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THERE lies a great road ahead of us. How the view changes as we pass along it. At first only the hill tops are visible, rosy and radiant under the enthusiasm of youth. Then the level plains come into sight flooded with the bright light of mid-day. And then slowly we slip into the valleys where the long shadows fall like memories across our hearts.

This, friends, is the way we look upon our life. Yep, we do seem to look upon our life here on our dear old earth in this fashion generally. But are we really right in thinking so? Isn't it our state of mind that we look upon life that way? Emerson, if we are not mistaken, did not think so. He believed in the immortality of the soul and, no doubt, found youth in old age.

Why man, in his declining years, the Sage of Concord says, wants to study? Why he reads books with the avidity of youth? What makes him devote himself to the acquisition of truth or give himself up entirely to some invention? Unless, the philosopher-poet reasons, we have another world in which we could resume our life here on earth.

And Tolstoy (We seem to be quite a metaphysical frame of mind today. We can't account for that.)—and Tolstoy, if our memory serves us right, gives us a piece of knowledge concerning our life after death. Why, he says, you are afraid of death? Did you afraid of coming into the world? (The truth is we didn't know all about it.) If a baby had a mind, a mind that enables it to know everything before it was born, he continues, it would probably hesitate to see the light of day. So we needn't be afraid of death as we did n't afraid of arriving here on earth, we guess.

We get up early each morning to see the wonder of a new day coming fresh from the hands of its Maker, and each evening we stand, taking care not to tread upon any anthill, on the camp grounds and watch the same day drop over the mountains to eternity. In the flaming sky where so often hangs the silver crescent is always the promise of another day, another chance to begin anew. The tantalizing sunrises and sunsets, with their orange bursts of color, never cease to be a wonder, marvel and mystery to us. And we feel

young,—infinitely young in heart and spirit. Hope and promise! The spiritual tonic of human being! They make us feel young. They keep us young. That's the "done," to use the language of the streets.

Be young. Feel young. Always. Do your best, Horatio, to keep things bright within. Light all the lamps, in your heart, at your shrines, and burn incense to the loves that were and are and make your mind sound like a bell, a bell of cheer, joy and merriment!

"I was too old for you, and I ought to have known it," says the nice old man, in a story by Italo Svevo, a celebrated Italian novelist. (No, old gent, you are not.) And the pretty girl exclaims in protest: "Old! I love you because I liked that air of distinction of yours." O boy, and boy-o-boy! No wonder the old gent smiles at the compliment and feels young and buoyant and happy. (He knows even in his old age he looks distinguished and takes pride in the fact.)

Take pride in the fact, our dear old friends including, of course, the ancient-looking gent sitting in a corner of a certain secondhand book store in a certain street in Los Angeles, of whom we mentioned in our previous essay: "ON BABIES." We are young, as we think young, as they say.

And now, friends, young and old (old in age only), we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!



Our Bacchus



I went, as usual, to canteen today
And everybody there looked blithe and gay

"Merry Christmas!" I said and sat
"Merry Christmas!" said one who was fat

I asked him, "You like beer or tea?"
He answered, "Beer, of course. Tea? Not for me."

And at supper I sat again by his side
He looked by that time like Bacchus without hide.

(Semitic) Higashi Nogaki



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