

The schoolmistress had tried life, too. Once in a while one meets with a single soul greater than all the living pageant which passes before it. As the pale astronomer sits in his study with sunken eyes and thin fingers, and weighs Uranus or Neptune as in a balance, so there are meek, slight women who have weighed all which this planetary life can offer, and hold it like a bauble in the palm of their slender hands. This was one of them. Fortune had left her, sorrow had baptized her; the routine of labor and the loneliness of almost friendless city-life were before her. Yet, as I looked upon her tranquil face, gradually regaining a cheerfulness which was often sprightly, as she became interested in the various matters we talked about and places we visited, I saw that eye and lip and every shifting lineament were made for love, — unconscious of their sweet office as yet, and meeting the cold aspect of Duty with the natural graces which were meant for the reward of nothing less than the Great Passion.

— I never addressed one word of love to the schoolmistress in the course of these pleasant walks. It seemed to me that we talked of everything but love on that particular morning. There was, perhaps, a little more timidity and hesitancy on my part than I have commonly shown among our people at the boarding-house. In fact, I considered myself the master at the breakfast-table; but, somehow, I could not command myself just then so well as usual. The truth is, I had secured a passage to Liverpool in the steamer which was to leave at noon, — with the condition, however, of being released in case circumstances occurred to detain me. The schoolmistress knew nothing about all this, of course, as yet.

It was on the Common that we were walking. The *mall*, or boulevard of our Common, you know, has various branches leading from it in different directions. One of these runs down from opposite Joy Street southward across the whole length of the Common to Boylston Street. We called it the long path, and were fond of it.

I felt very weak indeed (though of a tolerably robust habit) as we came opposite the head of this path on that morning. I think I tried to speak twice without making myself distinctly audible. At last I got out the question, — Will you take the long path with me? — Certainly, — said the schoolmistress, — with much pleasure. — Think, — I said, — before you answer: if you take the long path with me now, I shall interpret it that we are to part no more! — The schoolmistress stepped back with a sudden movement, as if an arrow had struck her.

One of the long granite blocks used as seats was hard by, — the one you may still see close by the Ginkgo-tree. — Pray, sit down, — I said. — No, no, she answered, softly, — I will walk the *long path* with you!

— The old gentleman who sits opposite met us walking, arm in arm, about the middle of the long path, and said, very charmingly, — “ Good-morning, my dears ! ”

## XII.

[I DID not think it probable that I should have a great many more talks with our company, and therefore I was anxious to get as much as I could into

every conversation. That is the reason why you will find some odd, miscellaneous facts here, which I wished to tell at least once, as I should not have a chance to tell them habitually, at our breakfast-table. — We're very free and easy, you know; we don't read what we don't like. Our parish is so large, one can't pretend to preach to all the pews at once. One can't be all the time trying to do the best of one's best; if a company works a steam fire-engine, the fire-men need n't be straining themselves all day to squirt over the top of the flagstaff. Let them wash some of those lower-story windows a little. Besides, there is no use in our quarrelling now, as you will find out when you get through this paper.]

— Travel, according to my experience, does not exactly correspond to the idea one gets of it out of most books of travels. I am thinking of travel as it was when I made the Grand Tour, especially in Italy. Memory is a net; one finds it full of fish when he takes it from the brook; but a dozen miles of water have run through it without sticking. I can prove some facts about travelling by a story or two. There are certain principles to be assumed, — such as these: — He who is carried by horses must deal with rogues. — To-day's dinner subtends a larger visual angle than yesterday's revolution. A mote in my eye is bigger to me than the biggest of Dr. Gould's private planets. — Every traveller is a self-taught entomologist. — Old jokes are dynamometers of mental tension; an old joke tells better among friends travelling than at home, — which shows that their minds are in a state of diminished, rather than increased, vitality. There was a story about "strahps to your pahnts," which was vastly funny to us fellows, — on the road from

Milan to Venice. — *Cœlum, non animum*, — travellers change their guineas, but not their characters. The bore is the same, eating dates under the cedars of Lebanon, as over a plate of baked beans in Beacon Street. — Parties of travellers have a morbid instinct for "establishing raws" upon each other. — A man shall sit down with his friend at the foot of the Great Pyramid and they will take up the question they had been talking about under "the great elm," and forget all about Egypt. When I was crossing the Po, we were all fighting about the propriety of one fellow's telling another that his argument was *absurd*; one maintaining it to be a perfectly admissible logical term, as proved by the phrase "reductio ad absurdum;" the rest badgering him as a conversational bully. Mighty little we troubled ourselves for *Padus*, the Po, "a river broader and more rapid than the Rhone," and the times when Hannibal led his grim Africans to its banks, and his elephants thrust their trunks into the yellow waters over which that pendulum ferry-boat was swinging back and forward every ten minutes!

— Here are some of those reminiscences, with morals prefixed, or annexed, or implied.

Lively emotions very commonly do not strike us full in front, but obliquely from the side; a scene or incident in *undress* often affects us more than one in full costume.

"Is this the mighty ocean? — Is this all?"

says the Princess in Gebir. The rush that should have flooded my soul in the Coliseum did not come. But walking one day in the fields about the city, I stumbled over a fragment of broken masonry, and lo!

the World's Mistress in her stone girdle — *alta moenia Romæ* — rose before me and whitened my cheek with her pale shadow as never before or since.

I used very often, when coming home from my morning's work at one of the public institutions of Paris, to stop in at the dear old church of St. Etienne du Mont. The tomb of St. Genevieve, surrounded by burning candles and votive tablets, was there; the mural tablet of Jacobus Benignus Winslow was there; there was a noble organ with carved figures; the pulpit was borne on the oaken shoulders of a stooping Samson; and there was a marvellous staircase like a coil of lace. These things I mention from memory, but not all of them together impressed me so much as an inscription on a small slab of marble fixed in one of the walls. It told how this church of St. Stephen was repaired and beautified in the year 16\*\*, and how, during the celebration of its reopening, two girls of the parish (*filles de la paroisse*) fell from the gallery, carrying a part of the balustrade with them, to the pavement, but by a miracle escaped uninjured. Two young girls nameless, but real presences to my imagination, as much as when they came fluttering down on the tiles with a cry that outscrambled the sharpest treble in the *Te Deum*. (Look at Carlyle's article on Boswell, and see how he speaks of the poor young woman Johnson talked with in the streets one evening.) All the crowd gone but these two "*filles de la paroisse*," — gone as utterly as the dresses they wore, as the shoes that were on their feet, as the bread and meat that were in the market on that day.

Not the great historical events, but the personal incidents which call up single sharp pictures of some human being in its pang or struggle, reach us most

nearly. I remember the platform at Berne, over the parapet of which Theobald Weinzäppli's restive horse sprung with him and landed him more than a hundred feet beneath in the lower town, not dead, but sorely broken, and no longer a wild youth, but God's servant from that day forward. I have forgotten the famous bears, and all else. — I remember the Percy lion on the bridge over the little river at Alnwick, — the leaden lion with his tail stretched out straight like a pump-handle, — and why? Because of the story of the village boy who must fain bestride the leaden tail, standing out over the water, — which breaking, he dropped into the stream far below, and was taken out an idiot for the rest of his life.

Arrow-heads must be brought to a sharp point and the guillotine-axe must have a slanting edge. Something intensely human, narrow, and definite pierces to the seat of our sensibilities more readily than huge occurrences and catastrophes. A nail will pick a lock that defies hatchet and hammer. "The Royal George" went down with all her crew, and Cowper wrote an exquisitely simple poem about it; but the leaf which holds it is smooth, while that which bears the lines on his mother's portrait is blistered with tears.

My telling these recollections sets me thinking of others of the same kind which strike the imagination, especially when one is still young. You remember the monument in Devizes market to the woman struck dead with a lie in her mouth. I never saw that, but it is in the books. Here is one I never heard mentioned; — if any of the "Note and Query" tribe can tell the story, I hope they will. Where is this monument? I was riding on an English stage-coach when we passed a handsome marble column (as I remember

it) of considerable size and pretensions. — What is that? — I said. — That, — answered the coachman, — is *the hangman's pillar*.<sup>a</sup> Then he told me how a

<sup>a</sup> It would have been well if I had consulted *Notes and Queries* before telling this story. A year or two before the time when I was writing, a number of communications relating to the subject were sent to that periodical. A correspondent called my attention to them, and other correspondents, — Miss H. P., of London, the librarian of a public institution at Dublin, a young gentleman, writing from Cornwall, and others, whose residences I do not now remember, wrote to me, mentioning stories like that which the coachman told me. The self-reproduction of the legend wherever there was a stone to hang it on, seems to me so interesting, as bearing on the philosophy of tradition, that I subjoin a number of instances from *Note and Queries*.

In the first the thief's booty was a deer and not a sheep, as the common account made it. The incident not only involved a more distinguished quadruped, but also was found worthy of being commemorated in rhyme.

*N. & Q. for January 5, 1856.*

“In Potter's *Churnwood*, p. 179, a ‘Legend of the Hangman's Stone,’ in verse, is given, in which the death of John of Oxley is described.

‘One shaft he drew on his well-tried yew,  
And a gallant hart lay dead;  
He tied its legs, and he hoisted his prize,  
And he toiled over Lubcloud brow.  
He reached the tall stone, standing out and alone,  
Standing then as it standeth now;  
With his back to the stone he rested his load,  
And he chuckled with glee to think  
That the rest of his way on the down hill lay  
And his wife would have spiced the strong drink.

A swineherd was passing o'er great Toe's Head,  
When he noticed a motionless man;  
He shouted in vain — no reply could he gain —  
So down to the gray stone he ran.  
All was clear. There was Oxley on one side the stone,  
On the other the down-hanging deer;

man went out one night, many years ago, to steal sheep. He caught one, tied its legs together, passed the rope over his head, and started for home. In

The burden had slipped, and his neck it had nipped;  
He was hanged by his prize — all was clear.’

“‘When I was a youth,’ the same writer continues, ‘there were two fields in the parish of Foremark, Derbyshire, called the Great and the Little Hangman's Stone. In the former there was a stone, five or six feet high, with an indentation running across the top of it, and there was a legend that a sheep-stealer, once upon a time having stolen a sheep, had placed it on the top of the stone, and that it had slipped off and strangled him with the rope with which it was tied, and that the indentation was made by the friction of the rope caused by the struggles of the dying man.’ — C. S. GREAVES.”

*N. & Q., April 5, 1856.*

SIMILAR LEGENDS AT DIFFERENT PLACES. — “At the end of Lamber Moor, on the roadside between Haverford West and Little Haven, in the County of Pembroke, there is a stone about four feet high, called ‘Hang Davy Stone,’ connected with which is a tradition of the accidental strangling of a sheep-stealer, similar to the legend mentioned by Mr. Greaves with reference to the stone at Foremark. — J. W. PHILLIPS.”

*N. & Q., May 17, 1856.*

“THE HANGMAN STONE. — It may be interesting to your correspondent, Mr. J. W. Phillips, to be informed that at about five miles from Sidmouth, on the road to Colyton, on the right hand side of the road, and near Bovey House, is a large stone known by the name of ‘Hangman Stone.’ The legend is precisely similar to that noticed by Mr. Phillips and by Mr. Greaves. — N. S. HEINEKER.”

*N. & Q., May 31, 1856.*

“HANGMAN STONES. — Some years ago there was still to be seen, in a meadow belonging to me, situate near the northwestern boundary of the parish of Littlebury, in Essex, a large stone, the name of which, and the traditions attached to it, were identical with those recorded by your correspondents treating

climbing a fence, the rope slipped, caught him by the neck, and strangled him. Next morning he was found hanging dead on one side of the fence and the sheep on the other; in memory whereof the lord of the manor caused this monument to be erected as a warning to all who love mutton better than virtue. I will of Hangman Stones. This stone was subsequently removed by the late Mr. Jabez Gibson to Saffron Walden, and still remains in his garden at that place. I have a strong impression that other 'hangman stones' are to be met with elsewhere, but I am unable to point out the exact localities. — BRAYBROOKE."

"On the right side of the road between Brighton and Newhaven (about five miles, I think, from the former place), is a stone designated as above, and respecting which is told the same legend as that which is quoted by Henry Kensington. — H. E. C."

*N. & Q.*, June 21, 1856.

"HANGMAN STONES. — At a picturesque angle in the road between Sheffield and Barnsley, and about three miles south of the latter place, there is a toll-bar called 'Hangman Stone Bar.' Attached to this title is the usual legend of a sheep-stealer being strangled by the kicking animal, which he had slung across his shoulders, and which pulled him backwards as he tried to climb over the stone wall inclosure with his spoil. I do not know that any particular stone is marked as the one on which the sheep was rested for the convenience of the thief in trying to make his escape, but the Jehu of the now extinct Barnsley mail always told this story to any inquiring passenger who happened to be one of five at top, — as quaint a four-in-hand as you shall see. — ALFRED GATTY."

I have little doubt that the story told by the "Jehu," which my memory may have embellished a little, as is not unusual with travellers' recollections, was the one to which I listened as one of the five outsides, and in answer to my question. The country boys used to insist upon it in my young days that *stones grew*. It seems to me probable that a very moderate monolith may have grown in my recollection to "a handsome marble column," and that "the lord of the manor" was my own phrase rather than our coachman's.

send a copy of this record to him or her who shall first set me right about this column and its locality.<sup>a</sup>

And telling over these old stories reminds me that I have something which may interest architects and perhaps some other persons. I once ascended the spire of Strasburg Cathedral, which is the highest, I think (at present), in Europe. It is a shaft of stone filigree-work, frightfully open, so that the guide puts his arms behind you to keep you from falling. To climb it is a noonday nightmare, and to think of having climbed it crisps all the fifty-six joints of one's twenty digits. While I was on it, "pinnacled dim in the intense inane," a strong wind was blowing, and I felt sure that the spire was rocking. It swayed back and forward like a stalk of rye or a cat-o'-nine-tails (bulrush) with a bobolink on it. I mentioned it to the guide, and he said that the spire did really swing back and forward, — I think he said some feet.

Keep any line of knowledge ten years and some other line will intersect it. Long afterwards I was hunting out a paper of Dumeril's in an old journal, — the "Magazin Encyclopédique" for *l'an troisième* (1795), when I stumbled upon a brief article on the vibrations of the spire of Strasburg Cathedral. A man can shake it so that the movement shall be shown in a vessel of water nearly seventy feet below the summit, and higher up the vibration is like that of an earthquake. I have seen one of those wretched wooden spires with which we very shabbily finish some of our stone churches (thinking that the lidless blue eye of heaven cannot tell the counterfeits we try to pass on it,) swinging like a reed, in a wind, but one would hardly think of such a thing's happening in a

<sup>a</sup> I sent two or three copies to different correspondents.

stone spire. Does the Bunker-Hill Monument bend in the blast like a blade of grass? I suppose so.

You see, of course, that I am talking in a cheap way; — perhaps we will have some philosophy by and by; — let me work out this thin mechanical vein. — I have something more to say about trees. I have brought down this slice of hemlock to show you. Tree blew down in my woods (that were) in 1852. Twelve feet and a half round, fair girth; — nine feet, where I got my section, higher up. This is a wedge, going to the centre, of the general shape of a slice of apple-pie in a large and not opulent family. Length, about eighteen inches. I have studied the growth of this tree by its rings, and it is curious. Three hundred and forty-two rings. Started, therefore, about 1510. The thickness of the rings tells the rate at which it grew. For five or six years the rate was slow, — then rapid for twenty years. A little before the year 1550 it began to grow very slowly, and so continued for about seventy years. In 1620 it took a new start and grew fast until 1714, then for the most part slowly until 1786, when it started again and grew pretty well and uniformly until within the last dozen years, when it seems to have got on sluggishly.

Look here. Here are some human lives laid down against the periods of its growth, to which they corresponded. This is Shakspeare's. The tree was seven inches in diameter when he was born; ten inches when he died. A little less than ten inches when Milton was born; seventeen when he died. Then comes a long interval, and this thread marks out Johnson's life, during which the tree increased from twenty-two to twenty-nine inches in diameter. Here is the span of Napoleon's career; — the tree does n't seem to have minded it.

I never saw the man yet who was not startled at looking on this section. I have seen many wooden preachers, — never one like this. How much more striking would be the calendar counted on the rings of one of those awful trees which were standing when Christ was on earth, and where that brief mortal life is chronicled with the stolid apathy of vegetable being, which remembers all human history as a thing of yesterday in its own dateless existence!

I have something more to say about elms. A relative tells me there is one of great glory in Andover, near Bradford. I have some recollections of the former place, pleasant and other. [I wonder if the old Seminary clock strikes as slowly as it used to. My roommate thought, when he first came, it was the bell tolling deaths, and people's ages, as they do in the country. He swore — (ministers' sons get so familiar with good words that they are apt to handle them carelessly) — that the children were dying by the dozen, of all ages, from one to twelve, and ran off next day in recess, when it began to strike eleven, but was caught before the clock got through striking.] At the foot of "the hill," down in town, is, or was, a tidy old elm, which was said to have been hooped with iron to protect it from Indian tomahawks (*Credat Hahne-mannus*), and to have grown round its hoops and buried them in its wood. Of course, this is not the tree my relative means.

Also, I have a very pretty letter from Norwich, in Connecticut, telling me of two noble elms which are to be seen in the town. One hundred and twenty-seven feet from bough-end to bough-end. What do you say to that? And gentle ladies beneath it, that love it and celebrate its praises! And that in a town

of such supreme, audacious, Alpine loveliness as Norwich! — Only the dear people there must learn to call it Norridge, and not be misled by the mere accident of spelling.

Norwich.

Porchmouth.

Cincinnati.

What a sad picture of our civilization!

I did not speak to you of the great tree on what used to be the Colman farm, in Deerfield, simply because I had not seen it for many years, and did not like to trust my recollection. But I had it in memory, and even noted down, as one of the finest trees in symmetry and beauty I had ever seen. I have received a document, signed by two citizens of a neighboring town, certified by the postmaster and a selectman, and these again corroborated, reinforced, and sworn to by a member of that extraordinary college-class to which it is the good fortune of my friend the Professor to belong, who, though he has *formerly* been a member of Congress, is, I believe, fully worthy of confidence. The tree "girts" eighteen and a half feet, and spreads over a hundred, and is a real beauty. I hope to meet my friend under its branches yet; if we don't have "youth at the prow," we will have "pleasure at the 'elm."

And just now, again, I have got a letter about some grand willows in Maine, and another about an elm in Wayland, but too late for anything but thanks.\*

\* There are trees scattered about our New England towns worth going a dozen or a score of miles to see, if one only knew where to look for them. A mile from where I am now writing (Beverly Farms, Essex County, Massachusetts) is one of the noblest oaks I have ever seen, not distinguished so much for

[And this leads me to say, that I have received a great many communications, in prose and verse, since I began printing these notes. The last came this very morning, in the shape of a neat and brief poem, from New Orleans. I could not make any of them public, though sometimes requested to do so. Some of them have given me great pleasure, and encouraged me to believe I had friends whose faces I had never seen. If you are pleased with anything a writer says, and doubt whether to tell him of it, do not hesitate, a pleasant word is a cordial to one, who perhaps thinks he is tiring you, and so becomes tired himself. I purr very loud over a good, honest letter that says pretty things to me.]

— Sometimes very young persons send communications which they want forwarded to editors; and these young persons do not always seem to have right conceptions of these same editors, and of the public, and of themselves. Here is a letter I wrote to one of these young folks, but, on the whole, thought it best not to send. It is not fair to single out one for such sharp advice, where there are hundreds that are in need of it.

DEAR SIR, — You seem to be somewhat, but not a great deal, wiser than I was at your age. I don't wish to be understood as saying too much, for I think, its size, though its branches must spread a hundred feet from bough-end to bough-end, as for its beauty and lusty promise. A few minutes walk from the station at Rockport is a horse-chestnut which is remarkable for size of trunk and richness of foliage. I found that it measures eight feet and three inches in circumference, about four feet from the ground. There may be larger horse-chestnut trees in New England, but I have not seen or heard of them.

without committing myself to any opinion on my present state, that I was not a Solomon at that stage of development.

You long to "leap at a single bound into celebrity." Nothing is so common-place as to wish to be remarkable. Fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else, — very rarely to those who say to themselves, "Go to, now, let us be a celebrated individual!" The struggle for fame, as such, commonly ends in notoriety; — that ladder is easy to climb, but it leads to the pillory which is crowded with fools who could not hold their tongues and rogues who could not hide their tricks.

If you have the consciousness of genius, do something to show it. The world is pretty quick, nowadays, to catch the flavor of true originality; if you write anything remarkable, the magazines and newspapers will find you out, as the schoolboys find out where the ripe apples and pears are. Produce anything really good, and an intelligent editor will jump at it. Don't flatter yourself that any article of yours is rejected because you are unknown to fame. Nothing pleases an editor more than to get anything worth having from a new hand. There is always a dearth of really fine articles for a first-rate journal; for of a hundred pieces received, ninety are at or below the sea-level; some have water enough, but no head; some head enough, but no water; only two or three are from full reservoirs, high up that hill which is so hard to climb.

You may have genius. The contrary is of course probable, but it is not demonstrated. If you have, the world wants you more than you want it. It has not only a desire, but a passion, for every spark of

genius that shows itself among us; there is not a bull-calf in our national pasture that can bleat a rhyme but it is ten to one, among his friends, and no takers, that he is the real, genuine, no-mistake Osiris.

*Qu'est ce qu'il a fait?* What has he done? That was Napoleon's test. What have you done? Turn up the faces of your picture-cards, my boy! You need not make mouths at the public because it has not accepted you at your own fancy-valuation. Do the prettiest thing you can and wait your time.

For the verses you send me, I will not say they are hopeless, and I dare not affirm that they show promise. I am not an editor, but I know the standard of some editors. You must not expect to "leap with a single bound" into the society of those whom it is not flattery to call your betters. When "The Pactolian" has paid you for a copy of verses, — (I can furnish you a list of alliterative signatures, beginning with Annie Aureole and ending with Zoe Zenith), — when "The Rag-bag" has stolen your piece, after carefully scratching your name out, — when "The Nut-cracker" has thought you worth shelling, and strung the kernel of your cleverest poem, — then, and not till then, you may consider the presumption against you, from the fact of your rhyming tendency, as called in question, and let our friends hear from you, if you think it worth while. You may possibly think me too candid, and even accuse me of incivility; but let me assure you that I am not half so plain-spoken as Nature, nor half so rude as Time. If you prefer the long jolting of public opinion to the gentle touch of friendship, try it like a man. Only remember this, — that, if a bushel of potatoes is shaken in a market-cart without springs to it, the small potatoes always get to the bottom. Believe me, etc., etc.

I always think of verse-writers, when I am in this vein; for these are by far the most exacting, eager, self-weighing, restless, querulous, unreasonable, literary persons one is like to meet with. Is a young man in the habit of writing verses? Then the presumption is that he is an inferior person. For, look you, there are at least nine chances in ten that he writes *poor* verses. Now the habit of chewing on rhymes without sense and soul to match them is, like that of using any other narcotic, at once a proof of feebleness and a debilitating agent. A young man can get rid of the presumption against him afforded by his writing verses only by convincing us that they are verses worth writing.

All this sounds hard and rough, but, observe, it is not addressed to any individual, and of course does not refer to any reader of these pages. I would always treat any given young person passing through the meteoric showers which rain down on the brief period of adolescence with great tenderness. God forgive us if we ever speak harshly to young creatures on the strength of these ugly truths, and so, sooner or later, smite some tender-souled poet or poetess on the lips who might have sung the world into sweet trances, had we not silenced the *matin-song* in its first low breathings! Just as my heart yearns over the unloved, just so it sorrows for the ungifted who are doomed to the pangs of an undeceived self-estimate. I have always tried to be gentle with the most hopeless cases. My experience, however, has not been encouraging.

— X. Y., æt. 18, a cheaply-got-up youth, with narrow jaws, and broad, bony, cold, red hands, having been laughed at by the girls in his village, and “got

the mitten” (pronounced *mittin*) two or three times, fails to souling and controlling, and youthing and truthing, in the newspapers. Sends me some strings of verses, candidates for the Orthopedic Infirmary, all of them, in which I learn for the millionth time one of the following facts: either that something about a chime is sublime, or that something about time is sublime, or that something about a chime is concerned with time, or that something about a rhyme is sublime or concerned with time or with a chime. Wishes my opinion of the same, with advice as to his future course.

What shall I do about it? Tell him the whole truth, and send him a ticket of admission to the Institution for Idiots and Feeble-minded Youth? One does n't like to be cruel, — and yet one hates to lie. Therefore one softens down the ugly central fact of donkeyism, — recommends study of good models, — that writing verse should be an incidental occupation only, not interfering with the hoe, the needle, the lapstone, or the ledger, — and, above all, that there should be no hurry in printing what is written. Not the least use in all this. The poetaster who has tasted type is done for. He is like the man who has once been a candidate for the Presidency. He feeds on the madder of his delusion all his days, and his very bones grow red with the glow of his foolish fancy. One of these young brains is like a bunch of India crackers; once touch fire to it and it is best to keep hands off until it has done popping, — if it ever stops. I have two letters on file; one is a pattern of adulation, the other of impertinence. My reply to the first, containing the best advice I could give, conveyed in courteous language, had brought out the second.