

surprised me, in my peripatetic wanderings, than to find, when I had now and then occasion to inquire my way, that the Londoners do not know London. The monster city of which they are so proud seems, like other very great ones of the earth, to have got beyond the familiarities of intimate acquaintance with even the men who respect it most.

I learned not to wonder, as I walked along the endless labyrinth of streets, and saw there was no such thing for a pedestrian as getting fairly into the country, that the literature of London — its purely indigenous literature — should be of so rural a character. The mere wayside beauties of nature, — green trees, and fresh grass, and soft mossy hillocks sprinkled over with harebells and daisies, and hawthorn bushes gray in blossom, and slender woodland streamlets, with yellow primroses looking down upon them from their banks, — things common and of little mark to at least the ordinary men that live among them, — must be redolent of poetry to even the ordinary Londoner, who, removed far from their real presence, contemplates them in idea through an atmosphere of intense desire. There are not a few silly things in what has been termed the Cockney school of poetry: in no other school does a teasing obscurity hover so incessantly on the edge of no meaning, or is the reader so much in danger of embracing, like one of the old mythologic heroes, a cloud for a goddess. But I can scarce join in the laugh raised against its incessant “babble about green fields,” or marvel that, in its ceaseless talk of flowers, its language should so nearly resemble that of Turkish love-letters composed of nosegays. Its style is eminently true to London nature, — which, of course, is simply human nature in London, — in the ardent desire which it breathes for rural quiet, and the green sunshiny solitude of the country. “Shapes of beauty,” according to one of its masters, — poor Keats, —