



Among the Hills

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In his prelude, Whittier criticizes the New Englanders of his time as crippled prisoners of their own lack of vision, with starved spirits though they live in a rich land. Optimistically he calls them to reach out for the beauty and joy provided by God and to appreciate the beauty of nature that reflects the love of God. As the poem opens, summer's long cloudy disposition gives way to sunshine and the natural beauties it reveals as a couple drives through the countryside to a farmhouse to purchase butter. Here the housewife tells her tale of how she came to the farm and convinced the crusty New Englander that he needed a wife and that it should be she: "And so the farmer found a wife." He was thus transformed as a man both private and public, as his "love thus deepened to respect." She too was transformed to a simpler life and outlook, now shunning "the follies, born/ Of fashion and convention." The couple returns home as the sun sets, and the poet reflects on her story and how "To rugged farm-life came the gift/ To harmonize and soften."

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