

MONADNOC

THOUSAND minstrels woke within me,
'Our music's in the hills;'—
Gayest pictures rose to win me,
Leopard-colored rills.
'Up! — If thou knew'st who calls
To twilight parks of beech and pine,
High over the river intervals,
Above the ploughman's highest line,
Over the owner's farthest walls!
'Up! where the airy citadel
O'erlooks the surging landscape's swell!
Let not unto the stones the Day
Her lily and rose, her sea and land display.
Read the celestial sign!
Lo! the south answers to the north;
Bookworm, break this sloth urbane;
A greater spirit bids thee forth
Than the gray dreams which thee detain.
Mark how the climbing Oreads
Beckon thee to their arcades;
Youth, for a moment free as they,
Teach thy feet to feel the ground,
Ere yet arrives the wintry day
When Time thy feet has bound.

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Take the bounty of thy birth,
Taste the lordship of the earth.'

I heard, and I obeyed,—
Assured that he who made the claim,
Well known, but loving not a name,
Was not to be gainsaid.
Ere yet the summoning voice was still,
I turned to Cheshire's haughty hill.
From the fixed cone the cloud-rack flowed
Like ample banner flung abroad
To all the dwellers in the plains
Round about, a hundred miles,
With salutation to the sea and to the bordering
isles.
In his own loom's garment dressed,
By his proper bounty blessed,
Fast abides this constant giver,
Pouring many a cheerful river;
To far eyes, an aerial isle
Unploughed, which finer spirits pile,
Which morn and crimson evening paint
For bard, for lover and for saint;
An eyemark and the country's core,
Inspirer, prophet evermore;
Pillar which God aloft had set
So that men might it not forget;
It should be their life's ornament,
And mix itself with each event;

Gauge and calendar and dial,
 Weatherglass and chemic phial,
 Garden of berries, perch of birds,
 Pasture of pool-haunting herds,
 Graced by each change of sum untold,
 Earth-baking heat, stone-cleaving cold.

The Titan heeds his sky-affairs,
 Rich rents and wide alliance shares;
 Mysteries of color daily laid
 By morn and eve in light and shade;
 And sweet varieties of chance,
 And the mystic seasons' dance;
 And thief-like step of liberal hours
 Thawing snow-drift into flowers.
 O, wondrous craft of plant and stone
 By eldest science wrought and shown!

'Happy,' I said, 'whose home is here!
 Fair fortunes to the mountaineer!
 Boon Nature to his poorest shed
 Has royal pleasure-grounds outspread.'
 Intent, I searched the region round,
 And in low hut the dweller found:
 Woe is me for my hope's downfall!
 Is yonder squalid peasant all
 That this proud nursery could breed
 For God's vicegerency and stead?
 Time out of mind, this forge of ores;

Quarry of spars in mountain pores;
 Old cradle, hunting-ground and bier
 Of wolf and otter, bear and deer;
 Well-built abode of many a race;
 Tower of observance searching space;
 Factory of river and of rain;
 Link in the Alps' globe-girding chain;
 By million changes skilled to tell
 What in the Eternal standeth well,
 And what obedient Nature can;—
 Is this colossal talisman
 Kindly to plant and blood and kind,
 But speechless to the master's mind?
 I thought to find the patriots
 In whom the stock of freedom roots;
 To myself I oft recount
 Tales of many a famous mount,—
 Wales, Scotland, Uri, Hungary's dells:
 Bards, Roys, Scanderbegs and Tells;
 And think how Nature in these towers
 Uplifted shall condense her powers,
 And lifting man to the blue deep
 Where stars their perfect courses keep,
 Like wise preceptor, lure his eye
 To sound the science of the sky,
 And carry learning to its height
 Of untried power and sane delight:
 The Indian cheer, the frosty skies,
 Rear purer wits, inventive eyes,—

Eyes that frame cities where none be,
 And hands that stablish what these see :
 And by the moral of his place
 Hint summits of heroic grace ;
 Man in these crags a fastness find
 To fight pollution of the mind ;
 In the wide thaw and ooze of wrong,
 Adhere like this foundation strong,
 The insanity of towns to stem
 With simpleness for stratagem.
 But if the brave old mould is broke,
 And end in churls the mountain folk
 In tavern cheer and tavern joke,
 Sink, O mountain, in the swamp !
 Hide in thy skies, O sovereign lamp !
 Perish like leaves, the highland breed
 No sire survive, no son succeed !

Soft ! let not the offended muse
 Toil's hard hap with scorn accuse.
 Many hamlets sought I then,
 Many farms of mountain men.
 Rallying round a parish steeple
 Nestle warm the highland people,
 Coarse and boisterous, yet mild,
 Strong as giant, slow as child.
 Sweat and season are their arts,
 Their talismans are ploughs and carts ;
 And well the youngest can command

Honey from the frozen land ;
 With cloverheads the swamp adorn,
 Change the running sand to corn ;
 For wolf and fox, bring lowing herds,
 And for cold mosses, cream and curds :
 Weave wood to canisters and mats ;
 Drain sweet maple juice in vats.
 No bird is safe that cuts the air
 From their rifle or their snare ;
 No fish, in river or in lake,
 But their long hands it thence will take ;
 Whilst the country's flinty face,
 Like wax, their fashioning skill betrays,
 To fill the hollows, sink the hills,
 Bridge gulfs, drain swamps, build dams and mills,
 And fit the bleak and howling waste
 For homes of virtue, sense and taste.
 The World-soul knows his own affair,
 Forelooking, when he would prepare
 For the next ages, men of mould
 Well embodied, well ensouled,
 He cools the present's fiery glow,
 Sets the life-pulse strong but slow :
 Bitter winds and fasts austere
 His quarantines and grottoes, where
 He slowly cures decrepit flesh,
 And brings it infantile and fresh.
 Toil and tempest are the toys
 And games to breathe his stalwart boys :

They bide their time, and well can prove,
 If need were, their line from Jove ;
 Of the same stuff, and so allayed,
 As that whereof the sun is made,
 And of the fibre, quick and strong,
 Whose throbs are love, whose thrills are song.

Now in sordid weeds they sleep,
 In dulness now their secret keep ;
 Yet, will you learn our ancient speech,
 These the masters who can teach.
 Fourscore or a hundred words
 All their vocal muse affords ;
 But they turn them in a fashion
 Past clerks' or statesmen's art or passion.
 I can spare the college bell,
 And the learned lecture, well ;
 Spare the clergy and libraries,
 Institutes and dictionaries,
 For that hardy English root
 Thrives here, unvalued, underfoot.
 Rude poets of the tavern hearth,
 Squandering your unquoted mirth,
 Which keeps the ground and never soars,
 While Jake retorts and Reuben roars ;
 Scoff of yeoman strong and stark,
 Goes like bullet to its mark ;

While the solid curse and jeer
 Never balk the waiting ear.

On the summit as I stood,
 O'er the floor of plain and flood
 Seemed to me, the towering hill
 Was not altogether still,
 But a quiet sense conveyed :
 If I err not, thus it said : —

Many feet in summer seek,
 Oft, my far-appearing peak ;
 In the dreaded winter time,
 None save dappling shadows climb,
 Under clouds, my lonely head,
 Old as the sun, old almost as the shade ;
 And comest thou
 To see strange forests and new snow,
 And tread uplifted land ?
 And leavest thou thy lowland race,
 Here amid clouds to stand ?
 And wouldst be my companion
 Where I gaze, and still shall gaze,
 Through tempering nights and flashing days,
 When forests fall, and man is gone,
 Over tribes and over times,
 At the burning Lyre,
 Nearing me,

With its stars of northern fire,
In many a thousand years ?

‘Gentle pilgrim, if thou know
The gamut old of Pan,
And how the hills began,
The frank blessings of the hill
Fall on thee, as fall they will.

‘Let him heed who can and will ;
Enchantment fixed me here
To stand the hurts of time, until
In mightier chant I disappear.
If thou trowest
How the chemic eddies play,
Pole to pole, and what they say ;
And that these gray crags
Not on crags are hung,
But beads are of a rosary
On prayer and music strung ;
And, credulous, through the granite seeming,
Seest the smile of Reason beaming ; —
Can thy style-discerning eye
The hidden-working Builder spy,
Who builds, yet makes no chips, no din,
With hammer soft as snowflake’s flight ; —
Knowest thou this ?
O pilgrim, wandering not amiss !

Already my rocks lie light,
And soon my cone will spin.

‘For the world was built in order,
And the atoms march in tune ;
Rhyme the pipe, and Time the warder,
The sun obeys them and the moon.
Orb and atom forth they prance,
When they hear from far the rune ;
None so backward in the troop,
When the music and the dance
Reach his place and circumstance,
But knows the sun-creating sound,
And, though a pyramid, will bound.

‘Monadnoc is a mountain strong,
Tall and good my kind among ;
But well I know, no mountain can,
Zion or Meru, measure with man.
For it is on zodiacs writ,
Adamant is soft to wit :
And when the greater comes again
With my secret in his brain,
I shall pass, as glides my shadow
Daily over hill and meadow.

‘Through all time, in light, in gloom
Well I hear the approaching feet

On the flinty pathway beat
 Of him that cometh, and shall come;
 Of him who shall as lightly bear
 My daily load of woods and streams,
 As doth this round sky-cleaving boat
 Which never strains its rocky beams;
 Whose timbers, as they silent float,
 Alps and Caucasus uprear,
 And the long Alleghanies here,
 And all town-sprinkled lands that be,
 Sailing through stars with all their history.

• Every morn I lift my head,
 See New England underspread,
 South from Saint Lawrence to the Sound,
 From Katskill east to the sea-bound.
 Anchored fast for many an age,
 I await the bard and sage,
 Who, in large thoughts, like fair pearl-seed,
 Shall string Monadnoc like a bead.
 Comes that cheerful troubadour,
 This mound shall throb his face before,
 As when, with inward fires and pain,
 It rose a bubble from the plain.
 When he cometh, I shall shed,
 From this wellspring in my head,
 Fountain-drop of spicier worth
 Than all vintage of the earth.
 There's fruit upon my barren soil

Costlier far than wine or oil.
 There's a berry blue and gold,—
 Autumn-ripe, its juices hold
 Sparta's stoutness, Bethlehem's heart,
 Asia's rancor, Athens' art,
 Slowsure Britain's secular might,
 And the German's inward sight.
 I will give my son to eat
 Best of Pan's immortal meat,
 Bread to eat, and juice to drain;
 So the coinage of his brain
 Shall not be forms of stars, but stars,
 Nor pictures pale, but Jove and Mars.
 He comes, but not of that race bred
 Who daily climb my specular head.
 Oft as morning wreathes my scarf,
 Fled the last plumule of the Dark,
 Pants up hither the spruce clerk
 From South Cove and City Wharf.
 I take him up my rugged sides,
 Half-repentant, scant of breath,—
 Bead-eyes my granite chaos show,
 And my midsummer snow:
 Open the daunting map beneath,—
 All his county, sea and land,
 Dwarfed to measure of his hand;
 His day's ride is a furlong space,
 His city-tops a glimmering haze.
 I plant his eyes on the sky-hoop bounding;

"See there the grim gray rounding
 Of the bullet of the earth
 Whereon ye sail,
 Tumbling steep
 In the uncontinented deep."
 He looks on that, and he turns pale.
 'T is even so, this treacherous kite,
 Farm-furrowed, town-incrusted sphere,
 Thoughtless of its anxious freight,
 Plunges eyeless on forever;
 And he, poor parasite,
 Cooped in a ship he cannot steer, —
 Who is the captain he knows not,
 Port or pilot trows not, —
 Risk or ruin he must share.
 I scowl on him with my cloud,
 With my north wind chill his blood;
 I lame him, clattering down the rocks;
 And to live he is in fear.
 Then, at last, I let him down
 Once more into his dapper town,
 To chatter, frightened, to his clan
 And forget me if he can.'

As in the old poetic fame
 The gods are blind and lame,
 And the simular despite
 Betrays the more abounding might,
 So call not waste that barren cone

Above the floral zone,
 Where forests starve:
 It is pure use; —
 What sheaves like those which here we glean
 and bind
 Of a celestial Ceres and the Muse?

Ages are thy days,
 Thou grand affirmer of the present tense,
 And type of permanence!
 Firm ensign of the fatal Being,
 Amid these coward shapes of joy and grief,
 That will not bide the seeing!

Hither we bring
 Our insect miseries to thy rocks;
 And the whole flight, with folded wing,
 Vanish, and end their murmuring, —
 Vanish beside these dedicated blocks,
 Which who can tell what mason laid?
 Spoils of a front none need restore,
 Replacing frieze and architrave; —
 Where flowers each stone rosette and metope
 brave;
 Still is the haughty pile erect
 Of the old building Intellect.

Complement of human kind,
 Holding us at vantage still,

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Our sumptuous indigence,
 O barren mound, thy plenties fill!
 We fool and prate;
 Thou art silent and sedate.
 To myriad kinds and times one sense
 The constant mountain doth dispense;
 Shedding on all its snows and leaves,
 One joy it joys, one grief it grieves.
 Thou seest, O watchman tall,
 Our towns and races grow and fall,
 And imagest the stable good
 For which we all our lifetime grope,
 In shifting form the formless mind,
 And though the substance us elude,
 We in thee the shadow find.
 Thou, in our astronomy
 An opaker star,
 Seen haply from afar,
 Above the horizon's hoop,
 A moment, by the railway troop,
 As o'er some bolder height they speed,—
 By circumspect ambition,
 By errant gain,
 By feasters and the frivolous,—
 Recallest us,
 And makest sane.
 Mute orator! well skilled to plead,
 And send conviction without phrase,
 Thou dost succor and remede

FABLE

The shortness of our days,
 And promise, on thy Founder's truth,
 Long morrow to this mortal youth.

FABLE

THE mountain and the squirrel
 Had a quarrel,
 And the former called the latter 'Little Prig;
 Bun replied,
 'You are doubtless very big;
 But all sorts of things and weather
 Must be taken in together,
 To make up a year
 And a sphere.
 And I think it no disgrace
 To occupy my place.
 If I'm not so large as you,
 You are not so small as I,
 And not half so sry.
 I'll not deny you make
 A very pretty squirrel track;
 Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
 If I cannot carry forests on my back,
 Neither can you crack a nut.'