by rubbing it with the palm of his hand,—offered to sing, "The sky is bright," accompanying himself on the front-door, if I would go down and help in the chorus. Said there never was such a set of fellows as the old boys of the set he has been with. Judges, mayors, congressmen, Mr. Speakers, leaders in science, clergymen, better than famous, and famous too, poets by the half-dozen, singers with voices like angels, financiers, wits, three of the best laughers in the commonwealth, engineers, agriculturists, all forms of talent and knowlege he pretended were represented in that meeting. Then he began to quote Byron about Santa Croce, and maintained that he could "furnish out creation" in all its details from that set of his. He would like to have the whole boodle of them, (I remonstrated against this word, but the Professor said it was a diabolish good word, and he would have no other), with their wives and children, shipwrecked on a remote island, just to see how splendidly they would reorganize society. They could build a city, they have done it; makes constitutions and laws; establish churches and lyceums; teach and practice the healing art; instruct in every department; found observatories; create commerce and manufactures; write songs and hymns, and sing 'em and make instruments to accompany the songs with; lastly, publish a journal almost as good as the *Northern Magazine*, edited by the Come-outers. There was nothing they were not up to, from a christening to a hanging; the last, to be sure, could never be called for, unless some stranger got in among them.

—I let the Professor talk as long as he liked; it didn't make much difference to me whether it was all truth, or partly made up of pale Sherry and similar elements. All at once he jumped up and said,—

Don't you want to hear what I just read to the boys?

I have had questions of a similar character asked me before, occasionally. A man of iron mould might perhaps say, No! I am not a man of iron mould, and said that I should be delighted.

The Professor then read—with that slightly sing-song cadence which is observed to be common in poets reading their own verses—the following stanzas; holding them at a focal distance of about two feet and a half, with an occasional movement back or forward for better adjustment, the appearance of which has been likened by some impertinent young folks to that of the act of playing on the trombone. His eyesight was never better; I have his word for it.

MARE RUBRUM.

Flash out a stream of blood-red wine!
  For I would drink to other days;
And brighter shall thy memory shine,
  Seen flaming through its crimson blaze.
The roses die, the summers fade;
  But every ghost of boyhood's dream
By nature's magic power is laid
  To sleep beneath this blood-red stream.

It filled the purple grapes that lay
  And drank the splendors of the sun,
Where the long summer's cloudless day
  Is mirrored in the broad Garonne;

It pictures still the bacchant shapes
  That saw their hoarded sunlight shed,
The maidens dancing on the grapes,
  Their milk-white ankles splashed with red.

Beneath these waves of crimson lie,
  In rosy fetters prisoned fast,
Those flitting shapes that never die,
  The swift-winged visions of the past.
Kiss but the crystal's mystic rim,
  Each shadow rends its flowery chain,
Springs in a bubble from its brim,
  And walks the chambers of the brain.

Poor Beauty! time and fortune's wrong,
  No form nor feature may withstand,
Thy wrecks are scattered all along,
  Like emptied sea-shells on the sand;
Yet sprinkled with this blushing rain,
  The dust restores each blooming girl,
As if the sea-shells moved again
  Their glistening lips of pink and pearl.

Here lies the home of school-boy life,
  With creaking stair and wind-swept hall,
And, scarred by many a truant knife,
  Our old initials on the wall;
Here rest, their keen vibrations mute—
  The shout of voices known so well,
The ringing laugh, the wailing flute,
  The chiding of the sharp-tongued bell.

Here, clad in burning robes, are laid
  Life's blossomed joys, untimely shed;
And here those cherished forms have strayed
  We miss awhile, and call them dead.
What wizard fills the maddening glass?
  What soil the enchanted clusters grew,
That buried passions wake and pass
  In beaded drops of fiery dew?

Nay, take the cup of blood-red wine,
  Our hearts can boast a warmer glow,
Filled from a vintage more divine,
  Calmed, but not chilled by winter's snow!

To-night the palest wave we sip
  Rich as the priceless draught shall be
That wet the bride of Cana's lip,
  The wedding wine of Galilee!

Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all.

I think Sir,—said the divinity student,—you must intend that for one of the sayings of the Seven Wise men of Boston you were speaking of the other day.

I thank you, my young friend,—was the reply,—but I must say something better than that, before I could pretend to fill out the number.

The schoolmistress wanted to know how many of these sayings there were on record, and what, and by whom said.

Why, let us see,—there is that one of Benjamin Franklin, "the great Bostonian," after whom this land was named. To be sure, he said a great many wise things,—and I don't feel sure he didn't borrow this,—he speaks as if it were old. But then he applied it so neatly!—

"He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged."

Then there is that glorious Epicurean paradox, uttered by my friend, the Historian, in one of his flashing moments:—

"Give us the luxuries of life, and we will dispense with its necessaries."

To these must certainly be added that other saying of one of the wittiest of men:—

"Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris."

—The divinity student looked grave at this, but said nothing.

The schoolmistress spoke out, and said she didn't think the wit meant any irreverence. It was only another way of saying, Paris is a heavenly place after New York or Boston.

A jaunty looking person, who had come in with the young fellow they call John,—evidently a stranger,—said there was one more wise man's saying that he had heard; it was about our place, but he didn't know who said it.—A civil curiosity was manifested by the company to hear the fourth wise saying. I heard him distinctly whispering to the young fellow who brought him to dinner, *Shall I tell it?* To which the answer was, *Go ahead!*—Well,—he said,—this was what I heard:—

"Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man, if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crow-bar."

Sir,—said I,—I am gratified with your remark. It expresses with pleasing vivacity that which I have sometimes heard uttered with malignant dullness. The satire of the remark is essentially true of Boston,—and of all other considerable—and inconsiderable—places with which I have had the privilege of being acquainted. Cockneys think London is the only place in the world. Frenchmen—you remember the line about Paris, the Court, the World, etc.—I recollect well, by the way, a sign in that city which ran thus: "Hotel de l'Univers et des États Unis"; and as Paris *is* the universe to a Frenchman, of course the United States are outside of it.—

"See Naples and then die."—It is quite as bad with smaller places. I have been about lecturing, you know, and have found the following propositions to hold true of all of them.

1. The axis of the earth sticks out visibly through the center of each and every town or city.

2. If more than fifty years have passed since its foundation, it is affectionately styled by the inhabitants the "*good old* town of ——————" (whatever its name may happen to be).

3. Every collection of its inhabitants that comes together to listen to a stranger is invariably declared to be a "remarkably intelligent audience."

4. The climate of the place is particularly favorable to longevity.

5. It contains several persons of vast talent little known to the world. (One or two of them, you may perhaps chance to remember, sent short pieces to the "Pactolian" some time since, which were "respectfully declined.")

Boston is just like other places of its size—only, perhaps, considering its excellent fish-market, paid fire department, superior monthly publications, and correct habit of spelling the English language, it has some right to look down on the mob of cities. I'll tell you, though, if you want to know it, what is the real offense of Boston. It drains a large water-shed of its intellect, and will not itself be drained. If it would only send away its first-rate men instead of its second-rate ones (no offense to the well-known exceptions, of which we are always proud), we should be spared such epigrammatic

remarks as that the gentleman has quoted. There can never be a real metropolis in this country until the biggest centre can drain the lesser ones of their talent and wealth. I have observed, by the way, that the people who really live in two great cities are by no means so jealous of each other, as are those of smaller cities situated within the intellectual basin, or *suction* range, of one large one, of the pretensions of any other. Don't you see why? Because their promising young author and rising lawyer and large capitalist have been drained off to the neighboring big city,—their prettiest girls have exported to the same market; all their ambition points there, and all their thin gilding of glory comes from there. I hate little, toad-eating cities.

Would I be so good as to specify any particular example?—Oh,—an example? Did you ever see a bear trap? Never? Well, shouldn't you like to see me put my foot into one? With sentiments of the highest consideration I must beg leave to be excused.

Besides, some of the smaller cities are charming. If they have an old church or two, a few stately mansions of former grandees, here and there an old dwelling with the second story projecting, (for the convenience of shooting the Indians knocking at the front-door with their tomahawks)—if they have, scattered about, those mighty square houses built something more than half a century ago, and standing like architectural boulders dropped by the former diluvium of wealth, whose refluent wave has left them as its monument,—if they have

gardens with elbowed apple-trees that push their branches over the high board-fence and drop their fruit on the side-walk,—if they have a little grass in their side-streets, enough to betoken quiet without proclaiming decay,—I think I could go to pieces, after my life's tranquil places, as sweetly as in any cradle that an old man may be rocked to sleep in. I visit such spots always with infinite delight. My friend, the Poet, says, that rapidly growing towns are most unfavorable to the imaginative and reflective faculties. Let a man live in one of these old quiet places, he says, and the wine of his soul, which is kept thick and turbid by the rattle of busy streets, settles, and as you hold it up, you may see the sun through it by day and the stars by night.

Do I think that the little villages have the conceit of the great towns? I don't believe there is much difference. You know how they read Pope's line in the smallest town in our State of Massachusetts? Well, they read it,—

"All are but parts of one stupendous *Hull!*"

Every person's feelings have a front-door and a side-door by which they may be entered. The front-door is on the street. Some keep it always open; some keep it latched; some, locked; some, bolted—with a chain that will let you peep in, but not go in—and some nail it up so that nothing can pass its threshold. This front-door leads into a passage which opens into an ante-room, and this into the interior apartments. The side-door opens at once into the sacred chambers.

There is almost always at least one key to this

side-door. This is carried for years hidden in a mother's bosom. Fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends, often, but by no means so universally, have duplicates of it. The wedding-ring conveys a right to one; alas, if none is given with it!

If nature or accident has put one of these keys into the hands of a person who has the torturing instinct, I can only pronounce the words that Justice utters over its doomed victim: *The Lord have mercy on your soul!* You will probably go mad within a reasonable time, or, if you are a man, run off and die with your head on a curbstone, in Melbourne or San Francisco; or, if you are a woman, quarrel and break your heart, or turn into a pale, jointed petrification that moves about as if it were alive, or play some real life-tragedy or other.

Be very careful to whom you trust one of these keys of the side-door. The fact of possessing one renders those even who are dear to you very terrible at times. You can keep the world out from your front-door, or receive visitors only when you are ready for them; but those of your own flesh and blood, or of certain grades of intimacy, can come in at the side-door, if they will, at any hour and in any mood. Some of them have a scale of your whole nervous system, and can play all the gamut of your sensibilities in semitones, touching the naked nerve-pulps as a pianist strikes the keys of his instrument. I am satisfied that there are as great masters of this nerve-playing as Vieuxtemps or Thalberg in their lines of performance. Married life is the school in which the most

accomplished artists in this department are to be found. A delicate woman is the best instrument; she has such a magnificent compass of sensibilities! From the deep inward moan which follows pressure on the nerves of sight, to the sharp cry as the filaments of taste are struck with a crashing sweep, is a range which no other instrument possesses. A few exercises on it daily at home fit a man wonderfully for his habitual labors, and refresh him immensely as he returns from them. No stranger can get a great many notes of torture out of a human soul; it takes one that knows it well,—parent, child, brother, sister, intimate. Be very careful to whom you give a side-door key; too many have them already.

—You remember the old story of the tender-hearted man, who placed a frozen viper in his bosom, and was stung by it when it became thawed? If we take a cold-blooded creature into our bosom, better that it should sting us and that we should die than that its chill should slowly steal into our hearts; warm it we never can! I have seen faces of women that were fair to look upon, yet one could see that the icicles were forming round these women's hearts. I knew what freezing image lay on the white breasts beneath the laces!

A very simple *intellectual* mechanism answers the necessities of friendship, and even of the most intimate relations of life. If a watch tells us the hour and the minute, we can be content to carry it about with us for a life-time, though it has no second-hand, and is not a repeater, nor a musical watch, —though it is not enamelled nor

jewelled,—in short, though it has little beyond the wheels required for a trustworthy instrument, added to a good face and a pair of useful hands. The more wheels there are in a watch or a brain, the more trouble they are to take care of. The moments of exaltation which belong to genius are egotistic by their very nature. A calm, clear mind, not subject to the spasms and crises that are so often met with in creative or intensely perceptive natures, is the best basis for love or friendship.—Observe, I am talking about *minds*. I won't say, the more intellect, the less capacity for loving; for that would do wrong to the understanding and reason; but, on the other hand, that the brain often runs away with the heart's best blood, which gives the world a few pages of wisdom or sentiment or poetry, instead of making one other heart happy, I have no question.

If one's intimate in love or friendship cannot or does not share all one's intellectual tastes or pursuits, that is a small matter. Intellectual companions can be found easily in men and books. After all, if we think of it, most of the world's loves and friendships have been between people that could not read nor spell.

But to radiate the heat of the affections into a clod, which absorbs all that is poured into it, but never warms beneath the sunshine of smiles or the pressure of hand or lip,—this is the great martyrdom of sensitive beings,—most of all in that perpetual *auto da fe* where young womanhood is the sacrifice.

You noticed, perhaps, what I just said about the loves and friendships of illiterate persons,—

that is, of the human race, with a few exceptions here and there. I like books,—I was born and bred among them, and have the easy feeling, when I get into their presence, that a stable boy has among horses. I don't think I undervalue them either as companions or as instructors. But I can't help remembering that the world's great men have not commonly been great scholars, nor its great scholars great men. The Hebrew patriarchs had small libraries, I think, if any; yet they represent to our imagination a very complete idea of manhood and, I think, if we could ask in Abraham to dine with us men of letters next Saturday, we should feel honored by his company.

What I wanted to say about books is this: That there are times in which every active mind feels itself above any and all human books.

I think a man must have a good opinion of himself, Sir,—said the divinity student,—who should feel himself above Shakespeare at any time.

My young friend,—I replied,—the man who is never conscious of any state of feeling or of intellectual effort entirely beyond expression by any form of words whatsoever is a mere creature of language. I can hardly believe there are any such men. Why, think for a moment of the power of music. The nerves that make us alive to it spread out (so the Professor tells me) in the most sensitive region of the marrow, just where it is widening to run up into the hemispheres. It has its seat in the region of sense rather than of thought. Yet it produces a continuous, and, as it were, logical sequence of

emotional and intellectual changes; but how different from trains of thought proper! how entirely beyond the reach of symbols! Think of human passions as compared with all phrases! Did you ever hear of a man's growing lean by the reading of "Romeo and Juliet," or blowing his brains out because Desdemona was maligned? There are a good many symbols, even, that are more expressive than words. I remember a young wife who had to part with her husband for a time. She did not write a mournful peon; indeed, she was a silent person, and perhaps hardly said a word about it; but she quietly turned of a deep orange color with jaundice. A great many people in this world have but one form of rhetoric for their profoundest experiences,—namely, to waste away and die. When a man can *read*, his paroxysm of feeling is passing. When he can *read*, his thought has slackened its hold. You talk about reading Shakespeare, using him as an expression for the highest intellect, and you wonder that any common person should be so presumptuous as to suppose his thought can rise above the text which lies before him. But think a moment. A child's reading of Shakespeare is one thing, and Coleridge's or Schlegel's reading of him is another. The saturation-point of each mind differs from that of every other. But I think it is as true for the small mind which can only take up a little as for the great one which takes up much, that the suggested trains of thought and feeling ought always to rise above —not the author, but the reader's mental version of the author, whoever he may be.

I think most readers of Shakespeare sometimes find themselves thrown into exalted mental conditions like those produced by music. Then they may drop the book, to pass at once into the region of thought without words. We may happen to be very dull folks, you and I, and probably are, unless there is some particular reason to suppose the contrary. But we get glimpses now and then of a sphere of spiritual possibilities, where we, dull as we are now, may sail in vast circles round the largest compass of earthly intelligences.

I confess there are times when I feel like the friend I mentioned to you some time ago. I hate the very sight of a book. Sometimes it becomes almost a physical necessity to talk out what is in the mind before putting anything else into it. It is very bad to have thoughts and feelings which were meant to come out in talk, *strike in*, as they say of some complaints that ought to show outwardly.

I always believed in life rather than in books. I suppose every day of earth, with its hundred thousand deaths and something more of births, with its loves and hates, its triumphs and defeats, it pangs and blisses, has more of humanity in it than all the books that were ever written, put together. I believe the flowers growing at this moment send up more fragrance to heaven than was ever exhaled from all the essences ever distilled.

Don't I read up various matters to talk about at this table or elsewhere? No, that is the least thing I would do. I will tell you my rule. Talk about those subjects you have had long in

your mind, and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.

Physiologists and metaphysicians have had their attention turned a good deal of late to the automatic and involuntary actions of the mind. Put an idea into your intelligence and leave it there an hour, a day, a year, without ever having occasion to refer to it. When, at last, you return to it, you do not find it as it was when acquired. It has domiciliated itself, so to speak, become at home, entered into relations with your other thoughts, and integrated itself with the whole fabric of the mind. Or take a simple and familiar example. You forget a name, in conversation, go on talking, without making any effort to recall it, and presently the mind evolves it by its own involuntary and unconscious action, while you were pursuing another train of thought and the name rises of itself to your lips.

There are some curious observations I should like to make about the mental machinery, but I think we are getting rather didactic.

I should be gratified, if Benjamin Franklin would let me know something of his progress in the French language. I rather liked that exercise he read us the other day, though I must confess I should hardly dare to translate it, for fear some people in a remote city where I once lived might think I was drawing their portraits.

Yes, Paris is a famous place for societies. I don't know whether the piece I mentioned from the French author was intended, simply as Nat-

ural History, or whether there was not a little malice in his description. At any rate, when I gave my translation to B. F. to turn back again into French, one reason was that I thought it would sound a little bald in English, and some people might think it was meant to have some local bearing or other,—which the author, of course, didn't mean, inasmuch as he could not be acquainted with anything on this side the water.

[The above remarks were addressed to the schoolmistress, to whom I handed the paper after looking it over. The divinity student came and read over her shoulder,—very curious, apparently, but his eyes wandered, I thought. Seeing that her breathing was a little hurried, and high, or *thoracic*, as my friend, the Professor, calls it, I watched her a little more closely. It is none of my business. After all, it is the imponderables that move the world—heat, electricity, love.—*Habet.*]

This is the piece that Benjamin Franklin made into boarding-school French, such as you see here; don't expect too much—the mistakes give a relish to it, I think:

Les Societes Polyphysiophilosophiques.

—Ces sociétés là sont une Institution pour supplèer aux besoins d'esprit et de coeur de ces individus qui ont survécu à leurs èmotions à l'égard du beau sexe, et qui n'ont pas la distract ion de l'habitude de boire.

Pour devenir membre d'une de ces Societes, on doit avoir le moins de cheveux possible. S'il y en reste plusieurs qui resistent aux depilatoires naturelles et autres, on doit avoir quelques con-

naissances, n'importe dans quel genre. Dès le moment qu'on ouvre la porte de la Societe, on a un grand interêt dans toutes les choses dont on ne sait rien. Ainsi, un microscopiste demontre un nouveau *flexor* du *tarse* d'un *melolantha vulgaris*. Douze savans improvises, portants des besicles, et qui ne connaissent rien des insectes, si ce n'est les morsures du *culex*, se prècipitent sur l'instrument, et voient—une grande bulle d'air, dont ils s'èmerveillent avec effusion. Ce qui est un spectacle plein d'instruction—pour ceux qui ne sont pas de ladite Societè. Touls les membres regardent les chimistes en particulieriavec un air d'intelligence parfaite pendant qu'ils prouvent dans un discours d'une demiheure que $O^6N^3H^5C^8$ etc. font quelque chose qui n'est bonne à rien, mais qui probablement a une odeur très dèsagrèable, selon l'habitude des produtis chimiques. Après celà vient un mathèmaticien qui vous bourre avec des a+b et vous rapporte enfin un x+y, dont vous n'avez pas besoin et que ne change nullement vos relations avec la vie. Un naturliste vous parle des formations spèeciales des animaux excessivement incomus, dont vous n'avez jamais soupconnè l'existence. Ainsi il vous dè crit les *follicules* de *l'appendix vermiformis* d'un *dzigguetai*. Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est qu'un *follicule*. Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est qu'un *appendix vermiformis*. Vous n'avez jamais entendu parler du *dzigguetai*. Ainsi vous gagnez toutes ces connaissances à la fois, qui s'attachent à votre esprit comme l'eau adhère aux plumes d'un canard. On' connait toutes les langues *ex officio* en devenant membre d'une de ces Sociètès. Ainsi quand on entend lire un Essai surles dialectes Tchutchiens, on comprend tout celà de suite, ets'instruit ènormènt.

Il y a deux expèces d'individus qu'on trouve toujours à ces Sociètès: 1° Le membre á questions. 2° Le membre à "Bylaws"

La *Question* une specialité Celui qui en fait métier ne fait jamais des réponses. Le question est une manfére trés commode de dire les choses suivantes: "Me voila! Je ne suis pas fossil, moi,—je respire encore! J'ai des idées,—voyez mon intelligence! Vous ne croyiez pas, vous autres, que je savais quelque chose de celà! Ah, nous, avons un peu de sagacité, voyez vous! Nous ne sommes nullement la bête qu'on pense!" *Le faiseur de questions donne peu d'attention aux reponses qu'on fait; ce n'est pas là dans sa spècialitè.*

Le membre à "Bylaws" est le bouchon de toutes les émotions mousseuses et genéreuses qui se montrent dans la Societe. C'est un empereur manque,—un tyran à la troisieme trituration. C'est un esprit dur, borne, exact, grand dans les petitesses, petit dans les grandeurs, selon le mot du grand Jefferson. On ne l'aime pas dans la Societe, mais on le respecte et on le craint. Il n'y a qu'un mot pour ce membre audessus de "Bylaws." Ce mot est pour lui ce que l'Om est aux Hindous. C'est sa religion; il n'y a rien audela. Ce mot la c'est la CONSTITUTION!

Lesdites Societes publient des feuilletons de tems en tems. On les trouve abandonnes à sa porte, nus comme des enfans nouveaunes, faute de membrane cutanee, ou mêne papyracee. Si on aime la botanique, on y trouve une memoire

sur les coquilles; si on fait des etudes zoologiques, on trouve un gand tas de q∠—ɪ, ce qui doit etre infiniment plus commode que les encyclupedies. Ainsi il est clair comme la metaphysique qu'on doit devenir membre d'une Societe telle que nous decrivons.

Recette pour le Depilatoire Physiophilosophique.

Chaux vive lb. ss. Eau bouillante Oj.
Dépilez avec. Polissez ensuite.

I told the boy that his translation into French was creditable to him ; and some of the company wishing to hear what there was in the piece that made me smile, I turned it into English for them, as well as I could, on the spot.

The landlady's daughter seemed to be much amused by the idea that a depilatory could take the place of literary and scientific accomplishments ; she wanted me to print the piece, so that she might send a copy of it to her cousin, in Mizzouraj ; she didn't think he'd have to do anything to the outside of his head to get into any of the societies ; he had to wear a wig once, when he played a part in a tabullo.

No,—said I,—I shouldn't think of printing that in English. I'll tell you why. As soon as you get a few thousand people together in a town there is somebody that every sharp thing you say is sure to hit. What if a thing was written in Paris or in Pekin ?—that makes no difference. Everybody in those cities, or almost everybody, has his counterpart here, and in all large places.—You never studied *averages*, as I have had occasion to.

I'll tell you how I came to know so much about averages. There was one season when I was lecturing, commonly, five evenings in the week, through most of the lecturing period. I soon found as most speakers do, that it was pleasanter to work one lecture than to keep several in hand.

Don't you get sick to death of one lecture? said the landlady's daughter, who had a new dress on that day, and was in spirits for conversation.

I was going to talk about averages, I said, but I have no objection to telling you about lectures to begin with.

A new lecture always has a certain excitement connected with its delivery. One thinks well of it, as of most things fresh from his mind. After a few deliveries of it, one gets tired and then disgusted with its repetition. Go on delivering it, and the disgust passes off, until, after one has repeated it a hundred or a hundred and fifty times, he rather enjoys the hundred and first or hundred and fifty-first time, before a new audience. But this is on one condition, that he never lays the lecture down and lets it cool. If he does, there comes on a loathing for it which is intense, so that the sight of the old battered manuscript is as bad as seasickness.

A new lecture is like any other new tool. We use it for a while with pleasure. Then it blisters our hands and we hate to touch it. By-and-by our hands get callous, and then we have no longer any sensitiveness about it. But if we give it up the callouses disappear; and if we