

# **A GLIMPSE AT WATERTOWN**

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A Glimpse at Watertown by Francis Leathe

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**FRANCIS LEATHE**

**A GLIMPSE  
AT WATERTOWN**



A GLIMPSE  
AT  
WATERTOWN.

BY A "NATIVE."

*Francis Sullivan.*

~~~~~  
"I come no more to make you laugh; things now  
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,  
Sad, high, and waking ———,"

SHAKESPEARE.

BOSTON:  
1851.

## P R E F A C E .

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DUGALD STEWART says, "*Our dreams are influenced by the prevailing temper of the mind,*" and quotes as an instance :

"— Agit ipso furentem,  
In somnis ferus Æneas, semper que relinquit,  
Sola sibi, semper longam incommittata videtur,  
Ire viam, et Tyrios desertâ quaerere terrâ."

In admitting this to be generally true, the author of the following pages feels bound to mention a single exception, which has occurred in his own personal experience. Before doing which, however, he will premise by stating, that from an actual phrenological survey of his cranium, by an itinerant artist who peddled "people's characters," done up in yellow covers, at the very low rate of one shilling, the fact was permanently established that his temperament was so far from being in the slightest degree *poetic*, that any attempt on his part at *rhyming* would meet with a most disastrous and mortifying defeat.

A few weeks since, at the close of a day spent in labor of a very prosaic nature, the author contrived to bring his mind to bear so exclusively upon subjects of a dry and uninteresting character, that he fell asleep in his chair, in which rather pleasant recreation he thinks he must have indulged for several hours, from the fact that when he awoke the fire had gone out and the candle had burnt to its socket. Upon collecting his somewhat deranged senses, he was impressed with the idea that he had been dreaming, and subsequent reflection

conducted to the belief that he had had a "*Glimpse at Watertown*" during his dream. A "lucifer," inflamed for the avowed purpose of aiding in the discovery of the precise locality of the bedstead, presented to him an object which, if not startling, was at least unexpected. Upon his table lay a quire of foolscap entirely written over. His first impulse, after reading a few lines, was to pronounce phrenology a humbug, and that he had been swindled out of a shilling. A moment's thought, however, served to convince him that though the Muse had favored him in his dreams, she had no idea of continuing her favors during his waking hours.

The following pages are an exact transcript of the manuscript found upon his table. In all criminal trials, (in these days of "spiritual knockings,") when everything else fails, and the case is altogether desperate, humanity suggests the plea of *somnambulism*. And certainly it is unreasonable to hold a man responsible for acts committed *while asleep*.

If then the reader finds fault with the rhyme, metre, sense, or sentiment, the author will only offer in defence that he does not consider himself in any degree responsible for acts committed by him while in a state of *somnambulism*.

## A GLIMPSE AT WATERTOWN.

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SOME soulless men, to gain an end —  
Their own peculiar tastes approve,  
Whom neither reason, shame can move,  
Will all their strongest efforts bend—  
Which shock e'en Satan to commend,  
Their influence most unkindly lend,  
That interest, morals, ne'er behoove.

To principle and interest blind,  
Senseless, heartless, selfish, mean,  
With souls impure and tongues unclean,  
They ever watch to wound mankind,—  
To enslave the soul and chain the mind  
Of those who different are inclined,  
Whoe'er to worth and virtue lean.

By envy, malice, avarice bent,  
The deeds we most abhor, they show ;  
Their very eyes with meanness glow ;  
Their minds on selfish ends intent,  
No threatening's loud their deeds prevent,



Their time in shameless labor spent,  
The cure of sin no care to know.

Their god is gold, and gold makes worth—  
They wish no better boon to gain,—  
'Twill wipe from man the foulest stain;  
'Twill hide the curse of moral dearth;  
Make misery the cause of mirth;  
To all the good of Heaven give birth,  
Make us from sins of Hell abstain.

And O ye men, ye *soulless* men!  
Ye soulless men I here chastise:  
"Let not your angry passions rise,"  
While I in detail here again,  
Declare the deeds ye ought to ken,  
Which help disgrace "the upper ten,"  
Nor raise at this the least surprise.

The best of motives guide my hand,  
While penning thus these measured lines;  
But when I see the base designs  
Which e'er appear at man's command,  
In every clime, in every land,—  
Designs the purest hearts to brand,  
No will my just contempt confine.

When in the world a wrong appears,  
No matter who the author be,

No matter what the author's plea,  
Whene'er the monster vice uprears  
Its hideous head which bites and sears,  
Let no base motives rouse your fears —  
Express your hatred bold and free.

Whene'er an honest man ye view  
With lofty thoughts and feelings true,  
Or high or low, or rich or poor,  
Let him your best regards secure ;  
O give an honest man his due,  
I'm sure you'll not this action rue,  
For of honest men there are but few  
To tax your patience to endure.

And now ye men of WATERTOWN,  
(For whom, in truth, these lines were penn'd,)  
I pray your fixed attention lend ;  
I know you'll fret, and snarl, and frown,  
I know you'll wander up and down,  
To find the author — if in town,—  
But cease your ire, he'll not be kenned.

Your faults have long enough been known,  
To be described in simple rhymes,  
And spread abroad in other climes,  
Lest you be in such folly grown,  
And it by bitter fruits be shown,  
That virtue from your homes has flown,  
And left a scene of sins and crimes.

Ye critics, too, don't take the pains  
To criticise these humble strains ;  
    You ne'er can wound a man like me,  
    Who makes no false pretence to be  
A poet, counting for his gains,  
And boasting of his gifted brains.  
In me the love of virtue reigns,—  
    Of real worth, of honesty.

Nor shall I sing of faults alone  
    Which stalk abroad in all your streets ;  
    Virtue shall with due praises meet.  
The foulest soil that e'er was known  
Is with some good intention sown,—  
Some lonely flower has sometimes blown,  
    And spread its fragrance pure and sweet.

Some "*Lot*" may in your precincts dwell,  
    To save your name from utter hate,—  
    Some few may much my scorn abate,  
But let these lines your conscience tell,  
To prize these friends of virtue well ;  
For no reward their presence sell,  
    But hold them in a high estate.

In good old times, in the ages that fade  
In the ever alluring oblivion's shade,  
A stern band of heroes, as ever were made,