

June, 1866.

Thought quivering thought and thought surprise
Which echo back their own replies

Behold the ship when new she came
To life upon the dancing wave

Behold the infant when so young
Its gaze shall meet all things as one

Behold above the mouldering clay
The slab which marks all men decay

Thou art yourself for earthly gain
Or whether life is not in vain

Or whither all that seems declining
Must pass before the breath of time
And beauties whom we deem so dear
Which gather on each rolling year
There silently to steal away
The animation from the clay

And tracing thus my fleeting thought
Out on the plain of mystery
I think on my view I caught
To mark the birth of memory

And now unto myself I ask
If from the present comes the past
Or is it from the caverned earth
Where first my thinking took its birth
Or did it take its living shape
In chaotic elements like
Awhile to linger and to be
A thought without a memory
Though its presence it can feel
Is something it cannot reveal

The water of our purest springs
Composed of mass of living things
Each liquid droplet in crystal hue
Change in a telescopic view
Since that our natural vision marks
Is the air too as full of thought
Like a pearly brook each gentle breeze
Sweetly mingles thoughts into its seas
And are they in their newest form
Pure as the cloudless sky of morn

Or does the evil one have power
To taint them in their natal hour

When first the new born babe shall breathe
Upon that breath shall it receive
Its natural impulse although it be
Inclined to sin and misery
And there is caught the vital spark
Which rules the passions of the heart
Whose time may strengthen its self will
In virtue Or extremes of ill

Since thought and knowledge we combine
As rays from the lamp of time
We ask in youth if it was pure
Wherefore did not that state endure

Does Satan sap the tender vine
Unguarded in its early time
To sin and folly lead astray
When first it takes the form of clay
Then those to stay that evil hand
The will of God or works of man

From a little plant the giant oak
Has grown to scorn the tempest stroke
In its young days we keep it trim
From foul broods gathering on its limb
And if perchance it should incline
Or bend before some heavier wind
Then we should brace the sapling tree
To gain its strength in symmetry

Take a child however so young
When first its passions are begun
And check them in a milder form
But conquer though it take you long
Then as it strengthens year by year
If willful you must be severe
The conquest ready to renew
Until those passions you subdue
Be gentle then, be reasoning, kind
Say too withal from time to time
Draw from the mind which you must see
To smother with the reason's young
That proud self will the hell of life
Which leads us on to weary strife
Has learned to shun the rocks of shore
Or dreamed it never was. Therefore

That spirit after seasons young
Is past ever more has begun