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UNDER THE WILLOWS

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

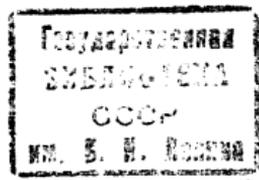
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TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

AGRO DOLCE.

THE wind is roistering out of doors,
My windows shake and my chimney roars ;
My Elmwood chimneys seem crooning to me,
As of old, in their moody, minor key,
And out of the past the hoarse wind blows,
As I sit in my arm-chair, and toast my toes.

“Ho! ho! nine-and-forty,” they seem to sing,
“We saw you a little toddling thing,
We knew you child and youth and man,
A wonderful fellow to dream and plan,
With a great thing always to come, — who knows?
Well, well! ’t is some comfort to toast one’s toes.

“How many times have you sat at gaze
Till the mouldering fire forgot to blaze,

Shaping among the whimsical coals
Fancies and figures and shining goals!
What matters the ashes that cover those?
While hickory lasts you can toast your toes.

“O dream-ship-builder! where are they all,
Your grand three-deckers, deep-chested and tall,
That should crush the waves under canvas piles,
And anchor at last by the Fortunate Isles?
There 's gray in your beard, the years turn
foes,
While you muse in your arm-chair and toast your
toes.”

I sit and dream that I hear, as of yore,
My Elmwood chimneys' deep-throated roar;
If much be gone, there is much remains;
By the embers of loss I count my gains,
You and yours with the best, till the old hope
glows
In the fanciful flame, as I toast my toes.

TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

Instead of a fleet of broad-browed ships,
To send a child's armada of chips!
Instead of the great guns, tier on tier,
A freight of pebbles and grass-blades sere!
“ Well, maybe more love with the less gift goes
I growl, as, half moody, I toast my toes.