

**THOREAU: THE POET-
NATURALIST, WITH
MEMORIAL VERSES**

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Thoreau: The Poet-Naturalist, with Memorial Verses by William Ellery Channing

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WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

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THE POET-NATURALIST.

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With Memorial Verses.

BY

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

"My greatest skill has been to want but little. For joy I could embrace the earth. I shall delight to be buried in it. And then I think of those among men, who will know that I love them, though I tell them not." —
H. D. T.

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1873.

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CAMBRIDGE:
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DEDICATION.

*Silent and serene,
The plastic soul emancipates her kind.
She leaves the generations to their fate,
Uncompromised by grief. She cannot weep :
She sheds no tears for us, — our mother, Nature !
She is ne'er rude nor vexed, not rough or careless ;
Out of temper ne'er, patient as sweet, though winds
In winter brush her leaves away, and time
To human senses breathes through frost.*

My friend !

*Learn, from the joy of Nature, thus to be :
Not only all resigned to thy worst fears,
But, like herself, superior to them all !
Nor merely superficial in thy smiles ;
And through the inmost fibres of thy heart
May goodness flow, and fix in that
The ever-lapsing tides, that lesser depths
Deprive of half their salience. Be, throughout,
True as the inmost life that moves the world,
And in demeanor show a firm content,
Annihilating change.*

*Thus Henry lived,
Considerate to his kind. His love bestowed
Was not a gift in fractions, half-way done ;
But with some mellow goodness, like a sun,
He shone o'er mortal hearts, and taught their buds
To blossom early, thence ripe fruit and seed.
Forbearing too oft counsel, yet with blows
By pleasing reason urged he touched their thought
As with a mild surprise, and they were good,
Even if they knew not whence that motive came ;
Nor yet suspected that from Henry's heart —
His warm, confiding heart — the impulse flowed.*

"Si tibi pulchra domus, si splendida mensa, quid inde?
 Si species auri, argentique quoque massa, quid inde?
 Si tibi sponsa decens, si sit generosa, quid inde?
 Si tibi sunt nati, si prædia magna, quid inde?
 Si fueris pulcher, fortis, dives ve, quid inde?
 Si doceas alios in quolibet arte, quid inde?
 Si lingua servorum inserviat ordo, quid inde?
 Si faveat mundus, si prospera cuncta, quid inde?
 Si prior, aut abbas, si dux, si papa, quid inde?
 Si felix annos regnes per mille, quid inde?
 Si rota fortunæ se tollit ad astra, quid inde?
 Tam cito, tamque cito fugiunt hæc ut nihil, inde?
 Sola manet virtus : nos glorificabimur, inde.
 Ergo Deo parè, bene nam provenit tibi inde."

LAURA BASSI'S

Sonnet on the gate of the Specola at Bologna.

"From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
 Earth lifts its solemn voice; but thou art fled,
 Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
 Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
 Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
 Now thou art not. Art and eloquence,
 And all the shows of the world, are frail and vain
 To weep a loss that turns their light to shade!
 It is a woe too deep for tears when all
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing spirit
 Whose light adorned the world around it leaves
 Those who remain behind nor sobs nor groans,
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were."

SHELLEY.

"The memory, like a cloudless sky,
 The conscience, like a sea at rest."

TENNYSON.

"Espérer ou craindre pour un autre est la seule chose qui donne
 à l'homme le sentiment complet de sa propre existence."

EUGÈNE DE GUÉRIN.

"For not a hidden path that to the shades
Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads
Lurked undiscovered by him ; not a rill
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,
But he had traced it upward to its source,
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,
Knew the gay wild-flowers on its banks, and culled
Its med'cinable herbs ; yea, oft alone,
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy."

COLERIDGE.

"Such cooling fruit
As the kind, habitable woods provide."

MILTON.

"My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I avail."

KEATS.

"Is this the mighty ocean ?— is this all ?"

LANDOR.

"Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch
At noise, but thrive unseen and dumb ;
Keep clean, bear fruit, earn life, and watch,
Till the white-winged reapers come."

VAUGHAN.

"No one hates the sea and danger more than I do ; but I fear
more not to do my duty to the utmost."— SIR ROBERT WILSON.

"The joyous birds shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempted sweet ;
Th' angelical soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine response meet,
With the low murmurs of the water's fall ;
The water's fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call ;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all."

SPENSER.

PREFACE.

DR. JOHNSON says that in the dedication to Harris's *Hermes*, of fourteen lines, there are six grammatical faults. This is as much as we could expect in an English pedant whose work treats of grammar; we trust our prologue will prove more drop-ripe, even if the whole prove dull, — dull as the last new comedy.

In a biographic thesis there can hardly occur very much to amuse, if of one who was reflective and not passionate, and who might have entered like Anthony Wood in his journal, "This day old Joan began to make my bed," — an entry not fine enough for Walpole. At the same time the account of a writer's stock in trade may be set off like the catalogues of George Robins, auctioneer, with illustrations even in Latin or —

"The learned Greek, rich in fit epithets,
Blest in the lovely marriage of pure words."

Byron's bath at Newstead Abbey is described as a dark and cellar-like hole. The halos about the brows of authors tarnish with time. Iteration, too, must be respected, — that law of Nature. Authors carry their robes of state not on their backs, but, like the Indians seen