

To stream as tides the ocean caverns  
through,  
Or with the rapture of great winds to  
blow  
About earth's shaken coignes, were not a  
fate  
To leave us all-disconsolate;  
Even endless slumber in the sweetening  
sod  
Of charitable earth  
That takes out all our mortal stains,  
And makes us cleaner neighbors of the  
cloud,  
Methinks were better worth<sup>490</sup>  
Than the poor fruit of most men's wake-  
ful pains,  
The heart's insatiable ache:  
But such was not his faith,  
Nor mine: it may be he had trod  
Outside the plain old path of *God thus*  
*spake,*  
But God to him was very God,  
And not a visionary wraith  
Skulking in murky corners of the mind,  
And he was sure to be<sup>499</sup>  
Somehow, somewhere, imperishable as He,  
Not with His essence mystically combined,  
As some high spirits long, but whole and  
free,  
A perfected and conscious Agassiz.  
And such I figure him: the wise of old  
Welcome and own him of their peaceful  
fold,  
Not truly with the guild enrolled  
Of him who seeking inward guessed  
Diviner riddles than the rest,  
And groping in the darks of thought  
Touched the Great Hand and knew it  
not;<sup>510</sup>  
Rather he shares the daily light,  
From reason's charier fountains won,  
Of his great chief, the slow-paced Stagy-  
rite,  
And Cuvier clasps once more his long-lost  
son.

2

The shape erect is prone: forever stilled  
The winning tongue; the forehead's high-  
piled heap,  
A cairn which every science helped to  
build,  
Unvalued will its golden secrets keep:  
He knows at last if Life or Death be  
best:

Wherever he be flown, whatever vest<sup>520</sup>  
The being hath put on which lately here  
So many-friended was, so full of cheer  
To make men feel the Seeker's noble zest,  
We have not lost him all; he is not gone  
To the dumb herd of them that wholly  
die;  
The beauty of his better self lives on  
In minds he touched with fire, in many an  
eye  
He trained to Truth's exact severity;  
He was a Teacher: why be grieved for  
him<sup>529</sup>  
Whose living word still stimulates the  
air?  
In endless file shall loving scholars come  
The glow of his transmitted touch to share,  
And trace his features with an eye less  
dim  
Than ours whose sense familiar wont  
makes numb.  
1874. 1874.

SONNET<sup>1</sup>

## SCOTTISH BORDER

As sinks the sun behind yon alien hills  
Whose heather-purpled slopes, in glory  
rolled,  
Flush all my thought with momentary  
gold,  
What pang of vague regret my fancy  
thrills?  
Here 'tis enchanted ground the peasant  
tills,  
Where the shy ballad dared its blooms un-  
fold,  
And memory's glamour makes new sights  
seem old,  
As when our life some vanished dream  
fulfils.  
Yet not to thee belong these painless tears,  
Land loved ere seen: before my darkened  
eyes,  
From far beyond the waters and the years,  
Horizons mute that wait their poet rise;  
The stream before me fades and disap-  
pears,  
And in the Charles the western splendor  
dies.  
1875.

<sup>1</sup> See Lowell's letter to Howells, March 21, 1875.  
*Letters*, vol. ii, p. 137.

## THREE MEMORIAL POEMS

<sup>1</sup> *Coscienza fucsa*  
O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna  
Pur sentirà la tua parola brusca.

If I let fall a word of bitter mirth,<sup>1</sup>  
When public shames more shameful pardon won,  
Some have misjudged me, and my service done,  
If small, yet faithful, deemed of little worth:  
Through veins that drew their life from Western earth  
Two hundred years and more my blood hath run  
In no polluted course from sire to son;  
And thus was I predestined ere my birth  
To love the soil wherewith my fibres own  
Instinctive sympathies; yet love it so  
As honor would, nor lightly to dethrone  
Judgment, the stamp of manhood, nor forego  
The son's right to a mother dearer grown  
With growing knowledge and more chaste than snow.

ODE<sup>2</sup>

READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT CONCORD  
BRIDGE

19TH APRIL, 1875

I

Who cometh over the hills,  
Her garments with morning sweet,  
The dance of a thousand rills  
Making music before her feet?  
Her presence freshens the air;  
Sunshine steals light from her face;  
The leaden footstep of Care  
Leaps to the tune of her pace,  
Fairness of all that is fair,  
Grace at the heart of all grace,<sup>10</sup>  
Sweetener of hut and of hall,  
Bringer of life out of naught,  
Freedom, oh, fairest of all  
The daughters of Time and Thought!

II

She cometh, cometh to-day:  
Hark! hear ye not her tread,  
Sending a thrill through your clay,  
Under the sod there, ye dead,  
Her nurslings and champions?  
Do ye not hear, as she comes,<sup>20</sup>  
The bay of the deep-mouthed guns,  
The gathering rote of the drums?

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the lines in the second stanza of Low-  
ell's 'Agassiz,' which were written in 1874, when the  
political corruption of that time was being revealed and  
in many cases condoned,—lines which were at the  
time severely criticised as 'unpatriotic.'  
<sup>2</sup> See Lowell's letter to James B. Thayer, January  
14, 1877. *Letters*, vol. ii, pp. 188-191.

The bells that called ye to prayer,  
How wildly they clamor on her,  
Crying, 'She cometh! prepare  
Her to praise and her to honor,  
That a hundred years ago  
Scattered here in blood and tears  
Potent seeds wherefrom should grow  
Gladness for a hundred years!'<sup>30</sup>

III

Tell me, young men, have ye seen  
Creature of diviner mien  
For true hearts to long and cry for,  
Manly hearts to live and die for?  
What hath she that others want?  
Brows that all endearments haunt,  
Eyes that make it sweet to dare,  
Smiles that cheer untimely death,  
Looks that fortify despair,  
Tones more brave than trumpet's breath;  
Tell me, maidens, have ye known<sup>41</sup>  
Household charm more sweetly rare,  
Grace of woman ampler blown,  
Modesty more debonair,  
Younger heart with wit full grown?  
Oh for an hour of my prime,  
The pulse of my hotter years,  
That I might praise her in rhyme  
Would tingle your eyelids to tears,  
Our sweetness, our strength, and our star,  
Our hope, our joy, and our trust,<sup>51</sup>  
Who lifted us out of the dust,  
And made us whatever we are!

IV

Whiter than moonshine upon snow  
Her raiment is, but round the hem

Crimson stained; and, as to and fro  
Her sandals flash, we see on them,  
And on her instep veined with blue,  
Flecks of crimson, on those fair feet,  
High-arched, Diana-like, and fleet, 60  
Fit for no grosser stain than dew:  
Oh, call them rather christs than stains,  
Sacred and from heroic veins!  
For, in the glory-guarded pass,  
Her haughty and far-shining head  
She bowed to shrive Leonidas  
With his imperishable dead;  
Her, too, Morgarten saw,  
Where the Swiss lion fleshed his icy paw;  
She followed Cromwell's quenchless star  
Where the grim Puritan tread 71  
Shook Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar:  
Yea, on her feet are dearer dyes  
Yet fresh, not looked on with untearful  
eyes.

## V

Our fathers found her in the woods  
Where Nature meditates and broods,  
The seeds of unexamined things  
Which Time to consummation brings  
Through life and death and man's unstable  
moods;  
They met her here, not recognized, 80  
A sylvan huntress clothed in furs,  
To whose chaste wants her bow sufficed,  
Nor dreamed what destinies were hers:  
She taught them bee-like to create  
Their simpler forms of Church and State;  
She taught them to endure  
The past with other functions than it knew,  
And turn in channels strange the uncertain  
stream of Fate;  
Better than all, she fenced them in their  
need  
With iron-handed Duty's sternest creed, 90  
'Gainst Self's lean wolf that ravens word  
and deed.

## VI

Why cometh she hither to-day  
To this low village of the plain  
Far from the Present's loud highway,  
From Trade's cool heart and seething  
brain?  
Why cometh she? She was not far away.  
Since the soul touched it, not in vain,  
With pathos of immortal gain,  
'T is here her fondest memories stay.  
She loves yon pine-bemurmured ridge 100

Where now our broad-browed poet sleeps,  
Dear to both Englands; near him he  
Who wore the ring of Canace;  
But most her heart to rapture leaps  
Where stood that era-parting bridge,  
O'er which, with footfall still as dew,  
The Old Time passed into the New;  
Where, as your stealthy river creeps,  
He whispers to his listening weeds  
Tales of sublimest homespun deeds. 120  
Here English law and English thought  
'Gainst the self-will of England fought;  
And here were men (coequal with their  
fate),  
Who did great things, unconscious they  
were great.

They dreamed not what a die was cast  
With that first answering shot; what then?  
There was their duty; they were men  
Schooled the soul's inward gospel to obey,  
Though leading to the lion's den.  
They felt the habit-hallowed world give  
way 120

Beneath their lives, and on went they,  
Unhappy who was last.  
When Buttrick gave the word,  
That awful idol of the unchallenged Past,  
Strong in their love, and in their lineage  
strong,

Fell crashing: if they heard it not,  
Yet the earth heard,  
Nor ever hath forgot,  
As on from startled throne to throne,  
Where Superstition sate or conscious  
Wrong, 130  
A shudder ran of some dread birth un-  
known.

Thrice venerable spot!  
River more fateful than the Rubicon!  
O'er those red planks, to snatch her diadem,  
Man's Hope, star-girdled, sprang with  
them,  
And over ways untried the feet of Doom  
strode on.

## VII

Think you these felt no charms  
In their gray homesteads and embowered  
farms?  
In household faces waiting at the door  
Their evening step should lighten up no  
more? 140  
In fields their boyish feet had known?  
In trees their fathers' hands had set,  
And which with them had grown,

Widening each year their leafy coronet?  
Felt they no pang of passionate regret  
For those unsolid goods that seem so much  
our own?

These things are dear to every man that  
lives,  
And life prized more for what it lends than  
gives.

Yea, many a tie, through iteration sweet,  
Strove to detain their fatal feet; 150  
And yet the enduring half they chose,  
Whose choice decides a man life's slave or  
king,

The invisible things of God before the seen  
and known:

Therefore their memory inspiration blows  
With echoes gathering on from zone to  
zone;

For manhood is the one immortal thing  
Beneath Time's changeful sky,  
And, where it lightened once, from age to  
age,

Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,  
That length of days is knowing when to  
die. 160

## VIII

What marvellous change of things and  
men!

She, a world-wandering orphan then,  
So mighty now! Those are her streams  
That whirl the myriad, myriad wheels  
Of all that does, and all that dreams,  
Of all that thinks, and all that feels,  
Through spaces stretched from sea to sea;  
By idle tongues and busy brains,  
By who doth right, and who refrains, 170  
Hers are our losses and our gains;  
Our maker and our victim she.

## IX

Maiden half mortal, half divine,  
We triumphed in thy coming; to the brinks  
Our hearts were filled with pride's tumul-  
tuous wine;

Better to-day who rather feels than thinks.  
Yet will some graver thoughts intrude,  
And cares of sterner mood;  
They won thee: who shall keep thee? From  
the deeps

Where discrowned empires o'er their ruins  
brood,

And many a thwarted hope wrings its weak  
hands and weeps, 180

I hear the voice as of a mighty wind

From all heaven's caverns rushing uncon-  
fined,

'I, Freedom, dwell with Knowledge: I  
abide

With men whom dust of faction cannot  
blind

To the slow tracings of the Eternal Mind;  
With men by culture trained and fortified,  
Who bitter duty to sweet lusts prefer,  
Fearless to counsel and obey.

Conscience my sceptre is, and law my  
sword,

Not to be drawn in passion or in play, 190  
But terrible to punish and deter;

Implacable as God's word,  
Like it, a shepherd's crook to them that  
blindly err.

Your firm-pulsed sires, my martyrs and my  
saints,

Offshoots of that one stock whose patient  
sense

Hath known to mingle flux with perma-  
nence,

Rated my chaste denials and restraints  
Above the moment's dear-paid paradise:

Beware lest, shifting with Time's gradual  
creep,

The light that guided shine into your  
eyes. 200

The envious Powers of ill nor wink nor  
sleep:

Be therefore timely wise,  
Nor laugh when this one steals, and that  
one lies,

As if your luck could cheat those sleepless  
spies,

Till the deaf Fury comes your house to  
sweep!

I hear the voice, and unaffrighted bow;  
Ye shall not be prophetic now,

Heralds of ill, that darkening fly  
Between my vision and the rainbowed sky,

Or on the left your hoarse forebodings  
croak 210

From many a blasted bough  
On Yggdrasil's storm-sinewed oak,

That once was green, Hope of the West, as  
thou:

Yet pardon if I tremble while I boast;  
For I have loved as those who pardon most.

## X

Away, ungrateful doubt, away!  
At least she is our own to-day.

Break into rapture, my song,

Verses, leap forth in the sun,  
 Bearing the joyance along 220  
 Like a train of fire as ye run!  
 Pause not for choosing of words,  
 Let them but blossom and sing  
 Blithe as the orchards and birds  
 With the new coming of spring!  
 Dance in your jollity, bells;  
 Shout, cannon; cease not, ye drums;  
 Answer, ye hillside and dells;  
 Bow, all ye people! She comes,  
 Radiant, calm-fronted, as when 230  
 She hallowed that April day.  
 Stay with us! Yes, thou shalt stay,  
 Softener and strengthener of men,  
 Freedom, not won by the vain,  
 Not to be courted in play,  
 Not to be kept without pain.  
 Stay with us! Yes, thou wilt stay,  
 Handmaid and mistress of all,  
 Kindler of deed and of thought,  
 Thou that to hut and to hall 240  
 Equal deliverance brought!  
 Souls of her martyrs, draw near,  
 Touch our dull lips with your fire,  
 That we may praise without fear  
 Her our delight, our desire,  
 Our faith's inextinguishable star,  
 Our hope, our remembrance, our trust,  
 Our present, our past, our to be,  
 Who will mingle her life with our dust  
 And makes us deserve to be free! 250  
 1875. 1875.

### UNDER THE OLD ELM<sup>1</sup>

POEM READ AT CAMBRIDGE ON THE  
 HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY OF WASH-  
 INGTON'S TAKING COMMAND OF THE  
 AMERICAN ARMY, 3D JULY, 1775

I

I

WORDS pass as wind, but where great  
 deeds were done  
 A power abides transfused from sire to  
 son:

<sup>1</sup> I think the 'Old Elm' the best of the three [memorial poems], mainly because it was composed after my college duties were over, though even in that I was distracted by the intervention of the Commencement dinner. (LOWELL, letter of January 14, 1877.)  
 We, too, here in my birthplace, having found out

The boy feels deeper meanings thrill his  
 ear,  
 That tingling through his pulse life-long  
 shall run,  
 With sure impulsion to keep honor clear,  
 When, pointing down, his father whispers,  
 'Here,  
 Here, where we stand, stood he, the purely  
 great,  
 Whose soul no siren passion could un-  
 sphere,  
 Then nameless, now a power and mixed 230  
 with fate.'  
 Historic town, thou holdest sacred dust, 10  
 Once known to men as pious, learned,  
 just,  
 And one memorial pile that dares to  
 last;  
 But Memory greets with reverential kiss  
 No spot in all thy circuit sweet as this,  
 Touched by that modest glory as it past,  
 O'er which yon elm hath piously displayed 240  
 These hundred years its monumental shade.

2

Of our swift passage through this scenery  
 Of life and death, more durable than we,  
 What landmark so congenial as a tree 20  
 Repeating its green legend every spring,  
 And, with a yearly ring,  
 Recording the fair seasons as they flee,  
 Type of our brief but still-renewed mortal-  
 ity?  
 We fall as leaves: the immortal trunk re-  
 mains,  
 Buidled with costly juice of hearts and  
 brains  
 Gone to the mould now, whither all that  
 be  
 Vanish returnless, yet are procreant still  
 In human lives to come of good or ill,  
 And feed unseen the roots of Destiny. 30

that something happened here a hundred years ago, must have our centennial; and, since my friend and townsman Dr. Holmes could not be had, I felt bound to do the poetry for the day. We have still standing the elm under which Washington took command of the American (till then provincial) army, and under which also Whitefield had preached some thirty years before. I took advantage of the occasion to hold out a hand of kindly reconciliation to Virginia. I could do it with the profounder feeling, that no family lost more than mine by the Civil War. Three nephews (the hope of our race) were killed in one or other of the Virginia battles, and three cousins on other of those bloody fields. (LOWELL, letter of July 6, 1875. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper & Brothers.)  
 See also the letters of October 16, 1875, and February 22, 1877.

II

I

Men's monuments, grown old, forget their  
 names  
 They should eternize, but the place  
 Where shining souls have passed imbibes a  
 grace  
 Beyond mere earth; some sweetness of  
 their fames  
 Leaves in the soil its unextinguished trace,  
 Pungent, pathetic, sad with nobler aims,  
 That penetrates our lives and heightens  
 them or shames.  
 This insubstantial world and fleet  
 Seems solid for a moment when we stand  
 On dust ennobled by heroic feet 40  
 Once mighty to sustain a tottering land,  
 And mighty still such burthen to upbear,  
 Nor doomed to tread the path of things  
 that merely were:  
 Our sense, refined with virtue of the spot,  
 Across the mists of Lethe's sleepy stream  
 Recalls him, the sole chief without a blot,  
 No more a pallid image and a dream,  
 But as he dwelt with men decorously su-  
 preme.

2

Our grosser minds need this terrestrial  
 hint  
 To raise long-buried days from tombs of  
 print: 50  
 'Here stood he,' softly we repeat,  
 And lo, the statue shrined and still  
 In that gray minster-front we call the Past,  
 Feels in its frozen veins our pulses thrill,  
 Breathes living air and mocks at Death's  
 deceit.  
 It warms, it stirs, comes down to us at last,  
 Its features human with familiar light,  
 A man, beyond the historian's art to kill,  
 Or sculptor's to efface with patient chisel-  
 blight.

3

Sure the dumb earth hath memory, nor for  
 naught 60  
 Was Fancy given, on whose enchanted loom  
 Present and Past commingle, fruit and  
 bloom  
 Of one fair bough, inseparably wrought  
 Into the seamless tapestry of thought.  
 So charmed, with undeluded eye we see  
 In history's fragmentary tale

Bright clues of continuity,  
 Learn that high natures over Time prevail,  
 And feel ourselves a link in that entail  
 That binds all ages past with all that are  
 to be. 70

III

I

Beneath our consecrated elm  
 A century ago he stood,  
 Famed vaguely for that old fight in the  
 wood  
 Whose red surge sought, but could not  
 overwhelm  
 The life foredoomed to wield our rough-  
 hewn helm: 1—  
 From colleges, where now the gown  
 To arms had yielded,<sup>2</sup> from the town,  
 Our rude self-summoned levies flocked to  
 see  
 The new-come chiefs and wonder which  
 was he.  
 No need to question long; close-lipped and  
 tall, 80  
 Long trained in murder-brooding forests  
 lone  
 To bridle others' clamors and his own,  
 Firmly erect, he towered above them all,  
 The incarnate discipline that was to free  
 With iron curb that armed democracy.

2

A motley rout was that which came to  
 stare,  
 In raiment tanned by years of sun and  
 storm,  
 Of every shape that was not uniform,  
 Dotted with regimentals here and there;  
 An army all of captains, used to pray 90  
 And stiff in fight, but serious drill's despair,  
 Skilled to debate their orders, not obey;  
 Deacons were there, selectmen, men of note  
 In half-tamed hamlets ambushed round  
 with woods,  
 Ready to settle Freewill by a vote,

<sup>1</sup> After the defeat of Braddock, Washington wrote to his brother: 'By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet I escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me.' (Quoted in the *Riverside Literature Series*.)

<sup>2</sup> Harvard, Hollis, and Massachusetts Halls were used as barracks, and the President's house was for a time Washington's headquarters.

But largely liberal to its private moods;  
 Prompt to assert by manners, voice, or pen,  
 Or ruder arms, their rights as Englishmen,  
 Nor much fastidious as to how and when:  
 Yet seasoned stuff and fittest to create 100  
 A thought-staid army or a lasting state:  
 Haughty they said he was, at first; severe;  
 But owned, as all men own, the steady hand  
 Upon the bridle, patient to command,  
 Prized, as all prize, the justice pure from  
 fear,  
 And learned to honor first, then love him,  
 then revere.  
 Such power there is in clear-eyed self-  
 restraint  
 And purpose clean as light from every  
 selfish taint.

## 3

Musing beneath the legendary tree,  
 The years between furl off: I seem to see 110  
 The sun-flecks, shaken the stirred foliage  
 through,  
 Dapple with gold his sober buff and blue  
 And weave prophetic aureoles round the  
 head  
 That shines our beacon now nor darkens  
 with the dead,  
 O man of silent mood,  
 A stranger among strangers then,  
 How art thou since renowned the Great,  
 the Good,  
 Familiar as the day in all the homes of men!  
 The winged years, that winnow praise to  
 blame,  
 Blow many names out: they but fan and  
 flame 120  
 The self-renewing splendors of thy fame.

## IV

## I

How many subtlest influences unite,  
 With spiritual touch of joy or pain,  
 Invisible as air and soft as light,  
 To body forth that image of the brain  
 We call our Country, visionary shape,  
 Loved more than woman, fuller of fire than  
 wine,  
 Whose charm can none define,  
 Nor any, though he flee it, can escape! 129  
 All party-colored threads the weaver Time  
 Sets in his web, now trivial, now sublime,  
 All memories, all forebodings, hopes and  
 fears,

Mountain and river, forest, prairie, sea,  
 A hill, a rock, a homestead, field, or tree,  
 The casual gleanings of unreckoned years,  
 Take goddess-shape at last and there is She,  
 Old at our birth, new as the springing  
 hours,  
 Shrine of our weakness, fortress of our  
 powers,  
 Consoler, kindler, peerless 'mid her peers,  
 A force that 'neath our conscious being  
 stirs, 140  
 A life to give ours permanence, when we  
 Are borne to mingle our poor earth with  
 hers,  
 And all this glowing world goes with us on  
 our biers.

## 2

Nations are long results, by ruder ways  
 Gathering the might that warrants length  
 of days;  
 They may be pieced of half-reluctant  
 shares  
 Welded by hammer-strokes of broad-  
 brained kings,  
 Or from a doughty people grow, the heirs  
 Of wise traditions widening cautious rings;  
 At best they are computable things, 150  
 A strength behind us making us feel bold  
 In right, or, as may chance, in wrong;  
 Whose force by figures may be summed  
 and told,  
 So many soldiers, ships, and dollars strong,  
 And we but drops that bear compulsory  
 part  
 In the dumb throb of a mechanic heart;  
 But Country is a shape of each man's  
 mind  
 Sacred from definition, unconfined  
 By the cramped walls where daily drudger-  
 ies grind;

An inward vision, yet an outward birth 160  
 Of sweet familiar heaven and earth;  
 A brooding Presence that stirs motions  
 blind  
 Of wings within our embryo being's shell  
 That wait but her completer spell  
 To make us eagle-natured, fit to dare  
 Life's nobler spaces and untarnished air.

## 3

You, who hold dear this self-conceived  
 ideal,  
 Whose faith and works alone can make it  
 real,

Bring all your fairest gifts to deck her  
 shrine  
 Who lifts our lives away from Thine and  
 Mine 170  
 And feeds the lamp of manhood more di-  
 vine  
 With fragrant oils of quenchless constancy.  
 When all have done their utmost, surely he  
 Hath given the best who gives a character  
 Erect and constant, which nor any shock  
 Of loosened elements, nor the forceful sea  
 Of flowing or of ebbing fates, can stir  
 From its deep bases in the living rock  
 Of ancient manhood's sweet security:  
 And this he gave, serenely far from pride  
 As baseness, boon with prosperous stars  
 allied, 181  
 Part of what nobler seed shall in our loins  
 abide.

## 4

No bond of men as common pride so  
 strong,  
 In names time-filtered for the lips of song,  
 Still operant, with the primal Forces bound  
 Whose currents, on their spiritual round,  
 Transfuse our mortal will nor are gainsaid:  
 These are their arsenals, these the exhaust-  
 less mines  
 That give a constant heart in great de-  
 signs;  
 These are the stuff whereof such dreams  
 are made 190  
 As make heroic men: thus surely he  
 Still holds in place the massy blocks he  
 laid  
 'Neath our new frame, enforcing soberly  
 The self-control that makes and keeps a  
 people free.

## V

## I

Oh, for a drop of that Cornelian ink  
 Which gave Agricola dateless length of  
 days,  
 To celebrate him fitly, neither swerve  
 To phrase unkempt, nor pass discretion's  
 brink,  
 With him so statue-like in sad reserve,  
 So diffident to claim, so forward to de-  
 serve! 200  
 Nor need I shun due influence of his fame  
 Who, mortal among mortals, seemed as  
 now

The equestrian shape with unimpassioned  
 brow,  
 That paces silent on through vistas of ac-  
 claim.

## 2

What figure more immovably august  
 Than that grave strength so patient and so  
 pure,  
 Calm in good fortune, when it wavered,  
 sure,  
 That mind serene, impenetrably just,  
 Modelled on classic lines so simple they  
 endure?  
 That soul so softly radiant and so white 210  
 The track it left seems less of fire than  
 light,  
 Cold but to such as love distemperature?  
 And if pure light, as some deem, be the  
 force  
 That drives rejoicing planets on their  
 course,  
 Why for his power benign seek an impurer  
 source?  
 His was the true enthusiasm that burns  
 long,  
 Domestically bright,  
 Fed from itself and shy of human sight,  
 The hidden force that makes a lifetime  
 strong,  
 And not the short-lived fuel of a song. 220  
 Passionless, say you? What is passion for  
 But to sublime our natures and control  
 To front heroic toils with late return,  
 Or none, or such as shames the conqueror?  
 That fire was fed with substance of the  
 soul  
 And not with holiday stubble, that could  
 burn,  
 Unpraised of men who after bonfires run,  
 Through seven slow years of unadvancing  
 war,  
 Equal when fields were lost or fields were  
 won,  
 With breath of popular applause or blame,  
 Nor fanned nor damped, unquenchably the  
 same, 231  
 Too inward to be reached by flaws of idle  
 fame.

## 3

Soldier and statesman, rarest unison;  
 High-poised example of great duties done  
 Simply as breathing, a world's honors worn  
 As life's indifferent gifts to all men born;

Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,  
 But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,  
 Tramping the snow to coral where they  
 trod,  
 Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content; <sup>240</sup>  
 Modest, yet firm as Nature's self; un-  
 blamed  
 Save by the men his nobler temper  
 shamed;  
 Never seduced through show of present  
 good  
 By other than unsetting lights to steer  
 New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his  
 steadfast mood  
 More steadfast, far from rashness as from  
 fear;  
 Rigid, but with himself first, grasping  
 still  
 In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of  
 will;  
 Not honored then or now because he  
 wooed  
 The popular voice, but that he still with-  
 stood; <sup>250</sup>  
 Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but  
 one,  
 Who was all this and ours, and all men's,  
 — WASHINGTON.

## 4

Minds strong by fits, irregularly great,  
 That flash and darken like revolving lights,  
 Catch more the vulgar eye unschooled to  
 wait  
 On the long curve of patient days and  
 nights  
 Rounding a whole life to the circle fair  
 Of orb'd fulfilment; and this balanced  
 soul,  
 So simple in its grandeur, coldly bare  
 Of draperies theatric, standing there <sup>260</sup>  
 In perfect symmetry of self-control,  
 Seems not so great at first, but greater  
 grows  
 Still as we look, and by experience learn  
 How grand this quiet is, how nobly stern  
 The discipline that wrought through life-  
 long throes  
 That energetic passion of repose.

## 5

A nature too decorous and severe,  
 Too self-respectful in its griefs and joys,  
 For ardent girls and boys  
 Who find no genius in a mind so clear <sup>270</sup>

That its grave depths seem obvious and  
 near,  
 Nor a soul great that made so little noise.  
 They feel no force in that calm-cadenced  
 phrase,  
 The habitual full-dress of his well-bred  
 mind,  
 That seems to pace the minuet's courtly  
 maze  
 And tell of ampler leisures, roomier length  
 of days.  
 His firm-based brain, to self so little kind  
 That no tumultuary blood could blind,  
 Formed to control men, not amaze,  
 Looms not like those that borrow height of  
 haze: <sup>280</sup>  
 It was a world of statelier movement then  
 Than this we fret in, he a denizen  
 Of that ideal Rome that made a man for  
 men.

## VI

## 1

The longer on this earth we live  
 And weigh the various qualities of men,  
 Seeing how most are fugitive,  
 Or fitful gifts, at best, of now and then,  
 Wind-wavered corpse-lights, daughters of  
 the fen,  
 The more we feel the high stern-featured  
 beauty  
 Of plain devotedness to duty, <sup>290</sup>  
 Steadfast and still, nor paid with mortal  
 praise,  
 But finding amplest recompense  
 For life's ungarlanded expense  
 In work done squarely and unwasted days.  
 For this we honor him, that he could  
 know  
 How sweet the service and how free  
 Of her, God's eldest daughter here below,  
 And choose in meanest raiment which was  
 she.

## 2

Placid completeness, life without a fall  
 From faith or highest aims, truth's breach-  
 less wall, <sup>300</sup>  
 Surely if any fame can bear the touch,  
 His will say 'Here!' at the last trumpet's  
 call,  
 The unexpressive man whose life expressed  
 so much.

## VII

## 1

Never to see a nation born  
 Hath been given to mortal man,  
 Unless to those who, on that summer morn,  
 Gazed silent when the great Virginian  
 Unsheathed the sword whose fatal flash  
 Shot union through the incoherent clash  
 Of our loose atoms, crystallizing them <sup>310</sup>  
 Around a single will's unpliant stem,  
 And making purpose of emotion rash.  
 Out of that scabbard sprang, as from its  
 womb,  
 Nebulous at first but hardening to a star,  
 Through mutual share of sunburst and of  
 gloom,  
 The common faith that made us what we  
 are.

## 2

That lifted blade transformed our jangling  
 clans,  
 Till then provincial, to Americans,  
 And made a unity of wildering plans;  
 Here was the doom fixed: here is marked  
 the date <sup>320</sup>  
 When this New World awoke to man's  
 estate,  
 Burnt its last ship and ceased to look be-  
 hind:  
 Nor thoughtless was the choice; no love or  
 hate  
 Could from its poise move that deliberate  
 mind,  
 Weighing between too early and too late  
 Those pitfalls of the man refused by Fate:  
 His was the impartial vision of the great  
 Who see not as they wish, but as they  
 find.  
 He saw the dangers of defeat, nor less  
 The incomputable perils of success; <sup>330</sup>  
 The sacred past thrown by, an empty rind;  
 The future, cloud-land, snare of prophets  
 blind;  
 The waste of war, the ignominy of peace;  
 On either hand a sullen rear of woes,  
 Whose garnered lightnings none could  
 guess,  
 Piling its thunder-heads and muttering  
 'Cease!'  
 Yet drew not back his hand, but gravely  
 chose  
 The seeming-desperate task whence our  
 new nation rose.

## 3

A noble choice and of immortal seed!  
 Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance  
 Or easy were as in a boy's romance; <sup>341</sup>  
 The man's whole life precludes the single  
 deed  
 That shall decide if his inheritance  
 Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,  
 Our race's sap and sustenance,  
 Or with the unmotivated herd that only sleep  
 and feed.  
 Choice seems a thing indifferent; thus or so,  
 What matters it? The Fates with mock-  
 ing face  
 Look on inexorable, nor seem to know  
 Where the lot lurks that gives life's fore-  
 most place. <sup>350</sup>  
 Yet Duty's leaden casket holds it still,  
 And but two ways are offered to our will,  
 Toil with rare triumph, ease with safe dis-  
 grace,  
 The problem still for us and all of human  
 race.  
 He chose, as men choose, where most dan-  
 ger showed,  
 Nor ever faltered 'neath the load  
 Of petty cares, that gall great hearts the  
 most,  
 But kept right on the strenuous up-hill  
 road,  
 Strong to the end, above complaint or boast:  
 The popular tempest on his rock-mailed  
 coast <sup>360</sup>  
 Wasted its wind-borne spray,  
 The noisy marvel of a day;  
 His soul sate still in its unstormed abode.

## VIII

Virginia gave us this imperial man  
 Cast in the massive mould  
 Of those high-statured ages old  
 Which into grander forms our mortal metal  
 ran;  
 She gave us this unblemished gentleman:  
 What shall we give her back but love and  
 praise  
 As in the dear old unestranged days <sup>370</sup>  
 Before the inevitable wrong began?  
 Mother of States and undiminished men,  
 Thou gavest us a country, giving him,  
 And we owe alway what we owed thee then:  
 The boon thou wouldst have snatched from  
 us agen  
 Shines as before with no abatement dim.