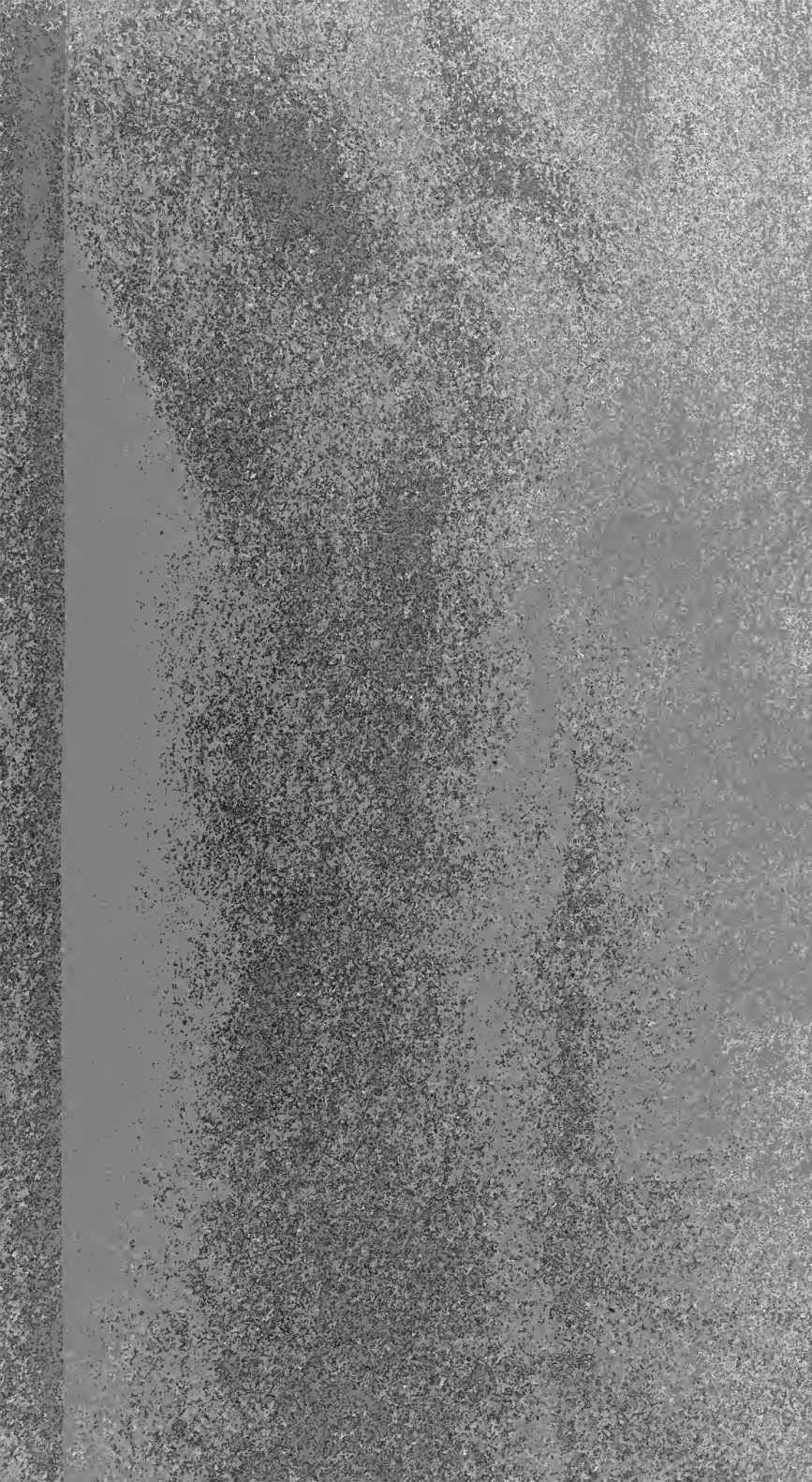




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URANIA:

A RHYMED LESSON.

BY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,

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BOSTON:

WILLIAM D. TICKNOR & COMPANY.

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P O E M .

YES, dear Enchantress, wandering far and long,
In realms unperfumed by the breath of song,
Where flowers ill flavored shed their sweets around,
And bitterest roots invade the ungenial ground,
Whose gems are crystals from the Epsom mine,
Whose vineyards flow with antimonial wine,
Whose gates admit no mirthful feature in,
Save one gaunt mocker, the Sardonic grin,
Whose pangs are real, not the woes of rhyme
That blue-eyed misses warble out of time ;
Truant, not recreant to thy sacred claim,
Older by reckoning, but in heart the same,
Freed for a moment from the chains of toil,
I tread once more thy consecrated soil ;
Here at thy feet my old allegiance own
Thy subject still, and loyal to thy throne !

My dazzled glance explores the crowded hall ;
 Alas, how vain to hope the smiles of all !
 I know my audience ; all the gay and young
 Love the light antics of a playful tongue,
 And these, remembering some expansive line
 My lips let loose among the nuts and wine,
 Are all impatience till the opening pun
 Proclaims the witty shamfight is begun.
 Two fifths at least, if not the total half,
 Have come infuriate for an earthquake laugh ;
 I know full well what alderman has tied
 His red bandanna tight about his side ;
 I see the mother, who, aware that boys
 Perform their laughter with superfluous noise,
 Beside her kerchief, brought an extra one
 To stop the explosions of her bursting son ;
 I know a tailor, once a friend of mine,
 Expects great doings in the button line ; —
 For mirth's concussions rip the outward case
 And plant the stitches in a tenderer place ; —
 I know my audience ; these shall have their due,
 A smile awaits them ere my song is through !

I know myself ; not servile for applause,
 My Muse permits no deprecating clause ;
 Modest or vain, she will not be denied
 One bold confession, due to honest pride.
 And well she knows, the drooping veil of song
 Shall save her boldness from the caviller's wrong ;

Her sweeter voice the Heavenly Maid imparts
 To tell the secrets of our aching hearts ;
 For this, a suppliant, captive, prostrate, bound,
 She kneels imploring at the feet of sound ;
 For this, convulsed in thought's maternal pains,
 She loads her arms with rhyme's resounding chains ;
 Faint though the music of her fetters be,
 It lends one charm ; her lips are ever free !

Think not I come, in manhood's fiery noon,
 To steal his laurels from the stage buffoon ;
 His sword of lath the harlequin may wield ;
 Behold the star upon my lifted shield !
 Though the just critic pass my humble name,
 And sweeter lips have drained the cup of fame,
 While my gay stanza pleased the banquet's lords,
 The soul within was tuned to deeper chords !
 Say, shall my arms, in other conflicts taught
 To swing aloft the ponderous mace of thought,
 Lift, in obedience to a school-girl's law,
 Mirth's tinsel wand or laughter's tickling straw ?
 Say, shall I wound with satire's rankling spear
 The pure, warm hearts that bid me welcome here ?
 No ! while I wander through the land of dreams
 To strive with great and play with trifling themes,
 Let some kind meaning fill the varied line ;
 You have your judgment ; will you trust to mine ?

BETWEEN two breaths what crowded mysteries lie,—
The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh!
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came.

But whence and why, our trembling souls inquire,
Caught these dim visions their awakening fire?
O who forgets, when first the piercing thought
Through childhood's musings found its way unsought,
I AM. I LIVE. The mystery and the fear
When the dread question — WHAT HAS BROUGHT ME HERE?
Burst through life's twilight, as before the sun
Roll the deep thunders of the morning gun!

Are angel faces silent and serene
Bent on the conflicts of this little scene,
Whose dreamlike efforts, whose unreal strife
Are but the preludes to a larger life?

Or does life's summer see the end of all,
These leaves of being mouldering as they fall,

As the old poet vaguely used to deem,
 As WESLEY questioned in his youthful dream ? (1)
 O could such mockery reach our souls indeed,
 Give back the Pharaohs' or the Athenian's creed ;
 Better than this a Heaven of man's device, —
 The Indian's sports, the Moslem's paradise !

Or is our being's only end and aim
 To add new glories to our Maker's name,
 As the poor insect, shrivelling in the blaze,
 Lends a faint sparkle to its streaming rays ?
 Does earth send upwards to the Eternal's ear
 The mingled discords of her jarring sphere
 To swell his anthem, while Creation rings
 With notes of anguish from its shattered strings ?
 Is it for this the immortal Artist means
 These conscious, throbbing, agonized machines ?

Dark is the soul whose sullen creed can bind
 In chains like these the all-embracing mind ;
 No ! two-faced bigot, thou dost ill reprove
 The sensual, selfish, yet benignant Jove,
 And praise a tyrant throned in lonely pride,
 Who loves himself, and cares for nought beside ;
 Who gave thee, summoned from primeval night,
 A thousand laws, and not a single right ;
 A heart to feel and quivering nerves to thrill,
 The sense of wrong, the death-defying will ;

Who girt thy senses with this goodly frame,
 Its earthly glories and its orbs of flame,
 Not for thyself, unworthy of a thought,
 Poor helpless victim of a life unsought,
 But all for him, unchanging and supreme,
 The heartless centre of thy frozen scheme !

Trust not the teacher with his lying scroll,
 Who tears the charter of thy shuddering soul ;
 The God of love, who gave the life that warms
 All breathing dust in all its varied forms,
 Asks not the tribute of a world like this
 To fill the measure of his perfect bliss.
 Though winged with life through all its radiant shores,
 Creation flowed with unexhausted stores
 Cherub and seraph had not yet enjoyed ;
 For this he called thee from the quickening void !
 Nor this alone ; a larger gift was thine,
 A mightier purpose swelled his vast design ;
 Thought ; conscience ; will ; to make them all thine own
 He rent a pillar from the eternal throne !

Made in his image, thou must nobly dare
 The thorny crown of sovereignty to share ;
 With eye uplifted it is thine to view
 From thine own centre, Heaven's o'erarching blue ;
 So round thy heart a beaming circle lies
 No fiend can blot, no hypocrite disguise,

From all its orbs one cheering voice is heard,
 Full to thine ear it bears the Father's word,
 Now, as in Eden where his first-born trod :
 "Seek thine own welfare, true to man and God !"

Think not too meanly of thy low estate ;
 Thou hast a choice ; to choose is to create !
 Remember whose the sacred lips that tell,
 Angels approve thee when thy choice is well ;
 Remember, One, a judge of righteous men,
 Swore to spare Sodom if she held but ten !
 Use well the freedom which thy Master gave,
 (Think'st thou that Heaven can tolerate a slave ?)
 And He who made thee to be just and true
 Will bless thee, love thee, — ay, respect thee too !

Nature has placed thee on a changeful tide,
 To breast its waves, but not without a guide ;
 Yet, as the needle will forget its aim,
 Jarred by the fury of the electric flame,
 As the true current it will falsely feel,
 Warped from its axis by a freight of steel ;
 So will thy CONSCIENCE lose its balanced truth
 If passion's lightning fall upon thy youth ;
 So the pure impulse quit its sacred hold,
 Girt round too deeply with magnetic gold.

Go to yon tower, where busy science plies
 Her vast antennæ, feeling through the skies ;
 That little vernier on whose slender lines
 The midnight taper trembles as it shines,

A silent index, tracks the planets' march
 In all their wanderings through the ethereal arch,
 Tells through the mist where dazzled Mercury burns,
 And marks the spot where Uranus returns.

So, till by wrong or negligence effaced,
 The living index which thy Maker traced
 Repeats the line each starry Virtue draws
 Through the wide circuit of creation's laws ;
 Still tracks unchanged the everlasting ray
 Where the dark shadows of temptation stray ;
 But, once defaced, forgets the orbs of light,
 And leaves thee wandering o'er the expanse of night !

“ What is thy creed ? ” a hundred lips inquire ;
 “ Thou seekest God beneath what Christian spire ? ”
 Nor ask they idly, for uncounted lies
 Float upward on the smoke of sacrifice ;
 When man's first incense rose above the plain,
 Of earth's two altars one was built by Cain !

Uncursed by doubt, our earliest creed we take ;
 We love the precepts for the teacher's sake ;
 The simple lessons which the nursery taught
 Fell soft and stainless on the buds of thought,
 And the full blossom owes its fairest hue
 To those sweet tear-drops of affection's dew.

Too oft the light that led our earlier hours
 Fades with the perfume of our cradle flowers,
 The clear, cold question chills to frozen doubt ;
 Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without ;

O then, if reason waver at thy side,
 Let humbler memory be thy gentle guide,
 Go to thy birth-place, and, if faith was there,
 Repeat thy father's creed, thy mother's prayer !

Faith loves to lean on time's destroying arm,
 And age, like distance, lends a double charm ;
 In dim cathedrals, dark with vaulted gloom,
 What holy awe invests the saintly tomb !
 There pride will bow, and anxious care expand,
 And creeping avarice come with open hand ;
 The gay can weep, the impious can adore,
 From morn's first glimmerings on the chancel floor
 Till dying sunset shed his crimson stains
 Through the faint halos of the irised panes.

Yet there are graves, whose rudely shapen sod
 Bears the fresh footprints where the sexton trod ;
 Graves where the verdure has not dared to shoot,
 Where the chance wildflower has not fixed its root,
 Whose slumbering tenants, dead without a name,
 The eternal record shall at length proclaim
 Pure as the holiest in the long array
 Of hooded, mitred, or tiaraed clay !

Come, seek the air ; some pictures we may gain,
 Whose passing shadows shall not be in vain ;
 Not from the scenes that crowd the stranger's soil,
 Not from our own amidst the stir of toil,

But when the Sabbath brings its kind release,
And care lies slumbering on the lap of peace.

The air is hushed ; the street is holy ground ;
Hark ! The sweet bells renew their welcome sound ;
As one by one awakes each silent tongue,
It tells the turret whence its voice is flung. ⁽²⁾

The Chapel, last of sublunary things
That shocks our echoes with the name of Kings,
Whose bell, just glistening from the font and forge,
Rolled its proud requiem for the second George,
Solemn and swelling, as of old it rang,
Flings to the wind its deep, sonorous clang ;—
The simpler pile, that, mindful of the hour
When Howe's artillery shook its half-built tower,
Wears on its bosom, as a bride might do,
The iron breastpin which the "Rebels" threw,
Wakes the sharp echoes with the quivering thrill
Of keen vibrations, tremulous and shrill ;—
Aloft, suspended in the morning's fire,
Crash the vast cymbals from the Southern spire ;—
The Giant, standing by the elm-clad green,
His white lance lifted o'er the silent scene,
Whirling in air his brazen goblet round,
Swings from its brim the swollen floods of sound ;—
While, sad with memories of the olden time,
The Northern Minstrel pours her tender chime,
Faint, single tones, that spell their ancient song,
But tears still follow as they breathe along.

Child of the soil, whom fortune sends to range
 Where man and nature, faith and customs change,
 Borne in thy memory, each remembered tone
 Mourns on the winds that sigh in every zone.
 When Ceylon sweeps thee with her perfumed breeze
 Through the warm billows of the Indian seas ;
 When, — ship and shadow blended both in one, —
 Flames o'er thy mast the equatorial sun,
 From sparkling midnight to refulgent noon
 Thy canvas swelling with the still monsoon ;
 When through thy shrouds the wild tornado sings
 And thy poor seabird folds her tattered wings,
 Oft will delusion o'er thy senses steal,
 And airy echoes ring the Sabbath peal !
 Then, dim with grateful tears, in long array
 Rise the fair town, the island-studded bay,
 Home, with its smiling board, its cheering fire,
 The half-choked welcome of the expecting sire,
 The mother's kiss, and, still if aught remain,
 Our whispering hearts shall aid the silent strain. —

Ah, let the dreamer o'er the taffrail lean
 To muse unheeded, and to weep unseen ;
 Fear not the tropic's dews, the evening's chills,
 His heart lies warm among his triple hills !

Turned from her path by this deceitful gleam,
 My wayward fancy half forgets her theme ;
 See through the streets that slumbered in repose
 The living current of devotion flows ;

Its varied forms in one harmonious band,
 Age leading childhood by its dimpled hand,
 Want, in the robe whose faded edges fall
 To tell of rags beneath the tartan shawl,
 And wealth, in silks that, fluttering to appear,
 Lift the deep borders of the proud cashmere.

See, but glance briefly, sorrow-worn and pale,
 Those sunken cheeks beneath the widow's veil ;
 Alone she wanders where with *him* she trod,
 No arm to stay her, but she leans on God.

While other doublets deviate here and there,
 What secret handcuff binds that pretty pair ?
 Compactest couple ! pressing side to side, —
 Ah, the white bonnet that reveals the bride !

By the white neckcloth, with its straitened tie,
 The sober hat, the Sabbath-speaking eye,
 Severe and smileless, he that runs may read
 The stern disciple of Geneva's creed ;
 Decent and slow, behold his solemn march ;
 Silent he enters through yon crowded arch.

A livelier bearing of the outward man,
 The light-hued gloves, the undevout rattan,
 Now smartly raised or half-profanely twirled, —
 A bright, fresh twinkle from the week-day world, —
 Tell their plain story ; — yes, thine eyes behold
 A cheerful Christian from the liberal fold.

Down the chill street that curves in gloomiest shade,
 What marks betray yon solitary maid ?
 The cheek's red rose, that speaks of balmier air ;
 The Celtic blackness of her braided hair ; (3)
 The gilded missal in her kerchief tied ;
 Poor Nora, exile from Killarney's side !

Sister in toil, though born of colder skies,
 That left their azure in her downcast eyes,
 See pallid Margaret, Labor's patient child,
 Scarce weaned from home, the nursling of the wild
 Where white Katahdin o'er the horizon shines,
 And broad Penobscot dashes through the pines ;
 Still, as she hastes, her careful fingers hold
 The unfailing hymn-book in its cambric fold.
 Six days at drudgery's heavy wheel she stands,
 The seventh sweet morning folds her weary hands ;
 Yes, child of suffering, thou may'st well be sure
 He who ordained the Sabbath loved the poor !

This weekly picture faithful memory draws,
 Nor claims the noisy tribute of applause ;
 Faint is the glow such barren hopes can lend,
 And frail the line that asks no loftier end.

Trust me, kind listener, I will yet beguile
 Thy saddened features of the promised smile ;
 This magic mantle thou must well divide,
 It has its sable, and its ermine side ;
 Yet, ere the lining of the robe appears,
 Take thou in silence, what I give in tears.

Dear listening soul, this transitory scene
 Of murmuring stillness, busily serene ;
 This solemn pause, the breathing-space of man,
 The halt of toil's exhausted caravan,
 Comes sweet with music to thy wearied ear ;
 Rise with its anthems to a holier sphere !

Deal meekly, gently, with the hopes that guide
 The lowliest brother straying from thy side ;
 If right, they bid thee tremble for thine own,
 If wrong, the verdict is for God alone !

What though the champions of thy faith esteem
 The sprinkled fountain or baptismal stream ;
 Shall jealous passions in unseemly strife
 Cross their dark weapons o'er the waves of life ?

Let my free soul, expanding as it can,
 Leave to his scheme the thoughtful Puritan ;
 But Calvin's dogma shall my lips deride ?
 In that stern faith my angel Mary died ; —
 Or ask if mercy's milder creed can save,
 Sweet sister, risen from thy new-made grave ?

True, the harsh founders of thy church reviled
 That ancient faith, the trust of Erin's child ;
 Must thou be raking in the crumbled past
 For racks and fagots in her teeth to cast ?

See from the ashes of Helvetia's pile
 The whitened skull of old Servetus smile !
 Round her young heart thy " Romish Upas " threw
 Its firm, deep fibres, strengthening as she grew ;
 Thy sneering voice may call them " Popish tricks," —
 Her Latin prayers, her dangling crucifix, —
 But *De Profundis* blessed her father's grave ;
 That " idol " cross her dying mother gave !

What if some angel looks with equal eyes
 On her and thee, the simple and the wise,
 Writes each dark fault against thy brighter creed,
 And drops a tear with every foolish bead !

Grieve, as thou must, o'er history's reeking page ;
 Blush for the wrongs that stain thy happier age ;
 Strive with the wanderer from the better path,
 Bearing thy message meekly, not in wrath ;
 Weep for the frail that err, the weak that fall,
 Have thine own faith, — but hope and pray for all !

Faith ; Conscience ; Love. A meaner task remains,
 And humbler thoughts must creep in lowlier strains ;
 Shalt thou be honest ? Ask the worldly schools,
 And all will tell thee knaves are busier fools ;
 Prudent ? Industrious ? Let not modern pens
 Instruct " Poor Richard's " fellow-citizens.

Be firm ! one constant element in luck
 Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck ;

See yon tall shaft ; it felt the earthquake's thrill,
Clung to its base, and greets the sunrise still.

Stick to your aim ; the mongrel's hold will slip,
But only crowbars loose the bulldog's grip ;
Small as he looks, the jaw that never yields,
Drags down the bellowing monarch of the fields !

Yet in opinions look not always back ;
Your wake is nothing, mind the coming track ;
Leave what you've done for what you have to do ;
Don't be " consistent," but be simply true.

Don't catch the fidgets ; you have found your place
Just in the focus of a nervous race,
Fretful to change, and rabid to discuss,
Full of excitements, always in a fuss.
Think of the patriarchs ; then compare as men
These lean-cheeked maniacs of the tongue and pen !
Run, if you like, but try to keep your breath ;
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death ;
And with new notions, — let me change the rule, —
Don't strike the iron till it's slightly cool.

Choose well your *set* ; our feeble nature seeks
The aid of clubs, the countenance of cliques ;
And with this object settle first of all
Your weight of metal and your size of ball.

Track not the steps of such as hold you cheap, —
 Too mean to prize, though good enough to keep.
 The “ real, genuine, no-mistake Tom Thumbs ”
 Are little people fed on great men’s crumbs.

Yet keep no followers of that hateful brood
 That basely mingles with its wholesome food
 The tumid reptile, which, the poet said,
 Doth wear a precious jewel in his head.

If the wild filly, “ Progress,” thou would’st ride,
 Have young companions ever at thy side ;
 But, wouldst thou stride the staunch old mare, “ Success,”
 Go with thine elders, though they please thee less.

Shun such as lounge through afternoons and eves,
 And on thy dial write “ Beware of thieves ! ”
 Felon of minutes, never taught to feel
 The worth of treasures which thy fingers steal,
 Pick my left pocket of its silver dime,
 But spare the right, — it holds my golden time !

Does praise delight thee ? Choose some *ultra* side ;
 A sure old recipe, and often tried ;
 Be its apostle, congressman, or bard,
 Spokesman, or jokesman, only drive it hard ;
 But know the forfeit which thy choice abides,
 For on two wheels the poor reformer rides,
 One black with epithets the *anti* throws,
 One white with flattery, painted by the *pros*.

Though books on MANNERS are not out of print,
An honest tongue may drop a harmless hint.

Stop not, unthinking, every friend you meet
To spin your wordy fabric in the street ;
While you are emptying your colloquial pack,
The fiend *Lumbago* jumps upon his back.

Nor cloud his features with the unwelcome tale
Of how he looks, if haply thin and pale ;
Health is a subject for his child, his wife,
And the rude office that insures his life.

Look in his face, to meet thy neighbour's soul,
Not on his garments to detect a hole ;
" How to observe," is what thy pages show,
Pride of thy sex, Miss Harriet Martineau !
O, what a precious book the one would be
That taught observers what they 're *not* to see !

I tell in verse, — 't were better done in prose, —
One curious trick that everybody knows ;
Once form this habit, and it 's very strange
How long it sticks, how hard it is to change.
Two friendly people, both disposed to smile,
Who meet, like others, every little while,
Instead of passing with a pleasant bow,
And " How d'ye do ? " or " How 's your uncle now ? "
Impelled by feelings in their nature kind,
But slightly weak, and somewhat undefined,
Rush at each other, make a sudden stand,
Begin to talk, expatiate, and expand ;

Each looks quite radiant, seems extremely struck,
 Their meeting so was such a piece of luck ;
 Each thinks the other thinks he 's greatly pleased
 To screw the vice in which they both are squeezed ;
 So there they talk, in dust, or mud, or snow,
 Both bored to death, and both afraid to go !

Your hat once lifted, do not hang your fire,
 Nor, like slow Ajax, fighting still, retire ;
 When your old castor on your crown you clap,
 Go off ; you 've mounted your percussion cap !

Some words on LANGUAGE may be well applied,
 And take them kindly, though they touch your pride ;
 Words lead to things ; a scale is more precise, —
 Coarse speech, bad grammar, swearing, drinking, vice .

Our cold Northeaster's icy fetter clips
 The native freedom of the Saxon lips ;
 See the brown peasant of the plastic South,
 How all his passions play about his mouth !
 With us, the feature that transmits the soul,
 A frozen, passive, palsied breathing-hole.
 The crampy shackles of the ploughboy's walk
 Tie the small muscles when he strives to talk ;
 Not all the pumice of the polished town
 Can smooth this roughness of the barnyard down ;
 Rich, honored, titled, he betrays his race
 By this one mark, — he 's awkward in the face ; —
 Nature's rude impress, long before he knew
 The sunny street that holds the sifted few.

It can't be helped, though if we're taken young,
 We gain some freedom of the lips and tongue ;
 But school and college often try in vain
 To break the padlock of our boyhood's chain ;
 One stubborn word will prove this axiom true ;
 No late-caught rustic can enunciate *view*.

A few brief stanzas may be well employed
 To speak of errors we can all avoid.

Learning condemns beyond the reach of hope
 The careless churl that speaks of *sōap* for *sōap* ;
 Her edict exiles from her fair abode
 The clownish voice that utters *rōad* for *rōad* ;
 Less stern to him who calls his *cōat* a *cōat*,
 And steers his *bōat*, believing it a *bōat*,
 She pardoned one, our classic city's boast,
 Who said, at Cambridge, *mōst* instead of *mōst*,
 But knit her brows and stamped her angry foot
 To hear a Teacher call a *rōot* a *rōot*.

Once more ; speak clearly, if you speak at all ;
 Carve every word before you let it fall ;
 Don't, like a lecturer or dramatic star,
 Try over hard to roll the British R ;
 Do put your accents in the proper spot ;
 Don't,—let me beg you,—don't say “How ?” for “What ?”
 And, when you stick on conversation's burs,
 Don't strew your pathway with those dreadful *urs*.

From little matters let us pass to less,
 And lightly touch the mysteries of *DRESS* ;

The outward forms the inner man reveal, —
 We guess the pulp before we cut the peel.

I leave the broadcloth, — coats and all the rest, —
 The dangerous waistcoat, called by cockneys “ vest,”
 The things named “ pants ” in certain documents,
 A word not made for gentlemen, but “ gents ” ;
 One single precept might the whole condense :
 Be sure your tailor is a man of sense :
 But add a little care, a decent pride,
 And always err upon the sober side.

Three pairs of boots one pair of feet demands,
 If polished daily by the owner’s hands ;
 If the dark menial’s visit save from this,
 Have twice the number, for he’ll sometimes miss.
 One pair for critics of the nicer sex,
 Close in the instep’s clinging circumflex,
 Long, narrow, light ; the Gallic boot of love,
 A kind of cross between a boot and glove.
 But not to tread on everlasting thorns
 And sow in suffering what is reaped in corns,
 Compact, but easy, strong, substantial, square,
 Let native art compile the medium pair.
 The third remains, and let your tasteful skill
 Here show some relics of affection still ;
 Let no stiff cowhide, reeking from the tan,
 No rough caoutchouc, no deformed brogan,
 Disgrace the tapering outline of your feet,
 Though yellow torrents gurgle through the street ;

But the *patched* calfskin arm against the flood
In neat, light shoes, impervious to the mud.

Wear seemly gloves ; not black, nor yet too light,
And least of all the pair that once was white ;
Let the dead party where you told your loves
Bury in peace its dead bouquets and gloves ;
Shave like the goat, if so your fancy bids,
But be a parent, — don't neglect your kids.

Have a good hat ; the secret of your looks
Lives with the beaver in Canadian brooks ;
Virtue may flourish in an old cravat,
But man and nature scorn the shocking hat.
Does beauty slight you from her bright abodes ?
Like old Apollo, you must take to *Rhoades*,
Mount the new castor, — ice itself will melt ;
Boots, gloves may fail ; the hat is always felt !

Be shy of breastpins ; plain, well-ironed white,
With small pearl buttons, — two of them in sight, —
Is always genuine, while your gems may pass,
Though real diamonds, for ignoble glass.
But spurn those paltry cis-Atlantic lies,
That round his breast the shabby rustic ties ;
Breathe not the name, profaned to hallow things
The indignant laundress blushes when she brings !

Our freeborn race, averse to every check,
 Has tossed the yoke of Europe from its *neck* ;
 From the green prairie, to the sea-girt town,
 The whole wide nation turns its collars down.

The stately neck is manhood's manliest part ;
 It takes the life-blood freshest from the heart ;
 With short, curled ringlets close around it spread,
 How light and strong it lifts the Grecian head !
 Thine, fair Erectheus of Minerva's wall ; —
 Or thine, young athlete of the Louvre's hall,
 Smooth as the pillar flashing in the sun
 That filled the arena where thy wreaths were won, —
 Firm as the band that clasps the antlered spoil
 Strained in the winding anaconda's coil !

I spare the contrast ; it were only kind
 To be a little, nay, intensely blind :
 Choose for yourself : I know it cuts your ear ;
 I know the points will sometimes interfere ;
 I know that often, like the filial John,
 Whom sleep surprised with half his drapery on,
 You show your features to the astonished town
 With one side standing and the other down ; —
 But O my friend ! my favorite fellow-man !
 If Nature made you on her modern plan,
 Sooner than wander with your windpipe bare, —
 The fruit of Eden ripening in the air, —
 With that lean head-stalk, that protruding chin,
 Wear standing collars, were they made of tin !

And have a neck-cloth, — by the throat of Jove !
Cut from the funnel of a rusty stove !

The long-drawn lesson narrows to its close,
Chill, slender, slow, the dwindled current flows ;
Tired of the ripples on its feeble springs,
Once more the Muse unfolds her upward wings.

Land of my birth, with this unhallowed tongue,
Thy hopes, thy dangers, I perchance had sung ;
But who shall sing, in brutal disregard
Of all the essentials of the “ native bard ” ?

Lake, sea, shore, prairie, forest, mountain, fall,
His eye omnivorous must devour them all ;
The tallest summits and the broadest tides
His foot must compass with its giant strides,
Where Ocean thunders, where Missouri rolls,
And tread at once the tropics and the poles ;
His food all forms of earth, fire, water, air,
His home all space, his birth-place everywhere.

Some grave compatriot, having seen perhaps
The pictured page that goes in Worcester's Maps,
And read in earnest what was said in jest,
“ Who sells fat oxen ” — please to add the rest, —
Sprung the odd notion that the poet's dreams
Grow in the ratio of his hills and streams,
And hence insisted that the aforesaid “ bard,”
Pink of the future, — fancy's pattern-card, —

The babe of Nature in the "giant West,"
Must be of course her biggest and her best.

But, were it true that nature's fostering sun
Saves all its daylight for that favorite one,
If for his forehead every wreath she means,
And we, poor children, must not touch the greens;
Since rocks and rivers cannot take the road
To seek the elected in his own abode,
Some voice must answer for her precious heir,
One solemn question; Who shall pay his fare?

O when at length the expected bard shall come,
Land of our pride, to strike thine echoes dumb,
(And many a voice exclaims in prose and rhyme
It's getting late, and he's behind his time,)
When all thy mountains clap their hands in joy,
And all thy cataracts thunder "That's the boy," —
Say if with him the reign of song shall end,
And Heaven declare its final dividend?

Be calm, dear brother! whose impassioned strain
Comes from an alley watered by a drain;
The little Mincio, dribbling to the Po,
Beats all the epics of the Hoang Ho;
If loved in earnest by the tuneful maid,
Don't mind their nonsense, — never be afraid!

The nurse of poets feeds her winged brood
By common firesides, on familiar food;

In a low hamlet, by a narrow stream,
 Where bovine rustics used to doze and dream,
 She filled young William's fiery fancy full,
 While old John Shakspeare talked of beeves and wool !

No Alpine needle, with its climbing spire,
 Brings down for mortals the Promethean fire,
 If careless nature have forgot to frame
 An altar, worthy of the sacred flame.

Unblest by any save the goat-herd's lines,
 Mont Blanc rose soaring through his "sea of pines" ;
 In vain the Arve and Arveiron dash,
 No hymn salutes them but the Ranz des Vaches,
 Till lazy Coleridge, by the morning's light,
 Gazed for a moment on the fields of white,
 And lo, the glaciers found at length a tongue,
 Mont Blanc was vocal, and Chamouni sung !

Children of wealth or want, to each is given
 One spot of green, and all the blue of heaven !
 Enough, if these their outward shows impart ;
 The rest is thine, — the scenery of the heart.

If passion's hectic in thy stanzas glow,
 Thy heart's best life-blood ebbing as they flow,
 If with thy verse thy strength and bloom distil,
 Drained by the pulses of the fevered thrill ;
 If sound's sweet effluence polarize thy brain,
 And thoughts turn crystals in thy fluid strain, —
 Nor rolling ocean, nor the prairie's bloom,
 Nor streaming cliffs, nor rayless cavern's gloom,

Need'st thou, young poet, to inform thy line ;
 Thy own broad signet stamps thy song divine !

Let others gaze where silvery streams are rolled,
 And chase the rainbow for its cup of gold ;
 To thee all landscapes wear a heavenly dye,
 Changed in the glance of thy prismatic eye ;
 Nature evoked thee in sublimer throes,
 For thee her inmost Arethusa flows, —
 The mighty mother's living depths are stirred, —
 Thou art the starred Osiris of the herd !

A few brief lines ; they touch on solemn chords,
 And hearts may leap to hear their honest words ;
 Yet, ere the jarring bugle blast is blown,
 The softer lyre shall breathe its soothing tone.

New England ! proudly may thy children claim
 Their ancient birthright by its humblest name !
 Cold are thy skies, but, ever fresh and clear,
 No rank malaria stains thine atmosphere ;
 No fungous weeds invade thy scanty soil
 Scarred by the ploughshares of unslumbering toil.
 Long may the doctrines by thy sages taught,
 Raised from the quarries where their sires have wrought,
 Be like the granite of thy rock-ribbed land, —
 As slow to rear, as obdurate to stand ;
 And as the ice, that leaves thy crystal mine,
 Chills the fierce alcohol in the Creole's wine,
 So may the doctrines of thy sober school
 Keep the hot theories of thy neighbors cool !

If ever, trampling on her ancient path,
 Cankered by treachery, or inflamed by wrath,
 With smooth "Resolves," or with discordant cries,
 The mad Briareus of disunion rise,
 Chiefs of New England! by your sires' renown,
 Dash the red torches of the rebel down!
 Flood his black hearth-stone till its flames expire,
 Though your old Sachem fanned his council-fire!

But if at last, — her fading cycle run, —
 The tongue must forfeit what the arm has won,
 Then rise, wild Ocean! roll thy surging shock
 Full on old Plymouth's desecrated rock!
 Scale the proud shaft degenerate hands have hewn,
 Where bleeding Valor stained the flowers of June!
 Sweep in one tide her spires and turrets down,
 And howl her dirge above Monadnock's crown!

List not the tale; the Pilgrim's ancient shore,
 Though strewn with weeds, is granite at the core;
 O rather trust that He who made her free
 Will keep her true, as long as faith shall be!

Farewell! yet, lingering through the destined hour,
 Leave, sweet Enchantress, one memorial flower!

An Angel, floating o'er the waste of snow
 That clad our western desert long ago,
 (The same fair spirit, who, unseen by day,
 Shone as a star along the Mayflower's way,)

Sent, the first herald of the Heavenly plan,
 To choose on earth a resting-place for man, —
 Tired with his flight along the unvaried field,
 Turned to soar upwards, when his glance revealed
 A calm, bright bay, enclosed in rocky bounds,
 And at its entrance stood three sister mounds.

The Angel spake : This threefold hill shall be ⁽⁴⁾
 The home of Arts, the nurse of Liberty !
 One stately summit from its shaft shall pour
 Its deep-red blaze, along the darkened shore ;
 Emblem of thoughts, that, kindling far and wide,
 In danger's night shall be a Nation's guide.
 One swelling crest the citadel shall crown,
 Its slanted bastions black with battle's frown,
 And bid the sons that tread its scowling heights
 Bare their strong arms for man and all his rights !
 One silent steep along the northern wave
 Shall hold the patriarch's and the hero's grave ;
 When fades the torch, when o'er the peaceful scene
 The embattled fortress smiles in living green,
 The cross of Faith, the anchor staff of Hope,
 Shall stand eternal on its grassy slope ;
 There through all time shall faithful Memory tell :
 " Here Virtue toiled, and Patriot Valor fell ;
 " Thy free, proud fathers slumber at thy side,
 " Live as they lived, or perish as they died ! "

NOTES.

(1) Page 7. *Οἷη περὶ φύλλων γενεῆ, τοιῆδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.*

Iliad, VI. 146.

Wesley quotes this line in his account of his early doubts and perplexities. See *Southey's Life of Wesley*, Vol. II. p. 185.

(2) Page 12. The churches referred to in the lines which follow are

1. "King's Chapel," the foundation of which was laid by Governor Shirley, in 1749.

2. The church in Brattle Square, consecrated in 1773. The completion of this edifice, the design of which included a spire, was prevented by the troubles of the Revolution, and its plain, square tower presents nothing more attractive than a massive simplicity. In the front of this tower is still seen, half imbedded in the brick-work, a cannon-ball, which was thrown from the American fortifications at Cambridge, during the bombardment of the city, then occupied by the British troops.

3. The "Old South," first occupied for public worship in 1730.

4. Park Street Church, built in 1809, the tall, white steeple of which is the most conspicuous of all the Boston spires.

5. Christ Church, opened for public worship in 1723, and containing a set of eight bells, the only chime in Boston.

(3) Page 15. For the propriety of the term "*Celtic* blackness," see *Lawrence's Lectures*, (Salem, 1828,) pp. 452, 453. But the ancient Celts appear to have been a xanthous, or fair-haired race. See *Prichard's Nat. Hist. of Man*, (London, 1843,) pp. 183, 193, 196.

(4) Page 31. The name first given by the English to Boston was TRIMOUNTAIN. The three hills upon and around which the city is built are Beacon Hill, Fort Hill, and Copp's Hill.

In the early records of the Colony, it is mentioned under date of May 6th, 1635, that "A BEACON is to be set on the Sentry hill, at Boston, to give notice to the country of any danger; to be guarded by one man stationed near, and fired as occasion may be." The last Beacon was blown down in 1789.

The eastern side of Fort Hill was formerly "a ragged cliff, that seemed placed by nature in front of the entrance to the harbor for the purposes of defence, to which it was very soon applied, and from which it obtained its present name." Its summit is now a beautiful green enclosure.

Copp's Hill was used as a burial-ground from a very early period. The part of it employed for this purpose slopes towards the water upon the northern side. From its many interesting records of the dead I select the following, which may serve to show what kind of dust it holds.

"Here lies buried in a
Stone Grave 10 feet deep,
Cap^t DANIEL MALCOM Mercht^t
who departed this Life
October 23d, 1769,
Aged 44 years.
a true son of Liberty.
a Friend to the Publick,
an Enemy to oppression,
and one of the foremost
in opposing the Revenue Acts
on America."

The gravestone from which I copied this inscription is bruised and splintered by the bullets of the British soldiers.

