

were two great girls; she had been robbed of their sweet childish growth, of their budding, which is the fairest time of flowers. A dead child never ages, but those we leave for years are sad and strange when next we see them; they are lost to us by the saddest of losses; they are ours no more. The arrested current may flow again in its old channel, but the bordering grasses, the mirrored flowers, the floating lilies, are gone; the bed of the brook is dry, arid, stony, and the water itself is turbid and troubled.

"There are three things that return not," and one of them is "lost opportunity." Not any power of time or man can refold the ardent rose's expanded leaves into their verdant calyx again; it is splendid and noble now; it braves the eye with color, and breathes an odor of rapture from its sun-smitten breast; but it is not a bud.

"For we know that something sweet
Followed Youth with flying feet,
And will never come again."

Poor Mary Ann!

THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE REPUBLIC.

[Seventeenth Paper.]

AMERICAN LITERATURE.—I.

IN a retrospect of what has been done in American literature during the past hundred years, it is of the first importance to draw a sharp line of distinction between the mental powers displayed in literature and those which have been exhibited in industrial creation, in statesmanship, and in the abstract and applied sciences. The literature of America is but an insufficient measure of the realized capacities of the American mind. When Sir William Hamilton declared that Aristotle had an imagination as great as that of Homer, he struck at the primary fact that the creative energies of the human mind may be exercised in widely different lines of direction. Imagination is, in the popular mind, obstinately connected with poetry and romance. This prejudice is further deepened by associating imagination with amiable emotions, regardless of the fact that two of the greatest characters created by the human imagination are two of the vilest types of intelligent nature—Iago and Mephistopheles. When the attempt is made to extend the application of the creative energy of imagination to business and politics, the sentimental outcry against such a profanation of the term becomes almost deafening. Every poetaster is willing to admit that Newton is one of the few grand scientific discoverers that the world has produced; but he still thinks that, in virtue of versifying some commonplaces of emotion and thought, he is himself superior to Newton in imagination. The truth is that, in spite of Newton's incapacity to appreciate works of literature and art, he possessed a creative imagination of the first class—an imagination which, in boundless fertility, is second only to Shakspeare's. In fact, it is the direction given to the creative faculty, and not to the materials on which it works, that discriminates between Fulton and Bryant, Whitney and Longfellow, Bigelow and Whittier, Goodyear and Lowell. Descending from the inventors, it would be easy to show that in the conduct of the ev-

ery-day transactions of life, more quickness of imagination, subtilty and breadth of understanding, and energy of will have been displayed by our men of business than by our authors. By the necessities of our position, the aggregate mind of the country has been exercised in creating the nation as we now find it. There is, indeed, something ludicrous, to a large observer of all the phenomena of our national life, in confounding the brain and heart of the United States with the manifestation that either has found in mere literary expression. The nation outvalues all its authors, even in respect to those powers which authors are supposed specially to represent. Nobody can write intelligently of the progress of American literature during the past hundred years without looking at American literature as generally subsidiary to the grand movement of the American mind.

It is curious, however, that the only apparent contradiction to this general principle dates from the beginning of our national life. At the time the American Revolution broke out, the two men who best represented the double aspect of the thought of the colonies were Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin. Both come within the domain of the historian of literature, for both were great forces in our literature, whose influence is yet unspent. Of Jonathan Edwards, the greatest of American theologians and metaphysicians, and a religious genius of the first order, it is impossible to speak without respect, and even reverence. No theologian born in our country has exercised more influence on minds and souls kindred to his own. Those who opposed him recognized his pre-eminent powers of intellect. Every body felt, in assailing such a consummate reasoner, the restraining modesty which a master-spirit always evokes in the minds of his adversaries. His treatise on the Will has been generally accepted as one of the marvels of intellectual acuteness, exercised on one of the most difficult problems which have ever tested the

resources of the human intellect. There have been many answers to it, but no answer which is generally considered unanswerable. Such works, indeed, as this of Edwards on the Will are not so much answered or refuted as gradually outgrown. But the treatise has certainly exercised and strengthened all the minds that have resolutely grappled with it, and has aided the development of the logical powers of American orthodox divines in a remarkable degree. Whether a controversialist agrees with its author, or dissents from him, Edwards always quickens the mental activity of every body who strives to follow the course of his argumentation, or to detect the lurking fallacy which is supposed to be discoverable somewhere in the premises or processes of his logic. Perhaps this fallacy is to be found in the various senses in which Edwards uses the vital word "determination." To most readers, who believe the will to be abstractly free, but that the actions of men commonly proceed from the characters they have gradually formed, the most satisfactory explanation of the mystery is that of Jouffroy, who declares that "Liberty is the ideal of the Me." Others may obtain consolation from Gilfillan's somewhat flippant remark, that every thing a man does is not necessary before he does it, but is necessary after he has done it. Essentially the doctrine of Edwards agrees with that of philosophical necessity, and with that so vehemently urged by many scientists, that the actions of men are as much controlled by law as the movements of the planets. The great difference between Edwards's theory and the others is, that he connects his metaphysics with a theological system, and his treatise remains as a kind of practical argument for the everlasting damnation of those who question the infallibility of its logic.

Edwards's large and subtle understanding was connected with an imagination of intense realizing power, and both were based on a soul of singular purity, open on many sides to communications from the Divine mind. He had an almost preternatural conception of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin." His imagination was filled with ghastly images of the retribution which awaits on iniquity, and his reasoned sermons on eternal torments were but the outbreak of a sensitive feeling, a holy passion for goodness, which made him intolerant of any excellence which did not approach his ideal of godliness. But then his spiritual experience, though it inflamed one side of his imagination with vivid pictures of the terrors of hell, on the other side gave the most enrapturing visions of the spiritual joys of heaven. It is unfortunate for his fame that his hell has obtained for him more popular recognition than his heaven. Like other

poets, such as Dante and Milton, his pictures of the torments of the damned have cast into the shade that celestial light which shines so lovingly over his pictures of the bliss of the redeemed. True religion, he tells us, consists in a great measure in holy affections—in "a love of divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency." "Sweetness" is a frequent word all through Edwards's works, when he desires to convey his perception of the satisfactions which await on piety in this world, and the ineffable joy of the experiences of pious souls in the next; and this word he thrills with a transcendent depth of suggestive meaning which it bears in no dictionary, nor in the vocabulary of any other writer of the English language. He was certainly one of the holiest souls that ever appeared on the planet. The admiration which has been generally awarded to his power of reasoning should be extended to his power of affirming, that is, when he affirms ideas coming from those moods of blessedness in which his soul seems to be in direct contact with divine things, and vividly beholds what in other discourses his mind reasons up to or about. To reach these divine heights, however, you must, according to Edwards, mount the stairs of dogma built by Augustine and Calvin.

Jonathan Edwards may be characterized as a man of the next world. Benjamin Franklin was emphatically a man of this world. Not that Franklin lacked religion and homely practical piety, but he had none of Edwards's intense depth of religious experience. God was to him a beneficent being, aiding good men in their hard struggles with the facts of life, and not pitiless to those who stumbled in the path of duty, or even to those who widely diverged from it. The heaven of Edwards was as far above his spiritual vision as the hell of Edwards was below his soundings of the profundities of human wickedness; but there never was a person who so swiftly distinguished an honest man from a rogue, or who was more quick to see that the rogue was at war with the spiritual constitution of things. He seems to have learned his morality in a practical way. All his early slips from the straight line of duty were but experiments, from which he drew lessons in moral wisdom. If he happened occasionally to lapse into vice, he made the experience of vice a new fortress to defend his virtue; and he came out of the temptations of youth and middle age with a character generally recognized as one of singular solidity, serenity, and benignity. His intellect, in the beautiful harmony of its faculties, his conscience, in the instinctive sureness of its perception of the relations of duties, and his heart, in its subordination of malevolent to beneficent emotions—all showed how diligent he

had been in the austere self-culture which eventually raised him to the first rank among the men of his time. Simplicity was the fine result of the complexities which entered into his mind and character. He was a man who never used words except to express positive thoughts or emotions, and was never tempted to misuse them for the purposes of declamation. He kept his style always on the level of his character. In announcing his scientific discoveries, as in his most private letters, he is ever simple. In breadth of mind he is probably the most eminent man that our country has produced; for while he was the greatest diplomatist, and one of the greatest statesmen and patriots of the United States, he was also a discoverer in science, a benignant philanthropist, and a master in that rare art of so associating words with things that they appeared identical. Edwards represents, humanly speaking, the somewhat doleful doctrine that the best thing a good man can do is to get out, as soon as he decently can, of this world into one which is immeasurably better, by devoting all his energies to the salvation of his own particular soul. Franklin, on the contrary, seems perfectly content with this world, as long as he thinks he can better it. Edwards would doubtless have considered Franklin a child of wrath, but Francis Bacon would have hailed him as one of that band of explorers who, by serving Nature, will in the end master her mysteries, and use their knowledge for the service of man. Indeed, the cheerful, hopeful spirit which runs through Franklin's writings, even when he was tried by obstacles which might have tasked the proverbial patience of Job, is not one of the least of his claims upon the consideration of those who rightfully glory in having such a genius for their countryman. The spirit which breathes through Franklin's life and works is that which has inspired every pioneer of our Western wastes, every poor farmer who has tried to make both ends meet by the exercise of rigid economy, every inventor who has attempted to serve men by making machines do half the drudgery of their work, every statesman who has striven to introduce large principles into our somewhat confused and contradictory legislation, every American diplomatist who has upheld the character of his country abroad by sagacity in managing men, as well as by integrity in the main purpose of his mission, and every honest man who has desired to diminish the evil there is in the world, and to increase every possible good that is conformable to good sense. Franklin is doubtless our Mr. Worldly Wiseman, but his worldly wisdom ever points to the Christian's prayer that God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

One of the most ludicrous misinterpreta-

tions of this large, bounteous, and benignant intelligence is that which confines his influence to the little corner of his mind in which he lodged "Poor Richard." It is common even now to hear complaints from opulent English gentlemen that Franklin has done much to make the average American narrow in mind, hard of heart, greedy of small gains, mean in little economies. This is said of a nation the poorer portions of whose population are needlessly wasteful, and whose richer portions astonish Europe annually by the profusion with which they scatter dollars to the right and the left. The maxims of Poor Richard are generally good, and the more they are circulated, the more practical good they will do; for our countrymen are remarkable rather for violating than for obeying them. In all these criticisms on Franklin, however, it is strange that few have observed what a delicious specimen of humorous characterization he has introduced into literature in his charming delineation of Poor Richard. The effect is heightened by the groaning, droning way in which the good man delivers his bits of wisdom, as if he despairingly felt that the rustics around him would disregard his advice and admonitions, and pass through the usual experiences of the passions, insensible to the gasping, croaking voice which warned them in advance.

Franklin is probably the best specimen that history affords of what is called a self-made man. He certainly "never worshipped his maker," according to Mr. Clapp's stinging epigram, but was throughout his life, though always self-respectful, never self-conceited. Perhaps the most notable result of his self-education was the ease with which he accosted all grades and classes of men on a level of equality. The printer's boy became, in his old age, one of the most popular men in the French court, not only among its statesmen, but among its frivolous nobles and their wives. He ever estimated men at their true worth or worthlessness; but as a diplomatist he was a marvel of sagacity. The same ease of manner which recommended him to a Pennsylvania farmer was preserved in a conference with a statesman or a king. He ever kept his end in view in all his complaisances, and that end was always patriotic. When he returned to his country he was among the most earnest to organize the liberty he had done so much to achieve; and he also showed his hostility to the system of negro slavery with which the United States was accursed. At the ripe age of eighty-four he died, leaving behind him a record of extraordinary faithfulness in the performance of all the duties of life. His sagacity, when his whole career is surveyed, amounts almost to saintliness; for his sagacity was uniformly devoted to the accom-

plishment of great public ends of policy or beneficence.

Edwards was born three years before Franklin, and died in 1758, nearly twenty years before the war broke out. Franklin died in 1790. Both being representative men, may properly be taken as points of departure in considering those writers and thinkers who were educated under the influences of the pre-Revolutionary period of our literary history. The writings of Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Jay, are a recognized portion of our literature, because the hoarded wisdom slowly gathered in by their practical knowledge of life crops out in their most familiar correspondence. A truism announced by such men brightens into a truth, because it has evidently been tested and proved by their experience in conducting affairs. There is an elemental grandeur in Washington's character and career which renders impertinent all mere criticism on his style; for what he was and what he did are felt to outvalue a hundredfold what he wrote, except we consider his writings as mere records of his sagacity, wisdom, patience, disinterestedness, intrepidity, and fortitude. John Adams had a large, strong, vehement mind, interested in all questions relating to government. He was a personage of indomitable individuality, large acquirements, quick insight, and resolute civic courage; but the storm and stress of public affairs gave to much of his thinking a character of intellectual irritation, rather than of sustained intellectual energy. His moral impatience was such that he seems to fret as he thinks. Jefferson, of all our early statesmen, was the most efficient master of the pen, and the most "advanced" political thinker. In one sense, as the author of the Declaration of Independence, he may be called the greatest, or, at least, the most generally known, of American authors. But in his private correspondence his literary talent is most displayed, for by his letters he built up a party which ruled the United States for nearly half a century, and which was, perhaps, only overturned because its opponents cited the best portions of Jefferson's writings against conclusions derived from the worst. In executive capacity he was relatively weak; but his mistakes in policy and his feebleness in administration, which would have ruined an ordinary statesman at the head of so turbulent a combination of irascible individuals as the Democratic party of the United States, were all condoned by those minor leaders of faction who, yielding to the magic persuasiveness of his pen, assured their followers that the great man could do no wrong. Read in connection with the events of his time, Jefferson's writings must be considered of permanent value and interest. As a political

leader he was literally a man of letters; and his letters are masterpieces, if viewed as illustrations of the arts by which political leadership may be attained. In his private correspondence he was a model of urbanity and geniality. The whole impression derived from his works is that he was a better man than his enemies would admit him to be, and not so great a man as his partisans declared him to be. Few public men who have been assailed with equal fury have exhibited a more philosophical temper in noticing assailants. Though occasionally spiteful in his references to rivals, his leading fault, as a political leader, was not so much in being himself a libeler as in the protection he extended to libelers who lampooned men obnoxious to him. His own mind seems to have been singularly temperate; but he had a marvelous toleration for the intemperance of the rancorous defamers of Washington, Hamilton, and Adams. The Federalists hated him with such a mortal hatred, and showered on him such an amount of horrible invective, that he may have witnessed with a sarcastic smile the still coarser and fiercer calumnies which the band of assassins of character in his interest showered on the leading Federalists. Jefferson in this contest proved himself capable of malice as well as insincerity; but in a scrutiny of his works it will be found that individually he had more amenity of temper than his opponents, for it must be remembered that in his political career he was stigmatized not only as the most wicked and foolish of politicians, but as the sultan of a negro harem, and that every circumstance of his private life was malignantly misrepresented. Many eminent New England divines regarded him as an atheist as well as an anarchist, and thundered at him from their pulpits as though he was a new incarnation of the evil principle. Jefferson's comparative moderation, in view of the savage fierceness of the attacks on his personal, political, and moral character, must, on the whole, be commended; but still his moderation covered a large amount of private intrigue, and a readiness to use underhand means to compass what he may have deemed beneficent ends.

The names of Hamilton, Madison, and Jay are inseparably associated as the authors of the *Federalist*, the political classic of the United States. Of the essays it contains, Hamilton wrote fifty-one, Madison twenty-nine, and Jay five. It is generally considered that Hamilton's are the best. Indeed, Alexander Hamilton was, next to Franklin, the most consummate statesman among the band of eminent men who had been active in the Revolution, and who afterward labored to convert a loose confederation of States into a national government.

His mind was as plastic as it was vigorous and profound. It was the appropriate intellectual expression of a poised nature whose power was rarely obtrusive, because it was half concealed by the harmonious adjustment of its various faculties. It was a mind deep enough to grasp principles, and broad enough to regard relations, and fertile enough to devise measures. Indeed, the most practical of our early statesmen was also the most inventive. He was as ready with new expedients to meet unexpected emergencies as he was wise in subordinating all expedients to clearly defined principles. In intellect he was probably the most creative of our early statesmen, as in sentiment Jefferson was the most widely influential. And Hamilton was so bent on practical ends that he was indifferent to the reputation which might have resulted from a parade of originality in the means he devised for their accomplishment. There never was a statesman less egotistic, less desirous of labeling a policy as "my" policy; and one of the sources of his influence was the subtle way in which he insinuated into other minds ideas which they appeared to originate. His moderation, his self-command, the exquisite courtesy of his manners, the persuasiveness of his ordinary speech, the fascination of his extraordinary speeches, and the mingled dignity and ease with which he met men of all degrees of intellect and character, resulted in making his political partisans look up to him as almost an object of political adoration. It is difficult to say what this accomplished man might have done as a leader of the Federal opposition to the Democratic administrations of Jefferson and Madison, had he not, in the maturity of his years and in the full vigor of his faculties, been murdered by Aaron Burr. Nothing can better illustrate the folly of the practice of dueling than the fact that, by a weak compliance with its maxims, the most eminent of American statesmen died by the hand of the most infamous of American demagogues. Certainly Hamilton had no need to accept a challenge in order to vindicate his claim to courage. That had been abundantly shown in the field, at the bar, in the cabinet, before the people. There was hardly any form of courage, military, civic, or moral, in which he had not proved that he was insensible to every kind of fear. The most touching expression of it was, perhaps, the confession he publicly made that he had been entrapped into a guilty intrigue with a wily woman. The confession was necessary to vindicate his integrity as a statesman, assailed by rancorous enemies. In reading it one is impressed with the innate dignity of character which such a mortifying disclosure of criminal weakness could not essentially degrade; and the allusion to his noble wife can hard-

ly even now be read without tears. "This confession," he nobly says, "is not made without a blush. I can not be the apologist of any vice because the ardor of passion may have made it mine. I can never cease to condemn myself for the pang which it may inflict on a bosom eminently entitled to all my gratitude, fidelity, and love; but that bosom will approve that, even at so great an expense, I should effectually wipe away a more serious stain from a name which it cherishes with no less elevation than tenderness. The public, too, I trust, will excuse the confession. The necessity of it to my defense against a more heinous charge could alone have extorted from me so painful an indecorum."

John Jay, another of the wise statesmen of the Revolution, who survived to perform services of inestimable value to the new constitutional government, was a man whose character needs no apologists. Webster finely said that "the spotless ermine of the judicial robe, when it fell on the shoulders of John Jay, touched nothing not as spotless as itself." His integrity ran down into the very roots of his moral being, and honesty was in him a passion as well as a principle. A great publicist as well as an incorruptible patriot, with pronounced opinions which exposed him to all the shafts of faction, his most low-minded and venomous adversaries felt that both his private and public character were unassailable. The celebrated "treaty" with Great Britain which he negotiated as the minister of the United States occasioned an outburst of Democratic wrath such as few American diplomatists have ever been called upon to face; but in all the fury of the opposition to it, few opponents were foolish enough to assail his integrity in assailing his judgment and general views of public policy.

Judge Story once said that to James Madison and Alexander Hamilton we were mainly indebted for the Constitution of the United States. It is curious that to Madison we are also mainly indebted for those Virginia "Resolutions of '98," which have been used to justify nullification and secession. With all his mental ability, Madison had not much original force of nature. He leaned now to Hamilton, now to Jefferson, and at last fell permanently under the influence of the genius of the latter. He was lacking in that grand moral and intellectual impulse, underlying mere knowledge and logic, which distinguishes the man who reasons from the mere reasoner. His character was not on a level with his talents and acquirements; his much-vaunted moderation came from the absence rather than from the control of passion; and his understanding, though broad, was somewhat mechanical in its operations, and had no foundation in a corresponding breadth of nature. The "Resolutions of

'98," which Southern Democrats came gradually to consider as of equal authority with the Constitution, were originally devised for a transient party purpose. The passage of the Alien and Sedition Laws, during the administration of John Adams, provoked Jefferson into writing a new "Declaration of Independence"—in this case directed not against Great Britain, but against the United States. He drew up a series of resolutions, which he sent to one of his subagents, George Nicholas, of Kentucky, to be adopted by the Legislature of that State. They were, with some omissions, passed. These resolutions substantially declared that the Federal Constitution was a compact between sovereign States, and that in case of a supposed violation of the compact, each party to it, as in other cases of parties having no common judge, had "an equal right to judge for itself, as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress." In a somewhat modified form, but still implicitly containing the poison of nullification, similar resolutions, drafted by Madison, were passed by the Legislature of Virginia. The object evidently was to frighten the general government by a threat of State resistance to its authority, without any settled purpose of nullification or rebellion. When Jefferson and Madison became successively Presidents of the United States, they seemed to have forgotten their "resolutions," except to express their horror when, seventeen years afterward, a few mild Federal gentlemen, meeting at Hartford, appeared to show some vague intention of availing themselves of the precious constitutional doctrines which Jefferson and Madison had so boldly announced. The "Resolutions of '98" must be considered an important portion of our national literature, for they were exultingly adduced as the logical justification of the gigantic rebellion of 1861. It is rare, even in the history of political factions, that a string of cunningly written resolves, designed to meet a mere party emergency, should thus cost a nation thousands of millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives.

When an armed ship has her upper deck cut down, and is thus reduced to an inferior class, it is said that she is "razeed." Fisher Ames may be called, on this principle, a razeed Burke. Of all the Federal writers and speakers of his time, he bears away the palm of eloquence. He has something of Burke's affluence of imagination, something of Burke's power of condensing political wisdom into epigrammatic apothegms, and more than Burke's hatred of "French principles;" but he lacks the immense moral force of Burke's individuality, the large scope of his reason, the overwhelming intensity of his passion. Still, his merits as a writer, when compared with those

of most of his contemporaries, are so striking that his countrymen seem unjust in allowing such an author to drop out of the memory of the nation. He was the despairing champion of a dying cause; he decorated the grave of Federalism with some of the choicest flowers of rhetoric; but the flowers are now withered, and the tomb itself hardly receives its due meed of honor.

The most eminent writers of the period which extends from 1776 to the first decade of the nineteenth century were either statesmen or theologians. Between these the poets, essayists, and romancers occupy a comparatively subordinate place; for we estimate the value of a literature, not so much by the character of the subjects with which it deals, as by the power of mind it evinces in dealing with them. As it regards our scholars and men of letters of that time, it must be remembered that the colonies were colonies of intellectual as well as of political Britain, and that their ideals of intellectual excellence were formed on English models. Our poets could only give a local color to a diction which was essentially that of Milton, or Dryden, or Pope, or Goldsmith, or Gray. They imitated these poets in a vain attempt to attain their elevation, simplicity, or compactness of style; but in doing this they merely did what contemporary versifiers in London or Edinburgh were intent on doing. Their verse has not survived, but it is not more completely forgotten than the verse of Mason, and Hayley, and Henry James Pye. They could write heroic verse as well as most of the English imitators of Pope, and Pindaric odes as well as most of the English imitators of Gray. Indeed, the verses with which our forefathers afflicted the world are generally not so bad as the verses of the poet laureates of England, from the period when Dryden was deprived of the laurel, to the period when Southey reluctantly accepted it. Timothy Dwight, an eminent patriot and theologian, was early smitten with the ambition to be a poet. He wrote "America," "The Conquest of Canaan" (an epic), "Greenfield Hill," and "The Triumph of Infidelity." These poems are not properly subjects of criticism, because they are hopelessly forgotten, and no critical resurrectionist can give them that slight appearance of vitality which would justify an examination of their merits and demerits. Yet they are reasonably good of their kind, and "Greenfield Hill," especially, contains some descriptions which are almost worthy to be called charming. Dwight, as a Latin scholar, occasionally felt called upon to show his learning in his rhymes. Thus in one of his poems he characterizes one of the most delightful of Roman lyricists as "desipient" Horace. After a diligent exploration of the dictionary, the reader finds that *desipient* comes from a Latin word signifying "to

be wise," and that its English meaning is "trifling, foolish, playful." It might be supposed that in the whole range of English poetry there was no descriptive epithet so ludicrously pedantic; but, fortunately for our patriotism, we can convict Dryden of a still greater sin against good taste. In Dryden's first ode (1687) for St. Cecilia's Day we find the following lines:

"Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place,
 Sequacious of the lyre."

It can not be doubted that Timothy Dwight's "desipit" is as poetically justifiable as John Dryden's "sequacious."

Perhaps the most versatile of our early writers of verse was Philip Freneau (1752-1832), a man of French extraction, possessing the talents of a ready writer, and endowed with that brightness and elasticity of mind which makes even shallowness of thought and emotion pleasing. He composed patriotic songs and ballads, satirized Tories, enjoyed the friendship of Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, and was in his day quite a literary power. Most of his writings, whether in verse or prose, were "occasional," and they died with the occasions which called them forth.

Perhaps a higher rank should be assigned to John Trumbull (1750-1831), who at the breaking out of the Revolution wrote the first canto of "McFingal," and published the third in 1782. This poem, written in Hudibrastic verse, is so full of original wit and humor that we hardly think of it as an imitation of Butler's immortal doggerel until we are reminded that many of the pithy couplets of "McFingal" are still quoted as felicitous hits of the ingenious mind of the author of "Hudibras." The immense popularity of the poem is unprecedented in American literary history. The first canto rapidly ran through thirty editions. Longfellow's "Evangeline" attained about the same circulation when the population of the country was thirty millions. "McFingal" was published when our population was only three millions. The poem, indeed, is to be considered as one of the forces of the Revolution, because, as a satire on the Tories, it penetrated into every farm-house, and sent the rustic volunteers laughing into the ranks of Washington and Greene. The vigor of mind and feeling displayed throughout the poem gives an impetus to its incidents which "Hudibras," with all its wonderful flashes of wit, comparatively lacks.

Francis Hopkinson (1737-91) was another of the writers who served the popular cause by seizing every occasion to make the British pretensions to rule ridiculous as well as hateful. His "Battle of the Kegs" probably laughed a thousand men into the republican ranks. His son, Francis Hopkinson, wrote the most popular of American

lyrics, "Hail, Columbia." It is curious that this ode has no poetic merit whatever. There is not a line, not an epithet, in the whole composition which distinguishes it from the baldest prose.

Robert Treat Paine, Jun., was originally named by his father Thomas; but being a zealous Federalist, he induced the Legislature of Massachusetts to change his cognomen into Robert Treat, because, detesting the theological iconoclast who was both a Democrat and an infidel, he desired, he said, to have a *Christian* name. His song of "Adams and Liberty" is far above Hopkinson's "Hail, Columbia" in emphasis of phrase, richness of illustration, and resounding harmony of versification. Even now it kindles enthusiasm, like the lyrics of Campbell, though it is, of course, more mechanical in structure and more rhetorical in tone than the "Battle of the Baltic" and the "Mariners of England." At the time, however, it roused a similar enthusiasm.

But all the poets of the United States were threatened with extinction or subordination when Joel Barlow (1755-1812) appeared. He was, according to all accounts, an estimable man, cursed with the idea not only that he was a poet, but the greatest of American poets; and in 1808 he published, in a superb quarto volume, "The Columbiad." It was also published in Paris and London. The London *Monthly Magazine* tried to prove not only that it was an epic poem, but that it was surpassed only by the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, and "Paradise Lost." Joel Barlow is fairly entitled to the praise of raising mediocrity to dimensions almost colossal. Columbia is, thank Heaven, still alive; "The Columbiad" is, thank Heaven, hopelessly dead. There are some elderly gentlemen still living who declare that they have read "The Columbiad," and have derived much satisfaction from the perusal of the same; but their evidence can not stand the test of cross-examination. They can not tell what the poem is, what it teaches, and what it means. No critic within the last fifty years has read more than a hundred lines of it, and even this effort of attention has been a deadly fight with those merciful tendencies in the human organization which softly wrap the overworked mind in the blessedness of sleep. It is the impossibility of reading "The Columbiad" which prevents any critical estimate of its numberless demerits.

It is to be noted that, admitting all the poetic talent that our versifiers from 1776 to 1810 can claim, they are exceeded in all the requisites of poetry by contemporary prose writers. Fisher Ames, in a political article contributed to a newspaper, often displayed a richness of imagery, a harmony of diction, and an intensity of sentiment and passion which would have more than supplied our rhymers with materials for a canto.

John Jay was not, like Fisher Ames, a man who thought in images, yet in one instance his fervid honesty enabled him to outleap every versifier of his time in the exercise of impassioned imagination. In a letter addressed to the States of the Confederation he showed the horrible injustice wrought by the depreciated currency of the country. "Humanity," he said, "as well as justice, makes this demand upon you; the complaints of ruined widows and the cries of fatherless children, whose whole support has been placed in your hands and melted away, have doubtless reached you; *take care that they ascend no higher.*" And, if we consider poetry in its inmost essence, what can exceed in sentiment and imagination the statement in prose of the perfections of the maiden whom Jonathan Edwards, the austere theologian, was so fortunate as to win for his wife? To be sure, the description runs back to the year 1723, when Edwards was only twenty years old. "They say," he writes, "there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that Great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this Great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for any thing except to meditate on Him, that she expects, after a while, to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven, being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong or sinful if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence of mind, especially after this Great God has manifested Himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place singing sweetly, and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, *and no one knows for what.* She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her." The "sage and serious" Spenser, in all his lovely characterizations of feminine excellence, never succeeded in depicting a soul more exquisitely beautiful than this of Sarah Pierrepont as viewed through the consecrating imagination of Jonathan Edwards.

The leading writers of fiction during the period immediately succeeding the Revolu-

tion were Susanna Rowson, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, and Charles Brockden Brown. Mrs. Rowson's novel of *Charlotte Temple* attained the unprecedented circulation of 25,000 copies, not so much for its literary merits as on account of its foundation in a mysterious domestic scandal which affected the reputation of a number of prominent American families. Brackenridge was a Democrat of a peculiar kind, generally supporting his party, but reserving to himself the right of criticising and satirizing it. At the time the antislavery section of the Democratic party in the State of New York was called by the nickname of "Barnburners," Mr. J. G. Saxe, the poet, was asked to define his position. "I am," he replied, "a Democrat with a proclivity to arson." Brackenridge at an earlier period showed a similar restlessness in his dissent from the policy of a party whose principles he generally advocated. His principal work is *Modern Chivalry; or, the Adventures of Captain Farrago and Teague O'Regan, his Servant*. The author had a vague idea of Americanizing Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. The adventures are somewhat coarsely and clumsily portrayed, but it gave Brackenridge an opportunity to satirize the practical workings of Democracy, and he did it with pitiless severity. Teague is represented as a creature only a little raised above the condition of a beast, ignorant, credulous, greedy, and brutal, lacking both common-sense and moral sense, but still ambitious to attain political office, and willing to put himself forward as a candidate for posts the duties of which he could not by any possibility perform. The exaggeration is heightened at times into the most farcical caricature, but the book can be read even now with profit by the champions of civil service reform. There are also in the course of the narrative some deadly shafts launched, in a humorous way, against the institution of slavery. Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) was our first novelist by profession. At the time he wrote *Arthur Mervyn*, *Edgar Huntley*, *Clara Howard*, and *Wieland* the remuneration of the novelist was so small that he could only make what is called "a living" by sacrificing every grace and felicity of style to the inexorable need of writing rapidly, and therefore inaccurately. Brown, in his depth of insight into the morbid phenomena of the human mind, really anticipated Hawthorne; but hurried as he was by that most malignant of literary devils, the printer's, he produced no such masterpieces of literary art as *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun*. Brown is one of the most melancholy instances of a genius arrested in its orderly development by the pressure of circumstances. In mere power his forgotten novels rank very high among the products of

the American imagination. And it should be added that though he is unread, he is by no means unreadable. *Wieland; or, the Transformation*, has much of the thrilling interest which fastens our attention as we read Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, or Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. With all his faults, Brown does not deserve to be the victim of the bitterest irony of criticism, that, namely, of not being considered worth the trouble of a critical examination. His writings are contemptuously classed among dead books, interesting to the antiquary alone. Still, they have that vitality which comes from the presence of genius, and a little stirring of the ashes under which they are buried would reveal sparks of genuine fire.

The progress of theology during the thirty years which followed the Revolution is illustrated by the works of many men of mark in their profession, and by two men of original though somewhat crotchety religious genius, Samuel Hopkins and Nathaniel Emmons. It is the rightful boast of Calvinism, that whatever judgment may be passed on the validity of its dogmas, nobody can question its power to give strength to character, to educate men into strict habits of deductive reasoning, and to comfort regenerated and elected souls with the blissful feeling that they are in direct communication with the Divine mind. But even before the Revolution broke out there was a widely diffused though somewhat lazy mental insurrection against its doctrines by men who were formally connected with its churches; and Jonathan Edwards, the greatest successor of Calvin, was dismissed from his pastoral charge in Northampton because he had attempted to refuse Christian fellowship to those members of the church who, though they assented to Calvinistic opinions, had given "no evidence of saving grace" in their hearts. The devil, Edwards said, was very orthodox in faith, and his speculative knowledge in divinity exceeded that of "a hundred saints of ordinary education." It was but natural that the unconverted members of orthodox churches, who were distinguished more by their social position, wealth, and good moral character than by their capacity to stand Edwards's test of vital piety, should end in doubting the truth of the doctrines by the relentless application of which they were proscribed as non-Christian. The Revolution brought into the country not merely French soldiers, but the skeptical philosophy of the great French writers of the eighteenth century. The French officers were practically missionaries of unbelief. The light but stinging mockery of Voltaire had educated the intelligent French mind into a shallow contempt for all the mysteries of the Christian religion; and in fighting for our liberties, these gay, bright Frenchmen fought

also against our accredited theological faith. There is something ludicrous in this contact of the French with the Yankee mind. Men like Franklin, Jefferson, John Adams, and others, had already adopted opinions which were opposed to Calvinism, but they had no strong impulse to announce their religious convictions. The general drift of the popular mind set in such an opposite direction, that they hesitated to peril their political aims in a vain attempt to enforce their somewhat languid theological views. Unitarianism, or Liberal Christianity, so called, had not yet arisen; and the protest against Calvinism first took the form of an open denial of the Christian faith. Thus Ethan Allen published, in 1784, a work which he called *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*. He summoned the fort of Ticonderoga to surrender in "the name of the Great Jehovah, and of the Continental Congress;" he afterward demanded that the impregnable fortress of Christianity should surrender in the name of Ethan Allen. Christianity declined to obey the summons of this stalwart Vermont soldier—doubtless much to his surprise.

But the man who was the most influential assailant of the orthodox faith was Thomas Paine. He was the arch-infidel, the infidel *par éminence*, whom our early and later theologians have united in holding up as a monster of iniquity and unbelief. The truth is that Paine was a dogmatic, well-meaning iconoclast, who attacked religion without having any religious experience or any imaginative perception of the vital spiritual phenomena on which religious faith is based. Nobody can read his *Age of Reason*, after having had some preparatory knowledge derived from the study of the history of religions, without wondering at its shallowness. Paine is, in a spiritual application of the phrase, color-blind. He does not seem to know what religion is. The reputation he enjoyed was due not more to his masterly command of all the avenues to the average popular mind than to the importance to which he was lifted by his horrified theological adversaries. His merit as a writer against religion consisted in his hard, almost animal, common-sense, to whose tests he subjected the current theological dogmas. He was a kind of vulgarized Voltaire. His eminent services to the country during the Revolutionary war were generally known—indeed, were acknowledged by the leading statesmen of the United States. His memorable pamphlet entitled *Common-Sense* reached a circulation of a hundred thousand copies. It was followed up by a series of tracts, under the general name of "The Crisis," which were almost as efficient as their predecessor in rousing, sustaining, and justifying the patriotism of the nation. He was the author

of the now familiar maxim that "these are the times that try men's souls." His after-career in England and France resulted in his pamphlet on *The Rights of Man*, directed against Burke's assault on the principles and methods of the French Revolutionists of 1789. It was unmistakably the ablest answer that any of the democrats of France, England, and the United States had made to Burke's eloquent and philosophic impeachment of the motives and conduct of the actors in that great convulsion. One passage still survives, because it almost rivals Burke himself in the power of making a thought tell on the general mind by aptness of imagery. "Nature," says Paine, "has been kinder to Mr. Burke than he is to her. He is not affected by the realities of distress touching his heart, but by the showy resemblance of it striking his imagination. *He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird.*" A writer thus known to the American people not only as the champion of their individual rights, but of the rights of all mankind, could not fail to exert much influence when he brought his peculiar power of simple, forcible, and sarcastic statement to an assault on the religion of the country whose nationality he had done so much to establish. He never touched the inmost sanctuaries of Calvinism, though he seriously damaged some of its outworks; and the fault of the eminent divines who opposed him was in throwing all their strength in defending what was proved in the end to be indefensible.

Indeed, it is pitiable to witness the obstructions which strong minds and religious hearts raised against an inevitable tendency of human thought. While infidelity was slowly undermining the system of theology on which they based the sentiment and the substance of religious belief, these theologians exerted their powers of reasoning in controversies, waged against each other, relating to the question whether deductive arguments from adroitly detached Scriptural texts could fix the time when original sin made infants liable to eternal damnation. Some argued that the spiritual disease was communicated in the moment of conception; others, a little more humane, contended that the child must be born before it could righteously be damned; others insisted that a certain time after birth, left somewhat undetermined, but generally assigned to the period when the child attains to moral consciousness, should elapse before it was brought under the penalties of the universal curse. The current theology of his time could not sustain the attacks of such a hard, vulgar reasoner as Paine, except by withdrawing into its vital and unassailable position, namely, its power of converting depraved souls into loving disciples of the Lord. The thinking of the dominant

theologians of that period has been quietly repudiated by their successors, and it has failed to establish any place in literature because it was exerted on themes which the human mind and human heart have gradually ignored. Still, the practical effects of the teaching of the great body of orthodox clergymen have been immense. It would be unjust to measure their influence by the success or failure of theories devised by the speculative ingenuity of their representative divines. It is impossible to estimate too highly the services of the clergymen of the country in the formation of the national character. Their sermons have not passed into literature. A band of "ministers," contented with small salaries, on which they almost starved, and with no reputation beyond their little parishes, labored year after year in the obscure work of purifying, elevating, and regenerating the individuals committed to their pastoral charge; and when they died, in all the grandeur with which piety invests poverty, they were swiftly succeeded by men who valiantly trod the same narrow path, leading to no success recognized on earth as brilliant or self-satisfying.

The period of our literary history between 1810 and 1840 witnessed the rise and growth of a literature which was influenced by the new "revival of letters" in England during the early part of the present century, represented by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Campbell, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Moore. Most of these eminent men were not only writers but powers; they communicated spiritual life to the soul, as well as beautiful images and novel ideas to the mind; and touching, as they did, the profoundest sources of imagination, reason, and emotion, they quickened latent individual genius into original activity by the magnetism they exerted on sympathetic souls, and thus stimulated emulation rather than imitation. The wave of Wordsworthianism swept gently over New England, and here and there found a mind which was mentally and morally refreshed by drinking deeply of this new water of life. But Pope was still for a long time the pontiff of poetry, recognized by the cultivated men of Boston no less than by the cultivated men of London and Edinburgh. Probably there occurred no greater and more sudden change from the old school to the new than in the case of a precocious lad who bore the name of William Cullen Bryant. At the age of fourteen, in the year 1808, he produced a versified satire on Jefferson's administration called "The Embargo." It was just as good and just as bad as most American imitations of Pope; but the boy indicated a facility in using the accredited verse of the time which excited the wonder and admiration of his elders. Vigor, compactness, ring-

ing emphasis in the constantly recurring rhymes, all seemed to show that a new Pope had been born in Massachusetts. The genius of the lad, however, was destined to take a different road to fame than that which was marked out by his admirers. He read the lyrical ballads of Wordsworth; and his friend, R. H. Dana, informs us that Bryant confessed to him that on reading that volume "a thousand springs seemed to gush up at once into his heart, and the face of nature of a sudden changed into a strange freshness and life." Accordingly his next poem of any importance was "Thanatopsis." We are told that it was written when he was only eighteen. It was published in the *North American Review* for 1816, when he was twenty-two. The difference of four years makes little difference in the remarkable fact that the poem indicates no sign of youth whatever. The perfection of its rhythm, the majesty and dignity of the tone of matured reflection which breathes through it, the solemnity of its underlying sentiment, and the austere unity of the pervading thought, would deceive almost any critic into affirming it to be the product of an imaginative thinker to whom "years had brought the philosophic mind." Still it must be remembered that the poets in whom meditation and imagination have been most harmoniously blended have produced some of their best works when they were comparatively young. This is specially the case as regards Wordsworth. His poem on revisiting Tintern Abbey, written when he was twenty-eight, introduced an absolutely new element into English poetry, and was specially characterized by that quality of calm, deep, solid reflection which is commonly considered to be the peculiarity of genius when it has attained the maturity which age and experience alone can give. The wonderful "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from the Recollections of Early Childhood," written about four years later, indicates the highest point which the poetic insight and the philosophic wisdom of Wordsworth ever reached; and it ought, on ordinary principles of criticism, to have been written thirty years later than the date which marks its birth. Nothing which Wordsworth afterward wrote, though precious in itself, displayed any thing equal to these poems in maturity of thought and imagination. It is doubtful if Bryant's "Thanatopsis" has been excelled by the many deep and beautiful poems which he has written since. In his case, as in that of Wordsworth, we are puzzled by the old head suddenly erected on young shoulders. They leap over the age of passion by a single bound, and become poetic philosophers at an age when other poets are in the sensuous stage of imaginative development. In estimating the claim of Bryant to be ranked as the foremost of

American poets, it may be said that he opened a rich and deep, if somewhat narrow, vein, which he has worked with marvelous skill, and that he has obtained more pure gold from his mine than many others who have sunk shafts here and there into more promising deposits of the precious metal. He is, perhaps, unequaled among our American poets in his grasp of the elemental life of nature. His descriptions of natural scenery always imply that nature, in every aspect it turns to the poetic eye, is thoroughly *alive*. Nobody can read his poems called "The Evening Wind," "Green River," "The Death of the Flowers," the invocation "To a Water-Fowl," "An Evening Reverie," "To the Fringed Gentian," not to mention others, without feeling that this poet has explored the inmost secrets of nature, and has shown how natural objects can be wedded to the human mind in "love and holy passion." In the abstract imagination which celebrates the fundamental idea and ideal of our American life, what can excel his noble verses on "The Antiquity of Freedom?" "The Land of Dreams" is perhaps the most exquisite of Bryant's poems, as in it thought, sentiment, and imagination are more completely dissolved in melody than in any other of his poems. In a criticism of the range of Bryant's mind it must be remembered that his poetry is only one expression of it. His life has been generally passed in political struggles which have called forth all his powers of statement and reasoning, based on a patient study of the phenomena presented by our social and political life. As the editor of the New York *Evening Post*, he has shown himself an able publicist, an intelligent economist, and a resolute party champion. And at a period of life when most men are justified in resting from their labors, he undertook the gigantic task of translating into blank verse such as few but he can give, the whole of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Another eminent writer of the period, and one who also happily survives, at the advanced age of eighty-eight, an object of the deserved respect and admiration of his countrymen, was Richard Henry Dana. His articles in the *North American Review*, from 1817 to 1819, were remarkable compositions for the time. The long paper on the English poets, published in 1819, surveys the whole domain of English poetry from Chaucer to Wordsworth. It exhibits a comprehensiveness of taste, a depth and delicacy of critical perception, and a grasp of the spiritual elements which enter into the highest efforts of creative minds, unexampled in any previous American contribution to the philosophy of criticism. His discernment of the relative rank and worth of British poets is specially noticeable. He interpreted before he

judged; and in interpreting he showed, in old George Chapman's phrase, that he possessed the "fit key," that is, the "deep and treasured heart,"

"With poesy to open poesy."

Even among the cultivated readers of the *North American*, there were few who could appreciate Dana's profound analysis of the genius of Wordsworth and Coleridge. In 1821 he began *The Idle Man*, of which six numbers were published. In this appeared his celebrated paper on Edmund Kean, the best piece of theatrical criticism in American literature; two novels, *Tom Thornton* and *Paul Felton*, dealing with the darker passions of our nature in a style so abrupt, a feeling so intense, and a moral purpose so inexorable that they rather terrified than pleased the "idle men" who read novels; and several of those beautiful meditations on nature and human life, in which the author exhibits himself as

"A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler betwixt life and death."

The Idle Man did not succeed. In 1827 he published a thin volume entitled *The Buccaneer, and Other Poems*. These are sufficient to give him a high rank among American poets, though they have obtained but little hold on popular sympathy. "The Buccaneer" is remarkable for its representation, equally clear, of external objects and internal moods of thought and passion. In one sense it is the most "objective" of poems; in another, the most "subjective." The truth would seem to be that Dana's overpowering conception of the terrible reality of sin—a conception almost as strong as that which was fixed in the imagination of Jonathan Edwards—interferes with the artistic disposition of his imagined scenes and characters, and touches even some of his most enchanting pictures with a certain baleful light. An uneasy spiritual discontent, a moral despondency, is evident in his verse as well as in his prose, and his large powers of reason and imagination seem never to have been harmoniously blended in his artistic creations. Still, he remains one of the prominences of our literature, whether considered as poet, novelist, critic, or general thinker.

Washington Allston, the greatest of American painters, was also a graceful poet. "His mind," says Mr. Dana, "seems to have in it the glad but gentle brightness of a star, as you look up to it, sending pure influences into your heart, and making it kind and cheerful." As a poet, however, he is now but little known. As a prose writer, his lectures on Art, and especially his romance of *Monaldi*, show that he could paint with the pen as well as with the brush. It is difficult to understand why *Monaldi* has

not obtained a permanent place in our literature. There is in it one description of a picture representing the visible struggle of a soul in the toils of sin which, in intensity of conception and passion, exceeds any picture he ever painted. The full richness of Allston's mind was probably only revealed to those who for years enjoyed the inestimable privilege of hearing him converse. It is to be regretted that no copious notes were taken of his conversations. Mrs. Jameson, in her visit to the United States, was so surprised to witness such opulence of thought conveyed in such seemingly careless talk, that she took a few notes of his deep and beautiful sayings. It would have been well if Dana and others who from day to day and year to year saw the clear stream of conversation flow ever on from the same inexhaustible mind, had made the world partakers of the wealth with which they were enriched. Allston, indeed, was one of those men whose works are hardly the measure of their powers—who can talk better than they can write, and conceive more vividly than they can execute.

The "revival" of American literature in New York differed much in character from its revival in New England. In New York it was purely human in tone; in New England it was a little superhuman in tone. In New England they feared the devil; in New York they dared the devil; and the greatest and most original literary dare-devil in New York was a young gentleman of good family, whose "schooling" ended with his sixteenth year, who had rambled much about the island of Manhattan, who had in his saunterings gleaned and brooded over many Dutch legends of an elder time, who had read much but had studied little, who possessed fine observation, quick intelligence, a genial disposition, and an indolently original genius in detecting the ludicrous side of things, and whose name was Washington Irving. After some preliminary essays in humorous literature, his genius arrived at the age of indiscretion, and he produced, at the age of twenty-six, the most deliciously audacious work of humor in our literature, namely, *The History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker*. It is said of some reformers that they have not only opinions, but the courage of their opinions. It may be said of Irving that he not only caricatured, but had the courage of his caricatures. The persons whom he covered with ridicule were the ancestors of the leading families of New York, and these families prided themselves on their descent. After the publication of such a book he could hardly enter the "best society" of New York, to which he naturally belonged, without running the risk of being insulted, especially by the elderly women of fashion; but

he conquered their prejudices by the same grace and geniality of manner, by the same unmistakable tokens that he was an inborn gentleman, through which he afterward won his way into the first society of England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Still, the promise of Knickerbocker was not fulfilled. That book, if considered as an imitation at all, was an imitation of Rabelais, or Swift, or of any author in any language who had shown an independence of all convention, who did not hesitate to commit indecorums, and who laughed at all the regalities of the world. The author lived long enough to be called a timid imitator of Addison and Goldsmith. In fact, he imitated nobody. His genius, at first riotous and unrestrained, became tamed and regulated by a larger intercourse with the world, by the saddening experience of life, and by the gradual development of some deep sentiments which held in check the audacities of his wit and humor. But even in the portions of *The Sketch-Book* relating to England it will be seen that his favorite authors belonged rather to the age of Elizabeth than to the age of Anne. In *Bracebridge Hall* there is one chapter called "The Rookery," which in exquisitely poetic humor is hardly equaled by the best productions of the authors he is said to have made his models. That he possessed essential humor and pathos, is proved by the warm admiration he excited in such masters of humor and pathos as Scott and Dickens; and style is but a secondary consideration when it expresses vital qualities of genius. If he subordinated energy to elegance, he did it, not because he had the ignoble ambition to be ranked as "a fine writer," but because he was free from the ambition, equally ignoble, of simulating a passion which he did not feel. The period which elapsed between the publication of Knickerbocker's history and *The Sketch-Book* was ten years. During this time his mind acquired the habit of tranquilly contemplating the objects which filled his imagination, and what it lost in spontaneous vigor it gained in sureness of insight and completeness of representation. *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* have not the humorous inspiration of some passages in Knickerbocker, but perhaps they give more permanent delight, for the scenes and characters are so harmonized that they have the effect of a picture, in which all the parts combine to produce one charming whole. Besides, Irving is one of those exceptional authors who are regarded by their readers as personal friends, and the felicity of nature by which he obtained this distinction was expressed in that amenity, that amiability of tone, which some of his austere critics have called elegant feebleness. As a biographer and historian, his *Life of Columbus* and his *Life of Washington* have

indissolubly connected his name with the discoverer of the American continent and the champion of the liberties of his country. In *The Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* and *The Alhambra* he occupies a unique position among those writers of fiction who have based fiction on a laborious investigation into the facts of history. His reputation is not local, but is recognized by all cultivated people who speak the English language. If Great Britain established an English intellectual colony in the United States, such men as Irving and Cooper may be said to have retorted by establishing an American intellectual colony in England.

James Fenimore Cooper was substantially a New Yorker, though accidentally born (in 1789) in New Jersey. He entered Yale College in 1802, and, three years after, left it without graduating, having obtained a midshipman's warrant in the United States navy. He remained in the naval service for six years. In 1811 he married, and in 1821 began a somewhat memorable literary career by the publication of a novel of English life, called *Precaution*, which failed to attract much attention. In the same year, however, he published another novel, relating to the Revolutionary period of our history, called *The Spy*, and rose at once to the position of a power of the first class in our literature. The novels which immediately followed did, on the whole, increase his reputation; and after the publication of *The Red Rover*, in 1827, his works were not only eagerly welcomed by his countrymen, but were translated into almost all the languages of Europe. Indeed, it seemed at one time that Cooper's fame was co-extensive with American commerce. The novels were intensely American in spirit, and intensely American in scenery and characters; but they were also found to contain in them something which appealed to human nature every where. Much of their popularity was doubtless due to Cooper's vivid presentation of the wildest aspects of nature in a comparatively new country, and his creation of characters corresponding to their physical environment; but the essential influence he exerted is to be referred to the pleasure all men experience in the kindling exhibition of man as an active being. No Hamlets, or Werthers, or Renés, or Childe Harolds were allowed to tenant his woods or appear on his quarter-decks. Will, and the trained sagacity and experience directing will, were the invigorating elements of character which he selected for romantic treatment. Whether the scene be laid in the primitive forest or on the ocean, his men are always struggling with each other or with the forces of nature. This primal quality of robust manhood all men understand, and it shines triumphantly through the interposing fogs of French, German, Italian, and

Russian translations. A physician of the mind could hardly prescribe a more efficient tonic for weak and sentimental natures than a daily diet made up of the most bracing passages in the novels of Cooper.

Another characteristic of Cooper, which makes him universally acceptable, is his closeness to nature. He agrees with Wordsworth in this, that in all his descriptions of natural objects he indicates that he and nature are familiar acquaintances, and, as Dana says, have "talked together." He takes nothing at second-hand. If brought before a justice of the peace, he could solemnly swear to the exact truth of his representations without running any risk of being prosecuted for perjury. Cooper as well as Wordsworth took nature, as it were, at first-hand, the perceiving mind coming into direct contact with the thing perceived; but Wordsworth primarily contemplated nature as the divinely appointed food for the nourishment of the spirit that meditates, while Cooper felt its power as a stimulus to the spirit that acts. No two minds could, in many respects, be more different, yet both agree in the instinctive sagacity which detects the heroic under the guise of the homely. The greatest creation of Cooper is the hunter and trapper, Leatherstocking, who appears in five of his best novels, namely, *The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Prairie*, *The Pathfinder*, and *The Deerslayer*, and who is unmistakably the life of each. The simplicity, sagacity, and intrepidity of this man of the woods, his quaint sylvan piety and humane feeling, the perfect harmony established between his will and reason, his effectiveness equal to all occasions, and his determination to dwell on those vanishing points of civilization which faintly mark the domain of the settler from that of the savage, altogether combine to make up a character which is admired equally in log-cabins and palaces. Wordsworth, in one of the most exquisite of his minor poems—"Three Years She grew in Sun and Shower"—has traced the process of nature in making "a lady of her own." Certainly Leatherstocking might be quoted as a successful attempt of the same austere goddess to make, out of ruder materials; a man of "her own."

Cooper lived to write thirty-four novels, the merits of which are so unequal that at times we are puzzled to conceive of them as the products of one mind. His failures are not to be referred to that decline of power which accompanies increasing age, for *The Deerslayer*, one of his best novels, was written six years after his worst novel, *The Monikins*. He often failed, early as well as late in his career, not because his faculties were impaired, but because they were misdirected. One of the secrets of his fascination was also one of the causes of his frequent

dullness. He equaled De Foe in the art of giving reality to romance by the dextrous accumulation and management of details. In his two great sea novels, *The Pilot* and *The Red Rover*, the important events are preceded by a large number of minor incidents, each of which promises to be an event. The rocks which the vessel by cunning seamanship escapes are described as minutely as the rocks on which she is finally wrecked. It is difficult for the reader to conceive that he is not reading an account of an actual occurrence. He unconsciously transports himself to the deck of the ship, participates in all the hopes and fears of the crew, thanks God when the keel just grazes a ledge without being seriously injured, and finally goes down into the "hell of waters" in company with his imagined associates. In such scenes the imagination of the reader is so excited that he has no notion whether the writer's style is good or bad. He is made by some magic of words to see, feel, realize, the situation; the verbal method by which the miracle is wrought he entirely ignores or overlooks. But then the preliminaries to these grand scenes which exhibit intelligent man in a life-and-death contest with the unintelligent forces of nature—how tiresome they often are! The early chapters of *The Red Rover*, for example, are dull beyond expression. The author's fondness for detail trespasses on all the reserved fund of human patience. It is only because "expectation sits i' the air" that we tolerate his tediousness. If we desire to witness the conduct of the man-of-war in the tempest and the battle, we must first submit to follow all the cumbersome details by which she is slowly detached from the dock and laboriously piloted into the open sea. There is more "padding" in Cooper's novels than in those of any author who can make any pretensions to rival him. His representative sailors, Long Tom Coffin, Tom Tiller, Nightingale, Bolthrope, Trysail, Bob Yarn, not to mention others, are admirable as characters, but they are allowed to inflict too much of their practical wisdom on the reader. In fact, it is a great misfortune, as it regards the permanent fame of Cooper, that he wrote one-third, at least, of his novels at all, and that he did not condense the other two-thirds into a third of their present length.

Cooper, on his return from Europe in 1833 or 1834, published a series of novels satirizing what he considered the faults and vices of his countrymen. The novels have little literary merit, but they afforded an excellent opportunity to exhibit the independence, intrepidity, and integrity of the author's character. It is a pity he ever wrote them; still, they proved that he became a bad novelist in order to perform what he deemed to be the duties of a good citizen. Indeed, as a brave, high-spirited,

noble-minded man, somewhat too proud and dogmatic, but thoroughly honest, he was ever on a level with the best characters in his best works.

The names of Joseph Rodman Drake and Fitz-Greene Halleck are connected, not merely by personal friendship, but by partnership in poetry. Both were born in the same year (1795), but Drake died in 1820, while Halleck survived to 1867. Halleck, in strength of constitution as well as in power of mind, was much superior to his fragile companion; but Drake had a real enthusiasm for poetry, which Halleck, though a poet, did not possess. Drake's "Culprit Fay" is an original American poem, formed out of materials collected from the scenery and traditions of the classical American river, the Hudson, but it was too hastily written to do justice to the fancy by which it was conceived. His "Ode on the American Flag" derives its chief strength from the resounding quatrain by which it is closed, and these four lines were contributed by Halleck. Indeed, Drake is, on the whole, less remembered by his own poems than by the beautiful tribute which Halleck made to his memory. They were coadjutors in the composition of the "Croaker Papers," originally contributed to the New York *Evening Post*; but the superiority of Halleck to his friend is manifest at the first glance. One of the puzzles which arrest the attention of a historian of American literature is to account for the strange indifference of Halleck to exercise often the faculty which on occasions he showed he possessed in superabundance. All the subjects he attempted—the "Croaker Papers," "Fanny," "Burns," "Red Jacket," "Alnwick Castle," "Connecticut," the magnificent heroic ode, "Marco Bozzaris"—show a complete artistic mastery of the resources of poetic expression, whether his theme be gay or grave, or compounded of the two. His extravagant admiration of Campbell was founded on Campbell's admirable power of compression. Halleck thought that Byron was a mere rhetorician in comparison with his favorite poet. Yet it is evident to a critical reader that a good deal of Campbell's compactness is due to a studied artifice of rhythm and rhyme, while Halleck seemingly writes in verse as if he were not trammelled by its laws; and his rhymes naturally recur without suggesting to the reader that his condensation of thought and feeling is at all affected by the necessity of rhyming. Prose has rarely been written with more careless ease and more melodious compactness than Halleck has shown in writing verse. The wonder is that with this conscious command of bending verse into the brief expression of all the moods of his mind, he should have written so little. The only explanation is to be found in his skepticism as to the vital real-

ity of those profound states of consciousness which inspire poets of less imaginative faculty than he possessed to incessant activity. He was among poets what Thackeray is among novelists. Being the well-paid clerk and man of business of a millionaire, his grand talent was not stung into exertion by necessity. Though he lived to the age of seventy-two, he allowed year after year to pass without any exercise of his genius. "What's the use?"—that was the deadening maxim which struck his poetic faculties with paralysis. Yet what he has written, though very small in amount, belongs to the most precious treasures of our poetical literature. What he might have written, had he so chosen, would have raised him to a rank among our first men of letters, which he does not at present hold.

James K. Paulding (1778-1860) completes this peculiar group of New York authors. He was connected with Irving in the production of the "Salmagundi" essays, and was at one time prominent as a satirist, humorist, and novelist. Most of his writings are now forgotten, though they evinced a somewhat strong though coarse vein of humor, which was not without its effect at the period when its local and political allusions and personalities were understood. A scene in one of his novels indicates the kind of comicality in which he excelled. The house of an old reprobate situated on the bank of a river is carried away by a freshet. In the agony of his fear he strives to recall some prayer which he learned when a child; but as he rushes distractedly up and down the stairs of his floating mansion, he can only remember the first line of the baby's hymn, "Now I lay me down to sleep," which he incessantly repeats as he runs.

While these New York essayists, humorists, and novelists were laughing at the New Englander as a Puritan and satirizing him as a Yankee, there was a peculiar revival of spiritual sentiment in New England; which made its mark in general as well as in theological literature. In the very home of Puritanism there was going on a reaction against the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism and the inexorable faith of the Pilgrim Fathers. This reaction began before the Revolutionary war, and continued after it. Jonathan Mayhew, the pastor of the West Church, of Boston, was not only a flaming defender of the political rights of the colonies, but his sermons also teemed with theological heresies. He rebelled against King Calvin as well as against King George. Probably Paine's *Age of Reason* had afterward some effect in inducing prominent Boston clergymen, reputed orthodox, to silently drop from their preaching the leading dogmas of the accredited creed. With such accomplished ministers as Freeman, Buckminster, Thacher, and their followers, ser-

monizing became more and more a form of moralizing, and the "scheme of salvation" was ignored or overlooked in the emphasis laid on the performance of practical duties. What would now be called rationalism, either expressed or implied, seemed to threaten the old orthodox faith with destruction by the subtle process of sapping and undermining without directly assailing it. The sturdy Calvinists were at first puzzled what to do, as the new heresiarchs did not so much offend by what they preached as by what they omitted to preach; but they at last forced those who were Unitarians in opinion to become Unitarians in profession, and thus what was intended as a peaceful evolution of religious faith was compelled to assume the character of a revolutionary protest against the generally received dogmas of the Christian churches. The two men prominent in this insurrection against ancestral orthodoxy were William Ellery Channing and Andrews Norton. Channing was a pious humanitarian; Norton was an accomplished Biblical scholar. Channing assailed Calvinism because, in his opinion, it falsified all right notions of God; Norton, because it falsified the true interpretation of the Word of God. Channing's soul was filled with the idea of the dignity of human nature, which, he thought, Calvinism degraded; Norton's mind resented what he considered the illogical combination of Scripture texts to sustain an intolerable theological theory. Channing delighted to portray the felicities of a heavenly frame of mind; Norton delighted to exhibit the felicities of accurate exegesis. Both were masters of style; but Channing used his rhetoric to prove that the doctrines of Calvinism were abhorrent to the God-given moral nature of man; Norton employed his somewhat dry and bleak but singularly lucid powers of statement, exposition, and logic to show that his opponents were deficient in scholarship and sophistical in argumentation. Channing's literary reputation, which overleaped all the boundaries of his sect, was primarily due to his essay on Milton; but Norton could not endure the theological system on which "Paradise Lost" was based, and therefore laughed at the poem. Norton had little of that imaginative sympathy with the mass of mankind for which Channing was pre-eminently distinguished. Any body who has mingled much with Unitarian divines must have heard their esoteric pleasantries as to what these two redoubtable champions of the Unitarian faith would say when they were transferred from earth to heaven. Channing, as he looks upon the bright rows of the celestial society, rapturously declares, "This gives me a new idea of the dignity of human nature;" Norton, with a certain patrician exclusiveness born of scholarly tastes, folds his hands, and qui-

etly says to St. Peter or St. Paul, "Rather a miscellaneous assemblage." But on earth they worked together, each after his gifts, to draw out all the resources of sentiment, scholarship, and reasoning possessed by such able opponents as they found in Stuart, Woods, and Park. There can be no doubt that Calvinism, in its modified Hopkinsian form, gained increased power by the wholesome shaking which Unitarianism gave it; for this shaking kindled the zeal, sharpened the intellects, stimulated the mental activity of every professor of the evangelical faith. Neither Channing nor Norton, in assailing the statements in which the Calvinistic creed was mechanically expressed, exhibited an interior view of the creed as it vitally existed in the souls of Calvinists. Channing, however, was still the legitimate spiritual successor of Jonathan Edwards in affirming, with new emphasis, the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, that God is in direct communication with the souls of His creatures. The difference is that Edwards holds the doors of communication so nearly closed that only the elect can pass in; Channing throws them wide open, and invites every body to be illumined in thought and vitalized in will by the ever-fresh outpourings of celestial light and warmth. But Channing wrote on human nature as though the world was tenanted by actual or possible Channings, who possessed his exceptional delicacy of spiritual perception, and his exceptional exemption from the temptations of practical life. He was, as far as a constant contemplation of the Divine perfections was concerned, a meditative saint, and had he belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, he probably would, on the ground of his spiritual gifts, have been eventually canonized. Still, the seductive subjectivity of his holy outlook on nature and human life tended to make the individual consciousness of what was just and good the measure of Divine justice and goodness; and in some mediocre minds, which his religious genius magnetized, this tendency brought forth distressing specimens of spiritual sentimentality and pious pertness. The most curious result, however, of Channing's teachings was the swift way in which his disciples overleaped the limitations set by their master. In the course of a single generation some of the most vigorous minds among the Unitarians, practicing the freedom of thought which he inculcated as a duty, indulged in theological audacities of which he never dreamed. He was the intellectual father of Theodore Parker, and the intellectual grandfather of Octavius B. Frothingham. Parker and Frothingham, both humanitarians, but students also of the advanced school of critical theologians, soon made Channing's heresies tame when compared with the heresies they promulgated.

The Free Religionists are the legitimate progeny of Channing.

But, in the interim, the theologian and preacher who came nearest to Channing in the geniality and largeness of his nature, and the persuasiveness with which he enforced what may be called the conservative tenets of Unitarianism, was Orville Dewey, a man whose mind was fertile, whose religious experience was deep, and who brought from the Calvinism in which he had been trained an interior knowledge of the system which he early rejected. He had a profound sense not only of the dignity of human nature, but of the dignity of human life. In idealizing human life he must still be considered as giving some fresh and new interpretations of it, and his discourses form, like Channing's, an addition to American literature, as well as a contribution to the theology of Unitarianism. He defended men from the assaults of Calvinists, as Channing had defended Man. Carlyle speaks somewhere of "this dog-hole of a world;" Dewey considered it, with all its errors and horrors, as a good world on the whole, and as worthy of the Divine beneficence.

The work which may be said to have bridged over the space which separated Channing from Theodore Parker was *Academical Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities*, by Dr. John G. Palfrey, Professor of Biblical Literature in the University of Cambridge, published in 1838, but which had doubtless influenced the students who had listened to them many years before their publication. This book is noticeable for the scholarly method by which most of the miracles recorded in the Old Testament are explained on natural principles, and the calm, almost prim and polite, exclusion of miracle from the Hebrew Scriptures. Accepting miracle when he considered it necessary, Dr. Palfrey broke the spell and charm, at least among Unitarian students of theology, which separated the Hebrew Bible from other great works which expressed the religious mind of the human race; and his *Academical Lectures* remain as a palpable landmark in the progress of American rationalism.

But probably the greatest literary result of the Unitarian revolt was the appearance in our literature of such a phenomenon as Ralph Waldo Emerson. He came from a race of clergymen; doubtless much of his elevation of character and austere sense of the grandeur of the moral sentiment is his by inheritance; but after entering the ministry he soon found that even Unitarianism was a limitation of his intellectual independence to which he could not submit; and, in the homely New England phrase, "he set up on his account," responsible for nobody, and not responsible to any body. His radicalism penetrated to the very root

of dissent, for it was founded on the idea that in all organizations, social, political, and religious, there must be an element which checks the free exercise of individual thought; and the free exercise of his individual thinking he determined should be controlled by nothing instituted and authoritative on the planet. Descartes himself did not begin his philosophizing with a more complete self-emancipation from all the opinions generally accepted by mankind. But Descartes was a reasoner; Emerson is a seer and a poet; and he was the last man to attempt to overthrow accredited systems in order to substitute for them a dogmatic system of his own. In his view of the duty of "man thinking," this course would have been to violate his fundamental principle, which was that nobody "could lay copyright on the world;" that no theory could include nature; that the greatest thinker and discoverer could only add a few items of information to what the human mind had previously won from "the vast and formless infinite;" and that the true work of a scholar was not to inclose the field of matter and mind by a system which encircled it, but to extend our knowledge in straight lines, leading from the vanishing points of positive knowledge into the illimitable unknown spaces beyond. Emerson's peculiar sphere was psychology. By a certain felicity of his nature he was a non-combatant; indifferent to logic, he suppressed all the processes of his thinking, and announced its results in affirmations; and none of the asperities which commonly afflict the apostles of dissent ever ruffled the serene spirit of this universal dissenter. He could never be seduced into controversy. He was assailed both as an atheist and as a pantheist; as a writer so obscure that nobody could understand what he meant, and also as a mere verbal trickster, whose only talent consisted in vivifying commonplaces, or in converting, by inversion, stale truisms into brilliant paradoxes; and all these varying charges had only the effect of lighting up his face with that queer, quizzical, inscrutable smile, that amused surprise at the misconceptions of the people who attacked him, which is noticeable in all portraits and photographs of his somewhat enigmatical countenance. His method was very simple and very hard. It consisted in growing up to a level with the spiritual objects he perceived, and his elevation of thought was thus the sign and accompaniment of a corresponding elevation of character. In his case, as in the case of Channing, there was an unconscious return to Jonathan Edwards, and to all the great divines whose "souls had sight" of eternal verities. What the orthodox saints called the Holy Ghost, he, without endowing it with personality, called the Over Soul. He believed with

them that in God we live and move and have our being; that only by communicating with this Being can we have any vital individuality; and that the record of a communication with Him or It was the most valuable of all contributions to literature, whether theological or human. The noblest passages in his writings are those in which he celebrates this august and gracious communion of the Spirit of God with the soul of man; and they are the most serious, solemn, and uplifting passages which can perhaps be found in our literature. Here was a man who had earned the right to utter these noble truths by patient meditation and clear insight. Carlyle exclaimed, in a preface to an English edition of one of Emerson's later volumes: "Here comes our brave Emerson, with *news* from the empyrean!" That phrase exactly hits Emerson as a transcendental thinker. His insights were, in some sense, revelations; he could "gossip on the eternal politics;" and just at the time when science, relieved from the pressure of theology, announced materialistic hypotheses with more than the confidence with which the bigots of theological creeds had heretofore announced their dogmas, this serene American thinker had won his way into all the centres of European intelligence, and delivered his quiet protest against every hypothesis which put in peril the spiritual interests of humanity. It is curious to witness the process by which this heresiarch has ended in giving his evidence, or rather his experience, that God is not the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer, but that, however infinitely distant He may be from the human understanding, He is still intimately near to the human soul. And Emerson knows by experience what the word soul really means!

"Were she a body, how could she remain
Within the body, which is less than she?
Or how could she the world's great shape contain,
And in our narrow breasts contained be?"

"All bodies are confined within some place,
But she all place within herself confines;
All bodies have their measure and their space,
But who can draw the soul's dimensioned lines?"

In an unpublished speech at a celebration of Shakspeare's birthday, he spoke of Shakspeare as proving to us that "the soul of man is deeper, wider, higher than the spaces of astronomy;" and in another connection he says that "a man of thought must feel that thought is the parent of the universe," that "the world is saturated with deity and with law."

It is this depth of spiritual experience and subtlety of spiritual insight which distinguish Emerson from all other American authors, and make him an elementary power as well as an elementary thinker. The singular attractiveness, however, of his writings comes from his intense perception

of Beauty, both in its abstract quality as the "awful loveliness" which such poets as Shelley celebrated, and in the more concrete expression by which it fascinates ordinary minds. His imaginative faculty, both in the conception and creation of beauty, is uncorrupted by any morbid sentiment. His vision reaches to the very sources of beauty—the beauty that cheers. The great majority even of eminent poets are "saddest when they sing." They contrast life with the beautiful possibilities of life which their imaginations suggest, and though their discontent with the actual may inspire by the energy of its utterance, it tends also to depress by emphasizing the impossibility of realizing the ideals it depicts. But the perception of beauty in nature or in human nature, whether it be the beauty of a flower or of a soul, makes Emerson joyous and glad; he exults in celebrating it, and he communicates to his readers his own ecstatic mood. He has been a diligent student of many literatures and many religions; but all his quotations from them show that he rejects every thing in his manifold readings which does not tend to cheer, invigorate, and elevate, which is not nutritious food for the healthy human soul. If he is morbid in any thing, it is in his comical hatred of all forms of physical, mental, and moral disease. He agrees with Dr. Johnson in declaring that "every man is a rascal as soon as he is sick." "I once asked," he says, "a clergyman in a retired town who were his companions—what men of ability he saw. He replied that he spent his time with the sick and the dying. I said he seemed to me to need quite other company, and all the more that he had this; for if people were sick and dying to any purpose, we should leave all and go to them, but, as far as I had observed, they were as frivolous as the rest, and sometimes much more frivolous." Indeed, Emerson, glorying in his own grand physical and moral health, and fundamentally brave, is impatient of all the weaknesses of humanity, especially those of men of genius. He never could be made to recognize the genius of Shelley, except in a few poems, because he was disgusted with the wail that persistently runs through Shelley's wonderfully imaginative poetry. In his taste, as in his own practice as a writer, he is a stout believer in the desirableness and efficacy of mental tonics, and a severe critic of the literature of discontent and desperation. He looks curiously on while a poet rages against destiny and his own miseries, and puts the ironical query, "Why so hot, my little man?" His ideal of manhood was originally derived from the consciousness of his own somewhat haughty individuality, and it has been fed by his study of the poetic and historic records of persons who have dared to

do heroic acts and dared to utter heroic thoughts. Beauty is never absent from his celebration of these, but it is a beauty that never enfeebles, but always braces and cheers.

Take the six or eight volumes in which Emerson's genius and character are embodied—that is, in which he has converted truth into life, and life into more truth—and you are dazzled on every page by his superabundance of compactly expressed reflection and his marvelous command of all the resources of imaginative illustration. Every paragraph is literally “rammed with life.” A fortnight's meditation is sometimes condensed in a sentence of a couple of lines. Almost every word bears the mark of deliberate thought in its selection. The most evanescent and elusive spiritual phenomena, which occasionally flit before the steady gaze of the inner eye of the mind, are fixed in expressions which have the solidity of marble. The collection of these separate insights into nature and human life he ironically calls an essay; and much criticism has been wasted in showing that the aphoristic and axiomatic sentences are often connected by mere juxtaposition on the page, and not by logical relation with each other, and that at the end we have no perception of a series of thoughts leading up to a clear idea of the general theme. This criticism is just; but in reading Emerson we have not to do with such economists of thought as Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith—with the writers of the *Spectator*, the *Rambler*, and the *Citizen of the World*. Emerson's so-called essay sparkles with sentences which might be made the texts for numerous ordinary essays; and his general title, it may be added, is apt to be misleading. He is fragmentary in composition because he is a fanatic for compactness; and every paragraph, sometimes every sentence, is a record of an insight. Hence comes the impression that his sentences are huddled together rather than artistically disposed. Still, with all this lack of logical order, he has the immense advantage of suggesting something new to the diligent reader after he has read him for the fiftieth time.

It is also to be said of Emerson that he is one of the wittiest and most practical as well as one of the profoundest of American writers, that his wit, exercised on the ordinary affairs of life, is the very embodiment of brilliant good sense, that he sometimes rivals Franklin in humorous insight, and that both his wit and humor obey that law of beauty which governs every other exercise of his peculiar mind. He has many defects and eccentricities exasperating to the critic who demands symmetry in the mental constitution of the author whose peculiar merits he is eager to acknowledge. He occasionally indulges, too, in some strange

freaks of intellectual and moral caprice which his own mature judgment should condemn—the same pen by which they were recorded being used to blot them out of existence. They are audacities, but how unlike his grand audacities! In short, they are somewhat small audacities, unworthy of him and of the subjects with which he deals—escapades of epigram on topics which should have exacted the austere exercise of his exceptional faculty of spiritual insight. Nothing, however, which can be said against him touches his essential quality of manliness, or lowers him from that rank of thinkers in whom the seer and the poet combine to give the deepest results of meditation in the most exquisite forms of vital beauty. And then how superb and animating is his lofty intellectual courage! “The soul,” he says, “is in her native realm, and it is wider than space, older than time, wide as hope, rich as love. Pusillanimity and fear she refuses with a beautiful scorn. They are not for her who putteth on her coronation robes, and goes through universal love to universal power.”

Emerson, though in some respects connected with the Unitarian movement as having been a minister of the denomination, soon cut himself free from it, and was as independent of that form of Christian faith as he was of other forms. He drew from all quarters, and whatever fed his religious sense of mystery, of might, of beauty, and of Deity was ever welcome to his soul. As he was outside of all religious organizations, and never condescended to enter into any argument with his opponents, he was soon allowed silently to drop out of theological controversy. But a fiercer and more combative spirit now appeared to trouble the Unitarian clergymen—a man who considered himself a Unitarian minister, who had for Calvinism a stronger repulsion than Channing or Norton ever felt, and who attempted to drag on his denomination to conclusions at which most of its members stood aghast.

This man was Theodore Parker, a born controversialist, who had the challenging chip always on his shoulder, which he invited both his Unitarian and his orthodox brethren to knock off. There never was a man who more gloried in a fight. If any theologians desired to get into a controversy with him as to the validity of their opposing beliefs, he was eager to give them as much of it as they desired. The persecution he most keenly felt was the persecution of inattention and silence. He was the Luther of radical Unitarianism. When the Unitarian societies refused fellowship with his society, he organized a church of his own, and made it one of the most powerful in New England. There was nothing but disease which could check and nothing but

death which could close his controversial activity. He became the champion of radical as against conservative Unitarianism, and the persistent adversary even of the most moderate Calvinism. Besides his work in these fields of intellectual effort, he threw himself literally head-foremost—and his head was large and well stored—into every unpopular reform which he could aid by his will, his reason, his learning, and his moral power. He was among the leaders in the attempt to apply the rigid maxims of Christianity to practical life; and many orthodox clergymen, who combined with him in his assaults on intemperance, slavery, and other hideous evils of our civilization, almost condoned his theological heresies in their admiration of his fearlessness in practical reforms. He was an enormous reader and diligent student, as well as a resolute man of affairs. He also had great depth and fervency of piety. His favorite hymn was "Nearer, my God, to Thee." While assailing what the great body of New England people believed to be the foundations of religion, he startled vigorous orthodox reasoners by his confident teaching that every individual soul had a consciousness of its immortality independent of revelation, and superior to the results of all the modern physical researches which seemed to place it in doubt. Indeed, his own incessant activity was an argument for the soul's immortality. In spite of all the outside calls on his energies, he found time to attend strictly to his ministerial duties, to make himself one of the most accomplished theological and general scholars in New England, and to write and translate books which required deep study and patient thought. The physical frame, stout as it was, at last broke down—his mind still busy in meditating new works which were never to be written. Probably no other clergyman of his time, not even Mr. Beecher, drew his society so closely to himself, and became the object of so much warm personal attachment and passionate devotion. Grim as he appeared when, arrayed in his theological armor, he went forth to battle, he was, in private intercourse, the gentlest, most genial, and most affectionate of men. And it is to be added that few orthodox clergymen had a more intense religious faith in the saving power of their doctrines than Theodore Parker had in the regenerating efficacy of his rationalistic convictions. When Luther was dying, Dr. Jonas said to him, "Reverend father, do you die in implicit reliance on the faith you have taught?" And from those lips, just closing in death, came the steady answering "Yes." Theodore Parker's answer to such a question, put to him on his death-bed, would have been the same.

BOSTON.

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE.

MY GEORGIE.

I HAVE been asked to tell the story; but, if I tell it at all, it must be in my own way. I'm an old woman now, and if I ramble and maunder at times, why, perhaps you would do the same if you were sixty years old. It wasn't necessary to see through a millstone to see that one of the girls loved him with her whole heart, while the other—But there! I have got into the middle of the story, and haven't told you the beginning yet.

There wasn't any great harm in Ida—I believe that thoroughly—but the child was too much of a kitten to know her own mind. Pretty? Oh yes, very pretty, even to my old eyes; just the sort of beauty that old age likes, with plenty of light and color about it—great soft dark eyes, and heaps of dark tangled hair, and the bloom of the damask rose on her soft oval cheeks. She was a good little thing in the main, but fanciful and flighty and capricious as a will-o'-the-wisp, and with a whole store-house of romance treasured up in her foolish little brain. It was really as good as a play to see that dainty, luxurious little creature sitting there in her silks and laces, talking about self-sacrifice and the pleasure of working and economizing for the man one loved. Work and economy, forsooth! and she knew about as much of either as a mollusk does of algebra. Not that I know what a mollusk is—Heaven forbid!—but it seems to be the fashion now to talk the most of what you understand the least. Yes, Ida was a nice little thing, bright and good-natured, and generous in an impulsive, open-handed way; but, bless you! she had about as much power of loving in her as a kitten. She could like people and be fond of them, and all that sort of thing, as long as every thing was smooth and pleasant; but at the first touch of adversity—puff! her little rush-light of love was out with a whiff, instead of burning up clearer and stronger and fiercer for the blast, as it ought to do if it were the right sort.

What is the use of being hard upon the child, though, for what she could no more help than she could the mole upon her cheek, which troubled her so? Love is a gift and a talent, like any other. Some people have it and some haven't, and whether it is a gift to be prayed for or not is a question my poor old brain can not pretend to settle. I believe in it yet, old as I am, and I believe in insanity, but it's precious little I've seen of either the one or the other. They say we are all crazy, more or less, only in most people it never comes out very strong, and perhaps it's much the same with love. I suppose most of us have more or less of the commodity lying loose about us, ready to be squandered on any body that comes along.