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Notes:

Page (3):

EVERY substance is negatively electric to that which stands above it in the chemical tables, positively to that which stands below it. Water dissolves wood and stone, and salt; air dissolves water; electric fire dissolves air, but the intellect dissolves fire, gravity, laws, method, and the subtlest unnamed relations of nature in its resistless menstruum. Intellect lies behind genius, which is intellect constructive.

Page 4:

Intellect separates the fact considered from *you* from all local and personal reference, and discerns it as if it existed for its own sake. Heraclitus looked upon the affections as dense and colored mists. In the fog of good and evil affections, it is hard for man to walk forward in a straight line. Intellect is void of affection, and sees an object as it stands in the light of science, cool and disengaged.

Page 4:

The intellect pierces the form, overleaps the wall, detects intrinsic likeness between remote things, and reduces all things into a few principles.

Page 4:

As a ship aground is battered by the waves, so man, imprisoned in mortal life, lies open to the mercy of coming events.

Page 5:

But a truth, separated by the intellect, is no longer a subject of destiny. We behold it as a god upraised above care and fear. And so any fact in our life, or any record of our fancies or reflections, disentangled from the web of our unconsciousness, becomes an object impersonal and immortal. It is the past restored, but embalmed. A better art than that of Egypt has taken fear and corruption out of it.

Page 5:

God enters by a private door into every individual. Long prior to the age of reflection, is the thinking of the mind.

Page 5-6:

In the most worn, **pedantic**, introverted, self-tormentor's life, the greatest part is incalculable by him, unforeseen, unimaginable, and must be, until he can take himself up by his own ears. What am I? What has my will done to make me that I am? Nothing. I have been floated into this thought, this hour, this connection of events, by might and mind sublime, and my ingenuity and wilfulness have not thwarted, have not aided to an appreciable degree.

Page 6:

Our truth of thought is therefore **vitiating** as much by too violent direction given by our will, as by too great negligence. We do not determine what we will think. We only open our senses, clear away, as we can, all obstruction from the fact, and suffer the intellect to see. We have little control over our thoughts. We are the prisoners of ideas. They catch us up for moments into their heaven, and so fully engage us, that we take no thought for the morrow, gaze like children, without an effort to make them our own. By-and-by we fall out of that rapture, bethink us where we have been, what we have seen, and repeat, as truly as we can, what we have beheld.

Page 7:

If we consider what persons have stimulated and profited us, we shall perceive the superiority of the spontaneous or intuitive principle over the arithmetical or logical.

Page 7:

In every man's mind, some images, words, and facts remain, without effort on his part to imprint them, which others forget, and afterwards these illustrate to him important laws.

Page 7:

Each mind has its own method. A true man never acquires after college rules. What you have aggregated in a natural manner, surprises and delights when it is produced. For we cannot oversee each other's secret.

Page 7:

Do you think the porter and the cook have no anecdotes, no experiences, no wonders for you?

Page 7 – 8:

Every man, in the degree in which he has wit and culture, finds his curiosity inflamed concerning the modes of living and thinking of other men, and especially of those classes whose minds have not been subdued by the drill of school education.

Page 8:

At last comes the era of reflection, when we not only observe, but take pains to observe ; when we of set purpose, sit down to consider an abstract truth; when we keep the mind's eye open, whilst we converse, whilst we read, whilst we act, intent to learn the secret law of some class of facts.

Page 8:

I **blench** and withdraw on this side and on that. I seem to know what he meant, who said. No man can see God face to face and live.

Page 9:

So now you must labor with your brains, and now you must forbear your activity, and see what the great Soul showeth.

Our intellections are mainly prospective.

Page 9:

Inspect what delights you in Plutarch, in Shakespeare, in Cervantes. Each truth that a writer acquires, is a lantern which he instantly turns full on what facts and thoughts lay already in his mind, and behold, all the mats and rubbish which had littered his garret, become precious. Every trivial fact in his private biography becomes an illustration of this new principle, revisits the day, and delights all men by its **piquancy** and new charm. Men say, where did he get this? and think there was something divine in his

life. But no ; they have myriads of facts just as good, would they only get a lamp to ransack their attic withal.

We are all wise. The difference between persons is not in wisdom but in art.

Page 10:

If you gather apples in the sunshine, or make hay, or hoe corn, and then retire within doors, and shut your eyes, and press them with your hand, you shall still see apples hanging in the bright light, with boughs and leaves thereto, or the tasselled grass, or the corn-flags, and this for five or six hours afterwards. There lie the impressions on the retentive organ, though you knew it not. So lies the whole series of natural images with which your life has made you acquainted, in your memory, though you know it not, and a thrill of passion flashes light on their dark chamber, and the active power seizes instantly the fit image, as the word of its momentary thought.

Page 10 – 11:

But our wiser years still run back to the despised recollections of childhood, and always we are fishing up some wonderful article out of that pond ;until, by-and-by, we begin to suspect that the biography of the one foolish person we know, is, in reality, nothing less than the miniature paraphrase of the hundred volumes of the Universal History.

Page 11 – 12:

To genius must always go two gifts, the thought and the publication. The first is revelation, always a miracle, which no frequency of occurrence, or incessant study can ever familiarize, but which must always leave the inquirer stupid with wonder. It is the advent of truth into the world, a form of thought now, for the first time, bursting into the universe, a child of the old eternal soul, a piece of genuine and immeasurable greatness. It seems, for the time, to inherit all that has yet existed, and to dictate to the unborn. It affects every thought of man, and goes to fashion every institution. But to make it available, it needs a vehicle or art by which it is conveyed to men. To be communicable, it must become picture or sensible object. We must learn the language of facts. The most wonderful inspirations die with their subject, if he has no hand to paint them to the senses. The ray of light passes invisible through space, and only when it falls on an object is it seen.

Page 12:

In common hours, we have the same facts as in the uncommon or inspired, but they do not sit for their portraits, they are not detached, but lie in a web.

Page 12 – 13:

It does not flow from experience only or mainly, but from a richer source. Not by any conscious imitation of particular forms are the grand strokes of the painter executed, but by repairing to the fountain-head of all forms in his mind. Who is the first drawing-master?

Page 14 – 15:

Truth is our element of life, yet if a man fasten his attention on a single aspect of truth, and apply himself to that alone for a long time, the truth becomes distorted and not itself, but falsehood ; herein resembling the air, which is our natural element, and the breath of our nostrils, but if a stream of the same be directed on the body for a time, it causes cold, fever, and even death. How wearisome the grammarian, the phrenologist, the political or religious fanatic, or indeed any possessed mortal, whose balance is lost by the exaggeration of a single topic.

Page 15:

When we are young, we spend much time and pains in filling our note-books with all definitions of Religion, Love, Poetry, Politics, Art, in the hope that in the course of a few years, we shall have condensed into our encyclopedia, the net value of all the theories at which the world has yet arrived. But year after year our tables get no completeness, and at last we discover that our curve is a parabola, whose arcs will never meet.

Page 16:

But the poet, whose verses are to be spherical and complete, is one whom nature cannot deceive, whatsoever face of strangeness she may put on. He feels a strict consanguinity, and detects more likeness than variety in all her changes.

Page 16:

But if the constructive powers are rare, and it is given to few men to be poets, yet every man is a receiver of this descending holy ghost, and may well study the laws of its influx.

Page 16 – 17:

God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please, — you can never have both. Between these, as a pendulum, man oscillates ever.

Page 17:

He will abstain from **dogmatism**, and recognize all the opposite negations between which, as walls, his being is swung.

Page 17:

Happy is the hearing man: unhappy the speaking man. As long as I hear truth, I am bathed by a beautiful element, and am not conscious of any limits to my nature.

Page 17:

When Socrates speaks, Lysis and Menexenus are afflicted by no shame that they do not speak.

Page 18:

The ancient sentence said, Let us be silent, for so are the gods.

Page 18:

Jesus says, Leave father, mother, house and lands, and follow me. Who leaves all, receives more. This is as true intellectually, as morally.

Page 18:

A new doctrine seems, at first, a subversion of all our opinions, tastes, and manner of living. Such has Swedenborg, such has Kant, such has Coleridge, such has Cousin seemed to many young men in this country. Take thankfully and heartily all they can give. Exhaust them, wrestle with them, let them not go until their blessing be won, and after a short season, the dismay will be overpast, the excess of influence withdrawn, and they will be no longer an alarming meteor, but one more bright star shining serenely in your heaven, and blending its light with all your day.

Page 19:

I were a fool not to sacrifice a thousand Æschyluses to my intellectual integrity. Especially take the same ground in regard to abstract truth, the science of the mind. The Bacon, the Spinoza, the Hume, Schelling, Kant, or whosoever propounds to you a philosophy of the mind, is only a more or less

awkward translator of things in your consciousness, which you have also your way of seeing, perhaps of denominating.

Page 19:

If Plato cannot, perhaps Spinoza will. If Spinoza cannot, then perhaps Kant. Anyhow, when at last it is done, you will find it is no recondite, but a simple, natural, common state, which the writer restores to you.

But let us end these **didactics**.

Page 19:

I shall not presume to interfere in the old politics of the skies ; " The cherubim know most ; the seraphim love most."

Page 20:

But I cannot recite, even thus rudely, laws of the intellect, without remembering that lofty and sequestered class of men who have been its prophets and oracles, the high priesthood of the pure reason, the *Trismegisti* expounders of the principles of thought from age to age. When at long intervals, we turn over their abstruse pages, wonderful seems the calm and grand air of these few, these great spiritual lords, who have walked in the world, — these of the old religion, — dwelling in a worship which makes the sanctities of Christianity look *parvenues* and popular; for "persuasion is in soul, but necessity is in intellect." This band of grandees, Hermes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, Plotinus, Olympiodorus, Proclus, Synesius, and the rest, have somewhat so vast in their logic, so primary in their thinking, that it seems antecedent to all the ordinary distinctions of rhetoric and literature, and to be at once poetry, and music, and dancing, and astronomy, and mathematics. I am present at the sowing of the seed of the world. With a geometry of sunbeams, the soul lays the foundations of nature. The truth and grandeur of their thought is proved by its scope and applicability, for it commands the entire schedule and inventory of things, for its illustration. But what marks its elevation, and has even a comic look to us, is the innocent serenity with which these babe-like Jupiters sit in their clouds, and from ago to age prattle to each other, and to no contemporary.

Page 21:

The angels are so enamored of the language that is spoken in heaven, that they will not distort their lips with the hissing and unmusical dialects of men, but speak their own, whether there be any who understand it or not.

Page (25):

My prudence consists in avoiding and going without, not in the inventing of means and methods, not in adroit steering, not in gentle repairing.

Page (25):

Yet I love facts, and hate lubricity, and people without perception.

Page (25):

We write from aspiration and antagonism, as well as from experience.

Page 26:

Prudence is the virtue of the senses. It is the science of appearances. It is the outmost action of the inward life. It is God taking thought for oxen.

Page 26:

The world of the senses is a world of shows ; it does not exist for itself, but has a symbolic character; and a true prudence or law of shows, recognises the co-presence of other laws; and knows that its own office is subaltern; knows that it is surface and not centre where it works.

Page 26:

There are all degrees of proficiency in knowledge of the world. It is sufficient, to our present purpose, to indicate three. One class lives to the utility of the symbol; esteeming health and wealth a final good. Another class live above this mark to the beauty of the symbol; as the poet, and artist, and the naturalist, and man of science. A third class live above the beauty of the symbol to the beauty of the thing signified; these are wise men. The first class have common sense; the second, taste; and the third, spiritual perception.

Page 26 – 27:

Once in a long time, a man traverses the whole scale, and sees and enjoys the symbol solidly; then also has a clear eye for its beauty, and, lastly, whilst he pitches his tent on this sacred volcanic isle of nature, does not offer to build houses and barns thereon, reverencing the splendor of the God which he sees bursting through each chink and cranny.

Page 27:

If a man lose his balance, and immerse himself in any trades or pleasures for their own sake, he may be a good wheel or pin, but he is not a cultivated man.

Page 28:

It respects space and time, climate, want, sleep, the law of polarity, growth and death.

Page 28:

We live by the air which blows around us, and we are poisoned by the air that is too cold or too hot, too dry or too wet. Time, which shows so vacant, indivisible and divine in its coming, is slit and peddled into trifles and tatters.

Page 29:

Do what we can, summer will have its flies.

Page 29:

The northerner is perforce a householder. He must brew, bake, salt and preserve his food. He must pile wood and coal. But as it happens that not one stroke can labor lay to, without some new acquaintance with nature; and as nature is inexhaustibly significant, the inhabitants of these climates have always excelled the southerner in force.

Page 30:

Time is always bringing the occasions that disclose their value. Some wisdom comes out of every natural and innocent action. The domestic man, who loves no music so well as his kitchen clock, and the airs which the logs sing to him as they burn on the hearth, has solaces which others never dream of.

Page 30:

The good husband finds method as efficient in the packing of fire-wood in a shed, or in the harvesting of fruits in the cellar, as in Peninsular campaigns or the files of the Department of State.

Page 30:

In the rainy day he builds a work-bench, or gets his tool-box set in the corner of the barn-chamber, and stored with nails, gimlet, pincers, screwdriver, and chisel. Herein he tastes an old joy of youth and childhood, the cat-like love of garrets, presses, and corn-chambers, and of the conveniences of long housekeeping.

Page 30:

One might find argument for optimism, in the abundant flow of this saccharine element of pleasure, in every suburb and extremity of the good world.

Page 31:

If you believe in the soul, do not clutch at sensual sweetness before it is ripe on the slow tree of cause and effect. It is vinegar to the eyes, to deal with men of loose and imperfect perception. Dr. Johnson is reported to have said, "If the child says he looked out of this window when he looked out of that, — whip him."

Page 31:

The beautiful laws of time and space once dislocated by our inaptitude, are holes and dens. If the hive be disturbed by rash and stupid hands, instead of honey, it will yield us bees. Our words and actions to be fair, must be timely. A gay and pleasant sound is the whetting of the scythe in the mornings of June ; yet what is more lonesome and sad than the sound of a whetstone or mower's rifle, when it is too late in the season to make hay?

Page 32:

The last Grand Duke of Weimar, a man of superior understanding, said : " I have sometimes remarked in the presence of great works of art, and just now especially, in Dresden, how much a certain property contributes to the effect which gives life to the figures, and to the life an irresistible truth.

Page 32:

The Raphael, in the Dresden gal'ery, (the only greatly affecting picture which I have seen,) is the quietest and most passionless piece you can imagine ; a couple of saints who worship the Virgin and child. Nevertheless, it awakens a" deeper impression than the contortions of ten crucified martyrs. For, beside all the resistless beauty of form, it possesses in the highest degree the property of the perpendicularity of all the figures." — This perpendicularity we demand of all the figures in this picture of life.

Page 32:

Let them stand on their feet, and not float and swing. Let us know where to find them. Let them discriminate between what they remember, and what they dreamed. Let them call a spade a spade. Let them give us facts, and honor their own senses with trust.

Page 33:

Who is prudent? The men we call greatest are least in this kingdom.

Page 33:

There is a certain fatal dislocation in our relation to nature, distorting all our modes of living, and making every law our enemy, which seems at last to have aroused all the wit and virtue in the world to ponder the question of Reform. 'We must call the highest prudence to counsel, and ask why health and beauty and genius should now be the exception, rather than the rule of human nature? We do not know

the properties of plants and animals and the laws of nature through our sympathy with the same, but this remains the dream of poets. Poetry and prudence should be coincident. Poets should be lawgivers; that is, the boldest lyric inspiration should not chide and insult, but should announce and lead the civil code, and the day's work. But now the two things seem irreconcilably parted. We have violated law upon law, until we stand amidst ruins, and when by chance we **espy** a coincidence between reason and the phenomena, we are surprised.

Page 33 – 34:

Genius should be the child of genius, and every child should be inspired; but now it is not to be predicted of any child, and nowhere is it pure. We call partial half-lights, by courtesy, genius; talent which converts itself to money, talent which glitters to-day, that it may dine and sleep well tomorrow; and society is officered by *men of parts*, as they are properly called, and not by divine men.

Page 34:

We have found out fine names to cover our sensuality withal, but no gifts can raise intemperance. The man of talent affects to call his transgressions of the laws of the senses trivial, and to count them nothing considered with his devotion to his art. His art rebukes him. That never taught him lewdness, nor the love of wine, nor the wish to reap where he had not sowed. His art is less for every deduction from his holiness, and less for every defect of common sense.

Page 34:

Goethe's Tasso is very likely to be a pretty fair historical portrait, and that is true tragedy. It does not seem to me so genuine grief when some tyrannous Richard III. oppresses and slays a score of innocent persons, as when Antonio and Tasso, both apparently right, wrong each other.

Page 34 – 35:

A man of genius, of an ardent temperament, reckless of physical laws, self-indulgent, becomes presently unfortunate, querulous, a "discomfortable cousin," a thorn to himself and to others.

Page 35:

The scholar shames us by his bifold life. Whilst something higher than prudence is active, he is admirable; when common sense is wanted, he is an incumbrance. Yesterday, Cæsar was not so great; to-day, Job not so miserable.

Page 35:

He resembles the opium eaters, whom travelers describe as frequenting the bazaars of Constantinople, who skulk about all day, the most pitiful drivellers, yellow, emaciated, ragged, and sneaking; then, at evening, when the bazaars are open, they slink to the opium shop, swallow their morsel, and become tranquil, glorious, and great. And who has not seen the tragedy of imprudent genius, struggling for years with paltry **pecuniary** difficulties, at last sinking, chilled, exhausted, and fruitless, like a giant slaughtered by pins?

Page 36:

The laws of the world are written out for him on every piece of money in his hand. There is nothing he will not be the better for knowing, were it only the wisdom of Poor Richard; or the State-street prudence of buying by the acre, to sell by the foot; or the thrift of the agriculturist, to stick a tree between whiles, because it will grow whilst he sleeps; or the prudence which consists in husbanding little strokes of the tool, little portions of time, particles of stock, and small gains.

Page 36:

The eye of prudence may never shut. Iron, if kept at the ironmonger's, will rust. Beer, if not brewed in the right state of the atmosphere, will sour. Timber of ships will rot at sea, or, if laid up high and dry, will strain, warp, and dry-rot. Money, if kept by us, yields no rent, and is liable to loss; if invested, is liable to depreciation of the particular kind of stock. Strike, says the smith, the iron is white.

Page 37:

Let him learn a prudence of a higher strain. Let him learn that everything in nature, even motes and feathers, go by law and not by luck, and that what he sows, he reaps.

Page 38:

But as every fact hath its roots in the soul, and if the soul were changed, would cease to be, or would become some other thing, therefore, the proper administration of outward things will always rest on a just apprehension of their cause and origin, that is, the good man will be the wise man, and the single-hearted, the politic man. Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society. On the most profitable lie, the course of events presently lays a destructive tax; whilst frankness proves to be the best tactics, for it invites frankness, puts the parties on a convenient footing, and makes their business a friendship.

Page 38:

The Latin proverb says, that "in battles, the eye is first overcome." The eye is daunted, and greatly exaggerates the perils of the hour.

Page 39:

You are afraid of Grim; but Grim also is afraid of you.

Page 39 – 40:

It is a proverb, that "courtesy costs nothing; " but calculation might come to value love for its profit. Love is fabled to be blind; but kindness is necessary to perception; love is not a hood, but an eye-water. If you meet a sectary, or a hostile partisan, never recognize the dividing lines; but meet on what common ground remains, — if only that the sun shines, and the rain rains for both, — the area will widen very fast, and ere you know it, the boundary mountains, on which the eye had fastened, have melted into air. If he set out to contend, almost St. Paul will lie, almost St. John will hate.

Page 40:

Though your views are in straight antagonism to theirs, assume an identity of sentiment, assume that you are saying precisely that which all think, and in the flow of wit and love, roll out your paradoxes in solid column, with not the infirmity of a doubt. So at least shall you get an adequate deliverance. The natural motions of the soul are so much better than the voluntary ones, that you will never do yourself justice in dispute.

Page 41:

Life wastes itself whilst we are preparing to live. Our friends and fellow-workers die off from us. Scarcely can we say we see new men, new women, approaching us. We are too old to regard fashion, too old to expect patronage of any greater, or more powerful. Let us suck the sweetness of those affections and consuetudes that grow near us.

Page 41:

Every man's imagination hath its friends; and pleasant would life be with such companions.

Page 41:

I do not know if all matter will be found to be made of one element, as oxygen or hydrogen, at last, but the world of manners and actions is wrought of one stuff, and begin where we will, we are pretty sure in a short space, to be mumbling our ten commandments.

* **Vocab Words in Bold**