

THE ARISTOCRAT OF THE ROAD.

More than one way of walking ? Verily ;
But, for the art of walking, only one.
Beginners in the ambulative art,
As in all art, are immethodical.

At first the prospective walker, rash
As any hero, dedicates himself
To chance. A vagabond upon the earth
He leads a life uncertain : art and craft
Pedalian suffer secret chrysalid
Probations and adventures ere they gain
The ultimate image of complete
Pedestrianism. Through gross suburban miles
And over leagues of undistinguished ground
He plods, he tramps. Utilitarian thoughts
Of exercise and health extenuate
The dulness of duty ; he persuades
Himself he likes it ; finds, where none exist,
Amazing qualities ; and tires his limbs,
His thought, his fancy, o'er and o'er again
But in the dismal watches of night
He knows it all delusion ; beauty, none,
Nor pleasure in it ; ennui only.

He tries a comrade. Worse and worse !—for that,
In high pedestrianism, turns out to be
A double misery, a manacled
Contingence was vexation. Walking-tours ?
Belletrists crack them up. He takes one—lo,
A sheer atrocity !
Forth from his travail and despair at last,
Crash through his plodding apparatus, breaks
The dawn of art. He recollects a mile,
Or half a mile, that pleased him ; a furlong here,
And there a hundred yards ; or an hour's march

Over some curve of the world when everything
 Above him and about him from the zenith
 To the sky-edge, and radiant from his feet
 Toward every cardinal point, put off the veil,
 Becoming evident as guilt or love, as things
 They cannot hide.

Thus art begins.
 And thus at once the plodder of the waste
 Attains utility and finds himself
 Aristocrat and patron of the road;
 the proud pedestrian free
 Of the world, walks only now in picked resorts,
 And can without a chart, without a guide,
 Discover lands richer than El Dorado,
 Sweeter than Beulah, and with ease
 Ascend secluded mountains more delectable
 Than heights in ancient pilgrimages famed,
 Or myth-clad hills, or summits of romance.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

—“*Fleet Street and other Poems.*”