SELECTIONS FROM THOREAU

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SELECTIONS FROM THOREAU

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

We are most of us familiar with one or another of the many legendary apparitions of the *alter ego*, or second self, a manifestation which must have entailed considerable inconvenience on the parties whom it principally concerned. It could hardly be agreeable to a person of strong distinctive personality to feel that his astral counterpart was travelling at large about the country, and compromising him by granting unauthorised interviews to all sorts of busybodies; still less, perhaps, would he relish such a startling experience as that of the magus Zoroaster, who, if the poet is to be credited, "met his own image walking in the garden." But it should be noted that the annals of literature present equally interesting, and better authenticated examples of a somewhat similar phenomenon. Authors, and especially those of new and unappreciated genius, are not unfrequently subject to the same annoyance as Zoroaster; nay, worse, for whereas the second self in the legend was at least an exact image of its original,