

# Authoring America:

## A Survey of American Literature from Its Beginnings to 2020

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An Open Anthology



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Volume 3: American Literature from 1865-1914

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### An Open Anthology

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This open textbook was developed as an adaptation of the textbook *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* by Amy Berke, Robert Bleil, Jordan Cofer, and Doug Davis, developed at the University of Georgia and the Galileo Open Learning Materials program. We appreciate the editors and creators making the text available for adaptation. The current work includes literary works representative of additional periods in the history of American literature, and intentionally includes non-canonical, ethnic, and/or countercultural writers. Also included here are essays providing information about the texts' cultural contexts and historical relevance.

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As all of us who study literature know, this anthology is far from complete, as all anthologies are. I've tried to include diverse voices. Copyright has been a challenge. If there is anything you want to see added, please email me at [cgrogan@udel.edu](mailto:cgrogan@udel.edu), and I will look into including it. In addition to being incomplete, this anthology is also far from perfect. If you see any mistakes, please email me at [cgrogan@udel.edu](mailto:cgrogan@udel.edu), and I will correct them. And if you'd like the Word versions of the volumes, I'm happy to share them if you email me at [cgrogan@udel.edu](mailto:cgrogan@udel.edu).

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# Volume 3: 1865-1914

## 3.1 Introduction to Realism and Naturalism

The following is a revised version of the introductory essays to Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 of *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### Late Romanticism

Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman are unlikely protagonists—or leading characters—for a literary movement. Each was an outsider: Dickinson, an unmarried woman who lived a life of quiet seclusion in western Massachusetts, and Whitman, a vagabond who lived a life in search of community. Dickinson and Whitman promoted a spirit of exploration and inventiveness that matched the geographical, industrial, political, and social growth of the United States. From their works, we gain not so much a literary renaissance as we do a sense of artistic innovation that developed alongside these other areas of American life and commerce.

As literary historians like William Charvat have noted, the development of an American literary tradition owes as much to the development of the American publishing industry in the middle decades of the nineteenth century as it does to the prominence of individual authors like Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Sales of these authors' works were dwarfed by the sales of pirated editions of novels by British authors like Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. Nonetheless, the success of these British imports convinced American publishers that the American market was sufficiently robust to demand new works; this demand created an opportunity for American writers to expand their audience, and a flourishing literary culture began to prosper.

American authors still faced steep odds in seeing their works into print, and American literary publishing did not flourish until the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 allowed the reliably consistent shipment of individuals and goods across the country. Additional technological improvements, including the widespread adoption of steam-powered machinery and gas-fueled lights, also provided the necessary conditions for the rapid production of printed materials and the means by which these materials could be enjoyed at the conclusion of a day of laboring. Thus, only when the Industrial Age expands the definition of leisure do Americans begin to embrace the culture of print and expand the boundaries of American literature.



The first attempts to define the literary culture of the mid-nineteenth century began in the 1930s and early 1940s as the United States took on a larger role in global politics, and the need for definition gained sharper focus with the publication of F. O. Matthiessen's *The American Renaissance* in 1941. Matthiessen argued that writers like Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, and Thoreau represented the expansion of a uniquely American style of writing that interacted with, and embraced, the North American landscape in new ways. What Matthiessen called a renaissance, however, was less of a cultural flourishing than the limited success of a few male authors from New England. Despite the real impact of Matthiessen's work in recognizing the presence of significant male American writers, his catalogue still neglected writing of women, African-Americans, and Native Americans whose works would not be widely recognized until the 1970s.

In order to describe the work of these authors, Matthiessen and others turned to literary labels popularized in reference to British authors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Romanticism, a literary movement emphasizing the freedom and originality of self-expression that began in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, also seemed to capture the spirit of nineteenth-century America and was frequently applied to authors of both prose and poetry. In the hands of these authors, the meadows of western Massachusetts replaced the Lake District as the source of inspiration, and the rejection of Puritan morality continued the American emphasis on freedom of expression. When Whitman and Dickinson began writing poetry in the 1850s, the thriving Abolitionist movement added urgency to the need for new voices and rapid change.

When we refer to Whitman and Dickinson as late Romantics, we place them at the end of a period that begins in the 1820s, and we suggest that their works are merely derivative from those that preceded them chronologically. Yet Whitman's and Dickinson's poetry is contemporary with these other works, and it seems more fruitful to consider the differences in genre than the differences in chronology. Whitman and Dickinson achieved their fame by changing American poetry from patriotic and historical ballads to free verse—poetry that lacks both rhyme and regular meter—and musically inspired celebrations of the individual in the American landscape. Whitman and Dickinson are the most famous of the Late Romantics, and their work inspired successive generations of American authors. From these poets, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, and Charles Chesnutt found the freedom to use a variety of American dialects in their work, the realists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries discovered the richness of the American landscape, and the Modernist poets located a source of new poetical forms to meet the needs of the adolescent Republic that came of age in the decades immediately following the Civil War.

Many of the works in this volume chart that national coming of age, in the years of Reconstruction, Western Expansion, Manifest Destiny, industrial might, and rapid immigration. The Civil War, while not a precise dividing line, is regarded as the most reliable current method for marking the split between the first and second half of the literary history of the United States. Teachers and critics quickly realized, however, that the continued growth of the literary and cultural productions of the United States required more precise divisions than the chronological division into pre-bellum and post-bellum periods can provide. Hence new divisions emerged, including Late Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Pre-Modernism, Modernism, and Contemporary American Literature, but the boundaries between these divisions remain fluid.

## **Realism**

After the Civil War and toward the end of the nineteenth century, America experienced significant change. With the closing of the Western frontier and increasing urbanization and industrialization, and with the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad and the advent of new communication technologies such as the telegraph, America began to emerge as a more unified nation as it moved into the Industrial Age. As immigration from both Europe and Asia peaked during the last half of the nineteenth century, immigrants provided cheap labor to rising urban centers in the Northeast and eventually in the Midwest. There was a subsequent rise in the middle class for the first time in America, as the economic landscape of the country began to change. The country's social, political, and cultural landscape began to change as well. Women argued for the right to vote, to own property, and to earn their own living, and, as African-Americans began to rise to social and political prominence, they called for social equality and the right to vote as well. Workers in factories and businesses began to lobby for better working conditions, organizing to create unions. Free public schools opened throughout the nation, and, by the turn of the century, the majority of children in the United States attended school. Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, activists and reformers worked to battle injustice and social ills. Within this heady mix of political, economic, social, and cultural change, American writers began to look more to contemporary society and social issues for their writing material, rather than to the distant or fictional past.

The first members of the new generation of writers sought to create a new American literature, one that distinctly reflected American life and values and did not mimic British literary customs. At the same time, these writers turned to the past, toward writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and James Fenimore Cooper, and reacted against their predecessors' allegiance to the Romantic style of writing which favored the ideal over the real representation of life in fiction. William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and

Henry James wrote prolifically about the Realistic method, where writers created characters and plot based on average people experiencing the common concerns of everyday life, and they also produced their own literary masterpieces using this style.

All writers in the Realistic mode shared a commitment to referential narrative. Their readers expected to meet characters that resembled ordinary people, often of the middle class, living in ordinary circumstances, who experienced plausible real-life struggles and who often, as in life, were unable to find resolution to their conflicts. Realists developed these characters by using ordinary speech in dialogue, commensurate to the character's social class. Often in Realistic stories, characterization and plot became intertwined, as the plot was formed from the exploration of a character working through or reacting to a particular issue or struggle. In other words, character often drove the plot of the story. Characters in Realistic fiction were three-dimensional, and their inner lives were often revealed through an objective, omniscient narrator.

Realists set their fiction in places that actually existed, and they were interested in recent or contemporary life, not in history or legend. Setting in Realistic fiction was important but was not limited to a particular place or region. Realists believed in the accuracy of detail, and, for them, accuracy helped build the "truth" conveyed in the work. The implied assumption for these writers is that "reality" is verifiable, is separate from human perception of it, and can be agreed upon collectively. Finally, Realistic writers believed that the function of the author is to *show*, not simply *tell*. The story should be allowed to show itself with a decided lack of authorial intrusion. Realistic writers attempted to avoid sentimentality or any kind of forced or heavy-handed emotional appeal. The three most prominent theorists and practitioners of American Literary Realism are Mark Twain, often called the comic Realist; William Dean Howells, often termed the social Realist; and Henry James, often characterized as the psychological Realist.

Two earlier literary styles contributed to the emergence of Realism: Local Color and Regionalism. These two sub-movements cannot be completely separated from one another or from Realism itself, since all three styles have intersecting points. However, there are distinct features of each style that bear comparison.

**Local Color:** After the Civil War, as the country became more unified, regions of the country that were previously "closed" politically or isolated geographically became interesting to the populace at large. Readers craved stories about eccentric, peculiar characters living in isolated locales. Local Color writing therefore involves a detailed setting of the characteristics of a particular locality, enabling the reader to "see" the setting. The writer typically is concerned with habits, customs, religious practices,

dress, fashion, favorite foods, language, dialect, common expressions, peculiarities, and surrounding flora and fauna of a particular locale. In some stories, the local inhabitants would examine their own environments, nostalgically trying to preserve in writing the “ways things were” in the “good old days.” More often, Local Color pieces were told from the perspective of an outsider (such as travelers or journalists) looking into a particular rural, isolated locale that had been generally closed off from the contemporary world. The Local Color story often involved a worldly “stranger” coming into a rather closed off locale populated with common folk. From there the story took a variety of turns, but often the stranger, who believed he was superior to the country bumpkins, was fooled or tricked in some way. Nostalgia and sentimentality, and even elements of the Romantic style of the earlier part of the century, may infuse a Local Color story. Often, the story is humorous, with a local trickster figure outwitting the more urbane outsider or interloper. In Local Color stories about the Old South, for example, nostalgia for a bygone era may be prevalent. The “plantation myth” popularized by Thomas Nelson Page, for instance, might offer a highly filtered and altered view of plantation life as idyllic, for both master and slave. Local Color stories about the West, such as Mark Twain’s “The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” might offer raucous stories with stock characters of gamblers or miners who outwit the interloper from the city, who flaunts his intellectual superiority over the locals. An early African-American writer, Charles Chesnutt, used the Local Color style of writing to deconstruct the plantation myth by showing the innate dignity, intelligence, and power of slaves or former slaves who outwit the white racist landowners.

Local Color writing can be seen as a transitional type of writing that took American literature away from the Romantic style and more firmly into the Realistic style. The characters are more realistically drawn, with very human, sometimes ignoble, traits: they swear, speak in regional dialect, swat flies away from their faces, and make mistakes; they are both comic and pitiable. The setting is realistically drawn as well: a real-life location, with accurate depictions of setting, people, and local customs. Local Color writing, however, does not reach the more stylistically and thematically complicated dimensions of Realistic writing. Local Color works tend to be somewhat sentimental stories with happy endings or at least endings where good prevails over evil. Characters are often flat or two-dimensional who are either good or bad. Outlandish and improbable events often happen during the course of the story, and characters sometimes undergo dramatic and unbelievable changes in characterization. Local Color did, however, begin a trend in American literature that allowed for a more authentic American style and storyline about characters who speak like Americans, not the British aristocracy, real-life American places, and more down-to-earth, recognizably human characters.

**Regionalism:** Regionalism can be seen as a more sophisticated form of Local Color, with the author using one main character (the protagonist) to offer a specific point of view in the story. Regionalist writers often employ Local Color elements in their fiction. After all, they are concerned with the characteristics of a particular locale or region. However, regionalist writers tell the story empathetically, from the protagonist's perspective. That is, the Regional writer attempts to render a convincing surface of a particular time and place, but investigates the psychological character traits from a more universal perspective. Characters tend to be more three-dimensional and the plot less formulaic or predictable. Often what prevents Regional writers from squarely falling into the category of "Realist" is their tendency toward nostalgia, sentimentality, authorial intrusion, or a rather contrived or happy ending.

In Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron," for example, the story has a number of features of Local Color stories: characters speak in a New England dialect, the landscape is described in detail, the customs and rituals of farming class families are described, and an outsider—the young male ornithologist—comes to this secluded region with a sense of superiority and is thwarted in his endeavors by young Sylvie who refuses to give up the secret location of the heron. However, the story is told from the perspective of Sylvie, and readers gain insight into her inner conflict as she attempts to make a difficult decision. We gain awareness of Sylvie's complexity as a character, a young girl who is faced with making an adult decision, a choice that will force her to grow up and face the world from a more mature stance. Jewett does, at times, allow the narrator to intrude in order to encourage readers to feel sympathy for Sylvie. Therefore, the story does not exhibit the narrative objectivity of a Realistic story.

Regionalism has often been used as a term to describe many works by women writers during the late nineteenth century; however, it is a term which, unfortunately, has confined these women writers' contribution to American literature to a particular style. Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman, for example, certainly wrote about the New England region, but their larger focus was on ordinary women in domestic spaces who seek self-agency in a male-dominated culture. Kate Chopin set most of her works among the Creole and Acadian social classes of the Louisiana Bayou region, yet the larger themes of her works offer examinations of women who long for passionate and personal fulfillment and for the ability to live authentic, self-directed lives. Like the established theorists of Realism—Howells, Twain, and James—women writers of the time, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Ellen Glasgow, who are generally not thought of as Regional writers, produced work which often defied strict labeling and which contributed to the beginning of a feminist tradition in American literature. While literary labels help frame the style and method

of stories written in the late nineteenth century, most literary works—especially those that have withstood the test of time—defy reductionism.

## Naturalism

The generation of writers that followed William Dean Howells broke with their past, as did the Realists when they rejected Romanticism as a literary style. Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, Harold Frederic, Hamlin Garland, Ellen Glasgow, and Kate Chopin, to name a few, rejected the limitations of Realism in terms of subject matter. While they all, to some extent, embraced the Realist style of writing with its attention to detail and authenticity, they rejected Realism's tendency not to offend the sensibilities of readers in the genteel classes. The new writers were not afraid of provocative subject matters and wrote about the human condition in starker, grimmer contexts. They all, to some extent, were influenced by not only scientific ideas of the day, including Charles Darwin's views on evolution, but also European writers experimenting with this new style: Naturalism. Émile Zola, a prominent French novelist, had articulated a theory of Naturalism in *Le Roman Expérimental* (1880). Zola had argued for a kind of intense Realism, one that did not look away from any aspects of life, including the base, dirty, or ugly. Also influenced by Darwin, Zola saw the human in animal terms, and he argued that a novel written about the human animal could be set up as a kind of scientific experiment, where, once the ingredients were added, the story would unfold with scientific accuracy. He was particularly interested in how hereditary traits under the influence of a particular social environment might determine how a human behaves. The American writers Norris, Crane, and London, similarly characterize humans as part of the evolutionary landscape, as beings influenced—and even determined—by forces of heredity and environment beyond their understanding or control.

With Darwin's and Zola's influence apparent, the Naturalists sought to push Realism even further, or as Frank Norris argued in his essay "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," to go beyond the "meticulous presentation of teacups, rag carpets, wall paper, and hair-cloth sofas"—or beyond Realism as mere photographic accuracy—and to embrace a kind of writing that explores the "unplumbed depths of the human heart, and the mystery of sex, and the black, unsearched penetralia of the souls of men." Norris is calling for a grittier approach in examining the human being as essentially an upright animal, a kind of walking complex combination of inherited traits, attributes, and habits deeply affected by social and economic forces.

Naturalistic works went where Realistic works did not go, dealing with taboo subjects for the time, subjects such as prostitution, alcoholism, domestic violence, violent deaths, crime, madness, and degeneration. Sometimes defined as pessimistic

materialistic determinism, Naturalism sought to look at human nature in a scientific light, and the author often took on the role of scientist, coolly observing the human animal in a variety of plights, at the mercy of forces beyond his control or understanding, compelled by instinct and determined by cause and effect to behave in certain, often self-destructive, ways as a result of heredity and environment. In such works, the plot plays out on the material evolutionary plain, where a benevolent deity or any supernatural form is absent and idealistic concepts, such as justice, liberty, innate goodness, and morality, are shown as illusions, as simple fabrications of the human animal trying to elevate himself above the other animals.

In the Naturalistic works, nature is depicted as indifferent, sometimes even hostile, to humans, and humans are often depicted as small, insignificant, nameless losers in battles against an all-powerful nature. Characters may dream of heroic actions in the midst of a battle to survive extreme conditions, but they are most often trapped by circumstances, unable to summon the will to change their determined outcome. Characters rarely exhibit free will at all; they often stumble through events, victims of their own vices, weaknesses, hereditary traits, and grim social or natural environments. A male character in a Naturalistic novel is often characterized as part “brute,” and he typically exhibits strong impulses, compulsions, or instinctive drives, as he attempts to satiate his greed, his sexual urges, his decadent lusts, or his desire for power or dominance. Female characters also typically exhibit subconscious drives, acting without knowing why, unable to change course.

Naturalistic works are not defined by a region; the characters’ action may take place in the frozen Alaska wilderness, on the raging sea, or within the slums of a city. Stylistically, Naturalistic novels are written from an almost journalistic perspective, with narrative distance from action and the characters. Often characters are not given names as a way to reinforce their cosmic insignificance. The plot of the story often follows the steady decline of a character into degeneration or death (known as the “plot of decline”).

### **Turn of the Twentieth Century/Pre-Modernism**

In the twenty-one years between the World’s Columbian Exposition (also known as the Chicago World’s Fair) in 1893 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the economic, political, and social landscape changed forever. Unprecedented immigration irrevocably changed both the American landscape and American politics, and the colonial powers of nineteenth-century Europe began to lose their grip on their possessions and territories. American literature of the period reflected these changes.

In the United States, the northern and western migration that followed Reconstruction (the period between 1865 and 1877 when the Federal government set the conditions by which the states of the former Confederacy would be readmitted to full participation in the national government) caused such rapid growth in northern cities that the municipal governments were strained to the breaking point as they rushed to deliver services to millions of residents in thousands of languages. In the West, waves of migration were rapidly filling in the plains and prairies; this population boom set up a clash of cultures that continues to have repercussions in contemporary politics. In less than twenty years, the United States marked two population milestones: the population of New York City exceeded five million persons for the first time and, in 1915, the total population of the United States topped one hundred million.

Many immigrants to the United States in this period were fleeing from the collapse of the ancient European monarchies and empires. When Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom died on January 22, 1901, more than half of the persons in the world owed her allegiance; by the outbreak of World War I, a new wave of self-governance had swept through Europe. The political consequences of this destabilization continue to be felt throughout the world today.

These two decades were also remarkable for American literature. F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway were born within three years of each other, and they would collectively reshape the American literary landscape in the twentieth century. Literary contributions were not, however, restricted to white males. Although Mark Twain continued to hold court as the most famous author in the country, Charlotte Perkins Gillman, Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton, and Willa Cather were also making literary and social headlines.

The selections in this volume speak to the growth of African-American literary culture. The selections by Booker T. Washington (1901) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) both continue the tradition of African-American autobiography begun in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Olaudah Equiano and Frederick Douglass, and forge new ground as political and social manifestoes. In these works both authors advocated passionately, in the wake of the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Plessey v. Ferguson*, that the schools and municipal services provided to African-Americans were, in fact, not equal to those provided to the rest of the population. These works are not just autobiography, however: *The Souls of Black Folk* is often considered one of the earliest works in the field of sociology.

Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1895), demonstrates the development of African-American narrative and autobiography. Unlike Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Washington struck a



more conciliatory tone aimed at lifting African-Americans out of poverty in exchange for lesser political and individual autonomy. In the following decades, the debates between Du Bois and Washington formed the backdrop for the struggle over African-American art and literature during the Harlem Renaissance.

The dawn of the twentieth century witnessed the first significant crisis of American identity since the end of the Civil War, and this time the crisis played out on the world stage. In the decades that followed World War I, the United States would undergo even more dramatic changes, and the most significant literary changes were yet to come.

## 3.2 Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

The second of nine children and born in 1819 to a Long Island farmer and carpenter, Walt Whitman is both the journeyman poet of American-ness and its champion. A journalist and newspaper editor throughout his life, Whitman worked as a law clerk, a schoolteacher, a printer, a civil servant, and a hospital aide, but he was always writing; from his teenage years until his death, his byline was on constant view. Contemporary reports suggest that Whitman was an industrious worker but that he was often accused of idleness because his habit of long midday walks contrasted sharply with nineteenth-century attitudes toward work. In “Song of Myself,” Whitman addressed these critics directly by writing, “I loafe and invite my soul,/ I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass” (4-5). For Whitman, too much industry dulled the ability to celebrate the ordinary. In the preface to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, Whitman expounds on his love for the common: “Other states indicate themselves in their deputies . . . but the genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislators, nor in its ambassadors or authors or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors . . . but always most in the common people.” Whitman’s love for the common people that he encountered and observed in the urban centers of the north is expressed in all of his poetry; if his British contemporary Alfred Lord Tennyson is the national poet of mourning, then Whitman is the national poet of celebration.

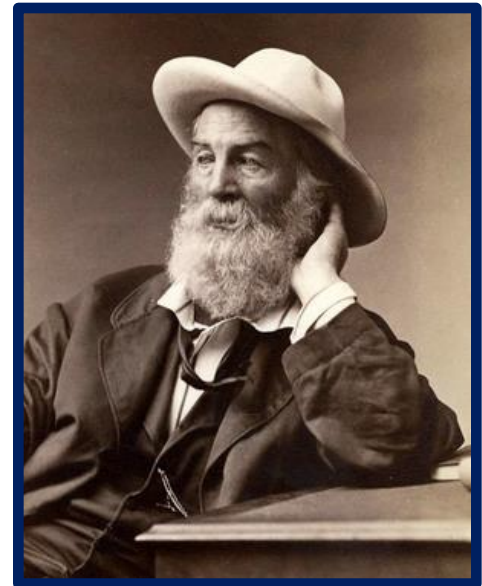


Image 3.1: Walt Whitman, Brooklyn, NY,  
September 1872  
Photographer: G. Frank E. Pearsall  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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Many readers feel confused and disoriented when reading Whitman for the first time. Without using the aid of rhyme and meter as a guide, Whitman’s poetry may initially appear disjointed and meandering, but at the same time readers often take great comfort in the simplicity of the language, the clarity of the images, and the deep cadences, or rhythms, of the verse. Such contradictions are at the heart of Whitman’s work. Much of Whitman’s success and endurance as a poet comes from his ability to marry embedded cultural forms to the needs of a growing and rapidly modernizing nation. Whitman first came to wide public attention with the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 when he was just twenty-five years old. Grand in scope if not in size, the first edition established Whitman as a poet who loved wordplay and common images; by the time of his death in 1892, Whitman had expanded the initial collection of just twelve poems over the course of six editions to one that ultimately included more than 400 poems. The selection included here largely samples Whitman’s early poetry up through the Civil War. In the selections from “Song of Myself” and “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” we see Whitman at his most iconic: sweeping views of everyday life that freely mingle high and low culture. Yet the poet of the common man did not spend all of his days gazing at his fellow Americans. In the final selection from Whitman, we see Whitman rising as a national poet with “O Captain! My Captain!” one of two poems on the death of Abraham Lincoln. An urban poet

who lived almost his entire life in New York, New Jersey, and Washington, DC, the enduring appeal of his works testifies to his ability to connect the great and the common through language.

The Walt Whitman biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.2.1 Preface to *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

America does not repel the past or what it has produced under its forms or amid other politics or the idea of castes or the old religions ... accepts the lesson with calmness ... is not so impatient as has been supposed that the slough still sticks to opinions and manners and literature while the life which served its requirements has passed into the new life of the new forms perceives that the corpse is slowly borne from the eating and sleeping rooms of the house ... perceives that it waits a little while in the door ... that it was fittest for its days ... that its action has descended to the stalwart and wellshaped heir who approaches ... and that he shall be fittest for his days.

The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem. In the history of the earth hitherto the largest and most stirring appear tame and orderly to their ampler largeness and stir. Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night. Here is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations. Here is action untied from strings necessarily blind to particulars and details magnificently moving in vast masses. Here is the hospitality which forever indicates heroes... . Here are the roughs and beards and space and ruggedness and nonchalance that the soul loves. Here the performance disdaining the trivial unapproached in the tremendous audacity of its crowds and groupings and the push of its perspective spreads with crampless and flowing breadth and showers its prolific and splendid extravagance. One sees it must indeed own the riches of the summer and winter, and need never be bankrupt while corn grows from the ground or the orchards drop apples or the bays contain fish or men beget children upon women.

Other states indicate themselves in their deputies ... but the genius of the United States is not best or most in its executives or legislatures, nor in its ambassadors or authors or colleges or churches or parlors, nor even in its newspapers or inventors ... but always most in the common people. Their manners speech dress friendships—the freshness and candor of their physiognomy—the picturesque looseness of their carriage ... their deathless attachment to freedom—their aversion to anything indecorous or soft or mean—the practical acknowledgment of the citizens of one state by the citizens of all other states—the fierceness of their roused resentment—their Curiosity and welcome of novelty—their self-esteem and wonderful sympathy—their susceptibility to a slight—the air they

have of persons who never knew how it felt to stand in the presence of superiors—the fluency of their speech their delight in music, the sure symptom of manly tenderness and native elegance of soul ... their good temper and openhandedness—the terrible significance of their elections—the President's taking off his hat to them not they to him—these too are unrhymed poetry. It awaits the gigantic and generous treatment worthy of it.

The largeness of nature or the nation were monstrous without a corresponding largeness and generosity of the spirit of the citizen. Not nature nor swarming states nor streets and steamships nor prosperous business nor farms nor capital nor learning may suffice for the ideal of man ... nor suffice the poet. No reminiscences may suffice either. A live nation can always cut a deep mark and can have the best authority the cheapest ... namely from its own soul. This is the sum of the profitable uses of individuals or states and of present action and grandeur and of the subjects of poets.—As if it were necessary to trot back generation after generation to the eastern records! As if the beauty and sacredness of the demonstrable must fall behind that of the mythical! As if men do not make their mark out of any times! As if the opening of the western continent by discovery and what has transpired since in North and South America were less than the small theatre of the antique or the aimless sleepwalking of the middle ages! The pride of the United States leaves the wealth and finesse of the cities and all returns of commerce and agriculture and all the magnitude of geography or shows of exterior victory to enjoy the breed of full-sized men or one full-sized man unconquerable and simple.

The American poets are to enclose old and new for America is the race of races. Of them a bard is to be commensurate with a people. To him the other continents arrive as contributions ... he gives them reception for their sake and his own sake. His spirit responds to his country's spirit... he incarnates its geography and natural life and rivers and lakes. Mississippi with annual freshets and changing chutes, Missouri and Columbia and Ohio and Saint Lawrence with the falls and beautiful masculine Hudson, do not embouchure where they spend themselves more than they embouchure into him. The blue breadth over the inland sea of Virginia and Maryland and the sea off Massachusetts and Maine and over Manhattan bay and over Champlain and Erie and over Ontario and Huron and Michigan and Superior, and over the Texan and Mexican and Floridian and Cuban seas and over the seas off California and Oregon, is not tallied by the blue breadth of the waters below more than the breadth of above and below is tallied by him. When the long Atlantic coast stretches longer and the Pacific coast stretches longer he easily stretches with them north or south. He spans between them also from east to west and reflects what is between them. On him rise solid growths that offset the growths of pine and cedar and hemlock and liveoak and locust and chestnut and cypress and hickory and limetree and cottonwood and tuliptree and cactus and wildvine and tamarind and persimmon ... and tangles as tangled as any canebrake or swamp ... and forests coated with transparent ice and icicles hanging from the boughs and crackling in the wind ... and sides and peaks

of mountains ... and pasturage sweet and free as savannah or upland or prairie ... with flights and songs and screams that answer those of the wildpigeon and highhold and orchard-oriole and coot and surf-duck and redshouldered-hawk and fish-hawk and white-ibis and indian-hen and cat-owl and water-pheasant and qua-bird and pied-sheldrake and blackbird and mockingbird and buzzard and condor and night-heron and eagle. To him the hereditary countenance descends both mother's and father's. To him enter the essences of the real things and past and present events—of the enormous diversity of temperature and agriculture and mines—the tribes of red aborigines—the weather-beaten vessels entering new ports or making landings on rocky coasts—the first settlements north or south—the rapid stature and muscle—the haughty defiance of '76, and the war and peace and formation of the constitution... . the union always surrounded by blatherers and always calm and impregnable—the perpetual coming of immigrants—the wharfhem'd cities and superior marine—the unsurveyed interior—the loghouses and clearings and wild animals and hunters and trappers... . the free commerce—the fisheries and whaling and gold-digging—the endless gestation of new states—the convening of Congress every December, the members duly coming up from all climates and the uttermost parts ... the noble character of the young mechanics and of all free American workmen and workwomen ... the general ardor and friendliness and enterprise—the perfect equality of the female with the male... . the large amativeness—the fluid movement of the population—the factories and mercantile life and laborsaving machinery—the Yankee swap—the New-York firemen and the target excursion—the southern plantation life—the character of the northeast and of the northwest and south-west—slavery and the tremulous spreading of hands to protect it, and the stern opposition to it which shall never cease till it ceases or the speaking of tongues and the moving of lips cease. For such the expression of the American poet is to be transcendent and new. It is to be indirect and not direct or descriptive or epic. Its quality goes through these to much more. Let the age and wars of other nations be chanted and their eras and characters be illustrated and that finish the verse. Not so the great psalm of the republic. Here the theme is creative and has vista. Here comes one among the wellbeloved stonecutters and plans with decision and science and sees the solid and beautiful forms of the future where there are now no solid forms.

Of all nations the United States with veins full of poetical stuff most need poets and will doubtless have the greatest and use them the greatest. Their Presidents shall not be their common referee so much as their poets shall. Of all mankind the great poet is the equable man. Not in him but off from him things are grotesque or eccentric or fail of their sanity. Nothing out of its place is good and nothing in its place is bad. He bestows on every object or quality its fit proportions neither more nor less. He is the arbiter of the diverse and he is the key. He is the equalizer of his age and land... . he supplies what wants supplying and checks what wants checking. If peace is the routine out of him speaks the spirit of peace, large, rich, thrifty, building vast and populous cities, encouraging agriculture and the arts and commerce—lighting the study of man, the soul, immortality—federal, state or municipal government, marriage, health, freetrade, intertravel by land and sea... .

nothing too close, nothing too far off ... the stars not too far off. In war he is the most deadly force of the war. Who recruits him recruits horse and foot ... he fetches parks of artillery the best that engineer ever knew. If the time becomes slothful and heavy he knows how to arouse it ... he can make every word he speaks draw blood. Whatever stagnates in the flat of custom or obedience or legislation he never stagnates. Obedience does not master him, he masters it. High up out of reach he stands turning a concentrated light ... he turns the pivot with his finger ... he baffles the swiftest runners as he stands and easily overtakes and envelops them. The time straying toward infidelity and confections and persiflage he withholds by his steady faith ... he spreads out his dishes ... he offers the sweet firmfibred meat that grows men and women. His brain is the ultimate brain. He is no arguer ... he is judgment. He judges not as the judge judges but as the sun falling around a helpless thing. As he sees the farthest he has the most faith. His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things. In the talk on the soul and eternity and God off of his equal plane he is silent. He sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and denouement... . he sees eternity in men and women... . he does not see men and women as dreams or dots. Faith is the antiseptic of the soul ... it pervades the common people and preserves them ... they never give up believing and expecting and trusting. There is that indescribable freshness and unconsciousness about an illiterate person that humbles and mocks the power of the noblest expressive genius. The poet sees for a certainty how one not a great artist may be just as sacred and perfect as the greatest artist ... The power to destroy or remould is freely used by him but never the power of attack. What is past is past. If he does not expose superior models and prove himself by every step he takes he is not what is wanted. The presence of the greatest poet conquers ... not parleying or struggling or any prepared attempts. Now he has passed that way see after him! there is not left any vestige of despair or misanthropy or cunning or exclusiveness or the ignominy of a nativity of color or delusion of hell or the necessity of hell and no man thenceforward shall be degraded for ignorance or weakness or sin.

The greatest poet hardly knows pettiness or triviality. If he breathes into any thing that was before thought small it dilates with the grandeur and life of the universe. He is a seer... . he is individual ... he is complete in himself... . the others are as good as he, only he sees it and they do not. He is not one of the chorus... . he does not stop for any regulation ... he is the president of regulation. What the eyesight does to the rest he does to the rest. Who knows the curious mystery of the eyesight? The other senses corroborate themselves, but this is removed from any proof but its own and foreruns the identities of the spiritual world. A single glance of it mocks all the investigations of man and all the instruments and books of the earth and all reasoning. What is marvellous? what is unlikely? what is impossible or baseless or vague? after you have once just opened the space of a peachpit and given audience to far and near and to the sunset and had all things enter with electric swiftness softly and duly without confusion or jostling or jam.

The land and sea, the animals, fishes and birds, the sky of heaven and the orbs, the forests mountains and rivers, are not small themes ... but folk expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb real objects... . they expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls. Men and women perceive the beauty well enough ... probably as well as he. The passionate tenacity of hunters, woodmen, early risers, cultivators of gardens and orchards and fields, the love of healthy women for the manly form, seafaring persons, drivers of horses, the passion for light and the open air, all is an old varied sign of the unfailing perception of beauty and of a residence of the poetic in outdoor people. They can never be assisted by poets to perceive... . some may but they never can. The poetic quality is not marshalled in rhyme or uniformity or abstract addresses to things nor in melancholy complaints or good precepts, but is the life of these and much else and is in the soul. The profit of rhyme is that it drops seeds of a sweeter and more luxuriant rhyme, and of uniformity that it conveys itself into its own roots in the ground out of sight. The rhyme and uniformity of perfect poems show the free growth of metrical laws and bud from them as unerringly and loosely as lilacs or roses on a bush, and take shapes as compact as the shapes of chestnuts and oranges and melons and pears, and shed the perfume impalpable to form. The fluency and ornaments of the finest poems or music or orations or recitations are not independent but dependent. All beauty comes from beautiful blood and a beautiful brain. If the greatnesses are in conjunction in a man or woman it is enough... . the fact will prevail through the universe ... but the gaggery and gilt of a million years will not prevail. Who troubles himself about his ornaments or fluency is lost. This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body... . The poet shall not spend his time in unneeded work. He shall know that the ground is always ready ploughed and manured... . others may not know it but he shall. He shall go directly to the creation. His trust shall master the trust of everything he touches ... and shall master all attachment.

The known universe has one complete lover and that is the greatest poet. He consumes an eternal passion and is indifferent which chance happens and which possible contingency of fortune or misfortune and persuades daily and hourly his delicious pay. What balks or breaks others is fuel for his burning progress to contact and amorous joy. Other proportions of the reception of pleasure dwindle to nothing to his proportions. All expected from heaven or from the highest he is

rapport with in the sight of the daybreak or a scene of the winter woods or the presence of children playing or with his arm round the neck of a man or woman. His love above all love has leisure and expanse... . he leaves room ahead of himself. He is no irresolute or suspicious lover ... he is sure ... he scorns intervals. His experience and the showers and thrills are not for nothing. Nothing can jar him ... suffering and darkness cannot—death and fear cannot. To him complaint and jealousy and envy are corpses buried and rotten in the earth... . he saw them buried. The sea is not surer of the shore or the shore of the sea than he is of the fruition of his love and of all perfection and beauty.

The fruition of beauty is no chance of hit or miss ... it is inevitable as life... . it is exact and plumb as gravitation. From the eyesight proceeds another eyesight and from the hearing proceeds another hearing and from the voice proceeds another voice eternally curious of the harmony of things with man. To these respond perfections not only in the committees that were supposed to stand for the rest but in the rest themselves just the same. These understand the law of perfection in masses and floods ... that its finish is to each for itself and onward from itself ... that it is profuse and impartial ... that there is not a minute of the light or dark nor an acre of the earth or sea without it—nor any direction of the sky nor any trade or employment nor any turn of events. This is the reason that about the proper expression of beauty there is precision and balance... . one part does not need to be thrust above the other. The best singer is not the one who has the most lithe and powerful organ ... the pleasure of poems is not in them that take the handsomest measure and similes and sound.

Without effort and without exposing in the least how it is done the greatest poet brings the spirit of any or all events and passions and scenes and persons some more and some less to bear on your individual character as you hear or read. To do this well is to compete with the laws that pursue and follow time. What is the purpose must surely be there and the clue of it must be there ... and the faintest indication is the indication of the best and then becomes the clearest indication. Past and present and future are not disjoined but joined. The greatest poet forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is. He drags the dead out of their coffins and stands them again on their feet... . he says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realize you. He learns the lesson... . he places himself where the future becomes present. The greatest poet does not only dazzle his rays over character and scenes and passions ... he finally ascends and finishes all... . he exhibits the pinnacles that no man can tell what they are for or what is beyond... . he glows a moment on the extremest verge. He is most wonderful in his last half-hidden smile or frown ... by that flash of the moment of parting the one that sees it shall be encouraged or terrified afterward for many years. The greatest poet does not moralize or make applications of morals ... he knows the soul. The soul has that measureless pride which consists in never acknowledging any lessons but its own. But it has sympathy as measureless as its pride and the one balances the other and neither can stretch too far while it stretches in company with the other. The inmost secrets of art sleep with the twain. The



greatest poet has lain close betwixt both and they are vital in his style and thoughts.

The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity... nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness. To carry on the heave of impulse and pierce intellectual depths and give all subjects their articulations are powers neither common nor very uncommon. But to speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals and the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the roadside is the flawless triumph of art. If you have looked on him who has achieved it you have looked on one of the masters of the artists of all nations and times. You shall not contemplate the flight of the graygull over the bay or the mettlesome action of the blood horse or the tall leaning of sunflowers on their stalk or the appearance of the sun journeying through heaven or the appearance of the moon afterward with any more satisfaction than you shall contemplate him. The greatest poet has less a marked style and is more the channel of thoughts and things without increase or diminution, and is the free channel of himself. He swears to his art, I will not be meddlesome, I will not have in my writing any elegance or effect or originality to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains. I will have nothing hang in the way, not the richest curtains. What I tell I tell precisely for what it is. Let who may exalt or startle or fascinate or sooth I will have purposes as health or heat or snow has and be as regardless of observation. What I experience or portray shall go from my composition without a shred of my composition. You shall stand by my side and look in the mirror with me.

The old red blood and stainless gentility of great poets will be proved by their unconstraint. A heroic person walks at his ease through and out of that custom or precedent or authority that suits him not. Of the traits of the brotherhood of writers savans musicians inventors and artists nothing is finer than silent defiance advancing from new free forms. In the need of poems philosophy politics mechanism science behaviour, the craft of art, an appropriate native grand-opera, shipcraft, or any craft, he is greatest forever and forever who contributes the greatest original practical example. The cleanest expression is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself and makes one.

The messages of great poets to each man and woman are, Come to us on equal terms, only then can you understand us, We are no better than you, What we enclose you enclose, What we enjoy you may enjoy. Did you suppose there could be only one Supreme? We affirm there can be unnumbered Supremes, and that one does not countervail another any more than one eyesight countervails another ... and that men can be good or grand only of the consciousness of their supremacy within them. What do you think is the grandeur of storms and dismemberments and the deadliest battles and wrecks and the wildest fury of the elements and the power of the sea and the motion of nature and of the throes of human desires and dignity and hate and love? It is that something in the soul

which says, Rage on, Whirl on, I tread master here and everywhere, Master of the spasms of the sky and of the shatter of the sea, Master of nature and passion and death, And of all terror and all pain.

The American bards shall be marked for generosity and affection and for encouraging competitors... . They shall be kosmos ... without monopoly or secrecy ... glad to pass any thing to any one ... hungry for equal night and day. They shall not be careful of riches and privilege... . they shall be riches and privilege... . they shall perceive who the most affluent man is. The most affluent man is he that confronts all the shows he sees by equivalents out of the stronger wealth of himself. The American bard shall delineate no class of persons nor one or two out of the strata of interests nor love most nor truth most nor the soul most nor the body most ... and not be for the eastern states more than the western or the northern states more than the southern.

Exact science and its practical movements are no checks on the greatest poets but always his encouragement and support. The outself and remembrance are there... . there the arms that lifted him first and brace him best... . there he returns after all his goings and comings. The sailor and traveler ... the anatomist, chemist, astronomer, geologist, phrenologist, spiritualist, mathematician, historian and lexicographer are not poets, but they are the lawgivers of poets and their construction underlies the structure of every perfect poem. No matter what rises or is uttered they sent the seed of the conception of it ... of them and by them stand the visible proofs of souls ... always of their fatherstuff must be begotten the sinewy races of bards. If there shall be love and content between the father and the son and if the greatness of the son is the exuding of the greatness of the father there shall be love between the poet and the man of demonstrable science. In the beauty of poems are the tuft and final applause of science.

Great is the faith of the flush of knowledge and of the investigation of the depth of qualities and things. Cleaving and circling here swells the soul of the poet yet is president of itself always. The depths are fathomless and therefore calm. The innocence and nakedness are resumed ... they are neither modest nor immodest. The whole theory of the special and supernatural and all that was twined with it or educed out of it departs as a dream. What has ever happened... . what happens and whatever may or shall happen, the vital laws enclose all... . they are sufficient for any case and for all cases ... none to be hurried or retarded... . any miracle of affairs or persons inadmissible in the vast clear scheme where every motion and every spear of grass and the frames and spirits of men and women and all that concerns them are unspeakably perfect miracles all referring to all and each distinct and in its place. It is also not consistent with the reality of the soul to admit that there is anything in the known universe more divine than men and women.

Men and women and the earth and all upon it are simply to be taken as they are, and the investigation of their past and present and future shall be unintermitted

and shall be done with perfect candor. Upon this basis philosophy speculates ever looking toward the poet, ever regarding the eternal tendencies of all toward happiness never inconsistent with what is clear to the senses and to the soul. For the eternal tendencies of all toward happiness make the only point of sane philosophy. Whatever comprehends less than that ... whatever is less than the laws of light and of astronomical motion ... or less than the laws that follow the thief the liar the glutton and the drunkard through this life and doubtless afterward ... or less than vast stretches of time or the slow formation of density or the patient upheaving of strata—is of no account. Whatever would put God in a poem or system of philosophy as contending against some being or influence is also of no account. Sanity and ensemble characterize the great master ... spoilt in one principle all is spoilt. The great master has nothing to do with miracles. He sees health for himself in being one of the mass... . he sees the hiatus in singular eminence. To the perfect shape comes common ground. To be under the general law is great for that is to correspond with it. The master knows that he is unspeakably great and that all are unspeakably great ... that nothing for instance is greater than to conceive children and bring them up well ... that to be is just as great as to perceive or tell.

In the make of the great masters the idea of political liberty is indispensable. Liberty takes the adherence of heroes wherever men and women exist... . but never takes any adherence or welcome from the rest more than from poets. They are the voice and exposition of liberty. They out of ages are worthy the grand idea... . to them it is confided and they must sustain it. Nothing has precedence of it and nothing can warp or degrade it. The attitude of great poets is to cheer up slaves and horrify despots. The turn of their necks, the sound of their feet, the motions of their wrists, are full of hazard to the one and hope to the other. Come nigh them awhile and though they neither speak or advise you shall learn the faithful American lesson. Liberty is poorly served by men whose good intent is quelled from one failure or two failures or any number of failures, or from the casual indifference or ingratitude of the people, or from the sharp show of the tushes of power, or the bringing to bear soldiers and cannon or any penal statutes. Liberty relies upon itself, invites no one, promises nothing, sits in calmness and light, is positive and composed, and knows no discouragement. The battle rages with many a loud alarm and frequent advance and retreat... . the enemy triumphs... . the prison, the handcuffs, the iron necklace and anklet, the scaffold, garrote and leadballs do their work... . the cause is asleep... . the strong throats are choked with their own blood... . the young men drop their eyelashes toward the ground when they pass each other... . and is liberty gone out of that place? No never. When liberty goes it is not the first to go nor the second or third to go... . it waits for all the rest to go... . it is the last... . When the memories of the old martyrs are faded utterly away ... when the large names of patriots are laughed at in the public halls from the lips of the orators ... when the boys are no more christened after the same but christened after tyrants and traitors instead ... when the laws of the free are grudgingly permitted and laws for informers and bloodmoney are sweet to the taste of the people ... when I and you walk abroad upon the earth stung with

compassion at the sight of numberless brothers answering our equal friendship and caffing no man master—and when we are elated with noble joy at the sight of slaves ... when the soul retires in the cool communion of the night and surveys its experience and has much extasy over the word and deed that put back a helpless innocent person into the gripe of the gripers or into any cruel inferiority ... when those in all parts of these states who could easier realize the true American character but do not yet—when the swarms of cringers, suckers, doughfaces, lice of politics, planners of sly involutions for their own preferment to city offices or state legislatures or the judiciary or congress or the presidency, obtain a response of love and natural deference from the people whether they get the offices or no ... when it is better to be a bound booby and rogue in office at a high salary than the poorest free mechanic or farmer with his hat unmoved from his head and firm eyes and a candid and generous heart ... and when servility by town or state or the federal government or any oppression on a large scale or small scale can be tried on without its own punishment following duly after in exact proportion against the smallest chance of escape ... or rather when all life and all the souls of men and women are discharged from any part of the earth—then only shall the instinct of liberty be discharged from that part of the earth.

As the attributes of the poets of the kosmos concentre in the real body and soul and in the pleasure of things they possess the superiority of genuineness over all fiction and romance. As they emit themselves facts are showered over with light... . the daylight is lit with more volatile light... . also the deep between the setting and rising sun goes deeper many fold. Each precise object or condition or combination or process exhibits a beauty... . the multiplication table its—old age its—the carpenter’s trade its—the grand-opera its... . the hugehulled cleanshaped New-York clipper at sea under steam or full sail gleams with unmatched beauty... . the American circles and large harmonies of government gleam with theirs... . and the commonest definite intentions and actions with theirs. The poets of the kosmos advance through all interpositions and coverings and turmoils and stratagems to first principles. They are of use... . they dissolve poverty from its need and riches from its conceit. You large proprietor they say shall not realize or perceive more than any one else. The owner of the library is not he who holds a legal title to it having bought and paid for it. Any one and every one is owner of the library who can read the same through all the varieties of tongues and subjects and styles, and in whom they enter with ease and take residence and force toward paternity and maternity, and make supple and powerful and rich and large... .

These American states strong and healthy and accomplished shall receive no pleasure from violations of natural models and must not permit them. In paintings or mouldings or carvings in mineral or wood, or in the illustrations of books or newspapers, or in any comic or tragic prints, or in the patterns of woven stuffs or any thing to beautify rooms or furniture or costumes, or to put upon cornices or monuments or on the prows or sterns of ships, or to put anywhere before the human eye indoors or out, that which distorts honest shapes or which creates unearthly beings or places or contingencies is a nuisance and revolt. Of the human

form especially it is so great it must never be made ridiculous. Of ornaments to a work nothing outre can be allowed ... but those ornaments can be allowed that conform to the perfect facts of the open air and that flow out of the nature of the work and come irrepressibly from it and are necessary to the completion of the work. Most works are most beautiful without ornament... . Exaggerations will be revenged in human physiology. Clean and vigorous children are jetted and conceived only in those communities where the models of natural forms are public every day... . Great genius and the people of these states must never be demeaned to romances. As soon as histories are properly told there is no more need of romances.

The great poets are also to be known by the absence in them of tricks and by the justification of perfect personal candor. Then folks echo a new cheap joy and a divine voice leaping from their brains: How beautiful is candor! All faults may be forgiven of him who has perfect candor. Henceforth let no man of us lie, for we have seen that openness wins the inner and outer world and that there is no single exception, and that never since our earth gathered itself in a mass have deceit or subterfuge or prevarication attracted its smallest particle or the faintest tinge of a shade—and that through the enveloping wealth and rank of a state or the whole republic of states a sneak or sly person shall be discovered and despised... . and that the soul has never been once fooled and never can be fooled... . and thrift without the loving nod of the soul is only a foetid puff... . and there never grew up in any of the continents of the globe nor upon any planet or satellite or star, nor upon the asteroids, nor in any part of ethereal space, nor in the midst of density, nor under the fluid wet of the sea, nor in that condition which precedes the birth of babes, nor at any time during the changes of life, nor in that condition that follows what we term death, nor in any stretch of abeyance or action afterward of vitality, nor in any process of formation or reformation anywhere, a being whose instinct hated the truth.

Extreme caution or prudence, the soundest organic health, large hope and comparison and fondness for women and children, large alimentiveness and destructiveness and causality, with a perfect sense of the oneness of nature and the propriety of the same spirit applied to human affairs ... these are called up of the float of the brain of the world to be parts of the greatest poet from his birth out of his mother's womb and from her birth out of her mother's. Caution seldom goes far enough. It has been thought that the prudent citizen was the citizen who applied himself to solid gains and did well for himself and his family and completed a lawful life without debt or crime. The greatest poet sees and admits these economies as he sees the economies of food and sleep, but has higher notions of prudence than to think he gives much when he gives a few slight attentions at the latch of the gate. The premises of the prudence of life are not the hospitality of it or the ripeness and harvest of it. Beyond the independence of a little sum laid aside for burial-money, and of a few clap-boards around and shingles overhead on a lot of American soil owned, and the easy dollars that supply the year's plain clothing and meals, the melancholy prudence of the

abandonment of such a great being as a man is to the toss and pallor of years of moneymaking with all their scorching days and icy nights and all their stifling deceits and underhanded dodgings, or infinitesimals of parlors, or shameless stuffing while others starve... . and all the loss of the bloom and odor of the earth and of the flowers and atmosphere and of the sea and of the true taste of the women and men you pass or have to do with in youth or middle age, and the issuing sickness and desperate revolt at the close of a life without elevation of naiveté, and the ghastly chatter of a death without serenity or majesty, is the great fraud upon modern civilization and forethought, blotching the surface and system which civilization undeniably drafts, and moistening with tears the immense features it spreads and spreads with such velocity before the reached kisses of the soul... . Still the right explanation remains to be made about prudence. The prudence of the mere wealth and respectability of the most esteemed life appears too faint for the eye to observe at all when little and large alike drop quietly aside at the thought of the prudence suitable for immortality. What is wisdom that fills the thinness of a year or seventy or eighty years to wisdom spaced out by ages and coming back at a certain time with strong reinforcements and rich presents and the clear faces of wedding-guests as far as you can look in every direction running gaily toward you? Only the soul is of itself... . all else has reference to what ensues. All that a person does or thinks is of consequence. Not a move can a man or woman make that affects him or her in a day or a month or any part of the direct lifetime or the hour of death but the same affects him or her onward afterward through the indirect lifetime. The indirect is always as great and real as the direct. The spirit receives from the body just as much as it gives to the body. Not one name of word or deed ... not of venereal sores or discolorations ... not the privacy of the onanist ... not of the putrid veins of gluttons or rumdrinkers ... not speculation or cunning or betrayal or murder ... no serpentine poison of those that seduce women ... not the foolish yielding of women ... not prostitution ... not of any depravity of young men ... not of the attainment of gain by discreditable means ... not any nastiness of appetite not any harshness of officers to men or judges to prisoners or fathers to sons or sons to fathers or of husbands to wives or bosses to their boys ... not of greedy looks or malignant wishes ... nor any of the wiles practised by people upon themselves ... ever is or ever can be stamped on the programme but it is duly realized and returned, and that returned in further performances ... and they returned again. Nor can the push of charity or personal force ever be anything else than the profoundest reason, whether it bring arguments to hand or no. No specification is necessary ... to add or subtract or divide is in vain. Little or big, learned or unlearned, white or black, legal or illegal, sick or well, from the first inspiration down the wind-pipe to the last expiration out of it, all that a male or female does that is vigorous and benevolent and clean is so much sure profit to him or her in the unshakable order of the universe and through the whole scope of it forever. If the savage or felon is wise it is well ... if the greatest poet or savan is wise it is simply the same ... if the President or chief justice is wise it is the same ... if the young mechanic or farmer is wise it is no more or less ... if the prostitute is wise it is no more or less. The interest will come round ... all will come round. All the best actions of war and

peace ... all help given to relatives and strangers and the poor and old and sorrowful and young children and widows and the sick, and to all shunned persons all furtherance of fugitives and of the escape of slaves ... all the self-denial that stood ready and aloof on wrecks and saw others take the seats of the boats ... all offering of substance or life for the good old cause, or for a friend's sake or opinion's sake ... all pains of enthusiasts scoffed at by their neighbors ... all the vast sweet love and precious suffering of mothers ... all honest men baffled in strifes recorded or unrecorded ... all the grandeur and good of the few ancient nations whose fragments of animals we inherit ... and all the good of the hundreds of far mightier and more ancient nations unknown to us by name or date or location ... all that was ever manfully begun, whether it succeeded or no ... all that has at any time been well suggested out of the divine heart of man or by the divinity of his mouth or by the shaping of his great hands ... and all that is well thought or done this day on any part of the surface of the globe ... or on any of the wandering stars or fixed stars by those there as we are here ... or that is henceforth to be well thought or done by you whoever you are, or by any one—these singly and wholly inured at their time and inure now and will inure always to the identities from which they sprung or shall spring... . Did you guess any of them lived only its moment? The world does not so exist ... no parts palpable or impalpable so exist ... no result exists now without being from its long antecedent result, and that from its antecedent, and so backward without the farthest mentionable spot coming a bit nearer the beginning than any other spot... . Whatever satisfies the soul is truth. The prudence of the greatest poet answers at last the craving and glut of the soul, is not contemptuous of less ways of prudence if they conform to its ways, puts off nothing, permits no let-up for its own case or any case, has no particular sabbath or judgment-day, divides not the living from the dead or the righteous from the unrighteous, is satisfied with the present, matches every thought or act by its correlative, knows no possible forgiveness or deputed atonement ... knows that the young man who composedly periled his life and lost it has done exceeding well for himself, while the man who has not periled his life and retains it to old age in riches and ease has perhaps achieved nothing for himself worth mentioning ... and that only that person has no great prudence to learn who has learnt to prefer real longlived things, and favors body and soul the same, and perceives the indirect assuredly following the direct, and what evil or good he does leaping onward and waiting to meet him again—and who in his spirit in any emergency whatever neither hurries or avoids death.

The direct trial of him who would be the greatest poet is today. If he does not flood himself with the immediate age as with vast oceanic tides ... and if he does not attract his own land body and soul to himself and hang on its neck with incomparable love and plunge his semitic muscle into its merits and demerits ... and if he be not himself the age transfigured ... and if to him is not opened the eternity which gives similitude to all periods and locations and processes and animate and inanimate forms, and which is the bond of time, and rises up from its inconceivable vagueness and infiniteness in the swimming shape of today, and is held by the ductile anchors of life, and makes the present spot the passage from

what was to what shall be, and commits itself to the representation of this wave of an hour and this one of the sixty beautiful children of the wave—let him merge in the general run and wait his development... . Still the final test of poems or any character or work remains... .

The prescient poet projects himself centuries ahead and judges performer or performance after the changes of time. Does it live through them? Does it still hold on untired? Will the same style and the direction of genius to similar points be satisfactory now? Has no new discovery in science or arrival at superior planes of thought and judgment and behaviour fixed him or his so that either can be looked down upon? Have the marches of tens and hundreds and thousands of years made willing detours to the right hand and the left hand for his sake? Is he beloved long and long after he is buried? Does the young man think often of him? and the young woman think often of him? and do the middle-aged and the old think of him?

A great poem is for ages and ages in common and for all degrees and complexions and all departments and sects and for a woman as much as a man and a man as much as a woman. A great poem is no finish to a man or woman but rather a beginning. Has any one fancied he could sit at last under some due authority and rest satisfied with explanations and realize and be content and full? To no such terminus does the greatest poet bring ... he brings neither cessation or sheltered fatness and ease. The touch of him tells in action. Whom he takes he takes with firm sure grasp into live regions previously unattained thenceforward is no rest ... they see the space and ineffable sheen that turn the old spots and lights into dead vacuums. The companion of him beholds the birth and progress of stars and learns one of the meanings. Now there shall be a man cohered out of tumult and chaos ... the elder encourages the younger and shows him how ... they two shall launch off fearlessly together till the new world fits an orbit for itself and looks unabashed on the lesser orbits of the stars and sweeps through the ceaseless rings and shall never be quiet again.

There will soon be no more priests. Their work is done. They may wait awhile ... perhaps a generation or two ... dropping off by degrees. A superior breed shall take their place ... the gangs of kosmos and prophets en masse shall take their place. A new order shall arise and they shall be the priests of man, and every man shall be his own priest. The churches built under their umbrage shall be the churches of men and women. Through the divinity of themselves shall the kosmos and the new breed of poets be interpreters of men and women and of all events and things. They shall find their inspiration in real objects today, symptoms of the past and future... . They shall not deign to defend immortality or God or the perfection of things or liberty or the exquisite beauty and reality of the soul. They shall arise in America and be responded to from the remainder of the earth.

The English language befriends the grand American expression... . it is brawny enough and limber and full enough. On the tough stock of a race who through all



change of circumstance was never without the idea of political liberty, which is the animus of all liberty, it has attracted the terms of daintier and gayer and subtler and more elegant tongues. It is the powerful language of resistance ... it is the dialect of common sense. It is the speech of the proud and melancholy races and of all who aspire. It is the chosen tongue to express growth faith self-esteem freedom justice equality friendliness amplitude prudence decision and courage. It is the medium that shall well nigh express the inexpressible.

No great literature nor any like style of behaviour or oratory or social intercourse or household arrangements or public institutions or the treatment by bosses of employed people, nor executive detail or detail of the army or navy, nor spirit of legislation or courts or police or tuition or architecture or songs or amusements or the costumes of young men, can long elude the jealous and passionate instinct of American standards. Whether or no the sign appears from the mouths of the people, it throbs a live interrogation in every freeman's and freewoman's heart after that which passes by or this built to remain. Is it uniform with my country? Are its disposals without ignominious distinctions? Is it for the evergrowing communes of brothers and lovers, large, well-united, proud beyond the old models, generous beyond all models? Is it something grown fresh out of the fields or drawn from the sea for use to me today here? I know that what answers for me an American must answer for any individual or nation that serves for a part of my materials. Does this answer? or is it without reference to universal needs? or sprung of the needs of the less developed society of special ranks? or old needs of pleasure overlaid by modern science and forms? Does this acknowledge liberty with audible and absolute acknowledgement, and set slavery at nought for life and death? Will it help breed one goodshaped and wellhung man, and a woman to be his perfect and independent mate? Does it improve manners? Is it for the nursing of the young of the republic? Does it solve readily with the sweet milk of the nipples of the breasts of the mother of many children? Has it too the old ever-fresh forbearance and impartiality? Does it look with the same love on the last born and on those hardening toward stature, and on the errant, and on those who disdain all strength of assault outside of their own?

The poems distilled from other poems will probably pass away. The coward will surely pass away. The expectation of the vital and great can only be satisfied by the demeanor of the vital and great. The swarms of the polished deprecating and reflectors and the polite float off and leave no remembrance. America prepares with composure and goodwill for the visitors that have sent word. It is not intellect that is to be their warrant and welcome. The talented, the artist, the ingenious, the editor, the statesman, the erudite ... they are not unappreciated ... they fall in their place and do their work. The soul of the nation also does its work. No disguise can pass on it ... no disguise can conceal from it. It rejects none, it permits all. Only toward as good as itself and toward the like of itself will it advance half-way. An individual is as superb as a nation when he has the qualities which make a superb nation. The soul of the largest and wealthiest and proudest nation may well go half-way to meet that of its poets. The signs are

effectual. There is no fear of mistake. If the one is true the other is true. The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it.

### 3.2.2 “Song of Myself” (1855)

1

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loafe and invite my soul,  
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,  
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,  
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,  
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,  
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,  
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,  
Nature without check with original energy.

2

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves are crowded with perfumes,  
I breathe the fragrance myself and know it and like it,  
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it.

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of the distillation, it is odorless,  
It is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it,  
I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked,  
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

The smoke of my own breath,  
Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread, crotch and vine,  
My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart, the passing of blood and  
air through my lungs,  
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and dark-color'd sea-  
rocks, and of hay in the barn,  
The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the wind,  
A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around of arms,  
The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag,  
The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hill-sides,  
The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me rising from bed and  
meeting the sun.

Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth much?  
Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?  
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,  
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left,)  
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes  
of the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,  
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,  
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.

### 3

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end,  
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,  
Nor any more youth or age than there is now,  
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,  
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

Urge and urge and urge,  
Always the procreant urge of the world.

Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, always substance and increase,  
always sex,  
Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life.

To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd feel that it is so.

Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights, well entretied, braced in the  
beams,  
Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,  
I and this mystery here we stand.

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.

Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen,  
Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.

Showing the best and dividing it from the worst age vexes age,  
Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they discuss I am  
silent, and go bathe and admire myself.

Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean,  
Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than  
the rest.

I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing;  
As the hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at my side through the night, and  
withdraws at the peep of the day with stealthy tread,  
Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels swelling the house with their  
plenty,  
Shall I postpone my acceptation and realization and scream at my eyes,  
That they turn from gazing after and down the road,  
And forthwith cipher and show me to a cent,  
Exactly the value of one and exactly the value of two, and which is ahead?

#### 4

Trippers and askers surround me,  
People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward and city I live in, or  
the nation,  
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies, authors old and new,  
My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,  
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman I love,  
The sickness of one of my folks or of myself, or ill-doing or loss or lack of  
money, or depressions or exaltations,  
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of doubtful news, the fitful events;  
These come to me days and nights and go from me again,  
But they are not the Me myself.

Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I am,  
Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, unitary,  
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable certain rest,  
Looking with side-curved head curious what will come next,  
Both in and out of the game and watching and wondering at it.

Backward I see in my own days where I sweated through fog with linguists and  
contenders,  
I have no mockings or arguments, I witness and wait.

#### 5

I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you,  
And you must not be abased to the other.

Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat,  
Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even the best,  
Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,  
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me,  
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-  
stript heart,

And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the  
argument of the earth,  
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters  
and lovers,  
And that a kelson of the creation is love,  
And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the fields,  
And brown ants in the little wells beneath them,  
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, heap'd stones, elder, mullein and poke-  
weed.

## 6

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;  
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,  
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,  
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark,  
and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,  
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,  
Growing among black folks as among white,  
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the  
same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,  
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,  
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,  
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of their  
mothers' laps,  
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,  
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,  
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,  
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women,  
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of  
their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?  
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,  
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,  
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,  
And cease'd the moment life appear'd.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,  
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

## 7

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?  
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.

I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd babe, and am not  
contain'd between my hat and boots,  
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike and every one good,  
The earth good and the stars good, and their adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,  
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as  
myself,  
(They do not know how immortal, but I know.)

Every kind for itself and its own, for me mine male and female,  
For me those that have been boys and that love women,  
For me the man that is proud and feels how it stings to be slighted,  
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid, for me mothers and the mothers of  
mothers,  
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears,  
For me children and the begetters of children.

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale nor discarded,  
I see through the broadcloth and gingham whether or no,  
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and cannot be shaken away.

## 8

The little one sleeps in its cradle,

I lift the gauze and look a long time, and silently brush away flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up the bushy hill,  
I peeringly view them from the top.

The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bedroom,  
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair, I note where the pistol has fallen.

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of the promenaders,  
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb, the clank of the shod  
horses on the granite floor,  
The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of snow-balls,  
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd mobs,  
The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne to the hospital,  
The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows and fall,  
The excited crowd, the policeman with his star quickly working his passage to the  
centre of the crowd,  
The impassive stones that receive and return so many echoes,  
What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sunstruck or in fits,  
What exclamations of women taken suddenly who hurry home and give birth to  
babes,  
What living and buried speech is always vibrating here, what howls restrain'd by  
decorum,  
Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made, acceptances, rejections with  
convex lips,  
I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I come and I depart.

## 9

The big doors of the country barn stand open and ready,  
The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-drawn wagon,  
The clear light plays on the brown gray and green intertinged,  
The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.

I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop of the load,  
I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other,  
I jump from the cross-beams and seize the clover and timothy,  
And roll head over heels and tangle my hair full of wisps.

## 10

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,  
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and glee,  
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the night,  
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game,  
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with my dog and gun by my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud,

My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt for me,  
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and went and had a good time;  
You should have been with us that day round the chowder-kettle.

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in the far west, the bride was a red girl,  
Her father and his friends sat near cross-legged and dumbly smoking, they had moccasins to their feet and large thick blankets hanging from their shoulders,  
On a bank lounged the trapper, he was drest mostly in skins, his luxuriant beard and curls protected his neck, he held his bride by the hand,  
She had long eyelashes, her head was bare, her coarse straight locks descended upon her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to her feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside,  
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,  
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy and weak,  
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him,  
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and bruis'd feet,  
And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes,  
And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness,  
And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;  
He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and pass'd north,  
I had him sit next me at table, my fire-lock lean'd in the corner.

## 11

Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore,  
Twenty-eight young men and all so friendly;  
Twenty-eight years of womanly life and all so lonesome.

She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank,  
She hides handsome and richly drest aft the blinds of the window.

Which of the young men does she like the best?  
Ah the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.

Where are you off to, lady? for I see you,  
You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in your room.

Dancing and laughing along the beach came the twenty-ninth bather,  
The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved them.

The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it ran from their long hair,



Little streams pass'd all over their bodies.

An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies,  
It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.

The young men float on their backs, their white bellies bulge to the sun, they do  
not ask who seizes fast to them,  
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending arch,  
They do not think whom they souse with spray.

## 12

The butcher-boy puts off his killing-clothes, or sharpens his knife at the stall in  
the market,  
I loiter enjoying his repartee and his shuffle and break-down.

Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil,  
Each has his main-sledge, they are all out, there is a great heat in the fire.

From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements,  
The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive arms,  
Overhand the hammers swing, overhand so slow, overhand so sure,  
They do not hasten, each man hits in his place.

## 13

The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses, the block swags underneath on  
its tied-over chain,  
The negro that drives the long dray of the stone-yard, steady and tall he stands  
pois'd on one leg on the string-piece,  
His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast and loosens over his hip-band,  
His glance is calm and commanding, he tosses the slouch of his hat away from his  
forehead,  
The sun falls on his crispy hair and mustache, falls on the black of his polish'd  
and perfect limbs.

I behold the picturesque giant and love him, and I do not stop there,  
I go with the team also.

In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward as well as forward sluing,  
To niches aside and junior bending, not a person or object missing,  
Absorbing all to myself and for this song.

Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade, what is that you  
express in your eyes?  
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.

My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck on my distant and day-long  
ramble,  
They rise together, they slowly circle around.

I believe in those wing'd purposes,  
And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me,  
And consider green and violet and the tufted crown intentional,  
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else,  
And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet trills pretty well to me,  
And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of me.

#### 14

The wild gander leads his flock through the cool night,  
*Ya-honk* he says, and sounds it down to me like an invitation,  
The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listening close,  
Find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry sky.

The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the cat on the house-sill, the chickadee, the  
prairie-dog,  
The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,  
The brood of the turkey-hen and she with her half-spread wings,  
I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections,  
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

I am enamour'd of growing out-doors,  
Of men that live among cattle or taste of the ocean or woods,  
Of the builders and steerers of ships and the wielders of axes and mauls, and the  
drivers of horses,  
I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me,  
Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,  
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will take me,  
Not asking the sky to come down to my good will,  
Scattering it freely forever.

#### 15

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,  
The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his foreplane whistles its wild  
ascending lisp,  
The married and unmarried children ride home to their Thanksgiving dinner,  
The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with a strong arm,  
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance and harpoon are ready,

The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches,  
 The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at the altar,  
 The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of the big wheel,  
 The farmer stops by the bars as he walks on a First-day loafe and looks at the oats  
 and rye,  
 The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a confirm'd case,  
 (He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bed-room;)  
 The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,  
 He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes blurr with the manuscript;  
 The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,  
 What is removed drops horribly in a pail;  
 The quadroon girl is sold at the auction-stand, the drunkard nods by the bar-room  
 stove,  
 The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the policeman travels his beat, the gate-keeper  
 marks who pass,  
 The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I love him, though I do not know  
 him;)  
 The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race,  
 The western turkey-shooting draws old and young, some lean on their rifles, some  
 sit on logs,  
 Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position, levels his piece;  
 The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee,  
 As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the overseer views them from his  
 saddle,  
 The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their partners, the dancers  
 bow to each other,  
 The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret and harks to the musical rain,  
 The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron,  
 The squaw wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth is offering moccasins and bead-  
 bags for sale,  
 The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes bent  
 sideways,  
 As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat the plank is thrown for the shore-  
 going passengers,  
 The young sister holds out the skein while the elder sister winds it off in a ball,  
 and stops now and then for the knots,  
 The one-year wife is recovering and happy having a week ago borne her first  
 child,  
 The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine or in the factory or  
 mill,  
 The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer, the reporter's lead flies swiftly  
 over the note-book, the sign-painter is lettering with blue and gold,  
 The canal boy trots on the tow-path, the book-keeper counts at his desk, the  
 shoemaker waxes his thread,  
 The conductor beats time for the band and all the performers follow him,  
 The child is baptized, the convert is making his first professions,

The regatta is spread on the bay, the race is begun, (how the white sails sparkle!)  
 The drover watching his drove sings out to them that would stray,  
 The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling about the  
 odd cent;)  
 The bride unrumpled her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock moves slowly,  
 The opium-eater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips,  
 The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck,  
 The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other,  
 (Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you;)  
 The President holding a cabinet council is surrounded by the great Secretaries,  
 On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms,  
 The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of halibut in the hold,  
 The Missourian crosses the plains toting his wares and his cattle,  
 As the fare-collector goes through the train he gives notice by the jingling of loose  
 change,  
 The floor-men are laying the floor, the tinnners are tinning the roof, the masons are  
 calling for mortar,  
 In single file each shouldering his hod pass onward the laborers;  
 Seasons pursuing each other the indescribable crowd is gather'd, it is the fourth of  
 Seventh-month, (what salutes of cannon and small arms!)  
 Seasons pursuing each other the plougher ploughs, the mower mows, and the  
 winter-grain falls in the ground;  
 Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in the frozen  
 surface,  
 The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes deep with his axe,  
 Flatboatmen make fast towards dusk near the cotton-wood or pecan-trees,  
 Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river or through those drain'd by  
 the Tennessee, or through those of the Arkansas,  
 Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahooche or Altamahaw,

Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great-grandsons around them,  
 In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers after their day's sport,  
 The city sleeps and the country sleeps,  
 The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time,  
 The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by his wife;  
 And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them,  
 And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,  
 And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

## 16

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,  
 Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,  
 Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,  
 Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and stuff'd with the stuff that is fine,  
 One of the Nation of many nations, the smallest the same and the largest the  
 same,

A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable down by  
 the Oconee I live,  
 A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade, my joints the limberest joints on  
 earth and the sternest joints on earth,  
 A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elkhorn in my deer-skin leggings, a  
 Louisianian or Georgian,  
 A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye;  
 At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in the bush, or with fishermen off  
 Newfoundland,  
 At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest and tacking,  
 At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texan ranch,  
 Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners, (loving their big  
 proportions,)

Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands and welcome  
 to drink and meat,  
 A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thoughtfulest,  
 A novice beginning yet experient of myriads of seasons,  
 Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,  
 A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,  
 Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

I resist any thing better than my own diversity,  
 Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,  
 And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place,  
 The bright suns I see and the dark suns I cannot see are in their place,  
 The palpable is in its place and the impalpable is in its place.)

## 17

These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands, they are not original  
 with me,  
 If they are not yours as much as mine they are nothing, or next to nothing,  
 If they are not the riddle and the untying of the riddle they are nothing,  
 If they are not just as close as they are distant they are nothing.

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is and the water is,  
 This the common air that bathes the globe.

## 18

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,  
 I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for conquer'd and  
 slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?

I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

I beat and pound for the dead,  
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!  
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!  
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!  
And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes!  
And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes known!

## 19

This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger,  
It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous, I make appointments with all,  
I will not have a single person slighted or left away,  
The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited,  
The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited, the venerealee is invited;  
There shall be no difference between them and the rest.

This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float and odor of hair,  
This the touch of my lips to yours, this the murmur of yearning,  
This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face,  
This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?  
Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of a rock has.

Do you take it I would astonish?  
Does the daylight astonish? does the early redstart twittering through the woods?  
Do I astonish more than they?

This hour I tell things in confidence,  
I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

## 20

Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;  
How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?

All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own,  
Else it were time lost listening to me.

I do not snivel that snivel the world over,

That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.

Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids, conformity goes to the fourth-remov'd,  
I wear my hat as I please indoors or out.

Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be ceremonious?

Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair, counsel'd with doctors and calculated close,  
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barley-corn less,  
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

I know I am solid and sound,  
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,  
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,  
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,  
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,  
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,  
I see that the elementary laws never apologize,  
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all.)

I exist as I am, that is enough,  
If no other in the world be aware I sit content,  
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,  
And whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten million years,  
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite,  
I laugh at what you call dissolution,  
And I know the amplitude of time.

## 21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,  
The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,  
The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,

And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,  
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,  
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,  
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?  
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night,  
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the night.

Press close bare-bosom'd night—press close magnetic nourishing night!  
Night of south winds—night of the large few stars!  
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth!  
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!  
Earth of departed sunset—earth of the mountains misty-topt!  
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!  
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!  
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my sake!  
Far-swooping elbow'd earth—rich apple-blossom'd earth!  
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love—therefore I to you give love!  
O unspeakable passionate love.

## 22

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean,  
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers,  
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me,  
We must have a turn together, I undress, hurry me out of sight of the land,  
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse,  
Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells,  
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths,  
Sea of the brine of life and of unshovell'd yet always-ready graves,  
Howler and scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea,  
I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

Partaker of influx and efflux I, extoller of hate and conciliation,  
Extoller of amies and those that sleep in each others' arms.



I am he attesting sympathy,  
(Shall I make my list of things in the house and skip the house that supports them?)

I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also.

What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?  
Evil propels me and reform of evil propels me, I stand indifferent,  
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,  
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging pregnancy?  
Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd over and rectified?

I find one side a balance and the antipodal side a balance,  
Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine,  
Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past decillions,  
There is no better than it and now.

What behaved well in the past or behaves well to-day is not such a wonder,  
The wonder is always and always how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

## 23

Endless unfolding of words of ages!  
And mine a word of the modern, the word En-Masse.

A word of the faith that never balks,  
Here or henceforward it is all the same to me, I accept Time absolutely.

It alone is without flaw, it alone rounds and completes all,  
That mystic baffling wonder alone completes all.

I accept Reality and dare not question it,  
Materialism first and last imbuing.

Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!  
Fetch stonecrop mixt with cedar and branches of lilac,  
This is the lexicographer, this the chemist, this made a grammar of the old cartouches,  
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas.  
This is the geologist, this works with the scalpel, and this is a mathematician.

Gentlemen, to you the first honors always!

Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling,  
I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.

Less the reminders of properties told my words,  
And more the reminders they of life untold, and of freedom and extrication,  
And make short account of neuters and geldings, and favor men and women fully  
equipt,  
And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives and them that plot and  
conspire.

## 24

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,  
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding,  
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart from them,  
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!  
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,  
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me the current and index.

I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy,  
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the  
same terms.

Through me many long dumb voices,  
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves,  
Voices of the diseas'd and despairing and of thieves and dwarfs,  
Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,  
And of the threads that connect the stars, and of wombs and of the father-stuff,  
And of the rights of them the others are down upon,  
Of the deform'd, trivial, flat, foolish, despised,  
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

Through me forbidden voices,  
Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veil'd and I remove the veil,  
Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

I do not press my fingers across my mouth,  
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart,  
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,

Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from,  
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,  
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread of my own body, or  
any part of it,  
Translucent mould of me it shall be you!  
Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!  
Firm masculine colter it shall be you!  
Whatever goes to the tilth of me it shall be you!  
You my rich blood! your milky stream pale strippings of my life!  
Breast that presses against other breasts it shall be you!  
My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!  
Root of wash'd sweet-flag! timorous pond-snipe! nest of guarded duplicate eggs!  
it shall be you!  
Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be you!  
Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat, it shall be you!  
Sun so generous it shall be you!  
Vapors lighting and shading my face it shall be you!  
You sweaty brooks and dews it shall be you!  
Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me it shall be you!  
Broad muscular fields, branches of live oak, loving lounge in my winding paths,  
it shall be you!  
Hands I have taken, face I have kiss'd, mortal I have ever touch'd, it shall be you.

I dote on myself, there is that lot of me and all so luscious,  
Each moment and whatever happens thrills me with joy,  
I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the cause of my faintest wish,  
Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause of the friendship I take again.

That I walk up my stoop, I pause to consider if it really be,  
A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.

To behold the day-break!  
The little light fades the immense and diaphanous shadows,  
The air tastes good to my palate.

Hefts of the moving world at innocent gambols silently rising freshly exuding,  
Scooting obliquely high and low.

Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous prongs,  
Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.

The earth by the sky staid with, the daily close of their junction,

The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over my head,  
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be master!

## 25

Dazzling and tremendous how quick the sun-rise would kill me,  
If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of me.

We also ascend dazzling and tremendous as the sun,  
We found our own O my soul in the calm and cool of the daybreak.

My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach,  
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds and volumes of worlds.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal to measure itself,  
It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically,  
*Walt you contain enough, why don't you let it out then?*

Come now I will not be tantalized, you conceive too much of articulation,  
Do you not know O speech how the buds beneath you are folded?  
Waiting in gloom, protected by frost,  
The dirt receding before my prophetic screams,  
I underlying causes to balance them at last,  
My knowledge my live parts, it keeping tally with the meaning of all things,  
Happiness, (which whoever hears me let him or her set out in search of this day.)

My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting from me what I really am,  
Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me,  
I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking toward you.

Writing and talk do not prove me,  
I carry the plenum of proof and every thing else in my face,  
With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skeptic.

## 26

Now I will do nothing but listen,  
To accrue what I hear into this song, to let sounds contribute toward it.

I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames, clack of sticks  
cooking my meals,  
I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice,  
I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following,  
Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and night,  
Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh of work-people at  
their meals,  
The angry base of disjointed friendship, the faint tones of the sick,

The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips pronouncing a death-sentence,  
The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves, the refrain of the anchor-lifters,  
The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of swift-streaking engines and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd lights,  
The steam whistle, the solid roll of the train of approaching cars,  
The slow march play'd at the head of the association marching two and two,  
(They go to guard some corpse, the flag-tops are draped with black muslin.)

I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's complaint,)  
I hear the key'd cornet, it glides quickly in through my ears,  
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,  
Ah this indeed is music—this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,  
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)  
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,  
It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I possess'd them,  
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent waves,  
I am cut by bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath,  
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in fakes of death,

At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,  
And that we call Being.

## 27

To be in any form, what is that?  
(Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back thither,)  
If nothing lay more develop'd the quahaug in its callous shell were enough.

Mine is no callous shell,  
I have instant conductors all over me whether I pass or stop,  
They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through me.

I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am happy,  
To touch my person to some one else's is about as much as I can stand.

## 28

Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity,  
Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,  
Treacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help them,

My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what is hardly different from myself,  
On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,  
Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,  
Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,  
Depriving me of my best as for a purpose,  
Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,  
Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight and pasture-fields,  
Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,  
They bribed to swap off with touch and go and graze at the edges of me,  
No consideration, no regard for my draining strength or my anger,  
Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a while,  
Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry me.

The sentries desert every other part of me,  
They have left me helpless to a red marauder,  
They all come to the headland to witness and assist against me.

I am given up by traitors,  
I talk wildly, I have lost my wits, I and nobody else am the greatest traitor,  
I went myself first to the headland, my own hands carried me there.

You villain touch! what are you doing? my breath is tight in its throat,  
Unclench your floodgates, you are too much for me.

## 29

Blind loving wrestling touch, sheath'd hooded sharp-tooth'd touch!  
Did it make you ache so, leaving me?

Parting track'd by arriving, perpetual payment of perpetual loan,  
Rich showering rain, and recompense richer afterward.

Sprouts take and accumulate, stand by the curb prolific and vital,  
Landscapes projected masculine, full-sized and golden.

## 30

All truths wait in all things,  
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,  
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon,  
The insignificant is as big to me as any,  
(What is less or more than a touch?)

Logic and sermons never convince,  
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

(Only what proves itself to every man and woman is so,

Only what nobody denies is so.)

A minute and a drop of me settle my brain,  
I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and lamps,  
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or woman,  
And a summit and flower there is the feeling they have for each other,  
And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson until it becomes omnific,  
And until one and all shall delight us, and we them.

### 31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,  
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,  
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,  
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue,  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss, fruits, grains, esculent roots,  
And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over,  
And have distanced what is behind me for good reasons,  
But call any thing back again when I desire it.

In vain the speeding or shyness,  
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against my approach,  
In vain the mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd bones,  
In vain objects stand leagues off and assume manifold shapes,  
In vain the ocean settling in hollows and the great monsters lying low,  
In vain the buzzard houses herself with the sky,  
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs,  
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods,  
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador,  
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of the cliff.

### 32

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd,  
I stand and look at them long and long.

They do not sweat and whine about their condition,  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,  
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,  
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,  
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

So they show their relations to me and I accept them,

They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their possession.

I wonder where they get those tokens,  
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?

Myself moving forward then and now and forever,  
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,  
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among them,  
Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remembrancers,  
Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him on brotherly terms.

A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive to my caresses,  
Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,  
Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,  
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness, ears finely cut, flexibly moving.

His nostrils dilate as my heels embrace him,  
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure as we race around and return.

I but use you a minute, then I resign you, stallion,  
Why do I need your paces when I myself out-gallop them?  
Even as I stand or sit passing faster than you.

### 33

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at,  
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,  
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,  
And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,  
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,  
I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with lumbermen,  
Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet bed,  
Weeding my onion-patch or hoeing rows of carrots and parsnips, crossing  
savannas, trailing in forests,  
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,  
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down the shallow river,  
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where the buck turns  
furiously at the hunter,  
Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock, where the otter is feeding  
on fish,  
Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou,  
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where the beaver pats the  
mud with his paddle-shaped tail;



Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its  
low moist field,  
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd scum and slender shoots  
from the gutters,  
Over the western persimmon, over the long-leav'd corn, over the delicate blue-  
flower flax,  
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and buzzer there with the rest,  
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades in the breeze;  
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by low scragged  
limbs,  
Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the leaves of the brush,  
Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the wheat-lot,  
Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month eve, where the great gold-bug drops  
through the dark,  
Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree and flows to the meadow,  
Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous shuddering of their  
hides,  
Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen, where andirons straddle the hearth-  
slab, where cobwebs fall in festoons from the rafters;  
Where trip-hammers crash, where the press is whirling its cylinders,  
Wherever the human heart beats with terrible throes under its ribs,  
Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft, (floating in it myself and looking  
composedly down,)  
Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-noose, where the heat hatches pale-green  
eggs in the dented sand,  
Where the she-whale swims with her calf and never forsakes it,  
Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke,  
Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water,  
Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents,  
Where shells grow to her slimy deck, where the dead are corrupting below;  
Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regiments,  
Approaching Manhattan up by the long-stretching island,  
Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance,  
Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of hard wood outside,  
Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs or a good game of base-ball,  
At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances, drinking,  
laughter,  
At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice through  
a straw,  
At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find,  
At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings, house-raisings;  
Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles, cackles, screams, weeps,  
Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard, where the dry-stalks are scatter'd,  
where the brood-cow waits in the hovel,  
Where the bull advances to do his masculine work, where the stud to the mare,  
where the cock is treading the hen,

Where the heifers browse, where geese nip their food with short jerks,  
 Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless and lonesome prairie,  
 Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles far and near,  
 Where the humming-bird shimmers, where the neck of the long-lived swan is  
 curving and winding,  
 Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where she laughs her near-human  
 laugh,  
 Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in the garden half hid by the high weeds,  
 Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the ground with their heads out,  
 Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a cemetery,  
 Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and icicled trees,  
 Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of the marsh at night and  
 feeds upon small crabs,  
 Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the warm noon,  
 Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the walnut-tree over the well,  
 Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-wired leaves,  
 Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical firs,  
 Through the gymnasium, through the curtain'd saloon, through the office or  
 public hall;  
 Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the foreign, pleas'd with the new and old,  
 Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as the handsome,  
 Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet and talks melodiously,  
 Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the whitewash'd church,  
 Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist preacher, impress'd  
 seriously at the camp-meeting;  
 Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the whole forenoon, flattening the  
 flesh of my nose on the thick plate glass,  
 Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a  
 lane or along the beach,  
 My right and left arms round the sides of two friends, and I in the middle;  
 Coming home with the silent and dark-cheek'd bush-boy, (behind me he rides at  
 the drape of the day,)  
 Far from the settlements studying the print of animals' feet, or the moccasin print,  
 By the cot in the hospital reaching lemonade to a feverish patient,  
 Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining with a candle;  
 Voyaging to every port to dicker and adventure,  
 Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager and fickle as any,  
 Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife him,  
 Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone from me a long while,  
 Walking the old hills of Judæa with the beautiful gentle God by my side,  
 Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and the stars,  
 Speeding amid the seven satellites and the broad ring, and the diameter of eighty  
 thousand miles,  
 Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest,  
 Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly,  
 Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning,

Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing,  
I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at the product,  
And look at quintillions ripen'd and look at quintillions green.

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing soul,  
My course runs below the soundings of plummets.

I help myself to material and immaterial,  
No guard can shut me off, no law prevent me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only,  
My messengers continually cruise away or bring their returns to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping chasms with a pike-pointed staff,  
clinging to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck,  
I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest,  
We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light enough,  
Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the wonderful beauty,  
The enormous masses of ice pass me and I pass them, the scenery is plain in all  
directions,  
The white-topt mountains show in the distance, I fling out my fancies toward  
them,  
We are approaching some great battle-field in which we are soon to be engaged,  
We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we pass with still feet and  
caution,  
Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd city,  
The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities of the globe.

I am a free companion, I bivouac by invading watchfires,  
I turn the bridegroom out of bed and stay with the bride myself,  
I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs,  
They fetch my man's body up dripping and drown'd.

I understand the large hearts of heroes,  
The courage of present times and all times,  
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steam-ship, and  
Death chasing it up and down the storm,  
How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of days and  
faithful of nights,  
And chalk'd in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you;*

How he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days and would not give it up,  
How he saved the drifting company at last,  
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of their prepared graves,  
How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd unshaved men;  
All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,  
I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs,  
The mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her children gazing on,  
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing, cover'd with sweat,  
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous buckshot and the bullets,  
All these I feel or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,  
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen,  
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin,  
I fall on the weeds and stones,  
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,  
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,  
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,  
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,  
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris,  
Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my comrades,  
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels,  
They have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me forth.

I lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for my sake,  
Painless after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,  
White and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are bared of their fire-caps,  
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

Distant and dead resuscitate,  
They show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the clock myself.

I am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment,  
I am there again.

Again the long roll of the drummers,  
Again the attacking cannon, mortars,  
Again to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

I take part, I see and hear the whole,  
The cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,  
The ambulanza slowly passing trailing its red drip,  
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs,  
The fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion,  
The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general, he furiously waves with his hand,  
He gasps through the clot *Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments*.

### 34

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth,  
(I tell not the fall of Alamo,  
Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,  
The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo,)  
'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men.

Retreating they had form'd in a hollow square with their baggage for breastworks,  
Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times their number, was  
the price they took in advance,  
Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone,  
They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their  
arms and march'd back prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers,  
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,  
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,  
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,  
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First-day morning they were brought out in squads and massacred, it  
was beautiful early summer,  
The work commenced about five o'clock and was over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel,  
Some made a mad and helpless rush, some stood stark and straight,  
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the living and dead lay together,  
The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the new-comers saw them there,  
Some half-kill'd attempted to crawl away,

These were despatch'd with bayonets or batter'd with the blunts of muskets,  
A youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his assassin till two more came to release him,  
The three were all torn and cover'd with the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;  
That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and twelve young men.

### 35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight?  
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?  
List to the yarn, as my grandmother's father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you, (said he,)  
His was the surly English pluck, and there is no tougher or truer, and never was,  
and never will be;  
Along the lower'd eve he came horribly raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled, the cannon touch'd,  
My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water,  
On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all  
around and blowing up overhead.

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,  
Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of  
water reported,  
The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold to give them a  
chance for themselves.

The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,  
They see so many strange faces they do not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,  
The other asks if we demand quarter?  
If our colors are struck and the fighting done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,  
*We have not struck*, he composedly cries, *we have just begun our part of the  
fighting.*

Only three guns are in use,  
One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's mainmast,  
Two well serv'd with grape and canister silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little battery, especially the main-top,  
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

Not a moment's cease,  
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is generally thought we are sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,  
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high nor low,  
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the moon they surrender to us.

### 36

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,  
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the darkness,  
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking, preparations to pass to the one we have  
conquer'd,  
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders through a countenance  
white as a sheet,  
Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd in the cabin,  
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and carefully curl'd whiskers,  
The flames spite of all that can be done flickering aloft and below,  
The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for duty,  
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by themselves, dabs of flesh upon the masts  
and spars,  
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the soothe of waves,  
Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels, strong scent,  
A few large stars overhead, silent and mournful shining,  
Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and fields by the shore, death-  
messages given in charge to survivors,  
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of his saw,  
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild scream, and long, dull, tapering  
groan,  
These so, these irretrievable.

### 37

You laggards there on guard! look to your arms!  
In at the conquer'd doors they crowd! I am possess'd!  
Embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering,  
See myself in prison shaped like another man,  
And feel the dull unintermitted pain.

For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their carbines and keep watch,  
It is I let out in the morning and barr'd at night.

Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail but I am handcuff'd to him and walk by his side,  
(I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one with sweat on my twitching lips.)

Not a youngster is taken for larceny but I go up too, and am tried and sentenced.

Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp but I also lie at the last gasp,  
My face is ash-color'd, my sinews gnarl, away from me people retreat.

Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in them,  
I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.

### 38

Enough! enough! enough!  
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!  
Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers, dreams, gaping,  
I discover myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

That I could forget the mockers and insults!  
That I could forget the trickling tears and the blows of the bludgeons and hammers!  
That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and bloody crowning.

I remember now,  
I resume the overstaid fraction,  
The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to it, or to any graves,  
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one of an average unending procession,  
Inland and sea-coast we go, and pass all boundary lines,  
Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole earth,  
The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thousands of years.

Elèves, I salute you! come forward!  
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

### 39

The friendly and flowing savage, who is he?  
Is he waiting for civilization, or past it and mastering it?

Is he some Southwesterner rais'd out-doors? is he Kanadian?  
Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon, California?



The mountains? prairie-life, bush-life? or sailor from the sea?

Wherever he goes men and women accept and desire him,  
They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to them, stay with them.

Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as grass, uncomb'd head, laughter,  
and naiveté,  
Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes and emanations,  
They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers,  
They are wafted with the odor of his body or breath, they fly out of the glance of  
his eyes.

**40**

Flaunt of the sunshine I need not your bask—lie over!  
You light surfaces only, I force surfaces and depths also.

Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands,  
Say, old top-knot, what do you want?

Man or woman, I might tell how I like you, but cannot,  
And might tell what it is in me and what it is in you, but cannot,  
And might tell that pining I have, that pulse of my nights and days.

Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity,  
When I give I give myself.

You there, impotent, loose in the knees,  
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you,  
Spread your palms and lift the flaps of your pockets,  
I am not to be denied, I compel, I have stores plenty and to spare,  
And any thing I have I bestow.

I do not ask who you are, that is not important to me,  
You can do nothing and be nothing but what I will infold you.

To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean,  
On his right cheek I put the family kiss,  
And in my soul I swear I never will deny him.

On women fit for conception I start bigger and nimbler babes.  
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant republics.)

To any one dying, thither I speed and twist the knob of the door.  
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed,  
Let the physician and the priest go home.

I seize the descending man and raise him with resistless will,  
O despairer, here is my neck,  
By God, you shall not go down! hang your whole weight upon me.

I dilate you with tremendous breath, I buoy you up,  
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,  
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

Sleep—I and they keep guard all night,  
Not doubt, not decease shall dare to lay finger upon you,  
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to myself,  
And when you rise in the morning you will find what I tell you is so.

#### 41

I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on their backs,  
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed help.

I heard what was said of the universe,  
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years;  
It is middling well as far as it goes—but is that all?

Magnifying and applying come I,  
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,  
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,  
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his grandson,  
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,  
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf, the crucifix engraved,  
With Odin and the hideous-faced Mexitli and every idol and image,  
Taking them all for what they are worth and not a cent more,  
Admitting they were alive and did the work of their days,  
(They bore mites as for unfledg'd birds who have now to rise and fly and sing for themselves,)  
Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in myself, bestowing them  
freely on each man and woman I see,  
Discovering as much or more in a framer framing a house,  
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up sleeves driving the mallet  
and chisel,  
Not objecting to special revelations, considering a curl of smoke or a hair on the  
back of my hand just as curious as any revelation,  
Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes no less to me than the gods  
of the antique wars,  
Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,  
Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths, their white foreheads whole  
and unhurt out of the flames;  
By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every person  
born,

Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty angels with shirts  
bagg'd out at their waists,  
The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins past and to come,  
Selling all he possesses, traveling on foot to fee lawyers for his brother and sit by  
him while he is tried for forgery;  
What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square rod about me, and not filling  
the square rod then,  
The bull and the bug never worshipp'd half enough,  
Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd,  
The supernatural of no account, myself waiting my time to be one of the  
supremes,  
The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much good as the best, and be as  
prodigious;  
By my life-lumps! becoming already a creator,  
Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of the shadows.

## 42

A call in the midst of the crowd,  
My own voice, orotund sweeping and final.

Come my children,  
Come my boys and girls, my women, household and intimates,  
Now the performer launches his nerve, he has pass'd his prelude on the reeds  
within.

Easily written loose-finger'd chords—I feel the thrum of your climax and close.

My head slues round on my neck,  
Music rolls, but not from the organ,  
Folks are around me, but they are no household of mine.

Ever the hard unsunk ground,  
Ever the eaters and drinkers, ever the upward and downward sun, ever the air and  
the ceaseless tides,  
Ever myself and my neighbors, refreshing, wicked, real,  
Ever the old inexplicable query, ever that thorn'd thumb, that breath of itches and  
thirsts,  
Ever the vexer's *hoot! hoot!* till we find where the sly one hides and bring him  
forth,  
Ever love, ever the sobbing liquid of life,  
Ever the bandage under the chin, ever the trestles of death.

Here and there with dimes on the eyes walking,  
To feed the greed of the belly the brains liberally spooning,  
Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never once going,  
Many sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff for payment receiving,

A few idly owning, and they the wheat continually claiming.

This is the city and I am one of the citizens,  
Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets, newspapers,  
schools,  
The mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories, stocks, stores, real  
estate and personal estate.

The little plentiful manikins skipping around in collars and tail'd coats,  
I am aware who they are, (they are positively not worms or fleas,)  
I acknowledge the duplicates of myself, the weakest and shallowest is deathless  
with me,  
What I do and say the same waits for them,  
Every thought that flounders in me the same flounders in them.

I know perfectly well my own egotism,  
Know my omnivorous lines and must not write any less,  
And would fetch you whoever you are flush with myself.

Not words of routine this song of mine,  
But abruptly to question, to leap beyond yet nearer bring;  
This printed and bound book—but the printer and the printing-office boy?  
The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend close and solid in your  
arms?  
The black ship mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in her turrets—but the pluck of  
the captain and engineers?  
In the houses the dishes and fare and furniture—but the host and hostess, and the  
look out of their eyes?  
The sky up there—yet here or next door, or across the way?  
The saints and sages in history—but you yourself?  
Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human brain,  
And what is reason? and what is love? and what is life?

### 43

I do not despise you priests, all time, the world over,  
My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,  
Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between ancient and modern,  
Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five thousand years,  
Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the gods, saluting the sun,  
Making a fetich of the first rock or stump, powowing with sticks in the circle of  
obis,  
Helping the llama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of the idols,  
Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic procession, rapt and austere in the  
woods a gymnosophist,  
Drinking mead from the skull-cup, to Shastas and Vedas admirant, minding the  
Koran,

Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone and knife, beating the  
serpent-skin drum,  
Accepting the Gospels, accepting him that was crucified, knowing assuredly that  
he is divine,  
To the mass kneeling or the puritan's prayer rising, or sitting patiently in a pew,  
Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting dead-like till my spirit  
arouses me,  
Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of pavement and land,  
Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang I turn and talk like a man leaving  
charges before a journey.

Down-hearted doubters dull and excluded,  
Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd, atheistical,  
I know every one of you, I know the sea of torment, doubt, despair and unbelief.

How the flukes splash!  
How they contort rapid as lightning, with spasms and spouts of blood!

Be at peace bloody flukes of doubters and sullen mopers,  
I take my place among you as much as among any,  
The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same,  
And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all, precisely the same.

I do not know what is untried and afterward,  
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

Each who passes is consider'd, each who stops is consider'd, not a single one can  
it fail.

It cannot fail the young man who died and was buried,  
Nor the young woman who died and was put by his side,  
Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back and was never  
seen again,  
Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with bitterness worse  
than gall,  
Nor him in the poor house tubercled by rum and the bad disorder,  
Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd, nor the brutish koboo call'd the  
ordure of humanity,  
Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in,  
Nor any thing in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth,  
Nor any thing in the myriads of spheres, nor the myriads of myriads that inhabit  
them,  
Nor the present, nor the least wisp that is known.

It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.

What is known I strip away,  
I launch all men and women forward with me into the Unknown.

The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate?

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers,  
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,  
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,  
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my brother, my sister?  
I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or jealous upon me,  
All has been gentle with me, I keep no account with lamentation,  
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an encloser of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,  
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps,  
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,  
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I know I was even there,  
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the lethargic mist,  
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid carbon.

Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,  
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen,  
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings,  
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother generations guided me,  
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,

The long slow strata piled to rest it on,  
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,  
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and delight me,  
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

**45**

O span of youth! ever-push'd elasticity!  
O manhood, balanced, florid and full.

My lovers suffocate me,  
Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,  
Jostling me through streets and public halls, coming naked to me at night,  
Crying by day Ahoy! from the rocks of the river, swinging and chirping over my head,  
Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled underbrush,  
Lighting on every moment of my life,  
Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses,  
Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts and giving them to be mine.

Old age superbly rising! O welcome, ineffable grace of dying days!

Every condition promulges not only itself, it promulges what grows after and out of itself,  
And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled systems,  
And all I see multiplied as high as I can cipher edge but the rim of the farther systems.

Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always expanding,  
Outward and outward and forever outward.

My sun has his sun and round him obediently wheels,  
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,  
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest inside them.

There is no stoppage and never can be stoppage,  
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a pallid float, it would not avail in the long run,  
We should surely bring up again where we now stand,  
And surely go as much farther, and then farther and farther.

A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic leagues, do not hazard the span or make it impatient,

They are but parts, any thing is but a part.

See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that,  
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,  
The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,  
The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine will be there.

#### 46

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured and never will  
be measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey, (come listen all!)  
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff cut from the woods,  
No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,  
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,  
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, exchange,  
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a knoll,  
My left hand hooking you round the waist,  
My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and the public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road for you,  
You must travel it for yourself.

It is not far, it is within reach,  
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not know,  
Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.

Shoulder your duds dear son, and I will mine, and let us hasten forth,  
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as we go.

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff of your hand on my hip,  
And in due time you shall repay the same service to me,  
For after we start we never lie by again.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the crowded heaven,  
And I said to my spirit *When we become the enfolders of those orbs, and the  
pleasure and knowledge of every thing in them, shall we be fill'd and satisfied  
then?*

And my spirit said *No, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.*

You are also asking me questions and I hear you,  
I answer that I cannot answer, you must find out for yourself.

Sit a while dear son,



Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk to drink,  
But as soon as you sleep and renew yourself in sweet clothes, I kiss you with a  
good-by kiss and open the gate for your egress hence.

Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams,  
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,  
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment of your  
life.

Long have you timidly waded holding a plank by the shore,  
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,  
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to me, shout, and laughingly  
dash with your hair.

#### 47

I am the teacher of athletes,  
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own,  
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man not through derived power, but in his  
own right,  
Wicked rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,  
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,  
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him worse than sharp steel cuts,  
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song or play  
on the banjo,  
Preferring scars and the beard and faces pitted with small-pox over all latherers,  
And those well-tann'd to those that keep out of the sun.

I teach straying from me, yet who can stray from me?  
I follow you whoever you are from the present hour,  
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to fill up the time while I wait for a boat,  
(It is you talking just as much as myself, I act as the tongue of you,  
Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd.)

I swear I will never again mention love or death inside a house,  
And I swear I will never translate myself at all, only to him or her who privately  
stays with me in the open air.

If you would understand me go to the heights or water-shore,  
The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or motion of waves a key,  
The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.

No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,

But roughs and little children better than they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he knows me well,  
The woodman that takes his axe and jug with him shall take me with him all day,  
The farm-boy ploughing in the field feels good at the sound of my voice,  
In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with fishermen and seamen and love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is mine,  
On the night ere the pending battle many seek me, and I do not fail them,  
On that solemn night (it may be their last) those that know me seek me.

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he lies down alone in his blanket,  
The driver thinking of me does not mind the jolt of his wagon,  
The young mother and old mother comprehend me,  
The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment and forget where they are,  
They and all would resume what I have told them.

#### 48

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,  
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,  
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,  
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in  
his shroud,  
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,  
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learning of all  
times,  
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become  
a hero,  
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,  
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a  
million universes.

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,  
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,  
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,  
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?  
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,  
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,  
I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name,  
And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go,  
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

**49**

And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle to try to alarm me.

To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes,  
I see the elder-hand pressing receiving supporting,  
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,  
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

And as to you Corpse I think you are good manure, but that does not offend me,  
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,  
I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd breasts of melons.

And as to you Life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths,  
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.)

I hear you whispering there O stars of heaven,  
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual transfers and promotions,  
If you do not say any thing how can I say any thing?

Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest,  
Of the moon that descends the steeps of the sougning twilight,  
Toss, sparkles of day and dusk—toss on the black stems that decay in the muck,  
Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night,  
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams reflected,  
And debouch to the steady and central from the offspring great or small.

**50**

There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but I know it is in me.

Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body becomes,  
I sleep—I sleep long.

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word unsaid,  
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

Something it swings on more than the earth I swing on,  
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes me.

Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for my brothers and sisters.

Do you see O my brothers and sisters?  
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal life—it is Happiness.

**51**

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them,  
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?  
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,  
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)

Do I contradict myself?  
Very well then I contradict myself,  
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? who will soonest be through with his supper?  
Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? will you prove already too late?

**52**

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,  
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,  
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadow'd wilds,  
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,  
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,  
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,  
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,  
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,  
Missing me one place search another,  
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

### 3.2.3 “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (1856)

1

Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!  
Clouds of the west—sun there half an hour high—I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!

On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose,  
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,  
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,  
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,  
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,  
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,  
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,  
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,  
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,  
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,  
Others will see the islands large and small;  
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high,  
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,  
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,  
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,  
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,  
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,  
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,  
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,  
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,  
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with  
motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,  
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest in  
strong shadow,  
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,  
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,  
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,  
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head in the  
sunlit water,  
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,  
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,  
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,  
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,  
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,  
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,  
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine  
pennants,  
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-houses,  
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,  
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,  
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and  
glistening,  
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the granite  
storehouses by the docks,  
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flank'd on each side by  
the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,  
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning high and  
glaringly into the night,  
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow light over the  
tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

#### 4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,  
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,  
The men and women I saw were all near to me,  
Others the same—others who look back on me because I look'd forward to them,  
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night.)

#### 5

What is it then between us?  
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and place avails not,  
I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,

I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the waters around it,  
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,  
In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me,  
In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me,  
I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution,  
I too had receiv'd identity by my body,  
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I should be of  
my body.

**6**

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,  
The dark threw its patches down upon me also,  
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,  
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?  
Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,  
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,  
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,  
Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,  
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,  
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,  
The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,  
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,  
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting,  
Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest,  
Was call'd by my highest name by clear loud voices of young men as they saw  
me approaching or passing,  
Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning of their flesh  
against me as I sat,  
Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet never told  
them a word,  
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,

Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,  
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like,  
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

**7**

Closer yet I approach you,  
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you—I laid in my stores in  
advance,  
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?  
Who knows but I am enjoying this?  
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all  
you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than mast-hemm'd  
Manhattan?  
River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?  
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated  
lighter?

What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call  
me promptly and loudly by my highest name as I approach?  
What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my  
face?  
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?  
What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?  
What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish is  
accomplish'd, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!  
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!  
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the men and  
women generations after me!  
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!  
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!  
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!  
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!  
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!

Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my highest  
name!  
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!  
Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one makes it!  
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking  
upon you;  
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the  
hasting current;  
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;  
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all downcast eyes  
have time to take it from you!  
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the  
sunlit water!  
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd schooners,  
sloops, lighters!  
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!



Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!

Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,  
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,  
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung out divinest aromas,  
Thrive, cities—bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,  
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,  
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,  
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward,  
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us,  
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you permanently within us,  
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection in you also,  
You furnish your parts toward eternity,  
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

### 3.2.4 “I Hear America Singing” (1860)

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

### 3.2.5 “O Captain! My Captain!” (1865)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;  
    But O heart! heart! heart!  
    O the bleeding drops of red,  
    Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
    Here Captain! dear father!  
    This arm beneath your head!  
    It is some dream that on the deck,  
    You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;  
    Exult O shores, and ring O bells!  
    But I with mournful tread,  
    Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
    Fallen cold and dead.

### 3.3 Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Born into an influential and socially prominent New England family in 1830, Emily Dickinson benefited from a level of education and mobility that most of her contemporaries, female and male, could not comprehend. The middle child of Edward Dickinson and Emily Norcross, Dickinson, along with her older brother Austin and younger sister Lavinia, received both an extensive formal education and the informal education that came by way of countless visitors to the family homestead during Edward Dickinson's political career. Contrary to popular depictions of her life, Dickinson did travel outside of Amherst but ultimately chose to remain at home in the close company of family and friends. An intensely private person, Dickinson exerted almost singular control over the distribution of her poetry during her lifetime. That control, coupled with early portrayals of her as reclusive, has led many readers to assume that Dickinson was a fragile and timid figure whose formal, mysterious, concise, and clever poetry revealed the mind of a writer trapped in the rigid gender confines of the nineteenth century. More recent scholarship demonstrates not only the fallacy of Dickinson's depiction as the ghostly "Belle of Amherst," but also reveals the technical complexity of her poetry that predates the Modernism of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and Marianne Moore by almost three-quarters of a century. In the selections that follow, Dickinson's poetry displays both her technical proficiency and her embrace of techniques that were new to the nineteenth century. Like her contemporary Walt Whitman, Dickinson used poetry to show her readers familiar landscapes from a fresh perspective.



Image 3.2: Emily Dickinson, 1848  
Photographer: unknown  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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The selections that follow, from Dickinson's most prolific years (1861-1865), illustrate the poet's mastery of the lyric—a short poem that often expresses a single theme such as the speaker's mood or feeling. "I taste a liquor never brewed—" . . . celebrates the poet's relationship to the natural world in both its wordplay (note the use of liquor in line one to indicate both an alcoholic beverage in the first stanza and a rich nectar in the third) and its natural imagery. Here, as in many of her poems, Dickinson's vibrant language demonstrates a vital spark in contrast to her reclusive image. . . . "The Soul selects her own Society—," shows Dickinson using well-known images of power and authority to celebrate the independence of the soul in the face of expectations. In both of these first two poems, readers will note the celebrations of the individual will that engages fully with life without becoming either intoxicated or enslaved. . . . "Because I could not stop for Death—," one of the most famous poems in the Dickinson canon, forms an important bookend to "The Soul" in that both poems show Dickinson's precise control over the speaker's relationship to not only the natural world but also the divine. While death cannot be avoided, neither is it to be feared; the speaker of this poem reminds readers that the omnipresence of death does not mean that death is immanent. This idea of death as always present and potential comes full circle in . . . "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—." Here Dickinson plays with our preconceptions not only of death, but also of energy which appears

always to be waiting for someone to unleash it. Considered carefully, these four poems demonstrate the range of Dickinson's reach as a poet. In these lyrics, mortality and desire combine in precise lyrics that awaken both our imagination and our awareness of the natural world.

The Emily Dickinson biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.3.1 “I taste a liquor never brewed” (1861)

I taste a liquor never brewed –  
From Tankards scooped in Pearl –  
Not all the Frankfort Berries  
Yield such an Alcohol!

Inebriate of air – am I –  
And Debauchee of Dew –  
Reeling – thro' endless summer days –  
From inns of molten Blue –

When “Landlords” turn the drunken Bee  
Out of the Foxglove's door –  
When Butterflies – renounce their “drams” –  
I shall but drink the more!

Till Seraphs swing their snowy Hats –  
And Saints – to windows run –  
To see the little Tippler  
Leaning against the – Sun!

### 3.3.2 “The Soul selects her own Society” (1862)

The Soul selects her own Society –  
Then – shuts the Door –  
To her divine Majority –  
Present no more –

Unmoved – she notes the Chariots – pausing –  
At her low Gate –  
Unmoved – an Emperor be kneeling  
Upon her Mat –

I've known her – from an ample nation –  
Choose One –  
Then – close the Valves of her attention –  
Like Stone –

### **3.3.3 “Because I could not stop for Death” (1890)**

Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste  
And I had put away  
My labor and my leisure too,  
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove  
At Recess – in the Ring –  
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –  
We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed Us –  
The Dews drew quivering and Chill –  
For only Gossamer, my Gown –  
My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed  
A Swelling of the Ground –  
The Roof was scarcely visible –  
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
Were toward Eternity –

### **3.3.4 “My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun” (1863)**

My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –  
In Corners – till a Day  
The Owner passed – identified –  
And carried Me away –

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods –

And now We hunt the Doe –  
And every time I speak for Him  
The Mountains straight reply –

And do I smile, such cordial light  
Upon the Valley glow –  
It is as a Vesuvian face  
Had let it's pleasure through –

And when at Night - Our good Day done –  
I guard My Master's Head –  
'Tis better than the Eider Duck's  
Deep Pillow – to have shared –

To foe of His – I'm deadly foe –  
None stir the second time –  
On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –  
Or an emphatic Thumb –

Though I than He – may longer live  
He longer must – than I –  
For I have but the power to kill,  
Without – the power to die –

### 3.4 Mark Twain (1835-1910)

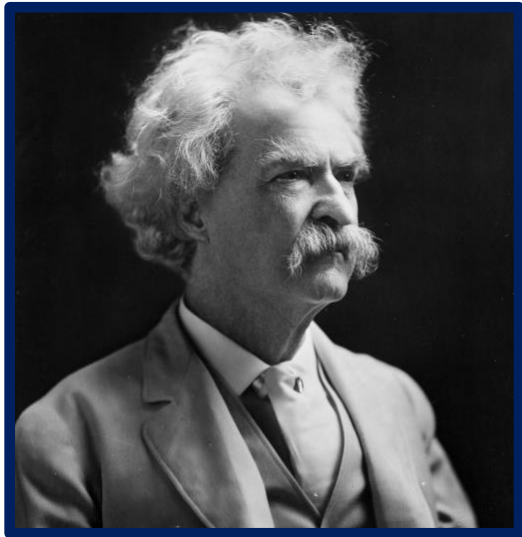


Image 3.3: Mark Twain, 1907  
Photographer: A. F. Bradley  
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Mark Twain is the pen name of author Samuel Langhorne Clemmons. Twain was born in Florida, Missouri, but grew up in Hannibal, Missouri, near the banks of the Mississippi River. This location was a major influence on his work and served as the setting for many of his stories. Although Twain originally apprenticed as a printer, he spent eighteen months on the Mississippi River training as a riverboat pilot (the name Mark Twain is a reference to a nautical term). By the start of the Civil War (1861), traffic on the Mississippi River had slowed considerably, which led Twain to abandon his dreams of piloting a riverboat. Twain claims to have spent two weeks in the Marion Rangers, a poorly organized local confederate militia, after leaving his job on a riverboat. In 1861, Twain's brother Orion was appointed by President Lincoln to serve as the Secretary of Nevada, and Twain initially accompanied him out West, serving as the Assistant Secretary of Nevada. Twain's adventures out West

would become the material for his successful book, *Roughing It!*, published in 1872, following on the heels of the success of his international travelogue, *Innocents Abroad* (1869). While living out West, Twain made a name for himself as a journalist, eventually serving as the editor of the *Virginia City Daily Territorial Enterprise*. The multi-talented Twain rose to prominence as a writer, journalist, humorist, memoirist, novelist, and public speaker.

Twain was one of the most influential and important figures of American Literary Realism, achieving fame during his lifetime. Twain was hailed as America's most famous writer, and is the author of several classic books such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Roughing It!*, *Innocents Abroad*, *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). Twain is known for his use of dialect, regional humor, and satire, as well as the repeated theme of having jokes at the expense of an outsider (or work featuring an outsider who comes to fleece locals).

In his famous "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," which has also been published under its original title "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" and "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," Twain experiments with early versions of meta-fiction, embedding a story within a story. Furthermore, the story relies on local color humor and regional dialect ("Why blame my cats") as well as featuring an outsider entering a new place, a staple in Twain's work. In *Roughing It!*, which details Twain's travels out West from 1861-1867, Twain describes many adventures visiting with outlaws and other strange characters, as well as encounters with notable figures of the age, such as Brigham Young and Horace Greeley. Furthermore, *Roughing It!* provided descriptions of the frontier from Nevada to San Francisco to Hawaii to an audience largely unfamiliar with the area. Although he claimed it to be a work of

non-fiction, *Roughing It!* features many fantastic stories of Twain's travels in the West, several of which were exaggerated or untrue.

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### 3.4.1 “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras” (1865)

In compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that Leonidas W. Smiley is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous Jim Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me to death with some exasperating reminiscence of him as long and as tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design it succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the dilapidated tavern in the decayed mining camp of Engel's, and noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good-day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named Leonidas W. Smiley—Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned his initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly, that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in finesse. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once.

“Rev. Leonidas W. H'm, Reverend Le—well, there was a feller here once by the name of Jim Smiley, in the winter of '49—or maybe it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because remember the big flume warn't finished when he first come to the camp; but any way he was the curioest man about always betting on anything



that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't he'd change sides. Any way that suited the other man would suit him—any way just so's he got a bet, he was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solit'ry thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take any side you please as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds sitting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting, he would be there reg'lar to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was too, and a good man. If he even see a straddle-bug start to go anywheres, he would bet you how long it would take him to get to—to wherever he was going to, and if you took him up he would foller that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley, and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to him—he'd bet on any thing—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley up and asked him how she was, and he said she was considerable better—thank the Lord for his inf'nit mercy—and coming on so smart that with the blessing of Prov'dence she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, "Well, I'll resk two-and-a-half she don't anyway."

Thish-er Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because of course she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards' start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag end of the race she'd get excited and desperate-like, and come cavorting and straddling up and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side amongst the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and always fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

And he had a little small bull-pup that to look at him you'd think he warn't worth a cent but to set around and look ornery and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him he was a different dog; his under jaw began to stick out like the fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover and shine like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him and bullyrag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what he was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog jest by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to

it—not chew, you understand, but only just grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that did'nt have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off in a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he see in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was his fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said be cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he did learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summerset, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of catching flies, and kep' him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as fur as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education and he could do 'most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog—and sing out, “Flies Dan'l, flies!” and quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had travelled and been everywhere, all said he laid over any frog that ever they see.

Well, Smiley kep' the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him down town sometimes and lay for a bet. One day, a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come acrost him with his box, and says:

“What might it be that you’ve got in the box?”

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, “It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain’t—it’s only just a frog.”

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, “H’m—so ’tis. Well, what’s he good for?”

“Well,” Smiley, says, easy and careless, “he’s good enough for one thing, I should judge—he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county.”

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and gave it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, “Well,” he says, “I don’t see no p’int about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.”

“Maybe you don’t,” Smiley says. “Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don’t understand ’em; maybe you’ve had experience, and maybe you ain’t only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I’ve got my opinion and I’ll resk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras county.”

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, “Well, I’m only a stranger here, and I aint got no frog; but if I had a frog, I’d bet you.”

And then Smiley says, “That’s all right—that’s all right—if you’ll hold my box a minute, I’ll go and get you a frog.” And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley’s, and set down to wait. So he sat there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prized his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for along time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and gave him to this feller and says:

“Now, if you’re ready, set him alongside of Dan’l, with his fore-paws just even with Dan’l’s, and I’ll give the word.” Then he says, “One—two—three—git!” and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively, but Dan’l gave a heave, and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it warn’t no use—he couldn’t budge; he was planted as solid as a church, and he couldn’t no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn’t have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulder—so—at Dan’l, and says again, very deliberate, “Well,” he says, “I don’t see no p’int about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.”

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, "I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow." And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and hefted him, and says, "Why, blame my cats if he don't weigh five pound!" and turned him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And—"

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: "Just set where yon are, stranger, and rest easy—I ain't going to be gone a second."

But, by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond Jim Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev. Leonidas W. Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he button-holed me and recommenced:

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, and—

"However, lacking both time and inclination, I did not wait to hear about the afflicted cow, but took my leave.

### 3.4.2 From *Roughing It!* (1872)

#### CHAPTER VII

It did seem strange enough to see a town again after what appeared to us such a long acquaintance with deep, still, almost lifeless and houseless solitude! We tumbled out into the busy street feeling like meteoric people crumbled off the corner of some other world, and wakened up suddenly in this. For an hour we took as much interest in Overland City as if we had never seen a town before. The reason we had an hour to spare was because we had to change our stage (for a less sumptuous affair, called a "mud-wagon") and transfer our freight of mails.

Presently we got under way again. We came to the shallow, yellow, muddy South Platte, with its low banks and its scattering flat sand-bars and pigmy islands—a melancholy stream straggling through the centre of the enormous flat plain, and only saved from being impossible to find with the naked eye by its sentinel rank of scattering trees standing on either bank. The Platte was "up," they said—which made me wish I could see it when it was down, if it could look any sicker and sorrier. They said it was a dangerous stream to cross, now, because its quicksands

were liable to swallow up horses, coach and passengers if an attempt was made to ford it. But the mails had to go, and we made the attempt. Once or twice in midstream the wheels sunk into the yielding sands so threateningly that we half believed we had dreaded and avoided the sea all our lives to be shipwrecked in a “mud-wagon” in the middle of a desert at last. But we dragged through and sped away toward the setting sun.

Next morning, just before dawn, when about five hundred and fifty miles from St. Joseph, our mud-wagon broke down. We were to be delayed five or six hours, and therefore we took horses, by invitation, and joined a party who were just starting on a buffalo hunt. It was noble sport galloping over the plain in the dewy freshness of the morning, but our part of the hunt ended in disaster and disgrace, for a wounded buffalo bull chased the passenger Bemis nearly two miles, and then he forsook his horse and took to a lone tree. He was very sullen about the matter for some twenty-four hours, but at last he began to soften little by little, and finally he said:

“Well, it was not funny, and there was no sense in those gawks making themselves so facetious over it. I tell you I was angry in earnest for awhile. I should have shot that long gangly lubber they called Hank, if I could have done it without crippling six or seven other people—but of course I couldn’t, the old ‘Allen’s’ so confounded comprehensive. I wish those loafers had been up in the tree; they wouldn’t have wanted to laugh so. If I had had a horse worth a cent—but no, the minute he saw that buffalo bull wheel on him and give a bellow, he raised straight up in the air and stood on his heels. The saddle began to slip, and I took him round the neck and laid close to him, and began to pray. Then he came down and stood up on the other end awhile, and the bull actually stopped pawing sand and bellowing to contemplate the inhuman spectacle. Then the bull made a pass at him and uttered a bellow that sounded perfectly frightful, it was so close to me, and that seemed to literally prostrate my horse’s reason, and make a raving distracted maniac of him, and I wish I may die if he didn’t stand on his head for a quarter of a minute and shed tears. He was absolutely out of his mind—he was, as sure as truth itself, and he really didn’t know what he was doing. Then the bull came charging at us, and my horse dropped down on all fours and took a fresh start—and then for the next ten minutes he would actually throw one hand-spring after another so fast that the bull began to get unsettled, too, and didn’t know where to start in—and so he stood there sneezing, and shovelling dust over his back, and bellowing every now and then, and thinking he had got a fifteen-hundred dollar circus horse for breakfast, certain. Well, I was first out on his neck—the horse’s, not the bull’s—and then underneath, and next on his rump, and sometimes head up, and sometimes heels—but I tell you it seemed solemn and awful to be ripping and tearing and carrying on so in the presence of death, as you might say. Pretty soon the bull made a snatch for us and brought away some of my horse’s tail (I suppose, but do not know, being pretty busy at the time), but something made him hungry for solitude and suggested to him to get up and hunt for it. And then you ought to have seen that spider-legged old skeleton go! and

you ought to have seen the bull cut out after him, too—head down, tongue out, tail up, bellowing like everything, and actually mowing down the weeds, and tearing up the earth, and boosting up the sand like a whirlwind! By George, it was a hot race! I and the saddle were back on the rump, and I had the bridle in my teeth and holding on to the pommel with both hands. First we left the dogs behind; then we passed a jackass rabbit; then we overtook a cayote, and were gaining on an antelope when the rotten girth let go and threw me about thirty yards off to the left, and as the saddle went down over the horse's rump he gave it a lift with his heels that sent it more than four hundred yards up in the air, I wish I may die in a minute if he didn't. I fell at the foot of the only solitary tree there was in nine counties adjacent (as any creature could see with the naked eye), and the next second I had hold of the bark with four sets of nails and my teeth, and the next second after that I was astraddle of the main limb and blaspheming my luck in a way that made my breath smell of brimstone. I had the bull, now, if he did not think of one thing. But that one thing I dreaded. I dreaded it very seriously. There was a possibility that the bull might not think of it, but there were greater chances that he would. I made up my mind what I would do in case he did. It was a little over forty feet to the ground from where I sat. I cautiously unwound the lariat from the pommel of my saddle—”

“Your saddle? Did you take your saddle up in the tree with you?”

“Take it up in the tree with me? Why, how you talk. Of course I didn't. No man could do that. It fell in the tree when it came down.”

“Oh—exactly.”

“Certainly. I unwound the lariat, and fastened one end of it to the limb. It was the very best green raw-hide, and capable of sustaining tons. I made a slip-noose in the other end, and then hung it down to see the length. It reached down twenty-two feet—half way to the ground. I then loaded every barrel of the Allen with a double charge. I felt satisfied. I said to myself, if he never thinks of that one thing that I dread, all right—but if he does, all right anyhow—I am fixed for him. But don't you know that the very thing a man dreads is the thing that always happens? Indeed it is so. I watched the bull, now, with anxiety—anxiety which no one can conceive of who has not been in such a situation and felt that at any moment death might come. Presently a thought came into the bull's eye. I knew it! said I—if my nerve fails now, I am lost. Sure enough, it was just as I had dreaded, he started in to climb the tree—”

“What, the bull?”

“Of course—who else?”

“But a bull can't climb a tree.”

“He can’t, can’t he? Since you know so much about it, did you ever see a bull try?”

“No! I never dreamt of such a thing.”

“Well, then, what is the use of your talking that way, then? Because you never saw a thing done, is that any reason why it can’t be done?”

“Well, all right—go on. What did you do?”

“The bull started up, and got along well for about ten feet, then slipped and slid back. I breathed easier. He tried it again—got up a little higher—slipped again. But he came at it once more, and this time he was careful. He got gradually higher and higher, and my spirits went down more and more. Up he came—an inch at a time—with his eyes hot, and his tongue hanging out. Higher and higher—hitched his foot over the stump of a limb, and looked up, as much as to say, ‘You are my meat, friend.’ Up again—higher and higher, and getting more excited the closer he got. He was within ten feet of me! I took a long breath,—and then said I, ‘It is now or never.’ I had the coil of the lariat all ready; I paid it out slowly, till it hung right over his head; all of a sudden I let go of the slack, and the slipnoose fell fairly round his neck! Quicker than lightning I out with the Allen and let him have it in the face. It was an awful roar, and must have scared the bull out of his senses. When the smoke cleared away, there he was, dangling in the air, twenty foot from the ground, and going out of one convulsion into another faster than you could count! I didn’t stop to count, anyhow—I shinned down the tree and shot for home.”

“Bemis, is all that true, just as you have stated it?”

“I wish I may rot in my tracks and die the death of a dog if it isn’t.”

“Well, we can’t refuse to believe it, and we don’t. But if there were some proofs—”

“Proofs! Did I bring back my lariat?”

“No.”

“Did I bring back my horse?”

“No.”

“Did you ever see the bull again?”

“No.”

“Well, then, what more do you want? I never saw anybody as particular as you are about a little thing like that.”

I made up my mind that if this man was not a liar he only missed it by the skin of his teeth. This episode reminds me of an incident of my brief sojourn in Siam, years afterward. The European citizens of a town in the neighborhood of Bangkok had a prodigy among them by the name of Eckert, an Englishman—a person famous for the number, ingenuity and imposing magnitude of his lies. They were always repeating his most celebrated falsehoods, and always trying to “draw him out” before strangers; but they seldom succeeded. Twice he was invited to the house where I was visiting, but nothing could seduce him into a specimen lie. One day a planter named Bascom, an influential man, and a proud and sometimes irascible one, invited me to ride over with him and call on Eckert. As we jogged along, said he:

“Now, do you know where the fault lies? It lies in putting Eckert on his guard. The minute the boys go to pumping at Eckert he knows perfectly well what they are after, and of course he shuts up his shell. Anybody might know he would. But when we get there, we must play him finer than that. Let him shape the conversation to suit himself—let him drop it or change it whenever he wants to. Let him see that nobody is trying to draw him out. Just let him have his own way. He will soon forget himself and begin to grind out lies like a mill. Don’t get impatient—just keep quiet, and let me play him. I will make him lie. It does seem to me that the boys must be blind to overlook such an obvious and simple trick as that.”

Eckert received us heartily—a pleasant-spoken, gentle-mannered creature. We sat in the veranda an hour, sipping English ale, and talking about the king, and the sacred white elephant, the Sleeping Idol, and all manner of things; and I noticed that my comrade never led the conversation himself or shaped it, but simply followed Eckert’s lead, and betrayed no solicitude and no anxiety about anything. The effect was shortly perceptible. Eckert began to grow communicative; he grew more and more at his ease, and more and more talkative and sociable. Another hour passed in the same way, and then all of a sudden Eckert said:

“Oh, by the way! I came near forgetting. I have got a thing here to astonish you. Such a thing as neither you nor any other man ever heard of—I’ve got a cat that will eat cocoanut! Common green cocoanut—and not only eat the meat, but drink the milk. It is so—I’ll swear to it.”

A quick glance from Bascom—a glance that I understood—then:

“Why, bless my soul, I never heard of such a thing. Man, it is impossible.”

“I knew you would say it. I’ll fetch the cat.”



He went in the house. Bascom said:

“There—what did I tell you? Now, that is the way to handle Eckert. You see, I have petted him along patiently, and put his suspicions to sleep. I am glad we came. You tell the boys about it when you go back. Cat eat a cocoanut—oh, my! Now, that is just his way, exactly—he will tell the absurdest lie, and trust to luck to get out of it again. Cat eat a cocoanut—the innocent fool!”

Eckert approached with his cat, sure enough. Bascom smiled. Said he:

“I’ll hold the cat—you bring a cocoanut.”

Eckert split one open, and chopped up some pieces. Bascom smuggled a wink to me, and proffered a slice of the fruit to puss. She snatched it, swallowed it ravenously, and asked for more!

We rode our two miles in silence, and wide apart. At least I was silent, though Bascom cuffed his horse and cursed him a good deal, notwithstanding the horse was behaving well enough. When I branched off homeward, Bascom said:

“Keep the horse till morning. And—you need not speak of this—foolishness to the boys.”

#### CHAPTER XIV

Mr. Street was very busy with his telegraphic matters —and considering that he had eight or nine hundred miles of rugged, snowy, uninhabited mountains, and waterless, treeless, melancholy deserts to traverse with his wire, it was natural and needful that he should be as busy as possible. He could not go comfortably along and cut his poles by the roadside, either, but they had to be hauled by ox teams across those exhausting deserts—and it was two days’ journey from water to water, in one or two of them. Mr. Street’s contract was a vast work, every way one looked at it; and yet to comprehend what the vague words “eight hundred miles of rugged mountains and dismal deserts” mean, one must go over the ground in person—pen and ink descriptions cannot convey the dreary reality to the reader. And after all, Mr. S.’s mightiest difficulty turned out to be one which he had never taken into the account at all. Unto Mormons he had sub-let the hardest and heaviest half of his great undertaking, and all of a sudden they concluded that they were going to make little or nothing, and so they tranquilly threw their poles overboard in mountain or desert, just as it happened when they took the notion, and drove home and went about their customary business! They were under written contract to Mr. Street, but they did not care anything for that. They said they would “admire” to see a “Gentile” force a Mormon to fulfil a losing contract in Utah! And they made themselves very merry over the matter. Street said—for it was he that told us these things:

“I was in dismay. I was under heavy bonds to complete my contract in a given time, and this disaster looked very much like ruin. It was an astounding thing; it was such a wholly unlooked-for difficulty, that I was entirely nonplussed. I am a business man—have always been a business man—do not know anything but business—and so you can imagine how like being struck by lightning it was to find myself in a country where written contracts were worthless!—that main security, that sheet-anchor, that absolute necessity, of business. My confidence left me. There was no use in making new contracts—that was plain. I talked with first one prominent citizen and then another. They all sympathized with me, first rate, but they did not know how to help me. But at last a Gentile said, ‘Go to Brigham Young!—these small fry cannot do you any good.’ I did not think much of the idea, for if the law could not help me, what could an individual do who had not even anything to do with either making the laws or executing them? He might be a very good patriarch of a church and preacher in its tabernacle, but something sterner than religion and moral suasion was needed to handle a hundred refractory, half-civilized sub-contractors. But what was a man to do? I thought if Mr. Young could not do anything else, he might probably be able to give me some advice and a valuable hint or two, and so I went straight to him and laid the whole case before him. He said very little, but he showed strong interest all the way through. He examined all the papers in detail, and whenever there seemed anything like a hitch, either in the papers or my statement, he would go back and take up the thread and follow it patiently out to an intelligent and satisfactory result. Then he made a list of the contractors’ names. Finally he said:

“‘Mr. Street, this is all perfectly plain. These contracts are strictly and legally drawn, and are duly signed and certified. These men manifestly entered into them with their eyes open. I see no fault or flaw anywhere.’ Then Mr. Young turned to a man waiting at the other end of the room and said: ‘Take this list of names to So-and-so, and tell him to have these men here at such-and-such an hour.’

“They were there, to the minute. So was I. Mr. Young asked them a number of questions, and their answers made my statement good. Then he said to them:

“‘You signed these contracts and assumed these obligations of your own free will and accord?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Then carry them out to the letter, if it makes paupers of you! Go!’ And they did go, too! They are strung across the deserts now, working like bees. And I never hear a word out of them. There is a batch of governors, and judges, and other officials here, shipped from Washington, and they maintain the semblance of a republican form of government—but the petrified truth is that Utah is an absolute monarchy and Brigham Young is king!”

Mr. Street was a fine man, and I believe his story. I knew him well during several years afterward in San Francisco.

Our stay in Salt Lake City amounted to only two days, and therefore we had no time to make the customary inquisition into the workings of polygamy and get up

the usual statistics and deductions preparatory to calling the attention of the nation at large once more to the matter. I had the will to do it. With the gushing self-sufficiency of youth I was feverish to plunge in headlong and achieve a great reform here—until I saw the Mormon women. Then I was touched. My heart was wiser than my head. It warmed toward these poor, ungainly and pathetically “homely” creatures, and as I turned to hide the generous moisture in my eyes, I said, “No—the man that marries one of them has done an act of Christian charity which entitles him to the kindly applause of mankind, not their harsh censure—and the man that marries sixty of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity so sublime that the nations should stand uncovered in his presence and worship in silence.”

## 3.5 Nicholas Said (1836-1882)

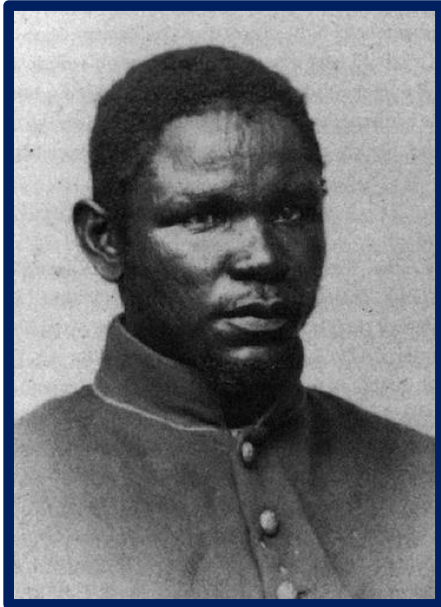


Image 3.4: Nicholas Said (also known as Mohammed Ali Ben Said), Sergeant, US Army, 55th United States Colored Infantry Regiment, 1865  
Photographer: unknown  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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Born in Kukawa, Bornu Empire, Nigeria, Nicholas Said, one of nineteen children, was sold off in the “Trans-Saharan” slave trade. As a youth, he learned Arabic in Central Africa and the Ottoman Turkish language of his enslavers. Said had several different enslavers throughout different parts of the world. Because he also knew Russian, he became the servant of Russian Prince Alexander Sergeyevich Menshikov, who secured a tutor for Said because of his linguistic abilities.

In the 1872 memoirs, he reported familiarity or fluency with the following languages: Italian, German, Russian, Turkish, Arabic, Mandara, Kanuri, as well as Armenian. For a young man being brought up in slave trade, this was quite an accomplishment.

A worldwide traveler, Said visited Africa, the Middle East, Europe, the Russian Empire, the Caribbean, South America, Canada, and the United States. In parts of his memoirs, he wrote about the instability of his homeland, his pilgrimage to Mecca, and his conversion from Islam to Christianity.

From 1863-1865, Said reportedly served in the Union Army during the American Civil War. Said, nor any of his ancestors, were enslaved in the United States, which was

unlike most African Americans in the United States Army at this time. He volunteered to fight in the war. Near the end of the war, he expressed an interest in studying medicine.

A journalist’s account suggests that in 1867, Said fell in love with an American woman and married her. During Reconstruction, they were to have settled in Alabama in a town called St. Stephens. Said’s later life is unclear, but one account has him dying in Brownsville, Tennessee.

The Nicholas Said biography was written by Nicholas Sinibaldi, a University of Delaware student

### 3.5.1 “A Native of Bornoo” (1867)

Nicholas Said, at the time of his enlistment in the army of the Union, during the third year of the great Rebellion, was about twenty-eight years of age, of medium height, somewhat slenderly built, with pleasing features, not of the extreme negro type, complexion perfectly black, and quiet and unassuming address.

He became known to the writer while serving in one of our colored regiments; and attention was first directed to his case by the tattooing on his face, and by the entry in the company descriptive book, which gave “Africa” as his birthplace.

Inquiry showed that he was more or less acquainted with seven different languages, in addition to his native tongue; that he had travelled extensively in Africa and Europe, and that his life had been one of such varied experience as to render it interesting both on that account and also on account of the mystery which surrounds, notwithstanding recent explorations, the country of his birth.

At the request of those who had been from time to time entertained by the recital of portions of his history, he was induced to put it in writing. The narrative which follows is condensed from his manuscript, and his own language has been retained as far as possible.

Reader, you must excuse me for the mistakes which this article will contain, as you will bear in mind that this language in which I am now trying to write is not my mother tongue; on the other hand, I never had a teacher, nor ever was at school for the purpose of acquiring the English. The only way I learned what little of the language I know was through French books.

I was born in the kingdom of Bornoo, in Soodan, in the problematic central part of Africa, so imperfectly known to the civilized nations of Europe and America.

Soodan has several kingdoms, the country of the Fellatahs and Bornoo being the most powerful,—the territorial extent of the latter being some 810,000 square miles.

These nations are strict Mohammedans, having been converted some two or three centuries ago by the Bedouin Arabs and those from Morocco, who, pushed by want of riches, came to Soodan to acquire them. Different languages are found in each nation, some written and some not; but the Arabic is very much in use among the higher class of people, as the Latin is used by the Catholic priests. Especially the Koran is written in Arabic, and in my country no one is allowed to handle the Sacred Book unless he can read it and explain its contents.

Bornoo, my native country, is the most civilized part of Soodan, on account of the great commerce carried on between it and the Barbary States of Fezzan, Tunis, and Tripoli. They export all kinds of European articles to Central Africa, and take gold-dust, ivory, &c., in return.

Bornoo has had a romantic history for the last one hundred years. The whole of Soodan, more than two thousand miles in extent, was once under the Maïs of Bornoo; but by dissensions and civil wars nearly all the tributaries north of Lake Tchad were lost. In 1809 a shepherd arose from the country of the Fellatahs and assumed the title of Prophet. He said to the ignorant portion of his countrymen, that Allah had given him orders to make war with the whole of Soodan, and had promised him victory. They believed his story, and the legitimate king was dethroned and the false prophet, Otman Danfodio, was proclaimed Emperor of the

Fellatahs. The impostor went at once to work, and in less than two years conquered almost the whole of Soodan, excepting Kanem, a tributary to my country. Bornoo, after a manly effort, was compelled by force of arms to submit to the yoke of the Fellatahs.

In 1815 Bornoo arose from its humiliating position, to shake off the yoke of Danfodio. Mohammed el Anim el Kanemy, the Washington of Bornoo, was the man who undertook to liberate his country and restore her former prestige. This immortal hero could collect from the villages of Bornoo but a few hundreds of horsemen; but in Kanem he got eight hundred men, and accepted an engagement with the enemy. He gained the first victory, and took such good advantage of his success, that in the space of two months he won forty battles, drove the enemy entirely out of Bornoo, and captured a great many places belonging to the Fellatahs.

At the close of the war, El Kanemy found himself at the head of twenty-eight thousand horsemen, and the real ruler of Bornoo. Like all great men, he refused the sceptre, and, going to the legitimate heir of the throne, Maïs Barnoma, told him he was at his disposal. Barnoma, notwithstanding the noble actions of El Kanemy, was jealous of his fame, and tried a plan to dispose of him, which he thought would be best, and of which the public would not suspect him. Accordingly he wrote to the king of Begharmi, promising to pay the expenses of his troops, and some extra compensation beside, if he would make as though he were really at war with Bornoo. He agreed to the proposal, and crossed with his army the great river Shary, the natural frontier of the two kingdoms. El Kanemy was then in the city of Kooka, which he had built for himself. He heard finally of the war between Bornoo and Begharmi, and, hastily calling out his ancient veterans, he reported to Engornoo, where the king resided. The combined forces numbered some forty thousand men. El Kanemy knew nothing of the infamous act of the king; but Allah, who protects the innocent and punishes the guilty, was smiling over him. The armies pitched their camps opposite to each other; and the king of Begharmi sent a messenger with a letter to Maïs Barnoma, informing him that the heaviest assault would be made upon the left, and that, if he would give El Kanemy command there, the bravest of the assailants would surround and kill him at once. This letter the messenger carried to El Kanemy instead of the king, who, at once seeing the plot, immediately answered the important document, signing the name of Barnoma, and loading the messenger with presents of all descriptions for his master. The next morning El Kanemy went to the king and told him that the heaviest assault would be made on the right, and that he should not expose his precious life there. As Barnoma got no letter from the king of Begharmi, he thought El Kanemy was right, and acted accordingly.

The battle finally began, and the Sycaries of Begharmi, attacking the left where they thought El Kanemy was, surrounded Maïs Barnoma and killed him, supposing him El Kanemy. The battle, however, went on, and the king of Begharmi found out before long that he had killed the wrong lion. His army, in

spite of their usual courage, were beaten, and obliged to recross the river Shary, at that place more than two miles wide, with a loss of half their number. The victorious army of El Kanemy also crossed the river, and, pursuing the retreating forces, captured Mesna, the capital of Begharmi, and drove the king into the country of Waday.

El Kanemy now found himself the absolute ruler of Bornoo, nor had that kingdom ever any greater ruler. Under his reign the nation prospered finely. He encouraged commerce with Northern and Eastern Africa, and, building a fleet of small vessels, sailed with a strong force against a tribe who inhabited the main islands of Lake Tchad, and who used to commit depredations upon the neighboring sections of Bornoo, and chastised them severely. These islanders are the finest type of the African race, possessing regular features, and large, expressive eyes, though they are the darkest of all Africans. El Kanemy also subdued many of the surrounding tribes and nations, until the population of Bornoo and its provinces amounted to nearly fifteen millions.

My father was the descendant of a very illustrious family. He was the first man who had a commission under El Kanemy when he went to Kanem to recruit his forces. He was made a Bagafuby, or captain of one hundred cavalry, and was in every engagement which El Kanemy went through. The name by which my father was known was Barca Gana. My great-grandfather was from Molgoi. He established himself in Bornoo many years ago, and was greatly favored by the monarchs of that country. My mother was a Mandara woman, the daughter of a chief. I was born in Kooka, a few years after the Waday war of 1831. We were in all nineteen children, twelve boys and seven girls. I was the ninth child of my mother. All my brothers were well educated in Arabic and Turkish. Two of them, Mustapha and Abderahman, were very rich, having acquired their wealth by trading in ivory and gold-dust. Both had been to Mecca as pilgrims. My father himself was rich, but when he was killed, our elder brother seized the greater part, and those who were not eighteen years of age had to leave their share in their mother's hands. Five cleared farms and a considerable amount of gold fell to my share. I do not know how much the gold amounted to, but my mother used to tell me, that, when I got to be twenty years of age, I would have as much as either of my elder brothers.

After my father's death I was given to a teacher to be instructed in my native tongue, and also in Arabic. In the space of three years I could read and write both languages. I was tried in my native tongue, and passed; but I could not pass in Arabic, and my mother and uncle returned me to the teacher for eighteen months. I stayed the required time, and then was tried and passed.

I was then old enough to be circumcised. Three hundred boys went through the ceremony at once, and were then dressed in white clothes, and received according to custom a great many presents. Fifteen days we ate the best that Kooka had, the king himself giving us the best he had in his palace. This generally happens only

to the sons of those who have distinguished themselves in the army, or, to explain myself better, to those of the military aristocracy. At the end of this time all of us went home. For my part, this was the first time I had slept in my father's house for four years and seven months. I was very much welcomed by my mother, sisters, and brothers, and was a pet for some time.

After returning from school to my father's house, I judge about four or five years afterwards, I was invited, in company with three of my brothers, by the eldest son of the governor of the province of Yaoori and Laree, who lived in the town of the latter name, to visit him. This part of the province is very charming. The forests are full of delicious game, and the lake of fish and beautiful aquatic birds; while in the dry seasons the woods and uncultivated plains are worthy to be called the garden of Eden. In my childhood I had quite a passion for hunting, one of my father's great passions also. In spite of the efforts of my elder brothers to check me in it, I would persuade the other boys to follow me into the thick woods, to the danger of their lives and mine. My worthy mother declared several times that I would be captured by the Kindils, a wandering tribe of the desert. Her prophecy was fulfilled after all, unhappily for myself, and perhaps more so for those I had persuaded with me. While on the visit just spoken of, one day,—it was a Ramadan day, anniversary of the Prophet's day,—I persuaded a great number of boys, and we went into the woods a great way from any village. We came across nests of Guinea fowl, and gathered plenty of eggs, and killed several of the fowl. We made fire by rubbing two pieces of dry stick together, and broiled the chickens and eggs. Then we proceeded farther, and came across a tree called Agoua, bearing a delicious kind of fruit. We all went up the tree, eating fruit and making a great deal of noise. We frolicked on that tree for many hours. Presently several of the boys told me they heard the neighing of horses. We then all agreed not to make so much noise, but we were just too late. In about a quarter of an hour we were startled by the cry, "Kindil! Kindil!" The boys who were nearest to the ground contrived to hide themselves in the thicket. It happened that I was higher than any one, and while coming down with haste, I missed my hold and fell, and lay senseless. When I opened my eyes, I found myself on horseback behind a man, and tied to him with a rope. Out of forty boys, eighteen of us were taken captive. I wished then that it was a dream rather than a reality, and the warnings of my mother passed through my mind. Tears began to flow down my cheeks; I not only lamented for myself, but for those also whom I persuaded into those wild woods. Meanwhile, our inhuman captors were laughing and talking merrily, but I could not understand them. About six hours' ride, as I suppose, brought us to their camp. The tents were then immediately taken down, the camels loaded, and we started again, travelling night, and day for three long days, until we came to a temporary village where their chief was. After we got there we were all chained together, except four, who were taken pity upon, on account of their age and birth. It was then night, and nearly all the camp was under the influence of hashish, an intoxicating mixture made of hemp-seed and other ingredients, which when too much is eaten will intoxicate worse than whiskey, or even spirits of wine. While the robbers were drunk, we boys were consulting and plotting to run away. We



succeeded in breaking the chains, and four of the oldest boys took their captors' arms, cut their throats, jumped on their horses, and succeeded in making their escape. When it was found out, they gave each of us fifteen strokes in the hollows of our feet, because we did not inform them.

A little while after our comrades' escape we started on again. This time we had to go on foot for five days, until we reached a town called Kashna, belonging to the Emperor of the Fellatahs, but situated in the country of Houssa, where we were all dispersed to see each other no more. Fortunately, none of my brothers were with me in the woods.

My lot was that of an Arab slave, for I was bought by a man named Abd-el-Kader, a merchant of Tripoli and Fezzan. He was not an Arabian, however, but a brown-skinned man, and undoubtedly had African blood in his veins. He had at this time a large load of ivory and other goods waiting for the caravan from Kano and Sacca-too. This caravan soon came, and with it we started for Moorzook, capital of the pachalic of Fezzan. Although we numbered about five hundred, all armed except slaves who could not be trusted, a lion whom we met after starting, lying in our path, would not derange himself on our account, and we had to attack him. Twelve men fired into him. Four men he killed, and wounded five or six, and then escaped. He was hit somewhere, as they found blood where he lay, but it was not known where. When he roared, he scared all the horses and camels composing the caravan. Abd-el-Kader was one of those who attacked the lion, but he was not hurt.

Five days after we left Kashna, we came to the first oasis. Here the plains were all barren and sandy, but full of gazelles, antelopes, and ostriches. The principal tree growing here was the date-palm, and the water was very bad, tasting salty.

As the caravan travelled toward the east, the ground rose by degrees. If I am not mistaken, we passed five oases before we came into the country of Tibboo, a mountainous region between Bornoo and Fezzan, the inhabitants of which suffer considerably from the Kindils, though they are also robbers themselves. The capital of Tibboo is Boolma, built on a high mountain. I was disappointed when I saw the city, for I had heard that it was quite a large place. Laree, the smallest town in Bornoo, is a place of more importance. The people of Tibboo are of dark-brown complexion, and are noted in Soodan for their shrewdness. The day that the caravan happened to be at Boolma, two parties were in a warlike attitude about a fair maid whom each wished their chief to have for a wife. We did not stay long enough to see the issue of the fight, and two days' journey took us out of the kingdom of Tibboo.

As soon as the oasis of Tibboo was left, the country became very rocky,—the rock being a kind of black granite; and the Arabs had to make shoes for both their camels and slaves, for the rocks were very sharp, and if this precaution had not been taken, in a few hours their feet would have been so cut that they could not

have proceeded farther. Some Arabs would rather lose four or five slaves than a single camel. They rode very seldom. In a journey of ten or twelve weeks I saw Abd-el-Kader ride but once, and the majority never rode at all.

In these rocky regions of the desert a great amount of salt is found also,—what is called in our language Kalboo, and I believe, in English, carbonate of soda. Soodan is supplied by the Moors and Kindils with salt from the desert. Sea-shells are also occasionally found in this region. After we left Tibboo fire was never allowed, even in the oases, but I do not know for what reason.

The mountainous regions of the desert passed, we came to a more level country, but it was not long before we saw other mountains ahead. As we passed over the last of them, we found them very dangerous from their steepness, and a few camels were lost by falling into the ravines. After passing this dangerous place, a sign of vegetation was seen, oases were more frequent, and at last forests of date-palm, the fruit of which forms the principal food of both the inhabitants of Fezzan and their camels, became abundant.

El Kaheni is the first town or human habitation seen after leaving Tibboo. It is a small walled town, like all other places in Fezzan. Here I first saw the curious way in which the Fezzaneers cultivate their land by irrigation. Each farm has a large well, wide at the top and sloping toward the bottom, out of which water is drawn by donkeys, and poured into a trough, from which it runs into small ditches. This process is renewed every few days until the crop no longer needs watering.

The people of El Kaheni were very courteous. I had a long talk with a young man, who gave me a description of the capital, Moorzook, but his story did not agree with that which Abd-el-Kader told me. I afterwards found that the young man's story was correct. We left El Kaheni the next day, taking a large load of dates, superior to those of Soodan in size and sweetness. After three days' journey we could see in the distance a large flag on a long pole, on the top of the English Consulate, the largest house in the metropolis of Fezzan. We passed several villages of trifling importance, and at about noon arrived within the walls of Moorzook. There the caravan dissolved, and each man went to his own house.

I found Moorzook to be not larger than a quarter of my native town of Kooka; but the buildings were in general better, every house being of stone, though of course very poorly built in comparison with European dwellings. The city has four gates, one toward each cardinal point of the compass. The northern is the one by which the caravan entered; the eastern is a ruin; the southern, which is behind the Pacha's palace, has mounted by it two guns of large calibre; while the western, and the best of all, is situated near the barracks, which are fine buildings, larger even than the Pacha's palace. The pachalic of Fezzan is a tributary of the Ottoman Porte, and the Pacha, a Turk, is very much hated by the Bedouins.

After reaching Abd-el-Kader's house, I found that he was a poor man. The reader can form some idea from his living in the capital, and having but one wife, all his property consisting of a piece of land about two and a half miles from the city, a few donkeys, ten camels, old and young, an Arab slave, and myself. While I was yet with him he bought also a young Fellatah girl. As soon as we arrived, he sent me with Hassan, his slave, to the farm, where I worked some fifteen days. I told him then that I was not used to such work, and prayed him to sell me to some Turk or Egyptian. He asked me what my father used to do, and I told him that he was a warrior and also traded in gold-dust and ivory. On hearing my father's name he opened his eyes wide, and asked me why I did not tell him that in Soodan. He had known my father well, but had not seen him for fifteen rainy seasons. From that day Abd-el-Kader was very kind to me, and said he had a great notion to take me back. He, however, sold me after all to a young Turkish officer named Abdy Agra, an excellent young man, full of life and fun. This officer was always with the Pacha, and I believe was one of his aides. His wife was a Kanowry woman. He used to bring home money every night and often gave me some. After he had dressed me up, I accompanied him to the Pacha's every day. He spoke my language very correctly, only with an accent, like all strangers trying to speak Kanowry, and he began to teach me Turkish. Strange to say, in Fezzan the Bornoo tongue is in great vogue, rich and poor speaking Kanowry. I stayed with Abdy Agra more than three months; but one day he told me that he had to send me to his father in Tripoli. So long as I had to be a slave, I hated to leave so excellent a man, but I had to go. Accordingly, when the caravan was to start, he sent me in charge of Abd-el-Kader, the man from whom he had bought me. Before leaving the city we went to a house that I had never seen before, and had our names registered in a book by a very benevolent-looking man, who wore spectacles on his eyes, something I had never seen before, and which made me afraid of him. As we passed out of the city gate we were counted one by one by an officer.

On our arrival at Tripoli, Abd-el-Kader took me to an old house in a street narrow and dirty beyond description, where we passed the night. The next morning he went with me to my new master, Hadji Daoud, the father of Abdy Agra. When we found him he was sitting on a divan of velvet, smoking his narghile. He looked at that time to be about forty-five years old, and was of very fine appearance, having a long beard, white as snow. Abd-el-Kader seemed well acquainted with him, for they shook hands and drank coffee together. After this we proceeded to the Turkish Bazaar, where I found that he was a merchant of tobacco, and had an extensive shop, his own property. Hadji Daoud had three wives; the principal one was an Arabian, one was a native of my country, and one, and, to do her justice, the best looking of them all, was a Houssa girl. He believed in keeping a comfortable table, and we had mutton almost daily, and sometimes fowls. He had but one son, and he was far away. He told me that he intended to treat me as a son, and every day I went to the shop with him. He treated me always kindly, but madam was a cross and overbearing woman.

About this time my master started on his third pilgrimage to Mecca, leaving a friend in charge of his store, and taking me with him. We went by sail from Tripoli to Alexandria, touching at Bengazi. From Alexandria we went by cars to Ben Hadad, thence to Saida and Cairo, the capital of Egypt. From Cairo we travelled to Kartoom, at the forks of the Nile, and thence to Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia, where we stayed only twenty-four hours, my master being in continual fear of his life from the natives, who differed from him in belief, and then started for Zela, a port on the Red Sea. From Zela we sailed to Muscat, and thence proceeded to Mecca. I had not come of my own free will and for the express purpose of a pilgrimage, and therefore I was not permitted to go with Daoud to the grave of the Prophet, and was obliged to content myself without the title of Hadji, which is one much respected among the Mohammedans. We had returned as far as Alexandria on our way home, when my master was informed that his store and a great deal of property, in fact, all his goods and money, had been destroyed by fire. This made the good man almost crazy. He did not hesitate to tell me that he should have to sell me; but said that he would take care that I should have a rich and good master, a promise which he kept. The next day, with the present of a good suit of clothes, I was put on board a vessel bound for Smyrna and Constantinople. I was to be landed at the former city. On this vessel was a young man of eighteen, one of the crew, who spoke my own language. I have heard it only twice, I think, since that time.

At Smyrna I was sold to a Turkish officer, Yousouf Effendi, a very wealthy man, and brother-in-law to the celebrated Reschid Pacha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had a great many houses in Smyrna, as well as Constantinople. We sailed the next day for the latter city in a man-of-war steamer, the Abdul Medjid. My duty was that of a Tchidboudji, which consists in filling and cleaning the pipes and narghiles. This was all that I had to do, while I was well dressed in cloths and silks, and had plenty of leisure time. After a service of eighteen months with Yousouf Effendi, he gave me to his younger brother, Yousouf Kavass, less wealthy than himself. This brother was, however, a very kind-hearted man, and treated his slaves, a Nubian, a native of Sennar, and myself, very kindly. While in this service I became known to Prince Mentchikoff, the Envoy Extraordinary of Russia at Constantinople, and was finally sold to him by my master. At the declaration of the Crimean war, after sending his things on board the Russian steamer Vladimir, the Prince started with despatches for his august master, via Corfu, Athens, Zara, Trieste, Vienna, Cracow, and Warsaw, to St. Petersburg. I accompanied him on the journey, and, as the despatches were of the utmost importance, we travelled with the greatest speed.

The house of my master, to which we went, in St. Petersburg, was situated on the Nevskoi Prospekt, the Broadway of the city, and was built of granite, in the Doric style, and very spacious. His family consisted of his wife, one son, and three daughters, while his servants numbered about thirty. The Prince, however, was not so immensely rich as some Russian aristocrats of his standing. Shortly after his arrival at St. Petersburg, Prince Mentchikoff was assigned to command in the

army of the Crimea, and he hastened there, leaving me in St. Petersburg. After his departure, not being satisfied with the way in which the head servant treated me, I engaged service with Prince Nicholas Troubetzkoy.

This family, better known as Le Grand Troubetzkoy, are descendants of the Grand Duke of Lithuania. The Prince's father was noted for skill and bravery in the war of 1828. The Troubetzkoy's claim relationship with the Emperor of France, the Duc de Morny, the half-brother of the Emperor, having married the daughter of Prince Serges Troubetzkoy.

Prince Nicholas was the youngest of five sons, and lived with his brother André, not far from the Italian theatre, both of them being single.

While in this service, I was baptized in St. Petersburg, November 12, 1855, into the Greek Church, my name being changed from Mohammed-Ali-Ben-Said to Nicholas Said. Prince Nicholas was my godfather. I shall always feel grateful, so long as I live, for Prince Nicholas's kindness to me; but I cannot help thinking that the way I was baptized was not right, for I think that I ought to have known perfectly well the nature of the thing beforehand. Still, it was a good intention the Prince had toward my moral welfare. After I was baptized he was very kind to me, and he bought me a solid gold cross to wear on my breast, after the Russian fashion. I was the Prince's personal servant, going always in the carriage with him.

As the Czar Nicholas was godfather to the Prince, he had free access to the palace. Though he had several chances to become minister at some European court, he always refused, preferring to live a life of inaction. His health, however, was not very good, and he was very nervous. I have seen him faint scores of time in Russia; but when he left Russia, his health began to improve very much.

Everybody acquainted with Russia knows that Czar Nicholas used to make all the aristocracy tremble at his feet. No nobleman, to whatever rank he might belong, could leave the country without his consent, and paying a certain sum of money for the privilege. This measure of the Czar was not very well liked by the nobility, but his will was law, and had to be executed without grumbling.

Prince Troubetzkoy had several times made application for permission to travel, but without success, so long as Czar Nicholas lived; for he hated liberal ideas, and feared some of his subjects might, in the course of time, introduce those ideas from foreign countries into Russia.

The Prince passed the summer season outside of the city, a distance of about twenty-five versts, at a splendid residence of his own, a marble house about the size of the Fifth Avenue Hotel of New York City. Adjoining it was a small theatre, or glass house, containing tropical fruits, and a menagerie, where I first saw a llama, and the interior of the palace was lined with pictures and statues. It

was a magnificent building, but was getting to be quite old, and the Prince used to talk of repairing it, though he remarked it would cost many thousand roubles. This estate contained many thousand acres, and four good-sized villages, and was about eight miles square. I had here some of the happiest days of my life.

About this time I went with the Prince to Georgia,—his brother-in-law, a general in that department, having been wounded by the Circassians under Schamyl. We reached Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, in January, and remained there until after the capture of Kars by the English and Turks. While in the Caucasus, the Prince visited some of the neighboring parts of Persia, including Teheran and some smaller towns, and he returned to Russia by way of Novgorod.

After the death of Czar Nicholas, Alexander, his successor, gave the Prince permission to travel where he chose, without limit of time, and on the 24th of February he started, going first to Warsaw, and thence, via Cracow, to Vienna. Here I remained for two months, in charge of his effects, while he visited a sister in Pesth, in Hungary. On his return we went to Prague, and thence to Dresden. At this place, I was greatly bothered by the children. They said that they had never seen a black man before. But the thing which most attracted them was my Turkish dress, which I wore all the time in Europe. Every day, for the three weeks we remained in Dresden, whenever I went to take my walk I was surrounded by them to the number of several hundred. To keep myself from them, I used to ride in a carriage or on horseback, but this was too expensive. I thought the way I could do best was to be friendly with them. So I used to sit in the garden and speak with them,—that is, those who could understand French. They took a great liking to me, for I used sometimes to buy them fruits, candies, and other things, spending in this way a large amount. Prince Troubetzkoy had a brother, Prince Vladimir, living in Dresden, a very handsome and a very excellent man, but suffering from consumption. He treated me very kindly, and when we left gave me several very interesting books, both religious and secular.

From Dresden we went to Munich, thence to Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, Coblenz, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Brussels, and Ostende; then, returning to Brussels, visited the field of Waterloo, and proceeded to Switzerland, passing through Berne, Interlachen, over the Jura and St. Gothard's, to Zurich. From Zurich we went to Como in Lombardy, where the Prince's eldest brother, Alexander, had a villa on the borders of the lake. After a short stay here, we went on to Verona, and then to Milan, where I was left while the Prince made a short visit to Venice. Here, while left alone, I did not behave as well as I might have done, sometimes drinking too much, and spending my money foolishly. Here also I saw, for the first time since leaving Africa, a countryman. He was named Mirza, and was born about thirty-five miles from Kooka, my native place. He was considerably older than I, and had been away from Africa some fifteen years. He was waiting on a Venetian Marquis whose name I have forgotten.

After a stay of four weeks in Milan, we started, via Genoa, Leghorn, and Pisa, for Florence. Here I attended my master at two levees,—one at the palace of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, where I believe I had a better time than the Prince, and the other at Prince Demidoff's. This latter gentleman is a very wealthy Russian, and is very widely known. He is not a nobleman in Russia, however, but has his title from the Grand Duke. He is well known for the disagreeable propensity he has for beating his servants. While he was in Vienna he was worsted in an attempt to chastise a Hungarian footman, but he would not quit the practice, and has paid several fines imposed by law in consequence.

Our next stopping-place was Rome, where the Prince remained for the winter, making meanwhile a short visit to Naples, and leaving in the spring for Paris. We were in Paris when the Prince Imperial was born, and stayed until his christening, which was a very important day there. I remember well the wonder of a young Russian servant-girl, that France should have still so many soldiers as appeared in the procession,—a fraction only, of course, of her army,—after losing so many in the Crimea. The Prince always took a great pride in dress, both for himself and his servants, and particularly here. I was always dressed in Turkish costume, embroidered with gold, and never costing less than two or three hundred dollars.

After a three months' stay in Paris we went to London, where the Prince took rooms at a first-class boarding-house; but he was invited almost all the time to different country seats, where I had very gay times, for the English servants live better than any in Europe.

At the conclusion of his English visit, the Prince returned to Baden-Baden, this time renting a house. While there Napoleon III. passed through the place on his way to meet the Czar Alexander; and Prince Troubetzkoy was summoned to Frankfort-on-the-Main to attend on the latter. Here I was one day told by the Prince to dress myself in my best, and go to the Russian Ambassador's to wait on the Emperor at dinner. There were present beside the two Emperors, the King of Wurtemberg, the Grand Dukes of Baden, Hesse Darmstadt, and Nassau, the Ministers of France and Belgium, the Burgomaster of Frankfort, Messrs. Rothschild, and many others. A splendid dinner was served at six o'clock, the usual Russian dinner-hour, and was followed by a ball, which continued until two in the morning. A day previous to the monarch's departure Prince Gortchakoff handed my master thirty thalers as a present for me.

About this time I began to think of the condition of Africa, my native country, how European encroachments might be stopped, and her nationalities united. I thought how powerful the United States had become since 1776, and I wondered if I were capable of persuading the kings of Soodan to send several hundred boys to learn the arts and sciences existing in civilized countries. I thought that I would willingly sacrifice my life, if need be, in realizing my dreams. I cried many times at the ignorance of my people, exposed to foreign ambition, who, however good warriors they might be, could not contend against superior weapons and tactics in

the field. I prayed earnestly to be enabled to do some good to my race. The Prince could not but see that I was very sober, but I never told him my thoughts.

We stayed at Baden-Baden all summer and part of the fall, and then left for Paris. The Prince made this journey to visit his niece, who had just been married to the Duc de Morny, formerly the French Ambassador to Russia. She was a most beautiful person, only seventeen years of age. I was taken to see her, and kiss her hand, according to custom. She at first hesitated to give me her hand, undoubtedly being afraid. I had never seen her in Russia, as she was at the Imperial University, studying. After two weeks we again left Paris for Rome, via Switzerland, again passed the summer at Baden-Baden, again visited Paris, and various other points, until the year 1859 found the Prince again in London.

My desire to return to my native country had now become so strong, that I here told the Prince I must go home to my people. He tried to persuade me to the contrary, but I was inflexible in my determination. After he found that I was not to be persuaded, he got up with tears in his eyes, and said: "Said, I wish you good luck; you have served me honestly and faithfully, and if ever misfortune happens to you, remember I shall always be, as I always have been, interested in you." I, with many tears, replied that I was exceedingly thankful for all he had bestowed on me and done in my behalf, and that I should pray for him while I lived. I felt truly sorry to leave this most excellent Prince. As I was leaving, he gave me as a present two fifty-pound bills. It was many days before I overcame my regret. Often I could hardly eat for grief.

I now went to board at the Strangers' Home, at the West India Dock, five miles from where the Prince stopped. Here I waited for a steamer for Africa. Hardly had I been there two weeks, when a gentleman from Holland proposed to me a situation to travel with him in the United States and West India Islands. I had read much about these countries, and my desire to see them caused me to consent, and we left Liverpool soon after New Year's, 1860.

With this gentleman I went via Boston and New York to New Providence, Long Keys, Inagua, Kingston, Les Gonaives, St. Marc, Demerara, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and then back to New Providence, and from there by steamer to New York. We remained in New York two months, and then visited Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, Montreal, Quebec, and Ottawa, until, finally, at a small village called Elmer, my employer's funds gave out, and I lent him five hundred dollars of my own money. Of this five hundred I received back only three hundred and eighty, and this failure compelled me to remain in this country and earn my living by work to which I was unaccustomed.

At this point the written narrative of Nicholas ends, at some date during the year 1861. He afterward went to Detroit, and taught a school for those of his own color, meeting there, I believe, a clergyman whom he had seen years before in



Constantinople, while a servant to Prince Mentchikoff. At Detroit he enlisted in a colored regiment in the summer of 1863. He served faithfully and bravely with his regiment as corporal and sergeant in the Department of the South, and near the close of the war was attached, at his own request, to the hospital department, to acquire some knowledge of medicine. He was mustered out with the company in which he served, in the fall of 1865. But, alas for his plans of service to his countrymen in his native land! like many a warrior before him, he fell captive to woman, married at the South, and for some time past the writer, amidst the changes of business, has entirely lost sight of him.

### 3.6 William Dean Howells (1837-1920)

William Dean Howells was born in Martinsville, Ohio, in 1837. Howells's father was a newspaper editor, and Howells learned the skills of a writer and editor under his father's guidance. Howells continued to work in publishing until he secured a position with *The Atlantic Monthly* in Massachusetts in 1866, where he served as Assistant Editor. In 1871, Howells was promoted to editor of the magazine, and he continued working in that position until 1881. Howells, along with Mark Twain and Henry James, became one of the main advocates and theorists of American Literary Realism, a style of writing that reacted against the previous Romantic era's perceived literary excesses. Instead, the Realists praised the American novel that presented characters, setting, and action as "true to life." Howells's scope of influence on a generation of American writers can be seen in his endorsement of Henry James, Mark Twain, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Charles Chesnutt, Hamlin Garland, Frank Norris, and Stephen Crane, to name but a few. Howells eventually became known as the "Dean of American Letters" and today is considered the father of American Literary Realism. Howells produced his own creative work during his lifetime and is best remembered for two fine novels in the Realist tradition: *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), as well as a host of short stories and theoretical works on Realism. Howells lived a long, productive life, dying in 1920 at the age of 83.

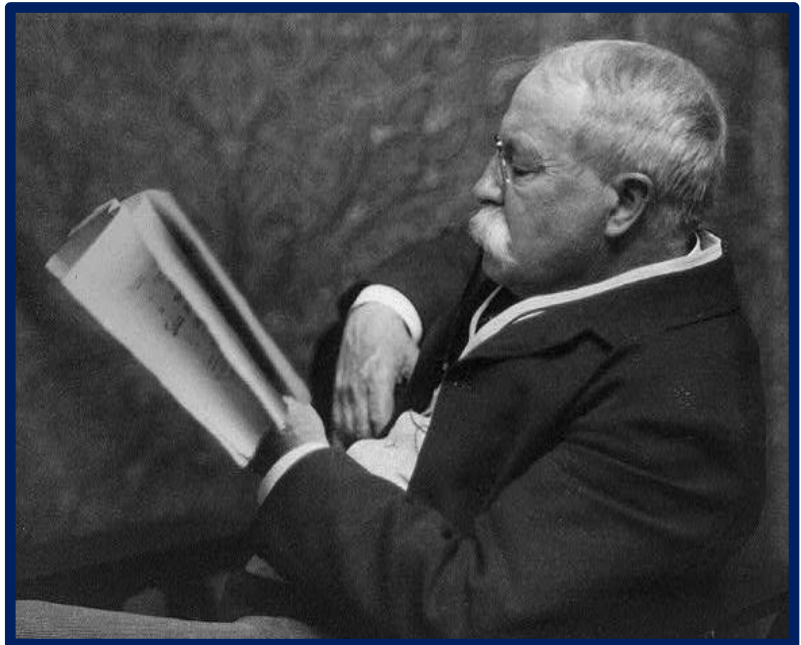


Image 3.5: William Dean Howells, circa 1900  
Photographer: Zaida Ben-Yusuf  
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With Mark Twain and Henry James, Howells wrote and spoke prolifically about Realism and its superiority over the earlier Romantic style practiced by authors such as James Fenimore Cooper. In *Criticism and Fiction* (1891), Howells sets forth his views on Realism, arguing that fiction should be "life-like" and "true to human experience." Howells, along with Twain in particular, rejected the idealistic, the fantastic, the heroic, and the exaggerated, preferring instead simplicity and honesty in fiction writing. Although there were some elements of reality that Howells preferred authors avoid, particularly the salacious and the sensational, Howells consistently privileged realism over idealism in his theory of writing fiction. Howells's own literary work espoused these principles. *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), two of his most famous novels, both deal with ordinary middle class people facing plausible personal conflicts in a contemporary setting. The characters are multi-faceted and dimensional, and the resolutions for the main characters are left open, as is often the case in "real life." In his famous short story "Editha," Howells explores a young woman's patriotic impulses in contrast to the

reality of war. He sets the story on the eve of the Spanish-American War, when nationalism was soaring and the desire for war with Spain was strong. Editha, a young woman who lives in the “ideal,” is caught up in the patriotic fervor, taking her understanding of the heroic from Romantic ideas that glorify war. She insists her fiancé George enlist in the army, imagining him as a heroic warrior leaving to fight for her. The story contrasts Editha’s naïve understanding of war with the grim reality of what war means for George.

The William Dean Howells biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.6.1 “Editha” (1905)

The air was thick with the war feeling, like the electricity of a storm which had not yet burst. Editha sat looking out into the hot spring afternoon, with her lips parted, and panting with the intensity of the question whether she could let him go. She had decided that she could not let him stay, when she saw him at the end of the still leafless avenue, making slowly up towards the house, with his head down and his figure relaxed. She ran impatiently out on the veranda, to the edge of the steps, and imperatively demanded greater haste of him with her will before she called him aloud to him: “George!”

He had quickened his pace in mystical response to her mystical urgency, before he could have heard her; now he looked up and answered, “Well?”

“Oh, how united we are!” she exulted, and then she swooped down the steps to him, “What is it?” she cried.

“It’s war,” he said, and he pulled her up to him and kissed her.

She kissed him back intensely, but irrelevantly, as to their passion, and uttered from deep in her throat. “How glorious!”

“It’s war,” he repeated, without consenting to her sense of it; and she did not know just what to think at first. She never knew what to think of him; that made his mystery, his charm. All through their courtship, which was contemporaneous with the growth of the war feeling, she had been puzzled by his want of seriousness about it. He seemed to despise it even more than he abhorred it. She could have understood his abhorring any sort of bloodshed; that would have been a survival of his old life when he thought he would be a minister, and before he changed and took up the law. But making light of a cause so high and noble seemed to show a want of earnestness at the core of his being. Not but that she felt herself able to cope with a congenital defect of that sort, and make his love for her save him from himself. Now perhaps the miracle was already wrought in him. In the presence of the tremendous fact that he announced, all triviality seemed to

have gone out of him; she began to feel that. He sank down on the top step, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, while she poured out upon him her question of the origin and authenticity of his news.

All the while, in her duplex emotioning, she was aware that now at the very beginning she must put a guard upon herself against urging him, by any word or act, to take the part that her whole soul willed him to take, for the completion of her ideal of him. He was very nearly perfect as he was, and he must be allowed to perfect himself. But he was peculiar, and he might very well be reasoned out of his peculiarity. Before her reasoning went her emotioning: her nature pulling upon his nature, her womanhood upon his manhood, without her knowing the means she was using to the end she was willing. She had always supposed that the man who won her would have done something to win her; she did not know what, but something. George Gearson had simply asked her for her love, on the way home from a concert, and she gave her love to him, without, as it were, thinking. But now, it flashed upon her, if he could do something worthy to *have* won her—be a hero, *her* hero—it would be even better than if he had done it before asking her; it would be grander. Besides, she had believed in the war from the beginning.

“But don’t you see, dearest,” she said, “that it wouldn’t have come to this if it hadn’t been in the order of Providence? And I call any war glorious that is for the liberation of people who have been struggling for years against the cruelest oppression. Don’t you think so, too?”

“I suppose so,” he returned, languidly. “But war! Is it glorious to break the peace of the world?”

“That ignoble peace! It was no peace at all, with that crime and shame at our very gates.” She was conscious of parroting the current phrases of the newspapers, but it was no time to pick and choose her words. She must sacrifice anything to the high ideal she had for him, and after a good deal of rapid argument she ended with the climax: “But now it doesn’t matter about the how or why. Since the war has come, all that is gone. There are no two sides any more. There is nothing now but our country.”

He sat with his eyes closed and his head leant back against the veranda, and he remarked, with a vague smile, as if musing aloud, “Our country—right or wrong.”

“Yes, right or wrong!” she returned, fervidly. “I’ll go and get you some lemonade.” She rose rustling, and whisked away; when she came back with two tall glasses of clouded liquid on a tray, and the ice clucking in them, he still sat as she had left him, and she said, as if there had been no interruption: “But there is no question of wrong in this case. I call it a sacred war. A war for liberty and humanity, if ever there was one. And I know you will see it just as I do, yet.”

He took half the lemonade at a gulp, and he answered as he set the glass down: "I know you always have the highest ideal. When I differ from you I ought to doubt myself."

A generous sob rose in Editha's throat for the humility of a man, so very nearly perfect, who was willing to put himself below her.

Besides, she felt, more subliminally, that he was never so near slipping through her fingers as when he took that meek way.

"You shall not say that! Only, for once I happen to be right." She seized his hand in her two hands, and poured her soul from her eyes into his. "Don't you think so?" she entreated him.

He released his hand and drank the rest of his lemonade, and she added, "Have mine, too," but he shook his head in answering, "I've no business to think so, unless I act so, too."

Her heart stopped a beat before it pulsed on with leaps that she felt in her neck. She had noticed that strange thing in men: they seemed to feel bound to do what they believed, and not think a thing was finished when they said it, as girls did. She knew what was in his mind, but she pretended not, and she said, "Oh, I am not sure," and then faltered.

He went on as if to himself, without apparently heeding her: "There's only one way of proving one's faith in a thing like this."

She could not say that she understood, but she did understand.

He went on again. "If I believed—if I felt as you do about this war— Do you wish me to feel as you do?"

Now she was really not sure; so she said: "George, I don't know what you mean."

He seemed to muse away from her as before. "There is a sort of fascination in it. I suppose that at the bottom of his heart every man would like at times to have his courage tested, to see how he would act."

"How can you talk in that ghastly way?"

"It *is* rather morbid. Still, that's what it comes to, unless you're swept away by ambition or driven by conviction. I haven't the conviction or the ambition, and the other thing is what it comes to with me. I ought to have been a preacher, after all; then I couldn't have asked it of myself, as I must, now I'm a lawyer. And you believe it's a holy war, Editha?" he suddenly addressed her. "Oh, I know you do! But you wish me to believe so, too?"

She hardly knew whether he was mocking or not, in the ironical way he always had with her plainer mind. But the only thing was to be outspoken with him.

“George, I wish you to believe whatever you think is true, at any and every cost. If I’ve tried to talk you into anything, I take it all back.”

“Oh, I know that, Editha. I know how sincere you are, and how— I wish I had your undoubting spirit! I’ll think it over; I’d like to believe as you do. But I don’t, now; I don’t, indeed. It isn’t this war alone; though this seems peculiarly wanton and needless; but it’s every war—so stupid; it makes me sick. Why shouldn’t this thing have been settled reasonably?”

“Because,” she said, very throatily again, “God meant it to be war.”

“You think it was God? Yes, I suppose that is what people will say.”

“Do you suppose it would have been war if God hadn’t meant it?”

“I don’t know. Sometimes it seems as if God had put this world into men’s keeping to work it as they pleased.”

“Now, George, that is blasphemy.”

“Well, I won’t blaspheme. I’ll try to believe in your pocket Providence,” he said, and then he rose to go.

“Why don’t you stay to dinner?” Dinner at Balcom’s Works was at one o’clock.

“I’ll come back to supper, if you’ll let me. Perhaps I shall bring you a convert.”

“Well, you may come back, on that condition.”

“All right. If I don’t come, you’ll understand.”

He went away without kissing her, and she felt it a suspension of their engagement. It all interested her intensely; she was undergoing a tremendous experience, and she was being equal to it. While she stood looking after him, her mother came out through one of the long windows onto the veranda, with a catlike softness and vagueness.

“Why didn’t he stay to dinner?”

“Because—because—war has been declared,” Editha pronounced, without turning.

Her mother said, "Oh, my!" and then said nothing more until she had sat down in one of the large Shaker chairs and rocked herself for some time. Then she closed whatever tacit passage of thought there had been in her mind with the spoken words: "Well, I hope *he* won't go."

"And *I* hope he *will*," the girl said, and confronted her mother with a stormy exaltation that would have frightened any creature less unimpressible than a cat.

Her mother rocked herself again for an interval of cogitation. What she arrived at in speech was: "Well, I guess you've done a wicked thing, Editha Balcom."

The girl said, as she passed indoors through the same window her mother had come out by: "I haven't done anything—yet."

In her room, she put together all her letters and gifts from Gearson, down to the withered petals of the first flower he had offered, with that timidity of his veiled in that irony of his. In the heart of the packet she enshrined her engagement ring which she had restored to the pretty box he had brought it her in. Then she sat down, if not calmly yet strongly, and wrote:

"George:—I understood when you left me. But I think we had better emphasize your meaning that if we cannot be one in everything we had better be one in nothing. So I am sending these things for your keeping till you have made up your mind.

"I shall always love you, and therefore I shall never marry any one else. But the man I marry must love his country first of all, and be able to say to me,  
'I could not love thee, dear so much,  
Loved I not honor more.'

"There is no honor above America with me. In this great hour there is no other honor.

"Your heart will make my words clear to you. I had never expected to say so much, but it has come upon me that I must say the utmost. Editha."

She thought she had worded her letter well, worded it in a way that could not be bettered; all had been implied and nothing expressed.

She had it ready to send with the packet she had tied with red, white, and blue ribbon, when it occurred to her that she was not just to him, that she was not giving him a fair chance. He had said he would go and think it over, and she was not waiting. She was pushing, threatening, compelling. That was not a woman's part. She must leave him free, free, free. She could not accept for her country or herself a forced sacrifice.

In writing her letter she had satisfied the impulse from which it sprang; she could well afford to wait till he had thought it over. She put the packet and the letter by, and rested serene in the consciousness of having done what was laid upon her by her love itself to do, and yet used patience, mercy, justice.

She had her reward. Gearson did not come to tea, but she had given him till morning, when, late at night there came up from the village the sound of a fife and drum, with a tumult of voices, in shouting, singing, and laughing. The noise drew nearer and nearer; it reached the street end of the avenue; there it silenced itself, and one voice, the voice she knew best, rose over the silence. It fell; the air was filled with cheers; the fife and drum struck up, with the shouting, singing, and laughing again, but now retreating; and a single figure came hurrying up the avenue.

She ran down to meet her lover and clung to him. He was very gay, and he put his arm round her with a boisterous laugh. "Well, you must call me Captain now; or Cap, if you prefer; that's what the boys call me. Yes, we've had a meeting at the town-hall, and everybody has volunteered; and they selected me for captain, and I'm going to the war, the big war, the glorious war, the holy war ordained by the pocket Providence that blesses butchery. Come along; let's tell the whole family about it. Call them from their downy beds, father, mother, Aunt Hitty, and all the folks!"

But when they mounted the veranda steps he did not wait for a larger audience; he poured the story out upon Editha alone.

"There was a lot of speaking, and then some of the fools set up a shout for me. It was all going one way, and I thought it would be a good joke to sprinkle a little cold water on them. But you can't do that with a crowd that adores you. The first thing I knew I was sprinkling hell-fire on them. 'Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war.' That was the style. Now that it had come to the fight, there were no two parties; there was one country, and the thing was to fight to a finish as quick as possible. I suggested volunteering then and there, and I wrote my name first of all on the roster. Then they elected me—that's all. I wish I had some ice-water."

She left him walking up and down the veranda, while she ran for the ice-pitcher and a goblet, and when she came back he was still walking up and down, shouting the story he had told her to her father and mother, who had come out more sketchily dressed than they commonly were by day. He drank goblet after goblet of the ice-water without noticing who was giving it, and kept on talking, and laughing through his talk wildly. "It's astonishing," he said, "how well the worse reason looks when you try to make it appear the better. Why, I believe I was the first convert to the war in that crowd to-night! I never thought I should like to kill a man; but now I shouldn't care; and the smokeless powder lets you see the man



drop that you kill. It's all for the country! What a thing it is to have a country that *can't* be wrong, but if it is, is right, anyway!"

Editha had a great, vital thought, an inspiration. She set down the ice-pitcher on the veranda floor, and ran up-stairs and got the letter she had written him. When at last he noisily bade her father and mother, "Well, good-night. I forgot I woke you up; I sha'n't want any sleep myself," she followed him down the avenue to the gate. There, after the whirling words that seemed to fly away from her thoughts and refuse to serve them, she made a last effort to solemnize the moment that seemed so crazy, and pressed the letter she had written upon him.

"What's this?" he said. "Want me to mail it?"

"No, no. It's for you. I wrote it after you went this morning. Keep it—keep it—and read it sometime—" She thought, and then her inspiration came: "Read it if ever you doubt what you've done, or fear that I regret your having done it. Read it after you've started."

They strained each other in embraces that seemed as ineffective as their words, and he kissed her face with quick, hot breaths that were so unlike him, that made her feel as if she had lost her old lover and found a stranger in his place. The stranger said: "What a gorgeous flower you are, with your red hair, and your blue eyes that look black now, and your face with the color painted out by the white moonshine! Let me hold you under the chin, to see whether I love blood, you tiger-lily!" Then he laughed Gearson's laugh, and released her, scared and giddy. Within her wilfulness she had been frightened by a sense of subtler force in him, and mystically mastered as she had never been before.

She ran all the way back to the house, and mounted the steps panting. Her mother and father were talking of the great affair. Her mother said: "Wa'n't Mr. Gearson in rather of an excited state of mind? Didn't you think he acted curious?"

"Well, not for a man who'd just been elected captain and had set 'em up for the whole of Company A," her father chuckled back.

"What in the world do you mean, Mr. Balcom? Oh! There's Editha!" She offered to follow the girl indoors.

"Don't come, mother!" Editha called, vanishing.

Mrs. Balcom remained to reproach her husband. "I don't see much of anything to laugh at."

"Well, it's catching. Caught it from Gearson. I guess it won't be much of a war, and I guess Gearson don't think so either. The other fellows will back down as

soon as they see we mean it. I wouldn't lose any sleep over it. I'm going back to bed, myself."

Gearson came again next afternoon, looking pale and rather sick, but quite himself, even to his languid irony. "I guess I'd better tell you, Editha, that I consecrated myself to your god of battles last night by pouring too many libations to him down my own throat. But I'm all right now. One has to carry off the excitement, somehow."

"Promise me," she commanded, "that you'll never touch it again!"

"What! Not let the cannikin clink? Not let the soldier drink? Well, I promise."

"You don't belong to yourself now; you don't even belong to *me*. You belong to your country, and you have a sacred charge to keep yourself strong and well for your country's sake. I have been thinking, thinking all night and all day long."

"You look as if you had been crying a little, too," he said, with his queer smile.

"That's all past. I've been thinking, and worshipping *you*. Don't you suppose I know all that you've been through, to come to this? I've followed you every step from your old theories and opinions."

"Well, you've had a long row to hoe."

"And I know you've done this from the highest motives—"

"Oh, there won't be much pettifoggery to do till this cruel war is—"

"And you haven't simply done it for my sake. I couldn't respect you if you had."

"Well, then we'll say I haven't. A man that hasn't got his own respect intact wants the respect of all the other people he can corner. But we won't go into that. I'm in for the thing now, and we've got to face our future. My idea is that this isn't going to be a very protracted struggle; we shall just scare the enemy to death before it comes to a fight at all. But we must provide for contingencies, Editha. If anything happens to me—"

"Oh, George!" She clung to him, sobbing.

"I don't want you to feel foolishly bound to my memory. I should hate that, wherever I happened to be."

"I am yours, for time and eternity—time and eternity." She liked the words; they satisfied her famine for phrases.

“Well, say eternity; that’s all right; but time’s another thing; and I’m talking about time. But there is something! My mother! If anything happens—”

She winced, and he laughed. “You’re not the bold soldier-girl of yesterday!” Then he sobered. “If anything happens, I want you to help my mother out. She won’t like my doing this thing. She brought me up to think war a fool thing as well as a bad thing. My father was in the Civil War; all through it; lost his arm in it.” She thrilled with the sense of the arm round her; what if that should be lost? He laughed as if divining her: “Oh, it doesn’t run in the family, as far as I know!” Then he added gravely: “He came home with misgivings about war, and they grew on him. I guess he and mother agreed between them that I was to be brought up in his final mind about it; but that was before my time. I only knew him from my mother’s report of him and his opinions; I don’t know whether they were hers first; but they were hers last. This will be a blow to her. I shall have to write and tell her—”

He stopped, and she asked: “Would you like me to write, too, George?”

“I don’t believe that would do. No, I’ll do the writing. She’ll understand a little if I say that I thought the way to minimize it was to make war on the largest possible scale at once—that I felt I must have been helping on the war somehow if I hadn’t helped keep it from coming, and I knew I hadn’t; when it came, I had no right to stay out of it.”

Whether his sophistries satisfied him or not, they satisfied her. She clung to his breast, and whispered, with closed eyes and quivering lips: “Yes, yes, yes!”

“But if anything should happen, you might go to her and see what you could do for her. You know? It’s rather far off; she can’t leave her chair—”

“Oh, I’ll go, if it’s the ends of the earth! But nothing will happen! Nothing *can*! I—”

She felt her lifted with his rising, and Gearson was saying, with his arm still round her, to her father: “Well, we’re off at once, Mr. Balcom. We’re to be formally accepted at the capital, and then bunched up with the rest somehow, and sent into camp somewhere, and got to the front as soon as possible. We all want to be in the van, of course; we’re the first company to report to the Governor. I came to tell Editha, but I hadn’t got round to it.”

She saw him again for a moment at the capital, in the station, just before the train started southward with his regiment. He looked well, in his uniform, and very soldierly, but somehow girlish, too, with his clean-shaven face and slim figure. The manly eyes and the strong voice satisfied her, and his preoccupation with some unexpected details of duty flattered her. Other girls were weeping and

bemoaning themselves, but she felt a sort of noble distinction in the abstraction, the almost unconsciousness, with which they parted. Only at the last moment he said: "Don't forget my mother. It mayn't be such a walk-over as I supposed," and he laughed at the notion.

He waved his hand to her as the train moved off—she knew it among a score of hands that were waved to other girls from the platform of the car, for it held a letter which she knew was hers. Then he went inside the car to read it, doubtless, and she did not see him again. But she felt safe for him through the strength of what she called her love. What she called her God, always speaking the name in a deep voice and with the implication of a mutual understanding, would watch over him and keep him and bring him back to her. If with an empty sleeve, then he should have three arms instead of two, for both of hers should be his for life. She did not see, though, why she should always be thinking of the arm his father had lost.

There were not many letters from him, but they were such as she could have wished, and she put her whole strength into making hers such as she imagined he could have wished, glorifying and supporting him. She wrote to his mother glorifying him as their hero, but the brief answer she got was merely to the effect that Mrs. Gearson was not well enough to write herself, and thanking her for her letter by the hand of someone who called herself "Yrs truly, Mrs. W. J. Andrews."

Editha determined not to be hurt, but to write again quite as if the answer had been all she expected. Before it seemed as if she could have written, there came news of the first skirmish, and in the list of the killed, which was telegraphed as a trifling loss on our side, was Gearson's name. There was a frantic time of trying to make out that it might be, must be, some other Gearson; but the name and the company and the regiment and the State were too definitely given.

Then there was a lapse into depths out of which it seemed as if she never could rise again; then a lift into clouds far above all grief, black clouds, that blotted out the sun, but where she soared with him, with George—George! She had the fever that she expected of herself, but she did not die in it; she was not even delirious, and it did not last long. When she was well enough to leave her bed, her one thought was of George's mother, of his strangely worded wish that she should go to her and see what she could do for her. In the exaltation of the duty laid upon her—it buoyed her up instead of burdening her—she rapidly recovered.

Her father went with her on the long railroad journey from northern New York to western Iowa; he had business out at Davenport, and he said he could just as well go then as any other time; and he went with her to the little country town where George's mother lived in a little house on the edge of the illimitable cornfields, under trees pushed to a top of the rolling prairie. George's father had settled there after the Civil War, as so many other old soldiers had done; but they were Eastern people, and Editha fancied touches of the East in the June rose overhanging the

front door, and the garden with early summer flowers stretching from the gate of the paling fence.

It was very low inside the house, and so dim, with the closed blinds, that they could scarcely see one another: Editha tall and black in her crapes which filled the air with the smell of their dyes; her father standing decorously apart with his hat on his forearm, as at funerals; a woman rested in a deep arm-chair, and the woman who had let the strangers in stood behind the chair.

The seated woman turned her head round and up, and asked the woman behind her chair: “*Who* did you say?”

Editha, if she had done what she expected of herself, would have gone down on her knees at the feet of the seated figure and said, “I am George’s Editha,” for answer.

But instead of her own voice she heard that other woman’s voice, saying: “Well, I don’t know as I *did* get the name just right. I guess I’ll have to make a little more light in here,” and she went and pushed two of the shutters ajar.

Then Editha’s father said, in his public will-now-address-a-few-remarks tone: “My name is Balcom, ma’am—Junius H. Balcom, of Balcom’s Works, New York; my daughter—”

“Oh!” the seated woman broke in, with a powerful voice, the voice that always surprised Editha from Gearson’s slender frame. “Let me see you. Stand round where the light can strike on your face,” and Editha dumbly obeyed. “So, you’re Editha Balcom,” she sighed.

“Yes,” Editha said, more like a culprit than a comforter.

“What did you come for?” Mrs. Gearson asked.

Editha’s face quivered and her knees shook. “I came—because—because George—” She could go no further.

“Yes,” the mother said, “he told me he had asked you to come if he got killed. You didn’t expect that, I suppose, when you sent him.”

“I would rather have died myself than done it!” Editha said, with more truth in her deep voice than she ordinarily found in it. “I tried to leave him free—”

“Yes, that letter of yours, that came back with his other things, left him free.”

Editha saw now where George’s irony came from.

“It was not to be read before—unless—until— I told him so,” she faltered.

“Of course, he wouldn’t read a letter of yours, under the circumstances, till he thought you wanted him to. Been sick?” the woman abruptly demanded.

“Very sick,” Editha said, with self-pity.

“Daughter’s life,” her father interposed, “was almost despaired of, at one time.”

Mrs. Gearson gave him no heed. “I suppose you would have been glad to die, such a brave person as you! I don’t believe *he* was glad to die. He was always a timid boy, that way; he was afraid of a good many things; but if he was afraid he did what he made up his mind to. I suppose he made up his mind to go, but I knew what it cost him by what it cost me when I heard of it. I had been through *one* war before. When you sent him you didn’t expect he would get killed.”

The voice seemed to compassionate Editha, and it was time. “No,” she huskily murmured.

“No, girls don’t; women don’t, when they give their men up to their country. They think they’ll come marching back, somehow, just as gay as they went, or if it’s an empty sleeve, or even an empty pantaloon, it’s all the more glory, and they’re so much the prouder of them, poor things!”

The tears began to run down Editha’s face; she had not wept till then; but it was now such a relief to be understood that the tears came.

“No, you didn’t expect him to get killed,” Mrs. Gearson repeated, in a voice which was startlingly like George’s again. “You just expected him to kill some one else, some of those foreigners, that weren’t there because they had any say about it, but because they had to be there, poor wretches—conscripts, or whatever they call ’em. You thought it would be all right for my George, *your* George, to kill the sons of those miserable mothers and the husbands of those girls that you would never see the faces of.” The woman lifted her powerful voice in a psalmlike note. “I thank my God he didn’t live to do it! I thank my God they killed him first, and that he ain’t livin’ with their blood on his hands!” She dropped her eyes, which she had raised with her voice, and glared at Editha. “What you got that black on for?” She lifted herself by her powerful arms so high that her helpless body seemed to hang limp its full length. “Take it off, take it off, before I tear it from your back!”

The lady who was passing the summer near Balcom’s Works was sketching Editha’s beauty, which lent itself wonderfully to the effects of a colorist. It had come to that confidence which is rather apt to grow between artist and sitter, and Editha had told her everything.

“To think of your having such a tragedy in your life!” the lady said. She added: “I suppose there are people who feel that way about war. But when you consider the good this war has done—how much it has done for the country! I can’t understand such people, for my part. And when you had come all the way out there to console her—got up out of a sick-bed! Well!”

“I think,” Editha said, magnanimously, “she wasn’t quite in her right mind; and so did papa.”

“Yes,” the lady said, looking at Editha’s lips in nature and then at her lips in art, and giving an empirical touch to them in the picture. “But how dreadful of her! How perfectly—excuse me—how *vulgar!*”

A light broke upon Editha in the darkness which she felt had been without a gleam of brightness for weeks and months. The mystery that had bewildered her was solved by the word; and from that moment she rose from grovelling in shame and self-pity, and began to live again in the ideal.

### 3.7 Henry James (1843-1916)

Henry James was born in New York City in 1843 to a wealthy family. James's father, Henry James, Sr., was a theologian and philosopher who provided James and his siblings with a life rich in travel and exposure to different cultures and languages. Having lived abroad for several years, the James family returned to America prior to the start of the Civil War, settling in Newport, Rhode Island, and later in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Unable to serve in the Union Army during the Civil War as a result of a physical disability, James attended Harvard Law School before deciding to embark on a life of traveling and writing, eventually locating to London in 1876. James's short works soon came to the attention of William Dean Howells, then assistant editor at the *Atlantic Monthly* in Boston, and James and Howells eventually became proponents and literary theorists for the Realism movement in literature that had reached American shores. Although gregarious and well-connected to leading artists and intellectuals of his age, James never married, preferring to live alone and to focus his personal time on reading and writing. While James spent a number of years traveling between England and America, he lived most of his adult life in England, eventually receiving British citizenship in 1915, one year before he died.

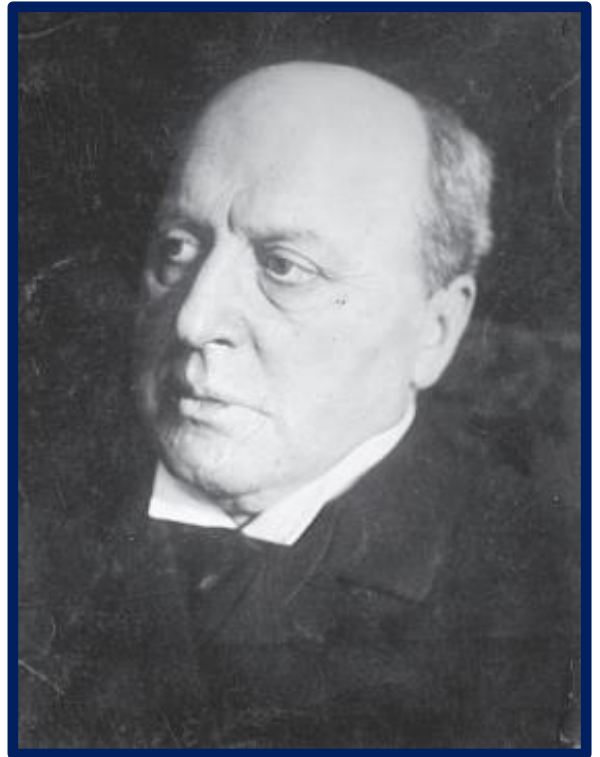


Image 3.6: Henry James, 1910  
Photographer: Bain News Service  
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James was one of the leading proponents of American Literary Realism, along with William Dean Howells and Mark Twain. James's *The Art of Fiction* (1884) sets forth many of James's ideas about the nature and importance of Realistic fiction. Often described as a psychological Realist, James went further than Howells and Twain in terms of experimentation with point of view, particularly in employing unreliable narrators and interior monologues. His notable novel-length works, including *Daisy Miller* (1878), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Bostonians* (1886), *What Maisie Knew* (1897), *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), and *The Ambassadors* (1903), examine a variety of themes, such as the plight of strong-willed or precocious young women or children at odds with the pressures of conventional society, tensions arising from transatlantic travel and living abroad where Americans experience clashes between American and European cultures, and emotional devastation resulting from a life not fully lived.

James's *Daisy Miller, A Study* (1878) is a novella that focuses on a young independent-minded American girl traveling abroad with her mother and brother in Europe who meets an American living abroad, Frederick Winterbourne. Her interactions with Winterbourne provide an examination of ways in which Daisy is viewed by those acclimated to European manners and unwritten rules of etiquette and behavior for young women. Winterbourne's obsessive desire to



understand whether or not Daisy is “innocent” provides much of the plot of the story. He cannot determine, for example, whether she is a playful young girl, simply ignorant of the cultural conventions of place and time, or whether she is more worldly and manipulative than meets the eye. Winterbourne himself becomes a psychological study: is his preoccupation with Daisy’s innocence a reflection of his own inhibitions? Is he living essentially a half-life, unable or unwilling to commit fully to another person? Is he paralyzed in a complex web of social or psychological fears? In characteristic Realist style, James offers no resolution at the end of the story, allowing questions about Daisy’s character and Winterbourne’s future to go unanswered.

The Henry James biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.7.1 “Daisy Miller” (1878)

#### PART I

At the little town of Vevey, in Switzerland, there is a particularly comfortable hotel. There are, indeed, many hotels, for the entertainment of tourists is the business of the place, which, as many travelers will remember, is seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake—a lake that it behooves every tourist to visit. The shore of the lake presents an unbroken array of establishments of this order, of every category, from the “grand hotel” of the newest fashion, with a chalk-white front, a hundred balconies, and a dozen flags flying from its roof, to the little Swiss pension of an elder day, with its name inscribed in German-looking lettering upon a pink or yellow wall and an awkward summerhouse in the angle of the garden. One of the hotels at Vevey, however, is famous, even classical, being distinguished from many of its upstart neighbors by an air both of luxury and of maturity. In this region, in the month of June, American travelers are extremely numerous; it may be said, indeed, that Vevey assumes at this period some of the characteristics of an American watering place. There are sights and sounds which evoke a vision, an echo, of Newport and Saratoga. There is a flitting hither and thither of “stylish” young girls, a rustling of muslin flounces, a rattle of dance music in the morning hours, a sound of high-pitched voices at all times. You receive an impression of these things at the excellent inn of the “Trois Couronnes” and are transported in fancy to the Ocean House or to Congress Hall. But at the “Trois Couronnes,” it must be added, there are other features that are much at variance with these suggestions: neat German waiters, who look like secretaries of legation; Russian princesses sitting in the garden; little Polish boys walking about held by the hand, with their governors; a view of the sunny crest of the Dent du Midi and the picturesque towers of the Castle of Chillon.

I hardly know whether it was the analogies or the differences that were uppermost in the mind of a young American, who, two or three years ago, sat in the garden of the “Trois Couronnes,” looking about him, rather idly, at some of the graceful

objects I have mentioned. It was a beautiful summer morning, and in whatever fashion the young American looked at things, they must have seemed to him charming. He had come from Geneva the day before by the little steamer, to see his aunt, who was staying at the hotel—Geneva having been for a long time his place of residence. But his aunt had a headache—his aunt had almost always a headache—and now she was shut up in her room, smelling camphor, so that he was at liberty to wander about. He was some seven-and-twenty years of age; when his friends spoke of him, they usually said that he was at Geneva “studying.” When his enemies spoke of him, they said—but, after all, he had no enemies; he was an extremely amiable fellow, and universally liked. What I should say is, simply, that when certain persons spoke of him they affirmed that the reason of his spending so much time at Geneva was that he was extremely devoted to a lady who lived there—a foreign lady—a person older than himself. Very few Americans—indeed, I think none—had ever seen this lady, about whom there were some singular stories. But Winterbourne had an old attachment for the little metropolis of Calvinism; he had been put to school there as a boy, and he had afterward gone to college there—circumstances which had led to his forming a great many youthful friendships. Many of these he had kept, and they were a source of great satisfaction to him.

After knocking at his aunt’s door and learning that she was indisposed, he had taken a walk about the town, and then he had come in to his breakfast. He had now finished his breakfast; but he was drinking a small cup of coffee, which had been served to him on a little table in the garden by one of the waiters who looked like an attache. At last he finished his coffee and lit a cigarette. Presently a small boy came walking along the path—an urchin of nine or ten. The child, who was diminutive for his years, had an aged expression of countenance, a pale complexion, and sharp little features. He was dressed in knickerbockers, with red stockings, which displayed his poor little spindle-shanks; he also wore a brilliant red cravat. He carried in his hand a long alpenstock, the sharp point of which he thrust into everything that he approached—the flowerbeds, the garden benches, the trains of the ladies’ dresses. In front of Winterbourne he paused, looking at him with a pair of bright, penetrating little eyes.

“Will you give me a lump of sugar?” he asked in a sharp, hard little voice—a voice immature and yet, somehow, not young.

Winterbourne glanced at the small table near him, on which his coffee service rested, and saw that several morsels of sugar remained. “Yes, you may take one,” he answered; “but I don’t think sugar is good for little boys.”

This little boy stepped forward and carefully selected three of the coveted fragments, two of which he buried in the pocket of his knickerbockers, depositing the other as promptly in another place. He poked his alpenstock, lance-fashion, into Winterbourne’s bench and tried to crack the lump of sugar with his teeth.

“Oh, blazes; it’s har-r-d!” he exclaimed, pronouncing the adjective in a peculiar manner.

Winterbourne had immediately perceived that he might have the honor of claiming him as a fellow countryman. “Take care you don’t hurt your teeth,” he said, paternally.

“I haven’t got any teeth to hurt. They have all come out. I have only got seven teeth. My mother counted them last night, and one came out right afterward. She said she’d slap me if any more came out. I can’t help it. It’s this old Europe. It’s the climate that makes them come out. In America they didn’t come out. It’s these hotels.”

Winterbourne was much amused. “If you eat three lumps of sugar, your mother will certainly slap you,” he said.

“She’s got to give me some candy, then,” rejoined his young interlocutor. “I can’t get any candy here—any American candy. American candy’s the best candy.”

“And are American little boys the best little boys?” asked Winterbourne.

“I don’t know. I’m an American boy,” said the child.

“I see you are one of the best!” laughed Winterbourne.

“Are you an American man?” pursued this vivacious infant. And then, on Winterbourne’s affirmative reply—“American men are the best,” he declared.

His companion thanked him for the compliment, and the child, who had now got astride of his alpenstock, stood looking about him, while he attacked a second lump of sugar. Winterbourne wondered if he himself had been like this in his infancy, for he had been brought to Europe at about this age.

“Here comes my sister!” cried the child in a moment. “She’s an American girl.”

Winterbourne looked along the path and saw a beautiful young lady advancing. “American girls are the best girls,” he said cheerfully to his young companion.

“My sister ain’t the best!” the child declared. “She’s always blowing at me.”

“I imagine that is your fault, not hers,” said Winterbourne. The young lady meanwhile had drawn near. She was dressed in white muslin, with a hundred frills and flounces, and knots of pale-colored ribbon. She was bareheaded, but she balanced in her hand a large parasol, with a deep border of embroidery; and she was strikingly, admirably pretty. “How pretty they are!” thought Winterbourne, straightening himself in his seat, as if he were prepared to rise.

The young lady paused in front of his bench, near the parapet of the garden, which overlooked the lake. The little boy had now converted his alpenstock into a vaulting pole, by the aid of which he was springing about in the gravel and kicking it up not a little.

“Randolph,” said the young lady, “what ARE you doing?”

“I’m going up the Alps,” replied Randolph. “This is the way!” And he gave another little jump, scattering the pebbles about Winterbourne’s ears.

“That’s the way they come down,” said Winterbourne.

“He’s an American man!” cried Randolph, in his little hard voice.

The young lady gave no heed to this announcement, but looked straight at her brother. “Well, I guess you had better be quiet,” she simply observed.

It seemed to Winterbourne that he had been in a manner presented. He got up and stepped slowly toward the young girl, throwing away his cigarette. “This little boy and I have made acquaintance,” he said, with great civility. In Geneva, as he had been perfectly aware, a young man was not at liberty to speak to a young unmarried lady except under certain rarely occurring conditions; but here at Vevey, what conditions could be better than these?—a pretty American girl coming and standing in front of you in a garden. This pretty American girl, however, on hearing Winterbourne’s observation, simply glanced at him; she then turned her head and looked over the parapet, at the lake and the opposite mountains. He wondered whether he had gone too far, but he decided that he must advance farther, rather than retreat. While he was thinking of something else to say, the young lady turned to the little boy again.

“I should like to know where you got that pole,” she said.

“I bought it,” responded Randolph.

“You don’t mean to say you’re going to take it to Italy?”

“Yes, I am going to take it to Italy,” the child declared.

The young girl glanced over the front of her dress and smoothed out a knot or two of ribbon. Then she rested her eyes upon the prospect again. “Well, I guess you had better leave it somewhere,” she said after a moment.

“Are you going to Italy?” Winterbourne inquired in a tone of great respect.

The young lady glanced at him again. "Yes, sir," she replied. And she said nothing more.

"Are you—a—going over the Simplon?" Winterbourne pursued, a little embarrassed.

"I don't know," she said. "I suppose it's some mountain. Randolph, what mountain are we going over?"

"Going where?" the child demanded.

"To Italy," Winterbourne explained.

"I don't know," said Randolph. "I don't want to go to Italy. I want to go to America."

"Oh, Italy is a beautiful place!" rejoined the young man.

"Can you get candy there?" Randolph loudly inquired.

"I hope not," said his sister. "I guess you have had enough candy, and mother thinks so too."

"I haven't had any for ever so long—for a hundred weeks!" cried the boy, still jumping about.

The young lady inspected her flounces and smoothed her ribbons again; and Winterbourne presently risked an observation upon the beauty of the view. He was ceasing to be embarrassed, for he had begun to perceive that she was not in the least embarrassed herself. There had not been the slightest alteration in her charming complexion; she was evidently neither offended nor flattered. If she looked another way when he spoke to her, and seemed not particularly to hear him, this was simply her habit, her manner. Yet, as he talked a little more and pointed out some of the objects of interest in the view, with which she appeared quite unacquainted, she gradually gave him more of the benefit of her glance; and then he saw that this glance was perfectly direct and unshrinking. It was not, however, what would have been called an immodest glance, for the young girl's eyes were singularly honest and fresh. They were wonderfully pretty eyes; and, indeed, Winterbourne had not seen for a long time anything prettier than his fair countrywoman's various features—her complexion, her nose, her ears, her teeth. He had a great relish for feminine beauty; he was addicted to observing and analyzing it; and as regards this young lady's face he made several observations. It was not at all insipid, but it was not exactly expressive; and though it was eminently delicate, Winterbourne mentally accused it—very forgivingly—of a want of finish. He thought it very possible that Master Randolph's sister was a coquette; he was sure she had a spirit of her own; but in her bright, sweet,

superficial little visage there was no mockery, no irony. Before long it became obvious that she was much disposed toward conversation. She told him that they were going to Rome for the winter—she and her mother and Randolph. She asked him if he was a “real American”; she shouldn’t have taken him for one; he seemed more like a German—this was said after a little hesitation—especially when he spoke. Winterbourne, laughing, answered that he had met Germans who spoke like Americans, but that he had not, so far as he remembered, met an American who spoke like a German. Then he asked her if she should not be more comfortable in sitting upon the bench which he had just quitted. She answered that she liked standing up and walking about; but she presently sat down. She told him she was from New York State—“if you know where that is.” Winterbourne learned more about her by catching hold of her small, slippery brother and making him stand a few minutes by his side.

“Tell me your name, my boy,” he said.

“Randolph C. Miller,” said the boy sharply. “And I’ll tell you her name;” and he leveled his alpenstock at his sister.

“You had better wait till you are asked!” said this young lady calmly.

“I should like very much to know your name,” said Winterbourne.

“Her name is Daisy Miller!” cried the child. “But that isn’t her real name; that isn’t her name on her cards.”

“It’s a pity you haven’t got one of my cards!” said Miss Miller.

“Her real name is Annie P. Miller,” the boy went on.

“Ask him HIS name,” said his sister, indicating Winterbourne.

But on this point Randolph seemed perfectly indifferent; he continued to supply information with regard to his own family. “My father’s name is Ezra B. Miller,” he announced. “My father ain’t in Europe; my father’s in a better place than Europe.”

Winterbourne imagined for a moment that this was the manner in which the child had been taught to intimate that Mr. Miller had been removed to the sphere of celestial reward. But Randolph immediately added, “My father’s in Schenectady. He’s got a big business. My father’s rich, you bet!”

“Well!” ejaculated Miss Miller, lowering her parasol and looking at the embroidered border. Winterbourne presently released the child, who departed, dragging his alpenstock along the path. “He doesn’t like Europe,” said the young girl. “He wants to go back.”

“To Schenectady, you mean?”

“Yes; he wants to go right home. He hasn’t got any boys here. There is one boy here, but he always goes round with a teacher; they won’t let him play.”

“And your brother hasn’t any teacher?” Winterbourne inquired.

“Mother thought of getting him one, to travel round with us. There was a lady told her of a very good teacher; an American lady—perhaps you know her—Mrs. Sanders. I think she came from Boston. She told her of this teacher, and we thought of getting him to travel round with us. But Randolph said he didn’t want a teacher traveling round with us. He said he wouldn’t have lessons when he was in the cars. And we ARE in the cars about half the time. There was an English lady we met in the cars—I think her name was Miss Featherstone; perhaps you know her. She wanted to know why I didn’t give Randolph lessons—give him ‘instruction,’ she called it. I guess he could give me more instruction than I could give him. He’s very smart.”

“Yes,” said Winterbourne; “he seems very smart.”

“Mother’s going to get a teacher for him as soon as we get to Italy. Can you get good teachers in Italy?”

“Very good, I should think,” said Winterbourne.

“Or else she’s going to find some school. He ought to learn some more. He’s only nine. He’s going to college.” And in this way Miss Miller continued to converse upon the affairs of her family and upon other topics. She sat there with her extremely pretty hands, ornamented with very brilliant rings, folded in her lap, and with her pretty eyes now resting upon those of Winterbourne, now wandering over the garden, the people who passed by, and the beautiful view. She talked to Winterbourne as if she had known him a long time. He found it very pleasant. It was many years since he had heard a young girl talk so much. It might have been said of this unknown young lady, who had come and sat down beside him upon a bench, that she chattered. She was very quiet; she sat in a charming, tranquil attitude; but her lips and her eyes were constantly moving. She had a soft, slender, agreeable voice, and her tone was decidedly sociable. She gave Winterbourne a history of her movements and intentions and those of her mother and brother, in Europe, and enumerated, in particular, the various hotels at which they had stopped. “That English lady in the cars,” she said—“Miss Featherstone—asked me if we didn’t all live in hotels in America. I told her I had never been in so many hotels in my life as since I came to Europe. I have never seen so many—it’s nothing but hotels.” But Miss Miller did not make this remark with a querulous accent; she appeared to be in the best humor with everything. She declared that the hotels were very good, when once you got used to their ways, and that Europe

was perfectly sweet. She was not disappointed—not a bit. Perhaps it was because she had heard so much about it before. She had ever so many intimate friends that had been there ever so many times. And then she had had ever so many dresses and things from Paris. Whenever she put on a Paris dress she felt as if she were in Europe.

“It was a kind of a wishing cap,” said Winterbourne.

“Yes,” said Miss Miller without examining this analogy; “it always made me wish I was here. But I needn’t have done that for dresses. I am sure they send all the pretty ones to America; you see the most frightful things here. The only thing I don’t like,” she proceeded, “is the society. There isn’t any society; or, if there is, I don’t know where it keeps itself. Do you? I suppose there is some society somewhere, but I haven’t seen anything of it. I’m very fond of society, and I have always had a great deal of it. I don’t mean only in Schenectady, but in New York. I used to go to New York every winter. In New York I had lots of society. Last winter I had seventeen dinners given me; and three of them were by gentlemen,” added Daisy Miller. “I have more friends in New York than in Schenectady—more gentleman friends; and more young lady friends too,” she resumed in a moment. She paused again for an instant; she was looking at Winterbourne with all her prettiness in her lively eyes and in her light, slightly monotonous smile. “I have always had,” she said, “a great deal of gentlemen’s society.”

Poor Winterbourne was amused, perplexed, and decidedly charmed. He had never yet heard a young girl express herself in just this fashion; never, at least, save in cases where to say such things seemed a kind of demonstrative evidence of a certain laxity of deportment. And yet was he to accuse Miss Daisy Miller of actual or potential incontinence, as they said at Geneva? He felt that he had lived at Geneva so long that he had lost a good deal; he had become dishabituated to the American tone. Never, indeed, since he had grown old enough to appreciate things, had he encountered a young American girl of so pronounced a type as this. Certainly she was very charming, but how deucedly sociable! Was she simply a pretty girl from New York State? Were they all like that, the pretty girls who had a good deal of gentlemen’s society? Or was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person? Winterbourne had lost his instinct in this matter, and his reason could not help him. Miss Daisy Miller looked extremely innocent. Some people had told him that, after all, American girls were exceedingly innocent; and others had told him that, after all, they were not. He was inclined to think Miss Daisy Miller was a flirt—a pretty American flirt. He had never, as yet, had any relations with young ladies of this category. He had known, here in Europe, two or three women—persons older than Miss Daisy Miller, and provided, for respectability’s sake, with husbands—who were great coquettes—dangerous, terrible women, with whom one’s relations were liable to take a serious turn. But this young girl was not a coquette in that sense; she was very unsophisticated; she was only a pretty American flirt. Winterbourne was almost grateful for having found the formula that applied to Miss Daisy Miller. He leaned



back in his seat; he remarked to himself that she had the most charming nose he had ever seen; he wondered what were the regular conditions and limitations of one's intercourse with a pretty American flirt. It presently became apparent that he was on the way to learn.

"Have you been to that old castle?" asked the young girl, pointing with her parasol to the far-gleaming walls of the Chateau de Chillon.

"Yes, formerly, more than once," said Winterbourne. "You too, I suppose, have seen it?"

"No; we haven't been there. I want to go there dreadfully. Of course I mean to go there. I wouldn't go away from here without having seen that old castle."

"It's a very pretty excursion," said Winterbourne, "and very easy to make. You can drive, you know, or you can go by the little steamer."

"You can go in the cars," said Miss Miller.

"Yes; you can go in the cars," Winterbourne assented.

"Our courier says they take you right up to the castle," the young girl continued. "We were going last week, but my mother gave out. She suffers dreadfully from dyspepsia. She said she couldn't go. Randolph wouldn't go either; he says he doesn't think much of old castles. But I guess we'll go this week, if we can get Randolph."

"Your brother is not interested in ancient monuments?" Winterbourne inquired, smiling.

"He says he don't care much about old castles. He's only nine. He wants to stay at the hotel. Mother's afraid to leave him alone, and the courier won't stay with him; so we haven't been to many places. But it will be too bad if we don't go up there." And Miss Miller pointed again at the Chateau de Chillon.

"I should think it might be arranged," said Winterbourne. "Couldn't you get some one to stay for the afternoon with Randolph?"

Miss Miller looked at him a moment, and then, very placidly, "I wish YOU would stay with him!" she said.

Winterbourne hesitated a moment. "I should much rather go to Chillon with you."

"With me?" asked the young girl with the same placidity.

She didn't rise, blushing, as a young girl at Geneva would have done; and yet Winterbourne, conscious that he had been very bold, thought it possible she was offended. "With your mother," he answered very respectfully.

But it seemed that both his audacity and his respect were lost upon Miss Daisy Miller. "I guess my mother won't go, after all," she said. "She don't like to ride round in the afternoon. But did you really mean what you said just now—that you would like to go up there?"

"Most earnestly," Winterbourne declared.

"Then we may arrange it. If mother will stay with Randolph, I guess Eugenio will."

"Eugenio?" the young man inquired.

"Eugenio's our courier. He doesn't like to stay with Randolph; he's the most fastidious man I ever saw. But he's a splendid courier. I guess he'll stay at home with Randolph if mother does, and then we can go to the castle."

Winterbourne reflected for an instant as lucidly as possible—"we" could only mean Miss Daisy Miller and himself. This program seemed almost too agreeable for credence; he felt as if he ought to kiss the young lady's hand. Possibly he would have done so and quite spoiled the project, but at this moment another person, presumably Eugenio, appeared. A tall, handsome man, with superb whiskers, wearing a velvet morning coat and a brilliant watch chain, approached Miss Miller, looking sharply at her companion. "Oh, Eugenio!" said Miss Miller with the friendliest accent.

Eugenio had looked at Winterbourne from head to foot; he now bowed gravely to the young lady. "I have the honor to inform mademoiselle that luncheon is upon the table."

Miss Miller slowly rose. "See here, Eugenio!" she said; "I'm going to that old castle, anyway."

"To the Chateau de Chillon, mademoiselle?" the courier inquired. "Mademoiselle has made arrangements?" he added in a tone which struck Winterbourne as very impertinent.

Eugenio's tone apparently threw, even to Miss Miller's own apprehension, a slightly ironical light upon the young girl's situation. She turned to Winterbourne, blushing a little—a very little. "You won't back out?" she said.

"I shall not be happy till we go!" he protested.

“And you are staying in this hotel?” she went on. “And you are really an American?”

The courier stood looking at Winterbourne offensively. The young man, at least, thought his manner of looking an offense to Miss Miller; it conveyed an imputation that she “picked up” acquaintances. “I shall have the honor of presenting to you a person who will tell you all about me,” he said, smiling and referring to his aunt.

“Oh, well, we’ll go some day,” said Miss Miller. And she gave him a smile and turned away. She put up her parasol and walked back to the inn beside Eugenio. Winterbourne stood looking after her; and as she moved away, drawing her muslin furbelows over the gravel, said to himself that she had the tournure of a princess.

He had, however, engaged to do more than proved feasible, in promising to present his aunt, Mrs. Costello, to Miss Daisy Miller. As soon as the former lady had got better of her headache, he waited upon her in her apartment; and, after the proper inquiries in regard to her health, he asked her if she had observed in the hotel an American family—a mamma, a daughter, and a little boy.

“And a courier?” said Mrs. Costello. “Oh yes, I have observed them. Seen them—heard them—and kept out of their way.” Mrs. Costello was a widow with a fortune; a person of much distinction, who frequently intimated that, if she were not so dreadfully liable to sick headaches, she would probably have left a deeper impress upon her time. She had a long, pale face, a high nose, and a great deal of very striking white hair, which she wore in large puffs and rouleaux over the top of her head. She had two sons married in New York and another who was now in Europe. This young man was amusing himself at Hamburg, and, though he was on his travels, was rarely perceived to visit any particular city at the moment selected by his mother for her own appearance there. Her nephew, who had come up to Vevey expressly to see her, was therefore more attentive than those who, as she said, were nearer to her. He had imbibed at Geneva the idea that one must always be attentive to one’s aunt. Mrs. Costello had not seen him for many years, and she was greatly pleased with him, manifesting her approbation by initiating him into many of the secrets of that social sway which, as she gave him to understand, she exerted in the American capital. She admitted that she was very exclusive; but, if he were acquainted with New York, he would see that one had to be. And her picture of the minutely hierarchical constitution of the society of that city, which she presented to him in many different lights, was, to Winterbourne’s imagination, almost oppressively striking.

He immediately perceived, from her tone, that Miss Daisy Miller’s place in the social scale was low. “I am afraid you don’t approve of them,” he said.

"They are very common," Mrs. Costello declared. "They are the sort of Americans that one does one's duty by not—not accepting."

"Ah, you don't accept them?" said the young man.

"I can't, my dear Frederick. I would if I could, but I can't."

"The young girl is very pretty," said Winterbourne in a moment.

"Of course she's pretty. But she is very common."

"I see what you mean, of course," said Winterbourne after another pause.

"She has that charming look that they all have," his aunt resumed. "I can't think where they pick it up; and she dresses in perfection—no, you don't know how well she dresses. I can't think where they get their taste."

"But, my dear aunt, she is not, after all, a Comanche savage."

"She is a young lady," said Mrs. Costello, "who has an intimacy with her mamma's courier."

"An intimacy with the courier?" the young man demanded.

"Oh, the mother is just as bad! They treat the courier like a familiar friend—like a gentleman. I shouldn't wonder if he dines with them. Very likely they have never seen a man with such good manners, such fine clothes, so like a gentleman. He probably corresponds to the young lady's idea of a count. He sits with them in the garden in the evening. I think he smokes."

Winterbourne listened with interest to these disclosures; they helped him to make up his mind about Miss Daisy. Evidently she was rather wild. "Well," he said, "I am not a courier, and yet she was very charming to me."

"You had better have said at first," said Mrs. Costello with dignity, "that you had made her acquaintance."

"We simply met in the garden, and we talked a bit."

"Tout bonnement! And pray what did you say?"

"I said I should take the liberty of introducing her to my admirable aunt."

"I am much obliged to you."

"It was to guarantee my respectability," said Winterbourne.

“And pray who is to guarantee hers?”

“Ah, you are cruel!” said the young man. “She’s a very nice young girl.”

“You don’t say that as if you believed it,” Mrs. Costello observed.

“She is completely uncultivated,” Winterbourne went on. “But she is wonderfully pretty, and, in short, she is very nice. To prove that I believe it, I am going to take her to the Chateau de Chillon.”

“You two are going off there together? I should say it proved just the contrary. How long had you known her, may I ask, when this interesting project was formed? You haven’t been twenty-four hours in the house.”

“I have known her half an hour!” said Winterbourne, smiling.

“Dear me!” cried Mrs. Costello. “What a dreadful girl!”

Her nephew was silent for some moments. “You really think, then,” he began earnestly, and with a desire for trustworthy information—“you really think that—” But he paused again.

“Think what, sir?” said his aunt.

“That she is the sort of young lady who expects a man, sooner or later, to carry her off?”

“I haven’t the least idea what such young ladies expect a man to do. But I really think that you had better not meddle with little American girls that are uncultivated, as you call them. You have lived too long out of the country. You will be sure to make some great mistake. You are too innocent.”

“My dear aunt, I am not so innocent,” said Winterbourne, smiling and curling his mustache.

“You are guilty too, then!”

Winterbourne continued to curl his mustache meditatively. “You won’t let the poor girl know you then?” he asked at last.

“Is it literally true that she is going to the Chateau de Chillon with you?”

“I think that she fully intends it.”

“Then, my dear Frederick,” said Mrs. Costello, “I must decline the honor of her acquaintance. I am an old woman, but I am not too old, thank Heaven, to be shocked!”

“But don’t they all do these things—the young girls in America?” Winterbourne inquired.

Mrs. Costello stared a moment. “I should like to see my granddaughters do them!” she declared grimly.

This seemed to throw some light upon the matter, for Winterbourne remembered to have heard that his pretty cousins in New York were “tremendous flirts.” If, therefore, Miss Daisy Miller exceeded the liberal margin allowed to these young ladies, it was probable that anything might be expected of her. Winterbourne was impatient to see her again, and he was vexed with himself that, by instinct, he should not appreciate her justly.

Though he was impatient to see her, he hardly knew what he should say to her about his aunt’s refusal to become acquainted with her; but he discovered, promptly enough, that with Miss Daisy Miller there was no great need of walking on tiptoe. He found her that evening in the garden, wandering about in the warm starlight like an indolent sylph, and swinging to and fro the largest fan he had ever beheld. It was ten o’clock. He had dined with his aunt, had been sitting with her since dinner, and had just taken leave of her till the morrow. Miss Daisy Miller seemed very glad to see him; she declared it was the longest evening she had ever passed.

“Have you been all alone?” he asked.

“I have been walking round with mother. But mother gets tired walking round,” she answered.

“Has she gone to bed?”

“No; she doesn’t like to go to bed,” said the young girl. “She doesn’t sleep—not three hours. She says she doesn’t know how she lives. She’s dreadfully nervous. I guess she sleeps more than she thinks. She’s gone somewhere after Randolph; she wants to try to get him to go to bed. He doesn’t like to go to bed.”

“Let us hope she will persuade him,” observed Winterbourne.

“She will talk to him all she can; but he doesn’t like her to talk to him,” said Miss Daisy, opening her fan. “She’s going to try to get Eugenio to talk to him. But he isn’t afraid of Eugenio. Eugenio’s a splendid courier, but he can’t make much impression on Randolph! I don’t believe he’ll go to bed before eleven.” It appeared that Randolph’s vigil was in fact triumphantly prolonged, for

Winterbourne strolled about with the young girl for some time without meeting her mother. "I have been looking round for that lady you want to introduce me to," his companion resumed. "She's your aunt." Then, on Winterbourne's admitting the fact and expressing some curiosity as to how she had learned it, she said she had heard all about Mrs. Costello from the chambermaid. She was very quiet and very *comme il faut*; she wore white puffs; she spoke to no one, and she never dined at the *table d'hôte*. Every two days she had a headache. "I think that's a lovely description, headache and all!" said Miss Daisy, chattering along in her thin, gay voice. "I want to know her ever so much. I know just what YOUR aunt would be; I know I should like her. She would be very exclusive. I like a lady to be exclusive; I'm dying to be exclusive myself. Well, we ARE exclusive, mother and I. We don't speak to everyone—or they don't speak to us. I suppose it's about the same thing. Anyway, I shall be ever so glad to know your aunt."

Winterbourne was embarrassed. "She would be most happy," he said; "but I am afraid those headaches will interfere."

The young girl looked at him through the dusk. "But I suppose she doesn't have a headache every day," she said sympathetically.

Winterbourne was silent a moment. "She tells me she does," he answered at last, not knowing what to say.

Miss Daisy Miller stopped and stood looking at him. Her prettiness was still visible in the darkness; she was opening and closing her enormous fan. "She doesn't want to know me!" she said suddenly. "Why don't you say so? You needn't be afraid. I'm not afraid!" And she gave a little laugh.

Winterbourne fancied there was a tremor in her voice; he was touched, shocked, mortified by it. "My dear young lady," he protested, "she knows no one. It's her wretched health."

The young girl walked on a few steps, laughing still. "You needn't be afraid," she repeated. "Why should she want to know me?" Then she paused again; she was close to the parapet of the garden, and in front of her was the starlit lake. There was a vague sheen upon its surface, and in the distance were dimly seen mountain forms. Daisy Miller looked out upon the mysterious prospect and then she gave another little laugh. "Gracious! she IS exclusive!" she said. Winterbourne wondered whether she was seriously wounded, and for a moment almost wished that her sense of injury might be such as to make it becoming in him to attempt to reassure and comfort her. He had a pleasant sense that she would be very approachable for consolatory purposes. He felt then, for the instant, quite ready to sacrifice his aunt, conversationally; to admit that she was a proud, rude woman, and to declare that they needn't mind her. But before he had time to commit himself to this perilous mixture of gallantry and impiety, the young lady, resuming her walk, gave an exclamation in quite another tone. "Well, here's

Mother! I guess she hasn't got Randolph to go to bed." The figure of a lady appeared at a distance, very indistinct in the darkness, and advancing with a slow and wavering movement. Suddenly it seemed to pause.

"Are you sure it is your mother? Can you distinguish her in this thick dusk?" Winterbourne asked.

"Well!" cried Miss Daisy Miller with a laugh; "I guess I know my own mother. And when she has got on my shawl, too! She is always wearing my things."

The lady in question, ceasing to advance, hovered vaguely about the spot at which she had checked her steps.

"I am afraid your mother doesn't see you," said Winterbourne. "Or perhaps," he added, thinking, with Miss Miller, the joke permissible—"perhaps she feels guilty about your shawl."

"Oh, it's a fearful old thing!" the young girl replied serenely. "I told her she could wear it. She won't come here because she sees you."

"Ah, then," said Winterbourne, "I had better leave you."

"Oh, no; come on!" urged Miss Daisy Miller.

"I'm afraid your mother doesn't approve of my walking with you."

Miss Miller gave him a serious glance. "It isn't for me; it's for you—that is, it's for HER. Well, I don't know who it's for! But mother doesn't like any of my gentlemen friends. She's right down timid. She always makes a fuss if I introduce a gentleman. But I DO introduce them—almost always. If I didn't introduce my gentlemen friends to Mother," the young girl added in her little soft, flat monotone, "I shouldn't think I was natural."

"To introduce me," said Winterbourne, "you must know my name." And he proceeded to pronounce it.

"Oh, dear, I can't say all that!" said his companion with a laugh. But by this time they had come up to Mrs. Miller, who, as they drew near, walked to the parapet of the garden and leaned upon it, looking intently at the lake and turning her back to them. "Mother!" said the young girl in a tone of decision. Upon this the elder lady turned round. "Mr. Winterbourne," said Miss Daisy Miller, introducing the young man very frankly and prettily. "Common," she was, as Mrs. Costello had pronounced her; yet it was a wonder to Winterbourne that, with her commonness, she had a singularly delicate grace.



Her mother was a small, spare, light person, with a wandering eye, a very exiguous nose, and a large forehead, decorated with a certain amount of thin, much frizzled hair. Like her daughter, Mrs. Miller was dressed with extreme elegance; she had enormous diamonds in her ears. So far as Winterbourne could observe, she gave him no greeting—she certainly was not looking at him. Daisy was near her, pulling her shawl straight. “What are you doing, poking round here?” this young lady inquired, but by no means with that harshness of accent which her choice of words may imply.

“I don’t know,” said her mother, turning toward the lake again.

“I shouldn’t think you’d want that shawl!” Daisy exclaimed.

“Well I do!” her mother answered with a little laugh.

“Did you get Randolph to go to bed?” asked the young girl.

“No; I couldn’t induce him,” said Mrs. Miller very gently. “He wants to talk to the waiter. He likes to talk to that waiter.”

“I was telling Mr. Winterbourne,” the young girl went on; and to the young man’s ear her tone might have indicated that she had been uttering his name all her life.

“Oh, yes!” said Winterbourne; “I have the pleasure of knowing your son.”

Randolph’s mamma was silent; she turned her attention to the lake. But at last she spoke. “Well, I don’t see how he lives!”

“Anyhow, it isn’t so bad as it was at Dover,” said Daisy Miller.

“And what occurred at Dover?” Winterbourne asked.

“He wouldn’t go to bed at all. I guess he sat up all night in the public parlor. He wasn’t in bed at twelve o’clock: I know that.”

“It was half-past twelve,” declared Mrs. Miller with mild emphasis.

“Does he sleep much during the day?” Winterbourne demanded.

“I guess he doesn’t sleep much,” Daisy rejoined.

“I wish he would!” said her mother. “It seems as if he couldn’t.”

“I think he’s real tiresome,” Daisy pursued.

Then, for some moments, there was silence. “Well, Daisy Miller,” said the elder lady, presently, “I shouldn’t think you’d want to talk against your own brother!”

“Well, he IS tiresome, Mother,” said Daisy, quite without the asperity of a retort.

“He’s only nine,” urged Mrs. Miller.

“Well, he wouldn’t go to that castle,” said the young girl. “I’m going there with Mr. Winterbourne.”

To this announcement, very placidly made, Daisy’s mamma offered no response. Winterbourne took for granted that she deeply disapproved of the projected excursion; but he said to himself that she was a simple, easily managed person, and that a few deferential protestations would take the edge from her displeasure. “Yes,” he began; “your daughter has kindly allowed me the honor of being her guide.”

Mrs. Miller’s wandering eyes attached themselves, with a sort of appealing air, to Daisy, who, however, strolled a few steps farther, gently humming to herself. “I presume you will go in the cars,” said her mother.

“Yes, or in the boat,” said Winterbourne.

“Well, of course, I don’t know,” Mrs. Miller rejoined. “I have never been to that castle.”

“It is a pity you shouldn’t go,” said Winterbourne, beginning to feel reassured as to her opposition. And yet he was quite prepared to find that, as a matter of course, she meant to accompany her daughter.

“We’ve been thinking ever so much about going,” she pursued; “but it seems as if we couldn’t. Of course Daisy—she wants to go round. But there’s a lady here—I don’t know her name—she says she shouldn’t think we’d want to go to see castles HERE; she should think we’d want to wait till we got to Italy. It seems as if there would be so many there,” continued Mrs. Miller with an air of increasing confidence. “Of course we only want to see the principal ones. We visited several in England,” she presently added.

“Ah yes! in England there are beautiful castles,” said Winterbourne. “But Chillon here, is very well worth seeing.”

“Well, if Daisy feels up to it—” said Mrs. Miller, in a tone impregnated with a sense of the magnitude of the enterprise. “It seems as if there was nothing she wouldn’t undertake.”

“Oh, I think she’ll enjoy it!” Winterbourne declared. And he desired more and more to make it a certainty that he was to have the privilege of a tete-a-tete with the young lady, who was still strolling along in front of them, softly vocalizing. “You are not disposed, madam,” he inquired, “to undertake it yourself?”

Daisy’s mother looked at him an instant askance, and then walked forward in silence. Then—“I guess she had better go alone,” she said simply. Winterbourne observed to himself that this was a very different type of maternity from that of the vigilant matrons who massed themselves in the forefront of social intercourse in the dark old city at the other end of the lake. But his meditations were interrupted by hearing his name very distinctly pronounced by Mrs. Miller’s unprotected daughter.

“Mr. Winterbourne!” murmured Daisy.

“Mademoiselle!” said the young man.

“Don’t you want to take me out in a boat?”

“At present?” he asked.

“Of course!” said Daisy.

“Well, Annie Miller!” exclaimed her mother.

“I beg you, madam, to let her go,” said Winterbourne ardently; for he had never yet enjoyed the sensation of guiding through the summer starlight a skiff freighted with a fresh and beautiful young girl.

“I shouldn’t think she’d want to,” said her mother. “I should think she’d rather go indoors.”

“I’m sure Mr. Winterbourne wants to take me,” Daisy declared. “He’s so awfully devoted!”

“I will row you over to Chillon in the starlight.”

“I don’t believe it!” said Daisy.

“Well!” ejaculated the elder lady again.

“You haven’t spoken to me for half an hour,” her daughter went on.

“I have been having some very pleasant conversation with your mother,” said Winterbourne.

“Well, I want you to take me out in a boat!” Daisy repeated. They had all stopped, and she had turned round and was looking at Winterbourne. Her face wore a charming smile, her pretty eyes were gleaming, she was swinging her great fan about. No; it’s impossible to be prettier than that, thought Winterbourne.

“There are half a dozen boats moored at that landing place,” he said, pointing to certain steps which descended from the garden to the lake. “If you will do me the honor to accept my arm, we will go and select one of them.”

Daisy stood there smiling; she threw back her head and gave a little, light laugh. “I like a gentleman to be formal!” she declared.

“I assure you it’s a formal offer.”

“I was bound I would make you say something,” Daisy went on.

“You see, it’s not very difficult,” said Winterbourne. “But I am afraid you are chaffing me.”

“I think not, sir,” remarked Mrs. Miller very gently.

“Do, then, let me give you a row,” he said to the young girl.

“It’s quite lovely, the way you say that!” cried Daisy.

“It will be still more lovely to do it.”

“Yes, it would be lovely!” said Daisy. But she made no movement to accompany him; she only stood there laughing.

“I should think you had better find out what time it is,” interposed her mother.

“It is eleven o’clock, madam,” said a voice, with a foreign accent, out of the neighboring darkness; and Winterbourne, turning, perceived the florid personage who was in attendance upon the two ladies. He had apparently just approached.

“Oh, Eugenio,” said Daisy, “I am going out in a boat!”

Eugenio bowed. “At eleven o’clock, mademoiselle?”

“I am going with Mr. Winterbourne—this very minute.”

“Do tell her she can’t,” said Mrs. Miller to the courier.

“I think you had better not go out in a boat, mademoiselle,” Eugenio declared.

Winterbourne wished to Heaven this pretty girl were not so familiar with her courier; but he said nothing.

“I suppose you don’t think it’s proper!” Daisy exclaimed. “Eugenio doesn’t think anything’s proper.”

“I am at your service,” said Winterbourne.

“Does mademoiselle propose to go alone?” asked Eugenio of Mrs. Miller.

“Oh, no; with this gentleman!” answered Daisy’s mamma.

The courier looked for a moment at Winterbourne—the latter thought he was smiling—and then, solemnly, with a bow, “As mademoiselle pleases!” he said.

“Oh, I hoped you would make a fuss!” said Daisy. “I don’t care to go now.”

“I myself shall make a fuss if you don’t go,” said Winterbourne.

“That’s all I want—a little fuss!” And the young girl began to laugh again.

“Mr. Randolph has gone to bed!” the courier announced frigidly.

“Oh, Daisy; now we can go!” said Mrs. Miller.

Daisy turned away from Winterbourne, looking at him, smiling and fanning herself. “Good night,” she said; “I hope you are disappointed, or disgusted, or something!”

He looked at her, taking the hand she offered him. “I am puzzled,” he answered.

“Well, I hope it won’t keep you awake!” she said very smartly; and, under the escort of the privileged Eugenio, the two ladies passed toward the house.

Winterbourne stood looking after them; he was indeed puzzled. He lingered beside the lake for a quarter of an hour, turning over the mystery of the young girl’s sudden familiarities and caprices. But the only very definite conclusion he came to was that he should enjoy deucedly “going off” with her somewhere.

Two days afterward he went off with her to the Castle of Chillon. He waited for her in the large hall of the hotel, where the couriers, the servants, the foreign tourists, were lounging about and staring. It was not the place he should have chosen, but she had appointed it. She came tripping downstairs, buttoning her long gloves, squeezing her folded parasol against her pretty figure, dressed in the perfection of a soberly elegant traveling costume. Winterbourne was a man of imagination and, as our ancestors used to say, sensibility; as he looked at her dress

and, on the great staircase, her little rapid, confiding step, he felt as if there were something romantic going forward. He could have believed he was going to elope with her. He passed out with her among all the idle people that were assembled there; they were all looking at her very hard; she had begun to chatter as soon as she joined him. Winterbourne's preference had been that they should be conveyed to Chillon in a carriage; but she expressed a lively wish to go in the little steamer; she declared that she had a passion for steamboats. There was always such a lovely breeze upon the water, and you saw such lots of people. The sail was not long, but Winterbourne's companion found time to say a great many things. To the young man himself their little excursion was so much of an escapade—an adventure—that, even allowing for her habitual sense of freedom, he had some expectation of seeing her regard it in the same way. But it must be confessed that, in this particular, he was disappointed. Daisy Miller was extremely animated, she was in charming spirits; but she was apparently not at all excited; she was not fluttered; she avoided neither his eyes nor those of anyone else; she blushed neither when she looked at him nor when she felt that people were looking at her. People continued to look at her a great deal, and Winterbourne took much satisfaction in his pretty companion's distinguished air. He had been a little afraid that she would talk loud, laugh overmuch, and even, perhaps, desire to move about the boat a good deal. But he quite forgot his fears; he sat smiling, with his eyes upon her face, while, without moving from her place, she delivered herself of a great number of original reflections. It was the most charming garrulity he had ever heard. He had assented to the idea that she was "common"; but was she so, after all, or was he simply getting used to her commonness? Her conversation was chiefly of what metaphysicians term the objective cast, but every now and then it took a subjective turn.

"What on EARTH are you so grave about?" she suddenly demanded, fixing her agreeable eyes upon Winterbourne's.

"Am I grave?" he asked. "I had an idea I was grinning from ear to ear."

"You look as if you were taking me to a funeral. If that's a grin, your ears are very near together."

"Should you like me to dance a hornpipe on the deck?"

"Pray do, and I'll carry round your hat. It will pay the expenses of our journey."

"I never was better pleased in my life," murmured Winterbourne.

She looked at him a moment and then burst into a little laugh. "I like to make you say those things! You're a queer mixture!"

In the castle, after they had landed, the subjective element decidedly prevailed. Daisy tripped about the vaulted chambers, rustled her skirts in the corkscrew

staircases, flirted back with a pretty little cry and a shudder from the edge of the oubliettes, and turned a singularly well-shaped ear to everything that Winterbourne told her about the place. But he saw that she cared very little for feudal antiquities and that the dusky traditions of Chillon made but a slight impression upon her. They had the good fortune to have been able to walk about without other companionship than that of the custodian; and Winterbourne arranged with this functionary that they should not be hurried—that they should linger and pause wherever they chose. The custodian interpreted the bargain generously—Winterbourne, on his side, had been generous—and ended by leaving them quite to themselves. Miss Miller's observations were not remarkable for logical consistency; for anything she wanted to say she was sure to find a pretext. She found a great many pretexts in the rugged embrasures of Chillon for asking Winterbourne sudden questions about himself—his family, his previous history, his tastes, his habits, his intentions—and for supplying information upon corresponding points in her own personality. Of her own tastes, habits, and intentions Miss Miller was prepared to give the most definite, and indeed the most favorable account.

“Well, I hope you know enough!” she said to her companion, after he had told her the history of the unhappy Bonivard. “I never saw a man that knew so much!” The history of Bonivard had evidently, as they say, gone into one ear and out of the other. But Daisy went on to say that she wished Winterbourne would travel with them and “go round” with them; they might know something, in that case. “Don't you want to come and teach Randolph?” she asked. Winterbourne said that nothing could possibly please him so much, but that he had unfortunately other occupations. “Other occupations? I don't believe it!” said Miss Daisy. “What do you mean? You are not in business.” The young man admitted that he was not in business; but he had engagements which, even within a day or two, would force him to go back to Geneva. “Oh, bother!” she said; “I don't believe it!” and she began to talk about something else. But a few moments later, when he was pointing out to her the pretty design of an antique fireplace, she broke out irrelevantly, “You don't mean to say you are going back to Geneva?”

“It is a melancholy fact that I shall have to return to Geneva tomorrow.”

“Well, Mr. Winterbourne,” said Daisy, “I think you're horrid!”

“Oh, don't say such dreadful things!” said Winterbourne—“just at the last!”

“The last!” cried the young girl; “I call it the first. I have half a mind to leave you here and go straight back to the hotel alone.” And for the next ten minutes she did nothing but call him horrid. Poor Winterbourne was fairly bewildered; no young lady had as yet done him the honor to be so agitated by the announcement of his movements. His companion, after this, ceased to pay any attention to the curiosities of Chillon or the beauties of the lake; she opened fire upon the mysterious charmer in Geneva whom she appeared to have instantly taken it for

granted that he was hurrying back to see. How did Miss Daisy Miller know that there was a charmer in Geneva? Winterbourne, who denied the existence of such a person, was quite unable to discover, and he was divided between amazement at the rapidity of her induction and amusement at the frankness of her persiflage. She seemed to him, in all this, an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity. "Does she never allow you more than three days at a time?" asked Daisy ironically. "Doesn't she give you a vacation in summer? There's no one so hard worked but they can get leave to go off somewhere at this season. I suppose, if you stay another day, she'll come after you in the boat. Do wait over till Friday, and I will go down to the landing to see her arrive!" Winterbourne began to think he had been wrong to feel disappointed in the temper in which the young lady had embarked. If he had missed the personal accent, the personal accent was now making its appearance. It sounded very distinctly, at last, in her telling him she would stop "teasing" him if he would promise her solemnly to come down to Rome in the winter.

"That's not a difficult promise to make," said Winterbourne. "My aunt has taken an apartment in Rome for the winter and has already asked me to come and see her."

"I don't want you to come for your aunt," said Daisy; "I want you to come for me." And this was the only allusion that the young man was ever to hear her make to his invidious kinswoman. He declared that, at any rate, he would certainly come. After this Daisy stopped teasing. Winterbourne took a carriage, and they drove back to Vevey in the dusk; the young girl was very quiet.

In the evening Winterbourne mentioned to Mrs. Costello that he had spent the afternoon at Chillon with Miss Daisy Miller.

"The Americans—of the courier?" asked this lady.

"Ah, happily," said Winterbourne, "the courier stayed at home."

"She went with you all alone?"

"All alone."

Mrs. Costello sniffed a little at her smelling bottle. "And that," she exclaimed, "is the young person whom you wanted me to know!"

## PART II

Winterbourne, who had returned to Geneva the day after his excursion to Chillon, went to Rome toward the end of January. His aunt had been established there for several weeks, and he had received a couple of letters from her. "Those people



you were so devoted to last summer at Vevey have turned up here, courier and all," she wrote. "They seem to have made several acquaintances, but the courier continues to be the most in time. The young lady, however, is also very intimate with some third-rate Italians, with whom she rackets about in a way that makes much talk. Bring me that pretty novel of Cherbuliez's—Paule Mere—and don't come later than the 23rd."

In the natural course of events, Winterbourne, on arriving in Rome, would presently have ascertained Mrs. Miller's address at the American banker's and have gone to pay his compliments to Miss Daisy. "After what happened at Vevey, I think I may certainly call upon them," he said to Mrs. Costello.

"If, after what happens—at Vevey and everywhere—you desire to keep up the acquaintance, you are very welcome. Of course a man may know everyone. Men are welcome to the privilege!"

"Pray what is it that happens—here, for instance?" Winterbourne demanded.

"The girl goes about alone with her foreigners. As to what happens further, you must apply elsewhere for information. She has picked up half a dozen of the regular Roman fortune hunters, and she takes them about to people's houses. When she comes to a party she brings with her a gentleman with a good deal of manner and a wonderful mustache."

"And where is the mother?"

"I haven't the least idea. They are very dreadful people."

Winterbourne meditated a moment. "They are very ignorant—very innocent only. Depend upon it they are not bad."

"They are hopelessly vulgar," said Mrs. Costello. "Whether or no being hopelessly vulgar is being 'bad' is a question for the metaphysicians. They are bad enough to dislike, at any rate; and for this short life that is quite enough."

The news that Daisy Miller was surrounded by half a dozen wonderful mustaches checked Winterbourne's impulse to go straightway to see her. He had, perhaps, not definitely flattered himself that he had made an ineffaceable impression upon her heart, but he was annoyed at hearing of a state of affairs so little in harmony with an image that had lately flitted in and out of his own meditations; the image of a very pretty girl looking out of an old Roman window and asking herself urgently when Mr. Winterbourne would arrive. If, however, he determined to wait a little before reminding Miss Miller of his claims to her consideration, he went very soon to call upon two or three other friends. One of these friends was an American lady who had spent several winters at Geneva, where she had placed her children at school. She was a very accomplished woman, and she lived in the

Via Gregoriana. Winterbourne found her in a little crimson drawing room on a third floor; the room was filled with southern sunshine. He had not been there ten minutes when the servant came in, announcing "Madame Mila!" This announcement was presently followed by the entrance of little Randolph Miller, who stopped in the middle of the room and stood staring at Winterbourne. An instant later his pretty sister crossed the threshold; and then, after a considerable interval, Mrs. Miller slowly advanced.

"I know you!" said Randolph.

"I'm sure you know a great many things," exclaimed Winterbourne, taking him by the hand. "How is your education coming on?"

Daisy was exchanging greetings very prettily with her hostess, but when she heard Winterbourne's voice she quickly turned her head. "Well, I declare!" she said.

"I told you I should come, you know," Winterbourne rejoined, smiling.

"Well, I didn't believe it," said Miss Daisy.

"I am much obliged to you," laughed the young man.

"You might have come to see me!" said Daisy.

"I arrived only yesterday."

"I don't believe that!" the young girl declared.

Winterbourne turned with a protesting smile to her mother, but this lady evaded his glance, and, seating herself, fixed her eyes upon her son. "We've got a bigger place than this," said Randolph. "It's all gold on the walls."

Mrs. Miller turned uneasily in her chair. "I told you if I were to bring you, you would say something!" she murmured.

"I told YOU!" Randolph exclaimed. "I tell YOU, sir!" he added jocosely, giving Winterbourne a thump on the knee. "It IS bigger, too!"

Daisy had entered upon a lively conversation with her hostess; Winterbourne judged it becoming to address a few words to her mother. "I hope you have been well since we parted at Vevey," he said.

Mrs. Miller now certainly looked at him—at his chin. "Not very well, sir," she answered.

“She’s got the dyspepsia,” said Randolph. “I’ve got it too. Father’s got it. I’ve got it most!”

This announcement, instead of embarrassing Mrs. Miller, seemed to relieve her. “I suffer from the liver,” she said. “I think it’s this climate; it’s less bracing than Schenectady, especially in the winter season. I don’t know whether you know we reside at Schenectady. I was saying to Daisy that I certainly hadn’t found any one like Dr. Davis, and I didn’t believe I should. Oh, at Schenectady he stands first; they think everything of him. He has so much to do, and yet there was nothing he wouldn’t do for me. He said he never saw anything like my dyspepsia, but he was bound to cure it. I’m sure there was nothing he wouldn’t try. He was just going to try something new when we came off. Mr. Miller wanted Daisy to see Europe for herself. But I wrote to Mr. Miller that it seems as if I couldn’t get on without Dr. Davis. At Schenectady he stands at the very top; and there’s a great deal of sickness there, too. It affects my sleep.”

Winterbourne had a good deal of pathological gossip with Dr. Davis’s patient, during which Daisy chattered unremittingly to her own companion. The young man asked Mrs. Miller how she was pleased with Rome. “Well, I must say I am disappointed,” she answered. “We had heard so much about it; I suppose we had heard too much. But we couldn’t help that. We had been led to expect something different.”

“Ah, wait a little, and you will become very fond of it,” said Winterbourne.

“I hate it worse and worse every day!” cried Randolph.

“You are like the infant Hannibal,” said Winterbourne.

“No, I ain’t!” Randolph declared at a venture.

“You are not much like an infant,” said his mother. “But we have seen places,” she resumed, “that I should put a long way before Rome.” And in reply to Winterbourne’s interrogation, “There’s Zurich,” she concluded, “I think Zurich is lovely; and we hadn’t heard half so much about it.”

“The best place we’ve seen is the City of Richmond!” said Randolph.

“He means the ship,” his mother explained. “We crossed in that ship. Randolph had a good time on the City of Richmond.”

“It’s the best place I’ve seen,” the child repeated. “Only it was turned the wrong way.”

“Well, we’ve got to turn the right way some time,” said Mrs. Miller with a little laugh. Winterbourne expressed the hope that her daughter at least found some

gratification in Rome, and she declared that Daisy was quite carried away. "It's on account of the society—the society's splendid. She goes round everywhere; she has made a great number of acquaintances. Of course she goes round more than I do. I must say they have been very sociable; they have taken her right in. And then she knows a great many gentlemen. Oh, she thinks there's nothing like Rome. Of course, it's a great deal pleasanter for a young lady if she knows plenty of gentlemen."

By this time Daisy had turned her attention again to Winterbourne. "I've been telling Mrs. Walker how mean you were!" the young girl announced.

"And what is the evidence you have offered?" asked Winterbourne, rather annoyed at Miss Miller's want of appreciation of the zeal of an admirer who on his way down to Rome had stopped neither at Bologna nor at Florence, simply because of a certain sentimental impatience. He remembered that a cynical compatriot had once told him that American women—the pretty ones, and this gave a largeness to the axiom—were at once the most exacting in the world and the least endowed with a sense of indebtedness.

"Why, you were awfully mean at Vevey," said Daisy. "You wouldn't do anything. You wouldn't stay there when I asked you."

"My dearest young lady," cried Winterbourne, with eloquence, "have I come all the way to Rome to encounter your reproaches?"

"Just hear him say that!" said Daisy to her hostess, giving a twist to a bow on this lady's dress. "Did you ever hear anything so quaint?"

"So quaint, my dear?" murmured Mrs. Walker in the tone of a partisan of Winterbourne.

"Well, I don't know," said Daisy, fingering Mrs. Walker's ribbons. "Mrs. Walker, I want to tell you something."

"Mother-r," interposed Randolph, with his rough ends to his words, "I tell you you've got to go. Eugenio'll raise—something!"

"I'm not afraid of Eugenio," said Daisy with a toss of her head. "Look here, Mrs. Walker," she went on, "you know I'm coming to your party."

"I am delighted to hear it."

"I've got a lovely dress!"

"I am very sure of that."

“But I want to ask a favor—permission to bring a friend.”

“I shall be happy to see any of your friends,” said Mrs. Walker, turning with a smile to Mrs. Miller.

“Oh, they are not my friends,” answered Daisy’s mamma, smiling shyly in her own fashion. “I never spoke to them.”

“It’s an intimate friend of mine—Mr. Giovanelli,” said Daisy without a tremor in her clear little voice or a shadow on her brilliant little face.

Mrs. Walker was silent a moment; she gave a rapid glance at Winterbourne. “I shall be glad to see Mr. Giovanelli,” she then said.

“He’s an Italian,” Daisy pursued with the prettiest serenity. “He’s a great friend of mine; he’s the handsomest man in the world—except Mr. Winterbourne! He knows plenty of Italians, but he wants to know some Americans. He thinks ever so much of Americans. He’s tremendously clever. He’s perfectly lovely!”

It was settled that this brilliant personage should be brought to Mrs. Walker’s party, and then Mrs. Miller prepared to take her leave. “I guess we’ll go back to the hotel,” she said.

“You may go back to the hotel, Mother, but I’m going to take a walk,” said Daisy.

“She’s going to walk with Mr. Giovanelli,” Randolph proclaimed.

“I am going to the Pincio,” said Daisy, smiling.

“Alone, my dear—at this hour?” Mrs. Walker asked. The afternoon was drawing to a close—it was the hour for the throng of carriages and of contemplative pedestrians. “I don’t think it’s safe, my dear,” said Mrs. Walker.

“Neither do I,” subjoined Mrs. Miller. “You’ll get the fever, as sure as you live. Remember what Dr. Davis told you!”

“Give her some medicine before she goes,” said Randolph.

The company had risen to its feet; Daisy, still showing her pretty teeth, bent over and kissed her hostess. “Mrs. Walker, you are too perfect,” she said. “I’m not going alone; I am going to meet a friend.”

“Your friend won’t keep you from getting the fever,” Mrs. Miller observed.

“Is it Mr. Giovanelli?” asked the hostess.

Winterbourne was watching the young girl; at this question his attention quickened. She stood there, smiling and smoothing her bonnet ribbons; she glanced at Winterbourne. Then, while she glanced and smiled, she answered, without a shade of hesitation, "Mr. Giovanelli—the beautiful Giovanelli."

"My dear young friend," said Mrs. Walker, taking her hand pleadingly, "don't walk off to the Pincio at this hour to meet a beautiful Italian."

"Well, he speaks English," said Mrs. Miller.

"Gracious me!" Daisy exclaimed, "I don't to do anything improper. There's an easy way to settle it." She continued to glance at Winterbourne. "The Pincio is only a hundred yards distant; and if Mr. Winterbourne were as polite as he pretends, he would offer to walk with me!"

Winterbourne's politeness hastened to affirm itself, and the young girl gave him gracious leave to accompany her. They passed downstairs before her mother, and at the door Winterbourne perceived Mrs. Miller's carriage drawn up, with the ornamental courier whose acquaintance he had made at Vevey seated within. "Goodbye, Eugenio!" cried Daisy; "I'm going to take a walk." The distance from the Via Gregoriana to the beautiful garden at the other end of the Pincian Hill is, in fact, rapidly traversed. As the day was splendid, however, and the concourse of vehicles, walkers, and loungers numerous, the young Americans found their progress much delayed. This fact was highly agreeable to Winterbourne, in spite of his consciousness of his singular situation. The slow-moving, idly gazing Roman crowd bestowed much attention upon the extremely pretty young foreign lady who was passing through it upon his arm; and he wondered what on earth had been in Daisy's mind when she proposed to expose herself, unattended, to its appreciation. His own mission, to her sense, apparently, was to consign her to the hands of Mr. Giovanelli; but Winterbourne, at once annoyed and gratified, resolved that he would do no such thing.

"Why haven't you been to see me?" asked Daisy. "You can't get out of that."

"I have had the honor of telling you that I have only just stepped out of the train."

"You must have stayed in the train a good while after it stopped!" cried the young girl with her little laugh. "I suppose you were asleep. You have had time to go to see Mrs. Walker."

"I knew Mrs. Walker—" Winterbourne began to explain.

"I know where you knew her. You knew her at Geneva. She told me so. Well, you knew me at Vevey. That's just as good. So you ought to have come." She asked him no other question than this; she began to prattle about her own affairs.

“We’ve got splendid rooms at the hotel; Eugenio says they’re the best rooms in Rome. We are going to stay all winter, if we don’t die of the fever; and I guess we’ll stay then. It’s a great deal nicer than I thought; I thought it would be fearfully quiet; I was sure it would be awfully poky. I was sure we should be going round all the time with one of those dreadful old men that explain about the pictures and things. But we only had about a week of that, and now I’m enjoying myself. I know ever so many people, and they are all so charming. The society’s extremely select. There are all kinds—English, and Germans, and Italians. I think I like the English best. I like their style of conversation. But there are some lovely Americans. I never saw anything so hospitable. There’s something or other every day. There’s not much dancing; but I must say I never thought dancing was everything. I was always fond of conversation. I guess I shall have plenty at Mrs. Walker’s, her rooms are so small.” When they had passed the gate of the Pincian Gardens, Miss Miller began to wonder where Mr. Giovanelli might be. “We had better go straight to that place in front,” she said, “where you look at the view.”

“I certainly shall not help you to find him,” Winterbourne declared.

“Then I shall find him without you,” cried Miss Daisy.

“You certainly won’t leave me!” cried Winterbourne.

She burst into her little laugh. “Are you afraid you’ll get lost—or run over? But there’s Giovanelli, leaning against that tree. He’s staring at the women in the carriages: did you ever see anything so cool?”

Winterbourne perceived at some distance a little man standing with folded arms nursing his cane. He had a handsome face, an artfully poised hat, a glass in one eye, and a nosegay in his buttonhole. Winterbourne looked at him a moment and then said, “Do you mean to speak to that man?”

“Do I mean to speak to him? Why, you don’t suppose I mean to communicate by signs?”

“Pray understand, then,” said Winterbourne, “that I intend to remain with you.”

Daisy stopped and looked at him, without a sign of troubled consciousness in her face, with nothing but the presence of her charming eyes and her happy dimples. “Well, she’s a cool one!” thought the young man.

“I don’t like the way you say that,” said Daisy. “It’s too imperious.”

“I beg your pardon if I say it wrong. The main point is to give you an idea of my meaning.”

The young girl looked at him more gravely, but with eyes that were prettier than ever. "I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me, or to interfere with anything I do."

"I think you have made a mistake," said Winterbourne. "You should sometimes listen to a gentleman—the right one."

Daisy began to laugh again. "I do nothing but listen to gentlemen!" she exclaimed. "Tell me if Mr. Giovanelli is the right one?"

The gentleman with the nosegay in his bosom had now perceived our two friends, and was approaching the young girl with obsequious rapidity. He bowed to Winterbourne as well as to the latter's companion; he had a brilliant smile, an intelligent eye; Winterbourne thought him not a bad-looking fellow. But he nevertheless said to Daisy, "No, he's not the right one."

Daisy evidently had a natural talent for performing introductions; she mentioned the name of each of her companions to the other. She strolled alone with one of them on each side of her; Mr. Giovanelli, who spoke English very cleverly—Winterbourne afterward learned that he had practiced the idiom upon a great many American heiresses—addressed her a great deal of very polite nonsense; he was extremely urbane, and the young American, who said nothing, reflected upon that profundity of Italian cleverness which enables people to appear more gracious in proportion as they are more acutely disappointed. Giovanelli, of course, had counted upon something more intimate; he had not bargained for a party of three. But he kept his temper in a manner which suggested far-stretching intentions. Winterbourne flattered himself that he had taken his measure. "He is not a gentleman," said the young American; "he is only a clever imitation of one. He is a music master, or a penny-a-liner, or a third-rate artist. D\_\_n his good looks!" Mr. Giovanelli had certainly a very pretty face; but Winterbourne felt a superior indignation at his own lovely fellow countrywoman's not knowing the difference between a spurious gentleman and a real one. Giovanelli chattered and jested and made himself wonderfully agreeable. It was true that, if he was an imitation, the imitation was brilliant. "Nevertheless," Winterbourne said to himself, "a nice girl ought to know!" And then he came back to the question whether this was, in fact, a nice girl. Would a nice girl, even allowing for her being a little American flirt, make a rendezvous with a presumably low-lived foreigner? The rendezvous in this case, indeed, had been in broad daylight and in the most crowded corner of Rome, but was it not impossible to regard the choice of these circumstances as a proof of extreme cynicism? Singular though it may seem, Winterbourne was vexed that the young girl, in joining her amoroso, should not appear more impatient of his own company, and he was vexed because of his inclination. It was impossible to regard her as a perfectly well-conducted young lady; she was wanting in a certain indispensable delicacy. It would therefore simplify matters greatly to be able to treat her as the object of one of those sentiments which are called by romancers "lawless passions." That she should



seem to wish to get rid of him would help him to think more lightly of her, and to be able to think more lightly of her would make her much less perplexing. But Daisy, on this occasion, continued to present herself as an inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence.

She had been walking some quarter of an hour, attended by her two cavaliers, and responding in a tone of very childish gaiety, as it seemed to Winterbourne, to the pretty speeches of Mr. Giovanelli, when a carriage that had detached itself from the revolving train drew up beside the path. At the same moment Winterbourne perceived that his friend Mrs. Walker—the lady whose house he had lately left—was seated in the vehicle and was beckoning to him. Leaving Miss Miller's side, he hastened to obey her summons. Mrs. Walker was flushed; she wore an excited air. "It is really too dreadful," she said. "That girl must not do this sort of thing. She must not walk here with you two men. Fifty people have noticed her."

Winterbourne raised his eyebrows. "I think it's a pity to make too much fuss about it."

"It's a pity to let the girl ruin herself!"

"She is very innocent," said Winterbourne.

"She's very crazy!" cried Mrs. Walker. "Did you ever see anything so imbecile as her mother? After you had all left me just now, I could not sit still for thinking of it. It seemed too pitiful, not even to attempt to save her. I ordered the carriage and put on my bonnet, and came here as quickly as possible. Thank Heaven I have found you!"

"What do you propose to do with us?" asked Winterbourne, smiling.

"To ask her to get in, to drive her about here for half an hour, so that the world may see she is not running absolutely wild, and then to take her safely home."

"I don't think it's a very happy thought," said Winterbourne; "but you can try."

Mrs. Walker tried. The young man went in pursuit of Miss Miller, who had simply nodded and smiled at his interlocutor in the carriage and had gone her way with her companion. Daisy, on learning that Mrs. Walker wished to speak to her, retraced her steps with a perfect good grace and with Mr. Giovanelli at her side. She declared that she was delighted to have a chance to present this gentleman to Mrs. Walker. She immediately achieved the introduction, and declared that she had never in her life seen anything so lovely as Mrs. Walker's carriage rug.

"I am glad you admire it," said this lady, smiling sweetly. "Will you get in and let me put it over you?"

“Oh, no, thank you,” said Daisy. “I shall admire it much more as I see you driving round with it.”

“Do get in and drive with me!” said Mrs. Walker.

“That would be charming, but it’s so enchanting just as I am!” and Daisy gave a brilliant glance at the gentlemen on either side of her.

“It may be enchanting, dear child, but it is not the custom here,” urged Mrs. Walker, leaning forward in her victoria, with her hands devoutly clasped.

“Well, it ought to be, then!” said Daisy. “If I didn’t walk I should expire.”

“You should walk with your mother, dear,” cried the lady from Geneva, losing patience.

“With my mother dear!” exclaimed the young girl. Winterbourne saw that she scented interference. “My mother never walked ten steps in her life. And then, you know,” she added with a laugh, “I am more than five years old.”

“You are old enough to be more reasonable. You are old enough, dear Miss Miller, to be talked about.”

Daisy looked at Mrs. Walker, smiling intensely. “Talked about? What do you mean?”

“Come into my carriage, and I will tell you.”

Daisy turned her quickened glance again from one of the gentlemen beside her to the other. Mr. Giovanelli was bowing to and fro, rubbing down his gloves and laughing very agreeably; Winterbourne thought it a most unpleasant scene. “I don’t think I want to know what you mean,” said Daisy presently. “I don’t think I should like it.”

Winterbourne wished that Mrs. Walker would tuck in her carriage rug and drive away, but this lady did not enjoy being defied, as she afterward told him. “Should you prefer being thought a very reckless girl?” she demanded.

“Gracious!” exclaimed Daisy. She looked again at Mr. Giovanelli, then she turned to Winterbourne. There was a little pink flush in her cheek; she was tremendously pretty. “Does Mr. Winterbourne think,” she asked slowly, smiling, throwing back her head, and glancing at him from head to foot, “that, to save my reputation, I ought to get into the carriage?”

Winterbourne colored; for an instant he hesitated greatly. It seemed so strange to hear her speak that way of her “reputation.” But he himself, in fact, must speak in

accordance with gallantry. The finest gallantry, here, was simply to tell her the truth; and the truth, for Winterbourne, as the few indications I have been able to give have made him known to the reader, was that Daisy Miller should take Mrs. Walker's advice. He looked at her exquisite prettiness, and then he said, very gently, "I think you should get into the carriage."

Daisy gave a violent laugh. "I never heard anything so stiff! If this is improper, Mrs. Walker," she pursued, "then I am all improper, and you must give me up. Goodbye; I hope you'll have a lovely ride!" and, with Mr. Giovanelli, who made a triumphantly obsequious salute, she turned away.

Mrs. Walker sat looking after her, and there were tears in Mrs. Walker's eyes. "Get in here, sir," she said to Winterbourne, indicating the place beside her. The young man answered that he felt bound to accompany Miss Miller, whereupon Mrs. Walker declared that if he refused her this favor she would never speak to him again. She was evidently in earnest. Winterbourne overtook Daisy and her companion, and, offering the young girl his hand, told her that Mrs. Walker had made an imperious claim upon his society. He expected that in answer she would say something rather free, something to commit herself still further to that "recklessness" from which Mrs. Walker had so charitably endeavored to dissuade her. But she only shook his hand, hardly looking at him, while Mr. Giovanelli bade him farewell with a too emphatic flourish of the hat.

Winterbourne was not in the best possible humor as he took his seat in Mrs. Walker's victoria. "That was not clever of you," he said candidly, while the vehicle mingled again with the throng of carriages.

"In such a case," his companion answered, "I don't wish to be clever; I wish to be EARNEST!"

"Well, your earnestness has only offended her and put her off."

"It has happened very well," said Mrs. Walker. "If she is so perfectly determined to compromise herself, the sooner one knows it the better; one can act accordingly."

"I suspect she meant no harm," Winterbourne rejoined.

"So I thought a month ago. But she has been going too far."

"What has she been doing?"

"Everything that is not done here. Flirting with any man she could pick up; sitting in corners with mysterious Italians; dancing all the evening with the same partners; receiving visits at eleven o'clock at night. Her mother goes away when visitors come."

“But her brother,” said Winterbourne, laughing, “sits up till midnight.”

“He must be edified by what he sees. I’m told that at their hotel everyone is talking about her, and that a smile goes round among all the servants when a gentleman comes and asks for Miss Miller.”

“The servants be hanged!” said Winterbourne angrily. “The poor girl’s only fault,” he presently added, “is that she is very uncultivated.”

“She is naturally indelicate,” Mrs. Walker declared.

“Take that example this morning. How long had you known her at Vevey?”

“A couple of days.”

“Fancy, then, her making it a personal matter that you should have left the place!”

Winterbourne was silent for some moments; then he said, “I suspect, Mrs. Walker, that you and I have lived too long at Geneva!” And he added a request that she should inform him with what particular design she had made him enter her carriage.

“I wished to beg you to cease your relations with Miss Miller—not to flirt with her—to give her no further opportunity to expose herself—to let her alone, in short.”

“I’m afraid I can’t do that,” said Winterbourne. “I like her extremely.”

“All the more reason that you shouldn’t help her to make a scandal.”

“There shall be nothing scandalous in my attentions to her.”

“There certainly will be in the way she takes them. But I have said what I had on my conscience,” Mrs. Walker pursued. “If you wish to rejoin the young lady I will put you down. Here, by the way, you have a chance.”

The carriage was traversing that part of the Pincian Garden that overhangs the wall of Rome and overlooks the beautiful Villa Borghese. It is bordered by a large parapet, near which there are several seats. One of the seats at a distance was occupied by a gentleman and a lady, toward whom Mrs. Walker gave a toss of her head. At the same moment these persons rose and walked toward the parapet. Winterbourne had asked the coachman to stop; he now descended from the carriage. His companion looked at him a moment in silence; then, while he raised his hat, she drove majestically away. Winterbourne stood there; he had turned his eyes toward Daisy and her cavalier. They evidently saw no one; they were too

deeply occupied with each other. When they reached the low garden wall, they stood a moment looking off at the great flat-topped pine clusters of the Villa Borghese; then Giovanelli seated himself, familiarly, upon the broad ledge of the wall. The western sun in the opposite sky sent out a brilliant shaft through a couple of cloud bars, whereupon Daisy's companion took her parasol out of her hands and opened it. She came a little nearer, and he held the parasol over her; then, still holding it, he let it rest upon her shoulder, so that both of their heads were hidden from Winterbourne. This young man lingered a moment, then he began to walk. But he walked—not toward the couple with the parasol; toward the residence of his aunt, Mrs. Costello.

He flattered himself on the following day that there was no smiling among the servants when he, at least, asked for Mrs. Miller at her hotel. This lady and her daughter, however, were not at home; and on the next day after, repeating his visit, Winterbourne again had the misfortune not to find them. Mrs. Walker's party took place on the evening of the third day, and, in spite of the frigidity of his last interview with the hostess, Winterbourne was among the guests. Mrs. Walker was one of those American ladies who, while residing abroad, make a point, in their own phrase, of studying European society, and she had on this occasion collected several specimens of her diversely born fellow mortals to serve, as it were, as textbooks. When Winterbourne arrived, Daisy Miller was not there, but in a few moments he saw her mother come in alone, very shyly and ruefully. Mrs. Miller's hair above her exposed-looking temples was more frizzled than ever. As she approached Mrs. Walker, Winterbourne also drew near.

"You see, I've come all alone," said poor Mrs. Miller. "I'm so frightened; I don't know what to do. It's the first time I've ever been to a party alone, especially in this country. I wanted to bring Randolph or Eugenio, or someone, but Daisy just pushed me off by myself. I ain't used to going round alone."

"And does not your daughter intend to favor us with her society?" demanded Mrs. Walker impressively.

"Well, Daisy's all dressed," said Mrs. Miller with that accent of the dispassionate, if not of the philosophic, historian with which she always recorded the current incidents of her daughter's career. "She got dressed on purpose before dinner. But she's got a friend of hers there; that gentleman—the Italian—that she wanted to bring. They've got going at the piano; it seems as if they couldn't leave off. Mr. Giovanelli sings splendidly. But I guess they'll come before very long," concluded Mrs. Miller hopefully.

"I'm sorry she should come in that way," said Mrs. Walker.

"Well, I told her that there was no use in her getting dressed before dinner if she was going to wait three hours," responded Daisy's mamma. "I didn't see the use of her putting on such a dress as that to sit round with Mr. Giovanelli."

“This is most horrible!” said Mrs. Walker, turning away and addressing herself to Winterbourne. “Elle s’affiche. It’s her revenge for my having ventured to remonstrate with her. When she comes, I shall not speak to her.”

Daisy came after eleven o’clock; but she was not, on such an occasion, a young lady to wait to be spoken to. She rustled forward in radiant loveliness, smiling and chattering, carrying a large bouquet, and attended by Mr. Giovanelli. Everyone stopped talking and turned and looked at her. She came straight to Mrs. Walker. “I’m afraid you thought I never was coming, so I sent mother off to tell you. I wanted to make Mr. Giovanelli practice some things before he came; you know he sings beautifully, and I want you to ask him to sing. This is Mr. Giovanelli; you know I introduced him to you; he’s got the most lovely voice, and he knows the most charming set of songs. I made him go over them this evening on purpose; we had the greatest time at the hotel.” Of all this Daisy delivered herself with the sweetest, brightest audibleness, looking now at her hostess and now round the room, while she gave a series of little pats, round her shoulders, to the edges of her dress. “Is there anyone I know?” she asked.

“I think every one knows you!” said Mrs. Walker pregnantly, and she gave a very cursory greeting to Mr. Giovanelli. This gentleman bore himself gallantly. He smiled and bowed and showed his white teeth; he curled his mustaches and rolled his eyes and performed all the proper functions of a handsome Italian at an evening party. He sang very prettily half a dozen songs, though Mrs. Walker afterward declared that she had been quite unable to find out who asked him. It was apparently not Daisy who had given him his orders. Daisy sat at a distance from the piano, and though she had publicly, as it were, professed a high admiration for his singing, talked, not inaudibly, while it was going on.

“It’s a pity these rooms are so small; we can’t dance,” she said to Winterbourne, as if she had seen him five minutes before.

“I am not sorry we can’t dance,” Winterbourne answered; “I don’t dance.”

“Of course you don’t dance; you’re too stiff,” said Miss Daisy. “I hope you enjoyed your drive with Mrs. Walker!”

“No. I didn’t enjoy it; I preferred walking with you.”

“We paired off: that was much better,” said Daisy. “But did you ever hear anything so cool as Mrs. Walker’s wanting me to get into her carriage and drop poor Mr. Giovanelli, and under the pretext that it was proper? People have different ideas! It would have been most unkind; he had been talking about that walk for ten days.”

“He should not have talked about it at all,” said Winterbourne; “he would never have proposed to a young lady of this country to walk about the streets with him.”

“About the streets?” cried Daisy with her pretty stare. “Where, then, would he have proposed to her to walk? The Pincio is not the streets, either; and I, thank goodness, am not a young lady of this country. The young ladies of this country have a dreadfully poky time of it, so far as I can learn; I don’t see why I should change my habits for THEM.”

“I am afraid your habits are those of a flirt,” said Winterbourne gravely.

“Of course they are,” she cried, giving him her little smiling stare again. “I’m a fearful, frightful flirt! Did you ever hear of a nice girl that was not? But I suppose you will tell me now that I am not a nice girl.”

“You’re a very nice girl; but I wish you would flirt with me, and me only,” said Winterbourne.

“Ah! thank you—thank you very much; you are the last man I should think of flirting with. As I have had the pleasure of informing you, you are too stiff.”

“You say that too often,” said Winterbourne.

Daisy gave a delighted laugh. “If I could have the sweet hope of making you angry, I should say it again.”

“Don’t do that; when I am angry I’m stiffer than ever. But if you won’t flirt with me, do cease, at least, to flirt with your friend at the piano; they don’t understand that sort of thing here.”

“I thought they understood nothing else!” exclaimed Daisy.

“Not in young unmarried women.”

“It seems to me much more proper in young unmarried women than in old married ones,” Daisy declared.

“Well,” said Winterbourne, “when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is a purely American custom; it doesn’t exist here. So when you show yourself in public with Mr. Giovanelli, and without your mother—”

“Gracious! poor Mother!” interposed Daisy.

“Though you may be flirting, Mr. Giovanelli is not; he means something else.”

“He isn’t preaching, at any rate,” said Daisy with vivacity. “And if you want very much to know, we are neither of us flirting; we are too good friends for that: we are very intimate friends.”

“Ah!” rejoined Winterbourne, “if you are in love with each other, it is another affair.”

She had allowed him up to this point to talk so frankly that he had no expectation of shocking her by this ejaculation; but she immediately got up, blushing visibly, and leaving him to exclaim mentally that little American flirts were the queerest creatures in the world. “Mr. Giovanelli, at least,” she said, giving her interlocutor a single glance, “never says such very disagreeable things to me.”

Winterbourne was bewildered; he stood, staring. Mr. Giovanelli had finished singing. He left the piano and came over to Daisy. “Won’t you come into the other room and have some tea?” he asked, bending before her with his ornamental smile.

Daisy turned to Winterbourne, beginning to smile again. He was still more perplexed, for this inconsequent smile made nothing clear, though it seemed to prove, indeed, that she had a sweetness and softness that reverted instinctively to the pardon of offenses. “It has never occurred to Mr. Winterbourne to offer me any tea,” she said with her little tormenting manner.

“I have offered you advice,” Winterbourne rejoined.

“I prefer weak tea!” cried Daisy, and she went off with the brilliant Giovanelli. She sat with him in the adjoining room, in the embrasure of the window, for the rest of the evening. There was an interesting performance at the piano, but neither of these young people gave heed to it. When Daisy came to take leave of Mrs. Walker, this lady conscientiously repaired the weakness of which she had been guilty at the moment of the young girl’s arrival. She turned her back straight upon Miss Miller and left her to depart with what grace she might. Winterbourne was standing near the door; he saw it all. Daisy turned very pale and looked at her mother, but Mrs. Miller was humbly unconscious of any violation of the usual social forms. She appeared, indeed, to have felt an incongruous impulse to draw attention to her own striking observance of them. “Good night, Mrs. Walker,” she said; “we’ve had a beautiful evening. You see, if I let Daisy come to parties without me, I don’t want her to go away without me.” Daisy turned away, looking with a pale, grave face at the circle near the door; Winterbourne saw that, for the first moment, she was too much shocked and puzzled even for indignation. He on his side was greatly touched.

“That was very cruel,” he said to Mrs. Walker.

“She never enters my drawing room again!” replied his hostess.



Since Winterbourne was not to meet her in Mrs. Walker's drawing room, he went as often as possible to Mrs. Miller's hotel. The ladies were rarely at home, but when he found them, the devoted Giovanelli was always present. Very often the brilliant little Roman was in the drawing room with Daisy alone, Mrs. Miller being apparently constantly of the opinion that discretion is the better part of surveillance. Winterbourne noted, at first with surprise, that Daisy on these occasions was never embarrassed or annoyed by his own entrance; but he very presently began to feel that she had no more surprises for him; the unexpected in her behavior was the only thing to expect. She showed no displeasure at her tete-a-tete with Giovanelli being interrupted; she could chatter as freshly and freely with two gentlemen as with one; there was always, in her conversation, the same odd mixture of audacity and puerility. Winterbourne remarked to himself that if she was seriously interested in Giovanelli, it was very singular that she should not take more trouble to preserve the sanctity of their interviews; and he liked her the more for her innocent-looking indifference and her apparently inexhaustible good humor. He could hardly have said why, but she seemed to him a girl who would never be jealous. At the risk of exciting a somewhat derisive smile on the reader's part, I may affirm that with regard to the women who had hitherto interested him, it very often seemed to Winterbourne among the possibilities that, given certain contingencies, he should be afraid—literally afraid—of these ladies; he had a pleasant sense that he should never be afraid of Daisy Miller. It must be added that this sentiment was not altogether flattering to Daisy; it was part of his conviction, or rather of his apprehension, that she would prove a very light young person.

But she was evidently very much interested in Giovanelli. She looked at him whenever he spoke; she was perpetually telling him to do this and to do that; she was constantly "chaffing" and abusing him. She appeared completely to have forgotten that Winterbourne had said anything to displease her at Mrs. Walker's little party. One Sunday afternoon, having gone to St. Peter's with his aunt, Winterbourne perceived Daisy strolling about the great church in company with the inevitable Giovanelli. Presently he pointed out the young girl and her cavalier to Mrs. Costello. This lady looked at them a moment through her eyeglass, and then she said:

"That's what makes you so pensive in these days, eh?"

"I had not the least idea I was pensive," said the young man.

"You are very much preoccupied; you are thinking of something."

"And what is it," he asked, "that you accuse me of thinking of?"

"Of that young lady's—Miss Baker's, Miss Chandler's—what's her name?—Miss Miller's intrigue with that little barber's block."

“Do you call it an intrigue,” Winterbourne asked—“an affair that goes on with such peculiar publicity?”

“That’s their folly,” said Mrs. Costello; “it’s not their merit.”

“No,” rejoined Winterbourne, with something of that pensiveness to which his aunt had alluded. “I don’t believe that there is anything to be called an intrigue.”

“I have heard a dozen people speak of it; they say she is quite carried away by him.”

“They are certainly very intimate,” said Winterbourne.

Mrs. Costello inspected the young couple again with her optical instrument. “He is very handsome. One easily sees how it is. She thinks him the most elegant man in the world, the finest gentleman. She has never seen anything like him; he is better, even, than the courier. It was the courier probably who introduced him; and if he succeeds in marrying the young lady, the courier will come in for a magnificent commission.”

“I don’t believe she thinks of marrying him,” said Winterbourne, “and I don’t believe he hopes to marry her.”

“You may be very sure she thinks of nothing. She goes on from day to day, from hour to hour, as they did in the Golden Age. I can imagine nothing more vulgar. And at the same time,” added Mrs. Costello, “depend upon it that she may tell you any moment that she is ‘engaged.’”

“I think that is more than Giovanelli expects,” said Winterbourne.

“Who is Giovanelli?”

“The little Italian. I have asked questions about him and learned something. He is apparently a perfectly respectable little man. I believe he is, in a small way, a cavaliere avvocato. But he doesn’t move in what are called the first circles. I think it is really not absolutely impossible that the courier introduced him. He is evidently immensely charmed with Miss Miller. If she thinks him the finest gentleman in the world, he, on his side, has never found himself in personal contact with such splendor, such opulence, such expensiveness as this young lady’s. And then she must seem to him wonderfully pretty and interesting. I rather doubt that he dreams of marrying her. That must appear to him too impossible a piece of luck. He has nothing but his handsome face to offer, and there is a substantial Mr. Miller in that mysterious land of dollars. Giovanelli knows that he hasn’t a title to offer. If he were only a count or a marchese! He must wonder at his luck, at the way they have taken him up.”

“He accounts for it by his handsome face and thinks Miss Miller a young lady qui se passe ses fantaisies!” said Mrs. Costello.

“It is very true,” Winterbourne pursued, “that Daisy and her mamma have not yet risen to that stage of—what shall I call it?—of culture at which the idea of catching a count or a marchese begins. I believe that they are intellectually incapable of that conception.”

“Ah! but the avvocato can’t believe it,” said Mrs. Costello.

Of the observation excited by Daisy’s “intrigue,” Winterbourne gathered that day at St. Peter’s sufficient evidence. A dozen of the American colonists in Rome came to talk with Mrs. Costello, who sat on a little portable stool at the base of one of the great pilasters. The vesper service was going forward in splendid chants and organ tones in the adjacent choir, and meanwhile, between Mrs. Costello and her friends, there was a great deal said about poor little Miss Miller’s going really “too far.” Winterbourne was not pleased with what he heard, but when, coming out upon the great steps of the church, he saw Daisy, who had emerged before him, get into an open cab with her accomplice and roll away through the cynical streets of Rome, he could not deny to himself that she was going very far indeed. He felt very sorry for her—not exactly that he believed that she had completely lost her head, but because it was painful to hear so much that was pretty, and undefended, and natural assigned to a vulgar place among the categories of disorder. He made an attempt after this to give a hint to Mrs. Miller. He met one day in the Corso a friend, a tourist like himself, who had just come out of the Doria Palace, where he had been walking through the beautiful gallery. His friend talked for a moment about the superb portrait of Innocent X by Velasquez which hangs in one of the cabinets of the palace, and then said, “And in the same cabinet, by the way, I had the pleasure of contemplating a picture of a different kind—that pretty American girl whom you pointed out to me last week.” In answer to Winterbourne’s inquiries, his friend narrated that the pretty American girl—prettier than ever—was seated with a companion in the secluded nook in which the great papal portrait was enshrined.

“Who was her companion?” asked Winterbourne.

“A little Italian with a bouquet in his buttonhole. The girl is delightfully pretty, but I thought I understood from you the other day that she was a young lady du meilleur monde.”

“So she is!” answered Winterbourne; and having assured himself that his informant had seen Daisy and her companion but five minutes before, he jumped into a cab and went to call on Mrs. Miller. She was at home; but she apologized to him for receiving him in Daisy’s absence.

“She’s gone out somewhere with Mr. Giovanelli,” said Mrs. Miller. “She’s always going round with Mr. Giovanelli.”

“I have noticed that they are very intimate,” Winterbourne observed.

“Oh, it seems as if they couldn’t live without each other!” said Mrs. Miller. “Well, he’s a real gentleman, anyhow. I keep telling Daisy she’s engaged!”

“And what does Daisy say?”

“Oh, she says she isn’t engaged. But she might as well be!” this impartial parent resumed; “she goes on as if she was. But I’ve made Mr. Giovanelli promise to tell me, if SHE doesn’t. I should want to write to Mr. Miller about it—shouldn’t you?”

Winterbourne replied that he certainly should; and the state of mind of Daisy’s mamma struck him as so unprecedented in the annals of parental vigilance that he gave up as utterly irrelevant the attempt to place her upon her guard.

After this Daisy was never at home, and Winterbourne ceased to meet her at the houses of their common acquaintances, because, as he perceived, these shrewd people had quite made up their minds that she was going too far. They ceased to invite her; and they intimated that they desired to express to observant Europeans the great truth that, though Miss Daisy Miller was a young American lady, her behavior was not representative—was regarded by her compatriots as abnormal. Winterbourne wondered how she felt about all the cold shoulders that were turned toward her, and sometimes it annoyed him to suspect that she did not feel at all. He said to himself that she was too light and childish, too uncultivated and unreasoning, too provincial, to have reflected upon her ostracism, or even to have perceived it. Then at other moments he believed that she carried about in her elegant and irresponsible little organism a defiant, passionate, perfectly observant consciousness of the impression she produced. He asked himself whether Daisy’s defiance came from the consciousness of innocence, or from her being, essentially, a young person of the reckless class. It must be admitted that holding one’s self to a belief in Daisy’s “innocence” came to seem to Winterbourne more and more a matter of fine-spun gallantry. As I have already had occasion to relate, he was angry at finding himself reduced to chopping logic about this young lady; he was vexed at his want of instinctive certitude as to how far her eccentricities were generic, national, and how far they were personal. From either view of them he had somehow missed her, and now it was too late. She was “carried away” by Mr. Giovanelli.

A few days after his brief interview with her mother, he encountered her in that beautiful abode of flowering desolation known as the Palace of the Caesars. The early Roman spring had filled the air with bloom and perfume, and the rugged surface of the Palatine was muffled with tender verdure. Daisy was strolling along

the top of one of those great mounds of ruin that are embanked with mossy marble and paved with monumental inscriptions. It seemed to him that Rome had never been so lovely as just then. He stood, looking off at the enchanting harmony of line and color that remotely encircles the city, inhaling the softly humid odors, and feeling the freshness of the year and the antiquity of the place reaffirm themselves in mysterious interfusion. It seemed to him also that Daisy had never looked so pretty, but this had been an observation of his whenever he met her. Giovanelli was at her side, and Giovanelli, too, wore an aspect of even unwonted brilliancy.

“Well,” said Daisy, “I should think you would be lonesome!”

“Lonesome?” asked Winterbourne.

“You are always going round by yourself. Can’t you get anyone to walk with you?”

“I am not so fortunate,” said Winterbourne, “as your companion.”

Giovanelli, from the first, had treated Winterbourne with distinguished politeness. He listened with a deferential air to his remarks; he laughed punctiliously at his pleasantries; he seemed disposed to testify to his belief that Winterbourne was a superior young man. He carried himself in no degree like a jealous wooer; he had obviously a great deal of tact; he had no objection to your expecting a little humility of him. It even seemed to Winterbourne at times that Giovanelli would find a certain mental relief in being able to have a private understanding with him—to say to him, as an intelligent man, that, bless you, HE knew how extraordinary was this young lady, and didn’t flatter himself with delusive—or at least TOO delusive—hopes of matrimony and dollars. On this occasion he strolled away from his companion to pluck a sprig of almond blossom, which he carefully arranged in his buttonhole.

“I know why you say that,” said Daisy, watching Giovanelli. “Because you think I go round too much with HIM.” And she nodded at her attendant.

“Every one thinks so—if you care to know,” said Winterbourne.

“Of course I care to know!” Daisy exclaimed seriously. “But I don’t believe it. They are only pretending to be shocked. They don’t really care a straw what I do. Besides, I don’t go round so much.”

“I think you will find they do care. They will show it disagreeably.”

Daisy looked at him a moment. “How disagreeably?”

“Haven’t you noticed anything?” Winterbourne asked.

"I have noticed you. But I noticed you were as stiff as an umbrella the first time I saw you."

"You will find I am not so stiff as several others," said Winterbourne, smiling.

"How shall I find it?"

"By going to see the others."

"What will they do to me?"

"They will give you the cold shoulder. Do you know what that means?"

Daisy was looking at him intently; she began to color. "Do you mean as Mrs. Walker did the other night?"

"Exactly!" said Winterbourne.

She looked away at Giovanelli, who was decorating himself with his almond blossom. Then looking back at Winterbourne, "I shouldn't think you would let people be so unkind!" she said.

"How can I help it?" he asked.

"I should think you would say something."

"I do say something;" and he paused a moment. "I say that your mother tells me that she believes you are engaged."

"Well, she does," said Daisy very simply.

Winterbourne began to laugh. "And does Randolph believe it?" he asked.

"I guess Randolph doesn't believe anything," said Daisy. Randolph's skepticism excited Winterbourne to further hilarity, and he observed that Giovanelli was coming back to them. Daisy, observing it too, addressed herself again to her countryman. "Since you have mentioned it," she said, "I AM engaged." Winterbourne looked at her; he had stopped laughing. "You don't believe!" she added.

He was silent a moment; and then, "Yes, I believe it," he said.

"Oh, no, you don't!" she answered. "Well, then—I am not!"

The young girl and her cicerone were on their way to the gate of the enclosure, so that Winterbourne, who had but lately entered, presently took leave of them. A week afterward he went to dine at a beautiful villa on the Caelian Hill, and, on arriving, dismissed his hired vehicle. The evening was charming, and he promised himself the satisfaction of walking home beneath the Arch of Constantine and past the vaguely lighted monuments of the Forum. There was a waning moon in the sky, and her radiance was not brilliant, but she was veiled in a thin cloud curtain which seemed to diffuse and equalize it. When, on his return from the villa (it was eleven o'clock), Winterbourne approached the dusky circle of the Colosseum, it recurred to him, as a lover of the picturesque, that the interior, in the pale moonshine, would be well worth a glance. He turned aside and walked to one of the empty arches, near which, as he observed, an open carriage—one of the little Roman streetcabs—was stationed. Then he passed in, among the cavernous shadows of the great structure, and emerged upon the clear and silent arena. The place had never seemed to him more impressive. One-half of the gigantic circus was in deep shade, the other was sleeping in the luminous dusk. As he stood there he began to murmur Byron's famous lines, out of "Manfred," but before he had finished his quotation he remembered that if nocturnal meditations in the Colosseum are recommended by the poets, they are deprecated by the doctors. The historic atmosphere was there, certainly; but the historic atmosphere, scientifically considered, was no better than a villainous miasma. Winterbourne walked to the middle of the arena, to take a more general glance, intending thereafter to make a hasty retreat. The great cross in the center was covered with shadow; it was only as he drew near it that he made it out distinctly. Then he saw that two persons were stationed upon the low steps which formed its base. One of these was a woman, seated; her companion was standing in front of her.

Presently the sound of the woman's voice came to him distinctly in the warm night air. "Well, he looks at us as one of the old lions or tigers may have looked at the Christian martyrs!" These were the words he heard, in the familiar accent of Miss Daisy Miller.

"Let us hope he is not very hungry," responded the ingenious Giovanelli. "He will have to take me first; you will serve for dessert!"

Winterbourne stopped, with a sort of horror, and, it must be added, with a sort of relief. It was as if a sudden illumination had been flashed upon the ambiguity of Daisy's behavior, and the riddle had become easy to read. She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect. He stood there, looking at her—looking at her companion and not reflecting that though he saw them vaguely, he himself must have been more brightly visible. He felt angry with himself that he had bothered so much about the right way of regarding Miss Daisy Miller. Then, as he was going to advance again, he checked himself, not from the fear that he was doing her injustice, but from a sense of the danger of appearing unbecomingly exhilarated by this sudden revulsion from cautious criticism. He

turned away toward the entrance of the place, but, as he did so, he heard Daisy speak again.

“Why, it was Mr. Winterbourne! He saw me, and he cuts me!”

What a clever little reprobate she was, and how smartly she played at injured innocence! But he wouldn’t cut her. Winterbourne came forward again and went toward the great cross. Daisy had got up; Giovanelli lifted his hat. Winterbourne had now begun to think simply of the craziness, from a sanitary point of view, of a delicate young girl lounging away the evening in this nest of malaria. What if she WERE a clever little reprobate? that was no reason for her dying of the perniciosa. “How long have you been here?” he asked almost brutally.

Daisy, lovely in the flattering moonlight, looked at him a moment. Then—“All the evening,” she answered, gently. “I never saw anything so pretty.”

“I am afraid,” said Winterbourne, “that you will not think Roman fever very pretty. This is the way people catch it. I wonder,” he added, turning to Giovanelli, “that you, a native Roman, should countenance such a terrible indiscretion.”

“Ah,” said the handsome native, “for myself I am not afraid.”

“Neither am I—for you! I am speaking for this young lady.”

Giovanelli lifted his well-shaped eyebrows and showed his brilliant teeth. But he took Winterbourne’s rebuke with docility. “I told the signorina it was a grave indiscretion, but when was the signorina ever prudent?”

“I never was sick, and I don’t mean to be!” the signorina declared. “I don’t look like much, but I’m healthy! I was bound to see the Colosseum by moonlight; I shouldn’t have wanted to go home without that; and we have had the most beautiful time, haven’t we, Mr. Giovanelli? If there has been any danger, Eugenio can give me some pills. He has got some splendid pills.”

“I should advise you,” said Winterbourne, “to drive home as fast as possible and take one!”

“What you say is very wise,” Giovanelli rejoined. “I will go and make sure the carriage is at hand.” And he went forward rapidly.

Daisy followed with Winterbourne. He kept looking at her; she seemed not in the least embarrassed. Winterbourne said nothing; Daisy chattered about the beauty of the place. “Well, I HAVE seen the Colosseum by moonlight!” she exclaimed. “That’s one good thing.” Then, noticing Winterbourne’s silence, she asked him why he didn’t speak. He made no answer; he only began to laugh. They passed under one of the dark archways; Giovanelli was in front with the carriage. Here



Daisy stopped a moment, looking at the young American. "DID you believe I was engaged, the other day?" she asked.

"It doesn't matter what I believed the other day," said Winterbourne, still laughing.

"Well, what do you believe now?"

"I believe that it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not!"

He felt the young girl's pretty eyes fixed upon him through the thick gloom of the archway; she was apparently going to answer. But Giovanelli hurried her forward. "Quick! quick!" he said; "if we get in by midnight we are quite safe."

Daisy took her seat in the carriage, and the fortunate Italian placed himself beside her. "Don't forget Eugenio's pills!" said Winterbourne as he lifted his hat.

"I don't care," said Daisy in a little strange tone, "whether I have Roman fever or not!" Upon this the cab driver cracked his whip, and they rolled away over the desultory patches of the antique pavement.

Winterbourne, to do him justice, as it were, mentioned to no one that he had encountered Miss Miller, at midnight, in the Colosseum with a gentleman; but nevertheless, a couple of days later, the fact of her having been there under these circumstances was known to every member of the little American circle, and commented accordingly. Winterbourne reflected that they had of course known it at the hotel, and that, after Daisy's return, there had been an exchange of remarks between the porter and the cab driver. But the young man was conscious, at the same moment, that it had ceased to be a matter of serious regret to him that the little American flirt should be "talked about" by low-minded menials. These people, a day or two later, had serious information to give: the little American flirt was alarmingly ill. Winterbourne, when the rumor came to him, immediately went to the hotel for more news. He found that two or three charitable friends had preceded him, and that they were being entertained in Mrs. Miller's salon by Randolph.

"It's going round at night," said Randolph—"that's what made her sick. She's always going round at night. I shouldn't think she'd want to, it's so plaguy dark. You can't see anything here at night, except when there's a moon. In America there's always a moon!" Mrs. Miller was invisible; she was now, at least, giving her daughter the advantage of her society. It was evident that Daisy was dangerously ill.

Winterbourne went often to ask for news of her, and once he saw Mrs. Miller, who, though deeply alarmed, was, rather to his surprise, perfectly composed, and, as it appeared, a most efficient and judicious nurse. She talked a good deal about

Dr. Davis, but Winterbourne paid her the compliment of saying to himself that she was not, after all, such a monstrous goose. "Daisy spoke of you the other day," she said to him. "Half the time she doesn't know what she's saying, but that time I think she did. She gave me a message she told me to tell you. She told me to tell you that she never was engaged to that handsome Italian. I am sure I am very glad; Mr. Giovanelli hasn't been near us since she was taken ill. I thought he was so much of a gentleman; but I don't call that very polite! A lady told me that he was afraid I was angry with him for taking Daisy round at night. Well, so I am, but I suppose he knows I'm a lady. I would scorn to scold him. Anyway, she says she's not engaged. I don't know why she wanted you to know, but she said to me three times, 'Mind you tell Mr. Winterbourne.' And then she told me to ask if you remembered the time you went to that castle in Switzerland. But I said I wouldn't give any such messages as that. Only, if she is not engaged, I'm sure I'm glad to know it."

But, as Winterbourne had said, it mattered very little. A week after this, the poor girl died; it had been a terrible case of the fever. Daisy's grave was in the little Protestant cemetery, in an angle of the wall of imperial Rome, beneath the cypresses and the thick spring flowers. Winterbourne stood there beside it, with a number of other mourners, a number larger than the scandal excited by the young lady's career would have led you to expect. Near him stood Giovanelli, who came nearer still before Winterbourne turned away. Giovanelli was very pale: on this occasion he had no flower in his buttonhole; he seemed to wish to say something. At last he said, "She was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw, and the most amiable"; and then he added in a moment, "and she was the most innocent."

Winterbourne looked at him and presently repeated his words, "And the most innocent?"

"The most innocent!"

Winterbourne felt sore and angry. "Why the devil," he asked, "did you take her to that fatal place?"

Mr. Giovanelli's urbanity was apparently imperturbable. He looked on the ground a moment, and then he said, "For myself I had no fear; and she wanted to go."

"That was no reason!" Winterbourne declared.

The subtle Roman again dropped his eyes. "If she had lived, I should have got nothing. She would never have married me, I am sure."

"She would never have married you?"

"For a moment I hoped so. But no. I am sure."

Winterbourne listened to him: he stood staring at the raw protuberance among the April daisies. When he turned away again, Mr. Giovanelli, with his light, slow step, had retired.

Winterbourne almost immediately left Rome; but the following summer he again met his aunt, Mrs. Costello at Vevey. Mrs. Costello was fond of Vevey. In the interval Winterbourne had often thought of Daisy Miller and her mystifying manners. One day he spoke of her to his aunt—said it was on his conscience that he had done her injustice.

“I am sure I don’t know,” said Mrs. Costello. “How did your injustice affect her?”

“She sent me a message before her death which I didn’t understand at the time; but I have understood it since. She would have appreciated one’s esteem.”

“Is that a modest way,” asked Mrs. Costello, “of saying that she would have reciprocated one’s affection?”

Winterbourne offered no answer to this question; but he presently said, “You were right in that remark that you made last summer. I was booked to make a mistake. I have lived too long in foreign parts.”

Nevertheless, he went back to live at Geneva, whence there continue to come the most contradictory accounts of his motives of sojourn: a report that he is “studying” hard—an intimation that he is much interested in a very clever foreign lady.

### 3.8 Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909)

Born in 1849 in the coastal town of South Berwick, Maine, Sarah Orne Jewett grew up accompanying her father, a doctor, on rounds across the rural countryside. She was educated at South Berwick Academy, graduating in 1866. In spite of obstacles she would have faced as a woman seeking a medical education in the nineteenth century, Jewett harbored ambitions of becoming a doctor herself, but ill health prevented her from moving forward with the plan. Instead, she continued to educate herself by reading widely in her father's private library, eventually deciding upon a life of writing. She published a short story at age nineteen in *The Atlantic Monthly*, and her work was promoted by William Dean Howells, assistant editor at the magazine, who praised Jewett's ability to capture the distinctive voice of ordinary people in the New England region. As her reputation grew, she regularly traveled to Boston, where she enjoyed the company of other writers. Jewett never married but later in life befriended the widow of James Thomas Fields, Howells's predecessor at *The Atlantic Monthly*. Annie Adams Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett were companions for the rest of Jewett's life. Jewett died in 1909 after a long illness.



Image 3.7: Sarah Orne Jewett, 1894  
Photographer: Houghton Mifflin  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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Jewett's most notable works are her novels and short stories that explore characters firmly rooted in the New England region, particularly *A Country Doctor* (1884); *A White Heron* (1886), a short story collection; and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896). Jewett has been described as both a local colorist and a regionalist, and even as an early Realist. The difficulty in labeling her work points to limits of categorizing literature using terms for distinct literary movements that developed at times parallel to one another and at other instances overlapped. Most literary critics, though, are comfortable describing Jewett's work as representative of American Literary Regionalism. Similar to fellow New England writer Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's fiction, Jewett's work does exhibit features of Local Color—the important sense of locale in terms of geography and landscape, as well as the speech patterns and customs of the inhabitants. However, beyond the particulars of place, these stories focus on characterization, particularly in ways that plot or action in the story is filtered through the consciousness of a central protagonist, most often a young girl or a woman. In Jewett's work, as in Freeman's, there is evidence of three dimensional characters who must work through an internal conflict, and this dimensional characterization predicts the kind of psychological complexity of character that becomes even more refined and sophisticated in works by Realistic writers such as Howells and James. Additionally, her work, with its focus on the lives of women and the limitations placed on them by the cultural and historical moment, predicts an early feminist realism. In one of her most important short stories, "A White Heron," Sylvy's internal conflict—whether or not to give away the location of the heron's nest to the handsome male stranger—forms the basis of the plot of the story. Sylvy's allegiance is challenged, then, in terms of whether she will protect the wild bird or please the

young man. However, Sylvy must also decide a larger issue than whether she will be loyal to the bird or the ornithologist (and all each represents symbolically). She must determine who she is and whether she can be loyal to this new sense of self.

The Sarah Orne Jewett biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.8.1 “A White Heron” (1886)

#### I.

The woods were already filled with shadows one June evening, just before eight o'clock, though a bright sunset still glimmered faintly among the trunks of the trees. A little girl was driving home her cow, a plodding, dilatory, provoking creature in her behavior, but a valued companion for all that. They were going away from whatever light there was, and striking deep into the woods, but their feet were familiar with the path, and it was no matter whether their eyes could see it or not.

There was hardly a night the summer through when the old cow could be found waiting at the pasture bars; on the contrary, it was her greatest pleasure to hide herself away among the huckleberry bushes, and though she wore a loud bell she had made the discovery that if one stood perfectly still it would not ring. So Sylvia had to hunt for her until she found her, and call Co' ! Co' ! with never an answering Moo, until her childish patience was quite spent. If the creature had not given good milk and plenty of it, the case would have seemed very different to her owners. Besides, Sylvia had all the time there was, and very little use to make of it. Sometimes in pleasant weather it was a consolation to look upon the cow's pranks as an intelligent attempt to play hide and seek, and as the child had no playmates she lent herself to this amusement with a good deal of zest. Though this chase had been so long that the wary animal herself had given an unusual signal of her whereabouts, Sylvia had only laughed when she came upon Mistress Moolly at the swamp-side, and urged her affectionately homeward with a twig of birch leaves. The old cow was not inclined to wander farther, she even turned in the right direction for once as they left the pasture, and stepped along the road at a good pace. She was quite ready to be milked now, and seldom stopped to browse. Sylvia wondered what her grandmother would say because they were so late. It was a great while since she had left home at half-past five o'clock, but everybody knew the difficulty of making this errand a short one. Mrs. Tilley had chased the hornéd torment too many summer evenings herself to blame any one else for lingering, and was only thankful as she waited that she had Sylvia, nowadays, to give such valuable assistance. The good woman suspected that Sylvia loitered occasionally on her own account; there never was such a child for straying about out-of-doors since the world was made! Everybody said that it was a good change

for a little maid who had tried to grow for eight years in a crowded manufacturing town, but, as for Sylvia herself, it seemed as if she never had been alive at all before she came to live at the farm. She thought often with wistful compassion of a wretched geranium that belonged to a town neighbor.

“Afraid of folks,” old Mrs. Tilley said to herself, with a smile, after she had made the unlikely choice of Sylvia from her daughter’s houseful of children, and was returning to the farm. “‘Afraid of folks,’ they said! I guess she won’t be troubled no great with ’em up to the old place!” When they reached the door of the lonely house and stopped to unlock it, and the cat came to purr loudly, and rub against them, a deserted pussy, indeed, but fat with young robins, Sylvia whispered that this was a beautiful place to live in, and she never should wish to go home.

The companions followed the shady wood-road, the cow taking slow steps and the child very fast ones. The cow stopped long at the brook to drink, as if the pasture were not half a swamp, and Sylvia stood still and waited, letting her bare feet cool themselves in the shoal water, while the great twilight moths struck softly against her. She waded on through the brook as the cow moved away, and listened to the thrushes with a heart that beat fast with pleasure. There was a stirring in the great boughs overhead. They were full of little birds and beasts that seemed to be wide awake, and going about their world, or else saying good-night to each other in sleepy twitters. Sylvia herself felt sleepy as she walked along. However, it was not much farther to the house, and the air was soft and sweet. She was not often in the woods so late as this, and it made her feel as if she were a part of the gray shadows and the moving leaves. She was just thinking how long it seemed since she first came to the farm a year ago, and wondering if everything went on in the noisy town just the same as when she was there, the thought of the great red-faced boy who used to chase and frighten her made her hurry along the path to escape from the shadow of the trees.

Suddenly this little woods-girl is horror-stricken to hear a clear whistle not very far away. Not a bird’s-whistle, which would have a sort of friendliness, but a boy’s whistle, determined, and somewhat aggressive. Sylvia left the cow to whatever sad fate might await her, and stepped discreetly aside into the bushes, but she was just too late. The enemy had discovered her, and called out in a very cheerful and persuasive tone, “Halloa, little girl, how far is it to the road?” and trembling Sylvia answered almost inaudibly, “A good ways.”

She did not dare to look boldly at the tall young man, who carried a gun over his shoulder, but she came out of her bush and again followed the cow, while he walked alongside.

“I have been hunting for some birds,” the stranger said kindly, “and I have lost my way, and need a friend very much. Don’t be afraid,” he added gallantly. “Speak up and tell me what your name is, and whether you think I can spend the night at your house, and go out gunning early in the morning.”

Sylvia was more alarmed than before. Would not her grandmother consider her much to blame? But who could have foreseen such an accident as this? It did not seem to be her fault, and she hung her head as if the stem of it were broken, but managed to answer "Sylvy," with much effort when her companion again asked her name.

Mrs. Tilley was standing in the doorway when the trio came into view. The cow gave a loud moo by way of explanation.

"Yes, you'd better speak up for yourself, you old trial! Where'd she tucked herself away this time, Sylvy?" But Sylvia kept an awed silence; she knew by instinct that her grandmother did not comprehend the gravity of the situation. She must be mistaking the stranger for one of the farmer-lads of the region.

The young man stood his gun beside the door, and dropped a lumpy game-bag beside it; then he bade Mrs. Tilley good-evening, and repeated his wayfarer's story, and asked if he could have a night's lodging.

"Put me anywhere you like," he said. "I must be off early in the morning, before day; but I am very hungry, indeed. You can give me some milk at any rate, that's plain."

"Dear sakes, yes," responded the hostess, whose long slumbering hospitality seemed to be easily awakened. "You might fare better if you went out to the main road a mile or so, but you're welcome to what we've got. I'll milk right off, and you make yourself at home. You can sleep on husks or feathers," she proffered graciously. "I raised them all myself. There's good pasturing for geese just below here towards the ma'sh. Now step round and set a plate for the gentleman, Sylvy!" And Sylvia promptly stepped. She was glad to have something to do, and she was hungry herself.

It was a surprise to find so clean and comfortable a little dwelling in this New England wilderness. The young man had known the horrors of its most primitive housekeeping, and the dreary squalor of that level of society which does not rebel at the companionship of hens. This was the best thrift of an old-fashioned farmstead, though on such a small scale that it seemed like a hermitage. He listened eagerly to the old woman's quaint talk, he watched Sylvia's pale face and shining gray eyes with ever growing enthusiasm, and insisted that this was the best supper he had eaten for a month, and afterward the new-made friends sat down in the door-way together while the moon came up.

Soon it would be berry-time, and Sylvia was a great help at picking. The cow was a good milker, though a plaguy thing to keep track of, the hostess gossiped frankly, adding presently that she had buried four children, so Sylvia's mother, and a son (who might be dead) in California were all the children she had left.

“Dan, my boy, was a great hand to go gunning,” she explained sadly. “I never wanted for pa’tridges or gray squer’ls while he was to home. He’s been a great wand’rer, I expect, and he’s no hand to write letters. There, I don’t blame him, I’d ha’ seen the world myself if it had been so I could.

“Sylvy takes after him,” the grandmother continued affectionately, after a minute’s pause. “There ain’t a foot o’ ground she don’t know her way over, and the wild creaturs counts her one o’ themselves. Squer’ls she’ll tame to come an’ feed right out o’ her hands, and all sorts o’ birds. Last winter she got the jay-birds to bangeing here, and I believe she’d’a’ scanted herself of her own meals to have plenty to throw out amongst ’em, if I hadn’t kep’ watch. Anything but crows, I tell her, I’m willin’ to help support — though Dan he had a tamed one o’ them that did seem to have reason same as folks. It was round here a good spell after he went away. Dan an’ his father they didn’t hitch, — but he never held up his head ag’in after Dan had dared him an’ gone off.”

The guest did not notice this hint of family sorrows in his eager interest in something else.

“So Sylvy knows all about birds, does she?” he exclaimed, as he looked round at the little girl who sat, very demure but increasingly sleepy, in the moonlight. “I am making a collection of birds myself. I have been at it ever since I was a boy.” (Mrs. Tilley smiled.) “There are two or three very rare ones I have been hunting for these five years. I mean to get them on my own ground if they can be found.”

“Do you cage ‘em up?” asked Mrs. Tilley doubtfully, in response to this enthusiastic announcement.

“Oh no, they’re stuffed and preserved, dozens and dozens of them,” said the ornithologist, “and I have shot or snared every one myself. I caught a glimpse of a white heron a few miles from here on Saturday, and I have followed it in this direction. They have never been found in this district at all. The little white heron, it is,” and he turned again to look at Sylvia with the hope of discovering that the rare bird was one of her acquaintances.

But Sylvia was watching a hop-toad in the narrow footpath.

“You would know the heron if you saw it,” the stranger continued eagerly. “A queer tall white bird with soft feathers and long thin legs. And it would have a nest perhaps in the top of a high tree, made of sticks, something like a hawk’s nest.”

Sylvia’s heart gave a wild beat; she knew that strange white bird, and had once stolen softly near where it stood in some bright green swamp grass, away over at the other side of the woods. There was an open place where the sunshine always seemed strangely yellow and hot, where tall, nodding rushes grew, and her



grandmother had warned her that she might sink in the soft black mud underneath and never be heard of more. Not far beyond were the salt marshes just this side the sea itself, which Sylvia wondered and dreamed much about, but never had seen, whose great voice could sometimes be heard above the noise of the woods on stormy nights.

“I can’t think of anything I should like so much as to find that heron’s nest,” the handsome stranger was saying. “I would give ten dollars to anybody who could show it to me,” he added desperately, “and I mean to spend my whole vacation hunting for it if need be. Perhaps it was only migrating, or had been chased out of its own region by some bird of prey.”

Mrs. Tilley gave amazed attention to all this, but Sylvia still watched the toad, not divining, as she might have done at some calmer time, that the creature wished to get to its hole under the door-step, and was much hindered by the unusual spectators at that hour of the evening. No amount of thought, that night, could decide how many wished-for treasures the ten dollars, so lightly spoken of, would buy.

The next day the young sportsman hovered about the woods, and Sylvia kept him company, having lost her first fear of the friendly lad, who proved to be most kind and sympathetic. He told her many things about the birds and what they knew and where they lived and what they did with themselves. And he gave her a jack-knife, which she thought as great a treasure as if she were a desert-islander. All day long he did not once make her troubled or afraid except when he brought down some unsuspecting singing creature from its bough. Sylvia would have liked him vastly better without his gun; she could not understand why he killed the very birds he seemed to like so much. But as the day waned, Sylvia still watched the young man with loving admiration. She had never seen anybody so charming and delightful; the woman’s heart, asleep in the child, was vaguely thrilled by a dream of love. Some premonition of that great power stirred and swayed these young creatures who traversed the solemn woodlands with soft-footed silent care. They stopped to listen to a bird’s song; they pressed forward again eagerly, parting the branches — speaking to each other rarely and in whispers; the young man going first and Sylvia following, fascinated, a few steps behind, with her gray eyes dark with excitement.

She grieved because the longed-for white heron was elusive, but she did not lead the guest, she only followed, and there was no such thing as speaking first. The sound of her own unquestioned voice would have terrified her — it was hard enough to answer yes or no when there was need of that. At last evening began to fall, and they drove the cow home together, and Sylvia smiled with pleasure when they came to the place where she heard the whistle and was afraid only the night before.

## II.

Half a mile from home, at the farther edge of the woods, where the land was highest, a great pine-tree stood, the last of its generation. Whether it was left for a boundary mark, or for what reason, no one could say; the woodchoppers who had felled its mates were dead and gone long ago, and a whole forest of sturdy trees, pines and oaks and maples, had grown again. But the stately head of this old pine towered above them all and made a landmark for sea and shore miles and miles away. Sylvia knew it well. She had always believed that whoever climbed to the top of it could see the ocean; and the little girl had often laid her hand on the great rough trunk and looked up wistfully at those dark boughs that the wind always stirred, no matter how hot and still the air might be below. Now she thought of the tree with a new excitement, for why, if one climbed it at break of day, could not one see all the world, and easily discover from whence the white heron flew, and mark the place, and find the hidden nest?

What a spirit of adventure, what wild ambition! What fancied triumph and delight and glory for the later morning when she could make known the secret! It was almost too real and too great for the childish heart to bear.

All night the door of the little house stood open and the whippoorwills came and sang upon the very step. The young sportsman and his old hostess were sound asleep, but Sylvia's great design kept her broad awake and watching. She forgot to think of sleep. The short summer night seemed as long as the winter darkness, and at last when the whippoorwills ceased, and she was afraid the morning would after all come too soon, she stole out of the house and followed the pasture path through the woods, hastening toward the open ground beyond, listening with a sense of comfort and companionship to the drowsy twitter of a half-awakened bird, whose perch she had jarred in passing. Alas, if the great wave of human interest which flooded for the first time this dull little life should sweep away the satisfactions of an existence heart to heart with nature and the dumb life of the forest!

There was the huge tree asleep yet in the paling moonlight, and small and silly Sylvia began with utmost bravery to mount to the top of it, with tingling, eager blood coursing the channels of her whole frame, with her bare feet and fingers, that pinched and held like bird's claws to the monstrous ladder reaching up, up, almost to the sky itself. First she must mount the white oak tree that grew alongside, where she was almost lost among the dark branches and the green leaves heavy and wet with dew; a bird fluttered off its nest, and a red squirrel ran to and fro and scolded pettishly at the harmless housebreaker. Sylvia felt her way easily. She had often climbed there, and knew that higher still one of the oak's upper branches chafed against the pine trunk, just where its lower boughs were set close together. There, when she made the dangerous pass from one tree to the other, the great enterprise would really begin.

She crept out along the swaying oak limb at last, and took the daring step across into the old pine-tree. The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast, the sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons, the pitch made her thin little fingers clumsy and stiff as she went round and round the tree's great stem, higher and higher upward. The sparrows and robins in the woods below were beginning to wake and twitter to the dawn, yet it seemed much lighter there aloft in the pine-tree, and the child knew she must hurry if her project were to be of any use.

The tree seemed to lengthen itself out as she went up, and to reach farther and farther upward. It was like a great main-mast to the voyaging earth; it must truly have been amazed that morning through all its ponderous frame as it felt this determined spark of human spirit wending its way from higher branch to branch. Who knows how steadily the least twigs held themselves to advantage this light, weak creature on her way! The old pine must have loved his new dependent. More than all the hawks, and bats, and moths, and even the sweet voiced thrushes, was the brave, beating heart of the solitary gray-eyed child. And the tree stood still and frowned away the winds that June morning while the dawn grew bright in the east.

Sylvia's face was like a pale star, if one had seen it from the ground, when the last thorny bough was past, and she stood trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top. Yes, there was the sea with the dawning sun making a golden dazzle over it, and toward that glorious east flew two hawks with slow-moving pinions. How low they looked in the air from that height when one had only seen them before far up, and dark against the blue sky. Their gray feathers were as soft as moths; they seemed only a little way from the tree, and Sylvia felt as if she too could go flying away among the clouds. Westward, the woodlands and farms reached miles and miles into the distance; here and there were church steeples, and white villages, truly it was a vast and awesome world.

The birds sang louder and louder. At last the sun came up bewilderingly bright. Sylvia could see the white sails of ships out at sea, and the clouds that were purple and rose-colored and yellow at first began to fade away. Where was the white heron's nest in the sea of green branches, and was this wonderful sight and pageant of the world the only reward for having climbed to such a giddy height? Now look down again, Sylvia, where the green marsh is set among the shining birches and dark hemlocks; there where you saw the white heron once you will see him again; look, look! a white spot of him like a single floating feather comes up from the dead hemlock and grows larger, and rises, and comes close at last, and goes by the landmark pine with steady sweep of wing and outstretched slender neck and crested head. And wait! wait! do not move a foot or a finger, little girl, do not send an arrow of light and consciousness from your two eager eyes, for the heron has perched on a pine bough not far beyond yours, and cries back to his mate on the nest and plumes his feathers for the new day!

The child gives a long sigh a minute later when a company of shouting cat-birds comes also to the tree, and vexed by their fluttering and lawlessness the solemn heron goes away. She knows his secret now, the wild, light, slender bird that floats and wavers, and goes back like an arrow presently to his home in the green world beneath. Then Sylvia, well satisfied, makes her perilous way down again, not daring to look far below the branch she stands on, ready to cry sometimes because her fingers ache and her lamed feet slip. Wondering over and over again what the stranger would say to her, and what he would think when she told him how to find his way straight to the heron's nest.

"Sylvy, Sylvy!" called the busy old grandmother again and again, but nobody answered, and the small husk bed was empty and Sylvia had disappeared.

The guest waked from a dream, and remembering his day's pleasure hurried to dress himself that might it sooner begin. He was sure from the way the shy little girl looked once or twice yesterday that she had at least seen the white heron, and now she must really be made to tell. Here she comes now, paler than ever, and her worn old frock is torn and tattered, and smeared with pine pitch. The grandmother and the sportsman stand in the door together and question her, and the splendid moment has come to speak of the dead hemlock-tree by the green marsh.

But Sylvia does not speak after all, though the old grandmother fretfully rebukes her, and the young man's kind, appealing eyes are looking straight in her own. He can make them rich with money; he has promised it, and they are poor now. He is so well worth making happy, and he waits to hear the story she can tell.

No, she must keep silence! What is it that suddenly forbids her and makes her dumb? Has she been nine years growing and now, when the great world for the first time puts out a hand to her, must she thrust it aside for a bird's sake? The murmur of the pine's green branches is in her ears, she remembers how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away.

Dear loyalty, that suffered a sharp pang as the guest went away disappointed later in the day, that could have served and followed him and loved him as a dog loves! Many a night Sylvia heard the echo of his whistle haunting the pasture path as she came home with the loitering cow. She forgot even her sorrow at the sharp report of his gun and the sight of thrushes and sparrows dropping silent to the ground, their songs hushed and their pretty feathers stained and wet with blood. Were the birds better friends than their hunter might have been, — who can tell? Whatever treasures were lost to her, woodlands and summer-time, remember! Bring your gifts and graces and tell your secrets to this lonely country child!

## 3.9 Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)

On July 22, 1849, in New York City, Emma Lazarus was born into a large Jewish family. She was the fourth of seven children. Her father, Moses Lazarus, was a wealthy Jewish merchant. Lazarus was privately educated by tutors from an early age. She studied American and British literature as well as several languages, including German, French, and Italian. She was particularly fond of poetry.

Lazarus began to write at the age of eleven. She was inspired by the American Civil War. The poems written when she was a teenager were collected and published as *Poems and Translations* in 1867. This collection was followed by a second book of poetry, *Admetus and Other Poems*, in 1871, whose title poem was dedicated to Ralph Waldo Emerson. In addition to her books of poems, her poetry was published in popular magazines, including *Lippincott's Monthly* and *Scribner's Monthly*. She also authored *Alide: An Episode of Goethe's Life*, *The Spagnoletto*, *Poems and Ballads of Heinrich Heine*, *The Crowning of the Red Cock*, and the sixteen-part cycle poem "Epochs."

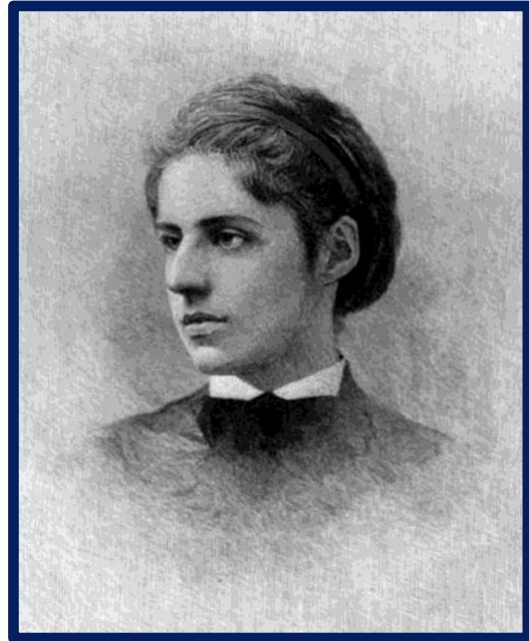


Image 3.8: Emma Lazarus, 1872  
Photographer: T. Johnson  
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One of the first successful Jewish American authors, Lazarus was part of the late nineteenth century New York literary elite and was recognized in her day as an important American poet. As a Jewish American woman, she faced discrimination. Lazarus published some of the first literary works that explained the struggles of Jewish Americans. She was also an advocate for Jewish refugees.

On November 19, 1887, when she was 38 years old, Lazarus died in New York, most likely from Hodgkin's lymphoma. Many are familiar with her sonnet "The New Colossus," reproduced below, which was written in 1883 and whose lines were inscribed on a bronze plaque on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1903.

The Emma Lazarus biography was written by Nicholas Sinibaldi, a University of Delaware student.

### 3.9.1 "The New Colossus" (1883)

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame

Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

### 3.10 Kate Chopin (1850-1904)



Image 3.9: Kate Chopin, 1894  
Photographer: unknown  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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Katherine O’Flaherty Chopin was born in 1850 in St. Louis, Missouri, to an affluent family. She was formally educated in a Catholic school for girls. At age twenty, she married Oscar Chopin and moved with him to New Orleans. The couple eventually relocated to Cloutierville in 1879, an area where many members of the Creole community lived. The Chopins lived, worked, and raised their six children together until Oscar died unexpectedly in 1882, leaving his wife in serious debt. Chopin worked and sold the family business to pay off the debt, eventually moving back to St. Louis to be near her mother, who died soon after Chopin returned. After experiencing these losses, Chopin turned to reading and writing to deal with her grief. Her experiences in New Orleans and Cloutierville provided rich writing material, and during the 1890s, she enjoyed success as a writer, publishing a number of stories in the Local Color tradition. By 1899, her style had evolved, and her important work *The Awakening*, published that year, shocked the Victorian audience of the time in its frank depiction of a woman’s sexuality. Unprepared for the negative critical reception that ensued, Chopin retreated from the publishing world. She died unexpectedly a few years later in 1904, from a brain hemorrhage.

In her lifetime, Chopin was known primarily as a Local Color writer who produced a number of important short stories, many of which were collected in *Bayou Folk* in 1894. Her groundbreaking novel *The Awakening* published in 1899 was ahead of its time in the examination of the rigid cultural and legal boundaries placed on women which limited or prevented them from living authentic, fully self-directed lives. The novel offers a sensuous portrait of a young married woman and mother, Edna Pontellier, who awakens to herself as a dimensional human being with sexual longings and a strong will to live an authentic life, not the repressed half-life she is assigned by tradition and culture, through the institutions of marriage and motherhood, to “perform.” Though today it is viewed as an important early feminist work, the novel shocked and offended the turn of the century reading audience. It was all but forgotten until interest in the novel and in Chopin’s work in general was revived in the 1960s.

The Kate Chopin biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.10.1 “The Story of an Hour” (1894)

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband’s friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard’s name leading the list of “killed.” He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister’s arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.



Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: “free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the key-hole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of

Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his gripsack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of the joy that kills.

### 3.11 George Edward Woodberry (1855-1930)

American literary critic, poet, university professor, and man of letters, George Edward Woodberry was born in Beverly, Massachusetts, on May 12, 1855. He was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and began his college career at Harvard in 1872. Because a health issue interrupted his studies, he graduated in 1877. Woodberry earned highest final honors in philosophy, and was awarded an Oration at Commencement. During his time in college, he wrote the controversial essay “Relation to Palla Athene to Athens.” The committee did not allow him to present his work orally because they disapproved of the subject matter. The only people to see his potential at this time were his friends who went on to publish it in small numbers.

After his first collection of poetry, *Verses from the Harvard Advocate*, was published, he was hired as a Professor of English and History at the University of Nebraska. He left this post to move to New York to work as assistant editor of *The Nation*. The following year, he moved to Cambridge to continue his career in editing. He also contributed pieces to *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper’s*. In 1880, he returned to teach for the University of Nebraska for a two-year period. He immersed himself into his writing upon his return to Beverly. The work for which he is most known was published in 1885: the definitive study of Edgar Allen Poe’s work.

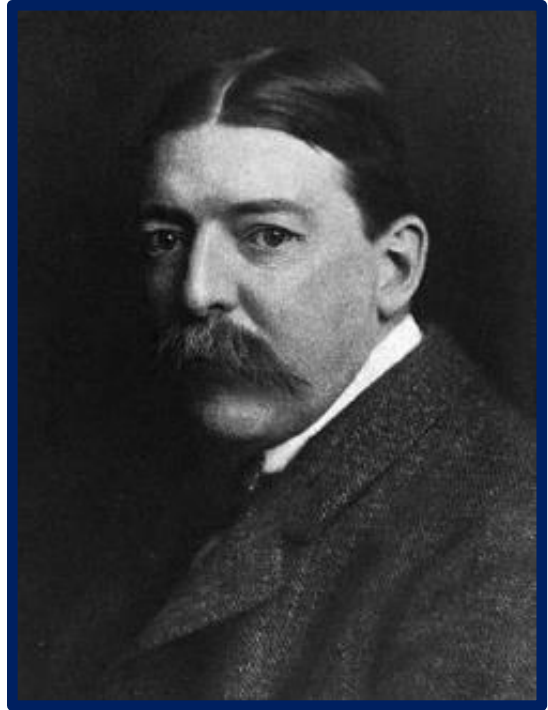


Image 3.10: George Edward Woodberry, 1903  
Photographer: Hollinger  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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During the late 1880s, Woodberry took a short trip to Italy and in his travels he found their conditions of life so very disheartening. From this came the 1887 work *My Country*. From 1891–1904, he was professor of comparative literature at Columbia University. While working there he was elected as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He ended up giving Italy another chance in the early 1890s. This trip being much happier and influential than the first visit, he was inspired to write two books upon his return.

His life ended on January 2, 1930 at the age of 74, in Beverly, Massachusetts. After his death he was awarded one of the first three Frost Medals in poetry by the Poetry Society of America. Harvard later named a poetry room after him in honor of his lifetime poetic achievements.

The George Edward Woodberry biography was written by Pamela O. and Curstyn D., University of Delaware students.

### 3.11.1 “On a Portrait of Columbus” (1892)

Was this his face, and these the finding eyes  
That plucked a new world from the rolling seas?  
Who, serving Christ, whom most he sought to please,  
Willed his one thought until he saw arise  
Man’s other home and earthly paradise—  
His early vision, when with stalwart knees  
He pushed the boat from his young olive-trees,  
And sailed to wrest the secret of the skies?  
He on the waters dared to set his feet,  
And through believing planted earth’s last race.  
What faith in man must in our new world beat,  
Thinking how once he saw before his face  
The west and all the host of stars retreat  
Into the silent infinite of space!

## 3.12 Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)

Born a slave in Virginia, Booker T. Washington grew up to become the most influential black author and activist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As discussed in his autobiography, *Up From Slavery* (1901), Washington spent his early childhood working as a slave on a plantation. After Emancipation, and while still a boy, he first worked with his stepfather in the coalmines and salt foundries of West Virginia and then as a houseboy. At the age of fourteen, Washington left home to attend the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, a segregated school for minorities, where he worked as a janitor while learning to be an educator. Washington distinguished himself at the Hampton Institute, ultimately returning after graduation at the invitation of the school's principal to teach there. In 1881, at the age of twenty-five, Washington was hired to build and lead the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University), a new school in Alabama whose mission was to train African Americans for agricultural and industrial labor. The school was so poorly funded that Washington and his students famously had to make their own bricks and construct their own school buildings. Through Washington's inspiring leadership and tireless fundraising, Tuskegee grew and prospered. In 1895, Washington gave a five-minute speech at the Atlanta Cotton State and International Exposition that propelled him to the forefront of American politics and culture. American presidents called on him for advice about race relations and white business leaders sought him out to coordinate charitable giving to black institutions, earning Washington the moniker "the Moses of his race" in newspapers of the era.

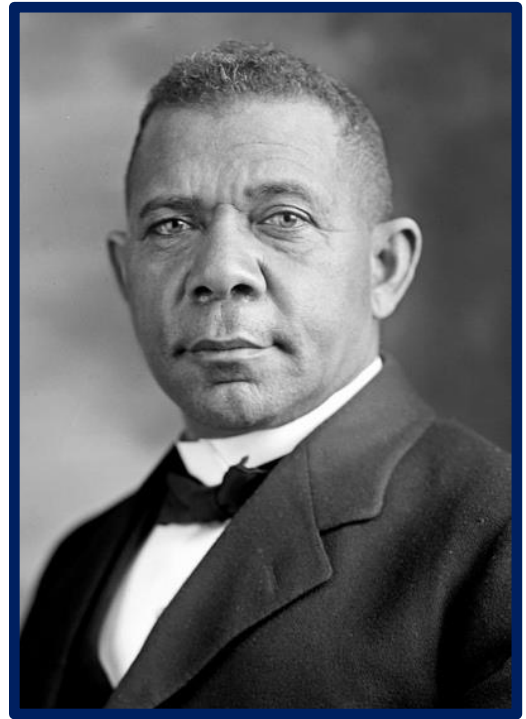


Image 3.11: Booker T. Washington, 1905  
Photographer: Harris & Ewing  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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Washington wrote almost twenty books in his lifetime, including several autobiographies, a biography of Frederick Douglass, and inspirational self-improvement texts such as *Sowing and Reaping* (1900) and *Character Building* (1902). Four chapters from Washington's biography, *Up From Slavery*, are reproduced below. In the first chapter, Washington recounts his childhood up until the time of Emancipation. Chapter 2 documents his boyhood in West Virginia, and Chapter 9, his time in Tuskegee. In the fourteenth chapter, he reprints his Exposition Address and discusses its startlingly positive reception by a largely white audience that up to that point was fearful of America's black population. Unlike contemporaries such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Washington did not criticize the Supreme Court's 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that the nation's different races should be treated as "separate but equal." Instead, he sought to work within the law's segregationist restrictions. Washington pragmatically wrote his biography to showcase the industry and integrity of all African Americans rather than to demonize his former owners or celebrate his personal accomplishments. As you read Washington's chapters, consider

how Washington uses the form of the slave narrative to give examples not only of the horrors of slavery but also of harmonious and honorable race relations.

The Booker T. Washington biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.12.1 From *Up From Slavery* (1901)

#### Chapter 1: “A Slave Among Slaves”

I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time. As nearly as I have been able to learn, I was born near a cross-roads post-office called Hale’s Ford, and the year was 1858 or 1859. I do not know the month or the day. The earliest impressions I can now recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters—the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins.

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were especially cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and a brother and sister till after the Civil War, when we were all declared free.

Of my ancestry I know almost nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later, I heard whispered conversations among the coloured people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother’s side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America. I have been unsuccessful in securing any information that would throw any accurate light upon the history of my family beyond my mother. She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family history and family records—that is, black family records. My mother, I suppose, attracted the attention of a purchaser who was afterward my owner and hers. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the near-by plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at that time.

The cabin was not only our living-place, but was also used as the kitchen for the plantation. My mother was the plantation cook. The cabin was without glass windows; it had only openings in the side which let in the light, and also the cold, chilly air of winter. There was a door to the cabin—that is, something that was called a door—but the uncertain hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings there was, in the lower right-hand corner of the room, the “cat-hole,”—a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The “cat-hole” was a square opening, about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin I could never understand the necessity for this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats. There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the centre of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. An impression of this potato-hole is very distinctly engraved upon my memory, because I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed. There was no cooking-stove on our plantation, and all the cooking for the whites and slaves my mother had to do over an open fireplace, mostly in pots and “skillets.” While the poorly built cabin caused us to suffer with cold in the winter, the heat from the open fireplace in summer was equally trying.

The early years of my life, which were spent in the little cabin, were not very different from those of thousands of other slaves. My mother, of course, had little time in which to give attention to the training of her children during the day. She snatched a few moments for our care in the early morning before her work began, and at night after the day’s work was done. One of my earliest recollections is that of my mother cooking a chicken late at night, and awakening her children for the purpose of feeding them. How or where she got it I do not know. I presume, however, it was procured from our owner’s farm. Some people may call this theft. If such a thing were to happen now, I should condemn it as theft myself. But taking place at the time it did, and for the reason that it did, no one could ever make me believe that my mother was guilty of thieving. She was simply a victim of the system of slavery. I cannot remember having slept in a bed until after our family was declared free by the Emancipation Proclamation. Three children—John, my older brother, Amanda, my sister, and myself—had a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct, we slept in and on a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor.

I was asked not long ago to tell something about the sports and pastimes that I engaged in during my youth. Until that question was asked it had never occurred to me that there was no period of my life that was devoted to play. From the time that I can remember anything, almost every day of my life had been occupied in

some kind of labour; though I think I would now be a more useful man if I had had time for sports. During the period that I spent in slavery I was not large enough to be of much service, still I was occupied most of the time in cleaning the yards, carrying water to the men in the fields, or going to the mill to which I used to take the corn, once a week, to be ground. The mill was about three miles from the plantation. This work I always dreaded. The heavy bag of corn would be thrown across the back of the horse, and the corn divided about evenly on each side; but in some way, almost without exception, on these trips, the corn would so shift as to become unbalanced and would fall off the horse, and often I would fall with it. As I was not strong enough to reload the corn upon the horse, I would have to wait, sometimes for many hours, till a chance passer-by came along who would help me out of my trouble. The hours while waiting for some one were usually spent in crying. The time consumed in this way made me late in reaching the mill, and by the time I got my corn ground and reached home it would be far into the night. The road was a lonely one, and often led through dense forests. I was always frightened. The woods were said to be full of soldiers who had deserted from the army, and I had been told that the first thing a deserter did to a Negro boy when he found him alone was to cut off his ears. Besides, when I was late in getting home I knew I would always get a severe scolding or a flogging.

I had no schooling whatever while I was a slave, though I remember on several occasions I went as far as the schoolhouse door with one of my young mistresses to carry her books. The picture of several dozen boys and girls in a schoolroom engaged in study made a deep impression upon me, and I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise.

So far as I can now recall, the first knowledge that I got of the fact that we were slaves, and that freedom of the slaves was being discussed, was early one morning before day, when I was awakened by my mother kneeling over her children and fervently praying that Lincoln and his armies might be successful, and that one day she and her children might be free. In this connection I have never been able to understand how the slaves throughout the South, completely ignorant as were the masses so far as books or newspapers were concerned, were able to keep themselves so accurately and completely informed about the great National questions that were agitating the country. From the time that Garrison, Lovejoy, and others began to agitate for freedom, the slaves throughout the South kept in close touch with the progress of the movement. Though I was a mere child during the preparation for the Civil War and during the war itself, I now recall the many late-at-night whispered discussions that I heard my mother and the other slaves on the plantation indulge in. These discussions showed that they understood the situation, and that they kept themselves informed of events by what was termed the "grape-vine" telegraph.

During the campaign when Lincoln was first a candidate for the Presidency, the slaves on our far-off plantation, miles from any railroad or large city or daily



newspaper, knew what the issues involved were. When war was begun between the North and the South, every slave on our plantation felt and knew that, though other issues were discussed, the primal one was that of slavery. Even the most ignorant members of my race on the remote plantations felt in their hearts, with a certainty that admitted of no doubt, that the freedom of the slaves would be the one great result of the war, if the Northern armies conquered. Every success of the Federal armies and every defeat of the Confederate forces was watched with the keenest and most intense interest. Often the slaves got knowledge of the results of great battles before the white people received it. This news was usually gotten from the coloured man who was sent to the post-office for the mail. In our case the post-office was about three miles from the plantation, and the mail came once or twice a week. The man who was sent to the office would linger about the place long enough to get the drift of the conversation from the group of white people who naturally congregated there, after receiving their mail, to discuss the latest news. The mail-carrier on his way back to our master's house would as naturally retail the news that he had secured among the slaves, and in this way they often heard of important events before the white people at the "big house," as the master's house was called.

I cannot remember a single instance during my childhood or early boyhood when our entire family sat down to the table together, and God's blessing was asked, and the family ate a meal in a civilized manner. On the plantation in Virginia, and even later, meals were gotten by the children very much as dumb animals get theirs. It was a piece of bread here and a scrap of meat there. It was a cup of milk at one time and some potatoes at another. Sometimes a portion of our family would eat out of the skillet or pot, while some one else would eat from a tin plate held on the knees, and often using nothing but the hands with which to hold the food. When I had grown to sufficient size, I was required to go to the "big house" at meal-times to fan the flies from the table by means of a large set of paper fans operated by a pulley. Naturally much of the conversation of the white people turned upon the subject of freedom and the war, and I absorbed a good deal of it. I remember that at one time I saw two of my young mistresses and some lady visitors eating ginger-cakes, in the yard. At that time those cakes seemed to me to be absolutely the most tempting and desirable things that I had ever seen; and I then and there resolved that, if I ever got free, the height of my ambition would be reached if I could get to the point where I could secure and eat ginger-cakes in the way that I saw those ladies doing.

Of course as the war was prolonged the white people, in many cases, often found it difficult to secure food for themselves. I think the slaves felt the deprivation less than the whites, because the usual diet for slaves was corn bread and pork, and these could be raised on the plantation; but coffee, tea, sugar, and other articles which the whites had been accustomed to use could not be raised on the plantation, and the conditions brought about by the war frequently made it impossible to secure these things. The whites were often in great straits. Parched

corn was used for coffee, and a kind of black molasses was used instead of sugar. Many times nothing was used to sweeten the so-called tea and coffee.

The first pair of shoes that I recall wearing were wooden ones. They had rough leather on the top, but the bottoms, which were about an inch thick, were of wood. When I walked they made a fearful noise, and besides this they were very inconvenient, since there was no yielding to the natural pressure of the foot. In wearing them one presented an exceedingly awkward appearance. The most trying ordeal that I was forced to endure as a slave boy, however, was the wearing of a flax shirt. In the portion of Virginia where I lived it was common to use flax as part of the clothing for the slaves. That part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuse, which of course was the cheapest and roughest part. I can scarcely imagine any torture, except, perhaps, the pulling of a tooth, that is equal to that caused by putting on a new flax shirt for the first time. It is almost equal to the feeling that one would experience if he had a dozen or more chestnut burrs, or a hundred small pin-points, in contact with his flesh. Even to this day I can recall accurately the tortures that I underwent when putting on one of these garments. The fact that my flesh was soft and tender added to the pain. But I had no choice. I had to wear the flax shirt or none; and had it been left to me to choose, I should have chosen to wear no covering. In connection with the flax shirt, my brother John, who is several years older than I am, performed one of the most generous acts that I ever heard of one slave relative doing for another. On several occasions when I was being forced to wear a new flax shirt, he generously agreed to put it on in my stead and wear it for several days, till it was "broken in." Until I had grown to be quite a youth this single garment was all that I wore.

One may get the idea, from what I have said, that there was bitter feeling toward the white people on the part of my race, because of the fact that most of the white population was away fighting in a war which would result in keeping the Negro in slavery if the South was successful. In the case of the slaves on our place this was not true, and it was not true of any large portion of the slave population in the South where the Negro was treated with anything like decency. During the Civil War one of my young masters was killed, and two were severely wounded. I recall the feeling of sorrow which existed among the slaves when they heard of the death of "Mars' Billy." It was no sham sorrow, but real. Some of the slaves had nursed "Mars' Billy"; others had played with him when he was a child. "Mars' Billy" had begged for mercy in the case of others when the overseer or master was thrashing them. The sorrow in the slave quarter was only second to that in the "big house." When the two young masters were brought home wounded, the sympathy of the slaves was shown in many ways. They were just as anxious to assist in the nursing as the family relatives of the wounded. Some of the slaves would even beg for the privilege of sitting up at night to nurse their wounded masters. This tenderness and sympathy on the part of those held in bondage was a result of their kindly and generous nature. In order to defend and protect the women and children who were left on the plantations when the white males went to war, the slaves would have laid down their lives. The slave who

was selected to sleep in the “big house” during the absence of the males was considered to have the place of honour. Any one attempting to harm “young Mistress” or “old Mistress” during the night would have had to cross the dead body of the slave to do so. I do not know how many have noticed it, but I think that it will be found to be true that there are few instances, either in slavery or freedom, in which a member of my race has been known to betray a specific trust.

As a rule, not only did the members of my race entertain no feelings of bitterness against the whites before and during the war, but there are many instances of Negroes tenderly caring for their former masters and mistresses who for some reason have become poor and dependent since the war. I know of instances where the former masters of slaves have for years been supplied with money by their former slaves to keep them from suffering. I have known of still other cases in which the former slaves have assisted in the education of the descendants of their former owners. I know of a case on a large plantation in the South in which a young white man, the son of the former owner of the estate, has become so reduced in purse and self-control by reason of drink that he is a pitiable creature; and yet, notwithstanding the poverty of the coloured people themselves on this plantation, they have for years supplied this young white man with the necessities of life. One sends him a little coffee or sugar, another a little meat, and so on. Nothing that the coloured people possess is too good for the son of “old Mars’ Tom,” who will perhaps never be permitted to suffer while any remain on the place who knew directly or indirectly of “old Mars’ Tom.”

I have said that there are few instances of a member of my race betraying a specific trust. One of the best illustrations of this which I know of is in the case of an ex-slave from Virginia whom I met not long ago in a little town in the state of Ohio. I found that this man had made a contract with his master, two or three years previous to the Emancipation Proclamation, to the effect that the slave was to be permitted to buy himself, by paying so much per year for his body; and while he was paying for himself, he was to be permitted to labour where and for whom he pleased. Finding that he could secure better wages in Ohio, he went there. When freedom came, he was still in debt to his master some three hundred dollars. Notwithstanding that the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligation to his master, this black man walked the greater portion of the distance back to where his old master lived in Virginia, and placed the last dollar, with interest, in his hands. In talking to me about this, the man told me that he knew that he did not have to pay the debt, but that he had given his word to the master, and his word he had never broken. He felt that he could not enjoy his freedom till he had fulfilled his promise.

From some things that I have said one may get the idea that some of the slaves did not want freedom. This is not true. I have never seen one who did not want to be free, or one who would return to slavery.

I pity from the bottom of my heart any nation or body of people that is so unfortunate as to get entangled in the net of slavery. I have long since ceased to cherish any spirit of bitterness against the Southern white people on account of the enslavement of my race. No one section of our country was wholly responsible for its introduction, and, besides, it was recognized and protected for years by the General Government. Having once got its tentacles fastened on to the economic and social life of the Republic, it was no easy matter for the country to relieve itself of the institution. Then, when we rid ourselves of prejudice, or racial feeling, and look facts in the face, we must acknowledge that, notwithstanding the cruelty and moral wrong of slavery, the ten million Negroes inhabiting this country, who themselves or whose ancestors went through the school of American slavery, are in a stronger and more hopeful condition, materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, than is true of an equal number of black people in any other portion of the globe. This is so to such an extent that Negroes in this country, who themselves or whose forefathers went through the school of slavery, are constantly returning to Africa as missionaries to enlighten those who remained in the fatherland. This I say, not to justify slavery—on the other hand, I condemn it as an institution, as we all know that in America it was established for selfish and financial reasons, and not from a missionary motive—but to call attention to a fact, and to show how Providence so often uses men and institutions to accomplish a purpose. When persons ask me in these days how, in the midst of what sometimes seem hopelessly discouraging conditions, I can have such faith in the future of my race in this country, I remind them of the wilderness through which and out of which, a good Providence has already led us.

Ever since I have been old enough to think for myself, I have entertained the idea that, notwithstanding the cruel wrongs inflicted upon us, the black man got nearly as much out of slavery as the white man did. The hurtful influences of the institution were not by any means confined to the Negro. This was fully illustrated by the life upon our own plantation. The whole machinery of slavery was so constructed as to cause labour, as a rule, to be looked upon as a badge of degradation, of inferiority. Hence labour was something that both races on the slave plantation sought to escape. The slave system on our place, in a large measure, took the spirit of self-reliance and self-help out of the white people. My old master had many boys and girls, but not one, so far as I know, ever mastered a single trade or special line of productive industry. The girls were not taught to cook, sew, or to take care of the house. All of this was left to the slaves. The slaves, of course, had little personal interest in the life of the plantation, and their ignorance prevented them from learning how to do things in the most improved and thorough manner. As a result of the system, fences were out of repair, gates were hanging half off the hinges, doors creaked, window-panes were out, plastering had fallen but was not replaced, weeds grew in the yard. As a rule, there was food for whites and blacks, but inside the house, and on the dining-room table, there was wanting that delicacy and refinement of touch and finish which can make a home the most convenient, comfortable, and attractive place in the world. Withal there was a waste of food and other materials which was sad.

When freedom came, the slaves were almost as well fitted to begin life anew as the master, except in the matter of book-learning and ownership of property. The slave owner and his sons had mastered no special industry. They unconsciously had imbibed the feeling that manual labour was not the proper thing for them. On the other hand, the slaves, in many cases, had mastered some handicraft, and none were ashamed, and few unwilling, to labour.

Finally the war closed, and the day of freedom came. It was a momentous and eventful day to all upon our plantation. We had been expecting it. Freedom was in the air, and had been for months. Deserting soldiers returning to their homes were to be seen every day. Others who had been discharged, or whose regiments had been paroled, were constantly passing near our place. The “grape-vine telegraph” was kept busy night and day. The news and mutterings of great events were swiftly carried from one plantation to another. In the fear of “Yankee” invasions, the silverware and other valuables were taken from the “big house,” buried in the woods, and guarded by trusted slaves. Woe be to any one who would have attempted to disturb the buried treasure. The slaves would give the Yankee soldiers food, drink, clothing—anything but that which had been specifically intrusted to their care and honour. As the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring, and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom. True, they had sung those same verses before, but they had been careful to explain that the “freedom” in these songs referred to the next world, and had no connection with life in this world. Now they gradually threw off the mask, and were not afraid to let it be known that the “freedom” in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world. The night before the eventful day, word was sent to the slave quarters to the effect that something unusual was going to take place at the “big house” the next morning. There was little, if any, sleep that night. All as excitement and expectancy. Early the next morning word was sent to all the slaves, old and young, to gather at the house. In company with my mother, brother, and sister, and a large number of other slaves, I went to the master’s house. All of our master’s family were either standing or seated on the veranda of the house, where they could see what was to take place and hear what was said. There was a feeling of deep interest, or perhaps sadness, on their faces, but not bitterness. As I now recall the impression they made upon me, they did not at the moment seem to be sad because of the loss of property, but rather because of parting with those whom they had reared and who were in many ways very close to them. The most distinct thing that I now recall in connection with the scene was that some man who seemed to be a stranger (a United States officer, I presume) made a little speech and then read a rather long paper—the Emancipation Proclamation, I think. After the reading we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see.

For some minutes there was great rejoicing, and thanksgiving, and wild scenes of ecstasy. But there was no feeling of bitterness. In fact, there was pity among the slaves for our former owners. The wild rejoicing on the part of the emancipated coloured people lasted but for a brief period, for I noticed that by the time they returned to their cabins there was a change in their feelings. The great responsibility of being free, of having charge of themselves, of having to think and plan for themselves and their children, seemed to take possession of them. It was very much like suddenly turning a youth of ten or twelve years out into the world to provide for himself. In a few hours the great questions with which the Anglo-Saxon race had been grappling for centuries had been thrown upon these people to be solved. These were the questions of a home, a living, the rearing of children, education, citizenship, and the establishment and support of churches. Was it any wonder that within a few hours the wild rejoicing ceased and a feeling of deep gloom seemed to pervade the slave quarters? To some it seemed that, now that they were in actual possession of it, freedom was a more serious thing than they had expected to find it. Some of the slaves were seventy or eighty years old; their best days were gone. They had no strength with which to earn a living in a strange place and among strange people, even if they had been sure where to find a new place of abode. To this class the problem seemed especially hard. Besides, deep down in their hearts there was a strange and peculiar attachment to "old Marster" and "old Missus," and to their children, which they found it hard to think of breaking off. With these they had spent in some cases nearly a half-century, and it was no light thing to think of parting. Gradually, one by one, stealthily at first, the older slaves began to wander from the slave quarters back to the "big house" to have a whispered conversation with their former owners as to the future.

## Chapter 2: "Boyhood Days"

After the coming of freedom there were two points upon which practically all the people on our place were agreed, and I found that this was generally true throughout the South: that they must change their names, and that they must leave the old plantation for at least a few days or weeks in order that they might really feel sure that they were free.

In some way a feeling got among the coloured people that it was far from proper for them to bear the surname of their former owners, and a great many of them took other surnames. This was one of the first signs of freedom. When they were slaves, a coloured person was simply called "John" or "Susan." There was seldom occasion for more than the use of the one name. If "John" or "Susan" belonged to a white man by the name of "Hatcher," sometimes he was called "John Hatcher," or as often "Hatcher's John." But there was a feeling that "John Hatcher" or "Hatcher's John" was not the proper title by which to denote a freeman; and so in many cases "John Hatcher" was changed to "John S. Lincoln" or "John S. Sherman," the initial "S" standing for no name, it being simply a part of what the coloured man proudly called his "entitles."

As I have stated, most of the coloured people left the old plantation for a short while at least, so as to be sure, it seemed, that they could leave and try their freedom on to see how it felt. After they had remained away for a while, many of the older slaves, especially, returned to their old homes and made some kind of contract with their former owners by which they remained on the estate.

My mother's husband, who was the stepfather of my brother John and myself, did not belong to the same owners as did my mother. In fact, he seldom came to our plantation. I remember seeing him there perhaps once a year, that being about Christmas time. In some way, during the war, by running away and following the Federal soldiers, it seems, he found his way into the new state of West Virginia. As soon as freedom was declared, he sent for my mother to come to the Kanawha Valley, in West Virginia. At that time a journey from Virginia over the mountains to West Virginia was rather a tedious and in some cases a painful undertaking. What little clothing and few household goods we had were placed in a cart, but the children walked the greater portion of the distance, which was several hundred miles.

I do not think any of us ever had been very far from the plantation, and the taking of a long journey into another state was quite an event. The parting from our former owners and the members of our own race on the plantation was a serious occasion. From the time of our parting till their death we kept up a correspondence with the older members of the family, and in later years we have kept in touch with those who were the younger members. We were several weeks making the trip, and most of the time we slept in the open air and did our cooking over a log fire out-of-doors. One night I recall that we camped near an abandoned log cabin, and my mother decided to build a fire in that for cooking, and afterward to make a "pallet" on the floor for our sleeping. Just as the fire had gotten well started a large black snake fully a yard and a half long dropped down the chimney and ran out on the floor. Of course we at once abandoned that cabin. Finally we reached our destination—a little town called Malden, which is about five miles from Charleston, the present capital of the state.

At that time salt-mining was the great industry in that part of West Virginia, and the little town of Malden was right in the midst of the salt-furnaces. My stepfather had already secured a job at a salt-furnace, and he had also secured a little cabin for us to live in. Our new house was no better than the one we had left on the old plantation in Virginia. In fact, in one respect it was worse. Notwithstanding the poor condition of our plantation cabin, we were at all times sure of pure air. Our new home was in the midst of a cluster of cabins crowded closely together, and as there were no sanitary regulations, the filth about the cabins was often intolerable. Some of our neighbours were coloured people, and some were the poorest and most ignorant and degraded white people. It was a motley mixture. Drinking, gambling, quarrels, fights, and shockingly immoral practices were frequent. All who lived in the little town were in one way or another connected with the salt

business. Though I was a mere child, my stepfather put me and my brother at work in one of the furnaces. Often I began work as early as four o'clock in the morning.

The first thing I ever learned in the way of book knowledge was while working in this salt-furnace. Each salt-packer had his barrels marked with a certain number. The number allotted to my stepfather was "18." At the close of the day's work the boss of the packers would come around and put "18" on each of our barrels, and I soon learned to recognize that figure wherever I saw it, and after a while got to the point where I could make that figure, though I knew nothing about any other figures or letters.

From the time that I can remember having any thoughts about anything, I recall that I had an intense longing to learn to read. I determined, when quite a small child, that, if I accomplished nothing else in life, I would in some way get enough education to enable me to read common books and newspapers. Soon after we got settled in some manner in our new cabin in West Virginia, I induced my mother to get hold of a book for me. How or where she got it I do not know, but in some way she procured an old copy of Webster's "blue-back" spelling-book, which contained the alphabet, followed by such meaningless words as "ab," "ba," "ca," "da." I began at once to devour this book, and I think that it was the first one I ever had in my hands. I had learned from somebody that the way to begin to read was to learn the alphabet, so I tried in all the ways I could think of to learn it,—all of course without a teacher, for I could find no one to teach me. At that time there was not a single member of my race anywhere near us who could read, and I was too timid to approach any of the white people. In some way, within a few weeks, I mastered the greater portion of the alphabet. In all my efforts to learn to read my mother shared fully my ambition, and sympathized with me and aided me in every way that she could. Though she was totally ignorant, she had high ambitions for her children, and a large fund of good, hard, common sense, which seemed to enable her to meet and master every situation. If I have done anything in life worth attention, I feel sure that I inherited the disposition from my mother.

In the midst of my struggles and longing for an education, a young coloured boy who had learned to read in the state of Ohio came to Malden. As soon as the coloured people found out that he could read, a newspaper was secured, and at the close of nearly every day's work this young man would be surrounded by a group of men and women who were anxious to hear him read the news contained in the papers. How I used to envy this man! He seemed to me to be the one young man in all the world who ought to be satisfied with his attainments.

About this time the question of having some kind of a school opened for the coloured children in the village began to be discussed by members of the race. As it would be the first school for Negro children that had ever been opened in that part of Virginia, it was, of course, to be a great event, and the discussion excited the wildest interest. The most perplexing question was where to find a teacher.



The young man from Ohio who had learned to read the papers was considered, but his age was against him. In the midst of the discussion about a teacher, another young coloured man from Ohio, who had been a soldier, in some way found his way into town. It was soon learned that he possessed considerable education, and he was engaged by the coloured people to teach their first school. As yet no free schools had been started for coloured people in that section, hence each family agreed to pay a certain amount per month, with the understanding that the teacher was to “board ’round”—that is, spend a day with each family. This was not bad for the teacher, for each family tried to provide the very best on the day the teacher was to be its guest. I recall that I looked forward with an anxious appetite to the “teacher’s day” at our little cabin.

This experience of a whole race beginning to go to school for the first time, presents one of the most interesting studies that has ever occurred in connection with the development of any race. Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for an education. As I have stated, it was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn. As fast as any kind of teachers could be secured, not only were day-schools filled, but night-schools as well. The great ambition of the older people was to try to learn to read the Bible before they died. With this end in view men and women who were fifty or seventy-five years old would often be found in the night-school. Some day-schools were formed soon after freedom, but the principal book studied in the Sunday-school was the spelling-book. Day-school, night-school, Sunday-school, were always crowded, and often many had to be turned away for want of room.

The opening of the school in the Kanawha Valley, however, brought to me one of the keenest disappointments that I ever experienced. I had been working in a salt-furnace for several months, and my stepfather had discovered that I had a financial value, and so, when the school opened, he decided that he could not spare me from my work. This decision seemed to cloud my every ambition. The disappointment was made all the more severe by reason of the fact that my place of work was where I could see the happy children passing to and from school mornings and afternoons. Despite this disappointment, however, I determined that I would learn something, anyway. I applied myself with greater earnestness than ever to the mastering of what was in the “blue-back” speller.

My mother sympathized with me in my disappointment, and sought to comfort me in all the ways she could, and to help me find a way to learn. After a while I succeeded in making arrangements with the teacher to give me some lessons at night, after the day’s work was done. These night lessons were so welcome that I think I learned more at night than the other children did during the day. My own experiences in the night-school gave me faith in the night-school idea, with which, in after years, I had to do both at Hampton and Tuskegee. But my boyish heart was still set upon going to the day-school, and I let no opportunity slip to push my case. Finally I won, and was permitted to go to the school in the day for

a few months, with the understanding that I was to rise early in the morning and work in the furnace till nine o'clock, and return immediately after school closed in the afternoon for at least two more hours of work.

The schoolhouse was some distance from the furnace, and as I had to work till nine o'clock, and the school opened at nine, I found myself in a difficulty. School would always be begun before I reached it, and sometimes my class had recited. To get around this difficulty I yielded to a temptation for which most people, I suppose, will condemn me; but since it is a fact, I might as well state it. I have great faith in the power and influence of facts. It is seldom that anything is permanently gained by holding back a fact. There was a large clock in a little office in the furnace. This clock, of course, all the hundred or more workmen depended upon to regulate their hours of beginning and ending the day's work. I got the idea that the way for me to reach school on time was to move the clock hands from half-past eight up to the nine o'clock mark. This I found myself doing morning after morning, till the furnace "boss" discovered that something was wrong, and locked the clock in a case. I did not mean to inconvenience anybody. I simply meant to reach that schoolhouse in time.

When, however, I found myself at the school for the first time, I also found myself confronted with two other difficulties. In the first place, I found that all the other children wore hats or caps on their heads, and I had neither hat nor cap. In fact, I do not remember that up to the time of going to school I had ever worn any kind of covering upon my head, nor do I recall that either I or anybody else had even thought anything about the need of covering for my head. But, of course, when I saw how all the other boys were dressed, I began to feel quite uncomfortable. As usual, I put the case before my mother, and she explained to me that she had no money with which to buy a "store hat," which was a rather new institution at that time among the members of my race and was considered quite the thing for young and old to own, but that she would find a way to help me out of the difficulty. She accordingly got two pieces of "homespun" (jeans) and sewed them together, and I was soon the proud possessor of my first cap.

The lesson that my mother taught me in this has always remained with me, and I have tried as best as I could to teach it to others. I have always felt proud, whenever I think of the incident, that my mother had strength of character enough not to be led into the temptation of seeming to be that which she was not—of trying to impress my schoolmates and others with the fact that she was able to buy me a "store hat" when she was not. I have always felt proud that she refused to go into debt for that which she did not have the money to pay for. Since that time I have owned many kinds of caps and hats, but never one of which I have felt so proud as of the cap made of the two pieces of cloth sewed together by my mother. I have noted the fact, but without satisfaction, I need not add, that several of the boys who began their careers with "store hats" and who were my schoolmates and used to join in the sport that was made of me because I had only a "homespun"

cap, have ended their careers in the penitentiary, while others are not able now to buy any kind of hat.

My second difficulty was with regard to my name, or rather A name. From the time when I could remember anything, I had been called simply "Booker." Before going to school it had never occurred to me that it was needful or appropriate to have an additional name. When I heard the school-roll called, I noticed that all of the children had at least two names, and some of them indulged in what seemed to me the extravagance of having three. I was in deep perplexity, because I knew that the teacher would demand of me at least two names, and I had only one. By the time the occasion came for the enrolling of my name, an idea occurred to me which I thought would make me equal to the situation; and so, when the teacher asked me what my full name was, I calmly told him "Booker Washington," as if I had been called by that name all my life; and by that name I have since been known. Later in my life I found that my mother had given me the name of "Booker Taliaferro" soon after I was born, but in some way that part of my name seemed to disappear and for a long while was forgotten, but as soon as I found out about it I revived it, and made my full name "Booker Taliaferro Washington." I think there are not many men in our country who have had the privilege of naming themselves in the way that I have.

More than once I have tried to picture myself in the position of a boy or man with an honoured and distinguished ancestry which I could trace back through a period of hundreds of years, and who had not only inherited a name, but fortune and a proud family homestead; and yet I have sometimes had the feeling that if I had inherited these, and had been a member of a more popular race, I should have been inclined to yield to the temptation of depending upon my ancestry and my colour to do that for me which I should do for myself. Years ago I resolved that because I had no ancestry myself I would leave a record of which my children would be proud, and which might encourage them to still higher effort.

The world should not pass judgment upon the Negro, and especially the Negro youth, too quickly or too harshly. The Negro boy has obstacles, discouragements, and temptations to battle with that are little known to those not situated as he is. When a white boy undertakes a task, it is taken for granted that he will succeed. On the other hand, people are usually surprised if the Negro boy does not fail. In a word, the Negro youth starts out with the presumption against him.

The influence of ancestry, however, is important in helping forward any individual or race, if too much reliance is not placed upon it. Those who constantly direct attention to the Negro youth's moral weaknesses, and compare his advancement with that of white youths, do not consider the influence of the memories which cling about the old family homesteads. I have no idea, as I have stated elsewhere, who my grandmother was. I have, or have had, uncles and aunts and cousins, but I have no knowledge as to where most of them are. My case will illustrate that of hundreds of thousands of black people in every part of our

country. The very fact that the white boy is conscious that, if he fails in life, he will disgrace the whole family record, extending back through many generations, is of tremendous value in helping him to resist temptations. The fact that the individual has behind and surrounding him proud family history and connection serves as a stimulus to help him to overcome obstacles when striving for success.

The time that I was permitted to attend school during the day was short, and my attendance was irregular. It was not long before I had to stop attending day-school altogether, and devote all of my time again to work. I resorted to the night-school again. In fact, the greater part of the education I secured in my boyhood was gathered through the night-school after my day's work was done. I had difficulty often in securing a satisfactory teacher. Sometimes, after I had secured some one to teach me at night, I would find, much to my disappointment, that the teacher knew but little more than I did. Often I would have to walk several miles at night in order to recite my night-school lessons. There was never a time in my youth, no matter how dark and discouraging the days might be, when one resolve did not continually remain with me, and that was a determination to secure an education at any cost.

Soon after we moved to West Virginia, my mother adopted into our family, notwithstanding our poverty, an orphan boy, to whom afterward we gave the name of James B. Washington. He has ever since remained a member of the family.

After I had worked in the salt-furnace for some time, work was secured for me in a coal-mine which was operated mainly for the purpose of securing fuel for the salt-furnace. Work in the coal-mine I always dreaded. One reason for this was that any one who worked in a coal-mine was always unclean, at least while at work, and it was a very hard job to get one's skin clean after the day's work was over. Then it was fully a mile from the opening of the coal-mine to the face of the coal, and all, of course, was in the blackest darkness. I do not believe that one ever experiences anywhere else such darkness as he does in a coal-mine. The mine was divided into a large number of different "rooms" or departments, and, as I never was able to learn the location of all these "rooms," I many times found myself lost in the mine. To add to the horror of being lost, sometimes my light would go out, and then, if I did not happen to have a match, I would wander about in the darkness until by chance I found some one to give me a light. The work was not only hard, but it was dangerous. There was always the danger of being blown to pieces by a premature explosion of powder, or of being crushed by falling slate. Accidents from one or the other of these causes were frequently occurring, and this kept me in constant fear. Many children of the tenderest years were compelled then, as is now true I fear, in most coal-mining districts, to spend a large part of their lives in these coal-mines, with little opportunity to get an education; and, what is worse, I have often noted that, as a rule, young boys who begin life in a coal-mine are often physically and mentally dwarfed. They soon lose ambition to do anything else than to continue as a coal-miner.

In those days, and later as a young man, I used to try to picture in my imagination the feelings and ambitions of a white boy with absolutely no limit placed upon his aspirations and activities. I used to envy the white boy who had no obstacles placed in the way of his becoming a Congressman, Governor, Bishop, or President by reason of the accident of his birth or race. I used to picture the way that I would act under such circumstances; how I would begin at the bottom and keep rising until I reached the highest round of success.

In later years, I confess that I do not envy the white boy as I once did. I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. Looked at from this standpoint, I almost reached the conclusion that often the Negro boy's birth and connection with an unpopular race is an advantage, so far as real life is concerned. With few exceptions, the Negro youth must work harder and must perform his tasks even better than a white youth in order to secure recognition. But out of the hard and unusual struggle through which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that one misses whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race.

From any point of view, I had rather be what I am, a member of the Negro race, than be able to claim membership with the most favoured of any other race. I have always been made sad when I have heard members of any race claiming rights or privileges, or certain badges of distinction, on the ground simply that they were members of this or that race, regardless of their own individual worth or attainments. I have been made to feel sad for such persons because I am conscious of the fact that mere connection with what is known as a superior race will not permanently carry an individual forward unless he has individual worth, and mere connection with what is regarded as an inferior race will not finally hold an individual back if he possesses intrinsic, individual merit. Every persecuted individual and race should get much consolation out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that merit, no matter under what skin found, is, in the long run, recognized and rewarded. This I have said here, not to call attention to myself as an individual, but to the race to which I am proud to belong.

#### Chapter 9: "Anxious Days and Sleepless Nights"

The coming of Christmas, that first year of our residence in Alabama, gave us an opportunity to get a farther insight into the real life of the people. The first thing that reminded us that Christmas had arrived was the "foreday" visits of scores of children rapping at our doors, asking for "Chris'mus gifts! Chris'mus gifts!" Between the hours of two o'clock and five o'clock in the morning I presume that we must have had a half-hundred such calls. This custom prevails throughout this portion of the South to-day.

During the days of slavery it was a custom quite generally observed throughout all the Southern states to give the coloured people a week of holiday at Christmas, or to allow the holiday to continue as long as the “yule log” lasted. The male members of the race, and often the female members, were expected to get drunk. We found that for a whole week the coloured people in and around Tuskegee dropped work the day before Christmas, and that it was difficult for any one to perform any service from the time they stopped work until after the New Year. Persons who at other times did not use strong drink thought it quite the proper thing to indulge in it rather freely during the Christmas week. There was a widespread hilarity, and a free use of guns, pistols, and gunpowder generally. The sacredness of the season seemed to have been almost wholly lost sight of.

During this first Christmas vacation I went some distance from the town to visit the people on one of the large plantations. In their poverty and ignorance it was pathetic to see their attempts to get joy out of the season that in most parts of the country is so sacred and so dear to the heart. In one cabin I notice that all that the five children had to remind them of the coming of Christ was a single bunch of firecrackers, which they had divided among them. In another cabin, where there were at least a half-dozen persons, they had only ten cents’ worth of ginger-cakes, which had been bought in the store the day before. In another family they had only a few pieces of sugarcane. In still another cabin I found nothing but a new jug of cheap, mean whiskey, which the husband and wife were making free use of, notwithstanding the fact that the husband was one of the local ministers. In a few instances I found that the people had gotten hold of some bright-coloured cards that had been designed for advertising purposes, and were making the most of these. In other homes some member of the family had bought a new pistol. In the majority of cases there was nothing to be seen in the cabin to remind one of the coming of the Saviour, except that the people had ceased work in the fields and were lounging about their homes. At night, during Christmas week, they usually had what they called a “frolic,” in some cabin on the plantation. That meant a kind of rough dance, where there was likely to be a good deal of whiskey used, and where there might be some shooting or cutting with razors.

While I was making this Christmas visit I met an old coloured man who was one of the numerous local preachers, who tried to convince me, from the experience Adam had in the Garden of Eden, that God had cursed all labour, and that, therefore, it was a sin for any man to work. For that reason this man sought to do as little work as possible. He seemed at that time to be supremely happy, because he was living, as he expressed it, through one week that was free from sin.

In the school we made a special effort to teach our students the meaning of Christmas, and to give them lessons in its proper observance. In this we have been successful to a degree that makes me feel safe in saying that the season now has a new meaning, not only through all that immediate region, but, in a measure, wherever our graduates have gone.

At the present time one of the most satisfactory features of the Christmas and Thanksgiving season at Tuskegee is the unselfish and beautiful way in which our graduates and students spend their time in administering to the comfort and happiness of others, especially the unfortunate. Not long ago some of our young men spent a holiday in rebuilding a cabin for a helpless coloured woman who was about seventy-five years old. At another time I remember that I made it known in chapel, one night, that a very poor student was suffering from cold, because he needed a coat. The next morning two coats were sent to my office for him.

I have referred to the disposition on the part of the white people in the town of Tuskegee and vicinity to help the school. From the first, I resolved to make the school a real part of the community in which it was located. I was determined that no one should have the feeling that it was a foreign institution, dropped down in the midst of the people, for which they had no responsibility and in which they had no interest. I noticed that the very fact that they had been asking to contribute toward the purchase of the land made them begin to feel as if it was going to be their school, to a large degree. I noted that just in proportion as we made the white people feel that the institution was a part of the life of the community, and that, while we wanted to make friends in Boston, for example, we also wanted to make white friends in Tuskegee, and that we wanted to make the school of real service to all the people, their attitude toward the school became favourable.

Perhaps I might add right here, what I hope to demonstrate later, that, so far as I know, the Tuskegee school at the present time has no warmer and more enthusiastic friends anywhere than it has among the white citizens of Tuskegee and throughout the state of Alabama and the entire South. From the first, I have advised our people in the South to make friends in every straightforward, manly way with their next-door neighbour, whether he be a black man or a white man. I have also advised them, where no principle is at stake, to consult the interests of their local communities, and to advise with their friends in regard to their voting.

For several months the work of securing the money with which to pay for the farm went on without ceasing. At the end of three months enough was secured to repay the loan of two hundred and fifty dollars to General Marshall, and within two months more we had secured the entire five hundred dollars and had received a deed of the one hundred acres of land. This gave us a great deal of satisfaction. It was not only a source of satisfaction to secure a permanent location for the school, but it was equally satisfactory to know that the greater part of the money with which it was paid for had been gotten from the white and coloured people in the town of Tuskegee. The most of this money was obtained by holding festivals and concerts, and from small individual donations.

Our next effort was in the direction of increasing the cultivation of the land, so as to secure some return from it, and at the same time give the students training in agriculture. All the industries at Tuskegee have been started in natural and logical

order, growing out of the needs of a community settlement. We began with farming, because we wanted something to eat.

Many of the students, also, were able to remain in school but a few weeks at a time, because they had so little money with which to pay their board. Thus another object which made it desirable to get an industrial system started was in order to make it available as a means of helping the students to earn money enough so that they might be able to remain in school during the nine months' session of the school year.

The first animal that the school came into possession of was an old blind horse given us by one of the white citizens of Tuskegee. Perhaps I may add here that at the present time the school owns over two hundred horses, colts, mules, cows, calves, and oxen, and about seven hundred hogs and pigs, as well as a large number of sheep and goats.

The school was constantly growing in numbers, so much so that, after we had got the farm paid for, the cultivation of the land begun, and the old cabins which we had found on the place somewhat repaired, we turned our attention toward providing a large, substantial building. After having given a good deal of thought to the subject, we finally had the plans drawn for a building that was estimated to cost about six thousand dollars. This seemed to us a tremendous sum, but we knew that the school must go backward or forward, and that our work would mean little unless we could get hold of the students in their home life.

One incident which occurred about this time gave me a great deal of satisfaction as well as surprise. When it became known in the town that we were discussing the plans for a new, large building, a Southern white man who was operating a sawmill not far from Tuskegee came to me and said that he would gladly put all the lumber necessary to erect the building on the grounds, with no other guarantee for payment than my word that it would be paid for when we secured some money. I told the man frankly that at the time we did not have in our hands one dollar of the money needed. Notwithstanding this, he insisted on being allowed to put the lumber on the grounds. After we had secured some portion of the money we permitted him to do this.

Miss Davidson again began the work of securing in various ways small contributions for the new building from the white and coloured people in and near Tuskegee. I think I never saw a community of people so happy over anything as were the coloured people over the prospect of this new building. One day, when we were holding a meeting to secure funds for its erection, an old, ante-bellum coloured man came a distance of twelve miles and brought in his ox-cart a large hog. When the meeting was in progress, he rose in the midst of the company and said that he had no money which he could give, but he had raised two fine hogs, and that he had brought one of them as a contribution toward the expenses of the building. He closed his announcement by saying: "Any nigger that's got any love



for his race, or any respect for himself, will bring a hog to the next meeting.” Quite a number of men in the community also volunteered to give several days’ work, each, toward the erection of the building.

After we had secured all the help that we could in Tuskegee, Miss Davidson decided to go North for the purpose of securing additional funds. For weeks she visited individuals and spoke in churches and before Sunday schools and other organizations. She found this work quite trying, and often embarrassing. The school was not known, but she was not long in winning her way into the confidence of the best people in the North.

The first gift from any Northern person was received from a New York lady whom Miss Davidson met on the boat that was bringing her North. They fell into a conversation, and the Northern lady became so much interested in the effort being made at Tuskegee that before they parted Miss Davidson was handed a check for fifty dollars. For some time before our marriage, and also after it, Miss Davidson kept up the work of securing money in the North and in the South by interesting people by personal visits and through correspondence. At the same time she kept in close touch with the work at Tuskegee, as lady principal and classroom teacher. In addition to this, she worked among the older people in and near Tuskegee, and taught a Sunday school class in the town. She was never very strong, but never seemed happy unless she was giving all of her strength to the cause which she loved. Often, at night, after spending the day in going from door to door trying to interest persons in the work at Tuskegee, she would be so exhausted that she could not undress herself. A lady upon whom she called, in Boston, afterward told me that at one time when Miss Davidson called her to see and send up her card the lady was detained a little before she could see Miss Davidson, and when she entered the parlour she found Miss Davidson so exhausted that she had fallen asleep.

While putting up our first building, which was named Porter Hall, after Mr. A. H. Porter, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who gave a generous sum toward its erection, the need for money became acute. I had given one of our creditors a promise that upon a certain day he should be paid four hundred dollars. On the morning of that day we did not have a dollar. The mail arrived at the school at ten o’clock, and in this mail there was a check sent by Miss Davidson for exactly four hundred dollars. I could relate many instances of almost the same character. This four hundred dollars was given by two ladies in Boston. Two years later, when the work at Tuskegee had grown considerably, and when we were in the midst of a season when we were so much in need of money that the future looked doubtful and gloomy, the same two Boston ladies sent us six thousand dollars. Words cannot describe our surprise, or the encouragement that the gift brought to us. Perhaps I might add here that for fourteen years these same friends have sent us six thousand dollars a year.

As soon as the plans were drawn for the new building, the students began digging out the earth where the foundations were to be laid, working after the regular

classes were over. They had not fully outgrown the idea that it was hardly the proper thing for them to use their hands, since they had come there, as one of them expressed it, “to be educated, and not to work.” Gradually, though, I noted with satisfaction that a sentiment in favour of work was gaining ground. After a few weeks of hard work the foundations were ready, and a day was appointed for the laying of the corner-stone.

When it is considered that the laying of this corner-stone took place in the heart of the South, in the “Black Belt,” in the centre of that part of our country that was most devoted to slavery; that at that time slavery had been abolished only about sixteen years; that only sixteen years before no Negro could be taught from books without the teacher receiving the condemnation of the law or of public sentiment—when all this is considered, the scene that was witnessed on that spring day at Tuskegee was a remarkable one. I believe there are few places in the world where it could have taken place.

The principal address was delivered by the Hon. Waddy Thompson, the Superintendent of Education for the county. About the corner-stone were gathered the teachers, the students, their parents and friends, the county officials—who were white—and all the leading white men in that vicinity, together with many of the black men and women whom the same white people but a few years before had held a title to as property. The members of both races were anxious to exercise the privilege of placing under the corner-stone some memento.

Before the building was completed we passed through some very trying seasons. More than once our hearts were made to bleed, as it were, because bills were falling due that we did not have the money to meet. Perhaps no one who has not gone through the experience, month after month, of trying to erect buildings and provide equipment for a school when no one knew where the money was to come from, can properly appreciate the difficulties under which we laboured. During the first years at Tuskegee I recall that night after night I would roll and toss on my bed, without sleep, because of the anxiety and uncertainty which we were in regarding money. I knew that, in a large degree, we were trying an experiment—that of testing whether or not it was possible for Negroes to build up and control the affairs of a large education institution. I knew that if we failed it would injure the whole race. I knew that the presumption was against us. I knew that in the case of white people beginning such an enterprise it would be taken for granted that they were going to succeed, but in our case I felt that people would be surprised if we succeeded. All this made a burden which pressed down on us, sometimes, it seemed, at the rate of a thousand pounds to the square inch.

In all our difficulties and anxieties, however, I never went to a white or a black person in the town of Tuskegee for any assistance that was in their power to render, without being helped according to their means. More than a dozen times, when bills figuring up into the hundreds of dollars were falling due, I applied to the white men of Tuskegee for small loans, often borrowing small amounts from

as many as a half-dozen persons, to meet our obligations. One thing I was determined to do from the first, and that was to keep the credit of the school high; and this, I think I can say without boasting, we have done all through these years.

I shall always remember a bit of advice given me by Mr. George W. Campbell, the white man to whom I have referred to as the one who induced General Armstrong to send me to Tuskegee. Soon after I entered upon the work Mr. Campbell said to me, in his fatherly way: "Washington, always remember that credit is capital."

At one time when we were in the greatest distress for money that we ever experienced, I placed the situation frankly before General Armstrong. Without hesitation he gave me his personal check for all the money which he had saved for his own use. This was not the only time that General Armstrong helped Tuskegee in this way. I do not think I have ever made this fact public before.

During the summer of 1882, at the end of the first year's work of the school, I was married to Miss Fannie N. Smith, of Malden, W. Va. We began keeping house in Tuskegee early in the fall. This made a home for our teachers, who now had been increased to four in number. My wife was also a graduate of the Hampton Institute. After earnest and constant work in the interests of the school, together with her housekeeping duties, my wife passed away in May, 1884. One child, Portia M. Washington, was born during our marriage.

From the first, my wife most earnestly devoted her thoughts and time to the work of the school, and was completely one with me in every interest and ambition. She passed away, however, before she had an opportunity of seeing what the school was designed to be.

#### Chapter 14: "The Atlanta Exposition Address"

The Atlanta Exposition, at which I had been asked to make an address as a representative of the Negro race, as stated in the last chapter, was opened with a short address from Governor Bullock. After other interesting exercises, including an invocation from Bishop Nelson, of Georgia, a dedicatory ode by Albert Howell, Jr., and addresses by the President of the Exposition and Mrs. Joseph Thompson, the President of the Woman's Board, Governor Bullock introduce me with the words, "We have with us to-day a representative of Negro enterprise and Negro civilization."

When I arose to speak, there was considerable cheering, especially from the coloured people. As I remember it now, the thing that was uppermost in my mind was the desire to say something that would cement the friendship of the races and bring about hearty cooperation between them. So far as my outward surroundings were concerned, the only thing that I recall distinctly now is that when I got up, I

saw thousands of eyes looking intently into my face. The following is the address which I delivered:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens.

One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success. I but convey to you, Mr. President and Directors, the sentiment of the masses of my race when I say that in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress. It is a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom.

Not only this, but the opportunity here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress. Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention or stump speaking had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or truck garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbour, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common

occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits of the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race: "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded your railroads and cities, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. Casting down your bucket among my people, helping and encouraging them as you are doing on these grounds, and to education of head, hand, and heart, you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories. While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen. As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, nursing your children, watching by the sick-bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defence of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one. In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

There is no defence or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Effort or means so invested will pay a thousand per cent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—"blessing him that gives and him that takes."

There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable:—

The laws of changeless justice bind  
Oppressor with oppressed;  
And close as sin and suffering joined  
We march to fate abreast.

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they

will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance the body politic.

Gentlemen of the Exposition, as we present to you our humble effort at an exhibition of our progress, you must not expect overmuch. Starting thirty years ago with ownership here and there in a few quilts and pumpkins and chickens (gathered from miscellaneous sources), remember the path that has led from these to the inventions and production of agricultural implements, buggies, steam-engines, newspapers, books, statuary, carving, paintings, the management of drug-stores and banks, has not been trodden without contact with thorns and thistles. While we take pride in what we exhibit as a result of our independent efforts, we do not for a moment forget that our part in this exhibition would fall far short of your expectations but for the constant help that has come to our education life, not only from the Southern states, but especially from Northern philanthropists, who have made their gifts a constant stream of blessing and encouragement.

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.

In conclusion, may I repeat that nothing in thirty years has given us more hope and encouragement, and drawn us so near to you of the white race, as this opportunity offered by the Exposition; and here bending, as it were, over the altar that represents the results of the struggles of your race and mine, both starting practically empty-handed three decades ago, I pledge that in your effort to work out the great and intricate problem which God has laid at the doors of the South, you shall have at all times the patient, sympathetic help of my race; only let this be constantly in mind, that, while from representations in these buildings of the product of field, of forest, of mine, of factory, letters, and art, much good will come, yet far above and beyond material benefits will be that higher good, that, let us pray God, will come, in a blotting out of sectional differences and racial animosities and suspicions, in a determination to administer absolute justice, in a willing obedience among all classes to the mandates of law. This, this, coupled with our material prosperity, will bring into our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth.

The first thing that I remember, after I had finished speaking, was that Governor Bullock rushed across the platform and took me by the hand, and that others did the same. I received so many and such hearty congratulations that I found it difficult to get out of the building. I did not appreciate to any degree, however, the impression which my address seemed to have made, until the next morning, when I went into the business part of the city. As soon as I was recognized, I was surprised to find myself pointed out and surrounded by a crowd of men who wished to shake hands with me. This was kept up on every street on to which I went, to an extent which embarrassed me so much that I went back to my boarding-place. The next morning I returned to Tuskegee. At the station in Atlanta, and at almost all of the stations at which the train stopped between that city and Tuskegee, I found a crowd of people anxious to shake hands with me.

The papers in all parts of the United States published the address in full, and for months afterward there were complimentary editorial references to it. Mr. Clark Howell, the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, telegraphed to a New York paper, among other words, the following, "I do not exaggerate when I say that Professor Booker T. Washington's address yesterday was one of the most notable speeches, both as to character and as to the warmth of its reception, ever delivered to a Southern audience. The address was a revelation. The whole speech is a platform upon which blacks and whites can stand with full justice to each other."

The Boston Transcript said editorially: "The speech of Booker T. Washington at the Atlanta Exposition, this week, seems to have dwarfed all the other proceedings and the Exposition itself. The sensation that it has caused in the press has never been equalled."

I very soon began receiving all kinds of propositions from lecture bureaus, and editors of magazines and papers, to take the lecture platform, and to write articles. One lecture bureau offered me fifty thousand dollars, or two hundred dollars a night and expenses, if I would place my services at its disposal for a given period. To all these communications I replied that my life-work was at Tuskegee; and that whenever I spoke it must be in the interests of Tuskegee school and my race, and that I would enter into no arrangements that seemed to place a mere commercial value upon my services.

Some days after its delivery I sent a copy of my address to the President of the United States, the Hon. Grover Cleveland. I received from him the following autograph reply:—

Gray Gables, Buzzard's Bay, Mass.,

October 6, 1895.

Booker T. Washington, Esq.:

My Dear Sir: I thank you for sending me a copy of your address delivered at the Atlanta Exposition.

I thank you with much enthusiasm for making the address. I have read it with intense interest, and I think the Exposition would be fully justified if it did not do more than furnish the opportunity for its delivery. Your words cannot fail to delight and encourage all who wish well for your race; and if our coloured fellow-citizens do not from your utterances gather new hope and form new determinations to gain every valuable advantage offered them by their citizenship, it will be strange indeed.

Yours very truly,

Grover Cleveland.

Later I met Mr. Cleveland, for the first time, when, as President, he visited the Atlanta Exposition. At the request of myself and others he consented to spend an hour in the Negro Building, for the purpose of inspecting the Negro exhibit and of giving the coloured people in attendance an opportunity to shake hands with him. As soon as I met Mr. Cleveland I became impressed with his simplicity, greatness, and rugged honesty. I have met him many times since then, both at public functions and at his private residence in Princeton, and the more I see of him the more I admire him. When he visited the Negro Building in Atlanta he seemed to give himself up wholly, for that hour, to the coloured people. He seemed to be as careful to shake hands with some old coloured “auntie” clad partially in rags, and to take as much pleasure in doing so, as if he were greeting some millionaire. Many of the coloured people took advantage of the occasion to get him to write his name in a book or on a slip of paper. He was as careful and patient in doing this as if he were putting his signature to some great state document.

Mr. Cleveland has not only shown his friendship for me in many personal ways, but has always consented to do anything I have asked of him for our school. This he has done, whether it was to make a personal donation or to use his influence in securing the donations of others. Judging from my personal acquaintance with Mr. Cleveland, I do not believe that he is conscious of possessing any colour prejudice. He is too great for that. In my contact with people I find that, as a rule, it is only the little, narrow people who live for themselves, who never read good books, who do not travel, who never open up their souls in a way to permit them to come into contact with other souls—with the great outside world. No man whose vision is bounded by colour can come into contact with what is highest and best in the world. In meeting men, in many places, I have found that the happiest people are those who do the most for others; the most miserable are those who do



the least. I have also found that few things, if any, are capable of making one so blind and narrow as race prejudice. I often say to our students, in the course of my talks to them on Sunday evenings in the chapel, that the longer I live and the more experience I have of the world, the more I am convinced that, after all, the one thing that is most worth living for—and dying for, if need be—is the opportunity of making some one else more happy and more useful.

The coloured people and the coloured newspapers at first seemed to be greatly pleased with the character of my Atlanta address, as well as with its reception. But after the first burst of enthusiasm began to die away, and the coloured people began reading the speech in cold type, some of them seemed to feel that they had been hypnotized. They seemed to feel that I had been too liberal in my remarks toward the Southern whites, and that I had not spoken out strongly enough for what they termed the “rights” of my race. For a while there was a reaction, so far as a certain element of my own race was concerned, but later these reactionary ones seemed to have been won over to my way of believing and acting.

While speaking of changes in public sentiment, I recall that about ten years after the school at Tuskegee was established, I had an experience that I shall never forget. Dr. Lyman Abbott, then the pastor of Plymouth Church, and also editor of the *Outlook* (then the *Christian Union*), asked me to write a letter for his paper giving my opinion of the exact condition, mental and moral, of the coloured ministers in the South, as based upon my observations. I wrote the letter, giving the exact facts as I conceived them to be. The picture painted was a rather black one—or, since I am black, shall I say “white”? It could not be otherwise with a race but a few years out of slavery, a race which had not had time or opportunity to produce a competent ministry.

What I said soon reached every Negro minister in the country, I think, and the letters of condemnation which I received from them were not few. I think that for a year after the publication of this article every association and every conference or religious body of any kind, of my race, that met, did not fail before adjourning to pass a resolution condemning me, or calling upon me to retract or modify what I had said. Many of these organizations went so far in their resolutions as to advise parents to cease sending their children to Tuskegee. One association even appointed a “missionary” whose duty it was to warn the people against sending their children to Tuskegee. This missionary had a son in the school, and I noticed that, whatever the “missionary” might have said or done with regard to others, he was careful not to take his son away from the institution. Many of the coloured papers, especially those that were the organs of religious bodies, joined in the general chorus of condemnation or demands for retraction.

During the whole time of the excitement, and through all the criticism, I did not utter a word of explanation or retraction. I knew that I was right, and that time and the sober second thought of the people would vindicate me. It was not long before

the bishops and other church leaders began to make careful investigation of the conditions of the ministry, and they found out that I was right. In fact, the oldest and most influential bishop in one branch of the Methodist Church said that my words were far too mild. Very soon public sentiment began making itself felt, in demanding a purifying of the ministry. While this is not yet complete by any means, I think I may say, without egotism, and I have been told by many of our most influential ministers, that my words had much to do with starting a demand for the placing of a higher type of men in the pulpit. I have had the satisfaction of having many who once condemned me thank me heartily for my frank words.

The change of the attitude of the Negro ministry, so far as regards myself, is so complete that at the present time I have no warmer friends among any class than I have among the clergymen. The improvement in the character and life of the Negro ministers is one of the most gratifying evidences of the progress of the race. My experience with them, as well as other events in my life, convince me that the thing to do, when one feels sure that he has said or done the right thing, and is condemned, is to stand still and keep quiet. If he is right, time will show it.

In the midst of the discussion which was going on concerning my Atlanta speech, I received the letter which I give below, from Dr. Gilman, the President of Johns Hopkins University, who had been made chairman of the judges of award in connection with the Atlanta Exposition:—

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore,

President's Office, September 30, 1895.

Dear Mr. Washington: Would it be agreeable to you to be one of the Judges of Award in the Department of Education at Atlanta? If so, I shall be glad to place your name upon the list. A line by telegraph will be welcomed.

Yours very truly,

D.C. Gilman

I think I was even more surprised to receive this invitation than I had been to receive the invitation to speak at the opening of the Exposition. It was to be a part of my duty, as one of the jurors, to pass not only upon the exhibits of the coloured schools, but also upon those of the white schools. I accepted the position, and spent a month in Atlanta in performance of the duties which it entailed. The board of jurors was a large one, containing in all of sixty members. It was about equally divided between Southern white people and Northern white people. Among them were college presidents, leading scientists and men of letters, and specialists in many subjects. When the group of jurors to which I was assigned met for organization, Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, who was one of the number, moved that I

be made secretary of that division, and the motion was unanimously adopted. Nearly half of our division were Southern people. In performing my duties in the inspection of the exhibits of white schools I was in every case treated with respect, and at the close of our labours I parted from my associates with regret.

I am often asked to express myself more freely than I do upon the political condition and the political future of my race. These recollections of my experience in Atlanta give me the opportunity to do so briefly. My own belief is, although I have never before said so in so many words, that the time will come when the Negro in the South will be accorded all the political rights which his ability, character, and material possessions entitle him to. I think, though, that the opportunity to freely exercise such political rights will not come in any large degree through outside or artificial forcing, but will be accorded to the Negro by the Southern white people themselves, and that they will protect him in the exercise of those rights. Just as soon as the South gets over the old feeling that it is being forced by “foreigners,” or “aliens,” to do something which it does not want to do, I believe that the change in the direction that I have indicated is going to begin. In fact, there are indications that it is already beginning in a slight degree.

Let me illustrate my meaning. Suppose that some months before the opening of the Atlanta Exposition there had been a general demand from the press and public platform outside the South that a Negro be given a place on the opening programme, and that a Negro be placed upon the board of jurors of award. Would any such recognition of the race have taken place? I do not think so. The Atlanta officials went as far as they did because they felt it to be a pleasure, as well as a duty, to reward what they considered merit in the Negro race. Say what we will, there is something in human nature which we cannot blot out, which makes one man, in the end, recognize and reward merit in another, regardless of colour or race.

I believe it is the duty of the Negro—as the greater part of the race is already doing—to deport himself modestly in regard to political claims, depending upon the slow but sure influences that proceed from the possession of property, intelligence, and high character for the full recognition of his political rights. I think that the according of the full exercise of political rights is going to be a matter of natural, slow growth, not an over-night, gourd-vine affair. I do not believe that the Negro should cease voting, for a man cannot learn the exercise of self-government by ceasing to vote, any more than a boy can learn to swim by keeping out of the water, but I do believe that in his voting he should more and more be influenced by those of intelligence and character who are his next-door neighbours.

I know coloured men who, through the encouragement, help, and advice of Southern white people, have accumulated thousands of dollars' worth of property,

but who, at the same time, would never think of going to those same persons for advice concerning the casting of their ballots. This, it seems to me, is unwise and unreasonable, and should cease. In saying this I do not mean that the Negro should truckle, or not vote from principle, for the instant he ceases to vote from principle he loses the confidence and respect of the Southern white man even.

I do not believe that any state should make a law that permits an ignorant and poverty-stricken white man to vote, and prevents a black man in the same condition from voting. Such a law is not only unjust, but it will react, as all unjust laws do, in time; for the effect of such a law is to encourage the Negro to secure education and property, and at the same time it encourages the white man to remain in ignorance and poverty. I believe that in time, through the operation of intelligence and friendly race relations, all cheating at the ballot-box in the South will cease. It will become apparent that the white man who begins by cheating a Negro out of his ballot soon learns to cheat a white man out of his, and that the man who does this ends his career of dishonesty by the theft of property or by some equally serious crime. In my opinion, the time will come when the South will encourage all of its citizens to vote. It will see that it pays better, from every standpoint, to have healthy, vigorous life than to have that political stagnation which always results when one-half of the population has no share and no interest in the Government.

As a rule, I believe in universal, free suffrage, but I believe that in the South we are confronted with peculiar conditions that justify the protection of the ballot in many of the states, for a while at least, either by an education test, a property test, or by both combined; but whatever tests are required, they should be made to apply with equal and exact justice to both races.

### 3.13 Charles W. Chesnutt (1858-1932)

Charles Waddell Chesnutt was born in 1858 in Cleveland, Ohio, to parents who were free African-Americans. The family moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina, when Chesnutt was a young boy, and there Chesnutt attended school, eventually becoming a teacher and later a principal. Chesnutt's parents were mixed race, and Chesnutt himself could have identified as white but chose to identify as African-American. After he married, he and his wife returned to Cleveland where Chesnutt passed the bar exam in 1887 and opened a court reporting firm, providing a prosperous life for his wife and four children. In Cleveland, Chesnutt began submitting his stories for publication and soon enjoyed success publishing a number of his stories in prominent literary magazines, gaining the attention of William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and other writers in the Realist literary movement. While Chesnutt was never able to support himself and his family with earnings from his writing, he continued to write and publish through the turn of the century. Later in his life, he devoted time and energy to political activism, serving on the General Committee for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a civil rights organization formed in 1909.



Image 3.12: Charles W. Chesnutt, circa 1898  
Photographer: unknown  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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Chesnutt was one of the first successful African-American writers producing fiction during the period of American Literary Realism. Chesnutt capitalized on the popularity of Local Color fiction after the Civil War and crafted stories about the Old South, depicting, for example, slaves living on plantations interacting with white plantation owners. Some of his first short stories, including the often-anthologized “The Goophered Grapevine” (1887), began appearing in literary magazines in 1887 and then were collected in *The Conjure Woman* (1899). In these stories about folk culture and voodoo practices in the slave community and later in the freed African-American community during Reconstruction, Chesnutt cleverly borrows the plantation tradition popular in Local Color fiction as a form which he then subverts by depicting African-American characters with innate humanity, intelligence, shrewdness, and an ability to outwit those in power.

The Charles W. Chesnutt biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.13.1 From *The Conjure Woman* (1899)

“The Goophered Grapevine”

Some years ago my wife was in poor health, and our family doctor, in whose skill and honesty I had implicit confidence, advised a change of climate. I shared, from an unprofessional standpoint, his opinion that the raw winds, the chill rains, and the violent changes of temperature that characterized the winters in the region of the Great Lakes tended to aggravate my wife’s difficulty, and would undoubtedly shorten her life if she remained exposed to them. The doctor’s advice was that we seek, not a temporary place of sojourn, but a permanent residence, in a warmer and more equable climate. I was engaged at the time in grape-culture in northern Ohio, and, as I liked the business and had given it much study, I decided to look for some other locality suitable for carrying it on. I thought of sunny France, of sleepy Spain, of Southern California, but there were objections to them all. It occurred to me that I might find what I wanted in some one of our own Southern States. It was a sufficient time after the war for conditions in the South to have become somewhat settled; and I was enough of a pioneer to start a new industry, if I could not find a place where grape-culture had been tried. I wrote to a cousin who had gone into the turpentine business in central North Carolina. He assured me, in response to my inquiries, that no better place could be found in the South than the State and neighborhood where he lived; the climate was perfect for health, and, in conjunction with the soil, ideal for grape-culture; labor was cheap, and land could be bought for a mere song. He gave us a cordial invitation to come and visit him while we looked into the matter. We accepted the invitation, and after several days of leisurely travel, the last hundred miles of which were up a river on a sidewheel steamer, we reached our destination, a quaint old town, which I shall call Patesville, because, for one reason, that is not its name. There was a red brick market-house in the public square, with a tall tower, which held a four-faced clock that struck the hours, and from which there pealed out a curfew at nine o’clock. There were two or three hotels, a court-house, a jail, stores, offices, and all the appurtenances of a county seat and a commercial emporium; for while Patesville numbered only four or five thousand inhabitants, of all shades of complexion, it was one of the principal towns in North Carolina, and had a considerable trade in cotton and naval stores. This business activity was not immediately apparent to my unaccustomed eyes. Indeed, when I first saw the town, there brooded over it a calm that seemed almost sabbatic in its restfulness, though I learned later on that underneath its somnolent exterior the deeper currents of life—love and hatred, joy and despair, ambition and avarice, faith and friendship—flowed not less steadily than in livelier latitudes.

We found the weather delightful at that season, the end of summer, and were hospitably entertained. Our host was a man of means and evidently regarded our visit as a pleasure, and we were therefore correspondingly at our ease, and in a position to act with the coolness of judgment desirable in making so radical a

change in our lives. My cousin placed a horse and buggy at our disposal, and himself acted as our guide until I became somewhat familiar with the country.

I found that grape-culture, while it had never been carried on to any great extent, was not entirely unknown in the neighborhood. Several planters thereabouts had attempted it on a commercial scale, in former years, with greater or less success; but like most Southern industries, it had felt the blight of war and had fallen into desuetude.

I went several times to look at a place that I thought might suit me. It was a plantation of considerable extent, that had formerly belonged to a wealthy man by the name of McAdoo. The estate had been for years involved in litigation between disputing heirs, during which period shiftless cultivation had well-nigh exhausted the soil. There had been a vineyard of some extent on the place, but it had not been attended to since the war, and had lapsed into utter neglect. The vines—here partly supported by decayed and broken-down trellises, there twining themselves among the branches of the slender saplings which had sprung up among them—grew in wild and unpruned luxuriance, and the few scattered grapes they bore were the undisputed prey of the first comer. The site was admirably adapted to grape-raising; the soil, with a little attention, could not have been better; and with the native grape, the luscious scuppernong, as my main reliance in the beginning, I felt sure that I could introduce and cultivate successfully a number of other varieties.

One day I went over with my wife to show her the place. We drove out of the town over a long wooden bridge that spanned a spreading mill-pond, passed the long whitewashed fence surrounding the county fair-ground, and struck into a road so sandy that the horse's feet sank to the fetlocks. Our route lay partly up hill and partly down, for we were in the sand-hill county; we drove past cultivated farms, and then by abandoned fields grown up in scrub-oak and short-leaved pine, and once or twice through the solemn aisles of the virgin forest, where the tall pines, well-nigh meeting over the narrow road, shut out the sun, and wrapped us in cloistral solitude. Once, at a cross-roads, I was in doubt as to the turn to take, and we sat there waiting ten minutes—we had already caught some of the native infection of restfulness—for some human being to come along, who could direct us on our way. At length a little negro girl appeared, walking straight as an arrow, with a piggin full of water on her head. After a little patient investigation, necessary to overcome the child's shyness, we learned what we wished to know, and at the end of about five miles from the town reached our destination.

We drove between a pair of decayed gateposts—the gate itself had long since disappeared—and up a straight sandy lane, between two lines of rotting rail fence, partly concealed by jimson-weeds and briers, to the open space where a dwelling-house had once stood, evidently a spacious mansion, if we might judge from the ruined chimneys that were still standing, and the brick pillars on which the sills

rested. The house itself, we had been informed, had fallen a victim to the fortunes of war.

We alighted from the buggy, walked about the yard for a while, and then wandered off into the adjoining vineyard. Upon Annie's complaining of weariness I led the way back to the yard, where a pine log, lying under a spreading elm, afforded a shady though somewhat hard seat. One end of the log was already occupied by a venerable-looking colored man. He held on his knees a hat full of grapes, over which he was smacking his lips with great gusto, and a pile of grapeskins near him indicated that the performance was no new thing. We approached him at an angle from the rear, and were close to him before he perceived us. He respectfully rose as we drew near, and was moving away, when I begged him to keep his seat.

"Don't let us disturb you," I said. "There is plenty of room for us all."

He resumed his seat with somewhat of embarrassment. While he had been standing, I had observed that he was a tall man, and, though slightly bowed by the weight of years, apparently quite vigorous. He was not entirely black, and this fact, together with the quality of his hair, which was about six inches long and very bushy, except on the top of his head, where he was quite bald, suggested a slight strain of other than negro blood. There was a shrewdness in his eyes, too, which was not altogether African, and which, as we afterwards learned from experience, was indicative of a corresponding shrewdness in his character. He went on eating the grapes, but did not seem to enjoy himself quite so well as he had apparently done before he became aware of our presence.

"Do you live around here?" I asked, anxious to put him at his ease.

"Yas, suh. I lives des ober yander, behine de nex' san'-hill, on de Lumberton plank-road."

"Do you know anything about the time when this vineyard was cultivated?"

"Lawd bless you, suh, I knows all about it. Dey ain' na'er a man in dis settlement w'at won' tell you ole Julius McAdoo 'uz bawn en raise' on dis yer same plantation. Is you de Norv'n gemman w'at's gwine ter buy de ole vimya'd?"

"I am looking at it," I replied; "but I don't know that I shall care to buy unless I can be reasonably sure of making something out of it."

"Well, suh, you is a stranger ter me, en I is a stranger ter you, en we is bofe strangers ter one anudder, but 'f I 'uz in yo' place, I wouldn' buy dis vimya'd."

"Why not?" I asked.



“Well, I dunno whe’r you b’lieves in cunj’in’ er not,—some er de w’ite folks don’t, er says dey don’t,—but de truf er de matter is dat dis yer ole vimya’d is goophered.”

“Is what?” I asked, not grasping the meaning of this unfamiliar word.

“Is goophered,—cunju’d, bewitch’.”

He imparted this information with such solemn earnestness, and with such an air of confidential mystery, that I felt somewhat interested, while Annie was evidently much impressed, and drew closer to me.

“How do you know it is bewitched?” I asked.

“I wouldn’ spec’ fer you ter b’lieve me ’less you know all ’bout de fac’s. But ef you en young miss dere doan’ min’ lis’nin’ ter a ole nigger run on a minute er two w’ile you er restin’, I kin ’splain to you how it all happen’.”

We assured him that we would be glad to hear how it all happened, and he began to tell us. At first the current of his memory—or imagination—seemed somewhat sluggish; but as his embarrassment wore off, his language flowed more freely, and the story acquired perspective and coherence. As he became more and more absorbed in the narrative, his eyes assumed a dreamy expression, and he seemed to lose sight of his auditors, and to be living over again in monologue his life on the old plantation.

“Ole Mars Dugal’ McAdoo,” he began, “bought dis place long many years befo’ de wah, en I’member well w’en he sot out all dis yer part er de plantation in scuppernon’s. De vimes growed monst’us fas’, en Mars Dugal’ made a thousan’ gallon er scuppernon’ wine eve’y year.

“Now, ef dey’s an’thing a niggers lub, nex’ ter ’possum, en chick’n, en watermillyums, it’s scuppernon’s. Dey ain’ nuffin dat kin stan’ up side’n de scuppernon’ fer sweetness; sugar ain’t a suckumstance ter scuppernon’. W’en de season is nigh ’bout ober, en de grapes begin ter swivel up des a little wid de wrinkles er ole age,—w’en de skin git sof’ en brown,—den de scuppernon’ make you smack yo’ lip en roll yo’ eye en wush fer mo’; so I reckon it ain’ very ’stonishin’ dat niggers lub scuppernon’.

“Dey wuz a sight er niggers in de naberhood er de vimya’d. Dere wuz ole Mars Henry Brayboy’s niggers, en ole Mars Jeems McLean’s niggers, en Mars Dugal’s own niggers; den dey wuz a settlement er free niggers en po’ buckrahs down by de Wim’l’ton Road, en Mars Dugal’ had de only vimya’d in de naberhood. I reckon it ain’ so much so nowadays, but befo’ de wah, in slab’ry times, a nigger did n’ mine goin’ fi’ er ten mile in a night, w’en dey wuz sump’n good ter eat at de yuther een’.

“So atter a w’ile Mars Dugal’ begin ter miss his scuppernon’s. Co’s e he ‘cuse’ de niggers er it, but dey all ’nied it ter de las’. Mars Dugal’ sot spring guns en steel traps, en he en de oberseah sot up nights once’t er twice’t, tel one night Mars Dugal’—he ’uz a monst’us keerless man—got his leg shot full er cow-peas. But somehow er nudder dey could n’ nebber ketch none er de niggers. I dunner how it happen, but it happen des like I tell you, en de grapes kep’ on a-goin’ des de same.

“But bimeby ole Mars Dugal’ fix’ up a plan ter stop it. Dey wuz a cunjuh ’oman livin’ down ’mong’s de free niggers on de Wim’l’ton Road, en all de darkies fum Rockfish ter Beaver Crick wuz feared er her. She could wuk de mos’ powerfuller kin’ er goopher,—could make people hab fits, er rheumatiz, er make ’em des dwinel away en die; en dey say she went out ridin’ de niggers at night, fer she wuz a witch ’sides bein’ a cunjuh ’oman. Mars Dugal’ hearn ’bout Aun’ Peggy’s doin’s, en begun ter ’flect whe’r er no he could n’ git her ter he’p him keep de niggers off’n de grapevimes. One day in de spring er de year, ole miss pack’ up a basket er chick’n en poun’-cake, en a bottle er scuppernon’ wine, en Mars Dugal’ tuk it in his buggy en driv ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s cabin. He tuk de basket in, en had a long talk wid Aun’ Peggy.

“De nex’ day Aun’ Peggy come up ter de vimya’d. De niggers seed her slippin’ ’roun’, en dey soon foun’ out what she ’uz doin’ dere. Mars Dugal’ had hi’ed her ter goopher de grapevimes. She sa’ntered ’roun’ ’mong’s de vimes, en tuk a leaf fum dis one, en a grape-hull fum dat one, en a grape-seed fum anudder one; en den a little twig fum here, en a little pinch er dirt fum dere,—en put it all in a big black bottle, wid a snake’s toof en a speckle’ hen’s gall en some ha’rs fum a black cat’s tail, en den fill’ de bottle wid scuppernon’ wine. Wen she got de goopher all ready en fix’, she tuk ’n went out in de woods en buried it under de root uv a red oak tree, en den come back en tole one er de niggers she done goopher de grapevimes, en a’er a nigger w’at eat dem grapes ’ud be sho ter die inside’n twel’ mont’s.

“Atter dat de niggers let de scuppernon’s ’lone, en Mars Dugal’ did n’ hab no ’casion ter fine no mo’ fault; en de season wuz mos’ gone, w’en a strange gemman stop at de plantation one night ter see Mars Dugal’ on some business; en his coachman, seein’ de scuppernon’s growin’ so nice en sweet, slip ’roun’ behine de smoke-house, en et all de scuppernon’s he could hole. Nobody did n’ notice it at de time, but dat night, on de way home, de gemman’s hoss runned away en kill’ de coachman. W’en we hearn de noos, Aun’ Lucy, de cook, she up ’n say she seed de strange nigger eat’n’ er de scuppernon’s behine de smoke-house; en den we knowed de goopher had b’en er wukkin’. Den one er de nigger chilluns runned away fum de quarters one day, en got in de scuppernon’s, en died de nex’ week. W’ite folks say he die’ er de fevuh, but de niggers knowed it wuz de goopher. So you k’n be sho de darkies did n’ hab much ter do wid dem scuppernon’ vimes.

“W’en de scuppernon’ season ’uz ober fer dat year, Mars Dugal’ foun’ he had made fifteen hund’ed gallon er wine; en one er de niggers hearn him laffin’ wid de oberseah fit ter kill, en sayin’ dem fifteen hund’ed gallon er wine wuz monst’us good intrus’ on de ten dollars he laid out on de vimya’d. So I ’low ez he paid Aun’ Peggy ten dollars fer to goopher de grapevimes.

“De goopher did n’ wuk no mo’ tel de nex’ summer, w’en ’long to’ds de middle er de season one er de fiel’ han’s died; en ez dat lef’ Mars Dugal’ sho’t er han’s, he went off ter town fer ter buy anudder. He fotch de noo nigger home wid ’im. He wuz er ole nigger, er de color er a gingy-cake, en ball ez a hoss-apple on de top er his head. He wuz a peart ole nigger, do’, en could do a big day’s wuk.

“Now it happen dat one er de niggers on de nex’ plantation, one er ole Mars Henry Brayboy’s niggers, had runned away de day befo’, en tuk ter de swamp, en ole Mars Dugal’ en some er de yuther nabor w’ite folks had gone out wid dere guns en dere dogs fer ter he’p ’em hunt fer de nigger; en de han’s on our own plantation wuz all so flusterated dat we fuhgot ter tell de noo han’ ’bout de goopher on de scuppernon’ vimes. Co’s e he smell de grapes en see de vimes, an atter dahk de fus’ thing he done wuz ter slip off ter de grapevimes ’dout sayin’ nuffin ter nobody. Nex’ mawnin’ he tole some er de niggers ’bout de fine bait er scuppernon’ he et de night befo’.

“Wen dey tole ’im ’bout de goopher on de grapevimes, he ’uz dat tarrified dat he turn pale, en look des like he gwine ter die right in his tracks. De oberseah come up en axed w’at ’uz de matter; en w’en dey tole ’im Henry be’n eatin’ er de scuppernon’s, en got de goopher on ’im, he gin Henry a big drink er w’iskey, en ’low dat de nex’ rainy day he take ’im ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s, en see ef she would n’ take de goopher off’n him, seein’ ez he did n’ know nuffin erbout it tel he done et de grapes.

“Sho nuff, it rain de nex’ day, en de oberseah went ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s wid Henry. En Aun’ Peggy say dat bein’ ez Henry did n’ know ’bout de goopher, en et de grapes in ign’ance er de conseq’ences, she reckon she mought be able fer ter take de goopher off’n him. So she fotch out er bottle wid some cunjuh medicine in it, en po’d some out in a go’d fer Henry ter drink. He manage ter git it down; he say it tas’e like whiskey wid sump’n bitter in it. She ’lowed dat ’ud keep de goopher off’n him tel de spring; but w’en de sap begin ter rise in de grapevimes he ha’ ter come en see her ag’in, en she tell him w’at e’s ter do.

“Nex’ spring, w’en de sap commence’ ter rise in de scuppernon’ vime, Henry tuk a ham one night. Whar’d he git de ham? *I* doan know; dey wa’n’t no hams on de plantation ’cep’n’ w’at ’uz in de smoke-house, but *I* never see Henry ’bout de smoke-house. But ez *I* wuz a-sayin’, he tuk de ham ober ter Aun’ Peggy’s; en Aun’ Peggy tole ’im dat w’en Mars Dugal’ begin ter prune de grapevimes, he mus’ go en take ’n scrape off de sap whar it ooze out’n de cut een’s er de vimes, en ’n’int his ball head wid it; en ef he do dat once’t a year de goopher would n’

wuk agin 'im long ez he done it. En bein' ez he fotch her de ham, she fix' it so he kin eat all de scuppernon' he want.

“So Henry 'n'int his head wid de sap out'n de big grapevime des ha'f way 'twix' de quarters en de big house, en de goopher nebber wuk agin him dat summer. But de beatenes' thing you eber see happen ter Henry. Up ter dat time he wuz ez ball ez a sweeten' 'tater, but des ez soon ez de young leaves begun ter come out on de grapevimes, de ha'r begun ter grow out on Henry's head, en by de middle er de summer he had de bigges' head er ha'r on de plantation. Befo' dat, Henry had tol'able good ha'r 'roun' de aidges, but soon ez de young grapes begun ter come, Henry's ha'r begun to quirl all up in little balls, des like dis yer reg'lar grapy ha'r, en by de time de grapes got ripe his head look des like a bunch er grapes. Combin' it did n' do no good; he wuk at it ha'f de night wid er Jim Crow, en think he git it straighten' out, but in de mawnin' de grapes 'ud be dere des de same. So he gin it up, en tried ter keep de grapes down by havin' his ha'r cut sho't.

“But dat wa'n't de quares' thing 'bout de goopher. When Henry come ter de plantation, he wuz gittin' a little ole an stiff in de j'int. But dat summer he got des ez spry en libely ez any young nigger on de plantation; fac', he got so biggity dat Mars Jackson, de oberseah, ha' ter th'eaten ter whip 'im, ef he did n' stop cuttin' up his didos en behave hisse'f. But de mos' cur'ouses' thing happen' in de fall, when de sap begin ter go down in de grapevimes. Fus', when de grapes 'uz gethered, de knots begun ter straighten out'n Henry's ha'r; en w'en de leaves begin ter fall, Henry's ha'r 'mence' ter drap out; en when de vimes 'uz bar', Henry's head wuz baller 'n it wuz in de spring, en he begin ter git ole en stiff in de j'int ag'in, en paid no mo' 'tention ter de gals dyoin' er de whole winter. En nex' spring, w'en he rub de sap on ag'in, he got young ag'in, en so soopl en libely dat none er de young niggers on de plantation could n' jump, ner dance, ner hoe ez much cotton ez Henry. But in de fall er de year his grapes 'mence' ter straighten out, en his j'int ter git stiff, en his ha'r drap off, en de rheumatiz begin ter wrastle wid 'im.

“Now, ef you 'd 'a' knowed ole Mars Dugal' McAdoo, you'd'a'knowed dat it ha' ter be a mighty rainy day when he could n' fine sump'n fer his niggers ter do, en it ha' ter be a mighty little hole he could n' crawl thoo, en ha' ter be a monst'us cloudy night when a dollar git by him in de dahkness; en w'en he see how Henry git young in de spring en ole in de fall, he 'lowed ter hisse'f ez how he could make mo' money out'n Henry dan by wukkin' him in de cotton-fiel'. 'Long de nex' spring, atter de sap 'mence' ter rise, en Henry 'n'int 'is head en sta'ted fer ter git young en soopl, Mars Dugal' up 'n tuk Henry ter town, en sole 'im fer fifteen hunder' dollars. Co'se de man w'at bought Henry did n' know nuffin 'bout de goopher, en Mars Dugal' did n' see no 'casion fer ter tell 'im. Long to'ds de fall, w'en de sap went down, Henry begin ter git ole ag'in same ez yuzhal, en his noo marster begin ter git skeered les'n he gwine ter lose his fifteen-hunder'-dollar nigger. He sent fer a mighty fine doctor, but de med'cine did n' 'pear ter do no

good; de goopher had a good holt. Henry tole de doctor 'bout de goopher, but de doctor des laff at 'im.

“One day in de winter Mars Dugal' went ter town, en wuz santerin' 'long de Main Street, when who should he meet but Henry's noo marster. Dey said 'Hoddy,' en Mars Dugal' ax 'im ter hab a seegyar; en atter dey run on awhile 'bout de craps en de weather, Mars Dugal' ax 'im, sorter keerless, like ez ef he des thought of it,—

“‘How you like de nigger I sole you las' spring?’

“Henry's marster shuck his head en knock de ashes off'n his seegyar.

“‘Spec' I made a bad bahgin when I bought dat nigger. Henry done good wuk all de summer, but sence de fall set in he 'pears ter be sorter pinin' away. Dey ain' nuffin pertickler de matter wid 'im—leastways de doctor say so—'cep'n' a tech er de rheumatiz; but his ha'r is all fell out, en ef he don't pick up his strenk mighty soon, I spec' I'm gwine ter lose 'im.’

“Dey smoked on awhile, en bimeby ole mars say, ‘Well, a bahgin 's a bahgin, but you en me is good fren's, en I doan wan' ter see you lose all de money you paid fer dat nigger; en ef w'at you say is so, en I ain't 'sputin' it, he ain't wuf much now. I 'spec's you wukked him too ha'd dis summer, er e'se de swamps down here don't agree wid de san'-hill nigger. So you des lemme know, en ef he gits any wusser I'll be willin' ter gib yer five hund'ed dollars fer 'im, en take my chances on his livin'.’

“Sho 'nuff, when Henry begun ter draw up wid de rheumatiz en it look like he gwine ter die fer sho, his noo marster sen' fer Mars Dugal', en Mars Dugal' gin him what he promus, en brung Henry home ag'in. He tuk good keer uv 'im dyoin' er de winter,—give 'im w'iskey ter rub his rheumatiz, en terbacker ter smoke, en all he want ter eat,—'caze a nigger w'at he could make a thousan' dollars a year off'n did n' grow on eve'y huckleberry bush.

“Nex' spring, w'en de sap ris en Henry's ha'r commence' ter sprout, Mars Dugal' sole 'im ag'in, down in Robeson County dis time; en he kep' dat sellin' business up fer five year er mo'. Henry nebber say nuffin 'bout de goopher ter his noo marsters, 'caze he know he gwine ter be tuk good keer uv de nex' winter, w'en Mars Dugal' buy him back. En Mars Dugal' made 'nuff money off'n Henry ter buy anudder plantation ober on Beaver Crick.

“But 'long 'bout de een' er dat five year dey come a stranger ter stop at de plantation. De fus' day he 'uz dere he went out wid Mars Dugal' en spent all de mawnin' lookin' ober de vimya'd, en atter dinner dey spent all de evenin' playin' kya'ds. De niggers soon 'skiver' dat he wuz a Yankee, en dat he come down ter Norf C'lina fer ter l'arn de w'ite folks how to raise grapes en make wine. He promus Mars Dugal' he c'd make de grapevimes b'ar twice't ez many grapes, en

dat de noo winepress he wuz a-sellin' would make mo' d'n twice't ez many gallons er wine. En ole Mars Dugal' des drunk it all in, des 'peared ter be bewitch' wid dat Yankee. Wen de darkies see dat Yankee runnin' 'roun' de vimya'd en diggin' under de grapevimes, dey shuk dere heads, en 'lowed dat dey feared Mars Dugal' losin' his min'. Mars Dugal' had all de dirt dug away fum under de roots er all de scuppernon' vimes, an' let 'em stan' dat away fer a week er mo'. Den dat Yankee made de niggers fix up a mixtry er lime en ashes en manyo, en po' it 'roun' de roots er de grapevimes. Den he 'vise Mars Dugal' fer ter trim de vimes close't, en Mars Dugal' tuck 'n done eve'ything de Yankee tole him ter do. Dyoin' all er dis time, mind yer, dis yer Yankee wuz libbin' off'n de fat er de lan', at de big house, en playin' kya'ds wid Mars Dugal' eve'y night; en dey say Mars Dugal' los' mo'n a thousan' dollars dyoin' er de week dat Yankee wuz a-ruinin' de grapevimes.

“Wen de sap ris nex' spring, ole Henry 'n'inted his head ez yuzhal, en his ha'r 'mence' ter grow des de same ez it done eve'y year. De scuppernon' vimes grewed monst's fas', en de leaves wuz greener en thicker dan dey eber be'n dyoin' my rememb'ance; en Henry's ha'r grewed out thicker dan eber, en he 'peared ter git younger 'n younger, en soopler 'n soopler; en seein' ez he wuz sho't er ban's dat spring, havin' tuk in consid'able noo groun', Mars Dugal' 'eluded he would n' sell Henry 'tel he git de crap in en de cotton chop'. So he kep' Henry on de plantation.

“But 'long 'bout time fer de grapes ter come on de scuppernon' vimes, dey 'peared ter come a change ober 'em; de leaves withered en swivel' up, en de young grapes turn' yaller, en bimeby eve'ybody on de plantation could see dat de whole vimya'd wuz dyin'. Mars Dugal' tuk'n water de vimes en done all he could, but 't wa'n' no use: dat Yankee had done bus' de watermillyum. One time de vimes picked up a bit, en Mars Dugal' 'lowed dey wuz gwine ter come out ag'in; but dat Yankee done dug too close under de roots, en prune de branches too close ter de vime, en all dat lime en ashes done burn' de life out'n de vimes, en dey des kep' a-with'in' en a-swivelin'.

“All dis time de goopher wuz a-wukkin'. When de vimes sta'ted ter wither, Henry 'mence' ter complain er his rheumatiz; en when de leaves begin ter dry up, his ha'r 'mence' ter drap out. When de vimes fresh' up a bit, Henry 'd git peart ag'in, en when de vimes wither' ag'in, Henry 'd git ole ag'in, en des kep' gittin' mo' en mo' fitten fer nuffin; he des pined away, en pined away, en fine'ly tuk ter his cabin; en when de big vime whar he got de sap ter 'n'int his head withered en turned yaller en died, Henry died too,—des went out sorter like a cannel. Dey didn't 'pear ter be nuffin de matter wid 'im, 'cep'n' de rheumatiz, but his strenk des dwinel' away 'tel he did n' hab ernuff lef ter draw his bref. De goopher had got de under holt, en th'owed Henry dat time fer good en all.

“Mars Dugal' tuk on might'ly 'bout losin' his vimes en his nigger in de same year; en he swo' dat ef he could git holt er dat Yankee he'd wear 'im ter a frazzle,

en den chaw up de frazzle; en he'd done it, too, for Mars Dugal' 'uz a monst'us brash man w'en he once git started. He sot de vimya'd out ober ag'in, but it wuz th'ee er fo' year befo' de vimes got ter b'arin' any scuppernon's.

"W'en de wah broke out, Mars Dugal' raise' a comp'ny, en went off ter fight de Yankees. He say he wuz mighty glad dat wah come, en he des want ter kill a Yankee fer eve'y dollar he los' 'long er dat grape-raisin' Yankee. En I 'spec' he would'a'done it, too, ef de Yankees had n' s'picioned sump'n, en killed him fus'. Atter de s'render ole miss move' ter town, de niggers all scattered 'way fum de plantation, en de vimya'd ain' be'n cultervated sence."

"Is that story true?" asked Annie doubtfully, but seriously, as the old man concluded his narrative.

"It's des ez true ez I'm a-settin' here, miss. Dey's a easy way ter prove it: I kin lead de way right ter Henry's grave ober yander in de plantation buryin'-groun'. En I tell yer w'at, marster, I would n' 'vise you to buy dis yer ole vimya'd, 'caze de goopher's on it yit, en dey ain' no tellin' w'en it's gwine ter crap out."

"But I thought you said all the old vines died."

"Dey did 'pear ter die, but a few un 'em come out ag'in, en is mixed in 'mong's de yuthers. I ain' skeered ter eat de grapes, 'caze I knows de old vimes fum de noo ones; but wid strangers dey ain' no tellin' w'at mought happen. I would n' 'vise yer ter buy dis vimya'd."

I bought the vineyard, nevertheless, and it has been for a long time in a thriving condition, and is often referred to by the local press as a striking illustration of the opportunities open to Northern capital in the development of Southern industries. The luscious scuppernong holds first rank among our grapes, though we cultivate a great many other varieties, and our income from grapes packed and shipped to the Northern markets is quite considerable. I have not noticed any developments of the goopher in the vineyard, although I have a mild suspicion that our colored assistants do not suffer from want of grapes during the season.

I found, when I bought the vineyard, that Uncle Julius had occupied a cabin on the place for many years, and derived a respectable revenue from the product of the neglected grapevines. This, doubtless, accounted for his advice to me not to buy the vineyard, though whether it inspired the goopher story I am unable to state. I believe, however, that the wages I paid him for his services as coachman, for I gave him employment in that capacity, were more than an equivalent for anything he lost by the sale of the vineyard.

### 3.14 Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

As she writes in her autobiography, Charlotte Perkins Gilman had one overriding goal in her life: “the improvement of the human race.” The niece of both the abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe and the suffragist Isabella Beecher Hooker, Gilman was one of the most important feminist



Image 3.13: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1895  
Photographer: Barry and Marble  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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writers, editors, and activists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She led an unconventional life that directly inspired her poetry, fiction, and nonfiction alike. At the age of thirty-four, she divorced a husband who sought to “domesticate” her, leaving both him and her daughter to pursue an independent career authoring works of poetry, fiction, and social criticism; editing and publishing her own feminist magazine, *Forerunner*; and lecturing for the American Woman Suffrage Association and other organizations on the need for social reform to ensure equality between men and women. In the 1890s, Gilman published three works that solidified her reputation as both a major American writer and a groundbreaking feminist theorist: a well-received collection of feminist poems, *In This Our World* (1893); the groundbreaking work of social theory, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898), in which she criticized

the economic dependency of women upon men; and the shocking short story reproduced below, “The Yellow Wall-Paper” (1892). Gilman remarried in 1900 and over the course of the first three decades of the twentieth century continued to edit, lecture, and publish works that advocated for the progressive reform of society. In her utopian novel *Herland* (1915), for example, she imagines a peaceful and ecologically sustainable society comprised solely of women who use technology and not men to reproduce.

While presented in the guise of a gothic tale of terror, “The Yellow Wall-Paper” is a fine example of political realism. Through this terrifying story of a woman locked in an ancient manor and haunted by a shadowy figure, Gilman shows that the real relationship between married men and women in her time is not one of equality but of domination and dependency. Gilman based the story on her own life. After giving birth to her daughter, Gilman fell into a state of depression and was sent to a clinic for treatment. Her doctor, a world-famous neurologist, advised her to quit all creative and intellectual activity and instead dedicate herself wholly to a private domestic routine. However, this so-called “rest-cure” only further deepened Gilman’s depression and so she sought—and found—a cure for herself in her true callings: the literary and political work to which she dedicated the rest of her life.



The Charlotte Perkins Gilman biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.14.1 “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps*—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see, he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one’s own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it *does* exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and co-heirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid; but I don't care—there is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a *draught*, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself,—before him, at least,—and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. “Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear,” said he, “and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time.” So we took the nursery, at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playground and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys’ school had used it. It is stripped off—the paper—in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate, and provoke study, and when you follow the lame, uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard-of contradictions.

The color is repellant, almost revolting; a smouldering, unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven’t felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able—to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I *cannot* be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wallpaper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wallpaper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

“You know the place is doing you good,” he said, “and really, dear, I don’t care to renovate the house just for a three months’ rental.”

“Then do let us go downstairs,” I said, “there are such pretty rooms there.”

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down cellar if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is as airy and comfortable a room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I’m really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deep-shaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fire-works in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it *knew* what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside-down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy-store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wallpaper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother—they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed, which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit—only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect, and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely, shaded, winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wallpaper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded, and where the sun is just so, I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to sulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wallpaper. Perhaps *because* of the wallpaper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed—it is nailed down, I believe—and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of “debased Romanesque” with *delirium tremens*—go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the cross-lights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,—the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap, I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I *must* say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I musn't lose my strength, and has me take cod-liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness, I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wallpaper.



If we had not used it that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all. I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more,—I am too wise,—but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around, just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wallpaper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper *did* move, and when I came back John was awake.

“What is it, little girl?” he said. “Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold.”

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

“Why darling!” said he, “our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.

“The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better. I feel really much easier about you.”

“I don’t weigh a bit more,” said I, “nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening, when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away.”

“Bless her little heart!” said he with a big hug; “she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let’s improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!”

“And you won’t go away?” I asked gloomily.

“Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really, dear, you are better!”

“Better in body perhaps”—I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

“My darling,” said he, “I beg of you, for my sake and for our child’s sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?”

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn’t,—I lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well under way in following, it turns a back somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions,—why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight—the moon shines in all night when there is a moon—I wouldn't know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candlelight, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind,—that dim sub-pattern,—but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed, he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit, I am convinced, for, you see, I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake,—oh, no!

The fact is, I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis, that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times *looking at the paper!* And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry—asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wallpaper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was *because* of the wallpaper—he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper—the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it—there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad—at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful. I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house—to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern *does* move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside-down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me—the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight, and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not *alive*!

She tried to get me out of the room—it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner—I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will *not* move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to *look* out of the windows even—there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did?



But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get *me* out in the road there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why, there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

"John dear!" said I in the gentlest voice, "the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!"

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said—very quietly indeed, "Open the door, my darling!"

"I can't," said I. "The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!"

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it, of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jennie! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

### 3.15 W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963)

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born in Massachusetts to an affluent family in Great Barrington, a town with few African-American families. Du Bois describes his youth as pleasant



Image 3.14: W. E. B. Du Bois, 1918  
Photographer: Cornelius Marion Battey  
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until, while in school, he realized that his skin color, not his academic ability, set him apart from his peers. While growing up in Massachusetts, Du Bois self-identified as “mulatto” before moving to Nashville to attend Fisk University, where he first began to encounter Jim Crow laws. After finishing his bachelor’s degree at Fisk University, Du Bois began graduate study at Harvard University. While completing his graduate work, Du Bois was awarded a prestigious one-year fellowship at the University of Berlin, where he was able to work with some of the most prominent social scientists of his day. In 1895, Du Bois completed his Ph.D., becoming the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. While at Harvard, Du Bois was an academic standout; indeed, Harvard University Press later published his dissertation as the first volume in their Harvard Historical Studies series.

After completing his Ph.D., Du Bois went on to hold multiple teaching appointments, first at Wilberforce College, then at the University of Pennsylvania, before moving to Atlanta University

where he produced his classic work, *Souls of Black Folk* (1905). In 1910, Du Bois left the academy to move to New York City, where he co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and served as the editor of the NAACP’s official publication, *The Crisis*. Furthermore, Du Bois was a central orchestrator of the Harlem Renaissance. His essay “The Talented Tenth,” which was a chapter from his book, *The Negro Problem* (1903), argued that the best African-American artists (the talented “tenth” he dubbed them) were capable of producing art as complex as any white artist. In his writings, Du Bois was openly critical of Washington, whom he saw as an accommodationist (Du Bois disagreed with many of Washington’s views and was especially angered by the result of *Plessy v. Ferguson*). By 1920, Du Bois grew frustrated with what he viewed as a lack of positive movement on racial progress. He spent the second half of his career focusing on legislative reform for national race relations, as well turning his attention to the socio-economic conditions of African Americans in the U.S. Late in life, a disillusioned Du Bois renounced his American citizenship, joined the Communist party, and moved to Ghana (1961), where he remained until his death in 1963.

Throughout his life, Du Bois remained one of the most influential academics of his time; however, he is best known for his book, *Souls of Black Folk*, which is a compilation of fourteen essays. In “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” Du Bois introduces the idea of “double consciousness,”

possibly his most famous literary/ academic contribution. Du Bois describes double consciousness as the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts” (12).

The W. E. B. Du Bois biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.15.1 From *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

“The Forethought”

Herein lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being black here at the dawning of the Twentieth Century. This meaning is not without interest to you, Gentle Reader; for the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line. I pray you, then, receive my little book in all charity, studying my words with me, forgiving mistake and foible for sake of the faith and passion that is in me, and seeking the grain of truth hidden there.

I have sought here to sketch, in vague, uncertain outline, the spiritual world in which ten thousand thousand Americans live and strive. First, in two chapters I have tried to show what Emancipation meant to them, and what was its aftermath. In a third chapter I have pointed out the slow rise of personal leadership, and criticized candidly the leader who bears the chief burden of his race to-day. Then, in two other chapters I have sketched in swift outline the two worlds within and without the Veil, and thus have come to the central problem of training men for life. Venturing now into deeper detail, I have in two chapters studied the struggles of the massed millions of the black peasantry, and in another have sought to make clear the present relations of the sons of master and man. Leaving, then, the white world, I have stepped within the Veil, raising it that you may view faintly its deeper recesses,—the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls. All this I have ended with a tale twice told but seldom written, and a chapter of song.

Some of these thoughts of mine have seen the light before in other guise. For kindly consenting to their republication here, in altered and extended form, I must thank the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly*, *The World’s Work*, the *Dial*, *The New World*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Before each chapter, as now printed, stands a bar of the Sorrow Songs,—some echo of haunting melody from the only American music which welled up from black souls in the dark past. And, finally, need I add that I who speak here am bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of them that live within the Veil?

### Chapter III: "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others"

From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmanned!

\*\*\*\*\*

Hereditary bondsmen! Know ye not

Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?

BYRON.



Easily the most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the ascendancy of Mr. Booker T. Washington. It began at the time when war memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen's sons,—then it was that his leading began. Mr. Washington came, with a simple definite programme, at the psychological moment when the nation was a little ashamed of having bestowed so much sentiment on Negroes, and was concentrating its energies on Dollars. His programme of industrial education, conciliation of the South, and submission and silence as to civil and political rights, was not wholly original; the Free Negroes from 1830 up to war-time had striven to build industrial schools, and the American Missionary Association had from the first taught various trades; and Price and others had sought a way of honorable alliance with the best of the Southerners. But Mr. Washington first indissolubly linked these things; he put enthusiasm, unlimited energy, and perfect faith into his programme, and changed it from a by-path into a veritable Way of Life. And the tale of the methods by which he did this is a fascinating study of human life.

It startled the nation to hear a Negro advocating such a programme after many decades of bitter complaint; it startled and won the applause of the South, it interested and won the admiration of the North; and after a confused murmur of protest, it silenced if it did not convert the Negroes themselves.

To gain the sympathy and cooperation of the various elements comprising the white South was Mr. Washington's first task; and this, at the time Tuskegee was founded, seemed, for a black man, well-nigh impossible. And yet ten years later it was done in the word spoken at Atlanta: "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the five fingers, and yet one as the hand in all things essential to

mutual progress.” This “Atlanta Compromise” is by all odds the most notable thing in Mr. Washington’s career. The South interpreted it in different ways: the radicals received it as a complete surrender of the demand for civil and political equality; the conservatives, as a generously conceived working basis for mutual understanding. So both approved it, and to-day its author is certainly the most distinguished Southerner since Jefferson Davis, and the one with the largest personal following.

Next to this achievement comes Mr. Washington’s work in gaining place and consideration in the North. Others less shrewd and tactful had formerly essayed to sit on these two stools and had fallen between them; but as Mr. Washington knew the heart of the South from birth and training, so by singular insight he intuitively grasped the spirit of the age which was dominating the North. And so thoroughly did he learn the speech and thought of triumphant commercialism, and the ideals of material prosperity, that the picture of a lone black boy poring over a French grammar amid the weeds and dirt of a neglected home soon seemed to him the acme of absurdities. One wonders what Socrates and St. Francis of Assisi would say to this.

And yet this very singleness of vision and thorough oneness with his age is a mark of the successful man. It is as though Nature must needs make men narrow in order to give them force. So Mr. Washington’s cult has gained unquestioning followers, his work has wonderfully prospered, his friends are legion, and his enemies are confounded. To-day he stands as the one recognized spokesman of his ten million fellows, and one of the most notable figures in a nation of seventy millions. One hesitates, therefore, to criticise a life which, beginning with so little, has done so much. And yet the time is come when one may speak in all sincerity and utter courtesy of the mistakes and shortcomings of Mr. Washington’s career, as well as of his triumphs, without being thought captious or envious, and without forgetting that it is easier to do ill than well in the world.

The criticism that has hitherto met Mr. Washington has not always been of this broad character. In the South especially has he had to walk warily to avoid the harshest judgments,—and naturally so, for he is dealing with the one subject of deepest sensitiveness to that section. Twice—once when at the Chicago celebration of the Spanish-American War he alluded to the color-prejudice that is “eating away the vitals of the South,” and once when he dined with President Roosevelt—has the resulting Southern criticism been violent enough to threaten seriously his popularity. In the North the feeling has several times forced itself into words, that Mr. Washington’s counsels of submission overlooked certain elements of true manhood, and that his educational programme was unnecessarily narrow. Usually, however, such criticism has not found open expression, although, too, the spiritual sons of the Abolitionists have not been prepared to acknowledge that the schools founded before Tuskegee, by men of broad ideals and self-sacrificing spirit, were wholly failures or worthy of ridicule. While, then, criticism has not failed to follow Mr. Washington, yet the prevailing public

opinion of the land has been but too willing to deliver the solution of a wearisome problem into his hands, and say, "If that is all you and your race ask, take it."

Among his own people, however, Mr. Washington has encountered the strongest and most lasting opposition, amounting at times to bitterness, and even today continuing strong and insistent even though largely silenced in outward expression by the public opinion of the nation. Some of this opposition is, of course, mere envy; the disappointment of displaced demagogues and the spite of narrow minds. But aside from this, there is among educated and thoughtful colored men in all parts of the land a feeling of deep regret, sorrow, and apprehension at the wide currency and ascendancy which some of Mr. Washington's theories have gained. These same men admire his sincerity of purpose, and are willing to forgive much to honest endeavor which is doing something worth the doing. They cooperate with Mr. Washington as far as they conscientiously can; and, indeed, it is no ordinary tribute to this man's tact and power that, steering as he must between so many diverse interests and opinions, he so largely retains the respect of all.

But the hushing of the criticism of honest opponents is a dangerous thing. It leads some of the best of the critics to unfortunate silence and paralysis of effort, and others to burst into speech so passionately and intemperately as to lose listeners. Honest and earnest criticism from those whose interests are most nearly touched,—criticism of writers by readers,—this is the soul of democracy and the safeguard of modern society. If the best of the American Negroes receive by outer pressure a leader whom they had not recognized before, manifestly there is here a certain palpable gain. Yet there is also irreparable loss,—a loss of that peculiarly valuable education which a group receives when by search and criticism it finds and commissions its own leaders. The way in which this is done is at once the most elementary and the nicest problem of social growth. History is but the record of such group-leadership; and yet how infinitely changeable is its type and character! And of all types and kinds, what can be more instructive than the leadership of a group within a group?—that curious double movement where real progress may be negative and actual advance be relative retrogression. All this is the social student's inspiration and despair.

Now in the past the American Negro has had instructive experience in the choosing of group leaders, founding thus a peculiar dynasty which in the light of present conditions is worth while studying. When sticks and stones and beasts form the sole environment of a people, their attitude is largely one of determined opposition to and conquest of natural forces. But when to earth and brute is added an environment of men and ideas, then the attitude of the imprisoned group may take three main forms,—a feeling of revolt and revenge; an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group; or, finally, a determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite environing opinion. The influence of all of these attitudes at various times can be traced in the history of the American Negro, and in the evolution of his successive leaders.

Before 1750, while the fire of African freedom still burned in the veins of the slaves, there was in all leadership or attempted leadership but the one motive of revolt and revenge,—typified in the terrible Maroons, the Danish blacks, and Cato of Stono, and veiling all the Americas in fear of insurrection. The liberalizing tendencies of the latter half of the eighteenth century brought, along with kindlier relations between black and white, thoughts of ultimate adjustment and assimilation. Such aspiration was especially voiced in the earnest songs of Phyllis, in the martyrdom of Attucks, the fighting of Salem and Poor, the intellectual accomplishments of Banneker and Derham, and the political demands of the Cuffes.

Stern financial and social stress after the war cooled much of the previous humanitarian ardor. The disappointment and impatience of the Negroes at the persistence of slavery and serfdom voiced itself in two movements. The slaves in the South, aroused undoubtedly by vague rumors of the Haytian revolt, made three fierce attempts at insurrection,—in 1800 under Gabriel in Virginia, in 1822 under Vesey in Carolina, and in 1831 again in Virginia under the terrible Nat Turner. In the Free States, on the other hand, a new and curious attempt at self-development was made. In Philadelphia and New York color-prescription led to a withdrawal of Negro communicants from white churches and the formation of a peculiar socio-religious institution among the Negroes known as the African Church,—an organization still living and controlling in its various branches over a million of men.

Walker's wild appeal against the trend of the times showed how the world was changing after the coming of the cotton-gin. By 1830 slavery seemed hopelessly fastened on the South, and the slaves thoroughly cowed into submission. The free Negroes of the North, inspired by the mulatto immigrants from the West Indies, began to change the basis of their demands; they recognized the slavery of slaves, but insisted that they themselves were freemen, and sought assimilation and amalgamation with the nation on the same terms with other men. Thus, Forten and Purvis of Philadelphia, Shad of Wilmington, Du Bois of New Haven, Barbadoes of Boston, and others, strove singly and together as men, they said, not as slaves; as "people of color," not as "Negroes." The trend of the times, however, refused them recognition save in individual and exceptional cases, considered them as one with all the despised blacks, and they soon found themselves striving to keep even the rights they formerly had of voting and working and moving as freemen. Schemes of migration and colonization arose among them; but these they refused to entertain, and they eventually turned to the Abolition movement as a final refuge.

Here, led by Remond, Nell, Wells-Brown, and Douglass, a new period of self-assertion and self-development dawned. To be sure, ultimate freedom and assimilation was the ideal before the leaders, but the assertion of the manhood rights of the Negro by himself was the main reliance, and John Brown's raid was



the extreme of its logic. After the war and emancipation, the great form of Frederick Douglass, the greatest of American Negro leaders, still led the host. Self-assertion, especially in political lines, was the main programme, and behind Douglass came Elliot, Bruce, and Langston, and the Reconstruction politicians, and, less conspicuous but of greater social significance, Alexander Crummell and Bishop Daniel Payne.

Then came the Revolution of 1876, the suppression of the Negro votes, the changing and shifting of ideals, and the seeking of new lights in the great night. Douglass, in his old age, still bravely stood for the ideals of his early manhood,—ultimate assimilation *through* self-assertion, and on no other terms. For a time Price arose as a new leader, destined, it seemed, not to give up, but to re-state the old ideals in a form less repugnant to the white South. But he passed away in his prime. Then came the new leader. Nearly all the former ones had become leaders by the silent suffrage of their fellows, had sought to lead their own people alone, and were usually, save Douglass, little known outside their race. But Booker T. Washington arose as essentially the leader not of one race but of two,—a compromiser between the South, the North, and the Negro. Naturally the Negroes resented, at first bitterly, signs of compromise which surrendered their civil and political rights, even though this was to be exchanged for larger chances of economic development. The rich and dominating North, however, was not only weary of the race problem, but was investing largely in Southern enterprises, and welcomed any method of peaceful cooperation. Thus, by national opinion, the Negroes began to recognize Mr. Washington's leadership; and the voice of criticism was hushed.

Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission; but adjustment at such a peculiar time as to make his programme unique. This is an age of unusual economic development, and Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life. Moreover, this is an age when the more advanced races are coming in closer contact with the less developed races, and the race-feeling is therefore intensified; and Mr. Washington's programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Again, in our own land, the reaction from the sentiment of war time has given impetus to race-prejudice against Negroes, and Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. In other periods of intensified prejudice all the Negro's tendency to self-assertion has been called forth; at this period a policy of submission is advocated. In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing.

In answer to this, it has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,—

First, political power,

Second, insistence on civil rights,

Third, higher education of Negro youth,—and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, and accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years, and has been triumphant for perhaps ten years. As a result of this tender of the palm-branch, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro.
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington's teachings; but his propaganda has, without a shadow of doubt, helped their speedier accomplishment. The question then comes: Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men? If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic *No*. And Mr. Washington thus faces the triple paradox of his career:

1. He is striving nobly to make Negro artisans business men and property-owners; but it is utterly impossible, under modern competitive methods, for workingmen and property-owners to defend their rights and exist without the right of suffrage.
2. He insists on thrift and self-respect, but at the same time counsels a silent submission to civic inferiority such as is bound to sap the manhood of any race in the long run.
3. He advocates common-school and industrial training, and depreciates institutions of higher learning; but neither the Negro common-schools, nor Tuskegee itself, could remain open a day were it not for teachers trained in Negro colleges, or trained by their graduates.

This triple paradox in Mr. Washington's position is the object of criticism by two classes of colored Americans. One class is spiritually descended from Toussaint

the Savior, through Gabriel, Vesey, and Turner, and they represent the attitude of revolt and revenge; they hate the white South blindly and distrust the white race generally, and so far as they agree on definite action, think that the Negro's only hope lies in emigration beyond the borders of the United States. And yet, by the irony of fate, nothing has more effectually made this programme seem hopeless than the recent course of the United States toward weaker and darker peoples in the West Indies, Hawaii, and the Philippines,—for where in the world may we go and be safe from lying and brute force?

The other class of Negroes who cannot agree with Mr. Washington has hitherto said little aloud. They deprecate the sight of scattered counsels, of internal disagreement; and especially they dislike making their just criticism of a useful and earnest man an excuse for a general discharge of venom from small-minded opponents. Nevertheless, the questions involved are so fundamental and serious that it is difficult to see how men like the Grimkes, Kelly Miller, J. W. E. Bowen, and other representatives of this group, can much longer be silent. Such men feel in conscience bound to ask of this nation three things:

1. The right to vote.
2. Civic equality.
3. The education of youth according to ability. They acknowledge Mr. Washington's invaluable service in counselling patience and courtesy in such demands; they do not ask that ignorant black men vote when ignorant whites are debarred, or that any reasonable restrictions in the suffrage should not be applied; they know that the low social level of the mass of the race is responsible for much discrimination against it, but they also know, and the nation knows, that relentless color-prejudice is more often a cause than a result of the Negro's degradation; they seek the abatement of this relic of barbarism, and not its systematic encouragement and pampering by all agencies of social power from the Associated Press to the Church of Christ. They advocate, with Mr. Washington, a broad system of Negro common schools supplemented by thorough industrial training; but they are surprised that a man of Mr. Washington's insight cannot see that no such educational system ever has rested or can rest on any other basis than that of the well-equipped college and university, and they insist that there is a demand for a few such institutions throughout the South to train the best of the Negro youth as teachers, professional men, and leaders.

This group of men honor Mr. Washington for his attitude of conciliation toward the white South; they accept the "Atlanta Compromise" in its broadest interpretation; they recognize, with him, many signs of promise, many men of high purpose and fair judgment, in this section; they know that no easy task has been laid upon a region already tottering under heavy burdens. But, nevertheless, they insist that the way to truth and right lies in straightforward honesty, not in indiscriminate flattery; in praising those of the South who do well and criticising

uncompromisingly those who do ill; in taking advantage of the opportunities at hand and urging their fellows to do the same, but at the same time in remembering that only a firm adherence to their higher ideals and aspirations will ever keep those ideals within the realm of possibility. They do not expect that the free right to vote, to enjoy civic rights, and to be educated, will come in a moment; they do not expect to see the bias and prejudices of years disappear at the blast of a trumpet; but they are absolutely certain that the way for a people to gain their reasonable rights is not by voluntarily throwing them away and insisting that they do not want them; that the way for a people to gain respect is not by continually belittling and ridiculing themselves; that, on the contrary, Negroes must insist continually, in season and out of season, that voting is necessary to modern manhood, that color discrimination is barbarism, and that black boys need education as well as white boys.

In failing thus to state plainly and unequivocally the legitimate demands of their people, even at the cost of opposing an honored leader, the thinking classes of American Negroes would shirk a heavy responsibility,—a responsibility to themselves, a responsibility to the struggling masses, a responsibility to the darker races of men whose future depends so largely on this American experiment, but especially a responsibility to this nation,—this common Fatherland. It is wrong to encourage a man or a people in evil-doing; it is wrong to aid and abet a national crime simply because it is unpopular not to do so. The growing spirit of kindness and reconciliation between the North and South after the frightful difference of a generation ago ought to be a source of deep congratulation to all, and especially to those whose mistreatment caused the war; but if that reconciliation is to be marked by the industrial slavery and civic death of those same black men, with permanent legislation into a position of inferiority, then those black men, if they are really men, are called upon by every consideration of patriotism and loyalty to oppose such a course by all civilized methods, even though such opposition involves disagreement with Mr. Booker T. Washington. We have no right to sit silently by while the inevitable seeds are sown for a harvest of disaster to our children, black and white.

First, it is the duty of black men to judge the South discriminatingly. The present generation of Southerners are not responsible for the past, and they should not be blindly hated or blamed for it. Furthermore, to no class is the indiscriminate endorsement of the recent course of the South toward Negroes more nauseating than to the best thought of the South. The South is not “solid”; it is a land in the ferment of social change, wherein forces of all kinds are fighting for supremacy; and to praise the ill the South is today perpetrating is just as wrong as to condemn the good. Discriminating and broad-minded criticism is what the South needs,—needs it for the sake of her own white sons and daughters, and for the insurance of robust, healthy mental and moral development.

Today even the attitude of the Southern whites toward the blacks is not, as so many assume, in all cases the same; the ignorant Southerner hates the Negro, the

workingmen fear his competition, the money-makers wish to use him as a laborer, some of the educated see a menace in his upward development, while others—usually the sons of the masters—wish to help him to rise. National opinion has enabled this last class to maintain the Negro common schools, and to protect the Negro partially in property, life, and limb. Through the pressure of the money-makers, the Negro is in danger of being reduced to semi-slavery, especially in the country districts; the workingmen, and those of the educated who fear the Negro, have united to disfranchise him, and some have urged his deportation; while the passions of the ignorant are easily aroused to lynch and abuse any black man. To praise this intricate whirl of thought and prejudice is nonsense; to inveigh indiscriminately against “the South” is unjust; but to use the same breath in praising Governor Aycock, exposing Senator Morgan, arguing with Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, and denouncing Senator Ben Tillman, is not only sane, but the imperative duty of thinking black men.

It would be unjust to Mr. Washington not to acknowledge that in several instances he has opposed movements in the South which were unjust to the Negro; he sent memorials to the Louisiana and Alabama constitutional conventions, he has spoken against lynching, and in other ways has openly or silently set his influence against sinister schemes and unfortunate happenings. Notwithstanding this, it is equally true to assert that on the whole the distinct impression left by Mr. Washington’s propaganda is, first, that the South is justified in its present attitude toward the Negro because of the Negro’s degradation; secondly, that the prime cause of the Negro’s failure to rise more quickly is his wrong education in the past; and, thirdly, that his future rise depends primarily on his own efforts. Each of these propositions is a dangerous half-truth. The supplementary truths must never be lost sight of: first, slavery and race-prejudice are potent if not sufficient causes of the Negro’s position; second, industrial and common-school training were necessarily slow in planting because they had to await the black teachers trained by higher institutions,—it being extremely doubtful if any essentially different development was possible, and certainly a Tuskegee was unthinkable before 1880; and, third, while it is a great truth to say that the Negro must strive and strive mightily to help himself, it is equally true that unless his striving be not simply seconded, but rather aroused and encouraged, by the initiative of the richer and wiser environing group, he cannot hope for great success.

In his failure to realize and impress this last point, Mr. Washington is especially to be criticised. His doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro’s shoulders and stand aside as critical and rather pessimistic spectators; when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we bend not our energies to righting these great wrongs.

The South ought to be led, by candid and honest criticism, to assert her better self and do her full duty to the race she has cruelly wronged and is still wronging. The North—her co-partner in guilt—cannot salve her conscience by plastering it with

gold. We cannot settle this problem by diplomacy and suaveness, by “policy” alone. If worse come to worst, can the moral fibre of this country survive the slow throttling and murder of nine millions of men?

The black men of America have a duty to perform, a duty stern and delicate,—a forward movement to oppose a part of the work of their greatest leader. So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him, rejoicing in his honors and glorying in the strength of this Joshua called of God and of man to lead the headless host. But so far as Mr. Washington apologizes for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds,—so far as he, the South, or the Nation, does this,—we must unceasingly and firmly oppose them. By every civilized and peaceful method we must strive for the rights which the world accords to men, clinging unwaveringly to those great words which the sons of the Fathers would fain forget: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

### 3.16 Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935)

Winner of the first Pulitzer Prize ever awarded to poetry, Edwin Arlington Robinson was the third son born to a New England merchant family. His father encouraged him to pursue a profitable profession in the sciences or business. The father went so far as to criticize his literary work and talents. This, however, had the opposite effect on Robinson, who studied Ancient Greek and Latin poems. Upon graduating from high school, Robinson was sent by his father to Harvard to further his son's education. While at the Ivy League university, Robinson submitted his poems to local magazines. *The Harvard Advocate* published his "Ballade of a Ship." His father died after his first year at Harvard.



Image 3.15: Edwin Arlington Robinson, 1897  
Photographer: unknown  
Source: Wikimedia Commons  
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In 1896, Robinson self-published *The Torrent and The Night Before*, which was comprised of his entire collection of poems at that time and named after his first and last poem. To help promote his talent, he sent copies of his book to fellow writers, who were mainly supportive of his work. *The Torrent and The Night Before* was intended to be a surprise for his mother, but she died just days before the copies were produced.

His second collection, *The Children of the Night*, gained a wider readership, including President Theodore Roosevelt's son. "Richard Cory," reproduced below, was published in *The Children of the Night*. Roosevelt offered Robinson a position at the New York Customs Office to promote American letters. To thank Roosevelt, Robinson dedicated *The Town down the River* to him.

Robinson published *Captain Craig* in 1902, *The Man Against the Sky* in 1916, and *King Jasper* in 1935. *Tristram*, a long narrative poem, was a best-selling book-length poem, achieving popular success. The best known of Robinson's poems are those now called the Tilbury Town cycle.

Edwin Arlington Robinson died of cancer in 1935. Before slipping into a final coma, he had been correcting galley proofs of *King Jasper*.

The Edwin Arlington Robinson biography was written by Paul Rodriguez, a University of Delaware student.

### 3.16.1 “Richard Cory” (1897)

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him:  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,  
And he was always human when he talked;  
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
“Good-morning,” and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—  
And admirably schooled in every grace:  
In fine, we thought that he was everything  
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;  
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
Went home and put a bullet through his head.



## 3.17 James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)

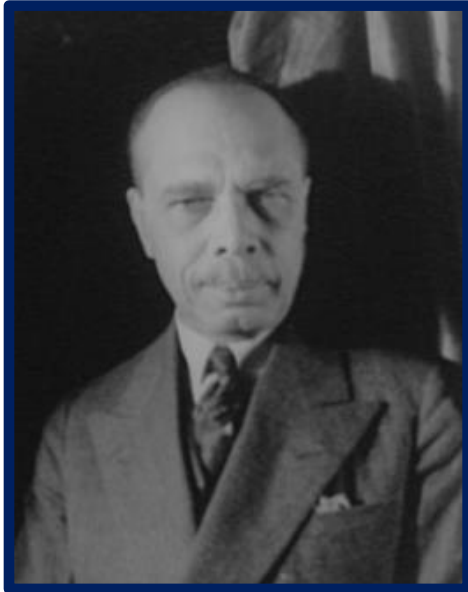


Image 3.16: James Weldon Johnson, 1932  
Photographer: Carl Van Vechten  
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James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, on June 17, 1871. He was a novelist, poet, activist, and a songwriter. Johnson was born into a middle class family; his father was a waiter at a hotel and his mother was a teacher—the first ever black teacher in Florida. As a child, Johnson was interested in reading, art, and writing. He graduated from Atlanta University in 1894 with his Bachelor's degree. After graduating, Johnson became the principal at Stanton School, the school where his mother taught and he attended years before.

While being a principal, Johnson pursued law and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1898—the first African-American admitted. Johnson was appointed by the Roosevelt Administration as a consul in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela in 1906 and as a consul in Corinto, Nicaragua in 1909. During his time as consul in Nicaragua, Johnson anonymously published his first novel, *Autobiography of Ex-Colored Man*.

In addition to working as a principal and lawyer, Johnson began to write along with his brother. Over the course of about ten years, Johnson and his brother composed over 200 songs. Their most famous song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” reproduced below, was written for Abraham Lincoln’s birthday and proclaimed the national anthem of the NAACP. In 1916 Johnson worked as a field secretary at the NAACP for four years and then served as executive secretary. As the executive secretary, he fought racism and brought attention to segregation, racial violence, and lynching. Johnson was a firm believer that it was crucial for black people to produce high quality art and literature in order to show that the black community is just as intelligent as the white. He believed that creating art was one of the only ways segregation would be abolished and equality and freedom earned. Johnson became a powerful voice for the black community not only through his time with the NAACP, but with his poems and novels. In 1934, he became the first African-American professor at New York University. His life was cut short on June 26, 1938 when his car was hit by a train in Wiscasset, Maine.

The James Weldon Johnson biography was written by Karyme Lopez, a University of Delaware student.

### 3.17.1 “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (1900)

*A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida, arranged to celebrate Lincoln’s birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercises. I wrote the words and he wrote the music. Our New*

*York publisher, Edward B. Marks, made mimeographed copies for us, and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of five hundred colored school children.*

*Shortly afterwards my brother and I moved away from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within twenty years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country. Today the song, popularly known as the Negro National Hymn, is quite generally used.*

*The lines of this song repay me in an elation, almost of exquisite anguish, whenever I hear them sung by Negro children.*

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.

True to our God,  
True to our native land.

### 3.18 Stephen Crane (1871-1900)

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1871. He was the fourteenth and last child born to a Methodist minister and his devout wife. After the death of his father, Crane attended military school and later college but eventually left to become a writer. He secured work as a freelance journalist, eventually accepting an assignment as a war correspondent in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. His first novel, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, published in 1893, offered a raw exploration of a young woman's struggle to thrive in the slums of New York amid poverty and prostitution, and it represented a distinct departure from mainstream Realist works to a new literary style known as Naturalism. Crane next turned his attention to the psychological experience of war in *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), his second novel. Praised by audiences and critics alike, the novel about a young Union soldier in the Civil War, secured Crane's reputation as an important new writer on the scene and became his signature work. Through his short life, Crane was a prolific writer, producing a significant number of poems, short stories, and journalistic pieces, as well as several other novels.

While he never married, Crane established a relationship with Cora Taylor, a free-spirited bohemian from Jacksonville, Florida. The two traveled and lived abroad, eventually settling in England where Crane's health deteriorated from his long struggle with tuberculosis. Crane died at the young age of twenty-eight.



Image 3.17: Stephen Crane, 1896  
Photographer: Lundelius Studio, NY  
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Crane was an innovative author within the generation of writers that followed Howells and other Realists. Always the maverick, Crane did not adhere to any one style. However, most critics today see many of his major works as representative of American Literary Naturalism. Taking issue with Howellsian Realism as too restrictive and genteel and under the influence of Darwin's ideas, Naturalist writers such as Crane, Frank Norris, and Jack London pushed for Realism to go further in scope and subject matter, to tackle grittier subjects such as poverty, crime, violence, and other sociological ills of the increasingly urban landscapes of the late nineteenth century. Naturalist writers also explored humans at odds with the natural world—vast oceans, deserts, and frozen tundra—characterized as indifferent or even hostile to human striving and suffering. In Crane's "The Open Boat," based on a real-life ordeal that Crane endured off the coast of Florida, the shipwreck survivors are depicted not as larger than life figures able to control their destinies through free will but as small insignificant dots on the vast and indifferent sea, unable to understand their plight or control the outcome of their desperate circumstances. While they fight for their lives, the correspondent comes to the stark conclusion that after a brutal and exhausting fight to reach shore and safety, the waves may cause their dinghy to crash on the rocks, raising yet another hurdle to survival for the weakened and injured men, who must now swim to shore

among the dangerous rocks in order to save their lives. As mentioned before, ideas such as justice, fairness, and mercy are shown as illusions in the Darwinian environment. The men are at the mercy of natural forces that they can neither understand nor control, and while they may feel some solidarity with one another in the boat, once it swamps each man is alone in his struggle for survival.

The Stephen Crane biography was reproduced from *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. Berke, Amy; Bleil, Robert; Cofer, Jordan; and Davis, Doug, *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present* (2015). EnglishOpen Textbooks. 5. [Link to ebook](#)

### 3.18.1 “Black Riders” (1895)

#### I

Black riders came from the sea.  
There was clang and clang of spear and shield,  
And clash and clash of hoof and heel,  
Wild shouts and the wave of hair  
In the rush upon the wind:  
Thus the ride of sin.

#### II

Three little birds in a row  
Sat musing.  
A man passed near that place.  
Then did the little birds nudge each other.  
They said, “He thinks he can sing.”  
They threw back their heads to laugh.  
With quaint countenances  
They regarded him.  
They were very curious,  
Those three little birds in a row.

#### III

In the desert  
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,  
who, squatting upon the ground,  
Held his heart in his hands,  
And ate of it.  
I said, “Is it good, friend?”  
“It is bitter bitter,” he answered;  
“But I like it  
Because it is bitter,  
And because it is my heart.”

#### IV

Yes, I have a thousand tongues,  
And nine and ninety-nine lie.  
Though I strive to use the one,  
It will make no melody at my will,  
But is dead in my mouth.

#### V

Once there came a man  
Who said,  
“Range me all men of the world in rows.”  
And instantly  
There was terrific clamour among the people  
Against being ranged in rows.  
There was a loud quarrel, world-wide.  
It endured for ages;  
And blood was shed  
By those who would not stand in rows,  
And by those who pined to stand in rows.  
Eventually, the man went to death, weeping.  
And those who staid in bloody scuffle  
Knew not the great simplicity.

#### VI

God fashioned the ship of the world carefully.  
With the infinite skill of an All-Master  
Made He the hull and the sails,  
Held He the rudder  
Ready for adjustment.  
Erect stood He, scanning His work proudly.  
Then-at fateful time-a wrong called,  
And God turned, heeding.  
Lo, the ship, at this opportunity,  
slipped slyly,  
Making cunning noiseless travel down the ways.  
So that, forever rudderless, it went upon the seas  
Going ridiculous voyages,  
Making quaint progress,  
Turning as with serious purpose  
Before stupid winds.  
And there were many in the sky  
Who laughed at this thing.

#### VII

Mystic shadow, bending near me, Who art thou?  
Whence come ye?

And—tell me—is it fair  
Or is the truth bitter as eaten fire?  
Tell me!  
Fear not that I should quaver.  
For I dare—I dare.  
Then, tell me!

### VIII

I looked here;  
I looked there;  
Nowhere could I see my love.  
And—this time—  
She was in my heart.  
Truly, then, I have no complaint,  
For though she be fair and fairer,  
She is none so fair as she In my heart.

### IX

I stood upon a high place,  
And saw, below, many devils  
Running, leaping,  
and carousing in sin.  
One looked up, grinning,  
And said, “Comrade! Brother!”

### X

Should the wide world roll away,  
Leaving black terror,  
Limitless night,  
Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand  
Would be to me essential,  
If thou and thy white arms were there,  
And the fall to doom a long way.

### XI

In a lonely place,  
I encountered a sage  
Who sat, all still,  
Regarding a newspaper.  
He accosted me:  
“Sir, what is this?”  
Then I saw that I was greater,  
Aye, greater than this sage.  
I answered him at once,  
“Old, old man, it is the wisdom of the age.”  
The sage looked upon me with admiration.

## **XII**

“And the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the heads  
of the children,  
even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate  
me.”

Well, then I hate thee, unrighteous picture;  
Wicked image, I hate thee;  
So, strike with thy vengeance  
The heads of those little men  
Who come blindly.  
It will be a brave thing.

## **XIII**

If there is a witness to my little life,  
To my tiny throes and struggles,  
He sees a fool;  
And it is not fine for gods to menace fools.

## **XIV**

There was crimson clash of war.  
Lands turned black and bare;  
Women wept;  
Babes ran, wondering.  
There came one who understood not these things.  
He said, “Why is this?”  
Whereupon a million strove to answer him.  
There was such intricate clamour of tongues,  
That still the reason was not.

## **XV**

“Tell brave deeds of war.”  
Then they recounted tales, –  
“There were stern stands  
And bitter runs for glory.”  
Ah, I think there were braver deeds.

## **XVI**

Charity thou art a lie,  
A toy of women,  
A pleasure of certain men.  
In the presence of justice,  
Lo, the walls of the temple  
Are visible  
Through thy form of sudden shadows.



## **XVII**

There were many who went in huddled procession,  
They knew not whither;  
But, at any rate, success or calamity  
Would attend all in equality.  
There was one who sought a new road.  
He went into direful thickets,  
And ultimately he died thus, alone;  
But they said he had courage.

## **XVIII**

In heaven,  
Some little blades of grass  
Stood before God.  
“What did you do?”  
Then all save one of the little blades  
Began eagerly to relate The merits of their lives.  
This one stayed a small way behind, Ashamed.  
Presently, God said,  
“And what did you do?”  
The little blade answered, “Oh my Lord,  
Memory is bitter to me,  
For, if I did good deeds,  
I know not of them.”  
Then God, in all His splendor,  
Arose from His throne.  
“Oh, best little blade of grass!” He said.

## **XIX**

A god in wrath  
Was beating a man;  
He cuffed him loudly  
With thunderous blows  
That rang and rolled over the earth.  
All people came running.  
The man screamed and struggled,  
And bit madly at the feet of the god.  
The people cried,  
“Ah, what a wicked man!”  
And “Ah, what a redoubtable god!”

## **XX**

A learned man came to me once.  
He said, “I know the way, – come.”  
And I was overjoyed at this.  
Together we hastened.

Soon, too soon, were we  
Where my eyes were useless,  
And I knew not the ways of my feet.  
I clung to the hand of my friend;  
But at last he cried, "I am lost."

### **XXI**

There was, before me,  
Mile upon mile  
Of snow, ice, burning sand.  
And yet I could look beyond all this,  
To a place of infinite beauty;  
And I could see the loveliness of her  
Who walked in the shade of the trees.  
When I gazed,  
All was lost  
But this place of beauty and her.  
When I gazed,  
And in my gazing, desired,  
Then came again  
Mile upon mile,  
Of snow, ice, burning sand.

### **XXII**

Once I saw mountains angry,  
And ranged in battle-front.  
Against them stood a little man;  
Aye, he was no bigger than my finger.  
I laughed, and spoke to one near me,  
"Will he prevail?"  
"Surely," replied this other;  
"His grandfathers beat them many times."  
Then did I see much virtue in grandfathers—  
At least, for the little man  
Who stood against the mountains.

### **XXIII**

Places among the stars,  
Soft gardens near the sun,  
Keep your distant beauty;  
Shed no beams upon my weak heart.  
Since she is here  
In a place of blackness,  
Not your golden days  
Nor your silver nights  
Can call me to you.

Since she is here  
In a place of blackness,  
Here I stay and wait

#### **XXIV**

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;  
Round and round they sped.  
I was disturbed at this;  
I accosted the man.  
“It is futile,” I said,  
“You can never—”  
“You lie,” he cried,  
And ran on.

#### **XXV**

Behold, the grave of a wicked man,  
And near it, a stern spirit.  
There came a drooping maid with violets,  
But the spirit grasped her arm.  
“No flowers for him,” he said.  
The maid wept:  
“Ah, I loved him.”  
But the spirit, grim and frowning:  
“No flowers for him.”  
Now, this is it—  
If the spirit was just,  
Why did the maid weep?

#### **XXVI**

There was set before me a mighty hill,  
And long days I climbed  
Through regions of snow.  
When I had before me the summit-view,  
It seemed that my labour  
Had been to see gardens  
Lying at impossible distances.

#### **XXVII**

A youth in apparel that glittered  
Went to walk in a grim forest.  
There he met an assassin  
Attired all in garb of old days;  
He, scowling through the thickets,  
And dagger poised quivering,  
Rushed upon the youth.  
“Sir,” said this latter,

"I am enchanted, believe me,  
To die, thus,  
In this medieval fashion,  
According to the best legends;  
Ah, what joy!"  
Then took he the wound, smiling,  
And died, content.

### **XXVIII**

"Truth," said a traveller,  
"Is a rock, a mighty fortress;  
Often have I been to it,  
Even to its highest tower,  
From whence the world looks black."  
"Truth," said a traveller,  
"Is a breath, a wind,  
A shadow, a phantom;  
Long have I pursued it,  
But never have I touched  
The hem of its garment."  
And I believed the second traveller;  
For truth was to me  
A breath, a wind,  
A shadow, a phantom,  
And never had I touched  
The hem of its garment.

### **XXIX**

Behold, from the land of the farther suns I returned.  
And I was in a reptile-swarmling place,  
Peopled, otherwise, with grimaces,  
Shrouded above in black impenetrableness.  
I shrank, loathing,  
Sick with it.  
And I said to him,  
"What is this?"  
He made answer slowly,  
"Spirit, this is a world;  
This was your home."

### **XXX**

Supposing that I should have the courage  
To let a red sword of virtue  
Plunge into my heart,  
Letting to the weeds of the ground  
My sinful blood,

What can you offer me?  
A gardened castle?  
A flowery kingdom?  
What? A hope?  
Then hence with your red sword of virtue.

### **XXXI**

Many workmen  
Built a huge ball of masonry  
Upon a mountain-top.  
Then they went to the valley below,  
And turned to behold their work.  
“It is grand,” they said;  
They loved the thing.  
Of a sudden, it moved:  
It came upon them swiftly;  
It crushed them all to blood.  
But some had opportunity to squeal.

### **XXXII**

Two or three angels  
Came near to the earth.  
They saw a fat church.  
Little black streams of people  
Came and went in continually.  
And the angels were puzzled  
To know why the people went thus,  
And why they stayed so long within.

### **XXXIII**

There was one I met upon the road  
Who looked at me with kind eyes.  
He said, “Show me of your wares.”  
And this I did,  
Holding forth one.  
He said, “It is a sin.”  
Then held I forth another;  
He said, “It is a sin.”  
Then held I forth another;  
He said, “It is a sin.”  
And so to the end;  
Always he said, “It is a sin.”  
And, finally, I cried out,  
“But I have none other.”  
Then did he look at me

With kinder eyes.  
“Poor soul!” he said.

#### **XXXIV**

I stood upon a highway,  
And, behold, there came  
Many strange peddlers.  
To me each one made gestures,  
Holding forth little images, saying,  
“This is my pattern of God.  
Now this is the God I prefer.”  
But I said, “Hence!  
Leave me with mine own,  
And take you yours away;  
I can’t buy of your patterns of God,  
The little gods you may rightly prefer.”

#### **XXXV**

A man saw a ball of gold in the sky;  
He climbed for it,  
And eventually he achieved it—  
It was clay.  
Now this is the strange part:  
When the man went to the earth  
And looked again,  
Lo, there was the ball of gold.  
Now this is the strange part:  
It was a ball of gold.  
Aye, by the heavens, it was a ball of gold.

#### **XXXVI**

I met a seer.  
He held in his hands  
The book of wisdom.  
“Sir,” I addressed him,  
“Let me read.”  
“Child—” he began.  
“Sir,” I said,  
“Think not that I am a child,  
For already I know much  
Of that which you hold.  
Aye, much.”  
He smiled.  
Then he opened the book  
And held it before me.—  
Strange that I should have grown so suddenly blind.

### **XXXVII**

On the horizon the peaks assembled;  
And as I looked,  
The march of the mountains began.  
As they marched, they sang,  
“Aye! We come! We come!”

### **XXXVIII**

The ocean said to me once,  
“Look!  
Yonder on the shore  
Is a woman, weeping.  
I have watched her.  
Go you and tell her this—  
Her lover I have laid  
In cool green hall.  
There is wealth of golden sand  
And pillars, coral-red;  
Two white fish stand guard at his bier.  
“Tell her this  
And more—  
That the king of the seas  
Weeps too, old, helpless man.  
The bustling fates  
Heap his hands with corpses  
Until he stands like a child  
With a surplus of toys.”

### **XXXIX**

The livid lightnings flashed in the clouds;  
The leaden thunders crashed.  
A worshipper raised his arm.  
“Hearken! Hearken! The voice of God!”  
“Not so,” said a man.  
“The voice of God whispers in the heart  
So softly  
That the soul pauses,  
Making no noise,  
And strives for these melodies,  
Distant, sighing, like faintest breath,  
And all the being is still to hear.”

### **XL**

And you love me  
I love you.

You are, then, cold coward.  
Aye; but, beloved,  
When I strive to come to you,  
Man's opinions, a thousand thickets,  
My interwoven existence,  
My life,  
Caught in the stubble of the world  
Like a tender veil—  
This stays me.  
No strange move can I make  
Without noise of tearing  
I dare not.  
If love loves,  
There is no world  
Nor word.  
All is lost  
Save thought of love  
And place to dream.  
You love me?  
I love you.  
You are, then, cold coward.  
Aye; but, beloved—

### **XLI**

Love walked alone.  
The rocks cut her tender feet,  
And the brambles tore her fair limbs.  
There came a companion to her,  
But, alas, he was no help,  
For his name was heart's pain.

### **XLII**

I walked in a desert.  
And I cried,  
“Ah, God, take me from this place!”  
A voice said, “It is no desert.”  
I cried, “Well, But—  
The sand, the heat, the vacant horizon.”  
A voice said, “It is no desert.”

### **XLIII**

There came whisperings in the winds:  
“Good-bye! Good-bye!”  
Little voices called in the darkness:  
“Good-bye! Good-bye!”  
Then I stretched forth my arms.



“No-no-”

There came whisperings in the wind “Good-bye! Good-bye!”

Little voices called in the darkness:

“Good-bye! Good-bye!”

#### **XLIV**

I was in the darkness;

I could not see my words

Nor the wishes of my heart.

Then suddenly there was a great light—

“Let me into the darkness again.”

#### **XLV**

Tradition, thou art for suckling children,

Thou art the enlivening milk for babes;

But no meat for men is in thee.

Then—

But, alas, we all are babes.

#### **XLVI**

Many red devils ran from my heart

And out upon the page,

They were so tiny

The pen could mash them.

And many struggled in the ink.

It was strange

To write in this red muck

Of things from my heart.

#### **XLVII**

“Think as I think,” said a man,

“Or you are abominably wicked;

You are a toad.”

And after I had thought of it,

I said, “I will, then, be a toad.”

#### **XLVIII**

Once there was a man—

Oh, so wise!

In all drink

He detected the bitter,

And in all touch

He found the sting.

At last he cried thus:

“There is nothing—

No life,

No joy,  
No pain—  
There is nothing save opinion,  
And opinion be damned.”

### **XLIX**

I stood musing in a black world,  
Not knowing where to direct my feet.  
And I saw the quick stream of men  
Pouring ceaselessly,  
Filled with eager faces,  
A torrent of desire.  
I called to them,  
“Where do you go? What do you see?”  
A thousand voices called to me.  
A thousand fingers pointed.  
“Look! look! There!”  
I know not of it.  
But, lo! In the far sky shone a radiance  
Ineffable, divine—  
A vision painted upon a pall;  
And sometimes it was,  
And sometimes it was not.  
I hesitated.  
Then from the stream  
Came roaring voices,  
Impatient:  
“Look! look! There!”  
So again I saw,  
And leaped, unhesitant,  
And struggled and fumed  
With outspread clutching fingers.  
The hard hills tore my flesh;  
The ways bit my feet.  
At last I looked again.  
No radiance in the far sky,  
Ineffable, divine;  
No vision painted upon a pall;  
And always my eyes ached for the light.  
Then I cried in despair,  
“I see nothing! Oh, where do I go?”  
The torrent turned again its faces:  
“Look! look! There!”  
And at the blindness of my spirit  
They screamed, “Fool! fool! fool!”

**L**

You say you are holy,  
And that  
Because I have not seen you sin.  
Aye, but there are those  
Who see you sin, my friend.

**LI**

A man went before a strange God—  
The God of many men, sadly wise.  
And the deity thundered loudly,  
Fat with rage, and puffing.  
“Kneel, mortal, and cringe  
And grovel and do homage  
To My Particularly Sublime Majesty.”  
The man fled.  
Then the man went to another God—  
The God of his inner thoughts.  
And this one looked at him  
With soft eyes  
Lit with infinite comprehension,  
And said, “My poor child!”

**LII**

Why do you strive for greatness, fool?  
Go pluck a bough and wear it.  
It is as sufficing.  
My Lord, there are certain barbarians  
Who tilt their noses  
As if the stars were flowers,  
And Thy servant is lost among their shoe-buckles.  
Fain would I have mine eyes even with their eyes.  
Fool, go pluck a bough and wear it.

**LIII**

i  
Blustering God,  
Stamping across the sky  
With loud swagger,  
I fear You not.  
No, though from Your highest heaven  
You plunge Your spear at my heart,  
I fear You not.  
No, not if the blow  
Is as the lightning blasting a tree,  
I fear You not, puffing braggart.

ii

If Thou canst see into my heart  
That I fear Thee not,  
Thou wilt see why I fear Thee not,  
And why it is right.  
So threaten not, Thou, with Thy bloody spears,  
Else Thy sublime ears shall hear curses.

iii

Withal, there is One whom I fear:  
I fear to see grief upon that face.  
Perchance, friend, He is not your God;  
If so, spit upon Him.  
By it you will do no profanity.  
But I—  
Ah, sooner would I die  
Than see tears in those eyes of my soul.

#### LIV

“It was wrong to do this,” said the angel.  
“You should live like a flower,  
Holding malice like a puppy,  
Waging war like a lambkin.”  
“Not so,” quoth the man  
Who had no fear of spirits;  
“It is only wrong for angels  
Who can live like the flowers,  
Holding malice like the puppies,  
Waging war like the lambkins.”

#### LV

A man toiled on a burning road,  
Never resting.  
Once he saw a fat, stupid ass  
Grinning at him from a green place.  
The man cried out in rage,  
“Ah! Do not deride me, fool!  
I know you—  
All day stuffing your belly,  
Burying your heart  
In grass and tender sprouts:  
It will not suffice you.”  
But the ass only grinned at him from the green place.

#### LVI

A man feared that he might find an assassin;

Another that he might find a victim.  
One was more wise than the other.

### **LVII**

With eye and with gesture  
You say you are holy.  
I say you lie;  
For I did see you  
Draw away your coats  
From the sin upon the hands  
Of a little child.  
Liar!

### **LVIII**

The sage lectured brilliantly.  
Before him, two images:  
“Now this one is a devil,  
And this one is me.”  
He turned away.  
Then a cunning pupil  
Changed the positions.  
Turned the sage again:  
“Now this one is a devil,  
And this one is me.”  
The pupils sat, all grinning,  
And rejoiced in the game.  
But the sage was a sage.

### **LIX**

Walking in the sky,  
A man in strange black garb  
Encountered a radiant form.  
Then his steps were eager;  
Bowed he devoutly.  
“My Lord,” said he.  
But the spirit knew him not.

### **LX**

Upon the road of my life,  
Passed me many fair creatures,  
Clothed all in white, and radiant.  
To one, finally, I made speech:  
“Who art thou?”  
But she, like the others,  
Kept cowed her face,  
And answered in haste, anxiously,

“I am good deed, forsooth;  
You have often seen me.”  
“Not uncowed,” I made reply.  
And with rash and strong hand,  
Though she resisted,  
I drew away the veil  
And gazed at the features of vanity.  
She, shamefaced, went on;  
And after I had mused a time,  
I said of myself,  
“Fool!”

## **LXI**

i

There was a man and a woman  
Who sinned.  
Then did the man heap the punishment  
All upon the head of her,  
And went away gaily.

ii

There was a man and a woman  
Who sinned.  
And the man stood with her.  
As upon her head, so upon his,  
Fell blow and blow,  
And all people screaming, “Fool!”  
He was a brave heart.

iii

He was a brave heart.  
Would you speak with him, friend?  
Well, he is dead,  
And there went your opportunity.  
Let it be your grief  
That he is dead  
And your opportunity gone;  
For, in that, you were a coward.

## **LXII**

There was a man who lived a life of fire.  
Even upon the fabric of time,  
Where purple becomes orange  
And orange purple,  
This life glowed,  
A dire red stain, indelible;  
Yet when he was dead,  
He saw that he had not lived.

**LXIII**

There was a great cathedral.  
To solemn songs,  
A white procession  
Moved toward the altar.  
The chief man there  
Was erect, and bore himself proudly.  
Yet some could see him cringe,  
As in a place of danger,  
Throwing frightened glances into the air,  
A-start at threatening faces of the past.

**LXIV**

Friend, your white beard sweeps the ground.  
Why do you stand, expectant?  
Do you hope to see it  
In one of your withered days?  
With your old eyes  
Do you hope to see  
The triumphal march of justice?  
Do not wait, friend!  
Take your white beard  
And your old eyes  
To more tender lands.

**LXV**

Once, I knew a fine song,  
It is true, believe me—  
It was all of birds,  
And I held them in a basket;  
When I opened the wicket,  
Heavens! They all flew away.  
I cried, "Come back, little thoughts!"  
But they only laughed.  
They flew on  
Until they were as sand  
Thrown between me and the sky.

**LXVI**

If I should cast off this tattered coat,  
And go free into the mighty sky;  
If I should find nothing there  
But a vast blue,  
Echoless, ignorant—  
What then?

## **LXVII**

God lay dead in heaven;  
Angels sang the hymn of the end;  
Purple winds went moaning,  
Their wings drip-dripping  
With blood  
That fell upon the earth.  
It, groaning thing,  
Turned black and sank.  
Then from the far caverns  
Of dead sins  
Came monsters, livid with desire.  
They fought,  
Wrangled over the world,  
A morsel.  
But of all sadness this was sad—  
A woman's arms tried to shield  
The head of a sleeping man  
From the jaws of the final beast.

## **LXVIII**

A spirit sped  
Through spaces of night;  
And as he sped, he called,  
“God! God!”  
He went through valleys  
Of black death-slime,  
Ever calling,  
“God! God!”  
Their echoes  
From crevice and cavern  
Mocked him:  
“God! God! God!”  
Fleetly into the plains of space  
He went, ever calling,  
“God! God!”  
Eventually, then, he screamed,  
Mad in denial,  
“Ah, there is no God!”  
A swift hand,  
A sword from the sky,  
Smote him,  
And he was dead.  
THE END



### 3.18.2 From *War Is Kind* (1896)

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.  
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky  
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,  
Little souls who thirst for fight,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
The unexplained glory flies above them,  
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—  
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.  
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,  
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

Swift, blazing flag of the regiment,  
Eagle with crest of red and gold,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,  
Make plain to them the excellence of killing  
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button  
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

### 3.18.3 “The Open Boat” (1897)

A tale intended to be after the fact. Being the experience of four men from the  
sunk steamer “Commodore”

#### I

None of them knew the colour of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were  
fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of  
slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the  
colours of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and  
at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like  
rocks.

Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: "Gawd! That was a narrow clip." As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.

The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he commanded for a day or a decade, and this captain had on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

"Keep 'er a little more south, Billie," said he.

"A little more south, ' sir," said the oiler in the stern.

A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and, by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.

A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of

swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slaty wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.

In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtlessly have been weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the colour of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the colour of the waves that rolled toward them.

In disjointed sentences the cook and the correspondent argued as to the difference between a life-saving station and a house of refuge. The cook had said: "There's a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Light, and as soon as they see us, they'll come off in their boat and pick us up."

"As soon as who see us?" said the correspondent.

"The crew," said the cook.

"Houses of refuge don't have crews," said the correspondent. "As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don't carry crews."

"Oh, yes, they do," said the cook.

"No, they don't," said the correspondent.

"Well, we're not there yet, anyhow," said the oiler, in the stern.

"Well," said the cook, "perhaps it's not a house of refuge that I'm thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light. Perhaps it's a life-saving station."

"We're not there yet," said the oiler, in the stern.

## II

As the boat bounced from the top of each wave, the wind tore through the hair of the hatless men, and as the craft plopped her stern down again the spray slashed

past them. The crest of each of these waves was a hill, from the top of which the men surveyed, for a moment, a broad tumultuous expanse, shining and wind-riven. It was probably splendid. It was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emerald and white and amber.

“Bully good thing it’s an on-shore wind,” said the cook. “If not, where would we be? Wouldn’t have a show.”

“That’s right,” said the correspondent.

The busy oiler nodded his assent.

Then the captain, in the bow, chuckled in a way that expressed humour, contempt, tragedy, all in one. “Do you think we’ve got much of a show now, boys?” said he.

Whereupon the three were silent, save for a trifle of hemming and hawing. To express any particular optimism at this time they felt to be childish and stupid, but they all doubtless possessed this sense of the situation in their mind. A young man thinks doggedly at such times. On the other hand, the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.

“Oh, well,” said the captain, soothing his children, “we’ll get ashore all right.”

But there was that in his tone which made them think, so the oiler quoth: “Yes! If this wind holds!”

The cook was bailing: “Yes! If we don’t catch hell in the surf.”

Canton flannel gulls flew near and far. Sometimes they sat down on the sea, near patches of brown sea-weed that rolled over the waves with a movement like carpets on a line in a gale. The birds sat comfortably in groups, and they were envied by some in the dingey, for the wrath of the sea was no more to them than it was to a covey of prairie chickens a thousand miles inland. Often they came very close and stared at the men with black bead-like eyes. At these times they were uncanny and sinister in their unblinking scrutiny, and the men hooted angrily at them, telling them to be gone. One came, and evidently decided to alight on the top of the captain’s head. The bird flew parallel to the boat and did not circle, but made short sidelong jumps in the air in chicken-fashion. His black eyes were wistfully fixed upon the captain’s head. “Ugly brute,” said the oiler to the bird. “You look as if you were made with a jack-knife.” The cook and the correspondent swore darkly at the creature. The captain naturally wished to knock it away with the end of the heavy painter; but he did not dare do it, because anything resembling an emphatic gesture would have capsized this freighted boat, and so with his open hand, the captain gently and carefully waved the gull away. After it had been discouraged from the pursuit the captain breathed easier on

account of his hair, and others breathed easier because the bird struck their minds at this time as being somehow grewsome and ominous.

In the meantime the oiler and the correspondent rowed. And also they rowed.

They sat together in the same seat, and each rowed an oar. Then the oiler took both oars; then the correspondent took both oars; then the oiler; then the correspondent. They rowed and they rowed. The very ticklish part of the business was when the time came for the reclining one in the stern to take his turn at the oars. By the very last star of truth, it is easier to steal eggs from under a hen than it was to change seats in the dingey. First the man in the stern slid his hand along the thwart and moved with care, as if he were of Sèvres. Then the man in the rowing seat slid his hand along the other thwart. It was all done with the most extraordinary care. As the two sidled past each other, the whole party kept watchful eyes on the coming wave, and the captain cried:

“Look out now! Steady there!”

The brown mats of sea-weed that appeared from time to time were like islands, bits of earth. They were travelling, apparently, neither one way nor the other. They were, to all intents, stationary. They informed the men in the boat that it was making progress slowly toward the land.

The captain, rearing cautiously in the bow, after the dingey soared on a great swell, said that he had seen the lighthouse at Mosquito Inlet. Presently the cook remarked that he had seen it. The correspondent was at the oars then, and for some reason he too wished to look at the lighthouse, but his back was toward the far shore and the waves were important, and for some time he could not seize an opportunity to turn his head. But at last there came a wave more gentle than the others, and when at the crest of it he swiftly scoured the western horizon.

“See it?” said the captain.

“No,” said the correspondent slowly, “I didn’t see anything.”

“Look again,” said the captain. He pointed. “It’s exactly in that direction.”

At the top of another wave, the correspondent did as he was bid, and this time his eyes chanced on a small still thing on the edge of the swaying horizon. It was precisely like the point of a pin. It took an anxious eye to find a lighthouse so tiny.

“Think we’ll make it, captain?”

“If this wind holds and the boat don’t swamp, we can’t do much else,” said the captain.

The little boat, lifted by each towering sea, and splashed viciously by the crests, made progress that in the absence of sea-weed was not apparent to those in her. She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top-up, at the mercy of five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her.

“Bail her, cook,” said the captain serenely.

“All right, captain,” said the cheerful cook.

### III

It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dingey. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.

“I wish we had a sail,” remarked the captain. “We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest.” So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.

Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed colour, and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.

At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. “We must be about opposite New Smyrna,” said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. “Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago.”

“Did they?” said the captain.

The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their old impetuous swooping at the dingey, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.

Shipwrecks are *à propos* of nothing. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dingey none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dingey, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.

For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.

“Take her easy, now, boys,” said the captain. “Don’t spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you’ll need all your strength, because we’ll sure have to swim for it. Take your time.”

Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. “That’s the house of refuge, sure,” said the cook. “They’ll see us before long, and come out after us.”

The distant lighthouse reared high. “The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he’s looking through a glass,” said the captain. “He’ll notify the life-saving people.”

“None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck,” said the oiler, in a low voice. “Else the life-boat would be out hunting us.”

Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. “We’ll never be able to make the lighthouse now,” said the captain. “Swing her head a little more north, Billie,” said he.

“‘A little more north,’ sir,” said the oiler.

Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsman watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.

Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dingey like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scatheless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

#### IV

“Cook,” remarked the captain, “there don’t seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge.”

“No,” replied the cook. “Funny they don’t see us!”

A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the eyes of the men. It was of dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little grey length.

Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dingey northward. “Funny they don’t see us,” said the men.

The surf’s roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. “We’ll swamp sure,” said everybody.

It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation’s life-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dingey and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.

“Funny they don’t see us.”

The light-heartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness



and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.

“Well,” said the captain, ultimately, “I suppose we’ll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we’ll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps.”

And so the oiler, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscles. There was some thinking.

“If we don’t all get ashore—” said the captain. “If we don’t all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?”

They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: “If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men’s fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd.... But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work.” Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: “Just you drown me, now, and then hear what I call you!”

The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would have concluded that the dingy could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. “Boys,” he said swiftly, “she won’t live three minutes more, and we’re too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?”

“Yes! Go ahead!” said the captain.

This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.

There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke. “Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now.”

The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east. A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.

“What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain’t they peaches?”

“Funny they haven’t seen us.”

“Maybe they think we’re out here for sport! Maybe they think we’re fishin’. Maybe they think we’re damned fools.”

It was a long afternoon. A changed tide tried to force them southward, but wind and wave said northward. Far ahead, where coast-line, sea, and sky formed their mighty angle, there were little dots which seemed to indicate a city on the shore.

“St. Augustine?”

The captain shook his head. “Too near Mosquito Inlet.”

And the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed. Then the oiler rowed. It was a weary business. The human back can become the seat of more aches and pains than are registered in books for the composite anatomy of a regiment. It is a limited area, but it can become the theatre of innumerable muscular conflicts, tangles, wrenches, knots, and other comforts.

“Did you ever like to row, Billie?” asked the correspondent.

“No,” said the oiler. “Hang it.”

When one exchanged the rowing-seat for a place in the bottom of the boat, he suffered a bodily depression that caused him to be careless of everything save an obligation to wiggle one finger. There was cold sea-water swashing to and fro in the boat, and he lay in it. His head, pillowed on a thwart, was within an inch of the swirl of a wave crest, and sometimes a particularly obstreperous sea came in-board and drenched him once more. But these matters did not annoy him. It is almost certain that if the boat had capsized he would have tumbled comfortably out upon the ocean as if he felt sure that it was a great soft mattress.

“Look! There’s a man on the shore!”

“Where?”

“There! See ’im? See ’im?”

“Yes, sure! He’s walking along.”

“Now he’s stopped. Look! He’s facing us!”

“He’s waving at us!”

“So he is! By thunder!”

“Ah, now we’re all right! Now we’re all right! There’ll be a boat out here for us in half-an-hour.”

“He’s going on. He’s running. He’s going up to that house there.”

The remote beach seemed lower than the sea, and it required a searching glance to discern the little black figure. The captain saw a floating stick and they rowed to it. A bath-towel was by some weird chance in the boat, and, tying this on the stick, the captain waved it. The oarsman did not dare turn his head, so he was obliged to ask questions.

“What’s he doing now?”

“He’s standing still again. He’s looking, I think.... There he goes again. Towards the house....

Now he’s stopped again.”

“Is he waving at us?”

“No, not now! he was, though.”

“Look! There comes another man!”

“He’s running.”

“Look at him go, would you.”

“Why, he’s on a bicycle. Now he’s met the other man. They’re both waving at us. Look!”

“There comes something up the beach.”

“What the devil is that thing?”

“Why, it looks like a boat.”

“Why, certainly it’s a boat.”

“No, it’s on wheels.”

“Yes, so it is. Well, that must be the life-boat. They drag them along shore on a wagon.”

“That’s the life-boat, sure.”

“No, by ——, it’s—it’s an omnibus.”

“I tell you it’s a life-boat.”

“It is not! It’s an omnibus. I can see it plain. See? One of these big hotel omnibuses.”

“By thunder, you’re right. It’s an omnibus, sure as fate. What do you suppose they are doing with an omnibus? Maybe they are going around collecting the life-crew, hey?”

“That’s it, likely. Look! There’s a fellow waving a little black flag. He’s standing on the steps of the omnibus. There come those other two fellows. Now they’re all talking together. Look at the fellow with the flag. Maybe he ain’t waving it.”

“That ain’t a flag, is it? That’s his coat. Why certainly, that’s his coat.”

“So it is. It’s his coat. He’s taken it off and is waving it around his head. But would you look at him swing it.”

“Oh, say, there isn’t any life-saving station there. That’s just a winter resort hotel omnibus that has brought over some of the boarders to see us drown.”

“What’s that idiot with the coat mean? What’s he signaling, anyhow?”

“It looks as if he were trying to tell us to go north. There must be a life-saving station up there.”

“No! He thinks we’re fishing. Just giving us a merry hand. See? Ah, there, Willie.”

“Well, I wish I could make something out of those signals. What do you suppose he means?”

“He don’t mean anything. He’s just playing.”

“Well, if he’d just signal us to try the surf again, or to go to sea and wait, or go north, or go south, or go to hell—there would be some reason in it. But look at him. He just stands there and keeps his coat revolving like a wheel. The ass!”

“There come more people.”

“Now there’s quite a mob. Look! Isn’t that a boat?”

“Where? Oh, I see where you mean. No, that’s no boat.”

“That fellow is still waving his coat.”

“He must think we like to see him do that. Why don’t he quit it? It don’t mean anything.”

“I don’t know. I think he is trying to make us go north. It must be that there’s a life-saving station there somewhere.”

“Say, he ain’t tired yet. Look at ’im wave.”

“Wonder how long he can keep that up. He’s been revolving his coat ever since he caught sight of us. He’s an idiot. Why aren’t they getting men to bring a boat out? A fishing boat—one of those big yawls—could come out here all right. Why don’t he do something?”

“Oh, it’s all right, now.”

“They’ll have a boat out here for us in less than no time, now that they’ve seen us.”

A faint yellow tone came into the sky over the low land. The shadows on the sea slowly deepened. The wind bore coldness with it, and the men began to shiver.

“Holy smoke!” said one, allowing his voice to express his impious mood, “if we keep on monkeying out here! If we’ve got to flounder out here all night!”

“Oh, we’ll never have to stay here all night! Don’t you worry. They’ve seen us now, and it won’t be long before they’ll come chasing out after us.”

The shore grew dusky. The man waving a coat blended gradually into this gloom, and it swallowed in the same manner the omnibus and the group of people. The spray, when it dashed uproariously over the side, made the voyagers shrink and swear like men who were being branded.

“I’d like to catch the chump who waved the coat. I feel like soaking him one, just for luck.”

“Why? What did he do?”

“Oh, nothing, but then he seemed so damned cheerful.”

In the meantime the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed, and then the oiler rowed. Grey-faced and bowed forward, they mechanically, turn by turn, plied the leaden oars. The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star appeared, just lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the west passed before the all-merging darkness, and the sea to the east was black. The land had vanished, and was expressed only by the low and drear thunder of the surf.

“If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?”

The patient captain, drooped over the water-jar, was sometimes obliged to speak to the oarsman.

“Keep her head up! Keep her head up!”

“‘Keep her head up,’ sir.” The voices were weary and low.

This was surely a quiet evening. All save the oarsman lay heavily and listlessly in the boat’s bottom. As for him, his eyes were just capable of noting the tall black waves that swept forward in a most sinister silence, save for an occasional subdued growl of a crest.

The cook’s head was on a thwart, and he looked without interest at the water under his nose. He was deep in other scenes. Finally he spoke. “Billie,” he murmured, dreamfully, “what kind of pie do you like best?”

## V

“Pie,” said the oiler and the correspondent, agitatedly. “Don’t talk about those things, blast you!”

“Well,” said the cook, “I was just thinking about ham sandwiches, and—”

A night on the sea in an open boat is a long night. As darkness settled finally, the shine of the light, lifting from the sea in the south, changed to full gold. On the northern horizon a new light appeared, a small bluish gleam on the edge of the waters. These two lights were the furniture of the world. Otherwise there was nothing but waves.

Two men huddled in the stern, and distances were so magnificent in the dingey that the rower was enabled to keep his feet partly warmed by thrusting them under his companions. Their legs indeed extended far under the rowing-seat until they

touched the feet of the captain forward. Sometimes, despite the efforts of the tired oarsman, a wave came piling into the boat, an icy wave of the night, and the chilling water soaked them anew. They would twist their bodies for a moment and groan, and sleep the dead sleep once more, while the water in the boat gurgled about them as the craft rocked.

The plan of the oiler and the correspondent was for one to row until he lost the ability, and then arouse the other from his sea-water couch in the bottom of the boat.

The oiler plied the oars until his head drooped forward, and the overpowering sleep blinded him. And he rowed yet afterward. Then he touched a man in the bottom of the boat, and called his name. "Will you spell me for a little while?" he said, meekly.

"Sure, Billie," said the correspondent, awakening and dragging himself to a sitting position. They exchanged places carefully, and the oiler, cuddling down in the sea-water at the cook's side, seemed to go to sleep instantly.

The particular violence of the sea had ceased. The waves came without snarling. The obligation of the man at the oars was to keep the boat headed so that the tilt of the rollers would not capsize her, and to preserve her from filling when the crests rushed past. The black waves were silent and hard to be seen in the darkness. Often one was almost upon the boat before the oarsman was aware.

In a low voice the correspondent addressed the captain. He was not sure that the captain was awake, although this iron man seemed to be always awake. "Captain, shall I keep her making for that light north, sir?"

The same steady voice answered him. "Yes. Keep it about two points off the port bow."

The cook had tied a life-belt around himself in order to get even the warmth which this clumsy cork contrivance could donate, and he seemed almost stove-like when a rower, whose teeth invariably chattered wildly as soon as he ceased his labour, dropped down to sleep.

The correspondent, as he rowed, looked down at the two men sleeping under-foot. The cook's arm was around the oiler's shoulders, and, with their fragmentary clothing and haggard faces, they were the babes of the sea, a grotesque rendering of the old babes in the wood.

Later he must have grown stupid at his work, for suddenly there was a growling of water, and a crest came with a roar and a swash into the boat, and it was a wonder that it did not set the cook afloat in his life-belt. The cook continued to sleep, but the oiler sat up, blinking his eyes and shaking with the new cold.

“Oh, I’m awful sorry, Billie,” said the correspondent contritely.

“That’s all right, old boy,” said the oiler, and lay down again and was asleep.

Presently it seemed that even the captain dozed, and the correspondent thought that he was the one man afloat on all the oceans. The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end.

There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife.

Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with the open mouth and looked at the sea.

Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail.

The correspondent looked over his shoulder at the captain. His face was hidden, and he seemed to be asleep. He looked at the babes of the sea. They certainly were asleep. So, being bereft of sympathy, he leaned a little way to one side and swore softly into the sea.

But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the whirring of the dark fin. The speed and power of the thing was greatly to be admired. It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile.

The presence of this bidding thing did not affect the man with the same horror that it would if he had been a picnicker. He simply looked at the sea dully and swore in an undertone.

Nevertheless, it is true that he did not wish to be alone. He wished one of his companions to awaken by chance and keep him company with it. But the captain hung motionless over the water-jar, and the oiler and the cook in the bottom of the boat were plunged in slumber.

## VI

“If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?”



During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard. The man felt it would be a crime most unnatural. Other people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—

When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples. Any visible expression of nature would surely be pelleted with his jeers.

Then, if there be no tangible thing to hoot he feels, perhaps, the desire to confront a personification and indulge in pleas, bowed to one knee, and with hands suppliant, saying: “Yes, but I love myself.”

A high cold star on a winter’s night is the word he feels that she says to him. Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation.

The men in the dingey had not discussed these matters, but each had, no doubt, reflected upon them in silence and according to his mind. There was seldom any expression upon their faces save the general one of complete weariness. Speech was devoted to the business of the boat.

To chime the notes of his emotion, a verse mysteriously entered the correspondent’s head. He had even forgotten that he had forgotten this verse, but it suddenly was in his mind.

“A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, There was lack of woman’s nursing, there was dearth of woman’s tears; But a comrade stood beside him, and he took that comrade’s hand, And he said: ‘I shall never see my own, my native land.’”

In his childhood, the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as important. Myriads of his school-fellows had informed him of the soldier’s plight, but the dinning had naturally ended by making him perfectly indifferent. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter for sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil’s point.

Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. It was no longer merely a picture of a few throes in the breast of a poet, meanwhile drinking tea and warming his feet at the grate; it was an actuality—stern, mournful, and fine.

The correspondent plainly saw the soldier. He lay on the sand with his feet out straight and still. While his pale left hand was upon his chest in an attempt to thwart the going of his life, the blood came between his fingers. In the far Algerian distance, a city of low square forms was set against a sky that was faint with the last sunset hues. The correspondent, plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.

The thing which had followed the boat and waited, had evidently grown bored at the delay. There was no longer to be heard the slash of the cut-water, and there was no longer the flame of the long trail. The light in the north still glimmered, but it was apparently no nearer to the boat. Sometimes the boom of the surf rang in the correspondent's ears, and he turned the craft seaward then and rowed harder. Southward, some one had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering, roseate reflection upon the bluff back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat. The wind came stronger, and sometimes a wave suddenly raged out like a mountain-cat, and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest.

The captain, in the bow, moved on his water-jar and sat erect. "Pretty long night," he observed to the correspondent. He looked at the shore. "Those life-saving people take their time."

"Did you see that shark playing around?"

"Yes, I saw him. He was a big fellow, all right."

"Wish I had known you were awake."

Later the correspondent spoke into the bottom of the boat.

"Billie!" There was a slow and gradual disentanglement. "Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

As soon as the correspondent touched the cold comfortable sea-water in the bottom of the boat, and had huddled close to the cook's life-belt he was deep in sleep, despite the fact that his teeth played all the popular airs. This sleep was so good to him that it was but a moment before he heard a voice call his name in a tone that demonstrated the last stages of exhaustion. "Will you spell me?"

"Sure, Billie."

The light in the north had mysteriously vanished, but the correspondent took his course from the wide-awake captain.

Later in the night they took the boat farther out to sea, and the captain directed the cook to take one oar at the stern and keep the boat facing the seas. He was to call out if he should hear the thunder of the surf. This plan enabled the oiler and the correspondent to get respite together. "We'll give those boys a chance to get into shape again," said the captain. They curled down and, after a few preliminary chatterings and trembles, slept once more the dead sleep. Neither knew they had bequeathed to the cook the company of another shark, or perhaps the same shark.

As the boat caroused on the waves, spray occasionally bumped over the side and gave them a fresh soaking, but this had no power to break their repose. The ominous slash of the wind and the water affected them as it would have affected mummies.

"Boys," said the cook, with the notes of every reluctance in his voice, "she's drifted in pretty close. I guess one of you had better take her to sea again." The correspondent, aroused, heard the crash of the toppled crests.

As he was rowing, the captain gave him some whisky-and-water, and this steadied the chills out of him. "If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar——"

At last there was a short conversation.

"Billie.... Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

## VII

When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the sea and the sky were each of the grey hue of the dawning. Later, carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendour, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves.

On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall white windmill reared above them. No man, nor dog, nor bicycle appeared on the beach. The cottages might have formed a deserted village.

The voyagers scanned the shore. A conference was held in the boat. "Well," said the captain, "if no help is coming we might better try a run through the surf right away. If we stay out here much longer we will be too weak to do anything for ourselves at all." The others silently acquiesced in this reasoning. The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall

wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is, perhaps, plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.

“Now, boys,” said the captain, “she is going to swamp, sure. All we can do is to work her in as far as possible, and then when she swamps, pile out and scramble for the beach. Keep cool now, and don’t jump until she swamps sure.”

The oiler took the oars. Over his shoulders he scanned the surf. “Captain,” he said, “I think I’d better bring her about, and keep her head-on to the seas and back her in.”

“All right, Billie,” said the captain. “Back her in.” The oiler swung the boat then and, seated in the stern, the cook and the correspondent were obliged to look over their shoulders to contemplate the lonely and indifferent shore.

The monstrous in-shore rollers heaved the boat high until the men were again enabled to see the white sheets of water scudding up the slanted beach. “We won’t get in very close,” said the captain. Each time a man could wrest his attention from the rollers, he turned his glance toward the shore, and in the expression of the eyes during this contemplation there was a singular quality. The correspondent, observing the others, knew that they were not afraid, but the full meaning of their glances was shrouded.

As for himself, he was too tired to grapple fundamentally with the fact. He tried to coerce his mind into thinking of it, but the mind was dominated at this time by the muscles, and the muscles said they did not care. It merely occurred to him that if he should drown it would be a shame.

There were no hurried words, no pallor, no plain agitation. The men simply looked at the shore. “Now, remember to get well clear of the boat when you jump,” said the captain.

Seaward the crest of a roller suddenly fell with a thunderous crash, and the long white comber came roaring down upon the boat.

“Steady now,” said the captain. The men were silent. They turned their eyes from the shore to the comber and waited. The boat slid up the incline, leaped at the furious top, bounced over it, and swung down the long back of the wave. Some water had been shipped and the cook bailed it out.

But the next crest crashed also. The tumbling boiling flood of white water caught the boat and whirled it almost perpendicular. Water swarmed in from all sides. The correspondent had his hands on the gunwale at this time, and when the water entered at that place he swiftly withdrew his fingers, as if he objected to wetting them.

The little boat, drunken with this weight of water, reeled and snuggled deeper into the sea.

“Bail her out, cook! Bail her out,” said the captain.

“All right, captain,” said the cook.

“Now, boys, the next one will do for us, sure,” said the oiler. “Mind to jump clear of the boat.”

The third wave moved forward, huge, furious, implacable. It fairly swallowed the dingey, and almost simultaneously the men tumbled into the sea. A piece of life-belt had lain in the bottom of the boat, and as the correspondent went overboard he held this to his chest with his left hand.

The January water was icy, and he reflected immediately that it was colder than he had expected to find it off the coast of Florida. This appeared to his dazed mind as a fact important enough to be noted at the time. The coldness of the water was sad; it was tragic. This fact was somehow so mixed and confused with his opinion of his own situation that it seemed almost a proper reason for tears. The water was cold.

When he came to the surface he was conscious of little but the noisy water. Afterward he saw his companions in the sea. The oiler was ahead in the race. He was swimming strongly and rapidly. Off to the correspondent’s left, the cook’s great white and corked back bulged out of the water, and in the rear the captain was hanging with his one good hand to the keel of the overturned dingey.

There is a certain immovable quality to a shore, and the correspondent wondered at it amid the confusion of the sea.

It seemed also very attractive, but the correspondent knew that it was a long journey, and he paddled leisurely. The piece of life-preserver lay under him, and sometimes he whirled down the incline of a wave as if he were on a hand-sled.

But finally he arrived at a place in the sea where travel was beset with difficulty. He did not pause swimming to inquire what manner of current had caught him, but there his progress ceased. The shore was set before him like a bit of scenery on a stage, and he looked at it and understood with his eyes each detail of it.

As the cook passed, much farther to the left, the captain was calling to him, "Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar."

"All right, sir." The cook turned on his back, and, paddling with an oar, went ahead as if he were a canoe.

Presently the boat also passed to the left of the correspondent with the captain clinging with one hand to the keel. He would have appeared like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat. The correspondent marvelled that the captain could still hold to it.

They passed on, nearer to shore—the oiler, the cook, the captain—and following them went the water-jar, bouncing gaily over the seas.

The correspondent remained in the grip of this strange new enemy—a current. The shore, with its white slope of sand and its green bluff, topped with little silent cottages, was spread like a picture before him. It was very near to him then, but he was impressed as one who in a gallery looks at a scene from Brittany or Holland.

He thought: "I am going to drown? Can it be possible? Can it be possible? Can it be possible?"

Perhaps an individual must consider his own death to be the final phenomenon of nature.

But later a wave perhaps whirled him out of this small deadly current, for he found suddenly that he could again make progress toward the shore. Later still, he was aware that the captain, clinging with one hand to the keel of the dingey, had his face turned away from the shore and toward him, and was calling his name. "Come to the boat! Come to the boat!"

In his struggle to reach the captain and the boat, he reflected that when one gets properly wearied, drowning must really be a comfortable arrangement, a cessation of hostilities accompanied by a large degree of relief, and he was glad of it, for the main thing in his mind for some moments had been horror of the temporary agony. He did not wish to be hurt.

Presently he saw a man running along the shore. He was undressing with most remarkable speed. Coat, trousers, shirt, everything flew magically off him.

"Come to the boat," called the captain.

“All right, captain.” As the correspondent paddled, he saw the captain let himself down to bottom and leave the boat. Then the correspondent performed his one little marvel of the voyage. A large wave caught him and flung him with ease and supreme speed completely over the boat and far beyond it. It struck him even then as an event in gymnastics, and a true miracle of the sea. An overturned boat in the surf is not a plaything to a swimming man.

The correspondent arrived in water that reached only to his waist, but his condition did not enable him to stand for more than a moment. Each wave knocked him into a heap, and the under-tow pulled at him.

Then he saw the man who had been running and undressing, and undressing and running, come bounding into the water. He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded towards the captain, but the captain waved him away, and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked, naked as a tree in winter, but a halo was about his head, and he shone like a saint. He gave a strong pull, and a long drag, and a bully heave at the correspondent’s hand. The correspondent, schooled in the minor formulæ, said: “Thanks, old man.” But suddenly the man cried: “What’s that?” He pointed a swift finger. The correspondent said: “Go.”

In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea.

The correspondent did not know all that transpired afterward. When he achieved safe ground he fell, striking the sand with each particular part of his body. It was as if he had dropped from a roof, but the thud was grateful to him.

It seems that instantly the beach was populated with men with blankets, clothes, and flasks, and women with coffee-pots and all the remedies sacred to their minds. The welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous, but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land’s welcome for it could only be the different and sinister hospitality of the grave.

When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea’s voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.

#### **3.18.4 “A Man Said to the Universe” (1899)**

A man said to the universe:  
“Sir, I exist!”  
“However,” replied the universe,  
“The fact has not created in me  
A sense of obligation.”

### 3.19 Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

Paul Lawrence Dunbar was born on June 27, 1872, in Dayton, Ohio. Both his parents were former slaves in Kentucky. Although he had always desired to be a lawyer, he wrote stories growing up, and in high school, Dunbar wrote and published stories for the school newspaper in Dayton. The only African-American in his class, he became class president, editor, and active member in literary and debate societies. He wasn't a stranger to rejection and discrimination. Life became even harder for him because he couldn't initially afford to attend college. He worked as an elevator operator, self-publishing a collection of writing titled *Oak and Ivy* and selling it to people who came on the elevator he worked.

American poet, novelist, playwright, and essayist, Dunbar was one of the first African-American writers to garner an international audience. He is best known for his dialectic poems collected in *Majors and Minors* (1895) and *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896). The latter contains "We Wear the Mask," reproduced below.

Some of his other well-known poetic works are "Sympathy," *The Sport of the Gods*, "When Malindy Sings," and *Lyrics of the Hearthside*. He was known for representing Black life at turn-of-the-century America. With the help of his friend Frederick Douglass, Dunbar was offered new job opportunities and exposure as his poems were getting more attention from major magazines, and even a six-month tour in England. When he was back from his tour, he visited Washington, DC, where he met fellow poet, Alice Dunbar Nelson, who would become his wife in 1896. In addition to meeting her, he also was busy publishing a story collection, *Folks from Dixie* (1898), a novel, *The Uncalled* (1898), and a number of other collections of poems. He also penned lyrics for musicals, including *In Dahomey* (1903), which was the first all-African-American musical produced on Broadway.

Dunbar's health took a turn for the worse when he contracted tuberculosis. He left his job to dedicate himself fully to writing and giving readings. He and his wife separated in 1902, although they did not divorce. He suffered a case of pneumonia and underwent a nervous breakdown. Dunbar died on February 9, 1906, at the age of 33. His legacy continued as his work influenced many writers of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s.

The Paul Laurence Dunbar Byrd biography was written by Jamar McCall, a University of Delaware student.

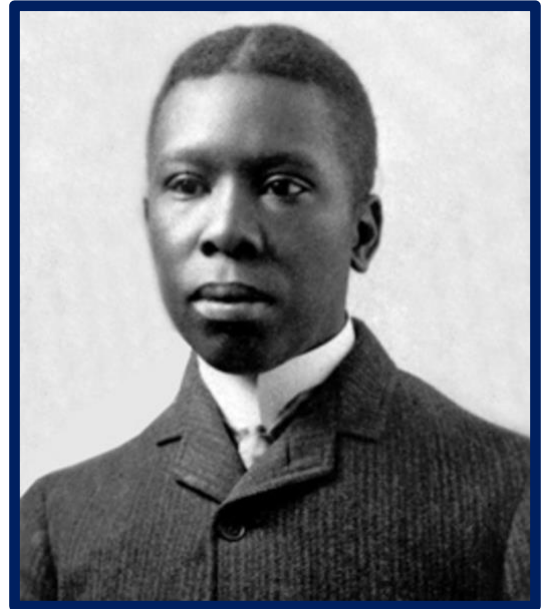


Image 3.18: Paul Laurence Dunbar, circa 1890  
Photographer: The African-American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920

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### 3.19.1 “We Wear the Mask” (1896)

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
    We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
    We wear the mask!