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Philosophy and a Creed, by Arnold Haultain

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ATTEMPT TO FIND A PHILOSOPHY AND A CREED ***

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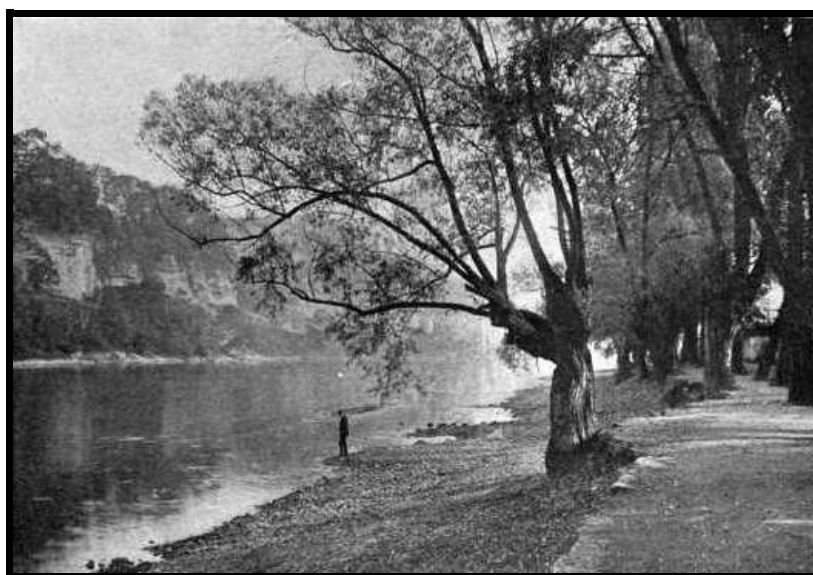
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ON THE BANKS OF THE RHONE

OF WALKS AND WALKING TOURS

*An Attempt to find a Philosophy
and a Creed*

BY
ARNOLD HAULTAIN
Author of "Hints for Lovers"
"The Mystery of Golf"
"Goldwin Smith: His Life and
Opinions"
Etc.



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1914

"De naturâ Rationis est res sub quâdam
aeternitatis specie percipere."

—SPINOZA, *Ethics*, Part II.,
Proposition xlv., Corollary ii.

PREFACE

The writing of this little book has given me a great deal of pleasure. That is why I hope that, here and there, it may give pleasure to others.

And yet it was not an easy task. Nature's lessons are hard to learn. Harder still is it to translate Nature's lessons to others. Besides, the appeal of Nature is to the Emotions; and words are weak things (save in the hands of a great Poet) by which to convey or to evoke emotion. Words seem to be the vehicles rather of ratiocination than of emotion. Is not even the Poet driven to link words to music? And always *le mot juste*, the exact word, is so difficult to find! Yet found it must be if the appeal is to avail.

If, in these pages, there are scattered speculations semi-mystical, semi-intelligible, perhaps even transcending the boundaries of rigid logic, I must simply aver that I put in writing that only which was given me to say. How or whence it came, I do not know.—And this, notwithstanding (or, perhaps, in a way, corroborative of) my own belief that no thought is autogenous, but has parents and a pedigree.

I have tried, quite humbly, to follow, as motto, the sentence chosen from Spinoza. Yet, with that sentence always should be read this other, taken from Pascal: "*La dernière démarche de la raison, c'est de reconnaître qu'il y a une infinité de choses qui la surpassent.*"—Always emotion, imagination, feeling, faith, try to soar above reason; and always they feel the inadequacy of words.

I have incorporated in this book some parts of my "Two Country Walks in Canada"—now long out of print (itself comprising an article from *The Nineteenth Century* and another from *Blackwood's*); also (with the permission of the editor) an article in *The Atlantic Monthly Magazine*; and Sections 22 and 23 first appeared in *The Canadian Magazine*.

GENEVA, 1914.

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I

GOLF AND WALKING

§ 1

Many are the indictments which are brought against Golf: that it is a deplorable waster of time; that it depletes the purse; that it divorces husband and wife; that it delays the dinner-hour, freckles fair feminine faces, upsets domestic arrangements, and unhinges generally the mental balance of its devotees. Yet perhaps to each of such charges Golf can enter a plea. It repays expenditure of time and money with interest in the form of health and good spirits. If it acts the part of co-respondent it is always open to the petitioner to espouse the game. If it keeps men and women away from work and home, at least it keeps them out on the breezy links and dispels for a time the cares of the office or the kitchen. If it tans—well, it tans, and a tanned face needs no paint, and is, moreover, beautiful to look upon. Nevertheless, one indictment there is against which it is not in the power of Golf to enter a plea. It has killed the country walk. "A country walk!" exclaimed a fellow-golfer to me the other day. "I have not taken a country walk since I began to play."

There are, I know, who affect to believe that Golf consists of country walks, diversified and embellished by pauses made for the purpose of impelling little round balls into little round holes; that mind and eye are occupied chiefly with the beauties of Nature, and that the impulsion of the insignificant sphere into the insignificant void is, as it were, but a sop to Cerberus, or a cock sacrificed to the Æsculapius of this sporting age. "How greatly," said to me once a fair and innocent stranger to my links—"how greatly this beautiful landscape must enhance the pleasure of your game!" *O sancta simplicitas!* Far be it from me to explain that as a rule the horrid golfer only drank in the beauties of that landscape when the game was over, and he was, perchance, occupied in performing a similar operation upon the contents of a tumbler at his elbow as he reclined in an arm-chair on the verandah.—And yet, and yet, our links *are* beautiful, and one and all of us their frequenters know and appreciate to the full their beauty; but *not*, I think, at the moment of "addressing the ball."—No; Golf is Golf; a country walk is quite another thing; and the one, I maintain, has killed the other.

II

THE ESSENCE OF A WALK

§ 2

For, mark you, the essence of a country walk is that you shall have no object or aim whatsoever. The frame of mind in which one ought to set out upon a rural peregrination should be one of absolute mental vacuity. Almost one ought to rid oneself, if so be that were possible, even of the categories of time and place: for to start with a determination to cover a certain distance within a specified time is to take, not a walk, but a "constitutional"; and of all abortions or monstrosities of country walks, commend me to the constitutional. The proper frame of mind is that of absolute and secure passivity; an openness to impressions; a giving-up of ourselves to the great and guiding influences of benignant Nature; a humble receptivity of soul; a wondering and childlike eagerness—not a restless and too inquisitive eagerness—to learn all that great Nature may like to teach, and to learn it in the way that great Nature would have us learn.

Yet, true, though we take with us a vacuous mind, it must be a plenable mind (if I may coin the word), a serenely responsive mind; otherwise we shall not reap the harvest of a quiet eye.

"How bountiful is Nature! he shall find
Who seeks not; and to him who hath not asked
Large measure shall be dealt,"

sings Wordsworth; and of Nature and of Nature's ways no one had a greater right to sing. Wordsworth must have been an ideal country walker. "The Excursion" is the harvest of innumerable walks, and when Wordsworth depicts the Wanderer he depicts himself:

"In the woods
A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
The better portion of his time; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
And liberty of Nature; there he kept,
In solitude and solitary thought,
His mind in a just equipoise of love."

Only, "the w . . . w . . . worst of W . . . W . . . Wordsworth is," as a stammering friend of mine once remarked, "is, he is so d . . . d . . . d . . . desperate p . . . pensive." (I was expecting a past participle, not an ungrammatical adverb for the "d.")—He is; and like, yet unlike, Falstaff, he is not only pensive in himself, but he is the cause of pensiveness in other things—to wit, his "stars," his "citadels," and what not; and certainly his diary of "A Tour in Scotland" makes the driest reading I know.—Nevertheless, Wordsworth must have been an ideal country walker. He was

"A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth";

and if we would understand him, we ourselves must

"Let the moon
Shine on us in our solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against us."

III NOTABLE WALKERS

§ 3

All great souls, I venture to think, were at some period of their lives walkers in the country. Jesus of Nazareth spent forty days in the wilderness, and the three years of his mission were, we know, spent in unceasing wandering. And whose heart does not burn within him as he reads the moving narrative of that seven-mile country walk which he took with two of his disciples to the village called Emmaus? It was after a forty days' solitary sojourn on Mount Sinai, too, so we are told, that Moses came down armed with the Decalogue; and was it not after a similar Ramadan retreat that Mohammed returned with the novel doctrine that there was no God but God? Enoch, we know, walked with God; and it is a childish fancy of mine which I am loath to relinquish that God took him, and that he was not, for because he was so delectable a companion. Of a surety the Sweet Singer of Israel must have wandered much in the green pastures and by the still waters; he who kept his father's sheep; who slew both the lion and the bear; who sang the high hills, a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies.—Indeed, if one comes to think of it, how much literature owes to the country walk! It was to that long walk outside the wall of Athens, and to the long talk that Socrates held with Phædrus under the plane-tree by the banks of the Ilissus, that we owe one of the most beautiful of the Dialogues of Plato. There had been no Georgics had not Virgil loved the country. Horace must as often have circumambulated his Sabine farm as he perambulated the Via Sacra. Chaucer must sometimes have pilgrimed afoot, and Spenser, trod as well as pricked o'er the plain. Shakespeare's poaching episode gives us a glimpse into his youthful pursuits. Milton "oft the woods among wooed Philomel to hear her evensong"; and even after his blindness "not the more ceased he to wander where the Muses haunt clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill." "The Traveller" of Goldsmith was the outcome of a walking tour; so was Robert Louis Stevenson's "Travels in the Cévennes with a Donkey". To how many minds walks about the green flat meads of Oxford have been a quiet stimulant we may get a hint from more than one of Matthew Arnold's poems. Was it to Newman that Jowett, meeting him alone and afoot, put the query: "*Nunquam minus solus quam quum solus?*" Of Jowett's walks many a tale is told. Of De Quincey, who spent his youth in wanderings; of William Cowper, the gentle singer of the "Winter Walk"; of Thoreau^[1]; of Mr John Burroughs^[2]; of Richard Jefferies^[3]; of Mr Hamilton Wright Mabie^[4] the discoverer of the Forest of Arden; of Mr Henry Van Dyke^[5] who would be, I warrant me, an incomparable companion for a walk, and whose books make the pent-up sigh for the open; of "A Son of the Marshes"^[6]; of Dr Charles C. Abbott^[7] that indefatigable Wasteland Wanderer; of Mr Charles Goodrich Whiting^[8] the Saunterer; of that prince of walkers, of whom *The Spectator* said it was "half a pity that such a man could not go walking about for ever, for the benefit of people who are not gifted with legs so stout and eyes so discerning," I mean that erudite nomad, George Borrow^[9]; of Senancour, who in his journeys afoot experienced *illusions imposantes*^[10]; of Sir Leslie Stephen^[11]—of these and many another lover of outdoor Nature it is

IV

MY EARLIEST WALKS

15

§ 4

The earliest walks which my own memory recalls were rather curious ones. We were in Burma, a country in which, in the dry season, exercise must be taken about daybreak or sundown, or not at all. We walked—and before breakfast; and always we were accompanied by a pet cat, a sharp-nosed "toddy-cat" (so they called him), indigenous to the country, and not unlike the American raccoon, very affectionate and very cleanly. But the cat was not our only companion, for just overhead, screaming threateningly, were always also, and all the way, a flock of kites—the mortal enemies, so I must suppose, of Hokey-Pokey (thus was named our 'coon-cat pet).—Now I come to think of it, it must have been a funny sight: a family afoot; in the rear an impudent cat with tail erect; overhead irate and clamorous kites.

16

V

INDIA

17

§ 5

My next walks were on the Nilgiris, the Blue Mountains of India. Ah, they were beautiful! The seven or eight thousand feet of altitude tempered the tropical sun, the mornings were fresh and invigorating—your cold bath was really cold, and spring seemed perennial. Hedges of cluster-roses bloomed the whole year round; on the orange-trees were leaf, bud, bloom and ripening fruit, also the whole year round. Heliotrope grew in gigantic bushes that were pruned with garden clippers. Through the grounds about the house flowed a babbling brook, widening here and there into quiet ponds, from the sedgy edges of which green-stemmed arums raised their graceful cups. In the deep valleys grew the tree-fern; here and there a playful waterfall gushed from the hill; and everything was green.—No; two things were not green: the one, the hot and hazy plains, shimmering in yellow dust as seen from the shoulder of a hill; the other, the gigantic Droog, a mighty mountain mass rearing its head, sombre and silent, on the other side of a deep ravine. The Droog was purple: not with the pellucid purple of a petal, but with the misty blue-black purple of the bloom of a plum.—Ah, it was all very good. Never shall I forget the convolvulus that decorated the northern verandah before the heat of day shrivelled the delicate corollas. There were rich bass purples that stirred one like the tones of an organ. There were soprano pinks so exquisite that a *pianissimo* trill on a violin seemed crude in comparison. Their beauty was all but audible: it penetrated the senses and reached in to some inner subtile psychic centre, there to move emotions which must remain unsaid.—This was in India.—There is something perfervid in the fascination of the East. The West may clutch the thrilled heart with a steely clasp; the East holds the soul in a passionate embrace.—Ah, India, beloved India, my first nurse and I trust my last; "not were that submarine, gem-lighted city mine" would I relinquish hope of seeing thee again, adored India: old majestic land; land of ancient castes and alien creeds; land of custom, myth, and magic; land of pungent odours, stinging tastes, and colours dazzling as the sun; land of mystery, of pageant, and of pain! Ah, subtile, thralling, luring India!—India is like Samson's lion: it has been conquered by the young and lusty Occident, and in its old carcass its conqueror finds both meat and sweetness;—and it serves for a riddle to others. To complete the analogy, there are those who are trying to plough with Samson's heifer.

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19

20

VI

ENGLISH BYWAYS

21

My next walks were in England. For their size, the British Isles probably afford the most varied tramping ground of any country in the world. Within a few hundred miles of radius you get infinite variety: the rolling downs; the quiet weald; hilly Derbyshire; mountainous Wales; Devonshire's lanes; the Westmorland or the Cumberland lakes—these for the seeker of quiet. For the more emprising there is the wild and broken scenery of the northern isles; and the lover of the homeless sea can choose any shore to his liking.

There is an impression abroad that in England you must confine your steps to the high-road. That has not been my experience. True, you must not expect everywhere to be allowed to stalk anywhere across country—unless you are following the beagles; but, so numerous are the byways and bridle-paths; so easy has access been made, through centuries of hereditary ownership, from one field or stile or farm to another; so generous, too, are so many landlords, that one can travel for many and many a mile without doing more than cross and recross the road. But true it is also that, in order to do this, you must know something of the locality.

One much-hidden entrance to a most sequestered spot I hope I do no wrong in revealing here.—London stretches out north-west almost to Uxbridge, nearly twenty miles out—that is, habitations line almost every inch of the way. After Uxbridge, the road is hard, dry, and comparatively uninteresting. But, near a cross-road, where is a house on either side, if you look carefully to the right you will dimly discern, beneath the shade of low-bending boughs, and almost hidden by these, a simple, unpretending stile. I recommend you to climb over it, for it is the entrance to a great, quiet, secluded spot, several acres in extent, thickly wooded with superb beeches and firs, so thickly wooded that the sky is invisible and the earth wholly in shade. But for the extreme kemptness of the underbrush (and the fact that you have just stepped out of the London road), you might be in a primæval forest of the West. Nor is this the sum of its beauty. High though it is above the surrounding country, embosomed in this forest is a lovely lake, exquisite in its colouring, reflecting, as it does, the cloud-flecked sky, and, all round its rim, the bending boughs of the beech. Typical of England are this lake and park. They are private property, of course; but the owner gives every wayfarer leave of access. Typical of England: tenacious of rights, yet just, nay, generous, to all.

VII

A SPRING MORNING IN ENGLAND

He who knows not England I will here permit to peep into a page of a diary giving a glimpse of a morning dawdle on the Sussex Downs:

"ROYAL OAK INN,
"VILLAGE OF POYNINGS,
"27th March 18—, 11.30
A.M.

"The little maid is laying the other half of this table to supply me with eggs and bacon....

"I got me out of Brighton early, walked through Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint, and strolled on in any direction that invited (for I had the whole lovely day to myself), choosing chiefly byways and sequestered paths approached by stiles.

"The day was superb. The sky, after a rainy night, was a rich deep blue, and across it sailed great white-grey clouds, the shadows of which chased each other—albeit solemnly and with dignity—over field and meadow. The fields, sown with corn already tall, were burnished green—they shone in the sunlight. The meadows were deeper in colour. The slopes of the downs changed their hues every moment; every acre changed, according as it caught the light direct, or through a thin cloud, or was immersed in shade by a big and thick one. The ditches and the little banks by the road, out of which the trim hedgerows sprang, were green with a hundred little plants and weeds—the dock, the nettle, groundsel, stick-a-bobs, ivy of every hue and shape, mullein, the alder well in leaf, and the hawthorn here and there in flower.—

"Breakfast over. The most delicious bacon, the freshest of eggs, milk that might have masqueraded as cream; and all served with the extremity of respectful civility. A fire smouldering in the hearth; a terrier longing to make friends; otherwise they shut the door and leave me to

quiet privacy.

"The greenness of the hedges was exquisite. And here and there the primroses in profusion—and the violets—and birds. England teems with life. I heard the thrush—'It *is* Spring! It *is* Spring! O the joy! I tell you it is—is—is!' And the blackbirds screaming out of a bush, pretending to be frightened, but only looking for an excuse to shout. The ring-doves, really disturbed and rising with noisy wings. The rooks, lost in real wonderment that anyone should stop and look at them for five minutes, and 'cawing' and 'cahing' in vociferous interrogation. Querulous tits, chirping hedge-sparrows, cheeping linnets and finches—by the hundreds and hundreds."

28

A mere peep (but a peep photographed on the spot), and giving but a poor glimpse of a scene the exact like of which you will not get elsewhere the wide world over.—And, by the way, shouldst ever find thyself at this self-same village of Poynings, omit not to examine the Early Perpendicular church;—the alms-box is an ancient thurible.

VIII

AUTUMN REVERIES

29

§ 9

This was in the spring. Autumn in England is equally lovely. In the new world—at least in the northern regions—there is a chill in the fall of the year. The cold north-western winds, cradled amidst palæocrystic ice, and blowing over tundra and prairie, are untempered by Gulf Stream or ocean. Untempered, too, by cloud and moisture, they cut keen, and reveal the leafless landscape in all its bareness. And it may be that they bring with them the thought that for many months to come that landscape will be bare indeed—unless covered with a shroud of snow.

Far different is autumn in England—I write (this time) situate in the basin of the Thames, and for many weeks I have been watching summer slowly give up its glowing glories in order that other glories, not less wonderful in colour, may take their place. For England is never colourless; nay, in England, all through the year, the colours are warm and sweet and comforting. The very trunks and twigs of the trees are warm with browns and greens and purples, the result of the mosses and lichens, minute epiphytic and parasitic vegetation which the humid climate so greatly fosters. Even brick walls, the stepping-stones in brooks, wooden palings—everything constructed by man, Nature soon mellows with a gentle hand; so that, in place of stark and staring edifices where the bare boards or the dull paint form blotches on the scene, you have everywhere a great harmony of colour—violets shading into green; greens gliding into softest yellows; and these again deepening into warm and beautiful orange and gold and red.

30

A long, long tramp through beechy Buckinghamshire one day revealed at every step beauties that filled the eye—and filled the heart. No pen could do them justice; and, among painters, only the brush of a Corot could attempt their depiction without depriving them of their exquisite, their almost evanescent, softness. A great mist lay over the land; a gentle, noiseless mist that hid from you the horizon and the outer world; that shut you in from the outer world; lured you into that mood of quiet reverence in the presence of quiet, wonder-working Nature; and revealed to you ... I cannot tell all that was revealed. I can only point to this and that beautiful little thing or vision, themselves but emblems of a Beauty and a Mystery invisible.

31

32

Again I saw the little ivies in the ditches. Again I saw unnumbered little leaves and stalks and tendrils in the hedges; all, of shape and texture and colour actually and positively divine. The hedges, a tangle of twigs thick with a hundred growths, were mighty marvels that no human clipping and pruning and trimming could diminish. And at every few paces rose out of these hedges, on either hand, old majestic elms, great in girth, tall of stature, interlacing their branches high overhead and making for pygmy me, who walked that winding lane, a wondrous fane in which to worship.—It was not exactly what one saw with one's bodily eye that roused worship in that fane. What was it?...

As morning grew towards noon, and the sun gained power, that gentle mist—so noiseless, like an angel's hand laid soothingly on me and on all that hemmed me in—the mist mysteriously withdrew itself. But only to show fresh loveliness. On either hand were meadows, still lush with grass; or brown and furrowed fields, shot through with the myriad tips of growing corn; and here and there in scattered heaps lay the rich leaves of the oak and the elm and the beech, brilliant in their orange and russet, and here and there lit up, like burnished gold, by glints of sunshine from between the clouds.

33

For miles, quiet little scenes like this filled the eye and the heart—entrancing, exalting, humbling.

Wherein lay the secret of their appeal? Why is it that field and hedgerow, winding lane and

IX SPIRITUALITY OF NATURE

34

§ 10

One thing at least is certain. Of this human race, of which each of us frail and wailing mortals is a fragment, this kindly or unkindly thing we call "external Nature" is at once the mother, the cradle, and the home: out of it we came; in it we play; from it we delve our livelihood; and—to it we go. For it is also our grave. But, unlike the mournful mounds, so pitilessly ranged in regular rows—as if, 'fore God, to accentuate the fact that in Death this impotent thing called sapient man meets at last a uniforming and levelling foe—unlike those mournful mounds we see in cemeteries, external Nature is a grave out of which there is a perpetual and unceasing resurrection. Nature is at once the tomb and the womb of life. What was once soil and rain and sunshine becomes grass—then hay—then beef or mutton or milk—and, in time, the very bone and muscle, the very laughter and tears of the child that plays in those fields. And when bone and muscle lay down that subtle thing called Life, give up the spirit and lie inert, they enter once again into the tomb and womb of Nature, and the mighty cycle begins afresh.

35

§ 11

And this "spirit" is not a thing apart, a thing outside Nature; breathed into man at his birth, and wafted to some mythical heaven—or hell—at his death. Actually and actively in great Nature, manifesting itself as soil and herb and sunshine, is immanent that which, when metamorphosed into so-called human Life, manifests itself as feeling, imagination, emotion, faith. There cannot be anything *in esse* in Man that was not aforetime *in posse* in Nature.

36

§ 12

Never shall I forget the day upon which—and the walk during which—there flared upon me like a great and sudden light the fact that the whole cosmos was *alive*—was LIFE; that it was not composed of two dissimilar things: (*a*) a gross and ponderable "matter"; and (*b*) an immaterial imponderable "mind." There is no such dichotomy in Nature. All is immaterial, spiritual, living. Every particle in me is alive; but every particle in me came from Nature; and, as I cannot create life, life must have existed potentially in those particles. My bodily mechanism is merely a transmutation of one form of life into another.

37

What we call "life" is a process; a process kept agoing by (*a*) the ingestion of surrounding material; and (*b*) the reproduction of the individual which so ingests.

Look at that field of oats growing there to the right. You will admit, will you not, that those little green blades just springing from the soil are actually and veritably the matter of the field in which they grow? The silicon and phosphorus and oxygen and nitrogen and carbon and what-not, which were in the air or soil, will by next July be gluten and protein. If you and I should haggle over the origin of the first oat-seed, at least if it did not spring from this particular field, it had not, I take it, any ultra-terrestrial origin.—Or granted it had, as, I think, Arrhenius argues, that origin was not extra-cosmic: it came, certainly, from somewhere within this our visible universe. Good! Let us go back.—The oats then—that is, the gluten and the protein—are but the matter of soil and air and sunshine in another form. So, then, is the porridge in your plate. So, then, are *you*, surely. You and I *are* this external Nature in another shape; and if we had *n* senses and a mind endowed with powers of discernment and of comprehension *n*thly more powerful than at present, we might be able, not only to see the process of transformation in its every stage, but—to understand that matter is immaterial, is spiritual (whatever that word may connote); and that ourselves, the porridge, the oats, the soil, the earth—the Cosmos, are, is ... one and a Mystery. In Nature, as in Man, resides that Spirit of Eternal Things which we call Life: a thing incomprehensible and divine; transcending thought; one and a unit; one with the thing that is, and one with that which asks itself what it is and whence it came; revealing itself under the aspects of time and space, yet unbounded by time or space; manifesting itself under an infinitude of forms, yet remaining one and the same; at once the revealer and the revealed; the thing thought of and the thing that thinks.

38

39

X

PRACTICAL TRANSCENDENTALISM

§ 13

But of what avail are transcendental themes like these for the conduct and comfort of life? What light are they to our path? To what goal do they point?

It is not a question that needs to be asked. Were no investigation to be undertaken, no theories formed, save for some definite and preconceived purpose, it may be that no new path would be found, no more distant goal discerned.

And yet these meditations, such as they were, crude in matter, inchoate in form, mere adumbrations of a truth all too dimly perceived, brought comfort. Once more they took me away from the trivial and the ephemeral. Above all, they took me away from the geocentric. So many creeds, so many religions, pin me down to this little planet. How many earths are there in the visible heavens? Are there terrestrial sinners on each and all? If so, for how many deaths did the vicarious mercy of the Almighty call? And even if we travel outside the realm of Christendom, still we find our little earth regarded as the centre of thought, the only scene upon which the great drama of Being is enacted: for so many philosophies and religions accentuate the isolated existence of individual human beings, and limit their application to the periphery of this speck in space.

I like the larger aspect. When we look up to the stars and remember that they are suns about which probably revolve an infinitude of habitable earths—earths of every conceivable and inconceivable kind, and peopled probably with an infinitude of beings—also of every conceivable and inconceivable kind—some perhaps as gross as we, others breathing airs of heaven, requiring neither senses nor anatomical organs, enjoying "the communion of saints" by powers and processes outside the ken of touch or speech or vision ... we link ourselves with the immensity of Being; we are not separate little entities trudging a few miles of earth, but particles of Omnipresent Life, partakers in the history and destiny of All that Is.

§ 14

There is a practical side, too, to these transcendental themes. For what is Conscience, that inward monitor which, whatever your creed, bids you walk thus and not otherwise, that applauds you when you do right, and shames you when you go wrong? From one point of view, Conscience is the evolved consensus of mankind, that inherited instinct which declares that only such actions as subserve the welfare of the race are right, and that all others are wrong; and that distributes its sanctions accordingly. From another, and perhaps a rather fanciful, point of view (and yet one that may appeal to those who look forward to a life after death and cling to a possibility of communication between dead and living)—from another point of view, Conscience may be the inaudible voice of myriads of fellow-creatures like unto ourselves, who, having passed through the trials and temptations of this life, and viewing this life from the plane of a life supernal, shout spiritually, warningly, in our psychic ears when they see us doing the things that brought them ill. But from another and cosmic point of view, it is that absolute and categorical imperative which dictates that each attenuated portion of the All shall act in Unison with the All, in the history and destiny of which each attenuated portion partakes.

But I digress.

XI

SPRING IN CANADA

§ 15

My next walks were in quite another hemisphere—to wit, in the great and growing colony of Canada.—From many points of view Canada is one of the most interesting of countries. From the rank of a somewhat humble dependency, made up of a heterogeneous collection of provinces, she has sprung within the last few decades into the rank of a proud and self-conscious nation. The contrast is notable. Indeed the country is one of contrasts. Her climate, her scenery, her sentiments, her people, her politics, all exhibit extremes the most extraordinary. A winter of Arctic severity is followed by a tropical summer. Within sight of luxuriant pastures glide stupendous glaciers. Flattest prairies spread to the feet of mountain ranges the rivals of the Alps; prim fields, orchards, and vineyards encroach upon primæval forests. Along with the hardy apple

and the far-famed No. 1 Manitoba wheat, this land produces strawberries, peaches, grapes, and melons. Constitutionally content with British connexion, her people are intimately influenced by ideas and manners American. Indeed, her people are as heterogeneous as herself. The Maritime Provinces of the extreme east hardly call themselves Canadian; Quebec is French; Ontario is Canadian to the core; so is Manitoba; in the North-West Territories are settlers from almost every nationality in Europe; British Columbia, in the extreme west, again, fights shy of the cognomen Canadian. Newfoundland holds aloof altogether. A rude and toilsome social life goes hand in hand with patches of refinement and culture unmistakable. Canadian cheese took the prize at Chicago; Canadian poetry has been crowned by the Academy. Lauding democratic institutions to the skies, Radical to the last degree, Canada nevertheless contains within herself castes and cliques in their horror of such principles almost rabid. With a political system the counterpart of the British, her politics are rife with personalities, election protests, corruption trials.

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However, I am not here concerned with political or social tendencies or delinquencies.

§ 16

Soon after I arrived I betook me, one spring, in my canoe, down the banks of the River Otonabee. Pitching a tent, I made this a focus from which I radiated in any direction I chose—dawdling and sauntering and lounging and seeing what there was to be seen.

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And what is there to be seen? Well, let me give you here another little photograph.

I write, sitting ensconced, sheltered from sun and wind, between two huge roots of the stump of a burned pine on a bare hill overlooking the river. Not a place in which to see much, you would say. Pardon me, you are wrong. You, shut in between four superficies of wall-paper, a whitewashed ceiling, and a carpet, know absolutely nothing of the clouded sky as I know it, gazing at it unconfined from horizon to zenith. Far overhead, the delicatest vapoury cirri fleck the purest blue; in the distance, bold, rounded, white cumuli rise above a misty haze of grey, against which as a background rise in points and curves and lines dark green firs and round-topped birches and emerald hill-sides; and below these, and nearer, comes the water—in no two spots the same—ruffled and unruffled, wavy and still, dark blue and lead-grey, in eddies and in currents; here dimpled, there like a mirror; now dazzling you with a thousand flashing, floating stars; there sullenly bearing up the reflections and shadows of the great, dark trees above it—at one moment thus, and while you say it, otherwise.—For a symbol of God—serene, shapeless, profound, in eternal repose, unchanging, all-embracing, majestic—give me the blue sky; for a symbol of Man—tossed, shapen, ever at strife, changeful, unresting, evanescent, with dark depths and foul weeds, sombre and woeful when deprived of the light of heaven, and beautiful only when beautified by skyey tints—give me the water. And after the water, and closer, comes my foreground—tufted grass and brown soil, with dandelions and clover and mullein, and here and there a piece of glistering granite or a quaint-shaped, rotting tree trunk. Amongst these hops fearless, while I sit still and silent with half-closed eyes, the thrush or the grey-bird, chasing insects a few feet from my foot; while above me, on the very stump against which I lean, perches the various-coloured high-holder.—Truly, it seems as if Nature had taken me to be one with her, recognised me as part of her manifold immensity, looked upon me as a consort, a co-mate.

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And am I not a part of her? It needs not to comprehend the harmonious workings of mighty natural laws to perceive the unity of all things. Each minutest spot on this earth verifies the truth. I need not move a step to find evidences of it. I look at my blackened stump, and not one square inch can I find which is not instinct with evidences of life within life; life interfused with, dependent on, correlated with other life, with signs of the ceaseless being born, growing, dying—with processes interlinked with processes. It is a universe of processes, this in which we live; not a universe *in which* this, that, and the other separate thing exists for a time, but a universe *of* subsistences, made up wholly of interdependent existences. Wherever I look on my trunk I see mosses and lichens and creeping ants and beetles, and the holes of boring worms, and the marks of woodpeckers' beaks, chrysalises, seeds, twigs. To each of these the stump is its universe: they regard it as we do the solar system, as a place, a locality, made for them to inhabit. They do not understand that the tree is itself but part of a greater whole of life, of thought; a link in an endless chain of existence. And so we often forget that this infinitely various and changing universe which we call ours, which we look upon as our habitation, our dwelling-house, in which we move about as lords and masters, is after all but an infinitesimal fragment of the real demesne of the true Lord of the Manor. And what if after all we were not even bailiffs of this manor? What if we were but the furniture in some small attic—mirrors, it may be—and that what we call our universe prove to be nothing more than the small part of this attic which is reflected in us!

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XII

AUTUMN IN CANADA

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This was in the spring. But I remember an autumn walk in Canada that was very different from this, both in the locality chosen and in the scenes viewed.

Late in October once, a friend and myself had three whole days' holiday!—rare and joyous boon! We took a train to the little Ontarian town of Stayner. From Stayner to the shores of the Georgian Bay was a little trudge of about three miles. But a trudge it was; for the train had been late; our knapsacks were heavy; the sun had set; and both darkness and hunger came on apace. But at last the shore was reached. And what a shore it was! For, beating on it from far away to the north was a wealth of waters—oceanic in magnitude, sombre as the sea and, as the sea, mysterious.

As we walked, the night closed in, the northern night, so beautiful, so clear, so immense. But it was chill and dark, and either we must advance, or we must seek shelter where we were. Shall it be a leafy "lean-to" under a pine, constructed of heaped-up boughs, or shall it be a trudge to a civilised hostelry? Such were the problems discussed over sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs (washed down with sandy water from the bay), as we sat on a wave-washed log, the wind blowing strong in our faces. The ground was damp as damp; the pines seemed lugubriously incompetent to shelter from the growing gale. Blankets we had none; night was upon us.—We decided to walk.

On the left was this rolling Georgian ocean, seemingly illimitable. In its northern stretches it reached up to Hudson's Bay, to the Arctic; and by its southern streams it drave down to Lake Ontario, to the St Lawrence, to the Atlantic. It was one with this Atlantic; it was one with the Pacific; it was first cousin to the Indian Ocean, and but once or twice removed from all the waters of the world, since they and it had a common origin.

The walking was superb. The sand was firm as asphalt: on the right was dimly visible a friendly fringe of trees—pine and scrub and brushwood; on the left there was ever that never-ceasing roll of waves—waves once more linking me with Ostend and Hove, Rotterdam and Rangoon, St John in New Brunswick, Ascension Isle, the Cape of Good Hope, and the palm-fringed coast of Malabar.

We walked. And we walked fast. But not too fast to notice. There was no moon. The stars came out, and in that pellucid northern air, where was no dust of road nor smoke of chimney, those stars shone as assuredly never can they shine elsewhere. It is a literal fact that, in order to determine whether or not the great luminous patches which I gazed at overhead were the veritable Milky Way or only drifting clouds lit up by starlight, I had to look again and again, and to take note as to whether there was perceptible any change of shape. There was not. It was the Galaxy itself; but so revealed, so clearly seen, so unremote, as it were, that once again the great portals of the Infinite seemed to open, and to permit a glimpse into the mysterious abode of Being—inadequate term by which we feebly connote the supreme unity of all that is. To permit a glimpse, too, into that puzzle of puzzles, the not impossible identification or unification or intussusception of that All with the smallest of its integral contents. For was not that assemblage of suns—those masses of solar systems, so numerous as to seem but a mist—was it not actually depicted on the tiny retina of the eye? It was; and, through this depicture, it was, as it were, intellectually embraced in the thinking mind behind; a fact symbolical of the truth, as yet but dimly comprehended, that in very deed the infinitesimal unit and the mighty All are one and identical.

However, ontological speculations under an autumnal sky have their limit; and glad indeed were we, after long search among the pines and the hemlocks, to find, albeit it was late, a hostel in which were warmth and shelter for the night.

XIII

WINTER IN CANADA

§ 18

I remember me, too, of a notable winter's walk in Canada.

For some reason, one night in mid-January, Sleep forsook me. After wooing her in vain, I rose at three and lighted an ungainly but highly satisfactory stove. It had a draught like a Bessemer furnace, drawing through an ugly stove-pipe which ran bolt upright, turned sharp before it reached the ceiling, and disappeared in a hole in the wall—an apparatus quite the most conspicuous article of furniture in the room (it was in a hotel). On this I warmed a cup of tea, then donned all the warm clothing I could find; and in some forty minutes was afoot.

My point of departure was a little Ontarian country town of some ten thousand inhabitants—we will call it Dummer. Dummer stood in a slightly higher latitude than the parallels which run

through the belt of country skirting the northern shore of the Great Lakes, along which are dotted most of the centres of population; and accordingly it was exposed to a slightly severer wintry climate. At the time of my visit it was enveloped in snow. Snow lay deep over the whole land, thick on every roof, over the edges of which it protruded itself in irregular curves—solid cataracts suspended in air, and vainly endeavouring to complete their descent by long six-foot icicles. Snow-white was every road, save for the two dirty grooves beaten down by the hoofs of horses. Snow covered the country, far as the eye could reach; glistening like glaciers on the hill-sides, deep purple and blue in the patches shaded by the pines; only the woods showing black against the dazzling white, the perpendicular walls of the wooden farm buildings, the solitary trees and shrubs, and the straggling snake-fences—long, unshaped logs of split timber, their ends placed zigzag the one over the other, to keep the structure erect—relieved the white monotony. And yet this belt of country is almost in the same latitude with the south of France, with the Riviera, whence but a few days before I had received in a letter a violet!

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When I started, there was no moon, there were no stars; my sole light was the skyey reflection of the electric lamps of the city; and only this for many miles enabled me to distinguish the grooves in which I had to walk from the high ridge of snow between them which I had to avoid. When I skirted the lee side of a high hill, or passed the distal edge of a thick wood, I floundered from one to other in the dark. The landscape, such of it as could be seen under a leaden-grey sky, was a vast monochrome, an expanse of dull white picked out with blotches and points and lines of black. Not a living thing was to be seen. Not a sound was to be heard. And, what particularly struck a lover of country walks, not the faintest suspicion of any kind of a scent was to be detected. Everything seemed to be dumb and dead; and the tiny flakes which fell in myriads, fell so silently, so pitilessly, had seemingly for their object the making of all things, if possible, still more dumb and dead.—There is always something poetic about snow in England. There is something playful and jocular in the way in which lusty standard rose-trees, stout shrubs, and sturdy hedges don aged Winter's garb, as a laughing maid will half demurely wear her grand-dam's cap. In the Western Hemisphere, away from the genial influences of the Gulf Stream, even in the same latitudes, winter is a more serious matter. The snow comes "to stay." There is little jocosity about it. It lies several feet thick. If it disappears during a temporary thaw, it comes again very soon. Here the trees do not sport with it. They put up with it. They stand knee-deep in it, leafless, motionless, scentless, soundless. If there is a wind, it sweeps through them with a long thin swish, like the wail of a host of lost spirits seeking shelter. Not a branch falls—the autumn blasts brought down all that was frangible. Only frozen tears fall, fall from the ice-crustured twigs. For miles on either side of me stood these patient trees; thick, black, heavy-boughed cedars, their stout trunks buried in snow, squatting, like Mr Kipling's Djinn of All Deserts, on their haunches and vainly "thinking a Magic" to make idling Winter "hump himself"; beech-trees, naked but for a few scattered sere and yellow leaves fluttering about their waists; the drooping-branched elm, not half so graceful as when full-leafed; elegant maples with a tracery of twigs far too fine to be compared to lace. These trees formed often the outermost fringe of thick woods. Into these I penetrated. A profound silence pervaded them, a silence so intense, so all-embracing, it seemed to overflow the forest, to go out into space, to enwrap the world in its grasp. Not a thing stirs. To be alive in that shrine of death-like soundlessness seems desecration. It is supreme, infinite, absolute; you, the living, moving onlooker, are finite and relative, a thing of time and space. To think is to disturb the serenity of its repose, for to think is to attempt to limit it, to reduce it to the level of yourself, and no thought is large enough to compass it. Only some shaggy elk, hoofed and horned, diabolically crashing through crust upon crust of superimposed layers of frozen snow; and only demoniacal little troops of wolves, pattering fiendishly, are fit to defy or to disturb this deity of Quiet. It is large, expansive, in its influence. Summer sights and sounds bind you to a spot, limit your attention to a locality, accentuate the petty, the individual, the trivial. The wintry woods, the white unfurrowed fields, stimulate no sense. The soul of man seems bared to the soul of Nature, and human thought and the universal mind seem contiguous and conterminous.—Silence affects the mind as darkness affects the senses: both in their impressiveness quicken the faculties to the utmost; and yet, as no sense can perceive the impalpability of darkness, so no thought can pierce the impenetrability of silence.—One must visit a wintry clime to experience emotions such as these.

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As I walked, the wind rose, and its noise in the convolutions of the ear, so still was everything else, became almost annoying in its resounding roar. I had followed devious and untravelled ways in the semi-darkness, and this wind it was that told me when again I reached a high-road—namely, by the whistling of the telegraph wires. I never heard such obstreperous wires. They made an Æolian harp truly hyperborean in timbre and volume. Every note in the scale of audible human sound seemed struck; and were there such a thing as an acoustical spectroscope, it would have shown, not only every tone and semitone in the gamut, but ultra-treble and infra-bass notes also. And it was played *fortissimo*. Those wires shrieked, bellowed. Whether at that early hour they were carrying messages, I do not know; but all the intensity of human anguish, human happiness, and human woe seemed to be flowing through their scannel lengths; and the thin hapless things plained of their freight to the unheeding winds. It was a weird sound far out there in the desolate wild, with not a soul to hear or sympathise—for I, what was I in all that huge expanse? They wotted not of me.

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Then the great sky by degrees broke up into masses of cloud, and here and there between them shone out the steady stars—imperturbable, piercing, shaken not by the slightest twinkle. One rich and brilliant planet in the west glowed argent in the blue—a blue into which the eye penetrated far, far into infinity. The Canadian sky is ever lofty, pellucid, profound; very different from the close canopy so common in cloudy England.

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But it was high time to turn homewards. A faint light overspread the east; things began to take shape; houses, instead of appearing as dark blotches against the white, now looked like habitable dwellings; the separate boughs were distinguishable on the trees. As one neared the town signs of life were seen—and smelled; the pungent odour of the "coal-oil" with which the impatient and unthrifty housewife coaxed her wood fire more rapidly to catch, smote almost smartingly upon the nostril. Sleepy-eyed mechanics, buttoned to the throat, heavily "overshoed," and with hands bepocketed, strode sullenly workwards. Later on "cutters"—so are called the comfortable little one-horsed sleighs just seating a couple—sped hither and thither. Then a milk-cart or two glided past, the cans wrapped in furs, the hairs on the horses' muzzles showing white with cleaving ice. Later still, and when within the precincts of the town proper, children were met espying sleighs on which to get "rides" to school. It was a different world now. A dazzling sun transformed the dull dead landscape of the night into a blinding spangled sheet of purest white. Involuntarily the eyes half closed against that glare. No wonder the sub-Arctic eye lacks the large frank openness of those of softer realms; against even the summer sunshine the protection of approximated eyelids is needed, as the crow's-feet of the farmers' features prove. If Canada has earned the title of Our Lady of the Snows, she certainly equally deserves the title of Our Lady of the Sunshine; nowhere is sunshine so bright or so abundant; so bright and abundant that it is not unreasonable to suppose that it has not a little to do with the elimination of that "phlegm" from the descendants of the immigrant of that land to the folk of which the French attribute that characteristic. "There are few, if any, places in England," says the Director of the Meteorological Service of Canada, "that have a larger normal annual percentage [of bright sunshine] than thirty-six, and there are many as low as twenty-five; whereas in Canada most stations exceed forty, and some few have as high a percentage as forty-six."^[12] "Weather permitting" is a phrase but rarely heard in Canada.

But my early morning walk was over. It was one I would not have exchanged for many another taken under more genial skies.

XIV

THE MOOD FOR WALKING

§ 19

A morning walk is worth the effort of getting up. Much would I give to have been of that party which, in sixteen hundred and something, "stretched their legs up Tottenham Hill towards the Thatched House in Hoddesdon on that fine fresh May morning"—I mean Messrs *Piscator*, *Venator*, and *Auceps*. I should have been *Peregrinator*; and whereas *Piscator* praised the water, and *Venator* the land, and *Auceps* the air, as the element in which each respectively traded, I should have praised all three, for the pedestrian's pleasures derive from no single one. And to walking I should have applied dear old Izaak Walton's own phrase, that it, like angling, was "most honest, ingenious, quiet, and harmless."^[13] Upon quiet, Walton sets extraordinary stress. Quoting with approbation the learned Peter du Moulin, he tells us that "when God intended to reveal any future events or high notions to his prophets, he then carried them either to the deserts or the sea-shore, that having so separated them from amidst the press of people and business, and the cares of the world, he might settle their mind in a quiet repose, and there make them fit for revelation."^[14]

It is strange that Izaak Walton, himself apparently a most quiet and contented old man (he lived to be ninety-one), should, writing at sixty years of age, and two hundred and fifty years ago—when I suppose there was no faster or noisier thing than a galloping horse—should so insistently preach and teach quiet. Yet, perhaps we must remember that he lived through the Great Rebellion. The last words of his book—and he puts them into his own, *Piscator's*, mouth—are:

"And [let the blessing of St Peter's Master be] upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust in his providence, and be quiet, and go a-angling. STUDY TO BE QUIET.—1 Thess. iv. 11."

Why, I do not exactly know, but there is to me something straightforward, honest, and simple-minded in the idea of ending a book with the words "and go a-angling." This and the quotation from 1 Thess. iv. 11 sum up for me the character of the man and the book.

§ 20

Walking rivals angling in demanding and engendering quiet. "To make a walk successful," says another dear old gentleman, writing at the same time of life but in modern times, "mind and body should be free of burthen."^[15] The true and abiding joy of walking is in calm. "The mood," says John Burroughs, "in which you set out on a spring or autumn ramble or a sturdy winter walk ... is the mood in which your best thoughts and impulses come to you.... Life is sweet in such moods, the Universe is complete, and there is no failure or imperfection anywhere."^[16] Only Nature can

induce such moods—

"Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,"

says the soul-tossed, self-torturing Byron. Books, music, art, the drama, philosophy, science—at bottom there seems to be something disquieting in these. They come in such questionable shape. They are the works of man; and we never altogether trust the works of man. We never feel, even with the first of those who know, that our fellow-man, who is, after all, like unto ourselves, has answered every question, allayed every doubt, stilled every fear. Was something of this in Matthew Arnold's mind when he cried:

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"One lesson, *Nature*, let me learn of thee,"

and prayed her to calm, to compose him to the end?—But enough in praise of calm. Calm is compatible with the highest and most exuberant spirits. Indeed, high and exuberant spirits are the first and natural outcome of a mind at peace with itself. Good old Walton is continually breaking out into pious or pastoral song—and making milkmaids and milkmaids' mothers break out into song, too.

XV

78

EVENING MEDITATIONS

§ 21

If, as Messieurs *Piscator*, *Venator*, and *Auceps*, and their tuneful milkmaids, show, early morning walks tend to blithesomeness of heart, evening walks tend perhaps to meditation of mind. As day wears on—I do not know, I may be wrong, but to me it seems that as day wears on it takes a more sombre aspect. It was at dusk that Gray's *Elegy* was written. In the very sound of Milton's simple words,

"Then came still evening on,"

there is to me an echo of quietness, perhaps of melancholy.—Many a lesson I have learned by quiet meditation in quiet scenes, prolonged far into the night.—Indeed, he is a wise walker who chooses for himself one or more secluded spots, sequestered deep, whither he may go, there to commune with himself; or to hold high converse with the mighty dead; or to lend an expectant ear for the dryads of the woods; or, if nothing more, to rid him of the petty perturbations incident to a life lived between four walls, a floor, and a ceiling, and broken into fragments by clocks which strike the hours and watches which point to the minute.

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§ 22

One such spot I have, and from it many a lesson I have learned.—It is a great amphitheatre, Nature-made, vast and open. It slopes to the north and west, and all about it and about are green trees—green trees and shrubs and lowly plants. In the whole space I am the one spectator—save for little grasses that stand on tiptoe to look and listen; save for little weeds that nod their heads; and a beetle crawling heedless over dry and shining grains of sand. In the orchestral centre, where, in ancient Greece, should stand the lighted altar, there chances to be a little crimson maple; and behind and beyond rise verdant hills. Before me, as where should be the stage, stand, in green habiliments, beech and elm and fir; oak and cedar; lithe and virginal saplings; broad-shouldered pines, staid and stalwart—a goodly company, goodly and green, wondrous green; and for me they act and pose and sing.... The drama opens.

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There is no fanfaronade. On the left, against a dove-grey cloud, the topmost twigs of a silver poplar rustle, the signal to commence. Gently, and with grace supreme, the boughs begin a cosmic song, and sway the while they chant. They dip and fall, and lightly rise; take hands and touch, and smile, and sing again. Troop after troop takes up the measure as the wind sweeps through the trees, and there is revealed to the eye and to the ear sound and motion obedient to an unseen power.... The movement deepens. Great masses join the dance, swell the vespertinal hymn. Huge and cumbrous boughs sweep back and forth, melodious, eloquent; and from tremulous leaf to swaying limb rises a choric song, beautiful, wonderful.... Of what is it that they speak?

81

Presently, beneath the dove-grey cloud, the red sun momentarily shows. Gleams strike the amphitheatre, the stage. My neighbour grasses glint in the sheen, the beetle's wing-sheaths glow; the sand grains glisten, and, overhead, the veined leaves of the larch, which before were black against the sky, become translucent to the light. The massed greens grow radiant; solitary

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boughs shake sunshine from their locks; the shrubs stand out overt; a divine gleesomeness fills all the wood.... Whence comes the mystic impulse?

Then slowly evening falls. The wind dies down. A fitful breeze, now warm with Summer's breath, now chill, strays aimless; and the major song sinks to a key in flats.—The sun sinks. The green shadows grow black; and where before was great leafage, is now a great gloom, in which even the white-stemmed birches lose their tapering limbs. Gone are the leaves of the larch; the shrubs hide; the beetle creeps out of sight. A far-off rill mingles a bass *maestoso* sob with its treble trill; and slowly, very slowly, a thin thin mist creates itself in every cranny of the dell. Only I am left, dull of hearing, miscomprehending, obtuse.

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Only a little scene in an unending play; for all through the night, and for endless days and nights, before man was, and long after man will be, these leafy persons uplift that solemn chant, enact that choric dance: now frolicsome and free; now plaintive: now expectant, patient, still.... What is it that they hymn?

§ 23

It is but little that I, I and the heedless beetle, comprehend of this mighty but mystical drama. Some supernal power impels them, so it seems, and they hymn and praise this power; some hidden force, emanating in regions far beyond the sun, yet immanent in the grass blade, in the leaflet, in the sand grains at my feet. Often a darksome power, ruthless, blind; slaying horde on horde; spilling blood like water; scattering real pain and poignant agony like hail; yet often thrilling, joyous, tremulous with bliss—inscrutable, recondite, dark. It is formed and transformed into myriad shapes, out-running time, out-living life; muted and re-muted, here into gross and ponderable matter, there into filmiest air; anon revealing itself as exuberant life; again vanishing in so-called death; a breath; a spirit; the soul of eternal things.... Some hidden power they hymn.

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The darkness deepens. The mist grows thick apace, heavy and sombre. The keen jagged edge that cut the horizon is blunted. The mystic play is withdrawn; the persons of the drama vanish; and spectators and stage, proscenium and scene, the ampitheatre, the open earth, and the illimitable sky, are blent into one dark and invisible whole.

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Then in the silence of night I heard the soundless voice of that Spirit of Eternal Things: that Mystery, impenetrable as the dark, impalpable: revealing itself as one with the shapes it took and one with the impulse they obeyed; in the grass blade and the leaf, and in the wind to which they swayed; in the ponderous earth that, darkling, rolls through space, and in the subtle mind that holds this earth in fee. The vast and the far-off were embraced in the vision, for from the remotest star came rays that united me with it. The minute and the trivial were summoned from their hiding to prove themselves near and akin. Magnitude and proportion were swallowed up in unity; number and computation disappeared in a stupendous integer. Not a leaf shook, not a bud burst, but was moved to motion and to life by forces infinite and remote, ante-dating sun or star, one with sun and star, older than the Milky Way, vaster than the limits of vision. For in each leaflet of the boscaje ran a sap ancient as ocean; and but yesterday, in the history of Time, that whole assemblage was something far other than it is. Bud and leaf were but manifestations of a something supreme—a Force, a Spirit, a God; a mysterious Thing that took hold of dew and sunshine and soil and transformed them into shape and perfume. And sunshine and dew and soil were in turn themselves but mutations of things, chemical elements or movements of molecules; and these again but mutations of things more subtle still—atoms or electrons, infinitesimal and innominate particles; till ultimately, surely, we arrive at something immense, immutable.—Something there must be behind all change; behind all appearances Something that Appears. And the last appearance, and the sum-total of appearances, must be potential in the first, as in the acorn is contained a potential forest. Given one acorn, and enough of space and time, and there is actually possible a cosmos of oaks; and every oak different, and no two twigs alike. So, could we explain the electron, we should comprehend the inane; in the moment lies concealed the æon. Indeed, it is only to time-fettered space-bound man that these are not one and identical. And, if in leaf and bud, then in perceiving mind. For somehow mind, this wondering mind of man, arose upon this planet; uprose, appeared, became. No trailing comet, surely, in wanton sport, showered mind upon this world. Whencesoever it arose, being here, and fed and nurtured by all things here, emergent from matter, a fragment of earth and sea and sky, surely in this mind of man must also be that self-same hidden power....

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I, too, then, was one of a mystic band, was in the hands of the self-same power, was indeed but a mutation amid its mutations, and had a part to play on my little stage, a part without which the mighty drama would be incomplete, however lowly it were. For, as by inexorable law the youngest leaflet in that dell was potentially existent from before all time, could not help but be and sway and flutter in the breeze, so I in my little world. But what the mighty drama portended or portrayed I knew as little as did the heedless beetle that had crept out of sight; and surely, he, poor little soul, had as much right to know as I—not many mutations, on this paltry planet, separated me from him. Only I saw, behind all, some ineffable power enacting an ineffable drama: playwright and protagonist in one; conceiving and enacting an endless plot; manifesting

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itself to itself, yet ever remaining the thing unmanifest; sundering itself into innumerable myriads, yet remaining one and a whole—incomprehensible—divine.^[17]

By degrees the great sky broke up into clouds. A half moon, cut into fantastic shapes by the twigs, peered through the trees; and as I thriddled the boles—I miscomprehending, obtuse, merely a larger atom in a small inane, finding my devious way by a doubly reflected light—the scene was shifted, fresh actors called, and the great drama went on, unfolding for ever a tale without end.

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XVI

THE UNITY OF NATURE

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§ 24

The lesson I learned was this: Nature is vast. Nature knows nothing of Time. Nor does Nature know anything of Space. It is we who import spatial and temporal limitations into Nature. Because we look up with two eyes, and feel forth with two arms, and walk about with two legs, we think, not only that *our*, but that *the*, universe is an infinite sphere!—an actual objective sphere of which each stupidly assumes that *he* is the centre! Which means that there are, supposedly, millions of centres, and each centre changing its place by millions of miles a day!—positive proof of the preposterousness of the assumption.—To an animalcule born and bred inside an old garden hose, the universe, I suppose, is an endless tunnel. To a baby cockroach hatched between floor and carpet, the universe is a limitless plane. Well, we are animalcules on a little rolling clod; and this clod may bear the same relation to some supernal, *n*-dimensional mansion and garden—and gardeners and Owner, as does my supposititious caoutchouc hose or patterned carpet to some terrestrial demesne.

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And so with Time. Time is a matter of individual memory, of remembering past events and of anticipating (which is memory reversed, as it were; memory projected) events to come. And memory, as we know it, is purely a matter of this or that sort of nerve-substance in the brain. Had we no memory, we should know nothing whatsoever of time; an event would be a point, and no past point could be recalled, nor any future one conjectured. So, could an infinite number of memories coalesce, there would be no time either, for in that case all events would occur here and now.

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Nature—the Cosmos—the All—the Deity ... *He* is not limited by cubical contents nor by clocks striking the hours.

§ 25

How convey a notion of this mysterious Unity? Shall we essay a gross and inadequate analogy?

There are in the blood of man little things called white corpuscles. They are alive; they are, in fact, little living personages. Indeed, it would be hard to deny that they possess a certain sort of "intelligence"; for, according to the phagocytic theory, they attack their foes and help their friends. Now, if these white corpuscles ever reason about the world which they inhabit, they must think that it consists of an immense red ocean in a perpetual flux, limitless and restless, and peopled with myriads of beings like unto themselves. Yet they are an integral part of the human frame; indeed without them the human frame could not be what it is. Well, man's place in *his* universe may be very similar to that of the white corpuscle in its; and the intelligence and nature of the Being of which man forms an integral part may be as inconceivable to man—to bewildered man, buried 'neath an ocean of air, and blown about space without even a "by your leave"—as are man's to the leucocytes of the blood.

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If there is no such thing as Space objectively existing outside our groping human selves; and if there is no such thing as Time, also objectively existing independent of our remembering and anticipating human selves; if also Death is but Life undergoing Change (for Life is not a thing extraneous to the cosmos, and there is nothing in the cosmos that can ever go out of it); if even Change itself is but a process so named because of the necessities of our temporal and spatial conditions; and what we call "multiplicity" or "manifoldness" merely a word coined by our incompetence to perceive the interdependence of all that is ... why, then, surely, one with and interpenetrating our own little space-bound, time-fettered lives, there must be an Absolute Life, indiscerptible because coherent; immutable, because unspatial; inexorable, because timeless; not to be gainsaid, because all-embracing; whose behests the human spirit, because identical with and contained in it, must and cannot but obey.

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§ 26

However, that there is a flaw in my Philosophy and a flaw in my Creed, I do not conceal from myself.—If, underlying and upholding all phenomenal multiplicity, there is a noumenal unity, how it comes about that there is evil and suffering and injustice and pain I do not know. Nor do I know how, if that Unity (including man) is governed by infrangible law, it comes about that we obtain notions of Responsibility and Will; how we feel that we ought to act thus and not otherwise, and have the power to choose the good from the evil. 97

Yet I comfort myself thus:—Human reason, after all, is inadequate for the explanation of anything superhuman. But there may be in man a faculty of imagination or feeling or emotion or faith—call it what you like—that *insists* upon our trying to act thus and not otherwise; upon our helping on the good and eradicating the bad; and that leaves the problem of the Origin of Evil and the problem of the Freedom of the Will to another sphere and another stage in the upward emergence of mind.

§ 27

Of the Origin of Evil I have no solution whatsoever. Why it is that not a single human being can go through his short threescore years and ten without pain, anguish, disappointment, the heartache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to; why 98

"But to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs";

why this solid earth is drenched with blood, and on every square inch of its surface are creatures slaughtering and stuffing creatures into their maws; why torture and agony—mental and physical—should be rampant; why innocent little babies should suffer lingering deaths—racked with pain—weak—gasping ... upon this heart-rending enigma I dare not dwell. But I cannot accept the incredible solution that an Almighty Being created this cosmos out of nothing thus, and, having created it thus, looks on at this his appalling creation unmoved.

§ 28

On the Freedom of the Will may I quote myself? Matthew Arnold has given me precedent.^[18] 99

"There are just two misleading terms in that little phrase, the Freedom of the Will, and these are just the words 'freedom' and 'will.' There is no such thing in the bodily frame as a separate entity or faculty called a 'will' walking about like a pilot on deck and directing the course; and, if there were, such pilot would not be 'free' from the influences of wind and tide. The bodily frame is like a ship, with its captain and crew. The captain has to go by the chart (that is, by his knowledge and experience of life), and the crew have to trim the sails (that is, adapt actions to circumstances). The captain (that is, the higher coordinating centres) is not 'free,' for he is dependent on his crew (to which we may compare the nerves and the ganglia)—which, in turn, are dependent upon weather (that is, our surroundings). The captain may 'will' as much as he likes, but if his crew are mutinous, or the winds contrary, he will not make port. 'Will power' at bottom merely means an intelligent captain and an obedient crew; and 'putting-forth' or 'exercising' will power merely means that captain and crew must work in harmony. So that, if attention, if virtue, if conduct and character depend upon will power (as of course they do), Aristotle seems to be perfectly right in saying that the secret of these is εἴς, or habit or practice: only a trained crew can work the ship."^[19] 100

§ 29

One thing only is certain—and whether the certainty derives from a rational or an emotional, a social or a cosmic, an evolutionary or an intuitive, a political or an ecclesiastical source, I do not stay to ask—one thing only is certain: *The evil that there is, it is our bounden duty to alleviate*; "le monde subsiste pour exercer miséricorde et jugement"^[20]; and I care not a fig that I have no metaphysical, philosophical, ethical, or religious basis of argument to adduce for this untransferable onus of Duty. 101

And I take comfort, also, in the thought that, after all, Reason has had very little to do with the moral progress of mankind. "C'est le cœur qui sent Dieu, et non raison."^[21] Answer me this one question: Which have exercised the greater influence for good: reasoned-out systems of philosophy; or religious evangels whose tenets no one could prove? How many pious followers has Spinoza or Leibnitz or Nietzsche? And how many Buddha or Confucius or Mohammed or—with all reverence be added his name—Jesus of Nazareth? 102

But the critic will say: If the religious tenet is incapable of proof, by what criterion can we judge of the authenticity of any evangel?—Well, if it teaches to alleviate suffering and to do the

Right, that is criterion enough for me.

Return we to the humble topic of walking.

XVII

THE INSTINCT FOR WALKING

§ 30

For many reasons, walking seems to be an ingrained instinct of mankind. I cling to the perhaps fanciful theory that no primitive instinct of man is altogether lost. It is modified, amplified, refined; that is all. With all our culture, we are barbarians still. Man is a clothed savage. And now and again he delights in doffing the clothing and returning heartily to savagery. How delightful the feel of the briny breeze and the boisterous wave on the bare pelt! Mr Edward Carpenter rails at the (I think) eleven layers of clothing that intervene between our skins and the airs of heaven. Walt Whitman revelled nude in his sun bath. What a treat too, sometimes, to get away from the multi-coursed dinner and to bite downright audibly into simple food in the fresh air, and to lap water noisily from the brook! Well, walking, perhaps, is the primal instinct, ancient as Eden, where the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. And, if my theory is correct, walking will persist till in recovered Paradise man walks with his Maker again. No mechanical contrivance for locomotion will extirpate the tribe of tramps, of those who walk from love of walking.

XVIII

A WOEFUL WALK

§ 31

But not all walks are occasions of unmitigated pleasure. By no means. A certain trudge, which particularly lives in my memory, was one of almost unmitigated pain.—No; I will not say that, for wert not thou, L—, cheeriest of companions, with me? What a walk that was! It rained the long day through, and as we strode westward, a cold, wet wind from the east blew hard. The roads were impassable for mud; the trees were leafless; the fields bare. Inns there were none, and at the thirteenth mile I broke a nice big flask of port wine or e'er a blessed sip of the liquid (I mean a sip of the blessed liquid) had passed our lips. A woeful walk was that, and woeful pedestrians were we.—Yet, somehow, it is with the extremest pleasure that now I recall that trudge. To beguile the time, and to try to forget the rain, we improvised a play, and shouted dialogues as we strode. We covered forty miles at a stretch; and whether it was the play, or the fresh air, or the exercise, or L—'s indomitable Mark Tapleyism, we limped (no, we lamely ran the last few yards) into our destination, in spirits, at least, buoyant, jubilant, and secure.—How mad and bad and sad it was! And oh, how we were stiff!

XIX

AUTUMN IN CANADA AGAIN

§ 32

Yet another country walk taken in England's North American dominions lives most pleasantly in my memory.

Two of the clock one autumn afternoon found me free. I had hoped to have lost no time in beginning to put enormous stretches of space between me and my desk. Not that this desk had not its pleasures, and many of them; but one craves a change of mental atmosphere, however salubrious that usually respired. The temptation, however, of calmly and in self-righteously

indolent manner enjoying the sweets of freedom was too strong, so I lounged a whole afternoon, and not till daybreak on the following morning was I booted, knapsacked, and afoot.

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The task of putting space between me and my desk was not one as easy as I had anticipated. It was hours before the dust of the city was shaken off, and the mud of the country allowed to take its place; the tedium of the streets at that unfrequented hour of the day made them seem interminable. For was I not craving and in search of country sights and sounds? And yet for miles not one met the eye or ear. Yes, I am forgetting: there was one which made up for much monotony. On a humble cottage wall facing the south, far out in the suburbs, was a wealth of flowering convolvulus such as I had rarely or only in India seen before. The sight was entrancing. The various-hued blossoms seemed blatantly to trumpet forth their beauty to the sun, to borrow the terms of sound and to apply them to colour. And what colour was there! That deep, soft, velvet purple, powdered with snowy pollen—what a profound, what an acute sense it produced of something altogether beyond the limitations of time and space, of something mysterious, beneficent, divine. Never before did I see so deep a meaning in those words: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." How paltry, how tainted, seemed all human greatness beside those simple petals; how marred, how deformed! And why? Why should Nature alone be able to smile openly before her Maker's eyes, and man be ever hiding himself from the presence of the Lord God? Ah! there is more than one interpretation of the text, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." ... Those brilliant blossoms aroused many a thought. How earnestly have all poets of Nature striven to find expression for the emotions that natural beauty evokes! And yet none has completely succeeded, and none will succeed till the hidden links are discovered between the beautiful thing, the mind that perceives it, and the Hand that fashions it. How is it that a sunset, a landscape, a green field even, or a growing fern, will sometimes in a moment of time cause to blaze up in a man a thrill, a joy, so intense that under its influence one feels dazed and dumb? A great power is, as it were, suddenly let loose; beauty incarnated momentarily reveals its divine presence, and one feels an all but overwhelming impulse to yield oneself to it and be rapt away whithersoever it leads. But—whither it leads we cannot go.

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Of all poets who have given utterance to this deep and mystical emotion, Wordsworth perhaps has best succeeded. What can rival the following lines?—which will bear constant quotation:—

"For I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

If only Wordsworth had written oftener in that strain of higher mood! To me this passage, even with just such narrow meaning as one not worthy to call himself a Wordsworthian can read into it, has been invaluable. In the mass of that hidden, cloudy, inner signification with which (I think it is Mr Ruskin who insists that) all poetry should be instinct, these lines are marvellous. They more nearly reach the goal of that "struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, that longing after the Infinite, that love of God," which Professor Max Müller describes as the basis of all religions, than all the creeds such religions have constructed.

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Wordsworth saw, as perhaps no one before him ever quite so clearly saw, the Spiritual Unity underlying those two things:—the one called External Nature; the other, this spark of life called the Human Soul—the product of, and burning in, that External Nature, as a flame feeds upon the air which it illumines.—But to return to my walk.

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§ 33

Curiously enough, I had hardly reached the confines of the town which I was leaving before I fell in with a youth apparently possessed of the same motive as myself—namely, to enjoy to the full the delights of the country after a year's inclusion in a thronged city; and, in order the better to do so, to use as means of locomotion his own two legs, and a stout stick. I say "apparently," for very short converse with him revealed the fact that he was utterly blind to the charms of Nature. He was nice-mannered and polite to a degree; but as a companion to aid in discovering rural beauty he was simply worse than none at all. His two negative or denominatorial eyes and ears completely cancelled, made useless, and altogether put out of existence my two positive or numeratorial senses. I was prepared to take infinite delight in the most trivial and insignificant of Nature's works, to extol her most commonplace manifestations, to find the longest sermons in the

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tinest pebbles; but to do this by the side of the most antipathetic of, to all intents and purposes, blind and deaf of fellow-pedestrians—it was out of the question. I nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice when I say that that utterance of his most pregnant with observation of the passing scene was contained in the words, "That's a potato-patch!" The early morning sun fought its way between dense grey clouds, and fell in cheering light on the tops of the trees, and in silver showers on the gleaming lake below; the rich green meadows caught the rays, the very air seemed laden with treasures of sunlight; young and graceful maples, in crimson autumn tints, like Mænads at vintage-time, flung flaming torches towards the sky, unmindful of the morn; the sumach and the gorgeous virginia-creeper were ablaze with beauty; yet of all this he saw nothing; a brown potato-patch by the highway rim a brown potato-patch was to him, and it was nothing more. Yes, by the by, it was something more: it was an appreciable piece of property, a prospective town lot at so much per foot frontage, one-third cash down and the balance in half-yearly instalments to suit the purchaser, all local improvements paid by.... At least some such jargon caught my inattentive ear. Real estate is, I gladly grant, a topic of (often too) absorbing interest; but one does not exactly wish to be confronted with intricate monetary calculations, connected with barter and commerce, when engaged in the not very kindred and decidedly delicate task of wooing Nature. Barter and commerce when Wordsworth is ringing in one's ears, incorporated companies and syndicates when bird and bush ask your attention—these things, in the language of the pharmacopœia, are incompatibles.

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§ 34

I had thus two causes of complaint against my companion. So I left him: I took a bypath; he kept to the highway. Nor was I sorry. It is pleasant now and again for short periods to get away from one's fellow-men. Familiarity breeds contempt, it is said; perhaps it is as true of aggregations of men as of individuals. At all events, one comes back from a temporary seclusion with a sweeter temper, a more kindly and tolerant regard for those about one. Nor was I sorry. The main road contained too many curious starers. To walk for pleasure was a thing wholly outside the limits of their comprehension. "'Tisn't 'cause 'tis cheaper?" asked one irrepressible inquirer (always this matter of money!); and he was still more puzzled at the explanation that hotel bills largely exceeded railway fare....

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§ 35

Yet one seeks entertainment when travelling long alone. The mind becomes overfull, it gathers from every sight and sound and scent, and craves another mind as depositary for the surplus, as sharer of the spoils. In time also it wearies of constant observation, and would give much for a companion. In lieu of a concrete one, I found myself quite unconsciously imitating Macaulay, and substituting an abstract one by quoting Milton; and never did his ponderous yet marvellously poised lines sound to me so grand as when rolled *ore rotundo* to the accompaniment of Ontario's rolling wave. M. Henri Cochin, Matthew Arnold tells us, speaks of "the majestic English iambic." It is to Milton surely that the English iambic owes the praise of majesty. To me, I confess, the exceeding beauty of much of Milton's verse is a snare—as is also much of Mr Ruskin's prose: the ear is so captivated by the sound that the mind strays from the sense.

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§ 36

Toronto was my starting point, and my course lay eastwards on the northern shore of great Lake Ontario by what is always known as the Kingston Road, one of the oldest in the country, the precursor of the Grand Trunk Railway, the track of which, indeed, it closely follows. The country through which it runs varies but little in scenery, being a great undulating stretch of fertile land thickly settled with farms and orchards, and as thickly wooded with pine, maple, larch, elm, fir, beech, hickory, and other trees common in Canada. Here and there a small river runs to the lake, and here and there the shore rises into cliffs of eighty or a hundred feet. Cows and sheep, and pigs and poultry, meet one all along the road, showing us the occupations of the inhabitants; as do also the fields of barley and wheat, and the great orchards gay with the unrivalled Canadian apple, which gleams at us from the boughs with every hue and size. The Kingston Road is a king's highway with a vengeance; hard, well-travelled, and dotted, I should say, along its whole length, with comfortable, often elaborate, habitations standing in the midst of fields and trees. At every ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty miles these habitations cluster into villages or towns; sometimes where road and railway intersect, when there spring up factories and warehouses; sometimes down by the shore, when there rise elevators and wharves. I cannot pretend to say that these are interesting. They consist for the most part each of one straggling main street, itself a part of the Kingston Road, and differentiated from it only by the unkempt habitations that line its length, and by the inevitable wooden pavements, broad in the central portions, but narrowing to a single plank in the outskirts—where, no doubt, it was in reality, if not in name, the "Lovers' Walk." They were not quaint, no ancient and few historical traditions clung to them, neither did they appear to me to possess any distinguishing characteristics.

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§ 37

I have spoken of a quiet country town. A country town of a Sunday afternoon in Canada is the quietest of existing things. Everything in it seems lifeless. Not a sound is heard from any side. One's own cough startles one in the very streets. Two cows slowly wend their way homewards; an over-ripe apple falls heavily in an unkempt front garden—even these signs of semi-life are a relief. Rows of youths, all dressed in sombre black, and all smoking cigars fearfully if not wonderfully made, lean against the walls of the inn at the corner, or stand in silent knots about the horse-gnawed "hitching-post." The jaded afternoon sunlight falls slantingly and weariedly on untidy plots in which weeds strive for mastery successfully with flowers, on empty verandahs with blistered paint, on the dusty grass encroaching ever on the street. I enter the inn. It is chilly, and in the common room which serves many purposes a battered stove lacking two-thirds of its mica radiates a dry and suffocating heat. On deal chairs, mostly tipped up, sit the youths but just now lounging without. They say nothing; only they sit and smoke, and spit—how they spit! They themselves probably are all unconscious of the incessant salivary sharp-shooting; but I—I sit in terror, like a nervous woman dreading the pistol shots on the stage. Soon church bells begin to clang. None heeds them, nor are they over-inviting; one is cracked, they are not in harmony, and they seem to be ringing a race in which the hindmost is to win. In the space of about an hour, however, the youths begin to move, as if with the feeling that at last will come a small relief from the awful *ennui* which they cannot express. Church is coming out. They go out and draw up before the doors. A heavy yellow light streams across the street, and with it issues an odour, perhaps, of sanctity, but much disguised by kerosene. Greetings follow between the out-coming damsels and the waiting youths, and curious raucous laughs intended to be tender are heard disappearing into darkened ways. Soon all is again hushed, and but for here and there the slow and lugubrious sounds of hymn tunes played on old and middle-aged organs, the little town might be a buried city of the East.

§ 38

Yet no doubt it had its tragedies, this seemingly peaceful and sequestered spot: indeed signs of most pathetic tragedies came under my own eyes, few as were the hours which I spent in it. Hanging about the unpretentious hostelry about which those uncouth youths gathered, were two specimens of what was once humanity that made the heart ache to look on. One was a case, I think, hopeless: a gaunt and dirty figure, his last drink still dripping from his beard, clothed in the vilest of shirts, and in things that were once trousers, which last hung loose over large and faded carpet slippers, he moved disgust as well as pity. The other was of a different class. Drink had been his bane also, but there was not in his face that absence of all shame, that despair merging into careless defiance, which stamped his fellow-sufferer's case as beyond the cure of man. They called him "Doc," and there were still evidences of birth and education upon his bloated features. What had driven him thus far? I could not help but conjecture. Was there a woman at the bottom of it? If so, where and what was she now? Somebody else's.... But this was idle guesswork. There was yet another case, a woman herself this time, still more tragic. Her motto, stamped upon every feature, expressed in every gesture, was "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." A tall, dark, and once handsome spinster, a *femme de trente ans*, she waited upon us at table; but with such an air of utter indifference, with such complete abstraction from things material and ephemeral, that she awed the very persons to whose wants she ministered. Her face wore a settled and unaltering expression of something missed yet never to that day for one moment forgotten. A machine could not have carried plates and moved dishes with more unflinching stolidity. Her thoughts were remotely away in the past, and it seemed as if nothing, nothing upon all this earth, could fetch them back. Cato's statue would have smiled as soon as she. It was pathetic in the extreme. One longed to give her if but one moment's peace of mind. Did she *never* forget? What was it she brooded on? How long would the feminine heart and brain stand that strain? Tragedies! Yes, there were tragedies there, as everywhere else.

§ 39

Such is Sunday in a country town. But in truth, after the rush and hurry of city life, in the country it seems always Sunday. There is a leisure, a calm, a restfulness, and, away by the fields, a quiet sanctity which pervades its every part and unconsciously influences its every inhabitant. By degrees, too, on the traveller through the country this calming influence comes. The still green meadows, the gently swaying boughs, the sunshine sleeping pillowed on the clouds—all tend to meditative and restful peace, and one reaps the harvest of a quiet eye. And if one yields to this beneficent mood there is much, very much, to be gained. Alone with Nature, all around the spacious earth, above the immeasurable heavens, alone in a vast expanse, one finds oneself, in Amiel's fine phrase, *tête-à-tête* with the Infinite. At such times the great problem of Life flares upon us like a flash of lightning, so sudden, so intense, so vivid is its irruption on the mental vision. Time and space, like the darkness of night, are annihilated, earthly bounds are burst, and there is revealed a realm of Being beyond the confines of the relative, the limited, the finite. We recognise the infinity of unity, the brotherhood of all things. Terms of proportion and comparison lose their significance: there is no great or little, important or trivial, for the minutest object is an essential part of the All, without which this All would cease to be.

§ 40

Curious thoughts, or "half-embodiments of thoughts" as Coleridge called them, that lonely walk aroused. What was this All? And what portion of this All was I—I, this tiny biped crawling ant-like between earth and sky? I looked over the flat earth, and remembered that it was not flat but round, and but one of myriads like itself, and among them, perhaps, as paltry as, upon it, I. I looked up at the sky, filled with the radiance of the sun, and again remembered that, sown through space like seed, were countless other suns, and ours perhaps the least in all that host. And when night came, and the stars shone, I remembered that even then I saw only what came in at the pin-prick of the eye, and that to the mighty All that myriad-studded sky was perhaps as trivial as to it was earth or sun. Yet, trivial as we were, we were not naught—not quite nothing. That was the wonder of it. So far from naught, indeed, that to me, this tiny biped crawling, himself was very important; his little pains, his aches, even these his questionings were very real. If incommensurable suns swung high overhead, he at least was the centre of his own little world, and not the most astounding facts of science could alter or remove that egocentric view.—And, if not nothing, if something in all that vast inane, then what? How came it that, prompted by what entered at that pin-prick eye, something within him could fling itself, fling itself faster than light, far beyond the outermost boundary of vision, and put to the immensity of Being questions which, could Being hear, would surely put it to the blush? Those pains, those aches, were they nothing to the All? To the tiny mighty atom they were much.—But the world spun round, and the sun set, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

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§ 41

It is well now and again, I think, to withdraw into the holy of holies of one's own self, "where dwells the Nameless,"^[22] in its shapeless and vague impenetrability, "as a cloud." The world is too much with us. The myriad trivial details of everyday life hide from us that of which they ought in reality perpetually to remind us. For, after all, what is all action, even as manifested in these trivial details, but a struggle to overcome space and time, the limitations of the finite; and what, again, is all thought but a struggle to conceive the infinite?

§ 42

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Yet another thought this spacious prospect gave me. The endless green fields and the endless blue lake seemed a symbol of the unrealisability of the ideal. With both I was enamoured, and with the beauty of both I craved in some dim and unknown way to take my fill of delight: both were at my feet, but both stretched away and away until they met the eternal and unapproachable heavens at the horizon. Yes, the fields were green, but not the spot on which I stood; the water was blue, but not in the cup with which I tried to assuage my thirst.—But there is a limit to ontological and psychological speculations of sombre hue.

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THE WALKING TOUR

§ 43

Up to the present we have considered the country walk only. The walking trip or tour is a more serious affair. If it requires as vacuous a frame of mind, it necessitates a more deliberate preparation. Much depends upon the country and the locality chosen. If inviting hostelries abound, one needs to weight oneself with little; if they are infrequent, or nonexistent, food and clothing become matters of moment. This may sound a truism; but it is a truism that many a tripper wishes he had laid more earnestly to heart when, miles from house and home, he finds himself wet, hungry, and fatigued. It is better to carry a few extra pounds far than to run short soon; for a worn-out body means a useless mind, and hunger and cold, with their attendant depression of spirits, not only rob the tour of its pleasure, but rob the tourist of his zest. Start, therefore, comfortable, and comfortably provided. This is not Sybaritism; it is common-sense.

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For an extended trip, send on some luggage ahead, if you can; and some money (I speak of civilised regions). It is impossible, if you are alone—unless, like Stevenson, you hire a donkey—to transport on your own back food and clothing to keep you going for more than a few days at a stretch—unless you shoot, or fish, or trap—which is sport or prospecting, not walking.

Your first care should be for your feet—another truism not seldom neglected. See that your boots fit—*fit*, remembering that the feet swell (I speak to tenderfoots).

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If you are unaccustomed to walking, a good plan is to start with an extra pair of leather soles inside your boots. These can be taken out when the feet swell.

If you prefer shoes to boots, wear gaiters or putties—to keep out the wet in winter, to keep out the dust in summer. The only occasion upon which I suffered from blisters was on a sixty-mile walk in tennis shoes on a dusty road in August. Take two or three changes of socks. If you walk in a populous region, carry a pair of light shoes. These will come in handy if you run across a friend who asks you to dinner. Carry also a collar or two; not only hosts and hostesses, but landlords and landladies look askance at too trampish an appearance. I once felt rather uncomfortable sitting at the head of a table d'hôte at the excellent Hôtel Kaltenbach on the American side at Niagara (the landlord knew me well), for I was in rough flannels and tweeds, and my fellow-guests were dressed like (and some of them probably were) millionaires and millionairesses. *Verbum sapientibus satis*.—Do not refuse an invitation to dinner. Follow Napoleon's advice and let the country you pass through support you, falling back upon your own food-supply when necessary. Help yourself to as much fruit as you can, or as the owners thereof and their dogs permit. A too concentrated diet is unwholesome. Expatriate upon this to the owners of orchards, and—back your theories with a dole.

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§ 44

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But nothing equals the evening meal cooked over your own fire—if you are not too tired to cook it. Of the cookery I shall speak later; but the fire is as invigorating as the food. Would you taste the consummation of human masculine contentment, stretch your tired legs before your own fire after a long, long walk followed by a full meal: your chamber, the forest primæval, green, indistinct in the twilight; your couch, the scented earth; your canopy, the heavens, curtained with clouds; in your nostrils the incense of burning wood; in your heart the peace which the world giveth not.—The elaborately ornamented modern hearth, with its carved oak or its sculptured marble, is the direct lineal descendant of the nomad fire—the earliest institution of man, the first promoter of civilisation, the binder-together of troglodytic families into tribes. "Hearth and Home" is an ancient, a very ancient, sentiment. It dates back, I take it, to the Glacial Epoch—far enough, in all conscience.—In my mind's eye I see the shivering Cave-man, appalled at the encroaching ice, the deepening cold. He gathers wood, huddles him in caves, the drops from his furry, ill-smelling clothing (there was no tanning then) sputtering in the flames. For self-protection, and from lack of fuel, family makes alliance with family, and the first-formed human community squats silent about the first-formed human hearth. What friendships must have there been cemented, what tales told; what a strange first unburthening of human heart to human heart! What ecstatic love-making, too, must have been enacted in the darksome corners of the sooty cave, the while the grey gorged hunters snored, and toothless beldames gesticulated dumb-crambo scandal by the smouldering brands!—No wonder præhistoric associations cluster even now about what is too often represented by a flamboyant mantelpiece with immaculate tiles and polished brasses. *Pro Aris et Focis!* The smoking altar is the consecrated symbol of the lowly hearth.

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XXI

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THE TRAMP'S DIETARY

§ 45

As to food—bacon, flour, and beans are the stand-by. The curious in the matter of concentrated and portable foods will do well to consult Nansen's elaborate and carefully calculated lists of these.^[23] Carry some chocolate: it staves off hunger and is nourishing. Milk, if you can get it, has wonderful staying powers, and by most people—especially under stress of prolonged exertion—is easily digested. Wear wool next the skin, and wear it loose. Let everything be loose. And see that your tailor puts pockets—deep and wide ones—in every conceivable and inconceivable part of your costume. As to books, sketching or writing materials, or a camera—every tramp has his hobby: indulge yours to the full; what are you walking for if not to enjoy life? Lastly, do not forget that, if you are not far from the haunts of men, you will over and over again be indebted to your fellow-men for little kindnesses and civilities. A pocketful of small change will make many a rough place smooth. I might mention also *sotto voce* that so will a flask of good whisky. To these you may add a couple of bandages, some chlorodyne, a few ounces of cognac, a small styptic, a needle and some thread, a small razor, and a cake of soap. Also, if you wear an eye-glass or glasses, by no means forget to carry some extra ones. As for the rest, a pipe, a very big pouch of tobacco (many will dip into it), a stout stick, and abundance of matches ought to make you independent of everything and everybody for days together.

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§ 46

A word, too, on beverages, which are as important as is food.—Eschew alcohol in every shape

or form, unless you are dog-tired at the end of a long day and must make a few miles ere nightfall. Alcoholic stimulation spells ruination to muscular exertion the moment the stimulus has passed off. It was said that on the march to the relief of Ladysmith in the South African War the drinkers could be told as plainly as if they had been labelled.

The best example I know of the wise and efficacious use of alcohol is in Edith Elmer Wood's "An Oberland Chalet." The author, her sister-in-law, and her brother, with a guide, were climbing the Strahlegg Pass. 143

"All the way up that eight hundred feet of rock wall, there was never a ledge large enough to rest on with the entire two feet at once!... The numbness of my hands was so great that my control over them was most uncertain. My life and that of my companions depended on the grip I should keep with those cramped, aching fingers, but though I concentrated my will power on them I felt no certainty that the next minute they would not become rigid and refuse to obey me.... After the first few minutes, I never looked downward. I was not inclined to dizziness, but the drop was too appalling.... Once we got all four on a little ledge not as wide as the length of our feet, but solid enough to stand on without balancing. We paused there to take breath, and somebody said 'Cognac.' Now our experience in the Alpine hut the night before had nearly made teetotalers of us. But at this moment we decided that stimulants might have a legitimate use. Frater produced his silver pocket flask and handed it round. We took a swallow in turn, and it was like liquid life running down our throats. I never experienced anything so magical.... I was at the very last point of endurance. I had lost faith in ever reaching the summit of the cliff. I had no more physical force with which to lift my sagging weight upward. I had lost the will power that lashes on an exhausted body. My numb hands were stiffening. My lungs were choked and labouring. I could neither go on nor go back. Then those two teaspoonfuls, or thereabouts, of fiery cognac that burned down my throat sufficed to give me back my grip on myself, physical and mental. I moved my cramped fingers and they answered. I took a deep long breath and felt strengthened. A hope, almost a confidence, crept into my heart that we might reach the top alive."^[24] 144

§ 47

The best all-round stimulant is tea. I say it advisedly, knowing full well that to Dr Alexander Haig and the anti-uric-acid dietists tea is Anathema Maranatha. But every mining prospector, every railroad constructor, every lumberman, every out-in-the-wilds worker throughout Australia and America drinks tea—proof, surely, that it is efficacious, even if it be in a sense deleterious. In huge quantities, and constantly taken, I dare say it is deleterious. But personally I know of no pick-me-up preferable to tea, when, cold, hungry, and tired at the end of a long day's tramp, you find yourself "all in" and unable to eat. 146

I recall an instance of the extraordinary efficacy of tea—quite weak, but hot. It was at the end of a forty-mile walk through a monotonous country in cold, wind, and rain. We arrived tired out; and although we knew we were hungry (for we had had precious little to eat all day), the thought of food was repulsive, though the restaurant we had reached displayed a variety of viands. I ordered hot tea in the biggest teapot procurable. It was brought. We sipped I forget how many cups each. Then we supped indeed; and after supper one of the party proposed to walk the forty miles back!

Perhaps Dr Haig will say that plain hot water would have done just as well. Humph! Give me weak, but good, tea.

Hot milk, of course, is an incomparable pick-me-up. But who, on a trudge, can always, by demanding it, obtain hot milk? If you can get it, milk, in any shape or form, is unrivalled. More than once it has raised me from the depths of low spirits, produced by hunger and thirst and fatigue, to the most contented of moods.—I was walking once on a hot summer's day along a barren and dusty road where was no habitation nor signs of men. My knapsack was empty, so was my water-bottle. Not a brook or a stream could I find. It was late in the day. I was heart-sick and weary. But the miracle happened. Did I believe my eyes, or was that a man there milking cows over yonder in that field? I made straight for him, and, after passing the time of day and being generally polite (the while my tongue clave to my palate), I presently asked if I might have some of his priceless liquid—I called it simply "milk." Genially he pointed to a pail—a *pail*, and bade me help myself. I put that vessel to my lips, and I rather think that the vertical arc described by any given point on the periphery of the bottom of that utensil during the process of deglutition was not a small one! When I put that pail down (and a twenty-five-cent piece beside it) I was a new man, and laughed at miles and melancholy. 147

Very often, when walking, especially in hot weather, one finds oneself tired when only a few miles have been covered. It is not real fatigue; it is want of fluid. The skin exudes moisture; the blood thickens; the serums and synovial fluids run short; waste matter is not excreted; the muscles and tendons require lubrication. A copious draught of water will put all to rights. Not everyone knows this. I myself owe the hint to a friend.^[25] 148

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Each walker must, however, discover for himself what is the food best suited to his needs—remembering always that it is quite possible to spoil a whole day by even trivial dietetic mistakes. If you walk to see and to enjoy, unless you possess that youth which can digest anything, and that vitality which can attack anything, take heed as to what you eat and what you attempt.—Most unfortunate is the remembrance of an otherwise lovely walk I took one day over one of the most lovely of the passes of the Jura. The day was superb; the road by the soft green pastures was superb; and superb was the climb through the tangled brushwood of the slopes. Filmy clouds formed themselves to leeward of the peaks and hid the tops of the pines; above, I gazed into a deep blue sky; beneath, I gazed into a deep green vale; and a tumbling brook sent its music up the heights. But—I had started foodless, and had stuffed into my pockets only a stodgy roll and a box of sardines. By noon I was hungry. I finished the roll *and* the sardines. With deplorable result. The pancreas rebelled, the senses were dulled, and all the beauties of the Jura were lost upon *heu me miserum!*—Fellow-tramp, take thought for your provender—and provender good old Dr Johnson defines as "dry food for brutes."—*That* is the diet to walk on.

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But, after all, one's impedimenta must be chosen according to one's tastes. Mr Hilaire Belloc equipped himself for his seven-hundred-mile walk from Toul to Rome with "a large piece of bread, half-a-pound of smoked ham, a sketch-book, two Nationalist papers, and a quart of the wine of Brulé"^[26] (but one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!); though farther on he tells us he also carried "a needle, some thread, and a flute."^[27] But then Mr Belloc's path lay through thickly-peopled districts; he rarely slept in the open; travelled in summer-time; and not once, I think, lighted a fire: and certes he reached Rome in sorry plight.

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XXII

PRACTICAL DETAILS

152

And now for some hints on the practical details of walking tours of more arduous character and more extended length.^[28]—Suit the weight of your knapsack or pack to your strength, leaving a large margin for comfort. If you travel in regions uninhabited by man, and the climate is rigorous, a shelter at night is all-important. Therefore carry a light blanket: a warm head and face induce sleep; so does a change to dry underclothing at the end of the day. For really hard trips, when you walk all day and walk far, you will need, to replace used-up muscular tissue, each day:

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¾ lb. of flour;
¾ lb. of bacon;
½ lb. of beans;

—and to these you should add dried fruit or rice. The best dried fruit is a mixture in equal parts of apricots and prunes. Take an abundance of tea: nothing takes the place of tea; and supply yourself with pepper, salt, sugar, candles, and soap. Your cooking pots should fit the one into the other. These things, with a small frying-pan, an axe (to cut poles for your evening shelter and wood for your fire), a file to sharpen this, and some stout wire hooks by which to hang your pots over the fire, complete, I think, the sum-total of your absolutely necessary impedimenta.

The sedulous, however sage, have little idea how large a part of active life depends on food. To stay-at-homes, who go down to the dining-room when the gong sounds, a meal seems a mere incident of life, an intermission from work, an opportunity for a family chat. The traveller on foot soon learns that a meal is of the most vital importance. Every reader of Nansen's thrilling narrative must have noticed this. Even in Mr Belloc's literary "Path to Rome" one is struck with the intrusion of this unliterary topic, and the more literary "Inland Voyage" of Robert Louis Stevenson is not free from it. While even in that delightful, and delightfully feminine, "An Oberland Chalet," which I have already cited, although the foods were generally cheese or cakes or *petits pains*, and the drinks chocolate or milk or *café au lait*, the mention of edibles and potables is frequent.

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The importance of a supply of food has so often been borne in upon me that I am inclined to believe that the political community is coæval with the pantry. Even amongst animals, only those

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form commonwealths which form common stores of food—as the ant and the bee.

The pedestrian gains a practical insight into this wide-reaching influence of a storage of food. Not for half-a-dozen hours can he subsist before its importance is impressed upon him by most painful pangs. If, therefore, sedulous sage, you set out on a long hard walk without due provision for the allaying of hunger, you will come to grief. I make no apologies, accordingly, for minute instructions on that topic here.

§ 52

The bread of the Western prospector, my fraternal informant tells me, is the bannock. Dost know how to make a bannock? You must have with you a bag containing flour (of the highest grade, made from hard wheat), baking powder, and salt, thoroughly mixed beforehand. (Use twice as much baking powder as the instructions on the tin direct. Half a cupful of salt will suffice for ten pounds of flour.) Open this bag, and make a depression in the contents with your fist. Into this pour a cupful of water. Stir the sides of the depression into the water till you get a stiff dough. Spread this dough in a clean greased frying-pan. Hold the pan over the fire till the under side of the dough is slightly browned, then take the pan off the fire and set it up on edge to allow the top of the bannock to toast, and your bannock is made—and very delicious you will find it if you are hungry, and hungry you certainly will be.

Beans are a more troublesome affair, for, unfortunately, they take from two to four hours to boil. But beans are the mainstay of life on a tour. There are two good varieties: the small white, and the larger brown. Take both, and before starting clean them thoroughly from dust and grit and stones—thoroughly. As soon as your fire is lighted, put on your beans in cold water with no salt, and keep them boiling. As soon as they show signs of softening, add a piece of bacon or a ham bone and some pepper and salt. When ready—eat. If they are not ready for you when you are ready for them (and this coincidence is, alas, rare with beans), the pot should be filled up with water, the remains of the fire raked into a circle, in the centre of which the pot should be kept for the night: they will then make a dish for breakfast, when they may be eaten as they are, or can be fried. If drained fairly dry, they may be carried as they are and used for luncheon.—But the best thing is to make a bannock of them. Take a clean frying-pan with plenty of bacon fat in it, and mash the already boiled beans in this with a fork. Heat, with stirring, till the mass is dry enough to set; then fry on both sides. This will keep for days, "and is," says my authority, "the finest food I know of for emergency trips."

XXIII

THE BEAUTY OF LANDSCAPE

§ 53

May I here request the reader to accompany me in a short digression?—Few things are pleasanter than a walk in which one turns down any lane that invites.

One of the first delights of walking is the pleasure derived from the passing scene.—What is the secret of the pleasure derived from a beautiful landscape—or, as a matter of fact, from almost any landscape? For apparently a landscape need not be actually beautiful in order to give pleasure. "I wouldn't give a mile of the dear old Sierras," says Bret Harte, "with their honesty, sincerity, and magnificent uncouthness, for 100,000 kilomètres of the picturesque Vaud."^[29] And even Mary MacLane, rail as she did at the barren sands of Butte, Montana, in her "Story,"^[30] when she left them wrote, "I love those things the best of all."^[31]—Bret Harte and Mary MacLane may give us a clue to the secret. It is not merely the contour or the colours of a landscape that delight; it is the associations that cling to it.—But what of a scene which is quite new to the eyes? Still, I think, association. "Scenery soon palls," says George Borrow, "unless it is associated with remarkable events, and the names of remarkable men."^[32] And Ruskin, you will remember, when gazing at the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain above the village of Champignole, in the Jura, found that the impressiveness of the scene owed its source to the fact that "those ever-springing flowers and ever-flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue."^[33]

Packed away in the brain and mind of man must be subtle and secret memories dating back through unknown ages of time.—A gaseous theory, perhaps, but one which Senancour has liquefied into the pellucid sentence:—"La nature sentie n'est que dans les rapports humains, et l'éloquence des choses n'est rien que l'éloquence de l'homme."^[34] The great fight for life, the stern joys of life—the ferocious combat, the thrilling love match, the myriad sensations and emotions evoked by man's physical environment, and his struggle for existence therein—surely these live somehow somewhere packed away in his brain to-day—just as some migratory and nidificatory memories must be packed away in the brain of a bird. It is these dormant cosmic

memories that a landscape revives. On how many a plain to-day does there not flow veritable human blood remuted into sap!—Terrene Nature was man's ancestral home and no man can gaze upon it unmoved.

§ 54

The freedom of a great expanse seems to arouse primitive instincts. Idylls are not enacted in drawing-rooms. It is the odorous glades are Hymen's haunts. In the meads of Enna Proserpine was wooed. Zephir won Aurora a-maying. On Latmos top Endymion was nightly kissed. In the boscaje Daphnis proposed—and was there and then accepted.^[35] If only Fashion would decree that honeymoons should be spent under Jove! Lovers ken the banks where amaranths blow, and poets build their altars in the fields. How actually physically exhilarating sometimes is

"The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,

.

Such life there, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting Nature have her way."^[36]

There must survive in the cosmic consciousness of the race, deep-seated and ineradicable memories of primæval nuptials. What a pity it is that that supreme, that sacred drama called "Love" should be enacted by youths and damsels, not in secluded groves amidst perfumed and amorous blooms, but in ball-rooms and boudoirs.^[37]

§ 55

It is a complex, it is a profound enigma, this of the appeal of the beauty of nature to the senses and emotions of man. For Beauty, we must remember, is not an attribute of the external thing. Beauty is in the soul that feels, the mind that thinks, the memory that remembers. *That* is beautiful which brings to mind and memory and soul, ecstatic thrill, exalted feeling. *That* is beautiful which makes for the preservation and propagation and (which should make for the) elevation of the race.—And this is why Beauty is of various kinds. There is a Beauty of the senses, and there is a beauty of the soul—as there is a terrestrial Aphrodite, and an Aphrodite uranian.^[38] Though why the earthly and the heavenly Aphrodites should not join hands, I do not know. Perhaps it is only when they do join hands—when there is at one and the same time a spiritual obsession and a physical oblation—that Beauty becomes transfigured before us, reveals her divine nature radiant through fleshly vestments. Ah! this occurs only when we are on the Mount.

§ 56

After all, did John Ruskin really get to the bottom of this matter of the appeal of Nature to the heart of man? Is the beauty of any particular scene due to the generic fact that "those ever-springing flowers and ever-flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue"? If my theory is right that beauty is subjective, not objective; that the connecting link between the natural object and the emotion which it evokes is that of memory or association, surely we must seek for a more particular, a more personal explanation than this of Ruskin his "human endurance, valour, and virtue." Well, I too have lounged a whole morning on a mountain top not far from the spot of which Ruskin wrote. Before me was the valley of the Arve; behind me, the valley of the Rhône: both, from that height of vision, and on that perfect day, breathing prosperity and peace. Square mile after square mile of fertile land lay under my eyes: farms and vineyards, fields and meadows, all watered by winding streams. Dotted about, here in groups, there discrete, were the tiled roofs of cottages; and all through the verdure, in long white curves with an occasional tangent, here hidden by boscaje, there emerging in the sunlight, ran the good white roads of France. The sweet grass on which I lay was thickly strewn with flowers, and the air brought scents sweet as softest music heard afar. To right and left in the middle distance rose Alpine peaks—light green at their bases, dark green in the zone of the pines, lifting grey or green or purple masses towards the clouds; and straight in front, some seven leagues away, stretched the rugged jagged snow-capped chain of Mont Blanc.

It was early morning, and it was one of those perfect summer days when, as one lay supine, one could actually perceive the filmy clouds vanish into invisibility; while, as an addition to the blessings of the scene, there came to my ear the tinkling bells of the cattle.

And the region was thick with the memories of human endurance, valour, and virtue. Cæsar's legions strode that soil. Long before Cæsar came, marauding bands had met and fought. And, since Cæsar's time, owing to the fortunes of war, war in which man fought hand-to-hand with man—opposed shield to javelin, discharged the feathered arrow, or pointed arquebus and carronade—the very ground on which I walked had changed owners innumerable.

It would be difficult to choose a more appealing scene.—And yet, if I probe my own heart to the core, if I tell my inmost thought, to me a sunny—or even, for that matter, a misty—scene in pastoral England—Surrey or Bucks or Berks, Kent or Devon, Sussex or Herts, where you will—rouses more poignant emotions than all the plain of Haute Savoie backed by the Chaîne du Mont Blanc.

Mr Kipling, in his simple language, has come nearer to the truth than has Ruskin with all his felicity of phrase. It is not the associations connected with human endeavour *in the mass* that make any particular scene to appeal, it is the associations connected with our own little selves; it is because "our hearts are small" that God has

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"Ordained for each one spot should prove
Beloved over all."^[39]

But, indeed, I think that the great Darwin long ago, quite incidentally—and quite unwittingly—put his finger upon the crux of the problem. Speaking of the beauties of the landscape of the East Indian Archipelago he says: "These scenes of the tropics are in themselves so delicious, that they almost equal those dearer ones at home, to which we are bound by each best feeling of the mind."^[40] The sublime and beautiful in Nature call forth our admiration, reverence, awe; it is the simple scenes, to which associations cling, that call forth our love.

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Nature—the sun, the sky, the earth, the sea—is always beautiful, because Nature, as Man's primæval habitat, has embedded in the memory of Man primæval associations; but for any one particular scene to arouse emotions deeper than those evoked by mere form and colour, that scene must arouse associations embedded in one's own memory or in those of one's forbears. It may be that this is a generalisation shallow and jejune. Yet I make it, remembering torrid India; wide Canadian snows; the Alps and the Jura; the Rhône; the Rhine; the Irawadi; lovely, lovable England; and those perfumed slopes of le Grand Salève, inhabited on that early morning only by myself and those grazing cows.

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§ 57

Those mild-eyed cattle interested me. They were very gentle, very sleek, very quiet and patient; large of bone, lactiferous; and, beneath all their passivity, I should imagine they possessed potentialities of heroism and endurance unknown to their bovine fellows of the plains. And if I may judge from the features, figures, and expressions of the women of this same region, too, I should be inclined to conjecture that they were not dissimilar in character to their kine. They too are quiet-eyed, deep-bosomed, large-framed, heavy-buttocked; and in the expression of their faces there is something patient and heroic. And the youthful tender of those cattle—he too was interesting. He lay prone on the grass, his back to Mont Blanc. If he exercised his own limbs but little, he faithfully performed all the duties appertaining to that state of life into which it had pleased God to call him by springing every twenty minutes to his feet and shouting orders to his dog—the faithful sub or deputy herdsman, who kept the cattle from straying too far. I envied that youthful herdsman his pleasant occupation. Life in that mountain air must be sweet to the senses, as companionship with those gentle kine must be quieting to the mind.

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§ 58

It was a wonderful morning, that. How quiet it was, how peaceful! Those mighty mountains were so still, so soundless. When I was out of sight of the cattle, the only noise that reached my ear was the hum of the bee at my elbow, the song of the lark overhead. Nature seemed at peace. Nature seemed to fraternise with Man. A great comradeship was abroad. With my own eyes I saw three cows come to their keeper's side, close up to him, and he, kind soul, stroked their soft and wrinkled cheeks. With my own eyes I saw a young and curious heifer walk up to the recumbent dog—her deputy-herdsman—and sniff his hide; and he, good creature, never twitched an ear!—though presently he did move off, moving somewhat stiffly, as if his dignity had been ruffled.

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And the flowers at my feet, on every side! It was not grass I lay on; it was blossoms—lovely scented blossoms; and as I looked along the slopes it was flowers I saw, not blades of grass: it was on a purpled plain I lay, a plain of blue and green and yellow and purple.—At first I could hardly bring myself to crush these buds. I kept to cart tracks, to cattle-paths. But in time these ceased, and I could not choose but crush. And then ... came a curious thought; one I hardly like to put on paper. Yet of itself it came, and some perhaps will interpret it as reverently as did I.—Nature was in repentant mood, and, like the Magdalen, was once again bedewing Man's feet with her tears, and bescenting them with her spikenard. She made amends, as it were, for her treatment of Man.—Fickle, feminine Nature, from whose loins we come, from whose breast we suck our livelihood; from whom we wrest our pleasure—with much cost—much cost and strife....

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§ 59

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Strife! The very word was like a bell to toll me back. Those very flowers were fighting for their lives. Their very scents and colours were but enticements for the bee—for the bee which, in turn, with toil, garnered honey against chimeral famine. And those still, stupendous mountains—silent, superb—immobile, massive; their very crags bespoke tremendous struggle, immense upheaval, and the grinding of ice and glacier. Indeed the solid earth and all about me was unrestful, rushing.—I lay on my back on the grass and thrust my finger towards the sky. It seemed steady enough in all conscience. Yet I knew that as a matter of fact that fingertip of mine was performing most astounding feats. It was rushing through space. And in its rush it was pursuing a path would take an expert astronomer to determine. With the rotation of the earth, it was flying eastwards at more than a dozen miles a minute. With the revolution of the earth, it was rushing round the sun some two or three miles in that minute. And with the whole solar system, it was leaping towards the constellation of Hercules with leaps of more than seven hundred miles in each minute!^[41]—Seven hundred miles a minute!^[42] It is inconceivable. That enormous mass, the sun, into a spot on which, hundreds of our earths could be dropped like a handful of pebbles into a puddle, it and the farthestmost of its planets, three thousand million miles away—all rushing through space ... twenty miles while I sneeze; thirty thousand miles while I sit at dinner; half-a-million miles between going to bed and getting up.... What a stupendous journey! What a mighty company! Where to? What for? Why this terrific expenditure of energy?—Think of the *ergs* necessary to propel that mass! What is being *done*? Who does it? And for whom?

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Nothing is immobile in Nature. Nothing is stationary in Life. To exist, to be, to live, is to become, to change, to strive, to achieve. The seeming peace about me was outcome of infinite struggle. Only by struggle does life evolve, does man aspire.

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Return we to my theme.

XXIV

180

WARNINGS TO THE OVER-ZEALOUS

§ 60

Now, I know precisely what will happen. Some epimethean enthusiast, carried away by the anticipated delights of a walk, will suddenly make up his mind to take one; will hastily stuff some things into a bag, and will start off at four o'clock in the morning with some vague and distant goal in view. He will think to roll John Burroughs and Richard Jefferies into one in his minute observation of Nature, and to outdo Wordsworth and Amiel combined in his philosophico-poetical disquisitions on the same; he will rid his mind of the world and the worldly, and float in themes transcendental and abstruse. But I think I know what will happen. By the afternoon of that selfsame day he will be hungry, thirsty, footsore, and tired. His boots will be tight; his bag as heavy as his spirits; his head as empty as his craw. Instead of observing Nature he will find Nature—in the shape of the rustics (and the rustics' dogs)—very narrowly observing him, not always with sympathetic or benignant gaze. Instead of deep and transcendental meditations rising spontaneously to his mind, he will find curt and practical questions assailing his ear as to who he is and what he is doing there.—My dear but epimethean enthusiast, you must know that Nature is a jealous mistress. If so be you are sedulously engaged for fifty weeks in the year in the pursuit of pelf, think not to woo her by a half day's worship at her shrine. Even if your courtship be sincere, it must be slow. Not in forty-eight hours will you brush away the cobwebs of the workaday world and prepare for the reception of sweet Nature's influence a mind free from all uncharitableness: their skies, not their characters, they change who sail over-seas. From all blindness of heart, from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, you must seek to be delivered, else you will walk in vain. For most men walk in a vain show, and the perpetual perambulation of the streets of Vanity Fair is a poor preparation for the Delectable Mountains.—But take heart. If you will keep but a corner of your mind free from the carking cares of barter and commerce—if only by half-holiday jaunts and Sabbath-day journeys, great will be your reward. By the end of the third or fourth day's tramp, what with the exhilarating exercise, the fresh air, the peace and loneliness, the long hours of mental quietude, the freedom from the petty distractions of social and official life, if you are humble and childlike, the world forgetting by the world forgot—the scales will fall from your eyes; then indeed you will see—and feel—and think. The trivial little objects at your feet, equally with the immense expanses of earth and sky, will lift you high above themselves; the wet and drooping high-road weed, the tender green of a curled frond, the soft oozy of a summer marsh—the sense of beauty—of the fitness of things—of their immense incomprehensibility—the wonder of it all ... words seem useless to say how such things sink into the soul, plough up its foundations, sow there seeds which, like the Indian juggler's plant, spring up at once and blossom into worship, reverence, awe.—Believe me, I am not extravagant or hyperbolic, nor do I beguile with empty words. If you will not hear me, hear the simple-minded Richard Jefferies:

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"I linger in the midst of the long grass, the luxury of the leaves, and the song in the very air. I seem as if I could feel all the glowing life the sunshine gives and the south wind calls to being. The endless grass, the endless leaves, the immense strength of the oak expanding, the unalloyed joy of finch and blackbird; from all of them I receive a little.... In the blackbird's melody one note is mine; in the dance of the leaf shadows the formed maze is for me, though the motion is theirs; the flowers with a thousand faces have collected the kisses of the morning. Feeling with them, I receive some, at least, of their fulness of life. Never could I have enough; never stay long enough.... The hours when the mind is absorbed by beauty are the only hours when we really live, so that the longer we can stay among these things so much the more is snatched from inevitable Time.... These are the only hours that are not wasted—these hours that absorb the soul and fill it with beauty. This is real life, and all else is illusion, or mere endurance. To be beautiful and to be calm, without mental fear, is the ideal of Nature. If I cannot achieve it, at least I can think it."^[43]

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Which passage has received the *imprimatur* of quotation by no less an authority than Lord Avebury (better known, perhaps, as Sir John Lubbock), himself not only a man of science, but a statesman and a man of affairs as well. Listen:

"The exquisite beauty and delight of a fine summer day in the country has never perhaps been more truly, and therefore more beautifully, described."^[44]

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But surely, with all deference to the learned quoter, there is something deeper in Richard Jefferies, these his dithyrambs, than a description of a fine summer day. Surely Jefferies finds himself here, in Amiel's fine phrase, *tête-à-tête* with the Infinite, and tries, poor soul, in vain to find vent for his thoughts. It is not a picture, it is a poem. Nor needed it the Pageant of Summer to transport this poet thither. Jefferies was here viewing Nature through a seventh sense—a sense more delicate than that of sight or sound, the sense that Maurice de Guérin has defined as,

"Un sens que nous avons tous, mais voilé, vague, et privé presque de toute activité, le sens qui recueille les beautés physiques et les livre à l'âme, qui les spiritualise, les harmonie, les combine avec les beautés idéales, et agrandit ainsi sa sphère d'amour et d'adoration"^[45]

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It is not Richard Jefferies his catalogue of the things he saw which moves us to admiration and delight, it is his sense sublime which enabled him to rise from the things which are seen to the things which are unseen, to rise above the *hic et nunc* of the parochial and to peer into the *illuc et tunc* of the eternal. He saw "into the life of things," and in him the finite stirred emotions which savoured of the infinite.

XXV

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HOW THAT ALL POINTS TO THE INFINITE

§ 61

Of a sober truth, could we only realise it, all things point to the infinite. Not a cobweb, not a wisp of morning mist, not a toadstool, not a gnat, but has a life-history dating back to the dark womb of Time, or ere even meteoritic dust or incandescent nebulæ were born; dating forward too, could we trace it, to the dark doom of Time, if for Time there be a doom. Who can understand it? Who shall explain it?—any part of it? Take Burns his simple line,—

"Green grow the rushes, O."

To explain "green" is not within the power of profoundest oculist and physicist combined: on the question of the colour-sense alone the scientific world is divided and has for years been divided; and of the precise action of chlorophyll—the green colouring-matter of plants—it is almost equally ignorant; while of the train of connected phænomena, from the chemic and catalytic action in the leaf, through the stimulation of the retina, the transmission along the optic nerve, the sensation in the corpora quadrigemina of the brain, to the concept in the mind, we know absolutely nothing. To define and classify the rushes, also; to know exactly their place in the vegetable kingdom and how they came there—their evolution from lower forms, the modifications wrought in their structure by environment and internecine strife—that is beyond the wit of botanist and palæophytologist in one. And as to that simple verb, "to grow," dealing, as it does, with life itself in its inmost penetralia, that has baffled, and probably will for ever baffle, the whole host of physical and metaphysical experimenters and speculators world without end. When we can explain Life, we shall be within measurable distance of explaining the Life-Giver.—Tennyson saw this:

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"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of your crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower, but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

§ 62

But my song has grown too advent'rous. Let us descend th'Aonian mount.—This, however, let me say: If to somewhat abstruse ontological speculations such as these you like to add scientific or other knowledge of the region of your walk—something of the geology, palæontology, mineralogy, zoology, botany, archæology, history, well and good. No sort of knowledge but is profitable for doctrine. The interest and pleasure of walking are greatly enhanced by noting and being able to account for the thousand and one natural phænomena which greet the eye even in the shortest stroll; and few things sooner oust petty worries from the mind than such occupation. Happy is the man who can do this. I, alas, cannot help you here. I have but a bowing acquaintance with Science, though it is always with a deep reverence that I doff my hat to her. Nevertheless, with this I console myself; it seems to matter but little with what sort of eyes you look on Nature, provided you really look. Give her but the seeing eye and the understanding heart, and she is lavish of her gifts.—And (let me roun this in thine ear) perhaps she prefers (woman-like) the understanding heart to the seeing eye; though (woman-like again) she likes to be admired as well as understood—though never (and here most woman-like) does she like to be too curiously regarded.—Sometimes, I confess, I have envied him gifted with the scientific eye: him in whom a granite boulder in a grassy mead rouses long geological trains of thought; to whom the dwarfed horse-tails by lacustrine shores paint pictures of dense equisetaceous forests; for whom a fossil trilobite calls up visions of Silurian seas; him too have I envied who can classify common plants or recognise and name the stones at his feet: can tell us why the lowly daisy is superior to the lordly oak; can expatiate on crystallographic angles; and learnedly descant on amphibole or pyroxene. For myself, I am not versed in the mechanism of Nature. I have never asked to see the wheels go round. I like to see her smile, and am not careful as to what oral or buccal muscles are brought into play for that smile. That she has an anatomy I suppose. But I bethink me of Actæon's fate, he who saw Dian's naked loveliness too near. So thou, beware lest thine eye see so much that thy heart understand too little. Keep thy mind "in a just equipoise of love." Accomplish that, and no knowledge is too high for thee.

§ 63

Here, however, it is but right to enter a *caveat*. It must be admitted that it is not given to everyone to hold high converse with Nature. Nature speaks a cryptic tongue, and unless one has paid some heed to her language her accents are apt to fall upon deaf ears. Nor can anyone translate Nature's language to those unversed in her speech. If you think to hear her voice while the din and clatter of business or mercature are ringing in your ears, you will hear nothing. Nor, for that matter, will you see anything. Trees and fields and clouds you may see, or may think you see; but they will say nothing to you, will mean nothing to you. To their mere beauty you will be blind; for beauty is a thing to be felt, not seen.

Goethe declared that Beauty was a primæval phænomenon which had never yet made its appearance.^[46] To Euripides—κλυων μεν αυδην, ομμα δ'ουχ ορων το σου.^[47]

And Shelley declares—

"Fair are others; none beholds thee,

. . . .

And all feel, yet see thee never." ^[48]

Beauty is *felt*. That is the clue to the secret. The appeal of natural beauty is to the heart, to the emotions, not to the intellect. The eyes of the wisest savant may miss what Nature will reveal to the veriest babe. This is what Mr Edward Carpenter means when he says, albeit in somewhat extravagant language—

"As to you, O Moon—

I know very well that when the astronomers look at you through their telescopes they see only an aged and wrinkled body;

But though they measure your wrinkles never so carefully they do not see you personal and close—

As you disclosed yourself among the chimney-tops last night to the eyes of a child—

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When you thought no one else was looking.

Anyhow I see plainly that like all created things you do not yield yourself up as to what you are at the first or the thousandth onset,

And that the scientific people for all their telescopes know as little about you as any one—

Perhaps less than most.

How curious the mystery of creation."^[49]

The poet, bereft of words whereby to give vent to his emotion, falls back on "the mystery of creation."—Not dissimilarly says Carlyle, "The rudest mind has still some intimation of the greatness there is in Mystery."^[50] And again, "The *mystical* enjoyment of an object goes infinitely farther than the *intellectual*."^[51]—It is not alone the indescribable colour of the delicate corolla, nor is it the minute knowledge of its astonishing structure, that causes to blaze up in the beholder a sense of something profound; it is not alone the majestic heap of the cloud, nor the piercing radiance of the quiet stars, known to be incomputably distant, that lifts one to the contemplation of the lofty; it is the immanent, the permanent Mystery that pervades and unifies all that ever was or is or shall be.

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XXVI

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THE PLEASURES OF WALKING

§ 64

"But what possible pleasure, what possible profit," I can hear the practical and common-sensible man asking, "is to be gained from walking—*walking*? Surely walking is the paltriest of sports. Why not write of riding, driving, rowing, bicycling, motoring, aeroplaning—any mode of locomotion rather than that of mere trudging?"—Well, in a technical and paronomasiacal phrase, the question really *solvitur ambulando*. For one thing, horses have to be baited, boats caulked, bicycles pumped up, balloons inflated, and motor cars eternally tinkered at—aeroplanes fly far beyond my welkin. For another thing, not the least of the practical blessings incident to a walk is that you are beyond the reach of letters and telegrams and telephones. You are not likely to be served with a writ when walking; you can laugh at *capiases* and injunctions; drafts at sight and judgment summonses cannot easily overtake you on a trudge. "I have generally found," says De Quincey, "that, if you are in quest of some certain escape from Philistines of whatsoever class—sheriff-officers, bores, no matter what—the surest refuge is to be found amongst hedgerows and fields."^[52] (Had De Quincey lived in the twentieth century, truly he might have added that it is amongst the fields and hedgerows also that one gets away from that pest of civilisation, the penubiquitous advertisement.—And not always even amongst fields and hedgerows, as the landscape-spoiling hoardings along the routes of our railways prove. Like Nero, I sometimes wish that the erectors of sky-signs and the daubers of barns and fences had but one neck that I might ... that I might—lay upon it a heavy yoke of taxation.—I throw out that hint to any Finance Minister or Chancellor of the Exchequer that may care to act upon it.)

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But far rather would I reply to my quærist in other words than mine.—"I went to the woods," says Thoreau, "because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life.... I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life.... Our life is frittered away by detail.... In the midst of this chopping sea of civilised life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand and one items to be allowed for that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds."^[53]

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Hear, too, Henri-Frédéric Amiel:

"*1st February 1854*.—A walk. The atmosphere incredibly pure—a warm, caressing gentleness in the sunshine—joy in one's whole being.... I became young again, wondering, and simple, as candour and ignorance are simple. I abandoned myself to life and to nature, and they cradled me with an infinite gentleness. To open one's heart in purity to this ever-pure nature, to allow this immortal life of things to penetrate into one's soul, is at the same time to listen to the voice of God. Sensation may be a prayer, and self-abandonment an act of devotion."^[54]

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Or hear a greater man than these—hear the great Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he who divided with Voltaire the intellectual realm of the eighteenth century:

"What I regret most in the details of my life which I have forgotten is that I did not keep a diary of my travels. Never have I thought so much, never have I realised my own existence so much,

been so much alive, been so much myself if I may so say, as in those journeys which I have made alone and afoot. Walking has something in it which animates and heightens my ideas: I can scarcely think when I stay in one place; my body must be set a-going if my mind is to work. The sight of the country, the succession of beautiful scenes, the great breeze, the good appetite, the health which I gain by walking, the getting away from inns, the escape from everything which reminds me of my lack of independence, from everything which reminds me of my unlucky fate—all this releases my soul, gives me greater courage of thought, throws me as it were into the midst of the immensity of the objects of Nature, which I may combine, from which I may choose at will, which I may make my own carelessly and without fear. I make use of all Nature as her master; my heart, surveying one object after another, unites itself, identifies itself with those in sympathy with it, surrounds itself with delightful images, intoxicates itself with emotions the most exquisite. If, in order to seize these, I amuse myself by describing them to myself, what a vigorous pencil, what bright colours, what energy of expression they need! Some have, so they say, discerned something of these influences in my writings, though composed in my declining years. Ah! if only those of my early youth had been seen! those which I have composed but never written down!"^[55]

Thus wrote the great Jean-Jacques in the calm of his declining years. Those walking inspirations must have been potent indeed to have left so lasting an impression.^[56]

§ 65

But Thoreau and Amiel and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are perhaps counsellors of perfection; exemplars too remote for our purpose. Permit me then to resort to an *argumentum ad hominem*.—I knew a man who one summer tried to do two and a half men's work in one. For five days in the week it took him from early in the morning of one day till early in the morning of the next. On Saturday afternoon he was free, and on Saturday he took the boat to a village twenty-one miles distant. Sunday afternoon was devoted (alas, necessarily) again to work,—but in the open air. At two-thirty on Monday morning he started on his return journey—afoot; breakfasted halfway in; and was at his desk in as good time as spirits.—Profit? That early morning walk picked him up for the week. Pleasure? My dear practical sir, would you had been with him! Would you had felt the quiet, the serenity, the calming influence of unsullied Nature; the supreme repose in those early morning hours, the solitude, the vastness, the expansion of soul and spirit beneath the silent stars, the quiet morn. He saw the full moon pale and set; he saw great Nature slowly wake; the sleepy cows knee-deep in clover; the fields begemmed with dew; the little pools—pools which at noon would be muddy puddles—glistening like emeralds and garnets in the dawn. By degrees, growing things were individualised. Each shrub, each creeping thing, had a life of its own. The veriest weed was exalted into a vegetable personality which had dealings with the Infinite and the Divine: and "all flowers in field or forest which unclosed their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day" spake to him.—He was alone—alone with unhurrying, uncareful Nature. The peace of untold æons entered his soul and couraged him to battle with the petty and the trivial for five more wearing days without a qualm.—Profit? Pleasure?—What nag, what buggy, what skiff, what bike, what motor, what dirigible balloon, or hydro-aeroplane would have got him that? In simple truth, of all that he learned and did during those arduous weeks, only those lovely lonely walks live in that man's memory to-day.—Would that oftener we bathed our thirsty souls in the dews of the dawn! Would that oftener men gat them away from offices and counters and desks—nay, from balls and bats and cleeks—away into the quiet country, where nor strife nor struggle, noble or ignoble, has place or worth! The world is too much with us. Call-loans—narrow margins, with a slump in the market—killing races with a dark horse—quickly changing quotations—prolonged ill luck—unstable tariffs—strikes and rumours of strikes—such things perturb the human mind. Well, I know few more efficacious antidotes to mental perturbation than an early morning walk. It is a psychic as well as a sanitary investment.

§ 66

It is also a mental tonic—even in homœopathic doses.—I took last Sunday a little four-mile stroll before breakfast, and its calming and beneficent influence is with me still. No one was about; I had the whole country to myself, and I bathed a tired head in the spacious quietude of earth and sky. From a height I looked over a great and restful country, across the sleeping town, and far away over the peaceful lake. Above it all stretched the benevolent heavens, brooding over this pendent world.—I thought I saw fixity in the midst of motion; substance beneath evanescence; unity in multiplicity; a sort of goal where everything was cyclical; an end where all things seemed only means; infinity lurking in finitude; a divine inhering in the human. After the treadmill of the week it was uplifting, exalting. I inhaled great draughts of air from ultra-planetary spaces; I fed on manna fallen from the highest heavens. This tiny planet, with its trivial cares and duties, vanished from my eyes, and I cooled my brow in the clouds of the holy of holies.—But none the less did I recognise the all-importance, to it and to me, of earth's small cares and duties. Were they not part of that infinite multiplicity in which lurked that infinite unity? Did they not go to make up the "spiritual economy"^[57] of the cosmos? But I saw them in a newer light—a larger light than merely solar, and they took on a new aspect, and declared themselves integral portions of that divine All without which that divine All would cease to be.

There is something strangely pure and purifying about early morning air. It is Nature's great

steriliser. It is aseptic; and none breathes it but is more or less cleansed of the taint of noontide life. The noxious germs of care and anxiety cannot live in it. It is a magnificent bactericide. Nature is herself then. Even the denizens of Nature seem to know this, for never is bird or beast more blithesome than at dawn.

§ 67

For lonely souls, for luckless souls, there is, perhaps, after all is said and done, but one source of solace. "Nothing human," said Eugénie de Guérin, "nothing human comforts the soul, nothing human supports it:—

'À l'enfant il faut sa mère,
À mon âme il faut mon Dieu.'"^[58]

Well, those who think their God has revealed himself in the Canonical Books will go to their Bible; those who think he has chosen the channel of a Church will derive ghostly strength from their spiritual counsellors; but those who think the Nameless has nowhere so plainly shown himself as in his works, will seek in the face and lineaments of Nature that consoling smile which every lonely soul so miserably craves; and fortunate it is that not over his works, but only over his words, theologians so wrathfully wrangle.—Art thou cast down, and is thy soul disquieted within thee? Dost distrust thyself? Has love grown cold? And hast thou caught on thy leman's lips a sigh not meant for thee? Is there none to whom thou canst go, on whose bosom to rain out the heavy mist of tears?—Go thou to Pan; betake thee to the fields; betake thee to the woods; pour out thy contrite heart at the altar of the universe, and thou shalt be comforted. What matters it the petty perturbations of the mind? What signify the paltry upheavings of the heart? Lay thy tired head on Nature's breast. Friendship may fade, ideals vanish, passion wane, the darling desire upon which thou hast staked thine all may prove to have been snatched from thee before thy very eyes.—Take heart. Always there is at hand the Infinite and the Eternal: about thee, above thee, in presence of which the petty and the paltry flee away.

I know no more comfortable medicament than the quiet companionship of Nature. The trees breathe a salutary air. The fields invite to repose. A calming influence pervades unwall'd, unceilinged earth, and there the crumpled soul has room in which to smooth itself out: the noxious bacilli which infest its folds are swept away; ill-natured thoughts take flight. How paltry seems a passing quarrel beneath the boughs of a hoary oak that has witnessed a hundred fights! How puny a callous rage beneath the capacious sky!

For, believe me, Great Pan is *not* dead. Nor, believe me, are any that go to him in any wise cast out. He cares not of what Church thou art a child, nor does he fence his tables. Worship at whatsoever shrine thou chooseth, always he will welcome thee to his, for Pan is beloved of all the gods.

Ach! There comes a time when nothing seems worth while; when gaiety palls, and even sorrow dulls instead of stirs; when nothing seems of any use, and one feels inclined to give up, to give up.—To such I would say, pull on thick boots, clutch a stout stick, and go for a country walk—rain or shine.—It sounds a preposterous remedy, but try it. Nature never gives up. Not a pygmy weed, trodden under foot of man, and covered up and overwhelmed with rival growths, but battles for its life with vim. Nor does it ask for what it battles. Neither does it question why more favoured plants are so carefully nurtured, and it, poor thing, is dragged up by the roots.—Take a country walk, and look at the weeds if at nothing else.

And remember, this is a legitimate remedy, preposterous though it may sound. So many prescriptions for the heartache are illegitimate—stimulants, or narcotics, or stimulant-narcotics: sport, work, play, hazardous adventure, the gaming-table or the betting-ring, to say nothing of the cup that inebriates but does not cheer. A country walk is but "letting Nature have her way," is but giving an opportunity for the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. Try it; do not, like Naaman, prate of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, but go wash in Jordan seven times.

XXVII

IS WALKING SELFISH?

§ 68

But is it not a selfish pleasure, this that is to be gained by rural peregrination, I shall be asked. Bluntly I answer, No. A country walk makes one blithesome; and than blithesomeness there is no greater foe to selfishness. Had Bacon not declared that gardening was the purest of human pleasures, I should be inclined to give the palm to walking.

We are too gregarious. We live too much in herds, and we consider too much what the herd will think of our petty individual ways. Civilisation is not an unmixed boon, and artificial combinations of men taint the natural simplicity of the race. In combining together for mutual protection against a common foe we forget that sometimes a man's foes are those of his own household. Each feels that the eyes of the world are upon him, and always he is subconsciously occupied in conforming himself to the world. A political community not only curtails the individual's freedom of action for the good of the whole, it curtails also his freedom of thought and manner. What is the result? The result is that "self-consciousness" has taken on a new and sinister meaning. Instead of denoting the especial and distinguishing characteristic of emancipated reason, self-consciousness has come to denote a painful cognisance of the fetters that our fellow-reasoners have put upon reason. We are the slaves of ourselves. Only the child and the savage are free to "live deliberately," to "live deep and suck out all the marrow of life." Long before the child has developed into the grown, and the savage into the civilised, man, that silent and unseen but tireless architect, Convention, builds about him an invisible but infrangible wall of reserve: his spontaneous emotions, his natural affections, his aspirations and ambitions, must filter through crevices and peepholes instead of exhaling from him as a rich and original aura.

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218

Already the taint is perceptible in our literature. The centripetal tendency is not a purely economic one. Commerce and industry draw the crowds to the cities, and immediately there arises a set of writers who write only of the city. How large a proportion of our fiction portrays only the wretched drawing-room intrigue, the wretched rivalries of wretched citizens. The Epic was buried three hundred years ago. The Ode is dead. The Lyric is dying. Now we have the Novel and the Problem Play, the sensational Newspaper and the Picture Magazine. In time, I suppose, we shall come to the Snapshot and the Paperette. Already we are almost there.—Was it for this that the mighty Areopagitical pleader for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing strove?

219

I wish that whole populations of crowded cities could be turned out hebdomadally to take long week-end walks in the country, there to mew its mighty youth and kindle its undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; there to slough off the skin of daily toil, cleanse itself from the dross of money-getting, and learn that there is something in life more worth living for than the weekly wage, and other joys than those of *panem et circenses*.—But this is a wild dream. As well try to rehabilitate the Bacchic dance and Chian wine in place of Football and beer or Baseball and peanuts.—Yet methinks I have heard of wilder. What did Jean-Jacques and his school really mean by "back to nature"?

220

To me, I confess, this polipetal or city-seeking tendency in modern life (if I may so call it) wears a most serious, a most sinister aspect. So, I am inclined to think, it did to Ruskin. "I had once purposed," wrote John Ruskin half-a-century ago, "to show what kind of evidence existed respecting the possible influence of country life on men; it seeming to me, then, likely that here and there a reader would perceive this to be a grave question, more than most which we contend about, political or social, and might care to follow it out with me earnestly. The day will assuredly come when men will see that it *is* a grave question."^[59]

221

If we read history aright, always the bloated city succumbs to the pagan horde. It is in the crowded city that all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,^[60] have most free play. And it is in the city, where division of labour is daily carried to greater extremes, that men's activities as a whole have least free play. The result is twofold: the nobler emotions are stunted; the baser passions are stimulated. Socialism (whatever the precise prescription so labelled may be) is no remedy for this. Perhaps Rousseau reasoned better than he knew.

222

In a sense, however—thanks to whatever gods may be!—as a matter of fact there is quietly going on a constant recurrence to Nature. The United States of America, Canada, Australia, South Africa—what but wholesale emigration from over-populous or over-pragmatical centres is the source and origin of these? Colonisation is the protest against the social, political, economical, or religious constrictions of the crowd.—It is precisely these constrictions, my practical quærist, that I am tempting thee now and again to flee. *De te fabula narratur*.

XXVIII

THE PÆAN OF BEING

223

§ 69

Have I too much belauded the country walk? I do not thereby decry the outdoor sport. The thorough sportsman is the noblest work of God (apologies to the shade of Alexander Pope!). Athletics, said that acute philosophical historian, Goldwin Smith, "wash the brain." Well, sometimes I think a really good country walk cleans the soul. You get away from rivalries and trivialities; from scandal, gossip, and paltriness; you get away from your compeers and your neighbours—perhaps you learn for the first time who your neighbour is—namely, your fellow-

farer in distress, as the Good Samaritan long ago taught; you get away from barter and commerce, from manners and customs, from forms and ceremonies; from the thousand and one complications that arise when a multitude of hearts that do not beat as one try to live in a too close contiguity. It was only when the inevitable third party appeared upon the scene (as I think someone must have said) that Adam and Eve ceased to be good, put on clothes, and hid themselves from the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden. It is easy to be generous amongst trees and grass and running water; one feels good 'neath the blue firmament on the open earth; ghosts vanish that scent the morning air, and glow-worms pale their uneffectual fire. For to everyone—I care not whether theist, deist, or atheist—to everyone Nature instinctively, spontaneously, proclaims herself an infinitely adorable Mystery. If there is anything above and beyond the ephemeral and the fleeting; if there is somewhere some immensity of Being, some source of All, would it not be well sometimes to make haste and bow the head towards the earth and worship?^[61]

Some immensity of Being. It is to this that in reality all Nature points. The clouds, the skies, the greenery of earth, the myriad forms of vegetation at our feet, stir as these may the soul to its depths, they are but single chords in the orchestra of Life. It is the great pæan of Being that Nature chants. By them it is that we perceive "the immense circulation of life which throbs in the ample bosom of Nature, a life which surges from an invisible source and swells the veins of this universe."^[62] Through them it is that we detect the enormous but incomprehensible unity which underlies this incommensurable multiplicity. The wavelet's splash; the purl of the rill; the sough of the wind in the pines—these are but notes in the divine diapason of Life, of Life singing its cosmic song, unmindful who may hear.—Alas, that so few hear aught but a thin and scrannel sound!

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- [1] See Henry D. Thoreau's "Walden"; "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers"; "Winter"; etc.
- [2] See John Burroughs, his "Birds and Poets"; "Locusts and Wild Honey"; "Pepacton"; "Signs and Seasons"; "Wake Robin"; "Winter Sunshine"; etc.
- [3] See Richard Jefferies, his "Amateur Poaching"; "Field and Hedgerow"; "Wild Life in a Southern County"; "Nature near London"; "Round about a Great Estate"; "Wood Magic"; "The Story of my Heart."
- [4] See Hamilton Wright Mabie's "In the Forest of Arden"; "Under the Trees and Elsewhere"; etc.
- [5] See Henry Van Dyke's "Fisherman's Luck, and some other Uncertain Things"; "Little Rivers: A Book of Essays in Profitable Idleness"; "Days Off, and other Digressions"; etc.
- [6] See "In the Green Leaf and the Sere," by "A Son of the Marshes." Edited by J. A. Owen. Illustrated by G. C. Haité and D. C. Nicholl. Also "Drift from Longshore," by the same author and editor.
- [7] See Charles C. Abbott's "Upland and Meadow"; "Wasteland Wanderings"; "The Birds About Us"; "A Naturalist's Rambles about Home"; "Outings at Odd Times"; "Recent Rambles, or, In Touch with Nature"; "Travels in a Tree Top"; "Birdland Echoes"; "Notes of the Night, and other Outdoor Sketches"; etc.
- [8] See Charles Goodrich Whiting's "Walks in New England"; etc.
- [9] See George Borrow's "Wild Wales: Its People, Language and Scenery."
- [10] "Obermann," lettre ii.
- [11] See his "In Praise of Walking," in *The Monthly Review* (London: Murray) of August, 1901.
- [12] Mr Robert F. Stupart, in the "Handbook of Canada," published by the Publication Committee of the Local Executive [of the British Association for the Advancement of Science], Toronto: 1897, p. 78.
- [13] See "The Compleat Angler," chapter i.
- [14] *Ibid.*
- [15] See a delightful letter to *The Publishers' Circular* of September the 27th, 1902; vol. lxxvii., p. 325, on "A Plea for a Long Walk," by T. Thatcher, of 44 College Green, Bristol, England. Also another letter by the same writer on "42 Miles on 2d. at the Age of 64," in the same periodical in its issue of April the 25th, 1903; vol. lxxviii., p. 457. The "2d." means that his food consisted of dry brown-bread crusts only, the cost of which he computes at twopence.
- [16] "Pepacton," Foot Paths, p. 205.
- [17] *Confer.*—"The primal One, from which all things are, is everywhere and nowhere. As being the cause of all things, it is everywhere. As being other than all things, it is nowhere.... No predicate of Being can be properly applied to it.... It is greatest of all, not by magnitude, but by potency.... It is to be regarded as infinite, not because of the impossibility of measuring or counting it, but because of the impossibility of comprehending its power. It is perfectly all-sufficing."—"The Neo-Platonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism." By Thomas Whittaker. Cambridge, 1901. Chapter v., pp. 58, 59.
- [18] See his General Introduction to Ward's "English Poets," vol. i., p. xvii. London and New York: Macmillan, 1880.
- [19] "The Mystery of Golf." By Arnold Haultain. Second Edition. Pp. 153, 154. London and New York: Macmillan, 1910.
- [20] Pascal, "Pensees," XVI. iv.
- [21] *Ibid.* iii.
- [22] Tennyson, "The Ancient Sage."
- [23] See his "Farthest North," ii. 73 *et seq.*; 76 *et seq.*; *et passim.*
- [24] "An Oberland Chalet." By Edith Elmer Wood. London: T. Werner Laurie. No date, but probably *circa* 1912. Pp. 256-260.
- [25] And I thank you, C.B.L.
- [26] "The Path to Rome," p. 16.
- [27] *Ibid.*, p. 341.
- [28] For these I am entirely indebted to my younger brother, Professor Herbert E. T. Haultain, A.M.Inst.C.E., etc.
- [29] Quoted in *The Academy and Literature* (London) of October the 4th, 1902, p. 340.
- [30] "The Story of Mary MacLane," by Herself. Chicago: Herbert S. Stone & Company, 1902.
- [31] In *The New York World* of September the 14th, 1902, p. 7.

- [32] "Wild Wales," Introduction.
- [33] "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," chapter vi., The Lamp of Memory, §i.
- [34] Obermann, Lettre XXXVI.
- [35] And his bride complained of the damp! (βαλλεις εις αμαραν με, και ειματα καλα μιναιεις.—Theocritus, Idyll XXVII. 52).
- [36] Browning, "Two in the Campagna."
- [37] *Confer* Edward Carpenter: "The Drama of Love and Death: A Study of Human Evolution and Transfiguration," page 51. London: George Allen, 1912. Also Mr Havelock Ellis, his "Studies in the Psychology of Sex," vol. vi., p. 558.
- [38] See Plato, Symposium, 180:—"παντες γαρ ισμεν, οτι ουκ εστιν ανευ Ερωτος Αφροδιτη, κ. τ. λ."
- [39] "Sussex," first stanza.—"The Five Nations," p. 69. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1903.
- [40] "The Voyage of the *Beagle*," chapter xx.
- [41] Professor W. W. Campbell, of the Lick Observatory, California, computes the velocity of the Solar System through space at approximately nineteen kilometres per second (see Lick Observatory Bulletin, No. 195, vol. vi. (1910-1911), p. 123. See also Bulletin No. 196, vol. vi., pp. 125 *et seq.*). What, in interstellar space, the precise curve described by my finger nail was, especially if to rotation, revolution, and the approach to Hercules, we add nutation, tidal drag, and the precession of the equinoxes, to say nothing of earth tremours, I should much like to know.
- [42] All my figures are, of course, rough in the extreme; and I give Professor Campbell the benefit of about fifty miles a minute because he says approximately.
- [43] "The Pageant of Summer."
- [44] "The Pleasures of Life," Part II., chapter viii.
- [45] "Journal, Lettres, et Poemes," p. 17. Paris, 1880.
- [46] "Das Schöne ist ein Urphänomen, das zwar nie selber zur Erscheinung kommt."—"Dichtung und Wahrheit."
- [47] "Hippolytus."
- [48] "Prometheus Unbound."
- [49] "Towards Democracy." Third Edition, pp. 149, 151. London: Fisher Unwin, 1892.
- [50] Essay on Characteristics. Works (Shilling Edition), ix. 15.
- [51] Essay on Diderot. Works, x. 26. The italics are Carlyle's.
- [52] Additions to the "Confessions of an Opium-Eater," p. 381. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1876.
- [53] "Walden," pp. 98, 99, in David Douglas's Edinburgh Edition, 1884.
- [54] "Journal Intime," p. 45. London: The Macmillan Co., 1890.—I avail myself of Mrs Humphry Ward's admirable translation.
- [55] "Confessions," Partie I. Livre IV. Paris: Lefevre's Edition; 1819, vol. i., pp. 259, 260.
- [56] Thirty-four years separated the tour of which he speaks from the date when he penned these words.
- [57] The fine phrase of Mrs Humphry Ward. See her preface to her translation of Amiel's "Journal," last paragraph.
- [58] Eugénie de Guérin, "Journal et Fragments," p. 181. Twenty-fourth Edition. Paris: Didier et Cie, 1879.
- [59] "Modern Painters," Part VI., chapter i., paragraph 7.—Vol. v., pp. 5 and 6 of Messrs George Allen & Sons' edition.
- [60] 1 John ii. 16.
- [61] Exodus xxxiv. 8.
- [62] "Cette immense circulation de vie qui s'opère dans l'ample sein de la nature; ... cette vie qui sourd d'une fontaine invisible et gonfle les veines de cet univers."—Maurice de Guérin, Journal, p. 22. Paris, 1880.

Transcriber's Note

The original text has been kept, except the following modifications:

Page [40](#): "inchaote" has been changed to "inchoate".

Page [83](#): "maestoso" has been set in italics.

Page [123](#): "ennui" has been set in italics.

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