

ter concede the fact that—my contemporaries are not so young as they have been,—and that, awkward as it is,—science and history agree in telling me that I can claim the immunities and must own the humiliations of the early stage of senility. Ah! but we have all gone down the hill together. The dandies of my time have split their waistbands and taken to high-low shoes. The beauties of my recollections—where are they? They have run the gauntlet of the years as well as I. First the years pelted them with red roses till their cheeks were all on fire. By and by they began throwing white roses, and that morning flush passed away. At last one of the years threw a snow-ball, and after that no year let the poor girls pass without throwing snow-balls. And then came rougher missiles,—ice and stones; and from time to time an arrow whistled, and down went one of the poor girls. So there are but few left; and we don't call those few *girls*, but—Ah, me! here am I groaning just as the old Greek sighed *Ai ai!* and the old Roman *Ehue!* I have no doubt we should die of shame and grief at the indignities offered us by age, if it were not that we see so many others as badly or worse off than ourselves. We always compare ourselves with our contemporaries.

[I was interrupted in my reading just here. Before I began at the next breakfast, I read them these verses;—I hope you will like them and get a useful lesson from them.]

#### THE LAST BLOSSOM.

Though young no more, we still would dream  
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles;  
The leagues of life to graybeards seem  
Shorter than boyhood's lingering smiles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice?  
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,  
And many a Holy Father's "niece"  
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain  
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,  
We think upon those ladies twain  
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,  
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,  
And dream that Youth and Age embrace!  
As April violets fill with snow.

Traced in her Lord's Olympian smile  
His lotus-loving Memphian lies,—  
The musky daughters of the Nile  
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress  
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,  
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress  
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet  
The morning of that blissful day  
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,  
And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,  
A lasso, with its leaping chain  
Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew  
O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,  
Sweet vision, waited for so long!  
Dove that wouldst seek the poet's cage,  
Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid  
Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told!  
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade  
Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms!—love heeds not years;  
 No frost the bud of passion knows.—  
 Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?  
 A voice behind me uttered,—Rose!

Sweet was her smile;—but not for me;  
 Alas, when woman looks *too* kind,  
 Just turn your foolish head and see,—  
 Some youth is walking close behind!

As to *giving up* because the almanac or the Family Bible says that it is about time to do it, I have no intention of doing any such thing. I grant you that I burn less carbon than some years ago. I see people of my standing really good for nothing, decrepit, effete, *la lièvre inferieure di ja pendante*, with what little life they have left mainly concentrated in their epigastrium. But as the disease of old age is epidemic, endemic, and sporadic, and everybody that lives long enough, is sure to catch it, I am going to say, for the encouragement of such as need it, how I treat the malady in my own case.

Firstly. As I feel, that, when I have anything to do, there is less time for it than when I was younger, I find that I give my attention more thoroughly, and use my time more economically than ever before; so that I can learn anything twice as easily as in my earlier days. I am not, therefore, afraid to attack a new study. I took up a difficult language a very few years ago with good success, and think of mathematics and metaphysics by-and-by.

Secondly. I have opened my eyes to a good many neglected privileges and pleasures within my reach, and requiring only a little courage to enjoy them. You may well suppose it pleased

me to find that old Cato was thinking of learning to play the fiddle, when I had deliberately taken it up in my old age and satisfied myself that I could get much comfort, if not much music, out of it.

Thirdly. I have found that some of those active exercises, which are commonly thought to belong to young folks only, may be enjoyed at a much later period.

A young friend has lately written an admirable article in one of the journals, entitled, "Saints and their Bodies." Approving of his general doctrines, and grateful for his records of personal experience, I cannot refuse to add my own experimental confirmation of his eulogy of one particular form of active exercise and amusement, namely, *boating*. For the past nine years, I have rowed, on fresh or salt water. My present fleet on the river Charles consists of three row-boats. 1. A small flat-bottomed skiff of the shape of a flat-iron, kept mainly to lend to boys. 2. A fancy "dory" for two pairs of sculls, in which I sometimes go out with my young folks. 3. My own particular water sulky, a "skeleton" or "shell" race-boat, twenty-two feet long, with huge outriggers, which boat I pull with ten-foot sculls,—alone, of course, as it holds but one, and tips him out, if he doesn't mind what he is about. In this I glide around the Back Bay, down the stream, up the Charles to Cambridge, and Watertown, up the Mystic, round the wharves, in the wake of steamboats—which have a swell after them delightful to rock upon; I linger under the bridges,—those "caterpillar bridges," as my brother

Professor so happily called them; rub against the black sides of old wood-schooners; cool down under the overhanging stern of some tall India man; stretch across to the Navy-Yard, where the sentinel warns me off from the Ohio,—just as if I should hurt her by lying in her shadow; then strike out into the harbor, where the water gets clear and the air smells of the ocean,—till all at once I remember, that, if a west wind blows up of a sudden, I shall drift along past the islands, out of sight of the dear old State-house,—plate, tumbler, knife and fork all waiting at home, but no chair drawn up at the table,—all the dear people waiting, waiting, waiting, while the boat is sliding, sliding, sliding into the great desert, where there is no tree and no fountain. As I don't want my wreck to be washed up on one of the beaches in company with devil's-aprons, bladder, weeds, dead horse, shoes, and bleached crab-shells, I turn about and flap my long, narrow wings for home. When the tide is running out swiftly, I have a splendid fight to get through the bridges, but always make it a rule to beat,—though I have been jammed up into pretty tight places at times, and was caught once between a vessel swinging round and the pier, until our bones (the boat's that is) cracked as if we had been in the jaws of Behemoth. Then back to my moorings at the foot of the Common, off with the rowing-dress, dash under the green translucent wave, return to the garb of civilization, walk through the Garden, take a look at my elms on the Common, and, reaching my habitat, in consideration of my advanced period of life, in-

dulge in the Elysian abandonment of a huge recumbent chair.

When I have established a pair of well-pronounced feathering-callouses on my thumbs, when I am in training so that I can do my fifteen miles at a stretch without coming to grief in any way, when I can perform my mile in eight minutes or a little less, then I feel as if I had old Time's head in Chancery, and could give it to him at my leisure.

I do not deny the attraction of walking. I have bored this ancient through and through in my daily travels, until I know it as an old inhabitant of a Cheshire knows his cheese. Why, it was I, who in the course of these rambles, discovered that remarkable avenue called *Myrtle street*, stretching in one long line from east of the Reservoir to a precipitous and rudely paved cliff which looks down on the grim abode of Science, and beyond it to the far hills; a promenade so delicious in its repose, so cheerfully varied with glimpses down the Northern slope into busy Cambridge Street, with its iron river of the horse-railroad, and wheeled barges gliding back and forward, over it,—so delightfully closing at its western extremity in sunny courts and passages where I know peace and beauty, and virtue, and serene old age must be perpetual tenants,—so alluring to all who desire to take their daily stroll, in the words of Dr. Watts,—

“Alike unknowing and unknown.”—

that nothing but a sense of duty would have prompted me to reveal the secret of its existence. I concede, therefore, that walking is an

immeasurably fine invention, of which old age ought constantly to avail itself.

Saddle-leather is in some respects ever preferable to sole-leather. The principal objection to it is of a financial character. But you may be sure that Bacon and Suydenham did not recommend it for nothing. One's *hepar*, or in vulgar language, liver,—a ponderous organ, weighing some three or four pounds, goes up and down like the dasher of a churn in the midst of the other vital arrangements at every step of a trotting horse. The brains also are shaken up like coppers in a money-box. Riding is good for those that are born with a silver-mounted bridle in their hand, and can ride as much and as often as they like, without thinking all the time they hear that steady grinding sound as the horse's jaws triturate with calm lateral movement the bank bills and promises to pay upon which it is notorious that the profligate animal in question feeds day and night.

Instead, however, of considering these kinds of exercise in this empirical way, I will devote a brief space to an examination of them in a more scientific form.

The pleasure of exercise is due first to a purely physical impression, and secondly to a sense of power in action. The first source of pleasure varies, of course, with our condition and the state of the surrounding circumstances; the second with the amount and kind of power, and the extent and kind of action. In all forms of active exercise there are three powers simultaneously in action—the will, the muscles, and the intellect. Each of these predominates in differ-

ent kinds of exercise. In walking, the will and muscles are so accustomed to work together, and perform their task with so little expenditure of force, that the intellect is left comparatively free. The mental pleasure in walking, as such, is in the sense of power over all our moving machinery. But in riding, I have the additional pleasure of governing another will, and my muscles extend to the tips of the animal's ears and to his four hoofs, instead of stopping at my hands and feet. Now in this extension of my volition and my physical frame into another animal, my tyrannical instincts and my desire for heroic strength are at once gratified. When the horse ceases to have a will of his own and his muscles require no special attention on your part, then you may live on horse-back, as Wesley did, and write sermons, or take naps, as you like. But, you will observe, that in riding on horseback, you always have a feeling that, after all, it is not you that do the work, but the animal, and this prevents the satisfaction from being complete.

Now, let us look at the conditions of rowing. I won't suppose you to be disgracing yourself in one of those miserable tubs, tugging in which is to rowing the true boat what riding a cow is to bestriding an Arab. You know the Esquimaux *kayak*, (if that is the name of it,) don't you! Look at that model of one over my door. Sharp rather?—On the contrary it is a lubber to the one you and I must have; a Dutch fish-wife to Psyche, contrasted with what I will tell you about.—Our boat then, is something of the shape of a pickerel, as you look down upon his

back, he lying in the sunshine just where the sharp edge of the water cuts in among the lily-pads. It is a kind of a giant *pod*, as one may say,—tight everywhere, except in a little place in the middle, where you sit. Its length is from seven to ten yards, and as it is only from sixteen to thirty inches wide, in its widest part, you understand why you want those "outriggers," or projecting iron-frames with the row-locks, in which the oars play. My row-locks are five feet apart; double or more than double the greatest width of the boat.

Here you are, then, afloat with a body a rod and a half long, with arms or wings, as you may choose to call them, stretching more than twenty-five feet from tip to tip; every volition of yours extending as perfectly into them as if your spinal cord ran down the centre strip of your boat, and the nerves of your arms tingled as far as the broad blades of your oars,—oars of spruce, balanced, leathered, and ringed under your own special direction. This, in sober earnest, is the nearest approach to flying that man has ever made or perhaps ever will make. As the hawk sails, without flapping his pinions, so you drift with the tide when you will, in the most luxurious form of locomotion indulged to an embodied spirit. But if your blood wants rousing, turn round that stake in the river, which you see a mile from here and when you come in in sixteen minutes, (if you do, for we are old boys, and not champion scullers, you remember,) then say if you begin to feel a little warmed up or not! You can row easily and gently all day, and you can row yourself blind

and black in the face in ten minutes, just as you like. It has been long agreed that there is no way in which a man can accomplish so much labor with his muscles, as in rowing. It is in the boat, then, that man finds the largest extension of his volitional and muscular existence; and yet he may tax both of them so slightly, in that most delicious of exercises, that he shall mentally write his sermon, or his poem, or recall the remarks he has made in company and put them in form for the public, as well as in his easy chair.

I dare not publicly name the rare joys, the infinite delights, that intoxicate me on some sweet June morning, when the river and bay are smooth as a sheet of beryl-green silk, and I run along ripping it up with my knife-edged shell of a boat, the rent closing after me like those wounds of Angels which Milton tells us of, but the seam still shining for many a long rood behind me. To lie still over the Flats, where the waters are shallow, and see the crabs crawling, and the sculpins gliding busily and silently beneath the boat,—to rustle in through the long, harsh grass, that leads up some tranquil creek,—to take shelter from the sunbeams under one of the thousand-footed bridges, and look down its interminable colonnades, crusted with green and oozy growths, studded with minute barnacles, and belted with rings of dark mussels, while overhead streams and thunders that other river whose every wave is a human soul flowing to eternity, as the river below flows to the ocean,—lying there moored unseen, in loneliness so profound that the columns of Tadmor in the

Desert could not seem more remote from life,—the cool breeze on one's forehead, the stream whispering against the half-sunken pillars,—why should I tell of these things, that I should live to see my beloved haunts invaded and the waves blackened with boats as with a swarm of water beetles? What a city of idiots we must be not to have covered this glorious bay with gondolas and wherries, as we have just learned to cover the ice in winter with skaters!

I am satisfied that such a set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscle, paste-complexioned youth as we can boast in our Atlantic cities never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage. Of the females that are the mates of these males I do not here speak. I preached my sermon from the lay-pulpit on this matter a good while ago. Of course, if you heard it, you know that my belief is that the total climatic influences here are getting up a number of new patterns of humanity, some of which are not an improvement on the old model. Clipper-built, sharp in the bows, long in the spars, slender to look at and fast to go, the ship, which is the present great organ of our national life of relation, is but a reproduction of the typical form which the elements impress upon its builder. All this we cannot help; but we can make the best of these influences, such as they are. We have a few good boatmen,—no good horsemen that I hear of,—nothing remarkable, I believe, in cricketing,—and as for any great athletic feat performed by a gentleman in these latitudes, society would drop a man who should run round the Common in five minutes. Some of our amateur fencers, sin-

gle stick players, and boxers, we have no reason to be ashamed of. Boxing is rough play, but not too rough for a hearty young fellow. Anything is better than this white-blooded degeneration to which we all tend.

I dropped into a gentlemen's sparring exhibition only last evening. It did my heart good to see that there were a few young and youngish youths left who could take care of their own heads in case of emergency. It is a fine sight, that of a gentleman resolving himself into the primitive constituents of his humanity. Here is a delicate young man now, with an intellectual countenance, a slight figure, a sub-pallid complexion, a most unassuming deportment, a mild adolescent in fact, that any Hiram or Jonathan from between the plough-tails would, of course, expect to handle with perfect ease. Oh, he is taking off his gold-bowed spectacles! Ah, he is divesting himself of his cravat! Why, he is stripping off his coat! Well, here he is, sure enough, in a tight silk shirt, and with two things that look like batter-puddings in the place of his fists. Now, see that other fellow with another pair of batter-puddings—the big one with the broad shoulders; he will certainly knock the little man's head off, if he strikes him. Feinting, stopping, dodging, hitting, countering,—little man's head not off yet. You might as well try to jump upon your own shadow as to hit the little man's intellectual features. He needn't have taken off the gold-bowed spectacles at all. Quick, cautious, shifty, nimble, cool, he catches all the fierce lunges or gets out of their reach, till his turn comes, and then,

whack goes one of the batter-puddings against the big one's ribs, and bang goes the other into the big one's face, and staggering, shuffling, slipping, tripping, collapsing, sprawling, down goes the big one in a miscellaneous bundle.—If my young friend, whose excellent article I have referred to, could only introduce the manly art of self-defence among the clergy, I am satisfied that we should have better sermons and an infinitely less quarrelsome church militant. A bout with the gloves would let off the ill-nature, and cure the indigestion, which, united, have embroiled their subjects in a bitter controversy. We should then often hear that a point of difference between an infallible and a heretic, instead of being vehemently discussed in a series of newspaper articles, had been settled by a friendly contest in several rounds, at the close of which the parties shook hands and appeared cordially reconciled.

But boxing you and I are too old for, I am afraid. I was for a moment tempted, by the contagion of muscular electricity last evening, to try the gloves with the Benicia Boy, who looked in as a friend to the noble art; but remembering that he had twice my weight and half my age, besides the advantage of his training, I sat still and said nothing.

There is one other delicate point I wish to speak of with reference to old age. I refer to the use of *dioptric media* which correct the diminishing refracting power of the humors of the eye,—in other words, spectacles. I don't use them. All I ask is a large, fair type, a strong daylight or gas light, and one yard of focal dis-

tance, and my eyes are as good as ever. But if *your* eyes fail, I can tell you something encouraging. There is now living in New York, states an old gentleman, who, perceiving his sight to fail, immediately took to exercising it on the finest print, and in this way fairly bullied Nature out of her foolish habit of taking liberties at five and forty—or thereabout. And now this old gentleman performs the most extraordinary feats with his pen, showing that his eyes must be a pair of microscopes. I should be afraid to say to you how much he writes in the compass of a half-dime,—whether the Psalms or the Gospels, I won't be positive.

But now, let me tell you this. If the time comes when you must lay down the fiddle and the bow, because your fingers are too stiff, and drop the ten-foot sculls, because your arms are too weak, and after dallying awhile with eye-glasses, come at last to the undisguised reality of spectacles,—if the time comes when that fire of life we spoke of has burned so low that where its flames reverberated there is only the sombre stain of regret, and where its coals glowed, only the white ashes that covered the embers of memory,—don't let your heart grow cold, and you may carry cheerfulness and love with you into the teens of your second century, if you can last so long. As our friend, the Poet, once said in some of those old-fashioned heroics of his which he keeps for his private reading.—

Call him not old, whose visionary brain  
Holds o'er the past its undivided reign,  
For him in vain the envious season roll  
Who bears eternal summer in his soul,

If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,  
 Spring with her birds, or children with their play,  
 Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art  
 Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart,—  
 Turn to the record where his years are told;—  
 Count his gray hairs,—they cannot make him old!

End of the Professor's Paper.

[The above essay was not read at one time, but in several instalments, and accompanied by various comments from different persons at the table. The company were in the main attentive, with the exception of a little somnolence on the part of the old gentleman opposite at times, and a few sly, malicious questions about the "old boys" on the part of that forward young fellow who has figured occasionally, not always to his advantage, in these reports.

On Sunday mornings, in obedience to a feeling I am not ashamed of, I have always tried to give a more appropriate character to our conversation. I have never read them any sermon yet, and I don't know that I shall, as some of them might take my convictions as a personal indignity to themselves. But having read our Company so much of the Professor's talk about age and other subjects connected with physical life, I took the next Sunday to repeat to them the following poem of his, which I have had by me some time. He calls it—I suppose, for his professional friends—*The Anatomist's Hymn*; but I shall name it—]

THE LIVING TEMPLE.

Not in the world of light alone,  
 Where God has built his blazing throne,

Nor yet alone in earth below,  
 With belted seas that come and go,  
 And endless isles of sun-lit green,  
 Is all thy Maker's glory seen;  
 Look in upon thy wondrous frame,—  
 Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves  
 Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,  
 Whose streams of brightening purple rush  
 Fired with a new and livelier blush,  
 While all their burden of decay  
 The ebbing current steals away,  
 And red with Nature's flame they start  
 From the warm fountains of the heart,

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,  
 Forever quivering o'er his task,  
 While far and wide a crimson jet  
 Leaps forth to fill the woven net  
 Which in unnumbered crossing tides  
 The flood of burning life divides,  
 Then kindling each decaying part  
 Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame  
 Behold the outward moving frame,  
 Its living marbles jointed strong  
 With glistening band and silvery thong,  
 And linked to reason's guiding reins  
 By myriad rings in trembling chains,  
 Each graven with the threaded zone  
 Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white  
 Is braided out of seven-hued light,  
 Yet in those lucid globes no ray  
 By any chance shall break astray.  
 Hark how the rolling surge of sound,  
 Arches and spirals circling round,  
 Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear  
 With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds  
 All thought in its mysterious folds.



That feels sensation's faintest thrill  
 And flashes forth the sovereign will;  
 Think on the stormy world that dwells  
 Locked in its dim and clustering cells  
 The lightning gleam of power it sheds  
 Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine  
 To make these mystic temples thine!  
 When wasting age and wearying strife  
 Have sapped the leaning walls of life,  
 When darkness gathers over all  
 And the last tottering pillars fall,  
 Take the poor dust thy mercy warms  
 And mould it into heavenly forms!

(Spring has come. You will find some verses to that effect at the end of these notes. If you are an impatient reader, skip to them at once. In reading aloud, omit, if you please, the sixth and seventh verses. These are parenthetical and digressive, and unless your audience is of superior intelligence, will confuse them. Many people can ride on horseback who find it hard to get on and to get off without assistance. One has to dismount from an idea and get into the saddle again at every parenthesis.)

The old gentleman who sits opposite, finding that spring had fairly come, mounted a white hat one day and walked into the street. It seems to have been a premature or otherwise exceptionable exhibition, not unlike that commemorated by the late Mr. Bayley. When the old gentleman came home he looked red in the face and complained that he had been "made sport of." By sympathizing questions I learned from him that a boy had called him "old daddy," and asked him when he had his hat whitewashed.

This incident led me to make some observations at table the next morning; which I here repeat for the benefit of the readers of this record.

The hat is the vulnerable point of the artificial integument. I learned this in early boyhood. I was once equipped in a hat of Leghorn straw, having a brim of much wider dimensions than were usual at that time, and sent to school in that portion of my native town which lies nearest to this metropolis. On my way I was met by a "Port-chuck," as we used to call the young gentlemen of that locality, and the following dialogue ensued:

*The Port-chuck.* Hullo, you-sir, did you know there was gon-to be a race to-morrah?

*Myself.* No. Who's gon-to run, 'n' wher's't gon-to be?

*The Port-chuck.* Squire Mico and Doctor Williams, round the brim o' your hat.

These two much-respected gentlemen being the oldest inhabitants at that time, and the alleged race-course being out of the question, the Port-chuck also winking and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, I perceived that I had been trifled with, and the effect has been to make me sensitive and observant respecting this article of dress ever since. Here is an axiom or two relating to it:

A hat that has been *popped*, or exploded by being sat down upon, is never itself again afterwards.

It is a favorite illusion of sanguine natures to believe the contrary.

Shabby gentility has nothing so characteristic as its hat. There is always an unnatural calm-

ness about its nap, and an unwholesome gloss, suggestive of a wet brush

The last effort of decayed fortune is expended in smoothing its dilapidated castor. The hat is the *ultimum moriens* of "respectability."

The old gentleman took all these remarks and maxims very pleasantly, saying, however, that he had forgotten most of his French, except the word for potatoes,—*pummies de tare*. *Ultimum moriens*, I told him is old Italian, and signifies *last thing to die*. With this explanation he was well contented, and looked quite calm when I saw him afterwards in the entry with a black hat on his head and the white one in his hand.

I think myself fortunate in having the Poet and the Professor for my intimates. We are so much together, that we no doubt think and talk a good deal alike; yet our points of view are in many respects individual and peculiar. You know me well enough by this time. I have not talked with you so long for nothing, and therefore, I don't think it necessary to draw my own portrait. But let me say a word or two about my friends.

The Professor considers himself, and I consider him, a very useful and worthy kind of drudge. I think he has a pride in his small technicalities. I know that he has a great idea of fidelity; and though I suspect he laughs a little inwardly at times at the grand airs "Science" puts on, as she stands marking time, but not getting on, while the trumpets are blowing and the big drums beating,—yet I am sure he has a liking for his specialty, and a respect for its cultivators.

But I'll tell you what the Professor said to the Poet the other day.—My boy, said he, I can work a great deal cheaper than you, because I keep all my goods in the lower story. You have to hoist yours into the upper chambers of the brain, and let them down again to your customers. I take mine in at the level of the ground, and send them off from my doorstep almost without lifting. I tell you, the higher a man has to carry the raw material of thought before he works it up, the more it costs him in blood, nerve and muscle. Coleridge knew all this very well when he advised every literary man to have a profession.

Sometimes I like to talk with one of them, and sometimes with the other. After a while I get tired of both. When a fit of intellectual disgust comes over me, I will tell you what I have found admirable as a diversion, in addition to boating and other amusements which I have spoken of,—that is, working at my carpenter's bench. Some mechanical employment is the greatest possible relief, after the purely intellectual faculties begin to tire. When I was quarantined once at Marseilles, I got to work immediately at carving a wooden wonder of loose rings on a stick, and got so interested in it, that, when we were set loose, I "regained my freedom with a sigh," because my toy was unfinished.

There are long seasons when I talk only with the Professor and others when I give myself wholly up to the Poet. Now that my winter's work is over, and spring is with us I feel naturally drawn to the Poet's company. I don't

know anybody more alive to life than he is. The passion of poetry seizes on him every spring, he says,—yet oftentimes he complains, that, when he feels most, he sings least.

Then a fit of despondency comes over him,—I feel ashamed, sometimes,—said he the other day,—to think how far my worst songs fall below my best. It sometimes seems to me, as I know it does to others who have told me so, that they ought to be *all best*,—if not in actual execution, at least in plan and motive. I am grateful,—he continued,—for all such criticisms. A man is always pleased to have his most serious efforts praised, and the highest aspect of his nature get the more sunshine.

Yet I am sure. that in the nature of things, many minds must change their key now and then, on penalty of getting out of tune or losing their voices. You know, I suppose, he said,—what is meant by complementary colors? You know the effect too, that the prolonged impression of any one color has on the retina. If you close your eyes after looking steadily at a *red* object, you see a *green* image.

It is so with many minds,—I will not say with all. After looking at one aspect of external nature; or of any form of beauty or truth, when they turn away, the *complementary* aspect of the same object stamps itself irresistibly and automatically upon the mind. Shall they give expression to their secondary mental state or not?

When I contemplate—said my friend, the Poet—the infinite largeness of comprehension belonging to the Central Intelligence, how remote the creative conception is from all scholastic and

ethical formulae, I am led to think that a healthy mind ought to change its mood from time to time and come down from its noblest condition,—never of course to degrade itself by dwelling upon what is itself debasing, but to let its lower faculties have a chance to air and exercise themselves. After the first and second floor have been out in the bright street dressed in all their splendors, shall not our humble friends in the basement have their holiday, and the cotton velvet and the thin-skinned jewelry—simple ornaments, but befitting the station of those who wear them—show themselves to the crowd, who think them beautiful as they ought to, though the people upstairs know that they are cheap and perishable?

I don't know but that I may bring the Poet here, some day or other, and let him speak for himself. Still I think I can tell you what he says quite as well as he could do it.—Oh,—he said to me, one day,—I am but a hand-organ man,—say rather a hand-organ. Life turns the winch and fancy or accident pulls out the stops. I come under your windows, some fine spring morning, and play you one of my *adagio* movements, and some of you say,—That is good,—play to us so always.

But, dear friends, if I did not change the stop sometimes, the machine would wear out in one part and rust in another. How easily this or that tune flows! you say, there must be no end of just such melodies in him. I will open the poor machine for you one moment, and you shall look. Ah! Every note marks where a spur of steel has been driven in. It is easy to

grind out the song, but to plant these bristling points which make it was the painful task of time.

I don't like to say it, he continued, but poets commonly have no larger stock of tunes than hand-organs; and when you hear them piping up under your window, you know pretty well what to expect. The more stops, the better. Do let them all be pulled out in their turn!

So spoke my friend, the Poet, and read me one of his stateliest songs, and after it a gay *chanson*, and then a string of epigrams. All true, he said, all flowers of his soul; only one with the corolla spread, and another with its disk half opened, and the third with the heart-leaves covered up and only a petal or two showing its tip through the calyx. The water lily is the type of the poet's soul, he told me.

What do you think, Sir, said the divinity-student, opens the souls of poets most fully?

Why, there must be the internal force and the external stimulus. Neither is enough by itself. A rose will not flower in the dark, and a fern will not flower anywhere.

What do I think is the true sunshine that opens the poet's corolla?—I don't like to say. They spoil a good many, I am afraid; or at least they shine on a good many that never come to anything.

"Who are they?" said the schoolmistress.

Woman. Their love first inspires the poet, and their praise is his best reward.

The schoolmistress reddened a little, but looked pleased. Did I really think so? I do think so: I never feel safe until I have pleased

them; I don't think they are the first to see one's defects, but they are the first to catch the color and fragrance of a true poem. Fit the same intellect to a man and it is a bow-string,—to a woman, and it is a harp-string. She is vibratile and resonant all over, so she stirs with slighter musical tremblings of the air about her. Ah me!—said my friend, the Poet, to me the other day,—what color would it not have given to my thoughts, and what thrice-washed whiteness to my words, had I been fed on woman's praises! I should have grown like Marvell's fawn,—

"Lillies without; roses within!"

But then,—he added,—we all think of so and so, we should have been this or that, as you were saying the other day, in those rhymes of yours.

I don't think there are many poets in the sense of creators; but of those sensitive natures which reflect themselves naturally in soft and melodious words, pleading for sympathy with their joys and sorrows, every literature is full. Nature carves with her own hands the brain which holds the creative imagination, but she casts the ever sensitive creatures in scores from the same mould.

There are two kinds of poets, just as there are two kinds of blondes. (Movement of curiosity among our ladies at table. Please to tell us about those blondes, said the schoolmistress.) Why, they are blondes who are such simply by deficiency of coloring matter,—*negative* or *washed blondes*, arrested by Nature on the way to become albinesses. There are others that are shot