

IN SCITUATE



UNDER a hill in Scituate,
Where sleep four hundred men of Kent,
My friend one bobolincolned June
Set up his roof-tree of content.

Content for not too long, of course ;
Since painter's eye makes rover's heart,
And the next turning of the road
May cheapen the last touch of art.

Yet also, since the world is wide,
And noon's face never twice the same,
Why not sit down and let the sun,
That artist careless of his fame,

Exhibit to our eyes, offhand,
As mood may dictate and time serve,
His precious perishable scraps
Of fleeting colour, melting curve ?

And while he shifts them all too soon,
Make vivid note of this and that,
Careful of nothing but to keep
The beauties we most marvel at.

Selective merely, bent to save
The sheer delirium of the eye,
Which best may solace or rejoice
Some fellow-rover by and by ;

That stumbling on it, he exclaim,
"What mounting sea-smoke! What a blue!"
And at the glory we beheld,
His smouldering joy may kindle too.

Merely selective? Bring me back,
Verbatim from the lecture hall,
Your notes of So-and-so's discourse;
The gist and substance are not all.

The unconscious hand betrays to me
What listener it was took heed,
Eager or slovenly or prim;
A written character indeed!

Much more in painting; every stroke
That weaves the very sunset's ply,
Luminous, palpitant, reveals
How throbbed the heart behind the eye;

How hand was but the cunning dwarf
Of spirit, his triumphant lord
Marching in Nature's pageantry,
Elated in the vast accord.

Art is a rubric for the soul,
Man's comment on the book of earth,
The little human summary
Which gives that common volume worth.

And coming on some painter's work,—
His marginal remarks, as 'twere,—
You cry not only, "What a blue!"
But, "What a human heart beat here!"

Here is the little sloping field,
Where billow upon billow rolls
The sea of daisies in the sun,
When June brings back the orioles.

THE SAVOY

All summer here the crooning winds
Are cradled in the rocking dunes,
Till they, full height and burly grown,
Go seaward and forget their croons.

And out of the Canadian north
Comes winter like a huge gray gnome,
To blanket the red dunes with snow
And muffle the green sea with foam.

I could sit here all day and watch
The seas at battle smoke and wade,
And in the cold night wake to hear
The booming of their cannonade.

Then smiling turn to sleep and say,
"In vain dark's banners are unfurled ;
That ceaseless roll is God's tattoo
Upon the round drum of the world."

And waking find without surprise
The first sun in a week of storm.
The southward eaves begin to drip,
And the faint Marshfield hills look warm ;

The brushwood all a purple mist ;
The blue sea creaming on the shore ;
As if the year in his last days
Had not a sorrow to deplore.

Then evening by the fire of logs,
With some old song or some new book ;
Our Lady Nicotine to share
Our single bliss ; while seaward, look,—

Orion mounting peaceful guard
Over our brother's new-made tent,
Beside a hill in Scituate
Where sleep so sound those men of Kent.

BLISS CARMAN.