

### III

1839

(ÆT. 21-22)

*Jan. 11.* THE THAW <sup>1</sup>

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears,  
Her tears of joy, that only faster flowed.

Fain would I stretch me by the highway-side,  
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,  
That, mingled soul and body with the tide,  
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

But I, alas, nor trickle can nor fume,  
One jot to forward the great work of Time,  
'T is mine to hearken while these ply the loom,  
So shall my silence with their music chime.

#### THE DREAM VALLEY

*Jan. 20.* The prospect of our river valley from Tahatawan Cliff appeared to me again in my dreams.

Last night, as I lay gazing with shut eyes  
Into the golden land of dreams,  
I thought I gazed adown a quiet reach  
Of land and water prospect,  
Whose low beach

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions, and Poems*, pp. 120 and 409; *Excursions*, Riv. 147.]

Was peopled with the now subsiding hum  
Of happy industry, whose work is done.

And as I turned me on my pillow o'er,  
I heard the lapse of waves upon the shore,  
Distinct as it had been at broad noonday,  
And I were wandering at Rockaway.

## LOVE

We two that planets erst had been  
Are now a double star,  
And in the heavens may be seen,  
Where that we fixèd are.

Yet, whirled with subtle power along,  
Into new space we enter,  
And evermore with spherul song  
Revolve about one centre.

*Feb.* 3.

The deeds of king and meanest hedger  
Stand side by side in heaven's ledger.

'T will soon appear if we but look  
At evening into earth's day-book,  
Which way the great account doth stand  
Between the heavens and the land.

## THE EVENING WIND

The eastern mail comes lumbering in,  
With outmost waves of Europe's din;

The western sighs adown the slope,  
Or 'mid the rustling leaves doth grope,  
Laden with news from Californ',  
Whate'er transpired hath since morn,  
How wags the world by brier and brake,  
From hence to Athabasca lake.<sup>1</sup>

## POETIZING

*Feb.* 8. When the poetic frenzy seizes us, we run and scratch with our pen, delighting, like the cock, in the dust we make, but do not detect where the jewel lies, which perhaps we have in the meantime cast to a distance, or quite covered up again.<sup>2</sup>

*Feb.* 9. It takes a man to make a room silent.

*Feb.* 10. THE PEAL OF THE BELLS<sup>3</sup>  
When the world grows old by the chimney-side,  
Then forth to the youngling rocks I glide,  
Where over the water, and over the land,  
The bells are booming on either hand.

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,  
And awhile they swing to the same old song,  
And the metal goes round at a single bound,  
A-lulling the fields with its measured sound,  
Till the tired tongue falls with a lengthened boom  
As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 180; *Riv.* 224.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, pp. 364, 365; *Riv.* 451, 452.]

<sup>3</sup> [This poem will be found in *Excursions, and Poems*, p. 417, under the title "Ding Dong," somewhat revised and without the last stanza.]

Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,  
And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,  
For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,  
And the breezes waft the loud ding-dong along.

When the echo has reached me in this lone vale,  
I am straightway a hero in coat of mail,  
I tug at my belt and I march on my post,  
And feel myself more than a match for a host.

I am on the alert for some wonderful Thing  
Which somewhere's a-taking place;  
'Tis perchance the salute which our planet doth ring  
When it meeteth another in space.

*Feb. 25.* THE SHRIKE

Hark! hark! from out the thickest fog  
Warbles with might and main  
The fearless shrike, as all agog  
To find in fog his gain.

His steady sails he never furls  
At any time o' year,  
And, perchèd now on Winter's curls,  
He whistles in his ear.<sup>1</sup>

THE POET

*March 3.* He must be something more than natural,  
— even supernatural. Nature will not speak through  
but along with him. His voice will not proceed from her

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 109; *Riv.* 134.]

midst, but, breathing on her, will make her the expression of his thought. He then poetizes when he takes a fact out of nature into spirit. He speaks without reference to time or place. His thought is one world, hers another. He is another Nature, — Nature's brother. Kindly offices do they perform for one another. Each publishes the other's truth.

MORNING

*April 4.* The atmosphere of morning gives a healthy hue to our prospects. Disease is a sluggard that overtakes, never encounters, us. We have the start each day, and may fairly distance him before the dew is off; but if we recline in the bowers of noon, he will come up with us after all. The morning dew breeds no cold. We enjoy a diurnal reprieve in the beginning of each day's creation. In the morning we do not believe in expediency; we will start afresh, and have no patching, no temporary fixtures. The afternoon man has an interest in the past; his eye is divided, and he sees indifferently well either way.

DRIFTING

Drifting in a sultry day on the sluggish waters of the pond, I almost cease to live and begin to be. A boatman stretched on the deck of his craft and dallying with the noon would be as apt an emblem of eternity for me as the serpent with his tail in his mouth. I am never so prone to lose my identity. I am dissolved in the haze.

DISAPPOINTMENT

*April 7. Sunday.* The tediousness and detail of execution never occur to the genius projecting; it always

antedates the completion of its work. It condescends to give time a few hours to do its bidding in.

## RESOLVE

Most have sufficient contempt for what is mean to resolve that they will abstain from it, and a few virtue enough to abide by their resolution, but not often does one attain to such lofty contempt as to require no resolution to be made.

## THE TEAMSTER

*April 8.* There goes a six-horse team, and a man by its side. He has rolled out of his cradle into a Tom-and-Jerry, and goes about his business while Nature goes about hers, without standing agape at his condition. As though sixty years were not enough for these things! What have death, and the cholera, and the immortal destiny of man, to do with the shipping interests? There is an unexplained bravery in this. What with bare astonishment one would think that man had his hands full for so short a term. But this is no drawback on the lace-working and cap-making interests. Some attain to such a degree of sang-froid and nonchalance as to be weavers of toilet cushions and manufacturers of pinheads, without once flinching or the slightest affection of the nerves, for the period of a natural life.<sup>1</sup>

## FAT PINE FOR SPEARING

*April 9.* Fat roots of pine lying in rich veins as of gold or silver, even in old pastures where you would least expect it, make you realize that you live in the

<sup>1</sup> [*Walden*, p. 8; Riv. 14, 15.]

youth of the world, and you begin to know the wealth of the planet. Human nature is still in its prime, then. Bring axe, pickaxe, and shovel, and tap the earth here where there is most sap. The marrowy store gleams like some vigorous sinew, and you feel a new suppleness in your own limbs. These are the traits that conciliate man's moroseness, and make him civil to his fellows; every such pine root is a pledge of suavity. If he can discover absolute barrenness in any direction there will be some excuse for pcevishness.

## SOCIETY

*April 14.* There is a *terra firma* in society as well as in geography, some whose ports you may make by dead reckoning in all weather. All the rest are but floating and fabulous Atlantides which sometimes skirt the western horizon of our intercourse. They impose only on seasick mariners who have put into some Canary Island on the frontiers of society.

## CIRCUMSTANCES

*April 24.* Why should we concern ourselves with what has happened to us, and the unaccountable fickleness of events, and not rather [with] how we have happened to the universe, and it has demeaned itself in consequence? Let us record in each case the judgment we have awarded to circumstances.

## ACQUAINTANCE

Cheap persons will stand upon ceremony, because there is no other ground; but to the great of the

earth we need no introduction, nor do they need any to us.

THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH

*April 25.* If we see the reality in things, of what moment is the superficial and apparent? Take the earth and all the interests it has known, — what are they beside one deep surmise that pierces and scatters them? The independent beggar disposes of all with one hearty, significant curse by the roadside. 'T is true they are not worth a "tinker's damn."

PICTURE

*April 30.* Of some illuminated pictures which I saw last evening, one representing the plain of Babylon, with only a heap of brick-dust in the centre, and an uninterrupted horizon bounding the desert, struck me most. I would see painted a boundless expanse of desert, prairie, or sea, without other object than the horizon. The heavens and the earth, — the first and last painting, — where is the artist who shall undertake it?

*May 11.* The farmer keeps pace with his crops and the revolutions of the seasons, but the merchant with the fluctuations of trade. Observe how differently they walk in the streets.

VICE AND VIRTUE

*May 16.* Virtue is the very heart and lungs of vice: it cannot stand up but it lean on virtue.

Who has not admired the twelve labors? And yet nobody thinks if Hercules had sufficient motive for

racking his bones to that degree. Men are not so much virtuous as patrons of virtue, and every one knows that it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than the temporary guardian of it.

THE FORM OF STRENGTH

*May 17.* We say justly that the weak person is flat; for, like all flat substances, he does not stand in the direction of his strength, that is on his edge, but affords a convenient surface to put upon. He slides all the way through life. Most things are strong in one direction, — a straw longitudinally, a board in the direction of its edge, a knee transversely to its grain, — but the brave man is a perfect sphere, which cannot fall on its flat side, and is equally strong every way. The coward is wretchedly spheroidal at best, too much educated or drawn out on one side commonly and depressed on the other; or he may be likened to a hollow sphere, whose disposition of matter is best when the greatest bulk is intended.<sup>1</sup>

SELF-CULTURE

*May 21.* Who knows how incessant a surveillance a strong man may maintain over himself, — how far subject passion and appetite to reason, and lead the life his imagination paints? Well has the poet said, —

"By manly mind  
Not e'en in sleep is will resigned."

By a strong effort may he not command even his brute body in unconscious moments?

<sup>1</sup> [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 278; *Misc.*, Riv. 36, 37. *The Service*, pp. 5, 6.]

## MY ATTIC

*June 4.* I sit here this fourth of June, looking out on men and nature from this that I call my perspective window, through which all things are seen in their true relations. This is my upper empire, bounded by four walls, viz., three of boards yellow-washed, facing the north, west, and south, respectively, and the fourth of plaster, likewise yellow-washed, fronting the sunrise, — to say nothing of the purlieus and outlying provinces, unexplored as yet but by rats.

The words of some men are thrown forcibly against you and adhere like burs.

## RENCOUNTER

*June 22. Saturday.* I have within the last few days come into contact with a pure, uncompromising spirit, that is somewhere wandering in the atmosphere, but settles not positively anywhere. Some persons carry about them the air and conviction of virtue, though they themselves are unconscious of it, and are even backward to appreciate it in others. Such it is impossible not to love; still is their loveliness, as it were, independent of them, so that you seem not to lose it when they are absent, for when they are near it is like an invisible presence which attends you.

That virtue we appreciate is as much ours as another's. We see so much only as we possess.

*June 24.* SYMPATHY <sup>1</sup>

Lately, alas, I knew a gentle boy,  
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould.

<sup>1</sup> [*Week.* pp. 276, 277; *Rev.* 343, 344.]

As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,  
But after manned him for her own stronghold.

On every side he open was as day,  
That you might see no lack of strength within,  
For walls and ports do only serve alway  
For a pretense to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Cæsar was victorious,  
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame;  
In other sense this youth was glorious,  
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

No strength went out to get him victory,  
When all was income of its own accord;  
For where he went none other was to see,  
But all were parcel of their noble lord.

He forayed like the subtle haze of summer,  
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,  
And revolutions works without a murmur,  
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,  
I quite forgot my homage to confess;  
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,  
I might have loved him, had I loved him less.

Each moment, as we nearer drew to each,  
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,  
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,  
And less acquainted than when first we met.

We two were one while we did sympathize,  
So could we not the simplest bargain drive;  
And what avails it now that we are wise,  
If absence doth this doubleness contrive?

Eternity may not the chance repeat,  
But I must tread my single way alone,  
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,  
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,  
For elegy has other subject none;  
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring  
Knell of departure from that other one.

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy;  
With fitting strain resound, ye woods and fields;  
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me  
Than all the joys other occasion yields.

Is't then too late the damage to repair?  
Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft  
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,  
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,  
Though it be scented in the morning air,  
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,  
Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

*July 4.* THE "BOOK OF GEMS"  
With cunning plates the polished leaves were decked,  
Each one a window to the poet's world,

So rich a prospect that you might suspect  
In that small space all paradise unfurled.

It was a right delightful road to go,  
Marching through pastures of such fair herbage,  
O'er hill and dale it led, and to and fro,  
From bard to bard, making an easy stage;

Where ever and anon I slaked my thirst  
Like a tired traveller at some poet's well,  
Which from the teeming ground did bubbling burst,  
And tinkling thence adown the page it fell.  
Still through the leaves its music you might hear,  
Till other springs fell faintly on the ear.

## ANNURSNACK

*July 11.* At length we leave the river and take to the road which leads to the hilltop, if by any means we may spy out what manner of earth we inhabit. East, west, north, and south, it is farm and parish, this world of ours. One may see how at convenient, eternal intervals men have settled themselves, without thought for the universe. How little matters it all they have built and delved there in the valley! It is after all but a feature in the landscape. Still the vast impulse of nature breathes over all. The eternal winds sweep across the interval *to-day*, bringing mist and haze to shut out their works. Still the crow caws from Nawshawtuct to Annursnack, as no feeble tradesman nor smith may do. And in all swamps the hum of mosquitoes drowns this modern hum of industry.

## EVERY MAN IS A ROMAN FORUM

All things are up and down, east and west, to *me*.  
In me is the forum out of which go the Appian and  
Sacred ways, and a thousand beside, to the ends of  
the world. If I forget my centralness, and say a bean  
winds with or against the *sun*, and not right or left, it  
will not be true south of the equator.

July 18.

## THE ASSABET

Up this pleasant stream let's row  
For the livelong summer's day,  
Sprinkling foam where'er we go  
In wreaths as white as driven snow.  
Ply the oars! away! away!<sup>1</sup>

Now we glide along the shore,  
Chuckling lilies as we go,  
While the yellow-sanded floor  
Doggedly resists the oar,  
Like some turtle dull and slow.

Now we stem the middle tide,  
Plowing through the deepest soil;  
Ridges pile on either side,  
While we through the furrow glide,  
Reaping bubbles for our toil.

Dew before and drought behind,  
Onward all doth seem to fly;  
Naught contents the eager mind,  
Only rapids now are kind,  
Forward are the earth and sky.

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 188; *Riv.* 234.]

Sudden music strikes the ear,  
Leaking out from yonder bank,  
Fit such voyagers to cheer.  
Sure there must be Naiads here,  
Who have kindly played this prank.

There I know the cunning pack  
Where yon self-sufficient rill  
All its telltale hath kept back,  
Through the meadows held its clack,  
And now bubbleth its fill.

Silent flows the parent stream,  
And if rocks do lie below  
Smothers with her waves the din,  
As it were a youthful sin,  
Just as still and just as slow.

But this gleeful little rill,  
Purling round its storied pebble,  
Tinkles to the selfsame tune  
From December until June,  
Nor doth any drought enfeeble.

See the sun behind the willows,  
Rising through the golden haze,  
How he gleams along the billows,  
Their white crests the easy pillows  
Of his dew-besprinkled rays.

Forward press we to the dawning,  
For Aurora leads the way,



Sultry noon and twilight scorning;  
 In each dewdrop of the morning  
 Lies the promise of a day.

Rivers from the sun do flow,  
 Springing with the dewy morn;  
 Voyageurs 'gainst time do row,  
 Idle noon nor sunset know,  
 Ever even with the dawn.<sup>1</sup>

Since that first "Away! away!"  
 Many a lengthy league we've rowed,  
 Still the sparrow on the spray  
 Hastes to usher in the day  
 With her simple stanza'd ode.<sup>2</sup>

*July 20.* THE BREEZE'S INVITATION

Come let's roam the breezy pastures,  
 Where the freest zephyrs blow,  
 Batten on the oak tree's rustle,  
 And the pleasant insect bustle,  
 Dripping with the streamlet's flow.

What if I no wings do wear,  
 Thro' this solid-seeming air  
 I can skim like any swallow;  
 Whoso dareth let her follow,  
 And we'll be a jovial pair.

Like two careless swifts let's sail,  
 Zephyrus shall think for me;

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 188; Riv. 234.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 200; Riv. 248.]

Over hill and over dale,  
 Riding on the easy gale,  
 We will scan the earth and sea.

Yonder see that willow tree  
 Winnowing the buxom air;  
 You a gnat and I a bee,  
 With our merry minstrelsy  
 We will make a concert there.

One green leaf shall be our screen,  
 Till the sun doth go to bed,  
 I the king and you the queen  
 Of that peaceful little green,  
 Without any subject's aid.

To our music Time will linger,  
 And earth open wide her ear,  
 Nor shall any need to tarry  
 To immortal verse to marry  
 Such sweet music as he'll hear.

*July 24.*

Nature doth have her dawn each day,  
 But mine are far between;  
 Content, I cry, for, sooth to say,  
 Mine brightest are, I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,  
 Though it be her noontide,  
 Her fairest field in shadow lies,  
 Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,  
 Conversing with my mate;  
 But if we interchange one ray,  
 Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see,  
 As from some eastern hill,  
 A brighter morrow rise to me  
 Than lieth in her skill.

As 't were two summer days in one,  
 Two Sundays come together,  
 Our rays united make one sun,  
 With fairest summer weather.<sup>1</sup>

*July 25.* There is no remedy for love but to love more.

*Aug. 31.* Made seven miles, and moored our boat on the west side of a little rising ground which in the spring forms an island in the river, the sun going down on one hand, and our eminence contributing its shadow to the night on the other.<sup>2</sup> In the twilight so elastic is the air that the sky seems to tinkle [*sic*] over farmhouse and wood. Scrambling up the bank of our *terra incognita* we fall on huckleberries, which have slowly ripened here, husbanding the juices which the months have distilled, for our peculiar use this night.<sup>3</sup> If they had been rank poison, the entire simplicity and confidence with which we plucked them would have

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, pp. 302, 303; Riv. 375, 376.]      <sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 38; Riv. 47.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Week*, p. 38; Riv. 47.]

insured their wholesomeness. The devout attitude of the hour asked a blessing on that repast. It was fit for the setting sun to rest on.

From our tent here on the hillside, through that isosceles door, I see our lonely mast on the shore, it may be as an eternity fixture, to be seen in landscapes henceforth, or as the most temporary standstill of time, the boat just come to anchor, and the mast still rocking to find its balance.<sup>1</sup>

No human life is in night, — the woods, the boat, the shore, — yet is it lifelike.<sup>2</sup> The warm pulse of a young life beats steadily underneath all. This slight wind is where one artery approaches the surface and is skin deep.

While I write here, I hear the foxes trotting about me over the dead leaves, and now gently over the grass, as if not to disturb the dew which is falling. Why should we not cultivate neighborly relations with the foxes? As if to improve upon our seeming advances, comes one to greet us nosewise under our tent-curtain. Nor do we rudely repulse him. Is man powder and the fox flint and steel? Has not the time come when men and foxes shall lie down together?

Hist! there, the musquash by the boat is taking toll of potatoes and melons. Is not this the age of a community of goods? His presumption kindles in me

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 39; Riv. 48.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 39; Riv. 48, 49.]

a brotherly feeling. Nevertheless. I get up to reconnoitre, and tread stealthily along the shore to make acquaintance with him. But on the riverside I can see only the stars reflected in the water, and now, by some ripple ruffling the disk of a star, I discover him.

In the silence of the night the sound of a distant alarm bell is borne to these woods. Even now men have fires and extinguish them, and, with distant horizon blazings and barking of dogs, enact the manifold drama of life.<sup>1</sup>

We begin to have an interest in sun, moon, and stars. What time riseth Orion? Which side the pole gropeth the bear? East, West, North, and South, — where are they? What clock shall tell the hours for us? — Billerica, midnight.

*Sept. 1. Sunday.* Under an oak on the bank of the canal in Chelmsford.

From Ball's Hill to Billerica meeting-house the river is a noble stream of water, flowing between gentle hills and occasional cliffs, and well wooded all the way. It can hardly be said to flow at all, but rests in the lap of the hills like a quiet lake. The boatmen call it a dead stream. For many long reaches you can see nothing to indicate that men inhabit its banks.<sup>2</sup> Nature seems to hold a sabbath herself to-day, — a still warm sun on river and wood, and not breeze enough to ruffle the water. Cattle stand up to their bellies in the river, and you think Rembrandt should be here.

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 39; Riv. 49.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 43; Riv. 54.]

Camped under some oaks in Tyngsboro, on the east bank of the Merrimack, just below the ferry.<sup>1</sup>

*Sept. 2.* Camped in Merrimack, on the west bank, by a deep ravine.<sup>2</sup>

*Sept. 3.* In Bedford, on the west bank, opposite a large rock, above Coos Falls.<sup>3</sup>

*Sept. 4. Wednesday.* Hooksett, east bank, two or three miles below the village, opposite Mr. Mitchel's.<sup>4</sup>

*Sept. 5.* Walked to Concord [N. H.], 10 miles.<sup>5</sup>

*Sept. 6.* By stage to Plymouth, 40 miles, and on foot to Tilton's inn, Thornton. The scenery commences on Sanbornton Square, whence the White Mountains are first visible. In Campton it is decidedly mountainous.

*Sept. 7.* Walked from Thornton through Peeling<sup>6</sup> and Lincoln to Franconia. In Lincoln visited Stone Flume and Basin, and in Franconia the Notch, and saw the Old Man of the Mountain.

*Sept. 8.* Walked from Franconia to Thomas J. Crawford's.

*Sept. 9.* At Crawford's.

*Sept. 10.* Ascended the mountain and rode to Conway.

*Sept. 11.* Rode to Concord.

*Sept. 12.* Rode to Hooksett and rowed to Bedford, N. H., or rather to the northern part of Merrimack, near the ferry, by a large island, near which we camped.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 118; Riv. 147.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Week*, p. 248; Riv. 307.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 179; Riv. 222.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Week*, p. 309; Riv. 383.]

<sup>5</sup> [See *Week*, pp. 318-322; Riv. 394-399.]

<sup>6</sup> [The original name of Woodstock, N. H.]

<sup>7</sup> [See *Week*, pp. 335-353; Riv. 414-437.]

*Sept.* 13. Rowed and sailed to Concord, about 50 miles.<sup>1</sup>

THE WISE REST

*Sept.* 17. Nature never makes haste; her systems revolve at an even pace. The bud swells imperceptibly, without hurry or confusion, as though the short spring days were an eternity.<sup>2</sup> All her operations seem separately, for the time, the single object for which all things tarry. Why, then, should man hasten as if anything less than eternity were allotted for the least deed? Let him consume never so many æons, so that he go about the meanest task well, though it be but the paring of his nails.<sup>3</sup> If the setting sun seems to hurry him to improve the day while it lasts, the chant of the crickets fails not to reassure him, even-measured as of old, teaching him to take his own time henceforth forever. The wise man is restful, never restless or impatient. He each moment abides there where he is, as some walkers actually rest the whole body at each step, while others never relax the muscles of the leg till the accumulated fatigue obliges them to stop short.

As the wise is not anxious that time wait for him, neither does he wait for it.

*Oct.* 22. Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [See *Week*, pp. 356-420; *Riv.* 442-518.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, pp. 110, 111; *Riv.* 137.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Week*, p. 110; *Riv.* 137.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 107; *Riv.* 132.]

ÆSCHYLUS

*Nov.* 5. There was one man lived his own healthy Attic life in those days. The words that have come down to us evidence that their speaker was a seer in his day and generation. At this day they owe nothing to their dramatic form, nothing to stage machinery, and the fact that they were spoken under these or those circumstances. All display of art for the gratification of a factitious taste is silently passed by to come at the least particle of absolute and genuine thought they contain. The reader will be disappointed, however, who looks for traits of a rare wisdom or eloquence, and will have to solace himself, for the most part, with the poet's humanity and what it was in him to say. He will discover that, like every genius, he was a solitary liver and worker in his day.

We are accustomed to say that the common sense of this age belonged to the seer of the last, — as if time gave him any vantage ground. But not so: I see not but Genius must ever take an equal start, and all the generations of men are virtually at a standstill for it to come and consider of them. Common sense is not so familiar with any truth but Genius will represent it in a strange light to it. Let the seer bring down his broad eye to the most stale and trivial fact, and he will make you believe it a new planet in the sky.

As to criticism, man has never to make allowance to man; there is naught to excuse, naught to bear in mind.

All the past is here present to be tried; let it approve itself if it can.

## GROWTH

We are not apt to remember that we grow. It is curious to reflect how the maiden waiteth patiently, confiding as the unripe houstonia of the meadow, for the slow moving years to work their will with her, — perfect and ripen her, — like it to be fanned by the wind, watered by the rain, and receive her education at the hands of nature.

These young buds of manhood in the streets are like buttercups in the meadows, — surrendered to nature as they.

*Nov. 7.* I was not aware till to-day of a rising and risen generation. Children appear to me as raw as the fresh fungi on a fence rail. By what degrees of consanguinity is this succulent and rank-growing slip of manhood related to me? What is it but another herb, ranging all the kingdoms of nature, drawing in sustenance by a thousand roots and fibres from all soils.

## LACONICISM

*Nov. 8.* Prometheus' answer to Io's question, who has bound him to the rock, is a good instance: —

Βούλουμα μὲν τὸ δῖον, Ἡφαίστου δὲ χεῖρ.

(The will indeed of Zeus, of Vulcan the hand.)

Also: —

Πταίσας δὲ τῶδε πρὸς κακῶ. μαθήσεται,  
Ὅσον τὸ, τ' ἄρχειν καὶ τὸ δουλοῦεν δίχα.

Such naked speech is the standing aside of words to make room for thoughts

## REGRET

*Nov. 13.* Make the most of your regrets; never smother your sorrow, but tend and cherish it till it come to have a separate and integral interest. To regret deeply is to live afresh. By so doing you will be astonished to find yourself restored once more to all your emoluments.

## DESPONDENCY

*Nov. 14.* There is nowhere any apology for despondency. Always there is life which, rightly lived, implies a divine satisfaction. I am soothed by the rain-drops on the door-sill; every globule that pitches thus confidently from the eaves to the ground is my life insurance. Disease and a rain-drop cannot coexist. The east wind is not itself consumptive, but has enjoyed a rare health from of old. If a fork or brand stand erect, *good* is portended by it. They are the warrant of universal innocence.

*Nov. 19.*

## FAREWELL

Light-hearted, thoughtless, shall I take my way,  
When I to thee this being have resigned,  
Well knowing where, upon a future day,  
With us'rer's craft more than myself to find.

## LINNÆUS

*Nov. 22.* Linnæus, setting out for Lapland, surveys his "comb" and "spare shirt," "leather breeches," and "gauze cap to keep off gnats," with as much complacency as Buonaparte would a park of artillery to be used in the Russian Campaign. His eye is to take in

fish, flower, and bird, quadruped and biped. The quiet bravery of the man is admirable. These facts have even a *novel* interest.<sup>1</sup>

*Nov. 29.* Many brave men have there been, thank Fortune, but I shall never grow brave by comparison. When I remember myself I shall forget them.

## BRAVERY

*Dec. 2.* A rare landscape immediately suggests a suitable inhabitant, whose breath shall be its wind, whose moods its seasons, and to whom it will always be fair. To be chafed and worried, and not as serene as Nature, does not become one whose nature is as steadfast as she. We do all stand in the front ranks of the battle every moment of our lives; where there is a brave man there is the thickest of the fight, there the post of honor. Not he who procures a substitute to go to Florida is exempt from service; he gathers his laurels in another field. Waterloo is not the only battle-ground: as many and fatal guns are pointed at my breast now as are contained in the English arsenals.

[Undated.]<sup>2</sup>

NOON

Straightway dissolved,

Like to the morning mists — or rather like the subtler  
mists of noon —

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 107; Riv. 131, 132.]

<sup>2</sup> [This comes at the end of the first book of Journal transcripts (1837-39) and follows immediately a bit of verse dated Oct. 16, 1838, which has been included in its proper chronological place.]

Stretched I far up the neighboring mountain's sides,  
Adown the valleys, through the nether air,  
Bathing, with fond expansiveness of soul,  
The tiniest blade as the sublimest cloud.

What time the bittern, solitary bird,  
Hides now her head amid the whispering fern,  
And not a paddock vexes all the shore,  
Nor feather ruffles the incumbent air,  
Save where the wagtail interrupts the noon.

FROM A CHAPTER ON BRAVERY. — *Script*

*Dec.* Bravery deals not so much in resolute action, as in healthy and assured rest. Its palmy state is a staying at home, and compelling alliance in all directions.<sup>1</sup>

The brave man never heareth the din of war; he is trustful and unsuspecting, so observant of the least trait of good or beautiful that, if you turn toward him the dark side of anything, he will still see only the bright.

One moment of serene and confident life is more glorious than a whole campaign of daring. We should be ready for all issues, not daring to die but daring to live. To the brave even danger is an ally.

In their unconscious daily life all are braver than they know. Man slumbers and wakes in his twilight with the confidence of noonday; he is not palsied nor struck

<sup>1</sup> [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 277; *Misc.*, Riv. 35. *The Service*, p. 1.]

dumb by the inexplicable riddle of the universe. A mere surveyor's report or clause in a preëmption bill contains matter of quite extraneous interest, of a subdued but confident tone, evincing such a steadiness in the writer as would have done wonders at Bunker's Hill or Marathon. Where there is the collected eye, there will not fail the effective hand; *χείρ δ' ὄρᾶ τὸ δράσιμον.*

Science is always brave, for to know is to know good; doubt and danger quail before her eye. What the coward overlooks in his hurry, she calmly scrutinizes, breaking ground like a pioneer for the array of arts in her train. Cowardice is unscientific, for there cannot be a science of ignorance. There may be a science of war, for that advances, but a retreat is rarely well conducted; if it is, then is it an orderly advance in the face of circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

If his fortune deserts him, the brave man in pity still abides by her. Samuel Johnson and his friend Savage, compelled by poverty to pass the night in the streets, resolve that they will stand by their country.

The state of complete manhood is virtue, and virtue and bravery are one. This truth has long been in the languages. All the relations of the subject are hinted at in the derivation and analogies of the Latin words *vir* and *virtus*, and the Greek *ἀγαθός* and *ἄριστος*. Language in its settled form is the record of men's second thoughts, a more faithful utterance than they can mo-

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 107; Riv. 132.]

mentarily give. What men say is so sifted and obliged to approve itself as answering to a common want, that nothing absolutely frivolous obtains currency in the language. The analogies of words are never whimsical and meaningless, but stand for real likenesses. Only the ethics of mankind, and not of any particular man, give point and vigor to our speech.

The coward was born one day too late, for he has never overtaken the present hour. He is the younger son of creation, who now waiteth till the elder decease.<sup>1</sup> He does not dwell on the earth as though he had a deed of the land in his pocket, — not as another lump of nature, as imperturbable an occupant as the stones in the field. He has only rented a few acres of time and space, and thinks that every accident portends the expiration of his lease. He is a non-proprietor, a serf, in his moral economy nomadic, having no fixed abode. When danger appears, he goes abroad and clings to straws.

Bravery and Cowardice are kindred correlatives with Knowledge and Ignorance, Light and Darkness, Good and Evil.

If you let a single ray of light through the shutter, it will go on diffusing itself without limit till it enlighten the world, but the shadow that was never so wide at first as rapidly contracts till it comes to naught. The shadow of the moon when it passes nearest the sun is lost in

<sup>1</sup> [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 277; *Misc.*, Riv. 35. *The Service*, p. 1.]

space ere it can reach our earth to eclipse it. Always the *system* shines with uninterrupted light, for, as the sun is so much larger than any planet, no shadow can travel far into space. We may bask always in the light of the system, always may step back out of the shade. No man's shadow is as large as his body, if the rays make a right angle with the reflecting surface. Let our lives be passed under the equator, with the sun in the meridian.

There is no ill which may not be dissipated like the dark, if you let in a stronger light upon it. Overcome evil with good. Practice no such narrow economy as they whose bravery amounts to no more light than a farthing candle, before which most objects cast a shadow wider than themselves.<sup>1</sup>

It was a conceit of Plutarch, accounting for the preferences given to signs observed on the left hand, that men may have thought "things terrestrial and mortal directly over against heavenly and divine things, and do conjecture that the things which to us are on the left hand, the gods send down from their right hand."<sup>2</sup> If we are not blind, we shall see how a right hand is stretched over all, as well the unlucky as lucky, and that the ordering soul is only right-handed, distributing with one palm all our fates.<sup>3</sup>

Men have made war from a deeper instinct than peace. War is but the compelling of peace.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 376; Riv. 465. *The Service*, pp. 8, 9.]

<sup>2</sup> [Plutarch's *Morals*, "Roman Questions," lxxviii.]

<sup>3</sup> [*The Service*, p. 9.]      <sup>4</sup> [*The Service*, p. 12.]

When the world is declared under martial law, every Esau retakes his birthright, and what there is in him does not fail to appear. He wipes off all old scores and commences a new account. The world is interested to know how any soul will demean itself in so novel a position. But when war too, like commerce and husbandry, gets to be a routine, and men go about it as indented apprentices, the hero degenerates into a marine, and the standing army into a standing jest.

No pains are spared to do honor to the brave soldier. All guilds and corporations are taxed to provide him with fit harness and equipment. His coat must be red as the sunset, or blue as the heavens. Gold or silver, pinchbeck or copper, solid or superficial, mark him for fortune's favorite. The skill of a city enchases and tempers his sword-blade; the Tyrian dye confounds him with emperors and kings. Wherever he goes, music precedes and prepares the way for him. His life is a holiday, and the contagion of his example unhinges the universe. The world puts by work and comes out to stare. He is the one only man. He recognizes no time-honored casts and conventions, no fixtures but trans-fixtures, no governments at length settled on a permanent basis. One tap of the drum sets the political and moral harmonies all ajar. His ethics may well bear comparison with the priest's. He may rally, charge, retreat in an orderly manner, but never flee nor flinch.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [A pencil interlineation in this paragraph is as follows:] The soldier is the degenerate hero, as the priest is the degenerate saint; and the soldier and the priest are related as the hero and [the] saint. The



Each more melodious note I hear  
 Brings sad reproach to me,  
 That I alone afford the ear,  
 Who would the music be.<sup>1</sup>

The brave man is the sole patron of music;<sup>2</sup> he recognizes it for his mother-tongue, — a more mellifluous and articulate language than words, in comparison with which speech is recent and temporary. It is his voice. His language must have the same majestic movement and cadence that philosophy assigns to the heavenly bodies. The steady flux of his thought constitutes time in music. The universe falls in and keeps pace with it, which before proceeded singly and discordant. Hence are poetry and song. When Bravery first grew afraid and went to war, it took music along with it. The soul delighted still to hear the echo of its own voice. Especially the soldier insists on agreement and harmony always. Indeed, it is that friendship there is in war that makes it chivalrous and heroic. It was the dim sentiment of a noble friendship for the purest soul the world has seen, that gave to Europe a crusading era.<sup>3</sup>

The day of tilts and tournaments has gone by, but no herald summons us to the tournament of love.

one's virtue is bravery, the other's bravery virtue. Mankind still pay to the soldier the honors due only to the hero. They delight to do him honor. He is adorned with silver and gold and the colors of the rainbow, invested with outward splendor; music is for him especially, and his life is a holiday.

<sup>1</sup> [*The Service*, p. 11.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 183; Riv. 228.]

<sup>3</sup> [*The Service*, p. 11.]

The brave warrior must have harmony if not melody at any sacrifice. Consider what shifts he makes. There are the bagpipe, the gong, the trumpet, the drum, — either the primitive central African or Indian, or the brass European. Ever since Jericho fell down before a blast of rams' horns, the martial and musical have gone hand in hand. If the soldier marches to the sack of a town, he must be preceded by drum and trumpet, which shall as it were identify his cause with the accordant universe. All woods and walls echo back his own spirit, and the hostile territory is then preoccupied for him. He is no longer insulated, but infinitely related and familiar. The roll-call musters for him all the forces of nature.<sup>1</sup>

All sounds, and more than all, silence, do fife and drum for us.<sup>2</sup> The least creaking doth whet all our senses and emit a tremulous light, like the aurora borealis, over things. As polishing expresses the vein in marble and the grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere.<sup>3</sup>

To the sensitive soul, the universe has its own fixed measure, which is its measure also, and, as a regular pulse is inseparable from a healthy body, so is its healthiness dependent on the regularity of its rhythm. In all sounds the soul recognizes its own rhythm, and seeks to express its sympathy by a correspondent movement of the limbs. When the body marches to the

<sup>1</sup> [*The Service*, p. 12.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, p. 183; Riv. 228.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Week*, p. 183; Riv. 227. *The Service*, p. 13.]

measure of the soul, then is true courage and invincible strength.<sup>1</sup>

The coward would reduce this thrilling sphere music to a universal wail, this melodious chant to a nasal cant. He thinks to conciliate all hostile influences by compelling his neighborhood into a partial concord with himself, but his music is no better than a jingle which is akin to a jar, — jars regularly recurring.<sup>2</sup>

He blows a feeble blast of slender melody, because nature can have no more sympathy with such a soul than it has of cheerful melody in itself. Hence hears he no accordant note in the universe, and is a coward, or consciously outcast and deserted man. But the brave man, without drum or trumpet, compels concord everywhere by the universality and tunefulness of his soul.<sup>3</sup>

“Take a metallic plate,” says Coleridge, “and strew sand on it; sound a harmonic chord over the sand, and the grains will whirl about in circles, and other geometrical figures, all, as it were, depending on some point

<sup>1</sup> [*Week*, p. 183; Riv. 228. *The Service*, p. 14.]

<sup>2</sup> [*The Service*, p. 14. See also p. 151 of this volume.]

<sup>3</sup> [*The Service*, p. 15.] [In pencil on a fly-leaf of the Journal:] The coward substitutes for this thrilling sphere music a universal wail, for this melodious chant a nasal cant, and but whistles to keep his courage up. He blows a feeble blast of slender melody and can compel his neighborhood only into a partial concord with himself, because nature has but little sympathy with such a soul. Hence he hears no accordant note in the universe, and is a coward, or consciously outcast and deserted man. But the brave man, without drum or trumpet, compels concord everywhere by the universality and tunefulness of his soul.

relatively at rest. Sound a discord, and every grain will whisk about without any order at all, in no figures, and with no points of rest.” The brave man is such a point of relative rest, over which the soul sounds ever a harmonic chord.

Music is either a sedative or a tonic to the soul.<sup>1</sup> I read that “Plato thinks the gods never gave men music, the science of melody and harmony, for mere delectation or to tickle the ear; but that the discordant parts of the circulations and beauteous fabric of the soul, and that of it that roves about the body, and many times, for want of tune and air, breaks forth into many extravagances and excesses, might be sweetly recalled and artfully wound up to their former consent and agreement.”<sup>2</sup>

By dint of wind and stringed instruments the coward endeavors to put the best face on the matter, — whistles to keep his courage up.

There are some brave traits related by Plutarch; *e. g.*: “Homer acquaints us how Ajax, being to engage in a single combat with Hector, bade the Grecians pray to the gods for him; and while they were at their devotions, he was putting on his armor.”

On another occasion, a storm arises, “which as soon as the pilot sees, he falls to his prayers, and invokes

<sup>1</sup> [*The Service*, p. 13.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Week*, pp. 183, 184; Riv. 228. *The Service*, p. 13. The quotation is from Plutarch's *Morals*, “Of Superstition.”]

his tutelar dæmons, but neglects not in the meantime to hold to the rudder and let down the main yard."

"Homer directs his husbandman, before he either plow or sow, to pray to the terrestrial Jove and the venerable Ceres, but with his hand upon the plow-tail."

Ἀρχὴ γὰρ ὄντως τοῦ νικᾶν τὸ θαρρῆέν. (Verily, to be brave is the beginning of victory.)

The Romans "made Fortune surname to Fortitude," for fortitude is that alchemy that turns all things to good fortune. The man of fortitude, whom the Latins called *fortis*, is no other than that lucky person whom *fors* favors, or *vir summae fortis*. If we will, every bark may "carry Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune." The brave man stays at home. For an impenetrable shield, stand inside yourself; he was an arrant coward who first made shields of brass. For armor of proof, *mea virtute me involvo* (I wrap myself in my virtue);

"Tumble me down, and I will sit  
Upon my ruins, smiling yet." <sup>1</sup>

The bravest deed, which for the most part is left quite out of history, which alone wants the staleness of a deed done and the uncertainty of a deed doing, is the life of a great man. To perform exploits is to be temporarily bold, as becomes a courage that ebbs and flows, the soul quite vanquished by its own deed subsiding into indifference and cowardice: but the exploit of a brave life consists in its momentary completeness.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*The Service*, pp. 7, 8. See p. 154 of this volume.]

<sup>2</sup> [*The Service*, pp. 23, 24.]

FRIENDSHIP <sup>1</sup>

*Fall of 1839.* Then first I conceive of a true friendship, when some rare specimen of manhood presents itself. It seems the mission of such to commend virtue to mankind, not by any imperfect preaching of her word, but by their own carriage and conduct. We may then worship moral beauty without the formality of a religion.

They are some fresher wind that blows, some new fragrance that breathes. They make the landscape and the sky for us.

The rules of other intercourse are all inapplicable to this.

We are one virtue, one truth, one beauty. All nature is our satellite, whose light is dull and reflected. She is subaltern to us, — an episode to our poem; but we are primary, and radiate light and heat to the system.

I am only introduced once again to myself.

Conversation, contact, familiarity are the steps to it and instruments of it, but it is most perfect when these are done, and distance and time oppose no barrier.

I need not ask any man to be my friend, more than the sun the earth to be attracted by him. It is not his to give, nor mine to receive. I cannot pardon my enemy; let him pardon himself.

<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *Week*, pp. 274-307; *Riv.* 341-381.]

Commonly we degrade Love and Friendship by presenting them under the aspect of a trivial dualism.

What matter a few words more or less with my friend, — with all mankind; — they will still be my friends in spite of themselves. Let them stand aloof if they can! As though the most formidable distance could rob me of any real sympathy or advantage! No, when such interests are at stake, time, and distance, and difference fall into their own places.

But alas! to be actually separated from that parcel of heaven we call our friend, with the suspicion that we shall no more meet in nature, is source enough for all the elegies that ever were written. But the true remedy will be to recover our friend again piecemeal, wherever we can find a feature, as Æetes gathered up the members of his son, which Medea had strewn in her path.

The more complete our sympathy, the more our senses are struck dumb, and we are repressed by a delicate respect, so that to indifferent eyes we are least his friend, because no vulgar symbols pass between us. On after thought, perhaps, we come to fear that we have been the losers by such seeming indifference, but in truth that which withholds us is the bond between us.

My friend will be as much better than myself as my aspiration is above my performance.

This is most serene autumn weather. The chirp of crickets may be heard at noon over all the land. As in summer they are heard only at nightfall, so now by their incessant chirp they usher in the evening of the year.<sup>1</sup> The lively decay of autumn promises as infinite duration and freshness as the green leaves of spring.

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 108 ; Riv. 133.]