

THE POET

THE Muse's hill by Fear is guarded,
A bolder foot is still rewarded.

His instant thought a poet spoke,
And filled the age his fame;
An inch of ground the lightning strook
But lit the sky with flame.

If bright the sun, he tarries,
All day his song is heard;
And when he goes he carries
No more baggage than a bird.

THE Asmodean feat is mine,
To spin my sand-heap into twine.

SLIGHTED Minerva's learnèd tongue,
But leaped with joy when on the wind
The shell of Clio rung.

FRAGMENTS ON NATURE AND LIFE

NATURE

THE patient Pan,
Drunken with nectar,
Sleeps or feigns slumber,
Drowsily humming
Music to the march of time.
This poor tooting, creaking cricket,
Pan, half asleep, rolling over
His great body in the grass,
Tooting, creaking,
Feigns to sleep, sleeping never;
'T is his manner,
Well he knows his own affair,
Piling mountain chains of phlegm
On the nervous brain of man,
As he holds down central fires
Under Alps and Andes cold;
Haply else we could not live,
Life would be too wild an ode.

COME search the wood for flowers, —
Wild tea and wild pea,

Grapevine and succory,
 Coreopsis
 And liatris,
 Flaunting in their bowers ;
 Grass with green flag half-mast high,
 Succory to match the sky,
 Columbine with horn of honey,
 Scented fern and agrimony ;
 Forest full of essences
 Fit for fairy presences,
 Peppermint and sassafras,
 Sweet fern, mint and vernal grass,
 Panax, black birch, sugar maple,
 Sweet and scent for Dian's table,
 Elder-blow, sarsaparilla,
 Wild rose, lily, dry vanilla, —
 Spices in the plants that run
 To bring their first fruits to the sun.
 Earliest heats that follow frore
 Nervèd leaf of hellebore,
 Sweet willow, checkerberry red,
 With its savory leaf for bread.
 Silver birch and black
 With the selfsame spice
 Found in polygala root and rind,
 Sassafras, fern, benzöine,
 Mouse-ear, cowslip, wintergreen,
 Which by aroma may compel
 The frost to spare, what scents so well.

WHERE the fungus broad and red
 Lifts its head,
 Like poisoned loaf of elfin bread,
 Where the aster grew
 With the social goldenrod,
 In a chapel, which the dew
 Made beautiful for God : —
 O what would Nature say ?
 She spared no speech to-day :
 The fungus and the bulrush spoke,
 Answered the pine-tree and the oak,
 The wizard South blew down the glen,
 Filled the straits and filled the wide,
 Each maple leaf turned up its silver side.
 All things shine in his smoky ray,
 And all we see are pictures high ;
 Many a high hillside,
 While oaks of pride
 Climb to their tops,
 And boys run out upon their leafy ropes.
 The maple street
 In the houseless wood,
 Voices followed after,
 Every shrub and grape leaf
 Rang with fairy laughter.
 I have heard them fall
 Like the strain of all
 King Oberon's minstrelsy.

Would hear the everlasting
 And know the only strong?
 You must worship fasting,
 You must listen long.
 Words of the air
 Which birds of the air
 Carry aloft, below, around,
 To the isles of the deep,
 To the snow-capped steep,
 To the thundercloud.

FOR Nature, true and like in every place,
 Will hint her secret in a garden patch,
 Or in lone corners of a doleful heath,
 As in the Andes watched by fleets at sea,
 Or the sky-piercing horns of Himmaleh;
 And, when I would recall the scenes I dreamed
 On Adirondac steeps, I know
 Small need have I of Turner or Daguerre,
 Assured to find the token once again
 In silver lakes that unexhausted gleam
 And peaceful woods beside my cottage door.

WHAT all the books of ages paint, I have.
 What prayers and dreams of youthful genius feign,
 I daily dwell in, and am not so blind
 But I can see the elastic tent of day
 Belike has wider hospitality
 Than my few needs exhaust, and bids me read
 The quaint devices on its mornings gay.
 Yet Nature will not be in full possessed,
 And they who truest love her, heralds are
 And harbingers of a majestic race,
 Who, having more absorbed, more largely yield,
 And walk on earth as the sun walks in the sphere.

BUT never yet the man was found
 Who could the mystery expound,
 Though Adam, born when oaks were young,
 Endured, the Bible says, as long;
 But when at last the patriarch died
 The Gordian noose was still untied.
 He left, though goodly centuries old,
 Meek Nature's secret still untold.

ATOM from atom yawns as far
 As moon from earth, or star from star.

WHEN all their blooms the meadows flaunt
 To deck the morning of the year,
 Why tinge thy lustres jubilant
 With forecast or with fear?

Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
 Who climb each night the ancient sky,
 Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
 No trace of age, no fear to die.

THE sun athwart the cloud thought it no sin
 To use my land to put his rainbows in.

FOR joy and beauty planted it,
 With faerie gardens cheered,
 And boding Fancy haunted it
 With men and women weird.

WHAT central flowing forces, say,
 Make up thy splendor, matchless day?

DAY by day for her darlings to her much she added
 more;
 In her hundred-gated Thebes every chamber was a
 door,
 A door to something grander, — loftier walls, and
 vaster floor.

SHE paints with white and red the moors
 To draw the nations out of doors.

A SCORE of airy miles will smooth
 Rough Monadnoc to a gem.

THE EARTH

OUR eyeless bark sails free
 Though with boom and spar
 Andes, Alp or Himmalee,
 Strikes never moon or star.

THE HEAVENS

WISP and meteor nightly falling,
 But the Stars of God remain.

TRANSITION

SEE yonder leafless trees against the sky,
 How they diffuse themselves into the air,
 And, ever subdividing, separate
 Limbs into branches, branches into twigs,
 As if they loved the element, and hasted
 To dissipate their being into it.

PARKS and ponds are good by day;
 I do not delight
 In black acres of the night,
 Nor my unseasoned step disturbs
 The sleeps of trees or dreams of herbs.

IN Walden wood the chickadee
 Runs round the pine and maple tree
 Intent on insect slaughter:
 O tufted entomologist!
 Devour as many as you list,
 Then drink in Walden water.

THE low December vault in June be lifted high,
 And largest clouds be flakes of down in that enormous
 sky.

THE GARDEN

MANY things the garden shows,
 And pleased I stray
 From tree to tree
 Watching the white pear-bloom,
 Bee-infested quince or plum.
 I could walk days, years, away
 Till the slow ripening, secular tree
 Had reached its fruiting-time,
 Nor think it long.

SOLAR insect on the wing
 In the garden murmuring,
 Soothing with thy summer horn
 Swains by winter pinched and worn.

BIRDS

DARLINGS of children and of bard,
 Perfect kinds by vice unmarred,
 All of worth and beauty set
 Gems in Nature's cabinet;
 These the fables she esteems
 Reality most like to dreams.

NATURE

Welcome back, you little nations,
 Far-travelled in the south plantations;
 Bring your music and rhythmic flight,
 Your colors for our eyes' delight:
 Freely nestle in our roof,
 Weave your chamber weatherproof;
 And your enchanting manners bring
 And your autumnal gathering.
 Exchange in conclave general
 Greetings kind to each and all,
 Conscious each of duty done
 And unstained as the sun.

WATER

THE water understands
 Civilization well;
 It wets my foot, but prettily
 It chills my life, but wittily,
 It is not disconcerted,
 It is not broken-hearted:
 Well used, it decketh joy,
 Adorneth, doubleth joy:
 Ill used, it will destroy,
 In perfect time and measure
 With a face of golden pleasure
 Elegantly destroy.

NAHANT

ALL day the waves assailed the rock,
 I heard no church-bell chime,
 The sea-beat scorns the minster clock
 And breaks the glass of Time.

SUNRISE

WOULD you know what joy is hid
 In our green Musketaquid,
 And for travelled eyes what charms
 Draw us to these meadow farms,
 Come and I will show you all
 Makes each day a festival.
 Stand upon this pasture hill,
 Face the eastern star until
 The slow eye of heaven shall show
 The world above, the world below.

Behold the miracle!
 Thou saw'st but now the twilight sad
 And stood beneath the firmament,
 A watchman in a dark gray tent,
 Waiting till God create the earth, —
 Behold the new majestic birth!

The mottled clouds, like scraps of wool,
 Steeped in the light are beautiful.
 What majestic stillness broods
 Over these colored solitudes.
 Sleeps the vast East in pleasèd peace,
 Up the far mountain walls the streams increase
 Inundating the heaven
 With spouting streams and waves of light
 Which round the floating isles unite: —
 See the world below
 Baptized with the pure element,
 A clear and glorious firmament
 Touched with life by every beam.
 I share the good with every flower,
 I drink the nectar of the hour: —
 This is not the ancient earth
 Whereof old chronicles relate
 The tragic tales of crime and fate;
 But rather, like its beads of dew
 And dew-bent violets, fresh and new,
 An exhalation of the time.

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NIGHT IN JUNE

I LEFT my dreary page and sallied forth,
 Received the fair inscriptions of the night;

The moon was making amber of the world,
 Glittered with silver every cottage pane,
 The trees were rich, yet ominous with gloom.

The meadows broad

From ferns and grapes and from the folded flowers
 Sent a nocturnal fragrance; harlot flies
 Flashed their small fires in air, or held their court
 In fairy groves of herds-grass.

HE lives not who can refuse me;
 All my force saith, Come and use me:
 A gleam of sun, a summer rain,
 And all the zone is green again.

SEEMS, though the soft sheen all enchants,
 Cheers the rough crag and mournful dell,
 As if on such stern forms and haunts
 A wintry storm more fitly fell.

PUT in, drive home the sightless wedges
 And split to flakes the crystal ledges.

NATURE

MAIA

ILLUSION works impenetrable,
Weaving webs innumerable,
Her gay pictures never fail,
Crowds each on other, veil on veil,
Charmer who will be believed
By man who thirsts to be deceived.

ILLUSIONS like the tints of pearl,
Or changing colors of the sky,
Or ribbons of a dancing girl
That mend her beauty to the eye.

THE cold gray down upon the quinces lieth
And the poor spinners weave their webs thereon
To share the sunshine that so spicy is.

SAMSON stark, at Dagon's knee,
Gropes for columns strong as he ;
When his ringlets grew and curled,
Groped for axle of the world.

BUT Nature whistled with all her winds,
Did as she pleased and went her way.

LIFE

A TRAIN of gay and clouded days
Dappled with joy and grief and praise,
Beauty to fire us, saints to save,
Escort us to a little grave.

No fate, save by the victim's fault, is low,
For God hath writ all dooms magnificent,
So guilt not traverse his tender will.

AROUND the man who seeks a noble end,
Not angels but divinities attend.

FROM high to higher forces
The scale of power uprears,
The heroes on their horses,
The gods upon their spheres.