

**P O E M S**

**BY**

**JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.**

**SECOND SERIES.**

---

**CAMBRIDGE:**  
**PUBLISHED BY GEORGE NICHOLS.**

**BOSTON:**  
**B. B. MUSSEY AND COMPANY.**

**1848.**

# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
COLUMBUS . . . . .	3
AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG . . . . .	17
THE EPITAPH . . . . .	22
HUNGER AND COLD . . . . .	25
THE LANDLORD . . . . .	30
TO A PINE-TREE . . . . .	33
SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES . . . . .	36
TO THE PAST . . . . .	39
TO THE FUTURE . . . . .	43
HEBE . . . . .	48
THE SEARCH . . . . .	50
THE PRESENT CRISIS . . . . .	53
SUMMER STORM . . . . .	63
THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND . . . . .	68
A CONTRAST . . . . .	73
EXTREME UNCTION . . . . .	75
THE OAK . . . . .	80

THE ROYAL PEDIGREE . . . . .	83
ABOVE AND BELOW . . . . .	87
THE CAPTIVE . . . . .	90
THE BIRCH-TREE . . . . .	96
AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH . . . . .	98
ON THE CAPTURE OF CERTAIN FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON . . . . .	106
ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES T. TORREY . . . . .	111
REMEMBERED MUSIC . . . . .	114
SONG: TO M. L. . . . .	116
TO THE DANDELION . . . . .	118
THE GHOST-SEER . . . . .	121
THE MORNING-GLORY . . . . .	131
STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS . . . . .	135
ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO . . . . .	142
ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD . . . . .	145
ANTI-TEXAS . . . . .	150
THE FALCONER . . . . .	157
THE CHANGELING . . . . .	160
AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE . . . . .	164
THE PIONEER . . . . .	180
LONGING . . . . .	183

\*.\* The poem called "The Morning-Glory," on page 131, it is proper to state, is by another hand.

## THE PRESENT CRISIS.



WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad  
earth's aching breast  
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east  
to west,  
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul  
within him climb  
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sub-  
lime  
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem  
of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instan-  
taneous throe,  
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to  
and fro ;  
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing  
start,  
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips  
apart,  
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath  
the Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a  
chill,  
Under continent to continent, the sense of coming  
ill,  
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies  
with God  
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by  
the sod,  
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the  
nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears  
along,

Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right  
or wrong ;

Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast  
frame

Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy  
or shame ; —

In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal  
claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to  
decide,

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or  
evil side ;

Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each  
the bloom or blight,

Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon  
the right,

And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness  
and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou  
shalt stand,  
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust  
against our land ?  
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 't is Truth alone  
is strong,  
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her  
throng  
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all  
wrong.

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-moments  
see,  
That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through  
Oblivion's sea ;  
Not an ear in court or market for the low foreboding  
cry  
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose  
feet earth's chaff must fly ;  
Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment  
hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger ; history's pages but  
record  
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems  
and the Word ;  
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the  
throne, —  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim  
unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above  
his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is  
great,  
Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm  
of fate,  
But the soul is still oracular ; amid the market's  
din,  
List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave  
within, —  
“ They enslave their children's children who make com-  
promise with sin.”

Slavery, the earthborn Cyclops, fellest of the giant  
brood,  
Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched  
the earth with blood,  
Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer  
day,  
Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable  
prey;—  
Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless  
children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her  
wretched crust,  
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 't is prosper-  
ous to be just;  
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward  
stands aside,  
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is cruci-  
fied,  
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had  
denied.

Count me o'er Earth's chosen heroes, — they were  
souls that stood alone

While the men they agonized for hurled the contume-  
lious stone,

Stood serene and down the future saw the golden beam  
incline

To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith  
divine,

By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's  
supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet  
I track,

Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns  
not back,

And these mounts of anguish number how each genera-  
tion learned

One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-  
hearts hath burned

Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face  
to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward : where to-day the mar-  
tyr stands,  
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his  
hands ;  
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling  
fagots burn,  
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe  
return  
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden  
urn.

'T is as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle  
slaves  
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers'  
graves ;  
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light  
a crime ;—  
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by  
men behind their time ?  
Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make  
Plymouth rock sublime ?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,  
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the  
Past's ;  
But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that  
hath made us free,  
Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender  
spirits flee  
The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them  
across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are  
traitors to our sires,  
Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-  
fires ;  
Shall we make their creed our jailer ? Shall we, in our  
haste to slay,  
From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral  
lamps away  
To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of  
to-day ?

New occasions teach new duties ; Time makes ancient  
good uncouth ;  
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep  
abreast of Truth ;  
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires ! we ourselves must  
Pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the  
desperate winter sea,  
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-  
rusted key.