

THE
ATLANTIC MONTHLY:
A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics.

VOL. LX. — JULY, 1887. — No. CCCLVII.

MY COUNTRY.

I.

WHO saith that song doth fail?
Or thinks to bound
Within a little plot of Grecian ground
The sole of mortal things that can avail?
Olympus was but heaven's gate;
Not there the strong Light-bringer deigned to wait;
But westward o'er the rosy height
His cloud-sprung coursers trample light;
And ever westward leans the god above the joyful steeds;
The light in his eyes is prophecy; on his lips the words are deeds;
On whirls the burning Singer; earth follows where he speeds.
The singing keels that moored great Rome
Silence o'ertakes; but his immortal song,
To which the world-wide fates belong,
Still seeks the fleeing shore and for the gods a home,
A new Ausonia sings, swells o'er a mightier foam:
The citadels of Italy
(O dear to him is Liberty!)
Chained not to her marble mountains,
Sealed not in her broken fountains,
His bright fire;
Up the dark North it leapt, the masterless desire:
Nor even the imperial isle, the Ocean-state,
Who Time's great order leads, and fastens fate,
Shall keep his speed across the shouting sea;
Destiny exceeds her scope;
The hope of man exceeds her hope;
The regions of the west unfold;
New ages on the god are rolled;
The throning years to be,
Of earth's new men the praise,
Rise on him where he stands and bends his dreaming gaze,
And smiles to see the shore night vainly shrouds
Through tracts of ruddy air and darkly-gleaming clouds.

II.

Awake, O Land, and lesser fortunes scorn!
 Amid the darkness, by the eastern strand,
 Bend down thy ear, and hearken with thy hand;
 He comes who brings to thee eternal morn!
 More radiant and fair
 Than ever thy mornings were,
 Or any morn that ever broke from night
 Since the dear star of dawn began his earthly flight!
 O whisper to thy clustered isles,
 If any rosy promise round them smiles;
 O call to every seaward promontory,
 If one of them, perchance, is made the cape of glory;
 O bid the mountains answer thy enquiry,
 If any peak be tipped with lonely fire,
 A shining name
 And station of the wingéd flame
 Above the time's desire!
 Doubt not, O waiting Land; for who hath power
 To bar the golden journey of the sun,
 Or on time's dial set back the destined hour?
 Doubt not, but O, thy heart within prepare,
 And ripen praise upon thy lips with prayer,
 When the bright summons through thy frame shall run
 Of that great day begun;
 Then heaven shall search thee with its shafts of light,
 And lay thy coverts and thy fastness bare,
 And drag the Serpent from its human lair,
 And on its scales the swords of God shall smite,
 Wielded aloft by spirits that know to fight,
 To find the heart with wounds and not to spare.
 O wilderness untried,
 If thou dost cherish,
 Brought from the old earth's side,
 The beasts that perish,
 The things that eat the dust and darkly crawl,
 And in the heart of nations poison all, —
 O terrible that brightness will appall,
 World-justice hanging o'er thee, and shall fall!
 Seize thy spear and grasp thy sword;
 Dare to speak the righteous word;
 And his battle rolling o'er thee,
 And his radiance flashing round,
 Shall drive the cumbering brood before thee,
 Free forevermore thy ground;
 Thy great ally,
 Leaning from the sky,
 Shall twine thy hair with morning and the olive's warless crown!

O Soil befriending men,
Pluck from the Future's hand her iron pen ;
While yet his coming lingers, O stoop down,
And write upon the threshold of thy earth
The word that levels all men in their birth,
And in thy love, and in their spirits' worth !
Be that sign, engraved on thee,
Thy omen and thy destiny !

III.

Look forth, O Land, thy mountain-tops
Glitter ; look, the shadow drops ;
On the warder summits hoary
Bursts the splendor-voicéd story !
Round the crags of watching rolled
The purple vales of heaven unfold,
And far-shining ridges hang in air, —
Northward beam, and to the south the promise bear ;
Unto isle and headland sing it,
O'er the misty Midland fling it,
From a hundred glorious peaks, the Appalachian gold !
O'er the valley of the thousand rivers,
O'er the sea-horizoned lakes,
Through heaven's wide gulf the marvelous fire quivers,
Myriad-winged, and every dwindling star o'ertakes ;
On where earth's last ranges listen,
Thunder-peaks that cloud the west ;
With the flashing signal waken ;
All the tameless Rockies own it, —
One great edge of sunrise glisten ;
All the skied Sierras throne it ;
And lone Shasta, high uplifted
O'er the snowy centuries drifted,
Hears, and through his lands is splendor shaken
From the morning's jewel in his crest !
O chosen Land,
God's hand
Doth touch thy spires,
And lights on all thy hills his rousing fires !
O beacon of the nations, lift thy head ;
Firm be thy bases under ;
Now thy earth-might with heaven wed
Beyond hell's hate to sunder !
O Land of Promise, whom all eyes
Have strained through time to see,
Since poets, cradled in the skies,
Flashed prophecy on thee !
O great Atlantis, other world,
That never voyager won,

Though many a shining sail was furled,
 Lost in the setting sun!
 Joy, joy, joy! thy destiny hath found thee!
 Now the oceans brighten round thee,
 To thy heaven-born fate ascending;
 Thou, earth's darling! thou, the yearning
 Of the last hope in her burning,
 Who shalt seal her womb forevermore!
 Child, whose rosy breath is blending
 With the morning's o'er thee bending
 While the chorus, never-ending,
 Swells from shore to shore,
 Triumph of the peoples, anthem never heard before!
 Titan, crowner of the ages,
 Now the eagle seeks thy hand;
 Poets, statesmen, heroes, sages,
 In the lustrous portals stand!
 Well may mount to mount declare thee;
 Ocean unto ocean sound thee;
 To the skies loud hymns upbear thee;
 Earth embrace, and heaven bound thee;
 God hath found thee!
 Through the world the tidings pour,
 And fill it o'er and o'er,
 As the wave of morning fills the long Atlantic shore;
 Fills, and brims — O speed the story! —
 The emerald cup of thy great river-gods;
 Brims, and through the west down golden sods
 To the Pacific rolls; flood unto flood speaks glory!

IV.

O fair Land, do thy eyes
 Dream paradise?
 Or mortal fields are these, or fallen skies?
 Dost thou not hear him singing in the gold
 The lofty pæan thy long years unfold,
 And joy divine that shines in man's just praise,
 Though yet a while delays
 The hour full-orbed, and his unclouded blaze?
 Of holy hymns and famous deeds
 He casts before the deathless seeds;
 He wooes thy dust with rosy rain;
 Of thy sweet months is he so fain;
 O lovelier than the poets told,
 Unwreathes his brow to light thy dying mould!
 And from their morning bower, and from their sunny lair,
 Scatters the bloom that sings
 Of heavenly pastures fair,

And o'er thy bosom flings
The fragrance of his own immortal air!
Nor flowers alone are his, but every fruit
That takes the breath of heaven fed from a darkened root;
Joy to thy virgin soil that spring shall thrill and shoot!
Like Love, its coming sweet,
With motions of auroral winds that fleet,
Shadow and music, o'er the new green wheat;
Thy summer lights the land, thy autumn loads the sea;
And still a lovelier year returns to thee;
Or where the glowing South is white like wool;
Or where the sun-spanned ocean of the maize
Broods in the brilliant calm, and lightly sways;
Or where by inland seas, forever full,
The golden reservoirs of summer days,
Towers of abundance stand in all thy ways;
Or further on, where bud and fruit together,
Immortal orchards, star the fadeless weather;
O generous fertility,
Like Love, to all men free!
And ever rolls an ampler year, and heaven grows ripe in thee!
Yea, nobler yields than these,
O favored Land,
Are whispering with thy breeze, —
The tillage of God's hand:
For though it seem thy own, this fair estate,
(Or fief or freehold, ask of Day and Night,)
The Eternal only sows the field of fate,
And o'er thy will doth exercise His right.
Thou canst not groove the soil nor turn the sod
But thou shalt drop therein the seeds of time;
Thy labor brings to light the will of God;
Fair must the harvest be, and stand sublime;
And when the mellowing year is made complete,
And for the world thou reapest time's increase,
He thrusts His sickle in the falling wheat,
And in thy bursting granaries garners Peace.

O humbly bow thee down,
Blesséd o'er all thou art;
Earth's plenty in thy crown,
God's Peace within thy heart!
Again, O mighty hymn, begin!
O mount, Virgilian song!
Let be the suffering and the sin;
Thy years to Love belong!
No Janus-stables on thy soil, nor hoof of Mars's steeds;
No ruin smokes; no war-bolt strikes; no scar of battle bleeds;
But fair as once Athene's height thy marble hill shall rise,
Where Justice reconciles thy earth, Virtue disarms thy skies!

As splendors of the dawn
 Make earthly tapers wan,
 Less than a candle's beam
 The world's first hope shall gleam
 When o'er thy vales and soothéd seas the truce of time shall stream!
 Come! Come! O light divine!
 O come, Saturnian morn!
 O Land of Peace on whom recline
 Ten thousand hopes unborn, —
 O Beautiful, stand forth, nor sword, nor lance,
 Silent wielder of the fates!
 War-tamer, striking with thy glance
 The thunder from imperial states!
 So hard, surpassing war, doth Peace assail;
 So far, exceeding hate, doth Love avail;
 Now, married to thy sphere,
 Blesséd between the nodding poles shall wheel the earth's Great Year.

V.

O destined Land, unto thy citadel,
 What founding fates even now doth peace compel,
 That through the world thy name is sweet to tell!
 O thronéd Freedom, unto thee is brought
 Empire; nor falsehood nor blood-payment asked;
 Who never through deceit thy ends hast sought,
 Nor toiling millions for ambition tasked;
 Unlike the fools who build the throne
 On fraud, and wrong, and woe;
 For man at last will take his own,
 Nor count the overthrow;
 But far from these is set thy continent,
 Nor fears the Revolution in man's rise;
 On laws that with the weal of all consent,
 And saving truths that make the people wise:
 For thou art founded in the eternal fact
 That every man doth greaten with the act
 Of freedom; and doth strengthen with the weight
 Of duty; and diviner moulds his fate,
 By sharp experience taught the thing he lacked,
 God's pupil; thy large maxim framed, though late,
 Who masters best himself best serves the State.
 This wisdom is thy Corner: next the stone
 Of Bounty; thou hast given all; thy store,
 Free as the air, and broadcast as the light,
 Thou flingest; and the fair and gracious sight,
 More rich, doth teach thy sons this happy lore:
 That no man lives who takes not priceless gifts
 Both of thy substance and thy laws, whereto

He may not plead desert, but holds of thee
A childhood title, shared with all who grew,
His brethren of the hearth; whence no man lifts
Above the common right his claim; nor dares
To fence his pastures of the common good;
For common are thy fields; common the toil;
Common the charter of prosperity,
That gives to each that all may blessed be.
This is the very counsel of thy soil.
Therefore if any thrive, mean-souled he spares
The alms he took; let him not think subdued
The State's first law, that civic rights are strong
But while the fruits of all to all belong;
Yea, though he heir the fortune of the earth,
Let him not hoard, nor spend it for his mirth,
But match his private means with public worth.
That man in whom the people's riches lie
Is the great citizen, in his country's eye.
Justice, the third great base, that shall secure
To each his earnings, howsoever poor,
From each his duties, howsoever great.
She bids the future for the past atone.
Behold her symbols on the hoary stone;
The awful scales and that war-hammered beam
Which whoso thinks to break doth fondly dream,
Or Czars who tyrannize or mobs that rage;
These are her charge, and heaven's eternal law;
She from old fountains doth new judgment draw,
Till, word by word, the ancient order swerves
To the true course more nigh; in every age
A little she creates, but more preserves.
Hope stands the last, a mighty prop of fate.
These thy foundations are, O firm-set State!
And strength is unto thee
More than this masonry
Of common thought;
Beyond the stars, from the Far City brought.
Pillar and tower
Declare the shaping power,
Massive, severe, sublime,
Of the stern, righteous time,
From sire to son bequeathed, thy eldest dower.
Large-limbed they were, the pioneers,
Cast in the iron mould that fate reverts;
They could not help but frame the fabric well,
Who squared the stones for heaven's eye to tell;
Who knew from eld and taught posterity,
That the true workman's only he
Who builds of God's necessity.
Nor yet hath failed the seed of righteousness;

Still doth the work the awe divine confess,
 Conscience within, duty without, express.
 Well may thy sons rejoice thee, O proud Land;
 No weakling race of mighty loins is thine,
 No spendthrifts of the fathers; lo, the Arch,
 The loyal keystone glorying o'er the march
 Of millioned peoples freed! on every hand
 Grows the vast work, and boundless the design.
 So in thy children shall thy empire stand,
 As in her Cæsars fell Rome's majesty, —
 O Desolation, be it far from thee!
 Forgetting sires and sons to whom were given
 The seals of glory and the keys of fate
 From Him, whom well they knew the Rock of State,
 Thy centre, and on thy doorposts blazed His name
 Whose plaudit is the substance of all fame,
 The sweetness of all hope, — forbid it, Heaven!

Shrink not, O Land, beneath that holy fear!
 Thou art not mocked of God;
 His kingdom is thy conquering sphere,
 His will thy sceptred rod!
 O Harbor of the sea-tossed fates,
 The last great mortal Bound;
 Cybele, with a hundred States,
 A hundred turrets, crowned;
 Mother, whose heart divinely holds
 Earth's poor within her breast;
 World-Shelterer, in whose open folds
 The wandering races rest!
 Advance, the hour supreme arrives;
 O'er Ocean's edge the chariot drives;
 The past is done;
 Thy orb begun;
 Upon the forehead of the world to blaze,
 Lighting all times to be with thy own golden days.

VI.

O Land beloved!
 My Country, dear, my own!
 May the young heart that moved
 For the weak words atone;
 The mighty lyre not mine, nor the full breath of song!
 To happier sons shall these belong.
 Yet doth the first and lonely voice
 Of the dark dawn the heart rejoice,
 While still the loud choir sleeps upon the bough;
 And never greater love salutes thy brow
 Than his, who seeks thee now.

Alien the sea and salt the foam
Where'er it bears him from his home ;
And when he leaps to land,
A lover treads the strand ;
Precious is every stone ;
No little inch of all the broad domain
But he would stoop to kiss, and end his pain,
Feeling thy lips make merry with his own ;
But O, his trembling reed too frail
To bear thee Time's All-Hail !
Faint is my heart, and ebbing with the passion of thy praise !
The poets come who cannot fail ;
Happy are they who sing thy perfect days !
Happy am I who see the long night ended,
In the shadows of the age that bore me,
All the hopes of mankind blending,
Earth awaking, heaven descending,
While the new day steadfastly
Domes the blue deeps over thee !
Happy am I who see the Vision splendid
In the glowing of the dawn before me,
All the grace of heaven blending,
Man arising, Christ descending,
While God's hand in secrecy
Builds thy bright eternity.

George E. Woodberry.

THE WATER-WAYS OF PORTSMOUTH.

SINCE the attitude of one thinking mind often expresses that of an organization, a whimsical critic might be forgiven for detecting in such a town as Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, poised among the seething forces of our young materialistic republic, a touch of resemblance to such a one as Ruskin ; who, to them that share not his beliefs, is merely the most illustrious laggard of his day. Portsmouth, too, shall take that name with a smile. She holds to the unprogressive doctrine that brawn is a good thing, but not the best. Her stilled and centred life, without ignoble idleness, is a consistent choice and a long, long protest. We are not certain that much heed is taken of her. She is venera-

ble, if aught in New England may so be considered, and a living exhortation to money-hunters. But we are like a household who really have no time for morning prayers.

The town, settled by royalists and Churchmen, a "sumptuous little aristocracy," had her social pomps once, never quite rivaled by any of her sisters, but now vanished like her shattered commerce, or her civic glory, which is a tale of Revolutionary and historic days. Her decay, such as it is, is thorough and unbroken. She puts forth no spasmodic strivings ; rarely do the fresh marbles of enterprise jut against her threadbare buildings. Her citizens, agreeing in harmony, care for their own with a thought-