Of all the public lecturers of our time and place, none have attracted more attention from the press, and consequently the people, than RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Lecturing has become quite a fashionable science--and now, instead of using the old style phrases for illustrating facts, we call travelling preachers perambulating showmen, and floating politicians, lecturers.

As a lecturer, Ralph Waldo Emerson is extensively known around these parts; but whether his lectures come under the head of law, logic, politics, Scripture, or the show business, is a matter of much speculation; for our own part, the more we read or hear of Ralph, the more we don't know what it's all about.

Somebody has said, that to his singularity of style or expression, Carlyle and his works owe their great notoriety or fame--and many compare Ralph Waldo to old Carlyle. They cannot trace exactly any great affinity between these two great geniuses of the flash literary school. Carlyle writes vigorously, quaintly enough, but almost always speaks when he says something; on the contrary, our flighty friend Ralph speaks vigorously, yet says nothing! Of all men that have ever stood and delivered in presence of "a reporter," none surely ever led these indefatigable knights of the pen such a wild-goose chase over the verdant and flowery pastures of King's English, as Ralph Waldo Emerson. In ordinary cases, a reporter well versed in his art, catches a sentence of a speaker, and goes on to fill it out upon the most correct impression of what was intended, or what is implied. But no such license follows the outpourings of Mr. Emerson; no thought can fathom his intentions, and quite as bottomless are even his finished sentences. We have known "old stagers," in the newspaporial line, veteran reporters, so dumbfounded and confounded by the first fire of Ralph, and his grand and lofty acrobating in elocution, that they up, seized their hat and paper, and sloped, horrified at the prospect of an attempt to "take down" Mr. Emerson.

If Roaring Ralph touches a homely mullen weed, on a donkey heath, straightway he makes it a full-blown rose, in the land of Ophir, shedding an odor balmy as the gales of Arabia; while with a facility the wonderful London auctioneer Robbins might envy, Ralph imparts to a lime-box, or pig-sty, a negro hovel, or an Irish shanty, all the romance, artistic elegance and finish of a first-class manor-house, or Swiss cottage, inlaid with alabaster and fresco, surrounded by elfin bowers, grand walks, bee hives, and honeysuckles.

Ralph don't group his metaphorical beauties, or dainties of Webster, Walker, &c., but rushes them out in torrents--rattles them down in cataracts and avalanches--bewildering, astounding, and incomprehensible. He hits you upon the left lug of your knowledge box with a metaphor so unwieldy and original, that your breath is soon gone--and before it is recovered, he gives you another rhapsody on t'other side, and as you try to steady yourself, bim comes another, heavier than the first two, while a fourth batch of this sort of elocution fetches you a bang over the eyes, giving you a vertigo in the ribs of your bewildered senses, and before you can say "God bless us!" down he has you--cobim! with a deluge of high-heeled grammar and three-storied Anglo Saxon, settling your hash, and brings you to the ground by the run, as though you were struck by lightning, or in the way of a 36-pounder! Ralph Waldo is death and an entire stud of
pale horses on flowery expressions and japonica-domish flubdubs. He revels in all those knock-kneed, antique, or
crooked and twisted words we used all of us to puzzle our brains over in the days of our youth, and grammar lessons
and rhetoric exercises. He has a penchant as strong as cheap boarding-house butter, for mystification, and a free
delivery of hard words, perfectly and unequivocally wonderful. We listened one long hour by the clock of Rumford
Hall, one night, to an outpouring of argumentum ad hominem of Mr. Emerson's--at what? A boy under an apple tree! If
ten persons out of the five hundred present were put upon their oaths, they could no more have deciphered, or translated
Mr. Ralph's argumentation, than they could the hieroglyphics upon the walls of Thebes, or the sarcophagus of old King
Pharaoh! When Ralph Waldo opens, he may be as calm as a May morn--he may talk for five minutes, like a book--we
mean a common-sensed, understandable book; but all of a sudden the fluid will strike him--up he goes--down he
fetches them. He throws a double somerset backwards over Asia Minor--flip-flaps in Greece--and skeets over Iceland; here he slips up with a flower garden--a torrent of gilt-edged metaphors, that would last a country
parson's moderate demand a long lifetime, are whirled with the fury and fleetness of Jove's thunderbolts. After
exhausting his sweet-scented receiver of this floral elocution, he pauses four seconds; pointing to vacuum, over the
heads of his audience, he asks, in an anxious tone, "Do you see that?" Of course the audience are not expected to be so
unmannerly as to ask "What?" If they were, Ralph would not give them time to "go in," for after asking them if they see
that, he continues--
"There! Mark! Note! It is a malaria prism! Now, then; here--there; see it! Note it! Watch it!"
During this time, half of the audience, especially the old women and the children, look around, fearfull of the ceiling
falling in, or big bugs lighting on them. But the pause is for a moment, and anxiety ceases when they learn it was only a
false alarm, only--
"Egotism! The lame, the pestiferous exhalation or concrete malformation of society!"
You breathe freer, and Ralph goes in, gloves on.
"Egotism! A metaphysical, calcareous, oleraceous amentum of--society! The mental varioloid of this sublunary
hemisphere! One of its worst feelings or features is, the craving of sympathy. It even loves sickness, because actual
pain engenders signs of sympathy. All cultivated men are infected more or less with this dropsy. But they are still the
leaders. The life of a few men is the life of every place. In Boston you hear and see a few, so in New York; then you
may as well die. Life is very narrow. Bring a few men together, and under the spell of one calm genius, what frank, sad
confessions will be made! Culture is the suggestion from a few best thoughts that a man should not be a charlatan, but
temper and subdue life. Culture redresses his balance, and puts him among his equals. It is a poor compliment always to
talk with a man upon his specialty, as if he were a cheese-mite, and was therefore strong on Cheshire and Stilton.
Culture takes the grocer out of his molasses and makes him genial. We pay a heavy price for those fancy goods, Fine
Arts and Philosophy. No performance is worth loss of geniality. That unhappy man called of genius, is an unfortunate
man. Nature always carries her point despite the means!"
If that don't convince you of Ralph's high-heeled, knock-kneed logic, or au fait dexterity in concocting flap-doodle
mixtures, you're ahead of ordinary intellect as far as this famed lecturer is in advance of gin and bitters, or opium
discourses on--delirium tremens!
In short, Ralph Waldo Emerson can wrap up a subject in more mystery and science of language than ever a defunct
Egyptian received at the hands of the mummy manufacturers! In person, Mr. Ralph is rather a pleasing sort of man; in
manners frank and agreeable; about forty years of age, and a native of Massachusetts. As a lawyer, he would have been
the horror of jurors and judges; as a lecturer, he is, as near as possible, what we have described him.

(The end)
Falconbridge's short story: Ralph Waldo Emerson