

nonce I've been living in the clouds of late—that is, *soaring* with the sage of Concord through hitherto unexplored ether. When I take up his essays, I wish to be of the *clouds-cloudy*, and because my feet are so securely glued to the solid earth, I find careering among *clouds*, even in company with a "*sage*," not the easiest thing in the world. Just as I grow ecstatic at having brushed the *cobwebs* from my mental vision, and succeeded in grasping a *thought*, it flits from me, and is a provoking example of "Now you've got it," and "Now, you 'aint." However, every now and then I manage to *grab* the *transcendental* coat-tails of an idea, and begin to flatter myself that the entire *coat*, buttons and all, will soon be in my possession, when the garment executes a complicated series of bewildering whirls and I am left in my common-place easy chair—an animated, or rather an *exhausted* refutation of Emerson's statement, viz: "That there is *one mind* common to all individuals." However, I stumbled upon something that made me long to shake the hand of the sage. It is where he speaks of the "scarcity of truth in society," and the artificial smile we are expected to assume at appropriate *crises*, and which never arrives at a *smile*, but stops short at an idiotic expansion of muscles he calls an "asinine expression." What a queer, honest, disagreeable old world this would be if society-fibbers never said "they had passed *delightful* evenings," when in reality they had been in metaphorical *hot water*, never smiled except *naturally* and never said sugary nothings while thinking of vinegar and spikes—I

think I'll think the sugar and say the vinegar, but I won't begin *now*, because Carlyle looms up just now and says: "What you going to do with me? I'm a sage too"—Yes I know you are, old man, and I love you with all your faults, but I would have to pull you to pieces "all the same," so, you'll get your due some time in the season of the "sere and yellow leaf." Then there's John Boyle O'Reilly and his "Moondyne" would like to parade him but that's too great a venture for this kind of a *Review*. The golden autumn days are coming and my lost wits may have been recovered by that time. *Au revoir* "Moondyne" and *Tolstoi*. What! That uncouth fellow? Yes, strange to say, he must needs wait too. I'm told by those that know, that Tolstoi's novels go off—like (a-hem!) hot cakes at the libraries, in Boston and elsewhere. The Dickens' land! I must keep out of that to-day for fear of not getting back in time to suit the OWL. What a "Happy Valley" it is though, mid-way between the *real* and the *unreal*; and how infinitely superior to "*Utopia*" or "*Arcadia*." I'm thinking of "*Peggotty*" just now, with his big heart, big enough to drown the wails of that exasperating "Gummidge" relict of the "old un"—more anon.

During the scribbling of these notes "inspiration" has snapped her fingers dangerously near my eyes and flounced off with a withering "will you have it now or wait till you get it?" I said I'd wait till I got it.

So I'm yours expectantly,

MERRY MACK.

