

“ Have I not
Near me, my mother Earth? behold it Heaven!
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not had my brain scared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, life's life lied away,
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey?
From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few
And subtle venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
And without utterance save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.”

If you thus sum your fellows, I am bold to tell you that you have looked upon them with no cultured eye. You have dwelt upon their failings. You have overlooked their noble characteristics, their generosity, their truth, their loyalty. Learn to read your fellows better, to estimate their motives more lovingly and therefore more truthfully. So shall your more highly cultured nature revise its first narrow verdict, and join all noblest voices in acclaim of the high, divine character that still ennobles manhood. Listen to Lowell.

For this true nobleness I seek in vain,
In woman and in man I find it not;
I almost weary of my earthly lot,
My life-springs are dried up with burning pain,
Now find'st it not? I pray thee look again,
Look inward, through the depths of thine own soul.
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?
Doth narrow search show thee no earthly stain?
Be noble, and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;
Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
And thou wilt never more be sad and lone.

Sometimes our discovery of the excellence that is in others comes full late. Gerald Massey says:

In this dim world of clouding cares
We rarely know, 'til 'wildered eyes
See white wings lessening up the skies,
The angels with us unawares.