

EMERSON'S TALKS WITH A COLLEGE BOY.



WHILE still an undergraduate, my connection with certain lectures delivered by Mr. Emerson before the students of Williams College and elsewhere necessarily threw me much with him; and now it is a youth's experience of him that I would give to youth.

Well do I remember his tender, shrewd, wise face as I first saw it. Almost before we were alone he made me forget in whose presence I stood. He was merely an old, quiet, modest gentleman, pressing me to a seat near him, and all at once talking about college matters, the new gymnasium, the Quarterly, and from these about books and reading and writing; and all as if he continually expected as much as he gave. And so it was ever after; no circumstances so varying but, whether I saw him alone or in the presence of others, there was the ever-ready welcome shining in his eyes, the same manifest gentleness and persistent preference of others.

One day, in my own room, glancing up at some "Laws of Writing" on the wall, he began abruptly:

"The most interesting writing is that which does not quite satisfy the reader. Try to leave a little thinking for him. That will be better for both. The trouble with most writers is, they spread too thin. The reader is as quick as they; has got there before and is ready and waiting. A little guessing does him no harm. So I would assist him with no connections. If *you* can see how the harness fits, he can. But make sure that you see it. Then when you have something new to say, say it! Out with it! Don't lead up to it! Don't try to let your hearer down from it. That is to be commonplace. Say it with all the grace and force you can, and stop. Be familiar only with good expressions.

"Expression is the main fight. Search unweariedly for that which is exact. Do not be dissuaded. Know words etymologically. Pull them apart, see how they are made; and use them only where they fit. Avoid the adjective. Let the noun do the work. The adjective introduces sound; gives an unexpected turn, and so often mars with an unintentional false note. Most fallacies are fallacies of language. Definitions save a deal of debate.

"Neither concern yourself about consistency.

The moment you putty and plaster your expressions to make them hang together you have begun a weakening process. Take it for granted that truths will harmonize; and as for the falsities and mistakes, they will speedily die of themselves. If you *must* be contradictory, let it be clean and sharp, as the two blades of scissors meet.

"Out of your own self should come your theme; and only thus can your genius be your friend. Eloquence, by which I mean a statement so luminous as to render all others unnecessary, is possible only on a self-originated subject.

"Don't run after ideas. Save and nourish them, and you will have all you should entertain. They will come fast enough and keep you busy.

"Reading is closely related to writing. While the mind is plastic there should be care as to its impressions. The new facts should come from nature, fresh, buoyant, inspiring, exact. Later in life, when there is less danger of imitating those traits of expression through which information has been received, facts may be gleaned from a wider field. But now keep close to realities. You then accustom yourself to getting facts at first hand. If we could get all our facts so, there would be no necessity for books; but they also give us facts, if we know how to use them. They are the granaries of thought as well.

"Read those men who were not lazy; who put themselves into contact with the realities. So you learn to look with your eyes, too. And do not forget the Persian, Parsee, and Hindu religious books; books of travel, too! And when you travel describe what you see. That will teach you what to see. Read those who wrote about facts from a new point of view. The atmosphere of such authors helps you even if the reasoning has been a mistake.

"And there is Darwin! I am glad to see him here. And you must read George Borrow's book about the Gipsies. He went among them, lived among them, and was a Gypsy himself. There is nothing from second sources, nor any empiricism in his book. You can rely upon everything, and it is quaintly told. From such as he you learn not to stop until you encounter the fact with your own hand.

"Avoid all second-hand borrowing books—'Collections of —,' 'Beauties of —,' etc. I see you have some on your shelves. I would burn them. No one can select the beautiful pas-



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R. Waldo Emerson

(ABOUT 1859.)

sages of another for you. It is beautiful for him, well! Another thought: wedding your aspirations will be the thing of beauty to you. Do your own quarrying.

"Do not attempt to be a great reader; and read for facts, and not by the bookful.

"You must know about ownership in facts. What another sees and tells you is not yours, but his. If you had seen it, you would not have seen what he did, and even less what he tells. Your only relief is to find out all you can about it and look at it in all possible lights. Keep your eyes open and see all you can; and when you get the right man question him close. So learn to divine books, to *feel* those that you want without wasting much time over them. Often a chapter is enough. The glance reveals when the gaze obscures. Somewhere the author has hidden his message. Find it, and skip the paragraphs that do not talk to you."

Upon my pressing him for directions more particular and practical, a process which was rarely successful, he, after a moment's hesitation, continued as follows:

"Well, learn how to tell from the beginnings of the chapters and from glimpses of the sentences whether you need to read them entirely through. So, turn page after page, keeping the writer's thought before you, but not tarrying with him, until he has brought you to the thing you are in search of; then dwell with him, if so be he has what you want. But recollect you read only to start your own team.

"Newspapers have done much to abbreviate expression, and so to improve style. They are to occupy during your generation a large share of attention." (This was said nearly a quarter of a century ago. It was as if he saw ahead the blanket editions.) "And the most studious and engaged man can neglect them only at his cost. But have little to do with them. Learn how to get *their* best too, without their getting yours. Do not read them when the mind is creative. And do not read them thoroughly, column by column. Remember they are made for everybody, and don't try to get what is n't meant for you. The miscellany, for instance, should not receive your attention. There is a great secret in knowing what to keep out of the mind as well as what to put in. And even if you find yourself interested in the selections, you cannot use them, because the original source is not of reference. You can't quote from a newspaper. Like some insects, it died the day it was born. The genuine news is what you want, and practice quick searches for it. Give yourself only so many minutes for the paper. Then you will learn to avoid the premature reports and anticipations, and the stuff put in for people who have nothing to think.

"Reading long at one time in any book, no

matter how it fascinates, destroys thought as completely as the inflections forced by external causes. Do not permit this. Stop, if you find yourself becoming absorbed, at even the first paragraph. Keep yourself out and watch for your own impressions. This is one of the norms of thought. You will accumulate facts in proportion as you become a fact. Otherwise you will accumulate dreams. Information is nothing, but the man behind it.

"Yield not one inch to all the forces which conspire to make you an echo. That is the sin of dogmatism and creeds. Avoid them. They build a fence about the intellect.

"You are anxious about your career. I know without your telling me. Every college boy is. You think you can study out yourself what you are best fitted for? No. But you remember our séance with Professor — over in the chemical laboratory yesterday; how he took a substance and tried it with others, one after other, until he discovered the affinity? So a man finds, by trying, what he can do best. Each man and woman is born with an aptitude to do something impossible to any other.

"By working, doing for others simultaneously with the doing of your own work, you make the greatest gain. That is the generous giving or losing of your life which saves it. Don't put this aside until you are more at liberty. That is slow death. Have something practical on your hands, it makes small matter what, at once. If your disposition is right you will select well.

"Live in a clear and clean loyalty to your own affair. Do not let another's, no matter how attractive, tempt you away. So, true and surprising revelations come to you, and experiences resembling the manifestations of genius. There are so many who are content to be, without being anything. Opportunities approach only those who use them. Even thoughts cease by and by to visit the idle and" (after a pause) "the perverse. But sudden and unforeseen helps and continued encouragement are vouchsafed to the devout worker. For God is everywhere, having his will, and he cannot be baffled. Make his business yours, as did his son. The man who works with him is constantly assured of achievement.

"Be choice in your friendships. You can have but few, and the number will dwindle as you grow older. Select minds who are too strong and large to pretend to knowledge and resources they do not really possess. They address you sincerely."

About poetry he uttered the following suggestions, occasioned by the criticism of some Class Day rhymes:

"I suppose you read over your verses after they are written?"

"Generally."

"I suppose then, after a little, they grow old to you?"

"Indeed, they do."

"And you continue to write. If, after a long time, you look over any of your lines and you come to one or a succession and say to yourself, 'That is good,' it is good; but destroy everything from which this verdict must be withheld. The Me is the judge, after all. And if a thing seems good to me, it shall to my fellow. I can sympathize with the desire for outward confirmation. Still, the poet is his own assurance. Poetry,"—and here he lapsed into that manner of reverie as if all hearers were far away,—“whether it comes in dreams or in gleams is noble. It must serve no sordid uses. It is of the above.

"You must keep some fact-books for poetry. I think that they are much more nearly related to poetry than rhyme or rhythm. Study Greek for expression; but the poetic *fact* is half the battle. Nature, gathered in by the sensitive soul, forms the furniture of the poet.

"Did you ever think about the logic of stimulus? Nature supplies her own. It is astonishing what she will do, if you give her a chance. In how short a time will she revive the overtired brain! A breath under the apple tree, a siesta on the grass, a whiff of wind, an interval of retirement, and the balance and serenity are restored. A clean creature needs so little and responds so readily! There is something as miraculous as the Gospels in it. Later in life, society becomes a stimulus. Occasionally, the gentle excitation of a cup of tea is needed. A mind invents its own tonics, by which, without permanent injury, it makes rapid rallies and enjoys good moods. Conversation is an excitant, and the series of intoxications it creates is healthful. But tobacco, tobacco—what rude crowbar is that with which to pry into the delicate tissues of the brain!"

Years after, I met Mr. Emerson in the West and mentioned in the conversation a bit of exciting experience among the Tennessee mountains, which drew from him the following:

"What tonic can be more inspiriting and healthful than an adventure? It gives back to the blood all its youth."

At a meeting of one of our college debating societies, Mr. Emerson said:

"I was interested in your critic's report. But there are nine of you here; then there should be nine critics. It is possible that you associate a wrong meaning with this word. I observed that your critic noted such minutiae as that a certain word was pronounced wrong; that a plural verb followed a single nominative; that a gesture was made with the index finger instead of the open hand; that a speaker stood

with his feet six inches apart instead of two. So you regard the speeches as so many targets, and listen to pick flaws, to find faults and little inaccuracies. You gain something in marking these things alone, but you lose immensely more. Criticism should not imply to you such a watching out, for that begets hostility of thought, a closing of the mind to the natural impulses of the speech, lest it be influenced by them; and indulgence in the silent rehearsing of premature rejoinders. You are chiefly here, I take it, for the study of method, manner, style. Then you should project yourselves into sympathy with the speaker. Make certain that you receive his effort. Receive it all, and receive it well. Put yourself in his place. Try to see why he sees as he does; and then proceed outward to investigate his sentiments and their expression. Remember all criticism dealing with isolated points is superficial. The prevailing thought and disposition are your main care.

"Then, seek what is characteristic. Get the method of the man, the way in which he tries to develop and impress his idea. Attend closely to the *quality* of the matter presented. It is an index to the speaker's originality and culture, and therefore of his ability to impress others.

"When your attention is held without effort from yourself; when you are conscious of thoughtfulness, a change of opinion working within—then attend, attend! Your speaker has power. Overlook all fault, intonation, emphasis, pronunciation. Lay hold of his secret. The genuine impressions of a speech are the thoughts it immediately arouses, and these are the sources of true critical activity."

I do not think of Mr. Emerson as primarily a critic. His was not generally the posture indicated by the word. He was familiar with the laws that determine excellence of form, but sincerity and the satisfaction of the moral sense constituted his criterion. "The first and main attention of men to one another is to listen and be taught," he said, "and we are continually surprised at the riches of our fellows." His criticism was of that rarest order, creative rather than judicial; and his historical and biographical judgments have been affected only by the discovery of facts and perspective unknown to him. He always saw the good—a rare trait. It is easy to point out defects.

Mr. Emerson talked apparently without reservation to me about his contemporaries and historical personages. I select such of his delightful comment as seems distinguished for the consideration of "his noble young men," as he called them.

I remember one afternoon we were walking among the hills of Williamstown in the locality known as Bryant's Glen.

"Yonder is a serious mountain," said Mr. Emerson, pointing to Greylock. "I should think this would be just the place to read 'The Excursion.' The hills are very like those of Westmoreland. Here one can see the poet standing on the shore and looking off on the wide sea-light, and backward on the glows of the mountains, and then recognizing the inner supernal light, the subjective, as he framed that most famed combination :

"The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream.

"Wordsworth," he continued, "is the poet of England. I see 'The Reader' lately acknowledges it. He is the only one who comes up to high-water mark. Other writers have to affect what to him is natural. So they have what Arnold called *simplism*, he, simplicity.

"The first three books of 'The Excursion' are the best. The discussions are uninteresting, but the adventures of the wonderful Peddler always charm me. There is sometimes an extreme even in Wordsworth. What is that 'horrible' line in 'Peter Bell'?"—

"The hard, dry see-saw of his horrible bray!

"The ass is unpoetical; and perhaps 'Alice Fell' is too childish, a little. His sonnets are good. They are, indeed, as pure, chaste, and transparent as Milton's. They are the witchery of language. He is the greatest poet since Milton."

Emerson could quote almost entirely "The Prelude" and "The Excursion," so much had he pondered them.

"There are no books for boys," he concluded, "like the poems of Sir Walter Scott. Every boy loves them if they are not put into his hands too late. 'Marmion,' 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' 'The Lady of the Lake'—they surpass everything for boy-reading we have."

It was uncommon to hear Mr. Emerson speak with such emphasis of any one as he did of Plato. At our first railroad restaurant, where, although there was plenty of time, everybody was eating as they do generally at travel-tables, Mr. Emerson leaned over towards me and said humorously, with a smile:

"Was n't it Plato who said of the citizens of Agrigentum,—they, you know, were colossal architects and eaters,—'These people build as if they were immortal; and eat as if they were to die instantly'?"

"Read Plato's 'Republic'! Read Plato's 'Republic'! Read Plato's 'Republic'!" he repeated, on another occasion. "He lifts man towards the divine, and I like it when I hear that a man reads Plato. I want to meet that man. For no man of self-conceit can go through Plato."

Carlyle, I believe, confesses that he cannot read Plato.

"I am glad you have so many of the Greek tragedies," continued Mr. Emerson. "Read them largely and swiftly in translation, to get their movement and flow; and then a little in the original every day. For the Greek is the fountain of language. The Latin has a definite shore-line. But the Greek is without bounds." Then after a pause he added, half to himself, "Dead languages, called dead because they can never die."

Of Gibbon he spoke strikingly as follows:

"He is one of the best readers that ever lived in England. You know his custom of examining himself both before and after his reading a book to see what had been added to his mental experience? All previous and contemporary British historians are barefooted friars in comparison with Gibbon. He was an admirable student, a tremendous worker. He banished himself to a lonely château just to work harder. But he thought uncleanly. He had—as also did Aristophanes, whom I never could read on that account—an imagination degraded and never assoiled, a low wit like that which defaces out-buildings. He was a disordered and coarse spirit, a mind without a shrine, but a great example of diligence and antidote to laziness.

"Locke was a stalwart thinker. He erected a school of philosophy, which limited everything to utility. But the soul has its own eyes, which are made illuminating by the spirit of God."

With the same lofty accent he spoke of Harriet Martineau, and compared her attitude with that of her brother.

"It was a grief to me when I learned that she had become a materialist." After a long pause he added, lifting his head, "God? It is all God."

"Read Chaucer," he said. "In a day you will get into his language, and then you will like him. Humor the lines a little, and they are full of music.

"I have seen an expurgated edition of Chaucer; shun it! Shun expurgated editions of any one, even of François Villon. They will be expurgating the Bible and Shakspeare next."

Of Shakspeare he talked much, and always without a word of subtraction. Of no one else did he speak in a similar strain of encomium excepting that imperial man, Walter Savage Landor.

"So far as we know," he said, "the 'Essays' of Montaigne is the only book Shakspeare owned. Like Aristophanes, Shakspeare had the care of the presentation of his plays. So they were kept practical. It has had much to do with their surviving.

"But Shakspeare was a wonder. He struck

twelve every time"; and then, after a pause, "We have not such creatures in America." Somehow the words, and his half-sad manner in uttering them, brought back to me old Nestor's lament:

For not any time have I seen such men, nor shall I as Perithous or Gyas, etc.

He spoke of the songs of Ben Jonson as "the finest in the English language. They are rich and succulent and metery. Few men have that wonderful power of rhyming, especially double-rhyming, that he has"; and he instanced "The Mask of Dædalus," and recited four stanzas of Jonson's ode to himself in illustration.

Of the author of "Noctes Ambrosianæ" he said:

"I liked him; not as Professor Wilson, but as Christopher North. He was a man singularly loved. Here, author of 'Guesses at Truth,' wrote his life, but it was incomplete. Then Carlyle attempted it, but he wrote too much with the air of a patron, too much condescension, as a teacher might say, 'Fine boy!'—too much pat-him-on-the-head in it. I wrote Carlyle I would rather agree with Wilson than himself."

I was much interested in his words on Shelley and Blake. While he seemed hesitatingly to recognize and allow the wide gleams of truth the disciples of these mystics claim for them, he yet insisted that their visions were rather a curiosity than a discovery; and rebuked them strongly for their trait of "obliteration of the imagination" by natural objects.

"I cannot read Shelley with comfort," he said. "His visions are not in accord with the facts. They are not accurate. He soars to sink." He quoted Blake's

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright,

over and over, almost the only thing I ever heard him quote that he put into the "Parnassus."

He many times referred to Leigh Hunt, and advised me to read him—"a true and gentle friend to all men."

Of Matthew Arnold he said: "He is stored with all critical faculties except humor, but so far he shows little of that." And of Browning: "He is always a teacher."

"Have you read any of Goethe?" he asked.

On my replying affirmatively as to "Wilhelm Meister," he said:

"Ah, yes, that is good. It wants to be read well. It contains the analysis of life. Wasson in 'The Atlantic' some time ago had some excellent words upon it, more a panegyric than a criticism. But Wasson must have just come to it. We have loved Meister a long time."

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Of Fichte he said: "He would use any weapon to convert a hearer. I think he would trepan a person, if so he could pass his own edacious conception into the bared brain."

I once asked his opinion of the novels of George Sand, and he answered as follows:

"It is wonderful, the amount she has written—everything; she seems to know the world. But her stories—I do not know about them. I do not read stories. I never could turn a dozen pages in 'Don Quixote' or Dickens without a yawn. Why read novels? We meet stranger creatures than their heroes. What writer of stories would not be derided if he gave us creatures as impossible as Nero or Alva or Joan of Arc?"

Again, referring to a poet then rather the fashion: "Melancholy is unendurable. Grief is abnormal. Victor Hugo has written such a book. I have not read it. I do not read the sad in literature."

These words were the first seismic tremors in my new heavens and new earth. They set my wits a-swimming, troubled me with apprehension of possible limitation in him. So the next day, with a youth's temerity, I told Mr. Emerson of my inability to accept his statements on this matter as I understood them. He heard me patiently, watched my quivering lips a moment, and then said briefly but with a beaming glance:

"Very well; I do not like disciples." This remarkable reply illustrates Mr. Emerson's peculiar and wholesome ways with lovers, emancipating them even from himself. From this time disappeared from his pupil the boyish and servile acquiescence, and I doubt not from the master the feeling of nausea it could not but cause. The release saved me my friend and made of his friendship the greater blessing.

Of cisoceanic contemporaries, Mr. Emerson spoke as follows:

"The connecting link between England and America is Oliver Wendell Holmes. If that acute-minded man had been born in England they would never have tired of making much of him. He has the finest sensibility, and that catholicity of taste without which no large and generous nature can be developed. Everything interests him.

"'Leaves of Grass,' by Walt Whitman, is a book you must certainly read. It is wonderful. I had great hopes of Whitman until he became Bohemian. He contrasts with Poe, who had an uncommon facility for rhyme, a happy jingle. Poe might have become much had he been capable of self-direction."

He spoke of Daniel Webster as "deformed. He came to me the type of decay. To gain his ambition, he gave ease, pleasure, happiness, wealth; and then added honor and truth. He

had a wonderful intellect; but of what importance is that when the rest of the man is gone?

"Hawthorne's writings are of the terrible, the grotesque, and somber. There is nothing joyous in them. It is the same way with Hugo. No man ought to write so.

"— wrote a pitiful book about Napoleon. But he was a wonderful man enough; always fell on his feet. The best memoirs of him are those of Las Cases. Scott is too British; O'Meara, the Irish surgeon, writes well of him—a little low, untutored, rough; but he had personal access, and Napoleon breathed through all the men about him. What was that he said about making his generals out of mud? His meanness, which could speak no chivalric word, spoke there, but it spoke fact."

Of Margaret Fuller he spoke much at one time and another, but nothing that teaches, unless it is the following:

"I was amused with what she said of Bettina Brentano—something like this: 'She has not pride enough. Only when I am sure of myself would I pour out my soul at the feet of another. In the assured soul it is kingly prodigality; in one which cannot forbear it is babyhood.'"

He repeated the word "kingly" with a musings circumflex, as if another woman would have used a different gender, and added:

"But she would need to be certain of her lover as well as herself—which Bettina could not. There is something, too, in the lover. Margaret never met Goethe. She was a strange woman. Her eyes in some moods were visible at night; and her hair apparently lightened and darkened. She had unconscious clairvoyant instincts, and could read the fortune in the human face; she was most inspired when in pain. What she wrote me is expressive of her deepest nature:

"With the intellect I always have, always shall overcome, but that is not the half of the work, the life, the life! O my God! shall the life never be sweet?"

The flame was in the heart of this dazzling woman. If Emerson was the brain of this Concord circle, Margaret Fuller was its blood.

Of this group, the most conspicuous in its domain that has ever existed in America, Mr. Emerson was easily chief; and during his strongest years perhaps he was more. There was something "catching" about him. No one could exactly explain or even understand it, but every one was sensible of it, so that his friends in England and America felt called upon to warn admirers that they must be on their guard; if they sought a familiarity closer than his pocket edition, not to be carried too far, for he could not encourage an imitator. Amusing stories have been told of

characteristic exaggerations resulting from too much Emerson in the neighborhood. Indeed one had to be more than human to remain in the presence of such a nature and not betray the fact. He was not a man to be approached closely. Nor was it well to be loved by him too dearly. Thoreau felt the perilous singling until his tones and his mode of speaking caught the trick of Emerson's so nearly that the two men could hardly be separated in conversation. What wonder that Channing, Bartol, Alcott, and the rest, strong and stately men (more than that—among the heavenliest bodies our material new world has seen), felt to some slight deflection of their orbit the unintentional, if not unconscious, attraction of the mild Jupiter so near them. Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller fled and saved themselves, but even they betrayed during their Concord residence a faint Emersonian adumbration. The fact is, no one meeting Emerson was ever the same again. His natural force was so resistless and so imperceptible that it commanded men before they were aware. Leaders, scholars of high cultivation, theorists and men of thought *de vieille roche*, who visited the lonely eminence where he dwelt apart, noticed the contagion. Then there were others, a curious throng, themselves often curiosities, who came. Concord contained during Emerson's solstitial years a great lighthouse, shining far and wide, and showing many ships their goal, but covered with the shreds of wrecked barks, which had been attracted by its clear, cold, solitary flame.

But of Thoreau, that hypethral man, I cannot say enough. Of no one did Mr. Emerson talk so often and so tenderly. The relation adverted to between the two needs a clearer understanding. Emerson made Thoreau. He was a child of Emerson, as if of his own flesh and blood. The elder took the younger fresh from college (rather drowsy, and he dozed after his return to Concord, but the Middlesex woods were his college); Emerson woke him, gave him his start, and immediately and astonishingly nourished him.

The disciple became as his master, unconsciously adopting his accent and form, realizing his attractions and antipathies, and knowing his good and evil. The development of this sturdy bud into its sturdier flower was a perpetual delight to the philosopher. In Thoreau he lived himself over again. He said he liked Thoreau because "he had the courage of his convictions," but I think he meant his own (Emerson's) convictions. In both we mark the same features; as a severe and *outré* way of looking at events and a searching for lessons in them, intolerance of makeshifts, etc.

"Henry was," continued Mr. Emerson, "homely in appearance, a rugged stone hewn

from the cliff. I believe it is accorded to all men to be moderately homely. But he surpassed sex. He had a beautiful smile and an earnest look. His character reminds me of Massillon. One could jeopard anything on him. A limpid man, a realist with caustic eyes that looked through all words and shows and bearing with terrible perception! He was a greater Stoic than Zeno or Scaevola or Xenophanes; greater, because nothing of impurity clung to him, a man whose core and whose breath was conscience. But he thought and said that society is always diseased, and the best, most so. Men of note would come to talk with him.

"I don't know," he would say, "perhaps a minute would be enough for both of us."

"But I come to walk with you when you take your exercise." "Ah, walking, that is my holy time."

"He refused on graduating from Harvard to take his degree. 'It is n't worth five dollars,' he said.

"I have always thought that he did not do justice to the influence of his college in forming him.

"Though living in civilization he was the keenest observer of external nature I have ever seen. He had the trained sense of the Indian, eyes that saw in the night, his own way of threading the woods and fields, so that he felt his path through them in the densest night without delay or interruption. He would hear a partridge fly into a bush in the dark of dawn and guide you to the spot after day unerringly.

"Things happened to him, came to him, as they will to lovers of the woods and fields. I remember once a friend accosted him while they were walking, with a request for an arrow-head, if he should ever find one, lamenting how fruitlessly he had searched for one.

"'They are rare,' said Thoreau, stooping and picking up a fragment of earth-covered substance he saw in the sod, 'and now that you have an opportunity you had better examine this!' And he presented a fine specimen from which he finished disengaging the earth-rust. An accident? I do not know. Sometimes I think the entire woods were a *cache* for him, he had such secrets of hiding things and finding them again."

As Thoreau exhibited Emerson the recluse, so Amos Bronson Alcott, a most benign, saintly, and unworldly man when I knew him, was a joyous, buoyant embodiment of Mr. Emerson socially. For Emerson was not what one would term "talkative." Indeed it is seldom

one meets a man more held in duress by his own thought. When he was surprised into utterance, it was mostly a monologue of oral reflections which seemed to be addressed to a widely read and thoughtful audience, and which always exacted much of the listener. It is somewhat remarkable that a man who has given more movement to thought than almost any other since Plato should have shown in habit so little sympathy with this law by which men most naturally receive ideas. But I think he secretly found irksome the simplest conditions under which people meet.

Mr. Alcott had a much more extended adaptiveness. He founded the parlor conversation as a means of culture.

Faith in man and man's final victory was Mr. Emerson's evangel. His transcendentalism is to be regarded as a fragment existing less as a religious idiosyncrasy, much less a passing fashion, than as a lifting and permanent force in general religious culture. As a modifying influence in thought, as an impulse towards a finer life, it has become a power. Its subtle suggestions, its aspirations; that which it stood for and symbolized; its exultant, soaring spirit—these gave it meaning to every elevated soul drawn into it. Where it touched the practical duties of life its touch was recognized as honest. Mr. Emerson's language often identified God incarnate with man perfected. The future was serene. Almost the last words I was ever to hear him utter were with a smile and cheer regarding a doubt he could not dispel.

"For that," he said, "we must wait until to-morrow morning."

By

That great and grave transition,
Which may not king or priest or conqueror spare,
And yet a babe can bear,

the morrow's morning has come to him.

The true Emersonian does not seek the master for knowledge, but for wisdom, and the best wisdom, a new life. And does not this search indicate that seminal, germinal, developing quality which is the central essence of the man himself? He comes immediately into the mind, a revolutionary force, questioning, suggesting, destroying composure, provoking doubt of the order that is; destroying gods, both Penates and Totems, not with blows, but with frost and fire; emancipating thought; sowing a sane discontent and elation; then stimulator, inspirer, and liberator of power. With what other service is such service comparable?

Charles J. Woodbury.