

VARIOUS

THE ATLANTIC
MONTHLY, VOLUME 09,
NO. 56, JUNE, 1862

Various

**The Atlantic Monthly,
Volume 09, No. 56, June, 1862**

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The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 56, June, 1862 / Various —
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Various The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 56, June, 1862 / A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics

WALKING

I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil,—to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister, and the school-committee, and every one of you will take care of that.

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks,—who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*: which word is beautifully derived "from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretence of going *à la Sainte Terre*," to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes a *Sainte-Terrer*" a Saunterer,—a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. Some, however, would derive the word from *sans terre*, without land or a home, which, therefore, in the good sense, will mean, having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering. He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all; but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea. But I prefer the first, which, indeed, is the most probable derivation. For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels.

It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises. Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to the old hearth-side from which we set out. Half the walk is but retracing our steps. We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return,—prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms. If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again,—if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk.

To come down to my own experience, my companion and I, for I sometimes have a companion, take pleasure in fancying ourselves knights of a new, or rather an old, order,—not Equestrians or Chevaliers, not Ritters or Riders, but Walkers, a still more ancient and honorable class, I trust. The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker,—not the Knight, but Walker Errant. He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People.

We have felt that we almost alone hereabouts practised this noble art; though, to tell the truth, at least, if their own assertions are to be received, most of my townsmen would fain walk sometimes, as I do, but they cannot. No wealth can buy the requisite leisure, freedom, and independence, which are the capital in this profession. It comes only by the grace of God. It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker. You must be born into the family of the Walkers. *Ambulator nascitur*,

non fit. Some of my townsmen, it is true, can remember and have described to me some walks which they took ten years ago, in which they were so blessed as to lose themselves for half an hour in the woods; but I know very well that they have confined themselves to the highway ever since, whatever pretensions they may make to belong to this select class. No doubt they were elevated for a moment as by the reminiscence of a previous state of existence, when even they were foresters and outlaws.

"When he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small
Of byrdes mery syngynge.

"It is ferre gone, sayd Robyn,
That I was last here;
Me lyste a lytell for to shote
At the donne dere."

I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them,—as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon,—I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago.

I, who cannot stay in my chamber for a single day without acquiring some rust, and when sometimes I have stolen forth for a walk at the eleventh hour of four o'clock in the afternoon, too late to redeem the day, when the shades of night were already beginning to be mingled with the daylight, have felt as if I had committed some sin to be atoned for,—I confess that I am astonished at the power of endurance, to say nothing of the moral insensibility, of my neighbors who confine themselves to shops and offices the whole day for weeks and months, ay, and years almost together. I know not what manner of stuff they are of,—sitting there now at three o'clock in the afternoon, as if it were three o'clock in the morning. Bonaparte may talk of the three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, but it is nothing to the courage which can sit down cheerfully at this hour in the afternoon over against one's self whom you have known all the morning, to starve out a garrison to whom you are bound by such strong ties of sympathy. I wonder that about this time, or say between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, too late for the morning papers and too early for the evening ones, there is not a general explosion heard up and down the street, scattering a legion of antiquated and house-bred notions and whims to the four winds for an airing,—and so the evil cure itself.

How womankind, who are confined to the house still more than men, stand it I do not know; but I have ground to suspect that most of them do not *stand* it at all. When, early in a summer afternoon, we have been shaking the dust of the village from the skirts of our garments, making haste past those houses with purely Doric or Gothic fronts, which have such an air of repose about them, my companion whispers that probably about these times their occupants are all gone to bed. Then it is that I appreciate the beauty and the glory of architecture, which itself never turns in, but forever stands out and erect, keeping watch over the slumberers.

No doubt temperament, and, above all, age, have a good deal to do with it. As a man grows older, his ability to sit still and follow in-door occupations increases. He grows vespertinal in his habits as the evening of life approaches, till at last he comes forth only just before sundown, and gets all the walk that he requires in half an hour.

But the walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise, as it is called, as the sick take medicine at stated hours,—as the swinging of dumb-bells or chairs; but is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day. If you would get exercise, go in search of the springs of life. Think of a man's swinging dumb-bells for his health, when those springs are bubbling up in far-off pastures unsought by him!

Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveller asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce a certain roughness of character,—will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer qualities of our nature, as on the face and hands, or as severe manual labor robs the hands of some of their delicacy of touch. So staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual and moral growth, if the sun had shone and the wind blown on us a little less; and no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. But methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough,—that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience. There will be so much the more air and sunshine in our thoughts. The callous palms of the laborer are conversant with finer tissues of self-respect and heroism, whose touch thrills the heart, than the languid fingers of idleness. That is mere sentimentality that lies abed by day and thinks itself white, far from the tan and callus of experience.

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall? Even some sects of philosophers have felt the necessity of importing the woods to themselves, since they did not go to the woods. "They planted groves and walks of Platanes," where they took *subdiales ambulationes* in porticos open to the air. Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head, and I am not where my body is,—I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder, when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works,—for this may sometimes happen.

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farm-house which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Nowadays almost all man's improvements, so called, as the building of houses, and the cutting down of the forest and of all large trees, simply deform the landscape, and make it more and more tame and cheap. A people who would begin by burning the fences and let the forest stand! I saw the fences half consumed, their ends lost in the middle of the prairie, and some worldly miser with a surveyor looking after his bounds, while heaven had taken place around him, and he did not see the angels going to and fro, but was looking for an old post-hole in the midst of paradise. I looked again, and saw him standing in the middle of a boggy, stygian fen, surrounded by devils, and he had found

his bounds without a doubt, three little stones, where a stake had been driven, and looking nearer, I saw that the Prince of Darkness was his surveyor.

I can easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do: first along by the river, and then the brook, and then the meadow and the wood-side. There are square miles in my vicinity which have no inhabitant. From many a hill I can see civilization and the abodes of man afar. The farmers and their works are scarcely more obvious than woodchucks and their burrows. Man and his affairs, church and state and school, trade and commerce, and manufactures and agriculture, even politics, the most alarming of them all,—I am pleased to see how little space they occupy in the landscape. Politics is but a narrow field, and that still narrower highway yonder leads to it. I sometimes direct the traveller thither. If you would go to the political world, follow the great road,—follow that market-man, keep his dust in your eyes, and it will lead you straight to it; for it, too, has its place merely, and does not occupy all space. I pass from it as from a beanfield into the forest, and it is forgotten. In one half-hour I can walk off to some portion of the earth's surface where a man does not stand from one year's end to another, and there, consequently, politics are not, for they are but as the cigar-smoke of a man.

The village is the place to which the roads tend, a sort of expansion of the highway, as a lake of a river. It is the body of which roads are the arms and legs,—a trivial or quadrivial place, the thoroughfare and ordinary of travellers. The word is from the Latin *villa*, which, together with *via*, a way, or more anciently *ved* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho*, to carry, because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried. They who got their living by teaming were said *vellaturam facere*. Hence, too, apparently, the Latin word *vilis* and our vile; also *villain*. This suggests what kind of degeneracy villagers are liable to. They are wayworn by the travel that goes by and over them, without travelling themselves.

Some do not walk at all; others walk in the highways; a few walk across lots. Roads are made for horses and men of business. I do not travel in them much, comparatively, because I am not in a hurry to get to any tavern or grocery or livery-stable or depot to which they lead. I am a good horse to travel, but not from choice a roadster. The landscape-painter uses the figures of men to mark a road. He would not make that use of my figure. I walk out into a Nature such as the old prophets and poets, Menu, Moses, Homer, Chaucer, walked in. You may name it America, but it is not America: neither Americus Vesputius, nor Columbus, nor the rest were the discoverers of it. There is a truer account of it in mythology than in any history of America, so called, that I have seen.

However, there are a few old roads that may be trodden with profit, as if they led somewhere now that they are nearly discontinued. There is the Old Marlborough Road, which does not go to Marlborough now, methinks, unless that is Marlborough where it carries me. I am the bolder to speak of it here, because I presume that there are one or two such roads in every town.

THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

Where they once dug for money,
But never found any;
Where sometimes Martial Miles
Singly files,
And Elijah Wood,
I fear for no good:
No other man,
Save Elisha Dugan,—
O man of wild habits,

Partridges and rabbits,
Who hast no cares
Only to set snares,
Who liv'st all alone,
Close to the bone,
And where life is sweetest
Constantly eatest.
When the spring stirs my blood
With the instinct to travel,
I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road.
Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it;
It is a living way,
As the Christians say.
Not many there be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.
What is it, what is it,
But a direction out there,
And the bare possibility
Of going somewhere?
Great guide-boards of stone,
But travellers none;
Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns.
It is worth going to see
Where you *might* be.
What king
Did the thing,
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen,
Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby?
They're a great endeavor
To be something forever;
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveller might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that is known;
Which another might read,
In his extreme need.
I know one or two
Lines that would do,
Literature that might stand
All over the land,
Which a man could remember
Till next December,

And road again in the spring,
After the thawing.
If with fancy unfurled
You leave your abode,
You may go round the world
By the Old Marlborough Road.

At present, in this vicinity, the best part of the land is not private property; the landscape is not owned, and the walker enjoys comparative freedom. But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only,—when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the *public* road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come.

What is it that makes it so hard sometimes to determine whither we will walk?

I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way; but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one. We would fain take that walk, never yet taken by us through this actual world, which is perfectly symbolical of the path which we love to travel in the interior and ideal world; and sometimes, no doubt, we find it difficult to choose our direction, because it does not yet exist distinctly in our idea.

When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle,—varies a few degrees, and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun. I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for the thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly towards the setting sun, and that there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. Within a few years we have witnessed the phenomenon of a southeastward migration, in the settlement of Australia; but this affects us as a retrograde movement, and, judging from the moral and physical character of the first generation of Australians, has not yet proved a successful experiment. The eastern Tartars think that there is nothing west beyond Thibet. "The world ends there," say they; "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." It is unmitigated East where they live.

We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. The Atlantic is a Lethean stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World

and its institutions. If we do not succeed this time, there is perhaps one more chance for the race left before it arrives on the banks of the Styx; and that is in the Lethe of the Pacific, which is three times as wide.

I know not how significant it is, or how far it is an evidence of singularity, that an individual should thus consent in his pettiest walk with the general movement of the race; but I know that something akin to the migratory instinct in birds and quadrupeds,—which, in some instances, is known to have affected the squirrel tribe, impelling them to a general and mysterious movement, in which they were seen, say some, crossing the broadest rivers, each on its particular chip, with its tail raised for a sail, and bridging narrower streams with their dead,—that something like the *furor* which affects the domestic cattle in the spring, and which is referred to a worm in their tails,—affects both nations and individuals, either perennially or from time to time. Not a flock of wild geese cackles over our town, but it to some extent unsettles the value of real estate here, and, if I were a broker, I should probably take that disturbance into account.

"Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strange strondes."

Every sunset which I witness inspires me with the desire to go to a West as distant and as fair as that into which the sun goes down. He appears to migrate westward daily, and tempt us to follow him. He is the Great Western Pioneer whom the nations follow. We dream all night of those mountain-ridges in the horizon, though they may be of vapor only, which were last gilded by his rays. The island of Atlantis, and the islands and gardens of the Hesperides, a sort of terrestrial paradise, appear to have been the Great West of the ancients, enveloped in mystery and poetry. Who has not seen in imagination, when looking into the sunset sky, the gardens of the Hesperides, and the foundation of all those fables?

Columbus felt the westward tendency more strongly than any before. He obeyed it, and found a New World for Castile and Leon. The herd of men in those days scented fresh pastures from afar.

"And now the sun had stretched out all the
hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay;
At last *he* rose, and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Where on the globe can there be found an area of equal extent with that occupied by the bulk of our States, so fertile and so rich and varied in its productions, and at the same time so habitable by the European, as this is? Michaux, who knew but part of them, says that "the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe; in the United States there are more than one hundred and forty species that exceed thirty feet in height; in France there are but thirty that attain this size." Later botanists more than confirm his observations. Humboldt came to America to realize his youthful dreams of a tropical vegetation, and he beheld it in its greatest perfection in the primitive forests of the Amazon, the most gigantic wilderness on the earth, which he has so eloquently described. The geographer Guyot, himself a European, goes farther,—farther than I am ready to follow him; yet not when he says,—"As the plant is made for the animal, as the vegetable world is made for the animal world, America is made for the man of the Old World The man of the Old World sets out upon his way. Leaving the highlands of Asia, he descends from station to station towards Europe. Each of his steps is marked by a new civilization superior to the preceding, by a greater power of development. Arrived at the Atlantic, he pauses on the shore of this unknown ocean, the bounds of which he knows not, and turns upon his footprints for an instant." When he has

exhausted the rich soil of Europe, and reinvigorated himself, "then recommences his adventurous career westward as in the earliest ages." So far Guyot.

From this western impulse coming in contact with the barrier of the Atlantic sprang the commerce and enterprise of modern times. The younger Michaux, in his "Travels West of the Alleghanies in 1802," says that the common inquiry in the newly settled West was, "From what part of the world have you come?" As if these vast and fertile regions would naturally be the place of meeting and common country of all the inhabitants of the globe."

To use an obsolete Latin word, I might say, *Ex Oriente lux; ex Occidente FRUX*. From the East light; from the West fruit.

Sir Francis Head, an English traveller and a Governor-General of Canada, tells us that "in both the northern and southern hemispheres of the New World, Nature has not only outlined her works on a larger scale, but has painted the whole picture with brighter and more costly colors than she used in delineating and in beautifying the Old World.... The heavens of America appear infinitely higher, the sky is bluer, the air is fresher, the cold is intenser, the moon looks larger, the stars are brighter, the thunder is louder, the lightning is vividder, the wind is stronger, the rain is heavier, the mountains are higher, the rivers longer, the forests bigger, the plains broader." This statement will do at least to set against Buffon's account of this part of the world and its productions.

Linnaeus said long ago, "Nescio quae facies *laeta, glabra* plantis Americanis: I know not what there is of joyous and smooth in the aspect of American plants"; and I think that in this country there are no, or at most very few, *Africanæ bestice*, African beasts, as the Romans called them, and that in this respect also it is peculiarly fitted for the habitation of man. We are told that within three miles of the centre of the East-Indian city of Singapore, some of the inhabitants are annually carried off by tigers; but the traveller can lie down in the woods at night almost anywhere in North America without fear of wild beasts.

These are encouraging testimonies. If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, and the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man,—as there is something in the mountain-air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? I trust that we shall be more imaginative, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher, and more ethereal, as our sky,—our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains,—our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests,—and our hearts shall even correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas. Perchance there will appear to the traveller something, he knows not what, of *laeta* and *glabra*, of joyous and serene, in our very faces. Else to what end does the world go on, and why was America discovered?

To Americans I hardly need to say,—

"Westward the star of empire takes its way."

As a true patriot, I should be ashamed to think that Adam in paradise was more favorably situated on the whole than the backwoodsman in this country.

Our sympathies in Massachusetts are not confined to New England; though we may be estranged from the South, we sympathize with the West. There is the home of the younger sons, as among the Scandinavians they took to the sea for their inheritance. It is too late to be studying Hebrew; it is more important to understand even the slang of to-day.

Some months ago I went to see a panorama of the Rhine. It was like a dream of the Middle Ages. I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination, under bridges built by the Romans, and repaired by later heroes, past cities and castles whose very names were music to my

ears, and each of which was the subject of a legend. There were Ehrenbreitstein and Rolandseck and Coblenz, which I knew only in history. They were ruins that interested me chiefly. There seemed to come up from its waters and its vine-clad hills and valleys a hushed music as of Crusaders departing for the Holy Land. I floated along under the spell of enchantment, as if I had been transported to an heroic age, and breathed an atmosphere of chivalry.

Soon after, I went to see a panorama of the Mississippi, and as I worked my way up the river in the light of to-day, and saw the steamboats wooding up, counted the rising cities, gazed on the fresh ruins of Nauvoo, beheld the Indians moving west across the stream, and, as before I had looked up the Moselle, now looked up the Ohio and the Missouri, and heard the legends of Dubuque and of Wenona's Cliff,—still thinking more of the future than of the past or present,—I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a different kind; that the foundations of castles were yet to be laid, and the famous bridges were yet to be thrown over the river; and I felt that *this was the heroic age itself*, though we know it not, for the hero is commonly the simplest and obscurest of men.

The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the world. Every tree sends its fibres forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plough and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every State which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the Northern forests who were.

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock-spruce or arbor-vitae in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our Northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. And herein, perchance, they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughter-house pork to make a man of. Give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure,—as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.

There are some intervals which border the strain of the wood-thrush, to which I would migrate, —wild lands where no settler has squatted; to which, methinks, I am already acclimated.

The African hunter Cummings tells us that the skin of the eland, as well as that of most other antelopes just killed, emits the most delicious perfume of trees and grass. I would have every man so much like a wild antelope, so much a part and parcel of Nature, that his very person should thus sweetly advertise our senses of his presence, and remind us of those parts of Nature which he most haunts. I feel no disposition to be satirical, when the trapper's coat emits the odor of musquash even; it is a sweeter scent to me than that which commonly exhales from the merchant's or the scholar's garments. When I go into their wardrobes and handle their vestments, I am reminded of no grassy plains and flowery meads which they have frequented, but of dusty merchants' exchanges and libraries rather.

A tanned skin is something more than respectable, and perhaps olive is a fitter color than white for a man,—a denizen of the woods. "The pale white man!" I do not wonder that the African pitied him. Darwin the naturalist says, "A white man bathing by the side of a Tahitian was like a plant bleached by the gardener's art, compared with a fine, dark green one, growing vigorously in the open fields."

Ben Jonson exclaims,—

"How near to good is what is fair!"

So I would say,—

How near to good is what is *wild!*

Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors, who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest-trees.

Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. When, formerly, I have analyzed my partiality for some farm which I had contemplated purchasing, I have frequently found that I was attracted solely by a few square rods of impermeable and unfathomable bog,—a natural sink in one corner of it. That was the jewel which dazzled me. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village. There are no richer parterres to my eyes than the dense beds of dwarf andromeda (*Cassandra calyculata*) which cover these tender places on the earth's surface. Botany cannot go farther than tell me the names of the shrubs which grow there,—the high-blueberry, paniced andromeda, lamb-kill, azalea, and rhodora,—all standing in the quaking sphagnum. I often think that I should like to have my house front on this mass of dull red bushes, omitting other flower plots and borders, transplanted spruce and trim box, even gravelled walks,—to have this fertile spot under my windows, not a few imported barrow-fulls of soil only to cover the sand which was thrown out in digging the cellar. Why not put my house, my parlor, behind this plot, instead of behind that meagre assemblage of curiosities, that poor apology for a Nature and Art, which I call my front-yard? It is an effort to clear up and make a decent appearance when the carpenter and mason have departed, though done as much for the passer-by as the dweller within. The most tasteful front-yard fence was never an agreeable object of study to me; the most elaborate ornaments, acorn-tops, or what not, soon wearied and disgusted me. Bring your sills up to the very edge of the swamp, then, (though it may not be the best place for a dry cellar,) so that there be no access on that side to citizens. Front-yards are not made to walk in, but, at most, through, and you could go in the back way.

Yes, though you may think me perverse, if it were proposed to me to dwell in the neighborhood of the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived, or else of a dismal swamp, I should certainly decide for the swamp. How vain, then, have been all your labors, citizens, for me!

My spirits infallibly rise in proportion to the outward dreariness. Give me the ocean, the desert, or the wilderness! In the desert, pure air and solitude compensate for want of moisture and fertility. The traveller Burton says of it,—“Your *morale* improves; you become frank and cordial, hospitable and single-minded. . . . In the desert, spirituous liquors excite only disgust. There is a keen enjoyment in a mere animal existence.” They who have been travelling long on the steppes of Tartary say,—“On reëntering cultivated lands, the agitation, perplexity, and turmoil of civilization oppressed and suffocated us; the air seemed to fail us, and we felt every moment as if about to die of asphyxia.” When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable, and, to the citizen, most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place,—a *sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow of Nature. The wild-wood covers the virgin mould,—and the same soil is good for men and for trees. A man's health requires as many acres of meadow to his prospect as his farm does loads of muck. There are the strong meats on which he feeds. A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. A township where one primitive forest waves above, while another primitive forest rots below,—such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey.

To preserve wild animals implies generally the creation of a forest for them to dwell in or resort to. So is it with man. A hundred years ago they sold bark in our streets peeled from our own woods.

In the very aspect of those primitive and rugged trees, there was, methinks, a tanning principle which hardened and consolidated the fibres of men's thoughts. Ah! already I shudder for these comparatively degenerate days of my native village, when you cannot collect a load of bark of good thickness,—and we no longer produce tar and turpentine.

The civilized nations—Greece, Rome, England—have been sustained by the primitive forests which anciently rotted where they stand. They survive as long as the soil is not exhausted. Alas for human culture! little is to be expected of a nation, when the vegetable mould is exhausted, and it is compelled to make manure of the bones of its fathers. There the poet sustains himself merely by his own superfluous fat, and the philosopher comes down on his marrow-bones.

It is said to be the task of the American "to work the virgin soil," and that "agriculture here already assumes proportions unknown everywhere else." I think that the farmer displaces the Indian even because he redeems the meadow, and so makes himself stronger and in some respects more natural. I was surveying for a man the other day a single straight line one hundred and thirty-two rods long, through a swamp, at whose entrance might have been written the words which Dante read over the entrance to the infernal regions,—"*Leave all hope, ye that enter,*"—that is, of ever getting out again; where at one time I saw my employer actually up to his neck and swimming for his life in his property, though it was still winter. He had another similar swamp which I could not survey at all, because it was completely under water, and nevertheless, with regard to a third swamp, which I did *survey* from a distance, he remarked to me, true to his instincts, that he would not part with it for any consideration, on account of the mud which it contained. And that man intends to put a girdling ditch round the whole in the course of forty months, and so redeem it by the magic of his spade. I refer to him only as the type of a class.

The weapons with which we have gained our most important victories, which should be handed down as heirlooms from father to son, are not the sword and the lance, but the bush-whack, the turf-cutter, the spade, and the bog-hoe, rusted with the blood of many a meadow, and begrimed with the dust of many a hard-fought field. The very winds blew the Indian's cornfield into the meadow, and pointed out the way which he had not the skill to follow. He had no better implement with which to intrench himself in the land than a clamshell. But the farmer is armed with plough and spade.

In Literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dulness is but another name for lameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in "Hamlet" and the "Iliad," in all the Scriptures and Mythologies, not learned in the schools, that delights us. As the wild duck is more swift and beautiful than the tame, so is the wild—the mallard—thought, which 'mid falling dews wings its way above the fens. A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East. Genius is a light which makes the darkness visible, like the lightning's flash, which perchance shatters the temple of knowledge itself,—and not a taper lighted at the hearth-stone of the race, which pales before the light of common day.

English literature, from the days of the minstrels to the Lake Poets,—Chaucer and Spenser and Milton, and even Shakespeare, included,—breathes no quite fresh and in this sense wild strain. It is an essentially tame and civilized literature, reflecting Greece and Rome. Her wilderness is a green-wood,—her wild man a Robin Hood. There is plenty of genial love of Nature, but not so much of Nature herself. Her chronicles inform us when her wild animals, but not when the wild man in her, became extinct.

The science of Humboldt is one thing, poetry is another thing. The poet to-day, notwithstanding all the discoveries of science, and the accumulated learning of mankind, enjoys no advantage over Homer.

Where is the literature which gives expression to Nature? He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him; who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved; who derived his words as often as

he used them,—transplanted them to his page with earth adhering to their roots; whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half-smothered between two musty leaves in a library,—ay, to bloom and bear fruit there, after their kind, annually, for the faithful reader, in sympathy with surrounding Nature.

I do not know of any poetry to quote which adequately expresses this yearning for the Wild. Approached from this side, the best poetry is tame. I do not know where to find in any literature, ancient or modern, any account which contents me of that Nature with which even I am acquainted. You will perceive that I demand something which no Augustan nor Elizabethan age, which no *culture*, in short, can give. Mythology comes nearer to it than anything. How much more fertile a Nature, at least, has Grecian mythology its root in than English literature! Mythology is the crop which the Old World bore before its soil was exhausted, before the fancy and imagination were affected with blight; and which it still bears, wherever its pristine vigor is unabated. All other literatures endure only as the elms which overshadow our houses; but this is like the great dragon-tree of the Western Isles, as old as mankind, and, whether that does or not, will endure as long; for the decay of other literatures makes the soil in which it thrives.

The West is preparing to add its fables to those of the East. The valleys of the Ganges, the Nile, and the Rhine, having yielded their crop, it remains to be seen what the valleys of the Amazon, the Plate, the Orinoco, the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi will produce. Perchance, when, in the course of ages, American liberty has become a fiction of the past,—as it is to some extent a fiction of the present,—the poets of the world will be inspired by American mythology.

The wildest dreams of wild men, even, are not the less true, though they may not recommend themselves to the sense which is most common among Englishmen and Americans to-day. It is not every truth that recommends itself to the common sense. Nature has a place for the wild clematis as well as for the cabbage. Some expressions of truth are reminiscent,—others merely sensible, as the phrase is,—others prophetic. Some forms of disease, even, may prophesy forms of health. The geologist has discovered that the figures of serpents, griffins, flying dragons, and other fanciful embellishments of heraldry, have their prototypes in the forms of fossil species which were extinct before man was created, and hence "indicate a faint and shadowy knowledge of a previous state of organic existence." The Hindoos dreamed that the earth rested on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent; and though it may be an unimportant coincidence, it will not be out of place here to state, that a fossil tortoise has lately been discovered in Asia large enough to support an elephant. I confess that I am partial to these wild fancies, which transcend the order of time and development. They are the sublimest recreation of the intellect. The partridge loves peas, but not those that go with her into the pot.

In short, all good things are wild and free. There is something in a strain of music, whether produced by an instrument or by the human voice,—take the sound of a bugle in a summer night, for instance,—which by its wildness, to speak without satire, reminds me of the cries emitted by wild beasts in their native forests. It is so much of their wildness as I can understand. Give me for my friends and neighbors wild men, not tame ones. The wildness of the savage is but a faint symbol of the awful ferocity with which good men and lovers meet.

I love even to see the domestic animals reassert their native rights,—any evidence that they have not wholly lost their original wild habits and vigor; as when my neighbor's cow breaks out of her pasture early in the spring and boldly swims the river, a cold, gray tide, twenty-five or thirty rods wide, swollen by the melted snow. It is the buffalo crossing the Mississippi. This exploit confers some dignity on the herd in my eyes,—already dignified. The seeds of instinct are preserved under the thick hides of cattle and horses, like seeds in the bowels of the earth, an indefinite period.

Any sportiveness in cattle is unexpected. I saw one day a herd of a dozen bullocks and cows running about and frisking in unwieldy sport, like huge rats, even like kittens. They shook their heads, raised their tails, and rushed up and down a hill, and I perceived by their horns, as well as by their

activity, their relation to the deer tribe. But, alas! a sudden loud *Whoa!* would have damped their ardor at once, reduced them from venison to beef, and stiffened their sides and sinews like the locomotive. Who but the Evil One has cried, "Whoa!" to mankind? Indeed, the life of cattle, like that of many men, is but a sort of locomotiveness; they move a side at a time, and man, by his machinery, is meeting the horse and ox half-way. Whatever part the whip has touched is thenceforth palsied. Who would ever think of a *side* of any of the supple cat tribe, as we speak of a *side* of beef?

I rejoice that horses and steers have to be broken before they can be made the slaves of men, and that men themselves have some wild oats still left to sow before they become submissive members of society. Undoubtedly, all men are not equally fit subjects for civilization; and because the majority, like dogs and sheep, are tame by inherited disposition, this is no reason why the others should have their natures broken that they may be reduced to the same level. Men are in the main alike, but they were made several in order that they might be various. If a low use is to be served, one man will do nearly or quite as well as another; if a high one, individual excellence is to be regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away, but no other man could serve so rare a use as the author of this illustration did. Confucius says,—"*The skins of the tiger and the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned.*" But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious; and tanning their skins for shoes is not the best use to which they can be put.

When looking over a list of men's names in a foreign language, as of military officers, or of authors who have written on a particular subject, I am reminded once more that there is nothing in a name. The name Menschikoff, for instance, has nothing in it to my ears more human than a whisker, and it may belong to a rat. As the names of the Poles and Russians are to us, so are ours to them. It is as if they had been named by the child's rigmarole,—*Iery wiery ichery van, tittle-tol-tan*. I see in my mind a herd of wild creatures swarming over the earth, and to each the herdsman has affixed some barbarous sound in his own dialect. The names of men are of course as cheap and meaningless as *Bose* and *Tray*, the names of dogs.

Methinks it would be some advantage to philosophy, if men were named merely in the gross, as they are known. It would be necessary only to know the genus, and perhaps the race or variety, to know the individual. We are not prepared to believe that every private soldier in a Roman army had a name of his own,—because we have not supposed that he had a character of his own. At present our only true names are nicknames. I knew a boy who, from his peculiar energy, was called "Buster" by his playmates, and this rightly supplanted his Christian name. Some travellers tell us that an Indian had no name given him at first, but earned it, and his name was his fame; and among some tribes he acquired a new name with every new exploit. It is pitiful when a man bears a name for convenience merely, who has earned neither name nor fame.

I will not allow mere names to make distinctions for me, but still see men in herds for all them. A familiar name cannot make a man less strange to me. It may be given to a savage who retains in secret his own wild title earned in the woods. We have a wild savage in us, and a savage name is perchance somewhere recorded as ours. I see that my neighbor, who bears the familiar epithet William, or Edwin, takes it off with his jacket. It does not adhere to him when asleep or in anger, or aroused by any passion or inspiration. I seem to hear pronounced by some of his kin at such a time his original wild name in some jaw-breaking or else melodious tongue.

Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard; and yet we are so early weaned from her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man,—a sort of breeding in and in, which produces at most a merely English nobility, a civilization destined to have a speedy limit.

In society, in the best institutions of men, it is easy to detect a certain precocity. When we should still be growing children, we are already little men. Give me a culture which imports much muck

from the meadows, and deepens the soil,—not that which trusts to heating manures, and improved implements and modes of culture only!

Many a poor sore-eyed student that I have heard of would grow faster, both intellectually and physically, if, instead of sitting up so very late, he honestly slumbered a fool's allowance.

There may be an excess even of informing light. Niépce, a Frenchman, discovered "actinism," that power in the sun's rays which produces a chemical effect,—that granite rocks, and stone structures, and statues of metal, "are all alike destructively acted upon during the hours of sunshine, and, but for provisions of Nature no less wonderful, would soon perish under the delicate touch of the most subtle of the agencies of the universe." But he observed that "those bodies which underwent this change during the daylight possessed the power of restoring themselves to their original conditions during the hours of night, when this excitement was no longer influencing them." Hence it has been inferred that "the hours of darkness are as necessary to the inorganic creation as we know night and sleep are to the organic kingdom." Not even does the moon shine every night, but gives place to darkness.

I would not have every man nor every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated: part will be tillage, but the greater part will be meadow and forest, not only serving an immediate use, but preparing a mould against a distant future, by the annual decay of the vegetation which it supports.

There are other letters for the child to learn than those which Cadmus invented. The Spaniards have a good term to express this wild and dusky knowledge,—*Gramática parda*, tawny grammar,—a kind of mother-wit derived from that same leopard to which I have referred.

We have heard of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It is said that knowledge is power; and the like. Methinks there is equal need of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Ignorance, what we will call Beautiful Knowledge, a knowledge useful in a higher sense: for what is most of our boasted so-called knowledge but a conceit that we know something, which robs us of the advantage of our actual ignorance? What we call knowledge is often our positive ignorance; ignorance our negative knowledge. By long years of patient industry and reading of the newspapers—for what are the libraries of science but files of newspapers?—a man accumulates a myriad facts, lays them up in his memory, and then when in some spring of his life he saunters abroad into the Great Fields of thought, he, as it were, goes to grass like a horse, and leaves all his harness behind in the stable. I would say to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, sometimes,—Go to grass. You have eaten hay long enough. The spring has come with its green crop. The very cows are driven to their country pastures before the end of May; though I have heard of one unnatural farmer who kept his cow in the barn and fed her on hay all the year round. So, frequently, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge treats its cattle.

A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful, but beautiful,—while his knowledge, so called, is oftentimes worse than useless, besides being ugly. Which is the best man to deal with,—he who knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he who really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all?

My desire for knowledge is intermittent; but my desire to bathe my head in atmospheres unknown to my feet is perennial and constant. The highest that we can attain to is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence. I do not know that this higher knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before,—a discovery that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. It is the lighting up of the mist by the sun. Man cannot *know* in any higher sense than this, any more than he can look serenely and with impunity in the face of the sun: [Greek: *Os thi noon, on kehinon nohaeseis,*]—"You will not perceive that, as perceiving a particular thing," say the Chaldean Oracles.

There is something servile in the habit of seeking after a law which we may obey. We may study the laws of matter at and for our convenience, but a successful life knows no law. It is an unfortunate discovery certainly, that of a law which binds us where we did not know before that we were bound. Live free, child of the mist,—and with respect to knowledge we are all children of the mist. The man who takes the liberty to live is superior to all the laws, by virtue of his relation to the law-maker. "That is active duty," says the Vishnu Purana, "which is not for our bondage; that is knowledge which is for our liberation: all other duty is good only unto weariness; all other knowledge is only the cleverness of an artist."

It is remarkable how few events or crises there are in our histories; how little exercised we have been in our minds; how few experiences we have had. I would fain be assured that I am growing apace and rankly, though my very growth disturb this dull equanimity,—though it be with struggle through long, dark, muggy nights or seasons of gloom. It would be well, if all our lives were a divine tragedy even, instead of this trivial comedy or farce. Dante, Bunyan, and others, appear to have been exercised in their minds more than we: they were subjected to a kind of culture such as our district schools and colleges do not contemplate. Even Mahomet, though many may scream at his name, had a good deal more to live for, ay, and to die for, than they have commonly.

When, at rare intervals, some thought visits one, as perchance he is walking on a railroad, then indeed the cars go by without his hearing them. But soon, by some inexorable law, our life goes by and the cars return.

"Gentle breeze, that wanderest unseen,
And bendest the thistles round Loira of storms,
Traveller of the windy glens,
Why hast thou left my ear so soon?"

While almost all men feel an attraction drawing them to society, few are attracted strongly to Nature. In their relation to Nature men appear to me for the most part, notwithstanding their arts, lower than the animals. It is not often a beautiful relation, as in the case of the animals. How little appreciation of the beauty of the landscape there is among us! We have to be told that the Greeks called the world [Greek: Kosmos], Beauty, or Order, but we do not see clearly why they did so, and we esteem it at best only a curious philological fact.

For my part, I feel that with regard to Nature I live a sort of border life, on the confines of a world into which I make occasional and transient forays only, and my patriotism and allegiance to the State into whose territories I seem to retreat are those of a moss-trooper. Unto a life which I call natural I would gladly follow even a will-o'-the-wisp through bogs and sloughs unimaginable, but no moon nor fire-fly has shown me the causeway to it. Nature is a personality so vast and universal that we have never seen one of her features. The walker in the familiar fields which stretch around my native town sometimes finds himself in another land than is described in their owners' deeds, as it were in some far-away field on the confines of the actual Concord, where her jurisdiction ceases, and the idea which the word Concord suggests ceases to be suggested. These farms which I have myself surveyed, these bounds which I have set up appear dimly still as through a mist; but they have no chemistry to fix them; they fade from the surface of the glass; and the picture which the painter painted stands out dimly from beneath. The world with which we are commonly acquainted leaves no trace, and it will have no anniversary.

I took a walk on Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me,—to whom the sun was servant,—who had not gone into society in the village,—who had not been called on. I saw their park, their

pleasure-ground, beyond through the wood, in Spaulding's cranberry-meadow. The pines furnished them with gables as they grew. Their house was not obvious to vision; the trees grew through it. I do not know whether I heard the sounds of a suppressed hilarity or not. They seemed to recline on the sunbeams. They have sons and daughters. They are quite well. The farmer's cart-path, which leads directly through their hall, does not in the least put them out,—as the muddy bottom of a pool is sometimes seen through the reflected skies. They never heard of Spaulding, and do not know that he is their neighbor,—notwithstanding I heard him whistle as he drove his team through the house. Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives. Their coat of arms is simply a lichen. I saw it painted on the pines and oaks. Their attics were in the tops of the trees. They are of no politics. There was no noise of labor. I did not perceive that they were weaving or spinning. Yet I did detect, when the wind lulled and hearing was done away, the finest imaginable sweet musical hum,—as of a distant hive in May, which perchance was the sound of their thinking. They had no idle thoughts, and no one without could see their work, for their industry was not as in knots and excrescences embayed.

But I find it difficult to remember them. They fade irrevocably out of my mind even now while I speak and endeavor to recall them, and recollect myself. It is only after a long and serious effort to recollect my best thoughts that I become again aware of their cohabitancy. If it were not for such families as this, I think I should move out of Concord.

We are accustomed to say in New England that few and fewer pigeons visit us every year. Our forests furnish no mast for them. So, it would seem, few and fewer thoughts visit each growing man from year to year, for the grove in our minds is laid waste,—sold to feed unnecessary fires of ambition, or sent to mill, and there is scarcely a twig left for them to perch on. They no longer build nor breed with us. In some more genial season, perchance, a faint shadow flits across the landscape of the mind, cast by the *wings* of some thought in its vernal or autumnal migration, but, looking up, we are unable to detect the substance of the thought itself. Our winged thoughts are turned to poultry. They no longer soar, and they attain only to a Shanghai and Cochin-China grandeur. Those *gra-a-ate thoughts*, those *gra-a-ate men* you hear of!

We hug the earth,—how rarely we mount! Methinks we might elevate ourselves a little more. We might climb a tree, at least. I found my account in climbing a tree once. It was a tall white pine, on the top of a hill; and though I got well pitched, I was well paid for it, for I discovered new mountains in the horizon which I had never seen before,—so much more of the earth and the heavens. I might have walked about the foot of the tree for threescore years and ten, and yet I certainly should never have seen them. But, above all, I discovered around me,—it was near the end of June,—on the ends of the topmost branches only, a few minute and delicate red cone-like blossoms, the fertile flower of the white pine looking heavenward. I carried straightway to the village the topmost spire, and showed it to stranger jurymen who walked the streets,—for it was court-week,—and to farmers and lumber-dealers and wood-choppers and hunters, and not one had ever seen the like before, but they wondered as at a star dropped down. Tell of ancient architects finishing their works on the tops of columns as perfectly as on the lower and more visible parts! Nature has from the first expanded the minute blossoms of the forest only toward the heavens, above men's heads and unobserved by them. We see only the flowers that are under our feet in the meadows. The pines have developed their delicate blossoms on the highest twigs of the wood every summer for ages, as well over the heads of Nature's red children as of her white ones; yet scarcely a farmer or hunter in the land has ever seen them.

Above all, we cannot afford not to live in the present. He is blessed over all mortals who loses no moment of the passing life in remembering the past. Unless our philosophy hears the cock crow in every barn-yard within our horizon, it is belated. That sound commonly reminds us that we are growing rusty and antique in our employments and habits of thought. His philosophy comes down to a more recent time than ours. There is something suggested by it that is a newer testament,—the gospel according to this moment. He has not fallen astern; he has got up early, and kept up early, and to be where he is is to be in season, in the foremost rank of time. It is an expression of the health and

soundness of Nature, a brag for all the world,—healthiness as of a spring burst forth, a new fountain of the Muses, to celebrate this last instant of time. Where he lives no fugitive slave laws are passed. Who has not betrayed his master many times since last he heard that note?

The merit of this bird's strain is in its freedom from all plaintiveness. The singer can easily move us to tears or to laughter, but where is he who can excite in us a pure morning joy? When, in doleful dumps, breaking the awful stillness of our wooden sidewalk on a Sunday, or, perchance, a watcher in the house of mourning, I hear a cockerel crow far or near, I think to myself, "There is one of us well, at any rate,"—and with a sudden gush return to my senses.

We had a remarkable sunset one day last November. I was walking in a meadow, the source of a small brook, when the sun at last, just before setting, after a cold gray day, reached a clear stratum in the horizon, and the softest, brightest morning sunlight fell on the dry grass and on the stems of the trees in the opposite horizon, and on the leaves of the shrub-oaks on the hill-side, while our shadows stretched long over the meadow eastward, as if we were the only motes in its beams. It was such a light as we could not have imagined a moment before, and the air also was so warm and serene that nothing was wanting to make a paradise of that meadow. When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen forever and ever an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still.

The sun sets on some retired meadow, where no house is visible, with all the glory and splendor that it lavishes on cities, and, perchance, as it has never set before,—where there is but a solitary marsh-hawk to have his wings gilded by it, or only a musquash looks out from his cabin, and there is some little black-veined brook in the midst of the marsh, just beginning to meander, winding slowly round a decaying stump. We walked in so pure and bright a light, gilding the withered grass and leaves, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or a murmur to it. The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening.

So we saunter toward the Holy Land, till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a bank-side in autumn.

WAR AND LITERATURE

It would be a task worthy of a volume, and requiring that space in order to be creditably performed, to show how war affects literature, at what points they meet, where they are at variance, if any wars stimulate, and what kinds depress the intellectual life of nations. The subject is very wide. It would embrace a discussion of the effects of war when it occurs during a period of great literary and artistic splendor, as in Athens and in the Italian Republics; whether intellectual decline is postponed or accelerated by the interests and passions of the strife; whether the preliminary concentration of the popular heart may claim the merit of adding either power or beauty to the intellectual forms which bloom together with the war.

These things are not entirely clear, and the experience of different countries is conflicting. The Thirty Years' War, though it commenced with the inspiration of great political and religious ideas, did not lift the German mind to any new demonstrations of truth or impassioned utterances of the imagination. The nation sank away from it into a barren and trivial life, although the war itself occasioned a multitude of poems, songs, hymns, and political disquisitions. The hymns of this period, which are filled with a sense of dependence, of the greatness and awfulness of an invisible eternity, and breathe a desire for the peaceful traits of a remote religious life, are at once a confession of the weariness of the best minds at the turmoil and uncertainty of the contest and a permanent contribution of the finest kind to that form of sacred literature. But princes and electors were fighting as much for the designation and establishment of their petty nationalities, which first checkered the map of Europe after the imperial Catholic power was rolled southwardly, as they were for the pure interest of Protestantism. The German intellect did eventually gain something from this political result, because it interrupted the literary absolutism which reigned at Vienna; no doubt literature grew more popular and German, but it did not very strikingly improve the great advantage, for there was at last exhaustion instead of a generously nourishing enthusiasm, and the great ideas of the period became the pieces with which diplomatists carried on their game. The *Volkslied* (popular song) came into vogue again, but it was not so fresh and natural as before; Opitz, one of the best poets of this period, is worth reading chiefly when he depicts his sources of consolation in the troubles of the time. Long poetical bulletins were written, in the epical form, to describe the battles and transactions of the war. They had an immense circulation, and served the place of newspapers. They were bright and characteristic enough for that; and indeed newspapers in Germany date from this time, and from the doggerel broadsides of satire and description which then supplanted minstrels of whatsoever name or guild, as they were carried by post, and read in every hamlet.¹ But the best of these poems were pompous, dull, and tediously elaborated. They have met the fate of newspapers, and are now on file. The more considerable poets themselves appeared to be jealous of the war; they complained bitterly that Mars had displaced Apollo; but later readers regret the ferocious sack of Magdeburg, or the death of Gustavus Adolphus, more than the silencing of all those pens.

On the other hand, Spain, while fighting for religion and a secure nationality, had her Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon, all of whom saw service in the field, and other distinguished names, originators of literary forms and successful cultivators of established ones. They created brilliant epochs for a bigoted and cruel country. All that was noble or graceful in the Spanish spirit survives in works which that country once stimulated through all the various fortunes of popular wars. But they were not wars for the sake of the people; the country has therefore sunk away from the literature which foretold so well how great she might have become, if she had been fortunate enough to represent, or

¹ Newspapers proper appeared as early as 1615 in Germany. But these rhymed gazettes were very numerous. They were more or less bulky pamphlets, with pithy sarcastic programmes for titles, and sometimes a wood or copper cut prefixed. A few of them were of Catholic origin, and one, entitled *Post-Bole*, (*The Express*), is quite as good as anything issued by the opposite party.

to sympathize with, a period of moral and spiritual ideas. Her literary forms do not describe growth, but arrested development.

A different period culminated in the genius of Milton, whose roots were in that golden age when England was flowering into popular freedom. He finally spoke for the true England, and expressed the vigorous thoughts which a bloody epoch cannot quench. Some of his noblest things were inspired by the exigencies of the Commonwealth, which he saw "as an eagle nursing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam."

The Dutch people, in their great struggle against Philip II., seemed to find a stimulus in the very exhaustions of war. The protesting ideas for which they fought drew fresh tenacity from the soil, wet with blood and tears, into which generous passion and resolution sank with every death. Here it is plain that a milder conflict, carried on by intrigue and diplomatic forms alone, for peaceable separation from the Catholic interest, would not have so quickened the intelligence which afterwards nourished so many English exiles and helped to freight the Mayflower. And we see the German mind first beginning to blossom with a language and a manifold literature during and after the Seven Years' War, which developed a powerful Protestant State and a native German feeling. Frederic's Gallic predilections did not infect the country which his arms had rendered forever anti-Gallic and anti-Austrian. The popular enthusiasm for himself, which his splendid victories mainly created, was the first instinctive form of the coming German sense of independence. The nation's fairest period coincided with the French Revolution and the aggressions of the Empire. "Hermann and Dorothea" felt the people's pulse, which soon beat so high at Jena and Leipsic with rage and hope. The hope departed with the Peace of 1815, and pamphleteering, pragmatic writing, theological investigation, historical research, followed the period of creative genius, whose flowers did not wither while the fields ran red.

A war must be the last resort of truly noble and popular ideas, if it would do more than stimulate the intelligence of a few men, who write best with draughts of glory and success. It must be the long-repressed understanding of a nation suffused with strong primitive emotions, that flies to arms to secure the precious privilege of owning and entertaining its knowledge and its national advantages. And in proportion as any war has ever been leavened with the fine excitement of religion or humanity, however imperfectly, and though tyrannized over by political selfishness, we can see that the honest feeling has done something to obliterate the traces of violence, to offer the comfort of worth in the cause to wounded lips.

When the people themselves take to fighting, not for dynastic objects, to secure the succession of an Infant to the throne, to fix a Pope in his chair, or to horse a runaway monarch around their necks, not to extort some commercial advantage, or to resist a tampering with the traditional balance of power, but to drive back the billows of Huns or Turks from fields where cities and a middle class must rise, to oppose citizen-right to feudal-right, and inoculate with the lance-head Society with the popular element, to assert the industrial against the baronial interest, or to expel the invader who forages among their rights to sweep them clean and to plant a system which the ground cannot receive, then we find that the intense conviction, which has been long gathering and brooding in the soul, thunders and lightens through the whole brain, and quickens the germs of Art, Beauty and Knowledge. Then war is only a process of development, which threatens terribly and shakes the locks upon its aegis in the face of the brutes which infest its path. Minerva is aware that wisdom and common sense will have to fight for recognition and a world: she fends blows from her tranquil forehead with the lowering crest; the shield is not always by her side, nor the sword-point resting on the ground. What is so vital as this armed and conscious intelligence? The pen, thus tempered to a sword, becomes a pen again, but flows with more iron than before.

But the original intellectual life begins while the pen is becoming tempered in the fires of a great national controversy, before it is hard enough to draw blood. Magnetic streams attract each slender point to a centre of prophesying thought long before the blood-red aurora stains suddenly

the midnight sky and betrays the influence which has been none the less mighty because it has been colorless. Sometimes a people says all that it has in its mind to say, during that comfortless period while the storm is in the air and has not yet precipitated its cutting crystals. The most sensitive minds are goaded to express emphatically their moral feeling and expectation in such a rude climate, which stimulates rather than depresses, but which is apt to fall away into languor and content. This only shows that the people have no commanding place in history, but are only bent upon relieving themselves from sundry annoyances, or are talking about great principles which they are not in a position, from ethnical or political disability, to develop. Such is all the Panslavic literature which is not Russian.² But sometimes a people whose intellect passes through a noble pre-revolutionary period, illustrating it by impetuous eloquence, indignant lyrics, and the stern lines which a protesting conscience makes upon the faces of the men who are lifted above the crowd, finds that its ideas reach beyond the crisis in its life into a century of power and beauty, during which its emancipated tendency springs forward, with graceful gestures, to seize every spiritual advantage. Its movements were grand and impressive while it struggled for the opportunity to make known the divine intent that inspired it; but when the fetters burst, and every limb enjoys the victory and the release, the movements become unbounded, yet rhythmical, like Nature's, and smite, or flow, or penetrate, like hers. To such a people war comes as the disturbance of the earth's crust which helps it to a habitable surface and lifts fair slopes to ripen wine and grain.

After all, then, we must carefully discover what a war was about, before we can trace it, either for good or for evil, into the subsequent life of a nation. There can be no such thing as exhaustion or deterioration, if the eternal laws have won the laurel of a fight; for they are fountains of youth, from which new blood comes rushing through the depleted veins. And it soon mantles on the surface, to mend the financial and industrial distress. Its blush of pride and victory announces no heady passion. It is the signal which Truth waves from the hearts of her children.

If we wish directly to consider the effect of war upon our own intellectual development, we must begin by asking what ideas of consequence are suggested by our copious use of the word Country. What a phrase is that—Our Country—which we have been accustomed for eighty years to use upon all festivals that commemorate civic rights, with flattering and pompous hopes! We never understood what it meant, till this moment which threatens to deprive us of the ideas and privileges which it really represents. We never appreciated till now its depth and preciousness. Orators have built up, sentence by sentence, a magnificent estimate of the elements which make our material success, and they thought it was a patriotic chord which they touched with the climax of their fine periods. It was such patriotism as thrives in the midst of content and satisfactory circumstances, which loves to have an inventory made of all the fixtures and conveniences and the crude splendor of a country's housekeeping,—things which are not indeed to be despised, for they show what a people can do when cast upon their own resources, at a distance from Governmental interference, free to select their own way of living, to be fervent in business, in charities, in the cause of education, in the explorations which lay open new regions to the emigration of a world, in the inventiveness which gives labor new pursuits and increases the chances of poor men, in the enterprise which has made foundries, mines, workshops, manufactories, and granaries of independent States. We have loved to

² Some cultivated Bohemians who can recall the glories of Ziska and his chiefs, and who comprehend the value of the tendency which they strove to represent, think that there would have grown a Bohemian people, a great centre of Protestant and Slavonic influence, if it had not been for the Battle of Weissenberg in 1620, when the Catholic Imperialists defeated their King Frederic. A verse of a popular song, *The Patriot's Lament*, runs thus, in Wratislaw's translation:—"Cursed mountain, mountain white! Upon thee was crushed our might; What in thee lies covered o'er Ages cannot back restore. "If there had been a Bohemian people, preserving a real vital tendency, the Battle of the White Mountain would have resulted differently, even had it been a defeat. Other patriots, cultivated enough to be Panslavists, indulge a more cheerful vein. They see a good time coming, and raise the cry of *Hej Slované!*" Hey, Slavonians! our Slavonic language still is living, Long as our true loyal heart is for our nation striving; Lives, lives the Slavonic spirit, and 't will live forever: Hell and thunder! vain against us all your rage shall shiver." This is nothing but a frontier feeling. The true Slavonic centre is at St. Petersburg; thence will roll a people and a language over all kindred ground.

linger over the praises of our common schools and our voluntary system of congregational worship, to count the spires which mark every place that man clears to earn his living in. It has been pleasant to trace upon the map the great arteries of intercommunication, flowing east and west, churned by countless paddle-wheels, as they force a vast freight of wealth, material, social, intellectual, to and fro, a freshet of fertilizing life to swell every stream. We love to repeat the names which self-taught men have hewn out in rude places, with the only advantage of being members of Mankind, holding their own share in the great heart and soul of it, and making that itself more illustrious than lineage and fortune. Every element of an unexhausted soil, and all the achievements of a people let loose upon it to settle, build, sow, and reap, with no master but ambition and no dread but of poverty, and a long list of rights thrust suddenly into their hands, with liberty to exercise them,—the right to vote, to speak, to print, to be tried by jury,—all this margin for unfettered action, even the corresponding vastness of the country itself, whose ruggedest features and greatest distances were playthings of the popular energy,—to love and extol these things were held by us equivalent to having a native land and feeding a patriotic flame. But now all at once this catalogue of advantages, which we were accustomed to call "our country," is stripped of all its value, because we begin to feel that it depends upon something else, more interior and less easy to appraise, which we had not noticed much before. Just as when suddenly, in a favorite child, endowed with strength, beauty, and effective gifts of every member, of whom we were proud and expected great things, and whom we took unlimited comfort in calling our own, there appears the solemn intention of a soul to use this fine body to express its invisible truth and honor, a wonderful revelation of a high mind filled with aspirations which we had not suspected,—a sudden lifting of the whole body like an eyelid before an inner eye, and we are astonished at the look it gives us: so this body of comfort and success, which we worshipped as our country, is suddenly possessed by great passions and ideas, by a consciousness that providential laws demand the use of it, and will not be restrained from inspiring the whole frame, and directing every member of it with a new plan of Unity, and a finer feeling for Liberty, and a more generous sense of Fraternity than ever before. Lately we did as we pleased, but now we are going to be real children of Liberty. Formerly we had a Union which transacted business for us, secured the payment of our debts, and made us appear formidable abroad while it corrupted and betrayed us at home,—a Union of colporteurs, and caucuses, and drummers of Southern houses; not a Union, but a long coffle of patriotic laymen, southerly clergymen, and slaves. Now the soul of a Democracy, gazing terribly through eyes that are weeping for the dead and for indignation at the cause of their dying, holds the thing which we call Union, and determines to keep its mighty hold till it can be informed with Unity, of which justice is the prime condition. See a Country at last, that is, a Republican Soul, making the limbs of free states shiver with the excitement of its great ideas, turning all our comfortable and excellent institutions into ministers to execute its will, resolved, to wring the great sinews of the body with the stress of its awakening, and to tax, for a spiritual purpose, all the material resources and those forms of liberty which we had pompously called our native land. A people in earnest, smarting with the wounds of war and the deeper inflictions of treachery, is abroad seeking after a country. It has been repeating with annual congratulations for eighty years the self-evident truths of the document which declared its independence; now it discovers that more evidence of it is needed than successful trading and building can bring, and it sends it forth afresh, with half a million of glittering specialities to enforce its doctrines, while trade, and speculation, and all the ambitions of prosperous men, and delicately nurtured lives, and other lives as dearly cherished and nursed to maturity, are sent out with an imperative commission to buy, at all hazards, a real country, to exchange what is precious for the sake of having finally what we dreamed we had before,—the most precious of all earthly things,—a Commonwealth of God. Yes, our best things go, like wads for guns, to bid our purpose speak more emphatically, as it expresses the overruling inspiration of the hour.

Is this really the character of our war, or is it only an ideal picture of what the war might be? That depends solely upon ourselves.

Our soldiers kindle nightly their bivouac fires from East to West, and set their watch. They are the advance posts of the great idea, which is destined to make a country as it advances southwardly, and to settle it with republicans. If we put it in a single sentence, "Freedom of industry for hand and brain to all men," we must think awhile upon it before we can see what truths and temporal advantages it involves. We see them best, in this night of our distress and trial, by the soldiers' watch-fires. They encroach upon the gloom, and open it for us with hopes. They shine like the stare of a deeper sky than day affords, and we can see a land stretching to the Gulf, and lying expectant between either sea, whose surface is given to a Republic to people and civilize for the sake of Man. Whoever is born here, or whoever comes here, brought by poverty or violence, an exile from misery or from power, and whatever be his ethnological distinction, is a republican of this country because he is a man. Here he is to find safety, cooperation, and welcome. His very ignorance and debasement are to be welcomed by a country eager to exhibit the plastic power of its divine idea,—how animal restrictions can be gradually obliterated, how superstition and prejudice must die out of stolid countenances before the steady gaze of republican good-will, how ethnic peculiarities shall subserve the great plan and be absorbed by it. The country no longer will have a conventional creed, that men are more important than circumstances and governments; we always said so, but our opinion was at the mercy of a Know-Nothing club, a slaveholding cabal, a selfish democracy: it will have a living faith, born with the pangs of battle, that nothing on earth is so precious as the different kinds of men. It will want them, to illustrate its preeminent idea, and it will go looking for them through all the neglected places of the world, to invite them in from the by-lanes and foul quarters of every race, expressly to show that man is superior to his accidents, by bringing their bodies into a place where their souls can get the better of them. Where can that be except where a democracy has been waging a religious war against its own great evil, and has repented in blood for having used all kinds of men as the white and black pawns in its games of selfish politics, with its own country for the board, and her peace and happiness lying in the pool for stakes? Where can man be respected best except here, where he has been undervalued most, and bitterness and blood have sprung from that contempt?

This is the first truly religious war ever waged. Can there be such a thing as a religious war? There can be wars in the interest of different theologies, and mixed wars of diplomacy and confessions of belief, wars to transfer the tradition of infallibility from a pope to a book, wars of Puritans against the divine right of kings in the Old World and the natural rights of Indians in the New, in all of which the name of God has been invoked for sanction, and Scripture has been quoted, and Psalms uplifted on the battle-field for encouragement. And it is true that every conflict, in which there are ideas that claim their necessary development against usage and authority, has a religious character so far as the ideas vindicate God by being good for man. But a purely religious war must be one to restore the attributes and prerogatives of manhood, to confirm primitive rights that are given to finite souls as fast as they are created, to proclaim the creed of humanity, which is so far from containing a single article of theology, that it is solely and distinctively religious without it, because it proclaims one Father in heaven and one blood upon the earth. Manhood is always worth fighting for, to resist and put down whatever evil tendency impairs the full ability to be a man, with a healthy soul conscious of rights and duties, owning its gifts, and valuing above everything else the liberty to place its happiness in being noble and good. Every man wages a religious war, when he attacks his own passions in the interest of his own humanity. The most truly religious thing that a man can do is to fight his way through habits and deficiencies back to the pure manlike elements of his nature, which are the ineffaceable traces of the Divine workmanship, and alone really worth fighting for. And when a nation imitates this private warfare, and attacks its own gigantic evils, lighted through past deficiencies and immediate temptations by its best ideas, as its human part rallies against its inhuman, and all the kingly attributes of a freeborn individual rise up in final indignation against its slavish attributes, then commences the true and only war of a people, and the only war of which we dare say, though it have the repulsive features that belong to all wars, that it is religious. But that we do say; for it is to win and keep the

unity of a country for the great purposes of mankind, a place where souls can have their chances to work, with the largest freedom and under the fewest disabilities, at the divine image stamped upon them,—to get here the tools, both temporal and spiritual, with which to strike poverty and misery out of those glorious traces, and to chisel deep and fresh the handwriting where God says, This is a Man!

Here is a sufficient ground for expecting that intellectual as well as political enlargement will succeed this trial of our country. It is well to think of all the approaching advantages, even those remote ones which will wear the forms of knowledge and art. For it is undeniable, that a war cannot be so just as to bring no evils in its train,—not only the disturbance of all kinds of industry, the suppression of some, the difficulty of diverting, at a moment's notice, labor towards new objects,—not only financial embarrassment and exhaustion, and the shadow of a coming debt,—not the maiming of strong men and their violent removal from the future labors of peace, nor the emotional suffering of thousands of families whose hearts are in the field with their dear ones, tossed to and fro in every skirmish, where the balls slay more than the bodies which are pierced: not these evils alone,—nor the feverish excitement of eighteen millions of people, whose gifts and intelligence are all distraught, and at the mercy of every bulletin,—nor yet the possible violations of private rights, and the overriding of legal defences, which, when once attempted in a state of war, is not always relinquished on the return of peace. These do not strike us so much as the moral injury which many weak and passionate minds sustain from the necessity of destroying life, of ravaging and burning, of inflicting upon the enemy politic distresses. There will be a taint in the army and the community which will endure in the relations of pacific life. And more than half a million of men, who have tasted the fierce joy of battle, have suffered the moral privations and dangers of the camp, are to be returned suddenly to us, and cast adrift, with no hope of finding immediate employment, and hankering for some excitements to replace those of the distant field. If little truth and little conscience have been at stake, these are the reasons which make wars so demoralizing: they leave society restored to peace, but still at war within itself, infested by those strange cravings, and tempted by a new ambition, that of waging successful wars. This will be the most dangerous country on the face of the earth, after the termination of this war; for it will see its own ideas more clearly than ever before, and long to propagate them with its battle-ardors and its scorn of hypocritical foreign neutralities. We have the elements to make the most martial nation in the world, with a peculiar combination of patience and impulse, coldness and daring, the capacity to lie in watchful calm and to move with the vibrations of the earthquake. And if ever the voice of our brother, crying out to us from the ground of any country, shall sigh among the drums which are then gathering dust in our arsenals, the long roll would wake again, and the arms would rattle in that sound, which is part of the speech of Liberty. But it is useless to affirm or to deny such possibilities. It is plain, however, that we are organizing most formidable elements, and learning how to forge them into bolts. The spirit of the people, therefore, must be high and pure. The more emphatically we declare, in accordance with the truth, that this war is for a religious purpose, to prepare a country for the growing of souls, a place where every element of material success and all the ambitions of an enthusiastic people shall only provide fortunate circumstances, so that men can be educated in the freedom which faith, knowledge, and awe before the Invisible secure, the better will it be for us when peace returns. A great believing people will more readily absorb the hurts of war. Spiritual vitality will throw off vigorously the malaria which must arise from deserted fields of battle. It must be our daily supplication to feel the religious purport of the truths for which we fight. We must disavow vindictiveness, and purge our hearts of it. There must be no vulgar passion illustrated by our glorious arms. And when we say that we are fighting for mankind, to release souls and bodies from bondage, we must understand, without affectation, that we are fighting for the slaveholder himself, who knows it not, as he hurls his iron disbelief and hatred against us. For we are to have one country, all of whose children, shall repeat in unison its noble creed, which the features of the land itself proclaim, and whose railroads and telegraphs are its running-hand.

How often we have enumerated and deprecated the evils of war! The Mexican War, in which Slavery herself involved us, (using the power of the Republic against which she conspired to further her conspiracy,) gave us occasion to extol the benefits of peace, and to draw up a formidable indictment against the spirit which lusted for the appeal to arms. We have not lusted for it, and the benefits of peace seem greater than ever; but the benefits of equity and truth seem greater than all. Show me justice, or try to make me unjust,—force upon me at the point of the sword the unspeakable degradation of abetting villany, and I will seize the hilt, if I can, and write my protest clear with the blade, and while I have it in my hand I will reap what advantages are possible in the desolation which it makes.

Among these advantages of a war waged to secure the rights of citizenship to all souls will be the excitement of a national intellectual life, which will take on the various forms of a national literature. This is to be expected for two reasons. First, because our arms will achieve unity. By this is meant not only that there will be a real union of all the States, consequent upon an eventual agreement in great political and moral ideas, but also that this very consent will bring the different characteristic groups of the country so near together, in feeling and mutual appreciation, and with a free interchange of traits, that we shall begin to have a nationality. And there can be no literature until there is a nation; when the varieties of the popular life begin to coalesce, as all sections are drawn together towards the centre of great political ideas which the people themselves establish, there will be such a rich development of intellectual action as the Old World has not seen. Without this unity, literature may be cultivated by cliques of men of talent, who are chiefly stimulated to express themselves by observing the thought and beauty which foreign intellects and past times produced; but their productions will not spring from the country's manifold life, nor express its mighty individuality. The sections of the country which are nearest to the intelligence of the Old World will furnish the readiest writers and the most polished thinkers, until the New World dwarfs the Old World by its unity, and inspires the best brains with the collected richness of the popular heart. Up to the period of this war the country's most original men have been those who, by protesting against its evils and displaying a genius emancipated from the prescriptions of Church and State, have prophesied the revolution, and given to America the first rich foretaste of her growing mind. The thunder rolled up the sky in the orator's great periods, the lightning began to gleam in the preacher's moral indignation, the glittering steel slumbered uneasily and showed its half-drawn menace from the subtle lines of poets and essayists who have been carrying weapons these twenty years; their souls thirsted for an opportunity to rescue fair Liberty from the obscene rout who had her in durance for their purposes, and to hail her accession to a lawful throne with the rich gifts of knowledge, use, and beauty, a homage that only free minds can pay, and only when freedom claims it. We do not forget the literary activity with which a thousand ready intellects have furnished convenient food for the people: there has been no lack of books, nor of the ambition to attempt all the intellectual forms. Some of this pabulum was not good for a growing frame; the excuse for offering it may be found in the exigencies of squatter-life. We are a notable people for our attachment to the frying-pan, and there is no doubt that it is a shifty utensil: it can be slung at the saddle-bow or carried in a valise, it will bear the jolting of a corduroy road, and furnish a camp-mess in the minimum of time out of material that was perhaps but a moment before sniffing or pecking at its rim. A very little blaze sets the piece of cold fat swimming, and the black cavity soon glows and splutters with extemporaneous content. But what dreams howl about the camp-fires, what hideous scalping-humor creeps from the leathery supper into the limbs and blood of the adventurous pioneer!

No better, and quite as scrofulous, has been the nourishment furnished by the rhetorical time-servers and polished conventionalists, whose gifts have been all directed against the highest good of the country's mind, to offer sweets to its crying conscience, and draughts of fierce or languid cordials to lull the uneasy moods of this fast-growing child of Liberty. Such men are fabricators of smooth speech; they have brought their gilding to put upon the rising pillars of the country, instead of strength to plant them firmly in their places and to spread the protecting roof. This period of storm will wash

off their dainty work. When the clean granite stands where it should to shelter the four-and-thirty States as they walk the vast colonnades together, intent upon the great interchanges of the country's thought and work, this tinsel will not be missed; as men look upon the grave lines that assure them of security, they will rejoice that the time for the truly beautiful has arrived, and hasten to relieve the solid space with shapes as durable as the imagination which conceives.

There must be a great people before there can be a great character in its books, its instructions, or its works of art. This character is prophesied only in part by what is said and thought while the people is becoming great, and the molten constituents are sparkling as they run into their future form. We have been so dependent upon traditional ideas that we suppose an epic, for instance, to be the essential proof that a people is alive and has something to express. Let us cease to wonder whether there will ever be an American poem, an American symphony, or an American *Novum Organon*. It is a sign of weakness and subservience: and this is a period crowded with acts of emancipation. We cannot escape from the past, if we would; we have a right to inherit all the previous life of men that does not surfeit us and impede our proper work, but let us stop our unavailing sighs for *Iliads*. The newspaper gathers and circulates all true achievements faster than blind poets can plod round with the story. The special form of the epic answered to a state of society when the harper connected cities with his golden wire, slowly unrolling its burden as he went. Vibrations travel faster now; men would be foolish to expect that the new life will go journeying in classic vehicles. When the imagination becomes free, it can invent forms equally surprising and better adapted to the face of the country.

There is no part of this country which has not its broad characters and tendencies, different from anything ever seen before, imperfect while they are doomed to isolation, during which they show only a maimed and grotesque vitality. The religious tendency is different, the humor is different, the imagination differs from anything beyond the Atlantic. And the East differs from the West, the North from the South; and the Pacific States will have also to contribute gifts peculiar to themselves, as the silt of the Sacramento glitters unlike that of the Merrimac or the Potomac. We are not yet a People; but we have great, vivid masses of popular life, which a century of literary expression will not exhaust. All these passionate characters are running together in this general danger, having seized a weapon: they have found an idea in common, they are pervaded by their first really solemn feeling, they issue the same word for the night from East to West. The nationality thus commenced will introduce the tendency to blend in place of the tendency to keep apart, and each other's gifts will pass sympathetically from hand to hand.

The heightened life of this epoch is another cause which shall prepare a great development of intellectual forms. Excitement and enthusiasm pervade all classes of the people. All the primitive emotions of the human heart—friendship, scorn, sympathy, human and religious love—break into the liveliest expression, penetrate every quarter of society; a great river is let loose from the rugged mountain-recesses of the people; its waters, saturated with Nature's simple fertility, cover the whole country, and will not retire without depositing their renewing elements. A sincere and humble people is feeling the exigency. A million families have fitted out their volunteers with the most sumptuous of all equipments, which no Government could furnish, love, tears of anxiety and pride, last kisses and farewells, and prayers more heaven-cleaving than a time of peace can breathe. What an invisible cloud of domestic pathos overhung for a year the course of the Potomac, and settled upon those huts and tents where the best part of home resided! what an ebb and flow of letters, bearing solemnity and love upon their surface! what anxiety among us, with all its brave housekeeping shifts, to keep want from the door while labor is paralyzed, and the strong arms have beaten their ploughshares into swords! What self-sacrifice of millions of humble wives and daughters whose works and sorrows are now refining the history of their country, and lifting the popular nobleness: they are giving *all that they are* to keep their volunteers in the field. The flag waves over no such faithfulness; its stars sparkle not like this sincerity. The feeling and heroism of women are enough to refresh and to remould the generation. Like subtle lightning, the womanly nature is penetrating the life of the age. From

every railroad-station the ponderous train bore off its freight of living valor, amid the cheers of sympathizing thousands who clustered upon every shed and pillar, and yearned forward as if to make their tumultuous feelings the motive power to carry those dear friends away. What an ardent and unquenchable emotion! Drums do not throb like these hearts, bullets do not patter like these tears. There is not a power of the soul which is not vitalized and expanded by these scenes. But long after the crowd vanishes, there stands a woman at the corner, with a tired child asleep upon her shoulder; the bosom does not heave so strongly as to break its sleep. There are no regrets in the calm, proud face; no, indeed!—for it is the face of our country, waiting to suffer and be strong for liberty, and to put resolutely the dearest thing where it can serve mankind. In her face read the history of the future as it shall be sung and written by pens which shall not know whence their sharpened impulse springs; the page shall reflect the working of that woman's face, daughter of the people; and when exulting posterity shall draw new patriotism from it, and declare that it is proud, pathetic, resolved, sublime, they shall not yet call it by its Christian name, for that will be concealed with moss upon her forgotten head-stone.

* * * * *

AN ORDER FOR A PICTURE

O good painter, tell me true,
Has your hand the cunning to draw
Shapes of things that you never saw?
Ay? Well, here is an order for you.

Woods and cornfields, a little brown,—
The picture must not be over-bright,—
Yet all in the golden and gracious light
Of a cloud, when the summer sun is down.

Alway and alway, night and morn,
Woods upon woods, with fields of corn
Lying between them, not quite sere,
And not in the full, thick, leafy bloom,
When the wind can hardly find breathing-room
Under their tassels,—cattle near,
Biting shorter the short green grass,
And a hedge of sumach and sassafras,
With bluebirds twittering all around,—
(Ah, good painter, you can't paint sound!)—
These, and the house where I was born,
Low and little, and black and old,
With children, many as it can hold,
All at the windows, open wide,—
Heads and shoulders clear outside,
And fair young faces all ablush:
Perhaps you may have seen, some day,
Roses crowding the self-same way,
Out of a wilding, way-side bush.

Listen closer. When you have done
With woods and cornfields and grazing herds,
A lady, the loveliest ever the sun
Looked down upon, you must paint for me:
Oh, if I only could make you see
The clear blue eyes, the tender smile,
The sovereign sweetness, the gentle grace,
The woman's soul, and the angel's face
That are beaming on me all the while!
I need not speak these foolish words:
Yet one word tells you all I would say,—
She is my mother: you will agree
That all the rest may be thrown away.

Two little urchins at her knee

You must paint, Sir: one like me,—
The other with a clearer brow,
And the light of his adventurous eyes
Flashing with boldest enterprise:
At ten years old he went to sea,—
God knoweth if he be living now,—
He sailed in the good ship "Commodore,"—
Nobody ever crossed her track
To bring us news, and she never came back.
Ah, 'tis twenty long years and more
Since that old ship went out of the bay
With my great-hearted brother on her deck:
I watched him till he shrank to a speck,
And his face was toward me all the way.

Bright his hair was, a golden brown,
The time we stood at our mother's knee:
That beautiful head, if it did go down,
Carried sunshine into the sea!

Out in the fields one summer night
We were together, half afraid
Of the corn-leaves' rustling, and of the shade
Of the high hills, stretching so still and far,—
Loitering till after the low little light
Of the candle shone through the open door,
And over the hay-stack's pointed top,
All of a tremble, and ready to drop,
The first half-hour, the great yellow star,
That we, with staring, ignorant eyes,
Had often and often watched to see
Propped and held in its place in the skies

By the fork of a tall red mulberry-tree,
Which close in the edge of our flax-field grew,—
Dead at the top,—just one branch full
Of leaves, notched round, and lined with wool,
From which it tenderly shook the dew
Over our heads, when we came to play
In its handbreadth of shadow, day after day.
Afraid to go home, Sir; for one of us bore
A nest full of speckled and thin-shelled eggs,—
The other, a bird, held fast by the legs,
Not so big as a straw of wheat:
The berries we gave her she wouldn't eat,
But cried and cried, till we held her bill,
So slim and shining, to keep her still.

At last we stood at our mother's knee.

THE SOUTH BREAKER

IN TWO PARTS

PART II

Blue-fish were about done with, when one day Dan brought in some mackerel from Boon Island: they hadn't been in the harbor for some time, though now there was a probability of their return. So they were going out when the tide served—the two boys—at midnight for mackerel, and Dan had heard me wish for the experience so often, a long while ago, that he said, Why shouldn't they take the girls? and Faith snatched at the idea, and with that Mr. Gabriel agreed to fetch me at the hour, and so we parted. I was kind of sorry, but there was no help for it.

When we started, it was in that clear crystal dark that looks as if you could see through it forever till you reached infinite things, and we seemed to be in a great hollow sphere, and the stars were like living beings who had the night to themselves. Always, when I'm up late, I feel as if it were something unlawful, as if affairs were in progress which I had no right to witness, a kind of grand freemasonry. I've felt it nights when I've been watching with mother, and there has come up across the heavens the great caravan of constellations, and a star that I'd pulled away the curtain on the east side to see came by-and-by and looked in at the south window; but I never felt it as I did this night. The tide was near the full, and so we went slipping down the dark water by the starlight; and as we saw them shining above us, and then looked down and saw them sparkling up from below,—the stars,—it really seemed as if Dan's oars must be two long wings, as if we swam on them through a motionless air. By-and-by we were in the island creek, and far ahead, in a streak of wind that didn't reach us, we could see a pointed sail skimming along between the banks, as if some ghost went before to show us the way; and when the first hush and mystery wore off, Mr. Gabriel was singing little French songs in tunes like the rise and fall of the tide. While he sang, he rowed, and Dan was ganging the hooks. At length Dan took the oars again, and every now and then he paused to let us float along with the tide as it slacked, and take the sense of the night. And all the tall grass that edged the side began to wave in a strange light, and there blew on a little breeze, and over the rim of the world tipped up a waning moon. If there'd been anything needed to make us feel as if we were going to find the Witch of Endor, it was this. It was such a strange moon, pointing such a strange way, with such a strange color, so remote, and so glassy,—it was like a dead moon, or the spirit of one, and was perfectly awful.

"She has come to look at Faith," said Mr. Gabriel; for Faith, who once would have been nodding here and there all about the boat, was sitting up pale and sad, like another spirit, to confront it. But Dan and I both felt a difference.

Mr. Gabriel, he stepped across and went and sat down behind Faith, and laid his hand lightly on her arm. Perhaps he didn't mind that he touched her,—he had a kind of absent air; but if any one had looked at the nervous pressure of the slender fingers, they would have seen as much meaning in that touch as in many an embrace; and Faith lifted her face to his, and they forgot that I was looking at them, and into the eyes of both there stole a strange deep smile,—and my soul groaned within me. It made no odds to me then that the air blew warm off the land from scented hay-ricks, that the moon hung like some exhumed jewel in the sky, that all the perfect night was widening into dawn. I saw and felt nothing but the wretchedness that must break one day on Dan's head. Should I warn him? I couldn't do that. And what then?

The sail was up, we had left the headland and the hills, and when they furled it and cast anchor we were swinging far out on the back of the great monster that was frolicking to itself and thinking no more of us than we do of a mote in the air. Elder Snow, he says that it's singular we regard day as illumination and night as darkness,—day that really hems us in with narrow light and shuts us upon ourselves, night that sets us free and reveals to us all the secrets of the sky. I thought of that when one by one the stars melted and the moon became a breath, and up over the wide grayness crept color and radiance and the sun himself, —the sky soaring higher and higher, like a great thin bubble of flaky hues,—and, all about, nothing but the everlasting wash of waters broke the sacred hush. And

it seemed as if God had been with us, and withdrawing we saw the trail of His splendid garments,—and I remembered the words mother had spoken to Dan once before, and why couldn't I leave him in heavenly hands? And then it came into my heart to pray. I knew I hadn't any right to pray expecting to be heard; but yet mine would be the prayer of the humble, and wasn't Faith of as much consequence as a sparrow? By-and-by, as we all sat leaning over the gunwale, the words of a hymn that I'd heard at camp-meetings came into my mind, and I sang them out, loud and clear. I always had a good voice, though Dan 'd never heard me do anything with it except hum little low things, putting mother to sleep; but here I had a whole sky to sing in, and the hymns were trumpet-calls. And one after another they kept thronging up, and there was a rush of feeling in them that made you shiver, and as I sang them they thrilled me through and through. Wide as the way before us was, it seemed to widen; I felt myself journeying with some vast host towards the city of God, and its light poured over us, and there was nothing but joy and love and praise and exulting expectancy in my heart. And when the hymn died on my lips because the words were too faint and the tune was too weak for the ecstasy, and when the silence had soothed me back again, I turned and saw Dan's lips bitten, and his cheek white, and his eyes like stars, and Mr. Gabriel's face fallen forward in his hands, and he shaking with quick sobs; and as for Faith,—Faith, she had dropped asleep, and one arm was thrown above her head, and the other lay where it had slipped from Mr. Gabriel's loosened grasp. There's a contagion, you know, in such things, but Faith was never of the catching kind.

Well, this wasn't what we'd come for,—turning all out-doors into a church,—though what's a church but a place of God's presence? and for my part, I never see high blue sky and sunshine without feeling that. And all of a sudden there came a school of mackerel splashing and darkening and curling round the boat, after the bait we'd thrown out on anchoring. 'Twould have done you good to see Dan just at that moment; you'd have realized what it was to have a calling. He started up, forgetting everything else, his face all flushed, his eyes like coals, his mouth tight and his tongue silent; and how many hooks he had out I'm sure I don't know, but he kept jerking them in by twos and threes, and finally they bit at the bare barb and were taken without any bait at all, just as if they'd come and asked to be caught. Mr. Gabriel, he didn't pay any attention at first, but Dan called to him to stir himself, and so gradually he worked back into his old mood; but he was more still and something sad all the rest of the morning. Well, when we'd gotten about enough, and they were dying in the boat there, as they cast their scales, like the iris, we put in-shore; and building a fire, we cooked our own dinner and boiled our own coffee. Many's the icy winter-night I've wrapped up Dan's bottle of hot coffee in rolls on rolls of flannel, that he might drink it hot and strong far out at sea in a wherry at daybreak!

But as I was saying,—all this time, Mr. Gabriel, he scarcely looked at Faith. At first she didn't comprehend, and then something swam all over her face as if the very blood in her veins had grown darker, and there was such danger in her eye that before we stepped into the boat again I wished to goodness I had a life-preserver. But in the beginning the religious impression lasted and gave him great resolutions; and then strolling off and along the beach, he fell in with some men there and did as he always did, scraped acquaintance. I verily believe that these men were total strangers, that he'd never laid eyes on them before, and after a few words he wheeled about. As he did so, his glance fell on Faith standing there alone against the pale sky, for the weather 'd thickened, and watching the surf break at her feet. He was motionless, gazing at her long, and then, when he had turned once or twice irresolutely, he ground his heel into the sand and went back. The men rose and wandered on with him, and they talked together for a while, and I saw money pass; and pretty soon Mr. Gabriel returned, his face vividly pallid, but smiling, and he had in his hand some little bright shells that you don't often find on these Northern beaches, and he said he had bought them of those men. And all this time he'd not spoken with Faith, and there was the danger yet in her eye. But nothing came of it, and I had accused myself of nearly every crime in the Decalogue, and on the way back we had put up the lines, and Mr. Gabriel had hauled in the lobster-net for the last time. He liked that branch of the business; he said it had all the excitement of gambling,—the slow settling downwards, the fading

of the last ripple, the impenetrable depth and shade and the mystery of the work below, five minutes of expectation, and it might bring up a scale of the sea-serpent, or the king of the crabs might have crept in for a nap in the folds, or it might come up as if you'd dredged for pearls, or it might hold the great backward-crawling lobsters, or a tangle of seaweed, or the long yellow locks of some drowned girl,—or nothing at all. So he always drew in that net, and it needed muscle, and his was like steel,—not good for much in the long pull, but just for a breathing could handle the biggest boatman in the harbor. Well,—and we'd hoisted the sail and were in the creek once more, for the creek was only to be used at high-water, and I'd told Dan I couldn't be away from mother over another tide and so we mustn't get aground, and he'd told me not to fret, there was nothing too shallow for us on the coast—"This boat," said Dan, "she'll float in a heavy dew." And he began singing a song he liked:—

"I cast my line in Largo Bay,
And fishes I caught nine:
There's three to boil, and three to fry,
And three to bait the line."

And Mr. Gabriel 'd never heard it before, and he made him sing it again and again.

"The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed,"

repeated Mr. Gabriel, and he said it was the only song he knew that held the click of the oar in the rowlock.

The little birds went skimming by us, as we sailed, their breasts upon the water, and we could see the gunners creeping through the marshes beside them.

"The wind changes," said Mr. Gabriel. "The equinox treads close behind us. Sst! Is it that you do not feel its breath? And you hear nothing?"

"It's the Soul of the Bar," said Dan; and he fell to telling us one of the wild stories that fishermen can tell each other by the lantern rocking outside at night in the dory.

The wind was dead east, and now we flew before it, and now we tacked in it, up and up the winding stream, and always a little pointed sail came skimming on in suit.

"What sail is that, Dan?" asked I. "It looks like the one that flitted ahead this morning."

"It is the one," said Dan,—for he'd brought up a whole horde of superstitious memories, and a gloom that had been hovering off and on his face settled there for good. "As much of a one as that was. It's no sail at all. It's a death-sign. And I've never been down here and seen it but trouble was on its heels. Georgie! there's two of them!"

We all looked, but it was hidden in a curve, and when it stole in sight again there *were* two of them, filmy and faint as spirits' wings,—and while we gazed they vanished, whether supernaturally or in the mist that was rising mast-high I never thought, for my blood was frozen as it ran.

"You have fear?" asked Mr. Gabriel,—his face perfectly pale, and his eye almost lost in darkness. "If it is a phantom, it can do you no harm."

Faith's teeth chattered,—I saw them. He turned to her, and as their look met, a spot of carnation burned into his cheek almost as a brand would have burned. He seemed to be balancing some point, to be searching her and sifting her; and Faith half rose, proudly, and pale, as if his look pierced her with pain. The look was long,—but before it fell, a glow and sparkle filled the eyes, and over his face there curled the deep, strange smile of the morning, till the long lids and heavy lashes dropped and made it sad. And Faith,—she started in a new surprise, the darkness gathered and crept off her face as cream wrinkles from milk, and spleen or venom or what-not became absorbed again and lost, and there was nothing in her glance but passionate forgetfulness. Some souls are like the white river-lilies,

—fixed, yet floating; but Mr. Gabriel had no firm root anywhere, and was blown about with every breeze, like a leaf on the flood. His purposes melted and made with his moods.

The wind got round more to the north, the mist fell upon the waters or blew away over the meadows, and it was cold. Mr. Gabriel wrapped the cloak about Faith and fastened it, and tied her bonnet. Just now Dan was so busy handling the boat—and it's rather risky, you have to wriggle up the creek so—that he took little notice of us. Then Mr. Gabriel stood up, as if to change his position; and taking off his hat, he held it aloft, while he passed the other hand across his forehead. And leaning against the mast, he stood so, many minutes.

"Dan," I said, "did your spiritual craft ever hang out a purple pennant?"

"No," said Dan.

"Well," says I. And we all saw a little purple ribbon running up the rope and streaming on the air behind us.

"And why do we not hoist our own?" said Mr. Gabriel, putting on his hat. And suiting the action to the word, a little green signal curled up and flaunted above us like a bunch of the weed floating there in the water beneath and dyeing all the shallows so that they looked like caves of cool emerald, and wide off and over them the west burned smoulderingly red like a furnace. Many a time since, I've felt the magical color between those banks and along those meadows, but then I felt none of it; every wit I had was too awake and alert and fast-fixed in watching.

"Is it that the phantoms can be flesh and blood?" said Mr. Gabriel laughingly; and lifting his arm again, he hailed the foremost.

"Boat ahoy! What names?" said he.

The answer came back on the wind full and round.

"'Speed,' and 'Follow.'"

"Where from?" asked Dan, with just a glint in his eye,—for usually he knew every boat on the river, but he didn't know these.

"From the schooner Flyaway, taking in sand over at Black Rocks."

Then Mr. Gabriel spoke again, as they drew near,—but whether he spoke so fast that I couldn't understand, or whether he spoke French, I never knew; and Dan, with some kind of feeling that it was Mr. Gabriel's acquaintance, suffered the one we spoke to pass us.

Once or twice Mr. Gabriel had begun some question to Dan about the approaching weather, but had turned it off again before anybody could answer. You see he had some little nobility left, and didn't want the very man he was going to injure to show him how to do it. Now, however, he asked him that was steering the Speed by, if it was going to storm.

The man thought it was.

"How is it, then, that your schooner prepares to sail?"

"Oh, wind's backed in; we'll be on blue water before the gale breaks, I reckon, and then beat off where there's plenty of sea-room."

"But she shall make shipwreck!"

"Not if the court know herself, and he think she do," was the reply from another, as they passed.

Somehow I began to hate myself, I was so full of poisonous suspicions. How did Mr. Gabriel know the schooner prepared to sail? And this man, could he tell boom from bowsprit? I didn't believe it; he had the hang of the up-river folks. But there stood Mr. Gabriel, so quiet and easy, his eyelids down, and he humming an underbreath of song; and there sat Faith, so pale and so pretty, a trifle sad, a trifle that her conscience would brew for her, whether or no. Yet, after all, there was an odd expression in Mr. Gabriel's face, an eager, restless expectation; and if his lids were lowered, it was only to hide the spark that flushed and quenched in his eye like a beating pulse.

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