

Nor gives the jealous lord one diamond
drop
So to be husbanded for poorer days.
Why need I volumes, if one word suffice?
Why need I galleries, when a pupil's
draught
After the master's sketch fills and o'erfills
My apprehension? Why seek Italy,
Who cannot circumnavigate the sea³⁰
Of thoughts and things at home, but still
adjourn
The nearest matters for a thousand days?¹
1846.

MEROPS

WHAT care I, so they stand the same, —
Things of the heavenly mind, —
How long the power to give them name
Taries yet behind?

Thus far to-day your favors reach,
O fair, appeasing presences!
Ye taught my lips a single speech,
And a thousand silences.

Space grants beyond his fated road
No inch to the god of day;
And copious language still bestowed
One word, no more, to say.

1846.

MUSKETAQUID

BECAUSE I was content with these poor
fields,
Low, open meads, slender and sluggish
streams,
And found a home in haunts which others
scorned,
The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,
And granted me the freedom of their
state,
And in their secret senate have prevailed
With the dear, dangerous lords that rule
our life,²
Made moon and planets parties to their
bond,
And through my rock-like, solitary wont
Shot million rays of thought and tender-
ness.
10

¹ See the poems 'Written at Rome' and 'Written in Naples,' with the notes on them; and compare also Whittier's 'To —,' and 'The Last Walk in Autumn.'
² Compare the poem 'Experience.'

For me, in showers, in sweeping showers,
the Spring
Visits the valley; — break away the
clouds, —
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,
Blue-coated, — flying before from tree to
tree,
Courageous sing a delicate overture
To lead the tardy concert of the year.
Onward and nearer rides the sun of May;
And wide around, the marriage of the
plants²⁰
Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain
The surge of summer's beauty; dell and
crag,
Hollow and lake, hillside and pine arcade,
Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged
cliff
Has thousand faces in a thousand hours.

Beneath low hills, in the broad interval
Through which at will our Indian rivulet
Winds mindful still of sannup and of
squaw,
Whose pipe and arrow off the plough un-
buries,
Here in pine houses built of new-fallen
trees,³⁰
Supplanters of the tribe, the farmers dwell.
Traveller, to thee, perchance, a tedious
road,

Or, it may be, a picture; to these men,
The landscape is an armory of powers,
Which, one by one, they know to draw and
use.

They harness beast, bird, insect, to their
work;
They prove the virtues of each bed of
rock,

And, like the chemist 'mid his loaded jars,
Draw from each stratum its adapted use
To drug their crops or weapon their arts
withal.⁴⁰

They turn the frost upon their chemic heap,
They set the wind to winnow pulse and
grain,

They thank the spring-flood for its fertile
slime,

And, on cheap summit-levels of the snow,
Slide with the sledge to inaccessible woods
O'er meadows bottomless. So, year by
year,

They fight the elements with elements

(That one would say, meadow and forest
walked,
Transmuted in these men to rule their like),
And by the order in the field disclose⁵⁰
The order regnant in the yeoman's brain.

What these strong masters wrote at large
in miles,

I followed in small copy in my acre;
For there's no rood has not a star above it;¹
The cordial quality of pear or plum
Ascends as gladly in a single tree
As in broad orchards resonant with bees;
And every atom poises for itself,
And for the whole. The gentle deities
Showed me the lore of colors and of sounds,
The innumerable tenements of beauty,⁶⁰
The miracle of generative force,
Far-reaching concords of astronomy
Felt in the plants and in the punctual birds;
Better, the linked purpose of the whole,
And, chiefest prize, found I true liberty
In the glad home plain-dealing Nature gave.
The polite found me impolite; the great
Would mortify me, but in vain; for still
I am a willow of the wilderness,⁷⁰
Loving the wind that bent me. All my hurts
My garden spade can heal. A woodland
walk,

A quest of river-grapes, a mocking thrush,
A wild-rose, or rock-loving columbine,
Salve my worst wounds.

For thus the wood-gods murmured in my
ear:

'Dost love our manners? Canst thou silent
lie?

Canst thou, thy pride forgot, like Nature
pass

Into the winter night's extinguished mood?
Canst thou shine now, then darkle,⁸⁰

And being latent, feel thyself no less?
As, when the all-worshipped moon attracts
the eye,

The river, hill, stems, foliage are obscure,
Yet envies none, none are unenviable.'

1846.

NATURE

A SUBTLE chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;

¹ Over every chimney is a star: in every field is an oaken garland or a wreath of parsley, laurel or wheat-ears. Nature waits to decorate every child. (*Journal*, 1840.)

The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.²
1849.

DAYS³

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds
them all.

I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

1851?

1857.

TWO RIVERS⁴

THY summer voice, Musketaquit,
Repeats the music of the rain;

² Prefixed to Emerson's 'Nature,' in the second edition (1849), ten years before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

³ Compare Emerson's expression in prose of the same idea in his 'Works and Days': 'The days are ever divine, as to the first Aryans. They come and go like muffled and veiled figures, sent from a distant friendly party; but they say nothing, and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away.' See Holmes's comparison of this passage with the poem, as typical of the essential differences between prose and poetry, in his *Life of Emerson*, pp. 310-314.

Lowell calls this poem 'as limpid and complete as a Greek epigram.' (*Life of Lowell*, vol. 1, p. 414.)

⁴ The *Journal* of 1856 shows the 'Two Rivers,' perhaps the most musical of his poems, as the thought first came to him by the river-bank and was then brought into form.

'Thy voice is sweet, Musketaquit, and repeats the music of the rain, but sweeter is the silent stream which flows even through thee, as thou through the land.'

'Thou art shut in thy banks, but the stream I love flows in thy water, and flows through rocks and through the air and through rays of light as well, and through darkness, and through men and women.'

'I hear and see the inundation and the eternal spending of the stream in winter and in summer, in men and animals, in passion and thought. Happy are they who can hear it.'

'I see thy brimming, eddying stream
And thy enchantment.
For thou changest every rock in thy bed
Into a gem,
All is opal and agate,
And at will thou pavest with diamonds;
Take them away from the stream
And they are poor, shreds and flints.
So is it with me to-day.'

(E. W. EMERSON, *Emerson in Concord*, pp. 232-233.)

But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
Through thee, as thou through Concord
Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent:
The stream I love unbounded goes
Through flood and sea and firmament;
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,
I hear the spending of the stream
Through years, through men, through Na-
ture fleet,
Through love and thought, through power
and dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay;
They lose their grief who hear his song,
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream, —
Who drink it shall not thirst again;
No darkness stains its equal gleam
And ages drop in it like rain.

1856-57.

1858.

BRAHMA¹

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

¹ This simple and condensed figurative statement of one of the commonplaces of any idealistic philosophy, whether Hindu, Platonist, Berkeleyan, or Hegelian, greatly astonished the matter-of-fact Americans of 1857, and aroused more ridicule and parody than any other of Emerson's poems. J. T. Trowbridge describes its effect as follows: "It was more talked about and puzzled over and parodied than any other poem of sixteen lines published within my recollection. 'What does it mean?' was the question readers everywhere asked; and if one had the reputation of seeing a little way into the Concord philosophy, he was liable at any time to be stopped on the street by some perplexed inquirer, who would draw him into the nearest doorway, produce a crumpled newspaper clipping from the recesses of a waistcoat pocket, and, with knitted brows, exclaim, 'Here! you think you understand Emerson; now tell me what all this is about. — If the red slayer think he slays,' and so forth." (Quoted in Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, p. 415.)

Somewhat wiser was the little school-girl in the story vouched for by Mr. E. W. Emerson. She was bidden by her teacher to learn some verses of Emerson. Next day she recited "Brahma." The astonished teacher asked why she chose that poem. The child answered that she tried several, but could not understand them at all, so learned this one, "for it was so easy. It just means 'God everywhere.'"

Lowell wrote to Emerson after the poem had appeared in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, of which

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

1857.

ODE

SUNG IN THE TOWN HALL, CONCORD,
JULY 4, 1857

O TENDERLY the haughty day
Fills his blue urn with fire;
One morn is in the mighty heaven,
And one in our desire.

The cannon booms from town to town,
Our pulses beat not less,
The joy-bells chime their tidings down,
Which children's voices bless.

For He that flung the broad blue fold
O'er-mantling land and sea,
One third part of the sky unrolled
For the banner of the free.

The men are ripe of Saxon kind
To build an equal state, —
To take the statute from the mind
And make of duty fate.

Lowell was editor: "You have seen, no doubt, how the Philistines have been parodying your 'Brahma,' and showing how they still believe in their special god Baal, and are unable to arrive at a conception of an omnipresent Deity. . . . Let me thank you in especial for one line in 'Brahma,' which abides with me as an intimate —

'When me they fly, I am the wings.

You have crammed meaning there with an hydraulic press.' It is this condensation of meaning which makes the great effectiveness of the poem, and also its difficulty, if difficulty there be.

The direct source of this particular expression of Emerson's idealism seems to be Krishna's song in the *Bhagavat-Gita*, which in Edwin Arnold's translation is as follows: —

He who shall say, 'Lo! I have slain a man.'
He who shall think, 'Lo! I am slain!' those both
Know naught! Life cannot slay. Life is not slain!

United States! the ages plead, —
Present and Past in under-song, —
Go put your creed into your deed,
Nor speak with double tongue.

20

For sea and land don't understand,
Nor skies without a frown
See rights for which the one hand fights
By the other cloven down.

Be just at home; then write your scroll
Of honor o'er the sea,
And bid the broad Atlantic roll,
A ferry of the free.

And henceforth there shall be no chain,
Save underneath the sea
The wires shall murmur through the main
Sweet songs of liberty.

30

The conscious stars accord above,
The waters wild below,
And under, through the cable wove,
Her fiery errands go.

For He that worketh high and wise,
Nor pauses in his plan,
Will take the sun out of the skies
Ere freedom out of man.

1857.

40

1857.

SEASHORE¹

I HEARD or seemed to hear the chiding Sea
Say, Pilgrim, why so late and slow to come?

¹ In July, 1857, Mr. Emerson, induced by Dr. Bartol, took his family to spend two weeks at Pigeon Cove, on Cape Ann. The day after our return to Concord, he came into our mother's room, where we were all sitting, with his journal in his hand, and said, 'I came in yesterday from walking on the rocks and wrote down what the sea had said to me; and to-day, when I open my book, I find it all reads as blank verse, with scarcely a change.'

Here is the passage from that journal, as he read it to us: July 23. 'Returned from Pigeon Cove, where we have made acquaintance with the sea, for seven days. 'T is a noble, friendly power, and seemed to say to me, Why so late and slow to come to me? Am I not here always, thy proper summer home? Is not my voice thy needful music; my breath thy healthful climate in the heats; my touch thy cure? Was ever building like my terraces? Was ever couch so magnificent as mine? Lie down on my warm ledges and learn that a very little but is all you need. I have made this architecture superfluous, and it is paltry beside mine. Here are twenty Romes and Ninevehs and Karnacs in ruins together, obelisk and pyramid and Giant's Causeway; here they all are prostrate or half piled. And behold the sea, the opaline, plentiful and strong, yet beautiful as the rose or the rainbow, full of food, nourisher of men, purger of the world, creating a sweet climate and in its

Am I not always here, thy summer home?
Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve?
My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,
My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath?
Was ever building like my terraces?
Was ever couch magnificent as mine?
Lie on the warm rock-ledges, and there learn
A little hut suffices like a town.
I make your sculptured architecture vain,
Vain beside mine. I drive my wedges home,
And carve the coastwise mountain into caves.
Lo! here is Rome and Nineveh and Thebes,
Karnak and Pyramid and Giant's Stairs
Half piled or prostrate; and my newest
slab
Older than all thy race.

Behold the Sea,
The opaline, the plentiful and strong,
Yet beautiful as is the rose in June,
Fresh as the trickling rainbow of July; ²⁰
Sea full of food, the nourisher of kinds,
Purger of earth, and medicine of men;
Creating a sweet climate by my breath,
Washing out harms and griefs from mem-
ory,
And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,
Giving a hint of that which changes not.
Rich are the sea-gods: — who gives gifts
but they?
They grope the sea for pearls, but more
than pearls:
They pluck Force thence, and give it to the
wise.

For every wave is wealth to Dædalus, ³⁰
Wealth to the cunning artist who can work
This matchless strength. Where shall he
find, O waves!
A load your Atlas shoulders cannot lift?

I with my hammer pounding evermore
The rocky coast, smite Andes into dust,
Strewing my bed, and, in another age,
Rebuild a continent of better men.
Then I unbar the doors: my paths lead out
The exodus of nations: I disperse
Men to all shores that front the hoary main.

I too have arts and sorceries; ⁴¹
Illusion dwells forever with the wave.
I know what spells are laid. Leave me to
deal

unchangeable ebb and flow, and in its beauty at a few
furlongs, giving a hint of that which changes not, and
is perfect.' (E. W. EMERSON, in the *Centenary Edi-
tion*.)

With credulous and imaginative man;
For, though he scoop my water in his palm,
A few rods off he deems it gems and clouds.
Planting strange fruits and sunshine on the
shore,

I make some coast alluring, some lone isle,
To distant men, who must go there, or die.

1857.

1867.

WALDEINSAMKEIT

I DO not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic care derides,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms that
fade,
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,
The pigeon in the pines,
The bittern's boom, a desert make
Which no false art refines.

Down in yon watery nook,
Where bearded mists divide,

The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,
The sires of Nature, hide.

Aloft, in secret veins of air,
Blows the sweet breath of song,
O, few to scale those uplands dare,
Though they to all belong!

40

See thou bring not to field or stone
The fancies found in books;
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,
To brave the landscape's looks.

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
Crowns all thy mean affairs.

1857.

1858.

FRAGMENTS ON NATURE AND
LIFE

NATURE

DAILY the bending skies solicit man,
The seasons chariot him from this exile,
The rainbow hours bedeck his glowing
wheels,
The storm-winds urge the heavy weeks
along,
Suns haste to set, that so remoter lights
Beckon the wanderer to his vaster home.

FOR Nature, true and like in every place,
Will hint her secret in a garden patch,
Or in lone corners of a doleful heath,
As in the Andes watched by fleets at sea,
Or the sky-piercing horns of Himmaleh;
And, when I would recall the scenes I
dreamed
On Adirondac steeps, I know
Small need have I of Turner or Daguerre,
Assured to find the token once again
In silver lakes that unexhausted gleam
And peaceful woods beside my cottage door.

BUT never yet the man was found
Who could the mystery expound,
Though Adam, born when oaks were
young,
Endured, the Bible says, as long;

LIFE

A TRAIN of gay and clouded days
Dappled with joy and grief and praise,
Beauty to fire us, saints to save,
Escort us to a little grave.

No fate, save by the victim's fault, is low,
For God hath writ all dooms magnificent,
So guilt not traverses his tender will.

THIS shining moment is an edifice
Which the Omnipotent cannot rebuild.

ROOMY Eternity
Casts her schemes rarely,
And an æon allows
For each quality and part
Of the multitudinous
And many-chambered heart.

BE of good cheer, brave spirit; steadfastly
Serve that low whisper thou hast served;
for know,
God hath a select family of sons
Now scattered wide thro' earth, and each
alone,
Who are thy spiritual kindred, and each one
By constant service to that inward law,
Is weaving the sublime proportions
Of a true monarch's soul. Beauty and
strength,
The riches of a spotless memory,
The eloquence of truth, the wisdom got
By searching of a clear and loving eye
That seeth as God seeth,—these are their
gifts;
And Time, who keeps God's word, brings
on the day
To seal the marriage of these minds with
thine,
Thine everlasting lovers. Ye shall be
The salt of all the elements, world of the
world.

LOVE

Asks nought his brother cannot give;
Asks nothing, but does all receive.
Love calls not to his aid events;

But when at last the patriarch died
The Gordian noose was still untied.
He left, though goodly centuries old,
Meek Nature's secret still untold.

ATOM from atom yawns as far
As moon from earth, or star from star.

TEACH me your mood, O patient stars!
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
No trace of age, no fear to die.

THE sun athwart the cloud thought it no
sin
To use my land to put his rainbows in.

DAY by day for her darlings to her much
she added more;
In her hundred-gated Thebes every cham-
ber was a door,
A door to something grander,—loftier
walls, and vaster floor.

SHE paints with white and red the moors
To draw the nations out of doors.

NIGHT IN JUNE

I LEFT my dreary page and sallied forth,
Received the fair inscriptions of the night;
The moon was making amber of the world,
Glittered with silver every cottage pane,
The trees were rich, yet ominous with
gloom.

The meadows broad
From ferns and grapes and from the folded
flowers
Sent a nocturnal fragrance; harlot flies
Flashed their small fires in air, or held their
court
In fairy groves of herds-grass.

BUT Nature whistled with all her winds,
Did as she pleased and went her way.

He to his wants can well suffice:
Asks not of others soft consents,
Nor kind occasion without eyes;
Nor plots to ope or bolt a gate,
Nor heeds Condition's iron walls, —
Where he goes, goes before him Fate;
Whom he uniteth, God installs;
Instant and perfect his access
To the dear object of his thought,
Though foes and land and seas between
Himself and his love intervene.

TELL men what they knew before;
Paint the prospect from their door.

HIM strong Genius urged to roam,
Stronger Custom brought him home.

THAT each should in his house abide,
Therefore was the world so wide.¹

YES, sometimes to the sorrow-stricken
Shall his own sorrow seem impertinent,
A thing that takes no more root in the world
Than doth the traveller's shadow on the
rock.

REX

THE bard and mystic held me for their own,
I filled the dream of sad, poetic maids,
I took the friendly noble by the hand,
I was the trustee of the hand-cart man,
The brother of the fisher, porter, swain,
And these from the crowd's edge well
pleased beheld
The service done to me as done to them.

SHUN passion, fold the hands of thrift,
Sit still, and Truth is near:
Suddenly it will uplift
Your eyelids to the sphere:

¹ A common thought with Emerson (see 'Written in Naples,' 'Written at Rome,' 'The Day's Ration,' and the essay 'Self-Reliance'), but, as here expressed, evidently meant for a direct answer to the last words of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, so often quoted by Carlyle: —

To give space for wandering is it
That the world was made so wide.

Wait a little, you shall see
The portraiture of things to be.

OH, what is Heaven but the fellowship
Of minds that each can stand against the
world
By its own meek and incorruptible will?

ON bravely through the sunshine and the
showers!
Time hath his work to do and we have ours.
1830-60. 1883.

FRAGMENTS ON THE POET AND
THE POETIC GIFT

THE gods talk in the breath of the woods,
They talk in the shaken pine,
And fill the long reach of the old seashore
With dialogue divine;
And the poet who overhears
Some random word they say
Is the fated man of men
Whom the ages must obey.

THE sun set, but set not his hope: —
Stars rose, his faith was earlier up:
Fixed on the enormous galaxy,
Deeper and older seemed his eye,
And matched his sufferance sublime
The taciturnity of Time.²
He spoke, and words more soft than rain
Brought the Age of Gold again:
His action won such reverence sweet
As hid all measure of the feat.

THE Dervish whined to Said,
'Thou didst not tarry while I prayed.
Beware the fire that Eblis burned.'
But Saadi coldly thus returned,
'Once with manlike love and fear
I gave thee for an hour my ear,
I kept the sun and stars at bay,
And love, for words thy tongue could say.
I cannot sell my heaven again
For all that rattles in thy brain.'

² The first six lines were originally written as part of 'The Poet,' but were first printed, with the four following, as motto to the essay on 'Character'.

THE free winds told him what they knew,
Discoursed of fortune as they blew;
Omens and signs that filled the air
To him authentic witness bare;
The birds brought auguries on their wings,
And carolled undecieving things
Him to beckon, him to warn;
Well might then the poet scorn
To learn of scribe or courier
Things writ in vaster character;
And on his mind at dawn of day
Soft shadows of the evening lay.

PALE genius roves alone,
No scout can track his way,
None credits him till he have shown
His diamonds to the day.

Not his the feaster's wine,
Nor land, nor gold, nor power,
By want and pain God screeneth him
Till his elected hour.

Go, speed the stars of Thought
On to their shining goals: —
The sower scatters broad his seed,
The wheat thou strew'st be souls.

FOR thought, and not praise;
Thought is the wages
For which I sell days,
Will gladly sell ages
And willing grow old
Deaf, and dumb, and blind, and cold,
Melting matter into dreams,
Panoramas which I saw
And whatever glows or seems
Into substance, into Law.

A DULL uncertain brain,
But gifted yet to know
That God has cherubim who go
Singing an immortal strain,
Immortal here below.
I know the mighty bards,
I listen when they sing,
And now I know
The secret store
Which these explore
When they with torch of genius pierce
The tenfold clouds that cover

The riches of the universe
From God's adoring lover.
And if to me it is not given
To fetch one ingot thence
Of the unfading gold of Heaven
His merchants may dispense,
Yet well I know the royal mine,
And know the sparkle of its ore,
Know Heaven's truth from lies that
shine —
Explored they teach us to explore.

FOR Fancy's gift
Can mountains lift;
The Muse can knit
What is past, what is done,
With the web that's just begun;
Making free with time and size,
Dwindles here, there magnifies,
Swells a rain-drop to a tun;
So to repeat
No word or feat
Crowds in a day the sum of ages,
And blushing Love outwits the sages.

TRY the might the Muse affords
And the balm of thoughtful words;
Bring music to the desolate;
Hang roses on the stony fate.

AND as the light divides the dark
Through with living swords,
So shalt thou pierce the distant age
With adamant words.

I FRAMED his tongue to music,
I armed his hand with skill,
I moulded his face to beauty
And his heart the throne of Will.

THAT book is good
Which puts me in a working mood.¹
Unless to Thought is added Will,
Apollo is an imbecile.

¹ Compare the essay 'Inspiration': 'Every book is good to read which sets the reader in a working mood.' . . . 'Fact-books, if the facts be well and thoroughly told, are much more nearly allied to poetry than many books that are written in rhyme.'