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THE IDEAL TENDENCY.

WE are all interested in Art; yet few of us have taken pains to justify the delight we feel in it. No philosophy can win us away from Shakspeare, Plato, Angelo, Beethoven, Goethe, Phidias,—from the masters of sculpture, painting, music, and metaphor. Their truth is larger than any other,—too large to be stated directly and lodged in systems, theories, definitions, or formulas. They suggest and assure to us what cannot be spoken. They communicate life, because they do not endeavor to measure life. Philosophy will present the definite; Art refers always to the vast,—to that which cannot be comprehended, but only enjoyed and adored. Art is the largest expression. It is not, like Science, a basket in which meat and drink may be carried, but a hand which points toward the sky. Our eyes follow its direction, and our souls follow our eyes. Man needs only to be shown an open space. He will rise into it with instant expansion. We are made partakers of that illimitable energy. Only poetry can give account of poetry, only Art can justify Art; and we cannot hope to speak finally of this elastic Truth, to draw a circle around that which is vital, because it has in it something of infinity,—but we may hope

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to remove a doubt growing out of the very largeness which exalts and refreshes us. Art is not practical. It offers no precept, but lies abroad like Nature, not to be grasped and exhausted. Neither is it anxious about its own reception, as though any man could long escape the benefit which it brings. Every principle of science, every deduction of philosophy, is a tool. Our very religion, as we dare to name it, is a key which opens the heavens to admit myself and family. Art offers only life; but perhaps that will appear worth taking without looking beyond. Can we look beyond? Life is an end in itself, and so better than any tool.

What is that which underlies all arts as their essence, the thing to be expressed and celebrated? What is poetry, the creation from which the artist is named? We shall answer boldly: it is no shaping of forms, but a making of man. Nature is a *plenum*, is finished, and the Divine account with her is closed; but man is only yet a chick in the egg. With him it is still the first day of creation, and he has not received the benediction of a completed work. And yet the completion is involved and promised in our daily experience. Man is a perpetual seeker. He sees always just before him

his own power, which he must hasten to overtake. He weighs himself often in thought; yet it is not his present, but a presumptive value, of which he is taking account. We are continually entering into our future, and it is so near us, we are already in every hour so full of it, that we draw without fraud on the credit of to-morrow. The student who has bought his first law-book is already a great counsellor. With the Commentaries he carries home consideration and the judicial habit. Some wisdom he imbibes through his pores and those of the sheepskin cover. Now he is grave and prudent, a man of the world and of authority; but if he had chosen differently, and brought home the first book of Theology, his day would have been tinted with other colors. For every choice carries a future involved in itself, and we begin to taste that when we take our course toward it. The habit of leaning forward and living in advance of himself has made its mark upon every man. We look not at the history or performance of the stranger, but at his pretensions. These are written in his dress, his air and attitude, his tone and occupation. The past is already nothing, the present is sliding away; to know any man, we must keep our eyes out in advance on the road he is following. For man is an involuntary, if not a willing traveller. Time does not roll from under his feet, but he is carried along with the current, and can never again be where or what he was. Nothing in his experience can ever be quite repeated. If you see the same trees and hills, they do not appear the same from year to year. Yesterday they were new and strange; you and they were young together. To-day they are familiar and disregarded. Soon they will be old friends, prattling to gray hairs of the brown locks and bounding breath of youth.

The pioneer of our growth is Imagination. Desire and Hope go on before into the wilderness of the unknown; they open paths; they make a clearing; they build and settle firmly before we

ourselves in will and power arrive at this opening, but they never await our coming. They are the "Fore-runners," off again deeper into the vast possibility of being. The boy walks in a dream of to-morrow. Two bushels of hickory-nuts in his bag are no nuts to him, but silver shillings; yet neither are the shillings shillings, but shining skates, into which they will presently be transmuted. Already he is on the great pond by the roaring fire, or ringing away into distant starry darkness with a sparkling brand. Already, before his first skates are bought, before he has seen the coin that buys them, he is dashing and wheeling with his fellows, a leader of the flying train.

That early fore-reaching is a picture of our entire activity. "Care is taken," said Goethe, "that the trees do not grow into the sky"; but man is that tree which must outgrow the sky and lift its top into finer air and sunshine. The essential seed is Growth; not shell and bark, nor kernel, but a germ which pierces the soil and lifts the stone. Spirit is such a germ, and perpetual reinforcement is its quality; so that the great Being is known to us as a becoming Creator, adding himself to himself, and life to life, in perpetual emanation.

The boy's thought never stops short of some personal prowess. It is ability that charms him. To be a man, as he understands manliness, is to have the whole planet for a gymnasium and play-ground. He would like to have been on the other side of Hydaspes when Alexander came to that stream. But he soon discovers that wit is the sword of sharpness,—that he is the ruler who can reach the deepest desire of man and satisfy that. If there is power in him, he becomes a careful student, examines everything, examines his own enthusiasm, examines his last examination, tries every estimate again and again. He distrusts his tools, and then distrusts his own distrust, lifting himself by the very boot-straps in his metaphysics, to get at some foundation which will not move. He will know what he is

about and what is great. He puts Cæsar, Milton, and Whitfield into his crucible; but that which went in Cæsar comes out a part of himself. The bold yet modest young chemist is egotistical. He cannot be anybody else but John Smith. Why should he? Who knows yet what it is to be John Smith? Napoleon and Washington are only playing his own game for him, since he so easily understands and accepts their play. A boy reads history as girls cut flowers from old embroidery to sew them on a new foundation. They are interested in the new, and in the old only for what they can make of it. So he sucks the blood of kings and captains to help him fight his own battles. He reads of Bunker's Hill and the Declaration of Independence with constant reference to the part he shall take in the politics of the world. His motto is, *Sic semper tyrannis!* Benjamin Franklin, and after him John Smith,—perhaps a better man than he. We live on that *perhaps*. Every great man departed has played out his last card, has taken all his chances. We are glad to see his power limited and sealed up. Shakspeare, we say, did not know everything; and here am I alone with the universe, nothing but a little sleepiness between me and all that Shakspeare and Plato knew or did not know. If I should be jostled out of my drowsiness, who can tell what may be given me to see, to say, or to do? Let us make ready and get upon some high ground from which we may overlook the work of the world; for the secret of all mastery is dormant, yet breathing and stirring in you and me.

Out of such material as we can gather we make a world in which we walk continually up and down. In it we find friends and enemies, we love and are loved, we travel and build. In it we are kings; we ordain and arrange everything, and never come away worsted from any encounter. For this sphere arises in answer to the practical question, What can I be and do? It is an embodiment of the force that is in me. Every dreamer, therefore, goes on to see himself among

men and things which he can understand and master, with which he can deal securely. The stable-boy has hid an old volume among the straw, and he walks with Portia and Desdemona while he grooms the horses. Already in his smock-frock he is a companion for princes and queens. But the rich man's son, well born, as we say, in the great house yonder, has one only ambition in life,—to turn stable-boy, to own a fast team and a trotting-wagon, to vie with gamesters upon the road. That is an activity to which he is equal, in which his value will appear. Both boys, and all boys, are looking upward, only from widely different levels and to different heights.

The young blasphemer does not love blasphemy, but to have his head and be let alone by Old Aunty, who combs his hair as if he were a girl. So always there is some ideal aim in the mixed motive. Out of six gay young men who drive and drink together, only one cares for the meat and the bottle. With the rest this feasting gallantly on the best, regardless of expense, is part of a system. It is in good style, is convivial. For these green-horns of society to live together, to be *convivæ*, is not to think and labor together, as wise men use, but to laugh and be drunken in company.

Into the lowest courses there enters something to keep the filth from overwhelming self-respect. The advocates of slavery have not, as it appears, lost all pretence of honor and honesty. Thieves are sustained by a sense of the injustice of society. They do but right an old wrong, taking bravely what was accumulated by cautious cunning. They cultivate many virtues, and, like the best of us, make much of these, identify themselves with these. If a man is harsh and tyrannical, he regrets that he has too much force of character. And it is not safe to accuse a harlot of stealing and lying. She has her ideal also, and strives to keep the ulcer of sin within bounds,—to save a sweet side from corruption.

Is this stooping very low to look for the Ideal Tendency? The greater gain,

if we find it prevailing in these depths. We may doubt whether thieves and harlots are subject to the same law which irresistibly lifts us, for we know that our own sin is not quite like other sin. But I must not offer all the cheerful hope I feel for the worst offenders, because too much faith passes for levity or impiety; and men thank God only for deliverance from great dangers, not for preservation from all danger. For gratitude we must not escape too easily and clean, but with some smell of fire upon us.

Yet in our own experience this planning what we shall do and become is constant, and always we escape from the present into larger air. The boy will not be content with that skill in skating which occupies his mind to-day. That belongs to the day and place, but next year he goes to the academy and fresh exploits engage him. He works gallantly in this new field and harness, because his thought has gone forward again, and he sees through these studies the man of thought. Already as a student he is a philosopher, a poet, a servant of the Muse. Bacon and Milton look kindly on him in invitation, he is walking to their company and in their company. The young hero-worshipper cannot remain satisfied with mere physical or warlike prowess. He soon sees the superiority of mental and moral mastery, of creation of good counsel. He will reverence the valiant reformer who brings justice in his train, the saint in whom goodness is enamored of goodness, the gentleman whose heart-beat is courtesy, the prophet in whom a religion is born, all who have been inspired with liberal, not dragged by sordid aims.

How beautiful to him is the society of poets! He reads with idolatry the letters and anecdotes of Coleridge and Wordsworth, Goethe and Schiller, Beethoven and Raphael. Look at the private thought of these men in familiar intercourse: no plotting for lucre, but a conspiracy to reach the best in life. The saints are even more ardent in aspiration, for their tender hearts were pressed and saddened

by fear. They are now set on fire by a sense of great redemption. They are prisoners pardoned.

For scholars the world is peopled only with saints, philosophers, and poets, and the studious boy seeks his own amid their large activity. So much of it meets his want, yet the whole does not meet all his want. He must combine and balance and embrace conflicting qualities. Every day his view enlarges. What was noble last year will now by no means content his conscience. Duty and beauty have risen.

The Ideal Tendency characterizes man, affords the only definition of him; and it is a perpetual, irresistible expansion. No matter on what it fastens, it will not stay, but spreads and soars like light in the morning sky.

To-day we are charmed with our partners, and think we can never tire of Alfred and Emily. To-morrow we discover without shame, after all our protestations and engagements, that their future seems incommensurate with our own. To our surprise, they also feel their paths diverging from ours. We part with a show of regret, but real joy to be free.

Both parties have gained from their intercourse a certainty of power and promise of greater power. Silly people fill the world with lamentation over human inconstancy; but if we follow love, we cannot cling to the beloved. We must love onward, and only when our friends go before us can we be true both to friendship and to them.

How eager and tremulous his excitement when at last the youth encounters all beauty in a maiden! Now he is on his trial. Can he move her? for he must be to her nothing or all. How stately and far-removed she seems in her crystal sphere! All her relations are fair and poetic. Her book is not like another book. Her soft and fragrant attire, can it be woven of ribbons and silk? She, too, has dreamed of the coming man, heroic, lyrical, impassioned; the beat of his blood a pæan and triumphal march; a man able to cut paths for her and lead her to all that is worthiest in life. Her

day is an expectation; her demand looks out of proud eyes. Can he move this stately creature, pure and high above him as the clear moon yonder, never turning from her course,—this Diana, who will love upward and stoop to no Endymion? Now it will appear whether he can pass with another for all he is to himself. This will be the victory for which he was born, or blackest defeat. If she could love him! If he should, after all, be to her only such another as her cousin Thomas, who comes and goes with all his pretensions as unregarded as Rover the house-dog! Between these *ifs* he vacillates, swung like a ship on stormy waters, touching heaven and hell.

Meanwhile the maiden dares hardly look toward this generous new-comer, whose destiny lies broad open in his courage and desire. Others she could conciliate and gently allure, but she will not play with the lion. She will throw no web around his strength to tear her heart away, if it does not hold him. For the first time she guards her fancy. She will not think of the career that awaits him, of the help there is in him for men, and the honor that will follow him from them,—of the high studies, tasks, and companionship to which he is hastening. What avails this avoidance, this turning-away of the head? A fancy that must be kept is already lost. She read his quality in the first glance of deep-meaning eyes. When at last he speaks, she sees suddenly how beyond all recovery he had carried away her soul in that glance. They marry each the expectation of the other. It was a promise in either that shone so fair. Happy lovers, if only as wife and husband they can go on to fulfil the promise! For love cannot be repeated; every day it must have fresh food in a new object; and unless character is renewed, love must leave it behind and wander on.

If the wife is still aspiring,—if she lays growing demands on her hero,—if her thought enlarges and she stands true to it, separate from him in integrity as he saw her first, following not his, but her

own native estimate,—she will always be his mistress. She will still have that charm of remoteness which belongs only to those who do not lean and borrow, to natures centred for themselves in the deep. There is something incalculable in such independence. It is full of surprise for the most intimate. In one breast the true wife prepares for her husband a course of loves. Every day she offers a new heart to be won. Every day the woman he could reach is gone, and there again before him is the inaccessible maiden who will not accept to-day the behavior of yesterday. This withdrawal and advancement from height to height is true virginity, which never lies down with love but keeps him always on foot and girded for fresh pursuit. Noble lovers rely on no pledges, point to no past engagements, but prefer to renew their relation from hour to hour. The heroic woman will command, and not solicit love. Let him go, when I cease to be all to him, when I can no longer fill the horizon of his imagination and satisfy his heart. But if there is less ascension in a woman, she is no mate for an advancing man. He must leave her; he walks by her side alone. So we pass many dear companions, outgrowing alike our loves and our fears.

Once or twice in youth we meet a man of sounding reputation or real wisdom, whose secret is hid above our discovery. His manners are formidable while we do not understand them. In his presence our tongues are tied, our limbs are paralyzed. Thought dies out before him, the will is unseated and vacillates, we are cowed like Antony beside Cæsar. In solitude we are ashamed of this cowardice and resolve to put it away; but when the great man returns, our knees knock and we are as weak as before. It is suicide to fly from such mortification. A brave boy faces it as well as he can. By-and-by the dazzle abates, he sees some flaw, some coarseness or softness, in this shining piece of metal; he begins to fathom the motives and measure the orbit of this tyrannous benefactor. They are the true

friends who daunt and overpower us, to whom for a little we yield more than their due.

This rule is universal, that no man can admire downward. All enthusiasm rises and lifts the subject of it. That which seems to you so base an activity is lifted above low natures. What matter, then, where the standard floats at this moment, since it cannot remain fixed?

Perfection retreats, as the horizon withdraws before a traveller, and lures us on and on. It even travels faster than our best endeavors can follow, and so beckons to us from farther and farther away. We may give ourselves to the ideal, or we may turn aside to appetite and sleep; but in every moment of returning sanity we are again on our feet and again upon an endless ascending road.

When a man has tasted power, when he sees the supply there is so near in Nature for all need, he hungers for reinforcement. That desire is prayer. It opens its own doors and takes supplies from God's hand. No wise man can grudge the necessary use of the mind to serve the body with shelter and food, for we go merrily to Nature, and with our milk we drink order, justice, beauty, and benignity. We cannot take the husks on which our bodies are fed, without expressing these juices also, which circulate as sap and blood through the sphere. We cannot touch any object but some spark of vital electricity is shot through us. Every creature is a battery, charged not with mere vegetable or animal, but with moral life. Our metaphysical being is fed from something hidden in rocks and woods, in streams and skies, in fire, water, earth, and air. While we dig roots, and gather nuts, and hunt and roast our meat, our blood is quickened not in the heart alone. Deeper currents are swelled. The springs of our humanity are opened in Nature; for that which streams through the landscape, and comes in at the eye and ear, is plainly the same fluid which enters as consciousness, and is the life by which we live. While we enjoy this spiritual refreshment and keep ourselves

open to it, we may dig without degradation; but if our minds fasten on the thing to be done, on commodity and safety, on getting and having, those avenues seem to close by which the soul was fed. Then we forget our incalculable chances and certainties; we go mad, and make the mind a muck-rake. If a man will direct his faculties to any limited and not to ilimitable ends, he cripples his faculties. No matter whether he is deluded by a fortune or a reputation or position, if he does not give himself wholly to grow and be a man, regardless of minor advantages, he has lost his way in the world. "Be true," said Schiller, "to the dream of thy youth." That dream was generous, not sordid. We must be surrendered to the perfection which claims us, and suffer no narrow aim to postpone that insatiable demand.

But the potency of life will bring back every wanderer, as he well knows. Every sinner keeps his trunk packed, ready to return to the good. The poor traders really mean to buy love with their gold. Feeling the hold of a chain which binds us even when we do not cling to it, we grow prodigal of time and power. The essence of life, as we enjoy it, is a sense of the inextinguishable ascending tendency in life; and this gives courage when there is yet no reverence or devotion.

In development of character is involved great change of circumstances. We cannot grow or work in a corner. It is not for greed alone or mainly that men make war and build cities and found governments, but to try what they can do and become, to justify themselves to themselves and to their fellows. We desire to please and help,—but still more, at first, to be sure that we can please and help. If he hears any man speak effectually in public, the ambitious boy will never rest till he can also speak, or do some other deed as difficult and as well worth doing. For the trial of faculty we must go out into the world of institutions, range ourselves beside the workers, take up their tools and strike



stroke for stroke with them. Every new situation and employment dazzles till we find out the trick of it. The boy longs to escape from a farm to college, from college to the city and practical life. Then he looks up from his desk, or from the pit in the theatre, to the gay world of fashion,—harder to conquer than even the world of thought. At last he makes his way upward into the sacred circle, and finds there a little original power and a great deal of routine. These fine parts are like those of players, learned by heart. The men who invented them, with whom they were spontaneous, seem to have died out and left their manners with their wardrobes to narrow-breasted children, whom neither clothes nor courtesies will fit. So in every department we find the snail freezing in an oyster-shell. The judges do not know the meaning of justice. The preacher thinks religion is a spasm of desire and fear. A young man soon loses all respect for titles, wigs, and gowns, and looks for a muscular master-mind. Somebody wrote the laws, and set the example of noble behavior, and founded every religion. Only a man capable of originating can understand, sustain, or use any institution. The Church, the State, the Social System come tumbling ruinous over the heads of bunglers, who cannot uphold, because they never could have built them, and the rubbish obstructs every path in life. An honest, vigorous thinker will clear away these ruins and begin anew at the earth. When the boy has broken loose from home, and fairly entered the world that allured him, he finds it not fit to live in without revolutions. He is as much cramped in it as he was in the ways of the old homestead. Feeding the pigs and picking up chips did not seem work for a man, but he finds that almost all the activity of the race amounts to nothing more; no more thought or purpose goes into it. Men find Church and State and Custom ready-made, and they fall into the procession, ask no searching questions, but take things for granted without reason; and their imita-

tion is as easy as picking up chips. It is no doing, but merely sliding down hill. The way of the world will not suit a valiant boy. To make elbow-room and get breathing-space, he becomes a reformer; and when now he can find no new worlds to conquer, he will make a world, laying in truth and justice every stone. The same seeker, who was so fired by the sight of his eyes, looking out from a mill-yard or a shoe-shop on the many-colored activity of his kind, who ran such a round of arts and sciences, pursuing the very secret of his being in each new enterprise, is now discontented with all that has been done. He begins again to look forward,—he becomes a prophet, instead of the historian he was. He easily sees that a true manhood would disuse our ways of teaching and worshipping, would unbuild and rebuild every town and house, would tear away the jails and abolish pauperism as well as slavery. He sees the power of government lying unused and unsuspected in spelling-books and Bibles. Now he has found a work, not for one finger, but for fighting Hercules and singing Apollo, worthy of Minerva and of Joye. He will try what man can do for man.

The history of every brave girl is parallel with that of her play-fellow and yoke-fellow. She sighs for sympathy, for a gallant company of youths and maidens worthy of all desire. Her music, drawing, and Italian are only doors which she hopes to open upon such a company. She longs for society to make the hours lyrical, for tasks to make them epic and heroic. The attitudes and actions of imaginative young persons are exalted every moment by the invisible presence of lovers, poets, inspired and inspiring companions. Such as they are we also shall be; when we walk among them and with them, we shall wash our hands of all injustice, meanness, and pretension. Women are as tired as men of our silly civilization, its compliments, restraints, and compromises. They feel the burden of routine as heavily, and keep their elasticity under it as long as

we. What they cannot hope to do, a great-hearted man, some lover of theirs, shall do for them; and they will sustain him with appreciation, anticipating the tardy justice of mankind. Every generous girl shares with her sex that new development of feminine consciousness, which the vulgar have named, in derision, a movement for woman's rights. She will seek to be more truly woman, to assert her special power and privilege, to approach from her own side the common ideal, offering a pure soprano to match the manly bass.

We all look for a future, not only better than our own past, but better than any past. Humanity is our inheritance, but not historical humanity. Man seems to be broken and scattered all abroad. The great lives are only eminent examples of a single virtue, and by admiration of every hero we have been crippled on some one side. If he is free, he is also coarse; if delicate, he is overlaid by the gross world; saints are timid and feverish, afraid of being spattered in the first puddle; heroes are profane. We must melt up all the old metal to make a new man and carry forward the common consciousness. Every failure was part of the final success. We go over a causeway in which every timber is some soldier fallen in this enterprise. Who doubts the result doubts God. We say, regretfully, "If I could only continue at my best!" and we ache with the little ebb, between wave and wave, of an advancing tide. But this tide is Omnipotence. It rises surely, if it were only an inch in a thousand years. The changes in society are like the geologic upheaval and sinking of continents; yet man is morally as far removed from the savage as he is physically superior to the saurian. We do not see the corn grow or the world revolve; yet if motion be given as the primal essence, we must look for inconceivable results. Wisdom will take care of wisdom, and extend. Consider the growth of intellect in the history of your own parish for twenty years. See how old views have died out of New

England, and new ones come in. Every man is fortified in his opinions, yet no man can hold his opinions. The closer they are hugged, the faster in any community they change. The ideas of such men as Swedenborg, Goethe, Emerson, float in the air like spores, and wherever they light they thrive. The crabbedest dogmatist cannot escape; for, if he open his eyes to seek his meat, some sunshine will creep in. We have combustibles stored in the stupidest of us, and a spark of truth kindles our slumbering suspicion. Since the great reality is organized in man, and waits to be revealed in him, it is of no avail to shut out the same reality from our ears. Thinkers are held to be dangerous, and excluded from the desks of public instruction; but the boys were already occupied with the same thoughts. They would hear nothing new at the lecture, and they are more encouraged by the terror of the elders than by any word the wise man could speak. In pursuit of truth, the difficulty is to ask a question; for in ability to ask is involved ability to reach an answer. The serious student is occupied with problems which the doctors have never been able to entertain, and he knows that their discourse is not addressed to him. If you have not wit to understand what I seek, you may croak with the frogs: you are left out of my game.

And the old people, unhappily, suspect that this boy, whose theory they do not comprehend, is master of their theory. They are puzzled and panic-stricken; they strike in the dark. In all controversy, the strong man's position is unassailed. His adversary does not see where he is, but attacks a man of straw, some figment of his own, to the amusement of intelligent spectators. Always our combatant is talking quite wide of the whole question. So the wise man can never have an opponent; for whoever is able to face and find him has already gone over to his side. By material defences, we shut out light for a little, by going where only our own views are repeated, and so boxing our-



selves from all danger of conviction; but if a strong thinker could gain the mere brute advantage of having an audience confined in their seats to hear him out, he would carry them all inevitably to his conclusion. They know it and run away. But the press has made our whole world of civilization one great lecture-room, from which no reading man can escape, and the only defence against progress is stolid preoccupation with trade or trifles. Yet this persistency is holding the breath, and can no more be continued in the mind than that in the body. Blundering and falsehood become intolerable to the blunderers; they must return to thought, and that is proper in a single direction, is approached by ten thousand avenues toward the One. It is religious, not ignorance or dogma. We cannot think without exploration of the divine order and recognition of its divinity, without finding ourselves carried away by it to service and adoration. All good is assured to us in Truth, and Truth follows us hard, drives us into many a corner, and will have us at last. So Love surprises all, and every virtue has a pass-key to every heart. Out of conflicting experience, amid barbarism and dogmatism, from feathers that float and stones that fall, we deduce the great law of moral gravitation, which binds spirit to spirit, and all souls to the best. Recognition of that law is worship. We rejoice in it without a taint of selfishness. We adore it with entire satisfaction. Worship is neither belief nor hope, but this certainty of repose upon Perfection. We explore over our heads and under our feet a harmony that is only enriched by dissolving discords. The drag of time, the cramp of organization, are only false fits. It is blasphemy to deny the dominant. We cannot escape our good; we shall be purified. When our destiny is thus assured to us, we become impatient of sleep and sin, and redouble exertion. We devote ourselves to this certainty, and our allegiance is religion. There is nothing in man omitted from the uplift of Ideality. That is a central and total

expansion of him, is an utmost entering into his inmost, is more himself than he is himself. All reverence is directed toward this Creator revealed in flesh, though not compassed. We adore him in others, while yet we despise him in ourselves. Every other motion of man has an external centre, is some hunger or passion, acts on us from its seat in Nature or the body, and we can face it, deny and repudiate it with the body; but this is the man flowing down from his source.

We must not be tempted to call things by too fine names, lest we should disguise them. All that is great is plain and familiar. The Ideal Tendency is simple love of life, felt first as desire and then as satisfaction. The men who represent it are not seekers, but finders, who go on to find more and more; for in the poet desire has fulfilled itself. Enjoyment makes the artist. He has gone on before us, reaching into the abyss of possibility; but he has reached more mightily. He begins to know what is promised in the universal attraction, in this eager turning of all faces toward our future. There is a centre from which no eye can be diverted, for it is the beam of sight. Look which way you will, that centre is everywhere. The universe is flooded with a ray from it, and the light of common day on every object is a refraction or reflection of that brightness.

Shallow men think of Ideality as another appetite, to be fed with pretty baubles, as the body is satisfied with meat and sleep; but the representative of that august impulse feels in it his immortality, and by all his lovely allegories, mythologies, fables, pictures, statues, manners, songs, and symphonies, he seeks to communicate his own feeling, that by specific gravity man must rise. It is no wonder, then, that we love Art while it offers us reinforcement of being, and despise the pretenders, for whom it is pastime, not prophecy.

For, in spite of all discouragement from the materialists, men stultified by trade or tradition, we have trusted the high desire and followed it thus far. We

felt the sacredness of life even in ourselves, and there was always reverence in our admiration. We could not be made to doubt the divinity of that which walked with us in the wood or looked on us in the morning. The grasses and pebbles, the waters and rocks, clouds and showers, snow and wind, were too brother-like to be denied. They sang the same song which fills the breast, and our love for them was pure. The men and women we sought, were they not worthy of honor? The artist comes to bid us trust the Ideal Tendency, and not dishonor him who moves therein. He is no trifler, then, to be thrust aside by the doctors with their sciences, or the economists with production and use. He offers manhood to man and womanhood to woman.

We have named Ideality a love of life.

Nay, what is it but life itself,—and that loving but true living? What word can have any value for us, unless it is a record of inevitable expansions in character. The universe is pledged to every heart, and the artist represents its promise. He sings, because he sees the man-child advancing, by blind paths it may be, but under sure guidance, propelled by inextinguishable desires toward the largest experience. He is no longer afraid of old bugbears. He feels for one, that nothing in the universe, call it by what ugly name you will, can crush or limit the lift of that heaven which works in the breast. Out of all eyes there looks on him the same expectation, and what for others is a great *perhaps* for him has become unavoidable certainty.

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## THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN.

"The mind of man is first led to adore the forces of Nature, and certain objects of the material world; at a later period, it yields to religious impulses of a higher and purely spiritual character."

HUMBOLDT.

### CHAPTER I.

ALPHEUS and Eleusa, Thessalian Greeks, travelled in their old age, to escape poverty and misfortune, which had surely taken joint lease with themselves of a certain hut among the hills, and managed both household and flock.

The Halcyon builds its nest upon a floating weed; so to the drifting fortunes of these wanderers clung a friendless child, innocent and beautiful Evadne.

Some secret voice, the country-people say, lured the shepherd from his home, to embark on the Ægean Sea, and lead the little one away, together with his aged wife, to look for a new home in exile. Mariners bound for Troas received them into their vessel, and the voyage began.

The Greeks lamented when they beheld the shores of Asia. Heavy clouds and the coming night concealed the landmarks which should have guided their approach, and, buffeted by the uncertain winds, they waited for the morning. By the light of dawn, they saw before them an unknown harbor, and the dwellings of men; and here the mariners determined to be rid of their passengers, who vexed them by their fears; while to these three any port seemed desirable, and they readily consented to put off towards the shore. At the hour when the winds rise, at early dawn, they gladly parted from the seamen and the tossing ship, and took the way before them to the little town.

No fisherman, shadowless, trod the sands; no pious hand lighted the fire of