

A precious, mouldering pleasure 'tis  
to meet an antique book,  
in just the dress his century wore;  
a privilege, I think,  
His (venerable) hand to take,  
and warming in our own,  
a passage back, or two, to make  
to times when he was young.  
His quaint opinions to inspect,  
his knowledge to unfold  
on what concerns our mutual mind,  
the literature of old;  
What interested scholars most,  
what competitions ran  
when Plato was a certainty,  
and Sophocles a man;  
When Sappho was a living girl,  
and Beatrice wore  
the gown that Dante deified.  
facts, centuries before,  
He traverses familiar,  
as one should come to town  
and tell you all your dreams were true:  
he lived where dreams were born.  
His presence is enchantment,  
you beg him not to go;  
old volumes shake their vellum heads  
and tantalize, just so.  
And there's grief of hunger, and grief of cold  
and there's a sort they call despair  
there's banishment from primitive lust  
in the slightest sight of fundamental air