

I go out into the orchard ; not because the fruit is ripe, but because the day is. Hesperia can entice without its golden apples. The slope,—lazily overspread by trees older than their owner,—is a living emerald, drinking light, and dips down into the sunset. Afar off,

“ The day, with splendour old,  
Sinks through the depths of gold.”

Birds house plentifully among the branches ; and now they are convivial and social, flitting from tree to tree, inter-communing with their neighbours, enlivening me with chirp and carol. Thoughts are flying with their wings ; power creeps silently out of the ground ; inspirations drop from the sky ; fancies trickle in light from leaf-tips, and float mellowly down from bits of cloud, dream-white ; emotions startle with the droning of a bumble-bee, or the thud of a fallen apple. Here I come for just such a harvest. These strange brains of ours—uppermost branches of the sentient life-tree—are the natural nesting-places and roosting-places of great and small ideas ; there harbour together the wren and the eagle ; there come

“ Truths that wake  
To perish never.”

They come and go, and return again, like these birds ; they are not the exclusive monopoly of any man, and you cannot enslave them any more than you can enchain a ghost or appropriate a shadow. They are the delight of him who can entertain them ; and, though you may wear rags outwardly, if you are inwardly fit, they will walk with you in purple. They are not as old merely as Plato or Mencius, or even the earliest seer—the thoughts we have most reason to prize ; they are old as eternity. They came forth from God, and are of Him ; they become the peculiar joy and glory of prophet and artist, who see the light of other worlds upon them. The finest words are gilded with a radiance they send. Their temple halls stand open for the wind of God to blow through, and through all their chambers come echoes of

“ The eternal deep  
Haunted forever by the eternal mind.”

They come and go, and return again, like these birds. Who has not felt the sudden accession, and again, desertion, of ideas and powers,—the inflowing and overflowing, and thorough possession by them of the soul ; and then, the

“ Fallings from us, vanishings,  
Blank misgivings ;”

as premonitory of that day when “ life and thought ” shall “ have gone away, side by side ”, and “ those that look out of the windows ” shall have been finally “ darkened ” ? No three sympathetic people are together but ideas and presentments flit from brain to brain, without words, like these birds from tree to tree. “ I thought of that very thing just before you spoke it ”, how often we say ! The poet did not originate his ideas ; they came to him from some whither ; he waited for them, drew them, and through the finer mould of his brain they came to forms of higher delicacy and nobler

beauty. Love transfused them as they passed the alembic of his individuality, and his genius made their dusky carbon gleaming and precious. But his are not the elements ; he did not, and could not, create, more than he could make a sun ! We are but the treasurers, it may be, of a bright, intellectual currency ; and the government allows us to open our private mint and put our stamp upon the pieces. So I will delight in this circulation, as real and vital as that of air, or sap, or tides, or fluid fire ; and the purer I am, the more worthy I am, the less sordid, and at once the more passive, and yet strenuous, I am, the more of this spiritual current will be appropriated,—the more of this highest intellectual gain will flow to me, and through me. I will adopt a sentiment appropriate to such a mood as this, and to such an hour, from my most teaching, if not teachable, poet :

“ The eye it cannot choose but see ;  
We cannot bid the ear be still ;  
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,  
Against or with our will.  
Nor less I deem that there are powers  
Which of themselves our minds impress ;  
That we can feed this mind of ours  
In a wise passiveness.”

And yet he rouses us with a bugle note, lest we lie too long under the apple trees, and so miss the twin spiritual condition,—

“ Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,  
And in the soul admit of no decay,  
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness ;  
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard.”

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A poet, writing of a poet's private communicativeness, says : “ In general society he was a very different character. The poetical temperament is naturally shy and reserved ; for it is always viewing things in lights invisible to ignoble minds, and it learns from early childhood that it can expect no sympathy from the multitude, in feelings and impressions which are instinctive with it. That vulgar assurance with which men of inferior grades often throw themselves into life, and society, and exhibit all that they have and are, without restraint, is taking with the masses ; they make way before it, and give to such men the key of mastery and success.” This may be a little strong, since the ordinary mind has much in sympathy with poetic moods and products, but cannot easily conceive of the points of character which are the poet's inseparable accompaniments. These characteristics will appear to the multitude under another colour, as pride, indifference, coldness, reserve, etc. Indeed they may be of the nature of real faults, and have their natural and inevitable result,—that is, more or less of alienation. Lowell says : “ The world always judges a man (and rightly enough, too) by his little faults, which he shews a hundred times a day, rather than by his great virtues, which he discloses perhaps but once in a lifetime, and to a single person,—nay, in proportion as they are rarer, and he is nobler, is shyer of