BY THE WAY

VERSES FRAGMENTS AND NOTES BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

LONGMANS & Co

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VERSES, FRAGMENTS & NOTES
BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

ARRANGED BY
HELEN ALLINGHAM

1912
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1 ed.

Signed by Helen Allingham

Neslà Landel Jones
from Helen Allingham

August 1914

BY THE WAY

WORKS BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

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The greater part of the letters here collected was written during the twenty years before 1870, when Allingham came to live in London. Among his correspondents were Leigh Hunt, the Brownings, Tennyson, Thackeray, Carlyle, Emerson, Morris, Burne-Jones, and Ruskin.

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WILLIAM ALLINGHAM: A DIARY.
MACMILLAN & CO.

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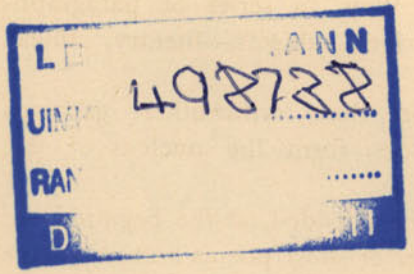

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PREFACE

Among my husband's papers I found, under his title of "By the Way," a series of paragraphs and notes on various subjects,—literary, ethical, critical.

A selection from these, with others gathered from his note-books, form the nucleus of this little volume.

To them have been added, at the beginning of the book, a number of short poems and fragments of verse, mostly of an earlier date than the prose notes.

Many of these fragments — sometimes only a couple of lines giving a vivid picture of a natural scene or effect—must have been written when Allingham was a very young man living in Ireland, closely watching and noting the moods of Nature in sea and sky.

In my selection and arrangement I have been greatly assisted by Mrs. Ernest Radford and Mrs. Baumer Williams: for the publication, I alone am responsible.

HELEN ALLINGHAM.

Hampstead, 1912.

TO THE FELLOW TRAVELLER

Jog on, jog on, by valley and hill:
Sight and Thought are never still.
Selfsame World for you and me;
Variously we think and see.
Here I show some thoughts of mine:
Gladly would I look at thine.
Jog on! agree or not agree,
Friendly pilgrims let us be.

VERSES
AND
FRAGMENTS

VERSES

THE HERMITAGE

Far from the city's smoke and stir
  My quiet Hermitage is made,
Where summer beech and winter fir
  Conjoin their hospitable shade.

The north-star crowns my wooded hill
  Of devious paths and thicket mild,
And by my garden foot a rill
  Sings to itself, like happy child.

Childlike, I love that skylark's trills;
This airy bloom along the hills
Enchants me; newly budding trees,
The bright brook shivering in the breeze,
The clumps of flow'rs, the wandering smells,
And every voice that sinks or swells,
And all the streaky blue above,
As many years ago, I love.
Thank Heav'n for this!—but "childlike," no!
Experience will not come and go.

TRIFLES

Slight are the colour'd threads that weave
  The fabric of our days,
But swiftly, and without retrieve,
  Th'incessant shuttle plays,
Each film is nothing as it goes,
The web a glaring pattern shows.

An ill thought merely floating past,
  Oh whiff it quick away!
Once touching, it may hook you fast
  Till, like the spider's prey,
You feel a poison in your blood
Corrupting all the vital flood.

To speak or write unholy things
  Is true infernal work;
No man can tell what evil springs
  From little seeds that lurk
In human hearts, at random sown;
A word's effect is never known.

In tears of blood, if such might be,
I'd weep my soul's inconstancy,
Remembering now to what pure heights
I have attain'd in happy flights,
Exalted moments, truer far
Than these low peeps and creeping are,
Whereof the witness doth remain
To sting me with remorseful pain.

TO ——

Symbol and proof of everything
That Poets dream and try to sing,
Perplex not with superfluous speech
This eloquence, beyond all reach
Of tongue, that in thy being lives,
Nor blurr'd with human language gives
Its heavenly message: silent we
Accept it without words from thee.

'Tis true we cannot keep the heights
Attain'd in these bold happy flights;
Earth calls us yet, and there is found
A truth belonging to the ground.

Low men who live by labour of their hands
In virtuous patience and good cheer of heart,
May simply apprehend immortal things;
So doth the flower of rich poetic souls.
But middle minds, presumptuous and confused
With false half-truth and ignorant knowingness,
Will turn away from every highest thought.

ON A BLACKTHORN WALKING-STICK

Given to me at Bath by W. S. Landor

This which was once a budding wand
  On hill-side or in shady glen,
  Where waters murmur'd, far from men,
And fledgling thrush his lesson conn'd,

When cut and trimm'd, and coax'd to meet
  The human grasp with easy crook,
  In LANDOR'S fingers twirl'd and shook
And bade his canine friend repeat

Gay barks and gambols; whilst in town
  Or field the sagely happy man
  Enjoy'd as only poets can
His own wide thought o'er all things thrown,

Or teem'd the wealth of books and life
  In frank discourse, where sudden jest
  Awoke the echo from her nest,
And breathing images were rife.

But now to me the stick descends,
  Who love, at least, the wise and brave,
  And proudly feel the hand that gave
Still clasp my slight hand as a friend's.

January 18th, 1854.

A REGRET

Alas, he's gone, and never knew
My love for him, so kind, so true,
He never heard in any word
How deeply oft my soul was stirr'd;
My trivial glance left all untold;
Why was I always dumb and cold?
Could he be with me now one day,
One hour, how much there were to say!
I'd prove how I had met his thought,
How tone and glance were unforgot,
  How brief "good-bye" was calmly said
By one with heart brimful of tears.
I gave no sign through all the years,
  And now, my Friend is dead.
Surely, if otherwhere we meet,
As knowing these things we shall greet.

Have I cause to be afraid?
I was most obscurely made
In the secret core of things;
And as a roaring cataract flings
Watery shapes to air, and springs
Into some black gulf below,
My life is hurrying even so,
I know not whither—Do I fear?

THE SOLITARY

'Tis my fate to walk alone,
Friends, companions, I have none.
How befalls that thus I find it?
Can I be inhuman-minded?
Hate I any creature? No.
Do I long for love? I do.
Is it that I scorn the store
I have, tho' others have no more,
Longing after higher food?
This unrestful mind or mood
Is it vanity or folly?
Is it bile and melancholy?
Or a ray of the Divine,
Glimmer of the true soul-shine,
Which pales the sunlight? This in me
Find I, whatso-e'er it be.

In evil forget not good,
Colour not Life with thy mood;
Think of old hours of boding,
Of terror and heart-corroding,
The darkness, the lightning, the blast,
And how they changed and pass'd
And melted away altogether
To sunshine and summer weather.

Of strangely shifting elements
Our life is form'd, and life's events.
With habits pale we hedge it round,
And fain would think it solid ground,
But everything we strive to clutch,
Melting to fog, eludes our touch;
Till, sad and weary, vext and daunted,
We take the flitting shows for granted.

I will not be a critic where I love.
Love must love or not love—
So long as he's my sweetheart I will love him.
What care I what the world call this or that?
Have I such reason, that it cannot err,
Like God's? I am a poor weak human soul,
And love or hate, I cannot tell you why—
Friends have I, real, or they seem so now,
And while I'm in that notion I am theirs
Through good and evil—
If friendship, love, are nothing, what's life worth?
Some may endure to play at chilly chess
With men and women—I must hate and love!

I never fancied I could lose
  Till knowing I had lost her.
Her own clear eye convey'd the news,
  And that is no impostor.
It spoke to one, it spoke to two;
Made him a king, left me to rue.

Tho' true love be far from common,
Many men and every woman
Can feel something fit to claim,
Decently, affection's name;
Will and Must and Has-Been, blent,
Keep them, in a sort, content.

The moon upon the cornfield shone,
The evening star was mild and lone,
And all the little birds were gone
To nestle in the bushes.

The scented herbs had sweeter grown,
The grass was all with dew-drops strown,
And every breath of air had flown
To whisper midst the rushes.

'Twas then that by the old yew tree,
We plighted vows to wedded be,
The good and ill of life to see
And share with one another.

The woodruff,[1] smelling like new-mown hay,
That Munichers put in their Wine of May,
When they merrily welcome the flowery time
With feast and music, with dance and rhyme,
(A festival made to sweeten the year,
To hope, and, after, to memory dear)
In the piny valleys beyond the plain
Whereto the city looks far and fain
Thro' many a sultry summer day.

[1] The wood-ruff "*Waldmeister*" is used near Munich in making *Mai-wein*.—W. A.

Who that, even in a dream,
Has felt pure love's ethereal beam
Enkindle feelings for his heart
To treasure up and set apart,
Encasketted with jealous fear,
Most pure, most delicate, most dear,
More strictly kept than miser's pelf
And seldom conn'd ev'n by himself—
Would wish to have his hoarded thought
Into vulgar parley brought?

I can be haughty with my brother-kind,
Walk on their courtesies like trivial flow'rs
Strewn for a humble tribute: this is well:
But if they knew me as I know myself,
The beggar's look who did not spit on me
Were grateful alms! Oh Gracious God in
Heaven!
How can we show our faces to Thy sun?

Many things flash across the town-bred mind,
They come and go, and leave small trace behind.
Few things, oft trudging through the country brain,
Impress themselves in marks that long remain.
Folk, here, make much of trifles; there, make light
Of life's chief things. How few men judge aright!

LORD BLANK: A BIOGRAPHY

A Babe was born with silver spoon,
Silver enough to make a moon!
It did not interest him much
The world he came to, late or soon.

This Babe was fed, this Babe was taught;
He neither lack'd nor cared for aught.
Nothing could interest him much,
Whatever youth or manhood brought.

At school he learnt what others learn;
With Alma Mater did sojourn,
And, though not interested much,
Took "Little-go" and "Greats" in turn.

He found a rich and handsome maid,
Of fitting years and proper grade;
She did not interest him much,
But in due form his court he paid.

And in due course she was his dame,
And several children duly came;
They did not interest him much;
His treatment of them none could blame.

In House of Commons year by year
He sat, on which side I'm not clear,
(It did not interest him much)
The course of Nature made him Peer.

A married lady whom he knew
Was pretty and amusing too;
She did not interest him much—
Yet by degrees a scandal grew.

The stupid husband made a rout,
And fiercely called his Lordship out.
This did not interest him much;
But—killed he was beyond a doubt.

His name is on the marble tomb,
Age, style, *et cetera:* I presume
They would not interest you much,
And so, take up no further room.

I saw a man go by to-day; O when we were at school,
They counted me a clever chap, and him a stupid fool.
Give each a bit of paper; I can write a song; but, zounds,
He, sir, can write a cheque on Coutts' for fifty thousand pounds.
He made it all, I don't know how, whilst I was making rhyme;
But still, I pay my modest way, so call not that a crime.

IRISH ANNALS

(1852)

MacMurlagh kill'd Flantagh, and Cormac killed Hugh,
Having else no particular business to do.
O'Toole killed O'Gorman, O'More killed O'Leary,
Muldearg, son of Phadrig, kill'd Con, son of Cleary.
Three show'rs in the reign of King Niall the Good
Rain'd silver and honey and smoking red blood.
Saint Colman converted a number of pagans,
And got for his friars some land of O'Hagan's,
The King and his clansmen rejoiced at this teaching
And paused from their fighting to come to the preaching.
The Abbot of Gort, with good reason no doubt,
With the Abbot of Ballinamallard fell out,
Set fire to the abbey-roof over his head,
And kill'd a few score of his monks, the rest fled.
The Danes, furious pirates by water and dry-land,
Put boats on Lough Erne and took Devenish Island;
The Monks, being used to such things, in a trice
Snatching relics and psalters and vessels of price,
Got into the Round-Tower and pull'd up the ladder;
Their end, for the Danes lit a fire, was the sadder.
Young Donnell slew Murlagh, then Rory slew Donnell,
Then Connell slew Rory, then Dermod slew Connell;
O'Lurcan of Cashel kill'd Phelim his cousin
On family matters. Some two or three dozen

Of this Tribe, in consequence, killed one another.
MacFogarty put out the eyes of his brother
James Longthair, lest James should be chosen for chief.
At Candlemas, fruit-trees this year were in leaf.
King Toole, an excitable man in his cups,
Falls out with King Rorke about two deerhound pups,
And scouring the North, without risking a battle,
Burns down all the houses, drives off all the cattle;
King Rorke to invade the South country arouses,
Drives off all the cattle, burns down all the houses.
If you wish for more slaughter and crimes and disasters
See, *passim*, those Annalists called "the Four Masters."[1]

The Whiting Society passes its time
In guessing at certain conundrums in rhyme,
The Author of which, still brisk and vivacious,
Just lives round the corner: "Consult him? Good gracious!
Was ever proposal so wild, so audacious!"
—"You know him and chat with him"—"True: but, my friend,
If he tells us his meaning our game's at an end."

[1] One of the O'Clearys became the principal compiler of that famous Chronicle of Ireland upon which the name of *Annals of the Four Masters* has been accidentally and not very happily fastened, but really called *Annala Rioghachta Eircann*, "*Annals of the Kingdom of Erin*."

WRECK OF THE "HENRIETTA CHARLOTTE"

Wrack *versus* Wreck

(*Circa* 1858)

The wreck directly reached the rock
And wronged the Rector's wrack,
The Rector rushed to wreak the wrongs
Of wrack upon the wreck:
Can rectitude direct the Rector,
Recklessly to wreak
Upon the wretched wreck, the wrongs
Of Rector's wracky rock?[1]

[1] These lines were written on the loss of a trading vessel at Ballyshannon Bar, wrecked on a portion of the shore over which the Rector claimed the rights of sea-weed: he sued the owner of the unfortunate vessel for damages—without success.

FRAGMENTS

—when February studs
The naked larch with million buds—

Snowdrops, the tender infants of the year—

As, upon a day of March,
When blue glory fills the arch
Of ether, and the wave is bright
And the mountains robed in light,
Hours are lovely beyond measure,
Tranquil souls have perfect pleasure;
Yet, bethink you, hedge and tree
Stand as bare as bare can be,
Or but faintly hint the time,
Hastening on, of leafy prime—

The throstle singing in the leafless woods;
The alder-catkins, and the willow-buds
That change from silver into paly gold—

The moist aerial veil was softly drawn
O'er mountain peak, smooth hill, and verdant lawn.

—sown with wood-anemones
Thick as a frosty night with stars—

Listless I wander'd down the wood arcades
Mid slender stems and sprouting leaflets green,
With primrose tufts and mingling violet,
Wild orchis and the wood-anemone
Around my feet; the wafting western air
As sweet as tho' it blew from Childhood's Land.

—like wood-anemones
Changing in an April breeze,
Sheets of snow or purple pale
As the breath may blow or fail—

Or paint th' unutterably tender blue
Of April skies—

To-night, returning in my walk, I saw
The soft and lingering lines of sunset cloud,
The stars around the crescent moon; far west
Shone Venus, ere she went below the ridge.
Jove's planet lighted up north-eastern heaven
Hung 'neath the Twins, and thence with easy slant
I found Orion.

—a vernal day
Of sleet and sunshine, summer patch'd with winter.

As tufts of sweet lilac
Pale-purple or milky
In freshest green leafage
Delight us in May—

Flow'rs on the threshold of sweet May-morning,
Dead leaves drifted when summer's gone—

Blue mists of hyacinth in forest glades—

Ere from the apple-blossom fell
One dainty white or crimson shell,
Or its green boss began to swell—

And children at play in the shadowy grass
Of the pink-blossomed orchard.

(*Beech*)—The tender green that floats below
While upper boughs are bare—

—fresh as a green beech
Now in the young perfection of its leaves—

When ferns unroll their croziers into plumes—

Tender leaves like baby fingers
Feeling for the vernal air—

To see among those gay green clouds
Of foliage in the vernal woods
The hawthorn shining—
A cataract of snowy blossom!

The pearl'd thorn opes its fragrant flow'rs,
Whitening the hedge—

—a secret little bower
Of twisted stalks and happy leaves—

Ivory lilies, tongued with gold—

—where the June sun weaves
Green light, green shade, in a curtain of leaves.

The lush green tangle of a leafy hedge,
Bindweed and briony and honeysuckle
Twisted luxuriantly, large pure white bells,
Green berries, fragrant floating coronets,
Ivory and amber—

The forest leaves in pleasant idleness
Are fingering the cool air—

The green twigs whisper gaily, and the
barren branches croak—

The forest cloisters, where the morning dew
Lies till the evening—

Root-netted paths and intricate wild ways
Through the dark forest—

Creaking boughs and hurtling leaves
When the wind through woodland grieves.

—a bank of cloud
Sweeping in one great whirl from west to east.

Like torn white lace the windy cloud
Lay scattered in the blue—

Fresh gold that veins the morning cloud—

Heaven's chalice over-brimm'd with sunny light—

In the blue sea of Heaven behold
Floating islands fring'd with gold—

White clouds that wander through airy deserts
yonder,
Bound to far-off regions of blessedness and calm—

—a windy day
Of cloudy lights and flying shadows
Over the forests and moors and meadows—

—kindly rains
Clothe the poor naked earth in mantling green.

The sky is dark—no matter ;
The west wind blows no ill ;
This pleasant rain will scatter
New green on every hill.

—a huge soft curd-white rain-cloud
Mounded and moulded by the busy winds—

—above a streak of angry light
The ink-blue storm weigh'd down upon the hills.

Tower upon tower of dark embattled cloud—

Tumultuous silence of the stormy clouds—

Behind the murky curtain of the rain
Were pale expanses, gleaming wilds of sky—

Oceans of thunder breaking overhead—

—like lit clouds when a flash
Rends the black storm, and shows the frighten'd faces
Waiting for thunder—

—a thunderbolt
Treads swift its zigzag pathway down the clouds.

—mount
The lightning's zigzag path to heaven.

—as dull clouds
Muffle the thunder upon mountain-tops.

The gale's fantastic symphonies,
The gestures of the raving trees,
The driving clouds, the snowy wold,
The ruffled waters dark and cold—

Behind the stormy precipice of cloud
A pure serene illimitable sky—

Measureless altitudes of bright white clouds—

On the great mountain-altar now
The sun burn'd like a sacrifice;
Next moment he had sunk below,
And in the lucid golden skies
A star appeared, and many a star,
In purpling ether faint and far,
Until the mystic rule of Night
Was paramount.

And when the day had dropt away
Behind the western hills—

Through a red portal in the jagged clouds
The sun looks fierce in parting—

Evening gold leaking through cloudy chinks—

A cleft of scarlet fire in misty clouds—

—palace of sunset, with vaporous walls,
Descend into the sea.

The red of sunset like a murder-stain—

—sunset's fiery realm
Of vaporous continents with peak and crag
And unsubstantial headlands built of gold,
Which soon the dusky twilight doth enfold.

The tranquil flame of iridescent skies
With level woof of scarlet, tender green
Over the dark-blue mountain's edge; aloft,
Purple awaking into starlight—

And from a northern coast the Lovers watch'd
Midsummer sunset crimsoning the sea,
A bath of colours 'twixt the sky and sand
From east to furthest west. The ripple broke
Like azure flame along the level shore,
And every dimple, every ridge that nets
The glassy film was variably dyed
With floating brilliance of prismatic hues,
Green, orange, golden, exquisitely gay,
Like delicate music. Ever in the north
The dusking splendour crept behind the hills
Eastwards, and one cloud waited for the Dawn
To drink its fill of glory. To the beach,
Meanwhile, ran wave on wave in lovely sport,
Whispering a message to the dewy fields
Far-spread and hush'd beneath a dark-blue dome.

The night a spongy dimness fill'd with moonshine,
Gray river-course, black boats based on their shadows,
The river, misty trees, the night, the world—

A sudden meteor in the zenith flew,
As though great Night gave signal for some wonder;
Then all was still and motionless, no sound,
No stir in starry heav'n or dark earth under.

See in that clump of trees the starry Bull
Hangs clear like diamond fruit, and down the sky
How steel-blue Sirius sparkles—

I saw Night's dome alive with meteors,
Shooting and sailing, melting one and all
To darkness and dim starlight—

When night has settled on the vale below,
Faint scarlet dyes the lonely peaks of snow
From a lost sunset—

Black texture of the leafy trees, engraved
On the clear, solemn, pearly blue of dawn;
No bird as yet awake, no star asleep,
Though some look drowsy.
Ocean lies tranquil in the arms of night,
Uncurtain'd by Dawn's airy heralds; far
On every hand, up to the mountain mist,
Fields, hills, and cots, and every forest brake
Slumber in dew.

The shore-less ocean overhead,
Star-islanded—

Night stole her fingers over the instrument
With preludes scarcely heard, emboldened soon
And swelling to a hymn of solemn joy
To which the stars came forth, and all the space
From earth to heaven was full of adoration.

Hear through foliage of the darken'd vale
Bubbling music of a nightingale,
Throb and thrill and mingle with the stars
Till they seem to tingle and grow pale.

—small starry points
Glitter'd aloft in the pale violet heaven—

In orient sky a solemn fleet of stars
Sail'd upwards to the zenith, and pursued
The shadowy voyage of the sinking moon,
Till Night's fourth hour engulfed them in the west.

From those vast whirling Worlds, no sigh or sound
Pierces the petty turmoil of our life—

The night was a shroud,
Made all of one cloud,
To wrap the dead earth—

—all the gray and misty night
Fill'd like a sponge with pallid light
Of the unseen moon—

—a warder Star came forth
Upon the mountain's windy battlement,
And gazed into the night—

At kissing of the Twilight and the Dawn
In a June midnight—

—a calm clear moon
Over the ruins of tempestuous sunset—

A storm-cloud menaces the silver moon
With dusk gigantic arms—

—as Luna's pearly ship
Sails the black midnight gulfs from cloud to cloud—

The great moon roll'd her globe of gold
Above the dark world's edge—

The moon a silver fish in cloudy net—

So the grave moon, clad in white,
From the cloister of a cloud
Emerging softly into light
Walketh through the wastes of night,
Too unrivall'd to be proud.

Up the shining disc of the full moon
Creeps the shadow of the greater orb
Which controls her—

—the moon
Spills a faint golden lustre in the tide—

The mighty flood that curtseys to the moon—

See how the Witch Moon from a cave of cloud
Scatters her spells upon the sleeping Earth—

O well-head pure and deep of silver light
O'erflowing mistily this dreaming world!

A tender moonshine in a marbled sky—

And where the moon in the eddy plays
Like a fiery snake—

I saw, with blunted cusps, the waning moon;
Her slender golden crescent stood embost
On a green morning sky—

A black cloud flying like a monstrous bat
Across the moon—

—a waning moon,
Sharp as a lancet, pierced the level cloud
And spread a floating glimmer on the stream—

The moon's reflection like a fish of gold
Swam in the current—

The embers of the moon slumber in sunlight—

—see the mountains dyed
With the deep blueness of a mussel-shell—

As, when the sun is shining on the fields,
The swarthy mountain sulks beneath a cloud
Foreshadowing tempest—

The mountains fleeced with vapours—

The huge black mountain smear'd with ghastly white.

The black mountains vein'd with snow—

Fresh verdure streaming up the rifted crag
Whose head is in the lower waifs of cloud—

And like a solid vapour, motionless
A gray-blue mountain on the horizon stood—

—the rich mountain, like a carven vase
Of ancient malachite, imperial gift,
With clear green slopes and shady tortuous glens—

A mountain full of lights and shades
As purple velvet flung in folds—

As a great mountain stands against the sun
With robes of shadow sweeping to the vale—

Battalions of dark pine
Ranged on the windy hills—

—the down's green fold,
Bepatch'd with gorse's honey-gold
And harebell-sprinkled. Thence long shadows
Creep at evening over the meadows.

Shut round with trees, but over these
And far beyond the dell,
A mountain chain that like a strain
Of music rose and fell.

The waves of budding barley silvery green,
Like waters rippling under cloudy sky—

Broad green pastures where doth pass
A little river clear as glass
That wimples through its waving weeds—

The glassy brook runs shivering in the breeze—

Where, seldom by an ear surprised,
The little stream soliloquised,
In songs and murmurs of delight,
Heard clearest of a starry night,
Amid the hush of all the hills.

—branches green
Across the road to kiss each other lean.

Where overhead the branches meet
And grass is cool to weary feet—

Or the warm wind wandering over
Fields of grass and purple clover—

Over the level field of ripening corn
A vision of blue hills—

—between their stems the peeping lake
Like a blue flower—

Across the breathless mirror of the lake
The wild-duck drew a long dividing wake,
Blurr'd for an instant the reflected shore,
Then heath and rock lay pictured as before.

Under boughs that wash the stream,
Kingfisher darts, an azure gleam—

—from the blue midmost of the lough
With neck outstretch'd the startled widgeon skims,
And for a moment rips the quiet flood
Entering her reedy chamber—

—flying remote
Through pure and lofty spaces of the air—

The sky lark hearted in a golden cloud
Shoots rays of music down, brighter than light—

—the lark spills through the sky
His rapturous unintelligible ode—

—larks high in air
Sing to the sower in brown fields below—

The singing mountaineer of lofty clouds,
The lark—

When the lark shuts her wings and drops
Right down like arrowhead, then slopes
To her small home amid the grass—

Hear the winnowing white doves' wings,
And see their shadows crossing—

—the nightingale's
First tremulous twittering on cold April eves.

—the love-intoxicated nightingale
Piping and gurgling his luxurious chant—

Softly from wooded hills remote
Comes the cuckoo's double note.

—from high to low
Like air-borne swallows in their facile sweep—

With delighted fancy follow
Viewless weavings of the swallow,
To and fro on golden air
Darting like a shuttle there—

As air-borne seagull sweeps the line of cliff
On sliding pinions—

—one hern
Gray sentry of the wide morass.

—the rook-army wavers home
Black on the sunset sky—

'Twas like the whirr of winglets
When sparrows rise from grain—

—little birds
Bustling and bickering through the bushes.

—a hawk
Balancing on the wind—

The wise muffled owl—

The proud eagle's royal melancholy—

—that winded far to Echo's call
And won a faint reply—

—to see rise
A vernal birch, green-fountain wise
With myriad sprinkling leaflets light,
Against a sky of blue and white—

Gay as a glittering birch-tree after rain—

—aged oak
Grappling the soil with monstrous claws—

Under the shelter of a sturdy oak
I heard the rain upon its roof of leaves
Beating like elfin hammers—

A huge old oak with gray and rocky trunk—

—a wizard oak
With branches fiercely scribbled on the sky.

A massy monumental poplar tree,
Its head among the stars—

An iron pillar'd yew-tree, canopied
With solemn darkness—

The yew spreads over them his fringèd pall—

A great tree on the midnight sky,
With stars like fruit among the boughs—

Gray mossy rocks o'ershadow'd with brown thorns—

—some old fairy-thorn
Stands like an islet mid the flowing corn—

The gray ash-stems mottled with brown moss
Like a serpent's skin—

(*Ashbud*)—like the hoof of an elfin steed.

Or elfin-haunted elder, nurse of dreams—

Black elder-berries beaded on the tree—

The Weathercock

North, south, east, west,
Would you fix me to the best?
Must obey the wind's behest!
Rusted, broken, I should rest.

High gabled cottage, all its lattices
Unfolded to sweet air—

—from the cottage roof
An avalanche of roses—

The rich old mansion muffled round with trees—

—you see
Nestled into a hollow of the downs,
Where sheep stray widely o'er the short green turf,
A little gray-wall'd church with lichen'd roof;
A farmyard and a huge old barn whose stacks
O'er-top the spire, the farmhouse lattices
Embower'd with vine; a figtree'd garden wall;
And one clump of rook-nested elms above
Gables and red tiled roofs and twisted chimneys.

An old green mound the summit crown'd,
Where dances the midnight elvish round,
Over the dust of pagan kings.

The bare green hills, the cloudy skies,
The sea that lone and sombre lies—

Pillars and carven stones of antique pride
Raised by dead men—

A pillar-stone set up for memory
Of some great thing, forgotten long ago.

The hill's green slope with sheep-paths interlaced—

The wing'd seeds with decaying wings
That lie upon the cold moist ground
Know this mild breath is heavenly Spring's.
And every germen hath unwound
His little coil of green, and put
A pale point forth, a timid shoot,
A slowly clasping spreading root,
A rising stem, a twig, a bud,
A thousand veins of pure green blood
Through breathing leaves, to stand one day,
When suns and moons have roll'd away,
A new Tree bearing flow'rs and fruit,
And many seeds like that one seed.

—more light
Than pigmy parachutes of thistle-seed
Floating on summer's breath—

—through pipy stalks
The sap runs eddying into fruit,
That sucks the sunshine to its core,
Condensing richest juices.

—tropic fruits
That take the sunshine deep into their hearts.

—the royal sun
With Midas-finger touching corn and fruit.

Warm-scented strawberries of luscious red—

The green javelins of the wheat—

Midsummer's monotonies of green—

Hollow lanes embank'd with fern—

A waste of flowers, a wilderness of bloom—

A nettle-leaf, that stings the timid hand,
Acquits the bold.

Ev'n as the baked and iron earth must yield
To the soft cleavage of a blade of grass—

The stony skeleton of a dead brook
Lay in the burnt-up field.

Somewhere on thy land
Shadeless and forlorn,
From a thought of love
Plant a little grove,
Which may sweet and sheltering stand
In the days unborn.

Praised be the man who plants a grove,
Beside the way, upon the hill,
To make a shelter for the rill—

A Mill

Two leaps the water from its race
Made to the brook below,
The first leap it was curving glass,
The second bounding snow.

—rush
With bubbling gush
Into its cold green pool.

Near where the riotous Atlantic surge
Booms heavily in storm, far-heard at night,
And flings ashore the bones of murder'd ships,
Or, in a gentler time, the milky wave,
The whispering weary wave, lies down to rest,
Lives a calm Well of water, a large Spring,
Pure and perennial. Often have I watch'd
Its crystal heart with ever tremulous pulse
Dim the green lining of the hollow'd sand,
Thick-platted cress within a spacious cup
Full at the solstice and for ever cold,
A soft pulsation scarcely to be heard
Save by a loving ear. Whole caravans
Creeping in torture through a burning waste
By one such Fount were saved. But here it brims,
With purest overflow for barefoot girls
Who tread the mossy track to dip their pails
Into the lonely Spring—

The green translucent river pool
Pouring over its rocky lip
A gush of diamonds—

—the black polish'd water pours
Over its ridge, an amber comb—

The rocky mountain rivulet,
The meadow-parting, peaceful stream—

The broken fern droops in the watercourse—

As on a lake the folded water-buds
Sleep in the tremulous image of the moon—

The long weeds, anchor'd in the current, sway
With fetter'd freedom—

Silvery grasses trailing in the stream—

—green weeds
Like flowing tresses of the River God—

Each fly that makes a gliding shadow-flower
Upon the sunny gravel of the pool—

Flies weave an airy tangle in the sun—

—the grasshopper,
Whose shifting tune works like a fairy mill,
Heard everywhere and nowhere to be found.

—butterfly,
The pretty gadabout of summer hours
To carry all the gossip of the flowers,
Not like the trading bee—

Now I am free
As a wildwood bee
Hiving in a hollow tree!

The stilted fly (Daddy Longlegs)—

Mail'd beetle and the courtier butterfly—

The cunning spider, fingering
Like a harper every string—

As blue flies creep from frosty sleep
In a ray of winter sun—

A multitudinous whisper, as of ants
Creeping among the dry leaves of a wood—

As the sea for a fish,
As the air for a bird,
All the world is a brave man's home—

(*A Pearl*)—This drop of curdled moonlight—

And joyous fancies danced like light
Upon a fountain'd grotto's roof—

Through sunny meadows by the fresh sea-wave—

Translucent green wave rushing into foam—

The loitering wave on sunny sand—

—hoarse-echoing caves,
Scooped by the immemorial waves—

Hush, hush, says the wave—

—the wide heaving sea,
Folded into thunder on a reef—

Raged like the fierce artillery of the surge
Against the ruin'd bastions of a cliff—

Black piles of rock, caved with the gnawing tide—

Rocks cross'd and scored as with a giant's knife—

Gray sandhills tufted with the pale-green bent
Faint rustling to the murmur of the sea—

—the drifting sand
Is filtered with a twist of rushes—

The shifting sands, the rocks that bide
The patient grooving of the tide—

There where the ocean-water swings and heaves
Its dark-green billow round an iron crag,
And bones of ships lie scatter'd on the strand—

—iron-gray the cloudy sky,
And iron-black the sea—

Deep in the mystic valleys of the sea—

The wave's green mantle edged with ermine froth—

A little ship upon the world's blue edge—

—the reappearing sun
Kindled a rainbow in the misty cloud,
Shone far across the green hills, and at sea
Lit the white sail.

Athwart the gloom on colour'd wings,
From earth to heav'n a rainbow springs—

Rough October's tawny flood—

As new green sprays
In autumn days
Sprout among the withering leaves—

The setting sun of Autumn shone
O'er leagues of forest, golden-brown,
Blue shadow, lustrous as a gem's,
Deepening richly here and there,
And close at hand the pillar'd stems
A-glow—

This is the second childhood of the year:
Pathetic reminiscences of Spring—

The brown fields ribbed with industry—

—when the fields are reap'd
And country-folk to market throng.

When fields are bare and granaries full—

To tame a savage woodland to the plough—

Large squares of tawny corn
Stood waiting for the hook;
On fields already shorn
Was ranged the tented stook;
The sky spread gray
But warm, the day
Had a quiet happy look;
And Matron Earth rejoiced in her increase,
At peace.

Fields are lone,
Swallows flown,
Dead leaves on the pathway strown—

—ancient moss
Tufted the quag with many a woolly boss.

The ghostly wind on autumn eves
Wailing among faded leaves—

Autumnal beech-woods dyed in sunset gold—

Brown woods, and flocking birds, and sodden fields,
A scarlet western flame, a creeping mist,
A wind that breathes of winter and of death,—
Sad Autumn!

Huge mountains and rough tumbling floods,
Great shadows upon shaggy woods—

Calm as a gray
Autumnal day
When everything is still.

Sad winds are calling
O'er stubble and moor,
Yellow leaves falling,—
What may endure?
Gray clouds flying,
Autumn dying.

Weak pallid flowers of winter,
Old age's children—

—the world of frost
Enchanted into stillness.

—as wan
As a white cloud reflected in a pool—

Faint as a day-moon—

At Christmas-time among the garden-beds
A sickly rose or pale hepatica,
Poor waifs and strays of Flora, touch us more
Than all the flush of May.

We tire of long blue summer: but it seems
In winter like a heavenly land of dreams.

Numb-finger'd winter—

The rich gold crocus upon Winter's hem—

To hear the humming of the wind
And the low-whispering fire.

Amid stark groves and hedgerows drear,
In myriad buds all brown and dim,
Folded in slumber lies the future Spring
With all its world of leaves.

Warm as in wintry woods the zest
Of holly berries or robin's breast—

—in the wide moon-stillness
Run ringing noises down a frozen lake—

—the snow
Came feathering down

The evening hills in orange haze of frost—

Then came the little Fairies of the Wood
Who dance as light as autumn's russet leaves,
Then came the Water-Nixies sweet and cold,
The Mine-Dwarfs, and the subtle Shapes of Air
That float about the changing atmosphere
And take its colours.

In the Night of Time,
Before the sun was made,
I heard sweet music chime
Through the world-shade.

Into fiery rings
I saw the Motelings dance,
And all Shapes of Things
Bit by bit advance.

Dear Mother Nature! on thy breast,
With all my faults, I lie caressed:
Thou my mother, great and mild,
I thy wayward foolish child.

A little sigh as when you see
Two lovers' names upon a tree
Carved a hundred years ago.

They seem to live in the shadows of the Past,
As in old pictures, under solemn skies,
In landscapes green, by waters deep and still.

A music like the memory of first love—

Music deep as love or life—

Thoughts too shadowy to be traced in words—

Like a child, at even-song
The daisy folds itself to sleep—

A little child as pure and sweet
As the daisies round his feet—

Pure as a primrose in the morning dew,
Fresh-blown among bare woods—

I saw two children wandering here and there
Like sister butterflies in vernal air—

—the caressing wind
Toy'd with her dress.

It seem'd too great a grace
To look upon her face—

A fair sight dully seen may wake to joy
In memory—

Sad as the fragment of a castle wall,
Hoary and nameless, stooping in the field,
Till Time's wing brush it silently away.

You leaves that were lusty,
Now yellow and rusty,
Now dying and rotten,
Come cover me over,
For ever and ever
Unseen and forgotten.

The sun cannot warm him,
The flow'rs cannot charm him,
Nor thunder alarm him.

The world's chill petrifying wave
Has turn'd his heart to stone—

Gloomy as that black river of the ghosts
That runs through Tartarus—

She died into eternal youth
In loving memories—

The world can give us much;
But what the world can take away again
Is least worth having. Use it like a king,
Who knows himself above his equipage,
And wears the real crown upon his thoughts.

If you have not known poverty
You know not the world—
If you have been always needy
You know not life.

—writhe in the grip of cold necessity—

You may look at a face for twenty years
And never know what it really is,
Till, some one moment, your vision clears,
And there! *that* face is hers or his.

Tears blur the harsher lines of grief, and touch them
Ev'n with prismatic fringes—

—this poor hope feebly shone,
Help'd by the sable background of despair.

—oft what lamplight shows for fair
The sun discredits.

A wicked thought is like a weed,
Single at first, but full of seed.

Virtue's toleration
Is sweet as flowers in May:
Vice's toleration
Has the sweet smell of decay.

—souls that die for want of air
Like fish in a frozen pond.

Trivial the act, but not the state of mind
Which in that act was shown, and lay behind.

Some men exhaust their poison in their youth,
Some store it up to burst in riper years—

Thou hast something of great worth;
Sell it not for all the earth.
Some one needs it; never stay
For asking,—give it all away.

Do it now: no, to-morrow.
Never, never, to my sorrow.

The rising tide up many an inlet rolls;
The spirit of the age fills many souls—

Unless I keep an altar-flame of life
Burning atop of stony circumstance,
My days are darkness and ignoble strife,
I the brute slave of appetite and chance.

Sufferer to Comforter

All very wise remarks! but, tell me true,
Were you in my place, would they comfort you?

—men to whom their dead opinions cling
Like last year's leaves upon a sheltered bough.

—most men are cowards:
A firmset purpose striding to its mark
Scatters the weak uncertain multitude,
Like birds, from off its way—

He can, who must.

The thoughtful scribe believes that, soon or late,
What's truly written will be truly read.

Too much liberty is worse than bondage.
Man's will diffused being weak, comprest is strong,
And will is freedom—

Each thinks himself exceptional:
Ridiculous!—and yet sublime.
The individual may be small,
Yet individuality's the prime
Glory and hope of us poor Sons of Time.

—good jesting only comes
From serious-thoughted men.

—I discern his soul
Like monstrous features of a hanging crag,
High, rude, and threatful.

Habit and mood enslave us, appetite
And ugly selfishness renew their hints,
Deaf to the music of divinest Order,
Blind to Experience with her threatening hand.

Habit is lord of even good men's lives—

When feet and will go different ways—

Despise not pleasure—that's unnatural,
But rate it at its worth—shun all which leaves
A sting of discontent, or sickly blank,
Nor baulk at any time a higher mood
For lower—

—the pleasure of living,
Each breath a mere joy, a thanksgiving.

To be just and firm is very good;
But run not your fruit-tree all to wood.

Death's hour glass, filled with human dust,
And every sand a life—

How swift our days!
Short while ago
We loved young April's showery gleams,
Then Summer warmed the woods and streams,
Then Autumn's haze,
And now the snow.
Even so.

—till conscience like a mirror dark and plain—

To praise the saints and live a beast—

Good Conscience fears no ghostly messenger,
Which if it came would come with news from heaven.

—hopes inaccessible
As cloudland's dells and peaks.

The sunbeam is not shaken by the wind,
Nor faith by accident of life—

Who dared to say what others fear'd to think—

Most men must be supported from without,
Only the strongest minds can live in doubt—

Priestcraft, with falsehood, ignorance and pride,
To rule men, labours ever to divide.
Religion seeks to join the human race
In one great bond before their Father's face.

The Little Town

And poor and small and shabby though it be,
Each little Town's the world's epitome.
Envy and hatred, avarice and pride,
Love, hope, and resignation, here abide,
And virtuous effort rises over fate,
And vice meets dismal shipwreck, soon or late.

Men respect not men enough,—
Far too much the rotten stuff
Of words, the masquerading dress
Wherewith we prank our nakedness.

But fling aside your dogmas! Just as well
Could Conic Sections save a soul from hell.

Frightened by the ghost of a dead creed.

He's bound to superstition like a cord
That's tangled in the texture of his life.

But who the proper limits shall descry,
Bid worship live, and superstition die?

Or damn'd while still alive, as by the curse
Of the great Florentine's revengeful verse.

Religion is a righteous life,
All the rest a wordy strife.

An Irish Priest

Big was this Priest and dark (few priests are fair),
His brows were thick, his eyes kept ambush there,
His straight black skirt reach'd far below the knee,
His band was clean, a broad brimm'd hat wore he;
He seldom spoke, and gravely; on his face
No smile diffused a transitory grace,
A scrap of rigid whisker, leaving bleak
The expanse below, stopp'd short on either cheek;
Large head was his, large chest, much snuff he took
And often carried in his hand a book.

Was orthodox in every dish;
Mince-pie at Christmas never fail'd,
Shrovetide brought pancakes, Lent salt-fish—

No one his country understands
Who has not lived in foreign lands.

The best of travel is to find
That home is better still.

All wonders of the earth and sea and sky
Fall cold upon a sad or thoughtful eye.

The generous heart flings open every door,
Half-emptied, he is richer than before:
The selfish nature, every gateway barr'd
Lies starving on his treasure cold and hard.

Iceland

Black rocks, white snows, and demon-haunted
wastes—

Holland

Canals and barges, cities old and clean
With high towers o'er the watery-meadows seen—

Innsbrück

Where dark pine-forests hang above the town,
And wolves into the peopled streets look down—

White Paris glittering deep into the night—

Milan's white marble coronets, 'mid the green
Lombard plain
Watch'd from afar by fifty leagues of mighty
mountain chain—

—Florence,
A carven casket in a bed of flow'rs—

An Eastern City hid in bow'rs and woods,
With here and there a peeping minaret,
And many a palace by the flowing streams.

Our citied earth, with fields, woods, mountains,
waters,
Is but the crust around a core of fire—

The Dance of Despair

No time to think, no time to weep,
To-morrow, to-morrow, for that, my dear,
To-morrow and all eternity.
How the music laments! how it waxes proud
Of its own despair!—in one wild sweep
Of joy, of flame from the nether sphere,
A torrent, a whirlpool of wailing sound,
It swings us round and round and round,
Embracing, enfolding thee and me,
Like a whirlwind catching a ship on the sea,
Like a net, a serpent, a swathing shroud,
It binds us, maddens us, hurries us on,
Whither, whither?
Together, together, wherever it be!

Resented—relented—consented—repented.

A moment's madness, a life's remorse.

A moment's rashness, and a life's regret.

He that's proud of being wise
Hath something still to learn—

All wisdom comes by mental fermentation
In the gross masses of the population,
And universal suffrage soon will show
Whether 'tis best to have a God or no!

Who for himself hath done the best,
Hath done as much for all the rest.

Nestor

Experience must accrue, no doubt.
Much ran in: has nothing run out?
Much is ripe: is nothing rotten?
Much is gotten: how much forgotten?

If women were only as sweet as they look!
But beauty is often a bait for a hook.

I've often laugh'd at this—
To think a smile,
A word, a look, a kiss,
Could men beguile:
And here am I to-day
Just as mad as they!

Where do all the lovely Children go to?
Are these stupid people what they grow to?

I like the bold and stirring city street,
Where men, by thousands in the hour, you meet;
Thousands of crossing threads, that weave alway
The God-seen pattern of a London day.

Who agree? not any two.
Why dispute then, I and you?
No two mortals are the same,
So let either bate his claim.

Leaves, lightly-poised and dallying with cool air,
Are millstones, weighed against her gravest mind.

Her thought is like the winging of a bat,
Rapid and variable—

—prove their wit
As much by all that they omit
As all they say.

A very fine thing to be serious, no doubt,—
But heavens! what poor things to be serious about!

I think with wonder on the days
Which seem'd too short;
I travell'd then in pleasant ways,
Work was but sport.

—nowadays a Throne
Is Ceremony's high key-stone—

Majestic oriental indolence—

What are Nations but Schools—Eton meets Harrow at cricket;
Germany, France, with cannon-balls and Paris for wicket.
The Soldier loses or wins, he plays for money and glory,
Quiet people must pay—that is the worst of the story.

When waves of war swept over the land—

Sung to the battle-rhyme of ringing blows—

On a Certain Mansion

Who lives in this fine house? Why, Titian;
Holbein and Turner in addition.
'Tis to them we pay our visit.
Who's the owner? Lord—who is it?

For his amusement Horace Walpole
Stirring up monkeys with a long pole—

O Simonides, Catullus,
Ronsard, Herrick, wherefore cull us
Little bunches? Don't ye know it's
Paltry to be minor poets?

Tommy Moore's Statue looks awkward and ill at ease,
Yet, don't disparage the sculptor's abilities;
So Erin's Bard would have look'd, not a doubt of it,
Fast fix'd in Dublin, not free to run out of it.

Life budded, bloom'd, and burgeon'd forth in Keats,
Luscious but hectic—

The Poet immeasurably transcends his work.
Over the broad bright stage of Shakespeare's mind
A thousand dramas moved; in Milton's thought
Rose fifty epics; ah, what poems flew
From this dull world with Keats's, Shelley's, mind!

Why say in verse what might be said in prose?
Why sing, unless your thought to music flows?

To Certain Folk.

I gave you works of art; you reckon'd them sorry stuff.
I'll give you chips and shavings; they are more than good enough.

How write freely, knowingly?—with two thousand a year one might.
But then, with two thousand a year one would hardly care to write.

Dazzling words of doubtful sense—
How cheap the verbally intense!

How oft a low completeness is preferr'd
To highest beauties dimly manifest.

Is Literature a Trade? O very well!
Please when you call to ring the tradesmen's bell.

Nobody drinks, but every one sips,
Nobody reads, but every one dips.

High climbs Autolycus in modern days;
He once cut purses, but he now writes plays.

Paper-currency, you know, is all the modern fashion;
Paper-money genius, paper-money passion,
Paper-money government, paper-money creed,—
Thus we pay our way through life and gold no longer need.

I do not wish my life to go to sleep,
I won't be sworn to look before I leap,
I can't be always prudent, safe and sure,
Nor bid one mood, however wise, endure!

In Purgatory rather let me stray
Than straight to Heav'n be nose-led all the way!

Taste the fruits of life in season,
Airy mirth and solid reason—

From the smoky choky city, from the ceaseless throng and riot,
Very gladly I withdraw to taste a little country quiet.

—with high wall and pale
Hath put the landscape into jail.

Busying himself to graft the wayside crabs
Leaves his own garden wild—

—the pig's great nose
Finds little sweetness in the rose.

Good manners which avoid all strife,
And still keep oil'd the wheels of life—

An Old Belief

Good Friday night 'twas revealed to me
Christ's Cross was made of an apple tree,
Of the very same stock that once did grow
In the Garden of Eden long ago.

The poor must be troublesome still,
And nothing on earth can prevent it,
For, preach or expound as you will,
You can't make the wretched contented.

Written on a Fan

Æolian Sceptre! Spare us East and North,
Waft but the South wind and the Zephir forth.

I knew poor Dives in his happy time,
His days of poverty, with youth, hope, trust,
Friendship and freedom—

This is our evangel
That Satan the black angel
Is waiting close behind you
To seize you and to bind you
And cast you into burning
Whence is no returning.

Epitaph (*by the Departed*)

I was a Bishop sleek and gracious,
Champion of St. Athanasius,
Now I sit above the sky
Watching unbelievers fry.

Epitaph (*by the Departed*)

If I be living, then I am not here,
If I be dead, the dust-hole is not I;
In either case, it plainly doth appear
If you say "*Here he lies*," 'tis you that lie.

A is dyspeptic, ugly, and lame,
B is handsome, jovial and strong,—
No one can alter right and wrong,
But how shall their views of life be the same?

Slight not words that move in measure,
Such may bring delicious pleasure,
Such may prove your memory's treasure.

Only the young for poetry care.
So be it: young folk there always are.

An author's thoughts, in verse or prose,
To smiles or tears can win her;
She never heard how long his nose,
Or what he likes for dinner!

A Prolific Author

His books no man can number,
Nor line thereof remember.

Man is more than beast by language only,
you find.
But how got Man a language?—before or
after a mind?
Oh what clever guesses! Oh what gabble
of geese!
And "Science" must have its day; and
wonders will never cease.

This is the motto of great and small—
"Each for himself, and the Devil take all!"
That's if he *can*—for in this new Age
We don't keep a devil, except for the stage.

Say what you will, no hours can be
So sweet as 'twixt eleven and three,
When the teasing world is far from me,
And Time is part of Eternity.

O the morning hour,
Dew on the spirit's flow'r,
Freshness, joy and power!

When light comes in and stars go out
And early cocks begin to shout,
We quit the straw and shake our rags
And shoulder soon our brats and bags;
And if we see a fowl astray
We pick her up upon our way.

The wind knocks,
The night weeps,
The cradle rocks,
The baby sleeps.

Your father and your mother
Were children long ago,
And you'll be men and women
When you grow—when you grow!

Fowler and Jowler
Went to the bog:
Very good sport
For the Man and the Dog.

They killed a couple
And wounded a third—
"Very bad sport!"
Said the little brown Bird.

On the ripe red-currants robin redbreast revels!

—noisy as a rookery in May!

—as greedy for them
As a jackdaw for cherries!

Face, hands, dabbled in gore?
—Blackberry juice, no more!

A cheek well-ripen'd with the country sun—

—the infant staggering
And balancing on little sturdy stumps—

(*Bubbles*)—Bright little worlds that float and fly,
Made as tho' of a tear and a sigh—

—sees beauty in an old and faded face.

—a venerable face,
Touch'd with the tender light of infancy.

A light limb'd Child, fresh as an April breeze
That shakes the daffodils; a Maiden slim
And sweeter than the bending rosy spray;
A rich and stately Woman like a tree
In fruited autumn—

Childhood's health is water pure,
Manhood's, foaming wine—

—the happy Boy
Who hangs his kite upon the cold March breeze.

She moving through the fair crowd like a swan
Through water-lilies—

—her white thoughts
Gliding like swans with innocent dignity.

The freshness of her colour like the pink
Of a sea-shell, or of a daisy's rim
New blown in early meads—

Her hair was fair as flax when scutch'd and carded,
Her eyes were bluer than the blue flax-blossom,
Her shape was like a slender sapling guarded
Safe from all blasts, her youthful neck and bosom
Were closely, loosely, in her frock enfolded
As a vale-lily's swathing leaflets hold it.

—a maiden mild and fair
In Sunday frock and shining hair.

Her slender form and modest grace
The calm religion of her face—

Drooping in languid billows round her neck
The golden burthen of her plenteous hair

Her soft loose hair like a brown bird's wing—

The happy hour smiles yet
Tho' years withdrawn,—too happy, once, to smile!
The flushing cheek, the silence, hopes and fears
Commingling, till She look'd me in the face
And freely gave me both her tender hands.
Life moves and changes on; but love is ours,
And we are love's, thank Heav'n, for evermore.

Your hand in my hand, dearest. Pulse with pulse,
Consenting vital tides, and soul with soul
Throb harmony.

Calm on the pillow rests my head,
My heart upon the thought of you,
I sink to sleep and happy dreams,
That happier day confesses true.

Uncertain gleams, uncertain showers
That please and mock the childlike hours;
Uncertain showers, uncertain gleams,
Like frowns and smiles that come in dreams,
That pass away and leave no trace
Upon the sleeper's tranquil face.

As from the stars descended sleepy dreams
Wrapt in dim dew and fragrancy—

Veil on veil falls over one's eyes
Till a phantom dawn begins to rise
From the sea of sleep—

Like sounds that reach but do not wake
The dreamer of a dream—

As one who wakens in chill morn, and sleep
Weighs soft and heavy on his eyelids yet,
And daylight vexes with its toil and pain,
Then, shutting them a moment, all as swift
Relapses down the smooth and silent slope
To that deep grotto curtained round with dreams,
As though the day were flitting fantasy
And slumber only real.

As when the fever'd brow grows cool and moist,
And the face calm, and the wild wandering thought
Sooth'd into slumber—

My bedroom window faces to the east,
And when the dawn's conspiracy's afoot,
I watch its fine cold secrets working up
To sun-burst, till the rich confederate clouds
Abate, and one white splendour reigns supreme.

—like thoughts within the twilight of a dream.

And in my throbbing ear sounds palpably
The tread of Time through the still night—

Mystical Truth is solid and real,
Everything passes, except the Ideal,
Not seen with eye or told with tongue,—
Soul-music of spirits rightly strung.

Life's wondrousness, like weight o' th' air,
Unfelt because within us as without.

Some that I know make always start
A gush of sweet waters within my heart;
To others, do or say as they will,
A bitter fountain replieth still.

Came with him ever chill and gloom,
My heart rose when he left the room
With sigh of deep relief.

Green hills, blue mountains, rocks and streams,
Birds, woodland, starry-night, sea-foam,
Flowers, fairies, children, music, dreams,
A book, a garden-chair,—sweet home!

—the fix'd meditative eye may find
With awe on some horizon of the mind
New intimation, as when distantly
Gush cloudy sunbeams on a silent sea
To natural vision.

As sometimes on a day roof'd in with cloud,
Hills standing sombre, shadow everywhere,
The sun from the world's end at evening looks
To the far east, enkindling it once more,
So in the old man's thought a dying light
Struck on his scenes of youth—

—we dimly see
A Finger stooping to the dust of death
To write therein Eternity.

I know not what Eternity may mean:
But I am of it; and eternal things
Alone concern me.

NOTES

NOTES

IF one considers the sensibilities, suspicions and prejudices of Mankind, and also how little we really know of each other, it will certainly appear that some *finesse* is requisite, not only in Society, but in meeting every Person. It is not the same whether you approach him *thus* or *thus*, or put a question in *that* form or *this;* the manner may be as requisite to success as the substance. These are not duplicities, but niceties of good sense and good feeling, easily learnt when we see and feel rightly. Some good people neglect them, to their own cost.

"*Laudator temporis acti*" is a very old jest or taunt; and no doubt the world looks brighter to most of us at twenty than at sixty; nevertheless a man must have leave to say, if he think so, that the world—even supposing general progress to be a necessary doctrine—is not at all points improving. Nay, does not history teach us that the praisers of the good old times must have been sometimes in the right of it, at least in the comparison of one generation with another?

Many writers attack Respectability, (call it Philistinism and other hard names) but I have observed people without talents, graces, or any superiority, passing through life simply and steadily, cherishing their wedded partners in better lot or worse, good to their relations, content with moderate pleasures, diligent, regular, inoffensive, trustworthy, useful, who if not *respectable* would have been—I know not exactly what, but in all probability more or less ugly and mischievous.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small."

—The Ancient Mariner.

It is unfortunate that the word "Love," which ought to be absolute king in its own region, should be used not only for the finest, highest, deepest, sweetest, holiest, of human relations, but, as the French do, for mere sensual passion, "a bloody fire," and also for our feelings of attachment to the lower animals. We do not, but in phrase, "love" dogs, horses, birds, butterflies, and our misuse of this word is a main example of how language can entangle thought. "Poetry," "Religion," "God," are also much abused words, and these four are the greatest words we have.

I have known a child, who had not in his nature any of the materials of a *liar*, sometimes tell a monstrous, absurd, transparent lie. Such children often grow up into most honest people; but, having ready imaginations and impetuous tempers, they set vividly before them some object or desire and immediately invent and carry into action the means which to their inexperience seems likely to fulfil it. On failing, these children are usually overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and take a step forward in morals.

Children's natural disposition is for the real and simple, until we puzzle and pervert them with glaring nonsense. What is best in artificial shows and performances they cannot at all take in,—and this rare and costly best is perhaps, at best, a titbit, a flavour, a perfume, that could well be dispensed with.

There are really good and bad people in the world; of whom, respectively, you *ought* to think well and ill, and indeed must, if your perceptions are healthy and your decisions honest. But there are also many people of whom you may *choose* to think ill or well,—that is, kindly or unkindly,—by the voluntary and customary action of your mind. You may open your eyes to what there is of better in them, shut your eyes to what is not so good; and, so far, you may be acting justifiably, nay wisely; but to go farther, as often is done, into habitual misrepresentation, applying as suits you the magnifying power or the diminishing power of an optic glass to every fact and every surmise—this is both foolish and wicked.

When I consider how much those who have their minds already cultivated and enriched are indebted daily to books, and how many other sources of supply to the Intellect and Imagination are constantly open for me, I cannot wonder at the uneducated being impelled so often into drunkenness and crime by their bodily miseries conjoined with the dull vacancy or bitter gnawing of their uninstructed minds, where the notions that do exist of themselves and the world are mainly erroneous and pernicious. Give a poor man the best education that general circumstances will permit, and you undoubtedly give him the very best gift that one man can confer upon another.

The Government, that is the Nation, ought to ensure the training, physical, moral, intellectual and industrial, of every child born within the circle of its authority,—ought to keep supervision of each until the age of discretion,—and ought to give to each the freest opportunities of advancement according to capacity.

The greatest of social questions is not land or monarchy or women's rights, but Education; not merely or mainly alphabetic education, but moral and practical training, formation of good habits of mind and body, and in the first place obedience, self-control, punctuality and diligence; then as far as possible, apportionment of fit labour to each and to all, and exaltation of their pleasures. Fit labour for each; fit pleasure for each; both within wholesome limits.

The loftiest conceivable theory of education is not too fine-spun to be applicable to the dullest and coarsest human material. Given any human creature, what is the right aim for his education? It can be given infallibly in six words:—*To make the best of him.* Neither more nor less than that is the right aim of education.

Education cannot add one tittle to a man's genius, but it can wondrously affect his character and career. Right education is a blessing, wrong a curse, each to an immeasurable degree.

In these modern times the crowd of over-educated men (and women too) is alarmingly on the increase. Over-educated is by no means synonymous with highly educated. Some are over-educated in learning to spell, because they are thus spoilt for their proper places in life. All education which is not a drawing-out but an over-laying and over-loading of natural powers is an evil and not a good. Persons but scantily endowed with imagination, judgment, and reasoning faculty may under favourable circumstances acquire a large, though not discriminating, knowledge of what others have said, a fluent supply of words, and therewith a boundless self-conceit, so that they seem to themselves to be not only wise but the wisest of living mankind, while in fact they are essentially and incurably poor-minded. Such people, unoriginal, fluent, plausible, narrow and immodest, are certain, even in retailing the good things acquired by memory, to confuse them by lack of proportionality and by additions from their own weakness. Spoilt for such work as nature meant them for, they are very ready to put themselves forward as counsellors and leaders, and not seldom gain a temporary acceptance. Their effect as a class is to darken counsel and mislead. Even a man of more than average ability may be over-educated, and thus lose his proper work and effectiveness in life.

There is a class of people who find what they want, or something that looks like it, in Comte,—those namely who require, before all else, satisfaction to their reasoning faculties. This, properly considered, and without the least paradox in the world, is the most unreasonable demand they could possibly make.

"Positivism," that ghastly parody on religion, has no future. It is absolutely sterile. The feeblest form of mysticism has more of truth and reality.

Immeasurably better even the fog and smoke of Superstition than the vacuum of Scientific Atheism. The one is unwholesome, the other fatal.

There is certainly nothing absurd in the notion of special providence or that of answers to prayer. We know that, within limits, will *can* alter the chain of events.

Old Rome with disdainful toleration made room for each conquered country's Gods in her Pantheon; and this to the cultivated meant One God, many Symbols,—to those of them, that is, to whom it meant more than Policy.

Theology is religion, as much as a cookery-book is a dinner. Religion is right living.

What a word is "Christianity"! Ideal Christianity, the greatest of truths; Dogmatic Christianity, the greatest of lies; and no one sure what any one means, or what he himself means, when he says "Christianity."

I have a tender and partly awful feeling for Christianity, just as I have for the memory of the old Church of my childhood,—the old Edifice itself, its altar, pews, windows, galleries, services and singing.

Whatever things may still be doubtful to honest and thoughtful men, it is no longer credible that "Civilized Nations" have a right to meddle with strangers on the pretence of extending the blessings of Christianity, or to quarrel because they have formed a paid soldier class, or to support and honour an untrusted priesthood.

False doctrine often goes along with good practice. "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right," is a mere fallacy. Good people often hold and spread wrong opinions, and do the more hurt because they are good people.

Some writers are fond of saying—This or that doubtless was an error, or a delusion, or a lie; but it was exceedingly useful at the time, very valuable, &c. But who can weigh good against evil effects? When you find out anything to be untrue, have done with it, that's the simple course, and be glad that you have found it out.

When a man has no belief in any intelligent regulation of the Universe, all evils are possible for him. This is no mysticism, but the soundest common-sense. It is easy to deny Free Will argumentatively, to any degree of cleverness. Seriously to disbelieve Free Will is to be of unsound mind. The whole world, the whole universe, is a network of cause and effect; but each human being, along with all he inherits, receives a power of original modification, may become a new starting point of forces, and can, within due measure, choose what he will do with this power.

Only in and by thyself could even Almighty Power work thy salvation.

Surely it is for Man's good that he cannot comprehend the primary, or even the post-primary forces of the Universe. Had he the intellect of a God (and nothing less would serve) without the other qualities inseparable from the idea of Divinity, his state must become Devilish. Through Eternity man's correlation with God may resemble that of the mathematical line and curve which continually approach but can never meet?

We feel within ourselves something greater immeasurably than all that happens to us. Our life is not a mere portion or atom, but a centre, a throne; and the universe a panorama that spreads and changes around us.

In things proveable you must honestly go by your logical reason; but in the vast crowd of things (thoughts) beyond human proof or testing, but *felt* in the heart, soul, imagination, you cannot go by it on pain of being struck stupid—the condition of all prosaists.

I am submissive and grateful to the "Scientists" so long as they do not go over their own border; when they do I feel vexed and sometimes angry with them. When one is received as a great authority there is always temptation to answer *en maître* the questions that assail one on all sides.

To talk of our resting on civilization is childish. Our civilization rests on supernatural faith, and without that could never have come into existence.

One may naturally enough object to be told one's duty in an austere and dictatorial tone. After all, does the lecturer so precisely know what my duty is? Life is not a simple but a complex, and often puzzling, business. His experiences, his views, are perhaps different from mine, and why should I adopt his in preference? He must, at least, be a very uncommon man who has a right to bully me for not giving in to his opinion.

Darwinism interests mankind, not as a question of natural history—mankind cares little for natural history—but as it touches or seems to touch the question, Is the Universe governed by Mind?

I was sick and dull, without courage, without faith, could speak with no one, hated all my books, hated life itself where mortals play the fool,—dark be the sleep of death!

I slept a short sleep, not of death, and awoke, and walked out to the hills. I saw silent clouds standing afar off in the sky; I noted the wild birds, and heather, and green moss. As I walked homewards through blowing air, my circle expanded itself to the distant horizon and immeasurably beyond; my spirit was tranquil, my heart praised God the Lord, my soul exulted greatly in its wonderful being.

I like the smell of Southernwood; which is sweet along with an acid freshness, and seems as though it ought to be good in sick rooms. I remember when taken out to walk by my nurse, seeing Southernwood in cottage-gardens (also marygolds and bachelor's buttons, and a blue flower, cross-laced with black) and having a bunch sometimes to carry home. These plants on this account give me a peculiar delight, and they are united with the remembrance of long sunny Sunday afternoons. I was glad to see in the kitchen-garden of Chelsea Hospital a great deal of Southernwood grown by the old pensioners, thinking that it testified of a love, preserved through war and travel, for the innocent delights of their childhood.

From infancy a devourer of books, I have many times regretted that my reading has been so desultory and miscellaneous. But of late I am more satisfied in the retrospect, perceiving that I sought in turn, and usually managed to find, at each epoch of life, the special nutriment for which my nature then craved. I ate with appetite and assimilated the food. The gains from this naturalness are to be set against the losses from lack of governance; and though I should not dare to *choose* thus for another, I would not on the whole have had things fall differently in my case.

I never approach London from the country, without some renewal of that throb with which I first felt myself flying into the dim cloud that droops over the monstrous metropolis of England. I was then a boy, and had lived most of the time in a distant corner of the kingdom, so that every sight and sound of the great city was marvellous and delightful to me—the long lines of houses, the shops and gas lamps, the whirling carriages and throngs of pedestrians, the adventurous diving here and there at choice, the many-roomed Aladdin's palace of theatre and musical wonders nightly open, the variety of people, the freedom of the hotel.

Travel mostly on foot, when you can; the natural way of going.

You have no doubt often remarked when looking at a group of talkers how pleasant, clever and interesting their conversation appeared to be, so long as you could not hear one word of it. The gestures, changes of feature, apparent mutual sympathies and suggestions were like a drama expressed in pantomime. You filled it in and coloured it with your own hopes, wishes and dreams. But, arrived within earshot, your fine fantasy is over: again the old platitudes, pretences, delusions, deceits, stupidities, the old fencing to keep each other off from any real contact, the old play-acting and emptiness!

Formality is necessary everywhere. But in men's manners and intercourse it ought to conceal itself, as it so beautifully does in natural phenomena. Formality is in the mechanism that underlies vitality and supports it, and it seems that artistic care, so to speak, has been taken everywhere to hide this mechanism in the Divine work, and with what wonderful and beautiful success.

No time! a busy age! we live at high pressure! But bless my soul! How is your time spent then? Any part of it in nonsense, frivolity, stupidity, sham show, sham duties, empty ceremonies, pretended pleasures? I have thought, looking at the crowds walking and driving through Regent Street,—perhaps not one in fifty of these people could give a really sound and sufficient reason for being here.

The Theatre is the most attractive and the most disappointing of amusements; a magnet which alternately attracts and repels. Yet its influence we, as a community, cannot escape,—the pungent story-book and picture-book of multitudes of town-dwellers.

(At the Theatre.) Here we enjoy at once the laziest and most stimulating of mental amusements.

Subtlety is of little or no value on the stage. Shakespeare's subtlety is so much into the bargain; the stage-effect makes the play.

I sometimes catch myself saying, "The fact is I seldom go to the Theatre," and then conscience gives me a hint, to consider, and on considering I find that I do go to the Theatre pretty often and should like to go oftener. Think as we please, say what we will, mankind must have theatrical amusements of some sort or another. But poor mankind, in this as in many things, is now in the hands of those to whom money-making is the first and chief object.

The ideal is absolutely necessary on the stage. Realistic tragedy, or comedy either, is and must always be, degrading.

Oratory and Drama both appeal to mixed audiences; but Oratory deals mainly with practical matters, Drama with ideal; Oratory presents itself as solid, Drama as poetic; Oratory is more instant and hot, Drama loftier and more memorable.

Irish Character.—To an ordinary Englishman the Irish character is incomprehensible. A Frenchman is easily *en rapport* with it. Paddy (I lean very little on race here, much on habit, association, local colour)—Paddy is never content without the free-and-easiest equality of social intercourse; yet it is true without the least paradox that no other human being is so sensitive to the slightest points of manners and courtesy, and that (stranger still) he adores forms and ceremonies, pedigrees, titles and dignities.

A wise and eminent Irishman (S. F.) said to me long ago, "*Punch's* insults to Ireland cost the English Government at least £10,000 a year for additional soldiers and police!"

Irish music has no gloom, no suggestion of permanent sadness, but a tender pathos, a sweet melancholy, like that inspired by the sighing wind of evening, or memories, gentle not poignant, shadowed not darkened. Plentiful merriment is in it, arch, jolly, or reckless, bold gay courage too, and triumph. Massive grandeur is not here, such as sounds in *The March of the Men of Harlech*; there is no breathing of "deliberate valour" in the Dorian mood. The Irish battle-marches are gay quicksteps,—well accordant this with the national character, which is *lyrical* in all its phases. I believe that a great genius for Lyrical Poetry has been obscured and almost lost to the world in the little-known and continually decaying language of Keltic Erin. The names of the tunes are often full of lyrical suggestion, and there were probably words to many of them.

By far the greatest difficulty in arranging a Home Government for Ireland lies in the deep-rooted antagonism—I will not call it ineradicable—of Catholics and Protestants; the former having, by count of heads, a majority of three to one. When men have learnt to consider a Religious Creed as a body of Symbols, not of doctrines, many political arrangements will become easier.

Irishmen have decided talent as waiters and with horses, yet I never in London met with an Irish waiter or cabman. Why is this? The brogue taboos them, most likely.

War, some argue, must be so long as men keep so much of the brutish nature. But do wars mostly spring out of mankind's brutishness, combativeness, anger, lust for blood? Or not rather from the selfish greed, ambition, trickery of a few, who craftily stir up and use for these purposes the gross passions latent in the multitude! War once let loose—it enlists, it violently compels all the passions into its mad service, blessing them with most sacred names.

The nation ought to be at all times ready to defend itself with the whole fighting force of its male population.

No standing army. War is only allowable in defence of some principle greatly dearer than life: for money (*i.e.* trade), vanity, revenge, "prestige," any kind of selfishness, it is devilish.

I can't fall in with his proposals for Reform (*forming again* in the strongest sense)—but when one like my friend William Morris, poet, artist, honest man, comes forward thus as extreme agitator, it is full surely a Sign of the Times, not to be neglected.

Public evils once defined, let the Government interfere with them in every possible way.

Though I can't register myself as democrat, I would sooner leave a question of war or no war to working men than to political partisans and mercantile speculators.

Bonaparte, first the Apostle then the Judas of Democracy.

One thing I don't yet understand about the Anti-Corn-law agitation. Must English working men and their families eat wheaten bread or else starve? Might they not do better with a very much smaller quantity of wheaten bread?

Mathematics—a collection of methods of measurement, without any reference to substance or quality of things, but so rapid, wide, complicated, powerful, that to those of a particular turn of mind it appears magical, as it were, and superlative, and to give them a key to all doors in the Temple of Knowledge; nay further, opens, some of them conceive, the gardens of imaginative beauty. But this is wholly a delusion, Mathematics being an instrument of Science, and where Imagination and Art begin, Science ends.

Vagueness, in writing or in speech (want of significance, absence of the power of making a distinct impression) is the surest evidence of inferiority. A writer or speaker may be obscure, yet not vague; subtle or abstruse, yet far from vague; verbose or involved, or discursive, or incomplete, without deserving the charge of vagueness. No good writer or speaker is vague, whatever other faults he may have.

Vague utterance (unfortunately too common both in prose and verse) is insignificant and unimpressive because the writer's mind has no grasp of anything substantial, while the corporeal hand or tongue works away, producing a certain visible or audible result,—which is much worse than nothing.

Some one defined Genius as an extraordinary capacity for taking pains; but this is absurd. Genius is one thing; the power of taking pains another. When both meet in one man (will and opportunity also granted) great works are produced. A commonplace man may be very painstaking but the quality of his work must be commonplace.

I entirely agree with Goethe's preference of subjects springing out of the poet's own moods and experiences.

The substance of a good novel consists of experience and observation, put artistically into a narrative form. A writer, however sensitive, keenwitted, accomplished, who has not sure footing on the solid ground, will in the end only give us something fantastic and frivolous.

Letters may easily be as insincere as talk. Many are complimentary, sycophantic, interested, dissimulative, simulative, coloured with this tint or that. And why should the evidence of diarists and anecdotists be so readily received? They may often be dishonest, very often inaccurate.

A *conceit* in writing I understand to be an image, fancy, comparison or simile which is unnatural, affected and insincere, not having any real root in the nature of things, not a spontaneous birth of the imaginative mind, from joy, feeling or insight, but a mere cleverness, a cold elaboration, a piece of false wit, always, however new or startling, the offspring of a conventional and superficial, or rather *pseudo*, relation between the observer or thinker and the matter before him.

Conceit, when spoken of a man's manners and bearing, has a well-known meaning, some part of which continues in the word in its application to literature, for we are impelled to think of a writer of conceits as one pluming himself on his talents and itching for immediate and petty applause. Fashion has sometimes seduced great men into imitating this tendency of lower minds, and in them it is at once conspicuous as a blemish among the virtues of their writing. Shakespeare, by the way, who so often carelessly indulged himself in this idle fashion of his time, shows in *Love's Labour's Lost*, as well as in many separate passages elsewhere, how conscious he was of the absurdity.

Translation.—An attempt at literal translation of a poem into verse of another language—close in words and close in metre—(except here and there, by luck, a passage or a short poem) must needs be a failure: to succeed (if at all possible, which I doubt, considering the nature of language and the nature of poetry) it would require a wonderful and hitherto unseen combination of powers. It may be said that Shakespeare has been translated into German with great closeness and great felicity. The relationship between the German and English tongues has certainly lessened the difficulty, yet not removed it. Whenever in Shakespeare you find a passage specially poetical, you may rely upon it that the more rich, poetical and peculiar it is, the less has it been possible for the ablest translator to

put it into other words without loss. This seems to me almost self-evident. Put the sense of any of Shakespeare's finest passages or scenes into other *English* words, however carefully, however ably, and can you doubt the result? Must it not be more or less a failure? Even if we imagined a greater poet than Shakespeare undertaking it, he could not deal with Shakespeare's thoughts and imaginings as well as Shakespeare himself. In short, the form and substance of Poetry are one and inseparable.

A second method of translation is to attempt giving the spirit rather than the letter—this is in fact paraphrasing—writing a new poem on the same theme: it may be a good poem or a bad one, but it is not Goethe's *Faust*, nor Homer's *Iliad*, but something which so far as it possesses original merit supersedes and shuts out from sight the original. [Unfinished.]

I must be born over again before I can enjoy, or even tolerate, those identical endings which the custom of the French language makes pass for rhymes. The French are wrong in this I am sure; the principles of assonancy involved are too universal and absolute to be fairly over-ridden by the custom even of so great and polished a nation. Likeness in variety is the acoustical law of rhyming; and this law has announced itself emphatically, and the more so because unconsciously, with early hymns of monkish Latin, and in the jingles of the nursery.

As every art is imperfect at first, a few identical

endings (clearly exceptional) were admitted by our primitive English poets, but have become rarer with each new generation, and if found in a modern production appear as confessed blemishes.

But our neighbours have adopted and extended the barbarous license into a habit so general that a large proportion of the quasi-rhymes of their best poets are pairs of identical sound.

Verse, which may be called the daughter of Language and Music, was born at a time of the world whereto History stretches not, and has been cherished and beloved amongst all the nations, ancient and modern, barbarous and civilized. Babes love the sound, youth passionately delights in it, age remembers it gladly. It helps memory, purifies and steadies language, guards elocution. It gives wings to thought, touches hidden verities, can soothe grief, heighten joy, beautify the common world, and blend with the divinest aspirations.

Songs (I now speak of those made to be sung) form a weak but pleasing class of poetry. United with actual music, they touch many auditors who care little or nothing for poetry alone. But good songs are seldom or never good poetry; the words are enslaved to the music.

It is true that, anciently, verse was always accompanied by the sister art; but each was then in a kind of barbarous freedom, and the union, though constant, was loose and easy. Burns, a true poet, wrote many famous and favourite songs, with a poetic hue throughout and here and there a line or a verse of poetry, but no complete poem among them all. The ideal song is at once a perfect song and a perfect poem. Moore, a wit and worldling, with musical ear, wrote many fashionable and successful songs, fitting words to tunes with amazing nicety,—but without any poetry at all, in the best sense of that ill-used term; I mean without those higher qualities, wanting which, verse is but an ingenious toy of the intellect.

There is originality in the world, but where an Originator? We have Poetry and Art the noble companions of King Soul, Science and Criticism his potent servants: where have these come from? The Oriental Myth, the Greek Myth, the Jewish Myth, the Christian Myth, no man made them, no set of men. Yet they have come into man's world and rooted themselves there. Homer took what he found existing, so did the Greek Dramatists, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, the balladists. "Shaper" rather than "maker" is the word for a poet. In the mental world, as in the physical, man shapes with boundless ingenuity, but makes nothing.

I cannot agree with those who argue that a literary work is best considered unconnected with the writer of it. There is no such thing as abstract literary work. To know the vital conditions under which an important book came into being would always be of great interest and value. I am not in the least thinking of gossippers and interviewers, whose details are usually altogether misleading. For me the book called Shakespeare's Works would be vastly increased in interest if I could know more of the man Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's aim was to produce attractive plays for his theatre; the poetry and wisdom flowed in spontaneously, as it were, from the deep and perennial well of his genius.

If Shakespeare's mind was unfathomably profound, it does not follow that each and every of his *dramatis personæ* must be considered and studied as unfathomably profound. Shakespeare built, rigged, and fitted out his ships for the theatrical waters.

Shakespeare's skill in stage-effects, also his fluency and naïveté of language, come largely from his technical familiarity with the theatre. His great mind flowed freely in this channel.

Shakespeare planned his work quietly, executed it without any fuss, and cleared away the scaffoldings and rubbish completely.

Shakespeare never thinks of going out of the manner of speech of his own day. His people of King Richard's time, King John's time, King Lear's time—his people of this or that foreign land,—in old Rome, at the Siege of Troy,—all speak Elizabethan English pure and simple. If he gives a touch of dialect in a comic character, it is very seldom and sparingly. Sir Hugh's and Fluellen's bits of Welsh-English are about the whole of it.

No play of Shakespeare is better written from end to end than the *Merry Wives*, if any so well.

Elizabethan Plays—what odd things they are! For example, Heywood's *A Woman killed with Kindness*, which has passages of memorable beauty, and therewithal and for the most part childish silliness. As to plot, there is none whatever. Frankford's transport on becoming sure of his wife's infidelity and her remorse for her offence, make up all.

Lamb's *Selections* did more than justice to the Old Dramatists. People said, "if these extracts are so fine, how fine must be the Plays!" The extracts are often very fine, but few can read the plays, and no one can remember them.

There is a great deal about chastity in *The Faithful Shepherdess*. It is very much in evidence. The virtuous characters are glaringly modest, reminding one of the obtrusive bashfulness of the Medicean Venus. The unvirtuous ones are—very much so.

Bacon's *Henry VII.*, one of the best written pieces of history I know. With large experience and observation, concise and opulent style, lucid order, dignity not excluding apt tinges of humour. Its only fault is the grave one of a low morality in handling politic deceits and extortions, being in this inferior to Shakespeare's Historical Plays, into a gap of which it comes, more exact but less noble.

Bacon.—I stand in awe of his great fame, but can feel no hearty belief in him, nor any affection for the man or his books.

The earliest English poet whose verse is worth reading for its own sake, continues, after five hundred years, to stand in the very first rank, and has had more influence on English poetry than any other writer.

Lord Surrey, Spencer, and Shakespeare (in his poems), Dryden and Pope, Wordsworth and Crabbe, Keats, Tennyson and the modern school, are various enough in garments and in gait, but all march in a procession at the head whereof is a quiet elderly Figure with forked gray beard, in a dark dress

and hood. Keats not merely followed Chaucer but imitated his dress and gestures and thus set a fashion of affectations which still prevails. Inversion is one of these affectations.

Everyone knows Herrick's delicious piece *To Daffodils*.

> "Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
> You haste away so soon;"

and it must have occurred to many a reader that the hardy sturdy Daffodil was a strange flower to choose for the type of frailness and speedy vanishing. The Poet, I doubt not, was thinking of the Day-Lily, *Hemerocallis*, "that is," says Gerarde, "fair or beautiful for a day," adding, "The nature is rather referred to the Asphodils than to Lillies." Whether Herrick wrote "Daffodil" for "Asphodil" by a slip, or following some rustic confusion of naming, one cannot say. Another remark of Gerarde seems to imply that the mistake was sometimes made: "Asphodill is called in Latin, *Asphodelus;* in English, Asphodill, not Daffodill; for Daffodill is *Narcissus*, another plant differing from Asphodill."

A few felicitous lines have given Richard Lovelace a place in English literature, a place whereto one kindly welcomes him looking at his portrait, the handsome, highbred, melancholy face.

Dryden has masterly sense and wit, a lofty sustained rhetoric flowing in measured and vigorous declamation, but of *poetry* not a jot; he is not even poetical.

Dryden was an able critic, a vigorous political satirist, a hack play-wright, a sycophant and a turn-coat. His verse is declamation, muscular, resonant, witty, and essentially unpoetic; though by dint of his critical faculty, general intelligence, and long practice in that business of versifying he produced some vivacious and memorable lines. He and his like have no true brotherhood with Chaucer and Shakespeare.

Blake's poetry has too much of the random in its manner of exposition; there are extraordinarily fine effects, and he deserves to be credited with high general intention, but you are never sure for many lines together that he is definitely expressing any distinct ideas, and not mostly drifting about with wind and tide—say whim and rhyme.

The muscular grasp of style which makes common material valuable by compression is shown in Cowper's *Royal George* lines.

Burns's poetry—full of life-juice.

I gaze with astonishment at the magnificent youthful prodigality of Shelley's genius. The loose and lavish splendour of its eloquence sometimes causes a smile, which has sadness in it. They who, after doing something remarkable, die young stand at a kind of advantage in the eyes of posterity, their extravagancies and their shortcomings are extenuated, and they are vaguely credited with an unaccomplished future.

The lofty and tender sensuousness of Keats, Shelley's impassioned purity,—to taste these is a delight fit for angels.

In Byron we have a man of the world, of the Regency time, a dandy and a wit of the town, flowering into a Poet to everybody's surprise, and most of all to his own.

Byron wrote with scornful ease, vigour, humour too; but he is inaccurate, slovenly, commonplace, coarse, and repeats a few effects. The swagger, the sneer, the sham-sentimental are his properties. He was precocious, went far at a dash, and afterwards went little farther. After twenty his mind no longer grew; it only aged.

Byron and Moore both wrote under awe of the bugbear Fashion (which Byron so affected to despise); the notions and taste of the *beau monde* set limits which they feared to overpass.

Moore was quick and bright, and good-natured, cultivated, mannerly and highly adaptable. He was Catholic and Liberal in Ireland, Protestant and Tory in England. He had a conventional sense of honour for which he was ready to risk his life, but no dislike to falsehood for its own sake. He was born a Poet so far as sensibility to the sound and value of words and tact in their arrangement went. Being also naturally, and to some extent technically, musical, he fitted words to music with marvellous adroitness. His work is altogether superficial, but unrivalled in its own kind.

Campbell in his lyrics aimed at being pithy and sonorous, and succeeded. It is natural that he should be popular. He has engrafted on the formal verse of the eighteenth century something of the richness and boldness of the school that succeeded it.

There are some who could easily dispense with Campbell's name on their roll of poets. Others (agreeing there with Campbell himself) would be content without Wordsworth (who himself saw little or nothing in Campbell's writing). Some would strike off Byron, and more perhaps Moore with his drawing-room conventionalities. Many to this day (including Emerson and Carlyle) deny Shelley a place, or Keats, and reckon both vapoury, puerile, morbid. Scott, it appears evident to a certain portion of the intellectual public, was a story-teller rather than a poet. Southey has unquestionably sunk in general estimation. Coleridge to no few appears vague and fragmentary. Crabbe might be called more prosaic than prose itself. In short, very few names would be left if a moderate proportion of black-balls could exclude from Parnassus, and Fame's Roll would be left almost a blank for the benefit of the rising generation and its new ideas.

Browning's mind is surprisingly opulent, rapid and acute, and his powers fill me with inexpressible admiration. Many of his poems are unsatisfactory. I think his colloquialism of style a heresy in art, and his obscure quaintnesses, faults. But he is a very great poet,—strong, manly, copious, fresh as light among the clouds, abundant in imagery, and at once exquisitely true and surprisingly novel in his presentment of things; native in all nobleness of character, wide and deep in his view of human

life, rich in various knowledge and cultivation, of strong good sense, delicate sensibility, universal sympathies, profoundly and simply religious, overflowing with imagination, humour, eloquence, fantasy. He delights in chains of motives and lines of reasoning so fine-spun as to be invisible to ordinary eyes. His *dramatis personæ* are all addicted to special pleading.

In certain modern poets, in much of Browning himself, the verse-forms are but a succession of obstacles artificially raised, as in a steeple-chase course; the more difficult, the cleverer the horse that gets over them.

Browning is, first and last and always, a great poet. His observations and modes of expression are intensely interesting. His real opinions he never gives you. His *formulæ* are cast in old lines. His general *hypothesis*, as far as one can gather it, has no special value.

Browning is said, I believe truly, to have written *The Pied Piper* almost extempore, to please Willy Macready, son of the actor. Lord Houghton told me he made *I wandered by the Brookside* in Ireland while driving along to visit Miss Edgeworth, and thought it worth nothing.

Pan and Luna—most wonderfully done; and, when done, what is it? One more proof that R. B. can toss the caber, put the stone, foot the sword-dance, beyond all possible rivalry.

R— B—

Quick wit that moves in many a tortuous line,
Through nature's bias or by whim's design;
An opulence of strange and splendid things
Gorgeously coloured as Archangel's wings;
Most marvellous chaos!—one electric flash
Would make a glorious World here, or a crash!

My Tennyson is the Tennyson of the two volumes of 1842, of *Locksley Hall*, the *Lotos Eaters*, the *Vision of Sin*, the *Morte d'Arthur*. What precedes this book is preparation—Tennyson gathering his powers together. In this book I find Tennyson giving his priceless gift to the present and all future generations. Here and there, out of the newer work, adds itself a poem to the old treasury: the first *Northern Farmer*, *The Spinster's Sweet-Arts*. But my two dear volumes are for me—Tennyson.

D. G. R. swears by picturesque vigour in poetry, no matter how violently or how crabbedly exprest; simplicity or sweetness is flavourless to him as water or milk to a brandy-drinker; pathos touches him not, unless weeping tears of blood. He delights in the brilliant and strange; the complete and musical has little interest for him.

Barnes's poems are, most of them, sketchy in manner (though far from careless), and have the charm of good sketches.

Morris's *Jason*, a wonderful and beautiful performance; and yet, when done, it seems an *exercise*, a work of strong will, fully awake to the modern world, pushing its experiences and poetic gifts into these antique moulds, not to any fresh and gainful presentment or development, but on the contrary tinging all with the doleful hues of modern atheism and *Welt-schmerz*.

Clough's poetry is wholesome brown bread, with little enticement for the palate. He has no lyric faculty or feeling. But he is always worth reading in and *The Bothie*—a *tertium quid* between poetry and prose—has peculiar and various merits. No one could have been recommended to attempt such a thing, but, being done, we are glad of it and don't see how it could have been done otherwise. Clough's model is Wordsworth, who mixes in sometimes as much prose as we can well bear. Clough gives a larger proportion of prose and almost a minimum of poetry. It is the *writer* that interests rather than the work—his experiences, his sympathies, his honesty.

On the whole, I always felt that Clough wrote in verse not from any natural impulse, but because it lent his shyness a veil and excused his dislike of uttering a definite opinion on any subject.

When Edward FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyam* first appeared anonymously, perhaps a dozen people were found to buy a copy each out of the slender edition of 200; the other copies descended to the bookseller's penny box and long tumbled there disregarded. Now (E. F. much-talked-of in the interval) people gladly give a guinea, or perhaps two or three, for one of those 200 copies. I knew the book, almost from its appearance. I have never valued it as low as a penny nor so high as a guinea, though when the market rose I sold my copy, having no palate for rarities. *Omar Khayyam* is commonplace beyond expression—Life is a bore, let us enjoy ourselves if we can, moralising a little, blaspheming a little, to spice our amusements. FitzGerald's phrasing is often happy, rises here and there into pungency. But the whole affair is not worth thinking twice about, save as one more instance of the absurdity of the "cultivated classes."

Says Omar Khayyam
If Life be a sham
Let us still, my brave boys, taste the best of it;
Comfort our noses
With wine-cups and roses,
While making half grumble half jest of it.

Edward FitzGerald (who, having thrown off his character of Recluse, got Editor, Publisher, Reviewers and a Public, must take the consequences) was a man of quaint personality and dry humour, whom his friends liked specially. He enjoyed originality but had scarce any original productiveness.

Fielding's humour and good humour, and his masterly ease of style, are beyond praise. In conscious and acknowledged demureness of comic gravity, he follows Cervantes.

Tom Jones, though not high, is genuine. Moreover, in Mr. Allworthy, the man of perfectly pure principles, Fielding, though not in the truest artistic way, counterpoises the selfishness of his other characters. The making Jones's moral disgust of Lady Bellaston turn on the pivot of a personal blemish is remarkably characteristic of our author.

I remember noting that the basis of Tom's love for Sophia, too, is unmistakeably corporeal. Yet Tom is not justly to be accused of sensualism. No —"healthy animalism" merely; and it may be said, and often is, that a book like this is right *as far as it goes*,—but, is it well to paint a picture of human life, leaving out the spiritualism which is constantly bathing real human life, and, in some moments, sure to flow in, however long repelled? Such a picture, when I consider it in a serious mood, seems false, pernicious, fiendish.

The savage disdain of Swift argues a greater spirit and more capable of goodness, even of love, than the sneering self-complacency of a Pope and a Horace Walpole.

Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* is a very elegant and finished piece, as by an English Virgil, but what does it show us? Of what is it a picture? There is not a single Irish touch from beginning to end.

Jane Austen's insight (in a small way) into character and motive is very shrewd and amusing, her sympathy with honesty, sense, and feeling, real and wholesome. As a literary artist she etches delicately and incisively. In details she is not perfect. Verbal and grammatical slips are frequent and lessen one's pleasure a little; yet these are on the whole trivial. What really annoys me sometimes is a tone of underbreeding, of the rural respectable sort, from which even her favourite young ladies are not always free.

Miss Austen's social insight, Currer Bell's fire, Sir Walter's manliness and *bonhomie*, Dickens's picturesque fancy and grotesque humour, vivacity, humanity, Thackeray's fine mixture of tenderness and sarcasm, Trollope's sturdy commonsense—

Hawthorne.—There is in life a drift of dreamy ghostly *evanescences*, moving through our sub-consciousness; these Nathaniel Hawthorne has embodied in words, has actually fixed on paper, without dishonouring a mystic atom of their ethereality. His reticency as a story-teller is a great part of the charm; he ever leaves a dubitation floating; the bounding-lines are touched here and there with mist. He is politely evasive when you scrutinise him, yet you cannot fail to be aware that not one man in a million observes with such keen minuteness. He is perhaps the most thoroughly sceptical of modern imaginists, while none is less tangibly heterodox. In style he is fastidious—at once daring and timid—shrinking

both from the triteness of custom and from conspicuous originality, and dipping into both. This too is characteristic of the motions of his mind, now errant within the border of some dusky and dangerous region of speculation, and, almost in the same instant, beheld safely seated in a quiet homestead of conventionalism. His airy pictures have been consistently completed — phantasies though they be—in his own mind; and every touch whereby the effect is to be transferred to his reader tends to the general purpose with unique propriety. There is nothing at random; yet perhaps no sentences have a succession less to be anticipated than his, where he has written his best. He hesitates where you least expect it, and presently, in a hint, unveils more than curiosity ever dared to require.

I sometimes love Hawthorne. The shy man, through his veil of fanciful sketch and tale, shows me more of his mind and heart than any pen-dipper of them all. What a pensive sympathetic humanity makes itself felt everywhere! He is no pessimist, save as regards men's efforts to alter the natural conditions of human life and the natural effects of human actions. His fixed faith is that man is a Spirit, with his real life flowing from, and to, a finer world than that of the senses. Sometimes I don't love him so well: his attitude of *spectator ab extra* strikes a chill.

Walt Whitman is a host who treats his guests with heaps of uncooked viands; instead of a feast he offers them a larder.

Emerson's writings are the most faithful communications we have yet received through literature. Gazing upon the grandeur of mountains, the cheerful purity and the force of sea-water, the delicacy of flowers or a sweet-coloured sky we feel most literature, in comparison with these natural perfections, to be muddy, false, artificial. But Emerson stands the test.

Emerson's attitude to the world has always been of the noblest simplicity. He seems absolutely free from vanity. One would as soon expect a fir-tree or a mountain to reply to criticism, or feel it. He gives you his real opinion, if you care to hear it, because that is what he has to give, not because he thinks it better than another man's opinion.

Emerson's genius, after all, it must be owned, is not creative but critical. But on the other hand consider this immense fact, that the *subject* of his criticism is nothing less than the Soul—the spiritual Reality underlying all phenomena.

Emerson's own life has been one of the wisest, happiest, and completest that we have ever heard of. All, without exception, who have approached the living man, however far from sympathy with his books, however full of prejudice against everything connected with him, bear testimony to the noble plainness of his living, the simple dignity of his manners, the wideness of his knowledge, and the quick but irresistible impressiveness of his mental and moral strength.

Does Emerson lean too much on individuality? "It is not good for man to be alone." His dealings with the domestic relations—Home Life, which is the central fact in human society—appear somewhat pale and impersonal. He contemplates Love as a means of culture—and of course this is one point of view, and an interesting one. He oddly describes Swedenborg's wonderful book *Conjugal Love* (in which sex is never forgotten) as a treatise on *Friendship*.

Sometimes, it must be owned, he writes in such shorthand as to become obscure—even unintelligible.

The essay entitled *The Oversoul* is noble—the highest peak of these twelve mountains. It sets forth in simplest and highest eloquence the doctrine which is the real root of Christianity—that the Divinity descends into man. "We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God."

The Essay on Prudence is solid and luminous as a precious stone.

Emerson's writings have already achieved immortality, for they have sunk deep into the souls and lives of many men, and many of the best men.

Carlyle was a great painter in words. To speak to any purpose of a person or thing, you must first, he would affirm, *see* this with your mind's eye, and see accurately. He knew very well the necessity and value of abstract thinking, but nothing interested him closely which could not be induced to present itself mentally in some kind of visual form. He held it of high importance to distinguish as clearly as possible between what you know and do not know. He cared nothing for most people's opinions, but anyone who could add to his storehouse of facts, help him to a share of their real experiences, he always listened to willingly. There are minds that care nothing for facts save as "factors" in some quasi-scientific mental process, and would willingly convert the persons and personages of History into algebraic symbols. With minds of this order, however capable and cultured, Carlyle had no sympathy, and could seldom if ever allow any value to their work. He has been a thousand times called "Poet"—and so he was in a sense, one of the most remarkable of Poets; his imagination bodied forth with extraordinary vividness the forms of things unseen.

Astonishing power and skill he also had in dealing with words; and thus could bring before his readers pictures of almost unexampled force, of soft and winning tenderness too at times. He was not a Poet in the stricter use of the name—to which for the sake of clear thinking one could wish it to be confined—inasmuch as he was not possessed by that instinctive and invincible longing for perfect verbal expression which finds its natural yet mysterious auxiliary in the metrical qualities of language.

One unaccustomed to the exercise is apt to find reading Carlyle like riding a dromedary—you are borne powerfully along, but dreadfully jolted and jumbled, and your carrier grumbles and growls all through the journey!

C.'s opinion you may refuse, contradict, abjure, abhor, do what you please about: to deny his insight, his genius, would be to deny that grass is green or that water flows.

Has Carlyle grown less great, less wonderful to me after my knowing so much of his early life? No, more,—seeing the roots, stems, leaves, fruit, all the growth of his wondrous books, and the *reality* of all.

A great Soul passionate for good,
  A mighty brain, a tender heart,
With flaws of temper, glooms of mood:
  Judge him according as thou art.

One may learn much from Ruskin, but not safely take him as a guide. Always listen attentively when he speaks, but be cautious how you follow him.

Landor's was a notable personality. But it is useless in his case—or any case—to argue from that to his literary work; though sometimes one may throw light upon the other. Literary work must speak for itself. His is essentially defective throughout, and only right by good luck, which seldom befalls,—and yet in reading him one has the feeling that there is always the chance of it. You seem to walk among the jumbled materials of great things, and hope to find at last, perhaps at the next turning, something *made*. Why is it that with all his force, grace, learning, Landor remains a Great Unreadable?—for such is he, let his praisers say all they can. Partly for want of common sense? Also he is too thoroughly "literary"—thinks first and most of *words*.

The difference between one man's gifts and another's is conspicuous in the sensuous arts. Millais's power of painting is miraculous to me, so is Leech's ability in comic designs. Among writers, though far from rating him first, I find Dickens's genius the most surprising, so innate, instinctive, unaccountable, like the power of a unique musician or actor. And it seems, as it were, only to *belong* to the personal Dickens, not to *be* him. He writes by what he has, not is. Thackeray is a man of intellect, sympathy and experience, who writes well; Dickens is, in the first place, a *writer*, with certain special powers, as Mozart was a musician; and all things besides, character and circumstances, &c., act only in modification of his peculiar faculty.

Dickens writes books that delight a vast number of readers, and wonderful and charming books they are. But in the perpetual effort to be amusing and striking, he often loses sight of nature and truth. He always worships *effect*. He presents his readers with scenes of farce and melodrama; the face, figure, dress, accent, gestures and peculiarities of each actor minutely described, and further impressed by the aid of engravings; supplies admirably painted scenery, and is minutely attentive to all the furnishings and accessories; profuse in "properties," perfect in "stage-business," he fills his dialogue with points, and brings every character on and off with a hit. In short he is the highly successful manager of a superior sort of Adelphi Theatre, which magically visits each of the innumerable audience in his own room, lodging, family-circle, club, tavern, ship, tent, or where-not, over the whole face of the habitable earth; and he makes many laugh and cry, and his treasury overflows.

No wonder Dickens has an immense audience,—his style of writing being expressly adapted for lazy minds. It amuses them with a dream of activity.

W. M. T.—I knew the man, and more than most writers is he present in his books; a man of genius, of kind feeling, of honour, good-breeding and good taste, of wit and humour, both, and of exquisite literary skill.

What a privilege to open a volume when you are recovering from illness, to hear him talk to you quietly, as long as it pleases you to listen, then shut the covers gently and lean back in your chair.

Thackeray quietly insinuates into the reader's mind many essential links in a story. Becky's tyranny over Rawdon in dictating the letter to his aunt is again shown after the dragoon's interview with that relative, along with first symptoms of the exasperation which it has been gradually producing. Remark also Miss Crawley's comments on the deterioration of her nephew's appearance since his marriage.

Charlotte Brontë.—The *Jane Eyre* novels are peculiar, and must be taken more as hints of the state of a singular mind than as throwing light upon human nature. The generalizations (of which there are few) all rest on individual character. The pictures of life are by a woman whose womanliness was distorted by the accidents of her mortal condition. Her books, however, are worth reading and re-reading, for she has observed keenly and felt deeply, and has a gift of original expression. Often a vernacular simplicity strengthens her style.

Greatly enjoying excitement and picturesqueness, she is above making "scenes" where a weaker writer would be sure to do so, as in the account of Mrs. Reed's deathbed, and that of Jane finding Mr. Rochester blind. But her colloquies, like Fuseli's figures, are often unnatural from excessive muscularity. The language of Helen Burns, and that of Jane when a child, seem unreal; and the talk between them in Chapter VI. is exposition, not representation.

Anthony Trollope.—A vigorous practical Englishman, kindly and honourable withal, if a little coarse-grained, who went into the trade or profession of novel-writing with all his soul and strength, wrote —how many?—novels and gained £70,000. The stories have real feeling, good sense, experience in them, much knowledge of the world and sufficient literary skill, although the suspicion "machine-made" is apt to intrude now and again on the reader, and there is nothing perhaps worthy of study, save as a light commentary on the tastes and customs of the day. He was as subservient to his audience (a highly respectable one) as any theatre manager, yet without the least truckling. He had a distinct, if not a very high aim, and he hit it.

The Egoist, by George Meredith.—Excessively clever, and tedious. Meredithian Spectres acting men and women, no air in their lungs, no blood in their veins, no solid ground under their feet.

In style, oddity and obscurity pretending to be subtlety and profundity. Amusing, and not hard to think how Anthony Trollope would have treated the same theme, of Prince Fortunatus jilted, and how much more effective in every way the common-sensical treatment would have been.

G. M. reminds one sometimes of a sort of shrivelled Jean Paul, acid cynicism in place of genial humour.

R. L. S.—A professional *litterateur* of mark, cultivated, skilled, brilliantly clever, with a special accomplishment of style, if too elaborated and self-conscious. His great defect as a fictionist is that he fails to make things plausible enough for his purposes (natural or truthful is out of the question), probably through lack of any deep feeling or conviction even of the imaginative sort. (For example, in *Dr. Jekyll*, &c., the incident of the bad man knocking down and trampling over the girl ought to have been made as real as possible, but it is told like something in a dream.)

He cares not if the pivots and hinges of a story are made of brown paper. Characters and motives, proportion and general intention, all these are lacking. Both in his careful skilful composite style and in his materials, he shows a wide and sympathetic acquaintance with whatever notable has been done in picturesque fiction: we get now a flavour of Dickens, now a whiff of Bret Harte, anon a smack of Edgar Poe, or a reminder of Hawthorne. He is a *literary* writer.

George Borrow's books have plenty of vigour and cleverness, but they are anomalous, "neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring," neither truth, fiction, nor pungent whimsicality. He is not content to amuse you; he puts in claims,—moral, doctrinal, learned,—and produces, sooth to say, but scant evidence for his trustworthiness. *Lavengro*, a string of bold sketches, has striking things in it and a style of much flavour. It is a sort of Defoe *on the boil.*

An "imaginary conversation" with real names seems to me an unallowable form of literary composition. Even in a drama or novel I dislike the introduction of real persons save to a very moderate degree, and that consistent with known probabilities; and neither Shakespeare nor Scott can overcome my scruples. A similar but less common and morally less serious license, is to name real places for your scenes in a work of fiction and describe them as best suits you, a glaring example of which is to be found in the novel called *Lorna Doone*. The real Doone Valley is no more terrific than Wimbledon Common.

Victor Hugo.—Real greatness, much theatricalism, some humbug. Gigantesque style, towering into grotesque and burlesque, like strange shadows thrown by secret lights. Grand pictures, great thoughts, of what value or how real to himself I don't know. As artist his conscience is as little nice as Napoleon's as ruler of men; he forces effects remorselessly, neglects both *verité* and *vraisemblance*, not merely plays with our credulity but insults it. His force and eloquence are overpowering, but is his sincerity equal to them? That he has real faiths, feelings, and enthusiasms, one does not doubt, but they do not master him, he uses them as material for poems and novels, modifies and moulds them as literary sensation and dramatic effect require. He is above all the

dramatist, novelist, literary man, conscious and vain of his power to raise, excite, suspend, make culminate the interest of his audience. He has such a relish for cruel situations, and forces you so unmercifully to watch every throb of pain, as to make one almost suspect him of hard-heartedness: doubtless 'tis but the coolness of a great surgeon.

His portrait does not show the face of a first-rate man; self-willed, hot-tempered, crotchetty, forceful, it might belong to a sturdy irascible *militaire;* it's undubitably the face of a whimster and a most obstinate one.

Victor Hugo, with all his fire, eloquence, imagination, realism, elaboration, does not paint us distinct portraits. In *Les Misérables* we can clearly recognise Javert only, the tall man with short nose and wide nostrils. The hero, Valjean, has no features. Cosette is a very pretty girl, Marius, a fine young man. The great writer does not see people, but types, and those—ideal types.

Yet, all said, Victor Hugo is a great force, and in his books you come now and again to a masterly generalisation, such as only Genius gives.

Even of so able a writer as Balzac one must ask, How much is experience, insight, imagination? and how much is "make believe," spinning out and working up? Read the famous *Père Goriot*, called "the Lear of common life:" much disappointed. In spite of laborious minuteness, B. lacks *vraisemblance*. Where he has not real knowledge of what he is speaking of, he lacks imagination (such as Shakespeare has, and lesser men too) to fill the gaps or make them invisible,—*e.g.* Rastignac with Mme. de Beauséant (when the Duchess is present). Goriot's deathbed is carefully worked up, but it is not true pathos, and one agrees that "he cannot do better" than die as soon as possible, a dismal old puppet. Vautrin is a clever charcoal-sketch, but his behaviour and long discourse to Rastignac are not *vraisemblable*, and he has no connexion at all with the main plot. As usual with Balzac all the persons presented (except in this case the slightly sketched pallid Victorine and good-natured medical student) are in their different ways contemptible.

Vautrin here and there brings to mind the later and more developed generous scoundrels, chivalrous ruffians, of Mr. Bret Harte's fiction.

Don Quixote, a gently, sadly-smiling satire on human life.

Swedenborg gives us, under a strange disguise, most subtle comments upon human character.

Tolstöi's *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* is a very disappointing book. It loses itself in admirably painted but inconsequent and often utterly trivial details. Tolstöi is a peculiar and interesting man, but not great in any way: he would have remained unknown in this country, had he not, years ago, written certain novels—now, we hear, despised by himself—wherein our publishers at last *saw money*. But, with all his gifts, he is not a good story-teller either. Still, his acute observation and frank mode of expression give one a thoroughly friendly feeling towards him, and he often makes impressive remarks.

Too much of curiosity-shop in Richter's writings: genius ought to discriminate and elucidate, and bring artfully a portion of the universal within human limits.

Reading Jean Paul is like travelling in Switzerland; one ought to be young and active to enjoy it.

Richter and Schiller were both literary elaborators, but one dealt with natural facts and human feelings the other with philosophic and moral ideas.

As a proof how needful it sometimes is to know *when* an author wrote a thing take Wieland, who began with preachings and ended with Leucianesque.

"Nothing so foolish," says Wieland, "as to aim at being more than a man": a shrewd but dangerous saying. The man who makes no spiritual estimate of his position is a low creature, and to come down to his level—to the common, the ordinary, the average of what calls itself "the world"—is degradation to anyone who has had a single gleam of spiritual insight.

Boccaccio. No "manners of the time" can explain, much less excuse, the vileness of bringing together in fancy a group of high-bred gentlemen and sweet modest ladies to hear and tell the grossest possible stories for amusement. 'Tis the framework that is so condemnable. It outrages at once probability and decency, even if we allow the widest imaginative and cosmopolitan license.

Every author, if more than a mountebank, may be regarded as a witness giving his evidence upon the world we live in. The more peculiar that evidence, the more necessary to know the *character* of the witness.

How little we learn of the mind of *the people* from all ancient literature.

Things felt in common by the majority of mankind were of old only said by few, for few could put them into words, still fewer write them. Nowadays nearly every man can write, many write well, nay cleverly.

One feature of our time is great cleverness worthlessly applied in a marketable direction.

Thought is stifled with clever words like a warrior in his too heavy armour.

One thing writers do,—show *themselves*. No man or woman so thoroughly by other means.

In most biographies we are forced to see the wise through the medium of the foolish.

A great secret of style is to insinuate, not express, what you would convey.

What use in comparing one man with another, weighing one against another? If a writer (say) gives you anything worth having, that is a positive benefit worth some measure of gratitude.

Poets and artists cannot for long breathe at ease in the world of Science, because *beauty* is absent. It may be said that beauty plays some part—though a very low one—in the Darwinian doctrine of natural selection: but the factor there is not beauty but attractiveness, and even this the scientist has only the right to attend to in the abstract; if it could be expressed in algebraic forms, so much the better for him.

Science is proud of its precision, exactness, its measuring and defining character; its merits (at least when they take a practical shape) are readily appreciated and highly valued, with good reason. But the world is so made that precision is only possible in the lower strata of experience. You find measurability in the lower strata of music, of sculpture, of painting, of poetry, but these arts in their highest effects rise out of definity into infinity. The work of the painter, of the musician, incomparably transcends all scientific means of investigation. When you begin to be able to measure and number, you are in a lower region.

Didactic intention, whether moral or immoral, injures Art. In the second case—when immoral—it may injure mankind; for there are always many ready to drink in bad art if flavoured with immorality.

The multiplication of artists (taking the word in its usual meaning)—is that a gain or a misfortune for the world? A misfortune, I think. For the world only gains by *good* things of that sort; middling things crowd us up more and more and hinder us from what is worth seeing. Also, a middling artist might be an excellent carpenter, builder, housepainter, designer (perhaps maker too) of furniture, woven stuffs, ornaments, &c.

To the Artist.

Do your own work well; express yourself; and neither envy nor emulate the successes of other men. With difficulty, if at all, can you do their things poorly, and in doing them you will have missed your real opportunities.

The essence of Art lies *in the way of putting it.*

Chastity of Soul is peculiarly needful for the pictorial artist, for his chief function is to teach the worship of Beauty, not as suggestive of sensual pleasure merely or mainly, but of infinitely higher delights. He is a traitor to his genius who makes Art the means of connecting Beauty with the lowest feeling it is capable of exciting, the means of emphasising that coarsest and most readily excited of its relations to Humanity.

Artists know most about Art; but it is better and happier for them to practise than to write about it, at risk of heating themselves and offending others.

However swift and easy in conception, the embodiment of that which is to endure is usually far from easy. Slowly, touch by touch, the great statue, the great picture, the great musical composition, the great poem, puts on perfection, and at last makes the whole world richer with a new gift.

The pleasant or agreeable is a matter of taste, the beautiful is a matter of intuition.

Worship of the Beautiful, without reverence, is apt to degenerate into voluptuousness, and in the next stage to corrupt into vice.

Art is neither moral nor immoral. It is a particular way of expressing things, and is still Art whether expressing good things or evil things. Whether it is good Art or bad depends upon whether it expresses things well or ill.

But in estimating the value of a *work of Art*, that which is expressed can by no means be left out.

In judging of a picture the artist-world is apt to reckon the subject as almost nothing, the public to count it almost everything.

In Art, imaginative treatment may be deeply true: realistic treatment must be full of falsehoods.

All mercenary Art must be inferior. The best things in writing, painting, &c. have come in spite of the market—supply not at all relative to demand.

To work for money, and to insist on being duly paid, are two different things.

Perseverance is the chief voluntary ingredient in all successes.

No number of half-successes in Art will reckon for one whole success.

Authors launching their paper-boats on the stream of Time—

One of the rarest qualities in poetry and most unattainable by effort, is true simplicity, naturalness, naivety. It is also precious as it is one of the least noticed or noticeable qualities: like fine manners, felt rather than observed, concealed by their own perfection.

Poetry has its own logic, very genuine but too subtle to be taught by rule.

Fancy plays, according to her mood and wilfulness, with the momentary appearances of things; Imagination pierces to their substance and nature and sees them (as far as human power can go) in their real relations and proportions—to use words that cannot be excelled it "bodies forth the forms of things unseen." Every true stroke of Imagination is a revelation and miracle. Fancy but makes the world into a fine toyshop.

Fancy—the logic of the intellect; Imagination—its faith.

The difficulty of a poet, especially nowadays, is not in writing Poetry,—that he does easily enough, being a poet,—but in finding something to write about, suitable and worth while.

The poet of our time must be well-instructed—his imagination is required to work on a larger collection of materials than if he had been earlier born.

If he can content himself to choose an archaic diction, a poet may evade nine-tenths of his difficulties.

The Lyrical is the essential poetic faculty, unattainable by any study or effort.

The poet works in his fine material by an instinct (call it), aided by experience and a sort of delicate airy logic.

Second parts, so often inferior to first,—the first springing from nature, the second from artifice.

Where there is *significancy*, a man's character is interesting, and a literary work important.

Very fine effects are sometimes got in poetry by *happy audacity*—which less friendly critics might call *hap-hazard*.

Supposing one to have the art of rhyming, it's easier to make something out of nothing with a Sonnet than by any other means I know of.

The rhymes suggest thoughts or mock thoughts and with ingenuity and good luck something clever may be produced, which at the same time is worth nothing at all.

In poetry, the vowels are like the primary colours in painting.

Write down the names of the ten most popular poets at any time—what a list! It recalls an Indian idol, with some eyes of diamond and others of glass, a difference not suspected by the crowd of worshippers, not even by every priest.

[*A General Classification of Poetry.*]

1st. Poetry, spontaneous, musical expression of feeling.

2nd. Poetry constructed skilfully or on a good subject.

3rd. Poetry reproduced from preceding literary materials.

In rating poets, the higher kind of product, though imperfect, must give higher rank than something more perfect of a lower kind—supposing each to be equally original.

For, the smallest and lowest degree of original faculty (what we mean by genius) stands immeasurably above the very best imitative; and this latter rule is to be applied before the former comes into play.

All looks important in print, and the worse sense may have the better type. If you could *see* the man who writes, even a good likeness of him, it might help you much. O if you could see what a poor pinched thing often is the Great Philosopher!

The public judgment on right and wrong, success and failure, is coarse and crude, yet in most cases it is practically worth more than super-subtle arguments and refinements.

That speedy reputation and lasting fame are two different things is a truth well known to the reflecting. It is curious, and in a manner touching, when one can find a standpoint in the midst of some by-gone era, to look round there a little and observe what men looked largest in the eyes of the "public" of their own day.

A writer may be so new and exciting that he suddenly and justly becomes famous; and yet perhaps it will take years, or even generations, before he settles into his true place.

Many "distinguished men" are such by mere luck. Fate has put them into conspicuous positions where tolerably successful conduct, which would have been unnoted amongst the crowd, may suffice to make their names household words for a short time.

The vulgar are apt to estimate a little man by his highest deeds, and a great man by his lowest.

When a man becomes famous he begins to interest the world, and perhaps to leave off interesting his real admirers.

From what paltry little glimpses, and (still oftener and worse) distorted reflections in other's talk, we make up our mental pictures of the men and women we pretend to "know."

The lowest and highest are below and above fashion, in the middle are its slaves.

The smooth glowing freshness and round outlines of Youth disguise the true character of a face from the common observer as much as do the disfigurements of old age, if not far more.

Those who give a boy precepts seldom know how to fit them to his character; therefore he pushes them aside as incomprehensible.

Some people who are perfectly judicial in manner are entirely crazed in judgment.

Vanity is the most cleverly versatile of the passions. A man can manage to be proud of anything, or any defect; any fault, any vice, almost any failure or any crime.

One who says worthless things with a wise air, gets more credit than one who says wise things carelessly.

I sometimes think an eloquent man is the worst in the world to get any definite information out of.

The man whose dreams were so vivid that he became uncertain whether his waking or his sleeping world were the real one, might be made a parable of. Is any one of us quite certain as to which are the dreams and which the realities of his existence?

To allay Humanity's discontent with the unreality of life—it slips by like a dream—consider and value those moments which leave some good with us, educate us, bring access of sound knowledge, of high feeling. My spirit is real to me, and so is that which affects it.

One practical and unsuspected evil in life is the use of elaborate machinery to simple ends.

The philosopher who put his eyes out to meditate on truth the better has many imitators.

Goodnatured fussy people expect you to be grateful for the *fuss* too, in addition to what they do for you, while you feel it to be a clear deduction, if indeed it does not counterbalance all the good.

One of the chief differences between good society and inferior—that in the first nothing is allowed to interrupt conversation, in the second everything is.

To speak of French manners suggests to many something finikin, and dancing-masterlike, bowing and scraping; but the real charm of French manners is naturalness and simplicity, along with good humour, and a regard, or at least the show of it, for other people's tastes and notions.

The cultivation of gentle and polite manners is entirely consistent with simplicity and sincerity of character. Either without the other is incomplete.

There may be refinement without tact and tact without refinement, but the combination of both is needed for good manners.

In things indifferent, or nearly, keep to the customary; in matters of convenience, yield much; in matters of principle, nothing.

Those who leave the customs of the society around them, are more likely to go into a worse condition than a better, unless they are calmly drawn by pure principles and can find their satisfaction in sincere obedience to wise views.

Nothing helps so much the preservation of good looks into an advanced age as placidity of temper; and even the habitual composure of countenance which is one of the usual requirements of good breeding has a like effect. The irritable and the uncultivated twist their features on every occasion, or on none, and thus age before their time.

The poetic charm of a city is its ancientness, its embodiment of past life and history. All cities nowadays are losing this, more or less rapidly, and city-life in its scene, as well as its character, becoming ever more prosaic.

London is a place unique—exactly half-way between everywhere in the world and nowhere in particular.

In London concert rooms and picture galleries, you may hear and see the best things, but in the most unnatural and uncomfortable way.

In London is a crowd, a press, a torrent of people and things far too much for clear sensation, much less thought, to grapple with discriminately. Individuality is cheap, the check of public opinion almost disappears. Evil tendencies expand, men grow reckless, or *blazé*, put a low valuation on the best things in life, nay on humanity itself, acquire a greed for passing pleasures, at any cost or risk.

We make our own life frivolous by giving in to the frivolity of others.

A professed Wit has many acquaintances and no friends.

—callous to farewells as an Innkeeper.

British cooking is unimaginative. I have dined for three months in my lodging, and eaten ninety successive mutton-chops.

The common use of stimulants and narcotics will never cease while the human race exists. The object of rational people ought to be to guard stringently against excess and adulteration.

Let no man bring his ill humours or sad thoughts to a feast, but the best flowers of his temper and fancy.

Certainly some of the best casual conversations I have enjoyed have been in the Commercial Rooms of inns.

Those who have found all through life money waiting on their wishes can never, howso sympathetic, understand the condition of mind of those who have to give a drop of their heart's blood for every pound or perhaps every shilling they get.

Civilization in the modern sense means the artificial accumulation of money and the good and bad results of that. There are good results in convenience of living, arts and manners; very bad results in some people having without any merit far too much, and many far too little, and the latter being slaves to the former.

The true "established religion" of modern civilized countries is *Money*.

If you fix your mind on getting money you may very likely get it, or power, or fame; but happiness? —no! It only comes by hap, never by plotting. By attention and prudence, however, you may escape much unhappiness.

There is physical courage, which is instinctive; intellectual courage, which is logical; and dutiful courage, which is conscientious. A man may be courageous with one of these; a perfectly brave man has all three.

The middle-class is the most censorious, upper and lower are comparatively generous in their estimations of conduct and character. The one has the courage of power and wealth, the other of numbers.

One appropriate punishment of debauch is that it diminishes and at length destroys the capacity of honest pleasure.

By code and custom of manners only, certain people are hindered from acting as the brutes they are. You see the enforced restraint in surly eye and reluctant voice.

Thoughtfulness, dutifulness, tenderness, pity, mercy, are peculiarly human qualities; and yet (oh strange!) Man is the cruellest of all animals.

False morals usually meet their correction quickly, false opinions very slowly—therefore the latter are the more widely pernicious.

Fastidiousness may be a great help to virtue and, without much ado, guard a man from serious risks.

Suppose we are, as it were, *vaccinated* in this life with evils so as to be freed from them hereafter?

We must have principles: but any man who insists that we must have *his* principles, and his only, is a nuisance.

Intolerance is virtue turned wrong side out.

What passes for high-principle is very commonly a form of self-interest—of selfishness. There is no more usual cover for selfishness and egoism than "duty to one's family." Unless a human creature is aiming at what is spiritually best and loveliest, because it is best and loveliest, I cannot (whatever his social or citizen "virtues") spend a mite of admiration upon him.

Utter selfishness is consistent with great apparent frankness, liberality, generosity even, the clever selfish man finding that the display of these qualities, in current form, brings him in satisfactory results.

Human rules and laws are very imperfect, all over the world; and hence comes a monstrous amount of vice and misery. But in this very thought lies encouragement; for, so far as vice and misery are part of mismanagement, so far they can be controlled and lessened.

A man is wise to be an optimist in contemplating the laws of the Universe, that is Divine Causes and Effects; but very foolish if he make this optimism an excuse for neglecting any part of these laws.

In the moral as in the physical world, a little elevation of standpoint gives many things to view that were invisible.

I saw to-day on a seal "Those who live on hope die fasting," a silly motto. No one lives on hope, but hope must be the sauce to every thing we live on.

"That's a compromise": well, is not everything in human affairs a compromise? Education—Business—Government—Religion? One's toleration of one's self is a compromise, and if it breaks down, comes madness.

Social life is, and must be, a system of compromises; and whoever does not, consciously or unconsciously, act on this truth, finds perpetual difficulties in his way through the world.

A stupid person is always dangerous. The mischief he may do is literally incalculable, and his defect incurable.

The obstinacy of a fool yields only to the whip.

Foolish thoughts may be worth a wise man's gravest attention, if the world, and especially if his neighbours, entertain them.

People who have just cleverness enough to make their stupidity intolerable!

Some men seem perpetually unripe; after threescore years they are unsettled, inexperienced, indecisive, incalculable. Instead of a well-furnished house to live in they are still in bricks and mortar. This is a very different condition from the perpetual youth of genius.

A man by nature is inclined to think he has a right to all that is possible for him; if imbued with good principles he finds nothing possible for him that is not right.

To speak rudely to a servant is like hitting a man whose hands are tied.

One ought to take pains to see and appreciate the strong points in people, and especially in those one objects to or opposes.

No individual entirely agrees with any other, or he would cease to be an individual.

To try and explain yourself fully to any other human being is to misjudge the possibilities of earth, and to generate countless mistakes.

People who have a strong agreement on many points, but differ on a few, are apt to grow vexed that they cannot agree altogether, and to harp on the notes that are out of tune till they become insufferable to each other. While, on the other hand, those who have no hope or wish of mutual intimacy are content to keep on easy and quiet terms with one another.

The agreement of like dispositions is monotone; of unlike, harmony.

Perhaps wise people never differ in actual judgment (or say, natural relation of mind to subject), however much in knowledge, experience, temper, cultivation, standpoint.

Sincere opinionative contradiction is a form of respect. True contempt is to let a man hold his notions, and say his say without contradiction.

Perfect humility is bold.

People differing in opinion are often not on different roads, but at different stages of the same road.

How seldom does any one simply speak his mind—express himself as nearly as possible just as he feels.

Honesty and frankness may be found in the same person, but they are distinct qualities.

A man often hopes that his friend is more sincere than himself.

Insincerity in the guise of good-nature is a dangerous dry-rot, to which even some excellent characters are liable.

Many men and most women care little for what is said, and much for how it is said and by whom.

In great part the differences of human languages lie in ways of spelling, and between human opinions in ways of saying.

Between the spoken or written expression, and the real thought or feeling, lies a gap which words never completely bridge over.

The intolerable person is whoever, under name of friend or not, habitually breaks in upon your working-time.

How many slight but alas! too effectual obstructions one finds in the attempt to do one's real work.

He who habitually most feels the attraction of things round him may most long to escape from it—may be wearily conscious of living in a magic thraldom.

It is in the beginning of an ordinary friendship that you are most likely to receive confidences; but not so with a great friendship.

Nothing vainer than trying to be friends with people who do not belong to you. How easy, from the first, is intercourse with the born friend of my spirit, how difficult and painful with others. Yet these strangers are also men, and one may touch them sometimes at some point or corner, or a flying glance may hit their human sympathy; therefore despise no one, be natural with all;—but without waste or lowering, and with reservation of your companionship for the genuine comrade.

A family without visitors and external society is apt to fall into torpor and discontent, like persons on a tedious voyage. Visitors stimulate the wits, burnish politeness, and sweeten the familiar intercourse which they partly interrupt.

It is unreasonable for a man who loves solitude to complain if he finds his own company sometimes tedious—as all men often find that of their best friends to be.

Right marriage gives perfect mutual trust, help, affection, and with this, the greatest attainable share of individual liberty for each.

Happy solitude is raised to its height of deliciousness by the society of one perfectly loved,—the sense of sympathy and security, and the sense of heavenly freedom, combining into a condition of almost angelic power and tranquillity.

Perhaps every one's conscience has its natural limits. I have often noticed that a man who has a great deal, one might almost say an overplus, of conscience in one direction, turns out to have too little or none at all in another.

Decayed creeds survive in the form of cursing and swearing—solemn gods become the expletives of a fishwife or the spice of a comic song.

Truth and expediency, born brothers, are deadliest enemies when they quarrel.

Loyalty, from a religion, has sunk to policy and good manners.

In the country, human sympathy runs into every part of the social intercourse; my tailor, shoemaker, and baker have a kind of living interest connected with what they do for me, and I think of them as well as of their work. Certainly city life induces a hardness.

When young one ought to live in the country. It is truly unfortunate for any one to have to spend the years of youth in a big town.

In childhood, inexperience makes every little change delightful, and every great change dreadful.

He does not disbelieve what his elders tell him, yet the child thinks that, somehow, Life will be other to him than to the rest, that is to every human creature but himself.

In youth we do not measure the distance and difficulty that are between conception and achievement, between criticism or theory and accomplished fact.

There are moral laws, as there are physical laws, strict yet elastic. Think of our body, the delicate machine! and how a man may over-eat and over-drink, and otherwise misuse it year after year. But if he goes on thus, the day of reckoning comes. A Nation is in this a man in large, and can go on a long time in unhealthy habits of life, but with a break-down or catastrophe inevitably ahead.

Men who have done extraordinarily well we are apt to blame, because they have not done better. So large is our latent notion of human power. The insignificance of common men escapes all comparison with an ideal.

Great contemporaries thoroughly respect each other; but usually keep apart. Each recognises the deep importance of individuality, and especially of his own to himself.

It is not the natural part of the finest minds to debate or construct legislative acts; but to perceive and announce truths, whether political, scientific, or poetic; and the part of the politicians to look up to these, appropriate and apply them.

There are no words or acts so eminently practical as those which tend to keep alive ideals.

If all one's enthusiasm were extinguished, what worth would life be? When a man ceases to be enraptured, does not that indicate, instead of progress, the most lamentable retrogression? O might we be ever in love with what is in truth lovely: then the secret of the world would no longer be a pain to us. But to love nothing is precisely to be a devil. Awful thought!—And what is it hardens the heart? Selfishness.

The difference in men's minds is of less and more. The best man is he who has all human qualities in their due proportions. Efficiency, however, in particular directions, is usually the result of a disproportion, an overbalance of qualities; and in what are called practical affairs the strongly partial man is sure to outdo the more complete one. Goethe could never have made himself Emperor of the French. But Napoleon's view of life was incomparably narrower, and his enjoyment of life immeasurably less.

Great misfortune for a fine man to be ranged with a party in his youth. This narrows his vision and clogs his feet.

Party-politics is one of the diseases of our Body-Social, an insanity which pretends to be strength. The Partisan is a slave, he cannot in matters political, speak, write, or hear a free word, much less act freely. His thought must always be "Is this for our side?" not "Is this true?" or "worth considering?" when he enters any arena of discussion he leaves his conscience at the door.

We ought to estimate the culture and prosperity of a Nation by the condition not of the few but of the many.

The personality of Man is real, profound, priceless, divine; the personality of Nations is a sham (personification mainly, a figure of speech), superficial, selfish, theatric, childish, and in its effects maleficent.

Good is the man of strong nationality, who cherishes the language and traditions of his country, her songs and stories, her history and fame; far better the man whose mental country is the broad world, whose fellow-countrymen are all the wise and well-meaning.

Let us not blame the multitude, they are what they are, little can they help themselves: blame the great men, the heroes, who might be so much and fall so short.

Revolution, in settled communities, always comes from above,—from neglect of duty in the higher classes. Thoughtful and cultivated men who, seeing where the blame lies, are touched with conscience or enthusiasm, become the most effectual leaders of the people.

Reconcile yourself to your Microcosm (I mean your own nature and character) with its variable climate, this day brilliant, the next dull, another stormy, a new one heavenly calm, and build nothing on fleeting moods, unless indeed you have a gift to discern the higher and seize their opportunity.

The fortuitous—or fatal—and the voluntary threads in our life-cord are so intertwisted as seldom to be clearly distinguishable: the latter are wholly in the power of the Will, and even the former come, in most cases, more or less under its authority.

If heredity and fate dishearten you, fix your attention, *per contra*, on individuality and will. Is it likely that no wisdom dwells outside of man's brain? that no personality exists but his? or that there is any pre-arranged defeat?

Individual life is the only real life of man. "Social life," "political life," "national life," are but phrases. All the value which these have has flowed into them from individual life, and returns again into that form.

I can approve nothing that necessarily sacrifices the individual. Our commonwealth is mankind. Human history is mainly enriched by individuality.

The object of every human being is Freewill, and the object of all just government is to aid Freewill in each, saving a right of others.

Your Freewill is your very self. This you may choose to give up, nullify or submit, and often with advantage in discipline and virtue, in any case where *Conscience* does not oppose. But Conscience is your soul's king, by divine right; the health, the life of your Freewill, the pupil of its eye, the heart of its life. When you deliberately act against your Conscience you attempt moral suicide.

The name "wilfulness" is sometimes very wrongly applied to a kind of natural obstinacy of character which neither springs out of the will nor is easily controlled by it.

Self-will and decision of character are not alike or allied, but antagonistic.

Will is father of habit; but the son soon gets beyond the father's control.

A bad face may be varnished, as it were, with comeliness and a good face with ugliness.

To hear and meditate the story of a great consistent soul gives one a mood of lofty calmness, like that which comes in up-looking through a pure vast open sky; whether of blue air brimmed with sunlight, or of permeable shadow deep behind deep throbbing with its mysterious galaxies.

To each of us our own Being is infinitely more certain than anything else in the universe.

The true optimist is he who takes the highest and hopefullest view of man's destiny. It is he, necessarily, who is often exceedingly discontent with man's actual condition and pursuits.

Man cannot estimate his soul too high—the living pearl of the ocean of Infinity: nor rate his intellect too low—as measure of eternal things.

There are days in March when despondency hangs on the landscape: the first delightful impulse of spring seems exhausted, yet its promise unfulfilled. And some such time may come in a man's life.

All permanent things in growing older grow more beautiful—and so the soul.

There are days, even hours, in which a man appears to himself to take a jump forwards—to come suddenly into a new condition, almost like a new state of being. But this change, however momentaneously perceived, is no doubt of gradual preparation.

There is in some cases really an excellent excuse for neglecting one's "business"—the need to live one's life.

No question is deeply interesting that does not apply to all humanity.

To the surface of a man's speech sometimes rises a word or phrase, giving hint of a latent bed of things, like a bubble from weeds under water.

The folly of a wise man is doubly hurtful, discrediting wisdom in his person, bewildering his fellow-men.

A man must not turn away from an act of charity, but he is not bound to go in search of "objects" of charity, and quit his own work—if work he has.

Trivial and paltry are our needs and works: yet something important is everywhere mixed up therein—truth, courage, kindness, knowledge.

Life is at once complex and simple. At every moment it is simple, but that simplicity is the focus of infinite complexities. Practically we have only to deal with the moment; the complexities—the before and after—are deep and difficult questions.

Among the most dismal moments are those in which a man sees himself relapsed and degraded after having gained a higher spiritual level, from which he had hoped never to descend.

The loss of wealth and means, friends, children and consort, health, liberty, and at last life, is no real tragedy; all are but shifts of scenery. But show me the man who as he spins his life from week to week and year to year, is getting colder in heart, poorer in brain, littler in Soul; and I see something to shudder at.

As I grow older, I wonder more, and grieve less. I have less exhilaration and more contentment.

In youth you catch fine meanings in music, in poetry—older, you see through your juvenile notions, are disillusioned and heap a thousand satires and jests on those early follies. The question remains, nevertheless, whether you were not and did not see better and clearer in that early time?

Intense, romantic, ideal Love—including, but *absolutely unconscious of*, desire or self. No words can express this indubitable truth, or its value to me.

The young cannot possibly understand the old; the old ought to understand the young.

Is it not a good provision in nature, that as we grow accustomed to the years they run away more quickly?

Every one seems to himself younger than to us. People's thoughts hang a little in the rear of the march of their lives. It will always take some time to enable them to realise what they have last become, and then they will already have moved on further.

Most men who live long die some years before their funerals.

When the natural time has come for a man to die, he feels it to be no hardship but the greatest of blessings.

O this Life, what is it? Does it give us, join us, —it alone,—to the immeasurable Universe? O does it hold us separate therefrom, as it were imprisoned for a time, while we peep through the barred windows?

Why do we believe in Love, Fidelity, Unselfishness? Where do they come from?

Experience and Faith are mutually complemental.

All human thought on a future state is guesswork, and the wisest minds guess the least.

It is unnatural and, indeed, impossible, to really think of life or any portion of life as an end in itself.

That the human race is but a string of bubbles on the ceaseless fathomless River of Time, a fancy natural to some moods, can scarcely commend itself as a probable theory to any healthy soul.

You cannot shake off God, escape from God. You cannot find, or comprehend God. Nor is it conceivable that this should be otherwise.

Religions are of men, Religion is of God.

The greatest Truths are insusceptible of logical proof because they outgo human intelligence, though not human sensibility.

Well for him who can meet the exigencies of life and the day with calm energy, neither vainly opposing nor weakly giving way, expecting little and regretting less.

L'Envoi

Go forth, my dear,
Friendless I fear,
And far or near
But scanty cheer.

Disconsolate,
I scan thy fate;
No welcomes wait
At any gate.

Thou must not stay,
Go on thy way,
Blue sky or gray,
All the long day.

THE END

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