

THE HOMES AND HAUNTS OF EMERSON.

It was said by a friend who stood by Thoreau's grave, before Hawthorne had been buried near him on the hill-side where he sleeps in Concord, "This village is his monument, covered with suitable inscriptions by himself." In future years,—when the pilgrim shall stand on the same pine-covered hill-top, where, a little higher up, as befits his genius, will be seen the grave of Emerson,—it can be said with even greater truth, that Concord itself is the monument of him who wrote

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,"

and that other song, unrivaled in the depth of its sadness, whose closing strain is

"The silent organ loudest chants
The Master's requiem."

For Concord is not only inscribed in all its tranquil scenery—its woods and fields and waters—with memories of Emerson the poet, but is also a family monument to his ancestors, the Bulkeley and Emersons and Blisses; pious ministers who founded it, prayed for it and preached in it, helped to rescue it from Indian ambush and English invasion, and then laid their bones there to become part of its soil, and to dignify the plain earth which had nourished them. The history of the town is indeed that of Emerson and his forefathers; and it is better known by his fame than through any other distinction it may now enjoy. It is here that the pilgrim shall say as the Persian disciple said of his master, "The eagle of the immaterial soul of Saadi hath shaken from his plumage the dust of the body."

Ralph Waldo Emerson is the eighth in descent from the Reverend Peter Bulkeley, Rector of Woodhill, in English Bedfordshire, where the Ouse, they say, pours a winding flood through green meadows, much as the Musketaquid now does in his American colony. This Puritan minister, unwilling to obey the bishops of Charles Stuart, emigrated to Massachusetts, in 1634, with several of his English flock, and, in company with Major Simon Willard, a Kentish man, planted the town of Concord in September, 1635. He was the first minister of the church which he gathered there, and, at his death in 1659, transmitted his sacred office to his son, Rev. Edward Bulkeley; whose

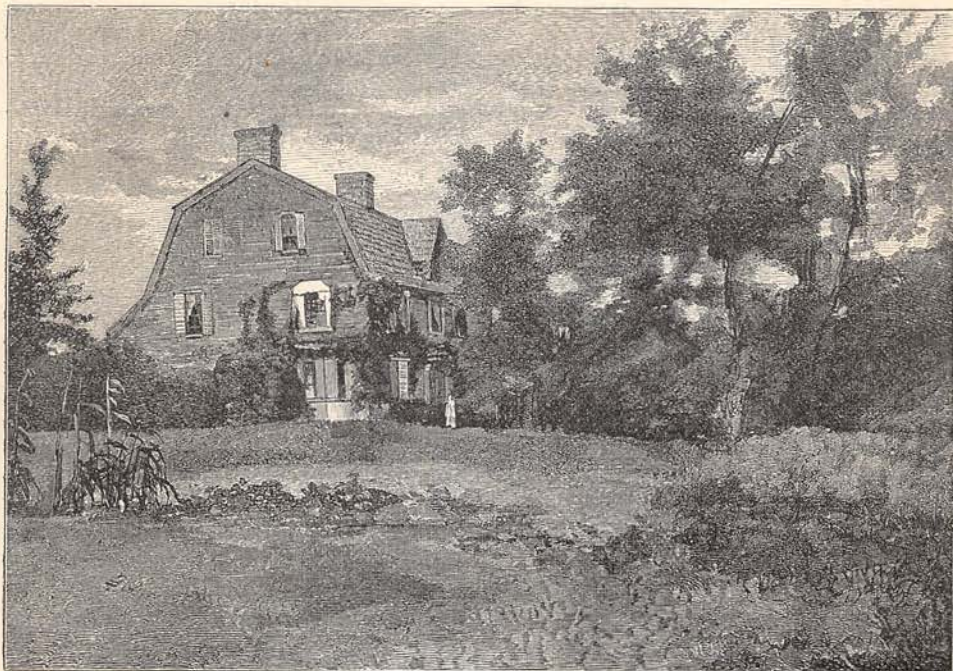
daughter, Elizabeth, born in Concord in 1638, married Rev. Joseph Emerson in 1665, and became the mother of a long line of ministerial Emersons. Her son, Edward Emerson, born in Concord in 1670, married Rebecca Waldo of Chelmsford in 1697; from whom the present Mr. Emerson derives both his descent and his middle name, by which he has commonly been called. The Emersons and Waldos, unlike the Bulkeleyes, first settled in Ipswich, and were not originally clergymen. Thomas Emerson, the first American ancestor of the poet, is supposed to be descended from the Emersons of Durham in England, and perhaps from that Ralph Emerson in the county palatine of Durham, who, in 1535, received from Henry VIII. a grant of the heraldic arms which the family of Ralph Waldo Emerson have inherited,—three lions passant, with a demi-lion holding a battle-ax for crest.* The Waldos claim descent from Peter Waldo, a leading man among those early Protestants known as Waldenses; their first American ancestor was Cornelius of Ipswich and Chelmsford, the father of Rebecca Emerson. These Waldos had been merchants in London. The Bulkeleyes were of gentle blood, and related to the family of Oliver St. John, the parliamentary leader and friend of Cromwell, whom Rev. Peter Bulkeley calls his nephew.

In New England, since Thomas Emerson's death in 1666, his descendants have taken to the Christian ministry as remarkably as the Cottons or the Mathers. Mr. Emerson of Concord, his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, of that name, were all ministers, and he has a clerical ancestor in every generation, on one side or the other, as far back as Fox's "Book of Martyrs," to which one of those ancestors wrote a supplement. Mr. Emerson himself was born in Boston, May 25, 1803; his father, Rev. William Emerson, being at that time and until his death in 1811, minister of the First Church congregation, which John Cotton had gathered in 1630. This church in 1803

* This escutcheon was carved on the tomb-stone of Nathaniel Emerson (brother of Rev. Joseph Emerson) at Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he died in 1712, at the age of eighty-three. In 1709, Richard Dale, a London herald, certified this as the correct escutcheon, and it has since been used by some branches of the Emerson family.

assembled in the Old Brick Meeting-house on Washington street, close by the Old State-house, but soon removed to a site near the parsonage-house, at the corner of Summer and Chauncy streets, in which Mr. Emerson was born. This house has been taken down, and so has the new parsonage-

Emerson of Concord married his successor in the parish, Dr. Ripley, who thus became the guardian of young William Emerson and his sisters. When, some thirty years after, Rev. William Emerson of Boston died, leaving six or seven young children, of whom Ralph Waldo was the third in age, Dr. Rip-



THE OLD MANSE.

house on the same estate, in which Mr. Emerson spent his childhood. His father, Rev. William Emerson of Boston, was born at Concord, in the parsonage-house of his father, Rev. William Emerson of Concord, famous as the Old Manse, since Hawthorne lived and wrote under its gambrel roof. It was then, a few years before the Revolution, a new and fine house, built for the young minister of Concord and his bride, Miss Phebe Bliss, the daughter of his predecessor in the parish, Rev. Daniel Bliss. The sketches given with this paper of its exterior and interior represent it as little different from what it was in 1775, when Mr. Emerson's grandfather went forth from its front door early on the morning of Concord fight, to join the farmers at their muster on his meeting-house green. It was in the same condition sixty years later when Ralph Waldo Emerson went to live in it, as he had done at intervals before.

About 1780, the widow of Rev. William

ley's parsonage at Concord became a second home to them,—their own home continuing in Boston and Cambridge until 1834, when, upon his return from England, Mr. R. W. Emerson took up his abode permanently in Concord. For a year or so he lived at the Old Manse with his grandfather, Dr. Ripley, and there his first book, "Nature," was chiefly written. In the latter part of 1835, after his marriage with Miss Lidian Jackson of Plymouth, he took possession of his own home on the Lexington road, east of the village, not far from the Walden woods, and has lived there ever since. The house was partially destroyed by fire a few years ago, but was rebuilt in its former shape and aspect. It stands among trees, with a pine grove across the street in front, and a small orchard and garden reaching to a brook in the rear. On the south-east side, from which the succeeding sketch is taken, it looks toward another orchard, on the edge of which formerly stood the picturesque sum-

mer-house built for Mr. Emerson in 1847-8 by his friend Mr. Bronson Alcott, but now for some years decayed and removed. The house itself is of wood,—a modest, home-like, comfortable residence, with small outlook, narrow grounds, and at some distance from Walden pond and the river—the two features of Concord scenery best known to the world, because most fully described by Thoreau and Hawthorne.

Mr. Emerson had dwelt in this home for seven years when Hawthorne, immediately upon his marriage with Miss Sophia Peabody in 1842, went to live in the Old Manse, of which he has given so charming a description. The general features of the landscape have also been described by him, as well as by Thoreau, by Ellery Channing, the poet, by Bronson Alcott, and by Emerson himself. Hawthorne said in 1843: "The scenery of Concord has no very marked characteristics, but a great deal of quiet beauty, in keeping with the river. There are broad and peaceful meadows, which, I think, are among the most satisfying objects in natural scenery. The heart reposes on them with a feeling that few things else can give, because almost all other objects are abrupt and clearly defined; but a meadow stretches out like a small infinity, yet with a secure homeliness which we do not find either in an expanse of water or of air. The hills which border these meadows are wide swells of land, or long and gradual ridges, some of them densely covered with wood. The white village appears to be embosomed among wooded hills. The river is one of the loveliest features in a scene of great rural beauty."

The sketch on page 500 is taken from one of these hills, and gives quite as much distinctness to the river and its meadows as to the village itself, beyond which, as this picture is drawn, lies the hill-side grave of Hawthorne and the houses of Emerson and Alcott. From the hill Nahshawtuc, on which the artist sat to sketch this view (and where the Indians used to encamp, between the two rivers, Assabet and Musketaquid, which flow under its north and south sides to form the Concord), one may see in the spring freshets that prospect which Thoreau described:

"Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is;
As lovely as the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples;
And in my neighbor's field of corn
I recognize the Golden Horn."

It was proposed by Thoreau that Concord should adopt for its coat-of-arms "a field verdant, with the river circling nine times round"; and he compared the slow motion of the stream to "the moccasined tread of an Indian warrior." Channing—who, since he came to reside in Concord, in 1841, has rambled over every foot of its ground with Thoreau, with Hawthorne, or with Emerson, and is one of the few persons who, as Thoreau thought, "understood the art of walking, that is, of taking walks; who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*"—Channing sings of these

"Peaceful walks
O'er the low valleys, seamed with long-past thrift,
And crags that beetle o'er the base of woods,
By rock and hill, low stream, and surly pitch
Of never-opening oaks."

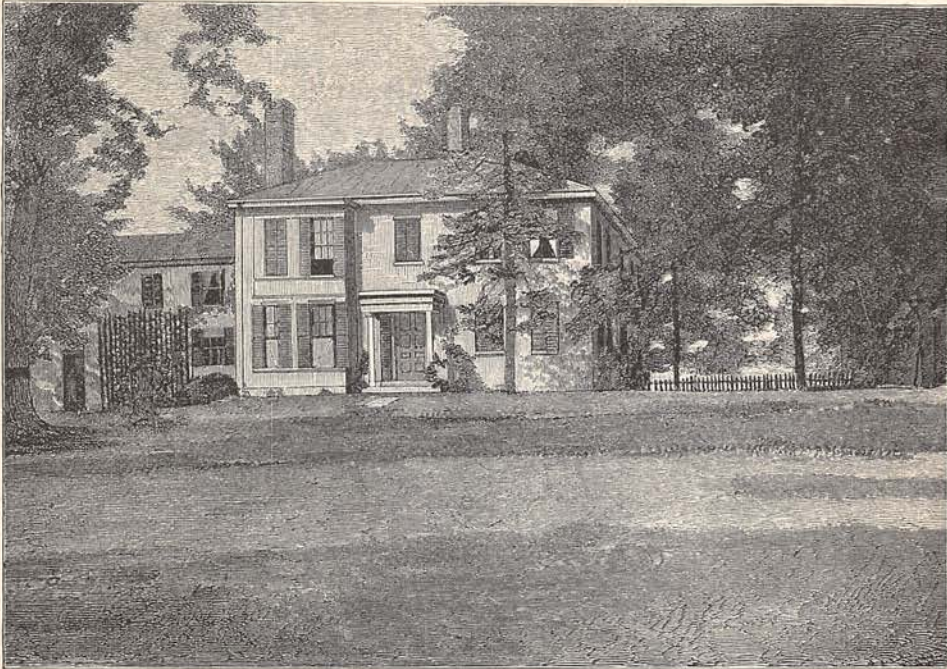
But Emerson himself, the first poet of Concord, if not of America, has drawn the landscape so familiar to him with the most truthful touches:

"Because I was content with these poor fields,
Low, open meads, slender and sluggish streams,
And found a home in haunts which others scorned,
The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,
And granted me the freedom of their state.
For me in showers, in sweeping showers, the
spring
Visits the valley;—break away the clouds,—
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream;
Beneath low hills, in the broad interval
Through which at will our Indian rivulet
Winds, mindful yet of sannup and of squaw,
Whose pipe and arrow oft the plow unburies.
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,
Blue-coated, flying before from tree to tree,
Courageous, sing a delicate overture
To lead the tardy concert of the year.
Onward and nearer rides the sun of May,
And wide around the marriage of the plants
Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain
The surge of summer's beauty; dell and crag
Hollow and lake, hill-side and pine arcade,
Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged cliff
Has thousand faces in a thousand hours."

Such is the picture presented to serene and hopeful eyes; but there is a different landscape, veiled with a sadder hue, which the same eyes have sometimes seen.

"In the long, sunny afternoon,
The plain was full of ghosts;
I wandered up, I wandered down,
Beset by pensive hosts.

"The winding Concord gleamed below,
Pouring as wide a flood
As when my brothers, long ago,
Came with me to the wood.



THE EMERSON HOUSE.

“But they are gone, the holy ones,
Who trod with me this lovely vale;
The strong, star-bright companions
Are silent, low and pale.

“I touch this flower of silken leaf
Which once our childhood knew;
Its soft leaves wound me with a grief
Whose balsam never grew.”

Those whom Emerson commemorates in these lines were his earliest companions, his brothers Edward and Charles, with whom he rambled among the Concord woods and streams in his boyhood and youth, from 1816 to 1836, when his youngest brother Charles died. A few years later—perhaps in 1838—his friend Alcott began to walk the hill-tops and wood-paths with him; in 1839 he became intimate with his young townsman, Henry Thoreau, then just setting forth with his brother John to explore the rivers Concord and Merrimac; and in 1841 Ellery Channing, returning eastward from the prairies of Illinois and the banks of the Ohio, made his home in a cottage, not far from Mr. Emerson's house. Hawthorne, as before mentioned, came first in 1842; he left Concord for Salem in 1846, but returned thither twice, in 1852 and finally, in 1860, when he came back from England. Between 1836 and 1846 Margaret Fuller was a frequent visitor in Concord, and a companion of Mr. Emerson and his friends. Hawthorne's note-

book records that in August, 1842, while returning through the woods from Mr. Emerson's house to the Old Manse, he encountered Margaret reading under a tree in “Sleepy Hollow”—the little park that has since become a cemetery, in which Hawthorne himself is buried. As they sat talking on the hill-side, not far from his future grave, “we heard,” he says, “foot-steps on the high bank above us, and while the person was still hidden among the trees he called to Margaret. Then he emerged from his green shade, and behold! it was Mr. Emerson, who said ‘there were Muses in the woods to-day, and whispers to be heard in the breezes.’ It being now nearly six o'clock, we separated,—Mr. Emerson and Margaret toward his home, and I toward mine.”

This anecdote may serve to call attention to a habit of Emerson, in which he agrees with Wordsworth. When a traveler asked to see the old poet's study, his servant answered—“Here is Mr. Wordsworth's library, but his study is out-of-doors.” It was for many years Mr. Emerson's custom to pass his mornings in his library, and his afternoons in the open air, walking alone or with a friend across the pastures and through the woods which encircle the village on all sides. Behind the first range of these woods to the southward lies the fair lake called

Walden, along whose shores Mr. Emerson owns some acres of woodland, so that he may look upon Walden as his own domain. His favorite walk has been to these woods and around this pond; and on the farther shore, opposite the cove where Thoreau built his cabin in 1845, Mr. Emerson once purposed to build a lodge or summer-house, for study and for the lovely prospect. The sketch of Walden given on page 504 was drawn from a point in the Emerson wood-lot, looking south-east across the water to the Emerson wood-lot on the other side, where the lodge, had it been built, was to stand. For some years, just before Thoreau's death in 1862, Mr. Emerson kept his boat in the cove beside which his friend's cabin had stood, and from this they now and then rowed forth together.

"Here sometimes gliding in his peaceful skiff
 Climené sails, heir of the world, and notes
 (In his perception that no thing escapes)
 Each varying pulse along Life's arteries,
 Both what she half resolves, and half effects,
 As well as her whole purpose. To his eye,
 The stars of many a midnight heaven have
 beamed
 Tokens of love, types of the soul. He saw
 In those far-moving barks on Heaven's sea,
 Radiates of force; and while he moved from
 man
 Lost on the eternal billow, still his heart
 Beat with some natural fondness for his race."

As Mr. Emerson was one day walking with a young friend along the railroad track

that dykes Walden on the south-west, he threw a stone into the green water and repeated his own lines, which had not then been printed:

"He smote the lake to please his eye
 With the beryl beam of the broken wave;
 He flung in pebbles, well to hear
 The moment's music which they gave."

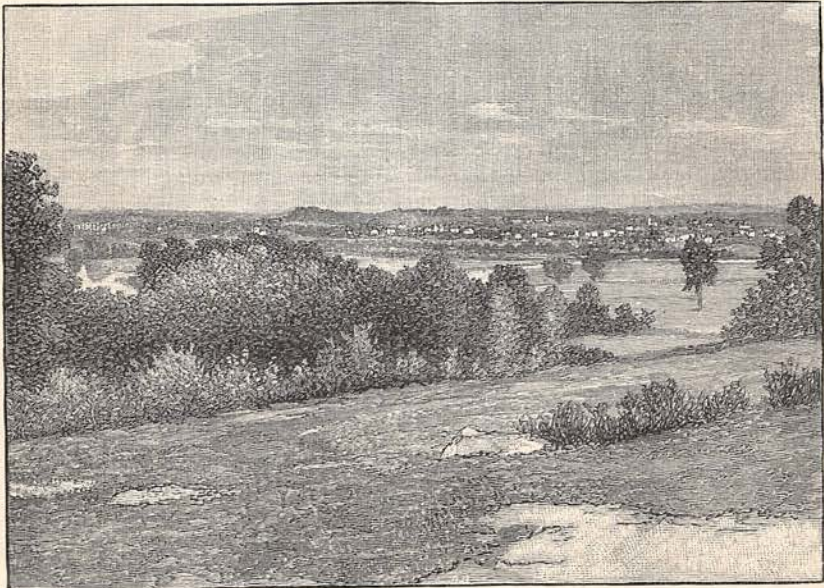
In one of his later poems, called "My Garden," he thus speaks of Walden and its wooded banks:

"My garden is a forest ledge
 Which older forests bound;
 The banks slope down to the blue lake edge,
 Then plunge to depths profound.

Waters that wash my garden side
 Play not in Nature's lawful web,
 They heed not moon or solar tide,—
 Five years elapse from flood to ebb."

The allusion here is to the mysterious rise and fall of the water in Walden, quite regardless of rain or drought, being sometimes at its highest in a dry summer, and at its lowest when all other streams and ponds are full. It seems to be fed by secret springs, and to have a hidden outlet.

When, at one period in his life, it became necessary for Mr. Emerson to decide in what town or city he would fix his abode, he said, "I am by nature a poet, and, therefore, must live in the country." His choice of Concord for a home was simple



CONCORD FROM LEE'S HILL.

and natural; it had been the home of his ancestors, the paradise of his childhood, and no other scenery could have been more in harmony with his genius. He found there the familiar beauty of nature and the freedom from social forms which the idealist needs; while his native city was still so near that he could resort to it or welcome his friends from it as often as his way of life required. For a few years before establishing himself in Concord, in 1834, he had been the minister of a parish in Boston, and for some years after his retirement there he continued to preach occasionally in pulpits not far from home. Gradually his pulpit became the lecture platform, from which, in Boston and in a hundred other cities and villages, he read those essays that, since 1840, have appeared in his books. His poems first began to be printed in the "Dial," a quarterly review established by him and his friends in 1840, and continuing four years. The first volume of poems was published in 1847; the second in 1867; a third, containing the most, but not all of these two volumes, came out in 1876, with a few new poems, the most important of which was his "Boston," first read at Faneuil Hall in December, 1873, when the poet had more than completed his three-score years and ten. It had been written about ten years earlier, however, as part of a longer poem not yet published. Several of his poems have long remained unpublished, among them one read in Cambridge more than forty years ago. He began to write verses very early, and, in the biography of his friend, Mrs. Samuel Ripley, we find the first of his lines that were ever printed. They are a translation made in May, 1814, when he was just eleven years old, from the fifth eclogue of Virgil. The passage translated begins:

*Sed tu desine plura puer; successimus antro,
Extinctum Nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnin
Flebant: vos coruli testes, et flumina Nymphis.*

This is Waldo Emerson's version of it, if, as I suppose, he translated it, and did not copy from some elder translator:

"Turn now, O youth! from your long speech
away;
The bower we've reached recluse from sunny ray.
The Nymphs with pomp have mourned for Daph-
nis dead;
The hazels witnessed and the rivers fled.
The wretched mother clasped her lifeless child,
And gods and stars invoked with accents wild.
Daphnis! The cows are not now led to streams
Where the bright sun upon the water gleams,



THE OLD NORTH BRIDGE REBUILT.

Neither do herds the cooling river drink,
Nor crop the grass upon the verdant brink.
O Daphnis! Both the mountains and the woods,
The Punic lions and the raging floods
All mourn for thee—for thee who first did hold
In chariot reins the spotted tiger bold."

There are ten more lines, but these are enough to show the smoothness of the verse and the freedom of the translation. It was written in continuation of a version made by Mrs. Ripley herself (then Miss Sarah Bradford), whose letter accompanying her own verses furnishes an agreeable picture of the young poet's occupations at the Boston Latin school. Miss Bradford, then not quite twenty-one years old, had read by herself and for her own delight not only Virgil and Horace and Juvenal in Latin, but Homer, Theocritus, Euripides and Sophocles in Greek, and Tasso in Italian. She writes thus to her friend's nephew, who afterward became her own nephew by marriage:

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND:—You love to trifle in rhyme a little now and then; why will you not

continue this versification of the fifth Bucolic? You will answer two ends, or, as the old proverb goes, kill two birds with one stone,—improve in your Latin, as well as indulge a taste for poetry. Why can't you write me a letter in Latin? But Greek is your favorite language; *Epistola in lingua Græca* would be still better. All the honor will be on my part, to correspond with a young gentleman in Greek. Only think of how much importance I shall feel in the literary world! Tell me what most interests you in Rollin; in the wars of contending princes, under whose banners you enlist, to whose cause you ardently wish success. Write me with what stories in Virgil you are most delighted. Is not that a charming one of Nisus and Euryalus? I suppose you have a Euryalus among your companions; or don't little boys love each other as well as they did in Virgil's time? How beautifully he describes the morning! Do write to your affectionate friend

SARAH.*

Amid such pursuits as this letter indicates, Waldo Emerson passed his boyhood, in his native city of Boston, then a town of greater fame than magnitude or wealth, but of a spirit greater than either. As he then saw it he has sung it, and the memory of that Boston will be best preserved in his nervous lyrical verse:

"The rocky nook with hill-tops three
Looked eastward from the farms,
And twice each day the flowing sea
Took Boston in its arms;
The men of yore were stout and poor,
And sailed for bread to every shore.

"And where they went, on trade intent,
They did what freemen can;

* Miss Bradford married the uncle of Waldo Emerson, Rev. Samuel Ripley, in 1818, and lived in his parish at Waltham until the spring of 1846, when they removed to the Old Manse in Concord, which Hawthorne had just left vacant. It had been the early home of Mr. Ripley, whose father, Rev. Doctor Ripley, had married Mrs. Emerson, grandmother of Waldo Emerson. In this picturesque residence Mrs. Ripley spent the rest of her life, dying at the age of seventy-four. She continued to be one of the most intimate friends of Mr. Emerson and his circle of companions, and for many years she spent her Sunday evenings at his house. She was the most learned woman ever seen in New England, and, at the same time, the sweetest and the most domestic. Closely associated with her for more than twenty years was Miss Elizabeth Hoar (a sister of Judge Hoar and of Senator Hoar, and the betrothed of Charles Emerson, who died in 1836)—a woman also of much learning, of a tender and self-renouncing nature and of the warmest affections. These ladies, with Mrs. Emerson, and with the younger friends and kindred who clustered about them, gave to the society of Concord the perfect charm of womanly grace and domestic sentiment, to which Margaret Fuller added a sibylline quality, and Mrs. Alcott a practical benevolence not less rare. Mrs. Alcott died in 1877, Miss Hoar in 1878, Mrs. Ripley in 1867, and all are buried among the pines on the summit or the slope of the hill where Hawthorne and Thoreau are buried.

Their dauntless ways did all men praise,
The merchant was a man.
The world was made for honest trade,—
To plant and eat be none afraid.

"We grant no dukedoms to the few,
We hold like rights, and shall;—
Equal on Sunday in the pew,
On Monday in the Mall.
For what avail the plow or sail,
Or land, or life, if freedom fail?"

* * *

"The sea returning, day by day,
Restores the world-wide mart;
So let each dweller on the Bay
Fold Boston in his heart,
Till these echoes be choked with snows,
Or over the town blue ocean flows.

"Let the blood of her hundred thousands
Throb in each manly vein;
And the wit of all her wisest
Make sunshine in her brain.
For you can teach the lightning speech
And round the globe your voices reach!"

Here the Boston of the eighteenth century finds itself connected with that of the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the period of Emerson's life in that city was the connecting link between the two. Born there in 1803, he left it in 1833, when it had grown from a town of 25,000 to a city of 65,000; it now numbers more than 350,000. It has given birth to no poet greater than Emerson, although Poe and Channing, Sprague and the elder Dana were also born there; and none of its poets have so well understood and illustrated its peculiar spirit. He breathed in its atmosphere and its traditions as a boy, while he drove his mother's cow to pasture along what are now the finest streets. He learned his first lessons of life in its schools and churches; listened to Webster and Story in its courts, to Josiah Quincy and Harrison Gray Otis in its town-meetings at Faneuil Hall; heard sermons in the Old South Meeting-house, and, in the years of his pastorate in Boston, sometimes preached there. I find, for example, that he gave the "charity lecture" at the Old South on the first Sunday of June, 1832. He was then, and had been for some time, one of the school committee of Boston; a few years earlier he was the chaplain of the Massachusetts Senate. After his graduation at Harvard College, in 1821, he had taught in his brother's school for young ladies, in Boston. This school was in Federal street, near the church of Doctor Channing, where in after years Mr. Emerson occasionally preached. He studied divinity, nominally with Doctor Channing; but the great preacher of the Unitarians took very little

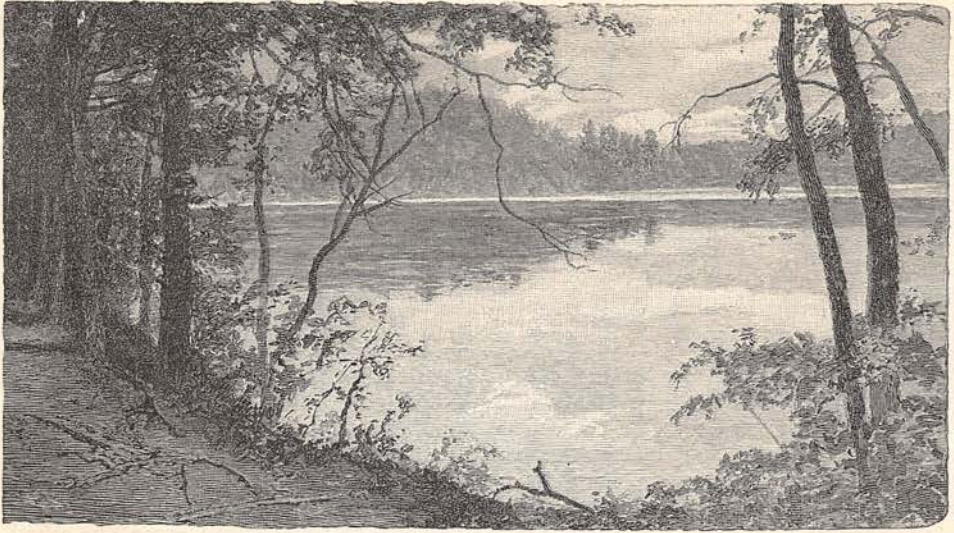
supervision of his studies. His own parish was at the North End, in Hanover street,—the same over which Cotton Mather and his father, Increase Mather, had preached in the time of Franklin. The Boston of history was a small place, and its famous men lived in sight of each other's houses. Franklin was born within gun-shot of where Emerson and Samuel Adams and Wendell Phillips were born; and Morse, the inventor of the electric telegraph, who could "teach the lightning speech," was born in Charlestown, just across the river from Mr. Emerson's parish.

The young scholar who, at the age of eleven, loved "to trifle in rhyme," and whose favorite language was Greek, entered college at fourteen and was graduated at eighteen. He continued to write verses during his boyhood and youth, and in college wrote two poems as exercises, one of which was to be given at a public exhibition. Being required to show this to his professor (who was Edward Channing, brother of the famous Doctor Channing), the only criticism made upon it was, "You had better write another poem." "What a useless remark was that!" said Mr. Emerson afterward; "he might at least have pointed out to me some things in my verses that were better than others, for all could not have been equally bad." He added that he received in college very little instruction or criticism from the professors that was of value to him, except from Edward Everett, who was then Greek professor, and who had newly returned from Europe, full of learning and enthusiasm. For a year his tutor in mathematics was Caleb Cushing, since so conspicuous in Massachusetts politics. In studying divinity, from 1823 to 1827, he heard the lectures of Professor Norton, and derived benefit from his criticisms. He profited most, however,—as he thought, and as his sermons will show,—from the preaching and the conversation of Doctor Channing, of whom he has spoken as one of the three most eloquent men he ever heard, the others being Daniel Webster and Wendell Phillips. His own pulpit eloquence was singularly attractive, though by no means equally so to all persons. In 1829, before the two friends had met, Mr. Bronson Alcott heard him preach in Doctor Channing's church, on "The Universality of the Moral Sentiment," and was much struck, as he said, "with the youth of the preacher, the beauty of his elocution, and the direct and sincere manner in which he addressed his hearers." This particular sermon was probably one

that he had written in July, 1829, concerning which he had said to a friend, while writing it: "I am striving hard to-day to establish the sovereignty and self-existent excellence of the Moral Law in popular argument, and slay the Utility swine." It is possible, therefore, that he may have taken a tone toward the Utilitarians which gave some ground for a remark made, not long after, by the wife of a Boston minister with whom Mr. Emerson exchanged. "Waldo Emerson came last Sunday," said this lady, "and preached a sermon for G—— with his chin in the air, in scorn of the whole human race." But the usual tone of his discourses could never justify this peevish criticism. Some years later, when he was preaching plain sermons to a small country congregation at Lexington, which was waiting to settle another minister (Mr. Emerson having declined to settle there), some one asked a woman in the parish why they had not invited Mr. A—— (a learned and eloquent preacher, since become famous). She replied with the greatest sincerity, "You do not consider what a simple, plain people we are; we can hardly understand any minister except Mr. Emerson." Only two or three of the sermons preached by him have ever been printed. That which he gave in his church September 9, 1832, when resigning his pastorate because of his scruples concerning the rite of the Lord's Supper, has been published in Mr. Frothingham's "Transcendentalism in New England."

Mr. Emerson began preaching as a candidate, and for the supply of pulpits casually vacant, in 1827. In November of that year he preached three Sundays for Dr. Dewey, then settled in New Bedford; and on Thanksgiving Day he preached for his uncle, Rev. Mr. Ripley, at Waltham. In April, 1828, he supplied the Concord pulpit of Doctor Ripley for two Sundays, and attended funerals and other pastoral services, during his grandfather's absence at the South. Later in the year 1828 he was invited to become the colleague of Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., in the Second Church at Boston, and accepted the call. He was ordained there early in 1829, Doctor Ripley giving the "charge" upon that occasion.*

* Mr. Emerson had asked Doctor Ripley to preach his ordination sermon, as he had preached that of his father, Rev. William Emerson at Harvard in 1792, but his aged kinsman declined, saying: "My son Sam has never been invited to preach an ordination sermon; I should prefer you would ask him." Rev. Samuel Ripley therefore preached the sermon and his father gave the charge.



WALDEN POND.

In course of it he said, "It may be asked 'Why is this service assigned to one so aged, and so little conversant in this metropolis?' Because I was the friend and successor of your excellent grandfather, and became the legal parent and guardian of his orphan children; because I guided the youthful days, directed the early studies, introduced into the ministry, witnessed the celebrity and deeply lamented the early death of your beloved father; and because no clergyman present can feel a livelier interest or purer joy, on seeing you risen up in his stead, and taking part with us in this ministry in your native city, where his eloquent voice is still remembered, and his memory affectionately cherished."* Of the son he said: "We cheerfully express our joy at the ordination of one whose moral, religious and literary character is so fair and promising. We cherish the expectation that you will make laudable progress in everything good and excellent,—that you

* Pulpit eloquence and literary skill were hereditary in the Emerson family. Both the father and the grandfather of Mr. R. W. Emerson were noted for these. An aunt of his was once passing through Concord in the stage-coach, not long after the Revolution, when one of her fellow-passengers, a stranger, inquired who preached in the village church, which he saw from the window. Being told that it was the successor of Rev. William Emerson of Concord, he said: "I once heard that minister preach in that church the most eloquent sermon I ever listened to,"—a compliment to her father which greatly pleased Miss Mary Emerson. This lady had much to do with the early education of Mr. R. W. Emerson and his brothers, and was herself one of the best writers of her time.

will be a wise teacher and an affectionate pastor. Your life must be a continuous lecture on piety and goodness, on personal virtues and relative duties. Your religion must be carried into the elegant houses of the opulent, and the humble dwellings of the poor. You must be quick to discern and embrace opportunities to instruct the youth, to teach the children, and, like our Savior, to take little ones into your arms and bless them. This branch of duty will be easier to you than to most ministers, both from natural disposition and habit." And then, as if with the spirit of prophecy, this venerable man added: "Professing Christians may censure you and exclude you from the arms of their charity. You will find it a serious trial to be deemed and treated as one whose belief and preaching are dangerous to the souls of your hearers,—to be daily misrepresented, and your usefulness impeded; to be denied the Christian name, and pointed at before ignorant people as a moral pestilence." This was what did in fact happen to Mr. Emerson after he found himself unable to accept the creed and perform the rites of the sect to which he belonged; and a painful controversy, in which he took little part, followed the preaching of his sermon explaining his personal views of the Lord's Supper, in September, 1832.

He finally bade farewell to his Boston parish in December, 1832, and early in 1833 embarked on his first voyage to Europe. He sailed up the Mediterranean in a vessel bound for Sicily, and went as far eastward

as Malta. Returning through Italy, France and England, he was at Florence in May, 1833, and in July he reached London.

Mr. Emerson's health, which had always been delicate, and which in 1832 had been greatly affected by bereavement and controversy, was quite restored by this sea-voyage, and his intellectual horizon was widened by the experiences of travel. In Florence he met Horatio Greenough, the first great American sculptor, and dined with Walter Savage Landor, then "living in a cloud of pictures at his Villa Gherardesca." In London he saw Wellington in Westminster

of the soul." Had Goethe been living then, the young American "might have wandered into Germany also," but as it was, he returned to Boston in October, and the next year withdrew from his native city to Concord, as already mentioned. It was at this withdrawal, I suppose, that he wrote the often-quoted "Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home,"—in which occurs this contrast between Boston and Concord, between the city and the country:

"Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face,
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye,



EMERSON'S LIBRARY.

Abbey, at the funeral of Wilberforce, and called on Coleridge. He made a pilgrimage to the North to visit Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, and Carlyle at Craigenputtock in Scotland; where, in a sort of exile, sixteen miles from Dumfries, in Nithsdale, "amid desolate heathery hills, the lonely scholar nourished his mighty heart." Carlyle afterward spoke of that visit as if it were the coming of an angel; and from that day onward the two friends have corresponded with each other. In sight of Wordsworth's country, in August, 1833, Carlyle and Emerson "sat down and talked of the immortality

To supple Office low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

"I am going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God."

In his retreat at Concord, the poet's inspiration, which had been felt but little

during the period of Mr. Emerson's theological studies and pastoral duties, revisited him, and constantly returned for thirty years. When, in his twenty-first year, he sent a Christmas poem to a friend, he said: "If it were not that my Muse unluckily caught cold and died a few years since, these verses would be better."

From that time (1823) to 1835, few poems were written by him that he has owned or published. Some verses on "Fame" belong to this period, and the graceful verses "To Ellen at the South" were written before 1830. But from 1835 (when he first appeared as an author of aught but sermons), his verses began to be remarkable, though few. In April, 1836, he wrote the hymn for the dedication of the Concord battle-monument, in which occurs the immortal line:

"And fired the shot heard round the world."

In the same year he published "Nature," his first book, which is a prose poem from beginning to end, and which contains a few of those sententious couplets that were afterward so common in his volumes.

"A subtle chain of countless rings,
The next unto the farthest brings:
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose.
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form."

It is to an earlier period than this that some of the love-poems belong,—that for example, "To Eva," and those lines which, if we did not find them in his book, we should hardly suspect to be Emerson's, called "The Amulet." These two poems he retains in the latest printed selection from his published and unpublished verses, but excludes another, quite as charming, which may be cited here:

"Thine eyes still shined for me, though far
I lonely roved the land or sea:
*As I behold yon evening star,
Which yet beholds not me.*

"This morn I climbed the misty hill,
And roamed the pastures through;
How danced thy form before my path,
Amidst the deep eyed dew!

"When the red-bird spread his sable wing,
And showed his side of flame;
When the rose-bud ripened to the rose,
In both I read thy name."

No poet, ancient or modern, not even Shakspeare or Dante, has more clearly divined or expressed with more profound

utterance the nature of love than Emerson, though the poems in which he has expressly dealt with that passion are few. To be a poet is to be a lover, and the feminine Muse is but the unknown quantity in the poet's algebra, by which he expresses now this element, now that, in the indeterminate equation of love. Or, as Emerson better announces this mystery:

"The sense of the world is short,
Long and various the report,—
To love and be beloved."

In another epigram, not yet acknowledged by him, he has said:

"They put their finger on their lip,—
The Powers above;
The seas their islands clip,
The moons in Ocean dip,—
They love, but name not love."

In that masterly and mystical lyric, the "Ode to Beauty" (first published in the "Dial," for October, 1843), he pursues this theme farther, and, indeed, to the very limits of human insight:

"Who gave thee O Beauty
The keys of this breast,—
Too credulous lover
Of blest and unblest?
Say when in lapsed ages
Thee knew I of old?
Or what was the service
For which I was sold?
When first my eyes saw thee
I found me thy thrall,
By magical drawings,
Sweet tyrant of all!
*Love drinks at thy fountain
False waters of thirst;*
Thou intimate stranger!
Thou latest and first!

* * * * *

"Queen of things! I dare not die
In Being's deeps, past ear and eye,
Lest there I find the same deceiver,
And be the sport of Fate forever.
Dread Power, but dear! if God thou be,
Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me!"

Here is a flight of love-song beyond Sappho and Anacreon, or the Persian poets, and soaring in another poem ("The Celestial Love"), to a height still more transcendent:

"To a region where all form
In one only Form dissolves;
In a region where the wheel
On which all beings ride,
Visibly revolves;
Where the starred, eternal worm
Girds the world with bound and term;
Where unlike things are like;
Where good and ill,

And joy and moan,
Melt into one.
There Past, Present, Future shoot
Triple blossoms from one root."

From this ecstasy the passage is brief into that other kindred mood in which the parable of "Uriel" was written,—a myth that perpetually receives and needs interpretation :

"It fell in the ancient
periods
Which the brooding soul
surveys,
Or ever the wild Time
coined itself
Into calendar months and
days.

* * * *

A sad self-knowledge
withering fell
On the beauty of Uriel;
In heaven once eminent,
the god
Withdrew, that hour,
into his cloud;
Whether doomed to long
gyration
In the sea of generation,
Or by knowledge grown
too bright

To hit the nerve of feebler sight.
Straightway a forgetting wind
Stole over the celestial kind,
And their lips the secret kept,
If in ashes the fire-seed slept.

* * * *

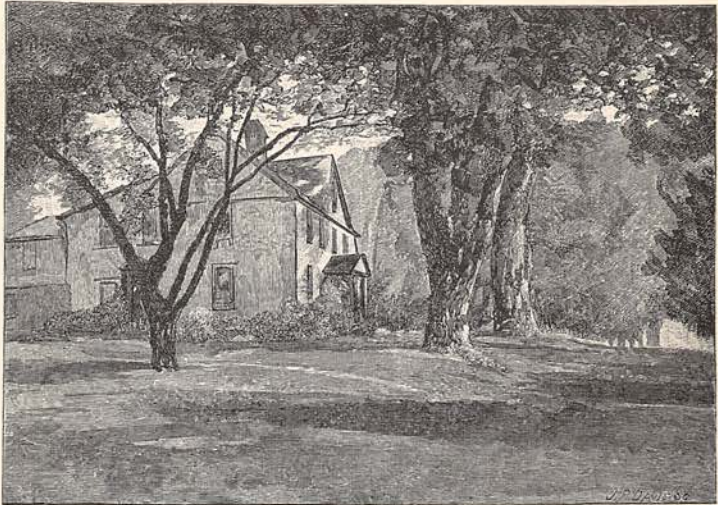
But now and then truth-speaking things
Shamed the angel's veiling wings;
And out of the good of evil born
Came Uriel's laugh of cherub scorn,
And a blush tinged the upper sky,
And the gods shook, they knew not why."

Verses like these revealed to all his discerning readers of poetry that a new poet had appeared, whose every utterance, be it better or worse, was a new surprise. In the same volume which contained the poems cited (published in 1847), appeared also "Merlin," wherein Emerson announced, in words not less dark and profound, his theory of the poet's mission. He was, among other things, to

"mount to Paradise
By the stair-way of surprise."

Wherever this new poet might be going, that was the stair-way he continually used; provoking admiration sometimes, sometimes a shudder, but more frequently laughter, among those who did not know him or understand him. The Philistines laughed at

his poems in the "Dial," where, from July, 1840, to July, 1844, he printed the best of his earlier verses. In 1843, writing about Wordsworth in his magazine he said, thinking perhaps of his own reception by the American critics,—“In the debates on the



THE ALCOTT HOUSE.

Copyright Bill, in the English Parliament, Mr. Sergeant Wakley, the coroner, quoted Wordsworth's poetry in derision, and asked the roaring House of Commons what that meant, and whether a man should have a public reward for writing such stuff." But Emerson, no more than Wordsworth, never listened to the derision and seldom to the advice of his critics. He would not conform to the age, but wrote on until the age should conform to his genius. As he predicts of the true bard, in "Merlin," so he has done before and since :

"He shall not seek to weave,
In weak, unhappy times,
Efficacious rhymes;
Wait his returning strength.
Bird, that from the nadir's floor
To the zenith's top can soar,
The soaring orbit of the Muse exceeds that
journey's length.
Nor, profane, affect to hit
Or compass that, by meddling wit,
Which only the propitious mind
Publishes when 'tis inclined."

Or, as he wrote in prose, in 1843, when reviewing his friend Carlyle's "Past and Present": "The poet cannot descend into the turbid present, without injury to his rarest gifts. Hence that necessity of isolation which genius has always felt. He must stand on

his glass tripod if he would keep his electricity." The same doctrine appears again and again in his verse and his prose,—in "Saadi," for example, which is his poetic autobiography :

"Now his memory is a den,
A sealed tomb from gods and men,
Whose rich secrets not transpire;
Speech should be like air and fire;
But to speak when he assays,
His voice is bestial and base;
Himself he heareth hiss or hoot,
And crimson shame him maketh mute;
But whom the Muses smile upon,
And touch with soft persuasion,
His words, like a storm-wind, can bring
Terror and Beauty on their wing.
Saadi! so far thy words shall reach,
Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech."

One may imagine "Saadi," as first published in the "Dial," and in the three editions of the "Poems" since, to be but the



The Entry of the
old Manser

torso of a work from which portions have been broken off here and there,—or which, having been wrought out piecemeal, has never been brought together by the author into a single whole. Every now and then, among the acknowledged or the unacknowledged

verses of Emerson, we find fragments of "Saadi," sometimes under other names,—for example, these :

"There are beggars in Iran and Araby,—
SAID was hungrier than all;
Men said he was a fly
That came to every festival.

His music was the south wind's sigh,
His lamp the maiden's downcast eye,
And ever the spell of beauty came
And turned the drowsy world to flame.

"Said melted the days in cups like pearl,
Served high and low, the lord and the churl;
Loved harebells nodding on a rock,
A cabin hung with curling smoke,
And huts and tents; nor loved he less
Stately lords in palaces,
Fenced by form and ceremony.

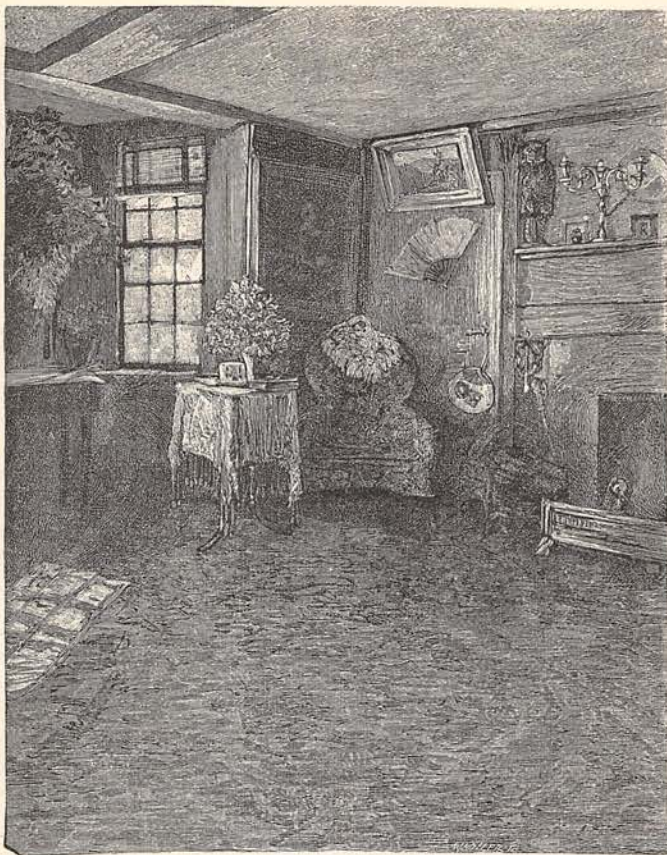
"Was never form and never face
So sweet to SEYD as only grace
Which did not slumber like a stone,
But hovered gleaming and was gone.
Beauty chased he everywhere,—
In flame, in storm, in clouds of air.

"While thus to love he gave his days
In loyal worship, scorning praise,
How spread their lures for him in vain
Thieving Ambition and paltering Gain!
He thought it happier to be dead,
To die for Beauty than live for bread.

"Said Saadi,—'When I stood before
Hassan the camel-driver's door,
I scorned the fame of Timour brave,—
Timour to Hassan was a slave.
In every glance of Hassan's eye
I read rich years of victory.
And I, who cower mean and small
In the frequent interval,
When wisdom not with me resides,
Worship toil's wisdom that abides.'

"Whispered the Muse in Saadi's cot,
'O gentle Saadi! listen not
(Tempted by thy praise of wit,
Or by thirst and appetite
For the talents not thine own),
To sons of contradiction.
Never, son of eastern morning,
Follow falsehood, follow scorning.
Denounce who will, who will, deny,
And pile the hills to scale the sky;
Let theist, atheist, pantheist,
Define and wrangle how they list,
Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer,—
But thou, joy-giver and enjoyer,
Unknowing war, unknowing crime,
Gentle Saadi, mind thy rhyme!
Heed not what the brawlers say,
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.'"

Without taking too literally this ideal portrait of a poet and scholar, it may serve as the picture of Emerson drawn by himself.



THE LEFT-HAND FRONT ROOM OF THE OLD MANSE.

In accord with this ideal, he has resolutely kept within the limits of his genius,—has avoided controversy, negation, applause, and the forcing of his talent beyond the measure of its powers. No man has disputed less, few have affirmed more. And while many have written much less than he that the world would gladly read, few have published less, in comparison with the great mass of papers which remain unprinted. Scarcely any of his numerous sermons have ever been published; most of his speeches on political and social occasions remain uncollected and unedited; many verses exist only in manuscript, or have been withdrawn from publication; and even of his lectures, from which he has printed freely, for nearly forty years, a great many still remain in manuscript. Even those published omit much that was spoken,—the fine lectures on History, on Love, and others, displaying so many omissions to those who heard them that the author was at the time sorely complained of by his faithful hearers

for leaving out so much that had delighted them. Few or none of the philosophical lectures read at Harvard University eight or nine years ago, and designed to make part of what Mr. Emerson calls "The Natural History of the Intellect," have ever been printed. This work when completed was to be the author's most systematic and connected treatise. It was to contain, what could not fail to be of interest to all readers, Mr. Emerson's observations on his own intellectual processes and methods, of which he has always been studiously watchful, and which, from his habit of writing he has carefully noted down. From this work, which even if not finished will at some time be printed, and from his correspondence of these many years, portions of which will finally be printed, it will be possible to reconstruct hereafter a rare and remarkable episode of literary history.

By far the largest part of all that has flowed from the pen of Emerson was written in the small library represented in the

sketch on page 505. Here too, the portrait of the poet was drawn by Mr. Eaton, in the hot afternoons of last July; while at evening in the adjoining parlor, to which the doors shown in the engraving lead, Mr. Alcott and his friend Dr. Jones, the Illinois Platonist, held conversations in a circle of Mr. Emerson's neighbors. In this house, indeed, have occurred more of those famous "conversations" of Mr. Alcott, than in any other place. Sometimes these Platonic dialogues have been carried on in the library itself, with the volumes of the Greek master looking down from the shelves upon his New England disciples, and the Sibyls of Raphael, with the Fates of Michael Angelo, glancing from the walls at the utterers of oracles as enigmatical as their own, if not so conclusive. Here have sat Margaret Fuller, Hawthorne, Whittier, Longfellow, Sumner, Thoreau, the Channings, the Lowells, Arthur Hugh Clough, Jones Very, Henry James and his sons, Louisa Alcott, Lord Amberley and his free-thoughted wife, the English Stanleys, the American Bradfords, Theodore Parker, Elizabeth Peabody, Julia Ward Howe, Wendell Phillips, John Brown, Wentworth Higginson, George William Curtis, Bret Harte, and hundreds more who have made for themselves a name in poetry, oratory, art, literature, or politics, in all parts of the world. To many of these men and women, and to thousands that have never distinguished themselves, Concord has been for years a Mecca, toward which their thoughts turned when their steps could not bend thitherward, but which has also been the shrine of their frequent pilgrimage. Hawthorne perceived and felt this tendency when he went in 1842 to dwell in the Old Manse, and he first, perhaps, described it. "Young visionaries," he said, "to whom just so much of insight had been imparted as to make life all a labyrinth around them, came to seek the clew that should lead them out of their self-involved bewilderment. Gray-headed theorists—whose systems, at first air, had imprisoned them in an iron frame-work—traveled painfully to his door, not to ask deliverance, but to invite the free spirit into their own thralldom. People that had lighted on a new thought, or a thought that they fancied new, came to Emerson, as the finder of a glittering gem hastens to a lapidary to ascertain its value. For myself, there had been epochs in my life when it, too, might have asked of this prophet the master-word that should solve me the

riddle of the universe; but now, being happy, I felt as if there were no question to be put, and therefore admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher." With a clearer perception, the result of a longer intimacy, the poet Channing has celebrated this part of Emerson's life:

"Not always went he lonely; for his thought
Retained the touch of one whose guest he was,—
A large and generous man, who, on our moors
Built up his thought (though with an Indian tongue,
And fittest to have sung at Persian feasts),
Yet dwelt among us as the sage he was,—
Sage of his days, patient and proudly true,—
Whose word was worth the world, whose heart
was pure.

Oh, such a heart was his! no gate or bar,—
The poorest wretch that ever passed his door,
Welcome as highest king or fairest friend,
To all his store, and to the world beside.
For if the genius of all learning flamed
Aloft in those clear eyes; if never hour,
Nor e'en the smallest instance of his times,
Could ever flit, nor give that soul reward;
Yet in his sweet relations with his race
Pure mercy lived. * * * * *
The merest waif from nothing, cast upon
The shores of this rich heart, became a gem,
So regal then its setting."

Mr. Alcott also has said his word about this hospitality of the friend, with whom his own name is so inseparably associated that when we think of Alcott we must remember Emerson. Their houses have stood for many years in the same neighborhood,—Mr. Alcott's being the very farm-house, under the hill-side on the Lexington road, which Hawthorne takes as the abode of one of his heroes in "Septimius Felton." Like Hawthorne's own "Wayside" just beyond, it long ago received from Alcott's graceful hand alterations and additions that converted the plain cottage into a picturesque home for thought and literature. In this house, embowered in orchards and vines and overtopped by the familiar pine-wood of the Concord landscape, Mr. Alcott once wrote thus concerning Mr. Emerson:

"Fortunate the visitor who is admitted of a morning for the high discourse, or permitted to join the poet in his afternoon walks to Walden, the Cliffs, or elsewhere,—hours to be remembered as unlike any others in the calendar of experiences. Shall I describe them as sallies oftentimes into the cloud-lands,—into scenes and intimacies ever new, none the less novel nor remote than when first experienced?—interviews, however, bringing their own trail of perplexing thoughts,—costing some days' duties, several nights' sleep oftentimes, to restore one to his place and poise. Certainly safer not to venture without the sure credentials, unless one will have his pretensions pricked, his conceits

reduced in their vague dimensions. But to the modest, the ingenuous, the gifted—welcome! nor can any bearing be more poetic and polite to all such,—to youth and accomplished women especially. His is a faith approaching to superstition concerning admirable persons, the rumor of excellence of any sort being like the arrival of a new gift to mankind, and he the first to proffer his recognition and hope. He, if any, must have taken the census of the admirable people of his time, numbering as many among his friends as most living Americans; while he is already recognized as the representative mind of his country, to whom distinguished foreigners are especially commended when visiting America.”

To which may be added Emerson's own hint in “Saadi”:

“Simple maids and noble youth
Are welcome to the man of truth;
Most welcome they who need him most,
They feed the spring which they exhaust,
For greater need
Draws better deed;
But, critic, spare thy vanity,
Nor show thy pompous parts
To vex with odious subtlety
The cheerer of men's hearts.”

This poem was written in the fullness of manly strength, near the outset of Emerson's literary career. Throughout the verses of that period there breathes no thought of age or weakness. They are like the utterance of

“Olympian bards who sung
Divine Ideas below,
Which always find us young
And always keep us so.”

But age came surely on, though slower than with most men, and was perceived by the poet himself, before any of his listeners saw the autumnal shadow. More than twelve years ago, in his poem “Terminus,” Emerson accepted the warning and declared anew, in advance of old age, his youthful faith:

“Economize the failing river,—
Not the less adore the Giver;
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise, accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still pian and smile,
And, fault of novel germs,
Mature the unfallen fruit.

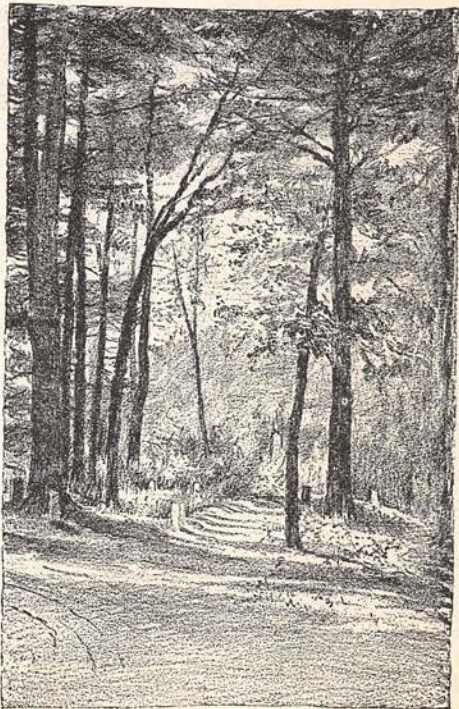
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As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime;
Lowly faithful, banish fear.
Right onward drive unharmed;
*The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed.”*

Mr. Eaton's portrait well presents the aged poet, now passing into silence, whose voice, from first to last, has been in this lofty key.

It will be for posterity to fix his rank among the poets of the world, but that he must rank among them, and in no obscure place, is certain. With that proud humility which distinguishes him among his contemporaries, and in allusion to the few readers that his poems have yet found, he said in October last, “It has been settled that I cannot write poetry.” The friend to whom he said it asked, “Has that at last been determined?” “Yes, that is the voice of the public.” “It was not so reported to me,” said his friend; “I heard that you could write nothing else than poetry.” The wise old man smiled, as always when he hears a close reply, and said: “I suppose everybody who writes verses at all has had this experience,—you must have had it,—they sometimes wrote lucky verses which seem excellent to themselves, however they may appear to others,—so good that they do not get finished.” His hearer might have responded that the unfinished poems are always the best, that the great world is but one verse in an endless song, and that the briefest fragment of a noble strain is more imperishable than the heavens themselves:

“An unrequested star did gently slide
Before the wise men to a greater light.”

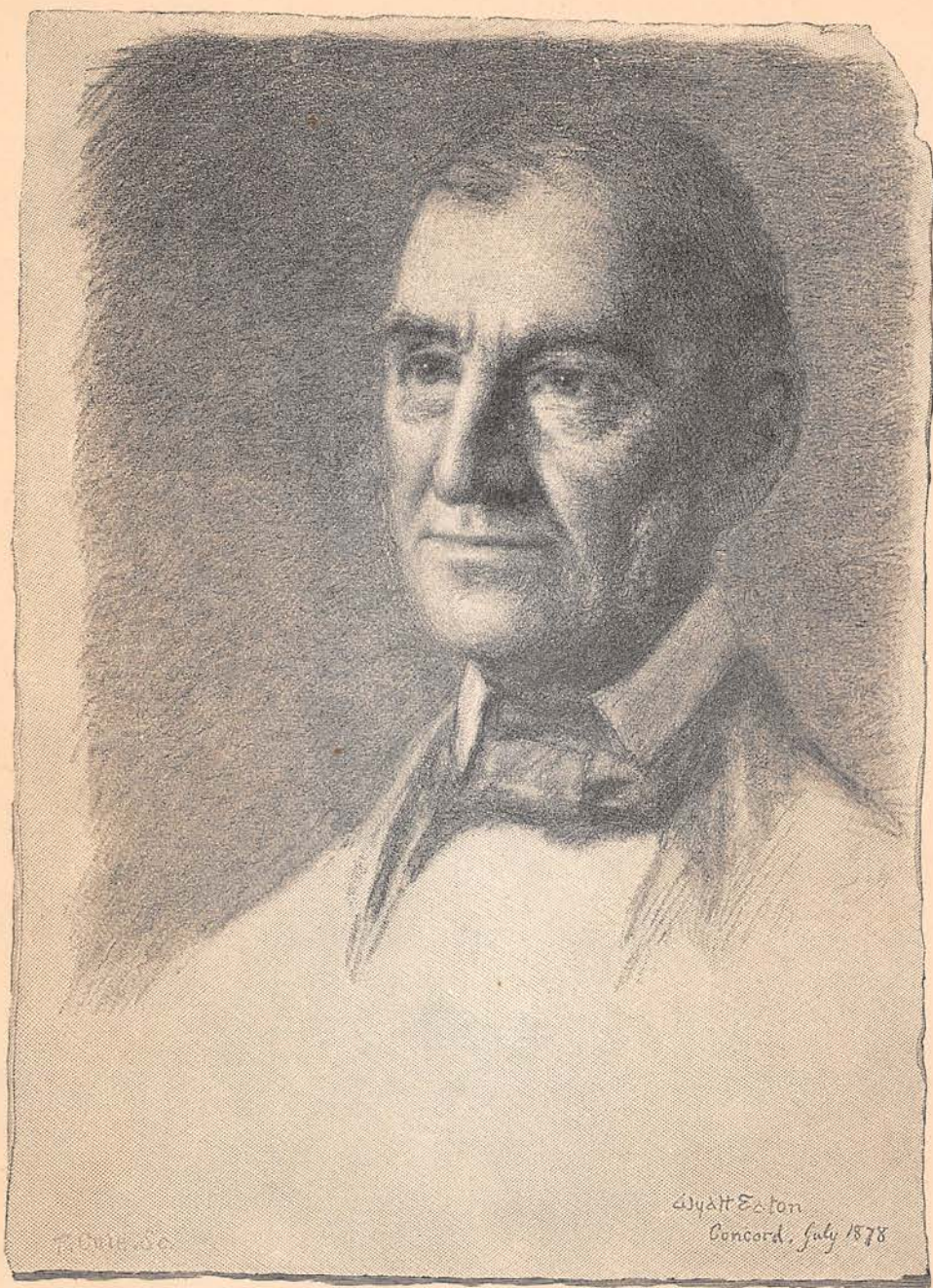


GRAVES OF HAWTHORNE AND THOREAU IN SLEEPY HOLLOW CEMETERY.

I see the inundation sweet,
I hear the spending of the stream
Through years, through men, through Nature
Through passion, thought, ^{flesh,} through power and dream.

R. Waldo Emerson

Concord, Massachusetts -
December 10, 1878



H. D. S. Co.

Wyatt Eaton
Concord, July 1878