

WALKS WITH ELLERY CHANNING.

THE following extracts from the MS. diaries of Ralph Waldo Emerson are here for the first time offered to the public, with the consent of his children. They describe with utter frankness his walks, talks, and excursions with his younger neighbor and friend, the late William Ellery Channing, usually known as Ellery Channing, to distinguish him from his uncle and godfather, the eminent divine. The younger Channing resided for the greater part of his life in Concord, and clearly inspired in Emerson much admiration for his rare gifts, as well as a warm affection for his wayward and recluse temperament. This combination of feeling shows Emerson in a light almost wholly new to the general reader, exhibiting him, not merely as a warm and even tender friend, but as one fully able to recognize the limitations and even defects of the man he loved and to extend to him, when needful, the frankest criticism. With all our previous knowledge of Emerson, it may yet be truly said that he has nowhere been revealed in so sweet and lovable a light as in these detached fragments. His relations with Thoreau may have come nearest to this friendship with Channing; but in dealing with the self-reliant Thoreau, he had not to face a nature so complex, so shy, or so difficult to reach. It might well be of this friendship that Emerson wrote, in his essay bearing that title, "Let it be an alliance of two large formidable natures, mutually beheld, mutually feared, before yet they recognize the deep identity which beneath these disparities unites them."

T. W. H.

Probably 1841. 10 December. A good visit to Boston, saw S. G. W. [Ward] and Ellery [Channing] to advantage. E. has such an affectionate

speech and a tone that is tremulous with emotion, that he is a flower in the wind.

Ellery said his poems were proper love poems; and they were really genuine fruits of a fine, light, gentle, happy intercourse with his friends. C.'s [Channing's] eyes are a compliment to the human race; that steady look from year to year makes Phidian Sculpture and Poussin landscape still real and contemporary, and a poet might well dedicate himself to the fine task of expressing their genius in verse.

1843. Ellery, who hopes there will be no cows in heaven, has discovered what cows are for, namely, it was twofold, (1) to make easy walking where they had fed, and (2) to give the farmers something to do in summer-time. All this haying comes at midsummer between planting and harvest when all hands would be idle but for this cow and ox which must be fed and mowed for; and thus intemperance and the progress of crime are prevented.

20 May. Walked with Ellery. In the landscape felt the magic of color; the world is all opal, and those ethereal tints the mountains wear have the finest effects of music upon us. Mountains are great poets, and one glance at this fine cliff scene undoes a great deal of prose and reinstates us wronged men in our rights.

Ellery thinks that very few men carry the world in their thoughts. But the actual of it is thus, that every man of mediocre health stands there for the support of fourteen or fifteen sick; and though it were easy to get his own bread with little labor, yet the other fourteen damn him to toil.

Ellery said the village [of Concord] did not look so very bad from our point; the three churches looked like geese swimming about in a pond.

W. E. C. railed an hour in good set terms at the usurpation of the past, at the great hoaxes of the Homers and Shakespeares, hindering the books and the men of to-day of their just meed. Oh, certainly! I assure him that the oaks and the horse-chestnuts are entirely obsolete, that the Horticultural Society are about to recommend the introduction of cabbage as a shade tree, so much more convenient and every way comprehensible; all grown from the seed upward to its most generous crumpled extremity within one's own short memory, past contradiction the ornament of the world, and then so good to eat, as acorns and horse-chestnuts are not. Shade trees for breakfast.

Ellery's poetry shows the art, though the poems are imperfect; as the first daguerres are grim things, yet show that a great engine has been invented.

Ellery's verses should be called poetry for poets. They touch the fine pulses of thought and will be the cause of more poetry and of verses more finished and better turned than themselves; but I cannot blame the N. Americans [N. A. Reviews] and Knickerbockers if they should not suspect his genius. When the rudder is invented for balloons, railroads will be superseded, and when Ellery's muse finds an aim, whether some passion, or some fast faith, and kind of string on which all these wild and sometimes brilliant beads can be strung, we shall have a poet. Now he fantasies merely, as dilettante in music. He breaks faith continually with the intellect. The sonnet has merits, fine lines, gleams of deep thought, well worth sounding, well worth studying, if only I could confide that he had any steady meaning before him, that he kept faith with himself; but I fear that he changed his purpose with every verse, was led up and down to this or that with the exigencies of the rhyme, and only wanted to write and rhyme somewhat, careless how or what, and stopped when he came to the end of the paper.

He breaks faith with the reader, wants integrity. Yet, for poets, it will be a better book than whole volumes of Bryant and Campbell.

A man of genius is privileged only as far as he is a genius. His dullness is as insupportable as any other dullness. Only success will justify a departure and a license. But Ellery has freaks which are entitled to no more charity than the dullness or madness of others, which he despises. He uses a license continually which would be just in oral improvisation, but is not pardonable in written verses. He fantasies on his piano.

Elizabeth Hoar said that he was a wood-elf which one of the maids in a story fell in love with and then grew uneasy, desiring that he might be baptized. Margaret [Fuller?] said he reminded one of a great Genius with a wretched little boy trotting before him.

1846. Channing thinks life looks great and inaccessible and constantly attacks us, and notwithstanding all our struggles is eating us up.

Sunday, September 20. Suffices Ellery Channing a mood for a poem. "There, I have sketched more or less in that color and style. You have a sample of it, what more would you get if I worked on forever?" He has no proposition to affirm or support, he scorns it. He has, first of all Americans, a natural flow, and can say what he will. I say to him, if I could write as well as you, I would write a good deal better.

No man deserves a patron until first he has been his own. What do you bring us slipshod verses for? no occasional delicacy of expression or music of rhythm can atone for stupidities. Here are lame verses, false rhymes, absurd images, which you indulge yourself in, which is as if a handsome person should come into a company with foul hands or face. Read Collins! Collins would have cut his hand off before he would have left, from a weak self-esteem, a shabby line in his ode.

1847. Channing wished we had a better word than Nature to express this fine picture which the river gave us in our boat, yesterday. "Kind" was the old word which, however, only filled half the range of our fine Latin word. But nothing expresses that power which seems to work for beauty alone, as C. said, whilst man works only for use. The *Mikania scandens*, the steel-blue berries of the cornel, the eupatoriums enriched now and then by a well-placed cardinal adorned the fine shrubbery with what Channing called judicious modest colors, suited to the climate, nothing extravagant, etc.

1848. I find W. E. C. always in cunning contraries. He denies the books he reads; denies the friends he has just visited; denies his own acts and purposes: "By God, I do not know them," and instantly the cock crows. The perpetual *non sequitur* in his speeches is irresistibly comic.

Ellery affirms, that "James Adams, the cabinet maker, has a true artistic eye; for he is always measuring the man he talks with for his coffin."

He says that Hawthorne agrees with him about Washington, that he is the extreme of well-dressed mediocrity.

If he was Mr. Bowditch [President of the Life Insurance Company] he would never insure any life that had any infirmity of goodness in it. It is Goodwin who will catch pickerel; if he had any moral traits, he 'd never get a bite.

He says writers never do anything; some of them seem to do, but do not. H. T. [Thoreau] will never be a writer; he is as active as a shoemaker. The merit of Irving's Life of Goldsmith is that he has not had the egotism to put in a single new sentence; 't is agreeable repetition of Boswell, Johnson & Company; and Montaigne is good, because there is nothing that has not already been cured in books. A good book being a Damascus blade, made by welding old nails and horseshoes. Everything

has seen service, and had wear and tear of the world for centuries, and now the article is brand-new. So Pope had but one good line, and that he got from Dryden, and therefore Pope is the best and only readable English poet.

Channing has a painter's eye, an admirable appreciation of form and especially of color. But when he bought pigments and brushes, and painted a landscape with fervor on a barrel-head, he could not draw a tree so that his wife could surely know it was a tree. So Alcott, the philosopher, has not an opinion or an apothegm to produce.

Ellery C. declared that wealth is necessary to every woman, for then she won't ask you when you go out whether you will call a hack. Every woman has a design on you — all, all — if it is only just a little message. But Mrs. H. rings for her black servant.

Ellery was witty on Xantippe and the philosophers old and new; and compared one to a rocket with two or three millstones tied to it, or to a colt tethered to a barn.

He celebrates Herrick as the best of English poets, a true Greek in England; a great deal better poet than Milton who, he says, is too much like Dr. Channing.

Yesterday, 28 October. Another walk with Ellery well worth commemoration, if that were possible; but no pen could write what we saw. It needs the pencils of all the painters to aid the description.

November 19. Yesterday, a cold fine ride with Ellery to Sudbury Inn and mounted the side of Nobscot. 'T is a pretty revolution effected in the landscape by turning your head upside down; an infinite softness and loveliness is added to the picture. Ellery declared it made Campagna of it at once; so, he said, Massachusetts is Italy upside down.

26 November. Yesterday walked over Lincoln hills with Ellery and saw golden willows, savins with two foliages, old chestnuts, apples as ever.

"What fine weather is this," said El-

lery, as we rode to Acton, "nothing of immortality here!"

"Life is so short," said he, "that I should think that everybody would steal."

"I like Stow. He is a very good character. There is only a spoonful of wit, and ten thousand feet of sandstone."

He told Edmund Hosmer that he "did not see but trouble was as good as anything else if you only had enough of it."

He says "Humour is unlaughed fun."

He said of Stow's poor Irishman that he "died of too much perspiration."

He thinks our Thurston's disease is "a paralysis of talent."

Of H. D. T. [Thoreau] he said, "Why, yes, he has come home, but now he has got to maximize the minimum, and that will take him some days." [This irresistibly suggests Thoreau's noted sentence, "I have traveled a great deal — in Concord."]

[Apparently a quotation from Ellery Channing's talk.] "Drive a donkey and beat him with a pole with both hands — that's action; but poetry is revolution on its own axis."

He says he has an immense dispersive power.

"How well they [the stars] wear!" He thought a man could still get along with them, who was considerably reduced in his circumstances; they are a kind of bread and cheese which never fail.

1849, November 17. Yesterday saw the fields covered with cobwebs in every direction, on which the wake of the setting sun appeared as on water. Walked over hill and dale with Channing, who found wonders of color and landscape everywhere, but complained of the want of invention: "Why, they had frozen water last year; why should they do it again? Therefore it was so easy to be an artist, because they do the same thing always, and therefore he only wants time to make him perfect in the imitation; and I believe, too, that pounding is one of the secrets." All summer he gets

water *au naturel*, and in winter they serve it up artistically in this crystal johnny-cake; and he had observed the same thing at the confectioners' shops, that he could never get but one thing there, though [they] had two ways of making it up.

14 December. Every day shows a new thing to veteran walkers. Yesterday, reflections of trees in the ice; snowflakes, perfect, on the ice; beautiful groups of icicles all along the eastern shore of Flint's Pond, in which, especially where encrusting the bough of a tree, you have the union of the most flowing with the most fixed. Ellery all the way squandering his jewels as if they were icicles, sometimes not comprehended by me, sometimes not heard. "How many days can Methusalem go abroad and see somewhat new? When will he have counted the changes of the kaleidoscope?"

1850. Then came the difference between American and English scholars. H. said the English were all bred in one way, to one thing, they went to Eton, they went to college, they went to London, they all knew each other and never did not feel [*i. e.*, never doubted] the ability of each. But here Channing is obscure, Newcomb is obscure, and so all the scholars are in a more natural, healthful, and independent condition.

W. E. C. said A. [Alcott] is made of earth and fire; he wants air and water. How fast all this magnetism would lick up water! He discharges himself in volleys. Can you not hear him snap when you are near him?

1852. Walk with Ellery to Lincoln; benzoin, laurus, rich beautiful plant in this dried-up country; parti-colored warbler. E. laughed at Nuttall's description of birds, "On the top of a high tree the bird pours all day the lays of affection," etc. Affection! Why, what is it? A few feathers, with a hole at one end, and a point at the other, and a pair of wings; Affection! Why, just as much

affection as there is in that lump of peat. We went to Bear Hill, and had a fine outlook. Descending, E. got sight of some laborers in the field below. Look at them, he said, those four! four demoniacs scratching in their cell of pain! Live for the hour! Just as much as any man has done or laid up in any way, unfits him for conversation. He has done something, makes him good for boys, but spoils him for the hour. That's the good of Thoreau, that he puts his whole sublunary capital into the last quarter of an hour; carries his whole stock under his arm. At home I found H. T. [Thoreau] himself who complained of Clough or somebody that he or they recited to every one at table, the paragraph just read by him or them in the last newspaper, and studiously avoided everything private. I should think he was complaining of one H. D. T. [Thoreau himself].

1853. Yesterday a ride to Bedford with Ellery along the "Bedford Levels" and walked all over the premises of the Old Mill, King Philip's mill, — on the Shawsheen River; old mill, with sundry nondescript wooden antiquities. Boys with bare legs were fishing on the little islet in the stream; we crossed and re-crossed, saw the fine stumps of trees, rocks and groves, and many Collot views of the bare legs; beautiful pastoral country, but needs sunshine. There were millions of light to-day, so all went well (all but the dismal tidings which knelled a funeral bell through the whole afternoon, in the death of S. S.).

Rich democratic land of Massachusetts, in every house well-dressed women with air of town ladies; in every house a *clavecin* [harpichord] and a copy of the Spectator; and some young lady a reader of Willis. Channing did not like the landscape; too many leaves — one leaf is like another and apt to be agitated by east wind, on the other hand "Professor" (Ellery's dog) strode gravely as a bear through all the sentimental parts and fitted equally well the grave and

the gay scenes. He has a stroke of humor in his eye, as if he enjoyed his master's jokes — Ellery "thinks England a flash in the pan;" as English people in 1848 had agreed that Egypt was humbug. I am to put down among the monomaniacs the English agriculturist, who only knows one revolution in political history, the rape-culture. But as we rode, one thing was clear, as oft before, that is favorable to sanity — the occasional change of landscape. If a girl is mad to marry, let her take a ride of ten miles, and see meadows, and mountains, she never saw before, two villages and an old mansion house and the odds are, it will change all her resolutions. World is full of fools, who get a-going and never stop; set them off on another tack, and they are half-cured. From Shawsheen we went to Burlington; and E. reiterated his conviction, that the only art in the world is landscape-painting. The boys held up their fish to us from far; a broad new placard on the walls announced to us that the Shawsheen mill was for sale; but we bought neither the fish nor the mill.

1854. Delicious summer stroll through the endless pastures of Barrett, Buttrick, and Esterbrook farms, yesterday, with Ellery; the glory of summer, what magnificence! yet one night of frost will kill it all. E. was witty on the Biographie Universelle — *de soi-même*. H. D. T. had been made to print his house into his title-page, in order that A. might have that to stick into one volume of the B. U. [Probably referring to Alcott's voluminous journals.]

1856. November 15. Walk with Ellery, who finds in Nature or man that whatever is done for beauty or in sport is excellent; but the moment there is any use in it, or any kind of talent, 't is very bad and stupid. The fox-sparrows and the blue snow-birds pleased him, and the water-cresses which we saw in the brook, but which he said were not in any botany.

When I said of Ellery's new verses

that they were as good as the old ones, "Yes," said Ward, "but those were excellent promise and now he does no more." He has a more poetic temperament than any other in America, but the artistic executive power of completing a design he has not. His poetry is like the artless warbling of a vireo, which whistles prettily all day and all summer on the elm, but never rounds a tune, nor can increase the value of melody by the power of composition and cuneiform [*sic*] determination. He must have construction also.

As Linnæus delighted in a new flower which alone gave him a seventh class, or filled a gap in his system, so I know a man who served as intermediate between two notable acquaintances of mine, not else to be approximated, and W. E. C. served as a companion of H. D. T., and T. of C. [Thoreau of Channing].

In answer to evidences of immortality, Ellery said, "There is a great deal of self-importance, and the good Oriental who cuts such a figure was bit by this fly."

He said of Boston, "There is a city of 130,000 people, and not a chair in which I can sit."

There often seems so little affinity between him and his works that it seems as if the wind must have written the book and not he.

1859. Secondary men and primary men. These travelers to Europe, these readers of books, these youths rushing into counting-rooms of successful merchants, are all imitators, and we get only the same product weaker. But the man who never so slowly and patiently works out his native thoughts is a primary person.

Ellery said, looking at a golden-rod, "Ah! here they are. These things consume a great deal of time. I don't know but they are of more importance than any other of our investments."

Glad of Ellery's cordial praise of Carlyle's history, which he thinks well entitled to be called a "Work," far su-

perior to his early books; wondered at his imagination which can invest with such interest to himself these (one would think) hopeless details of German story. He is the only man who knows. What a reader, such as abound in New England, enwreathed by the thoughts they suggest to a contemplative pilgrim.

"Unsleeping truths by which wheels on
Heaven's prime."

There is a neglect of superficial correctness which looks a little studied, as if perhaps the poet challenged notice to his subtler melody, and strokes of skill which recall the great masters. There is nothing conventional in the thought or the illustration, but "thoughts that voluntary move harmonious numbers," and pictures seen by an instructed eye.

Channing, who writes a poem for our fields, begins to help us. That is construction, and better than running to Charlemagne and Alfred for subjects.

W. E. C.'s poetry is wanting in clear statement. Rembrandt makes effects without details, gives you the effect of a sharp nose or a gazing eye, when, if you look close, there is no point to the nose, and no eye is drawn. W. M. Hunt admires this, and in his own painting puts his eye in deep shadow; but I miss the eye, and the face seems to nod for want of it. And Ellery makes a hazy, indefinite expression, as of miscellaneous music without any theme or tune. Still it is an autumnal air, and like the smell of the herb, *Life Everlasting* and syngenesious flowers. *Near Home* is a poem which would delight the heart of Wordsworth, though genuinely original and with a simplicity of plan which allows the writer to leave out all the prose. 'T is a series of sketches of natural objects.

W. E. C., the model of opinionists, or weather painters. He has it his own way. People whose watches go faster than their neighbors'.

1861. March 26. Yesterday wrote to F. G. Tuckerman to thank him for his book [Poems. Boston: 1860], and

praised *Rhotruda* [a poem]. Ellery C. finds two or three good lines and metres in the book; thinks it refined and delicate, but says the young people run on a notion that they must name the flowers, talk about an orchis, and say something about Indians; but he says, "I prefer passion and sense and genius to botany."

Ellery says of Tennyson, "What is best is the things he does not say."

He thinks these frogs at Walden are very curious but final facts; that they will never be disappointed by finding themselves raised to a higher state of intelligence.

Here is a right bit of Ellery C.: "Helps's book, called *Friends in Council*, is inexpressibly dull." "In this manufacture the modern English excel. Witness their Taylors, Wordsworths, Arnolds and Scotts (not Walter). Wise, elegant, moderate, and cultivated, yet unreadable."

Ellery says of Thoreau: "His effects can all be produced by cork and sand; but the substance that produces them is godlike and divine." And of C. [Curtis?], "Yes, he would make a very good draughtsman, if he had any talent for it."

October 24. A ride yesterday to Marlborough, though projected for years, was no good use of the day. That town has a most rich appearance of rural plenty, and comfort; ample farms, good houses, profusion of apples, pumpkins, etc. Yellow apple heaps in every enclosure, whole orchards left ungathered, and in the Grecian piazzas of houses, pumpkins ripening between the columns. At Gates's, where Dr. Channing and Mr. Jonas Phillips used to resort, they no longer keep a public house, closed it to the public last spring. At Cutting's, though there were oats for the horse, there was no dinner for men, — so we repaired to the chestnut woods and an old orchard, for ours. Ellery, who is a perpetual holiday, and ought only to be used like an oriflamme or a garland for

May-days and parliaments of wit and love, was no better to-day nor half so good as in some walks.

Ellery says: "What a climate! one day they take the cover off the sun, and all the Irishmen die of drinking cold water; and the next day you are up to your knees in snow."

He admires, as ever, the greatness in *Wilhelm Meister*. "It is no matter what Goethe writes about. There is no trifle; much superior to Shakespeare in this elevation."

A. B. A. [Alcott] said of W. E. C. that he had the keen appetite for society with extreme repulsion, so that it came to a kind of commerce of cats, love and hate, embrace and fighting.

Ellery thinks that he is the lucky man who can write in bulk, forty pages on a hiccup, ten pages on a man's sitting down in a chair (like Hawthorne, etc.) that will go. [Evidently referring to the marvelous chapter in the *House of the Seven Gables*, where Governor Pyncheon sits dead in the lonely room.]

Ellery thinks that these waterside cottagers of Nahant and Chelsea, and so on, never see the sea. There, it is all dead water, and a place for dead horses, and the smell of Mr. Kip's omnibus stable. But go to Truro, and go to the beach there, on the Atlantic side, and you will have every stroke of the sea like the cannon of the "sea-fencibles" [old-fashioned military companies for coast defense]. There is a solitude which you cannot stand more than ten minutes.

He thinks the fine art of Goethe and company very dubious, and 't is doubtful whether Sam Ward is quite in his senses in his value of that book of prints of old Italian school, Giotto and the rest. It may do for very idle gentlemen, etc., etc. I reply, There are a few giants who gave the thing vogue by their realism, Michel Angelo and Ribiera and Salvator Rosa, and the man who made the old *Torso Hercules* and the *Phidias* — man or men who made the *Parthenon*

reliefs — had a drastic style which a blacksmith or a stone-mason would say was starker than their own. And I adhere to [Van Waagen's?] belief, that there is a pleasure from works of art which nothing else can yield.

1862. Matthew Arnold writes well of "the grand style," but the secret of that is a finer moral sentiment. 'T is very easy for Alcott to talk grandly, he will make no mistake. 'T is certain that the poetic temperament of W. E. C. will utter lines and passages inimitable by any talent; 't is wood-thrush and cat-bird.

His talk is criss-cross, humorsome, humorous. I tormented my memory

just now in vain to restore a witty criticism of his, yesterday, on a book.

1864. On the 24th of September Ellery and I walked through Becky Stow's hole dry-shod; hitherto a feat for a muskrat alone.

This year the river meadows all dry and permeable to the walker. But why should Nature always be on the gallop? Look now, and instantly, or you shall never see it. Not ten minutes' repose allowed. Incessant whirl? And 't is the same, I thought, with my companion's genius. You must carry a stenographic press in your pocket if you would have his commentaries on things and men or they are irrecoverable.

TWO YEARS' LEGISLATION IN PORTO RICO.

THE WORK OF THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PORTO RICO, 1900-1902.

THE problem of endowing our newly acquired insular possessions with political institutions and systems of law at once conforming to American ideals of individual liberty and political justice, and yet adapted to the peculiar conditions in each island and the character of its inhabitants, constitutes one of the greatest of the many responsibilities now resting upon the American people. Of the various possessions to which this problem relates Porto Rico occupies an unique position from the fact that it is the first of the possessions coming to us from Spain to be granted a civil government and a considerable measure of local autonomy. It is in this island, then, that the United States is really making its first essay in the field of governing a dependency. The capacity of the United States to govern another people may be said there to be on trial. More than this, it is certain that the re-

sults there actually accomplished will exercise a profound influence upon the management of affairs in our other possessions. If the policies pursued in Porto Rico meet with success, they will undoubtedly be used as a guide for action elsewhere. Everything, therefore, that is done in Porto Rico in the way of working out the problem of government and administration assumes an interest and importance to the whole United States almost as great as to Porto Rico itself.

Civil government was organized in Porto Rico on May 1, 1900. Its constitution is found in the so-called "Foraker Act," approved by Congress April 12, 1900, which provides the Organic Act under which civil government is established on the island. This act did little more than set forth the bare outlines of a scheme of central government, leaving to the Porto Ricans its subsequent elaboration. Briefly, the act provided