

## THE SNOW-STORM

Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.  
Out of an unseen quarry evermore  
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer  
Curves his white bastions with projected roof  
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.  
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work  
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he  
For number or proportion. Mockingly,  
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;  
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;  
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,  
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate  
A tapering turret overtops the work.  
And when his hours are numbered, and the world  
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,  
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art  
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,  
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,  
The frolic architecture of the snow.

## WOODNOTES

I

I

WHEN the pine tosses its cones  
To the song of its waterfall tones,  
Who speeds to the woodland walks?  
To birds and trees who talks?  
Cæsar of his leafy Rome,  
There the poet is at home.  
He goes to the river-side,—  
Not hook nor line hath he;  
He stands in the meadows wide,—  
Nor gun nor scythe to see.  
Sure some god his eye enchants:  
What he knows nobody wants.  
In the wood he travels glad,  
Without better fortune had,  
Melancholy without bad.  
Knowledge this man prizes best  
Seems fantastic to the rest:  
Pondering shadows, colors, clouds,  
Grass-buds and caterpillar-shrouds,  
Boughs on which the wild bees settle,  
Tints that spot the violet's petal,  
Why Nature loves the number five,

And why the star-form she repeats :  
 Lover of all things alive,  
 Wonderer at all he meets,  
 Wonderer chiefly at himself,  
 Who can tell him what he is?  
 Or how meet in human elf  
 Coming and past eternities?

2

And such I knew, a forest seer,  
 A minstrel of the natural year,  
 Foreteller of the vernal ides,  
 Wise harbinger of spheres and tides,  
 A lover true, who knew by heart  
 Each joy the mountain dales impart ;  
 It seemed that Nature could not raise  
 A plant in any secret place,  
 In quaking bog, on snowy hill,  
 Beneath the grass that shades the rill,  
 Under the snow, between the rocks,  
 In damp fields known to bird and fox.  
 But he would come in the very hour  
 It opened in its virgin bower,  
 As if a sunbeam showed the place,  
 And tell its long-descended race.  
 It seemed as if the breezes brought him,  
 It seemed as if the sparrows taught him ;  
 As if by secret sight he knew  
 Where, in far fields, the orchis grew.

Many haps fall in the field  
 Seldom seen by wishful eyes,  
 But all her shows did Nature yield,  
 To please and win this pilgrim wise.  
 He saw the partridge drum in the woods ;  
 He heard the woodcock's evening hymn ;  
 He found the tawny thrushes' broods ;  
 And the shy hawk did wait for him ;  
 What others did at distance hear,  
 And guessed within the thicket's gloom,  
 Was shown to this philosopher,  
 And at his bidding seemed to come.

3

In unploughed Maine he sought the lumberers' gang  
 Where from a hundred lakes young rivers sprang ;  
 He trode the unplanted forest floor, whereon  
 The all-seeing sun for ages hath not shone ;  
 Where feeds the moose, and walks the surly bear,  
 And up the tall mast runs the woodpecker.  
 He saw beneath dim aisles, in odorous beds,  
 The slight Linnæa hang its twin-born heads,  
 And blessed the monument of the man of flowers,  
 Which breathes his sweet fame through the northern  
 bowers.  
 He heard, when in the grove, at intervals,  
 With sudden roar the aged pine-tree falls,—  
 One crash, the death-hymn of the perfect tree,  
 Declares the close of its green century.

Low lies the plant to whose creation went  
 Sweet influence from every element;  
 Whose living towers the years conspired to build,  
 Whose giddy top the morning loved to gild.  
 Through these green tents, by eldest Nature dressed,  
 He roamed, content alike with man and beast.  
 Where darkness found him he lay glad at night;  
 There the red morning touched him with its light.  
 Three moons his great heart him a hermit made,  
 So long he roved at will the boundless shade.  
 The timid it concerns to ask their way,  
 And fear what foe in caves and swamps can stray,  
 To make no step until the event is known,  
 And ills to come as evils past bemoan.  
 Not so the wise; no coward watch he keeps  
 To spy what danger on his pathway creeps;  
 Go where he will, the wise man is at home,  
 His hearth the earth,—his hall the azure dome;  
 Where his clear spirit leads him, there's his road  
 By God's own light illumined and foreshowed.

## 4

'T was one of the charmèd days  
 When the genius of God doth flow;  
 The wind may alter twenty ways,  
 A tempest cannot blow;  
 It may blow north, it still is warm;  
 Or south, it still is clear;  
 Or east, it smells like a clover-farm;

Or west, no thunder fear.  
 The musing peasant, lowly great,  
 Beside the forest water sate;  
 The rope-like pine-roots crosswise grown  
 Composed the network of his throne;  
 The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,  
 Was burnished to a floor of glass,  
 Painted with shadows green and proud  
 Of the tree and of the cloud.  
 He was the heart of all the scene;  
 On him the sun looked more serene;  
 To hill and cloud his face was known,—  
 It seemed the likeness of their own;  
 They knew by secret sympathy  
 The public child of earth and sky.  
 'You ask,' he said, 'what guide  
 Me through trackless thickets led,  
 Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough and wide.  
 I found the water's bed.  
 The watercourses were my guide;  
 I travelled grateful by their side,  
 Or through their channel dry;  
 They led me through the thicket damp,  
 Through brake and fern, the beavers' camp,  
 Through beds of granite cut my road,  
 And their resistless friendship showed.  
 The falling waters led me,  
 The foodful waters fed me,  
 And brought me to the lowest land,

Unerring to the ocean sand.  
 The moss upon the forest bark  
 Was pole-star when the night was dark;  
 The purple berries in the wood  
 Supplied me necessary food;  
 For Nature ever faithful is  
 To such as trust her faithfulness.  
 When the forest shall mislead me,  
 When the night and morning lie,  
 When sea and land refuse to feed me,  
 'T will be time enough to die;  
 Then will yet my mother yield  
 A pillow in her greenest field,  
 Nor the June flowers scorn to cover  
 The clay of their departed lover.'

## WOODNOTES

## II

*As sunbeams stream through liberal space  
 And nothing jostle or displace,  
 So waved the pine-tree through my thought  
 And fanned the dreams it never brought.*

'Whether is better, the gift or the donor?  
 Come to me,  
 Quoth the pine-tree,  
 'I am the giver of honor.

My garden is the cloven rock,  
 And my manure the snow;  
 And drifting sand-heaps feed my stock,  
 In summer's scorching glow.  
 He is great who can live by me:  
 The rough and bearded forester  
 Is better than the lord;  
 God fills the scrip and canister,  
 Sin piles the loaded board.  
 The lord is the peasant that was,  
 The peasant the lord that shall be;  
 The lord is hay, the peasant grass,  
 One dry, and one the living tree.  
 ✓ Who liveth by the ragged pine  
 Foundeth a heroic line;  
 Who liveth in the palace hall  
 Waneth fast and spendeth all.  
 He goes to my savage haunts,  
 With his chariot and his care;  
 My twilight realm he disenchant,  
 And finds his prison there.  
 ✓ 'What prizes the town and the tower?  
 Only what the pine-tree yields;  
 Sinew that subdued the fields;  
 The wild-eyed boy, who in the woods  
 Chants his hymn to hills and floods,  
 Whom the city's poisoning spleen  
 Made not pale, or fat, or lean;

Whom the rain and the wind purgeth,  
 Whom the dawn and the day-star urgeth,  
 In whose cheek the rose-leaf blusheth,  
 In whose feet the lion rusheth,  
 Iron arms, and iron mould,  
 That know not fear, fatigue, or cold.  
 I give my rafters to his boat,  
 My billets to his boiler's throat,  
 And I will swim the ancient sea  
 To float my child to victory,  
 And grant to dwellers with the pine  
 Dominion o'er the palm and vine.  
 Who leaves the pine-tree, leaves his friend,  
 Unnerves his strength, invites his end.  
 Cut a bough from my parent stem,  
 And dip it in thy porcelain vase;  
 A little while each russet gem  
 Will swell and rise with wonted grace;  
 But when it seeks enlarged supplies,  
 The orphan of the forest dies.  
 Whoso walks in solitude  
 And inhabiteth the wood,  
 Choosing light, wave, rock and bird,  
 Before the money-loving herd,  
 Into that forester shall pass,  
 From these companions, power and grace.  
 Clean shall he be, without, within,  
 From the old adhering sin,  
 All ill dissolving in the light

Of his triumphant piercing sight:  
 Not vain, sour, nor frivolous;  
 Not mad, athirst, nor garrulous;  
 Grave, chaste, contented, though retired,  
 And of all other men desired.  
 On him the light of star and moon  
 Shall fall with purer radiance down;  
 All constellations of the sky  
 Shed their virtue through his eye.  
 Him Nature giveth for defence  
 His formidable innocence;  
 The mounting sap, the shells, the sea,  
 All spheres, all stones, his helpers be;  
 He shall meet the speeding year,  
 Without wailing, without fear;  
 He shall be happy in his love,  
 Like to like shall joyful prove;  
 He shall be happy whilst he woos,  
 Muse-born, a daughter of the Muse.  
 But if with gold she bind her hair,  
 And deck her breast with diamond,  
 Take off thine eyes, thy heart forbear,  
 Though thou lie alone on the ground.

• Heed the old oracles,  
 Ponder my spells;  
 Song wakes in my pinnacles  
 When the wind swells.  
 Soundeth the prophetic wind,

The shadows shake on the rock behind,  
And the countless leaves of the pine are strings  
Tuned to the lay the wood-god sings.

Hearken! Hearken!

If thou wouldst know the mystic song  
Chanted when the sphere was young.  
Aloft, abroad, the pæan swells;  
O wise man! hear'st thou half it tells?  
O wise man! hear'st thou the least part?  
'T is the chronicle of art.

To the open ear it sings  
Sweet the genesis of things,  
Of tendency through endless ages,  
Of star-dust, and star-pilgrimages,  
Of rounded worlds, of space and time,  
Of the old flood's subsiding slime,  
Of chemic matter, force and form,  
Of poles and powers, cold, wet, and warm:  
The rushing metamorphosis  
Dissolving all that fixture is,  
Melts things that be to things that seem,  
And solid nature to a dream.  
O, listen to the undersong,  
The ever old, the ever young;  
And, far within those cadent pauses,  
The chorus of the ancient Causes!  
Delights the dreadful Destiny  
To fling his voice into the tree,  
And shock thy weak ear with a note

Breathed from the everlasting throat.  
In music he repeats the pang  
Whence the fair flock of Nature sprang.  
O mortal! thy ears are stones;  
These echoes are laden with tones  
Which only the pure can hear;  
Thou canst not catch what they recite  
Of Fate and Will, of Want and Right,  
Of man to come, of human life,  
Of Death and Fortune, Growth and Strife.'

Once again the pine-tree sung: —  
'Speak not thy speech my boughs among:  
Put off thy years, wash in the breeze;  
My hours are peaceful centuries.  
Talk no more with feeble tongue;  
No more the fool of space and time,  
Come weave with mine a nobler rhyme.  
Only thy Americans  
Can read thy line, can meet thy glance,  
But the runes that I rehearse  
Understands the universe;  
The least breath my boughs which tossed  
Brings again the Pentecost;  
To every soul resounding clear  
In a voice of solemn cheer, —  
"Am I not thine? Are not these thine?"  
And they reply, "Forever mine!"  
My branches speak Italian,

English, German, Basque, Castilian,  
 Mountain speech to Highlanders,  
 Ocean tongues to islanders,  
 To Fin and Lap and swart Malay,  
 To each his bosom-secret say.

‘Come learn with me the fatal song  
 Which knits the world in music strong,  
 Come lift thine eyes to lofty rhymes,  
 Of things with things, of times with times,  
 Primal chimes of sun and shade,  
 Of sound and echo, man and maid,  
 The land reflected in the flood,  
 Body with shadow still pursued.  
 For Nature beats in perfect tune,  
 And rounds with rhyme her every rune,  
 Whether she work in land or sea,  
 Or hide underground her alchemy.  
 Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,  
 Or dip thy paddle in the lake,  
 But it carves the bow of beauty there,  
 And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake.  
 The wood is wiser far than thou ;  
 The wood and wave each other know  
 Not unrelated, unaffied,  
 But to each thought and thing allied,  
 Is perfect Nature’s every part,  
 Rooted in the mighty Heart.  
 But thou, poor child ! unbound, unrhymed,

Whence camest thou, misplaced, mistimed,  
 Whence, O thou orphan and defrauded ?  
 Is thy land peeled, thy realm marauded ?  
 Who thee divorced, deceived and left ?  
 Thee of thy faith who hath bereft,  
 And torn the ensigns from thy brow,  
 And sunk the immortal eye so low ?  
 Thy cheek too white, thy form too slender,  
 Thy gait too slow, thy habits tender  
 For royal man ; — they thee confess  
 An exile from the wilderness, —  
 The hills where health with health agrees,  
 And the wise soul expels disease.  
 Hark ! in thy ear I will tell the sign  
 By which thy hurt thou may’st divine.  
 When thou shalt climb the mountain cliff,  
 Or see the wide shore from thy skiff,  
 To thee the horizon shall express  
 But emptiness on emptiness ;  
 There lives no man of Nature’s worth  
 In the circle of the earth ;  
 And to thine eye the vast skies fall,  
 Dire and satirical,  
 On clucking hens and prating fools,  
 On thieves, on drudges and on dolls.  
 And thou shalt say to the Most High,  
 “ Godhead ! all this astronomy,  
 And fate and practice and invention,  
 Strong art and beautiful pretension,

This radiant pomp of sun and star,  
 Throes that were, and worlds that are,  
 Behold! were in vain and in vain; —  
 It cannot be, — I will look again.  
 Surely now will the curtain rise,  
 And earth's fit tenant me surprise; —  
 But the curtain doth *not* rise,  
 And Nature has miscarried wholly  
 Into failure, into folly."

• Alas! thine is the bankruptcy,  
 Blessed Nature so to see.  
 Come, lay thee in my soothing shade,  
 And heal the hurts which sin has made.  
 I see thee in the crowd alone;  
 I will be thy companion.  
 Quit thy friends as the dead in doom,  
 And build to them a final tomb;  
 Let the starred shade that nightly falls  
 Still celebrate their funerals,  
 And the bell of beetle and of bee  
 Knell their melodious memory.  
 Behind thee leave thy merchandise,  
 Thy churches and thy charities;  
 And leave thy peacock wit behind;  
 Enough for thee the primal mind  
 That flows in streams, that breathes in wind:  
 Leave all thy pedant lore apart;  
 God hid the whole world in thy heart.

Love shuns the sage, the child it crowns,  
 Gives all to them who all renounce.  
 The rain comes when the wind calls;  
 The river knows the way to the sea;  
 Without a pilot it runs and falls,  
 Blessing all lands with its charity;  
 The sea tosses and foams to find  
 Its way up to the cloud and wind;  
 The shadow sits close to the flying ball;  
 The date fails not on the palm-tree tall;  
 And thou, — go burn thy wormy pages, —  
 Shalt outsee seers, and outwit sages.  
 Oft didst thou thread the woods in vain  
 To find what bird had piped the strain: —  
 Seek not, and the little eremite  
 Flies gayly forth and sings in sight.

• Hearken once more!  
 I will tell thee the mundane lore.  
 Older am I than thy numbers wot,  
 Change I may, but I pass not.  
 Hitherto all things fast abide,  
 And anchored in the tempest ride.  
 Trenchant time behoves to hurry  
 All to yeon and all to bury:  
 All the forms are fugitive,  
 But the substances survive.  
 Ever fresh the broad creation,  
 A divine improvisation,

From the heart of God proceeds,  
 A single will, a million deeds.  
 Once slept the world an egg of stone,  
 And pulse, and sound, and light was none;  
 And God said, "Throb!" and there was motion  
 And the vast mass became vast ocean.  
 Onward and on, the eternal Pan,  
 Who layeth the world's incessant plan,  
 Halteth never in one shape,  
 But forever doth escape,  
 Like wave or flame, into new forms  
 Of gem, and air, of plants, and worms.  
 I, that to-day am a pine,  
 Yesterday was a bundle of grass.  
 He is free and libertine,  
 Pouring of his power the wine  
 To every age, to every race;  
 Unto every race and age  
 He emptieth the beverage;  
 Unto each, and unto all,  
 Maker and original.  
 The world is the ring of his spells,  
 And the play of his miracles.  
 As he giveth to all to drink,  
 Thus or thus they are and think.  
 With one drop sheds form and feature;  
 With the next a special nature;  
 The third adds heat's indulgent spark;  
 The fourth gives light which eats the dark;

Into the fifth himself he flings,  
 And conscious Law is King of kings.  
 As the bee through the garden ranges,  
 From world to world the godhead changes;  
 As the sheep go feeding in the waste,  
 From form to form He maketh haste;  
 This vault which glows immense with light  
 Is the inn where he lodges for a night.  
 What recks such Traveller if the bowers  
 Which bloom and fade like meadow flowers  
 A bunch of fragrant lilies be,  
 Or the stars of eternity?  
 Alike to him the better, the worse,—  
 The glowing angel, the outcast corse.  
 Thou metest him by centuries,  
 And lo! he passes like the breeze;  
 Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,  
 He hides in pure transparency;  
 Thou askest in fountains and in fires,  
 He is the essence that inquires.  
 He is the axis of the star;  
 He is the sparkle of the spar;  
 He is the heart of every creature;  
 He is the meaning of each feature;  
 And his mind is the sky.  
 Than all it holds more deep, more high.'