

**HAYDN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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Haydn, and Other Poems by George Lansing Raymond

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GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND

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OTHER POEMS**

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BY

THE AUTHOR OF "LIFE BELOW."



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A.
DEDICATION TO A FRIEND,
AND AN
INTRODUCTION TO THE PUBLIC.

WHILE writing "Life Below," I was accustomed to place in your hands copies of the several books after their completion, in part for safe keeping, in part for the purpose of soliciting your friendly criticism. When I took them from you, in order to have them published, nothing could have been more appropriate for me than to return them to you in a public dedication. But older and weightier obligations claimed my first regard.

Now that the time has come when I can acknowledge the firm and disinterested friendship which encouraged me through struggles of apprenticeship, in connection with the acknowledgment I desire to express, in public, those conceptions of poetic thought and form upon which I have often dwelt in private. Not that I esteem them needed in order to interpret,

to appreciative minds, my poetry. I feel indebted much—and doubly so, because all happen to be strangers to myself—to writers who have ventured to express, in public periodicals, opinions of my works, as favorable, certainly, as could be reasonably expected. It is true that much injustice, also, has been done me, as I think, in many cases. What, for instance, is more aggravating and absurd than that a man, simply because he has exhibited the fidelity of the artist while delineating an experience imagined, should be taken to task not only for commending, but even for possessing, characteristics of which he fancies that he has expressed disapprobation rather, inasmuch as he has represented them in a fictitious character not only, but even thus under a process of chastisement and correction? However, if I be inclined to find fault with the critics, on the score of superficiality, I am deterred by the consideration that my own examination of each latest publication of a similar character is equally defective. If poetry be never fitly finished, as is true, until the author have submitted it to microscopic tests in order to detect and to obliterate the least suggestion of a flaw, it is not fitly criticized before the reader have applied his mind to it with tests of equal thoroughness. But such tests will not be applied to any book until, in some way, it can indicate that it is worthy of them. Such an indication, as it seems to me, is

best presented in the fact, that those who chance to read it once, re-read it. Wherefore is a book re-read? I think, since it expresses truth.¹ In popular phrase, men term the truth eternal. In it they find the sources of perennial freshness. And the degree in which a work of art embodies it, appears to me to measure the degree in which it can awaken a perennial interest.

And in the sphere of language, poetry, much more than prose, seems fitted to awaken such an interest; a fact which furnishes the key to all my theories presented at this time. The one who spake the truth in forms which have been held most sacred, and received most universally, spake never, we are told, without a parable. But parables are in poetic form. They illustrate a principle of real life through picturing how it operates in fancied circumstances. They indicate the workings of a law in one department or development of nature, through instancing its operations in analogous departments or developments. And parables are not exceptional examples confirming the esteem to which the truth, presented after such a method, is entitled. While new discoveries of successive epochs render obsolete the theories of

¹ Poetry, the flowering of literature, has a form, and, so to speak, an aroma peculiar to itself which cause it to appeal especially to the æsthetic faculty. Nevertheless truth will be found to constitute the root even of these qualities. See pages 6, 7.