

THE BIOGRAPHERS OF LINCOLN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was the first American to reach the lonely height of immortal fame.

Before him within the narrow compass of our history loom but two preëminent names : Columbus the discoverer, and Washington the founder,—the one an Italian seer, the other an English country gentleman.

In a narrow sense, of course, Washington was American : he was born, lived, and died here ; it was here he drew his sword and cut the petty, vexatious net which a stupid king had flung over us, and by his even, well-balanced, cool intelligence helped to guide us through national infancy. For all that he was English, and in his nature, habits, moral standards, and social theories, in short, in all points which, aside from mere geographical position, make up a man, was as thoroughgoing a British colonial gentleman as one could find anywhere beneath the Union Jack.

The genuine American of the Lincoln type came later, was the product of a new life, and departed very far from the Englishmen of colonial America.

The United States cast off its European habits about the end of the last century, and began in earnest its own proper career. From that day to this its whole history may be summed up as the subjugation of the continent, the elaboration of democracy, and the rebellion. In all of these Abraham Lincoln bore a part. He was pioneer, legislator, and the supreme figure of the war.

Not long before his birth there had sprung up over all inhabited parts of the United States a determination to grapple with the continental *terra incognita*, to wrest it from barbarism, to dare its solitudes, to search in the great vacant spaces between the eastern fringe of civilization and the far Pacific for whatever of goodly land or other lure lay therein. The tortuous thread of every river was traced through primeval forests and across virgin plains. A general roaming search was instituted and urged on by passionate geographical curiosity, by honest cupidity, but above all by a dominating resolve to found new homes where the conditions of nature were favorable to instant comfort and not too distant wealth. This great sweeping campaign against nature, this prodigious advance of a horde of home-makers, has been pushed since the dawn of the century, till now in its declining years the occupation of the continent is complete. With-

in the lifetime of Lincoln and since his death, forests and prairies, cañons and rivers, mountains and plains have all been explored. Siberian Montana has been ransacked, Sahàran Arizona has yielded up its last secrets, and even the blizzard has been tracked to its lair. Into every gorge the pioneer has gone to hunt anything worth having, and at last even the ice-armored crags have been stormed and scaled by those hammer-bearing sons of Thor the geologists.

We know our country, we have got it conquered, we have bound it with railroad iron, and seized upon every coigne of vantage.

This vast ACT OF POSSESSION is far the most impressive feature of our history, and when its political and military and commercial achievements sink back with the perspective of time and take their true places in the general picture of human life, there will be nothing about them so wonderful as the great Westward march of home-makers.

Such another migration has not been seen since the dark beginnings of Old World tradition, when that primitive Aryan snail took thousands of years to crawl into Europe and make of himself even a German.

It is true that the implements of modern civilization are tools of swiftness, that railways and telegraphs dragged at the heels of the pioneers vastly hastened the filling up of the West, as needle-guns and rifled cannon have urged war to its present awful brevity. Yet with all due allowance for the acceleration of the nineteenth century, the conquering and peopling of a broad continent within the short span of a single century remains the most extraordinary feat in the annals of the peaceful deeds of mankind.

It is out of this great migration that the true, hardy American people have sprung ; it was out of it that Lincoln came.

The rabble millions that have had themselves ferried over here to clutch for a share of American abundance, and who taint the pure air with odor of European degradation, are not numerous enough, thank God, to fatally dilute the strong new race. The sons of the pioneers are the true Americans ; in the century's struggle with nature they have gathered an Antæan strength, and, flushed with their victory over a savage continent, believe themselves the coming leaders of the world. Are there not signs that deep down in her secret consciousness Europe thinks so too ?

The very war of the Rebellion was but a quarrel in this business of Western home-making. In the midst of our career of land settlement we stopped short, flung down the axe and plow, and fought out the question whether these myriad new homes should be free or slave homes. The war was only a furious, dreadful interruption, and when it was done, on rolled the Westward tide again, as if nothing had happened.

From the days of the Revolution, when Washington an English commoner vanquished George an English king, until the Rebellion, there was no display of heroic greatness, no passion hot enough to melt the refractory soul of the nation and pour it forth like lava from an angry crater. The war of '12 was a mere episode. In that span of peaceful days there was no lack of noblest devotion to purpose; indeed, the whole story of Western settlement is one long tale of struggle and privation, of courage and death. The fallen in this quasi-peaceful campaign vastly outnumber the victims of war and count among them regiments of gentle women and defenseless children. Still the drama of life was never more than narrow and local; it was a period full of the sounds of pioneering, whose echoes scarcely ever carried beyond the lines of township and county.

Thus it is that the contemplation of Washington and Lincoln is like gazing upon two far-separated mountains, with a broad fertile valley stretching between them. Yonder in the misty lowlands are a million undistinguishable homes, the faintly seen spires of God's houses, smoke of toil and far reverberation of industries; with nothing anywhere to pierce the earth mist and reach toward the blue.

But up there in the clearer, finer air, the two star-neighboring giants wear upon their brows the white reflection of that universal and perpetual light which is true fame. Washington stands upon the border line of English and American history. Lincoln looms up from the very heart of American life, a true and characteristic son of the men of the West.

In claiming his preëminence as a great central figure of the war, there is no word or thought to disparage the goodly company of civil and military champions whose labor and valor were so closely linked together in the victory. For all of them we have our estimate of value; and each has received his fair division of the laurels. But for Lincoln there is a feeling of mystery and distance which is not to be explained by his short career and his early martyrdom; rather it has its origin in the consciousness that he was nearest to the hand of Divine Providence, and that the lips which uttered the Emancipation Proclamation and Gettysburg Consecration spoke with the deep vibra-

tion of a nature bowed and overcome by the great moral power which guides the destiny of the nation.

It is of this man that we are to have a biography, not a jostling forward of uncontrollable conceit in so-called personal reminiscences, but a serious and full account of an unex-ampled life.

Ah! how many things a biography may mean! Velasquez could paint a complete one of Philip IV. on a single square of canvas in an idle hour. With the icy courage of a vivisectioning naturalist, he gave you all there was of his weak, sensual patron, and cartloads of books do not throw another solitary ray on his character. A Boswell may crawl along at the heel of mediocrity and amuse whole generations with his twaddle and tattle. Carlyle could scream his hero-worship in forced, fantastic phrase, and still leave you an utter stranger to his demi-god.

As to Lincoln, what the world thirsts for is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. From the hands of John George Nicolay and John Hay we shall have *all* that.

They were his devoted friends, his faithful secretaries, the custodians and students of his papers. Moreover, as will presently be seen, they have by life and acquirement types of mind which give us the promise of a thoroughly good performance of their task.

John George Nicolay was born in the village of Essingen, in Rhenish Bavaria. His parents emigrated to this country when he was a child; they lived for a while in Cincinnati and then pushed on to Illinois. The elder Nicolay bought a farm in Pike County, and his son grew up there, acquiring in that beautiful country of forest and stream a strong love of rural life and field sports.

John Hay was born in Indiana, October 8, 1838; his father, a physician of standing and a type of the old-fashioned, high-minded professional gentleman; his mother, of a good Rhode Island family. His boyhood was passed in the West in the midst of all the political interest of the second stage of the business of community-making; namely, that period when the thin picket line of pioneer villages was followed by the organization of great towns, and when all the initial steps of local self-government were of foremost interest.

In the mean time slowly ripened the free-soil question, and thus these boys were forced into a far clearer knowledge of the structure of the civil and political institutions of their country and of impending issues than if they had grown up in an older State.

In communities like the Indiana and Illinois of forty years ago, boys led no separate life, there was no specialized hot-house treatment

as if a boy were an orchid or other frail exotic to be glassed away from the rough air of manhood; but they mingled with men, saw men's work, to a certain degree shared it, and fed upon men's books instead of the debilitating milk and water literature which is now given them. If in consequence manhood came a little prematurely, it did no harm, but much good in preparing young fellows for the early assumption of responsibility. Moreover it gave rise to those frank intimacies between men like Lincoln and youths like Nicolay and Hay.

Like most educated Western boys, therefore, they knew in detail the political life of which Lincoln was the outgrowth and the expression; and, what is of as much value in the interest of Lincoln's biography, they were equally familiar with the new type of manhood which was springing up about them.

Nicolay had begun his English education at Cincinnati, and continued to attend such schools as were within his reach until he was about eighteen years of age, when he resolved to become a printer and entered the office of the "Free Press" in Pittsfield. He soon became extremely expert in the business, and, not satisfied with knowing all there was to be learned in a country printing-office, he began to investigate the principle of the machinery employed, and at last invented a new form of press, for which he obtained a patent before he was nineteen years old. He next became associate editor, and it grew rapidly evident that there was not room enough for him in the office as a subordinate. With a little assistance from friends whose confidence he had gained by his energy and capacity, he bought the paper, assuming with the light heart of youth the care of its direction and the burden of debt which its purchase entailed. He made a good newspaper of it, and paid his debts with punctuality; but he felt no call to pass his life in Pittsfield, and when his friend O. M. Hatch was elected Secretary of State, he accepted his invitation to go to Springfield and take a position in his office.

Hay, growing up on the western verge of the State, early appreciated the untrammelled, un-Grundied man of the Mississippi Basin. He was arrested by the sharp contrast of manner and thought and speech between these children of the soil and the gentlemen who were a survival of colonial and early republican times; he perceived with relish the rich indigenous humor which blossomed out from the new human conditions, but never made the stupid, dull mistake of suspecting that because a man lacked the leather and prunella (for which there was little room in the wagon of the pioneer) he must lack also the generosity and honor of the gentleman.

It requires a certain amount of independence to be sure of moral qualities when found dissociated from their traditional accompaniments. "Is that man over there a gentleman?" said a pretty countess in a London drawing-room. "It is hard to fancy it with such a degenerate-looking cravat-knot."

No one has learned the new American better than did Hay in his youth, and ever since he has managed to keep the touch of comprehending sympathy equally with the free and equal, spontaneous Westerner and the prisoner who contentedly paces the iron-barred cages of caste in London or Madrid.

Hence there was no barrier of ignorance to prevent these men from understanding Lincoln. To them there was nothing baffling that this outgrowth of log-cabins and flat-boats should be full of tenderness and honor, nothing strange that the man of a quiet country law practice should rise and crush Douglas with lofty argument, and then lift the policy of the American Government from the mire of cowardly compromise to the firm, high ground of moral duty.

Coming to Springfield in the early years of the life of the Republican party, Nicolay not only faithfully fulfilled his duties in the office of the Secretary of State, but he also made himself felt in the politics of Illinois. He wrote constantly for the Illinois and St. Louis papers; he did much of the work of the State and local Republican committees; he frequently spoke at public meetings in Sangamon and the adjoining counties; he formed the acquaintance and gained the intimate friendship of the prominent Republican leaders of Illinois, and when, in the spring of 1860, Mr. Lincoln was nominated at Chicago, Mr. Nicolay was at once selected by him as the most discreet and competent person in his reach to assume the charge of his extensive correspondence. He acted in that capacity throughout that intensely excited and eventful campaign, and it is worthy of remark that not a line written from Mr. Lincoln's office from the nomination to the election gave the slightest embarrassment to the Republicans in any part of the country. Neither the President nor his secretary had had any special training in those fields where tact and discretion are supposed to be acquired; but there was an amount of good sense and sound judgment in the office which then, as thereafter, always proved equal to any demand. So perfect an understanding grew up during the campaign between Mr. Lincoln and his secretary, that after his election he determined to make the relation a permanent one, and the first nomination the President signed after his inauguration was

that of John G. Nicolay to be his official private secretary.

His confidence was not misplaced; for four years Mr. Nicolay served him with the greatest devotion, ability, and judgment. He made no mistakes; he never put himself forward; he did not magnify his office; he met the throng of place-seekers, of congressmen, of national and State officers, of cranks and inventors, who crowded the corridors of the White House,—all eager to impress their views or their claims upon the attention of the President,—with unflinching courtesy and patience, but with a reserve which promised nothing, and therefore gave no excuse for resentment when nothing was gained. Not only in Washington was he useful to Mr. Lincoln. He was frequently sent on delicate and confidential errands to different parts of the country, and acted constantly as a medium of communication between the President and prominent men of his party who lived away from the capital.

By the time Hay was sixteen, besides these precious lessons of Western life, he had been grounded so well in the preliminary studies of a university course that he was able to go to Rhode Island, the early home of his mother, and enter the Sophomore class of Brown University. There he remained three years, being graduated in the summer of 1858.

After that he continued his studies (among them the law) in Springfield, Illinois, and was admitted to the bar in February, 1861.

It was during this period that Lincoln formed for the young student that friendship which led him, when he entered the White House, to call Hay to his aid as assistant secretary, associating him in duty with Mr. Nicolay.

At twenty-one years of age, after a quiet boyhood, and a few calm years of university and professional study, Hay was flung suddenly into the dark vortex of the greatest modern struggle. The friend, the intimate of the President, living with him in the White House, sustaining, day after day, relations of the closest confidence, he saw the whole complex progress of events, and from the very force of position gained an accurate knowledge of the truth of that swiftly made history, free from the mixture of falsehood and distortion, which the public has too often and too credulously accepted. He knew from the lips of his chief the motives, estimates, and intentions of the man, and bore a share of that Atlas-load of desperate perplexity and incalculable care which rested with crushing weight on the shoulders of Lincoln. Not only in Washington, by the side of the President, did he do service, but for a time was called to

active military duty in the field, where, as assistant adjutant-general on the staffs of Generals Hunter and Gilmore, he rendered that "faithful and meritorious service" for which the brevets of lieutenant-colonel and colonel were bestowed. Early in 1864 he was recalled to the White House as aid-de-camp to the President, and remained on duty to the end. He watched by the martyr's death-bed, heard the last respiration, and saw the lamp of life dim and die.

The war was over. Lincoln's wise and generous character had disappeared from the stage. The nation and its people went out as from some black tragedy into the sunlight of every day, and resumed a suspended life.

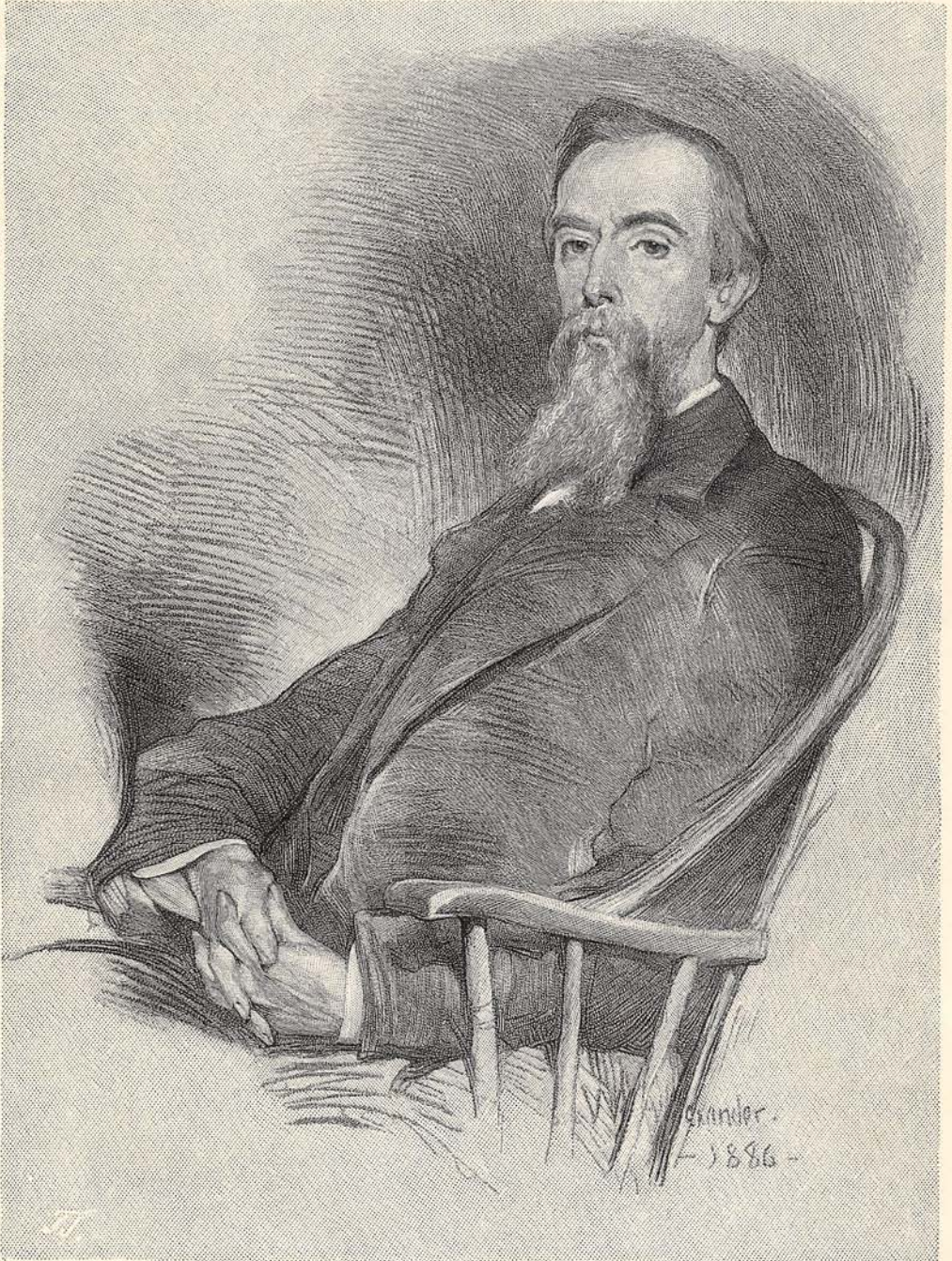
The two secretaries, with their clear, well-balanced observation, had watched the whole vast drama from behind the scenes, and more than all else they had beheld the great man, by the might and majesty of sincere conviction, and by faith in Divine Providence, rise and grow with the hour into giant stature.

The country lived and laughed again. Every one went his way. Nicolay and Hay went to Paris. Nicolay was appointed to succeed the Hon. John Bigelow as consul-general. Before sailing for his post he joined the party which went from New York to celebrate at Charleston the raising of the national flag upon the ruins of Fort Sumter. Four years before, the banner had been lowered on that fortress, the first victory of treason; the 14th of April, 1865, had been set aside as a festival day to commemorate its restoration; but even a darker significance was to be given to the second date than that which attached to the first. Mr. Nicolay shared in the rejoicings at Charleston and returned to the North to hear of the President's assassination. His appointment to Paris was confirmed by Mr. Johnson, and he managed the Paris consulate for more than four years with the ability and faithfulness with which he has always discharged every trust confided to him. The business of the office was admirably conducted during his incumbency and paid large sums annually into the Treasury.

For two years Hay occupied the post of secretary of legation.

The White House had been the scene of strain and perplexity, at length of tragedy and martyrdom, the very sun had seemed eclipsed by the smoke of war, and now the two young men found themselves in Paris the laughing, with the great city flinging her sparkling life gayly into the light, as the waters of the *grandes eaux* are tossed to the sapphire sky.

In the intervals of his regular official duties Hay refreshed himself with deep draughts from the streams of literature and art which water



Drawn by J. W. Alexander.

JOHN G. NICOLAY.

Engraved by T. Johnson.

and fertilize the flowery capital and flow on into the great mother river of the intellectual world of Europe. There, too, as we gather from his writings, he made, as we all do, his mocking bow to the modern god, Conventionality, that child of artifice and vanity, whom they over there have deified without waiting like good Latins till his death.

After two years in this city of wit and rapiers, of art and epigram, of polished intelligence and graceful extravagance, Hay went as *chargé d'affaires* to Vienna, where again his official position gave him rare facilities for learning what they do with their lives in that part of the world, and what if anything is behind the smiling *Gemüthlichkeit* on which the Viennese so frankly founds his civic pride.

Nicolay meantime remained in Paris till 1869, when he returned to America and assumed for a while the editorial control of the Chicago "Republican," a position which a change of proprietors caused him to relinquish.

Not long afterwards the position of marshal of the Supreme Court at Washington became vacant by the election to Congress of the Hon. Richard C. Parsons, and Mr. Nicolay was elected to fill it by the vote of the bench. He has occupied this post ever since. It leaves him a good deal of leisure, all of which he has devoted, for fifteen years, to the important work which is now approaching completion—"The Life of Abraham Lincoln."

Though he began without especial advantages, and though he has never been favored with robust health, there are few men who have made more of life than Mr. Nicolay. With little assistance from teachers he has acquired a knowledge of several languages; he has made himself thoroughly acquainted with all that is best worth knowing in English, French and German literature; he is an intelligent connoisseur of music, a lover of art, and something of an artist himself. He has an unusual comprehension of mechanical principles; has devised and patented numerous inventions, which he has never had the time or perhaps the inclination to turn to pecuniary advantage. He was, like Mr. Hay,—until the attention of both was monopolized by the exacting claims of their historical work,—a frequent and welcome contributor to the magazines in prose and verse, and is the author of the admirable volume with which Charles Scribner's Sons began their "Campaigns of the Civil War," and which at once took rank, by the unanimous verdict of intelligent critics, as one of the best of the series. It is called "The Outbreak of Rebellion," and contains the most accurate and valuable account yet printed of the events immediately preceding the war, and its opening scenes down to the battle of Bull Run. The hand

of a master may be recognized in a hurried sketch as well as in a finished picture, and this little book showed Mr. Nicolay to possess the indispensable qualifications of an historian,—calmness of temper, unflinching candor of statement, untiring industry in the collection and arrangement of facts, and unusual clearness and decision of judgment, entirely free from dogmatism or prejudice. His style is clear and graphic, with the ease and force which naturally flow from a definite purpose and a perfect comprehension of the subject in hand. He lives in a pleasant house of his own on Capitol Hill, with an only daughter, a student of art of the highest promise. Mrs. Nicolay recently died, deplored by the many who appreciated her winning and beautiful character, her strong trained intellect, and her active kindness and sympathy.

Hay's next diplomatic appointment after Vienna was secretary of legation at Madrid, where, to judge from the charming memorial of his stay, "Castilian Days," he found the Spanish character, and the all but unknown artistic and historic wealth under which Spain fairly groans, a fresher and more captivating field for his observation than northern Europe.

Hay's stay in Europe, from 1865 to 1870, was (as is plain to all who know him) a period of constant and devoted study. The intervals of duty were crammed full of observation and reading, not merely of art and letters, but of diplomacy and statesmanship. In our great cyclone he had stood by the side of the Captain with his hand on the shuddering wheel; what more natural than that he should watch with eager and critical eye the quaint old methods of navigation with which the dynastic admirals were manœuvring the cumbersome fleet of European nationalities. That he came back even a firmer Republican than he went is known to all his intimates.

That he had in common with the rest of his countrymen reduced his life from the strained pitch of war to the livable tones of every day was discernible from the spirit of the able leaders he wrote from 1871 to 1875 in the New York "Tribune," a series which reflected in scholarly finish and wide-world knowledge the ripe results of his years of European study.

It was at this period that, besides numerous contributions to the magazines, he published "Castilian Days" and "Pike County Ballads,"—the one a group of masterly pictures of a land and people with glory and greatness behind them; a land in the afternoon of life with the fading light of a declining history pouring back over heroes and armies, over castle wall and cathedral spire, glinting a single ray on the helmet of Don Quixote,



Drawn by J. W. Alexander.

Engraved by J. H. E. Whitney.

JOHN HAY.

touching the crumbling towers of the Visigoths, and falling mellow and full upon the inspired canvases of Velasquez and Murillo; the other a singing of the deeds of those rough, coarse demi-gods of Pike, a race as crude as if fashioned out of Mississippi River mud with a bowie knife, as archaic as Homer's Greeks, as shaggy and dangerous as their early ancestors of the Rhine on whom Cæsar put his iron heel.

Both pictures were true. Together they serve to show the range of perception of the writer.

The charm of "Castilian Days," beyond its diamondlike brilliancy, is the strength of Hay's critical attitude and the realist's habit of looking at things as they are, of justly distinguishing the truth. He says, in the delightful chapter on the "Cradle and Grave of Cervantes," "Having examined the evidence, we considered ourselves justly entitled to all the usual emotions in visiting the church of the parish, Santa Maria la Major." Jestingly said of himself, this is nevertheless characteristic of his insistence in getting at the realities of men and events.

This little book on Spain, so flowingly written, so full of wit and epigram, has passages of classic eloquence, like the burst of praise uttered before Murillo's Virgin in Madrid.

He should be ranked as a realist in the art of literature; and by that is not meant one who is contented with the visible actualities of men and nature, but who has imagination and poetic vision enough to truthfully discern those equally actual motives and tendencies which constitute the whole hidden framework of society. To be a realist in that sense is simply not to be driven from a normal, sound conception of the material and external facts of life, by the powerful current which surges through the channels of thought and feeling of all poetic natures. The greatest realist is he who can keep his feet always on the solid bottom while wading deepest into the foaming river of life, and such is Hay.

In 1879 Hay accepted the first assistant-secretaryship of state and discharged its duties to the end of the Hayes administration, in the mean time representing the United States at the International Sanitary Congress, of which he was elected President. Then, fulfilling a long-cherished intention, he declined the urgent invitation of Garfield and Blaine to remain in public life, and retired to devote himself to the life of Lincoln. It will hereafter appear that he did wisely, despite the regret of Garfield, and of Hay's fellow-citizens of Cleveland, who already looked upon him as a political leader. They naturally did not want to lose the man who had opened the

Garfield campaign with such solid argumentative shot. That they circulated hundreds of thousands of copies of his speech had no effect in modifying his determination, and so to the library table he turned.

In all this long course of public labors, Hay has always rendered distinguished service, and has steadily gained in public estimation as a sound, evenly balanced, judicially minded man. This is a triumph for any one, most of all for a very bright man.

Few great men have been fortunate in their contemporary biographers. Even when they chose them themselves, as some of the Cæsars did, there is something in the attitude of court favorite and leader of a literary *claque* that begets triviality and servility, something in the passive pose of a mere observer that incapacitates from a living knowledge of the struggles and purposes of a high career.

To know the life of a contemporary, one must share it.

With the lapse of centuries, even of decades after death, difficulties in the way of writing a life increase almost as the square of the distance. Not merely a million details of the personal habits of the hero are forgotten, but so swift is the wheel of human change that men lose the power of realizing and appreciating the manners and spirit of a past epoch to such a degree that neither erudition nor patience can ever make up the loss.

Consider, for example, the difficulty of knowing a man like Hadrian, and how neither the dull biographies of his day nor the brilliant pages of Gregorovius can solve the enigmatical nature of the great artist emperor. It is clearly impossible to root out the *Zeitgeist* of the nineteenth century from one's brain and live one's self into the social and national current of another age. The very attitude of study is fatal; the very need of archæology means the death of that free, spontaneous sympathy which is a vital basis of knowledge.

Only to poets is it given to plunge their souls into the sensitizing solution of the imagination, to hold them up to the invisible actinic light of other days, and to develop a true picture of a forgotten age.

On the other hand, some time must elapse after the close of a great career before deeds and policies, characters and events, gain their true and permanent perspective. Even the greatest acts require time to justify themselves, the sycophants and maligners must hide their heads, the turbid waters of a great popular flood must subside to the mean level of national life and clarify themselves.

There comes a time when the life and epoch of a great man pass from the level of the present to a higher plane; when from the theater

of change and uncertainty they enter and stand within the solemn irretrievableness of the past.

This is the hour for the biographer. This is the precious moment of maximum truth, when, freed from the confusion and the very motion of life, a man's character reveals itself in the statuesque repose of history; when yet he is near enough for us to trace with the accuracy of personal knowledge the details of every phase of experience and thought, and not far enough to be shrouded, mantled, and disguised by generations of fools who hate and fools who

worship, of blind men who can see no virtue, and deaf men who can hear no blame.

With Lincoln that moment of clearest visibility is *now*.

His great acts are justified, his policies proven, his splendid usefulness is acknowledged; and still it is not too late to hear the full story of his life from the lips of his two friends who in their boyhood knew him, who stood by him through every moment of his greatness, and bade him farewell as he passed across the threshold and vanished into the shadow of death.

Clarence King.

TO JOHN BURROUGHS.

SURE he, to whom, of mind or hand, belongs
 Some craft that doth uplift the thought of men
 Above the mold, and bring to human ken
 The joys of radiance, air and clear bird-songs;
 So that the brow, o'er moist with sullen toil,
 May catch a breeze from far-off paradise;
 So that the soul may, for a moment, rise
 Up from the stoop and cramp of daily moil,—
 May own his gift Divine! as sure may trace
 Its Source, as that of waters kind hands hold
 To thirsty lips; nor need he mourn (since grace
 Of his hath such refreshment wrought) if gold
 Be scant; to him hath richer boon been given
 An earth-bowed head to raise the nearer heaven.

Maria Lefferts Elmendorf.



ONCE WITH DAPHNE.

I WITH Daphne used to meet
 Where the rushes belled our feet
 On still mornings. Straightway, then,
 We forsook the haunts of men
 For the cool and secret glooms
 Where the unsunned laurel blooms.
 Round her waist she deftly drew
 Her bright fawn-skin, and laughed through
 That black tangle of her hair,
 That unwinding but left bare
 Half her shoulder's gleaming grace.
 Back she turned her perfect face,
 And with murmured laughter shook
 Down cool dew-baths. Straight we took
 Flight again and hastened on
 To a valley dusk and wan,
 And so strange we heard anew

Our old footsteps running through,
 And so dim that each one's face
 Seemed a shadow in the place,
 And so still the wind was heard
 Blowing on the beak of bird,
 And the woodland noises seemed
 Something soundless that we dreamed.
 There her voice was like a flame
 When, betimes, she spoke my name,
 And that whispered speech of hers
 Drowned the woodland choristers:
 Drowned th' elusive murmuring
 Of the bubbling, hidden spring;
 Drowned the ghosts of winds a-search
 For the vibrant leaf of birch.
 Ah, how little wise men know
 Where we happy dreamers go!

L. Frank Tooker.