

The Poetical Works of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Vol. 2 - Additional Poems (1837-1848)

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

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THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
[1893 three volume set]

ADDITIONAL POEMS

1837-1848

THE PILGRIM'S VISION

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THE STEAMBOAT
LEXINGTON
ON LENDING A PUNCH BOWL
A SONG FOR THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF HARVARD COLLEGE,
THE ISLAND HUNTING-SONG
DEPARTED DAYS
THE ONLY DAUGHTER
SONG WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER GIVEN TO CHARLES
DICKENS, BY THE YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON, FEBRUARY 1, 1842
LINES RECITED AT THE BERKSHIRE JUBILEE
NUX POSTCOENATICA
VERSES FOR AFTER-DINNER
A MODEST REQUEST, COMPLIED WITH AFTER THE
DINNER AT PRESIDENT EVERETT'S INAUGURATION
THE PARTING WORD
A SONG OF OTHER DAYS
SONG FOR A TEMPERANCE DINNER TO WHICH LADIES WERE INVITED
(NEW YORK MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, NOVEMBER, 1842)
A SENTIMENT
A RHYMED LESSON (URANIA)
AN AFTER-DINNER POEM (TERPSICHORE)

THE PILGRIM'S VISION

IN the hour of twilight shadows
The Pilgrim sire looked out;
He thought of the "bloody Salvages"
That lurked all round about,
Of Wituwamet's pictured knife
And Pecksuot's whooping shout;
For the baby's limbs were feeble,
Though his father's arms were stout.

His home was a freezing cabin,
Too bare for the hungry rat;
Its roof was thatched with ragged grass,
And bald enough of that;
The hole that served for casement
Was glazed with an ancient hat,
And the ice was gently thawing
From the log whereon he sat.

Along the dreary landscape
His eyes went to and fro,

The trees all clad in icicles,
The streams that did not flow;
A sudden thought flashed o'er him,--
A dream of long ago,--
He smote his leathern jerkin,
And murmured, "Even so!"

"Come hither, God-be-Glorified,
And sit upon my knee;
Behold the dream unfolding,
Whereof I spake to thee

By the winter's hearth in Leyden
And on the stormy sea.
True is the dream's beginning,--
So may its ending be!

"I saw in the naked forest
Our scattered remnant cast,
A screen of shivering branches
Between them and the blast;
The snow was falling round them,
The dying fell as fast;
I looked to see them perish,
When lo, the vision passed.

"Again mine eyes were opened;--
The feeble had waxed strong,
The babes had grown to sturdy men,
The remnant was a throng;
By shadowed lake and winding stream,
And all the shores along,
The howling demons quaked to hear
The Christian's godly song.

"They slept, the village fathers,
By river, lake, and shore,
When far adown the steep of Time
The vision rose once more
I saw along the winter snow
A spectral column pour,
And high above their broken ranks
A tattered flag they bore.

"Their Leader rode before them,
Of bearing calm and high,
The light of Heaven's own kindling
Throned in his awful eye;
These were a Nation's champions
Her dread appeal to try.
God for the right! I faltered,
And lo, the train passed by.

"Once more;--the strife is ended,
The solemn issue tried,
The Lord of Hosts, his mighty arm
Has helped our Israel's side;
Gray stone and grassy hillock
Tell where our martyrs died,
But peaceful smiles the harvest,
And stainless flows the tide.

"A crash, as when some swollen cloud
Cracks o'er the tangled trees
With side to side, and spar to spar,
Whose smoking decks are these?
I know Saint George's blood-red cross,
Thou Mistress of the Seas,
But what is she whose streaming bars
Roll out before the breeze?

"Ah, well her iron ribs are knit,
Whose thunders strive to quell
The bellowing throats, the blazing lips,
That pealed the Armada's knell!
The mist was cleared,--a wreath of stars
Rose o'er the crimsoned swell,
And, wavering from its haughty peak,
The cross of England fell!

"O trembling Faith! though dark the morn,
A heavenly torch is thine;
While feebler races melt away,
And paler orbs decline,
Still shall the fiery pillar's ray
Along thy pathway shine,
To light the chosen tribe that sought
This Western Palestine.

"I see the living tide roll on;
It crowns with flaming towers
The icy capes of Labrador,
The Spaniard's 'land of flowers'!
It streams beyond the splintered ridge
That parts the northern showers;
From eastern rock to sunset wave
The Continent is ours!"

He ceased, the grim old soldier-saint,
Then softly bent to cheer
The Pilgrim-child, whose wasting face
Was meekly turned to hear;
And drew his toil-worn sleeve across
To brush the manly tear
From cheeks that never changed in woe,
And never blanched in fear.

The weary Pilgrim slumbers,
His resting-place unknown;
His hands were crossed, his lips were closed,
The dust was o'er him strown;
The drifting soil, the mouldering leaf,
Along the sod were blown;
His mound has melted into earth,
His memory lives alone.

So let it live unfading,
The memory of the dead,
Long as the pale anemone
Springs where their tears were shed,
Or, raining in the summer's wind
In flakes of burning red,
The wild rose sprinkles with its leaves
The turf where once they bled!

Yea, when the frowning bulwarks
That guard this holy strand
Have sunk beneath the trampling surge
In beds of sparkling sand,
While in the waste of ocean

One hoary rock shall stand,
Be this its latest legend,--
HERE WAS THE PILGRIM'S LAND!

THE STEAMBOAT

SEE how yon flaming herald treads
The ridged and rolling waves,
As, crashing o'er their crested heads,
She bows her surly slaves!
With foam before and fire behind,
She rends the clinging sea,
That flies before the roaring wind,
Beneath her hissing lee.

The morning spray, like sea-born flowers,
With heaped and glistening bells,
Falls round her fast, in ringing showers,
With every wave that swells;
And, burning o'er the midnight deep,
In lurid fringes thrown,
The living gems of ocean sweep
Along her flashing zone.

With clashing wheel and lifting keel,
And smoking torch on high,
When winds are loud and billows reel,
She thunders foaming by;
When seas are silent and serene,
With even beam she glides,
The sunshine glimmering through the green
That skirts her gleaming sides.

Now, like a wild, nymph, far apart
She veils her shadowy form,
The beating of her restless heart
Still sounding through the storm;
Now answers, like a courtly dame,
The reddening surges o'er,
With flying scarf of spangled flame,
The Pharos of the shore.

To-night yon pilot shall not sleep,
Who trims his narrowed sail;
To-night yon frigate scarce shall keep
Her broad breast to the gale;
And many a foresail, scooped and strained,
Shall break from yard and stay,
Before this smoky wreath has stained
The rising mist of day.

Hark! hark! I hear yon whistling shroud,
I see yon quivering mast;
The black throat of the hunted cloud
Is panting forth the blast!

An hour, and, whirled like winnowing chaff,
The giant surge shall fling
His tresses o'er yon pennon staff,
White as the sea-bird's wing.

Yet rest, ye wanderers of the deep;
Nor wind nor wave shall tire
Those fleshless arms, whose pulses leap
With floods of living fire;
Sleep on, and, when the morning light
Streams o'er the shining bay,
Oh think of those for whom the night
Shall never wake in day.

LEXINGTON

SLOWLY the mist o'er the meadow was creeping,
Bright on the dewy buds glistened the sun,
When from his couch, while his children were sleeping,
Rose the bold rebel and shouldered his gun.
Waving her golden veil
Over the silent dale,
Blithe looked the morning on cottage and spire;
Hushed was his parting sigh,
While from his noble eye
Flashed the last sparkle of liberty's fire.

On the smooth green where the fresh leaf is springing
Calmly the first-born of glory have met;
Hark! the death-volley around them is ringing!
Look! with their life-blood the young grass is wet
Faint is the feeble breath,
Murmuring low in death,
"Tell to our sons how their fathers have died;"
Nerveless the iron hand,
Raised for its native land,
Lies by the weapon that gleams at its side.

Over the hillsides the wild knell is tolling,
From their far hamlets the yeomanry come;
As through the storm-clouds the thunder-burst rolling,
Circles the beat of the mustering drum.
Fast on the soldier's path
Darken the waves of wrath,--
Long have they gathered and loud shall they fall;
Red glares the musket's flash,
Sharp rings the rifle's crash,
Blazing and clanging from thicket and wall.

Gayly the plume of the horseman was dancing,
Never to shadow his cold brow again;
Proudly at morning the war-steed was prancing,
Reeking and panting he droops on the rein;
Pale is the lip of scorn,
Voiceless the trumpet horn,

Torn is the silken-fringed red cross on high;
Many a belted breast
Low on the turf shall rest
Ere the dark hunters the herd have passed by.

Snow-girdled crags where the hoarse wind is raving,
Rocks where the weary floods murmur and wail,
Wilds where the fern by the furrow is waving,
Reeled with the echoes that rode on the gale;
Far as the tempest thrills
Over the darkened hills,
Far as the sunshine streams over the plain,
Roused by the tyrant band,
Woke all the mighty land,
Girded for battle, from mountain to main.

Green be the graves where her martyrs are lying!
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their rest,
While o'er their ashes the starry fold flying
Wraps the proud eagle they roused from his nest.
Borne on her Northern pine,
Long o'er the foaming brine
Spread her broad banner to storm and to sun;
Heaven keep her ever free,
Wide as o'er land and sea
Floats the fair emblem her heroes have won.

ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL

This "punch-bowl" was, according to old family tradition, a caudle-cup. It is a massive piece of silver, its cherubs and other ornaments of coarse repousse work, and has two handles like a loving-cup, by which it was held, or passed from guest to guest.

THIS ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times,
Of joyous days and jolly nights, and merry Christmas times;
They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,
Who dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar,--so runs the ancient tale;
'T was hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose arm was like a flail;
And now and then between the strokes, for fear his strength should fail,
He wiped his brow and quaffed a cup of good old Flemish ale.

'T was purchased by an English squire to please his loving dame,
Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing for the same;
And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was found,
'T was filled with candle spiced and hot, and handed smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan divine,
Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little wine,
But hated punch and prelacy; and so it was, perhaps,
He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles and schnapps.

And then, of course, you know what's next: it left the Dutchman's shore

With those that in the Mayflower came,--a hundred souls and more,--
Along with all the furniture, to fill their new abodes,--
To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hundred loads.

'T was on a dreary winter's eve, the night was closing, dim,
When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled it to the brim;
The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with his sword,
And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in,--the man that never feared,--
He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his yellow beard;
And one by one the musketeers--the men that fought and prayed--
All drank as 't were their mother's milk, and not a man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming eagle flew,
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's wild halloo;
And there the sachem learned the rule he taught to kith and kin,
Run from the white man when you find he smells of "Hollands gin!"

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their leaves and snows,
A thousand rubs had flattened down each little cherub's nose,
When once again the bowl was filled, but not in mirth or joy,--
'T was mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her parting boy.

Drink, John, she said, 't will do you good,--poor child,
you'll never bear
This working in the dismal trench, out in the midnight air;
And if--God bless me!--you were hurt, 't would keep away the chill.
So John did drink,--and well he wrought that night at Bunker's Hill!

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old English cheer;
I tell you, 't was a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here.
'T is but the fool that loves excess; hast thou a drunken soul?
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl!

I love the memory of the past,--its pressed yet fragrant flowers,--
The moss that clothes its broken walls, the ivy on its towers;
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed,--my eyes grow moist and dim,
To think of all the vanished joys that danced around its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it straight to me;
The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er the liquid be;
And may the cherubs on its face protect me from the sin
That dooms one to those dreadful words,--"My dear, where HAVE you been?"

A SONG

FOR THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF HARVARD COLLEGE, 1836

This song, which I had the temerity to sing myself (_felix auda-cia_,
Mr. Franklin Dexter had the goodness to call it), was sent in a little
too late to be printed with the official account of the celebration. It
was written at the suggestion of Dr. Jacob Bigelow, who thought the
popular tune "The Poacher's Song" would be a good model for a lively
ballad or ditty. He himself wrote the admirable Latin song to be found

in the record of the meeting.

WHEN the Puritans came over
Our hills and swamps to clear,
The woods were full of catamounts,
And Indians red as deer,
With tomahawks and scalping-knives,
That make folks' heads look queer;
Oh the ship from England used to bring
A hundred wigs a year!

The crows came cawing through the air
To pluck the Pilgrims' corn,
The bears came snuffing round the door
Whene'er a babe was born,
The rattlesnakes were bigger round
Than the but of the old rams horn
The deacon blew at meeting time
On every "Sabbath" morn.

But soon they knocked the wigwams down,
And pine-tree trunk and limb
Began to sprout among the leaves
In shape of steeples slim;
And out the little wharves were stretched
Along the ocean's rim,
And up the little school-house shot
To keep the boys in trim.

And when at length the College rose,
The sachem cocked his eye
At every tutor's meagre ribs
Whose coat-tails whistled by
But when the Greek and Hebrew words
Came tumbling from his jaws,
The copper-colored children all
Ran screaming to the squaws.

And who was on the Catalogue
When college was begun?
Two nephews of the President,
And the Professor's son;
(They turned a little Indian by,
As brown as any bun;)
Lord! how the seniors knocked about
The freshman class of one!

They had not then the dainty things
That commons now afford,
But succotash and hominy
Were smoking on the board;
They did not rattle round in gigs,
Or dash in long-tailed blues,
But always on Commencement days
The tutors blacked their shoes.

God bless the ancient Puritans!
Their lot was hard enough;
But honest hearts make iron arms,

And tender maids are tough;
So love and faith have formed and fed
Our true-born Yankee stuff,
And keep the kernel in the shell
The British found so rough!

THE ISLAND HUNTING-SONG

The island referred to is a domain of princely proportions, which has long been the seat of a generous hospitality. Naushon is its old Indian name. William Swain, Esq., commonly known as "the Governor," was the proprietor of it at the time when this song was written. Mr. John M. Forbes is his worthy successor in territorial rights and as a hospitable entertainer. The Island Book has been the recipient of many poems from visitors and friends of the owners of the old mansion.

No more the summer floweret charms,
The leaves will soon be sere,
And Autumn folds his jewelled arms
Around the dying year;
So, ere the waning seasons claim
Our leafless groves awhile,
With golden wine and glowing flame
We 'll crown our lonely isle.

Once more the merry voices sound
Within the antlered hall,
And long and loud the baying hounds
Return the hunter's call;
And through the woods, and o'er the hill,
And far along the bay,
The driver's horn is sounding shrill,--
Up, sportsmen, and away!

No bars of steel or walls of stone
Our little empire bound,
But, circling with his azure zone,
The sea runs foaming round;
The whitening wave, the purpled skies,
The blue and lifted shore,
Braid with their dim and blending dyes
Our wide horizon o'er.

And who will leave the grave debate
That shakes the smoky town,
To rule amid our island-state,
And wear our oak-leaf crown?
And who will be awhile content
To hunt our woodland game,
And leave the vulgar pack that scent
The reeking track of fame?

Ah, who that shares in toils like these
Will sigh not to prolong
Our days beneath the broad-leaved trees,

Our nights of mirth and song?
Then leave the dust of noisy streets,
Ye outlaws of the wood,
And follow through his green retreats
Your noble Robin Hood.

DEPARTED DAYS

YES, dear departed, cherished days,
Could Memory's hand restore
Your morning light, your evening rays,
From Time's gray urn once more,
Then might this restless heart be still,
This straining eye might close,
And Hope her fainting pinions fold,
While the fair phantoms rose.

But, like a child in ocean's arms,
We strive against the stream,
Each moment farther from the shore
Where life's young fountains gleam;
Each moment fainter wave the fields,
And wider rolls the sea;
The mist grows dark,--the sun goes down,--
Day breaks,--and where are we?

THE ONLY DAUGHTER

ILLUSTRATION OF A PICTURE

THEY bid me strike the idle strings,
As if my summer days
Had shaken sunbeams from their wings
To warm my autumn lays;
They bring to me their painted urn,
As if it were not time
To lift my gauntlet and to spurn
The lists of boyish rhyme;
And were it not that I have still
Some weakness in my heart
That clings around my stronger will
And pleads for gentler art,
Perchance I had not turned away
The thoughts grown tame with toil,
To cheat this lone and pallid ray,
That wastes the midnight oil.

Alas! with every year I feel
Some roses leave my brow;
Too young for wisdom's tardy seal,
Too old for garlands now.

Yet, while the dewy breath of spring
Steals o'er the tingling air,
And spreads and fans each emerald wing
The forest soon shall wear.
How bright the opening year would seem,
Had I one look like thine
To meet me when the morning beam
Unseals these lids of mine!
Too long I bear this lonely lot,
That bids my heart run wild
To press the lips that love me not,
To clasp the stranger's child.

How oft beyond the dashing seas,
Amidst those royal bowers,
Where danced the lilacs in the breeze,
And swung the chestnut-flowers,
I wandered like a wearied slave
Whose morning task is done,
To watch the little hands that gave
Their whiteness to the sun;
To revel in the bright young eyes,
Whose lustre sparkled through
The sable fringe of Southern skies
Or gleamed in Saxon blue!
How oft I heard another's name
Called in some truant's tone;
Sweet accents! which I longed to claim,
To learn and lisp my own!

Too soon the gentle hands, that pressed
The ringlets of the child,
Are folded on the faithful breast
Where first he breathed and smiled;
Too oft the clinging arms untwine,
The melting lips forget,
And darkness veils the bridal shrine
Where wreaths and torches met;
If Heaven but leaves a single thread
Of Hope's dissolving chain,
Even when her parting plumes are spread,
It bids them fold again;
The cradle rocks beside the tomb;
The cheek now changed and chill
Smiles on us in the morning bloom
Of one that loves us still.

Sweet image! I have done thee wrong
To claim this destined lay;
The leaf that asked an idle song
Must bear my tears away.
Yet, in thy memory shouldst thou keep
This else forgotten strain,
Till years have taught thine eyes to weep,
And flattery's voice is vain;
Oh then, thou fledgling of the nest,
Like the long-wandering dove,
Thy weary heart may faint for rest,
As mine, on changeless love;

And while these sculptured lines retrace
The hours now dancing by,
This vision of thy girlish grace
May cost thee, too, a sigh.

SONG

WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER GIVEN TO CHARLES DICKENS
BY THE YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON, FEBRUARY 1, 1842

THE stars their early vigils keep,
The silent hours are near,
When drooping eyes forget to weep,--
Yet still we linger here;
And what--the passing churl may ask--
Can claim such wondrous power,
That Toil forgets his wonted task,
And Love his promised hour?

The Irish harp no longer thrills,
Or breathes a fainter tone;
The clarion blast from Scotland's hills,
Alas! no more is blown;
And Passion's burning lip bewails
Her Harold's wasted fire,
Still lingering o'er the dust that veils
The Lord of England's lyre.

But grieve not o'er its broken strings,
Nor think its soul hath died,
While yet the lark at heaven's gate sings,
As once o'er Avon's side;
While gentle summer sheds her bloom,
And dewy blossoms wave,
Alike o'er Juliet's storied tomb
And Nelly's nameless grave.

Thou glorious island of the sea!
Though wide the wasting flood
That parts our distant land from thee,
We claim thy generous blood;
Nor o'er thy far horizon springs
One hallowed star of fame,
But kindles, like an angel's wings,
Our western skies in flame!

LINES

RECITED AT THE BERKSHIRE JUBILEE,
PITTSFIELD, MASS., AUGUST 23, 1844

COME back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants for riches or fame!
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,
She calls you to feast from her bountiful lap.

Come out from your alleys, your courts, and your lanes,
And breathe, like young eagles, the air of our plains;
Take a whiff from our fields, and your excellent wives
Will declare it 's all nonsense insuring your lives.

Come you of the law, who can talk, if you please,
Till the man in the moon will allow it's a cheese,
And leave "the old lady, that never tells lies,"
To sleep with her handkerchief over her eyes.

Ye healers of men, for a moment decline
Your feats in the rhubarb and ipecac line;
While you shut up your turnpike, your neighbors can go
The old roundabout road to the regions below.

You clerk, on whose ears are a couple of pens,
And whose head is an ant-hill of units and tens,
Though Plato denies you, we welcome you still
As a featherless biped, in spite of your quill.

Poor drudge of the city! how happy he feels,
With the burs on his legs and the grass at his heels
No dodger behind, his bandannas to share,
No constable grumbling, "You must n't walk there!"

In yonder green meadow, to memory dear,
He slaps a mosquito and brushes a tear;
The dew-drops hang round him on blossoms and shoots,
He breathes but one sigh for his youth and his boots.

There stands the old school-house, hard by the old church;
That tree at its side had the flavor of birch;
Oh, sweet were the days of his juvenile tricks,
Though the prairie of youth had so many "big licks."

By the side of yon river he weeps and he slumps,
The boots fill with water, as if they were pumps,
Till, sated with rapture, he steals to his bed,
With a glow in his heart and a cold in his head.

'T is past,--he is dreaming,--I see him again;
The ledger returns as by legerdemain;
His neckcloth is damp with an easterly flaw,
And he holds in his fingers an omnibus straw.

He dreams the chill gust is a blossomy gale,
That the straw is a rose from his dear native vale;
And murmurs, unconscious of space and of time,
"A 1. Extra super. Ah, is n't it PRIME!"

Oh, what are the prizes we perish to win
To the first little "shiner" we caught with a pin!
No soil upon earth is so dear to our eyes
As the soil we first stirred in terrestrial pies!

Then come from all parties and parts to our feast;
Though not at the "Astor," we'll give you at least
A bite at an apple, a seat on the grass,
And the best of old--water--at nothing a glass.

NUX POSTCOENATICA

I WAS sitting with my microscope, upon my parlor rug,
With a very heavy quarto and a very lively bug;
The true bug had been organized with only two antennae,
But the humbug in the copperplate would have them twice as many.

And I thought, like Dr. Faustus, of the emptiness of art,
How we take a fragment for the whole, and call the whole a part,
When I heard a heavy footstep that was loud enough for two,
And a man of forty entered, exclaiming, "How d' ye do?"

He was not a ghost, my visitor, but solid flesh and bone;
He wore a Palo Alto hat, his weight was twenty stone;
(It's odd how hats expand their brims as riper years invade,
As if when life had reached its noon it wanted them for shade!)

I lost my focus,--dropped my book,--the bug, who was a flea,
At once exploded, and commenced experiments on me.
They have a certain heartiness that frequently appalls,--
Those mediaeval gentlemen in semilunar smalls!

"My boy," he said, (colloquial ways,--the vast, broad-hatted man,)
"Come dine with us on Thursday next,--you must, you know you can;
We're going to have a roaring time, with lots of fun and noise,
Distinguished guests, et cetera, the JUDGE, and all the boys."

Not so,--I said,--my temporal bones are showing pretty clear.
It's time to stop,--just look and see that hair above this ear;
My golden days are more than spent,--and, what is very strange,
If these are real silver hairs, I'm getting lots of change.

Besides--my prospects--don't you know that people won't employ
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy?
And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root?

It's a very fine reflection, when you 're etching out a smile
On a copperplate of faces that would stretch at least a mile,
That, what with sneers from enemies and cheapening shrugs of friends,
It will cost you all the earnings that a month of labor lends!

It's a vastly pleasing prospect, when you're screwing out a laugh,
That your very next year's income is diminished by a half,
And a little boy trips barefoot that Pegasus may go,
And the baby's milk is watered that your Helicon may flow!

No;--the joke has been a good one,--but I'm getting fond of quiet,
And I don't like deviations from my customary diet;

So I think I will not go with you to hear the toasts and speeches,
But stick to old Montgomery Place, and have some pig and peaches.

The fat man answered: Shut your mouth, and hear the genuine creed;
The true essentials of a feast are only fun and feed;
The force that wheels the planets round delights in spinning tops,
And that young earthquake t' other day was great at shaking props.

I tell you what, philosopher, if all the longest heads
That ever knocked their sinciputs in stretching on their beds
Were round one great mahogany, I'd beat those fine old folks
With twenty dishes, twenty fools, and twenty clever jokes!

Why, if Columbus should be there, the company would beg
He'd show that little trick of his of balancing the egg!
Milton to Stilton would give in, and Solomon to Salmon,
And Roger Bacon be a bore, and Francis Bacon gammon!

And as for all the "patronage" of all the clowns and boors
That squint their little narrow eyes at any freak of yours,
Do leave them to your prosier friends,--such fellows ought to die
When rhubarb is so very scarce and ipecac so high!

And so I come,--like Lochinvar, to tread a single measure,--
To purchase with a loaf of bread a sugar-plum of pleasure,
To enter for the cup of glass that's run for after dinner,
Which yields a single sparkling draught,
then breaks and cuts the winner.

Ah, that's the way delusion comes,--a glass of old Madeira,
A pair of visual diaphragms revolved by Jane or Sarah,
And down go vows and promises without the slightest question
If eating words won't compromise the organs of digestion!

And yet, among my native shades, beside my nursing mother,
Where every stranger seems a friend, and every friend a brother,
I feel the old convivial glow (unaided) o'er me stealing,--
The warm, champagny, the old-particular brandy-punchy feeling.

We're all alike;--Vesuvius flings the scoriae from his fountain,
But down they come in volleying rain back to the burning mountain;
We leave, like those volcanic stones, our precious Alma Mater,
But will keep dropping in again to see the dear old crater.

VERSES FOR AFTER-DINNER PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY, 1844

I WAS thinking last night, as I sat in the cars,
With the charmingest prospect of cinders and stars,
Next Thursday is--bless me!--how hard it will be,
If that cannibal president calls upon me!

There is nothing on earth that he will not devour,
From a tutor in seed to a freshman in flower;
No sage is too gray, and no youth is too green,

And you can't be too plump, though you're never too lean.

While others enlarge on the boiled and the roast,
He serves a raw clergyman up with a toast,
Or catches some doctor, quite tender and young,
And basely insists on a bit of his tongue.

Poor victim, prepared for his classical spit,
With a stuffing of praise and a basting of wit,
You may twitch at your collar and wrinkle your brow,
But you're up on your legs, and you're in for it now.

Oh think of your friends,--they are waiting to hear
Those jokes that are thought so remarkably queer;
And all the Jack Horners of metrical buns
Are prying and fingering to pick out the puns.

Those thoughts which, like chickens, will always thrive best
When reared by the heat of the natural nest,
Will perish if hatched from their embryo dream
In the mist and the glow of convivial steam.

Oh pardon me, then, if I meekly retire,
With a very small flash of ethereal fire;
No rubbing will kindle your Lucifer match,
If the fiz does not follow the primitive scratch.

Dear friends, who are listening so sweetly the while,
With your lips double--reefed in a snug little smile,
I leave you two fables, both drawn from the deep,--
The shells you can drop, but the pearls you may keep.

.....

The fish called the FLOUNDER, perhaps you may know,
Has one side for use and another for show;
One side for the public, a delicate brown,
And one that is white, which he always keeps down.

A very young flounder, the flattest of flats,
(And they 're none of them thicker than opera hats,)
Was speaking more freely than charity taught
Of a friend and relation that just had been caught.

"My! what an exposure! just see what a sight!
I blush for my race,--he is showing his white
Such spinning and wriggling,--why, what does he wish?
How painfully small to respectable fish!"

Then said an Old SCULPIN,--"My freedom excuse,
You're playing the cobbler with holes in your shoes;
Your brown side is up,--but just wait till you're tried
And you'll find that all flounders are white on one side."

.....

There's a slice near the PICKEREL'S pectoral fins,
Where the thorax leaves off and the venter begins,
Which his brother, survivor of fish-hooks and lines,

Though fond of his family, never declines.

He loves his relations; he feels they'll be missed;
But that one little tidbit he cannot resist;
So your bait may be swallowed, no matter how fast,
For you catch your next fish with a piece of the last.

And thus, O survivor, whose merciless fate
Is to take the next hook with the president's bait,
You are lost while you snatch from the end of his line
The morsel he rent from this bosom of mine!

A MODEST REQUEST

COMPLIED WITH AFTER THE DINNER AT PRESIDENT EVERETT'S INAUGURATION

SCENE,--a back parlor in a certain square,
Or court, or lane,--in short, no matter where;
Time,--early morning, dear to simple souls
Who love its sunshine and its fresh-baked rolls;
Persons,--take pity on this telltale blush,
That, like the AEthiop, whispers, "Hush, oh hush!"

Delightful scene! where smiling comfort broods,
Nor business frets, nor anxious care intrudes;
O si sic omnia I were it ever so!
But what is stable in this world below?
Medio e fonte,--Virtue has her faults,--
The clearest fountains taste of Epsom salts;
We snatch the cup and lift to drain it dry,--
Its central dimple holds a drowning fly
Strong is the pine by Maine's ambrosial streams,
But stronger augers pierce its thickest beams;
No iron gate, no spiked and panelled door,
Can keep out death, the postman, or the bore.
Oh for a world where peace and silence reign,
And blunted dulness veribrates in vain!
--The door-bell jingles,--enter Richard Fox,
And takes this letter from his leathern box.

"Dear Sir,--

 In writing on a former day,
One little matter I forgot to say;
I now inform you in a single line,
On Thursday next our purpose is to dine.
The act of feeding, as you understand,
Is but a fraction of the work in hand;
Its nobler half is that ethereal meat
The papers call 'the intellectual treat;'
Songs, speeches, toasts, around the festive board
Drowned in the juice the College pumps afford;
For only water flanks our knives and forks,
So, sink or float, we swim without the corks.
Yours is the art, by native genius taught,

To clothe in eloquence the naked thought;
Yours is the skill its music to prolong
Through the sweet effluence of mellifluous song;
Yours the quaint trick to cram the pithy line
That cracks so crisply over bubbling wine;
And since success your various gifts attends,
We--that is, I and all your numerous friends--
Expect from you--your single self a host--
A speech, a song, excuse me, and a toast;
Nay, not to haggle on so small a claim,
A few of each, or several of the same.
(Signed), Yours, most truly, _____ "

No! my sight must fail,--
If that ain't Judas on the largest scale!
Well, this is modest;--nothing else than that?
My coat? my boots? my pantaloons? my hat?
My stick? my gloves? as well as all my wits,
Learning and linen,--everything that fits!

Jack, said my lady, is it grog you'll try,
Or punch, or toddy, if perhaps you're dry?
Ah, said the sailor, though I can't refuse,
You know, my lady, 't ain't for me to choose;
I'll take the grog to finish off my lunch,
And drink the toddy while you mix the punch.

.....

THE SPEECH. (The speaker, rising to be seen,
Looks very red, because so very green.)
I rise--I rise--with unaffected fear,
(Louder!--speak louder!--who the deuce can hear?)
I rise--I said--with undisguised dismay
--Such are my feelings as I rise, I say
Quite unprepared to face this learned throng,

Already gorged with eloquence and song;
Around my view are ranged on either hand
The genius, wisdom, virtue of the land;
"Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed"
Close at my elbow stir their lemonade;
Would you like Homer learn to write and speak,
That bench is groaning with its weight of Greek;
Behold the naturalist who in his teens
Found six new species in a dish of greens;
And lo, the master in a statelier walk,
Whose annual ciphering takes a ton of chalk;
And there the linguist, who by common roots
Thro' all their nurseries tracks old Noah's shoots,--
How Shem's proud children reared the Assyrian piles,
While Ham's were scattered through the Sandwich Isles!

--Fired at the thought of all the present shows,
My kindling fancy down the future flows:
I see the glory of the coming days
O'er Time's horizon shoot its streaming rays;
Near and more near the radiant morning draws
In living lustre (rapturous applause);

From east to west the blazing heralds run,
Loosed from the chariot of the ascending sun,
Through the long vista of uncounted years
In cloudless splendor (three tremendous cheers).
My eye prophetic, as the depths unfold,
Sees a new advent of the age of gold;
While o'er the scene new generations press,
New heroes rise the coming time to bless,--
Not such as Homer's, who, we read in Pope,
Dined without forks and never heard of soap,--
Not such as May to Marlborough Chapel brings,
Lean, hungry, savage, anti-everythings,
Copies of Luther in the pasteboard style,--
But genuine articles, the true Carlyle;
While far on high the blazing orb shall shed
Its central light on Harvard's holy head,
And learning's ensigns ever float unfurled
Here in the focus of the new-born world
The speaker stops, and, trampling down the pause,
Roars through the hall the thunder of applause,
One stormy gust of long-suspended Ahs!
One whirlwind chaos of insane hurrahs!

.

THE SONG. But this demands a briefer line,--
A shorter muse, and not the old long Nine;
Long metre answers for a common song,
Though common metre does not answer long.

She came beneath the forest dome
To seek its peaceful shade,
An exile from her ancient home,
A poor, forsaken maid;
No banner, flaunting high above,
No blazoned cross, she bore;
One holy book of light and love
Was all her worldly store.

The dark brown shadows passed away,
And wider spread the green,
And where the savage used to stray
The rising mart was seen;
So, when the laden winds had brought
Their showers of golden rain,
Her lap some precious gleanings caught,
Like Ruth's amid the grain.

But wrath soon gathered uncontrolled
Among the baser churls,
To see her ankles red with gold,
Her forehead white with pearls.
"Who gave to thee the glittering bands
That lace thine azure veins?
Who bade thee lift those snow-white hands
We bound in gilded chains?"

"These are the gems my children gave,"
The stately dame replied;

"The wise, the gentle, and the brave,
I nurtured at my side.
If envy still your bosom stings,
Take back their rims of gold;
My sons will melt their wedding-rings,
And give a hundred-fold!"

.....

THE TOAST. Oh tell me, ye who thoughtless ask
Exhausted nature for a threefold task,
In wit or pathos if one share remains,
A safe investment for an ounce of brains!
Hard is the job to launch the desperate pun,
A pun-job dangerous as the Indian one.
Turned by the current of some stronger wit
Back from the object that you mean to hit,
Like the strange missile which the Australian throws,
Your verbal boomerang slaps you on the nose.
One vague inflection spoils the whole with doubt,
One trivial letter ruins all, left out;
A knot can choke a felon into clay,
A not will save him, spelt without the k;
The smallest word has some unguarded spot,
And danger lurks in i without a dot.

Thus great Achilles, who had shown his zeal
In healing wounds, died of a wounded heel;
Unhappy chief, who, when in childhood doused,
Had saved his bacon had his feet been soused
Accursed heel that killed a hero stout
Oh, had your mother known that you were out,
Death had not entered at the trifling part
That still defies the small surgeon's art
With corns and bunions,--not the glorious John,
Who wrote the book we all have pondered on,
But other bunions, bound in fleecy hose,
To "Pilgrim's Progress" unrelenting foes!

.....

A HEALTH, unmingled with the reveller's wine,
To him whose title is indeed divine;
Truth's sleepless watchman on her midnight tower,
Whose lamp burns brightest when the tempests lower.
Oh, who can tell with what a leaden flight
Drag the long watches of his weary night,
While at his feet the hoarse and blinding gale
Strews the torn wreck and bursts the fragile sail,
When stars have faded, when the wave is dark,
When rocks and sands embrace the foundering bark!
But still he pleads with unavailing cry,
Behold the light, O wanderer, look or die!

A health, fair Themis! Would the enchanted vine
Wreathed its green tendrils round this cup of thine!
If Learning's radiance fill thy modern court,
Its glorious sunshine streams through Blackstone's port.

Lawyers are thirsty, and their clients too,
Witness at least, if memory serve me true,
Those old tribunals, famed for dusty suits,
Where men sought justice ere they brushed their boots;
And what can match, to solve a learned doubt,
The warmth within that comes from "cold with-out"?

Health to the art whose glory is to give
The crowning boon that makes it life to live.
Ask not her home;--the rock where nature flings
Her arctic lichen, last of living things;
The gardens, fragrant with the orient's balm,
From the low jasmine to the star-like palm,
Hail her as mistress o'er the distant waves,
And yield their tribute to her wandering slaves.
Wherever, moistening the ungrateful soil,
The tear of suffering tracks the path of toil,
There, in the anguish of his fevered hours,
Her gracious finger points to healing flowers;
Where the lost felon steals away to die,
Her soft hand waves before his closing eye;
Where hunted misery finds his darkest lair,
The midnight taper shows her kneeling there!
VIRTUE,--the guide that men and nations own;
And LAW,--the bulwark that protects her throne;
And HEALTH,--to all its happiest charm that lends;
These and their servants, man's untiring friends
Pour the bright lymph that Heaven itself lets fall,
In one fair bumper let us toast them all!

THE PARTING WORD

I MUST leave thee, lady sweet
Months shall waste before we meet;
Winds are fair and sails are spread,
Anchors leave their ocean bed;
Ere this shining day grow dark,
Skies shall gird my shoreless bark.
Through thy tears, O lady mine,
Read thy lover's parting line.

When the first sad sun shall set,
Thou shalt tear thy locks of jet;
When the morning star shall rise,
Thou shalt wake with weeping eyes;
When the second sun goes down,
Thou more tranquil shalt be grown,
Taught too well that wild despair
Dims thine eyes and spoils thy hair.

All the first unquiet week
Thou shalt wear a smileless cheek;
In the first month's second half
Thou shalt once attempt to laugh;
Then in Pickwick thou shalt dip,

Slightly puckering round the lip,
Till at last, in sorrow's spite,
Samuel makes thee laugh outright.

While the first seven mornings last,
Round thy chamber bolted fast
Many a youth shall fume and pout,
"Hang the girl, she's always out!"
While the second week goes round,
Vainly shall they ring and pound;
When the third week shall begin,
"Martha, let the creature in."

Now once more the flattering throng
Round thee flock with smile and song,
But thy lips, unweaned as yet,
Lisp, "Oh, how can I forget!"
Men and devils both contrive
Traps for catching girls alive;
Eve was duped, and Helen kissed,--
How, oh how can you resist?

First be careful of your fan,
Trust it not to youth or man;
Love has filled a pirate's sail
Often with its perfumed gale.
Mind your kerchief most of all,
Fingers touch when kerchiefs fall;
Shorter ell than mercers clip
Is the space from hand to lip.

Trust not such as talk in tropes,
Full of pistols, daggers, ropes;
All the hemp that Russia bears
Scarce would answer lovers' prayers;
Never thread was spun so fine,
Never spider stretched the line,
Would not hold the lovers true
That would really swing for you.

Fiercely some shall storm and swear,
Beating breasts in black despair;
Others murmur with a sigh,
You must melt, or they will die:
Painted words on empty lies,
Grubs with wings like butterflies;
Let them die, and welcome, too;
Pray what better could they do?

Fare thee well: if years efface
From thy heart love's burning trace,
Keep, oh keep that hallowed seat
From the tread of vulgar feet;
If the blue lips of the sea
Wait with icy kiss for me,
Let not thine forget the vow,
Sealed how often, Love, as now.

A SONG OF OTHER DAYS

As o'er the glacier's frozen sheet
Breathes soft the Alpine rose,
So through life's desert springing sweet
The flower of friendship grows;
And as where'er the roses grow
Some rain or dew descends,
'T is nature's law that wine should flow
To wet the lips of friends.
Then once again, before we part,
My empty glass shall ring;
And he that has the warmest heart
Shall loudest laugh and sing.

They say we were not born to eat;
But gray-haired sages think
It means, Be moderate in your meat,
And partly live to drink.
For baser tribes the rivers flow
That know not wine or song;
Man wants but little drink below,
But wants that little strong.
Then once again, etc.

If one bright drop is like the gem
That decks a monarch's crown,
One goblet holds a diadem
Of rubies melted down!
A fig for Caesar's blazing brow,
But, like the Egyptian queen,
Bid each dissolving jewel glow
My thirsty lips between.
Then once again, etc.

The Grecian's mound, the Roman's urn,
Are silent when we call,
Yet still the purple grapes return
To cluster on the wall;
It was a bright Immortal's head
They circled with the vine,
And o'er their best and bravest dead
They poured the dark-red wine.
Then once again, etc.

Methinks o'er every sparkling glass
Young Eros waves his wings,
And echoes o'er its dimples pass
From dead Anacreon's strings;
And, tossing round its beaded brim
Their locks of floating gold,
With bacchant dance and choral hymn
Return the nymphs of old.
Then once again, etc.

A welcome then to joy and mirth,

From hearts as fresh as ours,
To scatter o'er the dust of earth
Their sweetly mingled flowers;
'T is Wisdom's self the cup that fills
In spite of Folly's frown,
And Nature, from her vine-clad hills,
That rains her life-blood down!
Then once again, before we part,
My empty glass shall ring;
And he that has the warmest heart
Shall loudest laugh and sing.

SONG

FOR A TEMPERANCE DINNER TO WHICH LADIES WERE
INVITED (NEW YORK MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
NOVEMBER, 1842)

A HEALTH to dear woman! She bids us untwine,
From the cup it encircles, the fast-clinging vine;
But her cheek in its crystal with pleasure will glow,
And mirror its bloom in the bright wave below.

A health to sweet woman! The days are no more
When she watched for her lord till the revel was o'er,
And smoothed the white pillow, and blushed when he came,
As she pressed her cold lips on his forehead of flame.

Alas for the loved one! too spotless and fair
The joys of his banquet to chasten and share;
Her eye lost its light that his goblet might shine,
And the rose of her cheek was dissolved in his wine.

Joy smiles in the fountain, health flows in the rills,
As their ribbons of silver unwind from the hills;
They breathe not the mist of the bacchanal's dream,
But the lilies of innocence float on their stream.

Then a health and a welcome to woman once more!
She brings us a passport that laughs at our door;
It is written on crimson,--its letters are pearls,--
It is countersigned Nature.--So, room for the Girls!

A SENTIMENT

THE pledge of Friendship! it is still divine,
Though watery floods have quenched its burning wine;
Whatever vase the sacred drops may hold,
The gourd, the shell, the cup of beaten gold,
Around its brim the hand of Nature throws
A garland sweeter than the banquet's rose.

Bright are the blushes of the vine-wreathed bowl,
Warm with the sunshine of Anacreon's soul,
But dearer memories gild the tasteless wave
That fainting Sidney perished as he gave.
'T is the heart's current lends the cup its glow,
Whate'er the fountain whence the draught may flow,--
The diamond dew-drops sparkling through the sand,
Scooped by the Arab in his sunburnt hand,
Or the dark streamlet oozing from the snow,
Where creep and crouch the shuddering Esquimaux;
Ay, in the stream that, ere again we meet,
Shall burst the pavement, glistening at our feet,
And, stealing silent from its leafy hills,
Thread all our alleys with its thousand rills,--
In each pale draught if generous feeling blend,
And o'er the goblet friend shall smile on friend,
Even cold Cochituate every heart shall warm,
And genial Nature still defy reform!

A RHYMED LESSON (URANIA)

This poem was delivered before the Boston Mercantile Library Association, October 14, 1846.

YES, dear Enchantress,--wandering far and long,
In realms unperfumed by the breath of song,
Where flowers ill-flavored shed their sweets around,
And bitterest roots invade the ungenial ground,
Whose gems are crystals from the Epsom mine,
Whose vineyards flow with antimonial wine,
Whose gates admit no mirthful feature in,
Save one gaunt mocker, the Sardonic grin,
Whose pangs are real, not the woes of rhyme
That blue-eyed misses warble out of time;--
Truant, not recreant to thy sacred claim,
Older by reckoning, but in heart the same,
Freed for a moment from the chains of toil,
I tread once more thy consecrated soil;
Here at thy feet my old allegiance own,
Thy subject still, and loyal to thy throne!

My dazzled glance explores the crowded hall;
Alas, how vain to hope the smiles of all!
I know my audience. All the gay and young
Love the light antics of a playful tongue;
And these, remembering some expansive line
My lips let loose among the nuts and wine,
Are all impatience till the opening pun
Proclaims the witty shamfight is begun.
Two fifths at least, if not the total half,
Have come infuriate for an earthquake laugh;
I know full well what alderman has tied
His red bandanna tight about his side;
I see the mother, who, aware that boys
Perform their laughter with superfluous noise,

Beside her kerchief brought an extra one
To stop the explosions of her bursting son;
I know a tailor, once a friend of mine,
Expects great doings in the button line,--
For mirth's concussions rip the outward case,
And plant the stitches in a tenderer place.
I know my audience,--these shall have their due;
A smile awaits them ere my song is through!

I know myself. Not servile for applause,
My Muse permits no deprecating clause;
Modest or vain, she will not be denied
One bold confession due to honest pride;
And well she knows the drooping veil of song
Shall save her boldness from the caviller's wrong.
Her sweeter voice the Heavenly Maid imparts
To tell the secrets of our aching hearts
For this, a suppliant, captive, prostrate, bound,
She kneels imploring at the feet of sound;
For this, convulsed in thought's maternal pains,
She loads her arms with rhyme's resounding chains;
Faint though the music of her fetters be,
It lends one charm,--her lips are ever free!

Think not I come, in manhood's fiery noon,
To steal his laurels from the stage buffoon;
His sword of lath the harlequin may wield;
Behold the star upon my lifted shield
Though the just critic pass my humble name,
And sweeter lips have drained the cup of fame,
While my gay stanza pleased the banquet's lords,
The soul within was tuned to deeper chords!
Say, shall my arms, in other conflicts taught
To swing aloft the ponderous mace of thought,
Lift, in obedience to a school-girl's law,
Mirth's tinsel wand or laughter's tickling straw?
Say, shall I wound with satire's rankling spear
The pure, warm hearts that bid me welcome here?
No! while I wander through the land of dreams,
To strive with great and play with trifling themes,
Let some kind meaning fill the varied line.
You have your judgment; will you trust to mine?

.....

Between two breaths what crowded mysteries lie,--
The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh!
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came.

But whence and why, our trembling souls inquire,
Caught these dim visions their awakening fire?
Oh, who forgets when first the piercing thought
Through childhood's musings found its way unsought?
I AM;--I LIVE. The mystery and the fear

When the dread question, WHAT HAS BROUGHT ME HERE?
Burst through life's twilight, as before the sun
Roll the deep thunders of the morning gun!

Are angel faces, silent and serene,
Bent on the conflicts of this little scene,
Whose dream-like efforts, whose unreal strife,
Are but the preludes to a larger life?

Or does life's summer see the end of all,
These leaves of being mouldering as they fall,
As the old poet vaguely used to deem,
As WESLEY questioned in his youthful dream?
Oh, could such mockery reach our souls indeed,
Give back the Pharaohs' or the Athenian's creed;
Better than this a Heaven of man's device,--
The Indian's sports, the Moslem's paradise!

Or is our being's only end and aim
To add new glories to our Maker's name,
As the poor insect, shrivelling in the blaze,
Lends a faint sparkle to its streaming rays?
Does earth send upward to the Eternal's ear
The mingled discords of her jarring sphere
To swell his anthem, while creation rings
With notes of anguish from its shattered strings?
Is it for this the immortal Artist means
These conscious, throbbing, agonized machines?

Dark is the soul whose sullen creed can bind
In chains like these the all-embracing Mind;
No! two-faced bigot, thou dost ill reprove
The sensual, selfish, yet benignant Jove,
And praise a tyrant throned in lonely pride,
Who loves himself, and cares for naught beside;
Who gave thee, summoned from primeval night,
A thousand laws, and not a single right,--
A heart to feel, and quivering nerves to thrill,
The sense of wrong, the death-defying will;
Who girt thy senses with this goodly frame,
Its earthly glories and its orbs of flame,
Not for thyself, unworthy of a thought,
Poor helpless victim of a life unsought,
But all for him, unchanging and supreme,
The heartless centre of thy frozen scheme.

Trust not the teacher with his lying scroll,
Who tears the charter of thy shuddering soul;
The God of love, who gave the breath that warms
All living dust in all its varied forms,
Asks not the tribute of a world like this
To fill the measure of his perfect bliss.
Though winged with life through all its radiant shores,
Creation flowed with unexhausted stores
Cherub and seraph had not yet enjoyed;
For this he called thee from the quickening void!
Nor this alone; a larger gift was thine,
A mightier purpose swelled his vast design
Thought,--conscience,--will,--to make them all thine own,

He rent a pillar from the eternal throne!

Made in his image, thou must nobly dare
The thorny crown of sovereignty to share.
With eye uplifted, it is thine to view,
From thine own centre, Heaven's o'erarching blue;
So round thy heart a beaming circle lies
No fiend can blot, no hypocrite disguise;
From all its orbs one cheering voice is heard,
Full to thine ear it bears the Father's word,
Now, as in Eden where his first-born trod
"Seek thine own welfare, true to man and God!"
Think not too meanly of thy low estate;
Thou hast a choice; to choose is to create!
Remember whose the sacred lips that tell,
Angels approve thee when thy choice is well;
Remember, One, a judge of righteous men,
Swore to spare Sodom if she held but ten!
Use well the freedom which thy Master gave,
(Think'st thou that Heaven can tolerate a slave?)
And He who made thee to be just and true
Will bless thee, love thee,--ay, respect thee too!

Nature has placed thee on a changeful tide,
To breast its waves, but not without a guide;
Yet, as the needle will forget its aim,
Jarred by the fury of the electric flame,
As the true current it will falsely feel,
Warped from its axis by a freight of steel;
So will thy CONSCIENCE lose its balanced truth
If passion's lightning fall upon thy youth,
So the pure effluence quit its sacred hold
Girt round too deeply with magnetic gold.
Go to yon tower, where busy science plies
Her vast antennae, feeling through the skies
That little vernier on whose slender lines
The midnight taper trembles as it shines,
A silent index, tracks the planets' march
In all their wanderings through the ethereal arch;
Tells through the mist where dazzled Mercury burns,
And marks the spot where Uranus returns.
So, till by wrong or negligence effaced,
The living index which thy Maker traced
Repeats the line each starry Virtue draws
Through the wide circuit of creation's laws;
Still tracks unchanged the everlasting ray
Where the dark shadows of temptation stray,
But, once defaced, forgets the orbs of light,
And leaves thee wandering o'er the expanse of night.

"What is thy creed?" a hundred lips inquire;
"Thou seekest God beneath what Christian spire?"
Nor ask they idly, for uncounted lies
Float upward on the smoke of sacrifice;
When man's first incense rose above the plain,
Of earth's two altars one was built by Cain!
Uncursed by doubt, our earliest creed we take;
We love the precepts for the teacher's sake;
The simple lessons which the nursery taught

Fell soft and stainless on the buds of thought,
And the full blossom owes its fairest hue
To those sweet tear-drops of affection's dew.
Too oft the light that led our earlier hours
Fades with the perfume of our cradle flowers;
The clear, cold question chills to frozen doubt;
Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without
Oh then, if Reason waver at thy side,
Let humbler Memory be thy gentle guide;
Go to thy birthplace, and, if faith was there,
Repeat thy father's creed, thy mother's prayer!

Faith loves to lean on Time's destroying arm,
And age, like distance, lends a double charm;
In dim cathedrals, dark with vaulted gloom,
What holy awe invests the saintly tomb!
There pride will bow, and anxious care expand,
And creeping avarice come with open hand;
The gay can weep, the impious can adore,
From morn's first glimmerings on the chancel floor
Till dying sunset sheds his crimson stains
Through the faint halos of the irised panes.
Yet there are graves, whose rudely-shapen sod
Bears the fresh footprints where the sexton trod;
Graves where the verdure has not dared to shoot,
Where the chance wild-flower has not fixed its root,
Whose slumbering tenants, dead without a name,
The eternal record shall at length proclaim
Pure as the holiest in the long array
Of hooded, mitred, or tiaraed clay!

Come, seek the air; some pictures we may gain
Whose passing shadows shall not be in vain;
Not from the scenes that crowd the stranger's soil,
Not from our own amidst the stir of toil,
But when the Sabbath brings its kind release,
And Care lies slumbering on the lap of Peace.

The air is hushed, the street is holy ground;
Hark! The sweet bells renew their welcome sound
As one by one awakes each silent tongue,
It tells the turret whence its voice is flung.
The Chapel, last of sublunary things
That stirs our echoes with the name of Kings,
Whose bell, just glistening from the font and forge,
Rolled its proud requiem for the second George,
Solemn and swelling, as of old it rang,
Flings to the wind its deep, sonorous clang;
The simpler pile, that, mindful of the hour
When Howe's artillery shook its half-built tower,
Wears on its bosom, as a bride might do,
The iron breastpin which the "Rebels" threw,
Wakes the sharp echoes with the quivering thrill
Of keen vibrations, tremulous and shrill;
Aloft, suspended in the morning's fire,
Crash the vast cymbals from the Southern spire;
The Giant, standing by the elm-clad green,
His white lance lifted o'er the silent scene,
Whirling in air his brazen goblet round,

Swings from its brim the swollen floods of sound;
While, sad with memories of the olden time,
Throbs from his tower the Northern Minstrel's chime,--
Faint, single tones, that spell their ancient song,
But tears still follow as they breathe along.

Child of the soil, whom fortune sends to range
Where man and nature, faith and customs change,
Borne in thy memory, each familiar tone
Mourns on the winds that sigh in every zone.
When Ceylon sweeps thee with her perfumed breeze
Through the warm billows of the Indian seas;
When--ship and shadow blended both in one--
Flames o'er thy mast the equatorial sun,
From sparkling midnight to refulgent noon
Thy canvas swelling with the still monsoon;
When through thy shrouds the wild tornado sings,
And thy poor sea-bird folds her tattered wings,--
Oft will delusion o'er thy senses steal,
And airy echoes ring the Sabbath peal
Then, dim with grateful tears, in long array
Rise the fair town, the island-studded bay,
Home, with its smiling board, its cheering fire,
The half-choked welcome of the expecting sire,
The mother's kiss, and, still if aught remain,
Our whispering hearts shall aid the silent strain.
Ah, let the dreamer o'er the taffrail lean
To muse unheeded, and to weep unseen;
Fear not the tropic's dews, the evening's chills,
His heart lies warm among his triple hills!

Turned from her path by this deceitful gleam,
My wayward fancy half forgets her theme.
See through the streets that slumbered in repose
The living current of devotion flows,
Its varied forms in one harmonious band
Age leading childhood by its dimpled hand;
Want, in the robe whose faded edges fall
To tell of rags beneath the tartan shawl;
And wealth, in silks that, fluttering to appear,
Lift the deep borders of the proud cashmere.
See, but glance briefly, sorrow-worn and pale,
Those sunken cheeks beneath the widow's veil;
Alone she wanders where with HIM she trod,
No arm to stay her, but she leans on God.
While other doublets deviate here and there,
What secret handcuff binds that pretty pair?
Compactest couple! pressing side to side,--
Ah, the white bonnet that reveals the bride!
By the white neckcloth, with its straitened tie,
The sober hat, the Sabbath-speaking eye,
Severe and smileless, he that runs may read
The stern disciple of Geneva's creed
Decent and slow, behold his solemn march;
Silent he enters through yon crowded arch.
A livelier bearing of the outward man,
The light-hued gloves, the undevout rattan,
Now smartly raised or half profanely twirled,--
A bright, fresh twinkle from the week-day world,--

Tell their plain story; yes, thine eyes behold
A cheerful Christian from the liberal fold.
Down the chill street that curves in gloomiest shade
What marks betray yon solitary maid?
The cheek's red rose that speaks of balmier air,
The Celtic hue that shades her braided hair,
The gilded missal in her kerchief tied,--
Poor Nora, exile from Killarney's side!
Sister in toil, though blanched by colder skies,
That left their azure in her downcast eyes,
See pallid Margaret, Labor's patient child,
Scarce weaned from home, the nursling of the wild,
Where white Katahdin o'er the horizon shines,
And broad Penobscot dashes through the pines.
Still, as she hastes, her careful fingers hold
The unfailing hymn-book in its cambric fold.
Six days at drudgery's heavy wheel she stands,
The seventh sweet morning folds her weary hands.
Yes, child of suffering, thou mayst well be sure
He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor!

This weekly picture faithful Memory draws,
Nor claims the noisy tribute of applause;
Faint is the glow such barren hopes can lend,
And frail the line that asks no loftier end.
Trust me, kind listener, I will yet beguile
Thy saddened features of the promised smile.
This magic mantle thou must well divide,
It has its sable and its ermine side;
Yet, ere the lining of the robe appears,
Take thou in silence what I give in tears.

Dear listening soul, this transitory scene
Of murmuring stillness, busily serene,--
This solemn pause, the breathing-space of man,
The halt of toil's exhausted caravan,--
Comes sweet with music to thy wearied ear;
Rise with its anthems to a holier sphere!

Deal meekly, gently, with the hopes that guide
The lowliest brother straying from thy side
If right, they bid thee tremble for thine own;
If wrong, the verdict is for God alone.

What though the champions of thy faith esteem
The sprinkled fountain or baptismal stream;
Shall jealous passions in unseemly strife
Cross their dark weapons o'er the waves of life?

Let my free soul, expanding as it can,
Leave to his scheme the thoughtful Puritan;
But Calvin's dogma shall my lips deride?
In that stern faith my angel Mary died;
Or ask if mercy's milder creed can save,
Sweet sister, risen from thy new-made grave?

True, the harsh founders of thy church reviled
That ancient faith, the trust of Erin's child;
Must thou be raking in the crumbled past

For racks and fagots in her teeth to cast?
See from the ashes of Helvetia's pile
The whitened skull of old Servetus smile!
Round her young heart thy "Romish Upas" threw
Its firm, deep fibres, strengthening as she grew;
Thy sneering voice may call them "Popish tricks,"
Her Latin prayers, her dangling crucifix,
But De Profundis blessed her father's grave,
That "idol" cross her dying mother gave!
What if some angel looks with equal eyes
On her and thee, the simple and the wise,
Writes each dark fault against thy brighter creed,
And drops a tear with every foolish bead!
Grieve, as thou must, o'er history's reeking page;
Blush for the wrongs that stain thy happier age;
Strive with the wanderer from the better path,
Bearing thy message meekly, not in wrath;
Weep for the frail that err, the weak that fall,
Have thine own faith,--but hope and pray for all!

Faith; Conscience; Love. A meaner task remains,
And humbler thoughts must creep in lowlier strains.
Shalt thou be honest? Ask the worldly schools,
And all will tell thee knaves are busier fools;
Prudent? Industrious? Let not modern pens
Instruct "Poor Richard's" fellow-citizens.

Be firm! One constant element in luck
Is genuine solid old Teutonic pluck.
See yon tall shaft; it felt the earthquake's thrill,
Clung to its base, and greets the sunrise still.

Stick to your aim: the mongrel's hold will slip,
But only crowbars loose the bulldog's grip;
Small as he looks, the jaw that never yields
Drags down the bellowing monarch of the fields!

Yet in opinions look not always back,--
Your wake is nothing, mind the coming track;
Leave what you've done for what you have to do;
Don't be "consistent," but be simply true.

Don't catch the fidgets; you have found your place
Just in the focus of a nervous race,
Fretful to change and rabid to discuss,
Full of excitements, always in a fuss.
Think of the patriarchs; then compare as men
These lean-cheeked maniacs of the tongue and pen!
Run, if you like, but try to keep your breath;
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death;
And with new notions,--let me change the rule,--
Don't strike the iron till it 's slightly cool.

Choose well your set; our feeble nature seeks
The aid of clubs, the countenance of cliques;
And with this object settle first of all
Your weight of metal and your size of ball.
Track not the steps of such as hold you cheap,
Too mean to prize, though good enough to keep;

The "real, genuine, no-mistake Tom Thumbs"
Are little people fed on great men's crumbs.
Yet keep no followers of that hateful brood
That basely mingles with its wholesome food
The tumid reptile, which, the poet said,
Doth wear a precious jewel in his head.

If the wild filly, "Progress," thou wouldst ride,
Have young companions ever at thy side;
But wouldst thou stride the stanch old mare, "Success,"
Go with thine elders, though they please thee less.
Shun such as lounge through afternoons and eves,
And on thy dial write, "Beware of thieves!"
Felon of minutes, never taught to feel
The worth of treasures which thy fingers steal,
Pick my left pocket of its silver dime,
But spare the right,--it holds my golden time!

Does praise delight thee? Choose some ultra side,--
A sure old recipe, and often tried;
Be its apostle, congressman, or bard,
Spokesman or jokesman, only drive it hard;
But know the forfeit which thy choice abides,
For on two wheels the poor reformer rides,--
One black with epithets the anti throws,
One white with flattery painted by the pros.

Though books on MANNERS are not out of print,
An honest tongue may drop a harmless hint.
Stop not, unthinking, every friend you meet,
To spin your wordy fabric in the street;
While you are emptying your colloquial pack,
The fiend Lumbago jumps upon his back.
Nor cloud his features with the unwelcome tale
Of how he looks, if haply thin and pale;
Health is a subject for his child, his wife,
And the rude office that insures his life.
Look in his face, to meet thy neighbor's soul,
Not on his garments, to detect a hole;
"How to observe" is what thy pages show,
Pride of thy sex, Miss Harriet Martineau!
Oh, what a precious book the one would be
That taught observers what they 're NOT to see!

I tell in verse--'t were better done in prose--
One curious trick that everybody knows;
Once form this habit, and it's very strange
How long it sticks, how hard it is to change.
Two friendly people, both disposed to smile,
Who meet, like others, every little while,
Instead of passing with a pleasant bow,
And "How d' ye do?" or "How 's your uncle now?"

Impelled by feelings in their nature kind,
But slightly weak and somewhat undefined,
Rush at each other, make a sudden stand,
Begin to talk, expatiate, and expand;
Each looks quite radiant, seems extremely struck,
Their meeting so was such a piece of luck;

Each thinks the other thinks he 's greatly pleased
To screw the vice in which they both are squeezed;
So there they talk, in dust, or mud, or snow,
Both bored to death, and both afraid to go!
Your hat once lifted, do not hang your fire,
Nor, like slow Ajax, fighting still, retire;
When your old castor on your crown you clap,
Go off; you've mounted your percussion cap.

Some words on LANGUAGE may be well applied,
And take them kindly, though they touch your pride.
Words lead to things; a scale is more precise,--
Coarse speech, bad grammar, swearing, drinking, vice.
Our cold Northeaster's icy fetter clips
The native freedom of the Saxon lips;
See the brown peasant of the plastic South,
How all his passions play about his mouth!
With us, the feature that transmits the soul,
A frozen, passive, palsied breathing-hole.
The crampy shackles of the ploughboy's walk
Tie the small muscles when he strives to talk;
Not all the pumice of the polished town
Can smooth this roughness of the barnyard down;
Rich, honored, titled, he betrays his race
By this one mark,--he's awkward in the face;--
Nature's rude impress, long before he knew
The sunny street that holds the sifted few.
It can't be helped, though, if we're taken young,
We gain some freedom of the lips and tongue;
But school and college often try in vain
To break the padlock of our boyhood's chain
One stubborn word will prove this axiom true,--
No quondam rustic can enunciate view.

A few brief stanzas may be well employed
To speak of errors we can all avoid.
Learning condemns beyond the reach of hope
The careless lips that speak of so'ap for soap;
Her edict exiles from her fair abode
The clownish voice that utters ro'ad for road
Less stern to him who calls his coat a co'at,
And steers his boat, believing it a bo'at,
She pardoned one, our classic city's boast,
Who said at Cambridge mo'st instead of most,
But knit her brows and stamped her angry foot
To hear a Teacher call a root a ro'ot.

Once more: speak clearly, if you speak at all;
Carve every word before you let it fall;
Don't, like a lecturer or dramatic star,
Try over-hard to roll the British R;
Do put your accents in the proper spot;
Don't,--let me beg you,--don't say "How?" for "What?"
And when you stick on conversation's burs,
Don't strew your pathway with those dreadful _urs_.

From little matters let us pass to less,
And lightly touch the mysteries of DRESS;
The outward forms the inner man reveal,--

We guess the pulp before we cut the peel.

I leave the broadcloth,--coats and all the rest,--
The dangerous waistcoat, called by cockneys "vest,"
The things named "pants" in certain documents,
A word not made for gentlemen, but "gents;"
One single precept might the whole condense
Be sure your tailor is a man of sense;
But add a little care, a decent pride,
And always err upon the sober side.

Three pairs of boots one pair of feet demands,
If polished daily by the owner's hands;
If the dark menial's visit save from this,
Have twice the number,--for he 'll sometimes miss.
One pair for critics of the nicer sex,
Close in the instep's clinging circumflex,
Long, narrow, light; the Gallic boot of love,
A kind of cross between a boot and glove.
Compact, but easy, strong, substantial, square,
Let native art compile the medium pair.
The third remains, and let your tasteful skill
Here show some relics of affection still;
Let no stiff cowhide, reeking from the tan,
No rough caoutchoue, no deformed brogan,
Disgrace the tapering outline of your feet,
Though yellow torrents gurgle through the street.

Wear seemly gloves; not black, nor yet too light,
And least of all the pair that once was white;
Let the dead party where you told your loves
Bury in peace its dead bouquets and gloves;
Shave like the goat, if so your fancy bids,
But be a parent,--don't neglect your kids.

Have a good hat; the secret of your looks
Lives with the beaver in Canadian brooks;
Virtue may flourish in an old cravat,
But man and nature scorn the shocking hat.
Does beauty slight you from her gay abodes?
Like bright Apollo, you must take to Rhoades,--
Mount the new castor,--ice itself will melt;
Boots, gloves, may fail; the hat is always felt.

Be shy of breastpins; plain, well-ironed white,
With small pearl buttons,--two of them in sight,--
Is always genuine, while your gems may pass,
Though real diamonds, for ignoble glass.
But spurn those paltry Cisatlantic lies
That round his breast the shabby rustic ties;
Breathe not the name profaned to hallow things
The indignant laundress blushes when she brings!

Our freeborn race, averse to every check,
Has tossed the yoke of Europe from its neck;
From the green prairie to the sea-girt town,
The whole wide nation turns its collars down.
The stately neck is manhood's manliest part;
It takes the life-blood freshest from the heart.

With short, curled ringlets close around it spread,
How light and strong it lifts the Grecian head!
Thine, fair Erechtheus of Minerva's wall;
Or thine, young athlete of the Louvre's hall,
Smooth as the pillar flashing in the sun
That filled the arena where thy wreaths were won,
Firm as the band that clasps the antlered spoil
Strained in the winding anaconda's coil
I spare the contrast; it were only kind
To be a little, nay, intensely blind.
Choose for yourself: I know it cuts your ear;
I know the points will sometimes interfere;
I know that often, like the filial John,
Whom sleep surprised with half his drapery on,
You show your features to the astonished town
With one side standing and the other down;--
But, O, my friend! my favorite fellow-man!
If Nature made you on her modern plan,
Sooner than wander with your windpipe bare,--
The fruit of Eden ripening in the air,--
With that lean head-stalk, that protruding chin,
Wear standing collars, were they made of tin!
And have a neckcloth--by the throat of Jove!--
Cut from the funnel of a rusty stove!

The long-drawn lesson narrows to its close,
Chill, slender, slow, the dwindled current flows;
Tired of the ripples on its feeble springs,
Once more the Muse unfolds her upward wings.

Land of my birth, with this unhallowed tongue,
Thy hopes, thy dangers, I perchance had sung;
But who shall sing, in brutal disregard
Of all the essentials of the "native bard"?
Lake, sea, shore, prairie, forest, mountain, fall,
His eye omnivorous must devour them all;
The tallest summits and the broadest tides
His foot must compass with its giant strides,
Where Ocean thunders, where Missouri rolls,
And tread at once the tropics and the poles;
His food all forms of earth, fire, water, air,
His home all space, his birthplace everywhere.

Some grave compatriot, having seen perhaps
The pictured page that goes in Worcester's Maps,
And, read in earnest what was said in jest,
"Who drives fat oxen"--please to add the rest,--
Sprung the odd notion that the poet's dreams
Grow in the ratio of his hills and streams;
And hence insisted that the aforesaid "bard,"
Pink of the future, fancy's pattern-card,
The babe of nature in the "giant West,"
Must be of course her biggest and her best.

Oh! when at length the expected bard shall come,
Land of our pride, to strike thine echoes dumb,
(And many a voice exclaims in prose and rhyme,
It's getting late, and he's behind his time,)
When all thy mountains clap their hands in joy,

And all thy cataracts thunder, "That 's the boy,"--
Say if with him the reign of song shall end,
And Heaven declare its final dividend!

Becalm, dear brother! whose impassioned strain
Comes from an alley watered by a drain;
The little Mincio, dribbling to the Po,
Beats all the epics of the Hoang Ho;
If loved in earnest by the tuneful maid,
Don't mind their nonsense,--never be afraid!

The nurse of poets feeds her winged brood
By common firesides, on familiar food;
In a low hamlet, by a narrow stream,
Where bovine rustics used to doze and dream,
She filled young William's fiery fancy full,
While old John Shakespeare talked of beeves and wool!

No Alpine needle, with its climbing spire,
Brings down for mortals the Promethean fire,
If careless nature have forgot to frame
An altar worthy of the sacred flame.
Unblest by any save the goatherd's lines,
Mont Blanc rose soaring through his "sea of pines;"
In vain the rivers from their ice-caves flash;
No hymn salutes them but the Ranz des Vaches,
Till lazy Coleridge, by the morning's light,
Gazed for a moment on the fields of white,
And lo! the glaciers found at length a tongue,
Mont Blanc was vocal, and Chamouni sung!

Children of wealth or want, to each is given
One spot of green, and all the blue of heaven!
Enough if these their outward shows impart;
The rest is thine,--the scenery of the heart.

If passion's hectic in thy stanzas glow,
Thy heart's best life-blood ebbing as they flow;
If with thy verse thy strength and bloom distil,
Drained by the pulses of the fevered thrill;
If sound's sweet effluence polarize thy brain,
And thoughts turn crystals in thy fluid strain,--
Nor rolling ocean, nor the prairie's bloom,
Nor streaming cliffs, nor rayless cavern's gloom,
Need'st thou, young poet, to inform thy line;
Thy own broad signet stamps thy song divine!
Let others gaze where silvery streams are rolled,
And chase the rainbow for its cup of gold;
To thee all landscapes wear a heavenly dye,
Changed in the glance of thy prismatic eye;
Nature evoked thee in sublimer throes,
For thee her inmost Arethusa flows,--
The mighty mother's living depths are stirred,--
Thou art the starred Osiris of the herd!

A few brief lines; they touch on solemn chords,
And hearts may leap to hear their honest words;
Yet, ere the jarring bugle-blast is blown,
The softer lyre shall breathe its soothing tone.

New England! proudly may thy children claim
Their honored birthright by its humblest name
Cold are thy skies, but, ever fresh and clear,
No rank malaria stains thine atmosphere;
No fungous weeds invade thy scanty soil,
Scarred by the ploughshares of unslumbering toil.
Long may the doctrines by thy sages taught,
Raised from the quarries where their sires have wrought,
Be like the granite of thy rock-ribbed land,--
As slow to rear, as obdurate to stand;
And as the ice that leaves thy crystal mine
Chills the fierce alcohol in the Creole's wine,
So may the doctrines of thy sober school
Keep the hot theories of thy neighbors cool!

If ever, trampling on her ancient path,
Cankered by treachery or inflamed by wrath,
With smooth "Resolves" or with discordant cries,
The mad Briareus of disunion rise,
Chiefs of New England! by your sires' renown,
Dash the red torches of the rebel down!
Flood his black hearthstone till its flames expire,
Though your old Sachem fanned his council-fire!

But if at last, her fading cycle run,
The tongue must forfeit what the arm has won,
Then rise, wild Ocean! roll thy surging shock
Full on old Plymouth's desecrated rock!
Scale the proud shaft degenerate hands have hewn,
Where bleeding Valor stained the flowers of June!
Sweep in one tide her spires and turrets down,
And howl her dirge above Monadnock's crown!

List not the tale; the Pilgrim's hallowed shore,
Though strewn with weeds, is granite at the core;
Oh, rather trust that He who made her free
Will keep her true as long as faith shall be!
Farewell! yet lingering through the destined hour,
Leave, sweet Enchantress, one memorial flower!

An Angel, floating o'er the waste of snow
That clad our Western desert, long ago,
(The same fair spirit who, unseen by day,
Shone as a star along the Mayflower's way,)--
Sent, the first herald of the Heavenly plan,
To choose on earth a resting-place for man,--
Tired with his flight along the unvaried field,
Turned to soar upwards, when his glance revealed
A calm, bright bay enclosed in rocky bounds,
And at its entrance stood three sister mounds.

The Angel spake: "This threefold hill shall be
The home of Arts, the nurse of Liberty!
One stately summit from its shaft shall pour
Its deep-red blaze along the darkened shore;
Emblem of thoughts that, kindling far and wide,
In danger's night shall be a nation's guide.
One swelling crest the citadel shall crown,

Its slanted bastions black with battle's frown,
And bid the sons that tread its scowling heights
Bare their strong arms for man and all his rights!
One silent steep along the northern wave
Shall hold the patriarch's and the hero's grave;
When fades the torch, when o'er the peaceful scene
The embattled fortress smiles in living green,
The cross of Faith, the anchor staff of Hope,
Shall stand eternal on its grassy slope;
There through all time shall faithful Memory tell,
'Here Virtue toiled, and Patriot Valor fell;
Thy free, proud fathers slumber at thy side;
Live as they lived, or perish as they died!'"

AN AFTER-DINNER POEM

(TERPSICHORE)

Read at the Annual Dinner of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at
Cambridge, August 24, 1843.

IN narrowest girdle, O reluctant Muse,
In closest frock and Cinderella shoes,
Bound to the foot-lights for thy brief display,
One zephyr step, and then dissolve away!

.....

Short is the space that gods and men can spare

To Song's twin brother when she is not there.
Let others water every lusty line,
As Homer's heroes did their purple wine;
Pierian revellers! Know in strains like these
The native juice, the real honest squeeze,---
Strains that, diluted to the twentieth power,
In yon grave temple might have filled an hour.
Small room for Fancy's many-chorded lyre,
For Wit's bright rockets with their trains of fire,
For Pathos, struggling vainly to surprise
The iron tutor's tear-denying eyes,
For Mirth, whose finger with delusive wile
Turns the grim key of many a rusty smile,
For Satire, emptying his corrosive flood
On hissing Folly's gas-exhaling brood,
The pun, the fun, the moral, and the joke,
The hit, the thrust, the pugilistic poke,--
Small space for these, so pressed by niggard Time,
Like that false matron, known to nursery rhyme,--
Insidious Morey,--scarce her tale begun,
Ere listening infants weep the story done.

Oh, had we room to rip the mighty bags
That Time, the harlequin, has stuffed with rags!
Grant us one moment to unloose the strings,

While the old graybeard shuts his leather wings.
But what a heap of motley trash appears
Crammed in the bundles of successive years!
As the lost rustic on some festal day
Stares through the concourse in its vast array,--
Where in one cake a throng of faces runs,
All stuck together like a sheet of buns,--
And throws the bait of some unheeded name,
Or shoots a wink with most uncertain aim,
So roams my vision, wandering over all,
And strives to choose, but knows not where to fall.

Skins of flayed authors, husks of dead reviews,
The turn-coat's clothes, the office-seeker's shoes,
Scraps from cold feasts, where conversation runs
Through mouldy toasts to oxidated puns,
And grating songs a listening crowd endures,
Rasped from the throats of bellowing amateurs;
Sermons, whose writers played such dangerous tricks
Their own heresiarchs called them heretics,
(Strange that one term such distant poles should link,
The Priestleyan's copper and the Puseyan's zinc);
Poems that shuffle with superfluous legs
A blindfold minuet over addled eggs,
Where all the syllables that end in ed,
Like old dragoons, have cuts across the head;
Essays so dark Champollion might despair
To guess what mummy of a thought was there,
Where our poor English, striped with foreign phrase,
Looks like a zebra in a parson's chaise;
Lectures that cut our dinners down to roots,
Or prove (by monkeys) men should stick to fruits,--
Delusive error, as at trifling charge
Professor Gripes will certify at large;
Mesmeric pamphlets, which to facts appeal,
Each fact as slippery as a fresh-caught eel;
And figured heads, whose hieroglyphs invite
To wandering knaves that discount fools at sight:
Such things as these, with heaps of unpaid bills,
And candy puffs and homoeopathic pills,
And ancient bell-crowns with contracted rim,
And bonnets hideous with expanded brim,
And coats whose memory turns the sartor pale,
Their sequels tapering like a lizard's tale,--
How might we spread them to the smiling day,
And toss them, fluttering like the new-mown hay,
To laughter's light or sorrow's pitying shower,
Were these brief minutes lengthened to an hour.

The narrow moments fit like Sunday shoes,--
How vast the heap, how quickly must we choose!
A few small scraps from out his mountain mass
We snatch in haste, and let the vagrant pass.
This shrunken CRUST that Cerberus could not bite,
Stamped (in one corner) "Pickwick copyright,"
Kneaded by youngsters, raised by flattery's yeast,
Was once a loaf, and helped to make a feast.
He for whose sake the glittering show appears
Has sown the world with laughter and with tears,

And they whose welcome wets the bumper's brim
Have wit and wisdom,--for they all quote him.
So, many a tongue the evening hour prolongs
With spangled speeches,--let alone the songs;
Statesmen grow merry, lean attorneys laugh,
And weak teetotals warm to half and half,
And beardless Tullys, new to festive scenes,
Cut their first crop of youth's precocious greens,
And wits stand ready for impromptu claps,
With loaded barrels and percussion caps,
And Pathos, cantering through the minor keys,
Waves all her onions to the trembling breeze;
While the great Feasted views with silent glee
His scattered limbs in Yankee fricassee.

Sweet is the scene where genial friendship plays
The pleasing game of interchanging praise.
Self-love, grimalkin of the human heart,
Is ever pliant to the master's art;
Soothed with a word, she peacefully withdraws
And sheathes in velvet her obnoxious claws,
And thrills the hand that smooths her glossy fur
With the light tremor of her grateful purr.

But what sad music fills the quiet hall,
If on her back a feline rival fall!
And oh, what noises shake the tranquil house
If old Self-interest cheats her of a mouse.

Thou, O my country, hast thy foolish ways,
Too apt to purr at every stranger's praise;
But if the stranger touch thy modes or laws,
Off goes the velvet and out come the claws!
And thou, illustrious! but too poorly paid
In toasts from Pickwick for thy great crusade,
Though, while the echoes labored with thy name,
The public trap denied thy little game,
Let other lips our jealous laws revile,--
The marble Talfourd or the rude Carlyle,--
But on thy lids, which Heaven forbids to close
Where'er the light of kindly nature glows,
Let not the dollars that a churl denies
Weigh like the shillings on a dead man's eyes!
Or, if thou wilt, be more discreetly blind,
Nor ask to see all wide extremes combined.
Not in our wastes the dainty blossoms smile
That crowd the gardens of thy scanty isle.
There white-cheeked Luxury weaves a thousand charms;
Here sun-browed Labor swings his naked arms.
Long are the furrows he must trace between
The ocean's azure and the prairie's green;
Full many a blank his destined realm displays,
Yet sees the promise of his riper days
Far through yon depths the panting engine moves,
His chariots ringing in their steel-shod grooves;
And Erie's naiad flings her diamond wave
O'er the wild sea-nymph in her distant cave!
While tasks like these employ his anxious hours,
What if his cornfields are not edged with flowers?

Though bright as silver the meridian beams
Shine through the crystal of thine English streams,
Turbid and dark the mighty wave is whirled
That drains our Andes and divides a world!

But lo! a PARCHMENT! Surely it would seem
The sculptured impress speaks of power supreme;
Some grave design the solemn page must claim
That shows so broadly an emblazoned name.
A sovereign's promise! Look, the lines afford
All Honor gives when Caution asks his word:
There sacred Faith has laid her snow-white hands,
And awful Justice knit her iron bands;
Yet every leaf is stained with treachery's dye,
And every letter crusted with a lie.
Alas! no treason has degraded yet
The Arab's salt, the Indian's calumet;
A simple rite, that bears the wanderer's pledge,
Blunts the keen shaft and turns the dagger's edge;
While jockeying senates stop to sign and seal,
And freeborn statesmen legislate to steal.
Rise, Europe, tottering with thine Atlas load,
Turn thy proud eye to Freedom's blest abode,
And round her forehead, wreathed with heavenly flame,
Bind the dark garland of her daughter's shame!
Ye ocean clouds, that wrap the angry blast,
Coil her stained ensign round its haughty mast,
Or tear the fold that wears so foul a scar,
And drive a bolt through every blackened star!
Once more,--once only,--- we must stop so soon:
What have we here? A GERMAN-SILVER SPOON;
A cheap utensil, which we often see
Used by the dabblers in aesthetic tea,
Of slender fabric, somewhat light and thin,
Made of mixed metal, chiefly lead and tin;
The bowl is shallow, and the handle small,
Marked in large letters with the name JEAN PAUL.
Small as it is, its powers are passing strange,
For all who use it show a wondrous change;
And first, a fact to make the barbers stare,
It beats Macassar for the growth of hair.
See those small youngsters whose expansive ears
Maternal kindness grazed with frequent shears;
Each bristling crop a dangling mass becomes,
And all the spoonies turn to Absaloms
Nor this alone its magic power displays,
It alters strangely all their works and ways;
With uncouth words they tire their tender lungs,
The same bald phrases on their hundred tongues
"Ever" "The Ages" in their page appear,
"Alway" the bedlamite is called a "Seer;"
On every leaf the "earnest" sage may scan,
Portentous bore! their "many-sided" man,--
A weak eclectic, groping vague and dim,
Whose every angle is a half-starved whim,
Blind as a mole and curious as a lynx,
Who rides a beetle, which he calls a "Sphinx."
And oh, what questions asked in clubfoot rhyme
Of Earth the tongueless and the deaf-mute Time!

Here babbling "Insight" shouts in Nature's ears
His last conundrum on the orbs and spheres;
There Self-inspection sucks its little thumb,
With "Whence am I?" and "Wherefore did I come?"
Deluded infants! will they ever know
Some doubts must darken o'er the world below,
Though all the Platos of the nursery trail
Their "clouds of glory" at the go-cart's tail?
Oh might these couplets their attention claim
That gain their author the Philistine's name
(A stubborn race, that, spurning foreign law,
Was much belabored with an ass's jaw.)

Melodious Laura! From the sad retreats
That hold thee, smothered with excess of sweets,
Shade of a shadow, spectre of a dream,
Glance thy wan eye across the Stygian stream!
The slipshod dreamer treads thy fragrant halls,
The sophist's cobwebs hang thy roseate walls,
And o'er the crotchets of thy jingling tunes
The bard of mystery scrawls his crooked "runes."
Yes, thou art gone, with all the tuneful hordes
That candied thoughts in amber-colored words,
And in the precincts of thy late abodes
The clattering verse-wright hammers Orphic odes.
Thou, soft as zephyr, wast content to fly
On the gilt pinions of a balmy sigh;
He, vast as Phoebus on his burning wheels,
Would stride through ether at Orion's heels.
Thy emblem, Laura, was a perfume-jar,
And thine, young Orpheus, is a pewter star.
The balance trembles,--be its verdict told
When the new jargon slumbers with the old!

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Cease, playful goddess! From thine airy bound
Drop like a feather softly to the ground;
This light bolero grows a ticklish dance,
And there is mischief in thy kindling glance.
To-morrow bids thee, with rebuking frown,
Change thy gauze tunic for a home-made gown,
Too blest by fortune if the passing day
Adorn thy bosom with its frail bouquet,
But oh, still happier if the next forgets
Thy daring steps and dangerous pirouettes!

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