

ing their loads of oak and walnut from the country, as the slow-swinging oxen trailed them along over the complaining snow, in the cold, brown light of early morning. Lying in bed and listening to their dreary music had a pleasure in it akin to the Lucretian luxury, or that which Byron speaks of as to be enjoyed in looking on at a battle by one "who hath no friend, no brother there."

There was another sound, in itself so sweet, and so connected with one of those simple and curious superstitions of childhood of which I have spoken, that I can never cease to cherish a sad sort of love for it. — Let me tell the superstitious fancy first. The Puritan "Sabbath," as everybody knows, began at "sundown" on Saturday evening. To such observance of it I was born and bred. As the large, round disk of day declined, a stillness, a solemnity, a somewhat melancholy hush came over us all. It was time for work to cease, and for playthings to be put away. The world of active life passed into the shadow of an eclipse, not to emerge until the sun should sink again beneath the horizon.

It was in this stillness of the world without and of the soul within that the pulsating lullaby of the evening crickets used to make itself most distinctly heard, — so that I well remember I used to think that the purring of these little creatures, which mingled with the batrachian hymns from the neighboring swamp, *was peculiar to Saturday evenings*. I don't know that anything could give a clearer idea of the quieting and subduing effect of the old habit of observance of what was considered holy time, than this strange, childish fancy.

Yes, and there was still another sound which min-

gled its solemn cadences with the waking and sleeping dreams of my boyhood. It was heard only at times, — a deep, muffled roar, which rose and fell, not loud, but vast, — a whistling boy would have drowned it for his next neighbor, but it must have been heard over the space of a hundred square miles. I used to wonder what this might be. Could it be the roar of the thousand wheels and the ten thousand footsteps jarring and trampling along the stones of the neighboring city? That would be continuous; but this, as I have said, rose and fell in regular rhythm. I remember being told, and I suppose this to have been the true solution, that it was the sound of the waves, after a high wind, breaking on the long beaches many miles distant. I should really like to know whether any observing people living ten miles, more or less, inland from long beaches, — in such a town, for instance, as Cantabridge, in the eastern part of the Territory of the Massachusetts, — have ever observed any such sound, and whether it was rightly accounted for as above.

Mingling with these inarticulate sounds in the low murmur of memory, are the echoes of certain voices I have heard at rare intervals. I grieve to say it, but our people, I think, have not generally agreeable voices. The marrowy organisms, with skins that shed water like the backs of ducks, with smooth surfaces neatly padded beneath, and velvet linings to their singing-pipes, are not so common among us as that other pattern of humanity with angular outlines and plane surfaces, arid integuments, hair like the fibrous covering of a cocoa-nut in gloss and suppleness as well as color, and voices at once thin and strenuous; — acidulous enough to produce effervescence with alkalis,

and stridulous enough to sing duets with the katydids. I think our conversational soprano, as sometimes overheard in the cars, arising from a group of young persons, who may have taken the train at one of our great industrial centres, for instance, — young persons of the female sex, we will say, who have bustled in, full-dressed, engaged in loud strident speech, and who, after free discussion, have fixed on two or more double seats, which having secured, they proceed to eat apples and hand round daguerreotypes, — I say I think the conversational soprano, heard under these circumstances, would not be among the allurements the old Enemy would put in requisition, were he getting up a new temptation of St. Anthony.

There are sweet voices among us, we all know, and voices not musical, it may be, to those who hear them for the first time, yet sweeter to us than any we shall hear until we listen to some warbling angel in the overture to that eternity of blissful harmonies we hope to enjoy. — But why should I tell lies? If my friends love me, it is because I try to tell the truth. I never heard but two voices in my life that frightened me by their sweetness.

— Frightened you? — said the schoolmistress. — Yes, frightened me. They made me feel as if there might be constituted a creature with such a chord in her voice to some string in another's soul, that, if she but spoke, he would leave all and follow her, though it were into the jaws of Erebus. Our only chance to keep our wits is, that there are so few natural chords between others' voices and this string in our souls, and that those which at first may have jarred a little by and by come into harmony with it. — But I tell you this is no fiction. You may call the story of

Ulysses and the Sirens a fable, but what will you say to Mario and the poor lady who followed him?

— Whose were those two voices that bewitched me so? — They both belonged to German women. One was a chambermaid, not otherwise fascinating. The key of my room at a certain great hotel was missing, and this Teutonic maiden was summoned to give information respecting it. The simple soul was evidently not long from her mother-land, and spoke with sweet uncertainty of dialect. But to hear her wonder and lament and suggest with soft, liquid inflexions, and low, sad murmurs, in tones as full of serious tenderness for the fate of the lost key as if it had been a child that had strayed from its mother, was so winning, that, had her features and figure been as delicious as her accents, — if she had looked like the marble Clytie, for instance, — why, all I can say is —

[The schoolmistress opened her eyes so wide, that I stopped short.]

I was only going to say that I should have drowned myself. For Lake Erie was close by, and it is so much better to accept asphyxia, which takes only three minutes by the watch, than a *mésalliance*, that lasts fifty years to begin with, and then passes along down the line of descent (breaking out in all manner of boorish manifestations of feature and manner, which, if men were only as short-lived as horses, could be readily traced back through the square-roots and the cube-roots of the family stem on which you have hung the armorial bearings of the De Champignons or the De la Morues, until one came to beings that ate with knives and said "Haow?"), that no person of right feeling could have hesitated for a single moment.

The second of the ravishing voices I have heard was, as I have said, that of another German woman. — I suppose I shall ruin myself by saying that such a voice could not have come from any Americanized human being.

— What was there in it? — said the schoolmistress, — and, upon my word, her tones were so very musical, that I almost wished I had said three voices instead of two, and not made the unpatriotic remark above reported. — Oh, I said, it had so much *woman* in it, — *muliebriety*, as well as *femineity*; — no self-assertion, such as free suffrage introduces into every word and movement; large, vigorous nature, running back to those huge-limbed Germans of Tacitus, but subdued by the reverential training and tuned by the kindly culture of fifty generations. Sharp business habits, a lean soil, independence, enterprise, and east winds, are not the best things for the larynx. Still, you hear noble voices among us, — I have known families famous for them, — but ask the first person you meet a question, and ten to one there is a hard, sharp, metallic, matter-of-business clink in the accents of the answer, that produces the effect of one of those bells which small trades-people connect with their shop-doors, and which spring upon your ear with such vivacity, as you enter, that your first impulse is to retire at once from the precincts.

— Ah, but I must not forget that dear little child I saw and heard in a French hospital. Between two and three years old. Fell out of her chair and snapped both thigh-bones. Lying in bed, patient, gentle. Rough students round her, some in white aprons, looking fearfully business-like; but the child placid, perfectly still. I spoke to her, and the blessed little

creature answered me in a voice of such heavenly sweetness, with that reedy thrill in it which you have heard in the thrush's even-song, that I seem to hear it at this moment, while I am writing, so many, many years afterwards. — *C'est tout comme un serin*, said the French student at my side.

These are the voices which struck the key-note of my conceptions as to what the sounds we are to hear in heaven will be, if we shall enter through one of the twelve gates of pearl. There must be other things besides *aërolites* that wander from their own spheres to ours; and when we speak of celestial sweetness or beauty, we may be nearer the literal truth than we dream. If mankind generally are the shipwrecked survivors of some pre-Adamitic cataclysm, set adrift in these little open boats of humanity to make one more trial to reach the shore, — as some grave theologians have maintained, — if, in plain English, men are the ghosts of dead devils who have "died into life" (to borrow an expression from Keats), and walk the earth in a suit of living rags which lasts three or four score summers, — why, there must have been a few good spirits sent to keep them company, and these sweet voices I speak of must belong to them.

— I wish you could once hear my sister's voice, — said the schoolmistress.

If it is like yours, it must be a pleasant one, — said I.

I never thought mine was anything, — said the schoolmistress.

How should you know? — said I. — People never hear their own voices, — any more than they see their own faces. There is not even a looking-glass for the voice. Of course, there is something audible to us

when we speak; but that something is not our own voice as it is known to all our acquaintances. I think, if an image spoke to us in our own tones, we should not know them in the least. — How pleasant it would be, if in another state of being we could have shapes like our former selves for playthings, — we standing outside or inside of them, as we liked, and they being to us just what we used to be to others!

— I wonder if there will be nothing like what we call “play,” after our earthly toys are broken, — said the schoolmistress.

Hush, — said I, — what will the divinity-student say?

[I thought she was hit, that time; — but the shot must have gone over her, or on one side of her; she did not flinch.]

Oh, — said the schoolmistress, — he must look out for my sister’s heresies; I am afraid he will be too busy with them to take care of mine.

Do you mean to say, — said I, — that it is *your sister* whom that student —

[The young fellow commonly known as John, who had been sitting on the barrel, smoking, jumped off just then, kicked over the barrel, gave it a push with his foot that set it rolling, and stuck his saucy-looking face in at the window so as to cut my question off in the middle; and the schoolmistress leaving the room a few minutes afterwards, I did not have a chance to finish it.

The young fellow came in and sat down in a chair, putting his heels on the top of another.

Pooty girl, — said he.

A fine young lady, — I replied.

Keeps a fust-rate school, according to accounts, —

said he, — teaches all sorts of things, — Latin and Italian and music. Folks rich once, — smashed up. She went right ahead as smart as if she’d been born to work. That’s the kind o’ girl I go for. I’d marry her, only two or three other girls would drown themselves, if I did.

I think the above is the longest speech of this young fellow’s which I have put on record. I do not like to change his peculiar expressions, for this is one of those cases in which the style is the man, as M. de Buffon says. The fact is, the young fellow is a good-hearted creature enough, only too fond of his jokes, — and if it were not for those heat-lightning winks on one side of his face, I should not mind his fun much.]

[Some days after this, when the company were together again, I talked a little.]

— I don’t think I have a genuine hatred for anybody. I am well aware that I differ herein from the sturdy English moralist and the stout American tragedian. I don’t deny that I hate *the sight* of certain people; but the qualities which make me tend to hate the man himself are such as I am so much disposed to pity, that, except under immediate aggravation, I feel kindly enough to the worst of them. It is such a sad thing to be born a sneaking fellow, so much worse than to inherit a hump-back or a couple of club-feet, that I sometimes feel as if we ought to love the crippled souls, if I may use this expression, with a certain tenderness which we need not waste on noble natures. One who is born with such congenital incapacity that nothing can make a gentleman of him is entitled, not to our wrath, but to our profoundest

sympathy. But as we cannot help hating the sight of these people, just as we do that of physical deformities, we gradually eliminate them from our society, — we love them, but open the window and let them go. By the time decent people reach middle age they have weeded their circle pretty well of these unfortunates, unless they have a taste for such animals; in which case, no matter what their position may be, there is something, you may be sure, in their natures akin to that of their wretched parasites.

— The divinity-student wished to know what I thought of affinities, as well as of antipathies; did I believe in love at first sight?

Sir, — said I, — all men love all women. That is the *primâ-facie* aspect of the case. The Court of Nature assumes the law to be, that all men do so; and the individual man is bound to show cause why he does not love any particular woman. A man, says one of my old black-letter law-books, may show divers good reasons, as thus: He hath not seen the person named in the indictment; she is of tender age, or the reverse of that; she hath certain personal disqualifications, — as, for instance, she is a blackamoor, or hath an ill-favored countenance; or, his capacity of loving being limited, his affections are engrossed by a previous comer; and so of other conditions. Not the less is it true that he is bound by duty and inclined by nature to love each and every woman. Therefore it is that each woman virtually summons every man to show cause why he doth not love her. This is not by written document, or direct speech, for the most part, but by certain signs of silk, gold, and other materials, which say to all men, — Look on me and love, as in duty bound. Then the man pleadeth his special in-

capacity, whatsoever that may be, — as, for instance, impecuniosity, or that he hath one or many wives in his household, or that he is of mean figure, or small capacity; of which reasons it may be noted, that the first is, according to late decisions, of chiefest authority. — So far the old law-book. But there is a note from an older authority, saying that every woman doth also love each and every man, except there be some good reason to the contrary; and a very observing friend of mine, a young unmarried clergyman, tells me, that, so far as his experience goes, he has reason to think the ancient author had fact to justify his statement.

I'll tell you how it is with the pictures of women we fall in love with at first sight.

— We a'n't talking about pictures, — said the lady's daughter, — we're talking about women.

I understood that we were speaking of love at sight, — I remarked, mildly. — Now, as all a man knows about a woman whom he looks at is just what a picture as big as a copper, or a "nickel," rather, at the bottom of his eye can teach him, I think I am right in saying we are talking about the pictures of women. — Well, now, the reason why a man is not desperately in love with ten thousand women at once is just that which prevents all our portraits being distinctly seen upon that wall. They all *are* painted there by reflection from our faces, but because *all* of them are painted on each spot, and each on the same surface, and many other objects at the same time, no one is seen as a picture. But darken a chamber and let a single pencil of rays in through a key-hole, then you have a picture on the wall. We never fall in love with a woman in distinction from women, until we can get an image of

her though a pin-hole; and then we can see nothing else, and nobody but ourselves can see the image in our mental camera-obscura.

— My friend, the Poet, tells me he has to leave town whenever the anniversaries come round.

What's the difficulty? — Why, they all want him to get up and make speeches, or songs, or toasts; which is just the very thing he does n't want to do. He is an old story, he says, and hates to show on these occasions. But they tease him, and coax him, and can't do without him, and feel all over his poor weak head until they get their fingers on the *fontanelle* (the Professor will tell you what this means, — he says the one at the top of the head always remains open in poets), until, by gentle pressure on that soft pulsating spot, they stupefy him to the point of acquiescence.

There are times, though, he says, when it is a pleasure, before going to some agreeable meeting, to rush out into one's garden and clutch up a handful of what grows there, — weeds and violets together, — not cutting them off, but pulling them up by the roots with the brown earth they grow in sticking to them. That's his idea of a post-prandial performance. Look here, now. These verses I am going to read you, he tells me, were pulled up by the roots just in that way, the other day. — Beautiful entertainment, — names there on the plates that flow from all English-speaking tongues as familiarly as *and* or *the*; entertainers known whenever good poetry and fair title-pages are held in esteem; guest a kind-hearted, modest, genial, hopeful poet, who sings to the hearts of his countrymen, the British people, the songs of good cheer which the better days to come, as all honest souls trust and believe, will turn into the prose of common life. My

friend, the Poet, says you must not read such a string of verses too literally. If he trimmed it nicely below, you would n't see the roots, he says, and he likes to keep them, and a little of the soil clinging to them.

This is the farewell my friend, the Poet, read to his and our friend, the Poet: —

A GOOD TIME GOING!

Brave singer of the coming time,
Sweet minstrel of the joyous present,
Crowned with the noblest wreath of rhyme,
The holly-leaf of Ayrshire's peasant,
Good-bye! Good-bye! — Our hearts and hands,
Our lips in honest Saxon phrases,
Cry, God be with him, till he stands
His feet among the English daisies!

'T is here we part; — for other eyes
The busy deck, the fluttering streamer,
The dripping arms that plunge and rise,
The waves in foam, the ship in tremor,
The kerchiefs waving from the pier,
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,
The deep blue desert, lone and drear,
With heaven above and home before him!

His home! — the Western giant smiles,
And twirls the spotty globe to find it, —
This little speck the British Isles?
'T is but a freckle, — never mind it! —
He laughs, and all his prairies roll,
Each gurgling cataract roars and chuckles,
And ridges stretched from pole to pole
Heave till they crack their iron knuckles.

But Memory blushes at the sneer,
And Honor turns with frown defiant,
And Freedom, leaning on her spear,
Laughs louder than the laughing giant: —

“ An islet is a world,” she said,
 “ When glory with its dust has blended,
 And Britain keeps her noble dead
 Till earth and seas and skies are rended! ”

Beneath each swinging forest-bough
 Some arm as stout in death reposes,—
 From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow
 Her valor's life-blood runs in roses;
 Nay, let our brothers of the West
 Write smiling in their florid pages,
 One-half her soil has walked the rest
 In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages!

Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,
 From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,
 The British oak with rooted grasp
 Her slender handful holds together,—
 With cliffs of white and bowers of green,
 And Ocean narrowing to caress her,
 And hills and threaded streams between,—
 Our little mother isle, God bless her!

In earth's broad temple where we stand,
 Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,
 We hold the missal in our hand,
 Bright with the lines our Mother taught us;
 Where'er its blazoned page betrays
 The glistening links of gilded fetters,
 Behold, the half-turned leaf displays
 Her rubric stained in crimson letters!

Enough! To speed a parting friend
 'T is vain alike to speak and listen;—
 Yet stay,— these feeble accents blend
 With rays of light from eyes that glisten.
 Good-bye! once more,— and kindly tell
 In words of peace the young world's story,—
 And say, besides,— we love too well
 Our mothers' soil, our fathers' glory!

When my friend, the Professor, found that my friend, the Poet, had been coming out in this full-blown style, he got a little excited, as you may have seen a canary, sometimes, when another strikes up. The Professor says he knows he can lecture, and thinks he can write verses. At any rate, he has often tried, and now he was determined to try again. So when some professional friends of his called him up, one day, after a feast of reason and a regular “freshet” of soul which had lasted two or three hours, he read them these verses. He introduced them with a few remarks, he told me, of which the only one he remembered was this: that he had rather write a single line which one among them should think worth remembering than set them all laughing with a string of epigrams. It was all right, I don't doubt; at any rate, that was his fancy then, and perhaps another time he may be obstinately hilarious; however, it may be that he is growing graver, for time is a fact so long as clocks and watches continue to go, and a cat can't be a kitten always, as the old gentleman opposite said the other day.

You must listen to this seriously, for I think the Professor was very much in earnest when he wrote it.

THE TWO ARMIES.*

As Life's unending column pours,
 Two marshalled hosts are seen,—
 Two armies on the trampled shores
 That Death flows black between.

One marches to the drum-beat's roll,
 The wide-mouthed clarion's bay,

* This poem was written for and read at a meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

And bears upon a crimson scroll,
 "Our glory is to slay."

One moves in silence by the stream,
 With sad, yet watchful eyes,
 Calm as the patient planet's gleam
 That walks the clouded skies.

Along its front no sabres shine,
 No blood-red pennons wave;
 Its banner bears the single line,
 "Our duty is to save."

For those no death-bed's lingering shade;
 At Honor's trumpet-call,
 With knitted brow and lifted blade
 In Glory's arms they fall.

For these no clashing falchions bright,
 No stirring battle-cry;
 The bloodless stabber calls by night, —
 Each answers, "Here am I!"

For those the sculptor's laurelled bust,
 The builder's marble piles,
 The anthems pealing o'er their dust
 Through long cathedral aisles.

For these the blossom-sprinkled turf
 That floods the lonely graves,
 When Spring rolls in her sea-green surf
 In flowery-foaming waves.

Two paths lead upward from below,
 And angels wait above,
 Who count each burning life-drop's flow,
 Each falling tear of love.

Though from the Hero's bleeding breast
 Her pulses Freedom drew,

Though the white lilies in her crest
 Sprang from that scarlet dew, —

While Valor's haughty champions wait
 Till all their scars are shown,
 Love walks unchallenged through the gate,
 To sit beside the Throne!

X.

[THE schoolmistress came down with a rose in her hair, — a fresh June rose. She has been walking early; she has brought back two others, — one on each cheek.

I told her so, in some such pretty phrase as I could muster for the occasion. Those two blush-roses I just spoke of turned into a couple of damasks. I suppose all this went through my mind, for this was what I went on to say: —]

I love the damask rose best of all. The flowers our mothers and sisters used to love and cherish, those which grow beneath our eaves and by our doorstep, are the ones we always love best. If the Houyhnhnms should ever catch me, and, finding me particularly vicious and unmanageable, send a man-tamer to Rarefy me; I'll tell you what drugs he would have to take and how he would have to use them. Imagine yourself reading a number of the Houyhnhnm Gazette, giving an account of such an experiment.

"MAN-TAMING EXTRAORDINARY."

"The soft-hoofed semi-quadruped recently captured was subjected to the art of our distinguished man-tamer in presence of a numerous assembly. The ani-