted man. Each new form repeats not only the main character of the type, but part for part all the details, all the aims, furtherances, hindrances, energies and whole system of every other. Every occupation, trade, art, transaction, is a compend[2] of the world and a correlative[3] of every other. Each one is an entire emblem of human life; of its good and ill, its trials, its enemies, its course and its end. And each one must somehow accommodate[4] the whole man and recite all his destiny.

The world globes[5] itself in a drop of dew. The microscope cannot find the animalcule[6] which is less perfect for being little. Eyes, ears, taste, smell, motion, resistance, appetite, and organs of reproduction that take hold on eternity, — all find room to consist[7] in the small creature. So do we put our life into every act. The true doctrine of omnipresence is that God reappears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb. The value of the universe contrives to throw itself into every point. If the good is there, so is the evil; if the affinity, so the repulsion; if the force, so the limitation.

[1] Change of form.
[2] Brief summary.
[3] Interdependent.
[4] Have room for.
[5] Shows the law which makes it a globe.
[6] Tiny animal.
[7] Be together.

Thus is the universe alive. All things are moral. That soul which within us is a sentiment, outside of us is a law. We feel its inspiration; out there in history we can see its fatal[1] strength. "It is in the world, and the world was made by it." Justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life. Οἱ κύβοι Διὸς ἀεὶ εὐπίπτουσι, — The dice of God are always loaded. The world looks like a multiplication-table, or a mathematical equation, which, turn it how you will, balances itself. Take what figure you will, its exact value, nor more nor less, still returns to you. Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears wherever a part appears. If you see smoke, there must be fire. If you see a hand or a limb, you know that the trunk to which it belongs is there behind.

Every act rewards itself, or in other words integrates[2] itself, in a twofold manner; first in the thing, or in real nature; and secondly in the circumstance, or in apparent nature. Men call the circumstance the retribution. The causal retribution is in the thing and is seen by the soul. The retribution in the circumstance is seen by the understanding; it is inseparable from the thing, but is often spread over a long time and so does not become distinct until after many years. The specific stripes[3] may

[1] Irresistible, determining. [2] Makes itself complete.
[3] Blows given in punishment.

follow late after the offence, but they follow because they accompany it. Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed.

Whilst thus the world will be whole and refuses to be disparted, we seek to act partially, to sunder, to appropriate; for example, — to gratify the senses we sever the pleasure of the senses from the needs of the character. The ingenuity of man has always been dedicated to the solution of one problem, — how to detach the sensual sweet, the sensual strong, the sensual bright, etc., from the moral sweet, the moral deep, the moral fair; that is, again, to contrive to cut clean off this upper surface so thin as to leave it bottomless; to get a *one end*, without an *other end*. The soul says, 'Eat;' the body would feast. The soul says, 'The man and woman shall be one flesh and one soul;' the body would join the flesh only. The soul says, 'Have dominion over all things to the ends of virtue;' the body would have the power over things to its own ends.

The soul strives amain[1] to live and work through all things. It would be the only fact. All things shall be added unto it, — power, pleasure, knowledge, beauty. The particular man aims to be somebody; to set up for himself; to truck and higgle[2] for a private good; and,

[1] With all its strength. [2] Bargain in a petty way.

in particulars, to ride that he may ride; to dress that he may be dressed; to eat that he may eat; and to govern, that he may be seen. Men seek to be great; they would have offices, wealth, power and fame. They think that to be great is to possess one side of nature, — the sweet, without the other side, the bitter.

This dividing and detaching is steadily counteracted. Up to this day it must be owned no projector[1] has had the smallest success. The parted water reunites behind our hand. Pleasure is taken out of pleasant things, profit out of profitable things, power out of strong things, as soon as we seek to separate them from the whole. We can no more halve things and get the sensual good, by itself, than we can get an inside that shall have no outside, or a light without a shadow. "Drive out Nature with a fork, she comes running back."

Life invests[2] itself with inevitable conditions, which the unwise seek to dodge, which one and another brags that he does not know, that they do not touch him; — but the brag is on his lips, the conditions are in his soul. If he escapes them in one part they attack him in another more vital part. If he has escaped them in form and in the appearance, it is because he has resisted his life and fled from himself, and the retribution is so much death. So signal is the failure of all attempts to make this separation of the good[3] from the tax,[4] that the

[1] One who makes a plan. [2] Clothes.
[3] Not moral good, but a thing desired.
[4] A charge laid upon property.

experiment would not be tried, — since to try it is to be mad, — but for the circumstance that when the disease began in the will, of rebellion and separation, the intellect is at once infected, so that the man ceases to see God whole in each object, but is able to see the sensual allurement of an object and not see the sensual hurt; he sees the mermaid's head but not the dragon's tail, and thinks he can cut off that which he would have from that which he would not have. "How secret art thou who dwellest in the highest heavens in silence, O thou only great God, sprinkling with an unwearied providence certain penal blindnesses upon such as have unbridled desires!"

The human soul is true to these facts in the painting of fable, of history, of law, of proverbs, of conversation. It finds a tongue in literature unawares. Thus the Greeks called Jupiter, Supreme Mind; but having traditionally ascribed to him many base actions, they involuntarily made amends to reason by tying up the hands of so bad a god. He is made as helpless as a king of England. Prometheus knows one secret which Jove must bargain for; Minerva, another. He cannot get his own thunders; Minerva keeps the key of them:—

> "Of all the gods, I only know the keys
> That ope the solid doors within whose vaults
> His thunders sleep."

A plain confession of the in-working of the All and of its moral aim. The Indian mythology ends in the same

ethics; and it would seem impossible for any fable to be invented and get any currency which was not moral. Aurora forgot to ask youth for her lover, and though Tithonus is immortal, he is old. Achilles is not quite invulnerable; the sacred waters did not wash the heel by which Thetis held him. Siegfried, in the Nibelungen, is not quite immortal, for a leaf fell on his back whilst he was bathing in the dragon's blood, and that spot which it covered is mortal. And so it must be. There is a crack in every thing God has made. It would seem there is always this vindictive[1] circumstance stealing in at unawares even into the wild poesy in which the human fancy attempted to make bold holiday and to shake itself free of the old laws, — this back-stroke, this kick of the gun, certifying that the law is fatal; that in nature nothing can be given, all things are sold.

This is that ancient doctrine of Nemesis, who keeps watch in the universe and lets no offence go unchastised. The Furies, they[2] said, are attendants on justice, and if the sun in heaven should transgress his path they would punish him. The poets related that stone walls and iron swords and leather thongs had an occult[3] sympathy with the wrongs of their owners; that the belt which Ajax gave Hector dragged the Trojan hero over the field at the wheels of the car of Achilles, and the sword which Hector gave Ajax was that on whose point Ajax fell. They recorded that when the Thasians erected a statue

[1] Relating to punishment. [2] The ancients.
[3] Hidden, mysterious.

to Theagenes, a victor in the games, one of his rivals went to it by night and endeavoured to throw it down by repeated blows, until at last he moved it from its pedestal and was crushed to death beneath its fall.

This voice of fable has in it somewhat divine. It came from thought above the will of the writer. That is the best part of each writer which has nothing private in it; that which he does not know; that which flowed out of his constitution and not from his too active invention; that which in the study of a single artist you might not easily find, but in the study of many you would abstract as the spirit of them all. Phidias it is not, but the work of man in that early Hellenic[1] world that I would know. The name and circumstance of Phidias, however convenient for history, embarrass when we come to the highest criticism. We are to see that which man was tending to do in a given period, and was hindered, or, if you will, modified in doing, by the interfering volitions of Phidias, of Dante, of Shakspeare, the organ whereby man at the moment wrought.

Still more striking is the expression of this fact in the proverbs of all nations, which are always the literature of reason, or the statements of an absolute truth without qualification. Proverbs, like the sacred books of each nation, are the sanctuary of the intuitions. That which the droning world, chained to appearances, will not allow the realist to say in his own words, it will suffer him to say in proverbs without contradiction. And this law of

[1] Pertaining to Greece, Hellas.

laws, which the pulpit, the senate and the college deny, is hourly preached in all markets and workshops by flights of proverbs, whose teaching is as true and as omnipresent as that of birds and flies.

All things are double, one against another.—Tit for tat; an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; measure for measure; love for love.—Give, and it shall be given you.—He that watereth shall be watered himself.—What will you have? quoth God; pay for it and take it.—Nothing venture, nothing have.—Thou shalt be paid exactly for what thou hast done, no more, no less.—Who doth not work shall not eat.—Harm watch, harm catch.—Curses always recoil on the head of him who imprecates them.—If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own.—Bad counsel confounds the adviser.—The Devil is an ass.

It is thus written, because it is thus in life. Our action is overmastered and characterized above our will by the law of nature. We aim at a petty end quite aside from the public good, but our act arranges itself by irresistible magnetism in a line with the poles of the world.

A man cannot speak but he judges himself. With his will or against his will he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it. It is a thread-ball thrown at a mark, but the other end remains in the thrower's bag. Or rather it is a harpoon hurled at the whale, unwinding, as it flies, a coil of cord in the boat, and, if the harpoon is

not good, or not well thrown, it[1] will go nigh to cut the steersman in twain or to sink the boat.

You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong. "No man had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to him," said Burke. The exclusive in fashionable life does not see that he excludes himself from enjoyment, in the attempt to appropriate it. The exclusionist in religion does not see that he shuts the door of heaven on himself, in striving to shut out others. Treat men as pawns[2] and ninepins and you shall suffer as well as they. If you leave out their heart, you shall lose your own. The senses would make things of all persons; of women, of children, of the poor. The vulgar proverb, "I will get it from his purse or get it from his skin," is sound philosophy.

All infractions[3] of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by fear. Whilst I stand in simple relations to my fellow-man, I have no displeasure in meeting him. We meet as water meets water, or as two currents of air mix, with perfect diffusion and interpenetration of nature. But as soon as there is any departure from simplicity and attempt at halfness, or good for me that is not good for him, my neighbour feels the wrong; he shrinks from me as far as I have shrunk from him; his eyes no longer seek mine; there is war between us; there is hate in him and fear in me.

[1] The cord. [2] The lowest pieces in the game of chess. [3] Breakings.

All the old abuses in society, universal and particular, all unjust accumulations of property and power, are avenged in the same manner. Fear is an instructor of great sagacity and the herald of all revolutions. One thing he teaches, that there is rottenness where he appears. He is a carrion crow, and though you see not well what he hovers for, there is death somewhere. Our property is timid, our laws are timid, our cultivated classes are timid. Fear for ages has boded[1] and mowed and gibbered[2] over government and property. That obscene[3] bird is not there for nothing. He indicates great wrongs which must be revised.

Of the like nature is that expectation of change which instantly follows the suspension of our voluntary activity. The terror of cloudless noon, the emerald of Polycrates, the awe of prosperity, the instinct which leads every generous soul to impose on itself tasks of a noble asceticism[4] and vicarious[5] virtue, are the tremblings of the balance of justice through the heart and mind of man.

Experienced men of the world know very well that it is best to pay scot and lot as they go along, and that a man often pays dear for a small frugality. The borrower runs in his own debt. Has a man gained any thing who has received a hundred favours and rendered none? Has he gained by borrowing, through indolence or cunning, his neighbour's wares, or horses, or money? There arises

[1] Presaged evil.
[2] Spoken inarticulately.
[3] Ill-omened, threatening.
[4] Rigid bodily self-denial.
[5] In place of another.

on the deed the instant acknowledgment of benefit on the one part and of debt on the other; that is, of superiority and inferiority. The transaction remains in the memory of himself and his neighbour; and every new transaction alters according to its nature their relation to each other. He may soon come to see that he had better have broken his own bones than to have ridden in his neighbour's coach, and that "the highest price he can pay for a thing is to ask for it."

A wise man will extend this lesson to all parts of life, and know that it is the part of prudence to face every claimant and pay every just demand on your time, your talents, or your heart. Always pay; for first or last you must pay your entire debt. Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must pay at last your own debt. If you are wise you will dread a prosperity which only loads you with more.[1] Benefit is the end of nature. But for every benefit which you receive, a tax is levied. He is great who confers the most benefits. He is base, — and that is the one base thing in the universe, — to receive favours and render none. In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody. Beware of too much good staying in your hand. It will fast corrupt and worm[2] worms. Pay it away quickly in some sort.

[1] Supply: "debt." [2] Beget.

Labour is watched over by the same pitiless laws. Cheapest, say the prudent, is the dearest labour. What we buy in a broom, a mat, a wagon, a knife, is some application of good sense to a common want. It is best to pay in your land a skilful gardener, or to buy good sense applied to gardening; in your sailor, good sense applied to navigation; in the house, good sense applied to cooking, sewing, serving; in your agent, good sense applied to accounts and affairs. So do you multiply your presence, or spread yourself throughout your estate. But because of the dual constitution of things, in labour as in life there can be no cheating. The thief steals from himself. The swindler swindles himself. For the real price[1] of labour is knowledge and virtue, whereof wealth and credit are signs. These signs, like paper money, may be counterfeited or stolen, but that which they represent, namely, knowledge and virtue, cannot be counterfeited or stolen. These ends of labour cannot be answered but by real exertions of the mind, and in obedience to pure motives. The cheat, the defaulter, the gambler, cannot extort the knowledge of material and moral nature which his honest care and pains yield to the operative. The law of nature is, Do the thing, and you shall have the power; but they who do not the thing have not the power.

Human labour, through all its forms, from the sharpening of a stake to the construction of a city or an epic, is one immense illustration of the perfect compensation of

[1] Reward, price received.

the universe. The absolute balance of Give and Take, the doctrine that every thing has its price, — and if that price is not paid, not that thing but something else is obtained, and that it is impossible to get any thing without its price, — is not less sublime in the columns of a leger[1] than in the budgets[2] of states, in the laws of light and darkness, in all the action and reaction of nature. I cannot doubt that the high laws which each man sees implicated in those processes with which he is conversant, the stern ethics which sparkle on his chisel-edge, which are measured out by his plumb and foot-rule, which stand as manifest in the footing of the shop-bill as in the history of a state, — do recommend to him his trade, and though seldom named, exalt his business to his imagination.

The league between virtue and nature engages all things to assume a hostile front to vice. The beautiful laws and substances of the world persecute and whip the traitor. He finds that things are arranged for truth and benefit, but there is no den in the wide world to hide a rogue. Commit a crime, and the earth is made of glass. Commit a crime, and it seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground, such as reveals in the woods the track of every partridge and fox and squirrel and mole. You cannot recall the spoken word, you cannot wipe out the foot-track, you cannot draw up the ladder, so as to leave no inlet or clew. Some damning[3] circumstance always

[1] Old form of ledger, account-book. [2] Financial statement.
[3] Condemning.

transpires.[1] The laws and substances of nature, — water, snow, wind, gravitation, — become penalties to the thief.

On the other hand the law holds with equal sureness for all right action. Love, and you shall be loved. All love is mathematically just, as much as the two sides of an algebraic equation. The good man has absolute good, which like fire turns every thing to its own nature, so that you cannot do him any harm ; but as the royal armies sent against Napoleon, when he approached cast down their colours and from enemies became friends, so disasters of all kinds, as sickness, offence, poverty, prove benefactors : —

> " Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave and power and deity,
> Yet in themselves are nothing."

The good are befriended even by weakness and defect. As no man had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to him, so no man had ever a defect that was not somewhere made useful to him. The stag in the fable admired his horns and blamed his feet, but when the hunter came, his feet saved him, and afterwards, caught in the thicket, his horns destroyed him. Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults. As no man thoroughly understands a truth until he has contended against it, so no man has a thorough acquaintance with the hindrances or talents of men until he has suffered from the one and seen the triumph of the other over his own want of the same. Has he a defect of

[1] Comes to life, leaks out.

temper that unfits him to live in society? Thereby he is driven to entertain himself alone and acquire habits of self-help; and thus, like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl.

Our strength grows out of our weakness. The indignation which arms itself with secret forces does not awaken until we are pricked and stung and sorely assailed. A great man is always willing to be little. Whilst he sits on the cushion of advantages, he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something; he has been put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the insanity of conceit; has got moderation and real skill. The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants.[1] It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point. The wound cicatrizes[2] and falls off from him like a dead skin and when they would triumph, lo! he has passed on invulnerable. Blame is safer than praise. I hate to be defended in a newspaper. As long as all that is said is said against me, I feel a certain assurance of success. But as soon as honeyed words of praise are spoken for me I feel as one that lies unprotected before his enemies. In general, every evil to which we do not succumb is a benefactor. As the Sandwich Islander believes that the strength and valour of the enemy he kills passes into himself, so we gain the strength of the temptation we resist.

The same guards which protect us from disaster,

[1] Puts himself in their place. [2] Heals over with a scar.

defect and enmity, defend us, if we will, from selfishness and fraud. Bolts and bars are not the best of our institutions, nor is shrewdness in trade a mark of wisdom. Men suffer all their life long under the foolish superstition that they can be cheated. But it is as impossible for a man to be cheated by any one but himself, as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time. There is a third silent party to all our bargains. The nature and soul of things takes on itself the guaranty of the fulfilment of every contract, so that honest service cannot come to loss. If you serve an ungrateful master, serve him the more. Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withholden, the better for you; for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer.[1]

The history of persecution is a history of endeavours to cheat nature, to make water run up hill, to twist a rope of sand. It makes no difference whether the actors be many or one, a tyrant or a mob. A mob is a society of bodies voluntarily bereaving themselves of reason and traversing its work. The mob is man voluntarily descending to the nature of the beast. Its fit hour of activity is night. Its actions are insane, like its whole constitution. It persecutes a principle; it would whip a right; it would tar and feather justice, by inflicting fire and outrage upon the houses and persons of those who have these. It resembles the prank of boys, who run with fire-engines to put out the ruddy aurora streaming to the stars. The

[1] Treasury of a state.

inviolate spirit turns their spite against the wrongdoers. The martyr cannot be dishonoured. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. Hours of sanity and consideration are always arriving to communities, as to individuals, when the truth is seen and the martyrs are justified.

Thus do all things preach the indifferency of circumstances. The man is all. Every thing has two sides, a good and an evil. Every advantage has its tax. I learn to be content. But the doctrine of compensation is not the doctrine of indifferency. The thoughtless say, on hearing these representations, — What boots it to do well? there is one event to good and evil; if I gain any good I must pay for it; if I lose any good I gain some other; all actions are indifferent.

There is a deeper fact in the soul than compensation, to wit, its own nature. The soul is not a compensation, but a life. The soul *is*. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real Being. Essence, or God, is not a relation or a part, but the whole. Being is the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts and times within itself. Nature, truth, virtue, are the influx from thence. Vice is the absence or departure of the same. Nothing, Falsehood, may indeed stand as the

great Night or shade on which as a background the living universe paints itself forth, but no fact is begotten by it; it cannot work, for it is not. It cannot work any good; it cannot work any harm. It is harm inasmuch as it is worse not to be than to be.

We feel defrauded of the retribution due to evil acts, because the criminal adheres to his vice and contumacy[1] and does not come to a crisis or judgement anywhere in visible nature. There is no stunning confutation of his nonsense before men and angels. Has he therefore outwitted the law? Inasmuch as he carries the malignity and the lie with him he so far deceases from nature. In some manner there will be a demonstration of the wrong to the understanding also; but, should we not see it, this deadly deduction makes square the eternal account.

Neither can it be said, on the other hand, that the gain of rectitude must be bought by any loss. There is no penalty to virtue; no penalty to wisdom; they are proper additions of being. In a virtuous action I properly *am;* in a virtuous act I add to the world; I plant into deserts conquered from Chaos and Nothing and see the darkness receding on the limits of the horizon. There can be no excess to love, none to knowledge, none to beauty, when these attributes are considered in the purest sense. The soul refuses limits, and always affirms an Optimism, never a Pessimism.

His[2] life is a progress, and not a station. His instinct is trust. Our instinct uses "more" and "less" in appli-

[1] Obstinate baseness. [2] The soul's.

cation to man, of the *presence of the soul*, and not of its absence; the brave man is greater than the coward; the true, the benevolent, the wise, is more a man and not less, than the fool and knave. There is no tax on the good of virtue, for that is the incoming of God himself, or absolute existence, without any comparative. Material good has its tax, and if it came without desert or sweat, has no root in me, and the next wind will blow it away. But all the good of nature is the soul's, and may be had if paid for in nature's lawful coin, that is, by labour which the heart and the head allow. I no longer wish to meet a good I do not earn, for example to find a pot of buried gold, knowing that it brings with it new burdens. I do not wish more external goods, — neither possessions, nor honours, nor powers, nor persons. The gain is apparent; the tax is certain. But there is no tax on the knowledge that the compensation exists and that it is not desirable to dig up treasure. Herein I rejoice with a serene eternal peace. I contract the boundaries of possible mischief. I learn the wisdom of St. Bernard, — "Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault."

In the nature of the soul is the compensation for the inequalities of condition. The radical tragedy of nature seems to be the distinction of More and Less. How can Less not feel the pain; how not feel indignation or malevolence towards More? Look at those who have less faculty, and one feels sad and knows not well what to

make of it. He almost shuns their eye; he fears they will upbraid God. What should they do? It seems a great injustice. But see the facts nearly and these mountainous inequalities vanish. Love reduces them as the sun melts the iceberg in the sea. The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother and my brother is me. If I feel overshadowed and outdone by great neighbours, I can yet love; I can still receive; and he that loveth maketh his own the grandeur he loves. Thereby I make the discovery that my brother is my guardian, acting for me with the friendliest designs, and the estate I so admired and envied is my own. It is the nature of the soul to appropriate all things. Jesus and Shakspeare are fragments of the soul, and by love I conquer and incorporate them in my own conscious domain. His virtue, — is not that mine? His wit, — if it cannot be made mine, it is not wit.

Such also is the natural history of calamity. The changes which break up at short intervals the prosperity of men are advertisements[1] of a nature whose law is growth. Every soul is by this intrinsic necessity quitting its whole system of things, its friends and home and laws and faith, as the shellfish crawls out of its beautiful but stony case, because it no longer admits of its growth, and slowly forms a new house. In proportion to the vigour of the individual these revolutions are frequent, until in some happier mind they are incessant and all worldly

[1] Notices given.

relations hang very loosely about him, becoming as it were a transparent fluid membrane through which the living form is seen, and not, as in most men, an indurated [1] heterogeneous [2] fabric of many dates and of no settled character, in which the man is imprisoned. Then there can be enlargement, and the man of to-day scarcely recognizes the man of yesterday. And such should be the outward biography of man in time, a putting off of dead circumstances day by day, as he renews his raiment day by day. But to us, in our lapsed estate, resting, not advancing, resisting, not co-operating with the divine expansion, this growth comes by shocks.

We cannot part with our friends. We cannot let our angels go. We do not see that they only go out that archangels may come in. We are idolaters of the old. We do not believe in the riches of the soul, in its proper eternity and omnipresence. We do not believe there is any force in to-day to rival or re-create that beautiful yesterday. We linger in the ruins of the old tent where once we had bread and shelter and organs, nor believe that the spirit can feed, cover, and nerve us again. We cannot again find aught so dear, so sweet, so graceful. But we sit and weep in vain. The voice of the Almighty saith, 'Up and onward for evermore!' We cannot stay amid the ruins. Neither will we rely on the new; and so we walk ever with reverted eyes, like those monsters who look backwards.

And yet the compensations of calamity are made ap-

[1] Hardened. [2] Of different materials.

parent to the understanding also, after long intervals of time. A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden-flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener is made the banian of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighbourhoods of men.

FRIENDSHIP

A RUDDY drop of manly blood
The surging sea outweighs;
The world uncertain comes and goes,
The lover rooted stays.
I fancied he was fled,
And, after many a year,
Glowed unexhausted kindliness
Like daily sunrise there.
My careful heart was free again, —
O friend, my bosom said,
Through thee alone the sky is arched,
Through thee the rose is red,
All things through thee take nobler form
And look beyond the earth,
The mill-round of our fate appears
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me too thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair.

ANALYSIS

Theme: Friendship as the giving of the best that a man has in himself and the discovery of the best in another who responds to him.

Structure: A. *Introduction.* The natural kindness of the human heart, and the stimulating and joyful effects of indulging it. Friends quicken thought and enlarge life. But this exhilaration ebbs and flows; at times the soul returns into itself, asserts its own self-reliance, and questions the reality of all else compared with this. Doubts disturb friendship. But most of our disappointments come from the effort to make friends in haste and our failure to meet them on equal ground.

B. *Discussion.* Absolute friendship is the most solid thing we know. I. Its elements: (1) mutual sincerity, and (2) mutual tenderness, which is best expressed by homely service both to inward and to outward needs. II. Its limitations: Conversation is best between two; a company interferes with it. Affinity determines which two; but they must also have unlikeness, else there will be no intercourse, for there will be only one. III. Its requirements: reverence, delicacy, reserve, patient waiting for its full development, and intervals of silence. IV. Ideal friendships are dreams which we hope will be fulfilled in better regions. Meantime we must not descend to cheap ones, but keep our spiritual independence, and meet our friends only when we can do so on high ground. Therefore Emerson often withdraws from his friends in order that he may cherish his own inward visions. He would give to his friends that which he truly is, and receive that which emanates from them.

C. *Conclusion.* A question whether, after all, friendship may not be one-sided; giving without receiving; an unequal alliance, by which the superior is enlarged, while the inferior passes away. But this is treason to friendship, which requires perfect trust.

FRIENDSHIP

We have a great deal more kindness than is ever spoken. Maugre[1] all the selfishness that chills like east winds the world, the whole human family is bathed with an element of love like a fine ether. How many persons we meet in houses, whom we scarcely speak to, whom yet we honour, and who honour us! How many we see in the street, or sit with in church, whom, though silently, we warmly rejoice to be with! Read the language of these wandering eye-beams. The heart knoweth.

The effect of the indulgence of this human affection is a certain cordial exhilaration. In poetry and in common speech the emotions of benevolence and complacency which are felt towards others are likened to the material effects of fire; so swift, or much more swift, more active, more cheering, are these fine inward irradiations. From the highest degree of passionate love to the lowest degree of good-will, they make the sweetness of life.

Our intellectual and active powers increase with our affection. The scholar sits down to write, and all his years of meditation do not furnish him with one good thought or happy expression; but it is necessary to write a letter to a friend, — and forthwith troops of gentle thoughts invest themselves, on every hand, with chosen words. See, in any house where virtue and self-respect abide, the palpitation which the approach of a stranger

[1] In spite of.

causes. A commended stranger is expected and announced, and an uneasiness betwixt pleasure and pain invades all the hearts of a household. His arrival almost brings fear to the good hearts that would welcome him. The house is dusted, all things fly into their places, the old coat is exchanged for the new, and they must get up a dinner if they can. Of a commended stranger, only the good report is told by others, only the good and new is heard by us. He stands to us for humanity. He is what we wish. Having imagined and invested[1] him, we ask how we should stand related in conversation and action with such a man, and are uneasy with fear. The same idea exalts conversation with him. We talk better than we are wont. We have the nimblest fancy, a richer memory, and our dumb devil has taken leave for the time. For long hours we can continue a series of sincere, graceful, rich communications, drawn from the oldest, secretest experience, so that they who sit by, of our own kinsfolk and acquaintance, shall feel a lively surprise at our unusual powers. But as soon as the stranger begins to intrude his partialities, his definitions, his defects into the conversation, it is all over. He has heard the first, the last and best he will ever hear from us. He is no stranger now. Vulgarity, ignorance, misapprehension are old acquaintances. Now, when he comes, he may get the order, the dress and the dinner, — but the throbbing of the heart and the communications of the soul, no more.

[1] Clothed him with a form.

What is so pleasant as these jets of affection which make a young world for me again? What so delicious as a just and firm encounter of two, in a thought, in a feeling? How beautiful, on their approach to this beating heart, the steps and forms of the gifted and the true! The moment we indulge our affections, the earth is metamorphosed; there is no winter and no night; all tragedies, all ennuis[1] vanish, — all duties even; nothing fills the proceeding eternity but the forms all radiant of beloved persons. Let the soul be assured that somewhere in the universe it should rejoin its friend, and it would be content and cheerful alone for a thousand years.

I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for my friends, the old and the new. Shall I not call God the Beautiful, who daily showeth himself so to me in his gifts? I chide society, I embrace solitude, and yet I am not so ungrateful as not to see the wise, the lovely and the noble-minded, as from time to time they pass my gate. Who hears me, who understands me, becomes mine, — a possession for all time. Nor is Nature so poor but she gives me this joy several times, and thus we weave social threads of our own, a new web of relations; and, as many thoughts in succession substantiate themselves, we shall by and by stand in a new world of our own creation, and no longer strangers and pilgrims in a traditionary globe. My friends have come to me unsought. The great God gave them to me. By oldest right, by the divine affinity of virtue with itself, I find

[1] Tired feelings.

them, or rather not I but the Deity in me and in them derides and cancels the thick walls of individual character, relation, age, sex, circumstance, at which he usually connives,[1] and now makes many one. High thanks I owe you, excellent lovers, who carry out the world for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts. These are new poetry of the first Bard, — poetry without stop, — hymn, ode and epic, poetry still flowing, Apollo and the Muses chanting still. Will these too separate themselves from me again, or some of them? I know not, but I fear it not; for my relation to them is so pure that we hold by simple affinity, and the Genius[2] of my life being thus social, the same affinity will exert its energy on whomsoever is as noble as these men and women, wherever I may be.

I confess to an extreme tenderness of nature on this point. It is almost dangerous to me to "crush the sweet poison of misused wine" of the affections. A new person is to me a great event and hinders me from sleep. I have often had fine fancies about persons which have given me delicious hours; but the joy ends in the day; it yields no fruit. Thought is not born of it; my action is very little modified. I must feel pride in my friend's accomplishments as if they were mine, and a property in his virtues. I feel as warmly when he is praised, as the lover when he hears applause of his engaged maiden. We over-estimate the conscience of our friend. His goodness seems better than

[1] Shuts his eyes, overlooks them. [2] Guiding spirit.

our goodness, his nature finer, his temptations less. Every thing that is his, — his name, his form, his dress, books and instruments, — fancy enhances. Our own thought sounds new and larger from his mouth.

Yet the systole and diastole of the heart are not without their analogy in the ebb and flow of love. Friendship, like the immortality of the soul, is too good to be believed. The lover, beholding his maiden, half knows that she is not verily that which he worships; and in the golden hour of friendship we are surprised with shades of suspicion and unbelief. We doubt[1] that we bestow on our hero the virtues in which he shines, and afterwards worship the form to which we have ascribed this divine inhabitation. In strictness, the soul does not respect men as it respects itself. In strict science all persons underlie the same condition of an infinite remoteness. Shall we fear to cool our love by mining for the metaphysical foundation of this Elysian[2] temple? Shall I not be as real as the things I see? If I am, I shall not fear to know them for what they are. Their essence is not less beautiful than their appearance, though it needs finer organs for its apprehension. The root of the plant is not unsightly to science, though for chaplets and festoons we cut the stem short. And I must hazard the production of the bald fact amidst these pleasing reveries, though it should prove an Egyptian skull at our banquet. A man who stands united with his thought conceives magnificently of himself. He is conscious of a univer-

[1] Suspect. [2] Heavenly.

sal success, even though bought by uniform particular failures. No advantages, no powers, no gold or force, can be any match for him. I cannot choose but rely on my own poverty more than on your wealth. I cannot make your consciousness tantamount to mine. Only the star dazzles; the planet has a faint, moon-like ray. I hear what you say of the admirable parts and tried temper of the party you praise, but I see well that, for all his purple cloaks,[1] I shall not like him, unless he is at last a poor Greek[2] like me. I cannot deny it, O friend, that the vast shadow of the Phenomenal[3] includes thee also in its pied and painted immensity, — thee also, compared with whom all else is shadow. Thou art not Being, as Truth is, as Justice is, — thou art not my soul, but a picture and effigy of that. Thou hast come to me lately, and already thou art seizing thy hat and cloak. Is it not that the soul puts forth friends as the tree puts forth leaves, and presently, by the germination of new buds, extrudes the old leaf? The law of nature is alternation for evermore. Each electrical state superinduces the opposite. The soul environs itself with friends that it may enter into a grander self-acquaintance or solitude; and it goes alone for a season that it may exalt its conversation or society. This method betrays itself along the whole history of our personal relations. The instinct of affection revives the hope of union with our mates, and

[1] Marks of dignity and wealth.

[2] Lover of beauty and philosophy.

[3] That which appears to our senses.

the returning sense of insulation recalls us from the chase. Thus every man passes his life in the search after friendship, and if he should record his true sentiment, he might write a letter like this to each new candidate for his love: —

DEAR FRIEND,

If I was sure of thee, sure of thy capacity, sure to match my mood with thine, I should never think again of trifles in relation to thy comings and goings. I am not very wise; my moods are quite attainable, and I respect thy genius; it is to me as yet unfathomed; yet dare I not presume in thee a perfect intelligence[1] of me, and so thou art to me a delicious torment. Thine ever, or never.

Yet these uneasy pleasures and fine[2] pains are for curiosity and not for life. They are not to be indulged. This is to weave cobweb, and not cloth. Our friendships hurry to short and poor conclusions, because we have made them a texture of wine and dreams, instead of the tough fibre of the human heart. The laws of friendship are austere and eternal, of one web with the laws of nature and of morals. But we have aimed at a swift and petty benefit, to suck a sudden sweetness. We snatch at the slowest fruit in the whole garden of God, which many summers and many winters must ripen. We seek our friend not sacredly, but with an adulterate passion which

[1] Understanding. [2] Delicate, subtle.

would appropriate him to ourselves. In vain. We are armed all over with subtle antagonisms, which, as soon as we meet, begin to play, and translate all poetry into stale prose. Almost all people descend to meet. All association must be a compromise, and, what is worst, the very flower and aroma of the flower of each of the beautiful natures disappears as they approach each other. What a perpetual disappointment is actual society, even of the virtuous and gifted! After interviews have been compassed with long foresight we must be tormented presently by baffled blows, by sudden, unseasonable apathies,[1] by epilepsies[2] of wit and of animal spirits, in the heyday[3] of friendship and thought. Our faculties do not play us true, and both parties are relieved by solitude. I ought to be equal to every relation. It makes no difference how many friends I have and what content I can find in conversing with each, if there be one to whom I am not equal. If I have shrunk unequal from one contest, the joy I find in all the rest becomes mean and cowardly. I should hate myself, if then I made my other friends my asylum[4]: —

> "The valiant warrior famoused for fight,
> After a hundred victories, once foiled,
> Is from the book of honour razed quite
> And all the rest forgot for which he toiled."

Our impatience is thus sharply rebuked. Bashfulness and apathy are a tough husk in which a delicate organ-

[1] Indifference. [2] Frantic fits. [3] Frolic. [4] Refuge.

ization is protected from premature ripening. It would be lost if it knew itself before any of the best souls were yet ripe enough to know and own it. Respect the *natur-langsamkeit*[1] which hardens the ruby in a million years, and works in duration in which Alps and Andes come and go as rainbows. The good spirit of our life has no heaven which is the price of rashness. Love, which is the essence of God, is not for levity, but for the total worth of man. Let us not have this childish luxury in our regards, but the austerest worth; let us approach our friend with an audacious trust in the truth of his heart, in the breadth, impossible to be overturned, of his foundations.

The attractions of this subject are not to be resisted, and I leave, for the time, all account of subordinate social benefit, to speak of that select and sacred relation which is a kind of absolute, and which even leaves the language of love suspicious and common, so much is this purer, and nothing is so much divine.

I do wish not to treat friendships daintily, but with roughest courage. When they are real, they are not glass threads or frostwork, but the solidest thing we know. For now, after so many ages of experience, what do we know of nature or of ourselves? Not one step has man taken towards the solution of the problem of his destiny. In one condemnation of folly stand the whole universe of men. But the sweet sincerity of joy and peace which I draw from this alliance with my brother's soul is the nut itself whereof all nature and all thought is but the

[1] Slowness of nature.

husk and shell. Happy is the house that shelters a friend! It might well be built, like a festal bower or arch, to entertain him a single day. Happier, if he know the solemnity of that relation and honour its law! He who offers himself a candidate for that covenant comes up, like an Olympian, to the great games where the first-born of the world are the competitors. He proposes himself for contests where Time, Want, Danger, are in the lists, and he alone is victor who has truth enough in his constitution to preserve the delicacy of his beauty from the wear and tear of all these. The gifts of fortune may be present or absent, but all the speed in that contest depends on intrinsic nobleness and the contempt of trifles. There are two elements that go to the composition of friendship, each so sovereign that I can detect no superiority in either, no reason why either should be first named. One is truth. A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud. I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men never put off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank; *that* being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform unto. Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins. We parry and fend the approach

of our fellow-man by compliments, by gossip, by amusements, by affairs. We cover up our thought from him under a hundred folds. I knew a man who under a certain religious frenzy cast off this drapery, and omitting all compliment and commonplace, spoke to the conscience of every person he encountered, and that with great insight and beauty. At first he was resisted, and all men agreed he was mad. But persisting — as indeed he could not help doing — for some time in this course, he attained to the advantage of bringing every man of his acquaintance into true relations with him. No man would think of speaking falsely with him, or of putting him off with any chat of markets or reading-rooms. But every man was constrained by so much sincerity to the like plain-dealing, and what love of nature, what poetry, what symbol of truth he had, he did certainly show him. But to most of us society shows not its face and eye, but its side and its back. To stand in true relations with men in a false age is worth a fit of insanity, is it not? We can seldom go erect. Almost every man we meet requires some civility,—requires to be humoured; he has some fame, some talent, some whim of religion or philanthropy in his head that is not to be questioned, and which spoils all conversation with him. But a friend is a sane man who exercises not my ingenuity, but me. My friend gives me entertainment without requiring any stipulation on my part. A friend therefore is a sort of paradox in nature. I who alone am, I who see nothing in nature whose existence I can affirm with equal evi-

dence to my own, behold now the semblance of my being, in all its height, variety and curiosity, reiterated in a foreign form; so that a friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature.

The other element of friendship is tenderness. We are holden to men by every sort of tie, by blood, by pride, by fear, by hope, by lucre, by lust, by hate, by admiration, by every circumstance and badge and trifle, — but we can scarce believe that so much character can subsist in another as to draw us by love. Can another be so blessed and we so pure that we can offer him tenderness? When a man becomes dear to me I have touched the goal of fortune. I find very little written directly to the heart of this matter in books. And yet I have one text which I cannot choose but remember. My author says, — "I offer myself faintly and bluntly to those whose I effectually am, and tender myself least to him to whom I am the most devoted." I wish that friendship should have feet, as well as eyes and eloquence. It must plant itself on the ground, before it vaults over the moon. I wish it to be a little of a citizen, before it is quite a cherub. We chide the citizen because he makes love a commodity. It is an exchange of gifts, of useful loans; it is good neighbourhood; it watches with the sick; it holds the pall at the funeral; and quite loses sight of the delicacies and nobility of the relation. But though we cannot find the god under this disguise of a sutler,[1] yet on the other hand we cannot forgive the poet

[1] One who supplies food to an army.

if he spins his thread too fine and does not substantiate his romance by the municipal[1] virtues of justice, punctuality, fidelity and pity. I hate the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances. I much prefer the company of ploughboys and tin-peddlers to the silken and perfumed amity which celebrates its days of encounter by a frivolous display, by rides in a curricle[2] and dinners at the best taverns. The end of friendship is a commerce[3] the most strict and homely that can be joined; more strict than any of which we have experience. It is for aid and comfort through all the relations and passages of life and death. It is fit for serene days and graceful gifts and country rambles, but also for rough roads and hard fare, shipwreck, poverty and persecution. It keeps company with the sallies of the wit and the trances of religion. We are to dignify to each other the daily needs and offices[4] of man's life, and embellish it by courage, wisdom and unity. It should never fall into something usual and settled, but should be alert and inventive and add rhyme and reason to what was drudgery.

Friendship may be said to require natures so rare and costly, each so well tempered and so happily adapted, and withal so circumstanced (for even in that particular, a poet says, love demands that the parties be altogether paired), that its satisfaction can very seldom be assured. It cannot subsist in its perfection, say some of those who

[1] Pertaining to the town, or common life.

[2] A two-wheeled carriage. [3] Intercourse. [4] Duties, tasks.

are learned in this warm lore of the heart, betwixt more than two. I am not quite so strict in my terms, perhaps because I have never known so high a fellowship as others. I please my imagination more with a circle of godlike men and women variously related to each other and between whom subsists a lofty intelligence. But I find this law of *one to one* peremptory for conversation, which is the practice and consummation of friendship. Do not mix waters too much. The best mix as ill as good and bad. You shall have very useful and cheering discourse at several times with two several men, but let all three of you come together and you shall not have one new and hearty word. Two may talk and one may hear, but three cannot take part in a conversation of the most sincere and searching sort. In good company there is never such discourse between two, across the table, as takes place when you leave them alone. In good company the individuals merge their egotism into a social soul exactly co-extensive with the several consciousnesses there present. No partialities of friend to friend, no fondnesses of brother to sister, of wife to husband, are there pertinent, but quite otherwise. Only he may then speak who can sail on the common thought of the party, and not poorly limited to his own. Now this convention,[1] which good sense demands, destroys the high freedom of great conversation, which requires an absolute running of two souls into one.

No two men but being left alone with each other enter

[1] Formal agreement, rule of the game.

into simpler relations. Yet it is affinity that determines *which* two shall converse. Unrelated men give little joy to each other, will never suspect the latent powers of each. We talk sometimes of a great talent for conversation, as if it were a permanent property in some individuals. Conversation is an evanescent relation,[1] — no more. A man is reputed to have thought and eloquence; he cannot, for all that, say a word to his cousin or his uncle. They accuse his silence with as much reason as they would blame the insignificance of a dial in the shade. In the sun it will mark the hour. Among those who enjoy his thought he will regain his tongue.

Friendship requires that rare mean[2] betwixt likeness and unlikeness that piques[3] each with the presence of power and of consent in the other party. Let me be alone to the end of the world, rather than that my friend should overstep, by a word or a look, his real sympathy. I am equally balked by antagonism and by compliance. Let him not cease an instant to be himself. The only joy I have in his being mine, is that the *not mine* is *mine*. I hate, where I looked for a manly furtherance or at least a manly resistance, to find a mush of concession. Better be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo. The condition which high friendship demands is ability to do without it. That high office requires great and sublime parts. There must be very[4] two, before

[1] *I.e.* Dependent on both parties.
[2] Medium.
[3] Pricks, stirs up.
[4] Real, true. (Adjective.)

there can be very one. Let it be an alliance of two large, formidable natures, mutually beheld, mutually feared, before yet they recognize the deep identity which, beneath these disparities, unites them.

He only is fit for this society who is magnanimous; who is sure that greatness and goodness are always economy; who is not swift to intermeddle with his fortunes. Let him not intermeddle with this. Leave to the diamond its ages to grow, nor expect to accelerate the births of the eternal. Friendship demands a religious treatment. We talk of choosing our friends, but friends are self-elected. Reverence is a great part of it. Treat your friend as a spectacle.[1] Of course he has merits that are not yours, and that you cannot honour if you must needs hold him close to your person. Stand aside; give those merits room; let them mount and expand. Are you the friend of your friend's buttons, or of his thought? To a great heart he will still be a stranger in a thousand particulars, that he may come near in the holiest ground. Leave it to girls and boys to regard a friend as property, and to suck a short and all-confounding pleasure, instead of the noblest benefit.

Let us buy our entrance to this guild[2] by a long probation. Why should we desecrate noble and beautiful souls by intruding on them? Why insist on rash personal relations with your friend? Why go to his house, or know his mother and brother and sisters? Why be

[1] Something to be looked at with admiration.

[2] Society of fellow-workmen.

visited by him at your own? Are these things material to our covenant? Leave this touching and clawing. Let him be to me a spirit. A message, a thought, a sincerity, a glance from him, I want, but not news, nor pottage. I can get politics and chat and neighbourly conveniences from cheaper companions. Should not the society of my friend be to me poetic, pure, universal and great as nature itself? Ought I to feel that our tie is profane in comparison with yonder bar of cloud that sleeps on the horizon, or that clump of waving grass that divides the brook? Let us not vilify,[1] but raise it to that standard. That great defying eye, that scornful beauty of his mien and action, do not pique yourself on reducing, but rather fortify and enhance. Worship his superiorities; wish him not less by a thought, but hoard and tell them all. Guard him as thy counterpart. Let him be to thee forever a sort of beautiful enemy, untamable, devoutly revered, and not a trivial conveniency to be soon outgrown and cast aside. The hues of the opal, the light of the diamond, are not to be seen if the eye is too near. To my friend I write a letter and from him I receive a letter. That seems to you a little. It suffices me. It is a spiritual gift, worthy of him to give and of me to receive. It profanes nobody. In these warm lines the heart will trust itself, as it will not to the tongue, and pour out the prophecy of a godlier existence than all the annals of heroism have yet made good.

Respect so far the holy laws of this fellowship as not

[1] Make it common.

to prejudice[1] its perfect flower by your impatience for its opening. We must be our own before we can be another's. There is at least this satisfaction in crime, according to the Latin proverb; — you can speak to your accomplice on even terms. *Crimen quos inquinat, æquat.* To those whom we admire and love, at first we cannot. Yet the least defect of self-possession vitiates, in my judgement, the entire relation. There can never be deep peace between two spirits, never mutual respect, until in their dialogue each stands for the whole world.

What is so great as friendship, let us carry with what grandeur of spirit we can. Let us be silent, — so we may hear the whisper of the gods. Let us not interfere. Who set you to cast about[2] what you should say to the select souls, or how to say any thing to such? No matter how ingenious, no matter how graceful and bland. There are innumerable degrees of folly and wisdom, and for you to say aught is to be frivolous. Wait, and thy heart shall speak. Wait until the necessary and everlasting overpowers you, until day and night avail themselves of your lips. The only reward of virtue is virtue; the only way to have a friend is to be one. You shall not come nearer a man by getting into his house. If unlike, his soul only flees the faster from you, and you shall never catch a true glance of his eye. We see the noble afar off and they repel us; why should we intrude? Late, — very late, — we perceive that no arrangements, no in-

[1] Injure beforehand. [2] Try to guess.

troductions, no consuetudes[1] or habits of society would be of any avail to establish us in such relations with them as we desire, — but solely the uprise of nature in us to the same degree it is in them; then shall we meet as water with water; and if we should not meet them then, we shall not want them, for we are already they. In the last analysis, love is only the reflection of a man's own worthiness from other men. Men have sometimes exchanged names with their friends, as if they would signify that in their friend each loved his own soul.

The higher the style we demand of friendship, of course the less easy to establish it with flesh and blood. We walk alone in the world. Friends such as we desire are dreams and fables. But a sublime hope cheers ever the faithful heart, that elsewhere, in other regions of the universal power, souls are now acting, enduring and daring, which can love us and which we can love. We may congratulate ourselves that the period of nonage,[2] of follies, of blunders and of shame, is passed in solitude, and when we are finished men we shall grasp heroic hands in heroic hands. Only be admonished by what you already see, not to strike leagues of friendship with cheap persons, where no friendship can be. Our impatience betrays us into rash and foolish alliances which no god attends. By persisting in your path, though you forfeit the little you gain the great. You demonstrate yourself, so as to put yourself out of the reach of false relations, and you draw to you the first-born of the world,

[1] Common customs. [2] Legal infancy, immaturity.

— those rare pilgrims whereof only one or two wander in nature at once, and before whom the vulgar great show as spectres and shadows merely.

It is foolish to be afraid of making our ties too spiritual, as if so we could lose any genuine love. Whatever correction of our popular views we make from insight, nature will be sure to bear us out in, and though it seem to rob us of some joy, will repay us with a greater. Let us feel if we will the absolute insulation of man. We are sure that we have all in us. We go to Europe, or we pursue persons, or we read books, in the instinctive faith that these will call it out and reveal us to ourselves. Beggars all. The persons are such as we; the Europe, an old faded garment of dead persons; the books, their ghosts. Let us drop this idolatry. Let us give over this mendicancy. Let us even bid our dearest friends farewell, and defy them, saying 'Who are you? Unhand me: I will be dependent no more.' Ah! seest thou not, O brother, that thus we part only to meet again on a higher platform, and only be more each other's because we are more our own? A friend is Janus-faced; he looks to the past and the future. He is the child of all my foregoing hours, the prophet of those to come, and the harbinger[1] of a greater friend.

I do then with my friends as I do with my books. I would have them where I can find them, but I seldom use them. We must have society on our own terms, and admit or exclude it on the slightest cause. I cannot

[1] Forerunner, messenger sent ahead.

afford to speak much with my friend. If he is great he makes me so great that I cannot descend to converse. In the great days, presentiments hover before me in the firmament. I ought then to dedicate myself to them. I go in that I may seize them, I go out that I may seize them. I fear only that I may lose them receding into the sky in which now they are only a patch of brighter light. Then, though I prize my friends, I cannot afford to talk with them and study their visions, lest I lose my own. It would indeed give me a certain household joy to quit this lofty seeking, this spiritual astronomy or search of stars, and come down to warm sympathies with you; but then I know well I shall mourn always the vanishing of my mighty gods. It is true, next week I shall have languid moods, when I can well afford to occupy myself with foreign objects; then I shall regret the lost literature of your mind, and wish you were by my side again. But if you come, perhaps you will fill my mind only with new visions; not with yourself but with your lustres,[1] and I shall not be able any more than now to converse with you. So I will owe to my friends this evanescent intercourse. I will receive from them not what they have but what they are. They shall give me that which properly they cannot give, but which emanates from them. But they shall not hold me by any relations less subtile and pure. We will meet as though we met not, and part as though we parted not.

It has seemed to me lately more possible than I knew,

[1] Shining qualities.

to carry a friendship greatly, on one side, without due correspondence on the other. Why should I cumber myself with regrets that the receiver is not capacious? It never troubles the sun that some of his rays fall wide and vain into ungrateful space, and only a small part on the reflecting planet. Let your greatness educate the crude and cold companion. If he is unequal he will presently pass away; but thou art enlarged by thy own shining, and no longer a mate for frogs and worms, dost soar and burn with the gods of the empyrean.[1] It is thought a disgrace to love unrequited. But the great will see that true love cannot be unrequited. True love transcends the unworthy object and dwells and broods on the eternal, and when the poor interposed mask crumbles, it is not sad, but feels rid of so much earth and feels its independency the surer. Yet these things may hardly be said without a sort of treachery to the relation. The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust. It must not surmise or provide for infirmity. It treats its object as a god, that it may deify both.[2]

[1] Highest heavens.

[2] Itself and its object.

PRUDENCE

THEME no poet gladly sung,
Fair to old and foul to young;
Scorn not thou the love of parts,
And the articles of arts.
Grandeur of the perfect sphere
Thanks the atoms that cohere.

ANALYSIS

Theme: Prudence, as the art of securing our present welfare by conformity to the laws and rules of nature, is false when it regards them as final, true when it sees in them symbols of higher laws and means to spiritual ends.

Structure: A. *Introduction.* Emerson professes that he is short of prudence and praises it because he would like to have it, — the virtue of the senses, unfolding the beauty of laws within its own narrow scope. (1) Men of common sense esteem health and wealth as a final good. (2) Men of taste enjoy outward things as beautiful symbols. (3) Men of spiritual perception live in the beauty of the truth which things symbolize. A well-rounded man, taking in all three of these experiences, has true prudence.

B. *Discussion.* I. False prudence, which is altogether material and sensual, can only be corrected by culture, which aims at the perfection of man as the highest end. II. Yet we must respect natural facts and conditions, heat and cold, hunger and thirst, sleep and death, etc., because subjection to them is good discipline, and neglect of them is always punished. The common imprudences of men, and the special follies of genius, lead to all sorts of misery; and nature, scorned and violated, takes revenge on the drunkard, the idler, the spendthrift. Prudence is a minor virtue, but it will serve to teach us that law reigns everywhere III. But no virtue can be cultivated alone; therefore with prudence, courage, truth, etc., should be joined, and especially love, because it helps us to understand people and live with them on a friendly footing.

C. *Conclusion.* All the virtues are on the same side; and the whole world of morals and conduct is made of one stuff and subject to the ten commandments.

PRUDENCE

WHAT right have I to write on Prudence, whereof I have little, and that of the negative sort? My prudence consists in avoiding and going without, not in the inventing of means and methods, not in adroit steering, not in gentle repairing. I have no skill to make money spend well, no genius in my economy, and whoever sees my garden discovers that I must have some other garden. Yet I love facts, and hate lubricity [1] and people without perception. Then I have the same title to write on prudence that I have to write on poetry or holiness. We write from aspiration and antagonism, as well as from experience. We paint those qualities which we do not possess. The poet admires the man of energy and tactics; the merchant breeds his son for the church or the bar; and where a man is not vain and egotistic you shall find what he has not by his praise. Moreover it would be hardly honest in me not to balance these fine lyric words of Love and Friendship with words of coarser sound, and whilst my debt to my senses is real and constant, not to own it in passing.

Prudence is the virtue of the senses. It is the science of appearances. It is the outmost action of the inward life. It is God taking thought for oxen. It moves matter after the laws of matter. It is content to seek

[1] Slipperiness.

health of body by complying with physical conditions, and health of mind by the laws of the intellect.

The world of the senses is a world of shows; it does not exist for itself, but has a symbolic character; and a true prudence or law of shows recognizes the co-presence of other laws and knows that its own office is subaltern[1]; knows that it is surface and not centre where it works. Prudence is false when detached. It is legitimate when it is the Natural History of the soul incarnate, when it unfolds the beauty of laws within the narrow scope of the senses.

There are all degrees of proficiency in knowledge of the world. It is sufficient to our present purpose to indicate three. One class live to the utility of the symbol, esteeming health and wealth a final good. Another class live above this mark to the beauty of the symbol, as the poet and artist and the naturalist and man of science. A third class live above the beauty of the symbol to the beauty of the thing signified; these are wise men. The first class have common sense; the second, taste; and the third spiritual perception. Once in a long time, a man traverses the whole scale, and sees and enjoys the symbol solidly, then also has a clear eye for its beauty, and lastly, whilst he pitches his tent on this sacred volcanic isle of nature, does not offer to build houses and barns thereon, — reverencing the splendour of the God which he sees bursting through each chink and cranny.

[1] That of an inferior officer.

The world is filled with the proverbs and acts and winkings[1] of a base prudence, which is a devotion to matter, as if we possessed no other faculties than the palate, the nose, the touch, the eye and ear; a prudence which adores the Rule of Three, which never subscribes, which never gives, which seldom lends, and asks but one question of any project, — Will it bake bread? This is a disease like a thickening of the skin until the vital organs are destroyed. But culture, revealing the high origin of the apparent world and aiming at the perfection of the man as the end, degrades[2] every thing else, as health and bodily life, into means. It sees prudence not to be a several[3] faculty, but a name for wisdom and virtue conversing[4] with the body and its wants. Cultivated men always feel and speak so, as if a great fortune, the achievement of a civil or social measure, great personal influence, a graceful and commanding address, had their value as proofs of the energy of the spirit. If a man lose his balance and immerse himself in any trades or pleasures for their own sake, he may be a good wheel or pin,[5] but he is not a cultivated man.

The spurious prudence, making the senses final, is the god of sots and cowards, and is the subject of all comedy. It is nature's joke, and therefore literature's. The true prudence limits this sensualism by admitting the knowledge of an internal and real world. This recognition once made, the order of the world and the

[1] Silent hints. [2] Lowers. [3] Separate, distinct.
[4] Busied with. [5] *I.e.* in a machine.

distribution of affairs and times, being studied with the co-perception of their subordinate place, will reward any degree of attention. For our existence, thus apparently attached in nature to the sun and the returning moon and the periods which they mark, — so susceptible to climate and to country, so alive to social good and evil, so fond of splendour and so tender to hunger and cold and debt, — reads all its primary lessons out of these books.

Prudence does not go behind nature and ask whence it is. It takes the laws of the world whereby man's being is conditioned, as they are, and keeps these laws that it may enjoy their proper good. It respects space and time, climate, want, sleep, the law of polarity, growth and death. There revolve, to give bound and period to his being on all sides, the sun and moon, the great formalists in the sky: here lies stubborn matter, and will not swerve from its chemical routine. Here is a planted globe, pierced and belted with natural laws and fenced and distributed externally with civil partitions and properties which impose new restraints on the young inhabitant.

We eat of the bread which grows in the field. We live by the air which blows around us and we are poisoned[1] by the air that is too cold or too hot, too dry or too wet. Time, which shows so vacant, indivisible and divine in its coming, is slit and peddled into trifles and tatters. A door is to be painted, a lock to be repaired. I want

[1] Injured.

wood or oil, or meal or salt; the house smokes, or I have a headache; then the tax, and an affair to be transacted with a man without heart or brains, and the stinging recollection of an injurious or very awkward word, — these eat up the hours. Do what we can, summer will have its flies; if we walk in the woods we must feed mosquitoes; if we go a-fishing we must expect a wet coat. Then climate is a great impediment to idle persons; we often resolve to give up the care of the weather, but still we regard the clouds and the rain.

We are instructed by these petty experiences which usurp the hours and years. The hard soil and four months of snow make the inhabitant of the northern temperate zone wiser and abler than his fellow who enjoys the fixed smile of the tropics. The islander may ramble all day at will. At night he may sleep on a mat under the moon, and wherever a wild date-tree grows, nature has, without a prayer even, spread a table for his morning meal. The northerner is perforce a householder. He must brew, bake, salt and preserve his food, and pile wood and coal. But as it happens that not one stroke can labour lay to without some new acquaintance with nature, and as nature is inexhaustibly significant, the inhabitants of these climates have always excelled the southerner in force. Such is the value of these matters that a man who knows other things can never know too much of these. Let him have accurate perceptions. Let him, if he have hands, handle; if eyes, measure and discriminate; let him accept and

hive[1] every fact of chemistry, natural history and economics; the more he has, the less he is willing to spare any one. Time is always bringing the occasions that disclose their value. Some wisdom comes out of every natural and innocent action. The domestic man, who loves no music so well as his kitchen clock and the airs which the logs sing to him as they burn on the hearth, has solaces which others never dream of. The application of means to ends insures victory and the songs of victory not less in a farm or a shop than in the tactics of party or of war. The good husband[2] finds method as efficient in the packing of fire-wood in a shed or in the harvesting of fruits in the cellar, as in Peninsular campaigns or the files of the Department of State. In the rainy day he builds a work-bench, or gets his tool-box set in the corner of the barn-chamber, and stored with nails, gimlet, pincers, screwdriver and chisel. Herein he tastes an old joy of youth and childhood, the cat-like love of garrets, presses and corn-chambers, and of the conveniences of long housekeeping. His garden or his poultry-yard tells him many pleasant anecdotes. One might find argument for optimism in the abundant flow of this saccharine element of pleasure in every suburb and extremity of the good world. Let a man keep the law, — any law, — and his way will be strown with satisfactions. There is more difference in the quality of our pleasures than in the amount.

[1] Store up, as bees do honey. [2] Farmer, householder.

On the other hand, nature punishes any neglect of prudence. If you think the senses final, obey their law. If you believe in the soul, do not clutch at sensual sweetness before it is ripe on the slow tree of cause and effect. It is vinegar to the eyes to deal with men of loose and imperfect perception. Dr. Johnson is reported to have said, — "If the child says he looked out of this window, when he looked out of that, — whip him." Our American character is marked by a more than average delight in accurate perception, which is shown by the currency of the byword, "No mistake." But the discomfort of unpunctuality, of confusion of thought about facts, inattention to the wants of to-morrow, is of no nation. The beautiful laws of time and space, once dislocated by our inaptitude, are holes and dens. If the hive be disturbed by rash and stupid hands, instead of honey it will yield us bees. Our words and actions to be fair must be timely. A gay and pleasant sound is the whetting of the scythe in the mornings of June, yet what is more lonesome and sad than the sound of a whetstone or mower's rifle when it is too late in the season to make hay? Scatter-brained and "afternoon" men spoil much more than their own affair in spoiling the temper of those who deal with them. I have seen a criticism on some paintings, of which I am reminded when I see the shiftless and unhappy men who are not true to their senses. The last Grand Duke of Weimar, a man of superior understanding, said, — "I have sometimes remarked in the presence of great works of art,

and just now especially in Dresden, how much a certain property contributes to the effect which gives life to the figures, and to the life an irresistible truth. This property is the hitting, in all the figures we draw, the right centre of gravity. I mean the placing the figures firm upon their feet, making the hands grasp, and fastening the eyes on the spot where they should look. Even lifeless figures, as vessels and stools — let them be drawn ever so correctly — lose all effect so soon as they lack the resting upon their centre of gravity, and have a certain swimming and oscillating appearance. The Raphael in the Dresden gallery (the only great affecting picture which I have seen) is the quietest and most passionless piece you can imagine; a couple of saints who worship the Virgin and Child. Nevertheless it awakens a deeper impression than the contortions of ten crucified martyrs. For beside all the resistless beauty of form, it possesses in the highest degree the property of the perpendicularity of all the figures." This perpendicularity we demand of all the figures in this picture of life. Let them stand on their feet, and not float and swing. Let us know where to find them. Let them discriminate between what they remember and what they dreamed, call a spade a spade, give us facts, and honour their own senses with trust.

But what man shall dare task another with imprudence? Who is prudent? The men we call greatest are least in this kingdom. There is a certain fatal dislocation in our relation to nature, distorting our modes

of living and making every law our enemy, which seems at last to have aroused all the wit and virtue in the world to ponder the question of Reform. We must call the highest prudence to counsel, and ask why health and beauty and genius should now be the exception rather than the rule of human nature? We do not know the properties of plants and animals and the laws of nature, through our sympathy with the same; but this[1] remains the dream of poets. Poetry and prudence should be coincident. Poets should be lawgivers; that is, the boldest lyric inspiration should not chide and insult, but should announce and lead the civil code and the day's work. But now the two things seem irreconcilably parted. We have violated law upon law until we stand amidst ruins, and when by chance we espy a coincidence between reason and the phenomena, we are surprised. Beauty should be the dowry of every man and woman, as invariably as sensation; but it is rare. Health or sound organization should be universal. Genius should be the child of genius and every child should be inspired; but now it is not to be predicted of any child, and nowhere is it pure. We call partial half-lights, by courtesy, genius; talent which converts itself to money; talent which glitters to-day that it may dine and sleep well to-morrow; and society is officered by *men of parts*, as they are properly called, and not by divine men. These use their gift to refine luxury, not to abolish it. Genius is always ascetic, and piety, and

[1] *I.e.* to know the properties, etc.

love.[1] Appetite shows to the finer souls as a disease and they find beauty in rites and bounds that resist it.

We have found out fine names to cover our sensuality withal, but no gifts can raise intemperance. The man of talent affects to call his transgressions of the laws of the senses trivial and to count them nothing considered with his devotion to his art. His art never taught him lewdness, nor the love of wine, nor the wish to reap where he had not sowed. His art is less for every deduction from his holiness, and less for every defect of common sense. On him who scorned the world as he said, the scorned world wreaks its revenge. He that despiseth small things will perish by little and little. Goethe's Tasso is very likely to be a pretty fair historical portrait, and that is true tragedy. It does not seem to me so genuine grief when some tyrannous Richard the Third oppresses and slays a score of innocent persons, as when Antonio and Tasso, both apparently right, wrong each other. One living after the maxims of this world and consistent and true to them, the other fired with all divine sentiments, yet grasping also at the pleasures of sense, without submitting to their law. That is a grief we all feel, a knot we cannot untie. Tasso's is no unfrequent case in modern biography. A man of genius, of an ardent temperament, reckless of physical laws, self-indulgent, becomes presently unfortunate, querulous, a "discomfortable cousin," a thorn to himself and to others.

[1] Supply: "are always ascetic."

The scholar shames us by his bifold life. Whilst something higher than prudence is active, he is admirable; when common sense is wanted, he is an encumbrance. Yesterday, Cæsar was not so great; to-day, the felon at the gallows' foot is not more miserable. Yesterday, radiant with the light of an ideal world in which he lives, the first of men; and now oppressed by wants and by sickness, for which he must thank himself. He resembles the pitiful drivellers whom travellers describe as frequenting the bazaars of Constantinople, who skulk about all day, yellow, emaciated, ragged, sneaking; and at evening, when the bazaars are open, slink to the opium-shop, swallow their morsel and become tranquil and glorified seers. And who has not seen the tragedy of imprudent genius struggling for years with paltry pecuniary difficulties, at last sinking, chilled, exhausted and fruitless, like a giant slaughtered by pins?

Is it not better that a man should accept the first pains and mortifications of this sort, which nature is not slack in sending him, as hints that he must expect no other good than the just fruit of his own labour and self-denial? Health, bread, climate, social position, have their importance, and he will give them their due. Let him esteem Nature a perpetual counsellor, and her perfections the exact measure of our deviations. Let him make the night night, and the day day. Let him control the habit of expense. Let him see that as much wisdom may be expended on a private economy as on

an empire, and as much wisdom may be drawn from it. The laws of the world are written out for him on every piece of money in his hand. There is nothing he will not be the better for knowing, were it only the wisdom of Poor Richard, or the State-Street prudence of buying by the acre to sell by the foot; or the thrift of the agriculturist, to stick a tree between whiles, because it will grow whilst he sleeps; or the prudence which consists in husbanding little strokes of the tool, little portions of time, particles of stock and small gains. The eye of prudence may never shut. Iron, if kept at the ironmonger's, will rust; beer, if not brewed in the right state of the atmosphere, will sour; timber of ships will rot at sea, or if laid up high and dry, will strain, warp and dry-rot; money, if kept by us, yields no rent and is liable to loss; if invested, is liable to depreciation of the particular kind of stock. Strike, says the smith, the iron is white; keep the rake, says the haymaker, as nigh the scythe as you can, and the cart as nigh the rake. Our Yankee trade is reputed to be very much on the extreme of this prudence. It takes bank-notes, good, bad, clean, ragged, and saves itself by the speed with which it passes them off. Iron cannot rust, nor beer sour, nor timber rot, nor calicoes go out of fashion, nor money stocks depreciate, in the few swift moments in which the Yankee suffers any one of them to remain in his possession. In skating over thin ice our safety is in our speed.

Let him learn a prudence of a higher strain. Let

him learn that every thing in nature, even motes and feathers, go[1] by law and not by luck, and that what he sows he reaps. By diligence and self-command let him put the bread he eats at his own disposal, that he may not stand in bitter and false relations to other men; for the best good of wealth is freedom. Let him practise the minor virtues. How much of human life is lost in waiting! let him not make his fellow-creatures wait. How many words and promises are promises of conversation[2]! Let his be words of fate. When he sees a folded and sealed scrap of paper[3] float round the globe in a pine ship and come safe to the eye for which it was written, amidst a swarming population, let him likewise feel the admonition to integrate his being across all these distracting forces, and keep a slender human word among the storms, distances and accidents that drive us hither and thither, and, by persistency, make the paltry force of one man reappear to redeem its pledge after months and years in the most distant climates.

We must not try to write the laws of any one virtue, looking at that only. Human nature loves no contradictions, but is symmetrical. The prudence which secures an outward well-being is not to be studied by one set of men, whilst heroism and holiness are studied by another, but they are reconcilable. Prudence concerns the present time, persons, property and existing

[1] Goes.

[2] Mere talk, not fulfilled.

[3] A letter sent by post.

forms. But as every fact hath its roots in the soul, and if the soul were changed would cease to be, or would become some other thing, — the proper administration of outward things will always rest on a just apprehension of their cause and origin; that is, the good man will be the wise man, and the single-hearted the politic man. Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society. On the most profitable lie the course of events presently lays a destructive tax; whilst frankness invites frankness, puts the parties on a convenient footing and makes their business a friendship. Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great, though they make an exception in your favour to all their rules of trade.

So, in regard to disagreeable and formidable things, prudence does not consist in evasion or in flight, but in courage. He who wishes to walk in the most peaceful parts of life with any serenity must screw himself up to resolution. Let him front the object of his worst apprehension, and his stoutness will commonly make his fear groundless. The Latin proverb says, "In battles the eye is first overcome." Entire self-possession may make a battle very little more dangerous to life than a match at foils[1] or at football. Examples are cited by soldiers of men who have seen the cannon pointed and the fire given to it, and who have stepped aside from the path of the ball. The terrors of the storm are chiefly

[1] Fencing match.

confined to the parlour and the cabin. The drover, the sailor, buffets it all day, and his health renews itself at as vigorous a pulse under the sleet as under the sun of June.

In the occurrence of unpleasant things among neighbours, fear comes readily to heart and magnifies the consequence[1] of the other party; but it is a bad counsellor. Every man is actually weak and apparently strong. To himself he seems weak; to others, formidable. You are afraid of Grim; but Grim also is afraid of you. You are solicitous of the good-will of the meanest person, uneasy at his ill-will. But the sturdiest offender of your peace and of the neighbourhood, if you rip up *his* claims, is as thin and timid as any, and the peace of society is often kept, because, as children say, one is afraid and the other dares not. Far off, men swell, bully and threaten; bring them hand to hand, and they are a feeble folk.

It is a proverb that 'courtesy costs nothing'; but calculation might come to value love for its profit. Love is fabled to be blind, but kindness is necessary to perception; love is not a hood, but an eye-water.[2] If you meet a sectary or a hostile partisan, never recognize the dividing lines, but meet on what common ground remains, — if only that the sun shines and the rain rains for both; the area will widen very fast, and ere you know it, the boundary mountains on which the eye had fastened have melted into air. If they set out to con-

[1] Importance. [2] Does not blind us, but makes us see.

tend, Saint Paul will lie and Saint John will hate. What low, poor, paltry, hypocritical people an argument on religion will make of the pure and chosen souls! They will shuffle and crow, crook and hide, feign to confess here, only that they may brag and conquer there, and not a thought has enriched either party, and not an emotion of bravery, modesty, or hope. So neither should you put yourself in a false position with your contemporaries by indulging a vein of hostility and bitterness. Though your views are in straight antagonism to theirs, assume an identity of sentiment, assume that you are saying precisely that which all think, and in the flow of wit and love roll out your paradoxes in solid column, with not the infirmity of a doubt. So at least shall you get an adequate deliverance. The natural motions of the soul are so much better than the voluntary ones that you will never do yourself justice in dispute. The thought is not then taken hold of by the right handle, does not show itself proportioned and in its true bearings, but bears extorted, hoarse, and half witness. But assume a consent and it shall presently be granted, since really and underneath their external diversities, all men are of one heart and mind.

Wisdom will never let us stand with any man or men on an unfriendly footing. We refuse sympathy and intimacy with people, as if we waited for some better sympathy and intimacy to come. But whence and when? To-morrow will be like to-day. Life wastes itself whilst we are preparing to live. Our friends and fellow-workers

die off from us. Scarcely can we say we see new men, new women, approaching us. We are too old to regard fashion, too old to expect patronage of any greater or more powerful. Let us suck the sweetness of those affections and consuetudes that grow near us. These old shoes are easy to the feet. Undoubtedly we can easily pick faults in our company, can easily whisper names prouder, and that tickle the fancy more. Every man's imagination hath its friends; and life would be dearer with such companions. But if you cannot have them on good mutual terms, you cannot have them. If not the Deity but our ambition hews and shapes the new relations, their virtue escapes, as strawberries lose their flavour in garden-beds.

Thus, truth, frankness, courage, love, humility and all the virtues range themselves on the side of prudence, or the art of securing a present well-being. I do not know if all matter will be found to be made of one element, as oxygen or hydrogen, at last, but the world of manners and actions is wrought of one stuff, and begin where we will we are pretty sure in a short space to be mumbling our ten commandments.

SHAKESPEARE;
OR, THE POET

ANALYSIS

Theme: Shakespeare as a representative of those who interpret nature and life through poetry.

Structure: A. *Introduction.* The chief mark of genius is not originality but broad representative power, which makes a man speak for his age, his country, his race.

B. *Discussion.* I. Shakespeare's age was one in which the genius of England found its best expression through the drama. The popularity of the theatre: the mass of dramatic material already in existence: Shakespeare used old plays, etc., as sources and models, took his stuff from books and traditions, and moulded it into new and better forms, giving it universal human significance. II. Of his life but little has been unearthed by the Shakespeare Society. His greatness was unknown to his contemporaries. His prosperous and rather commonplace career as actor and theatre-owner and citizen, throws no light on his genius. His true biography is in his works. III. The extraordinary breadth, intensity and wisdom of his inner life as revealed in his plays and poems. His power of transferring the truth of things into verse: his wide range, precision in details, and vigour in execution. The meaning of his poetry moulds and controls the form. His large cheerfulness and joy in beauty. He is a master-mind, illuminating the world, and emancipating the thoughts of men.

C. *Conclusion.* Yet he shared the imperfection of humanity. He used his visions of the world and life as entertainments, not to guide, inspire and profit mankind. Other men, priests and prophets, have interpreted their visions in ethical commandments, stern, sombre, without beauty. The world still wants its poet-priest who shall bring both joy and virtue, beauty and law.

SHAKESPEARE; OR, THE POET

GREAT men are more distinguished by range and extent than by originality. If we require the originality which consists in weaving, like a spider, their web from their own bowels; in finding clay and making bricks and building the house; no great men are original. Nor does valuable originality consist in unlikeness to other men. The hero is in the press of knights and the thick of events; and seeing what men want and sharing their desire, he adds the needful length of sight and of arm, to come at the desired point. The greatest genius is the most indebted man. A poet is no rattle-brain, saying what comes uppermost, and, because he says every thing, saying at last something good; but a heart in unison with his time and country. There is nothing whimsical[1] and fantastic in his production, but sweet and sad earnest, freighted with the weightiest convictions and pointed with the most determined aim which any man or class knows of in his times.

The Genius of our life is jealous of individuals, and will not have any individual great, except through the general.[2] There is no choice to genius. A great man does

[1] Cf. *Self-Reliance*, p. 67.

[2] That which belongs to the *genus homo*.

not wake up on some fine morning and say, 'I am full of life, I will go to sea and find an Antarctic continent: to-day I will square the circle: I will ransack botany and find a new food for man: I have a new architecture in my mind: I foresee a new mechanic power:' no, but he finds himself in the river of the thoughts and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities, of his contemporaries. He stands where all the eyes of men look one way, and their hands all point in the direction in which he should go. The Church has reared him amidst rites and pomps, and he carries out the advice which her music gave him, and builds a cathedral needed by her chants and processions. He finds a war raging: it educates him, by trumpet, in barracks, and he betters the instruction. He finds two counties groping to bring coal, or flour, or fish, from the place of production to the place of consumption, and he hits on a railroad. Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people and in his love of the materials he wrought in. What an economy of power! and what a compensation for the shortness of life! All is done to his hand. The world has brought him thus far on his way. The human race has gone out before him, sunk the hills, filled the hollows and bridged the rivers. Men, nations, poets, artisans, women, all have worked for him, and he enters into their labours. Choose any other thing, out of the line of tendency, out of the national feeling and history, and he would have all to do for himself: his powers would be expended in

the first preparations. Great genial[1] power, one would almost say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind.

Shakespeare's youth fell in a time when the English people were importunate for dramatic entertainments. The court took offence easily at political allusions and attempted to suppress them.[2] The Puritans, a growing and energetic party, and the religious among the Anglican church, would suppress them. But the people wanted them. Inn-yards, houses without roofs, and extemporaneous enclosures at country fairs were the ready theatres of strolling players. The people had tasted this new joy; and, as we could not hope to suppress newspapers now, — no, not by the strongest party, — neither then could king, prelate, or puritan, alone or united, suppress an organ which was ballad, epic, newspaper, caucus, lecture, Punch and library, at the same time. Probably king, prelate, and puritan, all found their own account[3] in it. It had become, by all causes, a national interest, — by no means conspicuous, so that some great scholar would have thought of treating it in an English history, — but not a whit less considerable because it was cheap and of no account, like a baker's-shop. The best proof of its vitality is the crowd of writers which suddenly broke into this field; Kyd, Marlowe, Greene,

[1] Belonging to genius. [2] *I.e.* dramatic entertainment. [3] Advantage.

Jonson, Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Heywood, Middleton, Peele, Ford, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher.

The secure possession, by the stage, of the public mind, is of the first importance to the poet who works for it. He loses no time in idle experiments. Here is audience and expectation prepared. In the case of Shakespeare there is much more. At the time when he left Stratford and went up to London, a great body of stage-plays of all dates and writers existed in manuscript and were in turn produced on the boards. Here is the Tale of Troy, which the audience will bear hearing some part of, every week; the Death of Julius Cæsar, and other stories out of Plutarch, which they never tire of; a shelf full of English history, from the chronicles of Brut and Arthur, down to the royal Henries, which men hear eagerly; and a string of doleful tragedies, merry Italian tales and Spanish voyages, which all the London 'prentices know. All the mass has been treated, with more or less skill, by every playwright, and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts. It is now no longer possible to say who wrote them first. They have been the property of the Theatre so long, and so many rising geniuses have enlarged or altered them, inserting a speech or a whole scene, or adding a song, that no man can any longer claim copyright in this work of numbers. Happily, no man wishes to. They are not yet desired in that way. We have few readers, many spectators and hearers. They had best lie where they are.

Shakespeare, in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the *prestige*[1] which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done. The rude warm blood of the living England circulated in the play, as in street-ballads, and gave body which he wanted to his airy and majestic fancy. The poet needs a ground in popular tradition on which he may work, and which, again, may restrain his art within the due temperance.[2] It holds him to the people, supplies a foundation for his edifice, and in furnishing so much work done to his hand, leaves him at leisure and in full strength for the audacities of his imagination. In short, the poet owes to his legend what sculpture owed to the temple. Sculpture in Egypt and in Greece grew up in subordination to architecture. It was the ornament of the temple wall: at first a rude relief carved on pediments, then the relief became bolder and a head or arm was projected from the wall; the groups being still arranged with reference to the building, which serves also as a frame to hold the figures; and when at last the greatest freedom of style and treatment was reached, the prevailing genius of architecture still enforced a certain calmness and continence in the statue. As soon as the statue was begun for itself, and with no reference to the temple or palace, the art began to decline: freak, extravagance and exhibition took the place of the old temperance. This balance-wheel, which the sculptor found in

[1] A French word (pres-tīzh′): reputation. [2] Moderation.

architecture, the perilous irritability of poetic talent found in the accumulated dramatic materials to which the people were already wonted,[1] and which had a certain excellence which no single genius, however extraordinary, could hope to create.

In point of fact it appears that Shakespeare did owe debts in all directions, and was able to use whatever he found; and the amount of indebtedness may be inferred from Malone's laborious computations in regard to the First, Second, and Third parts of Henry VI., in which, "out of 6,043 lines, 1,771 were written by some author preceding Shakespeare, 2,383 by him, on the foundation laid by his predecessors, and 1,899 were entirely his own." And the proceeding investigation hardly leaves a single drama of his absolute invention. Malone's sentence is an important piece of external history. In Henry VIII. I think I see plainly the cropping out of the original rock on which his own finer stratum was laid. The first play was written by a superior, thoughtful man, with a vicious ear.[2] I can mark his lines, and know well their cadence. See Wolsey's soliloquy, and the following scene with Cromwell, where instead of the metre of Shakespeare, whose secret is that the thought constructs the tune, so that reading for the sense will best bring out the rhythm, — here the lines are constructed on a given tune, and the verse has even a trace of pulpit eloquence. But the play contains through all its length unmistakable traits of Shakespeare's hand, and some passages, as the account of

[1] Accustomed. [2] A poor ear for metre.

the coronation, are like autographs. What is odd, the compliment to Queen Elizabeth is in the bad rhythm.

Shakespeare knew that tradition supplies a better fable than any invention can. If he lost any credit of design, he augmented his resources; and, at that day, our petulant demand for originality was not so much pressed. There was no literature for the million. The universal reading, the cheap press, were unknown. A great poet who appears in illiterate times, absorbs into his sphere all the light which is any where radiating. Every intellectual jewel, every flower of sentiment it is his fine office to bring to his people; and he comes to value his memory equally with his invention. He is therefore little solicitous whence his thoughts have been derived; whether through translation, whether through tradition, whether by travel in distant countries, whether by inspiration; from whatever source they are equally welcome to his uncritical audience. Nay, he borrows very near home. Other men say wise things as well as he; only they say a good many foolish things, and do not know when they have spoken wisely. He knows the sparkle of the true stone, and puts it in high place, wherever he finds it. Such is the happy position of Homer perhaps; of Chaucer, of Saadi. They felt that all wit was their wit. And they are librarians and historiographers, as well as poets. Each romancer was heir and dispenser of all the hundred tales of the world, —

> "Presenting Thebes' and Pelops' line
> And the tale of Troy divine."[1]

[1] From Milton's *Il Penseroso.*

The influence of Chaucer is conspicuous in all our early literature; and more recently not only Pope and Dryden have been beholden to him, but, in the whole society of English writers, a large unacknowledged debt is easily traced. One is charmed with the opulence which feeds so many pensioners. But Chaucer is a huge borrower. Chaucer, it seems, drew continually, through Lydgate and Caxton, from Guido di Colonna, whose Latin romance of the Trojan war was in turn a compilation from Dares Phrygius, Ovid, and Statius. Then Petrarch, Boccaccio, and the Provençal poets are his benefactors: the Romaunt of the Rose is only judicious translation from William of Lorris and John of Meung: Troilus and Creseide, from Lollius of Urbino: The Cock and the Fox, from the *Lais* of Marie: The House of Fame, from the French or Italian: and poor Gower he uses as if he were only a brick-kiln or stone-quarry out of which to build his house. He steals by this apology, — that what he takes has no worth where he finds it and the greatest where he leaves it. It has come to be practically a sort of rule in literature, that a man having once shown himself capable of original writing, is entitled thenceforth to steal from the writings of others at discretion. Thought is the property of him who can entertain it and of him who can adequately place it. A certain awkwardness marks the use of borrowed thoughts; but as soon as we have learned what to do with them they become our own.

Thus all originality is relative. Every thinker is retrospective. The learned member of the legislature, at

Westminster or at Washington, speaks and votes for thousands. Show us the constituency, and the now invisible channels by which the senator is made aware of their wishes; the crowd of practical and knowing men, who, by correspondence or conversation, are feeding him with evidence, anecdotes and estimates, and it will bereave his fine attitude and resistance of something of their impressiveness. As Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Webster vote, so Locke and Rousseau think, for thousands; and so there were fountains all round Homer, Menu, Saadi, or Milton, from which they drew; friends, lovers, books, traditions, proverbs,—all perished—which, if seen, would go to reduce the wonder. Did the bard speak with authority? Did he feel himself overmatched by any companion? The appeal is to the consciousness of the writer. Is there at last in his breast a Delphi whereof to ask concerning any thought or thing, whether it be verily so, yea or nay? and to have answer, and to rely on that? All the debts which such a man could contract to other wit would never disturb his consciousness of originality; for the ministrations of books and of other minds are a whiff of smoke to that most private reality with which he has conversed.

It is easy to see that what is best written or done by genius in the world, was no man's work, but came by wide social labour, when a thousand wrought like one, sharing the same impulse. Our English Bible is a wonderful specimen of the strength and music of the English language. But it was not made by one man, or at one

time; but centuries and churches brought it to perfection. There never was a time when there was not some translation existing. The Liturgy, admired for its energy and pathos, is an anthology of the piety of ages and nations, a translation of the prayers and forms of the Catholic[1] church, — these collected, too, in long periods, from the prayers and meditations of every saint and sacred writer all over the world. Grotius makes the like remark in respect to the Lord's Prayer, that the single clauses of which it is composed were already in use in the time of Christ, in the Rabbinical[2] forms. He picked out the grains of gold. The nervous language of the Common Law, the impressive forms of our courts and the precision and substantial truth of the legal distinctions, are the contribution of all the sharp-sighted, strong-minded men who have lived in the countries where these laws govern. The translation of Plutarch gets its excellence by being translation on translation. There never was a time when there was none. All the truly idiomatic and national phrases are kept, and all others successfully picked out and thrown away. Something like the same process had gone on, long before, with the originals of these books. The world takes liberties with world-books. Vedas, Æsop's Fables, Pilpay, Arabian Nights, Cid, Iliad, Robin Hood, Scottish Minstrelsy, are not the works of single men. In the composition of such works the time thinks, the market thinks, the mason, the carpenter,

[1] Universal. [2] Belonging to the Rabbis or teachers of the Jews.

the merchant, the farmer, the fop, all think for us. Every book supplies its time with one good word; every municipal law, every trade, every folly of the day; and the generic catholic genius who is not afraid or ashamed to owe his originality to the originality of all, stands with the next age as the recorder and embodiment of his own.

We have to thank the researches of antiquaries, and the Shakespeare Society, for ascertaining the steps of the English drama, from the Mysteries celebrated in churches and by churchmen, and the final detachment from the church, and the completion of secular plays, from Ferrex and Porrex, and Gammer Gurton's Needle, down to the possession of the stage by the very pieces which Shakespeare altered, remodelled, and finally made his own. Elated with success and piqued by the growing interest of the problem, they have left no bookstall unsearched, no chest in a garret unopened, no file of old yellow accounts to decompose in damp and worms, so keen was the hope to discover whether the boy Shakespeare poached[1] or not, whether he held horses at the theatre door, whether he kept school, and why he left in his will only his second-best bed to Ann Hathaway, his wife.

There is somewhat touching in the madness with which the passing age mischooses the object on which all candles shine and all eyes are turned; the care with which it registers every trifle touching Queen Elizabeth and King

[1] Hunted or fished illegally.

James, and the Essexes, Leicesters, Burleighs, and Buckinghams; and lets pass without a single valuable note the founder of another dynasty, which alone will cause the Tudor dynasty to be remembered,—the man who carries the Saxon race in him by the inspiration which feeds him, and on whose thoughts the foremost people of the world are now for some ages to be nourished, and minds to receive this and not another bias. A popular player; —nobody suspected he was the poet of the human race; and the secret was kept as faithfully from poets and intellectual men as from courtiers and frivolous people. Bacon, who took the inventory of the human understanding for his times, never mentioned his name. Ben Jonson, though we have strained his few words of regard and panegyric, had no suspicion of the elastic fame whose first vibrations he was attempting. He no doubt thought the praise he has conceded to him generous, and esteemed himself, out of all question, the better poet of the two.

If it need wit to know wit, according to the proverb, Shakespeare's time should be capable of recognizing it. Sir Henry Wotton was born four years after Shakespeare, and died twenty-three years after him; and I find, among his correspondents and acquaintances, the following persons: Theodore Beza, Isaac Casaubon, Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, Lord Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, John Milton, Sir Henry Vane, Isaac Walton, Dr. Donne, Abraham Cowley, Bellarmine, Charles Cotton, John Pym, John Hales, Kepler, Vieta, Albericus Gentilis, Paul Sarpi, Arminius; with all of whom exists some token of his

having communicated, without enumerating many others whom doubtless he saw, — Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson, Beaumont, Massinger, the two Herberts, Marlowe, Chapman, and the rest. Since the constellation of great men who appeared in Greece in the time of Pericles, there was never any such society; — yet their genius failed them to find out the best head in the universe. Our poet's mask was impenetrable. You cannot see the mountain near. It took a century to make it suspected; and not until two centuries had passed, after his death, did any criticism which we think adequate begin to appear. It was not possible to write the history of Shakespeare till now; for he is the father of German literature: it was with the introduction of Shakespeare into German, by Lessing, and the translation of his works by Wieland and Schlegel, that the rapid burst of German literature was most intimately connected. It was not until the nineteenth century, whose speculative genius is a sort of living Hamlet, that the tragedy of Hamlet could find such wondering readers. Now, literature, philosophy, and thought, are Shakespearized. His mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see. Our ears are educated to music by his rhythm. Coleridge and Goethe are the only critics who have expressed our convictions with any adequate fidelity: but there is in all cultivated minds a silent appreciation of his superlative power and beauty, which, like Christianity, qualifies the period.

The Shakespeare Society have inquired in all directions, advertised the missing facts, offered money for any infor-

mation that will lead to proof, — and with what result? Beside some important illustration of the English stage, to which I have adverted, they have gleaned a few facts touching the property, and dealings in regard to property, of the poet. It appears that from year to year he owned a larger share in the Blackfriars' Theatre : its wardrobe and other appurtenances were his : that he bought an estate in his native village with his earnings as writer and shareholder ; that he lived in the best house in Stratford ; was entrusted by his neighbours with their commissions in London, as of borrowing money, and the like ; that he was a veritable farmer. About the time when he was writing Macbeth,[1] he sues Philip Rogers, in the borough-court of Stratford, for thirty-five shillings, ten pence, for corn delivered to him at different times ; and in all respects appears as a good husband, with no reputation for eccentricity or excess. He was a good-natured sort of a man, an actor and shareholder in the theatre, not in any striking manner distinguished from other actors and managers. I admit the importance of this information. It was well worth the pains that have been taken to procure it.

But whatever scraps of information concerning his condition these researches may have rescued, they can shed no light upon that infinite invention which is the concealed magnet of his attraction for us. We are very clumsy writers of history. We tell the chronicle of parentage, birth, birth-place, schooling, school-mates, earning of money, marriage, publication of books, celebrity,

[1] 1605–1606.

death; and when we have come to an end of this gossip, no ray of relation appears between it and the goddess-born; and it seems as if, had we dipped at random into the "Modern Plutarch," and read any other life there, it would have fitted the poems as well. It is the essence of poetry to spring, like the rainbow daughter of Wonder,[1] from the invisible, to abolish the past and refuse all history. Malone, Warburton, Dyce, and Collier, have wasted their oil. The famed theatres, Covent Garden, Drury Lane, the Park and Tremont have vainly assisted. Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean, and Macready dedicate their lives to this genius; him they crown, elucidate, obey and express. The genius knows them not. The recitation begins; one golden word leaps out immortal from all this painted pedantry and sweetly torments us with invitations to its own inaccessible homes. I remember I went once to see the Hamlet of a famed performer, the pride of the English stage; and all I then heard and all I now remember of the tragedian was that in which the tragedian had no part; simply Hamlet's question to the ghost:—

> "What may this mean,
> That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
> Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon?"

That imagination which dilates the closet he writes in to the world's dimension, crowds it with agents in rank and order, as quickly reduces the big reality to be the glimpses of the moon. These tricks of his magic spoil

[1] Iris.

for us the illusions of the green-room.[1] Can any biography shed light on the localities into which the Midsummer Night's Dream admits me? Did Shakespeare confide to any notary or parish recorder, sacristan, or surrogate in Stratford, the genesis of that delicate creation? The forest of Arden, the nimble air of Scone Castle, the moonlight of Portia's villa, "the antres vast and desarts idle" of Othello's captivity, — where is the third cousin, or grand-nephew, the chancellor's file of accounts, or private letter, that has kept one word of those transcendent secrets? In fine, in this drama, as in all great works of art, — in the Cyclopæan[2] architecture of Egypt and India, in the Phidian sculpture, the Gothic minsters, the Italian painting, the Ballads of Spain and Scotland, — the Genius draws up the ladder after him, when the creative age goes up to heaven, and gives way to a new age, which sees the works and asks in vain for a history.

Shakespeare is the only biographer of Shakespeare; and even he can tell nothing, except to the Shakespeare in us, that is, to our most apprehensive and sympathetic hour. He cannot step from off his tripod and give us anecdotes of his inspirations. Read the antique documents extricated, analysed, and compared by the assiduous Dyce and Collier, and now read one of these skyey sentences, — aerolites,[3] — which seem to have fallen out of heaven,

[1] The room in which the actors wait before coming on the stage.

[2] Gigantic.

[3] Masses of matter falling to the earth out of celestial space; fragments of a meteor.

and which not your experience but the man within the breast has accepted as words of fate, and tell me if they match; if the former account in any manner for the latter; or which gives the most historical insight into the man.

Hence, though our external history is so meagre, yet, with Shakespeare for biographer, instead of Aubrey and Rowe, we have really the information which is material; that which describes character and fortune, that which, if we were about to meet the man and deal with him, would most import[1] us to know. We have his recorded convictions on those questions which knock for answer at every heart, — on life and death, on love, on wealth and poverty, on the prizes of life and the ways whereby we come at them; on the characters of men, and the influences, occult and open, which affect their fortunes; and on those mysterious and demoniacal powers which defy our science and which yet interweave their malice and their gift in our brightest hours. Who ever read the volume of the Sonnets without finding that the poet had there revealed, under masks that are no masks to the intelligent, the lore of friendship and of love; the confusion of sentiments in the most susceptible, and, at the same time, the most intellectual of men? What trait of his private mind has he hidden in his dramas? One can discern, in his ample pictures of the gentleman and the king, what forms and humanities pleased him; his delight in troops of friends, in large hospitality, in cheerful giving. Let Timon, let Warwick, let Antonio the merchant answer for his great

[1] Concern.

heart. So far from Shakespeare's being the least known, he is the one person, in all modern history, known to us. What point of morals, of manners, of economy, of philosophy, of religion, of taste, of the conduct of life, has he not settled? What mystery has he not signified his knowledge of? What office, or function, or district of man's work has he not remembered? What king has he not taught state, as Talma taught Napoleon? What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy? What lover has he not outloved? What sage has he not outseen? What gentleman has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behaviour?

Some able and appreciating critics think no criticism on Shakespeare valuable that does not rest purely on the dramatic merit; that he is falsely judged as poet and philosopher. I think as highly as these critics of his dramatic merit, but still think it secondary. He was a full man, who liked to talk; a brain exhaling thoughts and images, which, seeking vent, found the drama next at hand. Had he been less, we should have had to consider how well he filled his place, how good a dramatist he was, — and he is the best in the world. But it turns out that what he has to say is of that[1] weight as to withdraw some attention from the vehicle; and he is like some saint whose history is to be rendered into all languages, into verse and prose, into songs and pictures, and cut up into proverbs; so that the occasion which gave the saint's meaning the form of a conversation, or

[1] Such.

of a prayer, or of a code of laws, is immaterial compared with the universality of its application. So it fares with the wise Shakespeare and his book of life. He wrote the airs for all our modern music: he wrote the text of modern life; the text of manners: he drew the man of England and Europe; the father of the man in America; he drew the man, and described the day, and what is done in it: he read the hearts of men and women, their probity, and their second thought and wiles; the wiles of innocence, and the transitions by which virtues and vices slide into their contraries: he could divide the mother's part from the father's part in the face of the child, or draw the fine demarcations of freedom and of fate: he knew the laws of repression which make the police of nature: and all the sweets and all the terrors of human lot lay in his mind as truly but as softly as the landscape lies on the eye. And the importance of this wisdom of life sinks the form, as of Drama or Epic, out of notice. 'Tis like making a question concerning the paper on which a king's message is written.

Shakespeare is as much out of the category of eminent authors, as he is out of the crowd. He is inconceivably wise; the others, conceivably. A good reader can, in a sort, nestle into Plato's brain and think from thence; but not into Shakespeare's. We are still out of doors. For executive faculty, for creation, Shakespeare is unique. No man can imagine it better. He was the farthest reach of subtlety[1] compatible with an individual self, —

[1] Rare, ethereal, and therefore pervasive.

the subtilest of authors, and only just within the possibility of authorship. With this wisdom of life is the equal endowment of imaginative and of lyric power. He clothed the creatures of his legend with form and sentiments as if they were people who had lived under his roof; and few real men have left such distinct characters as these fictions. And they spoke in language as sweet as it was fit. Yet his talents never seduced him into an ostentation, nor did he harp on one string. An omnipresent humanity co-ordinates all his faculties. Give a man of talents a story to tell, and his partiality will presently appear. He has certain observations, opinions, topics, which have some accidental prominence, and which he disposes all to exhibit. He crams this part and starves that other part, consulting not the fitness of the thing, but his fitness and strength. But Shakespeare has no peculiarity, no importunate topic; but all is duly given; no veins, no curiosities; no cow-painter, no bird-fancier, no mannerist is he: he has no discoverable egotism: the great he tells greatly; the small subordinately. He is wise without emphasis or assertion; he is strong, as nature is strong, who lifts the land into mountain slopes without effort and by the same rule as she floats a bubble in the air, and likes as well to do the one as the other. This makes that equality of power in farce, tragedy, narrative, and love-songs; a merit so incessant that each reader is incredulous of the perception of other readers.[1]

[1] *I.e.* feels as if he alone had discovered these excellences.

This power of expression, or of transferring the inmost truth of things into music and verse, makes him the type of the poet and has added a new problem to metaphysics.[1] This is that which throws him into natural history, as a main production of the globe, and as announcing new eras and ameliorations. Things were mirrored in his poetry without loss or blur: he could paint the fine with precision, the great with compass, the tragic and the comic indifferently and without any distortion or favour. He carried his powerful execution into minute details, to a hair point; finishes an eyelash or a dimple as firmly as he draws a mountain; and yet these, like nature's, will bear the scrutiny of the solar microscope.

In short, he is the chief example to prove that more or less of production, more or fewer pictures, is a thing indifferent. He had the power to make one picture. Daguerre learned how to let one flower etch its image on his plate of iodine, and then proceeds at leisure to etch a million. There are always objects; but there was never representation. Here is perfect representation, at last; and now let the world of figures sit for their portraits. No recipe can be given for the making of a Shakespeare; but the possibility of the translation of things into song is demonstrated.

His lyric power lies in the genius of the piece.[2] The Sonnets, though their excellence is lost in the splendour

[1] *I.e.* to account for such a universal mind.

[2] *I.e.* the pervading spirit of each lyric.

of the dramas, are as inimitable as they; and it is not a merit of lines, but a total merit of the piece; like the tone of voice of some incomparable person, so is this a speech of poetic beings, and any clause as unproducible now as a whole poem.

Though the speeches in the plays, and single lines, have a beauty which tempts the ear to pause on them for their euphuism,[1] yet the sentence is so loaded with meaning and so linked with its foregoers and followers, that the logician is satisfied. His means are as admirable as his ends; every subordinate invention, by which he helps himself to connect some irreconcilable opposites, is a poem too. He is not reduced to dismount and walk because his horses are running off with him in some distant direction: he always rides.

The finest poetry was first experience; but the thought has suffered a transformation since it was an experience. Cultivated men often attain a good degree of skill in writing verses; but it is easy to read, through their poems, their personal history: any one acquainted with the parties can name every figure; this is Andrew and that is Rachel. The sense thus remains prosaic. It is a caterpillar with wings, and not yet a butterfly. In the poet's mind the fact has gone quite over into the new element of thought, and has lost all that is exuvial.[2] This generosity abides with Shakespeare. We say, from the truth and

[1] Emerson means euphony, agreeable sound. Cf. note.

[2] Like the cast-off skin of a snake, or the covering of an insect.

closeness of his pictures, that he knows the lesson by heart. Yet there is not a trace of egotism.

One more royal trait properly belongs to the poet. I mean his cheerfulness, without which no man can be a poet,—for beauty is his aim. He loves virtue, not for its obligation but for its grace: he delights in the world, in man, in woman, for the lovely light that sparkles from them. Beauty, the spirit of joy and hilarity, he sheds over the universe. Epicurus relates that poetry hath such charms that a lover might forsake his mistress to partake of them. And the true bards have been noted for their firm and cheerful temper. Homer lies in sunshine; Chaucer is glad and erect; and Saadi says, "It was rumoured abroad that I was penitent; but what had I to do with repentance?" Not less sovereign and cheerful, — much more sovereign and cheerful, is the tone of Shakespeare. His name suggests joy and emancipation to the heart of men. If he should appear in any company of human souls, who would not march in his troop? He touches nothing that does not borrow health and longevity from his festal style.

And now, how stands the account of man with this bard and benefactor, when, in solitude, shutting our ears to the reverberations of his fame, we seek to strike the balance? Solitude has austere lessons; it can teach us to spare both heroes and poets; and it weighs Shakespeare also, and finds him to share the halfness and imperfection of humanity.

Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Chaucer, saw the splendour of meaning that plays over the visible world; knew that

a tree had another use than for apples, and corn another than for meal, and the ball of the earth, than for tillage and roads: that these things bore a second and finer harvest to the mind, being emblems of its thoughts, and conveying in all their natural history a certain mute commentary on human life. Shakespeare employed them as colours to compose his picture. He rested in their beauty; and never took the step which seemed inevitable to such genius, namely to explore the virtue which resides in these symbols and imparts this power: — what is that which they themselves say [1]? He converted the elements which waited on his command, into entertainments. He was master of the revels to mankind. Is it not as if one should have, through majestic powers of science, the comets given into his hand, or the planets and their moons, and should draw them from their orbits to glare with the municipal fireworks on a holiday night, and advertise in all towns, "Very superior pyrotechny this evening"? Are the agents of nature, and the power to understand them, worth no more than a street serenade, or the breath of a cigar? One remembers again the trumpet-text in the Koran, — "The heavens and the earth and all that is between them, think ye we have created them in jest?" As long as the question is of talent and mental power, the world of men has not his equal to show. But when the question is, to life and its materials and its auxiliaries, how does he profit me? What does it signify? It is but a Twelfth Night, or Midsummer Night's

[1] This seems contradictory to page 204, ll. 6–10, 23–25.

Dream, or Winter Evening's Tale: what signifies another picture more or less? The Egyptian verdict of the Shakespeare Societies comes to mind; that he was a jovial actor and manager. I can not marry this fact to his verse. Other admirable men have led lives in some sort of keeping with their thought; but this man, in wide contrast. Had he been less, had he reached only the common measure of great authors, of Bacon, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, we might leave the fact in the twilight of human fate: but that this man of men, he who gave to the science of mind a new and larger subject than had ever existed, and planted the standard of humanity some furlongs forward into Chaos, — that he should not be wise for himself; — it must even go into the world's history that the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement.

Well, other men, priest and prophet, Israelite, German and Swede, beheld the same objects: they also saw through them that which was contained. And to what purpose? The beauty straightway vanished; they read commandments, all-excluding mountainous duty; an obligation, a sadness, as of piled mountains, fell on them, and life became ghastly, joyless, a pilgrim's progress, a probation, beleaguered round with doleful histories of Adam's fall and curse behind us; with doomsdays and purgatorial and penal fires before us; and the heart of the seer and the heart of the listener sank in them.

It must be conceded that these are half-views of half-men. The world still wants its poet-priest, a reconciler,

who shall not trifle, with Shakespeare the player, nor shall grope in graves, with Swedenborg the mourner; but who shall see, speak, and act, with equal inspiration.[1] For knowledge will brighten the sunshine; right is more beautiful than private affection; and love is compatible with universal wisdom.

[1] One only, among all who have walked the earth, has reached this level.

GIFTS

Gifts of one who loved me, —
'Twas high time they came;
When he ceased to love me,
Time they stopped for shame.

ANALYSIS

Theme: The best way to make and to receive gifts.

Structure: A. *Introduction.* Gifts are of love and not of debt, because we take pleasure in giving: but the difficulty lies in choosing what to give.

B. *Discussion.* I. Flowers and fruits are always fit, because they seem like Nature's gifts to us. II. The necessities of men suggest lines for giving. III. Gifts which represent our own life and work are better than rings or jewels. IV. Substantial benefits must be offered with care, lest we seem to bestow favours. Patronage begets either a slavish gladness or an offended pride. Gratitude expected is destroyed. Debtors are resentful. V. Gifts come short of our good will toward those who are truly magnanimous. Their service to us exceeds our power to give to them. Their gratitude makes us ashamed.

C. *Conclusion.* Yet, after all, love is the king of giving and can make his own rules. In the long run the bond that unites kindred hearts is the only thing of real value. To love is giving and receiving.

GIFTS

It is said that the world is in a state of bankruptcy; that the world owes the world more than the world can pay, and ought to go into chancery[1] and be sold. I do not think this general insolvency, which involves in some sort all the population, to be the reason of the difficulty experienced at Christmas and New Year and other times, in bestowing gifts; since it is always so pleasant to be generous, though very vexatious to pay debts. But the impediment lies in the choosing. If at any time it comes into my head that a present is due from me to somebody, I am puzzled what to give, until the opportunity is gone. Flowers and fruits are always fit presents; flowers, because they are a proud assertion that a ray of beauty outvalues all the utilities of the world. These gay natures contrast with the somewhat stern countenance of ordinary nature: they are like music heard out of a workhouse. Nature does not cocker[2] us; we are children, not pets; she is not fond; everything is dealt to us without fear or favour, after severe universal laws. Yet these delicate flowers look like the frolic and interference of love and beauty. Men use to tell us that we love flattery even though we are not deceived by it, because it shows that we are of importance enough to be courted. Something like that pleasure, the flowers give us: what am I to whom these

[1] A court of equity. [2] Spoil by indulgence.

sweet hints are addressed? Fruits are acceptable gifts, because they are the flower of commodities, and admit of fantastic values being attached to them. If a man should send to me to come a hundred miles to visit him and should set before me a basket of fine summer-fruit, I should think there was some proportion between the labour and the reward.

For common gifts, necessity makes pertinences[1] and beauty every day, and one is glad when an imperative leaves him no option; since if the man at the door have no shoes, you have not to consider whether you could procure him a paint-box. And as it is always pleasing to see a man eat bread, or drink water, in the house or out of doors, so it is always a great satisfaction to supply these first wants. Necessity does everything well. In our condition of universal dependence it seems heroic to let the petitioner be the judge of his necessity, and to give all that is asked, though at great inconvenience. If it be a fantastic desire, it is better to leave to others the office of punishing him. I can think of many parts I should prefer playing to that of the Furies. Next to things of necessity, the rule for a gift, which one of my friends prescribed, is that we might convey to some person that which properly belonged to his character, and was easily associated with him in thought. But our tokens of compliment and love are for the most part barbarous. Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only

[1] Fitness.

gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn; the miner, a gem; the sailor, coral and shells; the painter, his picture; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing. This is right and pleasing, for it restores society in so far to the primary basis, when a man's biography is conveyed in his gift, and every man's wealth is an index of his merit. But it is a cold lifeless business when you go to the shop to buy me something which does not represent your life and talent, but a goldsmith's. This is fit for kings, and rich men who represents kings, and a false state of property, to make presents of gold and silver stuffs, as a kind of symbolical sin-offering, or payment of blackmail.

The law of benefits is a difficult channel, which requires careful sailing, or rude boats. It is not the office of a man to receive gifts. How dare you give them? We wish to be self-sustained. We do not quite forgive a giver. The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being bitten. We can receive anything from love, for that is a way of receiving it from ourselves; but not from any one who assumes to bestow. We sometimes hate the meat which we eat, because there seems something of degrading dependence in living by it: —

> "Brother, if Jove to thee a present make,
> Take heed that from his hands thou nothing take."

We ask the whole. Nothing less will content us. We arraign society if it do not give us, besides earth and

fire and water, opportunity, love, reverence, and objects of veneration.

He is a good man who can receive a gift well. We are either glad or sorry at a gift, and both emotions are unbecoming. Some violence I think is done, some degradation borne, when I rejoice or grieve at a gift. I am sorry when my independence is invaded, or when a gift comes from such as do not know my spirit, and so the act is not supported; and if the gift pleases me overmuch, then I should be ashamed that the donor should read my heart, and see that I love his commodity, and not him. The gift, to be true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him. When the waters are at level, then my goods pass to him, and his to me. All his are mine, all mine his. I say to him, How can you give me this pot of oil or this flagon of wine when all your oil and wine is mine, which belief of mine this gift seems to deny? Hence the fitness of beautiful, not useful things, for gifts. This giving is flat usurpation, and therefore when the beneficiary is ungrateful, as all beneficiaries hate all Timons, not at all considering the value of the gift but looking back to the greater store it was taken from, — I rather sympathize with the beneficiary than with the anger of my lord Timon. For the expectation of gratitude is mean, and is continually punished by the total insensibility of the obliged person. It is a great happiness to get off without injury and heart-burning from one who has had the ill-luck to be served by you. It is a very onerous

business, this of being served, and the debtor naturally wishes to give you a slap. A golden text for these gentlemen is that which I so admire in the Buddhist, who never thanks, and who says, "Do not flatter your benefactors."

The reason of these discords I conceive to be that there is no commensurability between a man and any gift. You cannot give anything to a magnanimous person. After you have served him he at once puts you in debt by his magnanimity. The service a man renders his friend is trivial and selfish compared with the service he knows his friend stood in readiness to yield him, alike before he had begun to serve his friend, and now also. Compared with that good-will I bear my friend, the benefit it is in my power to render him seems small. Besides, our action on each other, good as well as evil, is so incidental and at random that we can seldom hear the acknowledgments of any person who would thank us for a benefit, without some shame and humiliation. We can rarely strike a direct stroke, but must be content with an oblique one; we seldom have the satisfaction of yielding a direct benefit which is directly received. But rectitude scatters favours on every side without knowing it, and receives with wonder the thanks of all people.

I fear to breathe any treason against the majesty of love, which is the genius and god of gifts, and to whom we must not affect to prescribe. Let him give kingdoms or flower-leaves indifferently. There are persons from

whom we always expect fairy-tokens; let us not cease to expect them. This is prerogative, and not to be limited by our municipal rules. For the rest, I like to see that we cannot be bought and sold. The best of hospitality and of generosity is also not in the will, but in fate. I find that I am not much to you; you do not need me; you do not feel me; then am I thrust out of doors, though you proffer me house and lands. No services are of any value, but only likeness. When I have attempted to join myself to others by services, it proved an intellectual trick, — no more. They eat your service like apples, and leave you out. But love them, and they feel you and delight in you all the time.

NOTES

The heavy marginal figures stand for page, and the lighter ones for line.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

33 : 1. Recommencement of our literary year. Emerson was invited in 1837 to deliver the annual oration before the Harvard chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa, a society composed of honour-men from various American colleges. The college "commencement," at that time, was held in the autumn or late summer, at the beginning of the college year. The audience to which Emerson spoke crowded the hall, and contained many distinguished men. The oration excited general attention, and was warmly admired and as warmly condemned. Oliver Wendell Holmes called it "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." But it is, in fact, as much a claim for originality and liberty in every other country as in America. So far from teaching a new doctrine, it presents the philosophy of the German idealists, Hegel and Fichte and Schelling and others, which Coleridge had already made familiar to English readers, in a form which certainly bears traces of the influence of Bacon and Carlyle.

33 : 5. The ancient Greeks. The Grecian games (Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian) were, for the most part, public contests in athletic sports, running, boxing, wrestling, throwing the discus, and so on. They were held regularly, at certain intervals of years, and were connected with religious ceremonies. At some of them there were musical contests, and in later times poems and histories were recited for a prize. The Festivals of the Panathenæa

and the Dionysia at Athens included the singing of odes and the presentation of tragedies and comedies.

33 : 6. **Troubadours.** Poets and minstrels of southern France in the Middle Ages. They wandered from court to court, singing of love and war. Sometimes a prince or princess would hold a contest for these singers, gathered from different provinces; and this was called a "parliament."

34 : 7. **The pole-star.** The name given to that star which is nearest to the northern point of the invisible axis around which the heavens seem to turn. This star is now Polaris, which is about 1½ degrees from the polar point. It will, in course of time, move a little nearer to the pole, and then farther away. After about twelve thousand years the star Vega, one of the brightest in the constellation Lyra, will be the pole-star. Emerson means that poetry will be the central star of men's thoughts; and he chooses this figure because the Lyre, or Harp, is the emblem of the poet.

35 : 7. **The members.** The figure of the body and its members is used by St. Paul in 1 *Corinthians* xii. 14–21. Emerson's vivid poetic imagination expresses itself in this metaphor of the members strutting about separately. He is fond of using concrete images, and much prefers metaphor to simile. Cf. p. 35, l. 19, "the priest becomes a form," etc.; p. 38, l. 8, "seal and print"; p. 45, l. 23, "pearls and rubies to his discourse."

36 : 6. **Two handles: beware of the wrong one.** A maxim of Epictetus, a Stoic philosopher of the first century, preserved by Arrian in a book called *Encheiridion.*

36 : 12. **Every day, the sun.** The verb is omitted. This is a favourite construction with Emerson, who is sparing in his use of words and likes to condense.

36 : 15. **Beholding and beholden.** An illustration of Emerson's odd use of words. "Behold" originally meant to hold by, keep, retain. This sense is now obsolete, and the word means to hold in view, to see with attention. The participle "beholden," however,

follows the older sense, and means bound, held by obligation. Emerson uses "beholding" in the modern sense, of seeing; and "beholden" in the older sense, of being bound by ties of duty.

36 : 25. **Nature . . . mind.** Here begins the unfolding of Emerson's favourite doctrine that nature and the human mind correspond, and that in the relation between them the mind imposes its own laws and ideas on nature, instead of being evolved out of nature, so that the form of things as we see them is really of spiritual origin, coming from within us, and in the end we can look forward (as he says on page 38) "to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator." This, of course, is idealism; the doctrine that ideas and mental laws are the real things, and material objects are temporary forms.

38 : 5. **A becoming creator.** For example, the knowledge of astronomy brings the stars for us into an orderly universe obedient to gravitation and other laws, all of which, so far as we know them, are the product of thought, of mental power. Thus "the soul is the seal, and nature is the print."

38 : 13. **Know thyself.** A saying of Chilon, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, who lived in the sixth century B.C.

39 : 16. **Each generation for the next succeeding.** To-day men go farther, and say that each generation must write the books for itself.

40 : 7. **Cicero** (106–43 B.C.). A Roman statesman, orator, and author.

40 : 7. **Locke** (1632–1704). An English philosopher.

40 : 8. **Bacon** (1561–1626). An English judge and essayist. All three of these men made good use of the ancient wisdom which they found in libraries; and other "young men in libraries" may well follow their example.

40 : 14. **Third Estate.** In some countries, for example France, the nation has been politically divided into three estates or classes, nobility, clergy, and the common people. The last is called "the third estate."

42 : 15. **Chaucer** (1340–1400). Called "the morning star of English poetry"; author of the *Canterbury Tales.*

42 : 15. **Marvell** (1621–1678). One of Emerson's favourite poets; author of *The Garden, The Bermudas, Ode on Cromwell.*

42 : 15. **Dryden** (1631–1700). A dramatist and satiric poet; author of *Absalom and Achitophel, The Hind and the Panther, Alexander's Feast,* etc. The "modern joy" which Emerson finds in these old poets refutes what he says a little before: "the books of an older period will not fit this."

43 : 10. **Wealth of the Indies.** A Spanish proverb.

43 : 19. **Plato** (429–348 B.C.). The greatest of Greek idealists.

43 : 19. **Shakespeare** (1564–1616). The greatest English dramatic poet.

44 : 12. **A pen-knife for an axe.** This should be "a pen-knife for the work of an axe."

45 : 15. **The dumb abyss.** Does this refer to the world within, or without?

46 : 2. **A mulberry leaf . . . satin.** Satin is made from the cocoon of the silkworm, which feeds on the leaves of the mulberry.

46 : 16. **The corruptible . . . incorruption.** 1 *Cor.* xv. 54.

47 : 9. **Savoyards.** The inhabitants of a small country in the Western Alps, south of Geneva. It is now a part of France. The making of wooden toys is one of the industries of the country, and at one time the fir forests around certain villages were much reduced by careless cutting. The damage has now been largely repaired by scientific forestry.

47 : 13. **Authors . . . replenish their stock.** Washington Irving published *Astoria* in 1836, *The Rocky Mountains* in 1837. Longfellow published *Outre-Mer* in 1835. N. P. Willis published sketches of travel in Europe aud the East in 1835 and 1836. To these and other instances Emerson not very kindly alluded.

48 : 12. **Newton** (1642–1727). Sir Isaac Newton, English man of science, discoverer of the law of gravitation.

49 : 13. **Druids.** Priests of the ancient Celtic people of Gaul

and Britain. Their religion was full of superstitious rites and wild ceremonies.

49 : 13. **Berserkers.** Berserk (bearsark) was a name given to a mythological hero of the Norsemen, because he went into battle without armour, clad in a shirt of bearskin. In later times the name was given to those who went crazy in fighting, and were dangerous to friends as well as enemies. It is something like the Oriental phrase of "running amuck."

49 : 14. **Alfred** (849–901), King of the West Saxons, a patron of learning and religion, one of the wisest and greatest of English kings.

50 : 3. **Flamsteed.** John Flamsteed (1646–1719), English astronomer royal; his observations at Greenwich are the beginning of modern practical astronomy.

50 : 3. **Herschel.** Sir William Herschel (1738–1822), private astronomer to George III. of England, discovered the planet Uranus, 145 new double stars, the existence of systems beyond our own, and did more than any other man to make the immensity of the stellar universe known to men.

50 : 23. **Hostility . . . to educated society.** Here we see a trace of Emerson's sensitiveness to the opposition and criticism which were called out by his radical views and independent action. The conservatives distrusted him, and the academic authorities, at first, were rather scornful towards him. He often speaks indirectly in the tone of a martyr for liberty. But his martyrdom was mild and profitable.

52 : 18. **Privatest, secretest.** This use of the superlative in words which are usually compared with "most" is a trick of Carlyle's, from whom Emerson doubtless caught it.

54 : 8. **The head of the table.** The idea that the great man makes the seat which he occupies the seat of honour, is found in *Don Quixote*, where a gentleman who has offered the head of the table to a farmer, out of courtesy, is vexed by the persistent refusal of the rustic to take it, and cries out, "Sit down, clodpole;

for let me sit wherever I will, that will still be the upper end." As a Scotch saying it is usually attributed to the head of the clan Macdonald, whose chiefs of old were kings of the Gaels.

54 : 9. **Linnæus.** Karl von Linné (1707–1778), a Swede, was the founder of the systematic classification of plants and animals, and is regarded as one of the greatest of botanists, though his method of nomenclature is no longer used.

54 : 10. **Davy.** Sir Humphry Davy (1778–1829), an English natural philosopher, the inventor of the safety-lamp used by miners.

54 : 11. **Cuvier.** Georges, Baron de Cuvier (1769–1832), a French naturalist, founder of the science of comparative anatomy, one of the first to study the fossils of extinct animals.

54 : 14. **Follow the moon.** The daily rising of the waters of the ocean, which is called the tide, is caused by the attraction of gravitation exerted by the sun and the moon, but chiefly the moon, because it is so much nearer to the earth than the sun.

54 : 23. **Men are become of no account.** Here Emerson diverges from Carlyle, who holds that the hero is, and ought to be, the only person who counts. The multitude are of no consequence. But Emerson holds to ideal democracy, and believes that genius is the right of every man, and that the private person ought to count. He protests against the present state of hero-worship as a wrong done by man to himself.

55 : 19. **"Spoils . . . of office."** The theory that the right of appointment to minor as well as major offices in the government service should be used by a victorious political party to reward its followers and strengthen its power, came into American politics through the states of New York and Pennsylvania, with the victories of the Republican party early in the nineteenth century. The use of the word "spoils" to describe these appointments probably originated in a speech of Senator Marcy, in the United States Senate, 1832, "the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy."

56 : 17. **Etna . . . Vesuvius.** Two active volcanoes, the former on the island of Sicily, the latter on the mainland near

Naples. There is an undoubted connection between them, but their great eruptions do not occur at the same time.

56 : 28. **Classic . . . Romantic . . . Reflective.** The Classic age is marked by attention to rule and severity of form; the Romantic, by freedom of passion and luxuriance of ornament; the Reflective, by universal criticism and intellectual curiosity.

57 : 15. **"Sicklied o'er,"** etc. *Hamlet*, iii. 1.

58 : 29. **The meal in the firkin,** etc. Note here how Emerson shows his love of the plain fact, the concrete homely illustration.

59 : 14. **Goldsmith** (1728–1774). An Irish writer, best known by his poem, *The Deserted Village*, and his little novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield.* In form he followed to some extent the artificial manner of the writers of the Age of Queen Anne; but in spirit he was much more simple and natural, and helped to lead the way to the romantic and democratic period of English literature.

59 : 14. **Burns** (1759–1796). The greatest lyrical poet of Scotland, whose familiar songs, in lowland Scotch dialect, express the simple feelings of humanity with great beauty. His best descriptive pieces, *Tam O'Shanter*, and *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, deal with peasant life.

59 : 15. **Cowper** (1731–1800). An English reflective and descriptive poet, whose verse contains some excellent observations of nature at first hand, and much simple and humane sentiment, sympathy with the poor, and religious feeling.

59 : 15. **Goethe** (1749–1832). The greatest of German writers famous for the breadth of his thought, the philosophical depth of his genius, and the freedom with which he wrote in various styles, classical and romantic. His most celebrated poem is *Faust.* In prose, *Wilhelm Meister* is one of his greatest works.

59 : 15. **Wordsworth** (1770–1850). An English lyrical and reflective poet, the leader of the return to simplicity in diction, and the best exponent of the life of the plain people. His *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) mark the beginning of a new epoch in English poetry.

59 : 16. **Carlyle** (1795–1881). A Scotch essayist, lecturer, and

historian, a great friend of Emerson. Carlyle wrote with fierceness and freedom, attacking the shams of conventional society, and using a wild, grotesque style of his own. But he was not at all democratic in his spirit.

59 : 18. **Pope** (1688–1744). An English poet, excelling chiefly in reflective and satirical verse, the most famous writer of the Age of Queen Anne, master of a polished, pointed, intellectual style.

59 : 18. **Johnson** (1709–1784). An English scholar and essayist, the literary dictator of his time, and the great example of that balanced, dignified, long-worded style which is called Johnsonian.

59 : 18. **Gibbon** (1737–1794). An English historical writer whose life was almost entirely given to the composition of his great work on *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, written in the Johnsonian style.

Pope, Johnson, and Gibbon represent the classical influence in English literature: elegant, formal, clear, restrained, artificial. Goldsmith, Burns, and Cowper were poets of the transition, when the old forms were beginning to break up under the influence of democracy and the romantic spirit. Wordsworth, Goethe, and Carlyle represent modern literature as Emerson read it. There is no great resemblance among the three, but they all write freely and express the new ideas in new ways.

59 : 29. **Swedenborg** (1688–1772). A Swedish philosopher and mystic, at first devoted to natural science, and then given up to poetic visions and interpretations of religion. His theology explained the Bible in a symbolic or spiritual sense, and he claimed to be in association with the inhabitants of the unseen world, just as if he had died and become one of them. He founded the Church of the New Jerusalem. Emerson greatly admired his writings and often quoted him.

60 : 21. **Pestalozzi** (1746–1827). A Swiss teacher and reformer of education. He has had great influence on modern teaching, and in particular, the kindergarten idea was developed by his pupil Fröbel. Most of his practical experiments failed; therefore Emer-

son calls him "the melancholy Pestalozzi." But his thoughts and principles lived.

62 : 20. **Inspires all men.** Emerson here closes with his favourite idea of the Universal Reason, and its unity manifested through the individuality of every man.

SELF-RELIANCE

63 : 8. **Beaumont and Fletcher.** Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, dramatists of the Elizabethan Age, who wrote much in partnership. They were among the greatest of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

63 : 9. **Bantling on the rocks.** An allusion to Romulus and Remus, who, according to the fable, were cast out in infancy, and nourished by a she-wolf. They became the founders of Rome.

65 : 5. **An eminent painter.** Perhaps Washington Allston, one of the early American painters, who was living at this time near Emerson, and who wrote some good original verse.

65 : 13. **Milton.** John Milton (1608–1674), the most learned of English poets, author of *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes*, etc. He never set traditions at naught.

68 : 12. **The pit in the playhouse.** In early English theatres the floor of the house was known as the pit. The name is still given to that part of the floor which lies behind the orchestra stalls. It contains the cheaper seats, and the people who occupy the pit are likely to express their approval or dislike of the play with great freedom and in noisy ways. It corresponds to what we call "the gallery" in American theatres.

68 : 24. **Lethe.** A river in the underworld (according to Greek mythology), by drinking of which the souls of the dead were made to forget their earthly life.

70 : 1. **I will live then from the Devil.** Here we see Emerson's doctrine carried to an extreme.

70 : 15. **Barbadoes.** An island in the Atlantic, off the coast of

North America, belonging to Great Britain. The negroes, forming the chief part of the population, were emancipated from slavery in 1834. This criticism of the so-called Abolitionists illustrates Emerson's attitude toward political movements and parties in the United States. Cf. *Introduction*, page 23.

71 : 10. **To whom I am bought and sold.** This ungrammatical sentence illustrates Emerson's occasional carelessness in the use of a striking phrase.

73 : 9. **Do I not know beforehand,** etc. Why is not this equally true of Emerson's defence of self-reliance? May not the preacher honestly and fairly show the reasons which have led him to take his position?

75 : 17. **Clothe God with shape and colour.** Emerson implies that it is natural and right to speak of God as a person, even though you may hold, in your philosophy, that the Divine Being has no bounds or limits. This is in accordance with his own practice.

75 : 18. **Joseph.** *Genesis* xxxix. 12. Forsake and surrender anything that would keep from being true to your own impulse and conviction.

76 : 2 ff. **Pythagoras,** etc. The Greek philosopher, Pythagoras (582–500 B.C.) died in exile. Socrates (470–399 B.C.) was condemned by the Athenians to die by drinking poison. The Divine Founder of Christianity was crucified. Martin Luther (1483–1546), the leader of the Protestant Reformation, was excommunicated and outlawed. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) the discoverer of modern astronomy, was neglected and ridiculed; and Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), one of his greatest followers, was persecuted and imprisoned. Isaac Newton (1642–1727), the English philosopher, who discovered the law of gravitation, was long misunderstood and opposed in his teachings.

76 : 9. **Andes and Himmaleh.** The great mountain ranges of South America and Asia, respectively; they contain the highest peaks of the earth. The Asian range is usually called Himalaya.

76 : 11. **Acrostic.** An example of Emerson's incorrect use of odd words. A verse which reads the same backwards or forwards is not an acrostic, but a palindrome : *e.g.* "Madam, I'm Adam."

77 : 22–23. **Chatham,** etc. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (1708–1778), a great English statesman and orator, friendly to the cause of the Americans in the Revolution. George Washington (1732–1799), the leader of the American armies and first President of the United States. Samuel Adams, (1722–1803), a Massachusetts patriot, intensely devoted to the cause of liberty in the colonies, a man of simple habits and plain speech, called the "Father of the Revolution."

78 : 5. **Gazetted.** There are three official journals published in Great Britain, called Gazettes, containing lists of (1) appointments to office, (2) public honours conferred, and (3) persons declared bankrupt. It is to the last of these lists that the phrase, "to get into the gazette," usually refers.

78 : 7. **Spartan fife.** Sparta was the most martial state of ancient Greece, renowned for bravery and accustomed to train all its young men for war. The fife gave the signal for drill and for battle.

78 : 20. **Every body . . . reminds us,** etc. Even so the pupils of Emerson, who follow his advice, will certainly remind us of Emerson.

78 : 27. **Cæsar.** Julius Cæsar (100–44 B.C.), a great Roman general and statesman, the founder of imperial power in Rome.

79 : 4–6. **Hermit Antony,** etc. Antonius (250–356), a Christian of Upper Egypt, who went out into the desert to live alone, in voluntary self-denial and absolute poverty, is regarded as the first of the hermits and the beginner of the various orders of Christian monks. George Fox (1624–1691) founded the Society of Friends (commonly called Quakers) in England. John Wesley (1703–1791), an English clergyman, was the leader of that religious revival which resulted in the Methodist Church. Thomas Clarkson

(1760–1846) was an English philanthropist whose work resulted in action of Parliament, in 1807, declaring the slave trade illegal.

79 : 6. **Scipio** (234–184 B.C.), the Roman general who defeated Hannibal and destroyed Carthage. Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ix, 510.

79 : 23. **Popular fable of the sot,** etc. This fable is found in many languages and in various forms. Cf. *The Arabian Nights*, "The Sleeper Awakened." But it is not a well-chosen illustration for Emerson's purpose, since the drunken man's greatness was only a deception and lasted but a day.

80 : 10. **Scanderbeg and Gustavus.** George Castriota, known in history as Iskander Beg or Scanderbeg, was an Albanian chief who forsook the religion of Mahomet and fought against the Turks with great success (1403–1468). Gustavus II. (1594–1632) was the greatest king of Sweden, a brave soldier, and a wise, beneficent ruler.

81 : 5. **Parallax.** The apparent displacement of a heavenly body caused by a change of place of the beholder. It is used to calculate the size and distance of the stars. A star so distant as to have no parallax could not be measured.

81 : 10. **Intuition.** Here is the central doctrine of transcendentalism, which holds that the soul perceives the highest truths directly, without argument or reasoning, because the soul itself is a personal manifestation of the universal Reason. Cf. *Introduction*, page 17.

83 : 20. **Man is timid and apologetic,** etc. This idea is worked out in Emerson's poem of *The Sphinx*.

86 : 18. **Resolution of all into . . . One.** This is called Monism, the doctrine that there is but one real substance, force, and life in the universe.

87 : 10. **Take the shoes,** etc. The removal of the shoes is a common sign of reverence in the Oriental religions, and signifies that the place in which one stands is holy. Cf. *Exodus* iii. 5.

88 : 13. **Thor and Woden.** In the Scandinavian mythology,

current among the ancient Saxons, Woden, the chief god, was excellent in power and wisdom; Thor, his oldest son, was the god of thunder, and personified warlike courage.

88 : 23. **No covenants but proximities.** Does "but" in this sentence mean "except"; or does it introduce a clause in opposition to that which precedes it? In the former case Emerson's meaning is: "I will acknowledge no ties except those which arise out of nearness and relationship." In the latter case he means: "I will not make any ties or bonds at all, but will only recognize that certain people are near to me." This would carry independence very far and make social and family life difficult.

90 : 13. **High be his heart,** etc. Here is Emerson's safeguard against the dangers of the doctrine of absolute independence.

91 : 21. **Stoic.** A follower of the philosopher Zeno, who taught at Athens, in the Stoa or porch. The Stoics held that man should be indifferent to pleasure and pain, and follow the dictates of conscience firmly.

91 : 24. **The word made flesh.** *St. John* i. 14.

92 : 11. **Prayer.** This passage gives only one side of the truth about prayer; for the other side, read *St. Matthew* vii. 7–12; *St. John* xvi. 23–24; *St. Luke* xi., xviii.

92 : 26. **Caratach.** Caractacus, or Caradoc (50 A.D.), chief of the Catuvellauni, and Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, were leaders of the Britons in the struggle against the tyranny of Rome. They appear in Fletcher's play under the names of Bonduca and Caratach. Audate was a Celtic goddess.

93 : 22. **Zoroaster.** The founder of the ancient religion of Persia.

93 : 26. **Let not God speak to us.** *Exodus* xx. 19.

94 : 13. **Calvinism.** The theology of John Calvin, a French reformer (1509–1564).

94 : 13. **Swedenborgism.** The doctrine of Emanuel Swedenborg (see note 59: 29), usually called Swedenborgianism.

95 : 11. **They who made England,** etc. But Homer, Herodo-

tus, Plutarch, Dante, Petrarch, Leonardo, Chaucer, Spenser, Sidney, Raleigh, Milton, Scott, Wordsworth, etc., were all travellers.

96 : 4. **Thebes.** The ancient capital of Upper Egypt, now altogether a ruin.

96 : 4. **Palmyra.** A city founded by Solomon in an oasis of eastern Syria, afterwards the residence of Queen Zenobia; nothing now remains of it but some splendid ruins.

97 : 1. **Doric,** etc. The Doric was the earliest of the three chief styles of Greek architecture, and is marked by straight lines and simple columns. The Gothic architecture developed in the Middle Ages, and is marked by the use of pointed arches and clustered columns.

97 : 18. **Franklin.** Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), American philosopher, writer, discoverer, and patriot. He was the first to prove the nature of lightning by his famous experiment with the kite.

97 : 20. **Scipionism.** Scipio was the name of a distinguished Roman family which produced great generals and statesmen in three successive generations. Scipionism is precisely the thing which was handed on from one to another in this family.

97 : 25. **Phidias** (500–430 B.C.), the most famous of Greek sculptors. The style of his work may be judged by the frieze of the Parthenon of Athens.

97 : 25. **Trowel of the Egyptians.** The trowel is a poor symbol of the architecture of the Egyptians, for their greatest buildings were in huge courses of accurately dressed stones, held by their own weight, or sometimes fastened with metal clamps; very little mortar was used.

97 : 26. **Dante.** Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), the greatest poet of Italy, author of *The Divine Comedy*.

98 : 23. **Compare the health of the two men.** This is a mistake. Savage tribes, as a rule, are more subject to disease and less able to resist it, than civilized peoples. Unless the matter of climate comes in, the white explorer can usually wear out his red

or black or yellow guides. The trained athlete of civilization is stronger than the barbarian.

99 : 5. **Geneva.** A Swiss city, noted for the manufacture of watches, and long the centre of the world's trade in them.

99 : 7. **Greenwich.** The Royal Observatory at Greenwich, near London, in England, is taken as the starting-point for the calculation of the degrees of longitude; and the almanac which is issued there is used by all English-speaking geographers and astronomers, and by many others. Greenwich time is the standard for the British Empire.

99 : 13. **Increases the number of accidents.** This is a mistake. The number of accidents is probably not affected at all by the existence of insurance societies. If they have any effect, it is to increase the precautions against accident.

99 : 26. **Plutarch** (b. about 46 A.D.), a Greek historian, moral philosopher, and essayist, and one of Emerson's favourite authors. From Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* of Greek and Roman heroes, Emerson draws many of his illustrations. Among the ancients Plutarch is Emerson's nearest of kin.

100 : 8. **Hudson,** etc. Henry Hudson (d. 1611), an English navigator, the discoverer of the Hudson River and Hudson Bay. Vitus Behring (1680–1741), a Danish navigator after whom Behring Strait was named. Sir William Parry and Sir John Franklin were famous English explorers of the Arctic regions in the first part of the nineteenth century.

100 : 12. **A more splendid series,** etc. This is a mistake. The observations of Herschel and other modern astronomers were more splendid than those of Galileo. He was one of the inventors of the telescope, which was at first made double, like an opera-glass, and had a magnifying power of thirty times.

100 : 13. **Columbus.** Christopher Columbus (1445?–1506), a Genoese navigator, generally regarded as the discoverer of America; though some assert that there were earlier discoveries by the Norsemen, etc.

100 : 19. **Napoleon.** Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), a Corsican soldier who became lieutenant in the army of France 1785, general of the French army in Italy, 1796, in Egypt, 1798, First Consul and practical ruler of France, 1799, First Emperor of the French, 1704–1714. He almost succeeded in conquering all the other nations of Europe; was beaten by the English and Prussians at Waterloo; and died in exile, a captive of Great Britain, on the island of St. Helena. The Count de las Cases was his companion in exile and wrote *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène.* Emerson confuses him with Las Casas, a Spanish missionary.

101 : 4. **Their experience dies with them.** This is Emerson's great mistake. The experience of men is preserved in books, laws, institutions, and for this reason the past can teach us much. This is the secret of human progress, which Emerson in this passage seems to deny, though elsewhere he admits it.

101 : 25. **Caliph Ali** (600–661), a cousin and adopted son of Mahomet and the fourth caliph to succeed him in the leadership of Islam. Ali was called "the Lion of God," and was the author of many lyric poems and a collection of proverbs.

102 : 13. **Weaker by every recruit to his banner.** But note what Emerson says on pages 63, 75 about the power of self-helping man to attract others to him.

102 : 25. **Wheel rolls.** Fortuna, the ancient Italian goddess of good-luck, was depicted with a wheel as her symbol. In roulette, a gambling game, the wheel is used as the instrument.

COMPENSATION

107 : 2. **Compensation.** In common speech this means a payment for service rendered or for injury suffered. In law, it is a counter claim or set-off: where two men are in debt to each other, their debts are cancelled if equal; if unequal, a balance is struck. In physics it is a method of counteracting errors in an experiment by introducing other factors which act in an

opposite direction from the factors which cause the error. Emerson uses the word in a philosophic sense which implies all three meanings.

110 : 4. **Polarity.** One of Emerson's favourite long words, which he does not always use accurately. Polarity is derived from pole (Greek πόλος, a pivot, hinge, axis), which means, first, one of the two points in which the axis of revolution of the earth cuts the surface; and then, the opposite parts of the surface in any more or less spherical body. Polarity, however, refers not merely to the possession of two poles, but especially to a variation in certain properties of a body so that in one direction they are the opposite of what they are in the opposite direction; *e.g.* the magnetic needle has polarity because the negative end repels what the positive end attracts.

111 : 10. **Periodic or compensating errors.** Changes in the orbit of a planet which are caused by the attraction of the other planets, and which move it alternately forward and backward at short periods of years.

111 : 13. **The barren soil does not**, etc. But it does. Fevers prevail in unfruitful lands like the Italian Maremma; tigers among the rocky districts of India; scorpions in the desert, etc.

113: 2. **He must hate father and mother**, etc. The word "hate" is here used in the sense of withholding the supreme love. Cf. the words of Christ, *St. Luke* xiv. 26.

113 : 6. **A byword and a hissing.** *Jeremiah* xix. 8.

113 : 9. **Res nolunt diu**, etc. A Latin saying, of which the preceding sentence is a translation.

115 : 2. **That soul**, *i.e.* The Soul of the Universe.

115 : 4. **It is in the world**, etc. *St. John* i.: a reference to the Divine Word (λόγος), or Reason, which pervades all things.

115 : 7. **Οἱ κύβοι Διὸς ἀεὶ εὐπίπτουσι.** The dice of God always fall well, *i.e.* as He wishes them. There is no chance or uncertainty in the world.

115 : 12. **Every secret is told**, etc., *St. Luke* xii. 3.

115 : 23. **The causal retribution,** etc. For example, if you commit a theft, it makes you a thief, and your sense of honesty suffers or is killed. But it may be a long time before you are detected and put in jail, or even before you are suspected and begin to lose the confidence of your neighbours. Yet the outward punishment is really a part of the inward punishment.

117 : 15. **"Drive out Nature with a fork,"** etc. An old Latin proverb, quoted by the poet Horace.

118 : 7. **Mermaid's head . . . dragon's tail.** A mermaid is a fabulous creature of the sea, having a woman's head and body, and the tail of a fish, not a dragon.

118 : 9. **"How secret art thou,"** etc. *The Confessions of St. Augustine,* Bk. I.

118 : 17. **Jupiter.** The Greeks called their supreme god Zeus. In the Roman mythology Jupiter was the name of the corresponding deity. He was supposed to be subject, with all the other gods, to a higher power called Ananke, or fate.

118 : 20. **Helpless as a king of England.** The Parliament, in England, has supreme power in making laws, voting supplies of public money, etc. The king has rather less power than the President of the United States.

118 : 21. **Prometheus.** A semi-divine personage in Greek mythology, the friend of man, who stole fire from heaven and taught men how to use it. For this he was chained to a rock and torn by vultures. The important secret which he was supposed to know was a certain danger which threatened the throne of Zeus, and the only way to avert it. To obtain this secret Zeus offered to free him from his torture.

118 : 22. **Minerva.** Athena in the Greek mythology, corresponding to Minerva in the Roman, the goddess of wisdom, had the custody of the thunderbolts which Zeus used to display his anger and to punish men.

119 : 3. **Aurora.** The goddess of the dawn, who fell in love with Tithonus, son of a Trojan king. She persuaded Zeus to

promise that Tithonus should never die, but forgot to ask that he should remain young.

119 : 4. **Achilles.** The hero of Homer's *Iliad*, son of the sea-goddess Thetis, who dipped him in the river Styx, when he was a baby, to make him invulnerable. But the heel by which she held him was not immersed, and, being wounded there, he died.

119 : 6. **Siegfried.** The hero of the great German epic, the *Nibelungenlied*. He vanquished the Nibelungs and carried away their treasure, but was killed by Hagen who struck him from behind.

119 : 17. **Nemesis.** A mysterious Greek goddess, personifying the certainty of moral justice. She punished especially the proud and insolent who defied the divine laws.

119 : 19. **The Furies.** There were three Furies, Electo, Tisiphone, and Megæra, whose work it was to punish the guilty with their secret stings and whips.

119 : 23. **Ajax . . . Hector.** In the *Iliad*, it is narrated that Hector, the Trojan, exchanged arms and accoutrements with Ajax, the Greek, after a single combat. Hector was afterwards killed by Achilles. Ajax committed suicide by falling on the sword given him by Hector.

119 : 27. **Thasians.** The inhabitants of Thasos, a Greek island. Theagenes was one of their famous athletes.

120 : 16. **We are to see that which man,** etc. This is the opposite of Carlyle's theory that history is but the record of heroes and that the multitudes of men are of little consequence. Emerson seems to vacillate between the two theories. Cf. the passage on Druids and Berserkers, *The American Scholar*, p. 49. In *Self-Reliance*, p. 79, he says that "all history resolves itself into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons."

122 : 5. **Burke.** Edmund Burke (1729–1797), Irish orator and statesman, one of the most eloquent speakers in the British House of Commons.

123 : 15. **Polycrates.** The tyrant of the Greek island of Samos,

whose good fortune was so unbroken that he was advised to part with his most valued possession, lest the envy of the gods should destroy him. He threw his priceless emerald ring into the sea. But soon after a fisherman presented the king with a fish which had swallowed the ring; disaster followed, and Polycrates died miserably.

123 : 21. **Scot and lot.** Parish taxes assessed according to the ability of the person taxed.

127 : 19. **The stag in the fable.** One of the apologues of Æsop, whom tradition describes as a dwarf and a slave, living in Greece in the sixth century B.C.

129 : 7. **A third silent party.** This should be "a silent third party"; for Emerson does not mean that there are three silent parties, but three parties, one of whom is silent.

129 : 14. **Compound interest on compound interest.** Is this possible? Compound interest means the interest on interest and capital. To double the phrase adds nothing to its meaning.

130 : 14. **Compensation . . . indifferency.** Emerson here begins to explain the difference between the working of the law in the natural or outward world, and in the spiritual or inward world. He concludes by saying that there is no tax on the good of virtue, no loss to balance a moral gain; which amounts, after all, to an exemption of the soul from the strict rule that everything must be paid for.

132 : 20. **St. Bernard** (1091–1153). Abbot of Clairvaux in France, a famous churchman and a great writer on religion.

133 : 17. **His wit,** etc. Is this true? Must the intelligence of the wise man be discounted if there are some people who cannot comprehend or share it?

133 : 24. **As the shell-fish,** etc. This idea is beautifully expressed in the poem, *The Chambered Nautilus,* by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

135 : 19. **The banian of the forest.** An East Indian variety of fig tree, whose branches send down roots to the ground which in

their turn become trunks to support the tree. A single specimen will often cover a circle 100 yards in diameter.

FRIENDSHIP

142 : 9. **Apollo.** The Greek god of the sun, also of music, poetry, and healing. The nine Muses, who presided over different arts, followed him.

143 : 18. **Elysian.** The souls of the good and heroes exempt from death are represented by Greek mythology as dwelling in the Elysian Fields, in the Islands of the Blest, or somewhere above the earth.

143 : 26. **Egyptian skull.** It was the custom of the ancient Egyptians, says Plutarch, to bring in a skeleton at the close of a feast, to remind the guests that they must die. "Eat, drink, and be merry," etc.

146 : 13. **Heyday.** This word means a wild frolic, from the German *heida*, an exclamation of delight or surprise. Emerson makes the common mistake of using it as if it meant "high-day."

146 : 22. **"The valiant warrior,"** etc. misquoted from Shakespeare, Sonnet xxv.

148 : 6. **Olympian.** Olympia is a valley in Elis, Greece, where the sanctuary of Zeus was situated, and the famous Olympic games were held, to which the most noted athletes of the ancient world came to contend for prizes.

149 : 3. **I knew a man,** etc. Perhaps this refers to Jonas Very, a young enthusiast, intensely in earnest and extremely plain-spoken about his religious and moral convictions. Though he offended many, his sincerity and the beauty of his character were undoubted. He wrote a little poetry, of a lofty spiritual nature, and two or three of his sonnets are fine.

149 : 19. **Is worth a fit of insanity.** Compare the words of St. Paul, 2 *Corinthians* v. 13: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."

153 : 21. **The *not mine* is *mine*.** That is, something different from myself is put at my disposal and given for my advantage. Weak agreement would destroy this.

155 : 4. **Nor pottage.** The allusion is to the story of Jacob and Esau (*Genesis* xxv.). Pottage is the symbol of a low, sensual benefit, for which something higher is sacrificed.

156 : 5. **Crimen quos inquinat æquat:**

> "Those whom a crime doth stain
> It puts on equal plane."

158 : 21. **Janus-faced.** Janus, the ancient Latin god of war, was depicted with two faces, one looking backward, the other forward.

159 : 28. **It has seemed to me lately,** etc. Oliver Wendell Holmes says that this "suggests some personal relation of Emerson's about which we cannot help being inquisitive. Was he thinking of his relations with Carlyle?"

PRUDENCE

163 : 6. **Whoever sees my garden,** etc. Emerson loved his garden and at one time thought that he should cultivate it entirely with his own hands. But he found that hard labour out-of-doors meant poorer work in his study. He was not very skilful as a gardener. One day his little son, seeing him at work with a spade, cried out, "Take care, papa, you will dig your leg!"

164 : 9. **The Natural History of the soul incarnate.** That is, a care for outward things is lawful when it expresses the desire of an orderly soul to keep its house in order.

164 : 25. **This sacred volcanic isle.** The figure here is that of nature as an island thrown up by the action of the hidden fire of the Divine Spirit. Such an island is temporary, and therefore offers only a transient dwelling-place.

165 : 8. **A disease like,** etc. Elephantiasis.

167 : 10. **Regard the clouds.** "He that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." *Ecclesiastes* xi. 4.

168 : 14. **Peninsular campaigns.** The name usually given to the campaigns of Wellington and his allies in Spain and Portugal, against Napoleon's invading army.

169 : 6. **Dr. Johnson.** Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), the chief literary authority of the Georgian Age in England, maker of the first great English dictionary, and a famous sayer of good things in a rough way.

169 : 27. **The last Grand Duke of Weimar.** Charles Augustus (1757–1828), grand duke of Weimar, the friend and patron of Goethe, a man of taste and learning.

170 : 12. **Raphael in the Dresden gallery.** The most famous picture by the Italian painter, Raphael, called the "Sistine Madonna," hangs in the Royal Gallery at Dresden.

172 : 14. **Goethe's Tasso.** A poetic drama by Goethe, dealing with the life of Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), an Italian poet.

174 : 5. **Poor Richard.** The name under which Benjamin Franklin set forth his proverbs and prudential maxims, full of homely common sense.

174 : 5. **State-Street.** The financial district of the city of Boston, Massachusetts.

174 : 7. **Stick a tree between whiles.** A saying of the old Laird of Dumbiedikes, a character in Scott's novel, *The Heart of Midlothian*, chap. vii. "Jock, when ye hae naething else to do, ye may be aye sticking in a tree: it will be growing, Jock, when ye're sleeping."

SHAKESPEARE; OR, THE POET

183. **Shakespeare** (1564–1616), the greatest of English dramatic poets. He is now recognized by critics of all countries as the chief of a brilliant group of writers for the stage who made the reign of Queen Elizabeth illustrious in the history of literature.

185 : 19. **Punch.** The leading comic periodical of England, founded in 1841.

186 : 7. **At the time.** About 1586.

186 : 11. **Tale of Troy.** The *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy* by William Caxton, the *History, Sege and Destruccion of Troye* by Lydgate, and *Troilus and Creseide* by Chaucer, were books to which Shakespeare had access and from which he took material for his play of *Troilus and Cressida.*

186 : 12. **The Death of Julius Cæsar.** A tragedy in Latin on the death of Julius Cæsar was acted in Oxford in 1582. Shakespeare drew the material for his tragedy chiefly from the lives of Cæsar, Brutus, Antony, and Cicero in North's English translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* of illustrious Greeks and Romans, which was written early in the second century.

186 : 15. **Brut.** A poetical version of the legendary history of Britain, in French by Wace, in semi-Saxon by Layamon, about 1200 A.D.

186 : 15. **Arthur.** The legends relating to the British king Arthur were collected and retold by Sir Thomas Malory in English, and published in 1485.

186 : 15. **Royal Henries.** Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland,* published in 1578, were the main sources of Shakespeare's English History plays.

188 : 9. **Malone.** Edmund Malone, an Irish scholar and critic, published his edition of Shakespeare in 1790.

188 : 21. **Wolsey's soliloquy.** *Henry VIII,* iii. 2.

189 : 23. **Saadi.** The most famous of Persian poets. He lived and died at Shiraz in the thirteenth century.

190 : 7. **Lydgate and Caxton,** etc. It is entirely unnecessary, in a book for young readers, to load down the pages with notes explanatory of all these references. It may be doubted whether Emerson himself looked them all up in the original sources.

191 : 8. **Sir Robert Peel** (1788–1850), an English statesman, the founder of the modern conservative party and leader of England's free-trade policy (1846).

191 : 8. **Mr. Webster.** Daniel Webster (1782–1852), a famous American statesman and orator, and leader of the Whig party.

191 : 11. **Menu.** One of a class of fourteen demiurgic beings in the Sanskrit mythology. Emerson's defective scholarship is shown by his putting Menu, a mythical personage, in conjunction with Saadi and Milton.

191 : 16. **Delphi.** A town in Greece, the seat of the oracle of the Pythian Apollo; hence a secret shrine to which one comes for divine counsel and guidance.

191 : 27. **English Bible.** The so-called Authorized Version of the Bible in English was made by forty-seven men (1604–1611), on the basis of several earlier translations.

192 : 8. **Grotius** (1583–1645), a Dutch scholar and statesman.

193 : 9. **Shakespeare Society.** Founded by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps and J. P. Collier, 1841; dissolved 1853. The New Shakespeare Society was founded in 1874.

193 : 10. **Mysteries.** Plays dealing with characters and events from the Bible, chiefly from the Gospels, with illustrations from the Old Testament prophecies of Christ.

193 : 13. **Ferrex and Porrex.** Two characters in the tragedy of *Gorboduc*, by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, 1561.

193 : 13. **Gammer Gurton's Needle.** An English comedy by Bishop Still, acted at Cambridge, 1566.

194 : 13. **Ben Jonson** (1573–1637), an Elizabethan poet and dramatist of high rank; a friend and admirer of Shakespeare.

194 : 21. **Sir Henry Wotton** (1568–1639), an English statesman and author, one of the best-known men of the Elizabethan Age.

195 : 5. **Pericles** (c. 495–429, B.C.), Athenian statesman and orator, in whose days Greek literature and art were at their best.

195 : 15. **Lessing** (1729–1781), German critic and dramatist.

195 : 15. **Wieland** (1733–1813), German poet and romancer, translator of Shakespeare.

195 : 16. **Schlegel** (1767–1845), German poet and critic, translator of Shakespeare.

195 : 23. **Coleridge** (1772–1834), English poet and critic; *Lectures on Shakespeare.*

195 : 23. **Goethe** (1749–1832), German poet, critic, and romancer. His criticisms on Shakespeare may be found in his *Autobiography, Conversations with Eckermann,* and *Wilhelm Meister.*

196 : 6. **Blackfriars' Theatre.** A famous London playhouse, founded about 1596.

197 : 8. **Malone, Warburton, Dyce,** etc. Commentators on Shakespeare.

197 : 10. **Betterton, Garrick, Kemble,** etc. Actors who have become famous in their interpretation of Shakesperean rôles.

197 : 17. **The Hamlet of a famed performer,** etc. This was Macready, whom Emerson saw in America in 1848–49, just before the publication of this essay. May it not have been the actor's art which made Hamlet's question to the Ghost stand out so clear and vivid ?

198 : 6. **Forest of Arden.** The scene of *As You Like It.*

198 : 6. **Scone Castle.** Emerson refers to the castle of *Macbeth* (i. 6), which was at Inverness, not Scone.

198 : 7. **Portia's villa.** Belmont, *The Merchant of Venice,* i. 2.

198 : 21. **Tripod . . . inspirations.** The tripod at Delphi was a bronze altar, on three legs, standing over a cleft in the floor of the temple. Here the priestess sat when she was about to deliver the inspired oracle of Apollo.

199 : 6. **Aubrey and Rowe.** John Aubrey was an English antiquary and collector of anecdotes. Nicholas Rowe edited Shakespeare badly in 1709.

199 : 27. **Timon.** A Greek misanthrope of the fifth century, B.C.; the principal character in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens.*

199 : 28. **Warwick.** Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, a leading character in *King Henry the Sixth.*

199 : 28. **Antonio.** The princely merchant from whom *The Merchant of Venice* takes its name.

200 : 8. **As Talma taught Napoleon.** A French actor (1783–1826); intimate friend and counsellor of Napoleon I.

201 : 17. **As of Drama or Epic.** Here is an illustration of Emerson's defect as a critic. For the dramatic form conditions the expression of Shakespeare's wisdom, — what he says through the mouth of Iago is quite different from what he says in the character of Hamlet.

203 : 18. **Daguerre** (1789–1851), a French painter who invented, in 1839, a process of making pictures by the action of sunlight on a plate prepared with iodine ; they were called daguerreotypes.

203 : 24. **The possibility . . . is demonstrated.** Here is an example of extravagant and rhetorical criticism. Emerson writes as if Shakespeare were the first to prove "the possibility of the translation of things into song." But this is to leave out Homer and Euripides, Virgil and Dante, Chaucer and Marlowe, and a host of others.

204 : 8. **Euphuism.** An affected literary style, named from John Lyly's *Euphues* (1579). Emerson uses the wrong word: what he means is "euphony," that is, the real beauty and melody of Shakespeare's diction. Euphuism is caricatured in *Love's Labour's Lost.*

205 : 9. **Epicurus** (342–270 B.C.), a Greek philosopher who taught that pleasure is the end of rational life, and that the highest pleasure is freedom.

206 : 22. **Koran.** The sacred scripture of the Mohammedans, which is supposed to contain the revelations made by God to Mohammed, and delivered by him at Mecca and Medina.

207 : 2. **Egyptian verdict of the Shakespeare Societies.** Perhaps this refers to the Egyptian custom of bringing in a skeleton at a banquet, to remind the guests, "You are all mortal."

GIFTS

212 : 22. The Furies. Female divinities, in the Greek mythology, who punished men for iniquity. Alecto, "the unresting"; Megæra, "the jealous"; and Tisiphone, "the avenger."

212 : 28. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Compare Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal.*

> "The gift without the giver is bare.
> Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
> Himself, his hungering neighbour, and me."

214 : 25. Timon. An Athenian who lived in the fifth century, B.C. He gave away all his property to his professed friends, who thereupon forsook him and would have nothing to do with him. This changed him into a misanthrope.

215 : 3. Buddhist. A follower of the Indian sage who lived in the fifth century, B.C., and taught his disciples that the way of salvation is the renunciation of all personal desire.

215 : 17. We can seldom hear the acknowledgments, etc. Compare Wordsworth's poem, *Simon Lee.*

> "— I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning ;
> Alas! the gratitude of men
> Hath oftener left me mourning."

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