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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Emerson's "Success"—Actually, it is not

JOEL MYERSON
University of South Carolina

One of the most enduring misattributions of a work to Emerson is that of an inspirational prose passage called "Success" that appears, most often assigned to Emerson if to anyone, on many Web pages. It goes

> To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest citizens and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived—this is to have succeeded.[1]

I first learned of this when Meredith Mundy Wasinger, an editor at Dutton Children's Books, asked me to verify that this passage was indeed by Emerson so that it could be used in Judith Byron Schachner's *Mr. Emerson's Cook.*[2] I was not familiar with this passage, and fervently hoped it was not by Emerson, a wish fulfilled when it failed to turn up in any of my concordances to Emerson's writings. The next stop was the Internet, where I discovered how popular this passage was, turning up not only in the Web pages of individuals, but also on many New Age and leadership sites.[3] Questions about the source of the passage also turned up on a reference librarian Listserv, where some respondents pointed to a "Dear Abby" column for answers, and where the chase for its true attribution really began.

In her 17 November 1990 column, "Dear Abby" (Abigail Van Buren) answered a reader's question "How would you define success?" with the quote from "my favorite American poet, essayist and philosopher" printed above. However, on 1 February 1992, a chastened Abby printed a letter from Arthur Stanley Harvey, who wrote that the quotation was based on something his grandmother, Bessie Anderson Stanley, had written in 1904, and that it had been appropriated for many years by greeting card companies, including Hallmark, which had "erroneously credited Robert Louis Stevenson as the author." Abby then apologized, and printed what she described as the original from the 1904 *Brown Book Magazine:*

> He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction.

But a little more research shows yet another source. In September 1904, Joe Mitchell Chapple, publisher of the Boston *National Magazine,* announced he would give $10,000 for "Heart Throbs," which he defined as "those things that make us all kin; those things that endure—the classics of our own lives." The people who sent in the ten best contributions would receive a pile of silver dollars, "one silver dollar placed flat upon the other," as "will measure your exact height"; other major winners would receive twenty-five, ten, or five dollars; and five hundred lucky people (out of a total of 840 winners) would receive a dollar each. The results from this contest were published in a book, appropriately titled *Heart Throbs,* but it contained nothing by Stanley.[4] Owing to the success of this book, a second volume of *Heart Throbs* was published in 1911, "Contributed by the People," according to the title page. Unlike the first volume, this one contained "the voluntary contribution of thousands," including, on the very first

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1999 Emerson Society Patrons

Emerson Society members have responded generously to the appeal by Past President Ronald A. Bosco to join at new levels of membership. All donations above the $10 annual regular membership go to support the "Emerson in 2003" Bicentennial celebration now being organized. Dues categories are Life ($500), Sustaining ($50), Contributing ($25), and Regular ($10). Please send check payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) to Ronald A. Bosco, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of English, University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, NY 12222.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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For future issues of *Emerson Society Papers* we solicit information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news (promotions, transfers, retirements, deaths, etc.) of Emersonian scholars. We will also consider notes and short articles (about 4 to 5 double-spaced typewritten pages, or less) on subjects of interest to our membership. MLA stylesheet is preferred. Send manuscripts to the editor, Douglas Emory Wilson, 1404 Christine Ave., Anniston, AL 36207-3924.

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Sarah Ann Wider, Department of English, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY 13346.

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Emerson's Visit to the Tomb of His First Wife

Ralph H. Orth
University of Vermont

The most startling entry in all of Emerson's journals is undoubtedly that of 29 March 1832, a little over a year after the death of his first wife Ellen: "I visited Ellen's tomb & opened the coffin."[1] The statement seemed so significant to Robert D. Richardson, Jr., that he began his intellectual biography of Emerson with it.[2] Others have found it so stark and even ghoulish that at least one critic, Henry F. Pommer, has written that "the isolated entry presumably record[ed] a dream."[3]

Ellen Tucker Emerson

But it was not a dream, nor is the experience totally without parallel. Richardson mentions two similar instances, and a third has been found in a passage in Longfellow's prose narrative *Hyperion.* Perhaps it is time to bring these instances together and see what they tell us about attitudes toward death in the nineteenth century.

In *James Freeman Clarke: Disciple to Advancing Truth,* Arthur S. Bolster, Jr., describes an incident that occurred close to the time of Emerson's own visit:

> [Clarke's] cousin, Louisa Hickman…had married while he was at Harvard and gone to live in Louisville, Kentucky. During the winter of 1832 she was taken ill suddenly and died. Her broken-hearted young husband refused to leave her body, and had it embalmed and kept in the room with him, until wiser heads, fearing for his sanity, persuaded him to have it buried in the family tomb in the Newton graveyard. Some months later, the grieving widower wrote James a letter…enclosing the key to her coffin, and asking him to go and see if the body was still in proper condition. As a child James liked to visit cemeteries and wonder if when he died all that he knew and thought would end forever. This request awakened in him that old doubt. He waited until the middle of the night, took a lantern, went to the burying ground, and entered the tomb, closing the door behind him. Once inside, he unscrewed with a great deal of difficulty the outer box of wood in which the inner coffin was housed, then took the key and unlocked the inner coffin. The body was relatively undecayed, and he sat for a long while brooding on the brevity of life and the mystery of death.[4]

The second example involves Rufus W. Griswold, the editor and anthologist, remembered today chiefly for the damage he did to Edgar Allan Poe's reputation as his literary executor. In a letter to Richard Henry Dana (the elder), he describes what occurred in December 1842, a month after the death of his beloved wife Caroline:

> I could not think that my dear wife was dead. I dreamed night after night of our reunion. In a fit of madness I went [from Philadelphia] to New York. The vault where she is sleeping is nine miles from the city [in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn]. I went to it: the sexton unclosed it: and I went down alone into that silent chamber. I kneeled by her side and prayed, and then, with my own hand, unfastened the coffin lid, turned aside the drapery that hid her face, and saw the terrible changes made by Death and Time. I kissed for the last time her cold black forehead--I cut off locks of her beautiful hair, damp with the death dews, and sunk down in senseless agony beside the ruin of all that was dearest in the world. In the evening, a friend from the city, who had learned where I was gone, found me there, my face still resting on her own, and my body as lifeless and cold as that before me.[5]

In Longfellow's *Hyperion,* published in 1839, Paul Flemming, the hero, has loved but has not been able to marry Mary Ashburton, and in a church in St. Gilgin, Austria, he comes upon a marble tablet with the inscription: "Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart."

Longfellow comments, "Men sometimes go down into tombs, with painful longings to behold once more the faces of their departed friends; and as they gaze upon them, lying there so peacefully with the semblance that they wore on earth, the sweet breath of heaven touches them, and the features crumble and fall together, and are but dust. So did his

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PROSPECTS.

American Literature Association Conference

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels at the eleventh annual conference of the American Literature Association, to be held on 25-28 May in Long Beach, California. Dates and times are not yet available.

SESSION I

Asia in Emerson/Emerson in Asia.

CHAIR: Phyllis Cole *(Penn State Delaware County)*

"'All Tends to the Mysterious East': Emersonian Figurations of Orientalist Platitudes," Alan Hodder *(Hampshire College)*

"Emerson and the Disembodied 'Song of God': Reevaluating the Role of the *Gita,*" Stephen R. Westbrook *(University at Albany—SUNY)*

"Emerson's Impact on Japan," Hideo Kawasumi *(Seikei University)*

"Emerson and Japanese Neo-Confucianism," Yoshio Takanashi *(Nagano Prefectural College)*

SESSION II

The Reception of Emerson.

CHAIR: Ralph Bauer (University of Maryland)

"Reading Women Reading Emerson: Another Look at the Old Contention," Sarah Ann Wider *(Colgate University)*

"Textual Resonances: Emerson in the Pen of the Cuban Patriot José Marti," José C. Ballón *(Ohio Wesleyan University)*

"Imagining Emerson: Depictions of Emerson in Biographies of His Contemporaries," Mary Kupiec Cayton *(Miami University)*

The ALA conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency, 200 Pine Avenue, in Long Beach on 25–28 May (Thursday through Sunday). An opening reception will be held on Thursday evening beginning at 7:00 p.m. The conference fee is still only $50 (with a special rate of $10 for graduate students, independent scholars, high school teachers, and retired faculty). The Hyatt Regency Long Beach will offer a conference rate of $110 for a single or double room (triples are $135). For reservations, call 1-800-233-1234 before 15 April 2000 and request the American Literature Association conference rate.

You can receive a 10% discount on fares on American Airlines or U.S. Air if you make your reservations 60 days prior to departure. A 5% discount will be available for reservations made after 24 March 2000. To receive these discounts, call Travel Professionals at 888-293-9441 as soon as possible. (Note that Travel Professionals will charge a $10 service fee.)

For more information about the conference, check the ALA Web site (www.americanliterature.org) or contact the conference director, Jeanne Reesman, at reesman @lonestar.utsa.edu or the executive director of the ALA, Alfred Bendixen, at abendixen@calstatela.edu.

Phyllis Cole Finalist for Lowell Prize

Phyllis Blum Cole of Pennsylvania State University, Delaware County, was cited as a finalist for the prestigious James Russell Lowell Prize for her book *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism: A Family History,* published by Oxford University Press. The Lowell Prize is awarded annually by the Modern Language Association of America to recognize an outstanding book—a literary or linguistic study, a critical edition of an important work, or a critical biography—written by a member of the association. Professor Cole is the program chair for the Emerson Society and a former member of the society's Advisory Board.

The James Russell Lowell Prize Committee's citation for the book designated as finalist reads:

> Thanks to the scholarship and dedication of Phyllis Blum Cole, Mary Moody Emerson shakes off her endnote reputation as Ralph Waldo's crazy little aunt and emerges as a key figure in the development of transcendentalism. Cole's book establishes not only that Ralph Waldo Emerson was deeply influenced by his aunt at a critical stage in his intellectual development, but also that his mature writings drew on the unpublished papers that she allowed him to read and extract. This remarkable "family history" offers a vivid portrait of a woman whose fierce passion for ideas, wide-ranging scholarship, and formidable skills in debate made an indelible mark on some of the finest minds of her epoch.

Phyllis Blum Cole is associate professor of English and women's studies and a member of the graduate faculty at Penn State University's Delaware County campus, where she has taught since 1989. She previously taught at Wellesley College and Harvard University. She earned her B.A. from Oberlin College and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. Professor Cole has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Penn State University, and Harvard University. She has published over twenty articles and reviews in journals and has delivered papers at numerous academic conferences. She is conducting research for a new book, tentatively titled "One Law for Souls: Contesting Gender and Race in Antebellum Boston."

Ronald Bosco Wins Boydston Prize

Ronald A. Bosco, secretary/treasurer of The Emerson Society, has been awarded the third Jo Ann Boydston Essay Prize for "The Expanding Textual Circle of New England Transcendentalism," *Text* 11 (1998). The essay-review begins with a four-page prologue which contains an overview of the historical and cultural significance of New England Transcendentalism from the 1830s to the 1860s and the recent editorial history of the works of Thoreau and Emerson, as well as Margaret Fuller, Convers Francis, William Ellery Channing, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Louisa May Alcott, and other less-known figures in the circle of Transcendentalism. The review itself focuses on *Jones Very: The Complete Poems,* edited by Helen R. Deese (University of Georgia Press, 1993) and *The Selected Letters of Mary Moody Emerson,* edited by Nancy Craig Simmons (University of Georgia Press, 1993).

The citation reads: "Professor Bosco's essay-review not only takes into account the cultural and historical significance of New England Transcendentalism but also places Jones Very and Mary Moody Emerson within that intellectual and literary context in an artfully fashioned narrative that demonstrates their own importance as well as that of scholarly editions of biographical criticism; it is a model of scholarly erudition and critical acumen that successfully addresses both editorial specialists and non-specialist readers and that argues lucidly and convincingly that new editions of previously little-known or underappreciated literary figures are important in shaping and modifying our knowledge of American literature and culture."

Harmon Smith on "The Connection"

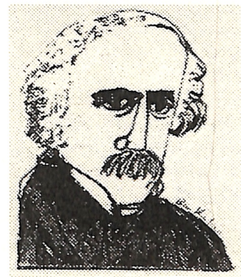
On 1 February, Emerson Society member Harmon Smith was the featured guest on Christopher Lydon's "The Connection," the popular, syndicated National Public Radio program produced by WBUR in Boston. Smith discussed his new book, *My Friend, My Friend: The Story of Thoreau's Friendship With Emerson.*

T-Shirts in Fourth Edition

The popular Ralph Waldo Emerson Society T-shirts—out of stock for the past few years—are back in a brand-new fourth edition. The shirts are available in a choice of navy blue or forest green, each with white ink. As in past editions, the 2000 edition features Christopher Pearse Cranch's "transparent eye-ball" caricature (the logo for the "PROSPECTS" column in this newsletter), with the familiar "R.W.E" on the left sleeve. More choices in size are now being offered: S, M, L, XL, and XXL—all in Beefy-T pre-shrunk, 100% cotton. Shirts are still only $12 each for members, plus $2 postage and handling for the first shirt and $1 for each additional shirt. Order by sending a check—payable to The Emerson Society—to Wes Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, WPI, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280. To check on availability of sizes and colors, call 508-831-5441 and leave a voice message.

The Scarlet Letter: 150 Years After

Our friends in the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society are planning a conference marking the sesquicentennial of *The Scarlet Letter.* It will be held 15–17 June 2000 at Suffolk University's Walsh Theater on Boston's Beacon Hill, close to the sites of *The Scarlet Letter* and Hawthorne's own Boston sojourns. Registration will include receptions and the Society Banquet at the Omni Parker House. Speakers will include Lawrence Buell, Michael Gilmore, and Myra Jehlen. The premiere of a new musical of *The Scarlet Letter* by the writer/composer Mark Governor will be presented on the evenings of the 16th and 17th—registered conferees will be admitted without charge; moderately priced tickets will be available to the public (see enclosed flyer).



Housing at reduced rates will be available at Suffolk University Student Residence (617-305-1965) and the Parker House (617-227-8600). Conference registration should be made as early as possible to ensure places at the banquet and special events. The conference fee of $85 ($60 for students—send ID xerox) plus optional membership ($10; $5 students) should be paid by check made out to the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society. Send to Prof. Peter Walker, Dept. of English, Salem State College, 352 Lafayette Street, Salem, MA 01970.

Everyday Transcendentalism: Concord in July

The Emerson Society's session at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering 2000 will offer a new look at the "Concord authors" in their place and time. The Gathering will take place in Concord 13–16 July, and the Emerson session, "Everyday Transcendentalism," is planned for 14 July at the Masonic Temple in Monument Square. We hope for a good conversation among presenters coming to Emerson from literature, social history, and public programming: Ronald Bosco and Joel Myerson on 'The Emerson Brothers: A Family Portrait," Ronald and Mary Zboray on "How Ordinary New Englanders Received the Works of Emerson and Thoreau," and Jayne Gordon and Phyllis Cole on "The Emersons in Their Neighborhood." All participants will be invited to continue their exploration of everyday Concord as visitors to the Emerson House and Concord Museum.

Reviews

Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen.

By Gary Collison, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. 294 pp. $27.95.

Shadrach, to give him the name by which he was most commonly known in the 1850s, was the first fugitive slave to be brought before the commissioner appointed in Boston to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. An earlier attempt to seize and return the much more well-known Ellen and William Craft was frustrated when the slave catchers were quickly recognized and harassed out of Boston before they could lay hands on them. Angry crowds dogged their steps, and abolitionist lawyers tied them up with legal complaints for everything from slandering William Craft to smoking in the street. When one of them tried to escape a mob in pursuit of his carriage, he was arrested for driving too fast and for "running the toll when chased over Cambridge bridge." When agents arrived in February, 1851, to arrest Shadrach, they were more circumspect and managed to remove him from his place of employment to the Boston Court House and bring him before Commissioner George T. Curtis. By the time the hearing began, however, the news had reached members of the Boston Vigilance Committee, established in the previous October in response to the threat of the Fugitive Slave Law. Lawyers quickly appeared to defend Shadrach, but, more important, a large crowd of two hundred or more men from Boston's black community gathered around the Court House and in the hallway outside of the Court Room itself. Just after Shadrach's hearing had been postponed for three days to give the lawyers time to go over the documents authorizing his arrest, the crowd burst into the courtroom, overpowered the marshals, and spirited the prisoner away. He seemingly disappeared, but we now know, thanks to Gary Collison, that by late that evening he was in Concord and a week later in Montreal.

The successful rescue of Shadrach demonstrated to supporters of the Compromise who hoped to show the effectiveness of the Fugitive Slave Law by enforcing it in the heart of abolitionist country that they would need considerably more force to carry out an arrest and return. In the later cases of Thomas Sims and Anthony Burns they were able to accomplish this, but the strategies of resistance through reactive violence and shrewd use of the law were already prefigured in the cases of Shadrach and the Crafts. Shadrach's case is particularly significant because his rescue was organized by local black leaders, Lewis Hayden in particular, and his movement from Boston to Montreal was managed by ordinary men and women, local heroes rather than the more famous speakers against slavery. At the same time, Shadrach's case stimulated strong intellectual and emotional currents. Theodore Parker spoke dramatically about Shadrach in his next sermon before his congregation in the Melodeon Theater, and on the very day in which Shadrach was in Concord Thoreau entered in his journal the first of a series of important reflections about slavery and freedom.

Of all the famous attempts to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, the least has been known about Shadrach's. His background before he appeared in the Boston Court House, his life after his dramatic rescue, even his name itself have been remarkably obscure. Gary Collison has in this volume done an impressive job of blowing away these obscurities, and he has managed to tell a story so fleshed out in specific details, specific names and characters, that it enhances our understanding of how the Fugitive Slave Law was enforced, of what it meant to both its supporters and opponents, particularly to its targets like Shadrach and the Crafts, and of the world of black Boston at mid-century. Although Collison has to picture large parts of Shadrach's own life by generalizing from the stories of slaves in similar conditions, he has unearthed a good deal of hard fact. He gives us a sense of Shadrach's life in Norfolk, Virginia, before his escape north, discusses the possible escape routes he might have taken, portrays the black community in Boston where he tried to take up a new life, and finally pictures Shadrach in Montreal, where he lived until his death in 1875.

Readers of this newsletter will be most interested in the account of Shadrach's first stop on his flight from Boston. Lewis Hayden and John J. Smith, leaders of the black community, brought Shadrach to the home of Francis B. Bigelow, whose wife, Ann, had been a founder of the Concord Women's Antislavery Society in 1837. At a time when prominent men like Emerson and Nathan Brooks had tender feelings about actually breaking the law, the women stepped forward to give actual support and care to Shadrach. On this occasion, however, Brooks, who opposed slavery but did not countenance "aiding and abetting" fugitives, found himself in the presence of Shadrach and discovered, like Mrs. Stowe's Senator Bird, that an actual fugitive in need of help demanded a reconsideration of his principles. Shadrach left Concord wearing Brooks's hat. Shadrach's stay in Concord was a matter of mere hours; fed and clothed by Ann Bigelow and Mary Brooks, he was well on his way north before other residents of Concord could have realized he was there. Years before this event, Emerson had noted in his journal that he hated "goodies," that the "electricity of virtue" in town lurked only in its kitchens among the obscure—chiefly women. Gary Collison's splendid study demonstrates how right Emerson was to trust in the consciences of Concord's women, who represent the determination of all the "obscure" people who stood up in 1851 against the iniquities of the Fugitive Slave Law.

—Frank Shuffelton
University of Rochester

The Emerson Museum: Practical Romanticism and the Pursuit of the Whole.

By Lee Rust Brown, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997. xii, 285 pp. $39.95 cloth.

It is entirely possible that the best description of Lee Rust Brown's *The Emerson Museum* is the jacket design by Lisa Clark. It depicts a rather large spider dangling ominously over a facsimile of part of a manuscript page of one of Emerson's Topical Notebooks. In its descriptiveness, this design says far more about what one will discover after opening the book than Brown's own teasingly cryptic title, and I say this even though there are no spiders in this book. What there is, though, is a web, both intricate in design and daunting in scope, that is woven, thread-by-thread, to envelop all of Emerson. The center of this web is Emerson's experience in the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris in July 1833, but its circumference is expansive enough to serve as a sort of grid through which all of Emerson might be productively read and even to push us beyond that to new ways of seeing Emerson, Euro-American Romanticism, and nineteenth-century western culture. In "Circles," Emerson wrote that "Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn." *The Emerson Museum* is remarkable in demonstrating just how well Brown has learned from and exploited that lesson of the master.

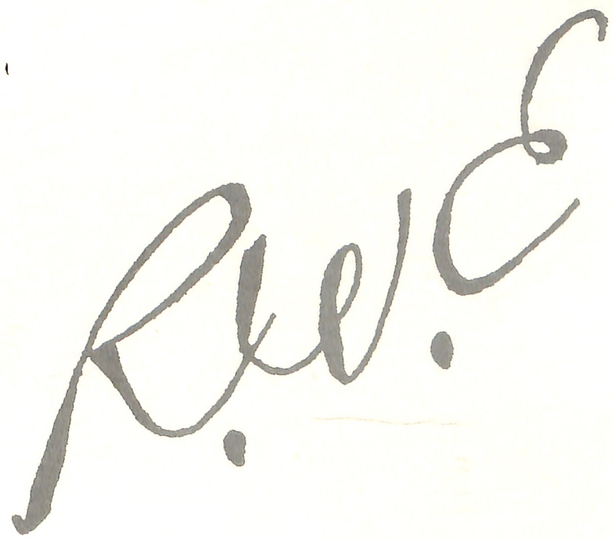
The Emerson Museum could be any number of things. On its most literal level it is the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, where, according to Brown, Emerson first realized the potential of natural history as a theoretical system that could order and give meaning to fragmentary texts by presuming the existence of a propective whole. What Emerson saw there was arguably how to see; that is, the arrangement of specimens in the Jardin des Plantes and the Cabinet of Natural History revealed that the methodology of natural history—classification—permitted the observer to overcome the literal surface of nature to recover "a divine plan that was immanent in nature rather than one dictated at the beginning of history."

At a remove from that level, though, the Emerson Museum is also Emerson's lifelong writing project in which fragments of thought and experience—literally the specimens of Emerson's everyday life—were dutifully recorded in the journals. There, these specimens were catalogued and classified with an elaborate system of indexing and cross-referencing that mimicked the natural historian's methodology of analyzing and organizing his specimens for display in the glass cabinets in the museum in Paris. Brown's theory, then, not only accounts for Emerson's characteristic method of composition—writing "up" from the fragmentary journals and notebooks—but it also suggests that the essays themselves are a sort of "impersonal biography" that reports "the present work of perception," or life writing itself, implicitly inviting the reader to further perceptions on the particular topics Emerson has chosen to essay. In other words, each essay of Emerson's attempts to recreate his experience in the museum in Paris by presenting a range of responses—from the mundane to the sublime—on a given topic or classification, while implicitly inviting the reader to draw her own circle around Emerson's essay, literally to transcend the text in the act of reading it.

Of course, the Emerson Museum is, at yet another remove, also Brown's book or, more accurately, Brown's display of his methodology for reading the Emersonian text. That methodology is, of necessity, fragmentary, in the sense that Brown is limited in the number of texts he can offer as "specimens" of the whole Emerson he desires us to see. For example, a large part of the first chapter, which deals with Emersonian transparency and Coleridge's theories of wholeness, focuses on Brown's reading of a few key passages from *Nature;* the third chapter features an extended discussion of "History" as part of an explanation of Emerson's biographical theory of history; and the book ends with a reading of "Experience" that serves Brown's argument that "Emerson's work engages the actual world in the most thoroughgoing sense, aiming no less intensely than science and realist novel writing to account for those reliable but mostly concealed realities that make up the shared world." But my point is not that Brown's selectivity is detrimental to his argument. To the contrary, his suggestive discussions of fragments of Emerson's writing—from sermons, lectures, and journals, as well as the essays—create a sense of a prospective, whole Emerson. And when these discussions are folded into Brown's learned and lucid discussions of such things as Coleridge's romanticism, Cuvier's natural history, Balzac's realism, Freud's dream-work, or Nietzsche's transvaluation of values, we are at least given a fleeting glimpse of the impossible wholeness of western culture in the nineteenth century.

The Emerson who emerges from all this suggestiveness is a titan—every bit the equal of Coleridge, Freud, or Nietzsche in the complexity and importance of his intellectual contributions. He is neither a Transcendentalist nor a Romantic, but what Brown calls a visionary empiricist or empirical transcendentalist, so thoroughly immersed in the actual world and so consumed by a devotion to receiving the practical power of the present moment that he seems much more closely aligned with Dewey, Peirce, and William James than with Goethe, or Wordsworth, or Carlyle. In fact, the Emerson that Brown is able to suggest in this accomplished work is the most mentally alive, intellectually rich, and exciting Emerson we have seen.

—Robert E. Burkholder
Penn State, University Park



Emerson's "Success"

(Continued from page 1)

page, "What is Success?" by "Bessie A. Stanley." Significantly, Emerson's "Good-Bye" is also included (pp. 7-8). The proximity of Stanley's work to Emerson's suggests that someone might have made the initial misattribution by copying Stanley's work, then returning to seek the author and mistakenly using Emerson's name from three leaves later; Stanley's name appears on the third line of a verso page, Emerson's on the fifth of a verso page, making such an eyeskip possible.[5]

I think Emerson would be glad to hear that we now know conclusively that this passage is not by him.

Notes

1. A popular variation of this reads, "To live well, to laugh often, to love much, to gain the respect of intelligent people, to win the love of little children. To fill one's niche and accomplish one's task, to leave the world better than one finds it whether by an improved flower, a perfect poem or another life ennobled. To never lack appreciation of earth's beauty or fail to express it, to always look for the best in others, to give the best one has. To make one's life an inspiration and one's memory a benediction. This is success."
2. This delightful book, by the great-granddaughter of Annie Burns Byron, who was actually Emerson's cook, was published by Dutton in 1998.
3. On one, the passage is attributed to the liberal Protestant minister Harry Emerson Fosdick: *members.tripod.com/~softlady/index.html.*
4. *Heart Throbs* [ed. Joseph Mitchell Chapple] (Boston: Chapple Publishing Company, 1905), pp. v-vi.
5. *Heart Throbs, Volume Two* [ed. Joseph Mitchell Chapple] (Boston: Chapple Publishing Company, 1911), pp. ii, 1-2. Surprisingly, "What is Success" is attributed to "Anon." in the index.

The text of "What is Success?" differs in wording from that published by "Dear Abby" as follows:

> He... much; ['who has enjoyed the trust of pure women' *not present;* 'who has gained' *present*] the respect. . . task ['who has left the world better than he found it' *not present*], whether ['by' *present*] an improved...soul; ['who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty, or failed to express it' *present*] who has always...given ['them' *not present*] the best...inspiration; ['and' *present*] whose memory a benediction.

Emerson's Visit

(Continued from page 3)

Past, with painful longings to behold once more the dear faces of those he had loved; and the sweet breath of heaven touched them, and they would not stay, but crumbled away and perished as he gazed. They, too, were dust. And thus, far-sounding, he heard the great gate of the Past shut behind him, as the divine poet did the gate of Paradise, when the angel pointed him the way up the Holy Mountain; and to him likewise was it forbidden to look back." [6]

Longfellow thus presents us with a classic statement of closure, a goal as valid for mourners today as it ever was, but accompanied in the nineteenth century by a greater sense of physical reality. Death today has a more abstract quality, where people usually die in hospitals, are frequently embalmed before being buried forever in the earth, or are reduced to ashes and scattered to the winds. In Emerson's time the display of the body in the home after death was common and above-ground tombs were the final repositories of choice for those who could afford them. The temptation to look 'just one last time" at the remains of the departed must have been strong, as the four examples here presented show. After that, it was possible to engage in "Sweeping up the Heart / And putting Love away / We shall not want to use again / Until Eternity."

Notes

1. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* ed. William H. Gilman, Ralph H. Orth et al., 16 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960-1982), 4:7.
2. Emerson: *The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 3.
3. *Emerson's First Marriage* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), p. 55.
4. *James Freeman Clarke* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1954), p. 65.
5. Joy Bayless, *Rufus Wilmot Griswold, Poe's Literary Executor* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1943), p. 66.
6. *The Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,* 14 vols., ed. Samuel Longfellow (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886), 8:275-76.