

**ESSAYS**  
**FOR**  
**SUMMER HOURS**

**BY**  
**Charles Lanman**

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# ESSAYS

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CHARLES LANMAN.

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SECOND EDITION.

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## DEDICATION.

TO LOUIS L. NOBLE.

MY Dear Friend:—The Essays contained in this little volume, are a portion of the fruit of my leisure hours during the last summer. The topics have generally originated in passing incidents, and are consequently of a desultory character. I have seldom taken my pen in hand unless prompted by the impulse of the moment. My ambition has been to please the fancy, and mend the heart of my reader; and, the commendation of a single individual possessing affections kindred to my own, will afford me more happiness than the applause of the multitude. With regard to my reception in the world of Letters, I would say, that if candid critics treat me kindly, I shall be encouraged to print again; but if they do not, I hope their frowns or ridicule will interpose no obstacle in the way of the mercantile pursuits in which you know it is my pride and my pleasure to be engaged. As a token of my friendship, and also of my esteem for you as a man, a Christian, and a Poet, I herewith dedicate to you this humble effort, hoping that its perusal will freshen the recollection of by-gone hours which we have enjoyed together, and revive some of the pleasing associations of your youth. As you will perceive, I have illustrated my first essay by an engraving from one of my own drawings. May this, as the design of an amateur, meet with your approbation.

Affectionately yours,

CHARLES LANMAN.

NEW YORK CITY, Autumn of 1841.

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## THE OLD INDIAN.



“One who had fled from the war of life.”

*Barry Cornwall.*



AMONG the peculiar characters that I remember when thinking of my Michigan home and my early days, none do I dwell upon with more pleasurable feelings than an old Indian. My first acquaintance with him took place when I was about twelve years old. It was the pleasant summer time. At an early hour of the day I had launched my little birch canoe from the sloping bank behind our orchard, and, accompanied by Rover, started on a duck hunt down the river Raisin. I would here remark, that the mouth of this beautiful river is studded with islands, and has been, from time immemorial, celebrated for its abundance of game. As I paddled along, I watched with an inward joy the progress of the morning. The farm houses that had been long sleeping amid the silence of night, were now enlivened by their inmates, who had sallied forth to perform their allotted duties. At one moment my ears were saluted by a chorus of voices from some neighbouring poultry yard, mingled with the lowing of cows and the jingling of bells in the sheepfold. And then I heard the singing of larks in the open fields, the neighing of a horse, or the shout of some happy boy. The mists, frightened by the sunbeams, were rising from the river, and from the trees on either side the dew was falling. I looked upon the changing landscape, smiling in its freshness, and felt my heart swell within me, for I beheld the glory and the goodness of God, and I “blessed him unaware.”

The ducks were very shy that day, and the few that I did shoot were taken on the wing. I was about making up my mind to return home, when I beheld a single canvass-back rise from the water in the distance, and, seemingly unconscious of my presence, fly directly over my head. I fired at it, and the feathers flew. Slowly but surely the bird descended, and at last fell upon an island a quarter of a mile away. This was soon reached, and a long hour did I search for my game among the bushes and grass, but I sought in

vain. This island was about two furlongs in length and one in width. At one end was a group of lofty sycamores, and at the other three black pines stood together, like robbers plotting the destruction of an enemy. Between and beneath these, the dark green and luxuriant foliage of less ambitious trees formed to all appearance a solid mass. Here the light green ivy encircled some youthful ash, from whose top it wandered among the limbs of other trees; and there, the clustering fruit hung in great abundance from the brown grape-vine. While rambling about this island, to satisfy my curiosity, I discovered in its centre a little clearing or miniature prairie, on which stood a single wigwam. A wreath of smoke rose from its chimney between the trees, gracefully curling upward to the sky. I entered the hut, and beheld the form of an Indian, who was engaged in cooking his noonday meal. At first he was surprised at my presence, but when I told him that I was merely on a hunting excursion, his countenance changed, and he manifested much pleasure. His kindness and my boyish familiarity conspired to make us soon acquainted. He was a tall, athletic, well-proportioned man, with dark eagle eyes. His long locks of hair, which had once vied with the raven's wing, were now whitening with age. I will not dwell upon the particulars of that interview. Let it suffice to know that I departed from that "green and lovely isle," feeling that I had a friend in the person of that old Indian.

Many a day during that summer and the ensuing autumn did I spend in his society. Many a table luxury brought I to his lonely dwelling. Many a lesson has he taught me, in the arts of fishing and hunting. Long years have flown since then. But the wild and pure enjoyments which I then participated in with this old Indian are deeply engraven on the tablet of my memory.

We used often to enter our respective canoes and explore the neighbouring creeks and rivers, little islands of the bay, and others far out into the lake. We would bathe together, at one time wading out from the sandy and sloping shore, and again leaping and diving from some abrupt headland into the clear water,—so clear and pure that the shells upon the bottom were distinctly seen at the depth of twenty feet or more. I never troubled myself about the origin of this old Indian. His name, to what nation he belonged, or his reasons for thus living alone, were things which I never desired to know: I was content to be with him, and during our various excursions to listen to his wild legends, his narratives of strange adventures and exploits, which he would recount in broken English, though always with the eloquence of nature. Ofttimes I could not comprehend his meaning,—more especially when he described the beauties of the Spirit Land, which he said existed far beyond the setting sun; and also when he told me of its

valleys and mountains and forests, smiling under the influence of perpetual summer, where the singing of birds was always heard, and where the buffalo, the horse, the deer, the antelope, the bear, the wolf, the panther, the muskrat, and the otter flourished and fattened for its inhabitants.

When we looked upon the lurid lightning, and listened to the sullen roar of the distant thunder, he would raise his hands to heaven, exclaiming, "the Great Spirit is angry," and kneeling down, would kiss the ground in fear and adoration. Pleasantly indeed did the days of that summer and the ensuing autumn pass away. Winter came, and the waters of the ever murmuring Raisin were clasped in his icy chains. In a little time I lost sight of my old friend, for his island home was desolate,—he had departed,—no one knew where. Spring came, and I was sent to an eastern city to school. Five years were flown, and I returned to the village of my birth. At the twilight hour a few evenings after this, I was seated at an open window with my mother, inhaling the fragrance of blowing flowers, and at times listening to the mellow tones of the sweet whip-poor-will. All the important incidents that had transpired during my absence were affectionately and particularly related. Nothing, however, interested me so much as the following brief account of my old Indian friend, which I now write down in the words in which it was told me:

"The summer after you left us, an Indian made his appearance in our village, whose poverty and old age elicited the kind sympathies and good wishes of all who knew him. Nothing was known of his history, save the fact that he belonged to the tribe of Potawatamies, a nation at this period almost extinct. Alas! for the poor Aborigines of our country. To them the earth is a dreary place, and their only joy is the hope that they will soon join their kindred in the land of spirits. One by one, like the lingering sands of an hour-glass, they are passing beyond the grave.

"As I had heard you talk about an Indian, with whom you had become acquainted while hunting, I thought this new comer might be the identical one. While passing through the village one day, I chanced to meet him, and invited him to come and sup with us that evening. He did so; and we were very glad to learn that he was indeed your friend, whom you thought dead. We discovered this fact from the way he spoke of a 'boy hunter,' who used to visit him in his lonely home. From that day he was our particular friend, as he had been before the friend of the whole village.

"His dress was common, but in the true Indian style. He became a great favorite among the boys, in whose sports he often participated. It was his custom in summer to sit beneath the great 'elm tree' on the green, and, gathering the children around him, rehearse to them wild stories about the

red men of the forest. Sometimes he would spend a whole day in whittling out bows and arrows for his youthful friends; and they in return would bestow on him various little presents, curious and rare. He had no particular abiding place. There were a dozen houses where he was perfectly at home. He seldom alluded to his tribe, and never ventured beyond the limits of the country. This was indeed unaccountable; but as he seemed to possess so amiable a disposition, no one could believe he had ever been guilty of a crime. Rather than this, it was thought he had been banished from his nation on account of some failure in warlike exploits,—or some similar cause.

“Perhaps, again, he was an Indian philosopher or poet, who had unfortunately drawn upon himself the ill-will of his people, by expressing some unpopular opinion. Sometimes he would enter the school-house, and listen attentively to the boys reciting their lessons. A printed book he looked upon as a treasure, and when one was given him, considered it a sacred gift, though its contents he could not read. He would often enter the church on the Sabbath, and in his seat near the pulpit, with his head resting upon both hands, would listen with an anxious gaze to the preacher’s words. He always left the house in a pensive mood. To his mind the heaven of the Christian was utterly incomprehensible. Of all the truths which were read to him from the Bible, the most interesting and wonderful was the history of our Saviour. When listening to this, he would often clasp his hands in an ecstasy of delight, exclaiming, ‘how good man! how good man!’

“On all occasions of festivity he was a welcome guest. Christmas and New-Years were always happy days with him. The little girls invited him to their pic-nic parties. The boys on Saturday afternoon had him to keep tally when they were playing ball. He was always the leader of the nutting parties in autumn, and a participator in the sleigh-rides of winter. In fact, he was everywhere, and had a hand in almost every thing that transpired.

“About six weeks ago it was reported throughout the village that our old Indian friend was very sick, and at the point of death. This intelligence was no less unexpected than melancholy. He had so completely won the affection of everybody, that it spread a universal gloom. In a few days he yielded up his spirit to his Father and his God. The next day was the Sabbath, and the one appointed for his burial. The sky was without a cloud, and the cool breeze, as it rustled among the leaves, brought health and refreshment to the body and soul of every one. The meadow-lark and the woodland birds sang louder and sweeter than they were wont to do. A good man had died, and Nature, animate and inanimate, seemed anxious to pronounce his requiem. A larger funeral than this I have seldom seen. Old men and women, young men and maidens, and children with tearful eyes,

followed the old Indian to his grave. It is situated in the northeast corner of the burying-ground, in the shadow of two weeping willows, that seem the guardians of his silent resting-place.”

Last evening, an hour before the sun had set, I stood beside the clay-cottage of my old Indian friend. Green is the grass, and many and beautiful the flowers, that flourish above his grave. I plucked a single harebell and placed it in my bosom, and its sister flowers I watered with my tears. Those tears, which were not the offspring of corroding grief, but of a mournful joy, were the only tribute that I could pay to one whom I dearly loved,—who was born a benighted heathen, but died a Christian. The mildly beaming and beautiful evening star had risen in the west, ere I departed from the “Silent City”; but I felt that the flower I had plucked, though faded, would in after hours remind me of my friend, and therefore I came away in peace, repeating to myself these words:

“And I am glad that he has lived thus long,  
And glad that he has gone to his reward:  
Nor deem that kindly Nature did him wrong,  
Softly to disengage the vital cord.  
When his weak hand grew palsied, and his eye  
Dark with the mists of age, it was his time to die.”

*Bryant.*

## AFTERNOON IN THE WOODLANDS.



“O, leave your towns, and go with me,  
Under the shady greenwood tree!”

*Thomas Miller.*



READER, I invite thee to leave thy occupation for a little while, and come with me into the woods, and we will hold silent and holy communion with the visible forms of Nature. Come, and I promise thee that when thou returnest thy heart will have become more peaceful and happy than it was before. Summer hath thrown open her leafy doors, leading to the voiceless woodlands, and by the perfume of her thousand flowers, invites us forth to enjoy the luxuries of her bounty. Let us depart, swift as the breeze.

Here, then, we will rest ourselves on this mossy bank, which lies in the very heart of the lonely woods. It is the sultry hour of noon, but the glaring heat of the sun does not reach this place. Like music of angels, the hum of the distant city comes softly echoing through these mellow-lighted chambers of solitude. Here, silence is for ever seated on her invisible throne. The song of the drowsy bee, the chirp of the grasshopper, and the drone of the beetle, tend but to deepen the surrounding stillness. There is not a breath of air. A single leaf has detached itself from that maple-tree, and is sinking to the earth. Thus, one after another, do our most cherished hopes pass away. See! here comes a little yellow-winged butterfly, flitting from flower to flower. It is a strange and beautiful truth,—God protects that little insect with the same care that he does each member of the human family. Is He not a God of love?

In a place like this, how many fantastic images are wont to rise up before the mind and eye! Even now, I behold a leafy temple, formed by the locked branches of the trees. It is the dwelling-place of the spirits of the wood. Ah! here they come, a bright and beautiful band. They have been wandering in the far-off, mute woodlands, and are now returning to revel in their emerald abode. There are many of them, but she who seems to be the queen is robed

in a garment made of the wild rose. The petals of the primrose, the violet, the marigold, the lily, the jessamine, the honeysuckle, the foxglove, and the mignonette, have been wrought into various robes to encircle the graceful forms of others. And some of them are clothed with delicate and deep green leaves. Each one is the guardian spirit of some flower, or plant, or tree. I hear one of them exclaim, while a tear glistens in her eye, "that a wicked mortal has pulled up one of her sassafras trees." Another is mourning the death of a favorite flower; while each, in turn, is relating some incident connected with her wanderings. Excepting these few troubles, how happy and free from care are these little woodland inhabitants! Would it were thus with the beautiful among men. But this can never be; for where sin and impurity are known, peace and happiness are strangers. But look! they have spread a banquet, and are preparing to enjoy it. Their table is covered with the products of their own domain. Fruit, from the sturdy walnut and chestnut trees, is there; honey, gathered from an old stump, the hive of the wild bee; and their wine is brought from the clear spring, or caught from the leaves, which were heavy with dew. Gentle music is breathing through that sylvan abode. Deeper and merrier do the cadences become. A shout!—and they are dancing and laughing with delight.

I am awake. The sweet vision has departed, and I hear no sound save the cooing of the turtle-dove, the song of the cuckoo, and the buzzing of the humblebee, all mingled with one harmonious strain. Tell me not that the woods are mute and lonely! Ah, no, they have a thousand tongues, and are the home of many of Nature's most beautiful creatures.

They are the favorite resort of poets and philosophers. Lovers, too, delight to retire to greenwood paths, to muse on future years of happiness. The thoughts which they give birth to are of the purest and most exalted kind. Those feelings and passions engendered by familiar intercourse with men, cannot enter these holy sanctuaries of Nature. We must leave them all behind if we desire to have the trees, the brooks, the moss, the birds, and the flowers, welcome us with sweet sympathy and love. Poetry, dreamy poetry, seems always to haunt the woodland solitude. It was in such a place the lovely Una sported with her milk-white lamb; and where the sorrowing Geraldine complained to Christabel, that "they had bound her to a palfrey white." It is the place most appropriate to read the delightful books of Mary Howitt, Thomas Miller, William Howitt, and Miss Mitford,—those pure hearted lovers of green fields and shady bowers.

How graceful does the ivy cling to that aged elm! Most aptly has it been called an emblem of woman's love. Look at that hickory! How like one of the marble columns of Balbec does it loom upward! It is a noble tree, but

seems proud of its strength and majesty. And it has a right to feel so; for it bears within its arms one of the largest and most luxuriant grape-vines of the forest. I am reminded of those comforting words which came from the lips of our Saviour, when he said to his disciples,—“I am the true vine; my Father is the husbandman; and ye are the branches.”

What a specimen of royalty is yonder oak! The tip of its topmost limb is an hundred feet from the earth. The oak is the goodliest tree that grows,—whether we behold it towering above its brethren of the forest, or standing alone upon the plain or mountain. It was under its shadow that the patriarch Abraham rested in the heat of the day; and Jacob hid the idols under the oak of Shechem. In history or poetry it is the most celebrated of trees. The ancient Druids made it the emblem of their deity, and paid it divine honors. Countless are the ships that have been wrought out of its timbers. Who can, estimate the merchandise it has transported from one continent to another?—or the number of souls it has safely borne across the pathless ocean? Even if these facts did not have that effect, its name has been immortalized by the poetry of Shakspeare, Spencer, and many more. Yes; of all the trees, the goodliest and most magnificent is the aged oak. Whether we behold it propping the sky with its huge masses of foliage, or lying in the dust, disarmed, sublime and glorious are the emotions it inspires.

Let us resume our walk, but with careful steps, for our pathway is covered with flowers. I see a pale, delicate lily peeping out from under the shadow of a fallen tree. How much does it seem like some lovely maiden, whose spirit strives to rise above the darkness caused by unrequited affection! Are not flowers the emblems of every thing we love? They have a silent voice, which sinks deeply into the heart. We behold the furrow pass over the field, and view, on its cold, damp bosom, the crushed image of the daisy; and recalling to mind the following lines by Burns, we acknowledge their wisdom and truth;



“Such is the fate of artless maid,  
Sweet flow’ret of the rural shade!—  
By love’s simplicity betrayed,  
    And guileless trust;  
Till she, like thee, all soiled is laid  
    Low in the dust.

“Such is the fate of simple bard,  
On Life’s rough ocean luckless starred;  
Unskilful he, to note the card  
    Of prudent lore,  
Till billows rage and gales blow hard,  
    And whelm him o’er.

“Such fate of suffering worth is given,  
Who long with want and woe has striven,  
By human pride and cunning driven  
    To misery’s brink;  
Till, wrecked of every stay but Heaven,  
    He, ruined, sink.

“E’en thou, who mourn’st the daisy’s fate,  
That fate is thine,—no distant date,  
Stern ruin’s ploughshare, drives elate,  
    Full on thy bloom;  
Till crushed beneath the furrows’ weight,  
    Shall be thy doom.”

Here we come at last to my favorite retreat. It is a little shady dell, through the centre of which a rivulet goes murmuring along. A tree has fallen across, which will answer the purpose of a bridge. On that we will again seat ourselves. This nameless brook is the most constant of all my friends, for, every time I come here, it teaches me the same sweet and soothing lessons. Even when clasped in the cold embrace of winter, it has a voice of instruction. I have known it for many years, and I verily believe I am the only person who has ever rested upon its banks before. It was the delight of my youth to come all alone to this lonely spot, during the long hours of the pleasant summer time, to study the mysteries of the Universe. Many, many days have I spent on these soft green banks,—shaded from the hot sun by the thick foliage of overhanging trees. And I do not deem those days as misspent time. Far from it. I held communion with my own heart; looked deep into that fountain, and wondered at the shadows which were wont to darken its unruffled waters. I have mused on the holy character of God, and on my own insignificance; and these thoughts have made me

humble, though contented and happy. In these solitudes I prepared myself to meet with fortitude the troubles and trials of active life.

Here, too, I have pondered the pages of Milton, and been startled by his sublimity; with him have walked through the Garden of Eden and on the burning pavements of Hell. Over those of Shakspeare, and held converse with the wonderful beings of his mighty mind; over those of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and been charmed by their melody, and their deep and beautiful philosophy.

If we are desirous to meditate on the past, or look into the mysterious future, there is no place better fitted for this purpose than the lonely woods,—remote from town and hamlet. Every thing we there see will inspire us with peaceful thoughts of purity and love. Here, as well as everywhere, Nature will speak to us in emblems. Like man, this little rivulet is born a wanderer; but unlike him, the business of its life is to laugh and be happy. Far up among the hills it commences its career. At first it skips along as though it feared to come in contact with the rude rocks around; but as it proceeds it gathers confidence, and in a little while the echo of its dashing is in the glen below. Now, it is gliding by so silently, you would hardly believe it to be so near were it not for the music of its ripples, and the noise of breaking bubbles. How beautiful is that water-lily, bending over to gaze at its own sweet image in the liquid mirror! See, under that drooping willow, and almost hid from view by the tall reeds,

“How peaceful sails  
Yon little fleet,—the wild-duck and her brood.”

*Grahame.*

Let us approach the brink, but carefully, around this cluster of hazels, so as not to frighten a single creature. How like gold do those pebbles appear in the sunshine! but in the shade they are of the varied colors of a bubble,—crimson, purple, scarlet, white, brown, green, yellow, blue, and variegated! Lo! an army of minnows!—headed, I declare, by an immense trout, who appears to be their king. What a place is this to read that delicious book, “The Complete Angler,” listening, as it were, to the heavenly discourse of good old Izaak Walton.

But come, my friend, we will continue our walk, for there are other sights and sounds to enjoy before we wend our homeward pathway. Look! I told you so. A red-winged blackbird has perched on the topmost bough of that slender ash, for the express purpose of giving us a song. His weight and haste have overwhelmed him in the green waves. Now, he is plainly seen above the highest leaf. How clear, loud, and shrill his voice! There,—there

he goes again! What a fellow! Just as though he thought us too ignorant to appreciate his song. Dear bird,—I love you for your coquettish impudence! Ah! here comes a robin! It has lit upon that stump. Why does it flutter so? Alas, it is suffering with a wound. Some cruel sportsman has shot it; perhaps while it was singing a sweet song in a neighbouring field. And now, alone, it has come to die, far from the haunts of men. O, what a sad lesson does this simple incident inculcate!—Reader, wilt thou not lay it to thy heart?

We have come out of the thick wood, and are now in the open fields. It is the time of harvest. The cradle, wielded by the brawny farmer, cuts down the golden grain. The more delicate portion of the reapers gather it into sheafs. But in the midst of the rural company there is one eye more brilliant than the rest. Sarah Bell, who is known in every cottage as “the primrose of the vale,” is there. She is the exact counterpart of that lovely being whom Bloomfield saw among the gleaners when he wrote the following:

“For lo! encircled there, the lovely maid,  
In youth’s own bloom and native smiles arrayed;  
Her hat awry, divested of her gown,  
Her creaking stays of leather stout and brown:  
Invidious barrier; why art thou so high,  
When the slight covering of her neck slips by:  
Then half revealing to the eager sight  
Her full ripe bosom, exquisitely white:  
In many a local tale of harmless mirth,  
And many a joke of momentary birth,  
She bears a part, and, as she stops to speak,  
Strokes back the ringlets from her glowing cheek.”

Happy and independent indeed is the life of the industrious farmer. The green field is his home, the blue sky his canopy, and the meadow-lark is the living lute, which cheers him with melody.

Glance upward; how proudly does that eagle bathe his rough bosom in the upper air! He is all alone,—playing, it would seem, with his own thoughts,—wheeling suddenly round,—now falling or rising,—then gliding smoothly away. He looks with scorn upon our earth. If we could follow him with our eyes, in half an hour we should see him feeding his young, on the brow of some cliff which frowns upon a distant sea.

See you yonder hill, whose summit is visible above the trees, skirting the eastern border of this field? Well! from that spot I wish you to gaze with me upon the setting sun.

Our desired eminence is attained. What a gorgeous landscape is before us. How refreshing is this evening breeze, which comes to us laden with the fragrance of flowery fields.

“See, how the green girt cottages shimmer in the setting sun! He bends and sinks,—the day is overlived. Yonder he hurries off, and quickens other life. O! that I have no wing to lift me from the ground, to struggle after, for ever after, him. I should see, in everlasting evening beams, the stilly world at my feet,—every height on fire,—every vale in repose,—the silver brook flowing into golden streams. The rugged mountain, with all its dark defiles, would not then break my godlike course. Already the sea, with its heated bays, opens on my enraptured sight. Yet the god seems at length to sink away. But the new impulse wakes. I hurry on to drink his everlasting light; the day before me, and the night behind; the heavens above, and under me the waves. A glorious dream; as it is passing—he is gone.”<sup>[1]</sup>

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[1] Hayward’s Goethe’s Faust.

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Yes, the wheels of his chariot have just gone down into the waters of the far-off western sea. How beautiful are those clouds! They seem like fairy islands in a stormless sea. Do you not behold mountains and valleys, and far winding streams? Are they not inhabited by angels? Do you not hear their evening anthem, as they welcome approaching night? They are gone,—all, all gone.

The far extending valley before us, is fast melting into the dusk of twilight. “The flies of evening are on their feeble wings, the hum of their course is on the fields.” The birds have gone to their nests. The flowers, afraid of the breath of night, have bid adieu to the sun, and closed their petals. No sound is heard save the sighing of the gentle wind, and the dying murmur of rural sounds.

And now before we part, kind reader, I wish you to drink in the sad, sweet melody of a favorite minstrel, whose harp was tuned at such an hour as this.

“Evening, as slow thy placid shades descend,  
    Veiling with gentlest hush the landscape still,  
    The lonely battlement and farthest hill  
And woods, *I think of those who have no friend,*  
Who now, perhaps, by melancholy led,  
    From the broad blaze of day, where pleasure flaunts,  
    Retiring, wander mid thy lonely haunts  
Unseen: and watch the tints that on thy bed  
Hang lovely, to their pensive Fancy’s eye,  
    Presenting fairy vales, where the tired mind  
    Might rest beyond the murmurs of mankind,  
Nor hear the hourly moans of misery!  
Ah! beauteous views, that Hope’s fair gleams the while,  
Should smile like you, and perish as they smile!”

*Bowles.*

Silence has again settled upon town, hamlet, and cottage. The woods are dark and solitary. Nature and all her works have retired to repose. God is looking down upon the world in watchfulness and love.

## SABBATH EVENING REFLECTIONS.



EVER since I was a child, I have always thought the Sabbath to be the most beautiful of days. In the pilgrimage of life it is our resting-place; and as we approach it we may lay by all our cares, and prepare the mind for the society and converse of God and holy angels. Who is there, in the Christian world at least, that does not welcome with joy the Sabbath evening? To me it comes fraught with a thousand pleasing recollections of childhood, and in fancy I behold myself innocent and happy. It is the hour best fitted for calm and serious reflection,—for the veil of twilight is spread over the landscape, and seems to hide from view the busy cares of the coming week. “The kiss of heavenly love descends upon me in the solemn stillness of the Sabbath.”

I have been standing this afternoon beside the mound where lies interred the body of a dear friend. Even beside his grave I was not sorrowful, for I knew that he had died a Christian; and I remembered the many happy hours we had passed together when we were young, and strangers to the world. It does not make me sad to think of the departed, when I know they have been cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. I know not why thinking upon death should make the heart gloomy! Is it because we wish our friends to live for ever in this “valley of tears”? Are we so selfish as to mourn, because they are happy in another and better world? I love the poet and the Christian, who could write these words:

“I would not live alway; I ask not to stay  
Where storm after storm rises dark o’er the way!  
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here,  
Are enough for life’s woes, full enough for its cheer.

“I would not live alway; thus fettered by sin,  
Temptation without, and corruption within;  
E’en the rapture of pardon is mingled with fears,  
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent tears.

“I would not live alway; no, welcome the tomb;  
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom;  
There, sweet be my rest, till He bid me arise,  
To hail him in triumph descending the skies.”

It is twenty short summers ago, this day, that four happy boys were seated upon a beautiful hill in New England. The services of the Sabbath were ended, and they had gathered there to gaze upon the setting sun. They looked with pleasure at the golden clouds, lingering in the west, but little did they think those clouds were emblems of themselves. I remember with what fond anticipations each looked into the future. Before their visions, everything was bright and full of promise. One, a dark-haired, noble boy, said,—“I would be a sailor.” He left his home to roam upon the sea; but the voice of the tempest does not disturb him *now*, for his body is beneath the wave. Another said,—“I wish to be an opulent merchant.” He also left his home and friends, and became a man of wealth, in a distant clime, among strangers; but in the prime of manhood he was called to die, and the cypress now sighs above his grave. Another said,—“I long for the applause of men.” Ambition urged him onward, and the world did for a time listen to the magic of his name; but alas! he too is among the forgotten dead. These three, the dearest friends of my boyhood, have gone to the world of spirits; and the fourth, the most unworthy one of all, is still in the land of the living. Strange and mysterious indeed are the workings of Providence!

In thinking upon a great city, I have often wondered at the carelessness with which its inhabitants look upon a passing funeral. They are so much occupied with temporal pursuits,—so anxious to become great, and rich, and powerful, that they seem to be ignorant of the fact that they all must die. It is strange that men should be so heedless of that solemn hour, when the soul leaves the body and wings its flight to Eternity.

That we must die, the works of the whole creation bear ample testimony. All bespeak change, decay, and death. We twine our affections about the heart of a young and delicate child; we delight to caress it, and we hope the innocent creature will live a long and joyous life; but in one short hour it is

cut down by the rude hand of Death, and perishes like a flower in the bud. Ought we to weep because that child has gone to rest in the bosom of its God? Every thing that we love must die. The father and mother, the tender husband and wife, and affectionate brothers and sisters, and ourselves too, must all be gathered to the cold grave,—to that earth which is the receptacle of all. The grave-yard is a silent city, where we shall all repose in peace, and where the beggar is equal to the king.

In view of these things, to what must we look for consolation? Conscience answers,—“to Religion.” Let us think less of the vanities of earth, and more of God and his kingdom. It would be better to lead a Christian life, even if there were no reward beyond the grave. The memory of a good man is more sacred than that of an infidel or worldling, and therefore in this point of view we should be gainers. But there is another world, and there are rich rewards awaiting those who follow the religion of Jesus. It is a pure and holy religion. How beautiful when it is the guardian spirit of old age! How unearthly is its influence upon the heart! Look at it, when the young man, in the vigor of life, is guided by its sweet and heavenly voice. Far beyond the boundaries of this world he beholds a light, and urged by the happiness which it points out, he pursues, with a strong, proud step, the journey of life, until at last he reaches heaven, and is a glad worshipper in the presence of his God.

Is any young man anxious to win to himself the love of the wise and good, and is he anxious of becoming the leader of the brave and noble, he must be guided in all his actions by the spirit of religion. To him the voice of wisdom says,—“Let no earthly fascinations, no corrupting sentiments, no hollow example, seduce you from the narrow path, and plunge you into whirlpools of inevitable ruin.”

Religion! how beautiful, too, when it has its home within the bosom of a young and innocent female! See her at the hour of rest, when, bending before her Maker, she offers up a fervent prayer, beseeching Him to forgive her sins, and lead her in the path of uprightness. With a clear conscience she lays her head upon her pillow, and her slumber is peaceful and happy. Borne as it were on the pinions of faith, her mind soars upward, and she beholds her future home,—the heavenly Jerusalem. When morning dawns she awakens from her refreshing sleep, and enters again upon her duties of kindness and of love. Can it be denied that angels look upon such a being as upon a sister spirit?

Religion will make us happier even in this world. It is this alone which can administer consolation to the mourner, the persecuted, and the poor. It calms the troubled feelings of a bereaved mother, for it whispers in her ear



that God has gathered to himself his own, and that she will meet the loved one in a few short years in a land where parting is unknown. It tells the afflicted sister and beloved friend, that the time is coming when they will be reunited to the companion of their childhood; the brother that he will yet meet his departed and much loved sister; the father that he will again meet his lovely and much loved child. As for me, I would rather be the poorest being upon the earth, the despised of the despised, than be deprived of that sweet enjoyment which religion alone can impart. When sorrow and disappointment gather around my path, to cloud my cherished hopes, I look upon the bright and perfect form of religion, and notwithstanding the chilling blast, I am resigned and happy. Without it, man is a blind mariner in the midst of a dangerous sea. The foundation of true religion is everlasting. "The creations of the sculptor may moulder into dust; the wreath of the bard may wither; the throne of the conqueror may be shivered by an opposing power into atoms; the fame of the warrior may no longer be hymned by the recording minstrel; the hope of the youth may be disappointed; but that which hallows the cottage, and sheds a glory around the palace,—religion,—shall never decay. It is celebrated by the angels of God; it is written on the pillars of heaven, and reflected down to earth." I would rather have the inward glory with which the poor man is crowned, than overshadow the world with my martial banners. Rather would I be the humblest of the lowly, and unknown to earth, but a Christian, than to have the reputation of the highest famed for genius, and be without religion.

Religion is the only antidote for Death. If we walk in the path which God has pointed out in his Holy Bible, we shall not be afraid to die. If we keep his commandments, and follow the example of the meek and lowly Saviour, who is our Redeemer, and the Son of God, when we are called to pass through the valley which leads to eternity, we shall be supported by his omnipotent hand, and, at last, shall be welcomed by him and his angels into that glorious kingdom, prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world. Reader! this very night thy soul may be required of thee,—therefore, I warn thee to *prepare to die*.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF MICHIGAN.



AFTER the absence of years,—and to one who loves every tree and stream of his native land,—it is a sad yet pleasing employment, to spend an occasional evening in dwelling upon the recollections of that land, and on the pleasures of a happy boyhood. Ye who have hearts that are in sympathy with mine, will pardon me if I make free use, in the present paper, of the personal pronoun I. It is a foolish and fashionable custom, that would brand every writer as an egotist, who is wont to express the thoughts and feelings of his own heart, and not those of a mixed public.

As a State, Michigan is yet in its infancy; but as a Territory, her name has been familiar to the world for many years. The character of its scenery and people is as original as its situation. Almost surrounded by water, it possesses all the advantages and beauties of an island; while at the same time it is but a small portion of a vast whole. Its streams are numerous and clear, but generally sluggish. A portion of the extreme North is uninhabited by human beings, owing to its barrenness. Huge granite mountains here loom upward in eternal solitude; sometimes presenting the appearance of having been severed asunder, and scattered around by some mighty convulsion of nature. On the borders of the cold and desolate lakes thus formed, the crane and the bittern rear their young. Occasionally on the brow of some jutting crag, may be discovered the meagre hut of some poor Indian. Perhaps a barbarous anchorite, to whom the voice of fellow-man is a grating sound, and to whom existence is but a mist, a dream; or it may be some disgraced warrior, who has been banished from friends and home to dwell in this dreary solitude, with no companions but a half-starved dog, rugged pines, and frowning rocks. But this section occupies only a small portion of the State.

The surface of the western half is destitute of rocks and undulating; and it is here that the loveliest of lakes, and streams, and prairies are to be found. Lake Michigan, the second in the world, is its western boundary. The eastern portion is entirely original in its appearance, possessing many beauties peculiarly its own. It is so level and low, that a stranger on approaching it

from Lake Erie, is often surprised to find himself in port, while in the act of looking out for land. This shore is watered by the Huron, St. Clair, and Erie lakes.

Well then, this, beloved reader, is the State over which my memory will now wander, in search of something that will please your fancy, and bring to your heart thoughts of peace and purity. This is the country where the first fifteen years of my existence were passed,—this the theatre where my future character as an actor in the drama of life, was formed and first acted out.

Remote from the glitter and noise of the great world, I used to wander all alone through her dark forest, and bathe in her pure streams without a care or thought to mar the peacefulness of life. A thousand words now full of meaning, and familiar to my ear, were then but unmeaning sounds. Those were the days when I sported on the lap of Nature, feeling it to be a luxury to breathe. Will they ever return? Ask that evening breeze whether it will ever again cool the fevered brow of that dying man!

How changed is my present condition! I am a man; acquainted with the world,—its vices and follies; and a dweller in the largest city of America. Unknown I came here, and unnoticed do I still live in the midst of thousands, the majority of whom are eager in the pursuit of pleasure,—not happiness. I am with them, but not of them.

Come, ye recollections of the past! and again take up your abode in the chamber of my soul. O, I would not relinquish the enjoyment ye afford for all the wealth contained in the marble palaces around me.

It has been my fortune, even from childhood, to be classed with those, of whom it is often said, “they never will amount to any thing.” It is my duty now, in the very face of this parental edict, to “rise up and say,” that in one profession at least I have become eminent, if not perfect; and that is hunting. Let me give you a sketch of one of my river hunts.

My father’s farm was situated just above Monroe, about two miles from the mouth of that beautiful stream, the river Raisin. It is early morning, in the latter end of spring. Breakfast is ended. My cap and buckskin shirt are on; the latter gathered round my waist by a scarlet-worsted belt. My powder-horn and shot-pouch are filled with the nicest kind of ammunition; and in my hand is my dear little gun, (bought expressly for myself,) polished bright as a sunbeam. I have kissed the baby, and am now on my “winding way.” At the mouth of the river, I borrow a canoe of some old Frenchman who resides there. If I were to offer him pay, he would not accept it; for the interesting reason that he “knows my father.” \* \* \* \* \* All the day long I have been hunting. The sun is in the West, and I am hungry. I have paddled around

many a green and lovely island; and explored many a *bayou*, and marsh, and outlets of creeks, frightening from her lonely nest many a wild-duck and her brood. My shot-pouch is now empty, although the bottom of my canoe is covered with game. There are five canvass-backs, three teals, three plovers, two snipes, one wood-duck, and several other kinds of water-fowl. The canoe is drawn up on shore, and with my thanks I have given old Robare a duck or two. My game is now slung upon my back, and I am homeward bound, proud as a young king. While passing through the village (for I have to do so) I hear a voice exclaiming, Lally, Lally! I approach, and find my father and several other gentlemen seated at the post-office door, *talking politics*. Each one in turn gives me a word of praise, calling me "quite a hunter," &c. I pay them for their kindness on the spot, by the donation of a canvass-back, and pass on. That evening my supper is a rare enjoyment for some of the ducks have been cooked under the especial charge of my mother. A little longer and I am in the land of dreams. Many, very many such days have I enjoyed, but *now* they are far from me. O, that I were an innocent, laughing, happy boy once more! Come back! come back! joys of my youth!

There are many other kinds of hunting peculiar to Michigan. The squirrel hunt, the turkey hunt, the pigeon hunt, the partridge hunt, the deer hunt, each in their turn and season, do I remember to have participated in. Reader! have you ever, while roaming in the woods bordering a prairie, started from his heathery couch, a noble buck, and seen him dart from you, "swift as an arrow from a shivering bow!" Was it not a sight worthy of a pure world? Did you not hail him, "king of the beautiful and fleet"? How much more independent and free is the "antlered monarch of the waste," than he who sits upon a throne, in the midst of gaudy pomp, with a nation trembling at his feet!

There is one hunting incident which I met with when about fourteen years of age, that it is impossible for me to forget. I had entered upon a cow-path, and as it led through so many and such beautiful places I forgot myself, and wandered on until the shadows of evening warned me of my situation. Great oaks, and hickories, and walnut trees were with me wherever I went. They cast a spell upon me like that which is wrought by the old of other days. The black night came at last, and there I was, alone and lost in that silent wilderness. Onward still did I continue, and even in my great fear was, at times, startled by the flapping of an owlet's wing, or the howl of a wolf. The stars were above, shining in their brightness, but invisible to me, so closely woven were the tops of the trees. Faintly glimmering in the distance I saw a fire-light, and on coming near, found a

party of Indians encamped. My heart panted with excessive fear and yet I could not speak,—could hardly breathe, and still my mind was free and active. I stood and listened,—and O, how solemn did the faint sound of a distant waterfall seem to me, as heard in that awful stillness! Would that I had power to express the emotions which came like a flood pouring into my soul. Covered by a blanket, and pillowed by a mocock of sugar, or a bundle of skins, each Indian was asleep upon his rush-mat. Parents and children and friends, promiscuously disposed, though all of them with their feet turned towards the expiring embers. The dogs, too, looking ferocious and cunning as wolves, were all sound asleep. I stole softly into the midst of this wild company, and covering myself with an odd blanket, strange to say, I slumbered.

When morning was come, and the Indians discovered a pale-faced boy among them, their astonishment can be more easily conceived than described. I at length informed them by signs that I was lost, and that my home was in the village of Monroe. I partook with them of a hearty breakfast, composed of venison, hominy, and water, and ere the sun had mounted high, was on my way homeward, with an Indian for my guide. As we parted on the outskirts of the village I offered to pay him for his trouble, but he declined receiving any thing. I turned around and the thick forest shielded him from my sight. Of course my friends were much concerned at my absence, and the majority of them insisted upon my having been drowned. For one whole week after this adventure, I was compelled to stay at home; but after that it was forgotten, and I was in the woods again.

Fishing was another art in which I was considered an adept. When the first warm days of spring lured the sturgeon and muskanouge from their deep blue homes in the lake, to ascend the Raisin, I was always among the first on “the large platform below the milldam,” with spear in hand, and heart to conquer. Many a noble sturgeon, six and seven feet long, have I seen extended upon the shore. As for *me*, I never *aimed* only at the smaller ones. Once, however, my spear entered the back of a “whapper,” and my determination to keep hold was nearly the cause of my being drowned. It must have been a thrilling, yet a ridiculous sight to see me a-straddle of the fellow, holding on to the spear, and passing down the river like lightning. I think if Mr. William Shakspeare had been present, he would have exclaimed, “Lo! a merman on a *sturgeon’s* back!” If I could enjoy such sport now, I would willingly risk such a ducking every day.

White bass fishing in Michigan, is one of the most quiet and interesting of sports. It is a common sight to see forty or fifty canoes, each one with two persons in it, with their lines thrown gracefully out, and floating silently

upon the smooth river at sunset,—small pieces of red and white flannel, being the trifles which lure to death many thousands of these beautiful and sweet fish.

The white fish are caught with the seine, and abound in all the lakes surrounding Michigan. The celebrated Mackinaw trout, so called after the town near which they are only found, is generally caught by the hook, and sometimes weigh forty pounds. Where they are caught, the water is so transparent that they may often be seen playing about at the depth of fifty feet.

How many long Saturday afternoons have I mused away “on the old wharf down the river”! How many sunfish, and perch, and black bass have I brought up from their pure element to spread upon my father’s table! But this was long,—long ago. Those days of innocence and youth have gone into their graves, bearing with them many blighted hopes and fond aspirations. Alas! they never,—never will return!

Time was when the society of Michigan was not so mixed as it is at present. The French were the first who settled there, and at as early a date as 1620; and for many years they and the Indians were the sole inhabitants. Now, people out of every civilized nation dwell within its borders. Detroit, on the river of that name, and Frenchtown, on the river Raisin, were both founded by the French. Here it is that the far-famed Jesuit missionaries first pitched their tents in (what is now) the United States. The former of these is a flourishing city of fifteen thousand inhabitants. Its principal street is handsomer (though not so wealthy,) than the Broadway of New York. Its elevation is about sixty or seventy feet above the water; and looking from its streets, the eye wanders over a scene not unlike that seen from the North River side of New York. But in winter, it is a beautiful sight to see this same vast sheet of water frozen like marble, and on its surface hundreds of sleighs and skaters, gliding in every direction; while a chorus of bells comes faintly and sweetly to your ear. Monroe, as I have before said, is situated about two miles from the Lake, and is also a flourishing city, containing about five thousand inhabitants,—a goodly portion of whom are the descendants of the early settlers. A deep impression of their origin is still visible in these places. But instead of diminishing, these characteristics add much to their beauty and interest.

I look upon the old French farms in this vicinity as among the finest and most beautiful in the world. The front part is generally watered by some river, on which the farm houses are mostly situated. They are about half a mile in width, sometimes running back in a straight line to the distance of three or four miles, though two miles would be an average length. A

description of one is that of many. Leaving the river and going back, you first pass through an orchard containing four or five hundred trees. Here a row of splendid pear trees, there a regiment of old black apple trees, each one staggering under its weight of fruit like a laughing, fat, wealthy wanderer. Entering that little enclosure behind the barn, you will see fifty small light green trees, from under whose leaves an innumerable number of rosy-cheeked peaches will peep at you, reminding you of as many lovely country girls. That strange noise which you hear is but the great screw of the cider press. I see, kind reader, that your mouth is watering; come along, then, and we will drink a glass of this American wine to the memory of those we love. A little further on we come to a green pasture, where there are cows, oxen, sheep, and horses grazing. Onward still, and a wheat field yellow as gold meets the eye, bowing before the breeze; then a little brook goes by, watering a rich meadow; then a cornfield stubble, and still another wheatfield; until, after a walk of a mile and a half, you find yourself in the forest, dark and gloomy. On just such a farm as this, was it my privilege to spend the dawn and morning of life. Is it strange, then, that a deep and holy love for Nature, should be firmly rooted in my heart?

I would dearly love to do it, but I fear to weary the patience of my reader, if I linger any *about my home*. But before I depart, I cannot refrain from quoting the following passage from Charlevoix, descriptive of the scenery as it existed when he passed through this region in 1721:

“The first of June being the day of Pentecost, after having sailed up a beautiful river (the Raisin) for the space of an hour, which has its rise as they say, at a great distance, and runs betwixt two fine meadows, we passed over a carrying-place of about sixty paces in breadth, in order to avoid turning round a point which is called the Long Point. It is a very sandy spot of ground, and naturally bears a great quantity of vines. The following days I saw nothing remarkable, but coasted along a charming country, hid at times by disagreeable prospects, which, however, are of no great extent. Wherever I went ashore, I was enchanted by the beauty and variety of a landscape, terminated by the noblest forests in the whole world. Add to this, that every part of it swarms with water-fowl. I cannot say whether the woods afford game in equal profusion. Were we all to sail, as I there did, with a serene sky, in a most charming climate, and in water as clear as that of the purest fountain; were we sure of finding everywhere as secure and agreeable places to pass the night in, where we might enjoy the pleasures of hunting at a small expense, breathe at our ease the purest air, and enjoy the prospect of the finest of countries; we might possibly be tempted to travel to the end of our days. How many oaks represented to me that of Mamre! How many

fountains put me in mind of that of Jacob! Each day a new situation, chosen at pleasure, a neat and commodious house built and finished with all necessaries in less than a quarter of an hour, and floored with a pavement of flowers, continually springing up on a carpet of the most beautiful green; on all sides simple and natural beauties, unadulterated and inimitable by art."

No one who has never witnessed them can form any idea of the exquisite beauty of the thousand lakes that gem the western part of Michigan. They are the brightest and purest mirrors that the virgin sky has ever used to adorn herself. Their banks are frequently dotted by human dwellings,—the humble, though comfortable abodes of emigrants and farmers. Notwithstanding what has been so often said by the artificial inhabitants of cities, concerning the hardships and ignorance of the backwoodsman's life, there is many a stout heart, exalted mind, and noble soul, whose dwelling-place has been for years on the borders of these very lakes. I *know* this to be true,—for I have slept beneath their roof, and often partaken with them of their johnny cake and fat quails. No,—no. I love these men as brothers, and shall always frown upon that cit or dandy, who sets down aught against them,—in malice or in ignorance.

Some of these little lakes smile in perpetual solitude. One of them is before me now. It is summer. The sun is above its centre. Deep and dark, and still are the shadows of the surrounding trees and bushes. On the broad leaf of a water-lily, a green snake is curled up, with his head elevated, and his tongue gleaming in the sunlight. He is the enemy of all flying insects and little birds, and if you watch him a moment longer, you will see one of them decoyed to death by the power of his charm. Hush! there is a stir among the dry leaves. It is but a lonely doe coming to quench her thirst. Is she not the Queen of Beauty? There she stands, knee-deep in the water, looking downward, admiring the brightness of her eyes, and the gracefulness of her neck. Vain creature, I love thee!

How Leigh Hunt would delight to be seated on this spot! His favorite flowers,—the rose, the violet, the lily, and sweetbrier,—would each sing him another song more soft and delicate than their first. What bright hue is that in the middle of the lake? It is but the reflection

“—of a vapor in the sky,  
Thin, white, and very high.”—*Coleridge*.

A great proportion of Michigan is covered by *white-oak openings*. Standing on a gentle hill, the eye wanders away for miles over an undulating surface, obstructed only by the trunks of lofty trees. Above you a green canopy, and beneath a carpet of velvet-grass, sprinkled with flowers of every



hue and size. O! what a glorious sight it is to be in one of these open forests, and see the deer bounding away, and the birds flying from tree to tree. "Earth has nothing to show more fair." The soil is a black vegetable mould mixed with gravel, and is considered the best for the production of wheat.

The *prairies* are another interesting feature of Michigan scenery. They meet the traveller at every point, and of many sizes, seeming like so many lakes; being often studded by wooded islands, and surrounded by shores of forest. Their soil is a deep black sand. Grass is their natural production, although corn, oats, and potatoes flourish upon them. Never can I forget the first time I entered White Pigeon Prairie. Sleeping beneath the shadows of sunset, as it was, the effect upon me was like that which is felt on first beholding the ocean,—overpowering awe. All that the poet has said about these gardens of the desert, is true.

*Burr-oak plains.* The only difference between these and the oak openings, is in the character of the trees and the evenness of their surface. The soil is a mixture of sand and black loam. They have the appearance of cultivated orchards, or English parks; and, on places where the foot of the white man has never been, a carriage and four could easily pass through. They produce both wheat and corn.

The *wet prairies* have the appearance of submerged land. In them the grass is often six or seven feet high. They are the resort of water-fowl, muskrats, pike, and pickerel.

But the best and most fertile soil in Michigan is that, designated by the title of *timbered land*. It costs more to prepare it for the plough, but when once the seed is sown, it yields a thousand fold. And with regard to their beauty and magnificence, the innumerable forests of this State are not surpassed by any in the world, whether we consider the variety or the grandeur of their productions. O how passionately dear to my heart are they; for it was from one of their holiest solitudes that my infant eyes first looked upon the azure sky. Never have I been so happy as when, a playful boy, I lived and loved and dreamed, beneath their twilight shadows. Such happiness, perchance, I shall never again enjoy in this world, unless it be when my panting heart shall have been united to another by the most delicate and sacred of sympathies and ties.

A friend of mine, now residing in western Michigan, and who has spent several years in Europe, thus writes respecting this region:

"O, such trees as we have here! Magnificent, tall, large-leafed, umbrageous. Valombrosa,—the far-famed Valombrosa of Tuscany, is nothing to the *thousand* Valombrosas here! A fig for your Italian scenery.

*This* is the country where Nature reigns in her virgin beauty; where trees grow, where corn grows, where *men* grow better than they do anywhere else in the world. This is the land to study nature in all her luxuriant charms, under glorious green branches, among singing birds and laughing streams; this the land to hear the cooing of the turtle-dove, in far, deep, cool, sylvan bowers; to feel your soul expand under the mighty influences of Nature in her primitive beauty and strength.”

The principal inland rivers of Michigan, are the Grand River, the Kalamazoo, the St. Joseph, the Saginaw, and river Raisin. The first three empty in Lake Michigan, and are about seventy miles apart. Their average length is about two hundred and fifty miles, and about thirty or forty rods in width. At present, they are navigable about half their length for small steamboats and bateaux. Their bed is of limestone, covered with pebbles. I was a passenger on board the Matilda Barney, on her first trip,—the first steamer that ever ascended the St. Joseph’s. I remember well the many flocks of wild turkeys, and herds of deer, that the “iron horse” frightened, in his winding career. The Indian canoe is giving way to the more costly but less beautiful rowboat, and those rivers are becoming deeper every day. Instead of the howl of the wolf, the songs of the husbandman now echo through their vales, and on their banks are many comfortable dwellings. The Saginaw runs towards the north, and empties into Lake Huron,—that same Huron which will be greatly celebrated in song by the young poet Noble. This river is navigable for sixty miles. The river Raisin is a winding stream, emptying into Lake Erie, called so from the quantity of grapes that cluster on its banks. Its Indian name is Numma-sepee, signifying River of Sturgeons. Sweet river! whose murmurs have so often been my lullaby, mayest thou continue in thy beauty for ever. Are there not streams like thee flowing through the Paradise of God?

Notwithstanding the comparative newness of Michigan, its general aspect is ancient. The ruin of many an old fort may be discerned on its borders, reminding the beholder of “wrong and outrage,” blood and strife. This was once the home of noble but oppressed nations. Here lived and loved the Algonquin and Shawanese; the names of whose warrior chiefs,—Pontiac the proud, and Tecumseh the brave,—will long be treasured in history. I have stood upon their graves, which are marked only by a blighted tree and an unhewn stone, and have sighed deeply, as I remembered their deeds. But they are gone,—gone like the lightning of a summer’s day!

It is a traditionary land. For we are told, that the Indian hunters of old saw fairies and genii floating over its lakes and streams, and dancing

through its lonely forests. In these did they believe, and to please them was their religion.

The historian<sup>[2]</sup> this State thus writes in alluding to “the times of the days of old.” “The streams rolled their liquid silver to the lakes, broken only by the fish which flashed in their current, or the swan that floated upon their surface. Vegetation flourished alone. Roses bloomed and died only to be trampled by the deer or savage; and strawberries studded the ground like rubies, where the green and sunny hill-sides reposed amid the silence, like sleeping infants in the lap of the forest. The rattlesnake glided undisturbed through its prairies; and the fog which hung in clouds over the stagnant marshes spread no pestilence. The panther, the fox, the deer, the wolf, and the bear, roamed fearless through the more remote parts of the domain, for there were none to dispute with them their inheritance. But clouds thickened. In the darkness of midnight, and the silence of the wilderness, the tomahawk and scalping-knife were forged for their work of death. Speeches were made under the voiceless stars, which were heard by none save God alone and their allies; and the war-song echoed from the banks of lakes, where had never been heard the footsteps of civilized man.” Then followed the horrors of war. Then and there were enacted the triumphs of revenge. But those sounds have died away;—traced only on the page of history those deeds. The voice of rural labor, the clink of the hammer, and the sound of Sabbath bells, now echo in those forests and vales. The plough is making deep furrows in its soil, and the sound of the anvil is in every part. Colleges and seminaries of learning are there. Railroads and canals, like veins of health, are gliding to its noble heart. The red man,—in his original grandeur and state of nature,—has passed away; and his bitterest enemy, the pale-face, is master of his possessions. I know these reflections are tinged with sadness; but are there not shadows resting upon *all* the past? Let us then cheer up and smile, for there *is* a star of Bethlehem above our heads.

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[2] James H. Lanman, uncle to the author.

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O Michigan! “thou art my own, my native land,” and I love thee tenderly. Thy skies are among the most gorgeous,—thy soil the most luxuriant,—thy birds and flowers the most beautiful,—and thy animals the most interesting in the world. And when I remember that thou art but a single volume in His library, and that these things are the handwriting of God, my affection for thee becomes still more strong. I believe thou art

destined to be distinguished and honored by the nations of the earth. God be with thee, and crown thee with his blessing!

## MUSINGS.



“But how the subject theme may gang,  
Let time and chance determine;  
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,  
Perhaps turn out a sermon.”

*Burns.*



How impressive is the eloquence of silence! Sweet indeed is the voice of woman,—the fireside song of those, who are near and dear to us. Sweet the sounds of morning and evening twilight. Sweet the million melodies continually floating over the bosom of Nature. But there are hours in the life of every man when the music of silence is dearer to him than all. Even such an hour is it my present privilege to enjoy. The iron tongue of Time has told the surrounding darkness that midnight is upon the earth. I am in my room alone. A burning taper is before me, but its light is too feeble to affect the distant objects. How much does it seem “like a good deed in a naughty world”? I turn my face from the light, and, looking into some dark corner, my mind is led to wander in that mysterious world created by the genius of Dante. Soon, this little taper will flicker in the socket, and leave behind it a world of gloom. Is it not so with life?

Motionless shadows are upon the wall. To me, they have a peculiar language. They are the emblems of my most ardent aspirations and fondest hopes. A few days since I heard a man say,—“next week shall I deliver my long thought-of oration in the presence of assembled thousands, make known what eloquence and genius I possess, and strive to win a name.” That man is now stretched upon the couch of sickness, and his thoughts are changed. A dark valley is before his mind, and he is wondering whether he can pass its dangers in safety. What were his hopes, his ambition, but shadows?

How refreshing is the breeze which now fans my forehead! it seems like the sweet breath of a guardian angel. It comes from the far south, and its

birthplace was amid the leaves of the olive and palm. Since its departure thence it has wandered over many a woody dell and silver lake, and kissed the glowing cheek of many a lovely dark-eyed maiden. It is gone,—gone to pursue its spirit-like wanderings in some other clime.

The chirping cricket has ceased its noise, and is asleep in its hiding-place. A little white miller is flying about the light, as though he thought it the most wonderful thing in the whole world. And this is not strange, because he came into being since the evening of yesterday. Dear little fellow, be careful,—else your ignorance and curiosity will be the cause of your death. That shining pyramid, which you think so beautiful, is treacherous. Like many of the beautiful things of earth, it carries pain and destruction within its bosom. That's right, sweet creature, rest yourself and slumber, if you please, on the corner of that Holy Bible. He who wrote that book is as much your Father, as He is mine. At this silent hour, and in this solitary place, you have come to minister to my delight. The thoughts which you have caused will make my rest this night more peaceful than it would have been but for you. The question is often asked,—why are such insects as yourself created? I answer, to accomplish some omnipotent end. God willed it that you should be born and minister for a few moments to my delight, and also to my instruction, by causing you to direct my thoughts to Him, who is infinite in greatness, holiness, and love. You have fulfilled the object of your mission. Good-by! I love you, and shall not forget your admonitions.

The light is out,—I am now seated at my window, gazing upon the city. There is such a calm in the heavens and upon the earth, I almost fear the world will never wake again. The ticking of my watch is the only sound I hear. How much more *real* wisdom may be gathered from this instrument, than from the lauded and far-fetched philosophy of man! With pompous pretensions, the one strives vainly to explain mysteries which are for ever hidden from his sight. The other, in its humbleness, simply tells of the fleetness of time. The lessons of this are of practical utility; and, if we were to listen to them as we ought, we should think less of ourselves, and look upon futurity as the period when our knowledge of God and the universe would be consummated. Why, then, should the ticking of a watch be beneath our notice? If we were but conscious of our own utter littleness, we would not dare look with contempt on the smallest atom in the world. Even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without attracting the notice of its Creator.

There is something in the nature of silence which always affects me deeply. Why it is I know not; but I do know that I love to be alone at such an hour as this. I love to forget the outward world, and hold communion with the beings of the mind. And, in a lonely place like this, if we invite them,

they will always come with their beautiful smiles, and sorrowful tears, whispering thoughts into the soul about another and a better world. With them too

“——the forms of the departed  
Enter at the open door,  
The loved ones, the true hearted,  
Come to visit me once more.”—*Longfellow*.

Yes! they come,—the young, the good,—the beautiful; those whom I loved long years ago, when life was but a pleasant dream. That dream is now a sad reality.

What an impressive sight! a slumbering city. The beating of its mighty heart has ceased. Filled as it is with the power of man, it is now as helpless as an infant on its mother’s breast.

Go with me back only a few generations, and we behold this spot a portion of an uncultivated wilderness. “Here lived and loved another race of beings. Here the Indian lover wooed his dusky mate, and the Indian hunter pursued the panting deer; the wigwam blaze beamed on the tender and helpless; and the council-fire gleamed on the wise and daring.” Behold the change! That race has withered from the land. “Their arrows are broken, their springs are dried up, their cabins are decayed. Their council-fires have long since gone out on the shore, and their war-cry has died away to the untrodden West.” That same soil is now the foundation of a city, which is the emporium of a great and powerful nation. Here flourish the arts that embellish civilized life. Churches, seminaries, and streets, crowded with the costly dwellings of the rich and learned, are on every side. Instead of the war-whoop of the blood-thirsty savage, we now hear the joyous shouts of the sons of commerce. But who can tell what the future will reveal? Have we no reason to expect a change? Is there a spot on the face of the earth where change and decay have never been? Alas! there is not.

In that delightful land embosomed in the Mediterranean sea, there once stood, in its pride and strength, one of the most splendid cities of the world. It had seven hills for its foundation, and a thousand domes glittered above its battlements. It was the seat of learning and the arts. She was mistress of the world. Pleasure and fame were sought, and their votaries were satisfied, even as they are in these our days. Since then, many centuries have rolled away and are lost in oblivion. They have gone, and O, how many millions of men have gone with them to the shoreless ocean of eternity! The spot where this city once stood, may be pressed by the foot of the traveller, but he cannot behold her former glory, for that has passed away. Her palaces have

crumbled, and the owl builds her nest within the mouldering chambers of her kings. The poet's lyre is broken. The voice of eloquence is for ever hushed. The wine-cup is in the dust. The voice of their merriment has long since ceased. The good, the brave, the noble, the wealthy, and the poor, are all forgotten. Spirit of change! these mighty revolutions are thine. Thou art the eldest-born of Time; thy lessons are precious to the soul, and ever should they be treasured in the memory.

I saw a beautiful child sporting upon its mother's lap. It was the brightest star in the horizon of her hope. I returned, and that mother was in her grave. The child was changed. Trembling with the weight of years, he stood, the last of his generation, a stranger amidst the perishing monuments of earth.

I saw a river, whose bosom was a crystal mirror, picturing the beauties of the earth and sky. I returned, but it was as marble, and I heard the skaters' steel ring upon its surface.

I saw a youth, kneeling at the feet of a fair girl, who was the idol of his heart. A few years were gone, and the vows of each had been forgotten; and they were weeping for different sorrows in separate homes.

Every hour proves to us that change and decay are written upon all things earthly. As surely will the proudest monuments of human labor pass away, as the morning mist from among the hills. If we can look upon the past and behold the ravages of time, or on the present and not feel his powerful influence upon ourselves and the things around us, then indeed will our future be dark and cheerless. Let us remember, that although this is but a theatre of change, there is a world beyond the skies, where the Saviour reigns supreme, and where change and decay can never come.

That man was a philosopher, who said that the history of the world was a history of ruin. It is so. Wherever we turn our eyes, we cannot fail to behold some magnificent ruin. Our daily footsteps are imprinted in the dust of things, which were once the admiration of men. They are the hieroglyphics of time. Silent and holy are all their teachings. Sometimes they remind us of beauty and peace, and sometimes of terror, tumult, and woe. They have nothing to do with the future and present, but the past is their all; and yet how wise, how important, their counsels!

In the spring-time of life, and the summer of the year, I once stood on the shore of Lake Superior. I remember to have seen, in a little sunny cove, and half imbedded in the sand, the ruin of an Indian canoe. A part of it was in the water, and in this the pike and the black bass found a safe retreat. Its sides were covered with moss and rank sea-weed. I was alone, and in that far-off wilderness the voice of that simple ruin sank deeply into my soul, and



I looked upon it as a beautiful but melancholy type of the history of the world.

I have seen a flower blooming in beauty in a secluded vale, and, ere I had a chance to look again, a chilly breath of air had scattered its petals and left it a ruin. I saw an oak standing in its pride upon a distant mountain. It had braved the storms of many centuries. I returned, and its limbs were leafless, and its trunk decayed. That oak is a fit emblem of Nature in ruins. The Coliseum at Rome, and the Parthenon at Athens, are the fit emblems of art in ruins.

Besides those of inanimate nature and art, the world is filled with living ruins.

A few months since I was a solitary traveller on the road between Stonington and Norwich, in Connecticut. It was one of the loveliest days in early autumn, and the genial atmosphere had a tendency to subdue every feeling of the heart, and threw me in a thoughtful mood. I was startled from my reverie by the sound of a low moan, proceeding from beneath an old pine tree beside the road. I dismounted, and approached the place, and saw the withered form of a woman, seated upon a stone, eating a dry crust of bread. Her hair was white as snow, and the tears of ninety years seemed to have made deep furrows in her cheeks. I saw by the copper color of her skin that she was an Indian, and therefore I asked her how many of her tribe were left? She raised her haggard eyes to mine, and with a trembling voice, in broken English, answered,—“only me.”

My heart was full. I prayed to God that he would bless her, and resumed my journey. But those sad words,—“only me! only me!” still haunted my memory. And now, at this late day, I would not, if I could, forget them. That little incident gave a new direction to my thoughts, and I became an altered man. That poor old desolate woman was the living ruin of a once powerful nation,—the last descendant of that proud and warlike tribe, whose chief was Philip of Pokanoket.

But the most awful of all ruins, is the ruin of intellect.

“One lost mind,  
Whose star is quenched, hath lessons for mankind,  
Of deeper import than each prostrate dome,  
Mingling its marble with the dust of Rome.”

*Mrs. Hemans.*

In view of the foregoing, which I hope has caused a pensive pleasure instead of gloom, it is most appropriate that we should dwell one moment on the following beautiful lines by Wordsworth:

“The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.”

Do they not find an echo in every thoughtful heart? It is true,—the human mind is too much taken up with the playthings of its infancy. When we remember that, in the short space of one hundred years, all the inhabitants of this world will have passed into another state of existence, we cannot but acknowledge that the occupations of time engage too much of our attention. All of us feel and know these things to be true, and yet we live as though we believed them not. Why is this? It is because the deep and dark valley of forgetfulness is the receptacle of neglected thought. It is a strange truth,—we do forget! In the multiplicity of our earthly pursuits we forget that we are but pilgrims to another world. Reason tells the old man, that he was once young; but is he not prone to forget the high aspirations, the wild, free thoughts, the innocence and happiness, of his early days?

Once, there was a man who was known throughout the world as a distinguished merchant. His ships floated in almost every sea, and he was called honorable and great. It was midnight, and I saw him asleep on his downy couch. His dreams were of luxury and wealth. I saw him again by the light of day, and a sordid smile was on his face. Care and anxiety had wrinkled his cheeks and brow. At last, he died,—was buried in great pomp, and is now forgotten. Was it merely to pass through these changing scenes that he was born? Was he not too earnestly engaged in playing with the *shadows* of life?

## DREAM OF THE WILDERNESS.



“And I was in the wilderness alone.”

*Bryant.*



I ENTERED the forest just as the glorious summer sun was sinking behind the far-off hills. The evening star rose in the west, and in a little while from the zenith a thousand other bright constellations looked smilingly down upon the earth. Something whispered me that I must spend the long watches of that night in wandering in the wilderness; and I departed with the silence of a shadow, and the speed of an antelope. Strange, and wild, and beautiful, were the scenes I beheld.

The mighty trees,—the elm, pine, oak, ash, maple, walnut, and bass-wood tree, which rose on every side, seemed like the columns of a vast temple, whose mysterious winding aisles, overhung with a multitudinous foliage, were deserted and desolate. No moving objects met my eye, save the fire-flies that darted in all directions, floating and sinking like burning flakes of snow. The gloomy silence was broken only by the chirp of the cricket, and the song of the katy-did. At intervals, too, the clear, soothing voice of the whip-poor-will would echo far and near. The huge masses of foliage above, reminded me of thunder clouds, and like them oppressed my spirit:

“O what a still, bright night! the dropping dew  
Woke startling echoes in the sleeping wood.”—*Noble.*

My pathway was not smooth, for I was forced to leap, now over some dead tree, and now over a pile of brush; and again over a mossy hillock, or some gurgling brooklet. Ever and anon I caught a glimpse of the deep blue sky; but in a moment it was lost to view, and I was in total darkness. My vision was wonderful. I saw all surrounding objects with intense clearness; for to me, the “darkness was as the light of day.” At times I paused to listen, startled by some distant sound; the howl of a wolf, the hooting of an owl, or

the “trumpet tone” of a flying swan; and as I listened, it would become a murmur, then a whisper, and at last die into a breathless stillness.

At the foot of a gnarled and stunted oak, I saw the manly form of an Indian, wrapped in his scarlet blanket, and extended upon a bearskin. He was fast asleep. On one side of him, and within his reach, lay a bundle of arrows and an unstrung bow; on the other, a knapsack of provisions, and a wolfish-looking dog. But this guardian of the slumbering savage was also fast asleep. As I looked upon this simple picture, the feelings of my heart responded to my thoughts, and I exclaimed, though there was no echo to my words: “Poor lone Indian! Is that dog thy only friend? Art thou indeed alone in the wide, wide world? Hast thou no wife to sympathize with thee, to love thee, in those hours of disappointment and trouble, incident to human life? No children to play around thy knees, and make thee happy in some comfortable wigwam, when the blue and scarlet birds make melody in summer, and the wind Euroclydon howls and roars among the forest trees in winter? Hast thou no daughter to protect and nourish, that she may be the bride of some future warrior? No son to listen, with flashing eye, to thy hunting-lessons, to smite his breast with pride and anger, as thou tellest him of the bravery and wrongs of thy ancestors? O that I knew thy history! But I will not disturb thy slumber. May thy dreams be of that land beyond the sunset clouds, where perpetual summer reigns,—the land of the Great Spirit, —the God of thy fathers.”

How vividly do the scenes and incidents of that night rise before my vision! I see them *now* with the same distinctness that I beheld them *then*. I stand upon the shore of that dark stream, rolling through the dense woods, where the full blaze of daylight has not penetrated for centuries. I hear that uncouth but solemn funeral hymn, and see that band of stern in heart, and strong in hand,

“Come winding down beside the wave,  
To lay the red chief in his grave.  
A dark cloak of the roebuck’s skin  
Covered the warrior, and within  
Its heavy folds the weapons, made  
For the hard toils of war, were laid;  
The cuirass, woven of plaited reeds,  
And the broad belt, of shells and beads.

“Before, a dark-haired virgin train  
Chanted the death-dirge of the slain;  
Behind, the long procession came  
Of hoary men and chiefs of fame,  
With heavy hearts, and eyes of grief,  
Leading the war-horse of their chief.

“Stripped of his proud and martial dress,  
Uncurbed, unreined, and riderless,  
With darting eye, and nostril spread,  
And heavy and impatient tread,  
He came; and oft that eye so proud,  
Asked for his rider in the crowd.”—*Longfellow*.

They buried the dark warrior; and beside his grave they loosed his noble steed; and swiftly an arrow cleaved its way to his stern heart. One bound, one piercing neigh, and on a prairie in the spirit land,

“The rider grasps his steed again.”

Not less sudden than varied are the scenes I behold. On that high dry limb, under a canopy of leaves, a flock of turkeys are roosting. They are all asleep save one, and he is acting the part of a sentinel, darting out his long neck, now this way, now that, as if he beheld an enemy. Fat, sleepy fellow! There was a time when it would be temerity to look at me thus. I am not a hunter *now*, else would I bring you down from your lofty resting-place!

My course is onward. Hark! I hear a yell, and a rushing sound. Two wolves are chasing a beautiful doe. Poor creature! Its strength is already lessening, its race is run. The wolves have seized it. There is a struggle; the blood issues from its graceful neck; one gasp more, and the tender mother of two sweet fawns lies dead. Its bones will moulder and mingle with the earth, giving nourishment to that cluster of hazel-bushes, which stand beside her mossy death-bed. Awakened by the scent, a croaking raven is wheeling in the distance. Its wings flap heavily,—and there are two,—and still another!

See! we come to a kind of opening,—a place where the trees grow less closely together. A cloud of thin white smoke is rising, as if from yon pile of

underbrush. It is an Indian encampment; a dozen bark wigwams, shaped like a sugar-loaf. But why this bustle, at so late an hour? The men have just returned from a three days' hunting tour, and they are now releasing their pack-horses from their loads of spoil. The blaze from a fire gives all surrounding objects a ruddy glow. In dire confusion upon the ground lie haunches of venison, red and gray squirrels, and racoons! turkeys, grouse, ducks, pheasants, and many other lesser birds, mingled with guns, bows and arrows, shot-pouches, powder-horns, skins, halters, brass kettles, and the like. The men are busy, and the women too. Roused from a four hours' nap, several children are coming out from the huts, rubbing their eyes. They seem to be the only playmates of the whining dogs.

Lo! what a beauteous sight! A herd of deer, reposing like a family of wood-sprites, near yonder clump of young maples! There are three bucks, five does, and two lovely spotted fawns. Upon that decayed "stump" beyond, a solitary American nightingale is resting. It is my favorite bird. Would that I knew the cause of its complainings and chastisement; for every now and then it utters forth the cry: "*Why whip poor Will?*"

What silver rays are those darting down through the leafy boughs? The moon!—the moon! High in heaven she sails, in queenly beauty. The very heart of the forest is not beyond her vivifying influence. Festoons of creeping plants hang from the surrounding limbs; and the ivy and grape-vine have twined themselves so closely around that ash, as entirely to hide from view the bark of the trunk. I thrust my hand against a bush, and a thousand dewdrops fall to the earth, glittering in the moonbeams. If my lady-love were with me, what a gorgeous wreath could I now weave for her beautiful brow; the purple and scarlet iris, the blue larchspur, the moccasin-flower, and the crimson and green lichen, and other mosses, flowers, and vines, too delicate to have a name!

A gentle breeze is stirring. The tops of the trees are moving to and fro with the strong but gentle motion of a ground-swell. Soothing is the music of the leaves; they seem to murmur with excess of joy. Another sound echoes through the listening wilderness. It is but a scuffle between a panther and bear. Let them growl and fight; who cares? How like two hot-headed politicians do they seem!

Again are the trees becoming thinner, and my steps are tending downward. The greensward I press is without a single stick or bramble. Here am I upon the brink of a little lake of the very purest water! The breeze has spent its force, and every thing is still. It is "the bridal hour of the earth and sky"! What a perfect mirror is this liquid element! The counterpart of two willows, a grass-grown rock, tall reeds, and beyond all, a row of slender

elms, and a lightning-shivered pine, are distinctly seen, pointing *downward*, downward to the moon and stars, in the cerulean void beneath. And in yon deep shadow a flock of ducks are floating silently, amid the sweet perfume of the wild lotus and white water-lily, which are growing near. One or two have wandered out into the lake, making no ripple, but moving as if lured away by the glossy loveliness of their shadows. The same mysterious influence which has brought me thus far, will transport me to the opposite shore.

I am there! yet still my course is “onward.” I am come to a little lawn, so smooth and beautiful that it seems a fit playground for the fairies. Perhaps it is here the water-sprites and wood-nymphs are wont to meet, to revel and rejoice at midnight, “the dawn of the fairy day.”

What sound is that!—so like the far-off tones of an hundred musical instruments, faintly murmuring? Ah! I thought so! Here they are:

“They come from beds of lichen green,  
They creep from the mullen’s velvet screen;  
Some on the backs of beetles fly,  
From the silver tops of moon-touched trees,  
Where they swung in their cobweb hammocks high,  
And rocked about in the evening breeze;  
Some from the hum-bird’s downy nest,—  
They had driven him out by elfin power,  
And pillowed on plumes of his rainbow breast  
Have slumbered there till the charmed hour.  
Some had lain in the scoop of the rock,  
With glittering ising-stars inlaid;  
And some had opened the four-o’-clock,  
And stole within its purple shade.  
And now they throng the moonlight glade,  
Above,—below,—on every side,  
There little minim forms arrayed  
In the tricky pomp of fairy pride!”—*Drake*.

That was but a flight of fancy. I look again, and instead of the fairies, I behold a myriad of fair flowers, peeping at the sky from the green luxuriant grass.

But see! I have reached,—surely it can be none other,—*a prairie*. What dark cloud is brooding over this motionless ocean?—a mighty flame bursting from its centre? It comes! it comes! The prairie is on fire! The wind is rising, and swift as the wind speeds the flame. Maddened by fear, the buffalo, the wild horse, the wolf, the deer, birds, and other living creatures, are fleeing for their lives. Roaring and hissing, the fire-flood rolls on, swallowing up every thing in its course. And now it has gone, leaving

behind it a wide path of blackness. The smoke obscures the moon and stars. "Far off its coming shone;" the incense of a sacrifice offered to the great God by the Earth, for some enormous sin. But it is gone; and I resume my journey.

I am now in an open country of hills and dales. A narrow but deep river is gliding by me, in its pride and beauty. Now it is lost to view by some abrupt headland, and anon it makes a long sweep through a plain or meadow, its ripples sporting in the moonlight.

I hear the splash of fish, leaping from their watery bed. I hear the measured stroke of a paddle. It is an Indian in his birch canoe, passing down the river. He has startled a loon from his wavy cradle below the rapids. I hear the sound of a waterfall. A mile away there is a precipice, where the river gathers all its strength for a fearful leap. Now, its surface is without a wrinkle; but a moment more, and it plunges down among the rocks, and the waves struggle, and leap, and rise and sink, like demon-spirits in agony.

I am standing on a hill which overlooks a lovely landscape of woods and lawns, streams, hills, valleys, and cultivated fields,—farm houses and church steeples. In the distance sleep the deep blue waves of a fresh-water sea. A streak of daylight is in the eastern sky. The spell is broken: my dream is ended.



## OLD LOUIS OLMSTED.



“His silver hairs,  
Will purchase him a good opinion,  
And buy men’s voices to commend his deeds.”

*Shakspeare.*



OUR carriage drove up to the village inn, about two hours before sunset. Owing to the lameness of one of our horses, my companions concluded not to resume our journey until the morrow. How they spent the evening it matters not to relate. As to myself, after taking a short walk, I returned to the inn, and falling into conversation with a young gentleman there, invited him to sup with me, and we remained together until a late hour. I afterwards learned that he was, at that time, on a visit home from college. It was one of the loveliest evenings of summer. From our seat at a front window, we had a view of nearly every dwelling in the village; for it was mostly built upon a single street, which was straight and wide, and lined on either side by a row of venerable elms and poplars.

A little cottage, which stood nearly opposite, attracted my attention by its rural beauty, and the air of real comfort by which it was surrounded. Its roof, which had seldom been heated by the summer sun, on account of the foliage which formed a canopy above it, was overgrown by a delicate green moss; and the window-blinds which had once been green, could hardly be distinguished from the brown wood-color of the clap-boards. It stood back from the street about three rods, and from the gate to the door, was spread a velvet carpet of deep green, divided only by a narrow gravel-walk, and dotted here and there by rose-bushes and clumps of other flowers. Behind the cottage, some of them hidden by the trees, stood a variety of outhouses, denoting the occupier to be a lover of agriculture. As I was looking on this interesting picture, softened by the setting sun, the sights and sounds of the hour made a deep impression on my mind. The doves were cooing and strutting before their windows, preparatory to retiring to rest; and near the

hen-coop, a solitary cock was looking watchfully round, like the father of a human family, before resigning himself to sleep. Four or five cows entered a lane, driven by a boy, mounted on a horse, who amused himself by whistling "Sweet Home." In a few moments these cows were in the barnyard, and the hearty milk-maid was performing her evening task. Anon the sweet song of my favorite bird, the whip-poor-will, was heard, and Night had thrown her veil upon the scene.

I know not how it was, but that rural abode seemed to have taken hold on my affections, and I inquired of my new acquaintance who it was that possessed so beautiful and Arcadian a home? and the following sketch was the result of my inquiry.

"The oldest cottage, now standing in our village, is the one directly opposite. The land upon which it stands, was, originally, about two furlongs in width, running back nearly a mile. The increasing importance of the place, however, compelled the proprietor to cut up most of the front part into building-lots; but behind these, the ancient boundaries of the farm are unchanged. The soil is most luxuriant, and the whole is undulating and wooded enough to afford many beautiful and varied landscapes. Close behind the house stands a fine orchard, beyond which rolls a crystal stream, sufficiently large to be called a river.

"That cottage is the ancestral home of Louis Olmsted, who is now bending with the weight of fourscore years. He has been the sole proprietor, tilling that same farm, for more than half a century. I have known him even from my childhood,

'And then,  
He was so old, he seems not older now.'

Many a time while playing ball, under those elms before his door, has he approached a party of us boys, and leaning on the fence, would smile most kindly, as if the sport and loud laugh of boyhood, reminded him of the sunny days of his own life. His life has not been without its legitimate troubles and trials, but these cannot be compared with his many blessings. His wife, who is one of the best of women, is still living, and were you to judge of the two, by their activity of mind and body, you would say they have many more years to live. Louis Olmsted is not a proud man; although an ignorant person, possessing his competence, would soon make himself disliked and unhappy by his arrogance. He has often expressed the wish, that his friends would address and speak of him under the title of Old Louis; and, as he is the much loved friend of everybody who knows him, he is better known by this name than any other. Sometimes, however, he is called upon to preside

at a public meeting, and then he is addressed as Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, &c. &c.

“Old Louis has been blessed with eight children, but only five of them are living. That boy whom you saw is his grandson, who is going to be a farmer, and attends school only in the winter. I wish you knew him,—he is a fine, intelligent little fellow, and will now talk more sensibly than many men who have passed through college. His father, who is the oldest son of Louis, is a merchant, and lives in a distant town. Another son, lately married, has the principal management of his father’s farm; and the remaining one is captain of a ship. He also has two daughters, both of whom are married, and live in the village. You thus see that Louis is not without a goodly portion of friends, and O, how they all love the good old man!

“Two principal studies have engaged the attention of Louis’s mind, during his leisure hours, and these have been sufficient, for they have taught him to understand and love

‘The human heart by which we live.’

And these studies are at the command of all. The one is the Bible, and the other, that great volume of truths, revealed to man by the revolving seasons.

“For one so old, Louis Olmsted is the healthiest, and most active man I have ever known. ‘His age is as a lusty winter, frosty but kindly.’ It matters not what may be the season, he still *busies* himself with the same occupations that he has followed for so many years; and it is with great reluctance that he refrains from assisting his son in the harder duties,—such as mowing in summer, ploughing in autumn, or chopping in winter. Planting and sowing are his favorite employments; and for this reason spring and summer are the seasons which he mostly loves. From March to September, he is busy as the ‘busy bee.’ The potato and corn fields, after being prepared to receive the seed, are under his peculiar charge, until their productions are snugly stored away in the cellar and the crib. I do not mean to say that he does all the weeding and hoeing, or gathers in the produce alone; but he is always present, to see how things are done; to direct, manage, and give a helping hand. But the garden of Old Louis (which is acknowledged to be the handsomest and best in the whole place) is entirely under his own control. During the first two months of spring he makes it his constant resort. He arranges the walks, trims and cleans the rose-bushes, the currant and raspberry bushes, plants the vegetables, and sows his flower-seeds wherever he can,—here, there, and everywhere. He is not a boasting man; but meet him in his garden, when it is blooming under the summer sun, and the old

man will talk earnestly,—sometimes proudly, in praise of his talents and taste as a gardener.

“A few days since, I entered his garden, and found him employed in arranging poles on a bed of beans, and though he delighted me with his conversation, he still continued his work, while I stood by, an attentive listener. Before the close of that interview, I concluded that Old Louis possessed the attributes of a philosopher, a poet, and a Christian. He is sufficiently wise to acknowledge his own comparative ignorance. He is not ashamed to gather wisdom from a simple flower, or an insect. It is a luxury to hear him descant upon the beautiful and sublime images of Nature, as seen in the broad light of day, or at the noon of night. Were he to take the pains, he could produce a volume of delicious poetry, without rhyme and high-wrought language; and though it might appear to many as homely prose, it would in reality be the real poetry of Nature. Above all,—he is a Christian, and seldom passes a single day without reading his Bible. The beggar never leaves his door without a smile upon his face, and a kinder feeling in his heart; and no man has ever heard him speak harshly of his neighbours. The unfortunate come to him for advice, and he talks to them with the affection of a father or a brother. He is a thinking man, and competent to advise; for he has had much experience, and always made it a point to learn ‘something from everything.’ He points you to the misshapen acorn, and exclaims: ‘As this nut becomes a splendid oak, so does the body of the good man, in the resurrection, rise from the darkness of the grave!’ When the trees are covered with blossoms, and the balmy breath of spring is wandering through the land calling on the sleeping flowers to arise and shed their smiles and fragrance upon the earth, he lives over again the happy days of his youth. When the leaves are falling in autumn, he is reminded of his own advanced age, and frequently spends whole days in the contemplation of eternal things. Were there no other way of ascertaining the fact, it seems to me I could designate the different seasons of the year and almost the days of the week, merely by being intimate with, and watching the moods and feelings of Louis Olmsted. In spring, he is a child in every thing but age. Many a time have I seen him sally forth, with hook and line, followed by his constant companion, a noble Newfoundland dog, and, after the lapse of three or four hours, return home with as many trout as he could carry. The Complete Angler, is a book which he knows by heart; and the good old author of that book, would have been delighted to grasp the brawny hand of such a man as Louis. In winter he seldom leaves the fireside, and is almost as invisible to the community as the germ of the leaf; and they are generally lured from their retirement by the same sunshine. With him, every day has

its peculiar employments. But on the Sabbath, it is a pleasant sight to see him and his old helpmate tottering along to church, while every one who meets them makes a respectful bow. He is not only a member, but has been a deacon of the village church for more than forty years, and during that long period the Rector and he have been bosom friends. Few weddings, or funerals, or celebrations, have ever taken place, in which these two worthies have not borne a part.

“He had invited me to dinner the other day, and after the cloth was removed, I accompanied him to his favorite seat, under an old apple-tree, in the orchard, where he interested me for several hours, with his various and valuable opinions. It was there the following remarks were elicited on the subject of his peculiar profession, and which I will repeat, as giving a further insight into his character:

“‘You know, my good Mr. Olmsted,’ said I, ‘that my last year at college terminates in about six months. My former intention of following the law as a profession, is now relinquished. After much consideration, I have resolved to be a farmer, for I believe it is the calling most congenial to my taste. Will you please favor me with your advice on the subject, and also with your opinion of the profession?’

“‘If you are not afraid to work,’ answered he, ‘would prefer living in the country to the city, and are not ambitious to have a greatly distinguished name, I should advise you to become a farmer.

“‘The science of good husbandry is the oldest in existence, and the only one instituted by the Most High. When God created Adam to *till the ground*, he placed him in the garden of Eden, which garden was a type of the whole earth. Of all the sciences, it is the most valuable to man. The world would sooner part with every other one, than be deprived of all knowledge concerning this. What other titles have a more pleasing influence upon the ear than husbandman, agriculturist, farmer? and these terms are synonymous in their signification. Farming is the most free and independent of all occupations. It is less dependent upon the course of human events, than any other. The fluctuations of the moneyed and mercantile world have no baneful effects upon its interests. If the farmer cannot obtain money for his produce, (which supposition is seldom realized) he can always obtain the necessaries, and many of the luxuries, of life. It is a pursuit which pleases and improves the mind, while it invigorates the bodily health. Besides this, it almost universally increases the estate; and, merely as a mode of accumulating riches, it is the safest, and most innocent. How many enjoyments are at the command of the husbandman, of which the denizen of the city is wholly ignorant! On the contrary, how few of the pleasures of the

city, are beyond the reach of the industrious and frugal husbandman! What occupation is more agreeable to the studious man? It furnishes him with every thing he has occasion for. What one more honorable, and more manly? And this question reminds me of a prevailing taste of the day, which seems to consider the cultivation of the soil as an employment beneath a gentleman, or appropriate and fit only for the lower class. It is founded in ignorance, folly, and false pride. God intended that the greater part of the human race should be tillers of the soil; but the present public taste would fain have the science of good husbandry neglected, and all others, (and other occupations,) whether valuable or not, over-done; which stain, God grant may be soon washed from our national character. In looking round among my own acquaintances, and from what I can learn, it would seem as if every father in the country, who is blessed with a son, should send him to college to prepare for some learned profession, or send him to some city to be a merchant. And this fact accounts for the extreme poverty of most lawyers and literary men. And as to the majority of those called merchants, they live upon the money of those who are rich, or, in vulgar phrase, “on the interest of what they owe.”

“ ‘Where shall a stranger be better entertained than at the farm-house of the successful farmer? Where is there a more comfortable place in winter? Which of the two men is the happiest, the chief magistrate of a great republic, or the obscure agriculturist, the proprietor of a well-stocked farm? There is but one answer to this question. How various are the gratifications of the farmer! According to his moods, he can enjoy the pleasures of the angle, rambles over the fields, and through the woods and groves, the luxuries of sweet flowers and charming fruit, and the pure, unadulterated air of the blue heavens. Instead of a close, hot room, in a narrow city street, he can sit, at the evening hour, in a green arbor, surrounded by four-o’clocks, primroses, and lilies, enjoying the cool breezes, which come from the waters of a far-off sea. What place beside a farm is more agreeable to the wife and mother? Where can a child obtain better health, than the place where he can frolic and rejoice with Nature? How beneficial too, to the thoughtful man, is a constant and familiar intercourse with the domestic animals! How pleasing the associations connected with the cow, the ox, the sheep, the horse, the pig, the various tribes of fowls and birds, and other creatures, still, which I could enumerate! Many of these are dear companions, though they be but brutes. They all speak eloquently (but not more so than does inanimate nature itself) of the great and eternal God. It is to these things, that we are indebted for our understanding (limited though it be) of the various holy attributes of the Deity.’ ”

After my new acquaintance had thus concluded, he looked at his watch, and found that it was nearly midnight. I thanked him most sincerely for the pleasure he had afforded me, and after wishing each other “good night and pleasant dreams,” he retired to his lodgings. I had been so interested in the foregoing, and other narratives, that the gradual melting of twilight into night had taken place unheeded by me. Before I retired to my room, I again admired the moss-grown cottage over the way, which was a perfect picture of repose and happiness, and considered for a moment the summer-like character of Old Louis Olmsted. He will “come to his grave,” thought I, “in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.”

It was a summer night of exceeding loveliness. The moon and stars were beaming and twinkling in the cerulean sky, mirroring themselves on the quiet bosom of stream and lake. “The murmur of voices, and the peal of remote laughter, no longer reached the ear.” The heavens were awake; but the earth was sleeping.

The “topmost twig that looked up to the sky” was motionless, for even the zephyrs were asleep. The scene, the hour, and the new feelings of my heart, caused me to exclaim, with tearful eyes of joy, (as I left the window,) How beautiful is this gay dressed world! how beautiful is that human heart, which is made white in the blood of Jesus! what a great and good Being is the Creator of the Universe!

## THE POET'S PILGRIMAGE.



A SUNNY-HAIRED boy had wandered far away from home one pleasant summer day, until, at last, he reached the shore of the great ocean. The “ocean’s blue” was in his eye, and its freedom in his soul. He leaped and shouted with delight,—now dipping his feet in the subsiding wave, then, running from beyond its reach as it came with greater force, booming upon the sand. Many and beautiful were the shells he gathered, and who can tell how many, and beautiful, and lofty, were the thoughts of that Poet boy? On either side of him, the smooth circular beach faded away until it was lost in the horizon. On the boundless waste, nothing was seen save the white crests of the billows, and a single ship in the distance bound to some unknown clime. At length, wearied with sport, he retreated to a little green knoll overlooking the sea, to rest himself. The breeze parted his flowing hair, and pressed his brow with its cooling kiss. The low murmur of the waves lulled him into a sweet slumber, and he had a dream.

The sound of an unusual splashing came indistinctly to his ear, and, looking downward, he beheld, on the very margin of the sea, a sight which made him wonder and admire. It was a pearly car, thick set with agate and coral, and drawn by four dolphins. The voice of an invisible spirit told him that those fishes were the subjects of his will, and that, if he desired it, he might enter the car, and roam wherever his fancy pleased, “o’er the deep waters of the dark blue sea.”

Timidly he descended to comply with this strange invitation, and no sooner had he seated himself, than the fishes, with a billowy motion, darted away on their mysterious pilgrimage.

Ere the coming on of evening he had been borne an hundred leagues from home, and on looking around he found himself

“Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide, wide sea!”

And in a little time,



“The western wave was all a flame,  
The day was wellnigh done,  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright sun.”—*Coleridge*.

There was a perfect calm, and the world of waters seemed like liquid gold; and O, how beautiful did the dolphins appear as the sun tinged them with his rays. Slowly and silently the car moved onward. The Poet bent forward and dipped his little hands in the cool wave, and then clapping them above his head would give vent to his gladness by a shout of laughter. A bubble rose to the surface; and looking down into the deep “blue halls of ocean,” fancy pictured to his mind many a wondrous scene. Far beyond the reach of the plummet, and half covered with sand, lay the hull of a magnificent ship, that had been struck by lightning, and gone down with many hundred souls. In the inner cabin, and reclining on an ottoman, was the form of a young mother, with an infant at her breast,—cold, white, silent as marble. Near them, and prostrate upon the floor, lay the body of one who seemed a nobleman,—struck dead, perhaps, while in the act of shielding his beloved wife and child. In various parts, on the floor, and some apparently asleep in their berths, were the bodies of the aged, the beautiful, and young. In the dark hold of the vessel, and leaning against a coil of rope, sat the withered form of an old miser, who had been summoned to the bar of God while counting his gold. Here and there, too, might be seen the lifeless forms of noble sailors, who had fallen like the oaks of the forest.

The Poet sighed deeply, and the tears that dimmed his eye aroused him from his reverie. But there was an indescribable charm in these pictures of the “deep, deep sea,” and, in a moment more, he was again looking thoughtfully through the translucent wave. And now he beheld a crystal cave, of vast and Gothic dimensions. It was brilliantly illuminated, and, from the greatness of the assemblage collected there, he thought it must be a festal hour. In the centre, and on a jasper throne, was seated an old king, with a trident in his hand, upon whose head glittered a diamond crown. Sea-nymphs, tritons, and mermaids were his attending ministers, all of whom, with their wreathed horns and shells, conspired to make the sweetest melody. On the walls of this uncouth dwelling-place, were hung a countless number of curiosities. There were strange looking books, pieces of sculpture and painting, silks, laces, and jewelry; cutlery, bows and arrows, and medals, and cannon,—every thing in fact that had been lost in the various shipwrecks of the past, and which was curious, costly, beautiful.

The vision was gone,—and the boy shouted louder than ever, and played with the water as he had done before,—a very child sporting with the

elements.

Listen! What heavenly strain of music is that coming so sweetly from the upper air? O! how beautiful! a thousand spirits are descending from the skies, clothed with the colors of the rainbow, and singing to their golden harps with their lute-toned voices. They come from those purple islands in the far west, where perpetual peace and purity reside. Look! a small, dark mass is rising in the south. The low rumbling of distant thunder is heard in the firmament. It dies into a whisper, the cloud has passed away.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sun was in the sea once more. A breeze sprang up, and the ripples chased each other along like creatures brought into existence by the breath of the universe. And then,

“The moving moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide!  
Softly she was going up,  
And a star or two beside.”—*Coleridge*.

A line of foam in the distance! It is the freshening breeze! A speck on the horizon! A sail! a sail! a ship!—nearer and nearer she comes, her canvass swelling before the wind, and with upright keel!

“She lifteth up her stately head  
And saileth joyfully,  
A lovely path before her lies  
A lovely path behind;  
She sails amid the loveliness  
Like a thing with heart and mind.  
Fit pilgrim through a scene so fair  
Slowly she beareth on;  
A glorious phantom of the deep,  
Risen up to meet the moon.”—*Wilson*.

She may well sail on in pride, for a thousand beings behold her in their sleep. Perchance some poor widow in her lonely home has calmed her troubled thoughts, and is now praying for the safe return of her only son, her bright-eyed sailor boy. The child is dreaming of the smiles and caresses of its returned father; and the wife falls upon the neck of her husband, and welcomes him with a thrill of joy; but morning comes, and nought but his shadowy form is within her dwelling. But the ship! how proudly does she buffet the blue waves! The pilot and watch are the only persons on deck, but their duty is performed in silence, for it is the hour of midnight, solemn and

grand. The passengers and most of the crew are in the land of dreams, while hope and joy, disappointment and sorrow mingle with their various visions. Is not home the sun of that mysterious world of dreams?

Onward did the dolphins glide. At daybreak the car was floating on the waters of the Mediterranean sea. The Poet silently enjoyed the views which were continually passing before his eye. On one side he beheld a range of dark mountains looming to the skies. When the sun was fairly risen, he was in full view of an ancient city in ruins, and his mind was busy with "the great, the glorious past." He looked towards the east, and thought of the thousand idolaters, who were at that moment bowing before the sun, and this reminded him of that beauteous city where the Saviour was born. Now, he heard the song of fishermen as they plied their oars; and then the talking voices of sailors, who were strolling about their ship, impatient for a breeze. And now, he reached a city whose foundations are in the sea. Here, every thing was new; and, as he gazed upon the hundred ships and domes, and the moving multitude; he remembered the words of the poet, and thought how beautiful and true they were,

"The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,  
Ebbing and flowing; and the salt sea-weed  
Clings to the marble of her palaces.  
No track of men, no footsteps to and fro,  
Lead to her gates. The path lies o'er the sea  
Invisible; and from the land we went,  
As to a floating city,—steering in  
And gliding up her streets as in a dream  
So smoothly,—silently,—by many a dome  
Mosque-like, and many a stately portico.  
The statues ranged along an azure sky;  
By many a pile in more than eastern splendor,  
Of old, the residence of merchant kings.  
The fronts of some, though time had shattered them,  
Still glowing with the richest hues of art,  
As if the wealth with them had run o'er."—*Rogers.*

Many of the far-famed cities of the old world were visited, and though in these he beheld many a ruin, he also saw a thousand scenes of surpassing loveliness. Again he was at the threshold of the sea, and as he glided through, swift as the breeze, the old fortress seemed to frown upon him as a trespasser. But what matter? he was a pilgrim from dream-land, and must hasten on. And now he was overtaken by the spirits of the storm, but to harm him they had no power. The lightning gleamed fearfully. Peal on peal of thunder rang through the heavens, mingled with the shrill whistle of the wind, the roar of the billows, and the dismal cry of the sea-gull. One

moment the little car was almost hid in the watery valley, and then again it would tremble on the tip-top of a giant wave. At intervals the boy caught a glimpse of some mastless ship or fishing-boat driven furiously before the wind, and heard the cry of despair from its ill-fated crew.

Onward, onward. That night an hundred shores were visited. Morning again dawned, and he was in the Northern ocean, near the brink of an immense whirlpool. A noble ship had just entered within the charmed circle, and noiselessly, but surely, she was hastening to destruction. How many prayers of agony were offered in that dreadful hour? but in vain, for it was "too late." Nearer and nearer,—now her bow is in the air,—down, down, shrieking and mad, six hundred souls have gone, whose bones will whiten on the sandy floor of ocean. Away,—away.

"And now there came both mist and snow,  
And it grew wondrous cold;  
And ice mast high, came floating by,  
As green as emerald.

"And through the drifts, the snowy clifts  
Did send a dismal sheen;  
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken  
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around;  
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
Like noises in a swound."—*Coleridge*.

In a little while he reached the Pacific ocean. On the shore of a quiet bay, and at the foot of a mountain, fifty canoes were moored, while from an upland point the Poet saw the blue smoke curl upwards from a peaceful Indian village.

Night was come again, and he was in the Southern ocean. And lo! a light many leagues away!

“Not bigger than a star it seems,—  
And now ’t is like the bloody moon;  
And now it shoots in hairy streams  
Its light! ’t will reach us soon.  
A ship! and all on fire! hull, yards, and mast,  
Her sheets are sheets of flame! she’s nearing fast!

“And now she rides upright and still,  
Shedding a wild and lurid light,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Waking the gloom of night,  
All breathes of terror, men in dumb amaze  
Gaze on each other ’neath the horrid blaze.”

*Dana.*

On a plank which floated near, the Poet beheld the lifeless body of a child, whose long dark hair fell streaming over his bosom. “My brother!” exclaimed he, and springing to clasp him to his heart—*his pilgrimage was ended!*

The sun was in the west. His beams like a flood of glory covered the ocean and the land. Two children, a boy and girl, who had missed their brother, searched for him through many a field and wood, until at last they found him asleep on his mossy couch, beside the sea. For a long hour had they been watching his slumbers, and when he did awake, hand in hand, happy and innocent, the three returned to their father’s cottage in the vale.

## AN EVENING IN THE CITY.



EVER since I came to the city to reside, it has been my custom to devote one evening of every week to the express purpose of walking the streets. The incidents which I have witnessed, and the wisdom thus collected, would be sufficient to make an interesting book. But the history of one of those evenings alone it is my present purpose to relate.

It is the middle month of summer. The twilight shadows have fallen upon the city, and the moon is just rising beyond the distant steeples. The hum of business has died away. The wealthy merchant is returning home to spend the evening in reviewing the profits of the day, or perhaps the whole night in dissipation. The poor mechanic is also returning to his home, after a day of toil. How different will be his reception from that of the rich and worldly man! I can fancy with what gladness little Mary runs to her father's arms, telling him how good a girl she has been to-day, and how far she has advanced in the spelling-book. I behold the placid and contented smile of that fond mother, as she leaves her sewing to prepare the evening meal. I hear the loud talking of little Griswold, as he relates his advancement in geography, or his exploits in playing marbles or the ball during the "recess." In an hour's time I see that family upon their knees at prayer: an hour more and they have all retired, and the house is still. Happy household! may not a single cloud darken the clear sky of your dreams this night.

But I must away. Beloved reader, I desire you to take my arm, and in imagination accompany me in my walk. By this means I shall be enabled to express to you my thoughts in the most familiar way.

Well, then, here we are in the principal street in the city. The lamps which line its sides extend further than the eye can reach, throwing upon the pavements a flood of dazzling light. What an immense concourse of people are passing to and fro, from all nations, kindred, and tongues! The first impression of a stranger at such a sight is, "where are they from?—where are they going?" Alas! the answers to those questions are to be found only in the Book of Life. Thoughtless indeed may be the man who first asked them, but that he did so proves him to be a philosopher.

Do you see that old fruit-woman, seated in a kind of box at the corner of yonder street? Let me tell you a little of her history, for she is a good woman, and one whom I number among my friends. Her name is Susan Gray, and her age is threescore years and five. This ancient looking dwelling on our right is the same where she was born, and where she spent her girlhood, loving and beloved. That whole block was once the property of her father, who was a man of wealth; but owing to some misfortune he became reduced, and this so affected his health that he died. In a few months after this his wife was also called away, and the daughter was left an orphan, though the consort of a poor but industrious mechanic. In process of time he also died, leaving behind him his widow and an only child. About twenty years ago the few acquaintances that Susan had, went away in different parts; and she was left poor and friendless in the world, with nothing to cheer her pathway save her religion, and a beautiful daughter. It so chanced in one of her rambles, that she determined to occupy this corner,—*for here the rent was free*,—and, if possible, gain a livelihood by following the humble employment of a fruit-woman. Success crowned her efforts until she became comfortably situated in a small secluded house. Think of it. Old Susan has been the occupant of that corner for twenty years! through the heat and cold of summer and winter. She has been as constant in her employment as the church clock above her head, which has not failed, during that period, to warn the city of the fleetness of Time. How varied are the characters which she has seen pass by!—many of whom are perhaps dwelling in the uttermost parts of the earth. In her we behold a noble example of perseverance, which deserves universal applause.

Eighteen years ago, at the close of a lovely summer's day, a poor orphan boy was seen seated on a marble stoop, in the very street where we now stand. Without a single friend to advise and cheer his drooping spirits, he had come to the metropolis to seek his fortune. The opulent merchant passed by him without even deigning to bestow a smile: and this neglect almost made the heart of that pale beautiful boy break with sorrow. That night no downy pillow received his aching head; but in its stead the stony threshold was his resting-place. On an evening following, this boy stopped at the fruit-stand of Susan Gray, and offered his three last pennies for something to satisfy the cravings of his hunger. The tears that dimmed his eye, were the introduction to many inquiries, which at length resulted in her asking him to come and make her house his home.

\* \* \* \* \*

One, two, and three years were fled. It would be a pleasant task to dwell long and particularly on the enjoyments of that obscure family,—and also on the simple scenes enacted beneath that roof; but when I say that religion had a part in all, the man who is familiar with the Christian poor can better imagine than I describe their beauty. Our little hero having obtained a berth in a first rate ship, bade adieu to his two fond friends, and the deep blue ocean became his home.

\* \* \* \* \*

As I have seen a flower blooming and expanding its beauty in a remote dell, and revealing with the advance of summer the full proportion of its graceful form, so did Lucy Gray increase in loveliness, and in the pure affections of the heart.

The bravery and talents and industry of the boy, soon elevated him to the office of Captain. Fortune smiled upon him, and he had an interest in ships that floated in almost every sea. But wherever he went, that being who relieved him in the hour of distress was not forgotten. Ah, no! he could not, would not, forget that poor old fruit-woman. Many a time when tossed by the waves of a northern sea, has his memory dwelt most fondly on her own and her daughter's image; and they have been to him the brightest pearls in the ocean of the past.

It is but three months ago since that "orphan boy" returned to this city; and Lucy Gray is now the happy wife of a *wealthy and distinguished captain*. Her mother has been so long engaged in selling fruit, that she is loth to relinquish the business, even for the quiet and comfort of her daughter's home. But as she says next Wednesday will complete the twenty-first year she has been thus engaged, she will not, until that day, take her final departure from the corner of St. Paul's church-yard. This, my friend, is but the outline of a simple tale of *truth*, and, I believe, bears within its bosom a lesson that can make you happy.

Let us pursue our way. What strain of music is that just heard above the noise of rolling carriages? It comes from yonder crowd, where a poor blind minstrel and his wife are playing and singing for the benefit of idle citizens or countrymen. Listen! it is a foreign song. Yes, the same it may be is now echoing through the smiling valleys of Switzerland. Poor minstrels! how strange it is that ye should be making music, when your hearts are lonesome and sorrowful! Ye are strangers in a land, far removed from that which gave you birth; and music, which was once a source of enjoyment, ye are now compelled to employ as a means of support. Do ye not in your dreams often



hear the bleating of your mountain goats, the song of shepherds, and the laugh or murmur of those streams on whose borders ye once sported in joy? Why did ye leave your happy homes? Return! O, return again! for here ye are strangers, friendless, alone. Like the multitude, all that I can do for you is to sigh for your hard lot and pass on. May the blessing of God rest upon your heads!

But look! is not this a noble edifice which we behold on the opposite walk? How sombre and yet how grand do those marble columns appear! Around its threshold there is great confusion, for people are constantly passing in and out; but look upward and you will see the cupola slumbering peacefully in the moonlight. That building is like a whited sepulchre,—for without it is beautiful and pleasing to the eye, but within, corruption and deformity reign supreme. On a platform erected there may be seen some human being bartering his soul for a brief shout of applause from an ignorant and thoughtless multitude. It is one of the widest gates leading to hell, and those who are most constant at its portals, are the infidel, the gamester, and the libertine. Beware, O young man! beware how you take the first step towards that temple, where the names of religion and virtue are unknown. I condemn the theatre as it is, not as it should be. No, no! I have too much reverence for the shade of the mighty Bard.

Hark! to that dreadful fire-bell! How dismal does it sound as its tones sweep through the air! See the signal on the City-Hall pointing to the direction of the fire! The great confusion and noise inspire a momentary belief that the city is besieged. Look! the flame is bursting from the roof of yonder dwelling. The shriek of a sick mother, with her child, comes from that upper room. It is painful to dwell upon her agony;—the fearful element has now hushed that cry;—that mother and her babe are in the world of spirits. “Who can tell what an hour may bring forth?”

A shout of revelry salutes the ear;—a fashionable assemblage are passing the silent watches of the night in thoughtless gayety. They are dancing away the few brief hours of their existence, as if the arm of Death were powerless. Many there are in that lighted hall, who now wear a smile of gladness, but whose hearts, when in the solitude of their chambers, will swell with anguish. O! if we could learn the history of each, we should tremble for the safety of those we love, and for ourselves too, so insinuating are the charms of pleasure. Cheerless, we have reason to believe, will be the evening of their lives.

What a contrast to the above picture is the one which may be seen in that small room looking out upon this dark alley! There, a poor old man is on the bed of death, and by his side sits his only daughter, who is reading to him

from the Holy Bible. For many a long night, it may be, has she been the only watcher beside that sick bed, during which time she has hardly known a single hour of sleep. It may be too, that before the sun shall rise again, the pulse of that aged man will have ceased beating, and that maiden be an orphan, and broken-hearted. Worshipper of Mammon! weep not for that young girl, but weep for yourself; even in her tears she is happier than thou: and though she may appear to you as friendless, God is her Father and dearest Friend.

Onward still might we continue, and yet other scenes behold, which would cause us to sigh and weep, or perhaps to laugh and be glad. But see, in the small lecture-room of this old church, there is a light. Let us approach and notice what is going on. It is a prayer-meeting. Tarry we here a little longer, for it is a refreshing sight. It is like a ray of sunshine in a cheerless wilderness. Do we not behold in this the secret of this city's prosperity? That room is a holy place,—for a few penitent souls are accustomed to assemble there, who know what it is to hold sweet communion with a blessed Redeemer. I believe that every one of this small but happy company will meet together at the right hand of God.

It is growing late: therefore let us retrace our steps. The shutters are all closed, and the streets deserted. Only occasionally do we meet with human beings, and these are watchmen. Are they not a noble set of men? They are poets and philosophers, though the world is not acquainted with their names. How could it be otherwise? Half their lives are passed in silence, beneath “the cold light of stars;” and they are always surrounded by the germ of all philosophy—mankind. One of them has just exclaimed, “twelve o'clock, and all's well.” Could he look into the hearts of thousands asleep around him, you would not hear those words. Near by, the loud rumbling of a carriage do we hear,—now, it has died away and seems no louder than the hum of a bee. This man whom we just passed, unsteady as a wave, is perhaps some confirmed drunkard or gamester, who is returning home to rouse from her troubled sleep an affectionate and devoted wife, on whom he will heap his brutal abuse. O! God, wilt thou not stop that father and husband in his mad career, and take that wronged and unfortunate woman under thy protecting care?

\* \* \* \* \*

I am alone and seated without a light at the window of my room. The angel of slumber is not near me, for my mind is confused. I will compose myself by a few serious thoughts and then retire.

Alone, did I say? That cannot be. The bride of the sun, and a countless number of bright stars, are my companions. Is it not a strange truth, that the moon has nightly performed her circuit in heaven for six thousand years? When the morning stars sang together with joy at the birth of creation, she ascended her cerulean throne, and has reigned the queen of night ever since. She was there when Nineveh the great was humbled. She saw all the cities of old, when they were drunken with excess of pleasure and pride; and she looked upon them and smiled when their glorious crests were in the dust. Kingdoms and nations have risen and departed, yet she has remained unchanged. When her sister, the Star of Bethlehem, led the way to the birthplace of our Saviour, she heard the song of gladness, which angels and archangels sung in the presence of God.

How fitting an hour is this

“for thought to soar  
High o’er the cloud of earthly woes;  
For rapt devotion to adore,  
For passion to repose;  
And virtue to forget her tears,  
In visions of sublimer spheres!  
For O! those transient gleams of heaven,  
To calmer, purer spirits given,  
Children of hallowed peace, are known  
In *solitude* and *shade* alone!  
Like flowers, that shun the blaze of noon  
To bloom beneath the midnight moon.  
The garish world they will not bless,  
But only live in loneliness.”—*Mrs. Hemans*.

How fitting an hour to muse upon the littleness of man! What is human life? That bubble on the ocean-wave is its emblem. As I look forward through the gloom of years, which of the world’s best gifts shall I strive to win? Shall it be fame? No! the applause of men will neither clothe nor give me sustenance. Shall I be the slave of my fellows merely to be the possessor of gold? for that wealth, which, as soon as I am gone, will be divided among those who despised me while living? I had rather be a beggar than become rich by the base means of flattery and hypocrisy. Shall I endeavour to become powerful? Why, I am but a worm. No, no! none of these things do I desire.

When I am summoned to the grave, I only wish a few dear friends to remember me, until they in their turn shall follow me, as one who loved his fellow-men. I desire the wealth and peace of a contented mind; and the power to rule, as a responsible governor, the citadel of my heart.

A star has just fallen from heaven. As it went down into the abyss of darkness, so does man fall from the zenith of his glory into the grave. How beautiful are the passages in Scripture which allude to the uncertainty of life? Who does not remember the parable of the ten virgins? “And at midnight there was a cry made: behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” How few of this slumbering multitude have their lamps trimmed and burning! How great would be the confusion, were the voice of the bridegroom (death) to enter all these dwellings! The miser, roused from his couch of straw, would press his gold to his bosom with a convulsive grasp, while a fiendish smile would pass across his haggard brow. The sinner would awake trembling at the sight of hell,—for even then its realities would rush upon his mind. The Christian, with the calmness of conscious rectitude, would deck himself, and go into the street to meet the bridegroom. There, too, is that beautiful “Vision of Mirza,” which also illustrates the shortness of life. The great bridge which he saw is still in existence; and it is sad to think of the thousands that have fallen through, unprepared, into the dark waters beneath. I have as yet passed on in safety, but many of my travelling companions are gone. May it be they have been thrown on some hospitable shore. The beautiful islands which Mirza saw far beyond the bridge and deep valley are still attainable; but we must first live a virtuous life, and pass through the portals of the grave. Yes! these bodies must first say to corruption, “Thou art my mother; and to the worm, thou art my brother and sister.” How powerful is death! Who can resist his chilly hand, or refuse to quaff the cup of “coal black wine,” when it is held forth by him? “It is death alone that can make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant. He takes the account of the rich man and proves him a beggar. He holds a glass before the eyes of the beautiful and makes them see therein their own deformity, and they acknowledge it. O! eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise thou hast persuaded; what none have dared thou hast accomplished; and whom all the world have flattered thou alone hast despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride and cruelty of man, and covered it all over with these two words,—*hic jacet.*”

But enough. Reader,—if you are not already asleep, one thing is certain, *you ought to be*. I bid you therefore a heartfelt good night, hoping that your dreams will be not of King Death, but of a land where his jurisdiction does not come, and that is—Heaven.

“Good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,  
I could say good night till it be morrow.”

*Shakspeare.*

## SUMMER MORNING.



“——Look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east;  
Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain-tops.”

*Shakspeare.*



AWAKE! slumberer, awake! Morning is come, bright and beautiful. What a gorgeous crown is that which she is twining on the brow of departing night! The crowing of the cock comes to my ear most sweetly, from the hamlet beyond the vale. Hark! he is answered by another in the east,—and still another from the south.

They have roused old William Wood from his peaceful slumber and pleasant dreams. There he stands in the door of his cottage, not quite awake, looking out upon the sky. I wonder what he is thinking of! I can almost hear him murmur to himself as he goes to the well,—“We shall have a fine day after all; and I must mow the field beyond the hill, before the sun goes down.” Old William, thou art indeed a happy man! Your industry and contentment have a more salutary influence on my heart than I have ever gathered from books. The unruly passions of men do not affect you, and while conscious of your Maker’s approbation, perfect happiness seems to be your lot. Live on, my friend, and “build your hope in heaven.” O, that I were not doomed to live a life so unlike that I love, so unlike your own!

But the echo of the poet’s words are in my ear:—

“ ’Tis too late,  
For the turtle and her mate  
Are setting yet in rest,  
And the throstle hath not been  
Gathering worms yet on the green,  
But attends her nest.

“Not a bird hath sought her young,  
Nor her morning lesson sung  
In the shady grove;  
But the nightingale i’ the dark  
Singing, woke the mounting lark;  
She records her love.

“The sun hath not with his beams  
Gilded yet the crystal streams,  
Rising from the sea;  
Mists do crown the mountain-tops,  
And each pretty myrtle drops;  
’Tis but newly day.”—*William Browne.*

The sun is up, and the earth, like a slumbering bride, is awakened by his first warm kiss. How gracefully the mists roll upward from the lake! Slowly and gradually the beasts awake and lounge along to their respective stalls, to meet the giver of their food. The trusty farmer disappoints them not, but meets them with a healthy glow and smile upon his cheeks. The frugal wife is busy in her dairy,—arranging her well-filled milk-pans, and “working” her fresh, sweet butter. The boys and girls are engaged in their respective duties, while the babe is still asleep in the cradle. The lark springs from her retreat and strains her little throat in singing praises to her glorious Creator.

“With gold the verdant mountain glows;  
More high the snowy peaks with hues of rose.  
Far stretched beneath the many tinted hills,  
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,—  
A solemn sea, whose vales and mountains round  
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound;  
A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide,  
And bottomless, divides the mighty tide.  
Like leaning masts of stranded ships appear  
The pines, that near the coast their summits rear;  
Of cabins, woods, and lawns, a pleasant shore,  
Bounds calm and clear, the chaos, still and hoar  
Loud through the midway gulf ascending, sound  
Unnumbered streams with hollow roar profound;  
Mount through the nearer mists, the chant of birds,  
And talking voices, and the low of herds,  
The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,  
And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest swell.”

O, Wordsworth! how my heart blesses thee for such strains as these!

Morning,—beautiful morning, with thy smiles, thy golden hair, and fragrant breath, I love thee more tenderly than I do thy dusky sister, Evening. It is true there is a melancholy pleasure in watching the shadows which attend her coming, because they remind me of joys that are past, of the absent and loved, of boyhood, with its sighs and fears. But thou, O Morning! thou fillest my soul with hope, and my heart with gladness. Thy presence upon the earth is welcomed by a thousand strains of melody. The trees, when fanned by thy soft breezes, whisper their enjoyment. The mountain rivulet bounds from its rocky home more joyful than it did when night was upon the earth. The birds too, which were then so silent, are now singing their sweetest songs for thee. Unitedly, they all proclaim the truth, that thou art “beautiful exceedingly!”

How carelessly do the cattle wander from home, cropping the luxuriant grass as they pass along. About noon the cows and heifers will have found a cool resting-place in the shade of the woods, or under the willow in some wet meadow. The sheep, too, will probably spend the day on some green and sunny lawn, where they can gambol and feed, unmolested by any noise or worrying dogs.

Here comes a humblebee, with gauzy wings and golden vestment! How beautiful! What a pleasant companion he is, when we are wandering over the fields, and through the woodlands! I love his murmuring hum, for it is the language of his kind, and, to my ear, sweeter than the sweetest strain of written poetry. How he balances himself in the air, almost within my reach!



“My home,” he seems to be telling me, “is in the hollow of an old stump, which bends over a streamlet, about three miles away. There are no trees near by, to cover it with their shadows, so that it is gilded by the first and last sunbeam of every clear day. It is a quiet, secluded place, and so remote from any farm-house, that the crowing of the cock, the bleating of sheep, and the laugh of the husbandman’s children, are heard only as a dying echo. Sometimes, however, the hay-maker, while wielding his scythe, comes within a few paces of my stump, and if I chance to be at home, and he hears my hum, he pauses in his work, and looks around as if intending to rob me of my honey. Occasionally, too, three or four cows come to the brook, to drink, while they stand for hours, belly-deep in the water, to escape the tormenting flies.

“The crown which you behold upon my head, is the symbol of my rank. I am the king of the largest and most powerful tribe of the bee race. My kingdom is comprised of every field and meadow which is watered by the brook flowing beneath my home. That brook, I believe, is the most beautiful in the world. Ducks with glassy green breasts are floating there; and little boys fish for minnows in its crystal waters. Many, too, are the spotted trout that flourish there; and often do I poise myself on the petals of a lily, and watch them as they swim about, now chasing each other, and now darting at some floating insect. Countless are the rich flowers that blossom, and countless the birds that breed and sing in my dominion. Many and lovely are the cottages that rise on every side. The ——. But I must away, for I have much to do, before the sunshine drinks up the dew.”

But who are these coming across that field, bearing upon their shoulders rakes, forks, and scythes? They are the mowers, who intend improving the sunshine now streaming upon the earth. Before night, yonder field will be dotted by many a cock of sweet clover hay. Hear them as they sharpen their already sharp instruments. How they swing their arms with the measured stroke of a pendulum! Rasp—rasp—rasp—how the grass and flowers fall before them! What havoc have they made! How many fair daughters of the field have they prostrated? what hidden homes have they laid bare! haunts of the bird and field-mouse, unroofing the snug dwelling, and leaving their little ones exposed to the covetous glances of the nesting boys? How like life are the flowers of the field! we gaze upon them as they fall before the scythe, and exclaim, “Man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.”

See, how the morning zephyr is sporting with the leaves of that birch tree, and with the thick hazel-bushes beside that fence. It is the breath of the

Earth, and upbears upon its bosom the dear little birds. How brilliant their plumage! how their eyes sparkle! how sweetly do they sing! To inhale the pure air of heaven is their greatest luxury. Here, in this nest above me, the red-breasted robin is feeding her little ones; there on that decayed tree the woodpecker is hammering away with his thick bill, ever and anon uttering a loud scream, as if he wished to make *all* the noise; within a few feet of me, a mockingbird is chattering loudly, mocking not only his companions, but myself, too, as if he thought me an old fool; among the clouds the lark is pouring out the music of her heart; all, all the birds are out under the open sky enjoying their daily holyday.

The clouds,—are they not magnificent, those morning clouds, floating so silently in the calm ocean of the sky? They are for ever changing, and every moment become still more beautiful. It would seem as if God had traced them with his own hand, that man might have a faint conception of the poetry of heaven. It may be they are the vehicles which angels employ when they wish to hover over our world, to weep for the wickedness of man, or rejoice at the triumph of virtue. It is indeed a charming superstition, that would people the sky and the air and the clouds with “beings brighter than have been.” For my part, this would be a cheerless and sorrowful world, were it not that I can at times go out of myself, in imagination, and hold sweet converse, and have fellowship with such beings. If the sordid and selfish among my fellows laugh at me because I love the clouds and the feelings they inspire,—I would ask why it is that God has made them? Why do they meet our sight at morning, noon, and evening? Give me a reasonable answer to this, ye worldly, and then I will acknowledge that it is folly to love the workmanship of God. I love the clouds, because they are the shadows of heavenly glories.

The flowers,—are they not the smiles of earth? But if this is true, why is it that they are weeping, when every thing around is so bright and joyful? 'Tis but the dew of heaven, in which they have been bathing all the night long. Here, at my feet, a little bluebell lies prostrate upon the damp earth. Some lazy ox has crushed it beneath his tread. I cannot,—no I would not banish the thought,—it reminds me of a much-loved sister, who was the companion and playmate of my boyhood. It reminds me of her, because

“Her bloom was like the springing flower  
That sips the early dew;  
The rose was budded in her cheek,  
Just opening to view.  
But love had, like the canker worm,  
Consumed her early prime;  
The rose grew pale, and left her cheek;  
*She died before her time.*”—Mallet.

There is a deeper philosophy in the language of flowers than is generally supposed. Its foundation is based upon a motive more important than mere amusement. The life of every flower that ever bloomed, has power to bring instruction and pleasurable feelings to the human heart. I love them, not because of their beauty alone, but because they always remind me of a kind and merciful Creator. I love them, because they are the stars in the green firmament of earth.

How glorious do those distant mountains appear in the sunlight, as they recede from the deep bosom of yonder valley, “like the subsiding waves of the ocean after a storm!” One of them, like a warrior clad in mail, is wooing the virgin sky. Mountains! and valleys! How does the heart leap at the mention of their very names. How exalted and soul-subduing the feelings they inspire! How many and various! how grand, gorgeous, and beautiful the scenes which pass before the mind, as we muse upon them! Did they not exist, how monotonous would be the scenery of the earth! Mountains! With them are associated steep frowning rocks and precipices, unfathomable chasms and laughing waterfalls,—vapors and clouds,—storms of thunder and lightning,—eagles, and goats, and daring hunters,—darkness,—the fearful avalanche, and plains of perpetual snow. Because they are seldom enlivened by comfortable abodes, too barren to be furrowed by the plough, it might at first view be supposed that they are useless features in the landscape, and unprofitably encroaching on the fertility and beauty of the plain. Experience and research, however, have unfolded to us their advantages. They are the sources of springs and rivers. “Their vast masses attract the clouds, and receive in the form of rain, hail, and snow, the moisture with which the atmosphere is charged, even when the plains below are parched with summer drought; and hence the irregular and mountainous surface of the earth is veined over with a multitude of rills, brooks, and rivers, whose waters, by a wonderful species of circulation, flow to the place whence they come,—that mighty and ever beating heart,—the ocean.” Were the earth a dead level, or slightly undulating, innumerable evils would result from the stagnant lakes and vast marshes which would cover its surface. Disease and death would soon subdue it. Animal and vegetable life would

languish; cultivation would scarcely exist; and instead of luxuriant and varied scenery, we should behold only a cheerless mixture of level land and turbid water. Were it not for mountains, we should have no rivers to fertilize the earth, and bear upon their bosoms, into the hearts of continents, the manufactures and productions of foreign countries. They exercise a salutary influence upon climate, for in their solitary fastnesses many of the most purifying winds originate. They are the bulwarks which Nature has reared to shield her valleys from the fierce northern blasts, or mitigate the solar heat,—affording shelter from its influence. In the extensive forests that ennoble those of our land,—the Rocky mountains, the Alleghanies, the Catskill, and the Green and White mountains,—grow the rarest and most valuable botanical curiosities. They are the almost sole repositories of minerals, and those rare metals so valuable to man, and necessary to the arts of civilization; the diamond that glitters in the kingly diadem, and that gold which is the supreme earthly desire of the human race. They have, from time immemorial, been the nurseries of patriotism, the abodes of industry, economy, patience, and every hardy virtue. The rugged mountaineer has always been the first in righteous war, and the first to sign the declaration of peace when the rights of his country were established. It was in the wild recesses of the mountains of Judea and Galilee, that the afflicted followers of our Saviour found refuge from their enemies, and where they worshipped in peace the God of their fathers. How dear to the Christian are the associations connected with Calvary, Sinai, and the mount of Olives!

Valleys! they are the gardens of the world,—broad and fertile. Crystal streams wind through them perpetually. How beautiful they are, when from their deep bosoms the songs of husbandmen mingle with the lowing of cattle and the chime of bells, while the eye rests calmly upon comfortable hamlets, cultivated fields, and smiling villages! How lovely too when reposing in their original luxuriance! while, in their solitude, resound the tramp of the free wild horse, the music of singing birds, and are seen herds of deer, feeding beside the buffalo, and the smoke curling upward from the lonely, conelike dwelling-place of the poor Indian! How delightful to an American are the associations connected with the valleys of our land! those of the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Hudson, and the Connecticut! Their productions are transported to every quarter of the globe. They are the homes of peace, plenty, and contentment.

Hark! do you not hear at intervals a sound as of a distant waterfall! Through the long still night that same cataract has been “blowing his trumpet from the steep.” On the approach of morning the sound seemed to die away, so that now you can hear it only in the pauses made by the singing

birds. But the brooklet and river that are near, glide past me as loudly and joyfully as ever. O, I love the music of the bounding streams, for they remind me of the happy laugh of innocent childhood. "But who the melodies of morn can tell?" Alas! it is not in the power of words, but when once *heard* their echo will never pass away.

From time immemorial, poets have likened the beginning of life to the beginning of day, and how true and beautiful is the comparison. Morning is generally attended by sunshine, and earth rejoices in its youthfulness. So do hope and innocence bring gladness to the heart of childhood. The former is sometimes darkened by storm; and so does misfortune sometimes spread its dark shadow over the lovely and the young.

I never come forth to enjoy the bustling music of this hour, or breathe its wholesome air, and gaze upon its unnumbered beauties, without *feeling* most deeply the existence of a Supreme Being. The infidel *pretends* to disbelieve this truth, but he does not in reality. In the silent watches of the night, when he is alone and wakeful, like the lost in hell, he believes and trembles. There is a God! The flowers of the valley, and the oaks upon the mountain, bless Him. Earth, with her thousand voices, the sun, and moon, and stars, all proclaim the eternal truth,—there is a God! He is infinite in holiness, in power, and love. Man, with his boasted intellect, cannot comprehend Him. His dwelling-place is the universe, and eternity is his lifetime. Who is it that regulates the beating pulses of eight hundred millions of human beings? Who is it that holds the earth in the hollow of his hand? It is God. Go down into the cold blue halls of ocean, and you will find Him there! Go to the regions of the sun, and you will find Him there. His frown penetrates the deepest hell, and the heaven of heavens is illumined by His smile. Ask the poor lonely widow, who it is that brings gladness to her desolate hearth, and she will answer,—God. Ask the oppressed orphan, who is his best friend; or the gospel minister, who it is that crowns his labors with success;—and they will answer,—God. Ask the nations of the earth, who it is that gives them peace, prosperity, and happiness, and you will hear the echo of God's name in every valley beneath the sun.

I have been thinking what a magnificent series of pictures might be seen by a man standing on the highest peak of the Alleghanies, provided his vision was bounded only by the surrounding seas. Looking towards the source of the Mississippi, he might see the elk and the deer, and the bear, rise from their dewy couches, and quench their thirst in its pure waters. How sublime, too, would that Father of rivers appear, rolling onward through solitary woods, smiling valleys, and by the battlements of splendid cities,

until it emptied itself in the lap of Mexico, with every tree and pinnacle upon its borders glittering in the beams of the rising sun.

Or looking to the west, he would see in some deep valley of the Rocky Mountains the Indian on his bridleless steed, in full pursuit after the buffalo. While dashing through thicket and stream, or over the plain, the shout of the hunter would startle the eagle from his eyerie. A moment more, and they are gone, and in their path no sound is heard but the dropping dew.

Turning south his eye would rest with pleasure on the boundless fields of cotton and rice, gleaming in the sun, like snow; or upon hills and plains waving with the palm, the magnolia, the lemon, and the orange tree. At the remotest corner of his country, he would behold, stationed at its southern threshold, a noble city, the seeming guardian of her inland treasures.

And turning to the east, his eye would linger long on the Atlantic ocean, with the gorgeous cities, and towns, and villages on its western shore. A thousand, floating palaces would meet his gaze, passing to and fro over its sleeping waves. Coming from every land under the sun, they would glide into their destined havens; those havens teeming with business and life and joy. “’Tis but a dream,” he would exclaim; but the recollection of his country’s greatness would banish such a thought, and he would again exclaim, “a reality indeed!”

What land, O morning, hast thou ever visited, more beautiful and glorious than America? Dear native land! I love every mountain and valley, and river, and tree, and flower, that rest upon thy bosom, and smile beneath thy skies.

On the sixth morning of creation, when God called into being an immortal soul, how fresh, how lovely beyond conception, must the earth have appeared to him! Was not that the hour when the birds sung their first hymn in praise of their Creator? On that morning, too, when Noah looked from the ark, and saw the waters subsiding, who can conceive the feelings with which he watched its advancement? As the tops of the mountains rose above the water, the rising sun dried them with his beams. The long night of desolation and woe was ended; the clouds that had obscured the sky were passed away, and it was now pure and tranquil as heaven itself. But enough. As the beauties of morning soon come to an end, though destined to return again, so must my rambling essay. As a reward for the reader’s kindness, however, in reading it, I would quote the following unequalled lines, describing a summer Sabbath morning in the country. They are by a dear poet, and their burden should be long remembered, for they have power to refine the heart:—

“How still the morning of the hallowed day!  
Mute is the voice of rural labor, hushed  
The plough-boy’s whistle and the milk-maid’s song.  
The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath  
Of teded grass, mingled with the faded flowers  
That yester-morn bloomed, waving in the breeze.  
Sounds the most faint attract the ear, the hum  
Of early bee, the trickling of the dew,  
The distant bleating midway up the hill.  
Calmness sits throned on yon unmoving cloud.  
To him, who wanders o’er the upland leas,  
The blackbird’s note comes mellow from the dale;  
And sweeter from the sky the gladsome lark  
Warbles his heaven-tuned song; the bubbling brook  
Courses more gently down the deep-worn glen;  
While from yon lowly roof, where curling smoke  
O’ermounts the mist, is heard at intervals  
The voice of psalms,—the simple song of praise.

“With dove-like wings, peace o’er yon village broods;  
The dizzying mill-wheel rests; the anvil’s din  
Hath ceased; all, all around is quietness.  
Less fearful on this day the limping hare  
Stops, and looks back, and stops and looks on man,  
Her deadliest foe. The toil-worn horse set free,  
Unheedful of the pasture, roams at large;  
And, as his stiff unwieldly bulk he rolls,  
His iron-armed hoofs gleam in the morning ray.”

*Grahame.*

## SOMETHING ABOUT BELLS.



I HAVE always loved the sound of bells. Sometimes, it is true, their music is associated with distress and gloom; but even then they have a voice of instruction. But how often do they *re-create* scenes which swell the heart with gladness, and makes us feel there is much that is good and beautiful in human nature! Who does not love to listen to their music on the sacred Sabbath, in the midst of a great city?

It is the morning of a day in June. With what a solemn tone do they call worshippers to the house of God! The streets, which a few hours ago seemed wellnigh deserted, are now thronged with people. The old man, trudging along upon his staff; the bright-eyed maiden, with her sylph-like form; parents and children; the happy and the sorrowful, all are hastening to their devotions. The bells are again silent. The swelling notes of the organ now fall upon the ear. Let us enter this ancient pile, whose spire points upwards to a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." A great multitude fills its aisles. The first psalm has been sung. Listen now to the humble, devout prayer of the gray-haired pastor. Anon, the sermon commences. A breathless silence prevails; while from the speaker's tongue, flow forth "instruction, admiration, comfort, peace."

Is there any thing on earth more beautiful than a scene like this? Does it not speak to us of that "continual city," whose maker and builder is God?—whose streets are paved with gold,—whose inhabitants are the children of the All-benevolent?

How different the scene which the fire-bell brings before the mind! Its sudden strokes seem to articulate the fearful word, "Fire!—fire!—fire!" We know the work of destruction is going on. We hear the rattling engines over the stony streets, the confused cry of men, and the wailings of distress. The rich man's dwelling is wrapped in flames, with the humble abode of his poor neighbour. The flame-banners flout the air; the smoke rises upward, and mingles with the midnight clouds.



The confusion is passed. On the spot where stood the fairest portion of a noble city, a heap of smouldering ashes alone arrests the eye. The rich man has been reduced to poverty; the poor man is still more poor! God help him, and his helpless little ones!

Ennobling thoughts spring up within us, when we hear the many-voiced bells, on a day of public rejoicing. They may speak to us of blood, but yet they tell of glorious victories. They may commemorate the triumphs of mind, or the noble achievements of the philanthropic and the good. Peal on peal echoes through the air, mingled with martial music, and the roaring of cannon, while a thousand national standards float gayly in the breeze. Touching and grand is the music of bells, on such a day as this!

In the silent watches of the night, how often have I been startled by the sound of a neighbouring clock! My mind has then gone forth, to wander over the wide region of thought. Then the bells have seemed to me to be the minstrels of Time; an old man, with bent form, his scythe and hour-glass in his withered hands. All over the world are his stationary minstrels; striking their instruments, and heaving a sigh for the thoughtlessness of men. At such an hour, when the world was wrapped in silence at the sound of a bell, the past has vanished like a scroll, and I have been borne, as on eagles' wings, back to the days of my boyhood. I have sported and gambolled with my playmates on the village green; hunted the wild-duck; explored lonely valleys, or sailed upon the lake, which almost washed the threshold of my happy home; and gazed into its clear blue depths, and fancied, that the trout revelling joyfully there, were bright and beautiful spirits! I have sat once more beside that dear girl, who was my first and only love, and sang to her the ballads of the olden time; while

“She sat and gazed upon me,  
With those deep and tender eyes;  
Like the stars, so still, and saint-like,  
Looking downward from the skies.”

*Longfellow.*

I have again heard her breathe my name, in accents sweeter than the song of the nightingale. Another stroke of the bell, and the waking vision vanished; the “voice in my dreaming ear melted away!” Then have I shed bitter, bitter tears upon my lonely pillow!

How striking is the ship-bell at sea, which measures the time of the sailor, and often, when wrapped in slumber, and in the midst of pleasant dreams, summons him to enter upon his watch. How often, too, has the fearful alarum-bell sounded at midnight, and proved to be but the knell of happy hearts; or summoned many brave mariners to their ocean-grave.

And there is the light-house bell, which sends forth its shrill voice of warning, when the wind and waves are high. Look out through the thick darkness, and behold that ship! How she trembles in the trough of the sea! She has heard the signal of danger, and now changes her course. The wind fills her sails, and nobly she meets and conquers the angry billows. A little while, and the dangerous reef is far behind her. Free as a mountain-bird she pursues her way over the “waste of waters.”

Enter yonder village, reposing in beauty on the distant plain. It has but one church, yet in that church there is a bell. The inhabitants are familiar with its tones, for it has for many years called them to the house of prayer. At an early hour, every day, its musical voice is heard; and me thinks, if it could be interpreted, its language would be: “Arise! arise! ye morning slumberers, and improve your time; for your hours are passing speedily away.”

And now its silvery tones are echoing merrily and loud, and the hour is one of peaceful happiness. The pride of the village has become a bride. The ceremony is ended; and the procession is now moving from the church.

“The bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,  
\* \* \* \* \*

The guests are met, the feast is set,—  
Mayst hear the merry din!  
The bride hath paced into the hall,  
Red as the rose is she.  
Nodding their heads before her, goes  
The merry minstrelsey.”—*Coleridge*.

But hark! the bell sounds out once more,—slowly and solemnly! It is a funeral. They are bearing to her tomb one who was young, beautiful, and good. Beside that murmuring rivulet they have made her grave. It is a resting-place, upon which no one can look, and say that the grave is fearful:

“All the discords, all the strife,  
All the ceaseless feuds of life,  
Sleep in the quiet grave:  
Hushed is the battle’s roar,  
The fire’s rage is o’er,  
The wild volcano smokes no more:  
Deep peace is promised in the lasting grave;  
Lovely, lovely is the grave!”—*Newspaper*.

It is now evening. Glorious was the robe in which the sun was decked, when he went down behind the distant hills! For the last time, to-day, does the bell send out its warning tone. The anvil is at rest. The post-office, where

were assembled the village politicians, is now closed. All places of business are deserted. The members of many a household have gathered around the family altar, to offer up their evening sacrifice of prayer. In a few short hours, that little village is silent as the grave.

Even the baying of the watch-dog has ceased, and the whip-poor-will has sung herself to sleep. Nothing is heard but the sighing of the wind among the trees, and nothing is seen above, but the clear blue sky, and the moon, and stars.

Such, gentle reader, are some of the associations connected with the sound of bells. May they awaken in kindred hearts pleasant remembrances of the past!

## THE RETURN.



DURING one of my visits in the country last summer, I met with the following incident, and I now relate it, believing that the thoughtful mind may gather instruction from its perusal.

It was a lovely afternoon, and I had wandered forth to enjoy the surrounding scenery, and glories of the western sky. On reaching the summit of a hill, a short distance from the village, I beheld the bent form of an aged man leaning upon his staff. His garb was suited to his age, but was dusty and worn; and, as he stood there silent as a statue, unconscious of surrounding things, it seemed to me that his eyes were fixed on some object beyond the boundaries of this world,—something undiscernible to the gaze of common men. I approached and offered him my hand, which he received with a warm pressure, while a strange smile lighted his withered countenance. I saw that something heavy was at the old man's heart, and I asked him, as a friend, to tell me of his grief. He assented, and seating ourselves upon a rude seat near by, he thus proceeded:

“My young friend, I have been thinking upon the pleasures and the sorrows of other days. At the mention of these two last words, how varied are the scenes which rise before me, causing my heart to flutter with joy, or tremble at remembered grief! I do not sympathize with those who tell me to forget the past, to trust no future, and live only for the present hour. Ah, no! such thoughts are inappropriate to an immortal soul on the borders of futurity!

“Yonder smiling village, almost hidden from view by those lofty elms, is the place of my birth. In the clear waters of that broad river I have often bathed this frame, when the blood of health and youth sparkled through its veins.

“Fifty years ago, I left a happy home to seek my fortune in the wide, wide world. Can I forget the tears, the blessings, and the breaking hearts of that sad parting? Dear parents, who have long since gone to your home of peace, forgive your erring child for his ingratitude and hardness of heart! He

has reaped an abundant reward for his wayward and ambitious spirit. For many years, I have been a friendless and solitary wanderer in a crowded world. As in the Mayday of life, I am even now poor, ignorant, sinful, and unknown. There was a time when the nobles of a distant land enjoyed the luxuries of my table, but poverty stripped me of my possessions,—and friendship became a name. The smile of flattery was changed to the frown of contempt and scorn,—and all, because I was poor. I have studied the human heart and the mysteries of the universe, but each succeeding year tends but to impress me more deeply with my ignorance. When I have reflected on the ravages of time, and the utter folly of living only for the present, I have striven to become a sinless creature, but my endeavours have proved vain. It is not age alone, but sin and its evil consequences, that have furrowed my brow so deeply. There was a time too, when my name was on the lips of a nation,—when I was called great, honorable, and good,—but that nation has forgotten me; those days are departed.

“A few hours since, and, after the absence of half a century, I returned to my native village,—hoping to find there one person at least who would remember me, and bend over my couch when I should die. But no,—‘I seemed a stranger, or as one forgot.’ I saw a youth with dark melancholy eyes and lofty forehead, walking thoughtfully in the shadow of the trees. I forgot myself, and called out the familiar name of an early friend, but the stranger thought the old man crazy,—and therefore heeded me not. It made me sad,—very sad. I heard the clear laugh of a maiden beyond a garden wall, and fancy pictured to my mind the deep blue eye, the heaving bosom and sweet smile of Mary Lee. Then I was happy. I saw a party of children returning from the strawberry fields, with baskets ‘brimming full;’ and, as they danced along with joyous hearts and blooming faces, I became a child once more. But when they came near, and gathered round to gaze at my thin white locks and furrowed cheeks, and one exclaimed ‘see how the poor man trembles,’ I felt that I was indeed old, and ripe for the sickle of death. As this happy group left me, a shade of thoughtfulness seemed to have settled on their young minds; and when one of the little girls lagged behind, and poured into my lap the contents of her basket, a tear of holy love dimmed my eyes, and I thanked God that he permitted angels to dwell upon the earth. Beautiful child!—may I meet thy pure spirit in the realms of bliss!

“I passed down the avenue, which once led to the little brown cottage where I was born,—but there everything was changed. No familiar voice greeted my ear. The marble mansion, the fashionable garden, and regular walks, added to my sorrow. Even the old apple-tree, under whose shadow my mother sung her lullaby for me, was gone. Those who saw me, thought

me an old mendicant, and offered me bread,—but I refused it, and turned away to hide my burning tears. For a moment, they wondered why the old man wept,—but then they passed on and he was forgotten. I sat down upon a stone, near the old school-house, and O, how mingled were the recollections it brought to mind! Where, thought I, are the noble young spirits, who were once so happy there? Many of them, perhaps, were lured into the world by fame, pleasure, and wealth; while a few have passed through this life knowing it to be but the pathway to an eternal one. They are gone,—all, all gone. The school-house still stands there, but it is ruin, mournfully reminding the beholder of other days. A part of the roof has fallen in, and the door is hingeless. Its inhabitants are the cricket and bat, and its broken windows are hung with curiously wrought tapestry from the spider's loom. A short distance from this ruin, stands a splendid edifice with towering spires, known by the name of '—— College.' I wondered, when I saw that, whether the learned of the present time were happier and better men than those who were instructed by the travelling pedagogue, fifty years ago.

"I entered the church, but this too had undergone a change. The moss-covered church, where the poor, the humble and good, ever went to congregate and worship God in sincerity and truth, is now changed to a naked white temple,—the Sabbath resort of fashionable worshippers.

"I went into the garden of graves,—but that too was changed; it had increased greatly in size. One portion of it spoke of the past and forgotten dead,—the other, of the present and dying. In the former, the graves of my parents were discerned by the broken fragments of their gray head-stones. One thing I saw there which pleased me, and was unchanged; it was the old oak, which still waved over them,—an emblem of infinite love. There was one other grave upon which I looked with peculiar feelings, and above it one evening primrose bloomed in beauty,—emblem of the buried one. O! there is consolation in the thought, that after the winter of death, comes the summer of eternal blessedness.

"And now I have come to this pleasant eminence, and under the open sky, to spend one short hour in thinking upon the pleasures of other days. I feel that my pilgrimage is almost ended,—that my goal is won.

"How many times have I roamed over these hills, arm-in-arm with Mary Lee, the brightest star in the horizon of my youthful hope. I verily believe she was the only being who ever loved me with the passion of an angel. How many years of happiness did we then anticipate! See you that little purple cloud just passing away from amidst its companions?—even so did her spirit fade into the cloudless sky of heaven.

“Young man, if you are not weary, listen a little longer to my words. If you have never ‘given your heart away, a sordid boon,’ or devoted your affections to some earthly object, I warn you to beware; place them on something that is lasting,—on your God. He is unchangeable and infinitely good, and if you are His child you will be for ever happy. But I tell you to begin early,—to begin now,—‘now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.’

“Next to God, and your fellow men, let the love of Nature engage your attention; and be not engrossed with the vanities of this changing world. Ambition is a delusion. It is this that has been the chief torment of my life. I have stood on the spot hallowed by the ashes of Socrates, and as I thought of him, and others, who once instructed mankind under a cloud of heathenism, I have felt that if the grave was the consummation of human glory, the plaudits of the world were not to be desired. Yes, cherish within your heart a love for Nature. She will alleviate many of the troubles of life, and will prove a constant friend. The scenes which now meet my eye, are the same to which I bade adieu in the morning of life. The same clouds are floating in the west. The same breeze is fanning my cheek, and sending the ripples to expire upon the shore. The same bees are struggling for the honey contained in that drooping flower. The same ant is building her little palace of sand at my feet, teaching me, as it did then, a lesson of industry. The same whip-poor-will is offering up her evening hymn. Every thing is unchanged, save myself and my affections. Then I was a happy boy, sympathizing with the glad season of spring,—now I am an old man, and brother to the autumnal leaves.

“An affectionate father and a fond mother went into their graves, weeping and praying for their lost, their ambitious son. Their prayers have been answered, and I shall soon meet them at the right hand of God, while my mortal part will nestle on the bosom of corruption, its second mother.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus did this good man unburden the feelings of his heart, until the approaching darkness and falling dew warned us to seek the shelter of our inns. He leaned upon my arm until we reached the foot of the hill, promising to relate to me on the morrow more particulars of his eventful life. We parted. That night my dreams were confused; for they were about a sinful fleeting world, and one that is sinless and eternal.

The next day I saw a funeral procession move slowly to the village church-yard. It was composed of a few humane Christians, and the family of

the inn-keeper,—but there was not one mourner there. The sunset of that evening was beautiful as ever, but the unknown old man was unconscious of its glories. Truly hath the poet said,—“We are born,—we laugh,—we weep,—we love,—we droop,—and then—we die.”



## THE PAINTER'S DREAM.



SUMMER was in its prime. Weary with the hunt, I had lain down to rest on the shady side of a gentle hill. I gazed upon the blue sky, and fancied it was an ocean, beyond which the broad and beautiful fields of heaven were basking beneath the smiles of God. A few white feathery clouds were floating there, and they seemed to me to be a fleet returning to their home of peace. In the dark regions of night, they had fought and conquered the enemy; and now, laden with redeemed souls, were hastening to the haven of eternal rest. Fancy, which had pictured this image, was gone, and I saw nothing, save an eagle playing with his mate above the trees of the forest. I slumbered,—and was a dreamer.

A breath of air, fragrant as the perfume of Arabia, swept across my senses, and I saw a spirit bending over me with a smile, whose element was love. And these were the words she spoke, in a voice soft and clear as the fall of waters, when heard from afar:—"Mortal, I am one of the spirits of Nature, and my office is to guard and preserve those of her works which are grand and beautiful. Since thou wert a child, I have watched thy progress through life with interest; for I knew that thou didst possess a heart which could appreciate the workmanship of Nature's hands. Many a time when thou hast sighed because of the heartlessness of men, and felt that thou wert friendless and alone, I have hovered near, and whispered in thy ear not to despair, but to be more devoted to the study of Nature and her Creator. Thou hast listened to me, and gone into the busy world a wiser and better man.

"This morning, when thou camest into the woods to hunt, I was with thee; and it was my will which caused slumber to seal thine eyelids. My object was, to transport thee to the nest of an eagle, that thou mightst from that great height behold four grand pictures, which hang in the gallery of my queen."

She ceased, and with the speed of thought we passed to the nest of the eagle. Taking my hand, and unfolding her wings of light, she then said to me:—

“Other mortals desire my presence, and I must depart. When thou hast gazed thy fill, thou hast but to express the wish in a whisper, and thou wilt be upon the earth again. Farewell.”

I know not how it was, but it seemed to me that I reclined on air. Just beneath me, so that I could almost touch it, hung the airy habitation of the king of birds. In it, the female was nestled with her young. Upon a limb near by, the male sat watching, though with a drowsy eye. At times, he was wide awake, but he heeded me not. It was passing strange!

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*Midnight.*—Around me, far as the eye can reach, is a wild, uncultivated wilderness. Before me lies spread out a vast and naked prairie. On the right, a mighty river sweeps onward to the sea. On the left, a range of mountains rise up, which seem like a vast caravan, moving to the south. The moon has compassed the heavens, and is near her setting. A thousand stars are by her side. She gilds with silver the leaves, the waves, and distant hills. On the further bank of yonder stream I can just discern an Indian village. Every voice within it is hushed. The warrior, asleep upon his mat, is dreaming of a new victory lost or won, the youth is dreaming of the dark-eyed maiden whom he loves, and the child is dreaming of the toys of yesterday. The pale-face has not yet trespassed upon their rights; and as they are at peace with the Great Spirit, they are contented and happy. Would they might thus remain, until, according to the decrees of nature, they should pass into futurity!

How impressive is this scene! how holy is the hour! The wind is up, and makes awful music as it sweeps through the dark forest. It comes to my ear like the death-wailings of a world. The owl has left her hiding-place, and is noiselessly flying from tree to tree. The whip-poor-will has folded her little head under her wing, and is asleep. One of the brightest rays of the moon has penetrated the thick foliage, and is hovering near the guardian spirit of that sweet bird. How happy! how innocent! how beautiful!

Hark! did you not hear the splash of the sturgeon, and see his graceful form gleam in the pale moonlight! Another sound! it is but the scream of a panther, or the howl of a wolf. The moon has disappeared,—the breeze has died away,—darkness and silence have settled upon the world.

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*Morning.*—The eagles have flown. As the sun rises above the mountains, the beasts retire to their dens, and the birds leave their nests. The woods and sky echo with a thousand strains of melody. Earth is awake, and clothed in her fresh green garment. The mists have left the valleys, and revealed to the open sky winding rivers and beautiful lakes. Every thing is laughing with joy under the glorious influence of the sun.

The deer is cropping his morning repast, with the dew-showers trickling from his side. How gracefully does the smoke curl upward from those Indian wigwams? The hunters are preparing for the chase. They have entered their canoes,—silently do they glide down the river,—now they are lost to view by an island. None are left in that village but the women and children. While the former busy themselves in some rude occupation, here and there may be seen some half-dressed children sporting in the sun. Some shooting at the target,—some leaping, and others dancing.

Hark! a voice in yonder thicket! It is a wounded buck, that has sought refuge from the hunter. The arrow has pierced his heart, and, like an exiled monarch, he has come here to die. See! how he writhes and bounds in agony. One effort more, and all is still. The noisy raven will now feed upon those delicately-formed limbs, and pluck from their sockets those eyes which were of late so brilliant and full of fire. Time is speeding onward. Lovely art thou, O morning! beneath the summer-skies of my dear native land,—my own America.

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*Noon and Afternoon.*—The sun is at the zenith. Not a breath of air is stirring, and the atmosphere is hot and sultry. The leaves and the green waves of the prairie are motionless. The birds are tired of singing, and have sought the cool shades of the thick wood. The deer is quenching his thirst at the nameless rivulet, or panting with heat in some secluded dell. On an old dry tree, whose giant arms stretch upward as if to grasp the clouds, a solitary eagle has perched himself. It is too hot even for him to enjoy a bath in the upper air. The butterfly and bee are resting on the fullblown flowers. Silence has again settled upon the Indian village. The boys, exhausted with heat and play, have gone to lie down,—some beneath their bark-houses, and some under the shady trees. Earth and air are so tranquil, it seems as if Nature had suspended her operations. The only moving object that meets my eye is the broad glassy river, whose waters roll sluggishly onward to the far-distant sea, where the sleeping waves and bending sky are mingled together.

A dark cloud has obscured the eastern horizon. The wind is rising,—a roaring sound is heard,—and now the storm spends its fury on forest and prairie. The dread thunder echoes through the chambers of the firmament. The fierce lightnings flash. The trees are bending as though they would break. An old oak which stood in its grandeur upon the plain now lies prostrate. Even so does God sometimes dash to the earth proud and insolent man. The parched soil is deluged with rain. The storm has spent its fury, and the clouds, like a routed army, are passing away in dire confusion. A rainbow is in the sky, and a fresh but gentle breeze is fanning my cheek.

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*Evening.*—The eagles have returned. The sun is in the west. A little while, and he will have bathed his heated brow in the waters of the Pacific. The clouds come out to meet him, decked in their most gorgeous robes of varied colors, while the evening star smiles at his approach. He has left the valleys in twilight, and his last beams are gilding the tops of the mountains. The moon is upon her throne once more. The whip-poor-will has commenced her evening hymn. On heavy wings a swan has just flown past me,—she is going to her lonely home on the margin of some distant lake. A stir is in the Indian village. The hunters have returned with their canoes loaded with game. The customary festival has commenced, and most strangely does their wild music sound as it breaks on the surrounding solitude. O! who can describe the beauties of this hour and this scene? The doe has gone to her grassy couch, and the birds are sleeping.

“The Mighty Being is awake.”—*Wordsworth.*

My dream was ended, and I sought my dwelling with a happy heart; thankful to God that he had implanted in my soul a love for all his grand and beautiful works.

## THE EARLY CALLED.



“O, she was too beautiful to die. Is there any thing that darts through the world so swiftly as a sunbeam?”

*Landor's Pericles and Aspasia.*



I HAVE seen a lovely flower open its petals in the dewy morning, and, as it shed its sweet smiles upon its companions, and filled the balmy air with fragrance, an invisible something caused it to droop from the parent stem, and in a little while it lay on the damp earth,—faded and soiled. And precisely such, was the fate of that young creature, whose memory I now commemorate.

Only three short summers did her Maker permit her to live in this wilderness world. She was the pride of her father, the joy of her mother, and the dear, dear playmate of three sisters, her superiors in age, but not less gifted in personal and intellectual accomplishments. Often have I seen these four delicate children, on a Sabbath afternoon, kneeling around their father's chair, and heard them recite their catechism and prayers, with folded hands, and upraised eyes, and I have thought that at such an hour, the angels of heaven have paused in their hosannas, as if jealous of that bright possession of the earth. How often too, while passing their happy home, have I heard a merry peal of laughter, and, in the fulness of my heart, thanked the great Creator for these human flowers. A few weeks ago, they sported under the shadow of the elm before their cottage door,—crowned with the rosebuds, and making melody in their hearts, even as the little birds around them. But alas! the scene is changed. Instead of the joyous smile and ringing laugh, three of those children are now clothed in the weeds of mourning, and a plaintive dirge is the only music in their home. The *youngest* one of them has gone to heaven. Her sister spirits in heaven, bowed before the throne of God, and craved permission to call her hence, and therefore it is that she has left the earth.

I have just returned from the funeral. Most of the attendants had reached the house of mourning when I arrived. The father and mother and sisters of the deceased, were seated near the head of the coffin, all of them sobbing as if their very hearts would break; and need I say, that many an eye beside was moistened by the sorrowful and sympathetic tear? The coffin-lid was raised, and, one after another, the friends approached and took a farewell gaze of the unconscious dead. I could hardly realize, that the innocent being whom I had so often caressed and kissed, and sported with, was thus insensible to the genial atmosphere which surrounded her. There was no change in her features, save that her eyes were closed, and the paleness of marble was on her cheeks and lips. The same smile, the same dimple, the same curling hair were there, that had been hers in the vigor of life. A delicate white lily, and a rose-geranium leaf were resting upon her bosom,—fit emblems of her purity and loveliness. As I resumed my seat, this exclamation escaped the lips of the bereaved father,—“O, how little space do we require after we are dead!” and the minister replied, “Ah, yes! and the rich and far-famed require no more than the poor and the obscure.” These words found a resting-place in my memory, and I pondered them in my heart.

And now when all was still, the silver-haired minister knelt in the midst of that mourning company, and offered up to God a long, earnest, and appropriate prayer. It was a strange scene,—that aged man kneeling beside the coffin of that little child. After this, the following words were sung, and the procession moved slowly to the burying-ground.

“Calm on the bosom of thy God,  
Young spirit! rest thee now!  
E’en while with us thy footsteps trod,  
His soul was on thy brow.

“Dust to its narrow house beneath!  
Soul, to its place on high!  
They that have seen thy look in death,  
No more may fear to die.

“Lone are the paths, and sad the bowers,  
Whence thy meek smile is gone;  
But O! a brighter home than ours,  
In heaven, is now thine own.”

*Mrs. Hemans.*

The body of the young, the beautiful and good, was laid in the damp cold tomb, but her immortal part had gone to that kingdom where sorrow and sighing are never known.

I was the last to leave the new-made grave, and I lingered long after the church-yard gate was closed, by the old sexton. My thoughts were about death, and with the dead. The sun was near his setting, and as I looked upon the clouds brightening and fading, coming and going, I thought of the glories of heaven, and longed to be free from the bondage of sin and the grave. In a remote corner of the burying-ground, I discovered a wild rosebush covered with blossoms. With careful hands I transplanted it to the grave of the early called, and retired. In about five minutes, while standing upon an elevation, a sweet song fell upon my ear, and looking back, I beheld an evening bird perched upon the rosebush, singing *his* plaintive dirge, and swinging to and fro.

## MIRTH AND SADNESS.



“Chide not her mirth who yesterday was sad;  
She may be so to-morrow.”

*Joanna Baillie.*



To think on the passions of men, is an instructive, but ever a sorrowful task. When we remember the trifling causes, and often melancholy results of anger, revenge, and many other evil passions of the human heart, we are constrained to weep over the weakness of our nature. When we think of the many trials which originate from love,—that passion universally considered as the foundation of happiness,—how many feelings of sorrow spring up to darken our thoughts! How many scenes of disappointment and unhappiness can we recall, as the offspring of that holy passion when perverted or interrupted in its proper course!

Mirth and sadness belong to the same great class, but the scenes in which they bear a part are far more numerous and varied. One singular fact respecting them, is, they are seldom seen far-distant from each other, but almost ever in intimate communion. It is not in our power to pry into the secrets of this great mystery; but let us, for our instruction, look at a few of those scenes where mirth and sadness may be discovered mingling their contrary elements. The pages of history and poetry are full of them; and so too are the pages of our own daily experience. On that night preceding the battle of Waterloo, how strangely blended were the passions of men!

“There was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium’s capital had gathered then  
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright  
The lamps shone o’er fair women and brave men.”

*Byron.*

In that assemblage of Mammon’s votaries I can discern the spirits of mirth and sadness. Over that banquet of luxury a gloom is suddenly resting; for at intervals a thought of the uncertainty of life steals into the heart; and this



utters its under tones in the festive music, and tinges with gloom their joyful feelings. Some are thinking of the past, and some of the morrow; while mirth and sadness have each their portion in the festival.

I heard the shout of victory echoing through the battle-field; I beheld an army which had conquered its enemies,—I approached to hear the song of joy, but that sound was lost amid the groans of the dying, and the blood-stained soil was heavy beneath the tread of the victorious. Mirth and sadness weighed upon the hearts of all, but still heavier did it weigh upon him who was the chief victor. How was it with these two armies when they came forth to battle? They were made up of brave soldiers, who went forth joyfully to meet their enemies, resolved to die or revenge their wrongs,—to die or redeem their country from oppression. But when they thought of their wives and children and aged parents, whom they never again expected to behold on earth, their manly smiles were changed to tears. Even so has it been since the foundation of the world.

I heard the sound of music, where the dance and the wine-cup went gayly round, and beheld a bridegroom and his bride. I looked at them, for I wished to feast my eyes upon a picture of happiness, but I turned away disappointed, for a thought of the dreamless and unknown future caused their young hearts to tremble. They came to the spot children of mirth, but they departed the victims of sadness.

I heard a sigh which floated on the bosom of midnight, and beheld in the solitude of his chamber, a child of intellect. He was wasting the oil of his existence over the pages of classic lore; and by the help of the taper, I could behold thoughts of immortality stamped upon his brow. He was dreaming of fame, and as his eye rested on its glittering pinnacle, which met his gaze far, far in the distance, the recollection of its real worthlessness, and his own unworthiness, made him yield up his hopes in despair. The joy of his young ambition was at last crushed in sorrow and sadness.

Mirth and sadness are not limited in their influence, only to individuals. The brightness of the former, and the shadows of the latter, have affected the most powerful nations. Our own Republic has, within the ensuing year, afforded an unparalleled example of this truth. Only a few months ago, a brave soldier and honest statesman, an accomplished scholar and a Christian, was living in the retirement of the country as an humble agriculturist. Suddenly a messenger appeared, and informed him that the voice of his country had proclaimed him its *Ruler*. The glad intelligence flew like the wind through every valley of the land. At the appointed day, on the portico of the capitol, in the presence of assembled thousands, this private individual was inaugurated *President of the United States*. Every

star-spangled banner from Maine to Louisiana, was unfolded to the breeze, —ten thousand guns and ringing bells proclaimed the tidings of joy, and bonfires were kindled upon the hills. The star of Hope shone brightly in the firmament.

But there came a change. The shouts of that rejoicing nation had hardly died on the air, one short month only had elapsed, ere another voice proclaimed throughout the country these mournful words:—“*The President is dead.*” A clap of thunder from a cloudless sky, or the falling of an oak in the still forest, could not have been more startling to the passing traveller. The Chief of a powerful Republic had left the highest seat of worldly honor, for a silent and insensible rest in the narrow grave. Eyes unused to weeping were filled with tears. The chime of funeral bells fell heavily upon the ear, and the national standards were all furled, from the Atlantic shore to the plains of Oregon. Churches, the halls of legislation, and private dwellings, were decorated with the gloomy weeds of death, and funeral sermons were preached from every pulpit. Instead of the joyous shout and loud huzza, one solemn dirge rose from the lips of a disheartened nation. Eighteen million souls were mourning the death of their illustrious and much loved Leader. And who can realize the bitterness of that sorrow which usurped his place at the fireside of home?

Such is the checkered lot of life. There are no enjoyments, no pleasures, no gratifications, of mere earthly nature, but which in their ultimate end are darkened by feelings of sadness. When we have looked on the works of nature and admired their transcendent loveliness, upon the works of art and admired them, and upon our friends whom we loved with the tenderest affection, the thought that they must all change, has caused feelings of despondency to darken our fondest hopes and aspirations. As we thought how rapidly the beauties of nature were passing away, how soon the monuments of art would crumble into dust, and that our friends, one by one were sinking into the silent grave, we have exclaimed in the bitterness of sorrow, “all things under the sun are vanity and vexation of spirit.” We well know from experience of the past, that Mirth and Sadness will never separate on earth, and therefore through the gloom which rests upon our souls, we discover in the distance of futurity a land,—a beautiful land.

“O! ye troubled pair!

Where ye have no part in the troubled air.

Far from the breathings of changeful skies,

Over the seas, and the graves it lies;

Where the day of the lightning and cloud is done,

And joys reign alone, as the lonely sun!”

*Mrs. Hemans.*

If these things be true, and that they are so we have but to listen to the voice of Nature to be convinced, let us remember, that it is the righteous alone, who are permitted to enter that land from whose bourne no traveller would ever wish to return. Just in proportion as the allurements of sin have power over our hearts, will all our joys end in disappointment and sorrow. There is but one adequate support for the calamities of mortal life, and that is, an assured belief “that the procession of our fate, however sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being, whose everlasting purposes embrace all accidents, converting them to good.” Let us then adore in humbleness and sincerity of heart, and keep the commandments of that Being, who has power to make us happy, even amid the many vicissitudes of life; and, when we are called to pass through that dark valley which leads to eternity, we shall be guided by His omnipotent hand, and be welcomed by Him and His angels into that glorious kingdom prepared for the redeemed, from the foundation of the world.

## SUMMER EVENING TWILIGHT.



“Now with religious awe, the farewell light  
Blends with the solemn coloring of the night.”

*Wordsworth.*



THAT hour in which the garish light of day is mellowed by the shades of evening, has always had a tendency to subdue and soothe the feelings of my heart. There is a mystery about it, which is indescribable, and constitutes its principal charm. I have thought that if I had power to number the days of my existence, I should choose to die at the twilight hour, and at the close of the twilight of life. The heat and burden of our pilgrimage and of the day just closed, would have a kindred influence upon us; and, valuing the former not more highly than the latter, we should calmly resign ourselves to that sweet sleep, whose morning is without end, and infinitely glorious. How many men have passed a stormy twilight, and died in the darkness of a starless midnight! Was it not so with Lear,

“That poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man?”

This hour reminds me of the humble dwelling where I was born, far away in the west, which stood upon the shore of the gently flowing Raisin. And this it may be is the cause of that thoughtful mood which is wont to steal over me, as the sun sheds his last beams upon our portion of the globe. I love to listen to the dying hum of business, whether it be in the populous city, or the secluded village. The laugh of childhood is now more plaintive than usual, as if it were conscious of the coming on of silence. And does not the farmer close his labors with a more measured tread; the merchant and mechanic with a more contemplative countenance than they began them in the morning? What hour is so well suited to listen to the tones of the lute, and the songs of the beautiful and young? I have a gentle sister, in whose soul there is an eternal melody. “When twilight gray has in her sober livery all things clad,” it is her custom to retire, all alone, to her harp, and, in quick

succession, pour forth a series of songs fit for the lips of angels. And often, when through, she looks around, and is surprised to find that her father, and mother, and sisters, even to the lisping babe, have long been listening in breathless attention. And then the laugh of homeborn happiness resounds. Such are many of the twilights of the present time in my present home. It seems to me the twilights of my boyhood were longer, and in many respects more interesting than those of my later years. Is this a delusion of the mind? If it is, let me remain deceived, for there is a luxury in the thought. I love the twilight hour, because its holy and blessed influence was around me when my lips were pressed by the first kiss of love. The remembrance of that kiss is sweet to my soul, and can never be obliterated while I have my reason.

The evening twilight is a kind of pause in time, in which daylight and darkness struggle for the mastery; and therefore, an appropriate hour to think upon our yesterdays, and our to-morrows. Yesterday! who can recall its precious moments? They are gone, for ever gone. Up to the throne of God, each, a winged spirit, they have ascended to trace upon the Book of Life the manner in which we have employed them here below. And who of us can say, they have thrown a halo around our names there written? Rather than this, have we not reason to fear that the angels of heaven have blotted out our names, and traced them upon another and a darkened page? To-morrow? Who can lengthen out its span? Boast not thyself of to-morrow; thou knowest not what tidings ere then may reach thee from the spirit land. Despair not of the morrow; it may come to thee fraught with unexpected good. If there is a cloud above thee, it may spend its fury, ere thou beholdest the morrow, or thou mayst be called to lie down in that lowly mansion which is beyond the reach of every storm. Yesterday, a father sat in the midst of his happy family,—smiling because he had no troubles, and talking loudly of the joys to come. “To-morrow, he goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.” Is there then no hope for this great evil? Ah yes! and it is found in these words:—“Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. *Wisely improve the Present. It is thine.* Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart.” Wisely improve the present, is the admonition of wisdom. Let the duties of to-day engage all our attention, and those of to-morrow will take care of themselves. Those who wisely improve the present, are destined to inhabit a world of perfect purity in the companionship of angels and redeemed men. Those who trifle with the present know not the agony that awaits them in the great Hereafter. It matters not what may be their condition or their pretensions, if they live only for the present life, they shall have no lot nor part in the life to come. Such men are worldlings, and as they live, so must they die.

How lovely are the works of Nature, when seen in the repose of twilight! How soul-subduing the dun obscurity that envelops the earth! Insensible nature seems to have charmed the beasts and birds into a kindred repose. The frolicsome lambs, grown weary of sport, are sleeping on the grassy lawn. The songs that lately echoed through the sunshiny fields, have died away, and the feathered minstrels (“all but the wakeful” whip-poor-will) have retired to their homes in the dark, still grove. The graceful outlines of yonder distant mountains are lost to view, and so too, are the “green girt cottages” at their base. The long low valley on this side, is only enlivened by a broad deep river flowing through its centre. In the distance, and around me

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“All the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save, where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds.”—*Gray*.

Soft and calm is the reign of twilight. The nighthawk stoops from his airy flight, and skims along the bosom of the unruffled lake, but we can only hear the beating motion of his wing. On the margin of yonder cove, canopied by willows, the shallop of the fisherman is safely moored, and the surrounding stillness is only broken by the passing ripples, or the leap of a hermit trout. The village green, where, but a few hours ago, resounded the laugh and shout and jest of thoughtless childhood, is now deserted and desolate, for the children have sought their homes.

A few paces from my window stands a most charming garden, surrounded by a barrier of heavy foliaged fruit trees. The tiny cups of the night-blowing flowers are filled with dew, and they almost oppress the senses by their excessive fragrance. The hermit toad has left his retirement, for a two or three hours' recreation among the herbs and vegetables, or on the moistened grass. The bat is flying about after its food, and a party of catydid are talking in the trees. And as the cooling breeze steals by, the leafy branches gently and gracefully bow and wave beneath its influence. It is a breeze from the far-off sea, and whispers in my ear many a pleasing tale of waves and winds, of solitary ships and fleet of sail. In the language of another:—

“A light mist,  
 So light, 'tis almost viewless, gathers o'er  
 Those fields, crowded with summer flowers. I hear  
 A hundred *whip-poor-wills* remote and nigh.  
 How beautiful! here in a poplar bower,  
 Entwined thick with jessamine and rose,  
 Clymatis, and the sweet-breathed honey-suckle—  
 I sit alone in a luxurious gloom;  
 And close above my head one joyous bird  
 Pours fearlessly a loud triumphant song;  
 And as he pauses, far away, I hear  
 Unnumbered delicate answerings, jocund trills,  
 And low, soft breathings; and the swell and fall  
 Of gently talking waters. O! this hour  
 Is worth a thousand days in gaudy courts,  
 Or noisy city.”

*Edward Atherstone.*

How many changes have taken place since the broad shadows of twilight were last upon the earth! A beauteous maiden has become a wife; the ambitious youth has established his name as a splendid orator; the merchant has become a bankrupt; the murderer has paid the forfeit of his life upon the gallows; ships have gone down to the bottom of the sea, with their crews and cargoes; the hand of death has cut down many a fond and doting parent, many a strong and delicate youth, and torn from many a mother's bosom her smiling first-born.

How various the emotions which this hour inspires in different men! The advanced Christian, as he sits before the cottage door, or at the window of his city residence, meditates upon his past life, and in view of the present hour, inwardly exclaims,—

“There is an evening twilight of the heart,  
 When its wild passion-waves are lulled to rest,  
 And the eye sees life's fairy scenes depart  
 As fades the day-beam in the rosy west.  
 'Tis with a nameless feeling of regret,  
 I gaze upon them as they melt away,  
 And fondly would I bid them linger yet,  
*But Hope is round me with her angel lay,  
 Hailing afar some happier moonlight hour.*  
 Dear are her whispers still, though lost their early power.”

*Halleck.*

The youth as he stood upon the hill, and watched the sun sink to his ocean-bed, surrounded by the pomp of summer clouds, vainly dreamed and believed, that even so would be the termination of his own career. The

poverty stricken laborer, as he sits at his scanty board with his wife and children, comfortless and friendless around him, the bitter murmur trembles from his lips: "O that God would take me from this heartless world, and lay my weary bones in the grave!" As the sick man upon his bed presses with his hands his feverish brow, and turns his languid eye towards the dim shadows, upon the wall, (which to him are spiritual beings, transcendent for their loveliness or deformity) he feels in his inmost soul that there is an eternity beyond the threshold of the grave. The ship-wrecked mariner, as he floats upon a plank out-sight of land, sighs to the passing zephyr, as if it had the disposition or the power to waft some wandering ship to his rescue.

Dear to my heart is the evening twilight, because it was the hour when Jesus Christ partook of the Sacrament of the Last Supper with his twelve disciples. After our blessed Redeemer had endured the mental sufferings of that night, and the agony of the cross on the following day, it was at the twilight hour also, that Joseph, of Arimathea, took down his body and placed it in the sepulchre. Therefore, is it an hollowed hour.

Lo! the star of descending night is mildly beaming upon me from her purple throne in the western sky. She is not alone; but of that vast assembly which surround her, she is the brightest and most fair. Who can form an adequate conception of the nature and destiny of those countless stars? The astronomer hath said that every one of them is an inhabited world, perfect and complete in itself. How overwhelming is such a thought! What an idea does it give of the omnipotence of God! O! that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly to those pure realms, where the baneful influences of sin were never known! Did not our Saviour allude to these, when he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions?" Yes, those stars are the glorious mansions of the redeemed. They are the everlasting homes of Christians, whose bodies by-gone years have seen mingle with the dust. Far beyond these, and beyond the ken of mortal, there are an innumerable number more, awaiting the arrival of other souls, not yet released from the thralldom of our earth. The bright effulgence that we see around them, is the reflection of God's smile. But see! up springs the moon,—rejoicing to run her course in the illimitable sky! The twilight hour is ended, and so too, are the musings it has inspired.



## THOUGHTS ON LITERATURE.



A TASTE for literature is one of the most substantial sources of enjoyment with which the human race is acquainted. It has a tendency to bring to perfection many of the noblest feelings of the heart. To its possessor it is a treasure of which the revolutions of the world cannot deprive him. In opulence or poverty, whether free to roam over the world or confined in a prison,—still, if he has within his reach a few favorite authors, he can banish the troubles and trials of the present, and be happy within the world of mind.

There is a certain class of men in almost every community, who take pleasure in sneering at those who follow literature as a profession, and who are anxious for its rewards. They look upon the man of letters as one prone to build airy castles, continually longing for pleasures which can never be realized, or as a mere day-dreamer. They think it would be better if all men were mechanics, or merchants, or farmers, and that man was made to plod through life with no higher aim than to satisfy his sensual desires! How foolish, how despicable are such ideas. These persons generally pass through life without making any good impressions upon their fellows, and when they die the memory of their usefulness is buried with them. What is the object of our living upon earth if it is not to train the soul for its future life? Why do people forget that gold is but dust, and that sensual gratifications tend but to debase the mind? Why is it we forget, that time is but the dawn of our existence?

The beneficial results of literature are many and varied, and its pleasures are of the most exalted kind. The literary man must needs be a thinking one, and every day he lives becomes wiser,—if wiser, then better,—if better, then happier. I do not mean to say, that all literary men are of necessity good,—for such is not the case; but I do say, that there are few professions more innocent, or better calculated to form the Christian character. The literary man mostly lives in company with the mighty spirits of the past, and the beings of his own mind. True, he studies the human heart in his daily walks, but the greater part of his knowledge is gathered from the past, and from thence his mind reaches forward into futurity, so that the field over which

his soul may roam in search of wisdom is boundless as the universe. This is not true of that man whose energies are all engrossed in sensual pursuits and pleasures.

Again. If it is true, that the mind will be employed throughout eternity in bringing to perfection those studies which have engaged its attention here, and that the happiness of that world will be increased in proportion to its earthly knowledge, it is reasonable to conclude that the man of science and wisdom will enjoy heaven more than the thoughtless and ignorant. "The superior intellectual views which some individuals shall possess beyond others, will constitute the principal distinction between redeemed men in the heavenly state."

A taste for literature may, and ought to be universally cultivated. The merchant, the farmer, the mechanic, and, in fact, every class of men, have abundance of time (if they would but improve it) to cultivate their minds, and by so doing, deserve the dignified title of literary men. There are many who have written books, that do not deserve this title. To study, to think, to impart and receive instruction from those with whom we daily associate, are the principal things which occupy a literary man.

Another advantage of this taste is, that its enjoyments are retained to an extreme old age,—a happiness which accompanies no other. "The intellectual faculties, the latest to decline, are vigorous in the decrepitude of age."

It is a deplorable fact, that the literature of the present day is too much under the influence of fashion. There are many persons pretending to have a refined literary taste, who seldom read any books but those which are fashionable; and what adds to your disgust of such, is the fact that they are continually talking about literature,—the subject of all others, of which they are mostly ignorant. The last novel, the last song or farce, are to them the standard literature of the present time. At times, I am almost constrained to believe that the world is growing in ignorance, instead of knowledge, when I reflect on the great quantity of books constantly written, which *should* condemn their authors to public shame. With the majority of the civilized world, such names as Addison are hardly known, or, if ever known, are forgotten. They are permitted to remain on the shelf, because they are not trifling or corrupt enough for the thoughtless and fashionable. Even the names of Milton and Shakspeare, what are they, after all, to the majority, but mere sounds? How small is the number who *study* their immortal pages! Many of our *learned* writers, keep a book of quotations, and by making frequent use of that, the public are led to believe that they are deeply read in classic literature. I chanced, a few days since, to be in company with a

gentleman who is the author of several books, which have been received with high commendation by the press. We were conversing upon literary matters, and, in illustrating one of my own remarks, I repeated the admirable advice of Polonius to his son Laertes, commencing

“And these few precepts in thy memory,” &c.

The gentleman alluded to was struck with the beauty and power of the lines, and inquired who was the author of them. I satisfied his curiosity, and the following *sensible* remark was the result:—“You don’t say! Why! I thought they sounded like my friend John Smith!” Now, this is a good specimen of the common fashionable devotees to literature. How mortifying must this be to every deserving literary man, when we remember that the world passes judgment on his profession, by believing such mere pretenders! How ungrateful to the memory of those great men, who have toiled through life to promote the instruction and happiness of their fellows!

Literary men exert a more lasting and salutary influence upon the customs and laws of their country, than any other class. From the earliest ages, their honors have been of the most distinguished kind; their names have always been cherished in the hearts of their countrymen, and they have been looked upon as deserving the respect and esteem of all. I am speaking of *literary* men, and not those who cater for the public taste,—those scribblers, who use any quantity of words, but are incapable of thought.

A man possessing a mind of noble powers, will never fawn before the public and write according to the dictates of others, but always adheres resolutely to the path he himself has pointed out. It is his province to *lead* the public, and not *to be led* by that many-headed monster. The atmosphere which such men breathe, is an intellectual one,—far too pure for the sordid and narrow-minded to inhale.

It is my good fortune to be acquainted with a few literary characters, male and female; and to be in their company, merely to look on and listen, I consider one of my dearest pleasures. I am also acquainted with some who are destitute of Christian principles,—and I look upon such with pity. Profaneness in any one is sufficiently disgusting,—but in an intellectual man it is doubly so. Wonderfully strange, indeed, is the human heart. It is made up of inconsistencies, and direct contradictions.

The friendships, too, of literary men, are different from all others. Founded in religion, they are pure and lasting,—so much so, that the worldling looks with wonder at their results, as well as to the happiness they afford. I have often admired the beauty of that picture which Cowley presents, of two young literary friends engaged in their midnight studies:

“Say, for you saw us, ye immortal lights,  
How oft, unwearied, have we spent the nights,  
Till the Ladæan stars, so famed for lore,  
Wondered at us from above.  
We spent them, not in toys, in lost, or wine;  
But in search of deep philosophy,  
Wit, eloquence, and poetry,—  
Arts which I loved; for they, my friend, were thine.”

It is a foolish caution, which the wisdom and prudence of the world is apt to give, that literature prevents men from following with success their respective occupations. Many examples might be adduced to prove the contrary, but such names as Roscoe, the *merchant*,—Lamb, the *book-keeper*,—dear Thomas Miller, the *basket-maker*,—Hogg and Clare, the *shepherds*,—Carlyle, the *statesman*,—and Burns, the *ploughman*, are sufficient. In view of the foregoing, the following thought from Mackenzie, is quite appropriate:

“In the more important relations of society,—the closer intercourse of friend, of husband, and of father,—that superior delicacy and refinement of feeling which the cultivation of the mind bestows, heightens affection into sentiment, and mingles with such connexions a dignity and tenderness which gives its dearest value to our existence.”

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I noticed some time since, in one of our prominent periodicals, an article entitled, “Country Life incompatible with Literary Labor.” It seems to me the arguments of that writer are without foundation. I will endeavour to disprove one of his assertions, viz.—“We never hear of great mental achievements emanating from the country.”

If it is true that Homer was a wandering minstrel, it is most likely true that the Iliad was the fruit of a quiet country life. It was not necessary that he should live amid the haunts of men to learn the history of the gods; for, on the subject of religion, the peasant was equal to the king in knowledge. Excepting, then, his knowledge of the gods, and an acquaintance with the prevailing wars, the subjects of the Iliad were brought from the fruitful stores of Homer’s imagination. The great number of figures which he took from the grand or beautiful objects of Nature, afford sufficient proof, that this poem was composed in the seclusion of the country.

It was after his travels through Europe, that Milton retired to a secluded place near his former home, and produced Paradise Lost,—that grandest effort of mere human genius. Little credit can be given to cities for their

influence in producing this inimitable work. For it, we are indebted to the Bible, to the vast and comprehensive mind and brilliant imagination of Milton. During the latter part of his life, this great man was blind; but his mind was stored with images from the book of nature. It is this which adds a charm to his sublime writings. It is this which caused him to write some of his most beautiful poems.

The little village of Stratford, which gave birth to, and under whose sod the body of Shakspeare now reposes, stands as proudly the mother of literature as any city under the sun. He was more fond of the country and its associations, than he was of the busy mart of trade and pleasure. He went to the city and among men to study the human heart, and then retired to the country to mould his thoughts into words, under the glorious influence of inanimate Nature. A contemporary poet said of him, that he was one

——“from whose pen  
Large streams of honnie and sweet nectar flowe;  
Scorning the boldness of such base-born men  
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throwe,  
Doth rather *choose to sit in idle cell,*  
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.”

It is better, far better, to pine away in obscurity, than to live in the city and spend life in writing that which ministers to the depraved appetites of men.

There, too, is Wordsworth. He writes from amid the scenes of nature, and but seldom makes us think of the turmoils of the great world. Instead of telling us of the dark deeds of men, or of showing the dark side of humanity, he tells us of every thing that is beautiful in country life. He looks upon the bright side of things, and, as a dutiful child, makes us wiser and happier, by telling us of nature and her God. It is entirely unreasonable to suppose that the city is the place for him who is writing for posterity. The only literature which can emanate from the city, is fictitious and political. The country is the place to study, to think, and to write; but the city is the place to sell the products of your mind.

The object of literature is to make man a wiser and happier being. The poet makes us happy because he tells us how we may become so. The historian points us to the past,—tells us of memorable deeds and strange events; and we learn as it were by experience, to become wise. The philosopher points out and explains the laws which regulate the universe, and we wonder at the greatness, and admire the wisdom, of God. It is necessary that all these should be acquainted with the world, but it is not necessary that they should live in the midst of a noisy city.

It is the part of wisdom, after you have become acquainted with the world, to retire remote from its jar and din, and write, for the instruction of your fellow men, that which the feelings of your heart dictate.

The advantages to a literary man of a country life are innumerable. On the one hand he has the workmanship of the Almighty, from which he may gather lessons of sound wisdom. On the other, he beholds nothing but the workmanship of man. In one case he has mountains, valleys, and rivers, to inspire him with noble thoughts. In the other, his vision is bounded by “an eternal meal of brick.” This is the difference between the advantages of a country and city life to the man of letters, and I think all must acknowledge that it is very wide.

## THE DYING YEAR.



How solemn, and yet how beautiful is the following idea of the Poet:

“And the year,  
On the earth his death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead  
Is lying.”—*Shelley*.

I have come forth under the blue canopy of Heaven, to listen to the admonitions of the dying year, and to enjoy the pensive pleasure which the present aspect of nature inspires.

I am alone,—and on the hills. Faint and more faint, and less varied, are becoming the melodies of Summer. Of all the seasons, this is the one I love most tenderly, for it reminds me of a bright futurity. It is but a few days since the lily bloomed in the valley; the place where it burst into life and wasted its fragrance and beauty, is hid from human observation,—for the leaves of Autumn are thick above its grave. Is it not an emblem of the loved and beautiful of earth? I do not weep, but alas! such was the fate of a much loved and only sister. An hundred years would not obliterate the memory of that grief. They told me she was dead,—and I went trembling to the room of sorrow. There she lay; beautiful as an angel. Closed were her dark blue eyes, and the impress of her parting smile was still upon her cheek, but her spirit had fled. For sixteen summers, she had been the joy of many hearts. Her innocence was like the lily, and her beauty like the budding rose. Her present and future home is the bosom of God.

What has become of the rose and the daisy, the butter-cup and violet, that were lately smiling so sweetly in yonder garden? The breath of Autumn passed over them, and they fell trembling to the earth. Where lately we beheld the red-breast, the blue-bird, the thrush, the lark, the wren, the fly-catcher and humming-bird, fluttering from tree to bush and then to flower, no sounds do we now hear, save the dropping seeds, and the murmuring wind among dry leaves. Ah yes, the music is around me which attends the return of the old pilgrim Autumn. As he came over the northern hills, he sent before him a chilly wind, as his messenger, to warn Summer of his

approach. Suddenly she paused,—listened and sighed,—and, gathering up her flowing robe of green, she departed for the south; the laughing zephyrs of the valleys, the woods and the hills, were her companions. The swallow has gone but we know not where; the bee is preparing her little cottage, to shield herself from the severities of Winter. The wood-house of the farmer is almost full. The wife with the boys and girls, are in the orchard, gathering the mellow fruit. The husband is in the open field, ploughing and sowing his wheat. The great screw of the cider-press has resumed its annual duty. How will each member of the family enjoy this domestic wine, when gathered around the frugal table at noon. Would that I could be with them! Listen to the sweet words of sweet Mary Howitt:

“There’s merry laughter in the field  
And harmless jest and frolic rout;  
And the last harvest-wain goes by,  
With its rustling load so pleasantly,  
To the glad and clamorous harvest shout.

“There are busy gleaners in the field,—  
The old, whose work is never done,  
And eager, laughing, childish bands  
Rubbing the ears in their little hands,  
And singing ’neath the Autumn sun.

“There are peasants in the hamlets low,  
Busied among their orchard-trees,  
Where the pleasant apples are red and gold,  
Like token fruits of those of old,  
In the gardens of the Hesperides.

“And boys are busy in the woods,  
Gathering the ripe nuts, bright and brown,—  
In shady lawns the children stray,  
Looking for blackberries through the day,  
Those berries of such old renown.”

This last stanza carries me right back to the dear little village where I was born. I am a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, laughing boy again. It is Saturday afternoon. The sun is shining brightly, but not very warm. A party of us children are going on a “chestnut gathering excursion,” over the fields and in the woods. We are a dozen, thoughtless, innocent, happy boys and girls. \*  
\* It is evening. We are at home, and each relating to our fond parents the deeds and pleasures of the long and pleasant Saturday afternoon. O Time! thou ruthless tyrant! why dost thou take from us the joys of childhood, so soon after we have clasped them in a fond embrace? I forget,—thou art the



appointed minister of the great Creator. In deep humility, I bow my head to the dust.

What a harmony there is in Autumn, what a lustre in its sky!

“Which through the Summer is not heard nor seen,  
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!”

Now it is a luxury to be upon the mountains at the hour of noon. Look,—the beautiful clouds are floating just above our heads,—“how silently!” Far beneath is a magic river, winding away among the distant hills, on whose banks repose in beauty, cities, towns, villages, and the humble abodes of poor but contented peasants. From the deep bosom of the valley is borne upward a variety of sounds, more pleasing than the murmur of the ocean-tide. Is not that a picture drawn by the finger of the Eternal One? When we go forth in the morning of this season, we find the ground wetted with frost and mist, instead of the pearly dew. The transparent haze which rests upon the mountain-top at noon,—the calmness in the air, and the clearness of the sky, now have a most mysterious influence upon the heart. The “still small voice” of nature makes us thoughtful; and seems to invite us to think upon the swiftness with which our days are passing away. How often at such an hour, have I been startled by the beating of my own heart! And the sunsets of Autumn,—are they not gorgeous beyond description? more so than the brightest dreams of poetry?

How true it is, that whenever we look upon the face of nature, we behold emblems of man’s condition, and of human life. In Spring, every thing is full of promise; then it is we are buoyed up with the hope that the harvests will be abundant, and that our land will teem with plenty. The child sporting upon the lawn, and the season, sympathize together, and nature rejoices in her virgin loveliness. We look again; and behold the cattle upon the hills and in the valleys are panting in the hot sun; near by, the sparkling rivulet bounds onward to the river, while from a remote distance we hear the mighty cataract hurrying its waters to the distant sea; woods are filled with the music of birds, and all nature is laughing under the glorious influence of Summer. The good man enumerates his blessings, and thanks his Maker that he is permitted to enjoy so many. Now it is, we feel most happy, excepting in those hours when the strange reality appears, telling us “we are passing away.” Another change, and lo! the eventide of the year, the melancholy season of Autumn. Melancholy I mean to those alone who never “list to Nature’s teachings.” The song of joy is no more heard, for the minstrels have gone to some warmer clime. The woodman’s toil is cheered by no happy strains; but the widowed quail, which is shivering on the fallen tree,

utters her plaintive cry, causing a momentary sadness to oppress his heart. The oak rears its head above the plain, but is stripped of its foliage,—naked and alone,—a fit emblem of man in the hour of adversity. We see the leaves floating on the bosom of the river, and we feel that such too will soon be our condition. The frosts of old age will soon wither us, and on the river of death we will be borne onward to Eternity!

“Autumn is dark on the mountain; gray mist rests on the hills. The whirlwind is heard on the heath. Dark rolls the river through the narrow plain. The leaves whirl round with the wind, and strew the grave of the dead.” Thus mournfully sang the aged Bard, who “lived in the times of the days of old.”

Again,—in the language of William Howitt, “The flowers are gone; the long grass stands amongst the green gorse and broom; the plants, which waved their broad white umbels to the Summer breeze, like skeleton-trophies of death, rattle their dry and hollow hues to the Autumnal winds. Our very gardens are sad, damp, and desolate. Naked stems and decaying leaves have taken the place of verdure.” The hill-sides are becoming brown. The woodland rivulet glides more sluggishly than it did over its pebbly bed. It seems to be murmuring itself away, because its former companions, the wild rose, the columbine, the honeysuckle, the bell-flower, and the violet, have departed from its borders. Will they never return? Ah yes! with the approaching Spring and Summer they will all come back, and with the rivulet laugh,—and be happy once more. Golden, and crimson, and purple are the colors, that now rest upon the forest trees, which were lately so fresh and green. Truly hath Mrs. Hemans said,

“The woods! O, solemn are the boundless woods  
Of the great western world in *their decline*.”

Is there not a lesson taught us in this decay of nature? Does it not warn us of the unknown future? “The blossoms of our Spring, the pride of our Summer, will soon fade into decay; and the pulse that now beats high with virtuous or vicious desire, will gradually sink,—and then must stop for ever.” It may be, that before another Autumn sheds its influence upon the world, our heads will be pillowed in the dust. If we are not dead, we shall be mourners; for in compliance to the laws of nature, some, or many of our friends will have gone to their homes beyond the grave. Ere the coming of another Autumn, many of our fondest hopes will have left us, like the rainbow, or the morning dew. “The damps of Autumn sink into the leaves, and prepare them for the necessity of their fall; and thus are we, as years close round us, detached from our tenacity to life by the gentle pressure of recorded sorrows.”<sup>[3]</sup> Let

the aged, in their reflections on the changes of the year, remember that their Autumn is passing, and that the narrow house, which has no door, will soon be their resting-place. Let the young, in the gladness of their youthful sports, pause and think of the future. They are now in the Spring-time of life, and it is uncertain whether they will ever behold the Autumn; it is therefore meet they should seek a refuge in case an untimely wind should sweep over them. That refuge is the bosom of our blessed Redeemer, whose throne is above the stars, and whose dwelling-place is the universe. It should not have that effect, but if it does make us sad to think on the changes of the year, and particularly on its close, let us turn our eye up to God, and if he smiles upon us, our melancholy will depart, and we shall be happy. In the words of an American Poet, I would say to the dying year:

“There’s loveliness in thy decay,  
Which breathes, which lingers on thee still,  
Like memory’s mild and cheering ray,  
Beaming upon the night of ill.

“Thou desolate and dying year,  
Prophetic of our final fall,  
Thy buds are gone, thy leaves are sear,  
Thy beauties shrouded in the pall;  
And all the garniture that shed  
A brilliancy upon thy prime,  
Hath, like a morning vision, fled  
Unto the expanded grave of time.

“O, thus hath life its even-tide  
Of sorrow, loneliness, and grief;  
And thus divested of its pride,  
It withers like the yellow leaf,—  
O, such is life’s Autumnal bower,  
When plundered of its summer bloom;  
And such is life’s Autumnal hour  
Which heralds man unto the tomb!”

*J. G. Brooks.*

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[3] Walter Savage Landor.

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But, beloved reader, that tomb must be approached with the firm step and placid smile of a Christian. If it be true, that our names are written in the Book of Life, we may depend upon it that our immortal spirits will at last triumph over death and the grave. It is a great thing to save a nation by the

power of eloquence; or to conquer an opposing army by the sword; but these, and all other earthly triumphs will avail us nothing, unless we can subdue the tyrant Death. Death is indeed a tyrant and a curse to those, that live only for time; but to those who have been born again, and who are living for eternity, death will be a most welcome friend. "Sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust" in God, they will approach the grave

"Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

*Bryant.*



## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Essays for Summer Hours* by Charles Lanman]