

# **LETTERS AND SOCIAL AIMS**

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Letters and Social Aims by Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

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SOCIAL AIMS**



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AND  
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BY  
RALPH WALDO EMERSON.



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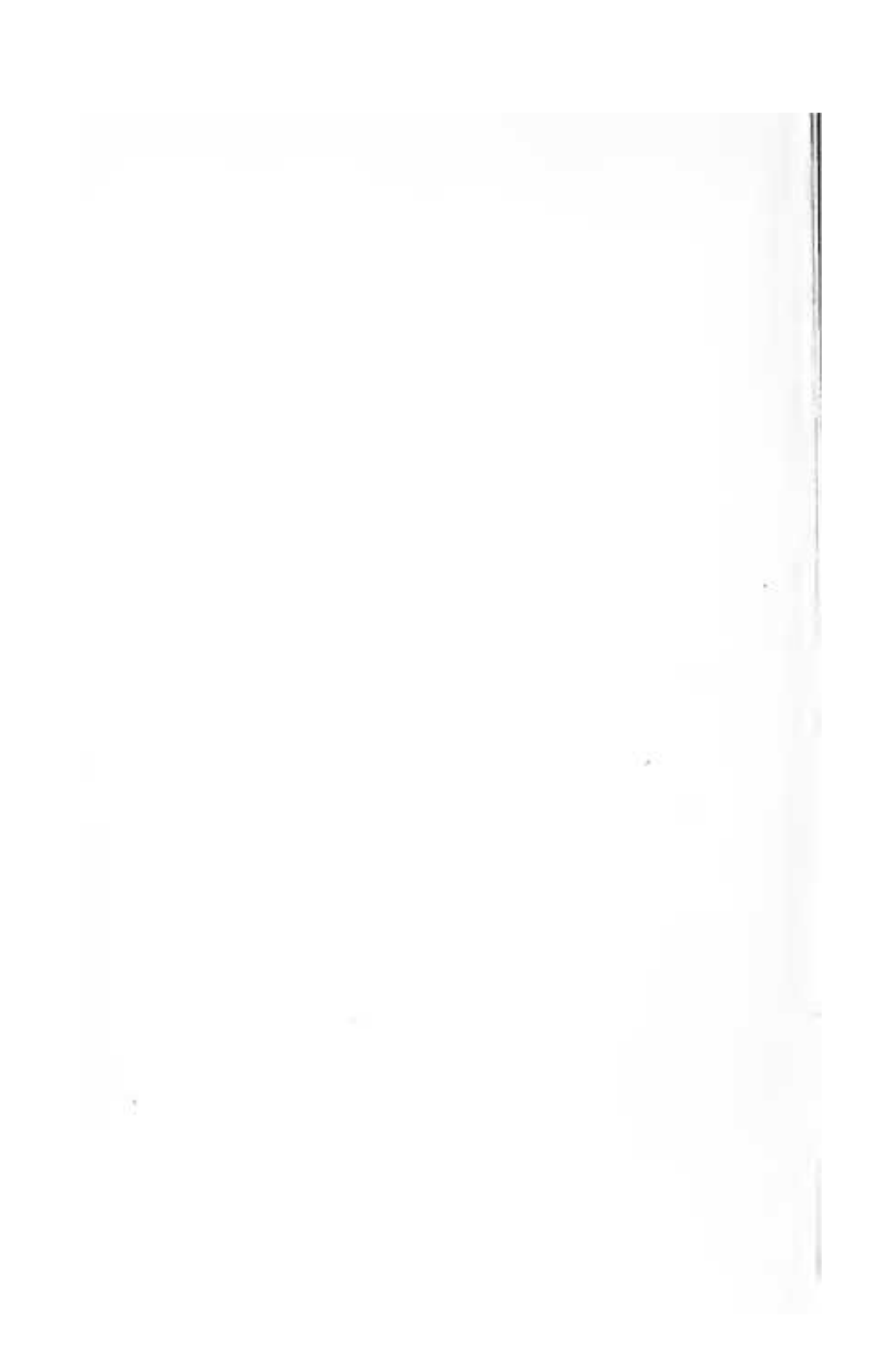


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POETRY AND IMAGINATION.



## POETRY AND IMAGINATION.

THE perception of matter is made the common-sense, and for cause. This was the cradle, this the go-cart, of the human child. We must learn the homely laws of fire and water; we must feed, wash, plant, build. These are ends of necessity, and first in the order of nature. Poverty, frost, famine, disease, debt, are the beadles and guardsmen that hold us to common-sense. The intellect, yielded up to itself, cannot supersede this tyrannic necessity. The restraining grace of common-sense is the mark of all the valid minds, — of Æsop, Aristotle, Alfred, Luther, Shakspeare, Cervantes, Franklin, Napoleon. The common-sense which does not meddle with the absolute, but takes things at their word, — things as they appear, — believes in the existence of matter, not because we can touch it, or conceive of it, but because it agrees with ourselves, and the universe does not jest with us, but is in earnest, — is the house of health and life. In spite of all the joys of poets and the joys of saints, the most imaginative and abstracted person never makes, with impunity, the least mistake in this particular, —