

The Spirit over-brooding all  
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above  
Or earth below they look,  
Who know with John his smile of love,  
With Peter his rebuke. 40

In joy of inward peace, or sense  
Of sorrow over sin,  
He is his own best evidence,  
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,  
Nor dream of bards and seers,  
No dead fact stranded on the shore  
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet  
A present help is He;  
And faith has still its Olivet,  
And love its Galilee. 50

The healing of his seamless dress  
Is by our beds of pain;  
We touch Him in life's throng and press,  
And we are whole again. 100

Through Him the first fond prayers are said  
Our lips of childhood frame,  
The last low whispers of our dead  
Are burdened with his name. 60

Our Lord and Master of us all!  
Whate'er our name or sign,  
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,  
We test our lives by thine.

Thou judgest us; thy purity  
Doth all our lusts condemn;  
The love that draws us nearer Thee  
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to thy sight,  
And, naked to thy glance,  
Our secret sins are in the light  
Of thy pure countenance. 70

Thy healing pains, a keen distress  
Thy tender light shines in;  
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,  
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,  
Thou dost our service own;

We bring our varying gifts to Thee,  
And Thou rejectest none. 80

To Thee our full humanity,  
Its joys and pains, belong;  
The wrong of man to man on Thee  
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes  
Therein to Thee allied;  
All sweet accords of hearts and homes  
In Thee are multiplied.

Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,  
Within our earthly sod, 90  
Most human and yet most divine,  
The flower of man and God!

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight  
Thy presence maketh one,  
As through transfigured clouds of white  
We trace the noon-day sun. 140

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,  
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,  
We know in Thee the fatherhood  
And heart of God revealed. 100

We faintly hear, we dimly see,  
In differing phrase we pray;  
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee  
The Light, the Truth, the Way! 60

The homage that we render Thee  
Is still our Father's own;  
No jealous claim or rivalry  
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do thy will is more than praise,  
As words are less than deeds, 110  
And simple trust can find thy ways  
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self thy service hath,  
No place for me and mine;  
Our human strength is weakness, death  
Our life, apart from thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,  
All labor vainly done;  
The solemn shadow of thy Cross  
Is better than the sun. 120

Alone, O Love ineffable!  
Thy saving name is given;

To turn aside from Thee is hell,  
To walk with Thee is heaven!

How vain, secure in all Thou art,  
Our noisy championship!  
The sighing of the contrite heart  
Is more than flattering lip.

Not thine the bigot's partial plea,  
Nor thine the zealot's ban; 130  
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee  
Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,  
What may thy service be?—  
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,  
But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,  
We pile no graven stone;  
He serves Thee best who loveth most  
His brothers and thy own. 140

Thy litanies, sweet offices  
Of love and gratitude;  
Thy sacramental liturgies  
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift  
The vaulted nave around,  
In vain the minster turret lift  
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring thy Christmas bells,  
Thy inward altars raise; 150  
Its faith and hope thy canticles,  
And its obedience praise!  
1866?

#### THE WORSHIP OF NATURE

THE harp at Nature's advent strung  
Has never ceased to play;  
The song the stars of morning sung  
Has never died away.

And prayer is made, and praise is given,  
By all things near and far;  
The ocean looketh up to heaven,  
And mirrors every star.

Its waves are kneeling on the strand,  
As kneels the human knee, 10  
Their white locks bowing to the sand,  
The priesthood of the sea!

They pour their glittering treasures forth,  
Their gifts of pearl they bring,  
And all the listening hills of earth  
Take up the song they sing.

The green earth sends her incense up  
From many a mountain shrine;  
From folded leaf and dewy cup  
She pours her sacred wine. 20

The mists above the morning rills  
Rise white as wings of prayer;  
The altar-curtains of the hills  
Are sunset's purple air.

The winds with hymns of praise are loud,  
Or low with sobs of pain,—  
The thunder-organ of the cloud,  
The dropping tears of rain.

With drooping head and branches crossed  
The twilight forest grieves, 30  
Or speaks with tongues of Pentecost  
From all its sunlit leaves.

The blue sky is the temple's arch,  
Its transept earth and air,  
The music of its starry march  
The chorus of a prayer.

So Nature keeps the reverent frame  
With which her years began,  
And all her signs and voices shame  
The prayerless heart of man. 40  
1867.

#### THE MEETING

THE elder folks shook hands at last,  
Down seat by seat the signal passed.  
To simple ways like ours unused,  
Half solemnized and half amused,  
With long-drawn breath and shrug, my  
guest

His sense of glad relief expressed.  
Outside, the hills lay warm in sun;  
The cattle in the meadow-run  
Stood half-leg deep; a single bird  
The green repose above us stirred. 10  
'What part or lot have you,' he said,  
'In these dull rites of drowsy-head?  
Is silence worship? Seek it where  
It soothes with dreams the summer air,  
Not in this close and rude-benched hall,

But where soft lights and shadows fall,  
 And all the slow, sleep-walking hours  
 Glide soundless over grass and flowers!  
 From time and place and form apart,  
 Its holy ground the human heart,  
 Nor ritual-bound nor templeward  
 Walks the free spirit of the Lord!  
 Our common Master did not pen  
 His followers up from other men;  
 His service liberty indeed,  
 He built no church, He framed no creed;  
 But while the saintly Pharisee  
 Made broader his phylactery,  
 As from the synagogue was seen  
 The dusty-sandalled Nazarene  
 Through ripening cornfields lead the way  
 Upon the awful Sabbath day,  
 His sermons were the healthful talk  
 That shorter made the mountain-walk,  
 His wayside texts were flowers and birds,  
 Where mingled with his gracious words  
 The rustle of the tamarisk-tree  
 And ripple-wash of Galilee.'

'Thy words are well, O friend,' I said;  
 Unmeasured and unlimited,  
 With noiseless slide of stone to stone,  
 The mystic Church of God has grown.  
 Invisible and silent stands  
 The temple never made with hands,  
 Unheard the voices still and small  
 Of its unseen confessional.  
 He needs no special place of prayer  
 Whose hearing ear is everywhere;  
 He brings not back the childish days  
 That ringed the earth with stones of praise,  
 Roofed Karnak's hall of gods, and laid  
 The plinths of Philæ's colonnade.  
 Still less He owns the selfish good  
 And sickly growth of solitude, —  
 The worthless grace that, out of sight,  
 Flowers in the desert anchorite;  
 Dissevered from the suffering whole,  
 Love hath no power to save a soul.  
 Not out of Self, the origin  
 And native air and soil of sin,  
 The living waters spring and flow,  
 The trees with leaves of healing grow.

'Dream not, O friend, because I seek  
 This quiet shelter twice a week,  
 I better deem its pine-laid floor  
 Than breezy hill or sea-sung shore;  
 But nature is not solitude:  
 She crowds us with her thronging wood;

Her many hands reach out to us,  
 Her many tongues are garrulous;  
 Perpetual riddles of surprise  
 She offers to our ears and eyes;  
 She will not leave our senses still,  
 But drags them captive at her will:  
 And, making earth too great for heaven,  
 She hides the Giver in the given.

'And so I find it well to come  
 For deeper rest to this still room,  
 For here the habit of the soul  
 Feels less the outer world's control;  
 The strength of mutual purpose pleads  
 More earnestly our common needs;  
 And from the silence multiplied  
 By these still forms on either side,  
 The world that time and sense have known  
 Falls off and leaves us God alone.

'Yet rarely through the charmed repose  
 Unmixed the stream of motive flows,  
 A flavor of its many springs,  
 The tints of earth and sky it brings;  
 In the still waters needs must be  
 Some shade of human sympathy;  
 And here, in its accustomed place,  
 I look on memory's dearest face;  
 The blind by-sitter guesseth not  
 What shadow haunts that vacant spot;  
 No eyes save mine alone can see  
 The love wherewith it welcomes me!  
 And still, with those alone my kin,  
 In doubt and weakness, want and sin,  
 I bow my head, my heart I bare,  
 As when that face was living there,  
 And strive (too oft, alas! in vain)  
 The peace of simple trust to gain,  
 Fold fancy's restless wings, and lay  
 The idols of my heart away.

'Welcome the silence all unbroken,  
 Nor less the words of fitness spoken, —  
 Such golden words as hers for whom  
 Our autumn flowers have just made  
 room;  
 Whose hopeful utterance through and  
 through  
 The freshness of the morning blew;  
 Who loved not less the earth that light  
 Fell on it from the heavens in sight,  
 But saw in all fair forms more fair  
 The Eternal beauty mirrored there.  
 Whose eighty years but added grace  
 And saintlier meaning to her face, —

The look of one who bore away  
 Glad tidings from the hills of day,  
 While all our hearts went forth to meet  
 The coming of her beautiful feet!  
 Or haply hers, whose pilgrim tread  
 Is in the paths where Jesus led;  
 Who dreams her childhood's sabbath dream  
 By Jordan's willow-shaded stream,  
 And, of the hymns of hope and faith,  
 Sung by the monks of Nazareth,  
 Hears pious echoes, in the call  
 To prayer, from Moslem minarets fall,  
 Repeating where his works were wrought  
 The lesson that her Master taught,  
 Of whom an elder Sibyl gave,  
 The prophecies of Cumæ's cave!

'I ask no organ's soulless breath  
 To drone the themes of life and death,  
 No altar candle-lit by day,  
 No ornate wordsman's rhetoric-play,  
 No cool philosophy to teach  
 Its bland audacities of speech  
 To double-tasked idolaters  
 Themselves their gods and worshippers,  
 No pulpit hammered by the fist  
 Of loud-asserting dogmatist,  
 Who borrows for the Hand of love  
 The smoking thunderbolts of Jove.  
 I know how well the fathers taught,  
 What work the later schoolmen wrought;  
 I reverence old-time faith and men,  
 But God is near us now as then;  
 His force of love is still unspent,  
 His hate of sin as imminent;  
 And still the measure of our needs  
 Outgrows the cramping bounds of creeds;  
 The manna gathered yesterday  
 Already savors of decay;  
 Doubts to the world's child-heart unknown  
 Question us now from star and stone;  
 Too little or too much we know,  
 And sight is swift and faith is slow;  
 The power is lost to self-deceive  
 With shallow forms of make-believe.  
 We walk at high noon, and the bells  
 Call to a thousand oracles,  
 But the sound deafens, and the light  
 Is stronger than our dazzled sight;  
 The letters of the sacred Book  
 Glimmer and swim beneath our look;  
 Still struggles in the Age's breast  
 With deepening agony of quest  
 The old entreaty: "Art thou He,  
 Or look we for the Christ to be?"

'God should be most where man is least:  
 So, where is neither church nor priest,  
 And never rag of form or creed  
 To clothe the nakedness of need, —  
 Where farmer-folk in silence meet, —  
 I turn my bell-unsummoned feet;  
 I lay the critic's glass aside,  
 I tread upon my lettered pride,  
 And, lowest-seated, testify  
 To the oneness of humanity;  
 Confess the universal want,  
 And share whatever Heaven may grant.  
 He findeth not who seeks his own,  
 The soul is lost that's saved alone.  
 Not on one favored forehead fell  
 Of old the fire-tongued miracle,  
 But flamed o'er all the thronging host  
 The baptism of the Holy Ghost;  
 Heart answers heart: in one desire  
 The blending lines of prayer aspire;  
 "Where, in my name, meet two or three,"  
 Our Lord hath said, "I there will be!"

'So sometimes comes to soul and sense  
 The feeling which is evidence  
 That very near about us lies  
 The realm of spiritual mysteries.  
 The sphere of the supernal powers  
 Impinges on this world of ours  
 The low and dark horizon lifts,  
 To light the scenic terror shifts;  
 The breath of a diviner air  
 Blows down the answer of a prayer:  
 That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt  
 A great compassion clasps about,  
 And law and goodness, love and force,  
 Are wedded fast beyond divorce.  
 Then duty leaves to love its task,  
 The beggar Self forgets to ask;  
 With smile of trust and folded hands,  
 The passive soul in waiting stands  
 To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,  
 The One true Life its own renew.

'So to the calmly gathered thought  
 The innermost of truth is taught,  
 The mystery dimly understood,  
 That love of God is love of good,  
 And, chiefly, its divinest trace  
 In Him of Nazareth's holy face;  
 That to be saved is only this, —  
 Salvation from our selfishness,  
 From more than elemental fire,  
 The soul's unsanctified desire,  
 From sin itself, and not the pain

That warns us of its chafing chain;  
That worship's deeper meaning lies  
In mercy, and not sacrifice,  
Not proud humilities of sense  
And posturing of penitence, 230  
But love's unforced obedience;  
That Book and Church and Day are given  
For man, not God, — for earth, not  
heaven, —

The blessed means to holiest ends,  
Not masters, but benignant friends;  
That the dear Christ dwells not afar,  
The king of some remoter star,  
Listening, at times, with flattered ear  
To homage wrung from selfish fear,  
But here, amidst the poor and blind, 240  
The bound and suffering of our kind,  
In works we do, in prayers we pray,  
Life of our life, He lives to-day.'

1868.

AMONG THE HILLS<sup>1</sup>

## PRELUDE

ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of  
gold

That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,  
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,  
And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers  
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.  
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,  
Wing-weary with its long flight from the  
south,

Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple  
leaf

With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,  
Confesses it. The locust by the wall 10  
Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.  
A single hay-cart down the dusty road  
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep  
On the load's top. Against the neighbor-  
ing hill,

Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,  
The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift  
still

<sup>1</sup> The lady of the poem 'Among the Hills' was purely imaginary. I was charmed with the scenery in Tamworth and West Ossipee, and tried to call attention to it in a story. . . . With the long range of the Sandwich Mountains and Chocoma on one hand, and the rugged masses of Ossipee on the other, it is really one of the most picturesque situations in the State. (WHITTIER, in a letter of May 11, 1881, quoted in Pickard's *Life*, vol. ii, p. 669. See also pp. 536-538.) The poem was at first called 'A Summer Idyl,' and planned as a companion piece to the 'Snow-Bound, a Winter Idyl.'

Defied the dog-star. Through the open  
door

A drowsy smell of flowers — gray helio-  
trope,

And white sweet clover, and shy mignon-  
ette —

Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends 20  
To the pervading symphony of peace.

No time is this for hands long over-worn  
To task their strength: and (unto Him be  
praise

Who giveth quietness!) the stress and  
strain

Of years that did the work of centuries  
Have ceased, and we can draw our breath  
once more

Freely and full. So, as yon harvesters  
Make glad their nooning underneath the  
elms

With tale and riddle and old snatch of song,  
I lay aside grave themes, and idly turn 30  
The leaves of memory's sketch-book, dream-  
ing o'er

Old summer pictures of the quiet hills,  
And human life, as quiet, at their feet.

And yet not idly all. A farmer's son,  
Proud of field-lore and harvest craft, and  
feeling

All their fine possibilities, how rich  
And restful even poverty and toil  
Become when beauty, harmony, and love  
Sit at their humble hearth as angels sat  
At evening in the patriarch's tent, when  
man 40

Makes labor noble, and his farmer's frock  
The symbol of a Christian chivalry  
Tender and just and generous to her  
Who clothes with grace all duty; still, I  
know

Too well the picture has another side, —  
How wearily the grind of toil goes on  
Where love is wanting, how the eye and  
ear

And heart are starved amidst the plenitude  
Of nature, and how hard and colorless  
Is life without an atmosphere. I look 50  
Across the lapse of half a century,  
And call to mind old homesteads, where no  
flower

Told that the spring had come, but evil  
weeds,

Nightshade and rough-leaved burdock in  
the place

Of the sweet doorway greeting of the rose  
And honeysuckle, where the house walls  
seemed

Blistering in sun, without a tree or vine  
To cast the tremulous shadow of its leaves  
Across the curtainless windows, from whose  
panes

Fluttered the signal rags of shiftlessness. 60  
Within, the cluttered kitchen floor, un-  
washed

(Broom-clean I think they called it); the  
best room

Stifing with cellar-damp, shut from the air  
In hot midsummer, bookless, pictureless

Save the inevitable sampler hung  
Over the fireplace, or a mourning piece,  
A green-haired woman, peony-cheeked, be-  
neath

Impossible willows; the wide-throated  
hearth

Bristling with faded pine-boughs half con-  
cealing

The piled-up rubbish at the chimney's  
back; 70

And, in sad keeping with all things about  
them,

Shrill, querulous women, sour and sullen  
men,

Untidy, loveless, old before their time,  
With scarce a human interest save their  
own

Monotonous round of small economies,  
Or the poor scandal of the neighborhood;  
Blind to the beauty everywhere revealed,  
Treading the May-flowers with regardless  
feet;

For them the song-sparrow and the bobolink  
Sang not, nor winds made music in the  
leaves; 80

For them in vain October's holocaust  
Burned, gold and crimson, over all the hills,  
The sacramental mystery of the woods.  
Church-goers, fearful of the unseen Powers,  
But grumbling over pulpit-tax and pew-  
rent,

Saving, as shrewd economists, their souls  
And winter pork with the least possible  
outlay

Of salt and sanctity; in daily life  
Showing as little actual comprehension  
Of Christian charity and love and duty 90  
As if the Sermon on the Mount had been  
Outdated like a last year's almanac:  
Rich in broad woodlands and in half-tilled  
fields,

And yet so pinched and bare and comfort-  
less,

The veriest straggler limping on his rounds,  
The sun and air his sole inheritance,  
Laughed at a poverty that paid its taxes,  
And hugged his rags in self-complacency!

Not such should be the homesteads of a land  
Where whoso wisely wills and acts may  
dwell 100

As king and lawgiver, in broad-acred state,  
With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to  
make

His hour of leisure richer than a life  
Of fourscore to the barons of old time.

Our yeoman should be equal to his home  
Set in the fair, green valleys, purple walled,  
A man to match his mountains, not to creep  
Dwarfed and abased below them. I would  
fain

In this light way (of which I needs must  
own

With the knife-grinder of whom Canning  
sings, 110  
'Story, God bless you! I have none to tell  
you!')

Invite the eye to see and heart to feel  
The beauty and the joy within their reach, —  
Home, and home loves, and the beatitudes  
Of nature free to all. Haply in years  
That wait to take the places of our own,  
Heard where some breezy balcony looks  
down

On happy homes, or where the lake in the  
moon

Sleeps dreaming of the mountains, fair as  
Ruth,

In the old Hebrew pastoral, at the feet 120  
Of Boaz, even this simple lay of mine  
May seem the burden of a prophecy,  
Finding its late fulfilment in a change  
Slow as the oak's growth, lifting manhood up  
Through broader culture, finer manners,  
love,

And reverence, to the level of the hills.

O Golden Age whose light is of the dawn,  
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,  
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with  
thee bring

All the old virtues, whatsoever things 130  
Are pure and honest and of good repute,  
But add thereto whatever bard has sung  
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream  
They saw the Happy Isles of prophecy!

Let Justice hold her scale, and Truth divide  
Between the right and wrong; but give the  
heart

The freedom of its fair inheritance;  
Let the poor prisoner, cramped and starved  
so long,

At Nature's table feast his ear and eye  
With joy and wonder; let all harmonies <sup>140</sup>  
Of sound, form, color, motion, wait upon  
The princely guest, whether in soft attire  
Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,  
And, lending life to the dead form of faith,  
Give human nature reverence for the sake  
Of One who bore it, making it divine  
With the ineffable tenderness of God;  
Let common need, the brotherhood of  
prayer,

The heirship of an unknown destiny, <sup>149</sup>  
The unsolved mystery round about us, make  
A man more precious than the gold of Ophir.  
Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things  
Should minister, as outward types and signs  
Of the eternal beauty which fulfils  
The one great purpose of creation, Love,  
The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven!

For weeks the clouds had raked the hills  
And vexed the vales with raining,  
And all the woods were sad with mist,  
And all the brooks complaining. <sup>160</sup>

At last, a sudden night-storm tore  
The mountain veils asunder,  
And swept the valleys clean before  
The besom of the thunder.

Through Sandwich notch the west-wind  
sang  
Good morrow to the cotter;  
And once again Chocorua's horn  
Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake, Ossipee,  
Once more the sunshine wearing, <sup>170</sup>  
Stooped, tracing on that silver shield  
His grim armorial bearing.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky,  
The peaks had winter's keenness;  
And, close on autumn's frost, the vales  
Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors  
With golden lights were checkered,

Once more rejoicing leaves in wind  
And sunshine danced and flickered. <sup>180</sup>

It was as if the summer's late  
Atoning for its sadness  
Had borrowed every season's charm  
To end its days in gladness.

I call to mind those banded vales  
Of shadow and of shining,  
Through which, my hostess at my side,  
I drove in day's declining.

We held our sidelong way above  
The river's whitening shallows, <sup>190</sup>  
By homesteads old, with wide-flung barns  
Swept through and through by swallows;

By maple orchards, belts of pine  
And larches climbing darkly  
The mountain slopes, and, over all,  
The great peaks rising starkly.

You should have seen that long hill-range  
With gaps of brightness riven, —  
How through each pass and hollow streamed  
The purpling lights of heaven, — <sup>200</sup>

Rivers of gold-mist flowing down  
From far celestial fountains, —  
The great sun flaming through the rifts  
Beyond the wall of mountains!

We paused at last where home-bound cows  
Brought down the pasture's treasure,  
And in the barn the rhythmic flails  
Beat out a harvest measure.

We heard the night-hawk's sullen plunge,  
The crow his tree-mates calling; <sup>210</sup>  
The shadows lengthening down the slopes  
About our feet were falling.

And through them smote the level sun  
In broken lines of splendor,  
Touched the gray rocks and made the green  
Of the shorn grass more tender.

The maples bending o'er the gate,  
Their arch of leaves just tinted  
With yellow warmth, the golden glow  
Of coming autumn hinted. <sup>220</sup>

Keen white between the farm-house showed,  
And smiled on porch and trellis

The fair democracy of flowers  
That equals cot and palace.

And weaving garlands for her dog,  
'Twixt chidings and caresses,  
A human flower of childhood shook  
The sunshine from her tresses.

On either hand we saw the signs  
Of fancy and of shrewdness, <sup>230</sup>  
Where taste had wound its arms of vines  
Round thrift's uncomely rudeness.

The sun-brown farmer in his frock  
Shook hands, and called to Mary:  
Bare-armed, as Juno might, she came,  
White-aproned from her dairy.

Her air, her smile, her motions, told  
Of womanly completeness;  
A music as of household songs  
Was in her voice of sweetness. <sup>240</sup>

Not fair alone in curve and line,  
But something more and better,  
The secret charm eluding art,  
Its spirit, not its letter; —

An inborn grace that nothing lacked  
Of culture or appliance, —  
The warmth of genial courtesy,  
The calm of self-reliance.

Before her queenly womanhood  
How dared our hostess utter <sup>250</sup>  
The paltry errand of her need  
To buy her fresh-churned butter?

She led the way with housewife pride,  
Her goodly store disclosing,  
Full tenderly the golden balls  
With practised hands disposing.

Then, while along the western hills  
We watched the changeful glory  
Of sunset, on our homeward way,  
I heard her simple story. <sup>260</sup>

The early crickets sang; the stream  
Plashed through my friend's narration:  
Her rustic patois of the hills  
Lost in my free translation.

'More wise,' she said, 'than those who swarm  
Our hills in middle summer,

She came, when June's first roses blow,  
To greet the early comer.

'From school and ball and rout she came,  
The city's fair, pale daughter, <sup>270</sup>  
To drink the wine of mountain air  
Beside the Bearcamp Water.

'Her step grew firmer on the hills  
That watch our homesteads over;  
On cheek and lip, from summer fields,  
She caught the bloom of clover.

'For health comes sparkling in the streams  
From cool Chocorua stealing:  
There's iron in our northern winds;  
Our pines are trees of healing. <sup>280</sup>

'She sat beneath the broad-armed elms  
That skirt the mowing meadow,  
And watched the gentle west-wind weave  
The grass with shine and shadow.

'Beside her, from the summer heat  
To share her grateful screening,  
With forehead bared, the farmer stood,  
Upon his pitchfork leaning.

'Framed in its damp, dark locks, his face  
Had nothing mean or common, — <sup>290</sup>  
Strong, manly, true, the tenderness  
And pride beloved of woman.

'She looked up, glowing with the health  
The country air had brought her,  
And, laughing, said: "You lack a wife,  
Your mother lacks a daughter.

"To mend your frock and bake your bread  
You do not need a lady:  
Be sure among these brown old homes  
Is some one waiting ready, — <sup>300</sup>

"Some fair, sweet girl with skilful hand  
And cheerful heart for treasure,  
Who never played with ivory keys,  
Or danced the polka's measure."

'He bent his black brows to a frown,  
He set his white teeth tightly.  
"T is well," he said, "for one like you  
To choose for me so lightly.

"You think because my life is rude  
I take no note of sweetness: <sup>310</sup>

- I tell you love has naught to do  
With meetness or unmeetness.
- “Itself its best excuse, it asks  
No leave of pride or fashion  
When silken zone or homespun frock  
It stirs with throbs of passion.
- “You think me deaf and blind: you bring  
Your winning graces hither  
As free as if from cradle-time  
We two had played together. 320
- “You tempt me with your laughing eyes,  
Your cheek of sundown’s blushes,  
A motion as of waving grain,  
A music as of thrushes.
- “The plaything of your summer sport,  
The spells you weave around me  
You cannot at your will undo,  
Nor leave me as you found me.
- “You go as lightly as you came,  
Your life is well without me; 330  
What care you that these hills will close  
Like prison-walls about me?
- “No mood is mine to seek a wife,  
Or daughter for my mother:  
Who loves you loses in that love  
All power to love another!
- “I dare your pity or your scorn,  
With pride your own exceeding;  
I fling my heart into your lap  
Without a word of pleading.” 340
- She looked up in his face of pain  
So archly, yet so tender:  
“And if I lend you mine,” she said,  
“Will you forgive the lender?”
- “Nor frock nor tan can hide the man;  
And see you not, my farmer,  
How weak and fond a woman waits  
Behind the silken armor?
- “I love you: on that love alone,  
And not my worth, presuming, 350  
Will you not trust for summer fruit  
The tree in May-day blooming?”
- Alone the hangbird overhead,  
His hair-swing cradle straining,
- Looked down to see love’s miracle, —  
The giving that is gaining.
- ‘And so the farmer found a wife,  
His mother found a daughter:  
There looks no happier home than hers  
On pleasant Bearcamp Water. 360
- ‘Flowers spring to blossom where she walks  
The careful ways of duty;  
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her  
Are flowing curves of beauty.
- ‘Our homes are cheerier for her sake,  
Our door-yards brighter blooming,  
And all about the social air  
Is sweeter for her coming.
- ‘Unspoken homilies of peace  
Her daily life is preaching; 370  
The still refreshment of the dew  
Is her unconscious teaching.
- ‘And never tenderer hand than hers  
Unknits the brow of ailing;  
Her garments to the sick man’s ear  
Have music in their trailing.
- ‘And when, in pleasant harvest moons,  
The youthful huskers gather,  
Or sleigh-drives on the mountain ways  
Defy the winter weather, — 380
- ‘In sugar-camps, when south and warm  
The winds of March are blowing,  
And sweetly from its thawing veins  
The maple’s blood is flowing, —
- ‘In summer, where some lily pond  
Its virgin zone is baring,  
Or where the ruddy autumn fire  
Lights up the apple-paring, —
- ‘The coarseness of a ruder time  
Her finer mirth displaces, 390  
A subtler sense of pleasure fills  
Each rustic sport she graces.
- ‘Her presence lends its warmth and health  
To all who come before it.  
If woman lost us Eden, such  
As she alone restore it.
- ‘For larger life and wiser aims  
The farmer is her debtor;

- Who holds to his another’s heart  
Must needs be worse or better. 400
- ‘Through her his civic service shows  
A purer-toned ambition;  
No double consciousness divides  
The man and politician.
- ‘In party’s doubtful ways he trusts  
Her instincts to determine;  
At the loud polls, the thought of her  
Recalls Christ’s Mountain Sermon.
- ‘He owns her logic of the heart,  
And wisdom of unreason, 410  
Supplying, while he doubts and weighs,  
The needed word in season.
- ‘He sees with pride her richer thought,  
Her fancy’s freer ranges;  
And love thus deepened to respect  
Is proof against all changes.
- ‘And if she walks at ease in ways  
His feet are slow to travel,  
And if she reads with cultured eyes  
What his may scarce unravel, 420
- ‘Still clearer, for her keener sight  
Of beauty and of wonder,  
He learns the meaning of the hills  
He dwelt from childhood under.
- ‘And higher, warmed with summer lights,  
Or winter-crowned and hoary,  
The ridged horizon lifts for him  
Its inner veils of glory.
- ‘He has his own free, bookless lore,  
The lessons nature taught him, 430  
The wisdom which the woods and hills  
And toiling men have brought him:
- ‘The steady force of will whereby  
Her flexile grace seems sweeter;  
The sturdy counterpoise which makes  
Her woman’s life completer;
- ‘A latent fire of soul which lacks  
No breath of love to fan it;  
And wit, that, like his native brooks,  
Plays over solid granite. 440
- ‘How dwarfed against his manliness  
She sees the poor pretension,
- The wants, the aims, the follies, born  
Of fashion and convention!
- ‘How life behind its accidents  
Stands strong and self-sustaining,  
The human fact transcending all  
The losing and the gaining.
- ‘And so in grateful interchange  
Of teacher and of hearer, 450  
Their lives their true distinctness keep  
While daily drawing nearer.
- ‘And if the husband or the wife  
In home’s strong light discovers  
Such slight defaults as failed to meet  
The blinded eyes of lovers,
- ‘Why need we care to ask? — who dreams  
Without their thorns of roses,  
Or wonders that the truest steel  
The readiest spark discloses? 460
- ‘For still in mutual sufferance lies  
The secret of true living;  
Love scarce is love that never knows  
The sweetness of forgiving.
- ‘We send the Squire to General Court,  
He takes his young wife thither;  
No prouder man election day  
Rides through the sweet June weather.
- ‘He sees with eyes of manly trust  
All hearts to her inclining; 470  
Not less for him his household light  
That others share its shining.’
- Thus, while my hostess spake, there grew  
Before me, warmer tinted  
And outlined with a tenderer grace,  
The picture that she hinted.
- The sunset smouldered as we drove  
Beneath the deep hill-shadows.  
Below us wreaths of white fog walked  
Like ghosts the haunted meadows. 480
- Sounding the summer night, the stars  
Dropped down their golden plummetts;  
The pale arc of the Northern lights  
Rose o’er the mountain summits,
- Until, at last, beneath its bridge,  
We heard the Bearcamp flowing,

And saw across the mapled lawn  
The welcome home-lights glowing.

And, musing on the tale I heard,  
'T were well, thought I, if often 490  
To rugged farm-life came the gift  
To harmonize and soften;

If more and more we found the troth  
Of fact and fancy plighted,  
And culture's charm and labor's strength  
In rural homes united, —

The simple life, the homely hearth,  
With beauty's sphere surrounding,  
And blessing toil where toil abounds  
With graces more abounding. 500  
1867-1868. 1868.

MARGUERITE <sup>1</sup>

THE robins sang in the orchard, the buds  
into blossoms grew;  
Little of human sorrow the buds and the  
robins knew!

Sick, in an alien household, the poor French  
neutral lay;  
Into her lonesome garret fell the light of  
the April day,

Through the dusty window, curtained by  
the spider's warp and woof,  
On the loose-laid floor of hemlock, on oaken  
ribs of roof,

The bedquilt's faded patchwork, the tea-  
cups on the stand,  
The wheel with flaxen tangle, as it dropped  
from her sick hand!

What to her was the song of the robin, or  
warm morning light,  
As she lay in the trance of the dying, heed-  
less of sound or sight? 510

<sup>1</sup> See the note on Longfellow's 'Evangeline,' p. 121. Whittier wrote to Mrs. Fields in November, 1870: 'You know that a thousand of the Acadians were distributed among the towns of Massachusetts, where they were mostly treated as paupers.' In the letter already quoted in the note on Evangeline, he says: 'The children were bound out to the families in the localities in which they resided; and I wrote a poem upon finding, in the records of Haverhill, the indenture that bound an Acadian girl as a servant in one of the families of that neighborhood. Gathering the story of her death, I wrote "Marguerite."'

Done was the work of her hands, she had  
eaten her bitter bread;  
The world of the alien people lay behind  
her dim and dead.

But her soul went back to its child-time;  
she saw the sun o'erflow  
With gold the Basin of Minas, and set over  
Gaspereau;

The low, bare flats at ebb-tide, the rush of  
the sea at flood,  
Through inlet and creek and river, from  
dike to upland wood;

The gulls in the red of morning, the fish-  
hawk's rise and fall,  
The drift of the fog in moonshine, over the  
dark coast-wall.

She saw the face of her mother, she heard  
the song she sang;  
And far off, faintly, slowly, the bell for  
vespers rang! 520

By her bed the hard-faced mistress sat,  
smoothing the wrinkled sheet,  
Peering into the face, so helpless, and feel-  
ing the ice-cold feet.

With a vague remorse atoning for her greed  
and long abuse,  
By care no longer heeded and pity too late  
for use.

Up the stairs of the garret softly the son of  
the mistress stepped,  
Leaned over the head-board, covering his  
face with his hands, and wept.

Outspake the mother, who watched him  
sharply, with brow a-frown:  
'What! love you the Papist, the beggar,  
the charge of the town?' 530

'Be she Papist or beggar who lies here, I  
know and God knows  
I love her, and fain would go with her  
wherever she goes! 540

'O mother! that sweet face came pleading,  
for love so athirst.  
You saw but the town-charge; I knew her  
God's angel at first.'

Shaking her gray head, the mistress hushed  
down a bitter cry;  
And awed by the silence and shadow of  
death drawing nigh,

She murmured a psalm of the Bible; but  
closer the young girl pressed,  
With the last of her life in her fingers, the  
cross to her breast.

'My son, come away,' cried the mother,  
her voice cruel grown.  
'She is joined to her idols, like Ephraim;  
let her alone!'

But he knelt with his hand on her forehead,  
his lips to her ear,  
And he called back the soul that was pass-  
ing: 'Marguerite, do you hear?' 40

She paused on the threshold of heaven;  
love, pity, surprise,  
Wistful, tender, lit up for an instant the  
cloud of her eyes.

With his heart on his lips he kissed her,  
but never her cheek grew red,  
And the words the living long for he spake  
in the ear of the dead.

And the robins sang in the orchard, where  
buds to blossoms grew;  
Of the folded hands and the still face never  
the robins knew! 1869. 1871.

IN SCHOOL-DAYS <sup>1</sup>

STILL sits the school-house by the road,  
A ragged beggar sleeping;  
Around it still the sumachs grow,  
And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,  
Deep scarred by raps official;  
The warping floor, the battered seats,  
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;  
Its door's worn sill, betraying 10

<sup>1</sup> See Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 32, 33. For Longfellow's comment on the poem, see Samuel Longfellow's *Life of H. W. Longfellow*, vol. iii, p. 287; and for Holmes's, Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. ii, pp. 641, 642. 'You have written,' said Holmes to Whittier, 'the most beautiful school-boy poem in the English language.'

The feet that, creeping slow to school,  
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun  
Shone over it at setting;  
Lit up its western window-panes,  
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,  
And brown eyes full of grieving,  
Of one who still her steps delayed  
When all the school were leaving. 20

For near her stood the little boy  
Her childish favor singled:  
His cap pulled low upon a face  
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow  
To right and left, he lingered;—  
As restlessly her tiny hands  
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt  
The soft hand's light caressing, 30  
And heard the tremble of her voice,  
As if a fault confessing.

'I'm sorry that I spelt the word:  
I hate to go above you,  
Because,'—the brown eyes lower fell,—  
'Because, you see, I love you!'

Still memory to a gray-haired man  
That sweet child-face is showing.  
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave  
Have forty years been growing! 40

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,  
How few who pass above him  
Lament their triumph and his loss,  
Like her,—because they love him.  
1869. 1870.

## MY TRIUMPH

THE autumn-time has come;  
On woods that dream of bloom,  
And over purpling vines  
The low sun fainter shines.

The aster-flower is failing,  
The hazel's gold is paling;  
Yet overhead more near  
The eternal stars appear!

And present gratitude  
Insures the future's good,  
And for the things I see,  
I trust the things to be;

That in the paths untrod,  
And the long days of God,  
My feet shall still be led,  
My heart be comforted.

O living friends who love me!  
O dear ones gone above me!  
Careless of other fame,  
I leave to you my name.

Hide it from idle praises,  
Save it from evil phrases:  
Why, when dear lips that spake it  
Are dumb, should strangers wake  
it?

Let the thick curtain fall;  
I better know than all  
How little I have gained,  
How vast the unattained.

Not by the page word-painted  
Let life be banned or sainted:  
Deeper than written scroll  
The colors of the soul.

Sweeter than any sung  
My songs that found no tongue;  
Nobler than any fact  
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,  
Others shall right the wrong, —  
Finish what I begin,  
And all I fail of win.

What matter, I or they?  
Mine or another's day,  
So the right word be said  
And life the sweeter made?

Hail to the coming singers!  
Hail to the brave light-bringers!  
Forward I reach and share  
All that they sing and dare.

The airs of heaven blow o'er me;  
A glory shines before me  
Of what mankind shall be, —  
Pure, generous, brave, and free.

A dream of man and woman  
Diviner but still human,  
Solving the riddle old,  
Shaping the Age of Gold!

The love of God and neighbor;  
An equal-handed labor;  
The richer life, where beauty  
Walks hand in hand with duty.

Ring, bells in unrequited steeples,  
The joy of unborn peoples!  
Sound, trumpets far off blown,  
Your triumph is my own!

Parcel and part of all,  
I keep the festival,  
Fore-reach the good to be,  
And share the victory.

I feel the earth move sunward,  
I join the great march onward,  
And take, by faith, while living,  
My freehold of thanksgiving.

#### MY BIRTHDAY

BENEATH the moonlight and the snow  
Lies dead my latest year;  
The winter winds are wailing low  
Its dirges in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind  
As if a loss befell;  
Before me, even as behind,  
God is, and all is well!

His light shines on me from above,  
His low voice speaks within, —  
The patience of immortal love  
Outwearying mortal sin.

Not mindless of the growing years  
Of care and loss and pain,  
My eyes are wet with thankful tears  
For blessings which remain.

If dim the gold of life has grown,  
I will not count it dross,  
Nor turn from treasures still my own  
To sigh for lack and loss.

The years no charm from Nature take;  
As sweet her voices call,

#### THE SISTERS

ANNIE and Rhoda, sisters twain,  
Woke in the night to the sound of rain,

The rush of wind, the ramp and roar  
Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed-gown white,  
And looked out into the storm and night.

'Hush, and hearken!' she cried in fear,  
'Hearest thou nothing, sister dear?'

'I hear the sea, and the plash of rain,  
And roar of the northeast hurricane.'

'Get thee back to the bed so warm,  
No good comes of watching a storm.'

'What is it to thee, I fain would know,  
That waves are roaring and wild winds  
blow?'

'No lover of thine's afloat to miss  
The harbor-lights on a night like this.'

'But I heard a voice cry out my name,  
Up from the sea on the wind it came!'

'Twice and thrice have I heard it call,  
And the voice is the voice of Estwick  
Hall!'

On her pillow the sister tossed her head.  
'Hall of the Heron is safe,' she said.

'In the tautest schooner that ever swam  
He rides at anchor in Annisquam.'

'And, if in peril from swamping sea  
Or lee shore rocks, would he call on thee?'

But the girl heard only the wind and tide,  
And wringing her small white hands she  
cried:

'O sister Rhoda, there's something wrong;  
I hear it again, so loud and long.'

'"Annie! Annie!" I hear it call,  
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!'

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame,  
'Thou liest! He never would call thy name!'

As beautiful her mornings break,  
As fair her evenings fall.

Love watches o'er my quiet ways,  
Kind voices speak my name,  
And lips that find it hard to praise  
Are slow, at least, to blame.

How softly ebb the tides of will!  
How fields, once lost or won,  
Now lie behind me green and still  
Beneath a level sun!

How hushed the hiss of party hate,  
The clamor of the throng!  
How old, harsh voices of debate  
Flow into rhythmic song!

Methinks the spirit's temper grows  
Too soft in this still air;  
Somewhat the restful heart foregoes  
Of needed watch and prayer.

The bark by tempest vainly tossed  
May founder in the calm,  
And he who braved the polar frost  
Faint by the isles of balm.

Better than self-indulgent years  
The outflung heart of youth,  
Than pleasant songs in idle ears  
The tumult of the truth.

Rest for the weary hands is good,  
And love for hearts that pine,  
But let the manly habitude  
Of upright souls be mine.

Let winds that blow from heaven re-  
fresh,  
Dear Lord, the languid air;  
And let the weakness of the flesh  
Thy strength of spirit share.

And, if the eye must fail of light,  
The ear forget to hear,  
Make clearer still the spirit's sight,  
More fine the inward ear!

Be near me in mine hours of need  
To soothe, or cheer, or warn,  
And down these slopes of sunset lead  
As up the hills of morn!

1871.