

Letters

from

a Landscape Painter

Charles Lanman

* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook *

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with an FP administrator before proceeding.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

Title: Letters from a Landscape Painter

Date of first publication: 1845

Author: Charles Lanman

Date first posted: Jan. 4, 2017

Date last updated: Jan. 4, 2017

Faded Page eBook #20170108

This eBook was produced by: Stephen Hutcheson & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at
<http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

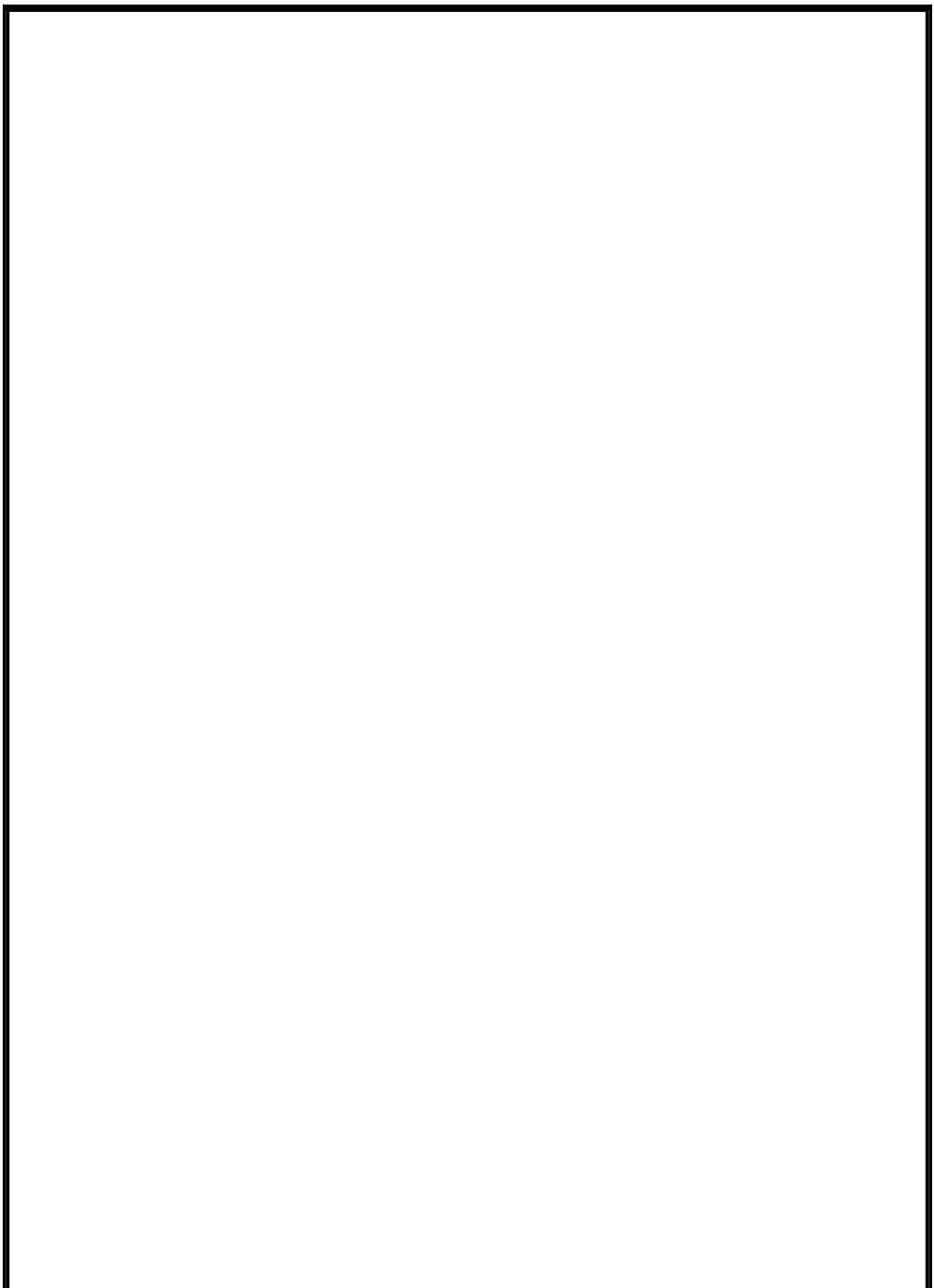
Letters

from

a Landscape Painter

Charles Lanman

fadedpage.com



LETTERS FROM A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
“ESSAYS FOR SUMMER HOURS.”

(Charles Lanman)

Gentlemen, let not prejudice prepossess you. I confess my discourse is like to prove suitable to my recreation,—calm and quiet.

IZAACK WALTON.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
MDCCCXLV.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1844, by
CHARLES LANMAN.
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY THURSTON, TORRY AND CO.
31 Devonshire Street.

CRITICAL NOTICES

OF

LANMAN'S "ESSAYS FOR SUMMER HOURS."

By John Neal, Esq.

"A book of two hundred and fifty pages, containing some twenty essays or thereabouts,—and perhaps more,—upon all sorts of pilgrimages: upon the woods and the city, Morning and Evening, the Dying Year, Literature, Mirth and Sadness, the Early Called, the Painter's Dream, &c., &c., &c.; written with great simplicity and sweetness,—untainted with affectation, except in two or three slight instances,—original, tender, and at times absolutely touching."

From the N. Y. Evening Post, Edited by W. C. Bryant.

"The volume, of which we have copied the title, is composed of essays on various subjects, the fruit, as the author tells us, of the leisure of last summer. They are agreeably written, with a vein of poetic embellishment."

From the Democratic Review.

"'Essays for Summer Hours,' is the title of a pleasing little tome, by Charles Lanman, comprising a series of sketches of American scenery, interspersed with poetical allusions to incidents and characters which are very harmoniously blended, and agreeably presented. We hope this work will prove

successful, and form the precursor of many other contributions to our elegant literature from the same pen.”

From the Southern Literary Messenger.

“This well printed, and handsome little volume, embraces a series of eighteen essays; the most of them founded in American scenery and associations. Some of the topics are furnished by the West, the native place of the young author; he has certainly done justice to the fresh scenes that are spread out in that interesting portion of the country. The talent of the writer is descriptive; he has painted, with remarkable fidelity and beauty, some of the most striking points of Western life. His language is chaste and well selected; and many of the moral reflections, growing out of the several subjects which he has selected for his essays, are expressed in an exceedingly interesting and even touching manner.”

From the Boston Miscellany.

“This a pleasant little volume of quiet Essays, written by a warm lover of nature, and dealing principally with descriptions of natural scenery, or the development of simple feeling. The author has well characterized them as reading ‘for summer hours.’ They neither furnish deep thought, nor are the parent of it; and yet they conduct the reader through pleasant places, in peaceful and undisturbed meditative shades, without disturbing him with paradoxical statements, or, often, with opinions that his judgment or his taste rejects. The author appears to have read a good deal, with discrimination and sympathy, and,—as it is true that the more we know, the more we learn from what we read of the best written efforts of master-minds,—so the more a writer,

especially of this class of essays, has gathered from the already accumulated stores of information and illustration, reader will be his power to impress his own train of thought upon his reader. Mr. Lanman appears to have had a peculiarly apt sympathy and appreciation for his favorite authors, and we consequently find that (which, although artistically a fault, is no loss to the readers of his book,) whenever he comes to the real depth of his subject, or to a marked point either of argument or illustration, he flies to quotation to express himself, and his quotations are in general well selected and classical.”

From the London Literary Gazette.

“This is a second edition, and the matter well deserves to run through many more; for we have met with nothing of the kind in Transatlantic polite literature in which so fresh and pure a spirit prevails. It is far away from the worldly, trading, and money-making go-a-head passion, which rules the multitude both there and here.”

**TO THE
HON. GEORGE PERKINS MARSH,
BURLINGTON, VERMONT.**

MY DEAR SIR,

To you, in testimony of my regard for you, as a Statesman, a Scholar, and a Lover of the Fine Arts, do I dedicate this little volume.

Had not my maiden effort in the world of letters been received by the public with such marked favor, I should not venture to publish again. The same motives, however, which prompted the first, have also prompted the present collection of my productions, and I desire no other reward than the one already bestowed upon me in the approving smile of honest and sincere hearts.

As my title-page implies, I am now a professional Landscape Painter, my inclinations having compelled me to relinquish the "cotton trade and sugar line," and these letters, originally written to a literary friend in New York, are but the offspring of one who claims the only merit of being a lover of Nature and his fellow men. I confess myself to be a creature of impulse, and each paper that I now publish, I would have considered as a mere record of my thoughts and feelings during the hour it may have been indited. Having been a sojourner in various portions of the country during the past summer, in search of the picturesque, you must not be surprised to find yourself one moment scrambling through a mountain gorge, and the next on the margin of the boundless sea. With this preliminary, I lay

aside my pen, and return to my palette and pencils.

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES LANMAN.

NEW YORK, Autumn of 1844.

CONTENTS.

<u>TROUTING AMONG THE CATSKILLS,</u>	1
<u>A SPRING DAY,</u>	19
<u>SOUTH PEAK MOUNTAIN,</u>	34
<u>A SLEEPLESS NIGHT,</u>	52
<u>COLE'S IMAGINATIVE PAINTINGS,</u>	64
<u>LAKE HORICON,</u>	83
<u>BURLINGTON,</u>	103
<u>TRIP TO PORTLAND,</u>	122
<u>MOOSEHEAD LAKE AND THE KENNEBECK,</u>	143
<u>LILLY LARNARD,</u>	157
<u>LOUIS L. NOBLE,</u>	172
<u>THE UNHAPPY STRANGER,</u>	190
<u>A WEEK IN A FISHING SMACK,</u>	197
<u>TRIP TO WATCH HILL,</u>	214
<u>OUR NEW YORK PAINTERS,</u>	233
<u>A SONG OF MEMORY,</u>	256

TROUTING AMONG THE CATSKILLS

Again am I in the country, where I shall probably remain until the even-tide of the year. The main object, as you know, in my contemplated wanderings, will be to study the “book of nature, opened wide,” with a view of adding to my stock of materials for future use in my profession. The first of those letters, which I promised to write you by way of recreation, I have now commenced, and I wish you to understand, at the very outset, that, as I have nothing in particular to prove, my themes will be as variable as my feelings; but I shall confine myself principally to descriptions of natural scenery and personal adventures.

My present stopping place is at an old Dutch farm-house near Plauterkill Clove, under the shadow of the Catskill mountains. Since my arrival here the weather has been rather chilly for the season, so that I have not had much opportunity to use the pencil, but I have already noted some noble views, which I shall attempt to portray in their summer garb. The consequence is—independent of the fact that May is the angler’s favorite month—I have been practising my hand at trouting, in which art you have reason to know I am somewhat of an adept. How truly hath it been written by good old Walton;—

2

Of recreation, there is none
So free as fishing is alone.
All other pastimes do no less,
Than mind and body both possess;
My *hands* alone my *work* can do,
So I can *fish* and *study* too.

Never, more deeply than now, have I felt the wisdom of this thought, and never before have I enjoyed this sport to such perfection, whether you consider my success or the scenery I have witnessed. My first excursion was performed along the margin of a stream, which rises about two miles off, out of a little lake on the mountains. My guide and companion was a notorious hunter of these parts, named Peter Hummel, whose services I have engaged for all my future rambles among the mountains. He is, without exception, the wildest and rarest character I have ever known, and would be a great acquisition to a menagerie. He was born in a little hut at the foot of South Peak, is twenty-seven years of age, and has never been to school a day in his life, or in his travels further away from home than fifteen miles. He was *educated* for a bark-gatherer, his father and several brothers being engaged in the business; but Peter is averse to commonplace labor, to anything, in fact, that will bring money. When a mere boy of five years, he had an inkling for the mountains, and once had wandered so far, that he was found by his father in the den of an old bear, playing with her cubs. To tramp among the mountains, with gun and dog, is Peter's chief and only happiness. He is probably one of the most perfect specimens of a hunter now living; and very few, I imagine, could have survived the dangers to which he has exposed himself. He seems to be one of those iron mortals that cannot die with age and infirmity,—or be killed by man, rock, or water; he must be shivered by a stroke of lightning.

Although one of the wildest of God's creatures, Peter Hummel is as amiable and kind-hearted a man as ever lived. He is an original wit withal, and shrewd and very laughable are many of his speeches, and his stories are the cream of romance and genuine mountain poetry.

But to return. We started on our tramp at an early hour, he with a trout-basket in his hand, containing our dinner, and I with my sketch-book and a "pilgrim staff." After a tiresome ascent of three hours at the almost perpendicular side of a mountain, over ledges and through gloomy ravines, we at last reached the wished-for brook. All the day long were we cheered by its happy song, as we descended, now leaping from one deep pool to another, and now scrambling over green-coated rocks, under and around fallen trees, and along the damp, slippery sides of the mountain, until we reached its mouth on a plain, watered by a charming river, and sprinkled with the rustic residences of a sturdy Dutch yeomanry. We were at home by sunset, having walked the distance of twenty miles, and captured one hundred and fifty trout, the most of which I distributed among the farm-houses in my way, on my return.

5

On another occasion, I had taken my sketch-book and some fishing tackle, and gone up a mountain road, when, after having outlined a few giant trees, whose bare arms were extended upwards, as if they were praying to be reclothed in their summer garniture, I found myself on the banks of Schoharie Creek. In the very first hole into which I peered, I discovered a large trout, lying near the bottom, just above a little bed of white sand, whence rose the bubbles of a spring. It must have been some thirty minutes, I think, that I stood there against a tree, watching him with a "yearning tenderness." "He is so happy," thought I, "I will let him live." Presently, however, a beautiful fly lighted on the water, which the greedy hermit swallowed in a minute, and returned to his cool bed, with his conscience, as I fancied, not one whit troubled by what he had done. Involuntarily I began to unwind my line, and having cut a pole, and repeated to myself something about "diamond cut diamond," I baited my hook, and

threw it in. The rogue of a trout, however, saw me, and scorned for a while to heed my bait. But I coaxed and coaxed, until at last he darted for it, apparently out of mere spite. 6

Something, then, like a miniature water-spout arose, and the monarch of the brook was in a fair way of sharing the same fate which had befallen the innocent fly. I learned a salutary lesson from this incident, and as I had yielded to the temptation of the brook, I shouldered my sketch-book, and descended the stream. At noon I reached a farm-house, where I craved something to eat. A first-rate dinner was given me, which was seasoned by many questions, and some information, concerning trout. That afternoon, in company with a little boy, I visited a neighboring stream, called the Roaring Kill, where I caught one hundred and sixty fish. I then returned to the farm-house, and spent the evening in conversation with my new acquaintances. After breakfast, on the following morning, I set out for home, and got there about noon, having made two additions to my sketches. Long shall I remember the evening spent with this family, and their hospitality towards an entire stranger. A good husband, a good wife, and two good daughters, have been added to my list of friends.

Another of my trouting pilgrimages was to a famous place called Stony Clove, among the mountains of Shindaken, which are a continuation of the Catskills, leading westward. It is a deep perpendicular cut or gorge between two mountains, from twenty to an hundred feet in width, three thousand in depth, and completely lined from base to summit by the most luxuriant vegetation. It is watered by a narrow but deep brook, which is so full of trout, that some seven hundred were captured by myself and two others in a single day. When I tell you that this spot is only one hundred miles from New York, you will be 7

surprised to hear that in its immediate vicinity we saw no less than two bears, a doe with two fawns, and a host of other less important game. In some parts of it the sunshine never enters, and cart loads of the purest ice may be found there throughout the year. It is the loneliest and most awful corner of the world that I have ever seen,—none other I fancy could make a man feel more utterly desolate. It is a type of the valley of the shadow of death; in single file did we have to pass through it, and in single file must we pass into the grave. To spend one day there, we had to encamp two nights, and how we generally manage that affair I will tell you presently. In returning from Stony Clove, we took a circuitous route and visited the Mountain House. We approached it by the way of the celebrated Catskill Fall, which I will describe to you in the graphic language of Cooper, as you may not remember the passage in his *Pioneer*. “Why there’s a fall in the hills, where the water of two little ponds, that lie near each other, breaks out of their bounds, and runs over the rocks into the valley. The stream is, may be, such a one as would turn a mill, if so useless a thing was wanted in the wilderness. *But the Hand that made that ‘Leap’ never made a mill!* There the water comes croaking and winding among the rocks, first so slow that a trout might swim in it, and then starting and running, just like any creature that wanted to make a fair spring, till it gets to where the mountain divides, like the cleft foot of a deer, leaving a deep hollow for the brook to tumble into. The first pitch is nigh two hundred feet, and the water looks like flakes of snow afore it touches the bottom, and then gathers itself together again for a new start, and, may be, flutters over fifty feet of flat rock, before it falls for another hundred, where it jumps from shelf to shelf, first turning this way and that way, striving to get out of the hollow, till it finally comes to the plain.”

Our party on this occasion consisted of three,—Peter Hummel, a bark-gatherer, and myself. I had chosen these fellows for the expedition, because of their friendship for me and their willingness to go, and I now resolved to give them a treat at the “Grand Hotel,” which the wild fellows in their ignorance had ever looked upon as a kind of paradise. You are aware, I suppose, that the Mountain House is an establishment vieing in its style of accommodations with the best hotels of the city. Between it and the Hudson there is, during the summer, an hourly line of stages, and it is the transient resort of thousands, who go there for the novelty of the scenery. The edifice itself stands on a cliff, within a few feet of the edge, and commands a most magnificent prospect, extending from Long Island Sound to the Green and White mountains. The first time I was there, I spent half the night at my bedroom window, watching the fantastic performances of a thunder-storm far below me, which made the building tremble like a leaf, and reminded me of Milton’s description of hell; while the sky above was cloudless, and studded with stars. Between this spot and South Peak, “there’s the High Peak and the Round Top, which lay back, like a father and mother among their children, seeing they are far above all the other hills.”

But to proceed. Coarsely and comically dressed as we were, we made a very unique appearance as we paraded into the office of the hotel. I met a few acquaintances there, to whom I introduced my comrades, and in a short time each one of them was spinning a mountain legend to a crowd of astonished and delighted listeners. In due time I ushered them into the dining-room, where was enacted a scene which can be better imagined than described. A Chinese in Victoria’s drawing-room, would not be more completely out of his element, or be the cause of

heartier laughter, than were these men among the soup, ice-creams, and silver forks of the “Yankee Palace,” as the house has been christened by the Dutch under the mountains.

About the middle of the afternoon we commenced descending the beautiful mountain road, and a jolly time we had of it, I assure you. A little while before there had been a heavy shower, and a thousand happy rills attended us with a song. A delightful nook on this road is pointed out as the identical spot where Rip Van Winkle slept away a score of his life. I reached home in time to spend the twilight hour in my room, musing upon the solemn and much loved mountains. I had but one companion, and that was a sweet whip-poor-will, which nightly comes to my window sill, to tell me a tale of its love or of the woods and solitary wilderness.

11

But the most unique and interesting of my fishing adventures, remains to be described. I have heard a great deal about a certain lake among the mountains, (the same alluded to above,) and I desired to visit it, and spend a night upon its shore. Having again spoken to Peter Hummel, and invited a neighbor to accompany us, whom they call White Yankee, the noon-tide hour of last Thursday found us on our winding way. And such a grotesque appearance as we made, would have caused you to laugh most heartily, I am sure. The group was mostly *animated*, when climbing the steep and rocky ravines which we were compelled to pass through. There was Peter, “long, lank, and lean,” and wild in his attire and countenance as an eagle of the wilderness, with an axe in his hand, and a huge knapsack on his back, containing our provisions and utensils for cooking. Next to him followed White Yankee, with three blankets lashed upon his back, a slouched white hat on his head,

12

and a half pound of tobacco in his mouth. Crooked legged withal, and somewhat sickly was this individual, and being wholly unaccustomed to this kind of business, he went along groaning, grunting, and sweating, as if he was “sent for, and *didn't want* to come.” In the rear trotted along your humble friend, with a gun upon his shoulder, a powder-horn and shot-pouch at his side, cowhide boots on his feet, and a cap on his head—his beard half an inch long, and his long hair streaming in the wind.

We reached our place of destination about five o'clock, and halted under a large impending rock, which was to be our sleeping place. We were emphatically under the “shadow of a rock, in a weary land.” Our first business was to build a fire, which we did with about one cord of green and dry wood. Eighty poles were then cut, to which we fastened our lines. The old canoe in the lake was bailed out, and, having baited our hooks with the small fish which we brought with us, we arranged the poles around the lake, in about seven feet water. We then prepared and ate our supper, and awaited the coming on of night. During this interval, I learned from Peter the following particulars concerning the lake. It was originally discovered by a hunter named Shew, after whom it has always been called. It was estimated to cover about fifty acres, and, in some places, to be more than two hundred feet in depth. For my part, however, I should have said that it did not contain five acres, but the mountains, which lower above it on every side, are calculated to deceive the eye; but, as to its depth, I could fancy it to be bottomless, for the water is apparently as black as ink. To the number of trout in it there seems to be no end. It is supposed they reach it, when small, through the brook already mentioned, when they increase in size, and multiply. Peter says

he caught one there once which weighed a little over five pounds, and a speckled, common trout, too. It also abounds in green and scarlet lizards, which would be a serious drawback to the pleasures of the fastidious. I asked Peter many questions concerning his adventures about this lake, and he told me that the number of “harmless murders” which he had committed here were two or three hundred. In one day, he shot three deer; at another time, a dozen turkeys; at another, twenty ducks; one night, an old bear; and again, half a dozen coons; and, on one occasion, annihilated a den of thirty-seven rattlesnakes. This will give you some idea of the stories which I hear from this man; but you cannot conceive the peculiar enjoyment they afford me: it is because they are associated with my “boyhood’s home,”—my wilderness home, in my much-loved Michigan.

14

At nine o’clock, we lighted a torch and went to examine our lines; and it was my peculiarly good fortune to haul out not less than forty-one trout, weighing from one to two pounds a-piece. Now, if this wasn’t sport, I should like to know what is? These we put into a spring of the coldest water I ever tasted, and then “laid down in our loneliness,” as Coleridge would have said on the occasion. Branches of hemlock constituted our couch, and my station was between Peter and White Yankee. Little did I dream, when I first saw these two bipeds, that I should ever have them for my bedfellows. But who, alas! can always have the bedfellow he desires? Think you that we could not sleep soundly in that lap of the forest, between the sheltering rock and the roaring fire? Yea, my friends were in the land of Nod in less than a dozen minutes; but it was hard for me to go to sleep, tired as I was, in the midst of such a scene. There I lay, flat upon my back, a stone and my cap for a pillow, wrapt up in

15

my blanket, with nothing but my nose and eyes exposed to the chilly night air. Oh! what pictures did my fancy conjure up, as I looked upon the army of trunks around me, glistening in the fire-light. One moment they were a troop of Indians from the spirit-land, come to revisit again the hunting-grounds of their fathers, and weeping that the white man had desecrated their soil; and again, I fancied them to be a congress of wild animals, assembled together to try, execute, and devour us, for the depredations our fellows had committed upon their kind for the last one hundred years. By and by, a star peered upon me from between the branches of a tree, and my thoughts ascended heavenward. And now, my eyes twinkled and blinked in sympathy with the star, and I was a dreamer.

16

An hour after the witching time of night, I was startled from my sleep by a bellowing halloo from Peter, who said it was time to examine the lines again. Had you heard the echoes which were then awakened, far and near, you would have thought yourself in enchanted land. But there were *living* answers to that shout, for a frightened fox began to bark; an owl commenced its horrible hootings; a partridge its drumming; and a wolf its howl. There was not a breeze stirring, and

“Nought was seen, in the vault on high,
But the moon, and the stars, and a cloudless sky,
And a river of white in the welkin blue.”

Peter and Yankee went out to haul in the trout, but I remained on shore, to attempt a drawing, by moonlight, of the lake before me. The opposite side of the mountain, with its dark tangled forest, was perfectly mirrored in the waters below, the whole seeming as solid and variegated as a tablet of Egyptian marble. The

canoe with its inmates noiselessly pursued its way, making the stillness more profound. In the water at my feet I distinctly saw lizards sporting about, and I could not but wonder why such creatures were created. I thought, with the Ancient Mariner,

17

“A thousand slimy things lived on,
And so did I.”

Again we retired to rest, and slept till day-break. We visited our hooks once more, and took them up, and found that we had one hundred and two trout, averaging more than a pound a-piece. We then partook of a substantial breakfast of this delicious fish, which were cooked by me as well as anybody could do it, and, having gathered up our plunder, started for home.

The accidents we met with during the night were harmless, though they might have proved serious. A paper of Locofoco matches, which Peter carried in his breeches pocket, took fire, and gave him such a scorching that he bellowed lustily. White Yankee, in his restless slumber, rolled so near our watch-fire, that he barely escaped with one corner of his blanket, the remainder having been consumed. As for me, I only got pitched into the water up to my middle, while endeavoring to reach the end of a log which extended into the lake. In descending the mountain, I shot three partridges, and confoundedly frightened a fox, and by noon was in my snug studio, commencing a picture from one of my last sketches.

18

But lo! my candle is flickering in the socket, and I must say,
Good night!

A SPRING DAY

May is near its close, and I am still at work in the valley of the Hudson. Spring is indeed come again, and this, for the present year, has been its day of triumph. The moment I awoke, at dawn, this morning, I knew by intuition that it would be so, and I bounded from my couch like a startled deer, impatient for the cool delicious air. Spring is upon the earth once more, and a new life is given me of enjoyment and hope. The year is in its childhood, and my heart clings to it with a sympathy, that I feel must be immortal and divine. What I have done to-day, I cannot tell: I only know that my body has been tremulous with feeling, and my eyes almost blinded with seeing. Every hour has been fraught with a new emotion of delight, and presented to my vision numberless pictures of surpassing beauty. I have held communion with the sky, the mountains, the streams, the woods, and the fields: and these, if you please, shall be themes of my present letter.

20

The sky! It has been of as deep an azure, and as serene, as ever canopied the world. It seemed as if you could look *through* it, into the illimitable home of the angels—could almost behold the glory which surrounds the Invisible. Three clouds alone have attracted my attention. One was the offspring of the dawn, and encircled by a rim of gold; the next was the daughter of noon, and white as a pearl; and the last, of evening, and robed in deepest crimson. Wayward and coquettish creatures were these clouds! Their chief ambition seemed to be to display their charms to the best advantage, as if conscious of their loveliness; and, at sunset, when the light lay pillowed on the mountains, it was a joyous sight to see them, side by side, like three sweet

sisters, as they were, *going home*. Each one was anxious to favor the world with its own last smile, so that, by their changing places so often, you would have thought they were all unwilling to depart. But they were the ministers of the Sun, and he would not tarry for them; and, while he beckoned them to follow on, the Evening Star took his station in the sky, and bade them depart: and when I looked again, they were gone. Never more, thought I, will those clouds be a source of joy to a human heart. And in this respect, also, they seemed to me to be the emblems of those beautiful but thoughtless maidens, who spend the flower of youth trifling with the affections of all whom they have the power to fascinate.

21

The mountains! In honor of the season which has just clothed them in the richest green, they have displayed every one of their varied and interesting charms. At noon, as I lay under the shadow of a tree, watching them “with a look made of all sweet accord,” my face was freshened by a breeze. It seemed to come from the summit of South Peak, and to be the voice of the Catskills. I listened, and these were the words which echoed through my ear.

“Of all the seasons, oh, Spring! thou art the most beloved, and to us, always the most welcome. Joy and gladness ever attend thy coming, for we know that the ‘winter is past, the rains are over and gone, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.’ And we know, too, that from thy hands flow unnumbered blessings. Thou softenest the earth, that the husbandman may sow his seed, which shall yield him a thousand fold at the harvest. Thou releasest the rivers from their icy fetters, that the wings of commerce may be unfurled once more. Thou givest food to the cattle upon a

22

thousand hills, that they, in their turn, may furnish man with necessary food, and also assist him in his domestic labors. Thou coverest the earth with a garniture of freshest loveliness, that the senses of man may be gratified, and his thoughts directed to Him who hath created all things, and pronounced them good. And, finally, thou art the hope of the year, and thine admonitions, which are of the future, have a tendency to emancipate the thoughts of man from this world, and the troubles which may surround him here, and fix them upon that clime where an everlasting spring abides.” “The voice in my dreaming ear melted away,” and I heard the roaring of the streams as they fretted their way down the rocky steeps.

The streams! Such “trumpets” as they have, blown to-day, would, I am afraid, have caused Mr. Wordsworth to exclaim:

23

“The cataracts—*make a devilish noise up yonder.*”

The fact is, “all the earth is gay,” and all the springs among the mountains “giving themselves up to jollity,” the streams are full to overflowing, and rush along with a “vindictive looseness,” because of the burden they have to bear. The falls and cascades, which make such exquisite pictures in the summer months, are now fearful to behold, for, in their anger, every now and then they toss some giant tree into an abyss of foam, which makes one fear the effects of an earthquake. But, after the streams have left the mountains, and are running through the bottom lands, they still seem to be displeased at something, and at *every turn* they take, *delve* into the “bowels of the harmless earth,” making it dangerous for the angler to approach too near, but rendering the haunt of the trout more spacious and commodious than before.

The streams are about the only things I cannot praise to-day, and I hope it will not *rain* for a month to come, if this is the way they intend to act whenever we have a number of delightful showers.

The woods! A goodly portion of the day have I spent in one of their most secret recesses. I went with Shakspeare under my arm, but could not read, any more than fly, so I stretched myself at full length on a huge log, and kept a sharp look-out for anything that might send me a waking dream. The brotherhood of trees clustered around me, laden with leaves just bursting into full maturity, and possessing that delicate and peculiar green, which lasts but a single day, and never returns. A fitful breeze swept through them, so that ever and anon I fancied a gushing fountain to be near, or that a company of ladies fair were come to visit me, and that I heard the rustle of their silken kirtles. And now my eyes rested on a tree, that was entirely leafless, and almost without a limb. Instead of grass at its foot, was a heap of dry leaves, and not a bush or vine grew anywhere near it, but around its neighbors they grew in great abundance. It seemed branded with a curse, alone, forsaken of its own, and despised by all. Can this, thought I, be an emblem of any human being? Strange that it should be, but it is nevertheless too true. Only one week ago, I saw a poor miserable maniac, bound hand and foot, driven from “home and all its treasures,” and carried to a dark, damp prison-house in a neighboring town. We can be reconciled to the mystery of a poisonous reptile’s existence, but it is very hard to understand for what good purpose a maniac is created. But to return. Another object I noticed, was a little tree about five feet high, completely covered with blossoms of a gaudy hue. At first, I tried to gather something poetical out of this thing, but could not to save my

life. It caused me a real hearty laugh as the idea expanded, for it reminded me of a certain maiden lady of my acquaintance, who is *old, stunted*, very fond of *tall men*, and always strutting round under a weight of *jewelry*. But oh, what beautiful flowers did I notice in that shady grove, whose whispering thrilled me with delight! Their names? I cannot tell them to you—they *ought* to have no names, any more than a cloud or a foam-bell on the river. Some were blue, some white, some purple, and some scarlet. There were little parties of them on every side, and as the wind swayed their delicate stems, I could not but fancy they were living creatures, the personified thoughts perhaps of happy and innocent children. Occasionally, too, I noticed a sort of straggler peeping at me from beside a hillock of moss, or from under the branches of a fallen tree, as if surprised at my temerity in entering its secluded haunt. Birds also were around me in that greenwood sanctuary, singing their hymns of praise to the Father of mercies for the return of spring. The nests of the females being already built, they had nothing to do but be happy, anticipating the time when they themselves should be the “dealers-out of some small blessings” to their own dear helpless broods. As to their mates, they were about as independent, restless and noisy as might be expected, very much as any rational man would be who was the husband of a young and beautiful wife.

26

But the open fields to-day have superabounded with pictures to please and instruct the mind. I know not where to begin to describe them. Shall it be at the very threshold of our farmhouse? Well, then, only look at those lilac trees in the garden, actually top-heavy with purple and white flowering pyramids. The old farmer has just cut a number of large branches, and given them to his little daughter to carry to her mother,

27

who will distribute them between the mantel-piece, the table, and the fire-place of the family sitting-room. But what ambrosial odor is that which now salutes the senses? It comes not from the variegated corner of the garden, where the tulip, the violet, the hyacinth, the blue bell, and the lily of the valley are vieing to outstrip each other in their attire; nor, from that clover-covered lawn, besprinkled with buttercups, dandelions, strawberry blossoms, and honeysuckles; but from the orchard, every one of whose trees are completely covered with snow-white blossoms. And from their numberless petals, emanates the murmur of bees, as they are busy extracting stores of honey. Oh, what an abundance of fruit—of apples, cherries, peaches, and pears, do these sweet blossoms promise! But, next week there *may* be a bitter *frost*; and this is the lesson which my heart learns. Now that I am in the spring-time of life, my hopes, in number and beauty, are like the blossoms of trees, and I know not but they may even on the morrow be withered by the chilly breath of the grave. But let us loiter farther on. The western slope of this gentle hill is equally divided, and of two different shades of green; one is planted with rye, and the other with wheat. The eastern slope of the hill has lately been loosened by the plough, and is of a sombre color, but to my eye not less pleasing than the green. And this view is enlivened with figures besides—for a farmer and two boys are planting corn, the latter opening the bed with their hoes, and the farmer dropping in the seed (which he carries in a bag slung at his side), and pushing it with his foot. And now, fluttering over their heads is a roguish bob-o-link, *scolding* about something in their *wake*, at a *respectful* distance, and hopping along the ground are a number of robins, and on the nearest fence a meadow-lark and bluebird are “holding on for a bite.” But there is no end to these rural pictures, so I will just take you into this neighboring

meadow-pasture, then into the poultry yard at home, and conclude my present epistle.

Here we are, then, in the midst of various domestic animals. Yonder, a couple of black colts are chasing each other in play, while their venerable mother (for they are brothers, though not twins) is standing a little way off, watching their antics, and twisting about her ears, as she remembers the happy days of her own colthood. Here are some half dozen hearty cows, lying down and grazing, each one with a “pledge of affection” sporting about her. There are six or eight oxen, eating away as fast as they can, while one, who seems to be a sentinel, occasionally rolls up his eye to see if the farmer is coming to renew his song of “haw! gee! gee! haw!” Under the shadow of that old oak, whose *portrait* I mean to take to-morrow, is a flock of sheep, with their lambs bounding beside them, as to the “tabor’s sound;” but to me there comes no “thought of grief” at the sight, wherein I must be suffered to disagree with Wordsworth, to whom I have already alluded once or twice, and whose celebrated and most wonderful ode has been echoing in my heart all the day long. Some of the lines in it are appropriate to the day, the charms of which I am attempting to make you *feel*, and you will oblige me by reading and inwardly digesting, for the hundredth time, as I know it will be, the following fragments of a whole, and yet really complete poems:—

“The sunshine is a glorious birth.”

“The winds come to me from the fields of sleep.”

“And the babe leaps up on his mother’s arm.”



“Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own.”



“Full soon thy soul shalt have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as fate, and deep almost as life.”



“O joy, that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive.”



“To me, the meanest flower that blows, can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”



Strange, that an immortal man, after dwelling upon such poetry, should be willing to go into a *poultry* yard. But why not? I should rather do this *willingly*, than be compelled, as I have been, and may be again, to hear a man say, after reading to him Wordsworth’s great Ode—“Why! of what *use* is such *stuff* as that? what does it *prove*? will it furnish a man with *bread and butter*? will it make the *pot boil*?” The people of the poultry yard have been in such glee to-day, and contributed so much to the gladness of the day, that I must pay them a passing tribute. In the first place, our old gobbler, with his retinue of turkey wives, has been on the point of bursting with pride ever

since sunrise. If the Grand Sultan of Turkey (who must be the father of all turkeys) cuts the same kind of capers in the presence of his hundred ladies, that must be a great country for lean people to “laugh and grow fat.” Our *ring-tailed* gobbler is a feathered personification of Jack Falstaff, possessing his prominent trait of cowardice to perfection. I flourished a red handkerchief in his face this morning, and, by the way he strutted round and gobbled, you would have thought he was going to devour you. About ten minutes after this, I threw down a handful of corn, which was intended for him. While he was busy picking it up, a certain rooster stepped along side and commenced picking too: the intruder, having got in the way of the gobbler, was suddenly pushed aside; whereupon the gentleman with spurs chuckled and “showed fight,” but the gobbler for a moment heeded him not. This the rooster could not bear, so he pounced upon his enemy, and whipt him without mercy, until the coward and fool ran away, with his long train of affectionate wives following behind.

The roosters, hens and chickens, which have figured in the yard to-day, would more than number a hundred, and such cackling, crowing, chuckling, and crying as they have made, was anything but a “*concord* of sweet sounds.” But the creatures have been happy, and it was therefore a pleasure to look at them. A young hen this morning made her first appearance with a large brood of chickens, yellow as gold, and this caused quite a sensation among the feathered husbands generally. The mother, as she rambled about, seemed to say by her pompous air, to her daughterless friends—“ar’nt they beautiful? don’t you wish you had a few?” It was also very funny to see with what looks of astonishment the youthful roosters surveyed these “infant phenomenons.” As to our ducks, and geese, and guinea hens,

they have minded their business pretty well—the two former paddling about the creek and mud-puddles, and the latter “between meals” roaming at large through the orchard and garden, altogether the most beautiful and rational of the feathered tribes.

A mountaineer, who is to take this letter to the post-office, is waiting for me below, and I must close,—hoping that the country figures I have endeavored to sketch may have a tendency to make you feel a portion of that joy, which has characterized this delightful Spring Day.

33

34

SOUTH PEAK MOUNTAINS.

I commence this letter in the language of Leather-Stocking: "You know the Catskills, lad, for you must have seen them on your left, as you followed the river up from York, looking as blue as a piece of clear sky, and holding the clouds on their tops, as the smoke curls over the head of an Indian chief at a council-fire." Yes, everybody is acquainted with the name of these mountains, but few with their peculiarities of scenery. They are situated about eight miles from the Hudson, rise to an average elevation of thirty-eight hundred feet, and running in a straight line from north to south, cover a space of some twenty-five miles. The fertile valley on the east is as beautiful as heart could desire, watered by the Catskill, Plauterkill, and Esopus Creeks, inhabited by a sturdy Dutch yeomanry, and is the mother of those three most flourishing towns, Catskill, Saugerties, and Kingston. The upland on the west, for some thirty miles, is rugged, dreary, and thinly settled, but the winding valley of Schoharie, beyond, is possessed of a thousand charms peculiarly American. The mountains themselves are covered with dense forests, abounding in cliffs and waterfalls, and for the most part untrodden by the footsteps of men. Looking at them from the Hudson, the eye is attracted by two deep hollows, which are called "cloves." That one nearest to the Mountain House, Catskill Clove, is distinguished for a remarkable fall, which is familiar to the world through the pen of Bryant and the pencil of Cole; but it is fast filling up with habitations of improvement, while the other, Plauterkill Clove, though yet possessing much of its original glory, is certain of the same destiny. The clove whence issues the Esopus is among the

Shandaken mountains, and is not visible from the Hudson.

My nominal residence at the present time is at the mouth of Plauterkill Clove. I came into the country to study,—to forget the busy world, and give myself up entirely to the hallowing influences of nature, and oh, how many “mysteries sublime,” has she revealed to me in my journeyings among the dear, dear Catskills! 36

To the west, and only half a mile from, my abode, are the beautiful mountains, whose graceful outlines fade away to the north, like the waves of the sea when covered with a *visible* atmosphere. The nearest, and to me most beloved of these, is called South Peak. It is nearly four thousand feet in height, and covered from base to summit by one vast forest of trees, varying from eighty to a hundred feet. Like most of its brethren, it is a perfectly wild and uncultivated wilderness, richly abounding in all the interesting features of mountain scenery. Like a corner stone, it stands at the junction of the northern and western ranges of the Catskills, and as its huge form looms up against the evening sky, it inspires one with awe, as if it were the ruler of the world; and yet I have learned to love it as a friend. Its name, its image, and every tree, and shrub, and vine, which spring from its rocky bosom, can never be forgotten. I have reflected upon it when reposing in the noontide sunshine, or enveloped in clouds, when holding communion with the most holy night, when trembling under the influence of a thunder-storm, or encircled by a rainbow. It has filled my soul with images of beauty and sublimity, and made me feel the omnipotence of God. 37

A day and night has it just been my privilege to spend on this

mountain, accompanied by a friend. We started at an early hour yesterday morning, equipped in our brown fustians, and laden with well-filled knapsacks, one of us with a hatchet in his belt, and the other with a brace of pistols. We were bound to the extreme summit of the peak, where we intended to spend the night, see the rising of the sun, and return at our leisure on the following day. But when I tell you, my friend, that our course lay right up the almost perpendicular side of the mountain, where was no path save that formed by a torrent or a bear, you will readily believe it was somewhat rare and wild. But this was what we delighted in, so we shouted “Excelsior,” and commenced the ascent. The air was excessively sultry, and the very first effort we made caused the perspiration to start most profusely; upward, upward, was our course,—now climbing through a tangled thicket, or under the spray of a cascade, and then again supporting ourselves by the roots of saplings, or scrambling under a fallen tree,—now, like the samphire gatherer, scaling a precipice, and then again clambering over a rock, or “shinning” up a hemlock tree, to reach a desired point. Our first halt was made at a singular spot called “Hunter’s Hole,” which is a spacious cavern or pit, forty feet deep and twenty wide, and approached only by a crack in the mountain sufficiently large to admit a man. There is a story connected with it worth recording. Many years ago, a farmer, residing at the foot of the mountain, having missed a favorite dog, and being anxious for his safety, called together his neighbors, and offered a reward for the safe return of his canine friend. Always ready to do a kind deed, a number of his neighbors immediately started in different directions for the hunt. A barking sound having issued from this cavern, it was discovered, and, at the bottom of it, the lost dog, which had probably fallen in while chasing a fox. “But how is he to be extricated from this hole?”

was the general inquiry of the assembled hunters. Not one of all the group would venture to descend, under any circumstances; so the poor animal remained a prisoner for another night. But the next morning he was released, and by none other than a brave boy, the son of the farmer, and playmate of the dog. A large number of men were present on the occasion. A strong rope was tied around the body of the boy, and he was gently lowered down. Having reached the bottom, and by the aid of his lamp discovered that he was in a “real nice place,” the little rogue thought he would have some sport; so he continued to pull down, more rope, until he had made a coil of two hundred feet, which was bewildering enough to the crowd above; but nothing happened to him, and the dog was raised. The young hero having played his trick so well, it was generally supposed, for a long time after, that this cavern was two hundred feet in depth, and none were found sufficiently bold to venture in. The bravery of the boy, however, was eventually the cause of his death, for he was cut down by a cannon ball in the war of 1812.

39

The next remarkable place that we attained in our ascent was the Bear Bank, where, in the winter, may ever be found an abundance of those charming creatures. It is said that they have often, on a clear day, been seen sunning themselves, even from as far as the Hudson. We were now on a beetling precipice three hundred feet high, where, under the shadow of a huge pine, we enjoyed a slice of bread and pork, without the “fixens to match.” Instead of a dessert of strawberries and ice-cream, we were furnished by venerable dame nature with a thunder-storm. It was one that we had noticed making a great commotion in the valley below, and which, having discovered two bipeds going toward its home, the sky, seemed to have come up there to frighten us back again.

40

But, “knowing that nature never did betray the heart that loved her,” we awaited the thunder-storm’s reply to our obstinate refusal to descend. The cloud was yet below us, but its unseen herald, a strong east wind, told us that the conflict had commenced. Presently a peal of thunder resounded through the vast profound, which caused the mountain to tremble to its deep foundation. And then followed another and another, as the storm increased, and the rain and hail poured down in floods. Thinking it safer to expose ourselves to the storm than remain under the pine, we retreated without delay, when we were suddenly enveloped in the heart of the cloud, only a few rods distant; a stroke of vivid lighting blinded us, and the towering forest monarch, even upon his proud throne, was smitten to the earth. We were in the midst of an unwritten epic poem about that time, but we could not then appreciate its beauties, for another peal of thunder, and another stroke of lightning, attracted our whole attention. Soon as these had passed, a terrible gale followed in their wake, tumbling down piles of loose rocks, and bending to the dust, as if in passion, the resisting forms of an army of trees, and a glorious rainbow spanned the mountain like that distinguishing circle around the temples of the mighty and holy, as portrayed by the painters of old. The commotion lasted for an hour, when the region of the Bear Bank became as serene as the slumber of a babe. A spirit of silent and holy prayer seemed to be brooding over that scene of marvellous loveliness, and with a shadow of thoughtfulness at our hearts we resumed our upward march.

41

The next place where we halted to get breath was upon a sort of peninsula, called the Eagle’s Nest, where it is said an Indian child was carried by one of those birds and cruelly destroyed, and whence the frantic mother, with the mangled body of

42

her babe, leaped into the terrible abyss below. From this point we discovered a host of clouds assembled in council above High Peak, as if discussing the parched condition of the earth, and the speediest mode of affording relief to a still greater extent than they had done; and far away to the west, was another assembly of clouds, vieing, like sporting children, to outrun and overleap each other in their aerial amphitheatre.

After this, we surmounted another lofty cliff, celebrated for rattlesnakes. Here the rocks were literally covered with the white bones of these reptiles, slaughtered by the hunter in by-gone years, and we saw a couple that were alive. One was about four feet long, and the other half this size, which seemed to be the offspring of the old one, for, when discovered, they were playing together, like an affectionate mother with her tender child. Strange, that even in creatures, the sight of which begets in man only abhorrence and fear, should be found one of the first and most cherished principles of humanity! The law of love is indeed universal. Soon as we appeared the sport ceased, and the venomous creatures, in the twinkling of an eye, coiled themselves up in the attitude of battle. But the conflict was of short duration, and to know the result you need only look into my cabinet of curiosities.

Higher up yet was it our lot to climb. We went a little out of our course to obtain a bird's-eye view of Shew's Lake. In its tranquil bosom the glowing evening sky was perfectly reflected, and the silence surrounding it so profound, that we could almost hear the ripples made by a solitary wild duck, as it swam from one shore to the other in its utter loneliness. And the thought entered my mind, that, as the infant of Bethlehem was tenderly protected by the parents who watched over its slumbers, so was

this exquisite lake cradled and protected in the lap of the mountains.

One sight more did we behold before reaching the summit. It was the sunset hour, and on a jutting cliff, which commanded an immense view, our eyes were delighted by a solitary deer, standing still, and looking down upon the silent void below, which was then covered with a deep purple atmosphere, causing the prospect to resemble the boundless ocean. It was the last of its race, we could not but fancy, bidding the human world good night, previous to seeking its heathery couch in a nameless ravine.

44

Such are some of the scenes we enjoyed in our ascent. One effort more and the long-desired eminence was attained, which was a little nearer the evening star than we had ever been before. It was now the shadowy hour of twilight, and as we were about done over with fatigue, it was not long before we had pitched our leafy tent, eaten some supper, offered up a prayer, and yielded ourselves to the embrace of sleep, “dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health.”

At midnight, a cooling breath of air having passed across my face, I was awakened from a fearful dream, which left me in a nervous and excited state of mind. A strange and solemn gloom had taken possession of my spirit, which was enhanced by the melancholy song of a neighboring hemlock grove. Our encampment having been made a little below the summit of the peak, and feeling anxious to behold the prospect at that hour from that point, I arose, without awaking my companion, and seated myself on the topmost rock, which was bare of trees and shrubs, and covered by a rich moss, softer and more beautiful

than a Turkey carpet. But oh, how can I describe the scene that burst upon my enraptured vision? It was unlike anything I had ever seen before, creating a “lone, lost feeling,” which I supposed could only be realized by a wanderer in the heart of an uninhabited wilderness, or on the ocean a thousand leagues from land. Above, around, and beneath me, ay, far beneath me, were the cold, bright stars, and to the east, the “old moon with the young moon in her arms.” In the west were floating a little band of pearly clouds, which I fancied to be winged chariots from the city of the living God, and that they were crowded with children, the absent and loved of other years, who, in a frolic of blissful joy, were out upon the fields of heaven. On my left reposed the long, broad valley of the Hudson, with its cities, towns, villages, woods, hills, and plains, whose crowded highway was diminished to a narrow girdle of deep blue. To the south, hill beyond hill, field beyond field, receded to the sky, occasionally enlivened by a peaceful lake. On my right, a multitudinous array of rugged mountains lay piled up, apparently as impassable as the bottomless pit. To the north, the king of the Catskills bared his bosom to the moonlight, as if demanding and expecting the homage of the world. Such was the scene that surrounded me at that witching hour of the night, and think you, that it did not animate my spirit with new life, and expand my love for the invisible Creator of all? Oh, yes, and I longed for the timbrel of Miriam, or the harp of David, that I might sing aloud this song of praise, —“Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Praise him, O earth, for he hath crowned thee with blessings numberless as the sands of ocean. Praise him, ye children of men, for he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Praise him, all ye starry hosts of heaven, for he telleth your numbers and calleth you names. Praise him, ye

heaven of heavens, for he commanded and ye were created. Praise ye him, all ye his angels, for he hath crowned you with immortality. Let everything that hath breath sing praises unto the Lord forever, for his manifold and infinite attributes.” The song ended, the weight upon my spirit was departed, and I sought my couch once more, and slumbered until the dawn.

We saw the sun rise, as a matter of course, which event is described in the following brief rhapsody: it will be more distinctly understood by those who are familiar with the mountain.

47

He comes! he comes! the “king of the bright day!” The crimson and golden clouds are parting, and he bursts on the bewildered sight! One moment more, and the whole earth rejoices in his beams; and these are not more welcome to the prince than the peasant, to the philosopher than the idiot. All, alike, are made happy by the blessed sunshine. But look! on either side and beneath the sun, what an array of new-born clouds are gathering!—like a band of cavaliers, preparing to accompany their leader on a journey. Out of the Atlantic have they just risen; at noon they will have pitched their tents on the cerulean plains of heaven; and when the hours of day are numbered, the far-off waters of the Pacific will again receive them in its cool embrace. Hark! was not that the roar of waves? No; naught but the report of thunder in the valley below. Can it be? can it be? are the two oceans coming together? God have mercy upon us! we are on a rock in the midst of an illimitable sea, and the tide is rising—rapidly. Strange! it is still as death, and yet the oceans are covered with billows. Lo! the naked masts of a Ship on fire! Now she is gone, and from her grave ascends the emblem of her fate. Yonder, as if a reef were hidden there to

48

impede their course, the waves are struggling in despair—now leaping to the very sky, and now plunging into a deep abyss. And when they have passed the unseen enemy, how beautiful are their various evolutions, as they hasten to the distant shore! Another look, and what a change! The mists of morning are being exhaled by the sun, already the world of waters is dispersed, and in the broad valley of the Hudson, far, far beneath me, are reposing all the enchanting features of the green earth.

We descended the mountain by a circuitous route, that we might enjoy the luxury of passing through the Plauterkill Clove. The same spring that gives rise to Schoharie Creek, which is a tributary of the Mohawk, also gives rise to this wild mountain stream. In its very infancy it begins to leap and laugh with the gladness of a boy. From its source to my dwelling-place the distance is only two miles, and yet it has a fall of twenty-five hundred feet; but the remainder of its course, until it reaches the Esopus creek, is calm and peaceful, and on every side and at every turn is protected by the farm-houses of a sturdy yeomanry. The wild gorge or dell, through which it passes, abounds in waterfalls of surpassing beauty, varying from ten to a hundred and fifty feet in height, whose rocks are green with the moss of centuries, and whose brows are ever wreathed with the most exquisite of vines and flowers. There's the Double Leap, with its almost fathomless pool, containing a hermit trout that has laughed at the angler's skill for a score of years; the Mountain Spirit, haunted by the disembodied spirit of an Indian girl, who lost her life there while pursuing a phantom of the brain; and the Blue Bell Fall, which is forever guarded by a multitudinous array of those charming flowers. Caverns, too, and chasms are there, dark, deep, chilly, and damp, where the

toad, the lizard and snake, and strange families of insects, are perpetually multiplying and actually seeming to enjoy their loathsome lives; the Black Chasm, the Gray Chasm, and the Devil's Chamber, with perpendicular walls of twice the height of a tall mast, and with a wainscoting of pines and hemlocks, that have "braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze." Plauterkill Clove is an eddy of the great and tumultuous world, and in itself a world of unwritten poetry, whose primitive loveliness has not yet been disfigured by the influences of mammon, and God grant that it may continue so forever. It is endeared to my heart for being a favorite haunt of solitude, and for having been consecrated by a brotherhood of friends to the pure religion of nature; and they always enter there as into a holy sanctuary. You may imagine, then, my friend, what was our mode of descending through the dell, and as to our feelings as we emerged under the open sky, they were allied to those of a pilgrim in a strange land, passing through the dim twilight of a dream-like cathedral. And now we stood upon a ledge whence could be obtained a view of the dear old mountain we were leaving behind, and as we contemplated its graceful lines and delicate hues of blueish green, we could not but admire, in the abstract, the sublimity and solemnity of its admonitions as a preacher, its faithfulness as a friend, and the grandeur of its conceptions as a poet. We reached home about noon, thankful to God for the love of nature which he has so deeply implanted in our hearts, and, as we hope, happier and better men.

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT.

I have been whiling away a little time this morning in recording a queer medley of thoughts, which occupied my mind during the tedious hours of the past night. Their cause and import I will leave you to guess.

It is well. My long, long dream of two years,—my dream of heart-gladness is at an end. I saw her, and was a lover, which is but another name for slave. She became my promised bride, and I was happy,—thoughtlessly happy. She proved herself to be a faithless and unworthy creature, and the link which bound us together was broken. And so, my dream is ended, and I am free.

A child, with a basket on his arm, was gathering flowers in a meadow on a bright spring morning. There was no end to the number that he plucked, and none, as he thought, in the world, could be compared to them in loveliness. And thus was it with my hopes,—but the flowers withered, and my hopes are gone.

Softly!—was not that a footstep, and did I not see the gleaming of a silken kirtle? No; it was only an echo and a reflection from the past. I know it, for I am alone, utterly alone.

O how truly hath it been written by the poet, that Art is long and time is fleeting! What a cheerless thought is this to the ambitious

Painter! Was I wrong to set my life upon *that* cast! At any rate, I will stand the hazard of the die. I sometimes think that the cup which others drink, the cup of fame, will never be quaffed by me. Well, what matter? Was I born, merely to create a name? No, no, no! I was brought into the wilderness of life to be tried by pain, sickness, and sorrow, and to leave it as becomes a Christian is my chief ambition. Fame, which I had hoped to win, I panted after, that another's happiness might be promoted. But she has frowned upon me, and an impassable ocean is forever spread between our hearts. Be it so.

Once, a serpent secreted itself within the petals of a flower. I pressed that flower to my bosom, and the serpent stung me. But I rejoice that the agony of the pain is over and gone.

54

A strange excitement is upon me,—with all my wooing sleep will not come to my relief. O how painful it is to count the slowly lagging hours, throughout the silent watches of this summer night! Restless am I as a wave of the sea, and, may be, as useless and insignificant. The pulsations of my mind are as fitful as the breeze which breathes upon me through my open window, but like that breeze they hasten to one point, which is the heart of a poor dreamer.

I cannot, with Othello, feel that *I* have thrown away a *pearl*. It was the shell of a pearl only, whose heart was a living worm.

Little things! Of these is the world composed, and that man is a fool who looks upon them with contempt. Yes, it is a little thing to say, "I love you with all my heart, and will follow you to the end." But when believed, if this proves to be the mockery of a hypocritical heart, who can describe the consequences that may result to the believer? Fatal they may be to the soul, as the bite of Tarantula to the body, unless our thoughts are attracted by a strain of melody emanating from the throne of Deity. And to that great Being am I deeply thankful, for having upheld me in my trying hour.

55

It hath been whispered in my ear, that the being whom I lately cherished as my life-blood, now mentions my name with a scornful smile. And why? not because of my inferior wealth, or family, or education, for with respect to these I am her superior,—but because I loved her as an angel. How little did I think of this, when her head has been pillowed on my bosom, and I have seen and felt the throbbings of her own! Yet, even then she nourished the spirit that would "damn" a queen. She tried to break my heart,—she failed,—but what matter? She must answer for the *deed*. When she comes to die, if not till then, when she come to "tread the wine-press alone," then must she repent her folly and ingratitude, and it is my prayer that she may be among the redeemed in heaven. Then will she be purified from the corruptions which cling to her here, and become a worthy subject of heavenly solicitude and love.

56

Where, O where are all the blissful dreams upon which my heart has so long existed? Vanished, like the shadow of a cloud, and I am a companionless pilgrim through the world. Who can

comprehend the misery of a desolate human heart? I thought she loved me with a spotless passion, and yet, while anguish rends my brow to-night, she is sweetly sleeping and dreaming on her couch of down. Surely, surely it must be a sin to love. What have I done, that my heart-strings should be snapt asunder,—that I must kiss the dust and be unhappy?

If you give a beggar a loaf of bread to save his life, and he spurns you with an oath, you cannot but exclaim, “O horrible ingratitude?” But what should be thought of those to whom you had given away your *heart*, if they should reciprocate with the damnable *lie*? “Begone, thou art a villain,—touch not the hem of our garments,—we are pure, but thou art polluted.”

It was the noontide hour, and as I was passing along a lonely and unfrequented road, I discovered a pair of turtle doves quietly cooing to each other on a sandy hillock in the sunshine. It was a picture of exquisite happiness, and yet the longer I gazed, the more deeply did it affect my heart, so that when I left the spot, I found that my eyes were filled with tears. The last time that I had wept before, was when I beheld the wreck of my *greatest hope*. When, I wonder, shall I be compelled to weep again?

O how my heart clings to the hour of our first acknowledgment of love! aye, and to all the blissful hours that have been mine since then in her society! Like a wealthy prince I gloried in my rare possession, and could not believe that aught on earth would ever make me a beggar. But,—the treasure that I doted on took

unto itself wings, and like a beautiful but unclean bird has flown away, to delight and to deceive some other unsatisfied mortal. I *am* a beggar now. O will not some of the poor and forsaken, that I have cheered with a kind word when I was happy, come forth now and welcome me with a smile of pure affection?

I loved her, and fondly anticipated that she would one day become the star of my *home*. Home! what place upon the earth is dearer to the heart of man? How pleasing is the anticipation of the absent school-boy as he looks forward to the close of the term, when he shall be welcomed to the fireside of home! The poor farmer toils unceasingly through the long days of summer, cheered by the comforts of home, which he fondly hopes will be the crown of his coming winter evenings! How fortunate is that man who can say—"mine is a happy home!" How thankful should he be! But is there no consolation for those who are homeless and friendless in the world? Ah yes, there is, and it is as sweet as it is invaluable. Our elder Brother, the meek and lowly Saviour, when upon the earth, was compelled to exclaim,—“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Homeless and unhappy Christian, cheer up! cheer up! A few more days, and you will be an inhabitant of that blessed world beyond the skies, “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” Yonder, is the home which I pant for *now*.

Friendship is one of the most beautiful and delicate plants that flourish in the garden of human passions, and to my mind is a holier emotion than love. What though I am no more a Lover! have I not a few well-tried friends, whom I “grapple to

my soul with looks of steel?" Why then should there be a weight upon my spirit? Long enough have I played the fool. O that I may be wise enough to renounce my folly!

How prone are we, who know not what it is to want, to forget that the world is full of suffering! We do not sympathize with those who suffer, and are contented to think only of ourselves. If, to be hungry, and naked, and friendless, is to suffer, what must be his condition, whose heart craves for the sympathy of love, and is destitute of those endearing attentions, which refine and elevate the soul?

There is a river, in a much-loved mountain and, whose waters are sometimes brackish and sometimes clear, and which sometimes hastens to the sea singing a plaintive under-song of loveliness. I know not why it is, but it seems to me, that such is the river of my life.

The smiles of woman! Sweet words. How many and beautiful beyond compare are the scenes which they recall to mind, whose charms are heightened by the smiles of a mother, a sister, a companion, or friend! All these, is it my privilege to claim, but yet the *whole* of my heart is not occupied. Who would wish to live in a world, where the lovely form and tender sympathies of woman were not known? It would be more desolate than the flowerless wilderness. Once, I thought to have toiled for a distinguished name, that I might be able to return a worthy recompense, for the smiles of the maiden whom I loved. I hoped to become affluent, that I might in future years make my

wife and children happy, and nourish the light which illumines the fireside circle, which light is the smile of woman. But,—who can tell what shall be on the morrow?

Welcome, thrice welcome, thou blessed night-wind that fannest my feverish brow, and banishes from my heart that pang of agony. Oh! I am a child again,—and bitter, bitter, bitter tears are the only witnesses, that my blood is cold and clotted. Can I endure this suffering? Is it possible, that these are the consequences of unrequited affection? Is it,—there that breeze again! it is a messenger from the bosom of God, and this is the burthen of its mission. “Child of sin and sorrow, thy days of darkness upon the earth are now commencing, and the period arrived, for thy nobler nature to assert its rightful supremacy. Terrible indeed will be the conflict, but fail not to struggle with all thy might for the mastery. If thou yieldest to this world, thy perfect happiness will be lost forever; but if thou conquerest on behalf of eternity, thy bliss will be as endless as its cycle, and more glorious than thy fondest dream.”

61

Once, I was dreaming only of manhood, and knew not what it was to love. *Now*, that I *can* love, there is not a being in the wide world whom I am privileged to love. Love! what is it but another name for jealousy, selfishness, and lust? Aye, this is the conclusion of the whole matter, if one woman that I know is a representative of her sex. But I rejoice in the conviction that here is a Love, which is as pure as the diamond, and lasting as the soul, which but blossoms in this world, bearing its fruit throughout the untold years of the great hereafter. She, who merits and enjoys that love, is the daughter of Heaven, and

62

the hope of the world. If we but prove faithful to her, she will never abandon us in our pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Look! the drapery of my couch is flooded with moonlight,—affording my bodily and mortal vision a most exquisite pleasure. And why? Because I *feel* that I am not utterly unloved. Surely, the blessed Queen of Night would not thus make my heart glad, if I were doomed to be forever a brother to the desolate and unknown!

Dear, dear girl, a thousand blessings rest upon thee for that pressure of thy soft hand upon my throbbing temples! It has soothed my pain, and hushed the wild tumult of my heart. Come near, come near, thou heavenly messenger, and let me press thy lips with a holy kiss, and then I will lie down again and be at peace. There!—’twas but a vision, and again my agony returns. O, my brain is on fire—see! see! the moon is veiled in blood, all the stars are falling, the air is beginning to simmer, the earth is swelling, and yet,—I am calmly going to pillow my head on a soft brown clod in the silent city of forgetfulness, the same which men call a grave-yard. Where can the body find a more *untroubled* home?

63

Love! It is not *this* that weighs my spirit down. I never loved a *woman*, and wherefore should I repine? I loved, but it was an ideal creature, a being of the mind. Such, we know, are never *false*,—I am once more happy. A light from heaven is beaming upon my soul, and, thanks to the breaking day, my sleepless night is ended.

COLE'S IMAGINATIVE PAINTINGS.

According to my promise, and to commemorate my visit to his place of residence, I herewith send you my mite of information concerning the productions of that man whom we delight to honor, as unquestionably the most gifted landscape painter of the present age. In my own opinion, none superior to him have ever existed, when we consider, in connection with his felicity of artistic execution, the poetic genius which his productions display. Having for years been a student of his art, and a warm lover of his pictures, I will describe some of the imaginative works of this Poet-Painter. First, however, a few words about the man himself.

Thomas Cole was born in England, but brought to this country in childhood. As his parents, before his birth, had resided in the United States, it is with the fullest propriety that he is 65 called an American painter. At any rate, his attachment to this country is so strong, that he has been heard to remark: "I would give my left arm, could I but identify myself with America, by saying that I was born here." The incidents of his youth and manhood, as recorded in "Dunlap's History of the Arts of Design," are among the most interesting things of the kind, and it is with reluctance that I refrain from inserting them in this place. Let it suffice, however, to state, that the genius which was born with him, was fostered by intimate and long continued acquaintance with the scenery of the Western States, when as yet they were a comparative wilderness. While toiling for a reputation, he resided for a few years at a time in Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Chillicothe, Steubenville, and New York city; and, having visited Europe a number of times,

established his reputation, and married a wife, he retired to the beautiful town of Catskill, on the Hudson, where he now resides, one of the most amiable of men, the best of husbands and fathers, and the most talented of living landscape painters.

The number of his imaginative paintings is about twenty, and his actual views somewhere between fifty and a hundred. Out of the former, I intend to select my especial favorites, of which I shall attempt to convey the best idea in my power for your benefit, namely, *The Course of Empire*, *The Departure and Return*, *Dream of Arcadia*, *Past and Present*, and *The Voyage of Life*. On these alone am I willing to base my previous assertion, that no landscape painter superior to Cole has ever lived. Of his other productions I shall say nothing, only giving the names of those which I have seen, by way of making you acquainted with the character of his subjects. They are as follows: *The Architect's Dream*, *Paradise*, *Scene from Manfred*, *Expulsion from Eden*, *Angels appearing to the Shepherds*, *Heroic Composition*, *Notch of the White Mountains*, *Italian Scenery*, *View of Florence*, *View in Rome*, *Schroon Mountain*, *Tornado in an American Forest*, *Mount Holyoke after a Storm*, *A Roman Aqueduct*, *Niagara*, *Mount Ætna*, *Lake George*, *New England Scenery*, *Distant View of the Catskill Mountains*, and a number of smaller views among the mountains. 66

The Course of Empire is a series, of five paintings, representing the History of a Scene—an epitome of that of Man. None but a great mind would have dared to choose so vast a subject, requiring the united attributes of poet, philosopher, and painter; and very few could have accomplished it so successfully. 67

In the first picture we have a perfectly wild scene of rocks, mountains, woods, and a bay of the ocean, reposing in the luxuriance of a ripe Spring. The clouds of night are being dissipated by the beams of the rising sun. On the opposite side of the bay rises a lofty promontory, crowned by a singular isolated rock, which would ever be a conspicuous landmark to the mariner. As the same locality is preserved in each picture of the series, this rock identifies it, although the position of the spectator changes in the several pictures. The chase being the most characteristic occupation of savage life, in the foreground we see an Indian clothed in skins, pursuing a wounded deer, which is bounding down a narrow ravine. On a rock, in the middle ground, are other Indians, with their dogs, surrounding another deer. On the bosom of a little river below are a number of canoes passing down the stream, while many more are drawn up on the shore. On an elevation beyond these is a cluster of wigwams, and a number of Indians dancing round a fire. In this picture we have the first rudiments of society. Men are already banded together for mutual aid in the chase. In the canoes, huts, and weapons, we perceive that the useful arts have commenced, and in the singing, which usually accompanies the dance of savages, we behold the germs of music and poetry. The Empire is asserted, to a limited degree, over sea, land, and the animal kingdom.

Ages have passed away, and in the second picture we have the Simple or Arcadian State of Society. The time of day is a little before noon, and the season early summer. The “untracked and rude” has been tamed and softened. Shepherds are tending their flocks; a solitary ploughman, with his oxen, is turning up the soil; and in the rude vessels passing into the haven of a growing village, and in the skeleton of a barque building on the shore,

we perceive the commencement of Commerce. From a rude temple on a hill the smoke of sacrifice is ascending to the sky, symbolizing the spirit of Religion. In the foreground, on the left hand, is seated an old man, who, by describing strange figures in the sand, seems to have made some geometrical

69

discovery, demonstrating the infancy of Science. On the right hand is a woman with a distaff, about crossing a stone bridge; beside her, a boy is drawing on a stone the figure of a man with a sword; and beyond these, ascending the road, a soldier is partly seen. Under some noble trees, in the middle distance, are a number of peasants dancing to the music of pipe and timbrel. All these things show us that society is steadily progressing in its march of usefulness and power.

Ages have again passed away, and in the third picture we have a magnificent city. It is now mid-day, and early Autumn. The Bay is now surrounded by piles of architecture, temples, colonnades, and domes. It is a day of rejoicing. The spacious harbor is crowded with vessels, war-galleys, ships, and barques, their silken sails glistening in the sunshine. Moving over a massive stone bridge, in the foreground, is a triumphal procession. The conqueror, robed in purple, is mounted on a car drawn by an elephant, and surrounded by captives and a numerous train of guards and servants, many of them bearing pictures and golden treasures. As he is about to pass the triumphal arch,

70

beautiful girls strew flowers in his path; gay festoons of drapery hang from the clustered columns; golden trophies glitter in the sun, and incense rises from silver censers. Before a Doric temple, on the left, a multitude of white-robed priests are standing on the marble steps, while near them a religious ceremony is being performed before a number of altars. The statue of Minerva, with a Victory in her hand, stands above the

building of the Caryatides, on a columned pedestal, near which is a company of musicians, with cymbals, “trumpets also, and shawms.” From the lofty portico of a palace, an imperial personage is watching the procession, surrounded by her children, attendants, and guards. Nations have been subjugated, man has reached the summit of human glory. Wealth, power, knowledge, and taste have worked together and accomplished the highest meed of human achievement and Empire.

Another change—and lo! in the fourth picture, the Vicious State, or State of Destruction. Behold the consequences of luxury, in the weakened and debased condition of mankind. A savage enemy has entered the once proud and happy city; a fierce tempest is raging; walls and colonnades are lying in the dust, and temples and palaces are being consumed by the torch of the incendiary. The fire of vengeance is swallowing up the devoted city. An arch of the bridge, over which the triumphal procession had before passed, has been battered down, and broken pillars, ruins of war-engines, and the temporary bridge which has been thrown over, indicate that this has been the scene of direst contention. Now there is a terrible conflict on the bridge, whose insecurity accelerates the horror of the conflict. Horses, and men, and chariots are precipitated into the raging waves. War-galleys are contending; others in flames; and others still, sinking beneath the prow of a superior foe. Smoke and flames are issuing from the falling and prostrate edifices; and along the battlements and in the blocked-up streets the conflict is dreadful indeed. The foreground is strewn with the bodies of the dead and dying. Some have fallen into the basin of a fountain, tinging the water with blood. One female is sitting in mute despair over the dead body of her son; another leaping over a battlement, to escape the grasp of a ruffian soldier; and

other soldiers drag a woman by the hair down the steps, that form the pedestal of a mutilated colossal statue, whose shattered head lies on the pavement below. A barbarous enemy has conquered the city; Carnage and Destruction have asserted their frightful Empire. 72

The last and most impressive picture of this series is the scene of Desolation. The sun has just departed, and the moon is ascending the twilight sky over the ocean, near the place where the sun rose in the first picture. The shades of evening are gradually stealing over the shattered and ivy-grown ruins of that once great city. A lonely column rises in the foreground, on whose capital a solitary heron has built her nest, and at the foot of it her mate is standing in the water, both of them apparently conscious of being a living mockery. The Doric temple and triumphal bridge may still be identified among the ruins, which are laved by the waters of the tranquil sea. But though man and his works have perished, the steep promontory with its isolated rock, still rears itself against the sky, unmoved, unchanged. Time has consumed the works of man, and art is resolving into its elemental nature. The gorgeous pageant has passed, the roar of battle has ceased, the multitude has mingled with the dust, the Empire is extinct. 73

The first, second, and last of these paintings are considered the best of Mr. Cole's productions, not only in the poetry they portray, but in their execution. The style is more varied and natural, and has less the appearance of paint than in many of his late productions. As to the third and fourth paintings, the conception of both is exceedingly fine and poetical, but deficient in execution. The architecture is admirably done, but the numerous figures, which it was necessary to introduce, are

poorly drawn and arranged. It would be, perhaps, too much to ask that an artist should be a great painter of scenery, and also a master of the human figure. As a whole, the Course of Empire is a work of art worthy of any nation or any painter of woman born. These pictures were painted for the late Luman Reed, at a cost of eight thousand dollars. Surely it were a blessing to the Fine Arts in this country, were such patrons more frequently found.

The Departure and Return, exhibit a poetical representation of the Feudal times. The Departure represents early morning in spring. As you look upon the picture, you can almost hear the fall of waters, and feel the pleasant breeze of the hour and season. In the distance is seen a church, whose spire is gilded by the beams of the rising sun; and in the foreground is a magnificent castle, looming to the sky, the seeming lord and guardian of the world. Coming forth from one of its massy gates is a band of mounted cavaliers, who are going to the wars, full of life and hope and gladness. The leader, in a splendid dress, is mounted on a noble charger, whose flashing eye and extended nostrils show that he is impatient for the fight. Turn your eyes away, and they are gone. 74

Imagine that months have passed, and look upon the Return. It is now evening, the season autumn, but the same section of country. The castle is now in the distance, and the church in the foreground. Toil-worn, a few only are returning home by a woodland path; and their leader, dying or wounded, is conveyed upon a litter carried by men. His steed, with heavy step, is following behind. As they approach the church a party of monks are seen coming out, and are taken by surprise, to meet the small remnant of brave warriors just returned from a long 75

and tedious campaign.

How simple and yet how complete is the story here revealed! As these are among the artist's early pictures, they are distinguished for their truth and unmannered style; and as compositions, are unsurpassed.

The "Dream of Arcadia" is the perfect personification of the sweetest dream of poetry and romance. It is composed of temples, vine-clad mountains, streams, cascades, trees, shepherds and minstrels, everything in fact which poets have described as making Arcady the most beautiful land under the sun.

The "Past and Present" consists of two pictures. The first is a tournament near a castle. The second is the same spot, but with the castle gone to decay. On the field where we beheld the brave deeds of chivalry, a single shepherd boy is tending his sheep. The first of these we think poorly managed, but the last is without a single fault,—it is superb.

The "Voyage of Life" is a series of fine pictures, allegorically portraying the prominent features of man's life, viz., childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. The subject is one of such universal interest, that it were almost impossible to treat it in an entirely original manner, but no one can deny that the conception of the painter displays a high and rare order of poetic power.

76

In the first we behold the dawn of a summer morning. A translucent stream is issuing from an unknown source out of a deep cavern in the side of a mountain. Floating gently down the

stream is a golden boat, made of the sculptured figures of the Hours, while the prow is formed by the present hour holding forth an emblem of Time. It is filled with flowers, and on these a little child is seated, tossing them with his upraised hands, and smiling with new-born joy, as he looks upon the unnumbered beauties and glories of this bright world around him; while a guardian angel is at the helm, with his wings lovingly and protectingly extended over the child. Love, purity, and beauty emanate like incense from the sky, the earth, and water, so that the heart of the gazer seems to forget the world, and lose itself in a dream of heaven.

A few fleeting years are gone, and behold the change! The Stream of Life is widened, and its current strong and irresistible, but it flows through a country of surpassing loveliness. The Voyager, who is now a youth, has taken the helm into his own hands, and the dismissed angel stands upon the shore looking at him with “a look made of all sweet accord,” as if he said in his heart, “God be with thee, thoughtless mortal!” But the youth heeds not his angel, for his eyes are now riveted by an airy castle pictured against the sky, dome above dome, reaching to the very zenith. The phantom of worldly happiness and worldly ambition has absorbed the imagination and eager gaze of the wayward voyager, and as he urges his frail bark onward, he dreams not of the dangers which may await him in his way. To the boat, only a few flowers are now clinging, and on closer observation we perceive that the castle in the air, apparently so real, has only a white cloud for its foundation, and that ere long the stream makes a sudden turn, rushing with the fury of a maddened steed down a terrible ravine. The moral of the picture it is needless for us to elucidate.

Another change, and lo! the verge of a cataract and a fearful storm. The rudderless bark is just about to plunge into the abyss below, while the voyager (now in the prime of manhood) is imploring the only aid, that can avail him in the trying hour, that of heaven. Demoniactal images are holding forth their temptations in the clouds around him, but he heeds them not. His confidence in God supports him, the previous agony of his soul is dispelled or subdued, by a reflection of immortal light stealing through the storm, and by the smiles of his guardian angel, visibly stationed in the far-off sky.

78

The Voyage of Life is ended, and our voyager, now white with hoary hairs, has reached that point where the waters of time and eternity mingle together—a bold conception, which is finely embodied by the daring genius of the painter. The hour-glass is gone, and the shattered bark is ready to dissolve into the fathomless waters beneath. The old man is on his knees, with clasped hands and his eyes turned heavenward, for the greenness of earth is forever departed, and a gloom is upon the ocean of Eternity. But just above the form of our good voyager is hovering his angel, who is about to transport him to his home; and, as the eye wanders upward, an infinite host of heavenly ministers are seen ascending and descending the cloudy steps which lead to the bosom of God. Death is swallowed up in life, the glory of heaven has eclipsed that of the earth, and our voyager is safe in the haven of eternal rest. And thus endeth the allegory of Human Life.

79

With regard to the mechanical execution of these paintings, I consider them not equal to some of the earlier efforts of the same pencil. They are deficient in atmosphere, and have too much the appearance of paint. The water in the first, second, and

third pictures, is superior, and the knowledge of perspective in the last of them is masterly. In all of them the figures are very fine, considering the difficulty of managing such peculiar characters. In the first I am pleased with the simplicity of the composition; in the second, with the variety, there being portrayed the elm of England, the plains of Tuscany, the palm of tropic climes, the mountains of Switzerland, and the oak of America; in the third, with the genius displayed in using the very storm to tell a story; and in the fourth, with the management of the light, and the apparent reality of those rays of glory. These pictures were painted for the late Samuel Ward, of New York, and the price received for them was five thousand dollars.

80

Thus have I attempted to describe the prominent imaginative paintings of Thomas Cole, with the object in view, of making you acquainted with the fact, that great acquisitions have been and are being made to the Fine Arts, even in our own country. His is a name which we should not willingly let die. A man of fine, exalted genius, by his pencil he has done a great deal of good, not only to his chosen art, by becoming one of its masters, but also in a moral point of view. And this reminds me of the influences, which may be exerted by the landscape painter. That these are of importance no one can deny. Is not painting as well the result and expression of thought as writing? What though, instead of pen, ink, and paper, the painter uses canvass, a pencil, and the colors of the rainbow, yet these, if he is a poet in his soul, can display his power to scarcely less effect than though, to give utterance to his “thoughts that glow,” his means were the “words that burn.” With these, if he is a wise and good man, he may portray, to every eye that rests upon his canvass, the loveliness of virtue and religion, or the deformity and

81

wretchedness of a vicious life. He may warn the worldling of his folly and impending doom, and encourage the Christian in his pilgrimage to heaven. He may delineate the marvellous beauty of nature, so as to lead the mind upward to its Creator, or proclaim the ravages of time, that we may take heed to our ways and prepare ourselves for a safe departure from this world, into that beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death. A goodly portion of all these things have been accomplished by Thomas Cole. As yet, he is the only landscape painter in this country who has attempted imaginative painting, and the success which has followed him in his career, even in a pecuniary point of view, affords great encouragement to our young painters in this department of the art. Cole has indeed done some great things, but a thousandfold more he has left undone. He has but set a noble example, which ought to be extensively followed. Mind, we do not mean by this that his subjects ought to be imitated. Far from it; because they are not stamped with a national character, as the productions of all painters should be. Excepting his actual views of American scenery, the paintings of Cole might

have been produced had he never set foot upon our soil. Let our young artists aspire to something above a mere copy of nature, or even a picture of the fancy; let them paint the visions of their imagination. No other country ever offered such advantages as our own. Let our young painters use their pencils to illustrate the thousands of scenes, strange, wild, and beautiful, of our early history. Let them aim high, and their achievements will be distinguished. Let them remember that theirs is a noble destiny. What though ancient wisdom and modern poetry have told us that “art is long and time is fleeting!”—let them toil and toil with nature as their guide, and they will assuredly have their reward.

LAKE HORICON.

If circumstances alone could make one poetical, then might you expect from me on this occasion a letter of rare excellence and beauty. My sketch book is my desk, my canopy from the sunshine an elm tree, the carpet under my feet a rich green sprinkled with flowers, the music in my ear of singing birds, and the prospect before me, north, east, and south, the tranquil bosom of Lake George, with its islands and surrounding mountains, whose waters, directly at my side, are alive with many kinds of fish, sporting together on a bed of sand. Yes, the far-famed Lake George is my subject, but in what I write I shall not use that title,—for I do not like the idea of christening what belongs to us with the name of an English monarch, however much his memory deserves to be respected. Shall it be Lake St. 84 Sacrament, then? No! for that was given to it by the Pope and the French nation. Horicon,—a musical and appropriate word, meaning pure water, and given it by the poor Indian,—is the name which rightfully belongs to the lake which is now my theme.

Lake Horicon is one of the few objects in Nature, that did not disappoint me after reading the descriptions of travellers. I verily believe, that in point of mere beauty it has not its equal in the world. Its length is thirty-four miles, and its width from two to four. Its islands number about three hundred, and vary from ten feet to a mile in length;—a great many of them are located in the centre of the lake, which place is called the Narrows. It is completely surrounded with mountains, the most prominent of which are, Black Mountain on the east of the Narrows, Tongue Mountain directly opposite, and French Mountain at the southern

extremity. The first is the most lofty, and remarkable for its wildness, and the superb prospect therefrom; the second is also wild and uninhabited, but distinguished for its dens of rattlesnakes; and the latter is somewhat cultivated, but memorable for having been the camping ground of the French during the Revolutionary war. The whole eastern border is yet a comparative wilderness, but along the western shore are some respectable farms, and a good coach road from Caldwell to Ticonderoga, which affords many admirable views of the sky-blue lake. There are three public houses here which I can recommend,—the Lake House for those who are fond of company,—Lyman's Tavern for the hunter of scenery and lover of quiet,—and Garfield's House for the fisherman. A nice little steamboat, commanded by a gentleman, passes through the lake every morning and evening (excepting Sundays), which is a convenient affair to the traveller, but an eye-sore to the admirer of the wilderness. When, in addition to all these things, it is remembered, that Horicon is the centre of a region made classic, by the exploits of civilized and savage warfare, it can safely be pronounced one of the most interesting portions of our country for the summer tourist to visit. I have looked upon it from many a peak whence might be seen almost every rood of its shore. I have sailed into every one of its bays, and, like the pearl diver, have repeatedly descended into its cold blue chambers, so that I have learned to love it as a faithful and well tried friend. Since the day of my arrival here, I have kept a journal of my adventures, and, as a memorial of Horicon, I will extract therefrom and embody in this letter the following passages.

85

86

Six oil sketches have I executed upon the Lake to-day. One of them was a view of the distant mountains, whose various

outlines were concentrated at one point, and whose color was of that delicate dreamy blue, created by a sunlight atmosphere, with the sun beyond. In the middle distance was a flock of islands, with a sail boat in their midst, and in the foreground a cluster of rocks, surmounted by a single cedar, which seemed to be the sentinel of a fortress. Another was of the ruins of Fort George, with a background of dark green mountains, and made more desolate by a flock of sheep sleeping in one of its shady moats. Another was of a rowing race between two rival fishermen, at the time when they were only a dozen rods from the goal, and when every nerve of their aged frames was strained to the utmost. Another was of a neat log-cabin on a quiet lawn near the water, at whose threshold a couple of ragged but beautiful children were playing with a large dog, and from whose chimney ascended the blue smoke with a thousand fantastic evolutions. Another was of a huge pine tree, which towered conspicuously above its kindred on the mountain side, and which seemed to me an appropriate symbol of Webster in the midst of a vast concourse of his fellow men. And the last was of a thunder-storm, driven away from a mountain top by the mild radiance of a rainbow, which partly encircled Horicon in a loving embrace.



I have been a fishing to-day, and, while enduring some poor sport, indited in my mind the following information, for the benefit of my piscatorial friends. The days of trout-fishing in Lake Horicon are nearly at an end. A few years ago it abounded in this fine fish, which were frequently caught weighing twenty pounds, but their average weight at the present is not more than one pound and a half, and they are scarce even at that. In taking them you first have to obtain a sufficient quantity of sapling bark

to reach the bottom in sixty feet of water, to one end of which must be fastened a stone, and to the other a stick of wood, which designates your fishing ground, and is called a buoy. A variety of more common fish are then caught, such as suckers, perch, and eels, which are cut up and deposited, some half a peck at a time, in the vicinity of the buoy. In a few days the trout will begin to assemble, and so long as you keep them well fed, a brace of them may be captured at almost any time during the summer. But the fact is, this is only another way for “paying too dear for the whistle.” The best angling, after all, is for the common brook trout, which is a bolder biting fish, and full as good for the table as the salmon trout. The cause of the great decrease in the large trout of this lake is this,—in the Autumn, when they have sought the shores for the purpose of spawning, the neighboring barbarians have been accustomed to spear them by torch-light; and if the heartless business does not cease, the result will be, that in a few years they will be extinct. There are two other kinds of trout in the lake, however, which yet afford good sport,—the silver trout, caught in the summer, and the fall-trout. But the black-bass, upon the whole, is now mostly valued by the fisherman. They are in their prime in the summer months. They vary from one to five pounds in weight; and are taken by trolling and with a drop line, and afford fine fun. Their haunts are along the rocky shores, and it is often the case that on a still day you may see them from your boat swimming about in herds, when the water is twenty feet deep. They have a queer fashion when hooked, of leaping out of the water for the purpose of getting clear, and it is seldom that a novice in the gentle art can keep them from succeeding. But alas, their numbers also are fast diminishing, by the same means and the same hands that have killed the trout. My advice to those who come here exclusively for the purpose of fishing is, to

continue their journey to the sources of the Hudson, Schroon Lake, Long Lake, and Lake Pleasant, in whose several waters there seems to be no end to every variety of trout, and where may be found much wild and beautiful scenery. The angler of the present day will be disappointed in Lake Horicon.

When issuing from the Narrows on your way down the Horicon, the most attractive object, next to the mountains, is a strip of low sandy land extending into the lake, called Sabbath Day Point. It was so christened by Abercrombie, who encamped and spent the Sabbath there, when on his way to Ticonderoga, where he was so sadly defeated. I look upon it as one of the most enchanting places in the world; but the pageant with which it is associated was not only enchanting, and beautiful, and grand, but perfectly magnificent. Only look at the picture, which I am attempting to reproduce upon canvass. It is the sunset hour, and before you, far up in the upper air, and companion of the Evening star and a host of glowing clouds, rises the majestic form of Black Mountain, enveloped in a mantle of rosy atmosphere. The bosom of the Lake is without a ripple, and every cliff, ravine, and island, has its counterpart in the pure waters. A blast of martial music from drums, fifes, bagpipes, and bugle horns, now falls upon the ear, and the immense procession comes in sight; one thousand and thirty-five battaux, containing an army of seventeen thousand souls, headed by the brave Abercrombie and the red cross of England,—the scarlet uniforms and glistening bayonets forming a line of light against the darker background of the mountain. And behind a log in the foreground is a crouching Indian runner, who, with the speed of a hawk, will carry the tidings to the French nation that an army is coming—“numerous as the leaves upon the

trees.” Far from the strange scene fly the affrighted denizens of mountain and wave,—while thousands of human hearts are beating happily at the prospect of victory, whose bodies in a few hours will be food for the raven on the plains of Ticonderoga.

A goodly portion of this day have I been musing upon the olden times, while rambling about Fort George, and Fort William Henry. Long and with peculiar interest did I linger about the spot near the latter, where were cruelly massacred the followers of Monroe, at which time Montcalm linked his name to the title of a heartless Frenchman, and the name of Webb became identified with all that is justly despised by the human heart. I profess myself to be an enemy to wrong and outrage of every kind, and yet a lover and defender of the Indian race; but when I picked up one after another the flinty heads of arrows, which were mementos of an awful butchery, my spirit revolted against the Red man, and for a moment I felt a desire to condemn him. Yes, I will condemn that particular band of murderers, but I cannot but defend the race. Cruel and treacherous they were, I will allow, but do we forget the treatment they ever met with from the white man? The most righteous of battles have ever been fought for the sake of sires and wives and children, and for what else did the poor Indian fight, when driven from the home of his youth into an unknown wilderness, to become thereafter a by-word and a reproach among the nations? “Indians,” said we, “we would have your lands, and if you will not be satisfied with the gewgaws we proffer, our powder and balls will teach you that power is but another name for right.” And this is the principle that has guided the white man ever since in his warfare against the aborigines of

our country. Oh, I cannot believe that we shall ever be a happy and prosperous people, until the King of kings shall have forgiven us for having, with a yoke of tyranny, almost annihilated an hundred nations.



A portion of this afternoon I whiled away on a little island, which attracted my attention by its charming variety of foliage. It is not more than one hundred feet across at the widest part, and is encircled by a yellow sand-bank, and shielded by a regiment of variegated rocks. But what could I find there to interest me, it may be inquired. My answer is this: That island, hidden in one of the bays of Horicon, is an Insect city, and more populous than was Rome in the days of her glory. There the honey-bee has his oaken tower, the wasp and humble-bee their grassy nests, the spider his den, the butterfly his hammock, the grasshopper his domain, the beetle and cricket and hornet their decayed stump, and the toiling ant her palace of sand. There they were born, there they flourish and multiply, and there they die, symbolizing the career and destiny of man. I was a “distinguished stranger” in that city, and I must confess that it gratified my ambition to be welcomed with such manifestations of regard as the inhabitants thought proper to bestow. My approach was heralded by the song of a kingly bee; and when I had thrown myself upon a mossy bank, multitudes of people gathered round, and, with their eyes intently fixed upon me, stood still, and let “expressive silence muse my praise.” To the “natives” I was emphatically a source of astonishment; and as I wished to gather instruction from the event, I wondered in my heart whether I would be a *happier* man if my presence in a human city should create a kindred excitement. At any rate it would be a “great excitement on a

small capital.”

While quietly eating my dinner this noon, in the shady recess of an island near Black Mountain, I was startled by the yell of a peck of hounds coming down one of its ravines. I knew that the chase was after a deer, so I waited in breathless anxiety for his appearance. Five minutes had hardly elapsed before I discovered a noble buck at bay on the extreme summit of a bluff which extended into the lake. There were five dogs yelping about him, but the “antlered monarch” fought them like a hero. His hoof was the most dangerous weapon he could wield, and it seemed to me that the earth actually trembled every time that he struck at his enemies. Presently, to my great joy, one of the hounds was killed, and another so disabled, that he retired from the contest. But the hunters made their appearance, and I knew that the scene would soon come to a tragic close. And when the buck beheld them, I could not but believe that over his face a “tablet of *agonizing* thoughts was traced,” for he fell upon his knees, then made a sudden wheel, and with a frightful bound, as a ball passed through his heart, cleared the rock and fell into the lake far below. The waters closed over him, and methought that the waves of Horicon and the leaves of the forest murmured a requiem above the grave of the wilderness king. I turned away with a tear in my eye, and partly resolved that I would never again have a dog for my friend, or respect the character of a hunter; but then I looked into the crystal waters of the lake, and thought of the *beam* in my own eye, and stood convicted of a kindred cruelty.

One of the most singular precipices overlooking Horicon is

about five miles from the outlet, and known as Rogers' Slide. It is some four hundred feet high, and at one point not a fissure or sprig can be discerned to mar the polished surface of the rock till it reaches the water. Once on a time in the winter, the said Rogers was pursued by a band of Indians to this spot, where, after throwing down his knapsack, he carefully retraced the steps of his snow-shoes for a short distance, and descending the hill by a circuitous route, continued his way across the frozen lake. The Indians, on coming to the jumping-off-place, discovered their enemy on the icy plain; but when they saw the neglected knapsack below, and no signs of returning footsteps where they stood, they thought the devil must be in the man, and gave up the pursuit.

96



The most famous, and one of the most beautiful islands in this lake, is Diamond Island, so called from the fact that it abounds in crystallized quartz. It is half a mile in length, but the last place in the world which would be thought of as the scene of a battle. It is memorable for the attack made by the Americans on the British, who had a garrison there, in 1777. The American detachment was commanded by Col. Brown, and being elated with his recent triumphs on Lake Champlain, he resolved to attack Diamond Island. The battle was bloody, and the British fought like brave men "long and well"; the Americans were defeated, and this misfortune was followed by the sufferings of a most painful retreat over the almost impassable mountains between the Lake and what is now Whitehall. While wandering about the island it was a difficult matter for me to realize, that it had ever resounded with the roar of cannon, the dismal wail of war, and the shout of victory. That spot is now covered with woods, whose shadowy groves are

97

the abode of a thousand birds, forever singing a song of peace or love, as if to condemn the ambition and cruelty of man.

In the vicinity of French Mountain is an island which is celebrated as the burial place of a rattle-snake hunter, named Belden. From all that I can learn, he must have been a strange mortal indeed. His birth-place and early history were alike unknown. When he first made his appearance at this Lake, his only companions were a brotherhood of rattlesnakes, by exhibiting which he professed to have obtained his living; and it is said that, during the remainder of his life, he acquired a handsome sum of money by selling the oil and gall of his favorite reptile. And I have recently been told that the present market price of a fat snake, when dead, is not less than half a dollar. Another mode peculiar to old Belden for making money, was to suffer himself to be bitten, at some tavern, after which he would return to his cabin to apply the remedy, when he would come forth again just as good as new. But he was not always to be a solemn trifler. For a week had the old man been missing, and on a pleasant August morning, his body was found on the island alluded to, sadly mutilated and bloated, and it was certain that he had died actually surrounded with rattlesnakes. His death-bed became his grave, and rattlesnakes were his only watchers,—and thus endeth the story of his life. 98

But this reminds me of two little adventures. The other day as I was seated near the edge of a sand bar, near the mouth of a brook, sketching a group of trees and the sunset clouds beyond, I was startled by an immense black snake, that landed at my side, and pursued its way directly under my legs, upon which my drawing-book was resting. Owing to my perfect silence, 99

the creature had probably looked upon me as a mere stump. But what was my surprise a few moments after, when reseated in the same place, to find another snake, and that a large spotted adder, passing along the same track the former had pursued. The first fright had almost disabled me from using the pencil, but when the second came, I gave a lusty yell, and forgetful of the fine arts, started for home on the keen run.

At another time, when returning from a fishing excursion, in a boat, accompanied by a couple of greenhorns, we discovered on the water, near Tongue Mountain, an immense rattlesnake, with his head turned towards us. As the oarsman in the bow of the boat struck at him with his oar, the snake coiled round it, and the fool was in the very act of dropping the devilish thing in my lap at the stern of the boat. I had heard the creature rattle, and not knowing what I did, as he hung suspended over me, overboard I went, and did not look behind till I had reached the land. The consequence was, that for one while I was perfectly disgusted even with Lake Horicon, and resolved to leave it without delay. The snake was killed without doing any harm, however, but such a blowing up as I gave the greenhorn actually made his hair stand straight with fear.

100

One more snake story and I'll stop. On the north side of Black Mountain is a cluster of some half-dozen houses, in a vale, which spot is called the Bosom, but from what cause I do not know. The presiding geniuses of the place are a band of girls, weighing two hundred pounds a piece, who farm it with their fathers for a living, but whose principal *amusement* is rattlesnake hunting. Their favorite playground is the notorious cliff on Tongue Mountain, where they go with naked feet (rowing their own boats across the Lake), and pull out by their

tails from the rocks the pretty playthings, and, snapping them to death, lay them away in a basket as trophies of their skill. I was told that in one day last year they killed the incredible number of eleven hundred. What delicious wives would these Horicon ladies make! Now that the Florida Indians have been driven from their country by bloodhounds, would it not be a good idea for Congress to secure the services of these amazons for the purpose of exterminating the rattlesnakes upon our mountains. This latter movement would be the most ridiculous, but the inhumanity of the former is without a parallel.

101



A clear and tranquil summer night, and I am alone on the pebbly beach of this paragon of lakes. The countless hosts of heaven are beaming upon me with a silent joy, and more impressive and holy than a poet's dream, are the surrounding mountains, as they stand reflected in the unruffled waters. Listen! what sound is that, so like the wail of a spirit? Only a loon, the lonely night-watcher of Horicon, whose melancholy moan, as it breaks the profound stillness, carries my fancy back to the olden Indian times, ere the white man had crossed the ocean. All these mountains and this beautiful Lake were then the heritage of a brave and noble-hearted people, who made war only upon the denizens of the forest, whose lives were peaceful as a dream, and whose manly forms, decorated with the plumes of the eagle, the feathers of the scarlet bird, and the robe of the bounding stag, tended but to make the scenery of the wilderness beautiful as an earthly Eden. Here was the quiet wigwam village, and there the secluded abode of the thoughtful chief.

102

Here, unmolested, the Indian child played with the spotted fawn, and the "Indian lover wooed his dusky mate;" here the Indian hunter, in the "sunset of his life," watched, with holy awe, the

sunset in the west, and here the ancient Indian prophetess sung her uncouth but religious chant. Gone,—all, all gone,—and the desolate creature of the waves, now pealing forth another wail, seems the only memorial that they have left behind. There,—my recent aspirations are all quelled, I can walk no farther to night;—there is a tear in my eye and a sadness in my soul, and I must seek my home. It is such a blessed night, that it seems almost sinful that a blight should rest upon the spirit of man; yet on mine a gloom will sometimes fall, nor can I tell from whence the cloud that makes me wretched. To prayer!!

Here endeth a lover's tribute to the sky-blue and ice-cold
Horicon.

BURLINGTON.

Of all the towns which I have ever seen, Burlington in Vermont is decidedly the most beautiful. It stands on the shore of Lake Champlain, and from the water to its eastern extremity is a regular elevation, which rises to the height of some three hundred feet. Its streets are broad and regularly laid out, the generality of its buildings elegant, and its inhabitants well educated, refined, and wealthy. My visit here is now about to close, and I cannot but follow the impulses of my heart, by giving you a brief account of its principal picturesque attraction, and some information concerning a few of its public men.

As a matter of course, my first subject is Lake Champlain. In approaching it from the south, and particularly from Horicon, one is apt to form a wrong opinion of its picturesque features; but one cannot pass through it without being lavish in its praise. It extends, in a straight line from south to north, somewhat over a hundred miles, and lies between the States of Vermont and New York. It is the gateway between the country on the St. Lawrence and that on the Hudson, and it is therefore extensively navigated by vessels and steamboats. The steamer Burlington, Captain Sherman, is unquestionably the finest boat in the Union; not on account of its size, but considering the admirable discipline with which it is commanded. Lake Champlain is surrounded with flourishing villages, whose population is generally made up of New Englanders and Canadians. Its width varies from half a mile to thirteen, but its waters are muddy, excepting in the vicinity of Burlington. Its islands are not numerous, but one of them, Grand Isle, is sufficiently large to support four villages. Its scenery may be

denominated bold; rising from the water on the west are the Adirondack Mountains, and at some distance on the east the beautiful Green Mountains, whose glorious *commanders* are Mansfield Mountain and the Camel's Hump. Owing to the width of the Lake at Burlington, and the beauty of the western mountains, the sunsets that are here visible are exceedingly superb. O that I could strike the lyre of the poet, that I might celebrate in song some of those which have transported my spirit to the realms of bliss. The classic associations of this Lake are uncommonly interesting. Here are the moss-covered ruins of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, whose present occupants are the snake, the lizzard, and toad. Lead and iron balls, broken bayonets, and English flints, have I picked up on their ramparts, which I cannot look upon without thinking of death-struggles and the horrible shout of war. And there too is Plattsburg, in whose waters Commodore McDonough vindicated the honor of the Stars and Stripes of Freedom. As to the fishing of this lake, I have but a word to say. Excepting trout, every variety of fresh-water fish is found here in abundance; but the water is not pure, which is ever a serious drawback to my enjoyment in wetting the line. Lake Champlain received its present name from a French nobleman, who discovered it in 1609, and who died at Quebec in 1635.

105

The associations I am now to speak of, are of a personal character; and the first, of the three names before me, is that of Joseph Torrey, the present Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy in the University of Vermont. As a citizen, he is one of the most amiable and beloved of men. As one of the faculty of the University, he occupies a high rank, and is a particular favorite with all his students. A pleasing evidence of the latter fact I noticed a few days since, when it

106

was reported among the students that the Professor had returned from a visit to the Springs for his health. I was in company with some half-dozen of them at the time, and these are the remarks they made. "How is his health"? "I hope he has improved"! "Now shall I be happy,—for ever since he went away, the recitation-room has been a cheerless place to me." "Now shall I be advised as to my essay"! "Now shall my poem be corrected"! "Now, in my troubles, shall I have the sympathies of a true friend"! Much more meaning is contained in these simple phrases than what meets the eye. Surely, if any man is to be envied, it is he who has a place in the affections of all who know him. As a scholar, too, Professor Torrey occupies an exalted station, as will be proven to the world in due time. He has never published anything but an occasional article for a review, and the memoir of President Marsh (who was his predecessor in the University), as contained in the admirable volume of his Remains, which should occupy a conspicuous place in the library of every American scholar and Christian. The memoir is indeed a rare specimen of that kind of writing,—beautifully written, and pervaded by a spirit of refinement that is delightful. But I was mostly interested in Mr. Torrey as a man of taste in the Fine Arts. In everything but the mere execution, he is a genuine artist, and long may I remember the counsels of his experience and knowledge. A course of Lectures on the Arts forms a portion of his instruction as Professor, and I trust that they will eventually be published for the benefit of our country. He has also translated, from the German of Schelling, a most admirable discourse entitled "Relation of the Arts of Design to Nature;" a copy of which ought to be in the possession of every young artist. Mr. Torrey has been an extensive traveller in Europe, and being a lover and an acute observer of everything connected with Literature and Art, it is a perfect luxury to hear

him expatiate upon “the wonders he has seen.” He also examines everything with the eye of a philosopher, and his conclusions are ever of practical utility. Not only can he analyze in a profound manner the principles of metaphysical learning, but, with the genuine feelings of a poet, descant upon the triumphs of poetic genius, or point out the mind-charms of a Claude or Titian. He is—but I will not say all that I would, for I fear that at our next meeting he would chide me for my boyish personalities. Let me conclude then with the advice, that, if you ever chance to meet the Professor in your travels, you must endeavor to secure an introduction, which I am sure you cannot but ever remember with unfeigned pleasure.

108

John Henry Hopkins, D. D., Bishop of Vermont, is another of the principal attractions of Burlington. The history of his life, the expression of his countenance, and his general deportment, all speak of the “peace of God.” Considering the number and diversity of his acquirements, I think him a very remarkable man. He is not only in point of character well worthy of his exalted station as Bishop, but as a theologian learned and eloquent to an uncommon degree. His contributions to the world of Letters are of rare value, having published volumes entitled “Christianity Vindicated;” “The Primitive Church;” “The Primitive Creed;” “The Church of Rome;” “British Reformation;” and “Letters to the Clergy.” His style of writing is persuasive, vigorous, and clear, and all his conclusions seem to have been formed in full view of the Bible, which is a virtue worth noticing in these degenerate days. Unlike the bigoted followers of Pusey, he is a *charitable* Episcopalian,—deserving and enjoying the love and esteem of every orthodox denomination. It is because of his honesty and soundness, I suppose, that some of his own church are

109

disaffected with his straight-forward conduct. Bishop Hopkins, as a divine, is of the same school with the late Bishop White, and therefore among the most eminently wise and good of his age and country.

The Bishop of Vermont is also a man of remarkable taste with regard to Architecture, Music, and Painting; in which departments, as an amateur, he has done himself great credit. Not only did he plan and superintend the building of an edifice for his recent school, but has published an interesting book on Architecture, wherein he appears to be as much at *home* as a Christopher Wren. Knowing the market to be full of sentimental nonsense in the way of songs, he composed, for the benefit of his own children, a few with a moral tone, which he also set to music, and are now published as a worthy tribute to his fine feelings and the correctness of his ear. But he ranks still higher as a man of taste in the capacity of a Painter. The Vermont Drawing Book, which he published, is an evidence of his ability as a draftsman. The family portraits which adorn his walls, prove him to have an accurate eye for color, and an uncommon knowledge of effect;—and his oil sketches of scenes from Nature, give token of an ardent devotion to Nature. But the best, in my opinion, of all his artistical productions, is a picture representing “our Saviour blessing little children.” Its conception, grouping, and execution, are all of very great merit, and I am persuaded will one day be looked upon with peculiar interest by the lovers and judges of art in this country. Though done in water colors, and considered by the artist as a mere sketch for a larger picture, there are some heads in it that would have called forth a compliment even from the lamented Allston. Would that he could be influenced to send it, for exhibition, to our National Academy! And thus endeth my

humble tribute of applause to a gifted man.

I now come to the Hon. George P. Marsh, of whom, if I were to follow the bent of my feelings, I could write a complete volume. Though yet in the early prime of life, he is a sage in learning and wisdom. After leaving college he settled in Burlington, where he has since resided, dividing his time between his legal profession and the retirement of his study. With a large and liberal heart, he possesses all the endearing and interesting qualities which belong to the true and accomplished gentleman. Like all truly great men, he is exceedingly retiring and modest in his deportment, and one of that rare class who are never excited by the voice of fame. About two years ago, almost without his knowledge, he was elected to a seat in the lower house of Congress, where he at once began to make an impression as a Statesman. Though few have been his public speeches, they are remarkable for sound political logic, and the classic elegance of their language. As an orator, he is not showy and passionate, but plain, forcible, and earnest.

But it is in the walks of private life, that Mr. Marsh is to be mostly admired. His knowledge of the Fine Arts is probably more extensive than that of any other man in this country, and his critical taste is equal to his knowledge; but that department peculiarly his hobby, is Engraving. He has a perfect passion for line engravings; and it is unquestionably true, that his collection is the most valuable and extensive in the Union. He is well acquainted with the history of this art from the earliest period, and also with its various mechanical ramifications. He is as familiar with the lives and peculiar styles of the Painters and Engravers of antiquity, as with his household affairs; and when he talks to you on his favorite

theme, it is not to display his learning, but to make you realize the exalted attributes and mission of universal Art.

As an author, Mr. Marsh has done but little in extent, but enough to secure a seat beside such men as Edward Everett, with whom he has been compared. He has published (among his numerous things of the kind) a pamphlet entitled “The Goths in New-England,” which is a fine specimen of chaste writing and beautiful thought; also another on the “History of the Mechanic Arts,” which contains a great deal of rare and important information. He has also written an “Icelandic Grammar” of 150 pages, which created quite a sensation among the learned of Europe a few years ago. As to his scholarship,—it can be said of him, that he is a *master* in some twelve of the principal modern and ancient languages. He has not learned them merely for the purpose of being considered a literary prodigy, but to multiply his means of acquiring information, which information is intended to accomplish some substantial end. He is not a visionary, but a devoted lover of truth, whether it be in History, Poetry, or the Arts.

113

But my chief object in speaking of this gentleman, was to introduce a passing notice of his Library, which is undoubtedly the most unique in the country. The building itself, which stands near his dwelling, is of brick, and arranged throughout with great taste. You enter it, as it was often my privilege, and find yourself in a perfect wilderness of gorgeous books, and portfolios of engravings. Of books Mr. Marsh owns some five thousand volumes. His collection of Scandinavian Literature is supposed to be the most complete that can be found out of the Northern Kingdoms. To give you an idea of this literary treasure, I will mention a few of the rarest specimens. In

114

old Northern Literature, here may be found the *Arna Magnæan* editions of old Icelandic Sagas, all those of *Suhm*, all those of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, and in fact all those printed at Copenhagen and Stockholm, as well as in Iceland, with scarcely an exception. This Library also contains the great editions of *Heimskringla*, the two *Eddas*, *Kongs-Skugg-Sjo*, *Konunga*, *Styrlise*, the *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum*, *Scriptores Rerum Svecicarum*, *Dansk Magazin*, the two complete editions of *Olaus Magnus*, *Saxo Grammaticus*, the works of Bartholinus, Torfaus, Schöning, Suhm, Pontoppidan, Grundtvig, Petersen, Rask, the *Aplantica* of Rudbeck, the great works of *Sjöborg*, Liljegren, Geijer, Cronholm, and Strinnholm, all the collections of old Icelandic, Danish, and Swedish laws, and almost all the writers, ancient and modern, who have treated of the language, literature, or history of the ancient Scandinavian race.

In modern Danish Literature, here may be found the works of Holberg, Wessel, Ewald, Hejberg, Baggesen, Ochlenschläger, Nyerup, Ingemann, with other celebrated authors; in Swedish, those of Leopold Oxenstierna, Bellmann, Franzen, Atterbom, Tegner, Frederika Bremer, and indeed almost all the *belles lettres* authors of Sweden, the Transactions of the Royal Academy of Science, (more than one hundred volumes,) those of the Swedish Academy, and of the Royal Academy of Literature, and many collections in documentary history, besides numerous other works.

In Spanish and Portuguese, besides many modern authors, here are numerous old chronicles, such as the Madrid collection of old Spanish Chronicles in seven volumes 4to.; the Portuguese *Livros ineditos da Historia Portugueza*, five volumes folio;

Fernam Lopez, de Brito, Duarte Nunez de Liam, Damiam de Goes, de Barros, Castanheda, Resende, Andrada, Osorio; also, de Menezes, Mariana, and others of similar character. In Italian, most of the best authors, who have acquired a European reputation; several hundred volumes of French works, including many of the ancient chronicles; a fine collection in German, including many editions of Reyneke de Vos, the 116
Nibelungen, and other works of the middle ages. In classical literature, good editions of the most celebrated Greek and Latin authors; and in English, a choice collection of the best authors, among which should be mentioned, as rare in this country, Lord Berners' Froissart, Roger Ascham, the writings of King James I., John Smith's Virginia (edition of 1624), Amadis de Gaul, and Palmerin of England. In lexicography, the best dictionaries and grammars in all the languages of Western Europe, and many biographical dictionaries and other works of reference in various languages. Many works too, are here, on astrology, alchemy, witchcraft, and magic; and a goodly number of works on the situation of Plato's Atlantis and Elysian Fields, such as Rudbeck's Atlantica, Goropius Becanus, de Grave Republique des Champs Elysées, and a host of others in every department of learning, the mere mention of which would cause the bookworm a thrill of delight.

In the department of Art, Mr. Marsh possesses the Musée Français, Musée Royal, (proof before letters) Liber Veritatis, Houghton Galley, Florence Gallery, Publications of 117
Dilettanti Society, and many other illustrated works and collections of engravings; the works of Bartsch, Ottley, Mengs, Visconti, Winchelmann, and other writers on the history and theory of Art; old illustrated works, among which are the original editions of Teuerdanck and Der Weiss Kunig; and many

thousand steel engravings, including many originals by Albert Dürer, Luke of Leyden, Lucas Cranach, Aldegreuer, Wierx, the Sadeliers Nauteuil, (among others the celebrated Louis XIV., size of life, and a proof of the Cadet a la Perle, by Masson,) Edelinck, Drevet, Marc Antonio, and other old engravers of the Italian school, Callot, Ostade, Rembrandt, (including a most superb impression of the Christ Healing the Sick, the hundred guilder Piece, and the portrait of Renier Ansloo,) Waterloo, Woollett, Sharp, Strange, Earlom, Wille, Ficquet, Schmidt, Longhi, and Morghen; in short, nearly all the works of all the greatest masters in chalcography, from the time of Dürer to the present day. It were folly for me to praise these various works, and I have alluded to them merely for the purpose of letting you know something of the taste and possessions of Mr. Marsh. His library is one of the most glorious places it has ever been my 118 fortune to visit, and the day that I became acquainted with the man, I cannot but consider as an era in my life. Morning, noon, and evening did I linger with the master-spirits of olden time, collected in that delightful place, and though I often stood in mute admiration of their genius, I was sometimes compelled to shed a tear, as I thought of the miserable destiny, as a writer or painter, which will probably be mine. Thank God, there is no such thing as *ambition* in that blessed world above the stars, which I hope to attain,—no ambition to harass the soul,—for then will it be free to revel, and forever, in its holy and godlike conceptions. But a truce to this strain of thought, and also to the Lions of Burlington, of whom I now take my leave with a respectful bow.

P. S. As you may probably be induced to visit Burlington, after what I have written, I cannot leave the place without mentioning

two more of its personal attractions—Judge Meech the farmer, and John H. Peck the merchant. Of the former, who resides just without the town, I would remark, that his mortal part is 119
six feet and a half high, and weighs nearly four hundred pounds, and a perfect counterpart in body as well as mind of the immortal Jack Falstaff. He is the proprietor of the largest grazing farm in New England, which contains three thousand acres, and at the present moment gives food to nearly four thousand sheep. The Judge is one of the most hospitable of men, and having spent a portion of his life as a trapper in the wilderness, and another as a member of Congress, there is no end to his fund of stories, which he tells with an admirable grace. One concerning himself, is to the following effect. Once on a time, when young, poor, and somewhat idle in his habits, he chanced to stop at a country store where he was known, for the purpose of purchasing a handkerchief, which the shopkeeper refused to let him have upon credit. The youth was so exasperated, that he swore he would one day purchase the whole property of the man; and it is a singular fact, that the identical store, and all the possessions of that merchant, are now incorporated in the immense estate of Judge Meech. A similar story is told of Mr. Astor (who once dealt in furs on Lake Champlain with the Judge) and the Astor House, so that it 120
would actually seem as if some people are born to become rich. And what is the strangest thing of all, Mr. Meech is a great trout fisherman, and of *course* a man of genius. About a month ago he caught one thousand in three days, which I can readily believe, but I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement I heard, that he ate two hundred and forty of the little fellows at one meal! Fail not to visit the Judge when you have an opportunity. He will be glad to see you, or any other honest man, and with his accomplished lady will show you every variety of

flowers, and an artificial pond full of trout, and will refresh you with the rarest kinds of fruit.

Of Mr. Peck, it will not do for me to say but a single word, as he has never filled any public station, and is therefore only a private citizen. He is just such a man as I suppose William Roscoe of Liverpool to have been, according to the account of Washington Irving—a perfect gentleman, a merchant of the first rank, a lover of books and pictures, and the giver of glorious dinners. A thousand blessings rest upon his head, and
upon all the gentlemen of Burlington of my acquaintance,
whom I shall ever look upon as among the true nobility of our
land, and therefore among the nobility of the earth.

121

122

TRIP TO PORTLAND.

Three loud knocks upon my bed-room door at Burlington, awakened me from “a deep dream of peace.” “The eastern stage is ready,” said my landlord, as he handed me a light; whereupon, in less than five minutes after the hour of three I was on my way to Portland, and inditing on the tablet of my memory the following disjointed stage-coach rhapsody.

A fine coach, fourteen passengers, and six superb horses. My seat is on the outside, and my eyes are on the alert for anything of peculiar interest, which I may meet with in my journey. Now does the beautiful range of the Green Mountains meet my view. The day is breaking, and lo! upon either side of me, and like the two leaders of an army, rise the peaks of Mansfield Mountain and the Camel’s Hump. Around the former the cloud-spirits of early morning are picturing the fantastic poetry of the sky; 123 while just above the summit of the other, may be seen the new moon and the morning star, waiting for the sun to come, like two sweet human sisters, for the smiles and kisses of a returning father. And now, as the sunbeams glide along the earth, we are in the solitude of the mountains, and the awakened mist-creatures are ascending from the cool and silent nooks in the deep ravines.

Young Dana’s description of a ship under full sail is very fine, but it does not possess the living beauty of that picture which is now before me, in those six bay horses, straining every nerve to eclipse the morning breeze. Hold your breath, for the road is hard and smooth as marble, and the extended nostrils of those matchless steeds speak of a noble pride within. There, the race

is done, the victory theirs, and now, as they trot steadily along, what music in the champing of those bits and the striking of those iron-bound hoofs! Of all the soulless animals on earth, none do I love so dearly as the horse,—I sometimes am inclined to think that they have souls. I respect a noble horse, more than I do some men. Horses are the Indian chiefs of the brute creation.

124

The Winooski, along whose banks is the most picturesque stage route in Vermont, is an uncommonly interesting stream,—rapid, clear, and cold. It is remarkable for its falls and narrow passes, where perpendicular rocks of a hundred feet or more frown upon its solitary pools. Its chief pictorial attraction is the cataract at Waterbury, which is a deep and jagged chasm in the granite mountain, whose horrors are greatly increased by the sight and the smothered howl of an avalanche of pure white foam. On its banks, and forty miles from its outlet near Burlington, is situated Montpelier, the capital of Vermont. It is a compact town, mostly built upon two streets, and completely hemmed in by rich and cultivated mountains. Its chief attractions to my mind, however, during my short stay, was a pair of deep black eyes, only half visible under their drooping lids. O the dear, dear women, I verily believe they will be the ruin of me!

During one of my rambles near Montpelier, I discovered an isolated and abandoned dwelling, which stands upon a little plot of green, in the lap of the forest near the top of a mountain. I entered its deserted chambers, and spent a long time musing upon its solemn admonitions. The cellar had become the home of lizards and toads. The spider and cricket were masters of the hearth, where once had been spun the mountain legend, by an old man to the only child of his

125

widowed son. They were, as I am told, the last of a long line, which once flourished in Britain, but with them their name would pass into forgetfulness. Only the years of a single generation have elapsed since then, but the dwellers upon yonder mountain are sleeping in the grave. And is this passing record of their existence the only inheritance they have left behind? Most true; but would it have been *better* for them, or for us, had they bequeathed to the world a noted name or immense possessions? What is our life?

The route between Montpelier and Danville lies along the Winooski, and is not less beautiful than that down the river. Its chief picture is Marshfield Waterfall. While at Montpelier a pleasure ride was got up by some of my friends, and as they were bound to the east, and I was honored with an invitation, I sent on my baggage and joined them, so that the monotony of my journey was agreeably relieved. We had our fishing-rods with us, and having stopped at the fall, we caught a fine mess of trout, which we had cooked for dinner at the next tavern on our way,—and our dessert was fine singing from the ladies, and good stories from the lips of Senator Phelps, who was of the party, and is celebrated for his conversational powers. For further particulars concerning that expedition, I would refer you to Mr. George Langdon and Lady of Montpelier, and to that pair of eyes, which I just now mentioned as having beamed upon me with a bewitching brilliancy. But alas! the dear creature is already,—excuse me, I cannot, I will not speak the hateful word. The lucky fellow ought to carry a liberal and kind soul hereafter, if he has never done so before.

At cock-crowing this morning I was again in my seat outside of the stage-coach, anxiously waiting for the mists to evaporate in

the east. The sun proved to be my friend, and soon as he appeared, they vanished like a frightened troop, and he was marching up the sky in the plenitude of his glory. And then, for the first time, did my vision rest upon the White Mountains, as they reposed in the distance, like a mighty herd of camels in the solitude of the desert. In the charming valley of the Connecticut we only tarried about ten minutes, but long enough for me to hear the mower whet his scythe, the “lark sing loud and high,” and the pleasant tinkle of a cow-bell far away in a broad meadow. While there I took a sketch, wherein I introduced the father of New England rivers, and the bald peak of Mount Lafayette, with the storm-inflicted scar upon its brow. A noble monument is yonder mountain to the memory of a noble man.

127

While breakfasting at Littleton this morning, I came to the conclusion to leave my baggage and visit Franconia. I jumped into the stage, and after a very pleasant ride of seventeen miles, found myself far into the Notch, in the midst of whose scenery I am to repose this night. I would not have missed the trip *even* for a *sincere* love-smile from the girl of my former idolatry. I reached here in time to enjoy an early dinner with “mine host”; after which I sallied forth to examine the wonders of the place, but was so delighted with everything around, that I did not take time to make a single sketch. I saw the Flume, and was perfectly astonished. It is a chasm in the mountain, thirty feet wide, about a hundred deep, and some two thousand long, and as regular in its shape as if it had been cut by the hand of man. Bridging its centre is a rock of many tons weight, which one would suppose could only have been hurled there from the heavens. Through its centre flows a little brook, which soon passes over a succession of rocky slides, and which are almost

128

as smooth and white as marble. And to cap the climax, this Flume is the centre of as perfect and holy a wilderness of scenery as could be imagined.

I have also seen (what should be the pride of the Merrimack, as it is upon one of its tributaries) the most superb pool in this whole country. The fall above it is not remarkable, but the forest-covered rocks on either side, and the pool itself, are wonderfully fine. In the first place, you must remember, that the waters of this whole region are cold as ice, and clear as possible. The pool forms a circle of about one hundred feet in diameter, and is said to be fifty feet in depth. Owing to the fall, it is the “head-quarters” of the trout, which are found all along the stream in great abundance. After I had completed a drawing, I laid aside my pencils and fixed my fishing rod. I threw the line *only* about two hours and caught *only* forty-five trout, but they were real beauties, I assure you. Among them was the great-grandfather of all trout,—he was *only* seventeen inches long, and weighed *only* two pounds and one ounce. It does take me, and no mistake, to throw a scientific fly.

129

The Old Man of the Mountain, is another of the lions of this place. It is a cone-shaped mountain, (at the foot of which is a small lake,) upon whose top are some rocks, which have a resemblance to the profile of an old man. It is really a very curious affair. There the old fellow stands, as he has stood perhaps for centuries, “looking the whole world in the face.” I wonder if the thunder never frightens him! and does the lightning play around his brow without making him wink? His business there, I suppose, is to protect the “ungranted lands” of New Hampshire, or keep Isaac Hill from lecturing the White Mountains on Locofocoism. He need not trouble himself as to

the first fear, for they could not be deeded even to a bear; and as to the second, I don't believe the mountains could ever be persuaded to go for the annexation of Texas. Every plant upon them speaks of freedom, and in their fastnesses does the eagle find a home,—their banner-symbols are the stars and stripes, and therefore they must be Whigs.

130

And another curiosity, which everybody goes to see, is called the Basin,—which is indeed an exquisite little spot,—fit for the abode of a very angel. It is formed in the solid rock, and though twenty feet in depth, you can see a sixpence at the bottom,—it is so wonderfully clear. But the wild beauties of this Notch, unknown to fame, are charming beyond compare. There goes the midnight warning of the clock, and I must retire. O that my dreams may be of yonder star, now just beaming with intense brightness above the dark outline of the nearest mountain.

The distance from Knight's tavern to the western outlet of Franconia Notch is eight miles. The eastern stage was to pass through about the middle of the afternoon, so after eating my breakfast I started on, intending to enjoy a walk between the mountains. With the conceptions and feelings that were with me then, I should have been willing to die, for I was perfectly happy. Now, as I sat upon a stone to sketch a mass of foliage, a little red squirrel came within five feet of me, and commenced a terrible chattering, as if his lady-love had given him the "mitten," and he was blowing out against the whole female sex; and now an old partridge with a score of children came tripping along the shadowy road, almost within my reach, and so fearless of my presence, that I would not have harmed one of them even for a crown. Both of these were exceedingly simple pictures, and yet they afforded me a world

131

of pleasure. I thought of the favorite haunts of these dear creatures,—the hollow tree,—the bed of dry leaves,—the cool spring,—the mossy yellow log,—the rocky ledges overgrown with moss,—the gurgling brooklet stealing through the trees, with its fairy waterfalls in a green shadow and its spots of vivid sunlight,—and of a thousand other kindred *gems* in the wonderful gallery of Nature. And now as I walked onward, peering into the gloomy recesses of the forest on either side, or fixed my eyes upon the blue sky with a few white clouds floating in their glory, many of my favorite songs were remembered, and, in a style *peculiarly* my own, I poured them upon the air, whilst I was answered by unnumbered mountain echoes. Nothing had they to do with the place or with each other, but like the pictures around me, they were a divine food for my soul,—so that I was in the perfect enjoyment of a heavenly feast. Now, as I looked through the opening trees, I saw an eagle floating above the summit of a mighty cliff,—now, with the speed of a falling star descending far into the leafy depths, and then, slowly but surely ascending, until hidden from view by a passing cloud. Fly on, proud bird, glorious symbol of my country's freedom! O what a god-like life is thine? Yes, thou art the “sultan of the sky,” and from thy craggy home forever lookest upon the abodes of man with indifference and scorn. The war-whoop of the Savage, the roar of artillery on the bloody battle field, and the loud boom of the ocean cannon, have fallen upon thy ear, and thou hast listened, utterly heedless as to whom belonged the victory. What strength and power in thy pinions! traversing in an hour a wider space

“Than yonder gallant ship, with all her sails
Wooing the winds, can cross from morn till eve!”

When thy hunger-shriek echoes through the wilderness, with terror does the wild animal seek his den, for thy talons are of iron and thy eyes of fire. But what is thy message to the sun? Far, far into the zenith art thou gone, forever gone—emblem of a mighty hope that once was mine.

133

My thoughts were upon the earth once more, and my feet upon a hill out of the woods, whence might be seen the long broad valley of the Amonoosack, melting into that of the Connecticut. Long and intently did I gaze upon the landscape, with its unnumbered farm-houses, reposing in the sunlight, and surmounted by pyramids of light blue smoke, and also upon the cattle gazing on a thousand hills. Presently I heard the rattling wheels of the stage-coach;—one more look over the charming valley,—and I was in my seat beside the coachman.

In view of the foregoing and forthcoming facts, and though I am sometimes hard pushed for the dollars needful, I cannot but conclude that I am a most lucky fellow. My ride from Franconia to Littleton was attended with this interesting circumstance. A very pretty young lady, who was in the stage, found it necessary to change her seat to the outside on account of the confinement within. Of course, I welcomed her to my side with unalloyed pleasure. The scenery was fine, but what do you suppose I cared for that,—as I sat there talking in a most eloquent strain to my companion, with my right arm around her waist to keep her from falling? That conduct of mine may appear “shocking” to those who have “never travelled,” but it was not only an act of politeness but of absolute necessity. Neither, as my patient’s smile told me, “was it bad to take.” And O, how perfectly delightful it was to have her cling to me, and to hear the beating of her heart, as the driver swung his whip and run his

134

horses down the hills! Animal magnetism is indeed a great invention,—and I am a believer in it, so far as the touch of a beautiful woman is concerned.

Away, away—thoughts of the human world! for I am entering into the heart of the White Mountains. Ah me! how can I describe these glorious hierarchs of New England! How solemnly do they raise their rugged peaks to heaven! Now, in token of their royalty, crowned with a diadem of clouds; and now with every one of their cliffs gleaming in the
135
sunlight like the pictures of a dream! For ages, have ye been the playmates of the storm, and held communion with the mysteries of the midnight sky. The earliest beams of the morning have bathed you in living light, and there too have been the last kisses of departing day. Man and his empires have arisen and decayed, but ye have remained unchanged, a perpetual mockery. Upon your summits, Time has never claimed dominion. There, as of old, does the eagle teach her brood to fly, and there does the wild bear prowl after his prey. There do thy waterfalls still leap and shout on their way to the dells below, even as when the tired Indian hunter, some hundred ages ago, bent him to quaff the liquid element. There still, does the rank grass rustle in the breeze, and the pine, and cedar, and hemlock, take part in the howling of the gale. Upon Man alone falls the heavy curse of time; Nature has never sinned, therefore is her glory immortal.

But how in thunder shall I get down from this great poetical eminence? Why, by giving you a simple matter-of-fact description. As you know, the highest of these mountains
136
was christened after our beloved Washington, and with it, as with him, are associated the names of Jefferson, Madison, and Adams. Its height is said to be six thousand and eight

hundred feet above the sea, but owing to its situation in the *centre* of a brotherhood of hills, it does not *appear* to be so grand an object as South Peak Mountain among the Catskills. Its summit, like most of its companions, is destitute of vegetation, and is therefore more desolate and monotonous. It is somewhat of an undertaking to ascend Mount Washington, though the trip is performed on horseback; but if the weather is clear, the traveller will be well repaid for his labor. The Painter will be pleased with the views which he will command in ascending the route from Crawford's, and which abounds in the wildest and most diversified charms of mountain scenery. But the prospect from the summit of Washington, will mostly excite the soul of the Poet. Not so much on account of what he will behold, but for the *breathless feeling*, which will make him deem himself for a moment to be an angel or a god. And then, more than ever, if he is a Christian, will he desire to be alone, so as to anticipate the bliss of heaven by a holy communion with the Invisible.

I spent a night upon this mountain, and my best view of the prospect was at the break of day, when, as Milton says,

137

“——morn, her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearls,”

and,

“Wak'd by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of light;”

or when, in the language of Shakspeare,

“The grey-eyed morn smiled on the frowning night,

Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light.”

Wonderfully vast, and strangely indistinct and dreamy, was the scene spread out on every side. To the west lay the superb Connecticut, with its fertile valley reposing in the gloom of night, while to the east, the ocean-bounded prospect, just bursting into the life of light, was faintly relieved by Winnepiseogee and Sebago lakes, and like rockets along the earth, wandered away the Merrimack, the Saco, and the Androscoggin, to their ocean home,—the whole forming an *epic landscape*, such as we seldom behold excepting in our dreams. Heavens! with what exquisite delight did I gaze upon the scene, as in the eyes of truth and fancy it expanded before my mind. Yonder, in one of a hundred villages, a young wife, with her first-born child at her side, was in the midst of her morning dream; and there, the pilgrim of fourscore years was lying on his couch in a fitful slumber, as the pains of age crept through his frame. There, on the Atlantic shore, the fisherman in the sheltering bay, hoisted anchor and spread his sail for the sea;—and there, the life-star of the lighthouse was extinguished, again at its stated time to appear with increased brilliancy. In reality, there was an ocean of mountains all around me, but in the dim light of the hour, and as I looked *down* upon them, it seemed to me that I stood in the centre of a plain, boundless as the universe; and though I could not see them, I felt that I was in a region of spirits, and that the summit of the mount was holy ground. But the morning was advancing, and the rising mists obscuring my vision, and, as I did not wish to have that day-break picture dissipated from my mind, I mounted my faithful horse, and with a solemn awe at heart descended the mountain.

The ride from the Notch House through the Notch valley, which

is some twelve miles long, is perfectly magnificent. First is the Gap itself, only some twenty feet in width, and overhung with jagged rocks of wondrous height, and then the tiny spring alive with trout, which gives birth to the untamed Saco. A few more downward steps, and you are in full view of a bluff, whose storm-scathed brow seems to prop the very heavens,—its deep grey shadows strongly contrasting with the deep blue sky. A little further on, and you find yourself in an amphitheatre of mountains, whose summits and sides are perfectly barren and desolate, where the storms of a thousand years have exhausted their fury. Downward still and farther on, and you come to the memorable Wiley cottage, whose inhabitants perished in the avalanche or slide of 1826. The storm had been unceasing for some days upon the surrounding country, and the dwellers of the cottage were startled at midnight by the falling earth. They fled,—and were buried in an instant; and up to the present time, only one of the seven bodies has ever been found. As it then stood, the dwelling still stands—a monument of mysterious escape, as well as of the incomprehensible decrees of Providence. The Saco river, which runs through the valley, was lifted from its original bed, and forced into a new channel. The whole place, which but a short time before was “a beautiful and verdant opening amid the surrounding rudeness and deep shadow, is now like a stretch of desolate sea-shore after a tempest,—full of wrecks, buried in sand and rocks, crushed and ground to atoms.”

139

140

After witnessing so much of the grand and gloomy, I was glad to reach the bottom of the Notch valley, and to continue along the picturesque Saco, through a very pleasant and well cultivated country, to Conway. My *last* view of Mount Washington and its lordly companions was the most *beautiful*. The sun was near his

setting, and the whole western sky was suffused with a glow of richest yellow and crimson, where hung two immense copper-colored clouds just touching the outline of the mountains; and through the hazy atmosphere the mountains themselves looked cloud-like, but with more of the bright blue of heaven upon them. In the extensive middle distance faded away wood-crowned hills, and in the foreground an exquisite little farm, with the husbandman's happy abode almost hidden by groups of elms, and with the simple figures, only a few paces off, of a little girl sitting on a stone, with a bunch of summer flowers in her hand, and a basket of berries and a dog at her side. One more yearning gaze upon the dear old mountains, and the fountain of my affections was full, and I wept like a very child.

Well, here I am at last in Portland. At the time of starting this morning from Conway it commenced raining, and all the way here were we attended with refreshing showers. There were six passengers, and it so happened that we were acquainted with each other before we reached the mountains, and having for the most part enjoyed their scenery in company, we were in a fitting mood to be somewhat entertaining. Doctor Orville Dewy, of New York, his lady and daughter, and John Frothingham, of Montreal, and daughter, are the friends whose names will ever be associated with my recollections of the White Mountains. The Doctor's faculty for telling a good story or cracking a joke, is well worthy of the orator and writer; and if Mr. Frothingham excels as a merchant in proportion to his entertaining manner of relating his European travels, he must indeed be a merchant prince. As to the fair ladies, I cannot pay them a better compliment than by letting

“Expressive silence muse their praise.”

Portland is a thriving city of some twenty thousand inhabitants, and commands a very fine view of the ocean.

142

If for no other reason, it should interest the admirers of genius because it is the native place of Mrs. Seba Smith, Professor Longfellow, and John Neal. I have just received an invitation to hear some singing from the lips of one of my fellow-travellers, and as I know it will be of the rarest kind, I must conclude this rhapsody, and *migrate* to the parlor.

143

MOOSEHEAD LAKE AND THE KENNEBECK.

Moosehead Lake is the largest and the wildest in New England. It lies in the central portion of the State of Maine, and distant from the ocean about one hundred and fifty miles. Its length is fifty miles, and its width from five to fifteen. It is embosomed among a brotherhood of mountains, whose highest peak hath been christened with the beautiful name of Katahden. All of them, from base to summit, are covered with a dense forest, in which the pine is by far the most abundant. It is the grand centre of the only wilderness region in New England, whose principal denizens are wild beasts. During the summer months, its tranquil waters remain in unbroken solitude, unless some scenery-hunting pilgrim, like myself, should happen to steal along its shores in his birchen canoe. But in the winter the case is very different, for then, all along its borders, may be heard the sound of the axe, wielded by a thousand men. Then it is that an immense quantity of logs are cut, which are manufactured into lumber at the extensive mills down the Kennebeck, which is the only outlet to the Lake.

144

A winter at Moosehead must be attended with much that is rare, and wild, and exciting, not only to the wealthy proprietor who has a hundred men to superintend, but even to the toiling chopper himself. Look at a single specimen of the gladdening scenes enacted in that forest world. It is an awful night, the winds wailing, the snow falling, and the forests making a moan. Before you is a spacious, but rudely built log cabin, almost covered with snow. But now, above the shriek of the storm, and

the howl of the wolf, you hear a long, loud shout, from a score of human mouths. You enter the cabin, and lo, a merry band of noble men, some lying on a buffalo-robe, and some seated upon a log, while the huge fire before them reveals every feature and wrinkle of their countenances, and makes a picture of the richest coloring. Now the call is for a song, and a young man 145 sings a song of Scotland, which is his native land; a mug of cider then goes round, after which an old pioneer clears his throat for a hunting legend of the times of old; now the cunning jest is heard, and peals of hearty laughter shake the building; and now a soul-stirring speech is delivered in favor of Henry Clay. The fireplace is again replenished, when with a happy and contented mind each woodman retires to his couch, to sleep, and to dream of his wife and children, or of the buxom damsel whom he loves.

The number of logs which these men cut in a single winter is almost incredible, and the business of conveying them to the lake upon the snow gives employment to a great many additional men and their oxen. The consequence is, that large quantities of flour, potatoes, pork, and hay, are consumed; and as these things are mostly supplied by the farmers of the Kennebeck, winter is the busiest season of the year throughout the region. When the lake is released from its icy fetters in the spring, a new feature of the logging business comes into operation, which is called rafting. A large raft contains about eighteen thousand 146 logs, and covers a space of some ten acres. In towing them to the Kennebeck, a small steamboat is employed, which, when seen from the summit of a hill, looks like a living creature struggling with a mighty incubus. But the most picturesque thing connected with this business is a floating log-cabin, called a Raft House, which ever attends a raft on its way to the river.

During the summer, as before stated, Moosehead Lake is a perfect solitude, for the “log chopper” has become a “log driver” on the Kennebeck,—the little steamer being moored in its sheltering bay, near the tavern at the south end of the lake, and the toiling oxen been permitted to enjoy their summer sabbath on the farm of their master.

The islands of Moosehead Lake, of any size, are only four; Moose and Deer Islands at the southern extremity, Sugar Island in the large eastern bay, and Farm Island in a north-western direction from that. All of these are covered with beautiful groves, but the time is not far distant when they will be cultivated farms. Trout are the principal fish that flourish in its waters, and may be caught at any time in great abundance. And thereby hangs a *fish story*.

It was the sunset hour, and with one of my companions I had gone to a rocky ledge for the purpose of trying my luck. We cut each of us a long pole, to which we fastened two immensely long lines with stout hooks. Our bait was squirrel meat, and I was the first to throw my line. It had hardly reached the water, before I had the pleasure of striking and securing a two pound trout. This threw my friend into a perfect fever of excitement, so that he was everlastingly slow in cutting up the squirrels; and it may be readily supposed that I was somewhat excited myself, so I grabbed the animal out of his hands, and in less than a “jiffy,” and with my *teeth*, made a number of good baits. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that in less than forty minutes we had caught nearly seventy pounds of salmon trout, and some of them, I tell you, were real *smashers*. But the trout of Moosehead are not to be compared with those of Horicon in point of delicacy, though they are very large, and

very abundant. The reason of this is, that its waters are not remarkably clear, and a good deal of its bottom is muddy. Moose River, which is the principal tributary to the Lake, is a narrow, deep, and picturesque stream, where may be caught the common trout, weighing from one to five pounds.

148

In this portion of Maine every variety of forest game may be found, but the principal kinds are the grey wolf, the black bear, the deer, and the moose. Winter is the appropriate season for their capture, when they afford a deal of sport to the hunter, and furnish a variety of food to the forest laborers. Deer are so very plenty, that a certain resident told me, that, in the deep snow of last winter, he caught some dozen of them alive, and having cut a slit in their ears, let them go, that they might recount to their kindred their marvellous escape. But the homeliest animal, the most abundant, and the best for eating, is the moose. I did not kill one, but spent a night with an old hunter who did. During the warm summer night these animals, for the purpose of getting clear of the black-fly, are in the habit of taking to the water, where, with nothing but their heads in sight, they remain for hours. It was the evening of one of those cloudless nights, whose memory can never die. We were alone far up the Moose River, and it seemed to me, "we were the first that ever burst into that *forest sea*." On board a swan-like birch canoe we embarked, and with our rifles ready, we carefully and silently descended the stream. How can I describe the lovely pictures that we passed? Now we peered into an ink-black recess in the centre of a group of elms, where a thousand fire-flies were revelling in joy;—and now a solitary duck shot out into the stream from its hidden home, behind a fallen and decayed tree; now we watched the stars mirrored in the sleeping

149

waves, and now we listened to the hoot of the owl, the drum of the partridge, the song of a distant waterfall, or the leap of a robber-trout. It was not far from midnight when my companion whispered, "Hush, hush!" and pointed to a dim spot some hundred yards below. The first fire was allotted me, so I took the best aim I could, and fired. I heard the ball skip along the water, and on coming near, found my mark to be only a smooth rock. Two hours more passed on, one small moose was killed, and at day-break we were in our cabin fast asleep.

The principal outlet to Moosehead Lake is the Kennebeck, which "now demands my song." It is the second river in Maine, and one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. Instead of watering a wilderness, as I had supposed, all along its valley for over a hundred miles are fertile and extensive farms, with here and there a thriving village, inhabited by an intelligent and industrious people. Its principal tributary is Dead River, and the spot at the junction of the two is called the Forks. The cultivated region stops here, and between this point and Moosehead the distance is about twenty-five miles, which is yet a forest wilderness.

150

The principal attraction at the Forks is a capital tavern, kept by one Burnham, who is a capital fellow to guide the lover of Nature or the trout fisherman to Moxy Fall or Lake Lanman, which are in the immediate vicinity. The mountains about here are quite lofty, and exceedingly picturesque, abounding in the maple, the oak, the pine, and hemlock. Emptying into the Kennebeck, a few miles north of the Forks, is a superb mountain-stream, named Moxy, after an Indian who was there drowned. Winding for a long distance among the rock of wild ravines, and eternally singing to the woods a trumpet-song, it

finally makes a sudden plunge into a chasm more than a hundred feet in depth. The perpendicular rocks on either side rise to an immense height, their tops crowned with a “peculiar diadem of trees,” and their crevices filled up with dark-green verdure, whence occasionally issues, hanging gracefully in the air, beautiful festoons of the ivy, and clusters of the mountain blue-bell. The depth of the pool was never told, and its waters wash against the granite walls in a perpetual gloom. On one occasion I visited it when there was a high freshet, and saw what I could hardly have believed from a description. I stood on an elevated point, in front of the Fall, when my eyes rested upon an immense log, some sixty feet long, coming down the foaming stream with all the fury of a maddened steed; presently it reached the precipice,—then cleaved its airy pathway down into the hell of waters,—was completely out of sight for *three minutes*, then, like a creature endowed with life, shot upward again clear out of the water, made another less desperate plunge, and quietly pursued its course into the Kennebeck.

In speaking of *Lake Lanman*, it is necessary that I should be a little egotistical. It is a fairy-like sheet of pure water in the heart of the mountain wilderness, only about a mile in length, but full of trout. The proprietor was of the party that accompanied me on my first visit. While approaching it, the remark was made, that it was yet without a name; when it was agreed that it should be christened after that individual, who should on that day throw the most successful fly. As fortune would have it, the honor was awarded to me; and on a guide-board in the forest, three miles from Burnham’s, may be seen the figure of a hand, and the words “Lake Lanman.” There stands my written name, exposed “to the peltings of the pitiless storm;”

and in a few years, at the longest, it will be washed away, and the tree which supports it be mingling with the dust. O, will it be even thus with the *memory* of name?

Not to attempt a description of the scenery of the Kennebeck, which could be faithfully given only by the pictures of a Cole or Durand, I will take you down its beautiful valley, and tell you what I know respecting its beautiful villages.

The first in order is Bingham, situated on a fertile “interval,” surrounded with picturesque hills, charming and quiet as a summer day, and containing within the jurisdiction of its town an uncommonly fine farm, belonging to a Mr. Parlin, who manufactures large quantities of maple sugar.

153

Solon is the next village in the Kennebeck valley, remarkable for nothing but Caritunk Falls, which are twenty feet high, and run through a gorge fifty feet wide. Here I saw some twenty men “driving” the logs that had been lodged all along the river when it was low. It is a laborious life which these men lead, but they receive good pay, and meet with many interesting adventures. They generally have the soul to enjoy fine scenery, and therefore demand the respect of the intelligent traveller.

Anson, though in the valley of the Kennebeck, is situated on Seven Mile Brook, and is a flourishing business place. From its neighboring hills may be seen the sky-piercing peaks of Mount Blue, Saddleback, Bigelow, and Mount Abraham, which are the guardian spirits of Maine. The town is distinguished for its agricultural enterprise, and the abundance of its wheat, having actually produced more than is reported from any other town in the State.

Norridgewock, so named by the Kennebeck Indians, because, when fighting with their enemies at this place, they could find *no-ridge-to-walk* upon, which was a desirable object. It is a charming little village, and associated with a celebrated Indian Chief named Bomazeen, and also with a Jesuit Missionary, whose name I do not remember. Not far from here is a picturesque fall, also a picturesque bend of the Kennebeck, where empties Sandy River, upon which are many extensive farms.

154

Skowhegan is a thriving village, where there are fine Falls, which I never could look upon without thinking of the famous Glen's Falls in New York, of which they are a perfect counterpart, though on a smaller scale. Many and very dear to me are my recollections of its "choice bits" of scenery, of the fine singing I there heard, of the acquaintances there formed, and of the pleasant literary communings which were mine in company with one of the best and most intellectual of women, and who has for many years been my "guide, counsellor, and friend."

Waterville, the next town on the river, is the seat of a Baptist College, and the head of navigation on account of the Ticonic Falls. It is the centre of an extensive farming district, which fact, together with the literary taste of its people, make it an uncommonly interesting place.

155

Augusta, the capital of the State, is also on the Kennebeck, and with its State House and other State buildings, its admirably conducted hotels, its commanding churches, its large bridge, and pleasant residences, is one of the most picturesque and interesting towns in the whole of New England.

Hallowell, two miles below Augusta, was once a great place of business, and is still a very pleasant place, though unable to compete with its rival the Capital. In my mind it is chiefly associated with some fine people, and particularly with three beautiful sisters, who are great lovers of poetry, and fine singers, either with the piano or guitar.

Gardiner, further down, is a tremendous place for saw-mills,—and lumbering I look upon as one of the nicest and surest kinds of business. It contains the handsomest church-building in the State, and a number of fine residences, belonging to its wealthy citizens, of which that one belonging to Mr. Gardiner, (after whom the place was named,) is the finest.

Bath is the next and most southern town on the Kennebeck; it is quite a large place, where there is a great deal of shipping done, and is now in a flourishing condition. The sail down the river from here is a most delightful one, for the eye revels on a continual succession of pleasant farms, quiet headlands, solitary islands, and vessels of every kind passing up and down the stream. Even to the present day, the Kennebeck abounds in salmon, which are caught with nets from the first of May till mid-summer. To take them with the hook is a *leetle* the *tallest* kind of sport *in all creation*, and for the manner in which I conquered a solitary individual, I refer you to a certain passage in Scrope on Salmon Fishing. Few are the rivers that I love more than the Kennebeck, and very dear to me are its manifold associations.

LILLY LARNARD.

I write from somewhere in Massachusetts, and the following passage will give you an idea of my theme:

All that life can rate
Worth name of life, in her hath estimate;
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, virtue, all
That happiness and prime can happy call.

SHAKS.

Lilly Larnard is an only child, the pride of her mother, and the delight of her father, who is the clergyman of our secluded and beautiful village. I desire to make you acquainted with this dear girl; but what can I find to say which hath not been anticipated by the poet? Her character is already revealed. Well, then, I will say something about her by way of illustration.

As I passed by her cottage this afternoon, which stands on the southern extremity of the green, about a hundred paces from the meeting house, I noticed an almost startling stillness about the premises, as if the place were deserted; but this was owing to the heat and natural silence of the hour. The closed window-blinds, half hidden by woodbine and honeysuckle; the open doors, with a kitten sunning itself upon the sill of one of them; bespoke it not only inhabited, but the abode of peace and contentment. In a green grape-vine arbor beside the house sat our little heroine, engaged in drawing some curious flowers, which she had gathered in the meadow during her morning walk. At this moment two of her female cousins stopped at the front gate, and called her to go with them on a

ramble through the woodlands. I had just time to change from one hand to the other my heavy string of trout, for I was returning home from angling, when out she came, bounding like a fawn, robed in white muslin, her gypsy bonnet awry, and a crimson scarf thrown carelessly over her shoulders. This simple dress is a specimen of her taste in such matters, and the very thing to correspond with her dark-brown curling hair, regular pearly teeth, blue, Madonna-like eyes, and blooming cheeks. A snow-white terrier, her constant playmate and companion, soon came following after, and having licked the hands of the two friends, as a token of recognition, leaped a neighboring fence, and led the way across a clover-field. When I turned to look again, the happy group were crossing a rude bridge at the foot of a hill, and following the path a short distance they were lost to view.

159

Lilly Larnard is now in her sixteenth year. She is passionately fond of the country; and I do believe, could she obtain permission, would spend half her time in the open air. If she has but one summer hour to spare, she goes no farther than her favorite brook, half a mile from home, where she will angle away her time, wandering up the stream to where the overhanging trees throw a soft twilight upon her path; and, if *necessity* requires it, will off with her slippers, and wade in after a bunch of lilies or some golden pebbles. The neighboring farmer as he comes to the post-office early in the morning, if he chances to pass the parsonage, will most likely be saluted by a sweet smile and bow. And from whom, do you think? Why, from Lilly Larnard, who is airing the parlor, dusting the furniture, or arranging some creeping flowers beside the door, with her pretty face almost hidden in a “kerchief white.” And it may be, when mowing in one of his fields in the afternoon, he

160

will be surprised by a hearty laugh in an adjoining copse, and on looking round behold a party of girls returning from the strawberry hills, with Lilly as their leader. She is a pure-hearted lover of nature, and everything, from the nameless flower to the cloud-capt mountain, hath a language which causes her to feel that the attributes of God are infinite. For her gayer hours, Nature “hath a tale of gladness, and a smile and eloquence of beauty, and glides into her darker musings, with a mild and gentle sympathy, which steals away their sharpness ere she is aware.”

But how does she busy herself at home? it will be asked. She is an early riser; and the first thing she does in the morning, after she has left her room, is to put everything in its place which is out of place. She kindly directs and helps Betty, the servant, to perform those numerous little household duties, such as feeding the chickens and straining the milk, not forgetting to give pussy a saucer full of the warm, sweet liquid. She sets the breakfast table, prepares the toast, and all those kindred delicacies, and pours out the coffee, sitting like a fairy queen in the old high-backed chair, with her parents on either side. And when her father clasps his hands to implore a blessing, she meekly bows her head, sweetly responding to the solemn Amen. If anything is wanted from the kitchen, she is up and away, and back again almost in a minute, so sprightly is she in all her movements. During the forenoon she is generally helping her mother to sew or knit, or do anything else which is required to be done; or, if her father wants her to read one of his chaste and deeply religious sermons, the sweetness of her eloquent voice makes it doubly impressive. In the afternoon she is generally engaged in some benevolent duty. Not one in a hundred is so well acquainted with the poor of the parish.

She enters the abode of the poor widow, and, besides administering to her temporal wants, gives her the overflowing sympathy of her own warm heart, administering at the same time the consolations of religion. It is a common sight to see her tripping along the street, with a basket on her arm; and the clerk, or more stately merchant, as he sees her pass his door, takes particular pains to make a bow, inwardly exclaiming,

162

—“Who now is to become the debtor of Lilly Larnard?”

And the stranger who may have met her in his walk, fails not to inquire of his host, at evening, the name of the lovely creature who wears a white dress and gypsy bonnet.

Lilly is a Christian, not only a church-going Christian, but her life is one continued round of charitable deeds and pious duties, almost worthy of an angel. She has a class of little boys in the Sabbath school, and they are all so fond of their amiable teacher, that I do believe they would undergo almost any trial for her sake. She *loves* her Bible too, and would be unhappy were she deprived of the privilege of reading it every day. When she rises from her pillow at dawn, she kneels beside her couch, and breathes her offering of prayer; and so, too, when the day is closed and she retires to repose.

Her father is a clergyman of easy fortune. The prayer of his youth seems to have been kindly answered by the Most High. About one year ago he bought a beautiful chesnut pony, and, all saddled and bridled, presented it to Lilly on her fifteenth birthday. As might be expected, she was perfectly transported with the gift. “Oh! father,” she exclaimed, “how I will try to merit your approbation in every action of my life.”

163

A colored boy, named Tommy, is Lilly’s groom and page, and he

seems to love the pony and his mistress above everything else in the world. A smarter and better-hearted page did not follow a high-born lady of the feudal times. Lilly has now become a first-rate rider; and often, when with her friends, takes pleasure in boasting of her noble accomplishment, and the speed of her horse. When she has been out riding, she almost always manages to canter through the middle street of the village on her return. Sometimes she is alone with her dog, and sometimes with a female friend; but the forelock of her pony is always surmounted by a few flowers, or a cluster of green leaves, for she has a queer notion of ransacking the most secluded corners of the field and wood. Only a week ago (the very day I caught that two-pound trout), while standing upon a hill, I saw her trying to leap a narrow but deep brook, and she did not give up trying until she had accomplished the deed. I thought that if her pony had been gifted with the power of speech, he would have exclaimed, “Well done, you courageous girl, you possess a wonderful deal of spunk!”

Lilly left school about two years ago, because her father chose to superintend her education himself. She is a good scholar in everything requisite for a lady. You could hardly puzzle her with questions in history, geography, or mathematics. Her modesty and simplicity of character are so great, that you would be surprised at the extent of her book-information and practical knowledge. She has a wonderful talent for making herself agreeable under all circumstances. If she meets a beggar woman in the street, she will talk familiarly with her about her sorrows, instructing her to bear up under every trial. She is the universal favorite of the whole village. All who know her, the poor and the rich, from the child of three years to the hoary head, all love her with the affection felt toward a sister or daughter. She

smiles with those who smile, and weeps with those who weep. Servant-girls consult with her about purchasing a new dress, and little children invite her to participate with them in their pastimes.

Lilly Larnard is a lover of poetry. Yes, whether she sees it in the primrose and the evening cloud; or hears it in the laughing rivulet and the song of birds; or reads it in the pages of Spenser, Milton, Shakspeare, Wordsworth, or Coleridge. And she is a *writer*, too, of sweet and soothing poetry, just such as should always emanate from the pure-hearted. To give you an idea of her poetic powers, I will here quote her last effort, which was written with a pencil on a fly-leaf of Dana's Poems while walking on the sea-shore; for, be it known that the village of her birth is within sound of the never-ceasing roar of the Atlantic. The title of it is—

165

A SEA-SHORE ECHO.

“Alone! and on the smooth, hard, sandy shore of the boundless sea! A lovelier morning never dawned upon the world of waters. O! how balmy, how clear, how soul-subduing, how invigorating is the air! Calmness sits throned upon the unmoving clouds, whose colors are like the sky, only of a brighter hue. One of them, more ambitious than its fellows, is swimming onward, a wanderer, and companionless. O that I could rest upon its ‘unrolling skirts,’ and take an aerial pilgrimage around the globe,—now looking down upon its humming cities, and fruitful and cultivated plains; and again, upon some unpeopled wilderness or ocean solitude! But alas! the peerless beauty of that light cloud will be extinguished, when the sun shall have withdrawn his influence, and, if not entirely

166

dispersed, will take another shape, and make its home in darkness. And so have I seen a man, when wandering from the heavenly sunshine of religion, passing from his cradle to the grave.

“As I gaze upward into yon blue dome, the anxieties of life are all forgotten, and my heart throbs with a quicker pulse, and beats with an increasing thrill of joy. How holy and serene those azure depths of air! Strange, that aught so beautiful should canopy a world of tears, decay, and death! Yonder sky is the everlasting home of countless worlds; the vast ethereal chamber, where are displayed the wonders of the thunder, and lightning, and rainbow; and a mirror, too, reflecting the glorious majesty, the wisdom and power of the Omnipotent. Lo! across my vision there is floating another cloud, whiter than the driven snow!

Rearward, there trails along another, and still another, until pile on pile they reach upward to the very zenith; and oh, how gorgeous the scenes which my fancy conjures up, delighted with their changing loveliness! One moment, I behold a group of angels reclining at ease upon the summit of a pearly battlement; and now, summoned by a celestial strain of melody, they spread their pinions for a higher flight,—a flight into the diamond portals of the New Jerusalem. Again, a river of pure white foam rolls swift but noiseless through unpeopled valleys, hemmed in by airy mountains of wondrous height, until its waters empty into a tranquil sea, boundless and ‘beautiful exceedingly;’ and on this, a myriad of swanlike barges are gliding to and fro, without a breeze, while the voyagers are striking their golden harps, and singing hymns of sweetest strain and holiest import, whose echoes die away on the shadowy waves. There! all these, like the dreams of youth, are melting into nothingness;—and my eyes now rest only upon the dark

blue ocean.

“The green waves of the Atlantic, with their undulating swell, come rolling in upon the sand, making a plaintive music, sweeter than the blended harmonies of a thousand instruments. Would that I might leap in and wrestle with them, and, when overcome by fatigue, lay my heated brow upon those cool watery pillows, rocked to sleep as in a cradle, while my lullaby would be the moaning of the sea. The mists of morning are all dispelled, and the glorious sunshine, emblem of God’s love, is bathing with effulgent light the ocean before me, and behind me the mountains and valleys of my own loved country. Look! how the white caps chase each other along the watery plain, like the milk-white steeds, striving in their freedom to outstrip the breeze. Whence comes this breeze, and whither is it going? Three days ago, at set of sun, it spread its wing near to a sandy desert of Africa, where a caravan of camels, and horses, and men, had halted for the night; and at the dawning of to-morrow, it will be sporting with the forest-trees of the western wilderness!

168

“Far as the eye can reach, the sea is ‘sprinkled o’er with ships,’ their white sails gleaming in the sunlight. One of them has just returned from India, another from the Pacific, and another from the Arctic Sea. Years have elapsed since they departed hence. They have been exposed to a thousand dangers, but the great God, who holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand, has conducted them back to their desired homes. How many silent prayers of thanksgiving, and what a thrilling and joyous shout, will echo to the shore, as those storm-beaten mariners drop anchor in their native waters! Yonder, too, are other ships, bound to the remotest corners of the earth. They

169

seem to rejoice in their beauty and speed, and proud is their bearing; but will they ever return? Alas! the shadowy future alone can answer. Farewell, a long farewell, ye snowy daughters of the ocean.”

But to return. Lilly Larnard is fond of music, too, and plays delightfully on the harp. Her voice is sweeter than the fall of waters when heard at a distance in the stillness of the twilight hour. She knows nothing of fashion, and if she did, would consider it beneath her dignity to be incommoded or swayed by it. Instead of decking herself with gew-gaws, for a brilliant appearance in the gay saloon, within sound of the rude jest and foolish flattery, she strives by watchfulness and care to purify her daily conduct; for hers is not less prone to sin than all other human hearts. “Necklaces does she sometimes wear, in her playful glee, made of the purple fruit that feeds the small birds in the moors, and beautiful is the gentle stain then visible over the blue veins of her swan-like bosom.” Beautiful as she is, a feeling of vanity never yet entered the heart of the rector’s daughter. She feels too deeply the truth, that personal charms, which are the only pride of weak-minded persons, time will eventually transform into wrinkled homeliness; and that an affectionate heart and good understanding will endure, and become more perfect, until the pilgrimage of life is ended.

170

Never has Lilly Larnard been more than thirty miles away from the village of her birth. She has read of cities, and the busy multitudes that throng them; of armies and navies; of politics and war; but all these things to her are but as the visions of a dream. She is ignorant of the real condition and character of the great world, for nought but the echo of its din has ever fallen upon her

ear. She listens with wonder to the deeds of which I sometimes tell her I have been an unwilling witness in the wilderness of men. She thinks it strange, that the inhabitants of cities think so much of the present life, and so little of the future. Her days have been spent in innocence beneath the blue dome of the illimitable sky, inhaling the pure unadulterated air of the country, now sporting in the sunshine, and now sprinkled by a refreshing shower; while the loveliest of flowers and birds, and holy and tender affections, have been her hourly companions; and her nights have passed away in pleasant dreams of that bright world beyond the stars.

LOUIS L. NOBLE.

You ask me to tell you who is Louis L. Noble, to whom I dedicated a volume of Essays some years ago? There is hardly a task in the wide world that I could enter upon with greater pleasure than the answering of this question. And why? Because he is one of my best friends, and a poet of rare genius and power.

To come directly to the point, then, he is a young clergyman of the Episcopal church, whose present field of ministerial labor is in North Carolina. He was born on the Susquehannah; but having spent his boyhood in the wilderness where I was born, there has ever been (since our acquaintance commenced) a delicate stream of sympathy flowing out of one heart into the other. His poetry (and this is perhaps the secret of my attachment to it) is the offspring of that wilderness country familiar to the world as Michigan, and his themes I look upon as my own. He has always been an admirer of the red man, and, like me, in times past has associated with him in the most intimate and familiar intercourse. Therefore, when their customs inspire his pen, you may depend upon the faithfulness of his descriptions. He is a creature of impulse, and whenever he strikes the lyre, it is because he cannot help it, or because it affords him an indescribable joy. He writes "with fury, and corrects with care;" and I am not sure but he sometimes weakens his conceptions by too much pruning and artificial arrangement. He is yet in the vigor of his days, and if his life is spared, we have reason to expect great things from his pen. In temper he is exceedingly amiable, and in disposition variable as the shade, but ever joyous as a strong-bodied and intellectual

boy,—a feeling which his philosophy teaches him is a treasure beyond all price. In person he is rather slender, but well formed and sinewy, with dark complexion, hair like the raven's wing, and an eye as black, as keen, and spirit-stirring as that of an Ottawa Chief. He is one who cannot but be *loved* by all who study his works, and to do this is the best literary advice I can offer you or any of my thinking friends.

174

And now, as an important portion of himself, let me characterize his poetry, and give you a few specimens. As yet, he has only occasionally published in our prominent periodicals; but a volume of his Poems is now in press, and I prophecy that its appearance will be a bright era in our Polite Literature. His principal efforts, up to this time, are entitled "Ni-ma-min," "Tale of the Morning Wind," "Lines to a Swan," "Love and Beauty," "The Cripple Boy," the "Emigrant's Burial," the "Girl of the Sky-blue Lake," and some fine songs and sonnets. A valuable and remarkable feature of his poetry, is its suggestive tendency. It is of a kind calculated to purify the public taste, to make more happy those who read it, to instil into the heart a love for the beautiful and true, and to make us at once conscious of our own littleness in the sight of God, and of the exalted attributes of the soul; or rather, makes a man feel that he is but a man, and yet a portion of the Invisible. It displays a consummate knowledge of the Indian character, an ardent attachment to the works of nature, and showing a remarkable mastery of language, and the writer to be possessed of a mind of refined poetical genius. You find nothing in it "long drawn out"; every sentence has a meaning. It contains no far-fetched conceptions and images; and every portion of each poem is closely cemented together, and pervaded by one spirit, one idea. Take away the rhyme, and it is poetry; take away the thought,

175

and you will find much poetry in the versification alone. It breathes of the virgin wilderness, and of its brave, hardy, and noble children; and dearly, dearly do I love it, for it recalls to mind the living joys of my wild, free, and happy boyhood. I would rather have written his forthcoming volume, than to have been the author of all the fashionable novels of the present century. If it be true, that “a thing of beauty is a joy forever,” then must the poetry of Noble be as enduring as the English language, or the memory of the Indian race now withering from the land. A thousand blessings rest upon the poet of my boyhood’s home! As to the faults of his poetry, I confess that he has his share, because he is of “woman born.” So far as my sagacity goes, the most glaring ones are these. He is somewhat inclined to the mysticism of the German, and sometimes makes use of epithets that remind us of his favorite authors. In the next place, his stories are not as clearly defined as they should be; but what, after all, to the genuine lover of poetry, is the mere story of a poem? “*Thoughts* that breathe, and words that burn,” are what delight him, and it will probably be only among kindred spirits that Noble will be popular. The mass of people will likely pass him by “as the idle wind, which they regard not.” And why? Because their minds are too narrow and weakly to enjoy anything superior to the horrid and disgusting trash continually teeming from the press. Noble’s poetry is possessed of the true spirit of the nine, and its gifted author need not doubt as to his reward, which is the only one he desires, namely, the approbation of sensible and refined minds.

And now, to back the foregoing opinions, I mean to quote three poems, neither of which shall be the longest and most ambitious he has written, viz.; “Lines to a Swan Flying in the Vale of the Huron,” “The Cripple Boy,” and the “Girl of the Sky-blue

Lake.” The Huron, alluded to in the first, rises in the interior of Michigan, and empties into Lake Erie. Its clear waters gave it the name of its more mighty kinsman, Lake Huron. Now free your imagination and give it wings.

O, what a still, bright night! It is the sleep
Of beauteous Nature in her bridal hall.
See, while the groves shadow the shining lake,
How the full moon does bathe their melting green!
I hear the dew-drop twang upon the pool,—
Hark, hark, what music! from the rampart hills,
How *like a far off bugle, sweet and clear,*
It searches through the list'ning wilderness!—
A swan—I know it by the trumpet-tone—
Winging her pathless way in the cool heavens,
Piping her midnight melody, she comes.

Beautiful bird! upon the dark, still world
Thou fallest like an angel—like a lone
Sweet angel from some sphere of harmony.
Where art thou, where?—no speck upon the blue
My vision marks, from whence thy music ranges.
And why this hour—this voiceless hour is thine—
And thine alone, I cannot tell. Perchance,
While all is hushed and silent but the heart,
E'en *thou* hast human sympathies for heaven,
And singest yonder in the holy deep
Because thou hast a pinion. If it be,
O for a wing, upon the aerial tide
To sail with thee, a minstrel mariner!

When to a rarer height thou wheelest up,

*Hast thou that awful thrill of an ascension—
 The lone, lost feeling in the vasty vault?—
 O, for thine ear, to hear the ascending tones
 Range the ethereal chambers!—then to feel
 A harmony, while from the eternal depth
 Steals nought but the pure starlight evermore!—*
 And then to list the echoes, faint and mellow,
 Far, far below, breathe from the hollow earth
 For thee, soft, sweet petition, to return.
 And hither, haply, thou wilt shape thy neck,
 And settle, like a silvery cloud, to rest,
 If thy wild image, flaring in the abyss,
 Startle thee not aloft. Lone aeronaut,
 That catchest, on thine airy looking-out,
 Glassing the hollow darkness, many a lake,
 Lay, for the night, thy lily bosom here,
 There is the deep unsounded for thy bath,
 The shallow for the shaking of thy plumes,
 The dreamy cove, or cedar-wooded isle,
 With galaxy of water-lilies, where,
 Like mild Diana 'mong the quiet stars,
 'Neath over-bending branches, thou wilt move,
 Till early warblers shake the crystal shower,
 And whistling pinions warn thee to thy voyage.

But where art thou!—lost—spirited away
 To bowers of light by thy own dying whispers?
*Or does some billow of the ocean air,
 In its still roll around from zone to zone,
 All breathless to the empyrean heave thee?—*
 There is a panting in the zenith—hush!—
 The *Swan*—How strong her great wing times the silence!

She passes over high and quietly.

Now peals the living clarion anew,
One vocal shower falls in and fills the vale.
What witchery in the wilderness it plays!—
Shrill snort the affrighted deer; across the lake
The loon, sole sentinel, screams loud alarm;
The shy fox barks; tingling in every vein
I feel the wild enchantment;—hark! they come,
The dulcet echoes from the distant hills,
Like fainter horns responsive all the while,
From misty isles, soft-stealing symphonies.

179

The bright, swift river of the bark canoe,
Threading the prairie ponds of Washtenung,
Thy day of romance wanes. Few summers more,
And the long night will pass away unwaked,
Save by the house-dog, or the village bell;
And she, thy minstrel queen, her ermine dip
In lonelier waters.

Ah! thou wilt not stoop:
Old Huron, haply, glistens on thy sky.
The chasing moon-beams, glancing on thy plumes,
Reveal thee now, a little beating blot,
Into the pale aurora fading.

There!—

Sinks gently back upon her flowery couch
The startled night:—tinkle the damp wood-vaults,
While slip the dew-pearls from their leafy curtain.
That last soft whispering note, how spirit-like!
While vainly yet my ear another waits,
A sad, sweet longing lingers in my heart.

Is not that a magnificent production? How does it breathe of nature in her primitive loveliness, and how completely does it wean us from the world of flesh and blood into that other one of spiritual blessedness! How majestic, and yet how sweet is the flowing of its numbers!—reminding us of a strong but pleasant summer-evening wind, which is wont to make us strangely happy, even in our grief! Can anything be more completely exquisite than the few lines that I have marked? Is there anything in Dana, Bryant, or Longfellow, that can eclipse them? or even in the very best of England's modern poets? There may be, but I have never been able to discover them, although I almost know by heart the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Wilson, Cowper, Goldsmith, Beattie, Shelly, Scott, Rogers, Campbell, and Mrs. Hemans.

180

Now comes "The Cripple Boy," of its kind, one of the sweetest and most affecting things I ever read; and I willingly acknowledge that it has often blinded my eyes with tears. Such poetry softens the heart, and prepares us to sympathize with the unfortunate, and look with kindly feeling upon our fellows. It smooths the rugged pathway of life, by telling us that it is not the whole of life to live, nor the whole of death to die. We read, and our hearts cannot but be made wiser, even as the story of the Ancient Mariner made the heart of the Wedding Guest, and caused him to renounce his anticipated pleasure. Read and see.

181

Upon an Indian rush-mat, spread
Where burr-oak boughs a coolness shed,
Alone he sat,—a cripple-child,—
With eyes so large, so dark and wild,
And fingers, thin and pale to see,

Locked upon his trembling knee.
A-gathering nuts so blithe and gay,
The children early tripped away;
And he his mother had besought
Under the oak to have him brought;—
It was ever his seat when black-birds sung
The wavy rustling tops among;—
They calmed his pain,—they cheered his loneliness—
The gales,—the music of the wilderness.

Upon a prairie, wide and wild,
Looked off that suffering cripple-child:
The hour was breezy, the hour was bright;—
O, 'twas a lively, a lovely sight!—
An eagle, sailing to and fro
Around a flitting cloud so white,
Across the billowy grass below
Darting swift their shadows' light;
And mingled noises, sweet and clear,
Noises out of the ringing wood,
Were pleasing trouble in his ear,
A shock how pleasant to his blood.
O, happy world!—Beauty and Blessing slept
On everything but him—he felt, and wept.

Humming a lightsome tune of yore;
Beside the open log-house door,
Tears upon his sickly cheek
Saw his mother, and so did speak;—
“What makes his mother's Henry weep?
You and I the cottage keep;
They hunt the nuts and clusters blue,

Weary lads, for me and you;
And yonder see the quiet sheep;—
Why now—I wonder why you weep!”—
“Mother, I wish that I could be
A sailor on the breezy sea!”
“A sailor on the stormy sea, my son!—
What ails the boy!—what have the breezes done!”

“I do!—I wish that I could be
A sailor on the rolling sea;
In the shadow of the sails
I would ride and rock all day,
Going whither blow the gales,
As I have heard a seaman say:
I would, I guess, come back again
For my mother, now and then,
And the curling fire so bright,
When the prairie burns at night;
And tell the wonders I had seen
Away upon the ocean green;”—
“Hush! hush! talk not about the ocean so;
Better at home a hunter hale to go.”

Between a tear and sigh he smiled;
And thus spake on the cripple-child:—
“I would I were a hunter hale,
Nimbler than the nimble doe,
Bounding lightly down the dale,—
But that will never be, I know!
Behind our house the woodlands lie;
A prairie wide and green before;
And I have seen them with my eye

A thousand times or more;
Yet in the woods I never strayed,
Or on the prairie-border played;
O, mother dear, that I could only be
A sailor-boy upon the rocking sea!"

You would have turned with a tear,
A tear upon your cheek;
She wept aloud, the woman dear,
And further could not speak;
The boy's it was a bitter lot
She always felt, I trow;
Yet never till then its bitterness
At heart had grieved her so.
*Nature had waked the eternal wish—
—Liberty, far and wide!*
And now, to win him health, with joy,
She would that morn have died.
Till noon she kept the shady door-way chair,
But never a measure of that ancient air.

Piped the March-wind;—pinched and slow
The deer were trooping in the snow;
He saw them out of the cottage door,
The lame boy sitting upon the floor:
"Mother, mother, how long will it be
Till the prairie go like a waving sea?
Will the bare woods ever be green—and when?
O, will it ever be summer again?"—
She looked in silence on her child:
That large eye, ever so dark and wild,
Oh me, how bright!—it may have been

That he was grown so pale and thin.
It came, the emerald month, and sweetly shed
Beauty for grief, and garlands for the dead.

The Girl of the Sky-blue Lake, is a simple Indian ballad, teeming with pictures as fresh and exquisite to behold as a full-blown wild rose of the wilderness. Some of its versification is remarkably fine, and the idea of the story pleasing and mournful to the soul,—attributes which I fancy are indispensable to the perfection of any poetry; for there is no such thing as poetry without truth, and truth is ever a subject of solemn consideration.

PART I.

“Push off, push off the birch canoe,
The wave and the wood are still;
The screaming loon is fast asleep,
And so is the whip-poor-will.

The moonlight-blowing flowers I love—
On yon little isle they grow;—”
So said a black-eyed Ottawa girl,
In silvery accents low.

“Off, off with the bark canoe, my boy,
And tarry till I come back—”
“No, sister,” said the red-neck’d boy,
“The panther will smell my track.

Our boat upon the deep shall rock,
And in it the paddles three;

My little grey dog my bow shall watch,
But I will keep with thee.”

“Now, nay, across the lake I go
Alone to the flow’ry isle;
I’ll come e’er the big owl screams for day,
So tarry thou here the while.

Thou art a bounding hunter bold,
As the wolf and the panther know;
And thou shalt whoop at the water-stars
That flash in the skies below;
And when the still woods halloo back,
The braver wilt thou grow.”

Now half-way over the sky-blue lake
Hath paddled the wild red girl;
Kneeling, a wearied arm she rests,—
The waters round her curl.

Away she looks, with beating heart,
Away to the purple isle;
Beneath it swings a bright round moon;
She listeneth all the while,—
Heard she one far shrill whistle-sound,
Her sadness were a smile.

*The lake was still as still could be,
And bright as a warrior’s blade;
And, save the dash of the leaping fish,
Not a waking sound was made.*

The lovely bright-eyed Ottawa girl

*Hath bent o'er the low canoe,
And smoothed anew her raven hair
In the glass of the shining blue.*

And now is at the islet's edge
The stem of her birchen bark:
And so is the bare, the springy foot
Of a hunter tall and dark.

“My deer-eyed dove,” the hunter breathed—
And the maid fell at his knee:
Along its lash a bright tear flashed,
And thus again spake he.

“My dark-eyed dove, the twisted shells,
With tints of the blood-red snow,
I've brought thee now, and scarlet bird,
And skin of the spotted doe.”

The red girl of the sky-blue lake,
She loves that chieftain bold:—
He loves again: but hatred lurks,
And ever by day and by night it works
In the heart of her father old.

And hither, when the swan leads off
Her brood on the sleeping swell,
Beneath a climbing vine they meet,
With tenderest words, in accents sweet,
The tale of their loves to tell.

The Indian boy is fast asleep,
And dew on his wolf-skin gray,
Hath cried him weary long ago;
His little grey dog is moaning low,
And the big owl screams for day.

Poor lonely sleeping Indian boy,—
How wild are his fitful dreams?
—In mirth she comes; and sinking now
To the water-moon she seems.

A wolf is trotting in the brake,
All under the panthers' limb;
But they have licked a fawn's sweet blood,
And careless are grown of him.

Then darker grew the shadowy woods,
And bent with a crackling sound;
Shines through the dark the flashing foam
On the pebbled beach around.

Too late the warning loon has yell'd
To the shallow-wading crane;
For now the thunder blast is up,
And whirls the driving rain.

O, red girl of the sky-blue lake,
Look well to thy dancing bark;
The wind is loud, the wave is white,
And the breaking morn is dark;

*The wind is loud, the wave is white,
Look well to thy slender oar:*

*The loon hath need of its wing of jet
To battle the might of the waves, that fret
Along to the foamy shore.*

Alone, upon the frothy beach,
In the still and pleasant morn,
The Ottawa child is waiting yet,
But frightened and forlorn.

His eyes are red, his hair is wild;
He hath donned his wolf-skin gray;
His shivering dog is moaning low;
The child hath turned him round to go,—
He can no longer stay.

Yet once, with aching heart, he looks
To the isle of flowers again;
It seems a sleeping bank of green
Upon a silvery plain.

Within its shade, the voiceless swans
Are sailing two by two;
But never his eye can catch a glimpse
Of the maiden's birch canoe;—
The bow-neck'd swans are all that move
Upon the silvery blue.

Turn home, heart-broken child! turn home;
That bark is in the deep;
And she has gone with the tinted shells
To their own green caves to sleep.

Her spirit owns a brighter isle

Than floats the moon below;
Where never the thunder-blast is heard,
She lists to the song of the scarlet bird,
And plays with the beautiful doe.

There! for this letter you owe me an oyster supper,—but if you will give me that beautiful engraving from Claude, hanging in your study, I will call the matter settled.

THE UNHAPPY STRANGER.

I was a passenger on board one of those noble steamers which navigate the Sound. The hurly-burly attending our departure from the dock was at last ended, and I had a good opportunity to wander quietly about the boat, studying, as it is my wont to do, the variously marked countenances of my fellow passengers. When the supper bell rang, there was a general movement made towards the after-cabin, and as I fell in with the crowd, I happened to cast my eye upon the only group left behind. This was composed of a middle-aged man and his three children. The latter were getting ready to retire to rest, and the youngest one, a sweet little girl of perhaps three years of age, ever and anon kept questioning her father as follows—"where's mother, pa?—pa, where's mother? When will she come back?" The kind and delicate attentions of the father, as he smoothed the pillows and laid them in their nest, tended to interest my feelings; and, when at the supper-table, my fancy was busy with the scene just witnessed.

191

It was now quite late; the lazily-uttered joke, and the less frequent peal of laughter, seemed to announce the spiritual presence of repose. The newspaper, the book, and checker-board, were gradually laid aside, and in a little while nearly all the berth-curtains were drawn up, and their occupants in the arms of sleep. Many of the lamps were out, and those that did remain produced a dim, solemn twilight throughout the cabin—the only part at all animated being that corner where the boot-black was engaged in his appropriate duty. The cause of my own wakefulness it is unnecessary to relate; suffice it to say, it was entirely dispelled by the following incident.

Just as I was about to retire, the sigh of a burdened heart smote my ear, and as I turned, I beheld an individual sitting near a berth, with his face resting upon the pillow, weeping bitterly. He was a fine, intelligent looking man, in the prime of life; and on nearer observation, I found him to be the identical one, 192 who had before attracted my attention. I approached his seat, and, in as kind a tone as possible, inquired the cause of his unhappiness; adding, that I should be pleased to do for him anything he might desire. For a moment, a fresh flood of tears was my only answer; but these he soon wiped away, and extending to me his hand, he thus began to speak.

“I am grateful to you, my dear Sir, for your expressions of kindness and sympathy towards me, but the weight which is resting upon my spirit cannot be easily dispelled. I have been sorely afflicted of late, and the associations connected with that event are what caused me to forget myself, and give vent to my emotions in tears. To be found weeping like a child, in the midst of a multitude of strangers, may be considered a weakness, I hope not a sin; but that you may understand my conduct, I will relate to you the cause.

“One short month ago, as I paused to consider my condition, I fancied myself to be one of the happiest of men. My cottage-home, which stands in one of the fairest valleys of New Hampshire, was then a perfect picture of contentment and peace. A much-loved wife, and three children, were then the joys of my existence. Every pleasurable emotion which I enjoyed was participated in by her, who was my first and only love. From our united hearts, every morning and evening, ascended a deep-felt prayer of gratitude to our Heavenly Father; and from the same source sprang every hope concerning the 193

temporal prospects of our children, and, to us and them, of the life beyond the grave. We were at peace with God, and with regard to this world, we had everything we desired.

“The time of harvest being now ended, and an urgent invitation having been received from my father-in-law, I concluded to take my family, and make a visit to the pleasant village in New Jersey, where my wife and I were children together, and where we had plighted our early love-vows. All things were ready, and, leaving our homestead to the care of a servant, we started on our journey,—reaching in due time, and in safety, our place of destination.

“We found our friends all well, and glad to see us. Not a care or trouble rested on a single heart. Thankful for the blessings of the past and present, all our prospects of the future were as bright as heart could desire. ‘Old familiar faces’ greeted us at every corner, old friendships were again revived, and a thousand delightful associations crowded around us, so that we had nothing to do but be happy.

194

“Thus had two weeks passed away, when, on the very night previous to our *intended* departure for home, my wife was suddenly taken ill, and when the morrow dawned,—*I was a widower, and my children motherless*. The idol of my heart, instead of returning to her earthly home, was summoned by her Maker to that blessed home above the stars, where the happiness of the redeemed will never end. God is great, and His will be done; but, alas, it almost breaks my heart to think of those bitter, bitter words—‘never more.’ I cannot bear to think of it; never more upon the earth shall I behold that beauteous form, and listen to that heavenly voice, which were my delight

and pride. To my eye, the greenness of earth is forever departed. O who can tell what a day or an hour may bring forth? O how lonely, lonely, is my poor, poor, poor heart!”

These last words of my stranger friend were uttered in a smothered tone, and with a drooping head; and, though he held my arm after I had risen to go, I tore myself away, for I thought it my duty to retire.

195

When I awoke in the morning, after a troubled sleep, I found the boat was at the dock, and the day somewhat advanced. My first thought was concerning the unhappy stranger, with whom I longed to have another interview; but in making diligent search I found that he was gone, and with him his three sweet orphan children. His form, and the few words he had spoken, seemed to me like a dream. O yes, they were indeed the substance of a vision—a dream of human life. Surely, surely life is but a vapor, which appeareth for a little season, and then vanisheth away. As the great Jeremy Taylor hath eloquently written: “Death meets us everywhere, and is procured by every instrument, and in all chances, and enters in at many doors; by violence and secret influence, by the aspect of a star, by the emissions of a cloud and the melting of a vapor, by the fall of a chariot and the stumbling of a stone, by a full meal or an empty stomach, by watching at the wine, or by watching at prayers, by the sun or the moon, by a heat or a cold, by sleepless nights or sleeping days, by water frozen into the hardness and sharpness of a dagger, or water thawed into the floods of a river, by a hair or a raisin, by violent motion, or sitting still, by severity or dissolution, by God’s mercy or God’s anger, by everything in providence and everything in manners, by everything in nature and everything in chance. We take pains to

196

heap up things useful to our life, and get our death in the purchase; and the person is snatched away, and the goods remain. And all this is the law and constitution of nature; it is a punishment to our sins, the unalterable event of providence, and the decree of heaven. The chains that confine us to this condition are strong as destiny, and immutable as the eternal laws of God.”

This picture of man’s condition is indeed most melancholy, but let us remember it is not a hopeless one. Only let us keep the commandments, and confide in the promises of the Invisible, and we shall eventually find that the laws regulating our final redemption will prove to be as immutable as those concerning our earthly condition.

A WEEK IN A FISHING SMACK.

On Monday morning of last week I started from Norwich, bound to New London, and from thence to any other portion of the world where I might have some sport in the way of salt-water fishing. In less than an hour after landing from the steamboat, I had boarded the handsome smack Orleans, Captain Keeney, and by dint of much persuasion secured a berth on board to accompany him on a fishing voyage. In addition to my previous preparation, I had only to purchase a Guernsey shirt and tarpaulin; and by the time I was regularly equipped, the sails were hoisted, and we were on our course for Nantucket. An intimate acquaintance was soon formed between myself and crew, which consisted of the master, two sailors, and the cook. The whole time that I spent in their company was six days, as I reached home on the following Saturday evening. The incidents that I met with were somewhat new, as a matter of course, and I employed a few moments of every evening during my absence, in briefly recording the events of the past day; and that medley I now put together as a literary chowder.

198

Monday Evening. My observations to-day have been limited to our little vessel, in consequence of a dense fog, which drenched us to the skin, and seems likely to continue us in this state of preservation. I have obtained some information, however, concerning the character of an interesting class of men, which may be new to you. Smack-fishermen are a brave, hardy, honest, and simple-hearted race, and as my Captain tells me, spend nine-tenths of their time “rocked in the cradle of the deep.” Their vessels, or smacks, are generally of about forty tons burthen; the number of those which supply New York and

Boston with fish is said to be near a thousand, and they are all at home anywhere on the coast between the Kennebeck and the Delaware. Of the perils which these fishermen endure, and the privations they suffer, how little is known or thought by the great world at large! Yet I believe there is as much genuine happiness in their lives, as in those of any other class.

199

Their fathers were fishermen before them, and as they themselves have mostly been born within hearing of the surf, they look upon the unsounded deep as their fitting home, their only home, and would not part with it for a palace or a crown. Four is the usual number of a smack's crew, and the master is invariably called a skipper. Most of them are worthy husbands and fathers, whose families are snugly harbored in some convenient seaport, with enough and to spare of the good things of life. They are a jovial set of men, hailing each other upon the ocean as friends, and meeting upon land as brothers. Each skipper thinks his craft the handsomest and swiftest that floats, and very exciting are the races they sometimes run. Their affection for their own vessel is like that of the Arab for his steed, and like the Arab, too, they have been known even to weep over the grave of their darling and their pride.

The kinds of fish which they mostly bring to market are shad, salmon, lobsters, mackerel, cod, bluefish, haddock, blackfish, paugies, bass, and halibut. The first three are generally purchased of local fisherman, but all the rest are caught by themselves. The haunts of the blackfish are rocky reefs, those of the bass and bluefish in the vicinity of sandy shoals or tide rips, and those of the remainder in about fifteen fathom water. These are the varieties they capture by way of business, but when in a frolicsome mood they frequently attack a sword-fish, a shark, or black whale; and soul-thrilling indeed, and laughable

200

withal, are the yarns they spin concerning these exploits.

As to their mode of living, while at sea, it is just what it should be, and what they would have it, although it would be “positively shocking” to a Bond Street gentleman of leisure. But they always possess a good appetite, which is what money cannot purchase, and without which the greatest delicacy in the world would be insipid or loathsome. Fish, sea-biscuit, corned-beef and pork, potatoes, onions, and pancakes, constitute their provisions, and what besides these would a reasonable man desire? It is with a mixture of some of these, that a *chowder* is concocted, and where can anything more delicious be found, even at the tables of the Astor and American? And with these ingredients, moreover, they manage very well to keep body and soul together, unless a storm on a rock-bound coast happens to make a sudden separation.

201

I have just been on deck, and must say that I resume my pen with a heavier heart. The fog has not dispersed in the least, a regular gale of wind is blowing from the north, and the waves, seemingly in a revengeful mood, are tossing our bark about, as if the skipper, like the Ancient Mariner, had shot another albatros. But like a fearless man, as he is, he stands at the helm, watching the sails with a steady eye, and the men with their storm-jackets on are standing by, muttering something about the coming darkness, and a reef somewhere on our lee. Never before have I so distinctly understood the force of the Psalmist’s simile, when he compares a wave to a drunken man reeling to and fro. Both have it in their power to cause a mighty mischief, and both become exhausted and perish,—one upon a sandy beach, and the other, sweeping over the peninsula of time, finds a grave on the shore of oblivion. Heavens! how the wind whistles, and the

waters roar! Aye, but a still small voice salutes my ear, and I lay me down to sleep, with a prayer upon my lips, and a feeling of security at my heart, as I place implicit confidence in Him who holdeth the ocean in the hollow of his hand.

202

Tuesday Evening. I was awakened out of a deep sleep this morning by the following salutation from the skipper, as he patted me on the shoulder. "It's a beautiful morning, and you ought to be up,—the fog is gone, and the wind is down; won't you come up and take the helm awhile,—so that the boys and I may obtain a little sleep before reaching the fishing-ground, which will be about ten o'clock?" I was delighted to accept the invitation, and in a very short time the sailors were asleep, and I in my new station, proud as a king, and happy as a sinless boy. And oh that I could describe the scene that fascinated my eyes as I lay there upon the deck, with one arm reposing on the rudder, and my other hand grasping a Claude glass! I felt as I once felt before, when standing on the famous precipice of Niagara, that then, more than ever, I desired God to be my friend. I also felt, that if the world did not demand the feeble services of my life, I should wish to remain upon the ocean forever, provided I could have "one fair being for my minister." More earnestly than ever did I long for a complete mastery of my art. The fact of being out sight of land, where the blue element announced that the ocean was soundless, filled my soul with that "lone, lost feeling," which is supposed to be the eagle's, when journeying to the zenith of the sky. The sun had just risen above the waves, and the whole Eastern portion of the heavens was flooded with the most exquisite coloring I ever beheld,—from the deepest crimson to the faintest and most delicate purple, from the darkest yellow to an almost invisible green; and all

203

blended, too, in a myriad of forms of marvellous loveliness. A reflection of this scene was also visible in the remaining quarters of the horizon. Around me the illimitable deep, whose bosom is studded with many a gallant and glittering ship,

that have the plain
Of ocean for their own domain.

The waves are lulling themselves to rest, and a balmy breeze is wandering by, as if seeking its old grandfather, who kicked up the grand rumpus last night; whereby I learn, that the offspring of a “rough and stormy sire,” are sometimes very beautiful and affectionate to the children of men. But look, even the dwellers in the sea and of the sea are participating in the hilarity of this bright autumnal morning! Here, a school of herring are skipping along like a frolicsome party of vagabonds as they are,—and yonder a shark has leaped out of the water, to display the symmetry of his form and the largeness of his jaw, and looking as if he thought “that land lubber would make me a first-rate breakfast;” there, a lot of porpoises are playing “leap-frog,” or some other *outlandish* game; and, a little beyond them, a gentleman sword-fish is swaggering along to parts unknown, to fight a duel in cold blood with some equally cold-blooded native of the Atlantic; and now, a flock of gulls are cleaving their course to the South, to the floating body perhaps of a drowned mariner, which their sagacity has discovered a league or two away,—and now, again, I notice a flock of petrels, hastening onward to where the winds blow and the waves are white. Such are the pictures I beheld in my brief period of command. It may have been but fancy, but I thought my little vessel was trying to eclipse her former beauty and her former speed. One thing I know, that she “walked the water like a thing

of life." I fancied, too, that I was the identical last man whom Campbell saw in his vision, and that I was then bound to the haven of eternal rest. But my shipmates returning from the land of Nod, and a certain clamor within my own body having caught my ear, I became convinced that to break my fast would make me happier than anything else just at that time, and I was soon as contented as an alderman at five P. M. About two hours after this we reached our fishing place, which was twenty miles east of Nantucket. We then lowered the jib and topsail, and having luffed and fastened the mainsheet, so that the smack could easily float, we hauled out our lines and commenced fishing, baiting our hooks with clams, of which we had some ten bushels on board. Cod fishing (for we were on a coddling cruize) is rather dull sport; it is, in fact, what I would call hard labor. In six hours we had caught all the skipper wanted, or that the well would hold, so we made sail again, bound to New York; and at supper-time the deck of our smack was as clean and dry, as if it had never been pressed save by the feet of ladies. At sunset, however, a fierce southerly wind sprang up, so that we were compelled to make a harbor; and just as I am closing this record, we are anchoring at Nantucket, with a score of storm-beaten whales on our starboard bow.

Wednesday Evening. The weather to-day has been quite threatening, and the skipper thought it best to remain at our moorings; but with me the day has not been devoid of interest; for, in my sailor garb, I have been strolling about the town, studying the great and solemn drama of life, while playfully acting a subordinate part myself. This morning, as it happened, I went into the public grave-yard, and spent an hour conning over the rude inscriptions to the memory of the departed. In that city of the dead I saw a number of the living walking to and fro, but

there was one who attracted my particular attention. He was a seaman of noble presence, seated upon an unmarked mound, with his feet resting upon a smaller one beside it, his head reclined upon one hand, while the other was occasionally passed across his face, as if wiping away a tear. I hailed him with a few kind questions, and my answer was the following brief tale.

“Yes, sir, four years ago I shipped aboard that whaler yonder, leaving behind me, in a sweet little cottage of my own, a dear, first-rate mother, a good wife, and an only boy. 207

They were all in the enjoyment of good health, and happy; and, when we were under sail, and I saw from the mast-head how kindly they waved their handkerchiefs beside my door, I too was happy, even in my hour of grief. Since that time I have circumnavigated the globe, and every rare curiosity I could obtain was intended for my darling ones at home. Last Saturday our ship returned. And while yet a league from port, I was again at the mast head, looking with an anxious heart towards my nest upon the shore. I saw that the blinds were closed, and that all around was very still; but ‘they are only gone a visiting,’ thought I, and rejoiced at heart. I landed, flew to my dwelling, and found it locked. The flagging in my yard attracted my notice, and I thought it strange that the rank grass had been suffered to grow over it so thickly. The old minister passed by my gate, and running to him with extended hand, I inquired for my family. ‘Oh Mr. B.,’ said he, ‘you must bless the Lord,—he gave them to you, and he hath taken them away.’ And as the thought stole into my brain, my suffering, Sir, was intense, and I longed to die. 208

And there they are, my wife and darling child, and, a step or two beyond, my dear old mother. Peace to their memories. As for me, I am a victim to blight and desolation, and

that sacred song which my mother used to be so fond of singing on Sabbath evenings long ago, that song I can understand now:

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

In a few days I mean to deliver up my property to the Seaman’s Friend Society, and then launching upon the deep once more, become, and forever, a wanderer from my native land.”

Such is the simple story I heard in the Nantucket grave-yard, and I have pondered much upon the world of woe which must be hidden in the breast of that old mariner. May the tale not have been recorded in vain.

After dinner, to-day, I got into company with some fishermen who were going after bass and bluefish, and in a short time I had captured, with my own hands, two big bass and some dozen bluefish,—which I packed in ice as a present to some New York friends.

209

At my present time of writing, which is near ten o’clock at night, we are weighing anchor, and the skipper tells me we shall be in New York by to-morrow’s sunset. An hour before coming on board this evening, I lounged into a sailor boarding-house, and mingled as freely with a company of whalemens there, as if I had ever been a *bonâ fide* member of the craft. I heard a great deal that interested me, and was sorry that I could not remain longer. There were some in that company lately arrived from every

portion of the world, and yet they were engaged in the same business, and had journeyed on the same mighty highway of nations. One was descanting upon the coral islands of the Torrid zone, another upon the ice-mountains of the Arctic Sea, a third was describing the coast of California, and another the waters that lave the Eastern shore of Asia. The more I listened to these men the more did the immensity of ocean expand before my mind, and in the same proportion was I led to wonder at the wisdom of the Almighty.

I have just been on deck, and find that we are on the way to our desired haven, wafted by a steady and pleasant breeze. Our course is between Martha's Vineyard and Rhode Island, which is a route studded with islands and seaports, that now appear in the cool starlight like the pictures of a dream.

210

Thursday Evening. Instead of coming through the Sound last night, we headed our vessel outside of Long Island, and after a delightful sail have realized our skipper's promise, for we are now floating beside the market in New York. The reason assigned for taking the outside course was, that the fish would keep better, on account of the greater coldness of the water. Nothing of peculiar interest has happened to us to-day, except the meeting with a wreck off Sandy Hook. It was the hull of a large ship, whose name we could not discern. It had a very old appearance, and from the moss and sea-weed that covered it, we supposed it must have been afloat for many months, the plaything of the waves. "Man marks the earth with ruin," but who is it that scatters such splendid ruins upon the ocean? And a thousand thousand remorseless surges echo back the answer: "To us, belong the glory of those deeds." If that wreck had language, what a strange, eventful history would it

211

reveal! Its themes would be,—home and all its treasures lost; the sea, and all its dangers; the soul, and all its agonies; the heart, and all its sufferings. But when we multiply all this as fast as time is multiplying it, we cannot but realize the idea, that human life is but a probationary state, and that sorrow and sighing are our earthly inheritance.

Friday Evening. After portioning out my fish this morning, and sending them to my friends, I put on my usual dress, and having obtained a six hours' furlough, set off towards Broadway, where, between the Mercantile Library reading rooms and the studios of a few artists, I managed to spend my time quite pleasantly. At noon we embarked for home, and had a delightful time, passing through the East River, and that pleasing panorama from the city to the Sound never appeared more beautiful.

It is now quite late, and I have been on deck all the evening alone. In a thoughtful mood I fixed my eyes upon the stars, and my spirits were saddened by the continual murmur of the sea. Of what avail, thought I, is all this excitement? Why was I created, and what, O what is my destiny? Is it to sail for a few brief years longer upon the ocean of life, and, when the death-tempest overtakes me, to pass away unloved and unremembered by a single human heart? If not an honored name, can I not leave behind me an humble memory, that will be cherished by a few, a very few, to whom I have laid bare my innermost soul, when I was younger than I am, and a hundred-fold more happy? What! O night! what is my destiny? And the tears upon my cheeks were the only answer that I received,—and I descended into the cabin to my berth, to pray, to slumber, and to dream.

Saturday Evening. We anchored off New London to-day, in time for me to take the evening steamer for Norwich. When I parted with my “shipmates,” I shook each one affectionately by the hand, and thought that I might travel many years without finding a brotherhood of nobler men. I reached home as the eight o’clock bells were ringing, and was reminded that another week of precious time was gone, and “another Sabbath was begun.” That the present must be remembered as an unprofitable week, I cannot believe, for I feel that my soul has been enlarged, and my heart humbled, by listening to the teachings of the mighty deep.

TRIP TO WATCH HILL.

A few mornings ago, just as the sun had risen above the eastern hills, which look down upon the Thames at Norwich, the prettiest sailboat of the place left her moorings, and with a pleasant northerly breeze started for the Sound. Her passengers consisted of six gentlemen, all equipped in their sporting jackets, and furnished with fishing tackle, and their place of destination was Watch Hill, which is a point of land in Rhode Island, extending into the Atlantic, a few miles from Stonington. We were on a fishing frolic, as a matter of course, and a happier company, I ween, were never yet afloat, for the sport of a morning breeze. What with the story, the jest, the iced lemonade and exquisite cigar, the minutes glided by as swiftly and unobserved as the tiny waves around us. Now we met a solitary fisherman, towing for bass, and as we hailed him with a friendly shout and passed by, he began to talk in an under tone, and his voice did not die away until we had turned a point. Oh, what would I not give for an accurate record of that old man's life! Anon, we witnessed the soothing picture of a well conducted farm, with its greengirt cottage, spacious barns, neat and flowing fields, and abundance of horses and oxen, cows, sheep, hogs, and poultry. Now we saw some noble men, such as Vernet delighted to paint, hauling the seine, and, as the "fruit of all their toil" were thrown upon the sand, their flipping forms reflected back the sunlight, reminding us of the short-lived glory of an earth-born name. Now, we were overtaken and tossed about by a steamer bound to New Haven; and then we sailed in company with a boat, a sloop, and schooner; meeting others, beating up, from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. And the

termination of this pleasing panorama was composed of Gale's Ferry, the commanding town, fort, and monument of Groton, together with the city of New London, among whose anchored shipping floated the saucy Revenue Cutter, and at whose docks were chained a goodly number of storm-beaten whalers.

Having taken in "our stores," and obtained from the fish-market a basket of bait, we again hoisted sail and put to sea, "bound first to Commit Rock," and "binding" ourselves to capture all of the watery enemy which might tempt the power or the dexterity of our arms. 216

When about three miles from New London, all eyes were attracted by a beautiful craft on our lee, laden with a party of ladies and gentlemen. "They're going toward a reef!" exclaimed our captain; and no sooner had the words escaped his lips, than the stranger struck, and stove a hole through her bottom. We were just in time to save the party from a watery grave; and when we had landed them in safety on the beach, we were well repaid for our trouble by the consciousness of having done a good act, and by the thankful words and benignant smiles of the ladies fair. A dozen minutes more and we were within oar's length of the fishing rock. "All ashore, that's coming!" shouted our mate, when we all leaped out, and a plenty of line being given her, the boat swung to, and "like a cradled thing at rest," floated upon the waves. Then commenced the sport. The breeze was refreshing, and the breath of the salt sea-foam 217 buoyed up our spirits to a higher pitch, and gave new vigor to our sinews. The youngest of the party was the first who threw his hook, which was snapped in the twinkling of an eye. Another trial, and a four-pound blackfish lay extended upon the rock. Another, and another, and another, until fourscore, even-

numbered, came following after. Tired of the sport, two of the party entered the boat, and hoisted sail for a little cruise. Half an hour had elapsed, when the steady breeze changed into a frightful gale, capsizing within hailing distance a fishing boat with two old men in it. Hanging on, as they were, to the keel of the boat (which having no ballast could not sink), their situation was extremely dangerous, as there was not a vessel within two miles. The poor men beckoned to us to help them; but as our boat was gone, we could not do so, which of course we much regretted. For one long, long hour did they thus hang, "midway betwixt life and death," exposed to the danger of being washed away by the remorseless surge, or swallowed up, as we were afterwards told, by a couple of sharks, which were kept away only by the hand of Providence. This incident tended to cool our ardor for fishing, and as we were satisfied with that day's luck, we put up our gear, during which time the boat arrived, and we embarked for the Hill. We made one short turn, however, towards the boat which had picked up the fishermen, as we were anxious to tell them why we did not come to their relief. We then tacked about, and the last words we heard from our companions were,—“Thank you—thank you—God bless you all,” and until we had passed a league beyond Fisher Island, our little vessel “carried a most beautiful bone between her teeth.”

At sunset we moored our little boat on the eastern shore of Paucatuck Bay. On ascending to the Watch Hill hotel, we found it to be a large, well-furnished house, and our host to be a fat and jolly Falstaff-ish sort of man, just suited to his station. At seven o'clock we sat down to a first-rate blackfish supper, then smoked a cigar, and while my companions resorted to the ten-pin alley, I buttoned up my pea-jacket, and sallied forth on an

“exploring expedition.” As I stood on the highest point of the peninsula facing, the south, I found that the light-house stood directly before me, on the extreme point, that a smooth beach faded away on either side, the left hand one being washed by the Atlantic, and that on the right by the waters of Fisher Island Bay, and that the dreary hills in my rear were dotted by an occasional dwelling. The breeze had died away, and the bright, full moon was in the cloudless sky. Many sails were in the offing, passing by and being passed by the Providence and Stonington steamboats bound to New York. The scenery around me, and the loveliness of the day, with its galaxy of stars above me, caused me to forget myself, and I wandered far away upon the shore—alone, in the awful presence of the great Atlantic Ocean. No sounds fell upon my ear, save the muffled roar of the ground swell, and the faint whispers of the tiny waves as they melted upon the sand. I traced my name, and beside it that of another, a being beauteous, for whose cabinet of curiosities I gathered many a round, smooth pebble, and many a delicate sea-shell. I wandered on, now gazing with wonder and admiration into the cerulean vault of Heaven, or into the still deeper blue of the mighty sea; and now singing with a loud voice one of the sacred songs of the sweet singer of Israel. Now, a thousand images of surpassing loveliness darted across my vision, as I thought of God—of an eternal life in heaven—and of love, divine and human; and then there came a weight upon my spirit, as I remembered the powers of darkness, the destiny of the condemned, and the miseries engendered by our evil passions. One moment I deemed myself immortal, released forever from the contaminating influence of sin, and then I thought of the valley of death, and trembled. In that communion with the mysteries of the universe, strongly blended as they were, I felt that I could wander on without

fatigue, until the whole earth should be trodden by my pilgrim feet. But the chilly air and the fading night warned me to retrace my steps, and in an hour I had reached my home.

When the sun rose from his ocean-bed on the following morning, surrounded by a magnificent array of clouds, I was up, and busily engaged preparing for a day's fishing,—first, and before breakfast, for bluefish, then for blackfish, and then for bass. While my companions were asleep, I went out with an old fisherman, and by breakfast time had captured thirty 221 bluefish, weighing about two pounds apiece. The manner of catching these is to tow for them with a long line, the bait being a piece of ivory attached to a strong hook. They are a very active and powerful fish, and when hooked make a great fuss, skipping and leaping out of the water.

At nine o'clock our party were at anchor on a reef about one mile off, and for the space of about two hours we hauled in the blackfish fast as possible, many of them weighing eight to ten pounds apiece. For them, you must have a small straight hook, and for bait, lobsters or crabs. A broiled blackfish, when rightly cooked, is considered one of the best of saltwater delicacies.

But the rarest of all fishing is that of catching bass, and a first-rate specimen I was permitted to enjoy. About eleven o'clock, I jumped into the surf-boat of an old fisherman, requesting him to pull for the best bass ground with which he was acquainted. In the mean time my friends had obtained a large boat, and were going to follow us. The spot having been reached, we let our boat float, wherever the tide and wind impelled it, and began to throw over lines, using for bait the skin of an eel six 222 inches long. Those in the neighboring boat had fine luck,

as they thought, having caught some dozen five-pounders, and they seemed to be perfectly transported because nearly an hour had passed and I had caught nothing. In their glee they raised a tremendous shout, but before it had fairly died away, my line was suddenly straightened, and I knew that I had a prize. Now it cut the water like a streak of lightning, although there were two hundred feet out, and as the fish returned I still kept it taught; and after playing with him for about forty minutes, I succeeded in drowning him, then hauled up gradually, and with my boat-hook landed him in the boat safe and sound. The length of that striped bass was four feet two inches, and his weight, before cleaned, fifty-eight pounds. That is a “fish story” worth telling. As a beneficial effect and natural consequence of that triumph, I would state, that I have grown about one inch in height since then,—more or less,—as the saying is,—but probably less. You can easily imagine the chop-fallen appearance of my brother fishermen, when they found out that “the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.” At three o’clock in the afternoon, a piece of that bass tended to satisfy the appetite which had been excited by his capture, and I assure you it touched the *right* spot.

Satisfied with our piscatorial sports, we concluded to spend the rest of the day quietly gathering shells upon the beach; but causes of excitement were still around us. No sooner had we reached the water’s edge, than we discovered a group of hardy men standing on a little knoll, in earnest conversation, while some of them were pointing towards the sea. “To the boat—to the boat,” suddenly shouted their leader, when they all descended with the speed of Swiss mountaineers, and on reaching a boat which had been made ready, they pushed her into the surf, and three of them jumped in, and thus commenced

the interesting scene of hauling the seine. There was something new and romantic to us in the thought, that the keen and intelligent eye of man could even penetrate into the deep, so far as to designate the course of travel of the tribes of the sea. And when the seine was drawn, it was a glorious and thrilling sight to see those fishermen tugging at the lines, or leap into the surf, which sometimes completely covered them, to secure the tens of thousands of fish which they had caught. There was a grace and beauty about the whole scene, which made me long for the genius of a Mount or Edmonds.

224

A little before sunset, I was again strolling along the shore, when the following incident occurred. You will please return with me to the spot. Yonder on that fisherman's stake, a little sparrow has just alighted, facing the main. It has been lured away from the green bowers of home by the music of the sea, and is now gazing, perhaps with feelings kindred to my own, upon this most magnificent structure of the Almighty hand. See! it spreads its wing, and is now darting towards the water—fearless and free. Ah! it has gone too near! for the spray moistens its plumes! There—there it goes, frightened back to its native woodland. That little bird, so far as its power and importance are concerned, seems to me a fit emblem of the mind of man, and this great ocean an appropriate symbol of the mind of God.

The achievements of the human mind “have their passing paragraphs of praise, and are forgotten.” Man may point to the Pyramids of Egypt, which are the admiration of the world, and exclaim, “Behold the symbol of my power and importance!” But most impotent is the boast. Those mighty mysteries stand in the solitude of the desert, and the glory of

225

their destiny is fulfilled, in casting a temporary shadow over the tent of the wandering Arab.

The achievements of the Almighty mind are beyond the comprehension of man, and lasting as his own eternity. The spacious firmament, with its suns, and moons, and stars; our globe, with its oceans, and mountains, and rivers; the regularly revolving seasons; and the still, small voice continually ascending from universal nature, all proclaim the power and goodness of their great original. And everything which God has created, from the nameless insect to the world of waters, which is the highway of nations, was created for good, was created to accomplish some omnipotent end. As this ocean is measureless and fathomless, so is it an emblem, beautiful but faint, of that wonderful Being, whose throne is above the milky-way, and who is himself from everlasting to everlasting. But see, there is a heavy cloud rising in the west, the breeze is freshening, 226 flocks of wild ducks are flying inland, and the upper air is ringing with the shrill whistle of the bold and wild sea-gull, whose home is the boundless sea; therefore, as my dear friend Noble has somewhere written, “the shortest homeward track’s the best.”

Still in the present tense would I continue. The witching hour of midnight has again returned. A cold rain-storm has just passed over, the moon is again the mistress of a cloudless sky, but the wind is still raging in all its fury.

“I view the ships that come and go,
Looking so like to living things.
O! ’tis a proud and gallant show
Of bright and broad-spread wings,

Making it light around them, as they keep
Their course right onward through the unsounded deep.”

Dana.

God be with them and their brave and gallant crews. But, again.

“Where the far-off sand-bars lift
Their backs in long and narrow line,
The breakers shout, and leap, and shift,
And send the sparkling brine
Into the air; then rush to mimic strife;
Glad creatures of the sea, and full of life!”

Ibid.

But I must stop quoting poetry, for as “a thing of beauty is a joy forever,” I should be forever writing about the sea.

Heavens! What a terrible song is the ocean singing! with
his long white hair streaming in the wind. The waving,
splashing, wailing, dashing, howling, rushing, and moaning of
the waves, is a glorious lullaby, and a fit prelude to a dream of
the sea.

227

At an early hour on the following day we embarked for home, but a sorry time did we have of it, for the winds were very lazy. We were ten hours going the distance of twenty-two miles. It was now sunset, we were off Gale’s Ferry, and not a solitary breath of air. Ashore we went, resolved to await the coming of the Sag Harbor steamboat, which usually arrived about nine o’clock, and by which we were taken in tow. Snugly seated in our boat, and going at the rate of eighteen miles, we were congratulating ourselves upon an early arrival home, and had already begun to divide and string up our fish. But, alas, at this

moment the painter broke, the steamer, unconscious of our fate, still sped onward, while we sheered off towards the shore, *almost disgusted* with human life in general—for our boat was large, and we had but one oar. But what matter? We were a jolly set, and the way we gave three cheers, as a prelude to the song of “Begone Dull Care,” must have been startling to the thousand sleeping echoes of hill, forest, river, and glen. 228

Having crept along at snails pace about one mile, we concluded to land, and, if possible, obtain a place to sleep, and something to eat; for not having had a regular dinner, and not a mouthful of supper, we were half starved. With clubs in our hands, to keep off hobgoblins and bull dogs, we wended our way towards a neighboring farm-house, where we knocked for admittance. Pretty soon a great gawky-looking head stuck itself out of an upper window, to which we made known our heartfelt desires, receiving in return the following answer: “My wife is sick—hain’t got any bread—you can go in the barn to sleep if you want to;” and we turned reluctantly away, troubled with a feeling very nearly allied to anger. “Come, let’s go off in this direction,” exclaimed one of the party, “and I’ll introduce you to my old friend, Captain Somebody,”—and away we posted, two by two, across a new-mown field. Presently our two leaders were awe-stricken by the sudden appearance of something white, which seemed to be rising out of the earth beside a cluster of bushes, and the way they wheeled about and put for the river, (accompanied by their fellows, whose fright was merely sympathetic,) was “a caution” to all unbelievers in ghosts and other midnight spectres. 229

At last we halted to gain a little breath, an explanation was made, and our captain forthwith resolved to *investigate* the

matter. He now took the lead, and on coming to the mysterious spot, discovered an *old blind white horse*; who had been awakened by a noise, and, following the instinct of his nature, had risen from his lair, to be better prepared for danger. I doubt whether the echoes are yet silent, which were caused by the loud and long peals of laughter which resounded to the sky. Being in a strange land, without chart or compass, we could not find the mortal dwelling place of Captain Somebody, and so we changed our course of travel.

We stopt at another house, farther on, but to save our lives we could not obtain an interview, although we entered the hen-coop, and set the hens and roosters a cackling and crowing, the pig-pen, and set the hogs a squealing, while a large dog and two puppies did their best to increase and prolong the mighty chorus. If our farmer friend did not deem himself transported to Bedlam, about that time, we imagine that nothing on earth would have the power to give him such a dream. Our ill-luck made us almost desperate, and so we returned to the boat, resolved to row the whole distance home, could we but find an extra oar.

230

It was now eleven o'clock, and the only things that seemed to smile upon us were the ten thousand stars, studding the clear, blue firmament. Anon, a twinkling light beamed upon our vision; and as we approached, we found it to proceed from a little hut on an island, where the Thames lamplighter and his boy were accustomed to pass the night after their work was done. Having again concluded to land, we received a hearty welcome, as the host proved to be an old acquaintance of our captain and mate. "Have you anything to eat?" was almost the first question of every tongue. "No, nothing but this barrel of crackers and some

cheese,” exclaimed the man of light. “And we,” shouted one of our crew, “have plenty of fish,—can’t we have a chowder?” “Aye, aye; a chowder, a chowder it shall be,” were the words which rang aloud to the very heavens. A wherry was despatched to the main-land, to the well known habitation of an old fisherman, for the necessary iron pot and bowls; for the potatoes and onions, which were dug for the occasion; for the pork, the pepper, and salt; all which, added to our biscuit and black-fish, nicely cleaned and prepared, constituted a chowder of the very first water. There was one addition to our company, in the person of the old fisherman; and our appearance, as we were seated in a circle on the floor, each with a bowl of thick hot soup in his hands, constituted a picture rich and rare. After we were done, it was acknowledged by all, that a better meal had never been enjoyed by mortal man. In about thirty minutes from this time the odd one of the company bade us “good night,” and the midnight brotherhood resigned themselves to sleep. The last sounds I heard, before closing my eyes, were caused by the regular opposition steamboats from New York, as they shot ahead almost as “swift as an arrow from a shivering bow.”

231

The first faint streak of daylight found us on board our boat, homeward bound, wafted on by a pleasant southerly breeze. At the usual hour, we were all seated at our respective breakfast tables, relating our adventures of the excursion just ended.

232

233

OUR NEW YORK PAINTERS.

Sometime ago, when I indited a letter on the paintings of Cole, I partly intended it to be the first of a series, which should include all those of our painters who have established themselves as masters. Since then, however, I have relinquished that idea. I am not *sufficiently* well acquainted with all these gentlemen, and the number of their productions, to devote a separate paper to each, and have, therefore, concluded briefly to embody my opinions concerning them in a single letter. I propose to speak of those only who are identified with New York, and who are now in the full tide of successful operation; and my object will be merely to write what would correspond to a letter of introduction. In my list, made without respect to persons, are the following names; Durand, Huntington, Edmonds, Page, Mount, Doughty, Wier, Inman, Ingham, Chapman, and Harvey.

Durand. If you are at all conversant with the history of art in this country, you need not be told that this gentleman has long borne the enviable reputation of being our best engraver of the human figure. It is also a well-known fact, that he has executed some remarkable pictures in the way of portraiture and fanciful history; but as he is now devoting himself principally to landscape, I shall consider his merits in this department alone.

234

His only imaginative landscapes, are a pair, allegorically portraying the “Morning and Evening” of human life. In one, the monuments of art and the works of nature are in their prime, and a halo of hope seems to surround the brow of every living creature, young men and maidens, and dancing children. In the

other, the same monuments and the same nature are falling to decay, and most of earth's children are trembling under the weary load of life. And here, on a fallen column, is seated an old man leaning upon his staff, and listening, as it were, to a song of memory, as it recalls the unnumbered joys of other days. A saddening subject, in reality, is here portrayed, but how has the genius of the painter endowed it with a spirit of immortality! To the thoughtful mind, it possesses a world of eloquence, and touches the heart with the thrill of poetry.

235

Considered as a maiden effort in the most exalted branch of landscape painting, it affords abundant reason to believe that Mr. Durand would accomplish great things in this department, if he would but persevere. The only fault I can find with it, is this—in the idea of its design, and in some parts of its execution, it bears too close a resemblance to the *Departure and Return*, or the *Past and Present*, of Thomas Cole.

The majority of Mr. Durand's landscapes I should designate as actual views and fanciful pictures; and here, I think, he is without a superior. In the choice of subjects, he always displays an exquisite taste; and as he paints with great care, and finishes highly, there is an indescribable summer-day charm about his pictures which is peculiarly their own. The three most difficult things in nature for an artist to delineate, are trees, atmospheres, and figures; but all these have been thoroughly mastered by Mr. Durand. His trees are strongly characteristic, and his figures numerous, happily introduced, and accurately drawn. Of his views, I mostly admire "Lake Geneva," "Shakspeare's Church," two "Views in Switzerland," "Island of Capri," "Deserted Road-side," "Farm Yard on the Hudson," "Oak Tree with horses under it," and a "View on the Rhine." Each one of these is a perfect gem, a beautiful and poetical reproduction of

236

the original scene. But the most unique and superb of all his paintings, is a fanciful picture of a large size, exhibiting an extensive lake in a wilderness. The sun is on the verge of the horizon, the sky is studded with an array of most gorgeous clouds, and the surface of the lake is quivering under the pinions of an evening breeze. In one corner of the foreground is a cluster of luxuriant trees, encircled with grape-vines, and in the other, an admirable rock, on which is standing a solitary heron, the only living creature in the whole scene. The great triumph of this picture is in the water—the gold-tipt waves.

The last time I saw Mr. Durand, he was finishing some studies of chestnut trees in blossom, which stand on the margin of Esopus Creek. They are wonderfully true to nature, and will enhance his reputation, even if he should not paint anything more during the coming summer. But I hope that he may not only live to do this, but to paint a dozen summers more, and a dozen pictures in each summer; for he is a great artist, and an honor to his native country.

237

Huntington. Although this gentleman is under thirty years of age, he has produced many admirable pictures, which place him on a level with the most gifted artists of any country. He commenced his career by painting landscapes, many of which were wood-scenes and waterfalls on the Rondout. They are remarkable for their rich coloring, and dashing style of execution. But it is as a portrait and historical painter that he is most celebrated. In both these departments his power is wonderful. Eight years ago he was a pupil of Mr. Morse, but now is an acknowledged master, and the pride of his profession. He uses the most glowing colors, and yet there is a perfect harmony in all he paints; he handles the pencil in a fine off-hand

style, and yet his flesh possesses the softness of the reality; he can take the most ordinary head, and by his arrangement and his faculty of exalting his subject, make an interesting picture, while at the same time it will be a speaking likeness. Of his portraits, the most superb are those of his father, an uncle and aunt,

238

“The Venetian Girl,” the “Roman Girl,” and “Shepherd Boy of the Campagna.” The last of these, which we think is equal to Murillo’s “Beggar Boy,” was painted in the incredible short period of four hours. If this fact and this picture do not prove Huntington to be a wonderful genius, we do not know what could do so. But even all the pictures just mentioned are eclipsed by his two historical ones, taken from the Pilgrim’s Progress, viz.: “Mercy’s Dream,” and “Christiana and Family passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.” In the first, Mercy is in a reclining position, resting on one arm, with her face raised heavenward, while the angel hovering above her is on the point of placing the crown upon her head. In her position there may be something a little unnatural, and the expression of the angel may be somewhat too earthly; but where, in the whole range of art, is there anything more beautifully designed, more accurately drawn, or more richly colored? In the other picture, Christiana and her family are represented on a rock overlooking a valley of flame. At first we are startled by a feeling of terror, but when the eye falls upon the principal figure, her

239

upraised countenance beaming with holy confidence and hope, the first impulse vanishes, and the heart throbs with peaceful joy. The soul depicted in that countenance, its conception and execution, is a triumph of art which we believe can never be surpassed. But the interest does not stop here. What a world of poetry has the painter portrayed in the eldest son attempting to shield the loved ones from the impending danger, and in the youngest child cleaving to its mother for

protection! All, in fact, look to Christiana for safety, while she, with the meekness of childhood, looks calmly up to the Almighty. I should rather be the author of that painting than of any others of superior merit. Oh, it is a blessed thing to see genius consecrating its powers to the promotion of His glory, from whom all genius flows! Huntington possesses both great and good qualities, and we trust that his sojourn in Europe will not be prolonged beyond an extensive tour.

Edmonds. This gentleman, who occupies the responsible station of cashier in a bank, is considered one of the ablest financiers in New York, while, at the same time, he enjoys a remarkable reputation as an artist. His paintings are comparatively few, owing to his peculiar situation, and to the correct notion which he entertains, that a work of art should not be exhibited to the public until its author has done his best to make it perfect. His style of coloring is warm and glowing, and his drawing exceedingly accurate. As a designer, he is more particular than our artists generally; and very few, I think, understand the principles of composition so well. He is a man of quite extensive reading, and of expansive mind, and his pictures are an index to the humor which it contains. They are of a comical character, and never fail to tell their story at a single glance. They are always intended to make you laugh, and are, therefore, agreeable helpers on to a long life; and sometimes possess an undercurrent of poetry or philosophy, which makes them voiceless preachers to the thinking man. His best pictures are the "Newspaper Boy," "The Country and City Beaux," "Sparkling," "The Bashful Cousin," "Italian Mendicants," "The Epicure," and "Stealing Milk." The first represents a large room thronged with men, women, and children, into the midst of whom a ragged boy has entered to sell his Sunday morning

papers. In the second we have a charming country lady and her accepted lover, suddenly surprised by the appearance of a city dandy; and while the latter is nettled by the appearance of things, the former, who is rocking himself in an arm-chair, very coolly puffs the smoke of his cigar into the face of his disappointed rival. In the next, a country damsel is peeling apples before a large blazing fire, while a hearty fellow is talking to her, "solemnly and slow," about his heart and other kindred matters. In the next, a bashful young fellow is taking leave of his friends, who urge him to sit down to tea, which is now ready. The next is a blind old man, led by a little girl, asking alms in the streets of Rome. In the Epicure, we have a butcher displaying his nice things to an old gentleman, almost eaten up in health by rich living. In the last, we have a school-boy in his mother's pantry, swallowing large quantities of rich cream, who is discovered by his "anxious Ma" in the very act. All things considered, I think Mr. Edmonds one of the most remarkable men of the age, and hope that he may live to make many more additions to the genius-stamped treasures of American art.

241

Page. Here we come to another honored artist, but one who has been greatly over-rated; not a man of genius, but one of rare, of extraordinary talent. As a mere portrait painter or map-taker, he is without a rival, I believe, in any country. The man who sits to him for a likeness, must expect to have every hair on his face delineated to perfection, but must not expect to have himself exalted or intellectualized. This is a thing which Page has never done, and can never do, and consequently he will never excel as an historical painter. I am warranted in making this assertion by looking at his past efforts in this department? What admirable execution has he squandered on his

242

picture of "The Whistle," his "Prison Scene," and lately in his "Ecce Homo." In coloring and drawing, these pictures cannot be surpassed; but how very inferior are they in conception, and especially the last! Surely, the Saviour of the world could never have borne so *physical* a countenance as Page has here conceived! It is understood, that he is engaged on a large picture, to be called "Jephtha's Daughter." I sincerely *hope* that he may triumph there, but I cannot but doubt. Parts of it I know will be astonishingly fine, but, as a whole, it will be a failure. I have been thus free in my remarks concerning this artist, because he is lauded as a great *genius*, which I am not willing to acknowledge, although I admire him as a portrait painter. His style of coloring is not easily described, for it varies with every one of his subjects, now pale as death or red as a cherry, and now blue as sapphire or green as an emerald. If I desired my children to behold their very Pa long after he is in the grave, I would rather have Page paint me than any other man. His greatest portraits are those of Mrs. Ridner, a single head and with a child, of Lowell the poet, of Mr. Leup, and of himself.

243

Mount. Three cheers for the laughter-loving and incomparable genius of Stony Brook, whom I know to be a first-rate fisherman, and a most pathetic player on the violin. Here is a man who stands alone in the art of painting, for, in everything he does, he is entirely original. His productions are stamped with an entirely American character, and so comically conceived, that they always cause the beholder to smile, whatever may be his troubles. His coloring is what we call cold, but remarkable for its fidelity; and his power and knowledge of drawing are superior to those of any other man in the country. Unlike Mr. Edmonds, he pays but little attention to designing by

244

rule, but in expression, he always lays himself out, and I know not that he has ever failed, in a single instance, to delineate the character he aimed at. He is peculiar in the habit of tasking his own mind for his subjects, so that you never see him illustrating the pages of any writer, historian, poet or wit. And this is a feature I greatly admire. The man who cannot conceive and execute a picture on his own hook entirely, is nothing but a copyist, whatever may be his knowledge of the art. Thinking and strictly original painters, are the only ones that exert a lasting and salutary influence on the pictorial genius of their country, and Mr. Mount, I am glad to know, is emphatically one of these. But let me glance at those pictures which I believe warrant the foregoing opinions. Their general character may be imagined by their titles, which are as follows: "Cider Making," "The Raffle," "Tough Yarn," "Fortune Telling," "Bargaining for a Horse," "Gamesters Surprised," "Winding Up," "Ringing a Hog," "Artist showing his Work," "The last Clam," "Hoeing Corn," "Husking Corn," "Rustic Dance," and "Rabbit Catching." In the first, we have a Long Island cider mill, with all the laughable appurtenances thereof. In the next, a company of loafers in a country bar-room are raffling for a goose, illustrating the proverb, that "birds of a feather flock together." The next picture, a lame old "covey" telling a story to two impatient gentlemen, which has been illustrated by an admirable story from the pen of Seba Smith, Esq. In the next, a couple of farmers, in a barn-yard, are discussing the merits of a "slick looking" horse hitched to a fence, one of them rolling a stone with his foot, and the other whittling a stick. In the next, we have some truant boys, who have stolen into a barn to play "heads or tails," who are discovered by the farmer; and while he approaches cautiously, with a long stick in his hand and vengeance in his eye, one of the boys is frightened by the

approaching step, but another is so absorbed in the game, that a nameless portion of his body is about to sting under the chastising stroke. The next exhibits a gentleman lover holding a skein of yarn for a buxom country damsel. The next, is a *painted* “concord of *sharp* sounds.” In the next, an artist is showing a country farmer a picture, which causes him great delight. The next, portrays the garret of a disappointed bachelor, seated before a fireless fireplace, and mourning over the departure of a few clams, the shells of which are on the hearth at his feet. The four remaining pictures are described in their titles. The man who could paint such a variety of subjects, ought assuredly to be a good portrait painter; and Mr. Mount is such. His portraits are only occasionally executed, and for particular friends, and the former only when the spirit moves him, for he is a creature of impulse. And besides, his health has ever been of a delicate nature, which will not suffer him to “bone” down to labor. This fact, I presume, will be a satisfactory answer to those who are continually inquiring, “Why don’t Mount paint more?” The pictures he has produced, admirable and numerous as they are, are but as the bud to the fruit, when we consider his great capacity. I hope that it may be his fortune to enjoy a long and happy life, and that he may make many more additions to American art.

246

Doughty. This gentleman has long been a favorite landscape painter with the public, and has executed many exceedingly beautiful pictures, principally of a fanciful character. In number they are too great, which is his misfortune and not his fault. He has been obliged to paint at a cheap price, or the public would have let him starve to death, as they would any other artist, or a man of refined and exalted taste. And having painted so much, it is not to be wondered at that many of

247

his productions should have been too hastily done, and that there should be a sameness in his subjects. Finishing, as he generally does, with great care, it always gratifies the eye to behold his pictures; but it is obvious that he has never painted much from nature, for there is a monotony in his touch, which cannot escape the criticism of the attentive student of foliage. There are some, however, and very important features too, in landscape painting, which are completely mastered by Mr. Doughty, and in which he is without a rival, either in Cole, Durand, or Huntington. His skies and water are the most true and beautiful that we have ever seen. A carefully painted waterfall by Doughty, is a picture of rare excellence and great value. His atmospheres, too, are sometimes most exquisitely conceived and executed.

248

Good figures are the principal things wanting in his paintings to make some of them nearly perfect, and his inability to paint them is undoubtedly another reason for the sameness of his subjects. When a man paints without a story or a moral in view, it is difficult to designate his pictures; but our favorites among those of Mr. Doughty, are a large “upright” with waterfall, an autumn scene, owned in Boston, another sold to the Apollo Association, and a scene on Lake George.

Wier. This gentleman is the accomplished teacher of drawing at the Academy of West Point. The majority of his productions, which are numerous, give evidence of his possessing extensive literary acquirements, a refined mind, and brilliant imagination. He is the author of a number of pleasing landscapes, the best of which, “Constable Bourbon’s March to Rome,” has been illustrated by the pen of Gulian C. Verplanck. The amusing pictures, called the “Boat Club,” and “St. Nicholas,” have proven, that if he would attempt it, he might excel in that department of the art occupied by Mount and Edmonds.

249

But it is as an historical painter, that his name will live, and is now mostly celebrated. His drawing is remarkably correct, his coloring rich, and his style of execution highly finished. Another qualification belonging to his works, and one which makes us love the man, is, that they are purely American. Who that has seen it, can ever forget his full-length portrait of "Red Jacket," the warrior and orator of the Senecas? Aside from the noble subject, it is unquestionably the most faithful and competent delineation of Indian character to be found; and who that has ever seen the "Indian Captives," by the same hand, has not mourned over the fate of the much wronged Aborigines of our land, even as "brave men mourn the brave?" In this painting, we have an Indian and his squaw, in prison, and an English soldier warning them of their impending fate. Although it is an intensely interesting scene, yet the painter has not availed himself of a single "face divine," which I fancy to be a beautifully poetic idea, and could not be carried out but by a man of genius. Mr. Wier is one of the four artists appointed by the General Government to execute four paintings for the Rotunda at Washington. The subject of his, is the "Departure of the Pilgrims from Leyden;" but as I have not yet seen it, I am unable to express an opinion as to its merits.

250

Inman. The reputation of this gentleman as a portrait painter is very extensive, and he has ever commanded a higher price than any other in New York. His productions are very numerous, and there is not a single branch of the art in which he has not made some successful attempts. His coloring is rich and life-like, his style of execution exceedingly bold and free. Painting as he does with great rapidity, we find that his drawing is seldom as correct as it should be. He manifests a refined and exalted taste in the arrangements of his portraits, and generally in his

miscellaneous designs. But, after all, he has painted some poor pictures, and this is an evidence of the fact, that he is a man of uncommon genius, and not talent. There is a wonderful spirit in his heads, and unlike his rival, Page, he portrays the mind, which, after all, is a greater triumph of art, and far more important in a portrait, than the mere shell of humanity, as delineated by Page. His full-length portrait of Macready, as William Tell, is a masterly performance, well conceived, well colored, and well drawn; and among his miscellaneous pictures, the most remarkable, are—"Rip Van Winkle," "Bride of Lammermoor," "Mumble the Peg," and "News-Boy;" all of them possessing many peculiar beauties, with some glaring faults. Of his plain portraits, I would mention only two as good specimens of his skill in general, namely, those of Nicholas Biddle and Bishop White. I do not deem it within the power of any man to go beyond these in portraying the body of man and the soul within. Mr. Inman is also one of those artists honored by a commission from the Government for a 10,000 dollar painting. I understand that he is very far behind-hand in his great undertaking. I know, however, that he has met with some sad misfortune, which may be the cause; but I trust that he will soon be at work, and may accomplish a national work worthy of his ability and his fame.

251

Ingham. This gentleman is one of the most celebrated and unique of all our portrait painters. His style is emphatically his own, and may be designated as that of exquisite finishing. You can never discern the traces of his pencil, and the reason is, he produces his effect by successive glazing. His pictures are distinguished for their transparency, richness of color, and harmony; and being a man of sentiment and delicate feeling, he is the universal favorite among the ladies, and

252

probably the most faultless painter in this country of those charming but incomprehensible creations of Heaven. His best productions are the portraits of "Miss McNevin," "Mr. Dunlap," "Dr. Channing," and the "White Plume;" and as genuine works of art, are inferior to nothing in the whole range of that department. That of Dr. Channing, is one of the best specimens of soul painting that I have ever seen, and any one familiar only with the writings of the great original, could not fail to select this portrait as his, from the midst of a hundred of other men, so full is it of expression, and so perfect and exalted is the effect of the painter. Ingham is a man of genius as well as talent, a friend to young artists, and an honor to American art.

Chapman. All hail to this poetical and ready artist, and accomplished gentleman, who has executed first-rate pictures in almost every department of painting! His coloring is rather gaudy and paint-like, but his drawing, when he takes pains, is correct and vigorous. His knowledge of design is profound, and his conception of a picture is quick, and always in admirable taste. He has been a devoted student of the old masters, and copied more celebrated paintings than any other American. Having been an extensive traveller throughout the United States, and ever being on the lookout for valuable subjects to paint, and a lover of historical lore, he has collected a large quantity of valuable materials, the whole of which I hope he may live to embody in national paintings. It was he who received the commission from Government to paint the third picture (Vanderlyn is at work on the fourth) for the Rotunda at Washington, and he has manfully fulfilled his obligation in the execution of the "Baptism of Pocahontas." Some of his other prominent pictures, are "Hagar and Ishmael fainting in the wilderness," full length portrait of "David Crocket," "Beppo,"

“The First Ship,” a large historical landscape representing “The Retreat from Fort Necessity,” and a full length of “Washington in his youth.” These, however, are but a small portion of what he has done, for he is one of the most industrious men living. He is also a complete master of sketching, and as he has a historical mind, his efforts of this kind are very beautiful and very numerous. He is without a rival in this lucrative branch of art, and for the past two years has mostly been devoted to it, and is consequently a favorite among booksellers. He is a lover of the “poor Indian,” and has done much toward perpetuating their personal and national characteristics. Among the many things which now occupy his time, is an American Drawing Book, which is what we very much need in this country, and his I know will be a superb and valuable one in every point of view.

254

Harvey. This gentleman is a landscape painter of rare merit; but many of his pictures, unfortunately for us, are owned in England. His principal work, and one which places him in a very high rank, is Forty Atmospheric Views in the United States, executed in watercolors, and in a style of uncommon beauty. He is a good draftsman, and possesses a remarkable eye for color, and everything from his pencil teems with sentiment and poetry. His contemplated work of “American Scenery,” when published after his own expensive plan, will be an invaluable acquisition to our treasury of art, and I hope that it may be received by the public with the favor it so richly deserves.

255

Such is the array of painters, of which the emporium of America may well be proud. Fame must ever attend their names, as surely as it is attending those of West, Copley, Stuart, Allston,

Jarvis, Trumbull, and Malbone, among the dead; and Sully, King, Harding, Fisher, Neagle, Morse, Vanderlyn, and Audubon, among the living of other cities;—altogether making a company which would reflect honor on any nation in the world.

A SONG OF MEMORY.

The din of the great world is hushed, and the vexatious cares, which have occupied my mind during the day, are all dispelled; and again, for a little while, I am left alone. The evening lamps are not yet lighted, but the fire in the grate burns brightly, so that the shadows on the wall are distinct and clear, but continually changing, even as my own wayward thoughts. Wayward they are at all times, I confess, but most strangely so when my spirit forgets the present, and the hereafter, and holds communion with the realities of by-gone years. Time has not yet set his signet on my brow, for it was but yesterday that my timid footsteps crossed the threshold of manhood; so that the years gone by, with me, are comprised in the budding and the blossoming seasons of childhood and youth. But with these, what a world of joys and griefs, of smiles and tears, are entwined, which the fond memory strangely delights to recall. I know not how it is with others, but to me the voice of memory is sometimes plaintive as the evening breeze, when sporting with the flowers in the garden of the dead. I am even now listening to that voice; and the burden of its song, I shall trace upon this page.

257

It were not wise to “look mournfully into the past,” for we know that “it comes not back again.” But it were well to ponder, deeply ponder, the history of our past lives, and analyze the motives which have ever influenced our conduct. How little can we remember, which will be of service to us, when we are called to die. But how many things there are, the remembrance of which inclines us to shed penitent tears, and heave the sigh of regret. Ours is a frail and sinful nature; not a day passes away,

that does not take with it the record of many sins, which we have committed in word, thought, and deed.

How many unkind words have we spoken to our parents, who have chided us for unworthy conduct; to a sister or brother, who have thwarted us—unconsciously, perhaps, or for our own good, in our thoughtless and head-strong desires; to some squalid beggar, whose misfortune it was to solicit our aid, when we were perplexed with the cares of business, or absorbed with some dream of opulence and renown; to a party of innocent children, who have chanced to disturb our moroseness by a natural and heartfelt shout of happiness and a laugh of joy; and even to our Maker, in the form of an oath, when we have been disappointed in some of our ambitious designs. Lightly spoken, it may be, were many of these words, but they are not lightly considered by our Creator, as we shall know at the judgment day.

258

How many selfish thoughts have we cherished in our bosoms, which we knew were desperately wicked, and which we would have blushed to proclaim; thought of hate and revenge, of hypocrisy and pride, of envy and sensuality. Do not the nature of these, and their great number, make us ashamed to own ourselves the lords of the brute creation, creatures made in the image of God?

How many wicked and debasing deeds have we committed which we would fain recall, or annihilate, but for which we must at last render a reasonably excuse, or suffer, unless the recording angel in heaven should drop a tear upon the page, where they are written down, and blot them out forever. In a fit of anger we may have rudely struck a friend or brother; we

259

have flattered the unsuspecting only to deceive and make them wretched; we have trifled with the misfortunes of the poverty stricken, the deformed, and the ignorant; in a thousand ways we have broken the commandments of our Lord and Saviour, and instead of God, we have worshipped Baal; we have not loved our Bible, the holy sanctuary, and the duty of prayer; we have misimproved our time, neglected many opportunities for doing good, and instead of giving a portion of our money to the poor heathen, who are perishing for the want of the bread of life all over the world, we have spent it all in administering to our own sensual gratifications.

Yes, it is too true, and the recollection of it should make us humble ourselves in the dust, that the words, thoughts, and deeds of our past lives, which we have reason deeply to regret, are more in number than the sands upon the sea-shore. But because they cannot be numbered, we must not omit to remember and meditate upon them. We should use them as a medicine, not in too great abundance, lest they make us sick, and not too sparingly, lest they produce not their desired effect.

260

Unenviable indeed is the condition of that man, who can dwell upon his moral character for a series of years, or even for a single week, and not find much to mourn over and regret. Sin and sorrow are our inheritance, and it is natural, therefore, and good for us, to have our cheeks occasionally moistened by regretful tears. Sometimes, too, there is a luxury in tears, which the breaking heart alone can know; and that proud man who is ashamed to weep, deserves to have pointed at him the finger of scorn.

At the mention of that word regret, memory calls up a long array

of beings whom I once loved most tenderly, but who are gone away to a country whence they can never return. Some had just pushed their little bark upon the stream of time, which flowed onward with a murmur “soft, gentle, and low,” and whose banks were covered with flowers. Some were in the strength and buoyancy of youth; others in the full vigor of manhood; and a few were tottering along, “wrinkled and bent, and white with hoary hairs.” I knew them, I loved them, and they died. I regret that they are gone, because they were the friends and counsellors of my early days. Deeply, indeed, do I mourn their absence, but I would not, even if I could, call them back again, for they have been transformed, as I trust, into the glorious image of their Creator, and his bosom is their home. In my hours of loneliness I am always strengthened by the hope, that when I too shall have passed the troubled waves of Jordan, I shall meet them again, and remain with them forever. O! yes, it is a nameless feeling of regret that oppresses me when I think, that upon the earth never more shall I listen to their voices, who once charmed my ear, and look upon their smiles, who once gladdened my heart. But often in my dreams do I behold them in their angelic robes, hovering in the ethereal atmosphere of heaven, and they are always beckoning to me, and pointing to a great white throne, whose foundations are everlasting. They are calling me away, but I cannot go, for my earthly pilgrimage is not yet ended. To secure the crown of Immortality, with which they endeavor to allure me, is my chief ambition; and though a thousand regrets are the burden of the song of Memory, yet I feel and hope that I shall at last obtain it, through the mercy and love of my Redeemer.

261

262

Lo! the voice of Memory is speaking to me in another tone, mournfully pleasing to the soul. It is telling me of the morning of

life, which was cheerful as the singing of birds, and loving as the opening of spring, when not a cloud arose to mar its beauty, or obscure the bright sun of innocence and youth; when every sense was gratified, every flower was sweet, and every rose without a thorn; when every kiss was a pledge of affection, and every friend was true; and when my cheeks were blooming with health, and my eyes beaming with joy. True, the sun has not yet reached the meridian, but far different from those of the morning are the associations of the early noon. Alas! it is with regret I remember the truth, that “I am not now that which I have been.” Weary and heavy laden as I am, my course is onward, and my heart is strong.

Memory is telling me of my childhood’s home, the
dearest and most lovely spot on the face of the earth, and
I regret that I can visit it only in my dreams. It is telling me the
thrilling legends which fascinated my boyish imagination, when,
with my bow and arrows, and clad in my hunting garb, I used to
visit the Indian villages of Michigan. The better I have ever
become acquainted with the red man of the wilderness, the more
deeply have I loved him, and the more highly have I honored his
character; and I regret that I cannot now, as of yore, chase with
him the bounding deer, and paddle the light canoe. I regret that
he is an exile and a stranger in the very land which gave him
birth, and which, by the laws of nations and of God, is rightfully
his own. Memory is telling me of those matchless lakes,
Superior, Michigan, Huron, and Erie, whose every inlet almost I
have explored, and from many of whose cliffs I have watched
the most glorious of sunsets—those lakes with whose waves in
summer it was my delight to sport, and over whose icy-plains in
winter I took the lead in skating, and used to drive the swift
Canadian pacer in the swan-like carriage. Of those rivers, too,

the Detroit, the St. Clair, the St. Joseph, the Huron, and the Raisin, in whose transparent waters I have often caught the sturgeon, the pickerel, and the bass, and along whose borders I have hunted the plover and the duck. Of those glorious forests, the homes of solitude and silence, where I was wont to be so happy alone with my God. Of those prairies, “boundless and beautiful, for which the speech of England has no name,” where I used to wander in dreamy mood, gathering the richest of flowers, with which to adorn the neck and forelock of my favorite steed. These are but the beginnings of the innumerable scenes, which are the themes of my memory. I regret that it is my lot to live so far removed from all these things, which are fast passing away, and that my pursuits compel me to live in a world of art, of business, and fashion.

264

And now come the recollections of the past summer, which I have attempted to commemorate in the foregoing letters. I know not with what feelings you may have perused them, but to me they are very dear, on account of the feelings and conceptions with which they are associated, and these are a kind of treasure, that my heart cherishes as the miser does his gold. Much of the time, during my various journeyings have I been alone, and I have held a blessed communion with my mother nature,—not only in the morning and at noon, but in the calm evening and in the most holy night. Thou hast, O Nature, instructed me in the “magic of thy mysteries,” and given my spirit an idea of its immortal destiny. I thank thee for having, even in my infancy, consecrated my affections to thy rational worship. Next to those of revealed religion are thy consolations. Thou art the Empress of a world of poetry, and yet the great human world is familiar only with thy name. Next to my Creator, thou hast proven thyself my most faithful friend, and when I

265

cease to love thee as I now do, may my right hand forget its cunning, and the silver cord of my life be forever loosened. In all my mortal pilgrimage may I be influenced by thy teachings, so that when I come to be an immortal, I may be fitted for a station at the footstool of God.

267

**JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY
ARE PUBLISHERS OF
NOTES ON CUBA.**

Containing an account of its Discovery and Early History; a description
of the face of the country, its population, resources
and wealth, its institutions, and the manners and
customs of its inhabitants; with directions to
travellers visiting the Island.

BY A PHYSICIAN.

12mo. pp. 359.

“The main purposes of this volume is to serve as a guide and a companion to invalids, travellers, and others who may visit Cuba. There is no other work of this character in the English language, nor in any language is there a book which embraces the information which is contained in this. The directions to travellers for their guidance, comfort and conduct, are very full, and we may add, very necessary. Then we have a methodical arrangement of matter which presents us with a complete and exceedingly interesting narrative, seeming to anticipate every question, and to draw a full picture of the country, of its

inhabitants, their employments and characteristics. The towns upon the island, with its general scenery, curiosities and striking objects, are described in full. The history, the geology, the government and commerce of the island, are noticed at length, and present the results of an evidently laborious investigation, and a faithful use of the eyes. The resources which a traveller or visitor will find for occupying his time, or for amusing himself, have their full share of space. The whole volume, coming from a source which stamps it with a high authority, is a valuable addition to our libraries, and will be much prized by those who read it.”—*Christian Register*.

“A well written, carefully printed, and instructive book, by a Physician. No invalid who seeks the blissful climate of Cuba, should leave home without this best of all guides and counsellors. We are delighted with the valuable contribution which he has made to history, as well as with the intelligence and good judgment he evinces as a physician. In recommending the Notes on Cuba to medical readers and voyagers, it would be unjust not to recommend it also to the whole reading community.”—*Boston Medical Journal*.

“Notes on Cuba, by an American Physician. This is a truly valuable and interesting book, both to the invalid intending to visit Cuba in search of health, and to the general reader, and supplies a gap in literature which it is surprising has not long ago been filled. The work is well written, and affords very pleasant reading. The author is known to us, and we can assure the readers of the work that it is entirely authentic, and entitled to the most entire confidence.”—*New Bedford Bulletin*.

JAMES MUNROE AND CO.'S PUBLICATIONS.

TWICE TOLD TALES.

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

FIRST AND SECOND SERIES.

2 vols. 12mo., elegantly printed on clear type and fine paper,
and neatly bound in cloth, gilt.

“To this little work we would say, ‘Live ever, sweet, sweet book.’ It comes from the hand of a man of genius. Every thing about it has the freshness of morning and of May. * * * * The book, though in prose, was written by a poet. * * * A calm, thoughtful face seems to be looking at you from every page. * * One of the most prominent characteristics of these tales is, that they are national in their character. The author has wisely chosen his themes among the traditions of New England. * * Another characteristic of this writer is the exceeding beauty of his style. It is as clear as running waters are. Indeed he uses words as mere stepping-stones, upon which, with a free and youthful bound, his spirit crosses and recrosses the bright and rushing stream of thought. * * In speaking in terms of such high praise as we have done, we have given utterance not alone to our own feelings, but we trust to those of all gentle readers of the *Twice Told Tales*. Like children we say, ‘Tell us more.’”—*North American Review*.

“The Tales are worth *twice telling* and a dozen readings.”—*Boston Courier*.

“A book like this, evincing a mind of such peculiar organization, may, or may not become popular; but whether they read it or not, the public may be assured, that in this unpretending volume by a countryman and neighbor, they will find more of that which

indicates thought in the writer, and begets thought in the reader, than in nine-tenths of the English reprints, which are so eagerly devoured.”—*Boston Daily Advertiser*.

“Mr. Hawthorne’s style is rich, refined, and graceful, and the present volume is an ornament to the literature of our country.”—*Boston Atlas*.

“This modest volume, which comes before us without preface, or any sort of an appeal to the public regard, is well calculated to stand on its own merits, and to acquire enduring popularity. The author possesses the power of winning immediate attention, and of sustaining it, by a certain ingenuous sincerity, and by the force of a style at once simple and graceful. In all his descriptions, whether of scenes or emotions, nature is his only guide. In short, in quiet humor, in genuine pathos, and deep feeling, and in a style equally unstudied and pure, the author of ‘Twice Told Tales’ has few equals, and with perhaps one or two eminent exceptions, no superior in our country. We confidently and cordially, therefore, commend the beautiful volume to the attention of our readers.”—*Knickerbocker*.

Transcriber's Notes

- Retained the copyright notice from the printed edition (although this book is in the public domain.)
- Created an original cover image for free, unrestricted use with this Distributed-Proofreaders Project-Gutenberg eBook.
- Added author's name (in red) on the title page.
- Silently corrected a few palpable typos.
- In the text versions only, delimited italicized text in _underscores_.

[The end of *Letters from a Landscape Painter* by Charles Lanman]