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TOPICS OF THE TIME.

Lincoln and Lowell.

"But democracies have likewise their finer instincts. I have also seen the ablest statesman and most pregnant speaker of our generation, a man of humble birth and ungainly manners, of little culture beyond what his own genius supplied, become more absolute in power than any monarch of modern times through the reverence of his countrymen for his honesty, his wisdom, his sincerity, his faith in God and man, and the nobly humane simplicity of his character."

The reprint in Lowell's latest volume, of his Birmingham address on "Democracy," containing the above tribute,—one of the most complete and satisfactory summaries of character ever packed into the very pith of prose,—reminds us that James Russell Lowell was the first of the leading American writers to see clearly and fully, and clearly, fully, and enthusiastically proclaim the greatness of Abraham Lincoln.

The allusion to the martyr-president in "The Commemoration Ode" (some of whose lines were given in fac-simile in connection with the portrait in our November number) was in its nature prophetic,—because it presented a view of the President to which the world is only now fully awakening.

"Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief;
Forgive me, if from present things I turn
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.
Nature, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old World molds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.
His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.
I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.
So always firmly he:
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.
Great captains, with their guns and drums,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

This portrait of "the first American" leaves scarce any detail for the future poet to dwell upon,—so remarkable is the passage for its sympathy and penetration, as well as for the beauty, tenderness, and dignity of its cadences. If Lowell had only linked his name with that of his immortal subject in such immortal verse he would deserve the congratulations and thanks of his fellow-countrymen.

But Lowell has done more than this. In the very thick and fury of the struggle for the salvation of the nation,—a struggle, be it remembered, not only of arms, but of intellects as well,—he came out in "The North American Review" (of which he was one of the editors), not with the usual patriotic flag-waving of that time, but with a full, statesmanlike, and characteristically witty and eloquent essay in support of the policy of the Administration, an essay including an estimate of Lincoln's character which, when read in the light of subsequent history, has more of the tinge of prophecy than even the "Ode." In an article in "The Atlantic Monthly" for July, 1862, Hawthorne had written of the President with a respect which is all the more creditable when one remembers how opposite in politics they had hitherto always been. From Hawthorne's article "Chiefly about War Matters," we quote the following passage:

"Good Heavens! what liberties have I been taking with one of the potentates of the earth, and the man on whose conduct more important consequences depend than on that of any other historical personage of the century! But with whom is an American citizen entitled to take a liberty, if not with his own chief magistrate? However, lest the above allusions to President Lincoln's little peculiarities (already well known to the country and to the world) should be misinterpreted, I deem it proper to say a word or two, in regard to him, of unfeigned respect and measurable confidence. He is evidently a man of keen faculties, and, what is still more to the purpose, of powerful character. As to his integrity, the people have that intuition of it which is never deceived. Before he actually entered upon his great office, and for a considerable time afterwards, there is no reason to suppose that he adequately estimated the gigantic task about to be imposed on him, or, at least, had any distinct idea how it was to be managed; and I presume there may have been more than one veteran politician who proposed to himself to take the power out of President Lincoln's hands into his own, leaving our honest friend only the public responsibility for the good or ill success of the career. The extremely imperfect development of his statesmanly qualities, at that period, may have justified such designs. But the President is teachable by events, and has now spent a year in a very arduous course of education; he has a flexible mind, capable of much expansion, and convertible towards far loftier studies and activities than those of his early life; and if he came to Washington a backwoods humorist, he has already transformed himself into as good a statesman (to speak moderately) as his prime-minister."—Vol. x., p. 47.

Before coming to Mr. Lowell's "North American" essay, we wish to refer to an article by the same writer on "The Election in November," published in "The Atlantic" for October, 1860 (the month before Lincoln's election), in which the political situation is summarized

and the question of slavery discussed with a breadth, a penetration, and a humor that make the paper worthy of permanent preservation among his writings. In this essay Mr. Lowell says that Lincoln "has proved both his ability and his integrity; he has had experience enough in public affairs to make him a statesman, and not enough to make him a politician."

In quoting, now, from Mr. Lowell's "North American" essay we go back of the condensed reprint in "My Study Windows" (entitled "Abraham Lincoln") to the "Review" article on "The President's Policy" written in 1863 and printed in the number for January, 1864.

"That a steady purpose and a definite aim have been given to the jarring forces which, at the beginning of the war, spent themselves in the discussion of schemes which could only become operative, if at all, after the war was over; that a popular excitement has been slowly intensified into an earnest national will; that a somewhat impracticable moral sentiment has been made the unconscious instrument of a practical moral end; that the treason of covert enemies, the jealousy of rivals, the unwise zeal of friends, have been made not only useless for mischief, but even useful for good; that the conscientious sensitiveness of England to the horrors of civil conflict has been prevented from complicating a domestic with a foreign war: all these results, any one of which might suffice to prove greatness in a ruler, have been mainly due to the good sense, the good humor, the sagacity, the large-mindedness, and the unselfish honesty of the unknown man whom a blind fortune, as it seemed, had lifted from the crowd to the most dangerous and difficult eminence of modern times. It is by presence of mind in untried emergencies that the native metal of a man is tested; it is by the sagacity to see, and the fearless honesty to admit, whatever of truth there may be in an adverse opinion, in order more convincingly to expose the fallacy that lurks behind it, that a reasoner at length gains for his mere statement of a fact the force of argument; it is by a wise forecast which allows hostile combinations to go so far as by the inevitable reaction to become elements of his own power, that a politician proves his genius for state-craft; and especially it is by so gently guiding public sentiment that he seems to follow it, by so yielding doubtful points that he can be firm without seeming obstinate in essential ones, and thus gain the advantages of compromise without the weakness of concession, by so instinctively comprehending the temper and prejudices of a people as to make them gradually conscious of the superior wisdom of his freedom from temper and prejudice,—it is by qualities such as these that a magistrate shows himself worthy to be chief in a commonwealth of freemen. And it is for qualities such as these that we firmly believe History will rank Mr. Lincoln among the most prudent of statesmen and the most successful of rulers. If we wish to appreciate him, we have only to conceive the inevitable chaos in which we should now be weltering, had a weak man or an unwise one been chosen in his stead.

". . . And certainly no one ever entered upon office with so few resources of power in the past, and so many materials of weakness in the present, as Mr. Lincoln. Even in that half of the Union which acknowledged him as President, there was a large and at that time dangerous minority that hardly admitted his claim to the office, and even in the party that elected him there was also a large minority that suspected him of being secretly a communicant with the church of Laodicea. All that he did was sure to be virulently attacked as ultra by one side; all that he left undone, to be stigmatized as proof of lukewarmness and backsliding by the other. Meanwhile he was to carry on a truly colossal war by means of both; he was to disengage the country from diplomatic entanglements of unprecedented peril undisturbed by the help or the hindrance of either, and to win from the crowning dangers of his administration, in the confidence of the people, the means of his safety and their own. He has contrived to do it, and perhaps none of our Presidents since Washington has stood so firm in the confidence of the people as he does after three years of stormy administration.

". . . Time was his prime-minister and, we began to think at one period, his general-in-chief also. At first he was so slow that he tired out all those who see no evidence of progress but in blowing up the engine; then he was so fast that he took the breath away from those who think there is no getting on safely while there is a spark of fire under the boilers. . . . Mr. Lincoln, as it seems to us, in reviewing his career, though we have sometimes in our impatience thought otherwise, has always waited, as a wise man should, till the right moment brought up all his reserves. *Semper nocuit differre paratis* is a sound axiom, but the really efficacious man will also be sure to know when he is *not* ready, and be firm against all persuasion and reproach till he is.

"One would be apt to think, from some of the criticisms made on Mr. Lincoln's course by those who mainly agree with him in principle, that the chief object of a statesman should be rather to proclaim his adhesion to certain doctrines, than to achieve their triumph by quietly accomplishing his ends. In our opinion, there is no more unsafe politician than a conscientiously rigid *doctrinaire*, nothing more sure to end in disaster than a theoretic scheme of policy that admits of no pliability for contingencies. . . . Mr. Lincoln's perilous task has been to carry a rather shackly craft through the rapids, making fast the unrulier logs as he could snatch opportunity, and the country is to be congratulated that he did not think it his duty to run straight at all hazards, but cautiously to assure himself with his setting-pole where the main current was, and keep steadily to that. He is still in wild water, but we have faith that his skill and sureness of eye will bring him out right at last."

Not the least interesting part of the essay is the author's comparison of Henry IV. of France with the American President,—before the assassination of Lincoln had completed a certain likeness in their careers. "Henry went over to the nation; Mr. Lincoln has steadily drawn the nation over to him. One left a united France; the other, we hope and believe, will leave a reunited America."

We are yet to quote, however, what is perhaps the most remarkable and prophetic portion of the essay. The very phraseology of the paragraph which closes the essay has such a similarity to recent utterances that one can hardly believe that it was written twenty-four years ago, and at a time when, though there had been notable Union victories, the issue was still far from being determined. Not only did Lowell thus early recognize the peculiar genius and the dominance of Lincoln, not only did he predict the triumph of the national cause, but he foresaw, in the midst of strife and bitterness, a near future of unprecedented harmony and prosperity. Never in the history of the world has internecine strife been followed so quickly by reconciliation; never before has a reunited nation more suddenly risen to the very height of material well-being and power. It is now a familiar history; but when Mr. Lowell wrote it down it was all yet beneath the veil of the future, only to be penetrated by the pure eyes of faith and inspiration:

"The danger of slavery has always been in the poor whites of the South; and wherever freedom of the press penetrates,—and it always accompanies our armies,—the evil thing is doomed. Let no one who remembers what has taken place in Maryland and Missouri think such anticipations visionary. The people of the South have been also put to school during these three years, under a sharper schoolmistress, too, than even ours has been, and the deadliest enemies of slavery will be found among those who have suffered most from its indirect evils. It is only by its extinction — for without it no secure union would be possible — that the sufferings and losses of the war can be repaid. That extinction accomplished, our wounds will not be long in healing. Apart from the slaveholding class, which is numerically small, and would be socially insignificant without its privileges, there are no such mutual antipathies between

the two sections as the conspirators, to suit their own purposes, have asserted, and even done their best to excite. We do not like the Southerners less for the gallantry and devotion they have shown even in a bad cause, and they have learned to respect the same qualities in us. There is no longer the nonsensical talk about Cavaliers and Puritans, nor does the one gallant Southron any longer pine for ten Yankees as the victims of his avenging steel. As for subjugation, when people are beaten they are beaten, and every nation has had its turn. No sensible man in the North would insist on any terms except such as are essential to assure the stability of peace. To talk of the South as our future Poland is to talk without book; for no region rich, prosperous, and free could ever become so. It is a geographical as well as a moral absurdity. With peace restored, slavery rooted out, and harmony sure to follow, we shall realize a power and prosperity beyond even the visions of the Fourth-of-July orator, and we shall see Freedom, while she proudly repairs the ruins of war, as the Italian poet saw her,—

> * "Girar la Libertà mirai
> E baciar lieta ogni ruina e dire
> Ruine sì ma servitù non mai."

It is a pleasure to know that Mr. Lincoln had the satisfaction of reading the "North American" essay. As it was, according to the custom of the day, unsigned, he wrote to the publishers, instead of to the author, concerning a certain point in his policy which had been criticised and which he wished to explain. This letter, which was dated January 16, 1864, appeared in the next number of the Review. It was characteristic of Lincoln to think only of the benefit of so notable a demonstration in favor of the cause to which his life was dedicated. "Of course," said the President, "I am not the most impartial judge; yet, with due allowance for this, I venture to hope that the article entitled 'The President's Policy' will be of value to the country." How like him to add —"I fear I am not quite worthy of all which is therein said of me personally."

Several of the leading American poets have shown their appreciation of Lincoln in verse or prose— either during his life or since his tragic death. Indeed, an interesting study could be made of the tributes and allusions to the great Liberator by the principal writers of the country. Such a study would not omit mention of Stedman's sonnet on Lincoln's death, and his poem on the cast of Lincoln's hand, a part of which was reprinted in the December CENTURY, of Dr. Holmes's memorial hymn, of Whitman's two poems on the death of Lincoln, or of Stoddard's stately and pathetic ode, and his sonnet published ten years ago in THE CENTURY. During the war the relations of Bryant with Lincoln were, perhaps, more important than those of any other of our poets with the President. Bryant had met him first when Lincoln was a Captain in the Black Hawk war,—and had presided at the Cooper Union meeting where the Western statesman delivered his now famous speech. Lincoln was Bryant's choice as a candidate as against Seward, and in personal interview as well as by letter and editorial, he encouraged, advised, and criticised the Lincoln administration throughout its existence. At Lincoln's death Bryant wrote the noble threnody which is familiar to all readers of American poetry. But we think it will be found that the literary record of Lowell in connection with Lincoln is more remarkable than that of any other of the distinguished authors of America.

> * "I beheld Liberty go 'round,
> Kiss every ruin joyfully, and say
> 'Ruins, if so must be, but Slavery never.'"

The Injustice of Socialism.

SOCIALISTS themselves maintain that their system alone is equitable, and that the present industrial methods are all wrong, since they lead necessarily to inequality in wealth and power and in the means of happiness. The object of socialism is to put an end to these inequalities, and to found a society in which all would fare as nearly as possible alike; and this, as socialists maintain, would be truly equitable and just. But when we inquire into the fundamental principles of their system, we find the element of justice conspicuously absent. Their main principles are the ownership of all means of production by the State, and the payment of all workmen according to what is assumed to be the rule of justice. This rule is expressed in the formula with which all students of the subject are familiar, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." According to this rule, a man of superior talents or creative genius would receive no higher recompense than the most inefficient workman, and, indeed, if the latter had a larger family, he would apparently receive more. The obvious intent of this rule is to prevent men of superior abilities from rising above the mass; and socialists proclaim that the privileges of higher intelligence must fall with the privileges of wealth and birth.

Such being the law of recompense in the socialistic system, let us see how it accords with the principles of justice as commonly understood among men. To determine this, we must inquire how a man would be recompensed for his labor if he worked all alone for himself. Suppose a man on a desert island, like Robinson Crusoe, with no goods of any kind except what he could cull from the bosom of Nature or produce by his unassisted labor. In this case it is plain that his wealth and prosperity would depend on the ability and energy with which he worked. If he tilled twice as much ground, he would raise twice as large a crop; if he contrived a way to kill game, he would have its flesh to eat; if he laid by a store of food for the winter season, he would have enough to eat, and if he did not, he would suffer and perhaps die of hunger; if he invented tools of various kinds, he could produce vastly more goods for his own use than he could without them; and, in short, the rewards of his industry would depend on the intelligence and enterprise with which he labored in his own behalf. If we suppose two or more men, each living on his own island, their comparative gains would depend partly, indeed, on the natural resources of the several islands, but mainly on the comparative skill and energy of the men themselves. This truth is abundantly illustrated in the life of nations. Why are Americans and Englishmen richer and more prosperous than Russians and Turks, and these latter more prosperous than Hottentots and Maoris? Clearly because of the greater intelligence and skill and the higher moral qualities of the more prosperous races; so that both of individuals and of nations it is true that, when working in their own behalf, they are recompensed according to their abilities, and not according to their needs.

Since a man is recompensed according to his ability when working for himself, he ought to be recompensed on the same principle when he works for society; for

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streets about, and here Mr. Gardiner told us something of the practical work of the colony and its difficulties.

Four evenings of the week are devoted, in the lecture-room opposite, to courses of lectures respectively on history, physiology, astronomy, and English Literature, the fee being one shilling for each complete course. Another evening there is a concert, and always on Saturday evening a "popular" lecture. The sixth evening of the week is given to a social reception in the drawing-room of the club-house, where the men of Toynbee Hall are assisted by friends from the West End in receiving and entertaining the poor people of the neighborhood. The difficulties of mingling classes are, after all, much the same in England as at home. There is a good deal of human nature everywhere. I asked Mr. Gardiner what kind of people proved the best entertainers. He replied that those who were popular at the West End were popular at the East, and there was, indeed, great difficulty in getting the right sort of people, because they were so much in demand in their own class of "society." Some practiced "entertainers," as they call them, could interest easily eight or ten of the poorer people, whereas others could take care of only one or two. The chief difficulty to overcome was the narrow sphere in which the poorer people did their thinking and their talking, and the whole purpose of these receptions, and of much of the other work, was to broaden the mental horizon of these people, and give them more and pleasanter things to think and talk about outside of the narrow circle of their tenement-house or neighborhood gossip. These men were hoping to accomplish much through the "national teachers,"—young men and women selected from the ranks of trades-people and the like, without much culture themselves, but who could be made the means of spreading the wider life among their pupils when they came to teach. To this end they organized reading-parties, as was the fashion at the universities, for those who showed special interest in the weekly lectures, and one or two of their best outdoor men were charged with forming cricket and tennis clubs and other outdoor circles, to broaden the life of their *protégés* in those directions.

The classes and reading-parties are organized into groups, each under the management of an Honorary (unpaid) Secretary. One group comprises one class studying the Old Testament, another studying moral philosophy, a course of Sunday afternoon lectures on the Ethics of the Ancient and Modern World, three classes in Victorian literature (one entirely of women), one in English history, two in political economy. A second group includes reading-parties on Mazzini, Ruskin, and literature, to each of which admission is by election, and classes in French, German, and Latin. Another group covers the physical sciences and includes an ambulance class. A fourth comprises singing-classes, instruction and entertainment for deaf and dumb, drawing-classes, elementary evening classes for boys, lantern illustrations in geography for boys, musical drill for boys, and several classes in shorthand. A fifth provides instruction and practice in carpentering, in wood-carving and in modeling, both for boys and men.

The work of Toynbee Hall is in the right direction, and, moreover, it is justified not only by its results but by the enjoyment which men have in the doing of it. "I could not give up this East End work," said one of them to me; "I could not live my life in content away from the people I have learned to know and love here."

R. R. Bowker.

Notes.

LINCOLN AND EMERSON.

BEFORE our editorial in the April CENTURY on "Lincoln and Lowell" was published, Mr. Lowell had added another to his sayings concerning the martyr President, in his speech at Chicago on the evening of Washington's Birthday, in which he referred to Lincoln as, "on the whole, the most remarkable statesman of all times."

In this connection it should be noted that while Emerson did not write in verse of Lincoln, yet in prose he divides with Lowell the honor of early appreciation and fortunate characterization. In "Miscellanies" will be found an essay entitled "American Civilization," which, according to a note by Mr. Cabot, is "part of a lecture delivered at Washington, January 31st, 1862, it is said, in the presence of President Lincoln and some of his Cabinet, some months before the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation." Mr. Lincoln may have been present, but his secretaries have no memorandum showing the fact, and the Washington papers of the next day throw no light on the subject: in fact, Mr. Emerson's son now believes that Lincoln was probably not present. The lecturer praised the "angelic virtue" of the Administration, but urged emancipation; and at the close of this essay, as printed, is a supplement commending the President for his proposal "to Congress that the Government shall coöperate with any State that shall enact a gradual abolishment of slavery." Next comes his address on the Emancipation Proclamation, in which the President is greatly praised for his moderation, fairness of mind, reticence, and firmness. "All these," Emerson says, "have bespoken such favor to the act, that, great as the popularity of the President has been, we are beginning to think that we have underestimated the capacity and virtue which the Divine Providence has made an instrument of benefit so vast. He has been permitted to do more for America than any other American man," etc. After this, in the same volume, comes Emerson's brief but memorable essay on the death of Lincoln, in which he says: "He is the true history of the American people in his time. Step by step he walked before them; slow with their slowness, quickening his march by theirs, the true representative of this continent; an entirely public man; father of his country, the pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue."

Again, in the essay on "Eloquence" ("Essays and Social Aims"), Emerson praises the Gettysburg speech, and in the essay on "Greatness" in the same volume he gives Lincoln as an example of the "great style of hero" who "draws equally all classes": "His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong."

SINCE the publication of the reference to the death of Black Hawk given in the "Life of Lincoln," in the December CENTURY, the authors have learned that Black Hawk was not buried on the bank of the Mississippi, as certain authorities have stated, but on the Des Moines river, and without unusual honors.