Ridge in haze. We heard the lowings of Prudence in those strange sounds in nature "that come a-swooning over hollow grounds."

In the story which is called *Kilmeny*, one reads, —

"In yon green woods there is a waik," —

which means an open space, pasture, or clearing, —

"And in that waik there is a wene," —

that is to say, a house, —

"And in that wene there is a maik," —

which means, not simply a person, but a *companionable* person, —

"That neither has flesh, nor blood, nor bane,
And down in yon green wood he walks his lane,"

that is, by himself, alone.

But you, O Abdullah, walk with Prudence. Out of your iniquities, which were doubtless many, out of your touch of kindness which was perhaps but casual, came a benefit unforgotten, the fine gift of a fruitful legend. It may well be that you were in fact a man whom some taint or degenerate tendency had driven out to be a pariah among men. It may have been but an odd incident in your singular life, in the course of your adventurous, and no doubt reproachful, career. We never knew, for you out of the unknown came, and went back, much as every soul in this world comes out of the unknown and goes back.

THE JACKSON AND VAN BUREN PAPERS

BY JAMES SCHOULER

After a long era of close secrecy, the manuscript collections of two great Democratic chieftains, presidents in succession, have been almost simultaneously donated to the government, and their contents now lie open to exploration in the Library of Congress.

These collections show somewhat in contrast the idiosyncrasies of the two leaders they severally represent. That of Jackson, consigned to his editorial friend, Francis P. Blair, whether in trust or in beneficial ownership, and passing to the children and grandchildren of the latter in lumbering condition, makes rather a chaotic mass. It contains few letters which Jackson himself wrote, aside from those already familiar; while it preserves, equally with the correspondence of great contemporaries like McLean, Taney, Kendall, Blair, and Benton, a quantity of trivial military material, and of insignificant letters from humble admirers, who, from one cause or another, seem to have touched the general's lingering concern. The Van Buren collection, on the other hand, though seemingly smaller, is choice and valuable, and shows a fine selecting skill in the retrospect. It is full of letters worth preserving permanently, from James Madison and Rufus King downward; it exhibits much of Van Buren's own composition; and it contains the fresh and interesting correspondence which Van Buren himself kept up with Jackson from 1831 to 1845, here (to the loss of the Jackson collection) presented in full, with the letters as they passed on either side. Van Buren lived many years in placid retirement after his presidency, and probably assorted and reassorted his papers, preparing from them some personal memoirs toward the close. His heirs, too, have shown a pious solicitude, as custodians, for his posthumous fame.

While, on the whole, posterity's judgment upon the character and public acts of these distinguished Americans is not likely to be changed by the new revelations of either collection, some side lights are furnished, upon the imperturbable humor and amiability which characterized Van Buren, as well as upon the best fibre of his qualities as a statesman and politician. For Van Buren, when a young man, took sage counsel from some of the soundest statesmen who founded the Union; he enjoyed, in the leisure hours of his prime, the companionship of men famous in our literature, such as Irving and Paulding; and when we speak of the "Albany regency" in his native state, which owned in politics his skillful direction, we must not forget that it comprised public men like Marcy, Silas Wright, Azariah Flagg, John A. Dix, and Van Buren's law partner, Butler, — all men of high talent and character, and useful in their day to the republic. Whatever writings might once have existed that showed the deft and cunning hand of our "little magician" in placing or displacing for political discipline have certainly been weeded out of the Van Buren correspondence as it now reaches us. Only such letters are here discoverable as support that leader's claim to a higher posthumous distinction.

Jackson, on the other hand, was somewhat careless and indiscreet in preserving his own papers; and to these papers, it will be recalled, Benton found access when preparing his *Thirty Years' View*, so that whatever vindication Jackson might have needed has long been sufficiently afforded. A careful study and comparison of the contents of these two collections will not essentially change the historical estimate of either president. And yet, while Jackson remains the same earnest, impetuous, willful, quarrelsome leader of men as before, devoted to his country though with a shade of dissimulation in dealing with those he uses for his ends, Van Buren rises to a higher level, perhaps, than his countrymen and contemporaries ever accorded to him, and shows, despite all politic and time-serving propensities while seeking the presidency, a real courage and statesmanship and withal a notable breadth of public conception, while in consummate station and after his defeat in 1840. So, too, as an adviser during Jackson's presidency, though suave and deferential, he gave some good restraining counsel, and showed a judicious temperament.

A few notes, taken from these two valuable sets of papers, may be of interest to present students of American history. And first, with reference to the War of 1812. It is known that our government at Washington received, December 9, and promptly transmitted, the news of the intended British invasion of New Orleans from the West Indies, warning not Jackson alone, but the executives of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia, whose militia were hastened forward. Jackson claims in these papers that the Washington dispatch did not reach him until the 18th of the following February, long after the battle of New Orleans had been fought; and that he hastened his preparations upon other information of the British designs which came to him, December 5, from a surgeon at Pensacola. Yet apprehensive letters, based upon information less certain, must have reached him seasonably from the War Department, and aroused his vigilance.

Gratitude toward benefactors was a sentiment not cherished in this warrior's breast, and those who had shown him repeated favors when he stood in need of friends he disparaged and disdained in the day of his strength. Gratitude or gratulation he claimed rather for himself; and as friends were those who might subserve his immediate ambition, friends and foes changed places often in his estimation. Recalling that strange taint of duplicity with which the Rhea correspondence with ex-President Monroe seemed flavored, I have often wondered whether a closer acquaintance with Jackson's private papers would confirm his own personal connection with that controversy. Aside, indeed, from the ex-President's solemn denial on his deathbed, which Cabinet advisers like Wirt, Calhoun, and John Quincy Adams, honorable like himself, confirmed, there were political circumstances of 1818–19 which made it inherently impossible that Monroe should have issued the secret order through Rhea, which President Jackson claimed by 1831 to have acted upon in seizing Pensacola and afterwards to have stealthily burnt at Monroe's special request, sent orally through Rhea.[1] Was it possible that Rhea himself deceived the general in 1818–19, by twice pretending an authority from the White House which he did not possess, and whose falsehood might have been exposed at any moment? Rhea had neither the nerve nor the cunning to play the Iago, and, in his prime at least, cherished the regard of his constituents, while personally devoted to Jackson. Yet the whole tale must have been a fabrication; and that fabrication dates assuredly from 1831. A few months before exploring these Jackson papers, I received through the mail from one of John Rhea's descendants a Tennessee paper, which printed Rhea's retained copy of the letter which he sent to Monroe in June, 1831; and that copy bore the signature of two witnesses, one of whom was Jackson's adopted son, Andrew J. Donelson. This brought the fabrication close to Jackson's own door, and the Jackson papers, as still preserved, complete the evidence. Here several letters from Rhea to the general are seen during the period of the Seminole War, but not in one of them, nor in any other correspondence of the next ten years, is there the least allusion to the order which Jackson claimed later to have burnt. But when the Seminole controversy raged hot with Calhoun in 1831, and Jackson's reëlection to the presidency was at stake, with his quondam friend Calhoun thrust from confidence, this story leaped into life, full clad, and Jackson must have been its responsible author. For to John Rhea (then seventy-eight years old and at home in Tennessee) he wrote, early in the year, suggesting the statement he desired from him; and Rhea, all tremulous and as though forgetful, asked to see a copy of Jackson's letter of January, 1818, to President Monroe, which had mentioned his name. He promises to come to Washington to make the statement; he will help all he can, since Jackson is on the defensive, but he wants everything brought to his recollection. "Say nothing of me in the business," he entreats, "until I speak out as fully as I can, and therefore this letter is so far *confidential*, CONFIDENTIAL." This was in February. In June, at Washington, President Jackson wrote out a full statement to Rhea of the story as agreed upon (his personal friend, General Eaton, late of the Cabinet, attesting the copy), and thereupon Rhea at once wrote Monroe. Was it thought that the ex-President was too old, too feeble, too near to death, to arouse himself for such a controversy? For a few months, Jackson wrote to personal friends, here and there, giving these same details concerning the "confidential order" he had received in 1818. But Monroe died July 4; Rhea's letter had been retained, unanswered; and presently it became known in Jackson's circle that a solemn denial, made by the ex-President *in extremis*, was in possession of the family. Jackson made secret inquiry; and in October, 1832, a discreet friend in New York city informed him confidentially that the Rhea letter had been read over and over again, paragraph by paragraph, to the dying Monroe, whose reply was then reduced to writing and signed in the presence of friends. After this, from one cause or another, Jackson dropped the tale; and when, shortly before his final retirement from office, Gouverneur, Monroe's son-in-law, wrote, January 6, 1837, transmitting to him a copy of Rhea's letter of June, 1831, denouncing the production as an impudent falsehood, a singular epistle on its face in matter and manner, and stated further that the ex-President had left a record of his own views on the subject, made in the most solemn manner, Jackson formally acknowledged the receipt of the communication, as requested, and made no other reply. Rhea, we may observe, had died in May, 1832, less than a year after he penned that falsehood.

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[1] See this writer's article on "Monroe and the Rhea Letter," *Historical Briefs*, p. 97; *History of the United States*, vol. iv, p. 38.

Jackson, in July, 1843, long after his presidency, received a letter from Anthony Butler, referring to charges just made against him in a Whig pamphlet, and asking the general to sustain him. Butler had been Jackson's minister to Mexico, where, in 1834, he made special effort to procure a peaceable transfer of Texas to the United States, for $5,000,000, advising that out of this fund a certain part should be devoted to bribing Mexican officials (notably Santa Anna) to sign a treaty of cession. Butler now claimed that President Jackson had sanctioned and then angrily denounced the proposed bribery, and then in an oral conversation had signified his willingness, provided the affair was managed without his own cognizance. Jackson in reply roundly denounced Butler as a scamp, and his statement as a tissue of falsehoods. Jackson's disapproval of bribery by his minister may well be believed; but sure it is that Butler's dispatches from Mexico, proposing in a translated cipher precisely such a course, were duly read by the President and placed among his private papers instead of the public archives, and that Butler continued the negotiation, though in vain. Jackson was always strong and sweeping in his asseverations, but in the concentration of immediate purpose he sometimes forgot past facts.

Let us turn to a more amiable phase of the general's character, — his chivalrous regard for woman. The Van Buren collection supplies a novel illustration in this respect. Both Van Buren and Jackson, it will be recalled, were widowers in 1833. During July of that year a long letter reached the Vice President, written from New Haven in a feminine hand and signed with modest initials. The writer asked to become the wife of the President of the United States: first, because she was ambitious, and ambition for a woman lay mainly in the marriage direction; next, because she wished to make her hero happy in his declining years. Her own age was stated at thirty-three. Pleading with Van Buren to advance her suit, if possible, she expressed a few flowery sentiments, and ended her epistle with a verse of poetry. Van Buren transmitted the letter to the President, who, without a word of coarse or jocular comment, returned his written reply for the young lady to peruse, meeting her unconventional proposal with a tender seriousness. He felt honored by her interest in him; but his only answer to such a letter would be, that his heart was in the grave of his dear, departed wife, from which sacred spot no living being could recall it. The sequel to this episode was a curious one. The woman wrote once more to the Vice President, this time over her full signature, to say that a man of her acquaintance had out of revenge written the previous letter, imitating her style and chirography. She besought Van Buren to destroy that "forged" epistle and consign all remembrance of it "to the tomb of the Capulets." As usually happens with such injunctions, the custodian of the correspondence preserved it carefully.

Once clearly associated with Andrew Jackson, by aiding his election in 1828, and entering the Cabinet as Secretary of State, Van Buren, only recently a supporter at all, became a most influential adviser of the long eight years' administration. Jackson in those times sought constantly his advice, and, though not yielding to it, he showed a strong anxiety to learn his associate's point of view, and gain the soothing corrective most needed for his own vigorous plans. For in this aspect, and moreover as a Northern ally of influence, Van Buren was indispensable. The proof of all this is found in the Van Buren collection, where the many autograph letters that passed between himself and his chief, during that period, are brought so happily together, with, likely enough, the coöperation of Blair after Jackson's death. Jackson could scarcely bear to be separated from his friend and accomplished associate during the latter's brief absence on the English mission. To him, in 1831, he confides passionately the progress of his own dissociation from Calhoun; he tenderly avows the wish of his heart to have his late Secretary return soon and remain near him for counsel; he affectionately declares his purpose to have him made the next Vice President and placed on the highroad to the succession. Upon Van Buren's rejection as minister by a Senate cabal, "the people will resent" was Jackson's consoling message, sent to London; and scarcely was Van Buren home again from abroad, when the President wrote him earnestly about the bank, internal improvement, and nullification perplexities through which he was now piloting. Van Buren wrote occasionally in reply; but he kept away from Washington that eventful winter, and avoided the turmoil of politics as much as possible until he should be sworn in as Vice President, in March, 1833. Meanwhile Jackson wrote his friend again and again, most of all avowing his determination to drive the nullifiers to the wall. "The moment I am prepared with proof, I will direct prosecutions for treason to be instituted against the leaders. . . . Nothing must be permitted to weaken our government at home or abroad." Van Buren's advice at this crisis was given dispassionately. He encouraged the President to do his duty, but to avoid extremities, if possible, so long as it was a constructive nullification only, without actual force applied.

Jackson's initiative in the removal of the deposits from the United States Bank, soon after entering upon his second term of office, is well confirmed by these manuscript collections. He did not move to his purpose until he felt that the Vice President would sustain him. Van Buren, it seems, had taken up this whole bank subject cautiously, upon his return from abroad, slowly maturing his own views of financial policy. He promptly accepted the President's veto of a recharter; thinking the country might get along for a while without a national bank, and then, if need be, incorporate a central bank, not in any state, but in the District of Columbia, with state branches. As to fighting Nicholas Biddle, however, and the present bank with its unexpired charter, he was more reluctant. But, in the course of Jackson's Northern tour, Van Buren appears to have yielded the point that the deposits should be removed, and this because the chief executive so willed it. Such being the situation, he wrote the President from Albany, September 4, 1833, after a careful conference with his friend Silas Wright. Premising that the people's interests should afford the motive, and not any desire to injure the present institution or to subserve state banks, he states three modes of removal: (1) with prior application to Congress and request for its coöperation; (2) with direct removal and completed state bank arrangements before Congress convened; (3) with completed state bank arrangements, and an order for removal before Congress convened, but so as to defer the actual removal until January 1, and after Congress had come together. Van Buren and Wright advocated skillfully the third plan, promising, however, to stand by the President's conclusion at any rate. This promise was enough for Jackson; and rejecting the third course, which would have been more politic, he took the second, as posterity is well aware.

From this time forward for many years, save only upon one subject, Jackson's correspondence with Van Buren continued frank and intimate, and he found his own resolute plans of administration treated with a deferential assent, not unmingled with wise and judicious suggestions to modify. His soft and conciliatory temper contrasts with the violent and aggressive demeanor of the old warrior, who, though mingling in correspondence his ailments and his political views together, as time went on, kept always the upper hand. And here we may remark that Jackson, in letter as in speech, was clear, pungent, and dogmatical; and his facility with the pen was doubtless very great. Page after page of large sheets of paper are seen covered in a bold and characteristic running hand; thought and expression flowing free and scarcely a word or a phrase altered. Political adversaries who sneered at his bad spelling and grammar are confuted; for mistakes of that kind are comparatively few and trivial, while the thought itself stands out clear of misconception. The real point of criticism to which Jackson's letters are liable consists rather in the narrow, passionate, and intensely partisan strain which they constantly betray. Though clearly conveying the purpose he was bent upon, he wrote with little delicacy of appreciation for his political friends and respecters; while to political opponents, Clay for instance, he could scarcely give a decent word, but loaded the "Whiggs" and Whig leaders alike with opprobrious epithets, as though all political opponents were enemies of their country. A correspondence couched in angry temper over old and forgotten things is never meet for posterity, and the composer of such letters may well wish them written in an ink that will speedily fade out. Jackson once wrote to Van Buren that he never read "the papers which diffuse falsehood;" meaning thereby that in a controversy he recognized only presses which were subservient to himself.

When Van Buren succeeded to the presidency the scene was shifted. Andrew Jackson lived in Tennessee and at the distant Hermitage for the rest of his life. Yet his hold was tenacious, still, upon the party management, and he kept up a frequent correspondence both with Van Buren and with Editor Blair. Scarcely had he reached home when he wrote to urge the new President not to repeal the specie circular; and so Van Buren in fact decided, not submitting the question to his own Cabinet counselors, as he has recorded, because he knew them to be divided. When the crash came, Van Buren bore himself with all the calmness possible; and too late had his predecessor betrayed a disquiet, in the midst of self-complacency, by urging him to look out that the deposit banks were safe, and to have the money counted. The new President now devised the plan of a sub-treasury; and he worked out the details of its presentation in Congress with his bosom friend, Silas Wright. Violent in his vituperation of the defaulting banks, Jackson indorsed the new measure heartily and steadily. "Fear not," he wrote to his successor, like a father, "the people are with you and will sustain you." Jackson remained true to his endeavor that Van Buren should have an eight years' administration like himself, and bitterly enough did he fling out at the "hard cider drinkers and coon worshippers" who brought Harrison in with the Whigs in 1840; but for the vice presidency he had pushed Polk's name so vigorously against Johnson of Kentucky, the former associate on the Democratic ticket, that Van Buren had to decline all interference from personal delicacy, while the Democratic convention itself yielded so far to the warrior's wishes as to nominate no one at all to that office, a course which in the end secured Johnson's precedence.

It was not easy to oppose Jackson face to face; and Van Buren, always filial, considerate, and worshipful in corresponding with him, would use his best arts to baffle or divert when pressed too hard. Despite the palpable embarrassments now suffered from his own willful misuse of the patronage, — a great error of his administration, as Jackson's best party friends conceded, — the veteran at the Hermitage urged repeatedly that places should be found by his successor for other favorites of his, regardless of their merits. In these, as in other matters of correspondence, Van Buren would gently parry, but Jackson thrust again until his point was gained. None of the minor defalcations of his term hurt Van Buren so much with the public as that of Swartwout, collector at the port of New York, whom Jackson had appointed at the outset of his presidency; and never to Jackson himself did Van Buren murmur a word of complaint. Yet Van Buren's papers show that Swartwout's unfitness to handle public moneys was so well known to him that in 1829 he stealthily set his New York friends to work, though all in vain, to prevent that appointment and to induce the general to find for such a crony a more appropriate place. And it was Van Buren's refusal, when President, to reappoint Swartwout that brought to light the collector's betrayal of his trust.

After Van Buren's retirement from office in 1841, the correspondence of these two great Democrats continued: the one thoughtful and solicitous for his chief's declining health; the other inclined, as he long had been, to make commodity of infirmities, yet showing himself as alert and vigorous as ever in impressing his personal direction upon the party politics. All was affectionate and confiding between them. Van Buren made a journey from New York to Tennessee, to see his preceptor in the flesh once more. He was hospitably welcomed, and his whole tour was one of unbroken enjoyment. Again and again was assurance given him that he would be once more the party nominee for 1844; but as the time approached it also became clear that Polk was the general's determined choice for the second place. "You and Polk," wrote Jackson, late in 1843, would be the next year's ticket.

But, as I have intimated, there was one subject which Jackson and Van Buren seemed mutually to avoid, in all their intimacy of correspondence, and this was the annexation of Texas. And as Northern and Southern men, respectively, from states whose political sentiments on that whole issue of slavery expansion were wide apart, they shrank from comparing views. Jackson, it is well known, favored and sought the acquisition of Texas, to maintain the sectional equilibrium which he believed essential to a permanent union of free and slave states, under the Constitution. Just before retiring from office he recognized Texan independence from Mexico, by nominating a minister to that republic. The Senate laid over this nomination until the new President was inaugurated; then, March 6, it was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations which promptly reported it back, and the Senate consented. No explanations appear to have passed between the two Presidents, but Van Buren, it is well known, so conducted relations with Texas and Mexico as to avoid all cause of offense to the latter power and place our intercourse upon a friendly footing. And so stood the situation, until John Tyler, lifted into supreme magistracy by the accident of Harrison's death, turned upon the Whig party, and the majority wish of the country, by seeking Texan annexation for Southern ends, and forcing artfully that issue for the campaign of 1844. Ex-President Jackson had been drawn into such an advocacy, having, indeed, steadily promoted, or perhaps contrived such a policy. The Texan designs of a recreant administration sought an establishment at the Hermitage; and Donelson, Jackson's adopted son, accepted the new mission to that republic. But Jackson, all the while encouraging Van Buren to consider himself the coming choice of the Democracy, confided not a word as to the new intrigue. Van Buren, however, had been confidentially warned, in March, through Editor Ritchie of Virginia, that Texan annexation was going to succeed, that Jackson was with the movement, had originated it, and would see it through; and that if Van Buren opposed he would be set aside, but otherwise would be renominated and elected. The party convention approached; Van Buren, like Clay, came out in a letter against the whole project, and the result is well known. Jackson avoided direct discussion; but shortly before the convention met, he sent a thundering epistle addressed to Butler, Van Buren's confidential friend, in the nature perhaps of a last appeal. In that epistle he bluntly and positively stated his regret that Van Buren had written publicly as he had done; for Jackson had hoped his friend would support Texan annexation and yield to the irresistible force of that issue. Texan acquisition, he argued, was necessary for the sake of the Union, and unless we annexed now, that republic would revert to England. Van Buren did not recant, but maintained a dignified self-respect; he bore his defeat in the party convention manfully; and for once it would seem that the master had miscalculated the depth of compliance into which he could draw one hitherto so docile and submissive.

Van Buren supported faithfully the party candidates, though the South had been untrue to him, and brought the Empire State into line for a Democratic victory. Nor did he permit Jackson to cast him off as the latter had done Calhoun. In due time he wrote his chief once more, and received a kind reply, each avoiding the tender topic. A few more letters passed between them of no special significance, and Jackson's sands of life ran out soon after Polk's accession to office. Polk had promptly expressed his thanks to Van Buren for the political support in New York to which he so largely owed his own election, and invited the latter's advice concerning the new Cabinet. But a misunderstanding arose, and while Van Buren was arranging which of his New York friends to propose (Silas Wright having declined the treasury), Polk chose Marcy, who was not acceptable. Van Buren cooled toward the new administration, and in the course of the Mexican War which soon followed, became completely estranged. On the Wilmot Proviso his views harmonized with those of the lamented Wright; and in a correspondence, November, 1847, with Justice Daniel of Virginia, he maintained such a position. The sentiment of New York state ran strongly at that time against Polk's aggressive policy for a wholesale Southern expansion.

No new light is thrown by these manuscripts upon Van Buren's acceptance, in 1848, of the Free-Soil nomination for President as against Cass and the regular Democratic ticket. But in a public letter he had, months before, expressed himself as opposed to fastening slavery upon new national territory already free. This was, in fact, the strong ground taken at the North concerning the new conquests from Mexico; and to meet such objection, Calhoun and his disciples developed the counter dogma, to which the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case gave later support, that the Constitution, of its own force, carried potential slavery into all territory acquired by the United States, leaving the test of freedom or slavery to await the transition from territory to state. That ultra dogma, with its corollary of intervening protection to the master's rights, as opposed to Douglas's "squatter sovereignty," was what split the Democracy in 1860, in platform and candidates, and assured the election of Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate. Van Buren, there is reason to think, had mainly in view, in 1848, the desire to get even with a dough-faced Northerner from whose rivalry he had suffered at the party convention of 1844; and certainly, by dividing the popular vote of the New York Democracy, he brought in Taylor and the Whigs, that year, and compassed Cass's national defeat. In these later years, Van Buren worked New York politics through his son John, a man of wit and bright promise. One of the Cass Democracy, it is said, spoke to "Prince John," deploring the party defeat, that November, and hoping to elicit an explanation. "Yes," was the latter's quick reply, as though misapprehending, "it hurt the old man."

Van Buren shared with the elder

Blair and Benton a certain isolation in national affairs during the years that followed. He kept up with Blair a desultory intercourse over passing politics; and both together soothed the dying Benton and Clay, their fellow veterans. Donelson remained bitter against Jackson's former friend as a "deserter" on the Texan annexation. Yet Van Buren, in his calm leisure and retirement, did not keep up his new Free-Soil connections, nor did he, like Blair, join the Republican movement which was organized after the Kansas-Nebraska Act. He collected facts and made notes for a review of his past career, touching lightly on things present. Autobiography became his cherished hobby. He dreaded geographical parties and sectional issues. Resolutions which he personally drew up for the Democratic convention of his state in 1860 were not used, because ill adapted to the disposition of that body. Van Buren's ruling idea, the next momentous winter, seems to have been, so far as he expressed himself outwardly, that, as the slave and non-slaveholding states so greatly differed, a division of the whole territory of the Union on the Crittenden basis was desirable; or, if that proved futile, to permit the Southern states to withdraw in peace. But he stood by the government when the crisis of collision came in 1861, and declined the proposal made by Franklin Pierce, that a meeting of the ex-Presidents should be held to consider the alarming condition of the country and make a united appeal.

"The great fault of the American people," observed an intimate friend of Van Buren's, soon after the latter's death, "is to represent him as a politician, when he was rather a patriot; though at the same time he took pleasure and pride in the means by which he carried out his measures."

"IN THE HEIGHTS"

(JOHN R. PROCTER)

BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER

ONE who this valley passionately loved
  No more these slopes shall climb, nor hear these streams
  That like the murmured melody of dreams
His happy spirit moved.

He knew the sudden and mysterious thrill
  That takes the heart of man on mountain heights,
These autumn days that flame from hill to hill,
  These deep and starry nights.

O vanished spirit! tell us, if so may be,
  Are our wild longings, stirred by scenes like this, —
Our deep-breathed, shadowless felicity, —
  A mocking, empty bliss?

No answering word, save from the inmost soul
  That cries: all things are real, — beauty, youth;

All the heart feels; of sorrow and joy the whole;
That which but seems is truth.

This mortal frame, that harbors the immortal,
Mechanic though it be, — in our life's fires
Turns spiritual; it becomes the portal
Wherethrough the soul aspires.

The soul's existence in this human sheath
Is life no more than is the spirit's life
In this wide nature whose keen air we breathe;
Whose strife arms us to strife.

And they are wise who seek not to destroy
The unreasoned happiness of the outpoured year.
To him, the lost! this vale brought no false joy,
And therefore is most dear.

Wherever in the majesty of space,
Near or afar, — but not from God afar, —
Where'er his spirit soars, whatever grace
Is his, whatever star, —

The aspirations and imaginings
That in these glorious paths his soul sublimed, —
They are a part of him; they are the wings
Whereby he strove and climbed.

Nature to man not alien doth endure;
His spirit with her spirit is transfused;
On this high mystery dream the humble-pure,
The mightiest poets mused.

The white clouds billow down the blowing sky,
Then, O my heart, be lifted up, rejoice!
The trumpet of the winds, to that wild voice
Let all my soul reply!

THOREAU'S JOURNAL II

[The following paragraphs as far as the heading 1850 on page 231 are taken from a large commonplace book containing transcripts from earlier journals. Thoreau drew largely from this book in writing the *Week*, and to a less extent in writing *Walden*. From internal evidence it appears that the entries were all written before 1847. The matter headed 1850 is taken from the Journal covering apparently the period from May 12 to September 19 of that year. Many of these entries lack dates. — THE EDITORS.]

CONSIDER the phenomena of morn or eve, and you will say that Nature has perfected herself by an eternity of practice, — evening stealing over the fields, the stars coming to bathe in retired waters, the shadows of the trees creeping farther and farther into the meadows, and a myriad phenomena beside.

I know of no rule which holds so true as that we are always paid for our suspicion by finding what we suspect. There can be no fairer recompense than this. Our suspicions exercise a demoniacal power over the subject of them. By some obscure law of influence, when we are perhaps unconsciously the subject of another's suspicion, we feel a strong impulse, even when it is contrary to our nature, to do that which he expects but reprobates.

No man seems to be aware that his influence is the result of his entire character, both that which is subject and that which is superior to his understanding, and what he really means or intends it is not in his power to explain or offer an apology for.

No man was ever party to a secure and settled friendship. It is no more a constant phenomenon than meteors and lightning. It is a war of positions, of silent tactics.

Beauty is a finer utility whose end we do not see.

Gower writes like a man of common sense and good parts who has undertaken with steady, rather than high, purpose to do narrative with rhyme. With little or no invention, following in the track of the old fablers, he employs his leisure and his pen-craft to entertain his readers and speak a good word for the right. He has no fire, or rather blaze, though occasionally some brand's end peeps out from the ashes, especially if you approach the heap in a dark day, and if you extend your hands over it you experience a slight warmth there more than elsewhere. In fair weather you may see a slight smoke go up here and there. He narrates what Chaucer sometimes sings. He tells his story with a fair understanding of the original, and sometimes it gains a little in blunt plainness and in point in his hands. Unlike the early Saxon and later English, his poetry is but a plainer and directer speech than other men's prose. He might have been a teamster and written his rhymes on his wagon seat as he went to mill with a load of plaster.

October 21, 1842.

The atmosphere is so dry and transparent and, as it were, inflammable at this season that a candle in the grass shines white and dazzling, and purer and brighter the farther off it is. Its heat seems to have been extracted and only its harmless refulgent light left. It is a star dropped down. The ancients were more than poetically true when they called fire Vulcan's flower. Light is somewhat almost moral. The most intense — as the fixed stars and our own sun — has an unquestionable preëminence among the