

**LOWELL'S  
FIRESIDE TRAVELS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649145706

Lowell's Fireside travels by James Russell Lowell & F. A. Cavenagh & E. V. Lucas

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL & F. A. CAVENAGH & E. V. LUCAS**

# **LOWELL'S FIRESIDE TRAVELS**



LOWELL'S  
FIRESIDE TRAVELS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

E. V. LUCAS

AND NOTES BY

F. A. CAVENAGH

OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS  
1915

70 1911  
ANNALS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK

TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY

HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.

PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

DS 2318  
A1  
1915  
MAIN

## CONTENTS

|                                      | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION . . . . .               | 5    |
| CAMBRIDGE THIRTY YEARS AGO . . . . . | 23   |
| A MOOSEHEAD JOURNAL . . . . .        | 72   |
| AT SEA . . . . .                     | 109  |
| IN THE MEDITERRANEAN . . . . .       | 121  |
| ITALY . . . . .                      | 128  |
| A FEW BITS OF ROMAN MOSAIC . . . . . | 181  |
| EDITOR'S NOTES . . . . .             | 207  |

568823





## INTRODUCTION

### I

*Fireside Travels* was first published, in America and England, in 1864, when Lowell was forty-five and was already famous as a poet and a satirist. Most of its contents had been written ten years or so earlier. It has been republished since in America, but this is the first English reprint. I read it first—allured by the title—when I was seventeen. That was in a borrowed copy. On acquiring my ticket, some few years after, I sought it in the British Museum Reading Room as soon almost as any book, and liked it better still; and the other day I found in the Charing Cross Road a copy for sixpence, from which this edition has been made.

I have from time to time asked many readers, including Americans, if they know the book, and they nearly all have said no. That here, in England, we should have missed it, is natural enough, since the original edition of 1864 was probably very small and it was a foreign work at that; but it is odd that Americans have not cherished it more, as they have cherished *Among my Books* and *My Study Windows*, which, although they cover wider ground and have more to them, are not essentially either better literature or more entertaining. Certainly they

are less humorous. What is the reason? Is it that the star-spangled banner does not flap quite so energetically in these pages as it should? One has heard it whispered that his countrymen considered that Lowell's gaze turned eastward rather too naturally. . . .

Whatever the reason, the neglect of *Fireside Travels* on both sides of the Atlantic has been a mistake, for it has meant the loss of much wisdom and wit, fancy and learning, wise humanity and not a little beauty. Lowell, in my opinion, never wrote better than in some of these pages, and one might even go farther and say that some of these pages could not have been improved by any man. There are character sketches in the first essay that can be mingled—and indeed have been mingled by a recent anthologist—with those of Lamb himself without any injury from the juxtaposition. There are wayside impressions that rank with the best *aperçus* of travel that exist. But above all, the book is a book: the projection of a very interesting and understanding personality. That its author should have possessed such a warm and mellow culture, such a comprehensive humour and sweet reasonableness, at the age of only thirty-four, is remarkable. He grew older and he grew sadder, but his wisdom was fixed, and I doubt if he would have made any changes in this work had he revised it thirty years after—except perhaps to correct a few lapses into the 'and which' heresy and (I

hope) cut out the dreadful pun about Milton's blindness.

Indeed, that which strikes one peculiarly on every page is the book's modernity. It was written nearly six decades ago and it might be new to-day. Nor have its best things become commonplaces: they do not, as much good writing of this age often does, read like imitations of its own progeny, —wherein lies one advantage of falling almost unnoticed from the press. None the less I should not be surprised to hear a reader remarking upon it that it was very like Stevenson in parts, and no doubt it is like Lamb too, in others. In so far as watchfulness goes, Lowell certainly had affinity with both men. He had not Stevenson's flexibility: there are in this book signs of straining a little; the sentences, although they may not have been less carefully artficed than Stevenson's, do not succeed in disguising the effort so successfully; he is not all of a piece, as Stevenson was. But of course in sheer learning he left him far behind—and the ease with which he introduces his parallels and illustrations fetched from the remotest regions is astonishing. As for Lamb, undoubtedly he was a predecessor of the author of the first essay, but no more. The man who could write as this book is written from so affluent a mind and so understanding a heart was in no need of anything more than a stimulus. Lowell's essay on Cambridge was, in a tender humorist who loved the backward