

ODE

INSCRIBED TO W. H. CHANNING

THOUGH loath to grieve  
The evil time's sole patriot,  
I cannot leave  
My honied thought  
For the priest's cant, *universe*  
Or statesman's rant.

If I refuse  
My study for their politique,  
Which at the best is trick,  
The angry Muse  
Puts confusion in my brain.

But who is he that prates  
Of the culture of mankind,  
Of better arts and life?  
Go, blindworm, go,  
Behold the famous States  
Harrying Mexico  
With rifle and with knife!

Or who, with accent bolder,  
Dare praise the freedom-loving mountaineer?

ODE

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I found by thee, O rushing Contoocook!  
And in thy valleys, Agiochook!  
The jackals of the negro-holder.

The God who made New Hampshire  
Taunted the lofty land  
With little men; —  
Small bat and wren  
House in the oak: —  
If earth-fire cleave  
The upheaved land, and bury the folk,  
The southern crocodile would grieve.  
Virtue palters; Right is hence;  
Freedom praised, but hid;  
Funeral eloquence  
Rattles the coffin-lid.

What boots thy zeal,  
O glowing friend,  
That would indignant rend  
The northland from the south?  
Wherefore? to what good end?  
Boston Bay and Bunker Hill  
Would serve things still; —  
Things are of the snake.

The horseman serves the horse,  
The neatherd serves the neat,

The merchant serves the purse,  
 The eater serves his meat ;  
 'T is the day of the chattel,  
 Web to weave, and corn to grind ;  
 Things are in the saddle,  
 And ride mankind.

There are two laws discrete,  
 Not reconciled, —  
 Law for man, and law for thing ;  
 The last builds town and fleet,  
 But it runs wild,  
 And doth the man unking.

'T is fit the forest fall,  
 The steep be graded,  
 The mountain tunnelled,  
 The sand shaded,  
 The orchard planted,  
 The glebe tilled,  
 The prairie granted,  
 The steamer built.

Let man serve law for man ;  
 Live for friendship, live for love,  
 For truth's and harmony's behoof ;  
 The state may follow how it can,  
 As Olympus follows Jove.

Yet do not I implore  
 The wrinkled shopman to my sounding woods,  
 Nor bid the unwilling senator  
 Ask votes of thrushes in the solitudes.  
 Every one to his chosen work ; —  
 Foolish hands may mix and mar ;  
 Wise and sure the issues are.  
 Round they roll till dark is light,  
 Sex to sex, and even to odd ; —  
 The over-god  
 Who marries Right to Might,  
 Who peoples, unpeoples, —  
 He who exterminates  
 Races by stronger races,  
 Black by white faces, —  
 Knows to bring honey  
 Out of the lion ;  
 Grafts gentlest scion  
 On pirate and Turk.

The Cossack eats Poland,  
 Like stolen fruit ;  
 Her last noble is ruined,  
 Her last poet mute :  
 Straight, into double band  
 The victors divide ;  
 Half for freedom strike and stand ; —  
 The astonished Muse finds thousands at her side.

ASTRÆA

EACH the herald is who wrote  
 His rank, and quartered his own coat.  
 There is no king nor sovereign state  
 That can fix a hero's rate ;  
 Each to all is venerable,  
 Cap-a-pie invulnerable,  
 Until he write, where all eyes rest,  
 Slave or master on his breast.  
 I saw men go up and down,  
 In the country and the town,  
 With this tablet on their neck,  
 ' Judgment and a judge we seek.'  
 Not to monarchs they repair,  
 Nor to learned jurist's chair ;  
 But they hurry to their peers,  
 To their kinsfolk and their dears ;  
 Louder than with speech they pray, —  
 ' What am I? companion, say.'  
 And the friend not hesitates  
 To assign just place and mates ;  
 Answers not in word or letter,  
 Yet is understood the better ;  
 Each to each a looking-glass,  
 Reflects his figure that doth pass.

ASTRÆA

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Every wayfarer he meets  
 What himself declared repeats,  
 What himself confessed records,  
 Sentences him in his words ;  
 The form is his own corporal form,  
 And his thought the penal worm.  
 Yet shine forever virgin minds,  
 Loved by stars and purest winds,  
 Which, o'er passion throned sedate,  
 Have not hazarded their state ;  
 Disconcert the searching spy,  
 Rendering to a curious eye  
 The durance of a granite ledge.  
 To those who gaze from the sea's edge  
 It is there for benefit ;  
 It is there for purging light ;  
 There for purifying storms ;  
 And its depths reflect all forms ;  
 It cannot parley with the mean, —  
 Pure by impure is not seen.  
 For there 's no sequestered grot,  
 Lone mountain tarn, or isle forgot,  
 But Justice, journeying in the sphere,  
 Daily stoops to harbor there.

### ÉTIENNE DE LA BOËCE

I SERVE you not, if you I follow,  
Shadowlike, o'er hill and hollow ;  
And bend my fancy to your leading,  
All too nimble for my treading.  
When the pilgrimage is done,  
And we've the landscape overrun,  
I am bitter, vacant, thwarted,  
And your heart is unsupported.  
Vainly valiant, you have missed  
The manhood that should yours resist, —  
Its complement ; but if I could,  
In severe or cordial mood,  
Lead you rightly to my altar,  
Where the wisest Muses falter,  
And worship that world-warming spark  
Which dazzles me in midnight dark,  
Equalizing small and large,  
While the soul it doth surcharge,  
Till the poor is wealthy grown,  
And the hermit never alone, —  
The traveller and the road seem one  
With the errand to be done, —  
That were a man's and lover's part,  
That were Freedom's whitest chart.

### COMPENSATION

WHY should I keep holiday  
When other men have none ?  
Why but because, when these are gay,  
I sit and mourn alone ?

And why, when mirth unseals all tongues,  
Should mine alone be dumb ?  
Ah ! late I spoke to silent throngs,  
And now their hour is come.

### FORBEARANCE

HAST thou named all the birds without a gun ?  
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk ?  
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse ?  
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust ?  
And loved so well a high behavior,  
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,  
Nobility more nobly to repay ?  
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine !