

THE CHARTIST'S COMPLAINT

DAY! hast thou two faces,
Making one place two places?
One, by humble farmer seen,
Chill and wet, unlighted, mean,
Useful only, triste and damp,
Serving for a laborer's lamp?
Have the same mists another side,
To be the appanage of pride,
Gracing the rich man's wood and lake,
His park where amber mornings break,
And treacherously bright to show
His planted isle where roses glow?
O Day! and is your mightiness
A sycophant to smug success?
Will the sweet sky and ocean broad
Be fine accomplices to fraud?
O Sun! I curse thy cruel ray:
Back, back to chaos, harlot Day!

THE TITMOUSE

You shall not be overbold
When you deal with arctic cold,
As late I found my lukewarm blood
Chilled wading in the snow-choked wood.
How should I fight? my foeman fine
Has million arms to one of mine:
East, west, for aid I looked in vain,
East, west, north, south, are his domain.
Miles off, three dangerous miles, is home;
Must borrow his winds who there would
come.

Up and away for life! be fleet! —
The frost-king ties my fumbling feet,
Sings in my ears, my hands are stones,
Curdles the blood to the marble bones,
Tugs at the heart-strings, numbs the sense,
And hems in life with narrowing fence.
Well, in this broad bed lie and sleep, —
The punctual stars will vigil keep, —
Embalmed by purifying cold;
The winds shall sing their dead-march old,
The snow is no ignoble shroud,
The moon thy mourner, and the cloud.

Softly, — but this way fate was pointing,
 'T was coming fast to such anointing,
 When piped a tiny voice hard by,
 Gay and polite, a cheerful cry,
Chic-chic-a-dee-dee! saucy note
 Out of sound heart and merry throat,
 As if it said, ' Good day, good sir!
 Fine afternoon, old passenger!
 Happy to meet you in these places,
 Where January brings few faces.'

This poet, though he live apart,
 Moved by his hospitable heart,
 Sped, when I passed his sylvan fort,
 To do the honors of his court,
 As fits a feathered lord of land;
 Flew near, with soft wing grazed my hand,
 Hopped on the bough, then, darting low,
 Prints his small impress on the snow,
 Shows feats of his gymnastic play,
 Head downward, clinging to the spray.

Here was this atom in full breath,
 Hurling defiance at vast death;
 This scrap of valor just for play
 Fronts the north-wind in waistcoat gray,
 As if to shame my weak behavior;
 I greeted loud my little savior,

' You pet! what dost here? and what for?
 In these woods, thy small Labrador,
 At this pinch, wee San Salvador!
 What fire burns in that little chest
 So frolic, stout and self-possesst?
 Henceforth I wear no stripe but thine;
 Ashes and jet all hues outshine.
 Why are not diamonds black and gray,
 To ape thy dare-devil array?
 And I affirm, the spacious North
 Exists to draw thy virtue forth.
 I think no virtue goes with size;
 The reason of all cowardice
 Is, that men are overgrown,
 And, to be valiant, must come down
 To the titmouse dimension.'

'T is good will makes intelligence,
 And I began to catch the sense
 Of my bird's song: ' Live out of doors
 In the great woods, on prairie floors.
 I dine in the sun; when he sinks in the sea,
 I too have a hole in a hollow tree;
 And I like less when Summer beats
 With stifling beams on these retreats,
 Than noontide twilights which snow makes
 With tempest of the blinding flakes.
 For well the soul, if stout within,
 Can arm impregnably the skin;

THE TITMOUSE

And polar frost my frame defied,
Made of the air that blows outside.

With glad remembrance of my debt,
I homeward turn; farewell, my pet!
When here again thy pilgrim comes,
He shall bring store of seeds and crumbs.
Doubt not, so long as earth has bread,
Thou first and foremost shalt be fed;
The Providence that is most large
Takes hearts like thine in special charge,
Helps who for their own need are strong,
And the sky doats on cheerful song.
Henceforth I prize thy wiry chant
O'er all that mass and minster vaunt;
For men mis-hear thy call in Spring,
As 't would accost some frivolous wing,
Crying out of the hazel copse, *Phe-be!*
And, in winter, *Chic-a-dee-dee!*
I think old Cæsar must have heard
In northern Gaul my dauntless bird,
And, echoed in some frosty wold,
Borrowed thy battle-numbers bold.
And I will write our annals new,
And thank thee for a better clew,
I, who dreamed not when I came here
To find the antidote of fear,
Now hear thee say in Roman key,
Pæan! Veni, vidi, vici.

THE HARP

ONE musician is sure,
His wisdom will not fail,
He has not tasted wine impure,
Nor bent to passion frail.
Age cannot cloud his memory,
Nor grief untune his voice,
Ranging down the ruled scale
From tone of joy to inward wail,
Tempering the pitch of all
In his windy cave.
He all the fables knows,
And in their causes tells,—
Knows Nature's rarest moods,
Ever on her secret broods.
The Muse of men is coy,
Oft courted will not come;
In palaces and market squares
Entreated, she is dumb;
But my minstrel knows and tells
The counsel of the gods,
Knows of Holy Book the spells,
Knows the law of Night and Day,
And the heart of girl and boy,
The tragic and the gay,

And what is writ on Table Round
 Of Arthur and his peers;
 What sea and land discoursing say
 In sidereal years. —
 He renders all his lore
 In numbers wild as dreams,
 Modulating all extremes, —
 What the spangled meadow saith
 To the children who have faith;
 Only to children children sing,
 Only to youth will spring be spring.

Who is the Bard thus magnified?
 When did he sing? and where abide?

Chief of song where poets feast
 Is the wind-harp which thou seest
 In the casement at my side.

Æolian harp,
 How strangely wise thy strain!
 Gay for youth, gay for youth,
 (Sweet is art, but sweeter truth,) —
 In the hall at summer eve
 Fate and Beauty skilled to weave.
 From the eager opening strings
 Rung loud and bold the song.
 Who but loved the wind-harp's note?
 How should not the poet doat

On its mystic tongue,
 With its primeval memory,
 Reporting what old minstrels told
 Of Merlin locked the harp within, —
 Merlin paying the pain of sin,
 Pent in a dungeon made of air, —
 And some attain his voice to hear,
 Words of pain and cries of fear,
 But pillowed all on melody,
 As fits the griefs of bards to be.
 And what if that all-echoing shell,
 Which thus the buried Past can tell,
 Should rive the Future, and reveal
 What his dread folds would fain conceal?
 It shares the secret of the earth,
 And of the kinds that owe her birth.
 Speaks not of self that mystic tone,
 But of the Overgods alone:
 It trembles to the cosmic breath, —
 As it heareth, so it saith;
 Obeying meek the primal Cause,
 It is the tongue of mundane laws.
 And this, at least, I dare affirm,
 Since genius too has bound and term,
 There is no bard in all the choir,
 Not Homer's self, the poet sire,
 Wise Milton's odes of pensive pleasure,
 Or Shakspeare, whom no mind can measure,
 Nor Collins' verse of tender pain,

Nor Byron's clarion of disdain,
 Scott, the delight of generous boys,
 Or Wordsworth, Pan's recording voice, —
 Not one of all can put in verse,
 Or to this presence could rehearse
 The sights and voices ravishing
 The boy knew on the hills in spring,
 When pacing through the oaks he heard
 Sharp queries of the sentry-bird,
 The heavy grouse's sudden whir,
 The rattle of the kingfisher;
 Saw bonfires of the harlot flies
 In the lowland, when day dies;
 Or marked, benighted and forlorn,
 The first far signal-fire of morn.
 These syllables that Nature spoke,
 And the thoughts that in him woke,
 Can adequately utter none
 Save to his ear the wind-harp lone.
 Therein I hear the Parcæ reel
 The threads of man at their humming wheel,
 The threads of life and power and pain,
 So sweet and mournful falls the strain.
 And best can teach its Delphian chord
 How Nature to the soul is moored,
 If once again that silent string,
 As erst it wont, would thrill and ring.

Not long ago at eventide,
 It seemed, so listening, at my side
 A window rose, and, to say sooth,
 I looked forth on the fields of youth:
 I saw fair boys bestriding steeds,
 I knew their forms in fancy weeds,
 Long, long concealed by sundering fates,
 Mates of my youth, — yet not my mates,
 Stronger and bolder far than I,
 With grace, with genius, well attired,
 And then as now from far admired,
 Followed with love
 They knew not of,
 With passion cold and shy.
 O joy, for what recoveries rare!
 Renewed, I breathe Elysian air,
 See youth's glad mates in earliest bloom, —
 Break not my dream, obtrusive tomb!
 Or teach thou, Spring! the grand recoil
 Of life resurgent from the soil
 Wherein was dropped the mortal spoil.

SEASHORE

I HEARD or seemed to hear the chiding Sea
Say, Pilgrim, why so late and slow to come?
Am I not always here, thy summer home?
Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve?
My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,
My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath?
Was ever building like my terraces?
Was ever couch magnificent as mine?
Lie on the warm rock-ledges, and there learn
A little hut suffices like a town.
I make your sculptured architecture vain,
Vain beside mine. I drive my wedges home,
And carve the coastwise mountain into caves.
Lo! here is Rome and Nineveh and Thebes,
Karnak and Pyramid and Giant's Stairs
Half piled or prostrate; and my newest slab
Older than all thy race.

Behold the Sea,
The opaline, the plentiful and strong,
Yet beautiful as is the rose in June,
Fresh as the trickling rainbow of July;
Sea full of food, the nourisher of kinds,
Purger of earth, and medicine of men;
Creating a sweet climate by my breath,

SEASHORE

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Washing out harms and griefs from memory,
And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,
Giving a hint of that which changes not.
Rich are the sea-gods: — who gives gifts but they?
They grope the sea for pearls, but more than pearls:
They pluck Force thence, and give it to the wise.
For every wave is wealth to Dædalus,
Wealth to the cunning artist who can work
This matchless strength. Where shall he find, O
waves!

A load your Atlas shoulders cannot lift?

I with my hammer pounding evermore
The rocky coast, smite Andes into dust,
Strewing my bed, and, in another age,
Rebuild a continent of better men.
Then I unbar the doors: my paths lead out
The exodus of nations: I disperse
Men to all shores that front the hoary main.

I too have arts and sorceries;
Illusion dwells forever with the wave.
I know what spells are laid. Leave me to deal
With credulous and imaginative man;
For, though he scoop my water in his palm,
A few rods off he deems it gems and clouds.
Planting strange fruits and sunshine on the shore,
I make some coast alluring, some lone isle,
To distant men, who must go there, or die.

SONG OF NATURE

MINE are the night and morning,
The pits of air, the gulf of space,
The sportive sun, the gibbous moon,
The innumerable days.

I hide in the solar glory,
I am dumb in the pealing song,
I rest on the pitch of the torrent,
In slumber I am strong.

No numbers have counted my tallies,
No tribes my house can fill,
I sit by the shining Fount of Life
And pour the deluge still ;

And ever by delicate powers
Gathering along the centuries
From race on race the rarest flowers,
My wreath shall nothing miss.

And many a thousand summers
My gardens ripened well,
And light from meliorating stars
With firmer glory fell.

SONG OF NATURE

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I wrote the past in characters
Of rock and fire the scroll,
The building in the coral sea,
The planting of the coal.

And thefts from satellites and rings
And broken stars I drew,
And out of spent and aged things
I formed the world anew ;

What time the gods kept carnival,
Tricked out in star and flower,
And in cramp elf and saurian forms
They swathed their too much power.

Time and Thought were my surveyors,
They laid their courses well,
They boiled the sea, and piled the layers
Of granite, marl and shell.

But he, the man-child glorious, —
Where tarries he the while ?
The rainbow shines his harbinger,
The sunset gleams his smile.

My boreal lights leap upward,
Forthright my planets roll,
And still the man-child is not born,
The summit of the whole.

Must time and tide forever run?
 Will never my winds go sleep in the west?
 Will never my wheels which whirl the sun
 And satellites have rest?

Too much of donning and doffing,
 Too slow the rainbow fades,
 I weary of my robe of snow,
 My leaves and my cascades;

I tire of globes and races,
 Too long the game is played;
 What without him is summer's pomp,
 Or winter's frozen shade?

I travail in pain for him,
 My creatures travail and wait;
 His couriers come by squadrons,
 He comes not to the gate.

Twice I have moulded an image,
 And thrice outstretched my hand,
 Made one of day and one of night
 And one of the salt sea-sand.

One in a Judæan manger,
 And one by Avon stream,
 One over against the mouths of Nile,
 And one in the Academe.

I moulded kings and saviors,
 And bards o'er kings to rule; —
 But fell the starry influence short,
 The cup was never full.

Yet whirl the glowing wheels once more,
 And mix the bowl again;
 Seethe, Fate! the ancient elements,
 Heat, cold, wet, dry, and peace, and pain.

Let war and trade and creeds and song
 Blend, ripen race on race,
 The sunburnt world a man shall breed
 Of all the zones and countless days.

No ray is dimmed, no atom worn,
 My oldest force is good as new,
 And the fresh rose on yonder thorn
 Gives back the bending heavens in dew.

TWO RIVERS

THY summer voice, Musketaquit,
Repeats the music of the rain ;
But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
Through thee, as thou through Concord Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent :
The stream I love unbounded goes
Through flood and sea and firmament ;
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,
I hear the spending of the stream
Through years, through men, through Nature fleet,
Through love and thought, through power and dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay ;
They lose their grief who hear his song,
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream, —
Who drink it shall not thirst again ;
No darkness stains its equal gleam,
And ages drop in it like rain.

WALDEINSAMKEIT

I DO not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea ;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky ;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time ?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic care derides,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

WALDEINSAMKEIT

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms that fade,
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,
The pigeon in the pines,
The bittern's boom, a desert make
Which no false art refines.

Down in yon watery nook,
Where bearded mists divide,
The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,
The sires of Nature, hide.

Aloft, in secret veins of air,
Blows the sweet breath of song,
O, few to scale those uplands dare,
Though they to all belong!

See thou bring not to field or stone
The fancies found in books;
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,
To brave the landscape's looks.

TERMINUS

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
Crowns all thy mean affairs.

TERMINUS

It is time to be old,
To take in sail:—
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said: 'No more!
No farther shoot
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs: no more invent;
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There's not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two;
Economize the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still plan and smile,

TERMINUS

And, — fault of novel germs, —
 Mature the unfallen fruit.
 Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
 Bad husbands of their fires,
 Who, when they gave thee breath,
 Failed to bequeath
 The needful sinew stark as once,
 The Baresark marrow to thy bones,
 But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
 Inconstant heat and nerveless reins, —
 Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
 Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.'

As the bird trims her to the gale,
 I trim myself to the storm of time,
 I man the rudder, reef the sail,
 Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime :
 'Lowly faithful, banish fear,
 Right onward drive unharmed ;
 The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
 And every wave is charmed.'

THE NUN'S ASPIRATION

THE yesterday doth never smile,
 The day goes drudging through the while,
 Yet, in the name of Godhead, I
 The morrow front, and can defy ;
 Though I am weak, yet God, when prayed,
 Cannot withhold his conquering aid.
 Ah me ! it was my childhood's thought,
 If He should make my web a blot
 On life's fair picture of delight,
 My heart's content would find it right.
 But O, these waves and leaves, —
 When happy stoic Nature grieves,
 No human speech so beautiful
 As their murmurs mine to lull.
 On this altar God hath built
 I lay my vanity and guilt ;
 Nor me can Hope or Passion urge
 Hearing as now the lofty dirge
 Which blasts of Northern mountains hymn,
 Nature's funeral high and dim, —
 Sable pageantry of clouds,
 Mourning summer laid in shrouds.
 Many a day shall dawn and die,
 Many an angel wander by,