



A BINOCULAR MICROSCOPE.

the highest achievements of human genius. What fertility of invention and high skill

in execution! How wonderfully blended are the rigid mathematics and the severest optical science and the nicest mechanism of constructive skill! The microscope is really the crystallization of large scientific experience. Nay, we prefer to regard it as an organism of thought, the clustered fruitage of the busy, active thinking of two hundred years. Such is the modern high-class achromatic compound microscope; while the last achievement, the binocular microscope, seems to leave nothing to be desired.

So much for the genesis and growth of the microscope. And shall we not indulge one thought on its conceptional origin? As if destined to the status of a noble organism, it began existence as a mere globule, a spherical cell. And who knows—but is it not likely that the conception took place in the mind of an inchoate optician when observing the effect of the morning sunlight on a drop of dew? There, to his astonishment, appeared in clear enlargement the hitherto indiscernible—the delicate nervures of the wing of a drowned midge. Thus in the beginning, perhaps, was prefigured that *ultima thule* of modern microscopy, the immersion lens.

And now, after such a genesis and such an unfolding, in how much is our world the better for the microscope? To what extent is science its debtor? Does it add to the sum of knowledge? Does it increase human happiness or lessen human misery? In subsequent papers we shall answer these questions.

## THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE REPUBLIC.

[Seventeenth Paper.]

AMERICAN LITERATURE.—(Concluded.)

TOWARD the conclusion of the first portion of this paper, published last month, the necessity was shown of noticing the New England revolt against Calvinism, in order to account for certain peculiarities which characterize some prominent poets and men of letters who testify to its influence. The theological protest against Unitarianism was made by some of the most powerful minds and learned scholars in the country—by Stuart, Park, Edwards, Barnes, Robinson, Lyman Beecher, the whole family of the Alexanders, of which Addison Alexander was the greatest, not to mention fifty others. The thought of these men still controls the theological opinion of the country, and their works are much more extensively circulated, and exert a greater practical influence, than the writings of such men as Channing, Norton, Dewey, Emerson, and Parker; but still they have not affected in a like degree the literature which springs from the heart, the imagination, and the

spiritual sentiment. Unitarianism, through its lofty views of the dignity of human nature, naturally allied itself with the sentiment of philanthropy. While it has not been more practically conspicuous than other denominations for the love of man, as expressed in works to ameliorate his condition, it has succeeded better in domesticating philanthropy in literature, especially in poetry. Witness Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, and Mrs. Howe.

Longfellow is probably the most popular poet of the country. The breadth of his sympathy, the variety of his acquisitions, the plasticity of his imagination, the sonorousness and weight of his verse, the vividness of his imagery, the equality, the beauty, the beneficence of his disposition, make him universally attractive and universally intelligible. Each of his minor poems is pervaded by one thought, and has that artistic unity which comes from the economic use of rich material. The "Hymn to the Night," "A Psalm of Life," "Footsteps of Angels,"

"The Skeleton in Armor," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "The Village Blacksmith," "Excelsior," "The Arsenal at Springfield," "Sea-Weed," "Resignation," and other of his minor poems have found a lodgment in the memory of every body, and it will be found that their charm consists in their unity as well as in their beauty, that they are as much poems, complete in themselves, as "Evangeline" or "Hiawatha." In "Maidenhood" and "Endymion," especially in the latter, the poet is revealed in all the exquisiteness, the delicacy, the refinement, of his imaginative faculty; but they are less popular than the poems previously mentioned, because they embody more subtle moods of the poetic mind. Longfellow's power of picturing to the eye and the soul a scene, a place, an event, a person, is almost unrivaled. His command of many metres, each adapted to his special subject, shows also how artistically he uses sound to re-enforce vision, and satisfy the ear while pleasing the eye.

"When descends on the Atlantic  
The gigantic  
Storm-wind of the equinox,  
Landward in his wrath he scourges  
The toiling surges,  
Laden with sea-weed from the rocks."

The ear least skilled to detect the harmonies of verse feels the obvious effect of lines like these. In his long poems, such as "Evangeline," "The Golden Legend," "Hiawatha," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," "The New England Tragedies," Longfellow never repeats himself. He occupies a new domain of poetry with each successive poem, and always gives the public the delightful shock of a new surprise. In his prose works, *Outre-Mer*, *Hyperion*, and *Kavanaugh*, he is the same man as in his verse—ever sweet, tender, thoughtful, weighty, vigorous, imaginative, and humane. His great translation of Dante is not the least of his claims to the gratitude of his countrymen, for it is a new illustration of his life-long devotion—rare in an American—to the service of literature, considered as one of the highest exercises of patriotism.

Longfellow has enjoyed every advantage that culture can give, and his knowledge of many nations and many languages undoubtedly has given breadth to his mind, and opened to him ever new sources of poetic interest; but John Greenleaf Whittier, who contests with him the palm of popularity as a poet, was one of those God-made men who are in a sense self-made poets. A musing farmer's boy, working in the fields, and ignorant of books, he early felt the poetic instinct moving in his soul, but thought his surroundings were essentially prosaic, and could never be sung. At last one afternoon, while he was gathering in the hay, a peddler dropped a copy of Burns into his hands. Instantly his eyes were unsealed.

There in the neighboring field was "Highland Mary;" "The Cotter's Saturday Night" occurred in his own father's pious New England home; and the birds which caroled over his head, the flowers which grew under his feet, were as poetic as those to which the Scottish plowman had given perennial interest. Burns taught him to detect the beautiful in the common, but Burns could not corrupt the singularly pure soul of the lad by his enticing suggestions of idealized physical enjoyment and unregulated passion. The boy grew into a man, cultivating assiduously his gift of song, though shy of showing it. The antislavery storm swept over the land, awakening consciences as well as stimulating intellects. Whittier had always lived in a region of moral ideas, and this antislavery inspiration inflamed his moral ideas into moral passion and moral wrath. If Garrison may be considered the prophet of antislavery, and Phillips its orator, and Mrs. Stowe its novelist, and Sumner its statesman, there can be no doubt that Whittier was its poet. Quaker as he was, his martial lyrics had something of the energy of a primitive bard urging on hosts to battle. Every word was a blow, as uttered by this newly enrolled soldier of the Lord. "The silent, shy, peace-loving man" became a "fiery partisan," and held his intrepid way

"against the public frown,  
The ban of church and state, the fierce mob's hounding down."

He roused, condensed, and elevated the public sentiment against slavery. The poetry was as genuine as the wrath was terrific, and many a political time-server, who was proof against Garrison's hottest denunciations and Phillips's most stinging invectives, quailed before Whittier's smiting rhymes. Yet he tells us he was essentially a poetic dreamer, unfit "to ride the winged hippogriff Reform."

"For while he wrought with strenuous will  
The work his hands had found to do,  
He heard the fitful music still  
Of winds that out of dream-land blew.

"The common air was thick with dreams—  
He told them to the toiling crowd;  
Such music as the woods and streams  
Sang in his ear he sang aloud.

"In still, shut bays, on windy capes,  
He heard the call of beckoning shapes,  
And, as the gray old shadows prompted him,  
To homely moulds of rhyme he shaped their legends grim."

In these lines he refers to two kinds of poetry in which he has obtained almost equal eminence—his intensely imaginative and meditative poems, and his ringing, legendary ballads, the material of the latter having been gathered, in his wanderings, from the lips of sailors, farmers, and that class of aged women who connect each event

they relate with the superstitions originally ingrafted upon it. It is needless to add that during the war of the rebellion, and the political contests accompanying reconstruction, the voice of Whittier rang through the land to cheer, to animate, to uplift, and also to warn and denounce. Whittier, though creedless, is one of the most religious of our poets. In these days of skepticism as to the possibility of the communication of the Divine Mind with the human, it is consolatory to read his poem on "The Eternal Goodness"—especially this stanza:

"I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air:  
I only know I can not drift  
Beyond His love and care."

Oliver Wendell Holmes—wit, satirist, humorist, novelist, scholar, scientist—is, above every thing, a poet, for the qualities of the poet pervade all the operations of his variously gifted mind. His sense of the ludicrous is not keener than his sense of the beautiful; his wit and humor are but the sportive exercise of a fancy and imagination which he has abundantly exercised on serious topics; and the extensive learning and acute logic of the man of science are none the less solid in substance because in expression they are accompanied by a throng of images and illustrations which endow erudition with life, and give a charm to the most closely linked chain of reasoning. The first thing which strikes a reader of Holmes is the vigor and elasticity of his nature. He is incapable of weakness. He is fresh and manly even when he securely treads the scarcely marked line which separates sentiment from sentimentality. This prevailing vigor proceeds from a strength of individuality which is often pushed to dogmatic self-assertion. It is felt as much in his airy, fleeing mockeries of folly and pretension, as in his almost Juvenalian invectives against baseness and fraud—in the pleasant way in which he stretches a coxcomb on the rack of wit, as in the energy with which he grapples an opponent in the tussle of argumentation. He never seems to imagine that he can be inferior to the thinker whose position he assails, any more than to the noodle whose nonsense he jeers at. In argument he is sometimes the victor, in virtue of scornfully excluding what another reasoner would include, and thus seems to make his own intellect the measure of the whole subject in discussion. When in his Autocrat, or his Professor, or his Poet, at the Breakfast Table, he touches theological themes, he is peculiarly exasperating to theological opponents, not only for the effectiveness of his direct hits, but for the easy way in which he gayly overlooks considerations which their whole culture has induced them to deem of vital moment. The truth is that Holmes's dogmatism comes rather

from the vividness and rapidity of his perceptions than from the arrogance of his personality. "This," he seems to say, "is not my opinion; it is a demonstrated law which you willfully ignore while pretending to be scholars." The indomitable courage of the man carries him through all the exciting controversies he scornfully invites. Holmes, for the last forty years, has been expressing this inexhaustible vitality of nature in various ways, and to-day he appears as vigorous as he was in his prime, more vigorous than he was in his youth. His early poems sparkled with thought and abounded in energy; but still they can not be compared in wit, in humor, in depth of sentiment, in beauty of diction, in thoughtfulness, in lyrical force, with the poems of the past twenty-five years of his life. It is needless to give even the titles of the many pieces which are fixed in the memory of all cultivated readers among his countrymen. His novels, *Elsie Venner* and *The Guardian Angel*, rank high among original American contributions to the domain of romance. In prose, as in verse, his fecundity and vigor of thought have found adequate expression in a corresponding point and compactness of style.

James Russell Lowell is now in the prime of his genius and at the height of his reputation. His earlier poems, pervaded by the transcendental tone of thought current in New England at the time they were written, were full of promise, but gave little evidence of the wide variety of power he has since displayed. The spirituality of his thinking has deepened with advancing years. Nothing in his first volume, *A Year's Life*, suggests the depth of moral beauty he afterward embodied in "The Vision of Sir Launfal," the throng of subtle thoughts and images which almost confuse us by their multiplicity in "The Cathedral," and the grandeur of "The Commemoration Ode." *The Biglow Papers* are unique in our literature. Lowell adds to his other merits that of being an accomplished philologist; but granting his scholarship as an investigator of the popular idioms of foreign speech, he must be principally esteemed for his knowledge of the Yankee dialect. Hosea Biglow is almost the only writer who uses the dialect properly, and most other pretenders to a knowledge of it must be considered caricaturists as compared with him; for Biglow, like Burns, makes the dialect he employs flexible to every mood of thought and passion, from good sense as solid as granite to the most bewitching descriptions of nature and the loftiest affirmations of conscience. As a prose writer, Lowell is quite as eminent as he is as a poet. His essays, where nature is his theme, are brimful of delicious descriptions, and his critical papers on Chaucer, Shakspeare, Spenser, Dryden, Pope, and Rousseau, not to mention others, are mas-

terpieces of their kind. His defect, both as poet and prose writer, comes from the too lavish use of his seemingly inexhaustible powers of wit, fancy, and imagination. He is apt to sacrifice unity of general effect by overloading his paragraphs with suggestive meaning. That wise reserve of expression to which Longfellow owes so much of his reputation, that subordination of minor thoughts to the leading thought of the poem or essay, are frequently disregarded by Lowell. His mind is too rich to submit even to artistic checks on its fertility.

Julia Ward Howe, one of the most accomplished women in the United States, a scholar, a reasoner, an excellent prose writer, a poet with the power to uplift as well as to please, is also generally known as a champion of the right of women to vote. In the facts, arguments, and appeals which she brings to bear on this debated question, and the felicity of the occasional sarcastic strokes with which she smites an opponent who has offended her reason as well as vexed her patience, we find a woman fully equipped to do battle for the cause of woman; and certainly that man must be exceptionally endowed with brains who can afford to indulge in the luxury of despising her intellect. Her thrilling "Battle Hymn of the Republic" is an artistic variation on the John Brown song. The original is incomparable of its kind. No poet could have written it. Such rudeness and wildness are beyond the conception even of Walt Whitman and the author of "Festus." One would say that it was written by the common soldiers who sang it as they advanced to battle; that it was an elemental tune, suited to the rugged natures that shouted its refrain as they resolutely faced death, with the confident assurance of immortality. The words are verbal equivalents of rifle-bullets and cannon-balls; the tune is a noise, like the shriek of the shell as it ascends to the exact point whence it can most surely descend to blast and kill. Mrs. Howe's hymn has not this elemental character, but it is still wonderfully animating and invigorating; and the constant use of Scripture phrases shows the high level of thought and sentiment to which her soul had mounted, and from which she poured forth her exulting strains. "Our Country," "The Flag," "Our Orders," are also thoughtful or impassioned outbreaks of the same spiritual feeling which gives vitality to the "Battle Hymn."

The authors thus grouped together, differing so widely as they do in the individuality impressed on their genius, are still connected by that peculiar impulse given to American literature by Channing's revolt against the Calvinistic view of human nature, and by the emphasis they all lay on the ethical sentiment, not merely in its practical application to the concerns of actual life, but as

highly idealized in its application to that life which is called divine. The new poetical metaphysics and theology had not touched the mind of Charles Sprague. His poem of "Curiosity," delivered in 1829 before the Phi Beta Society of Harvard College, is so excellent in description, in the various pictures it gives of human life, in the pungency of its wit and satire, that it deserves a place among the best productions of the school of Pope and Goldsmith. His odes are more open to criticism, though they contain many thoughtful, impassioned, and resounding lines. His "Shakspeare" ode is the best of these; and he concludes it with a very felicitous image, contrasting the success of the great poet of England in doing that which her statesmen and soldiers could not perform:

"Our Roman-hearted fathers broke  
Thy parent empire's galling yoke;  
But thou, harmonious monarch of the mind,  
Around their sons a gentler chain shall bind.  
Still o'er our land shall Albion's sceptre wave,  
And what her mighty lion lost her mightier swan  
shall save."

A more homely illustration of the fact that Shakspeare binds the English race together whithersoever it wanders, is afforded by the remark of a sturdy New England farmer when he heard the rumor that England intended to make the Mason and Slidell affair an occasion for war with the United States, and thus insure success to the Confederates. The farmer paused, reflected, sought out in his mind something which would indicate his complete severance not only from the people of England, but from the English mind, and at last condensed all his wrath in this intense remark, "Well, if that report is true, all I can say is that Lord Lyons is welcome to my copy of Shakspeare."

Perhaps Sprague's most original poems are those in which he consecrated his domestic affections. Wordsworth himself would have hailed these with delight. Any body who can read with unwet eyes "I See Still," "The Family Meeting," "The Brothers," and "Lines on the Death of M. S. C." is a critic who has as little perception of the language of natural emotion as of the reserves and refinements of poetic art.

Sprague had the good fortune, as the cashier of a leading Boston bank, to be independent of his poetic gifts, considered as means of subsistence. But Nathaniel Parker Willis was, perhaps, the first of our poets to prove that literature could be relied upon as a good business. He certainly enjoyed all those advantages which accompany competence, and the only bank he could draw upon was his brain. He thoroughly understood the art of producing what people desired to read, and for which publishers were willing to pay. His early Scripture sketches, written when he was a student of Yale, gave him the reputation of a promising gen-

ius, and though the genius did not afterward take the direction to which its first successes pointed, it gained in strength and breadth with the writer's advancing years. In his best poems he displayed energy both of thought and imagination; but his predominant characteristics were keenness of observation, fertility of fancy, quickness of wit, shrewdness of understanding, a fine perception of beauty, a remarkable felicity in the choice of words, and a subtle sense of harmony in their arrangement, whether his purpose was to produce melodious verse or musical prose. But he doubtless squandered his powers in the attempt to turn them into commodities. To this he was driven by his necessities, and he always frankly acknowledged that he could have done better with his brain had he possessed an income corresponding to that of other eminent American men of letters, who could select their topics without regard to the immediate market value of what they wrote. He became the favorite poet, satirist, and "organ" of the fashionable world. He wrote editorials, letters, essays, novels, which were full of evidences of his rare talent without doing justice to it. He idealized trivialities; he gave a kind of reality to the unreal; and week after week he lifted into importance the unsubstantial matters which for the time occupied the attention of "good society." Some of his phrases, such as "the upper ten thousand," "Fifth-Ave-nudity," are still remembered. The paper which Willis edited, the *Home Journal*, exerted a great deal of influence. However slight might be the subjects, there can be no question that the editor worked hard in bringing the resources of his knowledge, observation, wit, and fancy to place them in their most attractive lights. The trouble was not in the vigor of the faculties, but in the thinness of much of the matter. As an editor, however, Willis had an opportunity to display his grand generosity of heart, and the peculiar power he had of detecting the slightest trace of genius in writers who were the objects of his appreciative eulogy. In the whole history of American literature there is no other example of a prominent man of letters who showed, like Willis, such a passionate desire to make his natural influence effective in dragging into prominence writers who either had no reputation at all, or whose reputation was notoriously less than his.

James G. Percival had not Willis's happy disposition and adaptive talent. Though recognized by friends as a poet of the first (American) class, he never succeeded in interesting the great body of his intelligent countrymen in any but a few of his minor poems. He ranks among the great sorrowing class of neglected geniuses. A man of large though somewhat undigested erudi-

tion, knowing many languages and many sciences, he was seemingly ignorant of the art of marrying his knowledge to his imagination. When he wrote in prose, he was full of matter; when he wrote in verse, he was full of glow and aspiration and fancy, but wanting in matter. At present, the poet is required to supply nutriment as well as stimulant. Tennyson's immense popularity, which makes every new poem from his pen a literary event, is to be referred not merely to his imaginative power, but to his keeping himself on a level with the science and scholarship of his age. "In Memoriam" would not have attracted so much attention had it not been felt that the poet who celebrates a dead friend was, at the same time, all alive to the importance of problems, now vehemently discussed by theologians and scientists, which relate to the question of the reality and immortality of the human soul. Emerson, also, is not more noted for his grand reliance on the soul than for his acquaintance with the scientific facts and theories which appear to deny its existence.

Edgar Allan Poe, like Willis and Percival, adopted, or was forced into, literature as a profession. He was a man of rare original capacity, cursed by an incurable perversity of character. It can not be said he failed of success. The immediate recognition as positive additions to our literature of such poems as "The Raven," "Annabel Lee," and "The Bells," and of such prose stories as "The Gold Bug," "The Purloined Letter," "The Murders of Rue Morgue," and "The Fall of the House of Usher," indicates that the public was not responsible for the misfortunes of his life. He also assumed the position of general censor and supervisor of American letters, and in this he also measurably succeeded; for his critical power, when not biased by his caprices, was extraordinarily acute, and during the period of his domination no critic's praise was more coveted than his, and no critic's blame more dreaded. In most of his literary work he displayed that rare combination of reason and imagination to which may be given the name of imaginative analysis. He was so proud of this power that he was never weary of unfolding, even to a chance acquaintance, the genesis of his poems and stories, accounting, on reasonable grounds, for every melodious variation in the verse, every little incident touched upon in the narrative, as steps in a deductive argument from assumed premises. One of two things was necessary to quicken his mind into full activity. The first was animosity against an individual; the second was some chance suggestion which awakened and tasked all the resources of his intellectual ingenuity. The wild, weird, unearthly, *under-natural*, as distinguished from

supernatural, element in his most popular poems and stories is always accompanied by an imagination which not only spiritually discerns but relentlessly dissects. The morbid element, directing his powers, came from his character; the perfection of his analysis came from an intellect as fertile as it was calm, and as delicate in selecting every minute thread of thought as in seizing every evanescent shade of feeling.

Bayard Taylor is justly esteemed as one of the most eminent of American men of letters. A graduate of no university, he has mastered many languages; born in a Pennsylvania village, he may be said to have been every where and to have seen every body; and all that he has achieved is due to his own persistent energy and tranquil self-reliance. Journalist, traveler, essayist, critic, novelist, scholar, and poet, he has ever preserved the simplicity of nature which marked his first book of travels, and the simplicity of style which the knowledge of many lands and many tongues has never tempted him to abandon. His books of voyages and travels are charming, but their charm consists in the austere closeness of the words he uses to the facts he records, the scenery he depicts, and the adventures he narrates. The same simplicity of style characterizes his poems, his few novels, and numerous stories. The richness of his vocabulary never impels him to sacrifice truth of representation to the transient effectiveness which is readily secured by indulgence in declamation. One sometimes wonders that the master of so many languages should be content to express himself with such rigid economy of word and phrase in the one he learned at his mother's knee. Among Taylor's minor poems, it is difficult to select those which exhibit his genius at its topmost point. Perhaps "Camadeva" may be instanced as best showing his power of blending exquisite melody with serene, satisfying, uplifting thought. The song which begins with the invocation, "Daughter of Egypt, veil thine eyes!" is as good as could be selected from his many pieces to indicate the energy and healthiness of his lyric impulse. His longer poems would reward a careful criticism. The best of them is "The Masque of the Gods"—a poem comprehensive in conception, noble in purpose, and admirable in style. Taylor has also done a great work in translating, or rather transfusing, the two parts of Goethe's "Faust" into various English metres corresponding to the original German verse, literal not only in reproducing ideas, but in reproducing melodies. This long labor could only have been undertaken by an American man of letters whose love of there was entirely subordinate to his love of literature.

Another American writer who has made literature a profession is George William

Curtis. Mr. Curtis opened a new vein of satiric fiction in *The Potiphar Papers, Prue and I, and Trumps*; but probably the great extent of his popularity is due to his papers in this Magazine, under the general title of the Editor's Easy Chair. In these he has developed every faculty of his mind and every felicity of his disposition; the large variety of the topics he has treated would alone be sufficient to prove the generous breadth of his culture; but it is in the treatment of his topics that his peculiarly attractive genius is displayed in all its abundant resources of sense, knowledge, wit, fancy, reason, and sentiment. His tone is not only manly, but gentlemanly; his persuasiveness is an important element of his influence; and no reformer has equaled him in the art of insinuating sound principles into prejudiced intellects by putting them in the guise of pleantries. He can on occasion send forth sentences of ringing invective; but in the Easy Chair he generally prefers the attitude of urbanity which the title of his department suggests. His style, in addition to its other merits, is rhythmic; so that his thoughts slide, as it were, into the reader's mind in a strain of music. Not the least remarkable of his characteristics is the undiminished vigor and elasticity of his intelligence, in spite of the incessant draughts he has for years been making upon it.

In the domain of history and biography, American literature, during the past fifty years, can boast of works of standard value. The most indefatigable of all explorers into the unpublished letters and documents illustrating the history of the United States was Jared Sparks. His voluminous editions of *The Life and Writings of Washington and Franklin, his Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, and other books devoted to the task of adding to the authentic materials of American history, are mines of information to the students of history; but Mr. Sparks, though a clear and forcible writer, had not the gift of attractiveness; and the results of his investigations have been more popularly presented by Irving, in his *Life of Washington*, and Parton, in his *Life of Franklin*, than by his own biographies of those eminent men, based on the results of tireless original research extending through many years.

In the political history of the country there only remain two "families," in the English sense of the term. These are the Adamses and the Hamiltons. Charles F. Adams has published a collection of his grandfather's works, in ten volumes, introduced by a life of John Adams, which is one of the most delightful of American biographies, and, at the same time, a positive addition to the early history of the United States under our first two Presidents. An edition of Hamilton's works has

also been published; and one of Hamilton's sons has written a *History of the Republic of the United States*, "as traced in the writings of Alexander Hamilton and of his contemporaries." It is needless to say that the controversies between the two families have added new matter of great value to the mass of documents which shed light on our early history as a united nation.

It would be tedious to enumerate other works, which are valuable contributions to our annals; but, in 1834, George Bancroft appeared as the historian of the United States, or rather the historian of the process by which the States became united. He professed to have seized on the underlying idea which shaped the destinies of the country; in later volumes he indicated his initiation in the councils of Providence; and though his last volume (the tenth), published in 1874, only brings the history down to the conclusion of the Revolutionary war, his labor of forty years has confirmed him in his historical philosophy. Bancroft has been prominent in American politics during all this period; he has been successively Collector of the port of Boston, Secretary of the Navy, American minister in London and Berlin, and has thus enjoyed every possible advantage of correcting his declamation by his experience; but his tendency to rhapsody has not diminished with the increase of his knowledge and his years. He has, to be sure, availed himself of every opportunity to add to the materials which enter into the composition of American history, and has been as indefatigable in research as confident in theorizing. The different volumes of his work are of various literary merit, but they are all stamped by the unmistakable impress of the historian's individuality. There is no dogmatism more exclusive than that of fixed ideas and ideals, and this dogmatism Mr. Bancroft exhibits throughout his history both in its declamatory and speculative form. Indeed, there are chapters in each of his volumes which, considered apart, might lead one to suppose that the work was misnamed, and that it should be entitled, "The Psychological Autobiography of George Bancroft, as Illustrated by Incidents and Characters in the Annals of the United States." Generally, however, his fault is not in suppressing or overlooking facts, but in disturbing the relations of facts—substituting their relation to the peculiar intellectual and moral organization of the historian to their natural relations with each other. Still, he has written the most popular history of the United States (up to 1782) which has yet appeared, and has made a very large addition to the materials on which it rests. Perhaps he would not have been so tireless in research had he not been so passionately earnest in speculation.

The necessarily slow progress of Mr. Ban-

croft's history, and the various protests against his theories and his judgments, impelled Richard Hildreth, a bold, blunt, hard-headed, and resolute man, caustic in temper, keen in intellect, indefatigable in industry, and blessed with an honest horror of shams, to write a history of the United States, in which our fathers should be presented exactly as they were, "unbedaubed with patriotic rouge." The first volume was published in 1849, the sixth in 1852. The whole work included the events between the discovery and colonization of the continent and the year 1821. As a book of reference, this history still remains as the best in our catalogues of works on American history. The style is concise, the facts happily combined, the judgments generally good; and while justice is done to our great men, there is every where observable an almost vindictive contempt of persons who have made themselves "great" by the arts of the demagogue. Hildreth studied carefully all the means of information within his reach; but his plan did not contemplate original research on the large scale in which it was prosecuted by Bancroft.

The *History of New England*, by John G. Palfrey, is distinguished by thoroughness of investigation, fairness of judgment, and clearness and temperance of style. It is one of the ablest contributions as yet made to our colonial history. The various histories of Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, *The Pioneers of France in the New World*, *The Jesuits in North America*, *The Discovery of the Great West*, exhibit a singular combination of the talents of the historian with those of the novelist. The materials he has laboriously gathered are disposed in their just relations by a sound understanding, while they are vivified by a realizing mind. The result is a series of narratives in which accuracy in the slightest details is found compatible with the most glowing exercise of historical imagination, and the use of a style singularly rapid, energetic, and picturesque.

William H. Prescott had one of those happily constituted natures in which intellectual conscientiousness is in perfect harmony with the moral quality which commonly monopolizes the name of conscience. He was as incapable of lies of the brain as of lies of the heart. When he undertook to write histories, he employed an ample fortune to obtain new materials, sifted them with the utmost care, weighed opposing statements in an understanding which was unbiased by prejudice, and, suppressing the laborious processes by which he had arrived at definite conclusions, presented the results of his toil in a narrative so easy, limpid, vivid, and picturesque that his delighted readers hardly realized that what was so pleasing and instructive to them could have cost much

pain and labor to him. Echoes beyond the Atlantic, coming from England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, gradually forced the conviction into the ordinary American mind that the historian of Ferdinand and Isabella, of the conquerors of Mexico and Peru, of Philip the Second, had in his quiet Boston home made large additions to the history of Europe in one of its most important epochs. Humboldt was specially emphatic in his praise. Prescott was enrolled among the members of many foreign academies, whose doors were commonly shut to all who could not show that they had made contributions to human knowledge as well as to human entertainment. Much of his foreign reputation was doubtless due to his lavish expenditure of money to obtain rare books and copies of rare MSS. which contained novel and important facts; but his wide popularity is to be referred to his possession of the faculty of historical imagination; that is, his power of realizing and reproducing the events and characters of past ages, and of becoming mentally a contemporary of the persons whose actions he narrated. His partial blindness, which compelled him to listen rather than to read, and to employ a cunningly contrived apparatus in order to write, was in his case an advantage. He had the eyes of friends and faithful secretaries eager to serve him. What passed into his ear became an image in his mind, and his bodily infirmity quickened his mental sight. His judgment and imagination brooded over the throng of details to which he listened; he formed a mental picture out of the dry facts; and by assiduous thinking he disposed the facts in their right relations without losing his hold on their vitality as pictures of a past age. People who passed him in his daily afternoon walks around Boston Common knew that his thoughts were busy on Ferdinand, or Cortez, or Pizarro, or Philip, and not on the news of the day; and his rapid pace and the peculiar swing of his cane as he trudged on indicated that he was looking not on what was imperfectly present to his bodily eye, but on objects to which physical exercise had given new life and significance as surveyed by the eye of his mind. His intense absorption in the subject-matter of his various histories gave to them a peculiar attractiveness which few novels possess. Any body who, after reading Lew Wallace's recent romance of *The Fair God*, or Dr. Bird's *Calavar*, will then turn to Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, can not fail to be impressed with the historian's superiority to the romancer in the mere point of romantic interest.

Another American historian, John Lothrop Motley, the author of *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, *The History of the United Netherlands*, *The History of John of Barneveld*, and, it is to be hoped, of the great Thirty Years'

War, has been, like Prescott, untiring in research, has made large additions to the facts of European history, has decisively settled many debatable questions which have tried the sagacity of French and German historians of the sixteenth century, and has poured forth the results of his researches in a series of impassioned narratives, which warm the blood and kindle the imagination as well as inform the understanding. His histories are, in some degree, epics. As he frequently crosses Prescott's path in his presentation of the ideas, passions, and persons of the sixteenth century, it is curious to note the serenity of Prescott's narrative as contrasted with the swift, chivalric impatience of wrong which animates almost every page of Motley. Both imaginatively reproduce what they have investigated; both have the eye to see and the reason to discriminate; both substantially agree in their judgment as to events and characters; but Prescott quietly allows his readers, as a jury, to render their verdict on the statement of the facts, while Motley somewhat fiercely pushes forward to anticipate it. Prescott calmly represents; Motley intensely feels. Prescott is on a watch-tower surveying the battle; Motley plunges into the thickest of the fight. In temperament no two historians could be more apart; in judgment they are identical. As both historians are equally incapable of lying, Motley finds it necessary to overload his narrative with details which justify his vehemence, while Prescott can afford to omit them, on account of his reputation for a benign impartiality between the opposing parties. A Roman Catholic disputant would find it hard to fasten a quarrel on Prescott; but with Motley he could easily detect an occasion for a duel to the death. It is to be said that Motley's warmth of feeling never betrays him into intentional injustice to any human being; his histories rest on a basis of facts which no critic has shaken; and to the merit of being a historian of wide repute, it is to be added that he has ever been a stanch friend, in the emergencies of the politics of the country, to every cause based on truth, honor, reason, freedom, and justice. The same high chivalrous tone which rings through his histories has been heard in every crisis of his public career.

The European histories of Prescott and Motley required an introduction, and this was furnished by John Foster Kirk, in his *History of Charles the Bold*. Mr. Kirk was one of the ablest, most scholarly, and most enthusiastic of Prescott's secretaries. He had the sagacity to perceive the importance of the period of which he proposed to write the history, and the perseverance to execute the difficult task. Charles and Louis were known to all people who spoke the English tongue by Scott's famous novel

of *Quentin Durward*, and his feebler concluding romance of *Anne of Geierstein*; and Mr. Kirk had a right to suppose that an account of an important era of European history would lose none of its attractiveness by being rigidly conformed to historical facts. As to his research, it is sufficient to say that in his investigations in the archives of Switzerland alone he was probably the first man to disturb the dust which nearly four centuries had heaped on precious manuscript documents. As a thinker he is always ingenious, and as generally sound as he is original. In narrative, the richness of his materials, as in the case of Motley, tempts him sometimes into seemingly needless minuteness of detail.

Among other works which do credit to the historical literature of the country may be named *The Life and Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene*, from original materials, by George W. Greene—a work which, of its kind, is of the first class. The same writer's *Historical View of the American Revolution* is an excellent compend drawn from original sources. The various volumes of Richard Frothingham are admirable for accuracy and research. On the general subject of history, the elaborate work of Dr. John W. Draper, *The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, is comprehensive in scope, brilliant in style, and bold in speculation. The first volume of *The History of France*, by Parke Godwin, is so good that it is to be regretted the author has not continued his task. The various biographies written by James Parton—namely, the lives of Burr, Jackson, Franklin, and Jefferson—have the great merit of being entertaining, while they rest on a solid basis of facts which the writer has diligently explored. His love of paradox, though a fault, certainly gives piquancy to his lucid narrative. He starts commonly with a peculiar theory, and if sometimes unjust, the injustice comes from his surveying the subject from an eccentric point of view, and not from any deliberate intention to misstate facts or disturb their relations. *The Life of Josiah Quincy*, by his son, Edmund Quincy, is an admirably executed portrait of one of the stoutest specimens of political manhood in American history. Like Parton, Quincy interests by reproducing the period of which he writes, and, like him, is a painter of "interiors." *The Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, by Henry Wilson, is the work of a man who as Senator of the United States was long in the thick of the fight against slavery, who knew by experience the thoughts, passions, and policies of the parties in the contest, and who wrote the history of the contest with simplicity, earnestness, and impartiality. *The Life of Madison*, by William C. Rives, is a work of interest and value. Among the antiquarians and anecdotists who

have illustrated American history, the highest reputation belongs to Benson J. Lossing and the family of the Drakes.

In military history and biography, the most notable work the country has produced is *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman, Written by Himself*—or, as it might be called, "My Deeds in My Words." The sharpness, conciseness, and arbitrariness of the autobiographer's style are characteristic of the man. He is intensely conscious of his superiority. The word of command is heard ringing in every page of his two octavos. No man could, without being laughed at, have written what he has written unless he had done what he has done. Throughout his autobiography he appears self-centred, self-referring, self-absorbed, and, when opposed, prouder than a score of Spanish hidalgos. Like George Eliot's innkeeper, he divides human thought into two parts, namely, "my idea," and "humbbug;" there is no middle point; but then his intelligence is as solid, quick, broad, and full of resource as his will is defiantly self-reliant. Though there is something bare, bleak, harsh, abrupt, in his style, his blunt egotism every now and then runs into a rude humor. He pats on the back men as brave if not as skillful as himself, and looks down upon them with good-natured toleration as long as they look up to him; but when they do not, disbelief in Sherman denotes incompetency or malignity in the critic. His enmities are hearted, and sometimes vindictive. The grave has closed over a man who in his sphere did at least as much as Sherman to overturn the rebellion, and yet Sherman spares not Secretary Stanton dead any more than he spared Stanton living. Still the book is thoroughly a soldier's book, and must take a rank among the most instructive and entertaining military memoirs ever written.

In that department of history which describes the rise and growth of literatures, the most important work which has been produced by an American scholar is *The History of Spanish Literature*, by George Ticknor. As far as solid and accurate learning is concerned, it is incomparably the best history of Spanish literature in existence, and is so acknowledged in Spain. The author, in his travels in Europe, sought out every book which shed the slightest light on his great subject. The materials of his work are a carefully selected Spanish library, purchased by himself. He deliberately took up the subject as a task which would pleasingly occupy a lifetime. The latest edition, published shortly after his death, showed that the volumes always were on his desk for supervision, revision, and the introduction of new facts, and that he continued pruning and enlarging, his work to the day when the pen dropped from his hand. In research he was as indefatigable as he was consci-

entious, and possessing ample leisure and fortune, he tranquilly exerted the powers of his strong understanding and the refinements of his cultivated taste in forming critical judgments, which, if somewhat positive, had the positiveness of knowledge and reflection. Besides, his culture was cosmopolitan; he had enjoyed as wide opportunities for conversing with men as with books, and there was hardly an illustrious European scholar or man of letters of his time with whom he had not been on terms of intimacy; but erudition can not confer insight, nor can genius be communicated by mere companionship with it. Mr. Ticknor's defect was a lack of sympathy and imagination, and, to the historian of literature, nothing can compensate for a deficiency in these. He could not mentally transform himself into a Spaniard, and therefore could not penetrate into the secret of the genius of Spain. He studied its great writers, but he did not look into and behold their souls. There was something cold, hard, resisting, and repellent in his mind. His criticism, therefore, externally judicious, had not for its basis mental facts vividly conceived and vitally interpreted. Had Mr. Ticknor possessed the realizing imagination of his friend Prescott—who was never in Spain—he would have made what is now a valuable work, also a work of fascinating interest and extensive popularity.

In the department of history may be included works on the origin, progress, organization, comparison, and criticism of the religious ideas of various nations. Three works of this kind have been produced in the United States during the past twenty years, each of which indicates a "liberal" bias. The first is *The History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, by William R. Alger. This is a mine of generalized information, obtained by great labor, and sifted, analyzed, and classified with care and skill. Indeed, it is said that some of the author's acquaintances, knowing the comprehensiveness of the plan, and seeing year after year pass by without any signs of approaching publication, gently hinted to him that the book, as he was writing it, would only be finished in that state of existence which it took for its theme. The second is *Oriental Religions*, by Samuel Johnson, the product of a learned, intelligent, and intrepid "Free Religionist." The third is *Ten Great Religions*, by James Freeman Clarke. The boldness of the thinking in these works is as noticeable as the abundance of the knowledge.

The number of American statesmen who since 1810 have combined literary with political talent is numerous—so numerous, indeed, that, in despair of doing justice to all, we are forced to select three representative men as indicating three separate tendencies

in our national life. These are John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Charles Sumner. Calhoun specially followed the Jefferson who prompted the Resolutions of '98; Sumner, the Jefferson who wrote the Declaration of Independence; Webster, the man who drew up and carried into effect the Constitution of the United States. Calhoun was in politics what Calvin was in theology—a great deductive reasoner from premises assumed. The austerity of his character found a natural outlet in the rigor of his logic. He had the grand audacity of the intellectual athlete, pushed his argumentation to its most extreme results, was willing to peril life and fortune on an inference ten times removed from his original starting-point, and was always a reasoning being in matters where he seemed to be, on practical grounds, an unreasonable one. Despising rhetoric, he became a rhetorician of a high class by pure force of logical statement. Every word he used meant something, and he never indulged in an image or illustration except to condense or enforce a thought. In the discussions in the Senate of the United States regarding the very foundations of the government, raised by what is called "Foote's Resolution," Webster, in 1830, made his celebrated speech in reply to Hayne. In all the resources of the orator—statement, reasoning, wit, humor, imagination, passion—this speech has, like one of the masterpieces of Burke, acquired reputation as a literary work, as well as by its lucid exposition of constitutional law. Webster was so completely victorious over his antagonist in argument as well as eloquence, that only when the question of nullification came up was his triumph seriously questioned. Calhoun, who thought that Hayne had not made the most of the argument for State rights, introduced, in January, 1833, a series of resolutions into the Senate, carefully modeled on the Resolutions of '98, and afterward based an argument upon them as though they were of a validity equal to that of the Constitution itself. The speech was one of the most remarkable efforts of his ingenious, penetrating, and logical mind, and can now be studied with admiration by every body who enjoys following the processes of impassioned deductive reasoning on a question affecting the life of individuals and of States.

Webster's reply, called "The Constitution not a Compact between Sovereign States," was his greatest intellectual effort in the sphere of pure argumentation. Calhoun, a greater reasoner than Jefferson or Madison, had deduced from their propositions—originally thrown out to serve as a convenient cover for a somewhat factious opposition to the administration of John Adams—a theory of the government of the United States for all time to come. Webster resolutely

attacked the premises of Calhoun's speech, and paid little attention to his opponent's deductive reasoning from the premises. Calhoun retorted in a speech in which he complained that Webster had not answered his argument. It was not Webster's policy to discredit Madison, and he simply declared that Madison, in his old age, had repudiated such inferences as Calhoun had drawn from the Resolutions of '93. On constitutional grounds Webster was as triumphant in his contest with Calhoun as he had been in his previous contest with Hayne; but arguments are of small account against interests and passions, and it required the bloodiest and most expensive of civil wars to prove that strictly logical deductions from the Resolutions of '93 did not express the meaning of the Constitution of the United States. The victory intellectually won was eventually decided by "blood and iron." In addition to Webster's extraordinary power of lucid statement, on which he based the successive steps and wide sweep of his argumentation, he was master of an eloquence unrivaled of its kind, because it represented the kindling into unity of all the faculties and emotions of a strong, deep, and broad individual nature. Generally, understanding was his predominant quality; in statement and argument he seemed to be specially desirous to unite thought with facts; he distrusted all rhetoric which disturbed the relations of things; but in the heat of controversy he occasionally mounted to the real elevation of his character, and threw off flashes and sparks of impassioned imagination which had the electric, the smiting, effect of a completely roused nature. It is curious that he never exhibited the higher qualities of imagination in his speeches until the suppressed power flamed unexpectedly out after all his other faculties had been thoroughly kindled, and then it came with formidable effect. That Webster is one of the most eminent of our prose writers is acknowledged both at the North and the South. He was also a magnificent specimen of physical manhood; his mere presence in an assembly was eloquence; and when he spoke, voice and gesture added immensely to the effect of his majestic port and bearing. Fox said of Lord Chancellor Thurlow that he must be an impostor, for no man could be as wise as he looked. Webster was wiser in look than even Thurlow, but his works show that he was no impostor in the matter of political wisdom, laughable as are some of the epithets by which his admirers exaggerated his claims to reverence, as though he had clapped copyright on political thought. In the heathenism of partisan feeling, however, few deities of party were more worthy of apotheosis than "the godlike Dan!"

Up to 1850, when he made his memorable

"7th of March speech" in the Senate, Webster was considered the leading champion of the non-extension of slavery; but in that speech he waived the application of the principle to the Territories acquired by the Mexican war, though he contended that he still adhered to the principle itself. He lost, by this concession, his hold on the minds and consciences of the political antislavery men, and the position he vacated was eventually occupied by Charles Sumner, though Sumner had numerous competitors for that station of glory and difficulty. Webster must have foreseen the inevitable conflict between the Slave and Free States, but he labored to postpone a catastrophe he was powerless to prevent, thinking that judicious compromise might soften the shock when the collision of irreconcilable principles and persons could no longer be avoided. Sumner in heart was as earnest an abolitionist as Garrison or Phillips; his soul was on fire with moral enthusiasm; but he also had a vigorous understanding, and a memory stored with a vast amount of historical and legal knowledge. He never forgot any thing he had read, and he passed not a day without reading. Accordingly, when he entered the Senate of the United States, this philanthropic student-statesman was as ready in citing the precedents as he was fiery in declaring the principles of freedom. During the years preceding the civil war the dominant party in the government was bent on establishing a slave power, which, had it succeeded, would have disgraced the country forever. Law, logic, philosophy, even theology, were in the South all subordinated to the permanence and extension of negro slavery, and hundreds of sermons south of Mason and Dixon's line inculcated the refreshing doctrine that if Christ came primarily on earth to save sinners, his secondary, though not less important, object was to enslave "niggers." It is easy to say that it requires no parade of authorities to settle the proposition that two and two make four, but ethically and politically this was the proposition that Charles Sumner had to sustain by quotations from Vico and Leibnitz, from Coke, Mansfield, Camden, and Eldon, from Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall, Story, and Webster. Those who were foiled in their purposes by these quotations from authorities they could not but respect, called him a pedant; but what really vexed them was that in no case in which this pedant encountered an opponent did he fail to justify his course by the extent of his knowledge, as well as by the keenness of his intellect and the warmth of his sentiments. When the civil war broke out, he saw that negro slavery was doomed. In his endeavors to hasten emancipation he always contrived to make himself unacceptable to the more prudent statesmen of his

own party, by inaugurating measures which the course of events eventually compelled them to adopt; and after the war he dragged the Republican party up to his own policy of reconstruction, being in most cases only some six or twelve months ahead of what sober and judicious Republicans found at length to be the wisest course. Throughout his career Sumner was felt as a force as well as an intelligence, and probably the future historian will rank him high among the select class of American public men who have the right to be called creative statesmen. He always courted obloquy, not only when his party was depressed, but when it was triumphant. "Forward!" was ever his motto. When his political friends thought they had at last found a resting-place, his voice was heard crying loudly for a new advance. Many of his addresses belong to that class of speeches which are events. His collected works, carefully revised by himself, have now become a portion of American literature. They quicken the conscience of the reader, but they also teach him the lesson that moral sentiment is of comparatively small account unless it hardens into moral character, and is also accompanied by that thirst for knowledge by which intellect is broadened and enriched, and is trained to the task of supporting by facts and arguments what the insight of moral manliness intuitively discerns. Probably no statesman that the country has produced has exceeded Sumner in his passion for rectitude. In every matter that came up for discussion he vehemently put the question, "Which of the two sides is Right?" He so persistently capitalized this tremendous monosyllable, and poured into its utterance such an amount of moral fervor or moral wrath, that the modest word, which every body used without much regard to its meaning, blazed out in his rhetoric, not as a feeble and faded truism, but as a dazzling and smiting truth.

A word may be said here of two public men, one of whom belongs to literature by cultivation and of set purpose, the other accidentally and in the ordinary discharge of his public duties. Edward Everett was one of the most variously accomplished of the American scholars who have been drawn into public life by ambition and patriotism. Though he attained high positions, his nature was too sensitive and fastidious for the rough contentions of party, and he could not steel himself to bear calumny without wincing. He suffered exquisite mortification and pain at unjust attacks on his principles and character, whereas such attacks awakened in Sumner a kind of exultation, as they proved that his own blows were beginning to tell. As an orator, Everett's special gift was persuasion, not invective. The four volumes of his collected works are, in elegance and energy of style, wealth of in-

formation, and fertility of thought, important contributions to American literature; but being mostly in the form of speeches and addresses, they have not produced the impression which less learning, talent, and eloquence, concentrated on a few subjects, would assuredly have made. A very different man was Abraham Lincoln. He was a great rhetorician without knowing it. The statesman was doubtless astonished that messages and letters, written for purely practical purposes, should be hailed by fastidious critics as remarkable specimens of style. The truth was that Lincoln was deficient in fluency; he was compelled to wring his expression out of the very substance of his nature and the inmost life of the matter he had in hand; and the result was seen in sinewy sentences, in which thoughts were close to things, and words were close to thoughts. And finally, in November, 1863, his soul devoutly impressed with the solemnity and grandeur of his theme, he delivered at Gettysburg an address of about twenty lines, which is considered the top and crown of American eloquence.

There are certain writers in American literature who charm by their eccentricity as well as by their genius, who are both original and originals. The most eminent, perhaps, of these was Henry D. Thoreau—a man who may be said to have penetrated nearer to the physical heart of nature than any other American author. Indeed, he "experienced" nature as others are said to experience religion. Lowell says that in reading him it seems as "if all out-doors had kept a diary, and become its own Montaigne." He was so completely a naturalist that the inhabitants of the woods in which he sojourned forgot their well-founded distrust of man, and voted him the freedom of their city. His descriptions excel even those of Wilson, Audubon, and Wilson Flagg, admirable as these are, for he was in closer relations with the birds than they, and carried no gun in his hand. In respect to human society, he pushed his individuality to individualism; he was never happier than when absent from the abodes of civilization; and the toleration he would not extend to a Webster or a Calhoun, he extended freely to a robin or a woodchuck. With all this peculiarity, he was a poet, a scholar, a humorist; also, in his way, a philosopher and philanthropist; and those who knew him best, and entered most thoroughly into the spirit of his character and writings, are the warmest of all the admirers of his genius. Another Concord hermit is W. E. Channing, who has adopted solitude as a profession, and seclusion from his kind as the condition of independent perception of nature. The thin volume of poems in which he has embodied his insights and

experiences contains lines and verses which are remarkable both for their novelty and depth. A serene eccentric, A. Bronson Alcott, is eccentric only in this, that he thinks the object of life is spiritual meditation; that all action leads up to this in the end; and he has spent his life in tranquilly exploring those hidden or elusive facts of the higher consciousness which practical thinkers overlook or ignore. He is a Yankee seer who has suppressed every tendency in his Yankee nature toward "argufying" a point. Very different from all these is Walt Whitman, who originally burst upon the literary world as "one of the roughs," and whose "barbaric yawp" was considered by a particular class of English critics as the first original note which had been struck in American poetry, and as good as an Indian war-whoop. Wordsworth speaks of Chatterton as "the marvelous boy;" Walt Whitman, in his first *Leaves of Grass*, might have been styled the marvelous "b'hoj." Walt protested against all convention, even all forms of conventional verse; he seemed to start up from the ground, an earth-born son of the soil, and put to all cultivated people the startling question, "What do you think of Me?" They generally thought highly of him as an original. Nothing is more acceptable to minds jaded with reading works of culture than the sudden appearance of a strong, rough book, expressing the habits, ideas, and ideals of the uncultivated; but unfortunately Whitman declined to listen to the suggestion that his daring disregard of convention should have one exception, and that he must modify his frank expression of the relations of the sexes. The author refused, and the completed edition of the *Leaves of Grass* fell dead from the press. Since that period he has undergone new experiences; his latest books are not open to objections urged against his earliest; but still the *Leaves of Grass*, if thoroughly cleaned, would even now be considered his ablest and most original work. But when the first astonishment subsides of such an innovation as Walt Whitman's, the innovator pays the penalty of undue admiration by unjust neglect. This is true also of Joaquin Miller, whose first poems seemed to threaten all our established reputations. Each succeeding volume was more coldly received; and though the energy and glow of his verse were the same, the public, in its calmer mood, found that the richness of the matter was not up to the rush of the inspiration.

This eccentric deviation from accredited models is perhaps best indicated in American humorists, whose characteristic is ludicrous absurdity. George H. Derby (or John Phoenix) was perhaps the first who carried the hyperboles of humor to the height of humoristic extravaganzas. The peculiarity

of the whole school is to revel in the most fantastic absurdities of an ingenious fancy. There is a Western story told of a man who was so strong that his shadow once falling on a child instantly killed it. This is the kind of humor in which Americans excel. Charles F. Browne (Artemus Ward), indulging at his will in the oddest and wildest caricatures, still contrived to make his showman an original character, and to stamp on the popular imagination an image of the man, as well as to tickle the risibilities of the public by his sayings and doings. Perhaps the most delicious among his many delicious absurdities was his grave statement that it had been better than ten dollars in Jeff Davis's pocket "if he'd never been born." S. L. Clemens (Mark Twain), the most widely popular of this class of humorists, is a man of wide experience, keen intellect, and literary culture. The serious portions of his writings indicate that he could win a reputation in literature even if he had not been blessed with a humorous fancy inexhaustible in resource. He strikes his most effective satirical blows by an assumption of helpless innocence and bewildered forlornness of mind. The reader or the audience is in convulsions of laughter, while he preserves an imperturbable serenity of countenance, as if wondering why his statement is not received as an important contribution to human knowledge. Occasionally he indulges in a sly and subtle stroke of humor, worthy of the great masters, and indicating that his extravagancies are not the limit of his humorous faculty. D. R. Locke (Petroleum V. Nasby) is not only a humorist, but he was a great force in carrying the reconstruction measures of the Republican party, after the war, by his laughable but coarse, broad, and merciless pictures of the lowest elements in the Western States that had been opposed to the policy of equal justice. Charles G. Leland, an accomplished man of letters, the best translator of the most difficult pieces of Heine, has won a large reputation by his "Hans Breitmann Ballads," Hans being a lyricist who sings seemingly from the accumulated inspiration drawn from tuns of lager-beer. B. P. Shillaber, not so prominent as others we have named, has given a new life to Mrs. Partington, and has added Ike to the family. While he participates in the extravagance of the popular American humorists, he has a demure humane humor of his own which is quite charming.

Among those authors who combine humor with a variety of other gifts, the most conspicuous is F. Bret Harte. His subtlety of ethical insight, his depth of sentiment, his power of solid characterization, and his pathetic and tragic force are as evident as his broad perception of the ludicrous side of things. In his California stories, as in

some of his poems, he detects "the soul of goodness in things evil," and represents the exact circumstances in which ruffians and profligates are compelled to feel that they have human hearts and spiritual natures. He is original not only in the ordinary sense of the word, but in the sense of discovering a new domain of literature, and of colonizing it by the creations of his own brain. Perhaps the immense popularity of some of his humorous poems, such as "The Heathen Chinese," has not been favorable to a full recognition of his graver qualities of heart and imagination.

John Hay is, like Bret Harte, a humorist, and his contributions, in *Pike County Ballads*, to what may be called the poetry of ruffianism, if less subtle in sentiment and characterization than those of his model, have a rough raciness and genuine manliness peculiarly his own. His delightful volume called *Castilian Days*, displaying all the graces of style of an accomplished man of letters, shows that it was by a strong effort of imagination that he became for a time a mental denizen of Pike County, and made the acquaintance of Jim Bludso, and other worthies of that kind.

The writings of William D. Howells are masterpieces of literary workmanship, resembling the products of those cunning artificers who add one or two thousand per cent. to the value of their raw material by their incomparable way of working it up. What they are as artisans, he is as artist. His faculties and emotions are in exquisite harmony with each other, and unite to produce one effect of beauty and grace in the singular felicity of his style. He has humor in abundance, but it is thoroughly blended with his observation, fancy, imagination, and good sense. He has revived in some degree the lost art of Addison, Goldsmith, and Irving. Nobody ever "roared" with laughter in reading any thing he ever wrote; but few of our American humorists have excelled him in the power to unseal, as by a magic touch, those secret interior springs of merriment which generally solace the soul without betraying the happiness of the mood they create by any exterior bursts of laughter. His *Venetian Life*, *Italian Journeys*, *Suburban Sketches*—his novels, entitled *Our Wedding Journey*, *A Chance Acquaintance*, and *A Foregone Conclusion*—all indicate the presence of this delicious humorous element, penetrating his picturesque descriptions of scenery, as well as his refined perceptions of character and pleasing narratives of incidents.

Charles Dudley Warner, like Howells, is an author whose humor is intermixed with his sentiment, understanding, and fancy. In *My Summer in a Garden*, *Back-log Studies*, and other volumes he exhibits a reflective intellect under the guise of a comically sedate

humor. Trifles are exalted into importance by the incessant play of his meditative facetiousness.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich first won his reputation as a poet. In the exquisite ballad of "Babie Bell," and in other poems, he has, as it were, so dissolved thought and feeling in melody that rhyme and rhythm seem to be necessary and not selected forms of expression. As a prose writer he combines pungency with elegance of style, and in his stories has exhibited a sly original vein of humor, which, while it steals out in separate sentences, is most effectively manifested in the ludicrous shock of surprise which the reader experiences when he comes to the catastrophe of the plot. In this respect *Marjorie Daw* is one of the best prose tales in our literature.

Among the American novelists who have risen into prominence during the past thirty years, the greatest, though not the most popular, is Nathaniel Hawthorne. His first romance, *The Scarlet Letter*, did not appear until the year 1850, but previously he had published collections of short stories under the titles of *Twice-told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse*. These were recognized by judicious readers all over the country as masterpieces of literary art, but their circulation was ludicrously disproportioned to their merit. For years one of the greatest modern masters of English prose was valued at his true worth only by those who had found by experience in composition how hard it is to be clear and simple in style, and at the same time to be profound in sentiment, exact in thought, and fertile in imagination. Most of these short stories contain the germs of romances, and a literary economist of his materials, like Scott or Dickens, would have expanded Hawthorne's hints of passion and character into thrilling novels. *The Scarlet Letter*, the romance by which Hawthorne first forced himself on the popular mind as a genius of the first class, was but the expansion of an idea expressed in three sentences, written twenty years before its appearance, in the little sketch of "Endicott and the Cross," which is included in the collection of *Twice-told Tales*. But *The Scarlet Letter* exhibited in startling distinctness all the resources of his peculiar mind, and even more than Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* it touches the lowest depths of tragic woe and passion—so deep, indeed, that the representation becomes at times almost ghastly. If Jonathan Edwards, turned romancer, had dramatized his sermon on "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God," he could not have written a more terrific story of guilt and retribution than *The Scarlet Letter*. The pitiless intellectual analysis of the emotions of guilty souls is pushed so far that the reader, after being compelled to sympathize with the Puritanic notion of Law, sighs for some

appearance of the consoling Puritanic doctrine of Grace. Hawthorne, in fact, was a patient observer of the operation of spiritual laws, and relentless in recording the results of his observations. Most readers of romances are ravenous for external events; they demand that the heroes and heroines shall be swift in thought, confident in decision, rapid in act. In Hawthorne's novels the events occur in the hearts and minds of his characters, and our attention is fastened on the ecstasies or agonies of individual souls rather than on outward acts and incidents; at least, the latter appear trivial in comparison with the inward mental states they imperfectly express. Carlyle says that real genius in characterization consists in developing character from "within outward." Hawthorne's mental sight in discerning souls is marvelously penetrating and accurate, but he finds it so difficult to give them an adequate physical embodiment that their very flesh is spiritualized, and appears to be brought into the representation only to give a kind of phantasmal form to purely mental conceptions. These souls, while intensely realized as individuals, are, however, mere puppets in the play of the spiritual forces and laws behind them, and while seemingly gifted with will, even to the extent of indulging in all the caprices of willfulness, they drift to their doom with the certainty of fate. In this twofold power of insight into souls, and of the spiritual laws which regulate both the natural action and morbid aberrations of souls, Hawthorne is so incomparably great that in comparison with him all other romancers of the century, whether German, French, English, or American, seem to be superficial. The defect of his method was that he penetrated to such a depth into the human heart, and recorded so mercilessly its realities and possibilities of sin and selfishness as they appeared to his piercing, passionless vision of the movements of passion, that he rather frightened than pleased the ordinary novel-reader. The old woman who sagely concluded that she must be sick, because in reading the daily newspaper she did not, as was her wont, "enjoy her murders," unconsciously hit on the distinction which separates artistic representations of human life which include crime and misery from those representations in which the prominence of crime and misery is so marked as to become unpalatable. Hawthorne did not succeed in making his psychological pictures of sin and woe "enjoyable." The intensity of impassioned imagination which flames through every page of *The Scarlet Letter* was unrelieved by those milder accompaniments which should have been brought in to soften the effect of a tragedy so awful in itself. Little Pearl, one of the most exquisite creations of imaginative genius, is introduced

not to console her parents, but, in her wild, innocent willfulness, to symbolize their sin, and add new torments to the slow-consuming agonies of remorse. In *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Blithedale Romance*, and *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne deepened the impression made by his previous writings that he did not possess his genius, but was possessed by it. The most powerful of his creations of character were inspired not by his sympathies, but his antipathies. Personally he was the most gentle and genial and humane of men. He detested many of the characters in whose delineation he exerted the full force of his intellect and imagination; but he was so mentally conscientious that he never exercised the right of the novelist to kill the personages who displeased him at his own will and pleasure. So intensely did he realize his characters that to run his pen through them, and thus blot them out of existence, would have seemed to him like the commission of willful murder. He watched and noted the operation of spiritual laws on the malignant or feeble souls he portrayed, but never interfered personally to divert their fatal course. In thus emphasizing the tragic element in Hawthorne's genius, we may have too much overlooked his deep and delicate humor, his ingenuity of playful fancy, his felicity in making a landscape visible to the soul as well as the eye by his charming power of description, and the throng of thoughts which accompany every step in the progress of his narrative. Not the least remarkable characteristic of this remarkable man was the prevailing simplicity, clearness, sweetness, purity, and vigor of his style, even when his subjects might have justified him in deviating into some form of *Carlylesque*.

The most widely circulated novel ever published in this country, or perhaps in any other, is *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. The book has in the United States attained a sale of over 350,000 copies, and after the lapse of twenty-four years the demand for it still continues. It has been translated into almost every known language. Inspired by the insurrection of the public conscience against the Fugitive Slave Law, its popularity has survived the extinction of slavery itself. Its original publication, in 1852, was an important political event. It practically overturned the arguments of statesmen and decisions of jurists by an irresistible appeal to the heart and imagination of the American people. It was one of the most powerful agencies in building up the Republican party, in electing Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency, and in raising earnest volunteers for the great crusade against slavery. This effect was produced not by explosions of moral wrath against the iniquity it assailed, but by a vivid dramatic presentation of the facts of

the case, in which complete justice was done equally to the slave-holder and the slave. And the humor, the pathos, the keen observation, the power of characterization, displayed in the novel were all penetrated by an imagination quickened into activity by a deep and humane religious sentiment. Next to *Uncle Tom*, *The Minister's Wooing* is the best of Mrs. Stowe's novels. Her *Old-town Folks* and *Sam Lawson's Stories* are full of delightful Yankee humor.

It is impossible for us to spare the space for even an inadequate notice of all the novelists of the United States. At the time (1827) Miss Catharine M. Sedgwick published *Hope Leslie* she easily took a prominent position in our literature, in virtue not only of her own merits, but of the comparative absence of competitors. Since then there has appeared a throng of writers of romantic narratives, and the number is constantly increasing. We are compelled to confine our remarks to a few of the representative novelists. William Ware gained a just reputation by his *Letters from Palmyra* (1836). The style is elegant, the story attractive, and the pictures of the court of Zenobia are represented through a visionary medium which gives to the representation a certain charming poetic remoteness. Charles Fenno Hoffman, a poet as well as prose writer, whose song of "Sparkling and Bright" has probably rung over the emptying of a million of Champagne bottles, was a man who delighted in "wild scenes in forest and prairie," and whose *Greyslaer* shows the energy of his nature, as well as the brilliancy of his intellect. R. B. Kimball is noted for his business novels, and his heart-breaks come not from failures in love, but from failures in traffic. Donald G. Mitchell, in his *Reveries of a Bachelor*, originated a new style, in which a certain delightful daintiness of sentiment was combined with a fertile fancy and touches of humorous good sense. Sylvester Judd, a Unitarian clergyman, went into the great lumber region of Maine, and came out of it to record his observations, experiences, and insights in the novel of *Margaret*, which Lowell once affirmed to be the most intensely American book ever written. Thomas W. Higginson, distinguished in many departments of literature for the thoroughness of his culture and the classic simplicity and elegance of his style, is the author of a novel called *Malbone*, quite notable for beauty of description, ingenuity of plot, and subtlety of characterization. Herman Melville, after astonishing the public with a rapid succession of original novels, the scene of which was placed in the islands of the Pacific, suddenly dropped his pen, as if in disgust of his vocation. Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford is the author of many thrilling stories, written in a style of perhaps exaggerated splendor, but in which

prose is flushed with all the hues of poetry. Maria S. Cummins published in 1854 a novel called *The Lamplighter*, which attained an extraordinary popularity, owing to the simplicity, tenderness, pathos, and naturalness of the first hundred pages. Seventy thousand copies were sold in a year. Miss E. S. Phelps, in her *Gates Ajar*, *Hedged In*, and in a variety of minor tales, has exhibited a power of intense pathos which almost pains the reader it melts. Henry James, Jun.—long may it be before the "Jun." is detached from his name!—has a deep and delicate perception of the internal states of exceptional individuals, and a quiet mastery of the resources of style, which make his stories studies in psychology as well as models of narrative art. J. W. De Forest, the author of *Kate Beaumont* and other novels, is a thorough realist, whose characterization, animated narrative, well-contrived plots, and pitiless satire only want the relief of ideal sentiment to make them as pleasing as they are powerful. Edward Everett Hale, the author of *The Man without a Country*, *My Double*, and *How he Undid Me*, and *Sybaris and Other Homes*, is fantastically ingenious in the plan and form of his narratives, but he uses his ingenuity in the service of good sense and sound feeling, while he inspires it with the impulses of a hopeful, vigorous, and elastic spirit. Miss Louisa M. Alcott, in her *Little Women* and *Little Men*, has almost revolutionized juvenile literature by the audacity of her innovations. She thoroughly understands that peculiar element in practical youthful character which makes romps of so many girls and "roughs" of so many boys. Real little women and real little men look into her stories as into mirrors in order to get an accurate reflection of their inward selves. She has also a tart, quaint, racy, witty good sense, which acts on the mind like a tonic. Her success has been as great as her rejection of conventionality in depicting lads and lasses deserved. Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney has more sentiment and a softer manner of representation than Miss Alcott; but she has originality, though of a different kind; and her books, like those of Miss Alcott, have penetrated into households in every part of the country, and their characters have been domesticated at thousands of firesides. Faith Gartney especially is a real friend and acquaintance to many a girl who has no other. William G. Simms, the most prolific of American historical novelists, and in tireless intellectual energy worthy of all respect, failed to keep his hold on the popular mind by the absence in his vividly described scenes of adventure of that peculiar something which gives to such scenes a permanent charm. Theodore Winthrop, the author of *Cecil Dreeme*, *John Brent*, and other striking and admirable tales, rose suddenly into popularity, and as suddenly declined—

a conspicuous instance of the instability of the romancer's reputation. J. G. Holland has succeeded in every thing he has undertaken, whether as a sort of lay preacher to the young, as an essayist, as a novelist, or as a poet. It is hardly possible to take up any late edition of any one of his numerous volumes without finding "fortieth thousand" or "sixtieth thousand" smiling complacently and benignly upon you from the title-page. Mrs. Mary J. Holmes, the author of *Lena Rivers*, Mrs. Terhune (Marian Harland), the author of *Hidden Path*, Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson, the author of *St. Elmo*, are novelists very different from Dr. Holland, yet whose works have obtained a circulation corresponding in extent. We pause here in reading the list, not for want of subjects, but for want of space, and also, it must be confessed, for want of epithets.

It is a great misfortune that the temptation which besets clever people to write mediocre verses, and afterward to collect them in a volume, is irresistible. Time, and short time at that, proves the truth of Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck's remark, that "your fugitive poetry is apt to become stationary with the publisher." Even when a little momentary reputation is acquired, the writers are soon compelled to repeat mournfully the refrain of Pierpont's beautiful and pathetic poem, "Passing away! passing away!" It is not one of the least mysteries of this mismanagement of talent that the want of public recognition does not appease the desire to attain it. As a general rule, books of verses, even good verses, are the most unsalable of human products. There are numerous cases where genuine poetic faculty and inspiration fail to make the slightest impression on the public imagination. The most remarkable instance of this kind in our literature is found in the case of Mrs. Maria Brooks (Maria del Occidente), who printed, some forty years ago, a poem called "Zophiel, or the Bride of Seven," which Southey warmly praised, which was honored with a notice in the *London Quarterly Review*, which deserved most of the eulogy it received, which fell dead from the press, and which not ten living Americans have ever read. Again, some of the most popular and most quoted poems in our literature are purely accidental hits, and their authors are rather nettled than pleased that their other productions should be neglected while such prominence is given to one. Thus it might be somewhat dangerous now to compliment T. W. Parsons for his "Lines on a Bust of Dante," because he has become sick of praise confined to that piece, while the delicate beauty of scores of his other poems, and his noble rhymed translation of "Dante's Inferno," find few readers. Miss Lucy Larcom, when she pictured "Hannah Binding Shoes," did not

dream that Hannah was to draw away attention from her other heroines, and concentrate it upon herself. Freneau's "Indian Burying-Ground" is the only piece of that poet which survives. "The Gray Forest Eagle" of A. B. Street has screamed away attention from his "rippling of waters and waving of trees"—from his hundreds of pages of descriptive verse which are almost photographs of natural scenery. People quote the "Summer in the Heart" and "A Life on the Ocean Wave" of Epes Sargent, and overlook many better specimens of his melody and his imagination. There are some poems which almost every body has read, which are commonly considered the only poems of the writers. Such are "The Star-spangled Banner," by F. S. Key; "Woodman, Spare that Tree" (very insipid, by-the-way), by George P. Morris; "A Hymn," by Joseph H. Clinch; "The Baron's Last Banquet" and "Old Grimes is Dead," by A. G. Greene; "My Life is like the Summer Rose," by R. H. Wilde; "Sweet Home," by John Howard Payne; "The Christmas Hymn," by E. H. Sears; "The Old Oaken Bucket," by Samuel Woodworth; "Milton's Prayer of Patience," by Elizabeth Lloyd Howell; "The Relief of Lucknow," by Robert Lowell; "The Old Sergeant," by Forceythe Wilson; "The Vagabonds," by J. T. Trowbridge; and "Gnosis," by C. P. Cranch. There are other pieces, like the "Count Paul," and especially the "Theodora," of Mrs. Drinker (Edith May), which seem to be more deserving of success than some of those which have attained it. But little justice has been done to the poetic and dramatic talent of George H. Boker. "The King's Bell," exquisite for the limpid flow of its verse and the sweetly melancholy tone of its thought, together with other poems by Richard Henry Stoddard, have not received their due meed of praise. T. Buchanan Read wrote volumes of rich descriptive poetry, but the popularity of "Sheridan's Ride" is not sufficient to attract attention to them.

In thus commenting on the instability and uncertainty of the public taste in respect to poets, we have unconsciously indicated quite an excellent body of American poetry, and we may proceed with the enumeration.

W. W. Story, famous as a sculptor, is also a poet, who throws into verse the same energy of inspiration which is so obvious in his statues. Mrs. Frances S. Osgood had a singularly musical nature, and her poems sing of themselves. She did not appear to feel the fetters of rhyme; she danced in them. Her poems, however, have the thinness of substance which often accompanies quickness of sensibility and activity of fancy. As it is, the reader rises from the perusal of her poems with a delicious melody in his ears, a charming feeling in his

heart, and with but few thoughts in his head. Mrs. M. J. Preston has a more robust intellect, greater intensity of feeling, and more force of imagination than Mrs. Osgood, though lacking her lovely grace and bewitching melodiousness; but Mrs. Osgood could not have written a poem so deeply pathetic as "Keeping his Word." Henry Timrod and Paul H. Hayne are, with Mrs. Preston, the most distinguished poets of the South. Timrod's ode sung on the occasion of decorating the graves of the Confederate dead is, in its simple grandeur, the noblest poem ever written by a Southern poet. Hayne exhibits in all his pieces a rich sensuousness of nature, a seemingly exhaustless fertility of fancy, an uncommon felicity of poetic description, and an easy command of the harmonies of verse. John G. Saxe owes his wide acceptance with the public not merely to the elasticity of his verse, the sparkle of his wit, and the familiarity of his topics, but to his power of diffusing the spirit of his own good humor. The unctuous satisfaction he feels in putting his mood of merriment into rhyme is communicated to his reader, so that, as it were, they laugh joyously together. Edmund Clarence Stedman, in addition to his merits as a critic of poetry, has written poems which stir the blood as well as quicken the imagination. Such, among others, are "John Brown of Osawatomie" and "Kearney at Seven Pines." Perhaps the finest recent examples of exquisitely subtle imagination working under the impulse of profound sentiment are to be found in the little volume entitled "Poems by H. H." (Mrs. Helen Hunt).

We have space only to mention the names of Jones Very, Celia Thaxter, Mrs. Lippincott (Grace Greenwood), H. H. Brownell, Will Carleton (author of *Farm Ballads*), Alice and Phæbe Cary, and Mrs. L. C. Moulton, though each would justify a detailed criticism.

The limits of this essay do not admit the mention of every author who is worthy of notice. The reader must be referred for details to the various volumes of Dr. R. W. Griswold, to the *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, by E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck, to the useful *Manual of American Literature*, by Dr. John S. Hart, and the excellent *Hand-Book of American Literature*, by F. H. Underwood. Still, before concluding, it may be well to mention some names without which even so limited a view of American literature as the present would be incomplete. And, first, honor is due to Henry T. Tuckerman, who for nearly forty years was the associate of American authors, and who labored, year after year, to diffuse a taste for literature by his articles in reviews and magazines. He belonged to the class of appreciative critics, and was never more pleased than when he exercised the resources

of a cultivated mind to analyze, explain, and celebrate the merits of others. Richard Grant White, a critic of an austerer order, has for some time been engaged literally in a war of words. In the *minutiae* of English philology he has rarely met an antagonist he has not overthrown. In these encounters he has displayed wit, learning, logic, a perfect command of his subject, an imperfect command of his temper. The positiveness of his statements, however, seems always to come from the certainty of his knowledge. In his admirable edition of Shakspeare, and in his *Life and Genius of Shakspeare*, he has exhibited his rare critical faculty at its best. Henry N. Hudson, also an editor, biographer, and critic of Shakspeare, has specially shown his masterly power of analysis in commenting on the characters of the dramatist. Henry Giles, in two or three volumes of biography and criticism, has proved that clear perceptions, nice distinctions, and sound sense can be united with a rush of eloquence which seems too rapid for the pausing doubt of discriminating judgment. S. A. Allibone's *Dictionary of Authors*, with its 46,000 names, is one of those prodigies of labor which excite not only admiration, but astonishment. George P. Marsh, one of the most widely accomplished of American scholars, is principally known as the author of *Lectures on the English Language* and of *The English Language and Early English Literature*, both critical works of a high class. The greatest comparative philologist the country has produced, William D. Whitney, has, like Max Müller, in England, popularized some of the results of his investigations in an admirable volume on *Language, and the Study of Language*.

The theological literature of the United States covers so wide a field that it would be wild to attempt to characterize here even its eminent representatives. We can give only a few names. Henry Ward Beecher, the most widely renowned pulpit and platform orator of the country, is more remarkable for the general largeness and opulence of his nature than for the possession of any exceptional power of mind or extent of acquisition. As a theological scholar, or, indeed, as a trained and accurate writer, nobody would think of comparing him with Francis Wayland, or Leonard Bacon, or Edwards A. Park, or Frederick H. Hedge. In depth of spiritual insight, though not in depth of spiritual emotion, he is inferior to Horace Bushnell, Cyrus A. Bartol, and many other American divines. He feels spiritual facts intensely; he beholds them with wavering vision. But his distinction is that he is a formidable, almost irresistible, moral force. His influence comes from the conjoint and harmonious action of his whole blood and brain and will and soul, and his magnetism being thus both physical and

mental, he communicates his individuality in the act of radiating his thoughts, and thus *Beecherizes* his readers as he *Beecherizes* his audiences. He overpowers where he fails to convince. The reader, but especially the listener, is brought into direct contact or collision not only with a thinker and a stirrer up of the emotions, but with a strong, resolute, intrepid man. As Emerson would say, he could mob a mob, and compel it to submit. This continual sense of conscious power impels him into many imprudences and indiscretions, and stamps on what he says, and what he writes, and what he does, a character of haste and extemporaneousness. No man could throw off such an amount of intellectual work as he performs, who thought comprehensively or who thought deeply; for the comprehensive thinker hesitates, the deep thinker doubts; but hesitation and doubt are foreign to Mr. Beecher's intellectual constitution, and only intrude into his consciousness in those occasional reactions caused by the moral fatigue resulting now and then from his hurried, headlong intellectual movement. Observation, sense, wit, humor, fancy, sentiment, moral perception, moral might, are all included and fused in the large individuality whose mode of action we have ventured to sketch. Indeed, an impartial student of character, accustomed to penetrate into the souls of those he desires inwardly to know, to look at things from their point of view, and to interpret external evidence by the internal knowledge he has thus obtained, would say that Mr. Beecher was exactly the heedless, indiscreet man of religious genius likely to become the subject of such a scandal as has recently disgusted the country, and yet to be perfectly innocent of the atrocious crimes with which he was charged.

There are some books which it is difficult to class. Thus, Richard H. Dana, Jun., published some thirty years ago a volume called *Two Years Before the Mast*, which became instantly popular, is popular now, and promises to be popular for many years to come. In reading it any body can see that it is more than an ordinary record of a voyage, for there runs through the simple and lucid narrative an element of beauty and power which gives it the artistic charm of romance. Again, *Six Months in Italy*, by George S. Hillard, and *Notes of Travel and Study in Italy*, by Charles E. Norton, would be superficially classed among books of travel, but they are essentially works of literature, and their chief worth consists in descriptions of natural scenery, in pointed reflection, in delicate criticism of works of art. The volume entitled *White Hills*, by Thomas Starr King, apparently intended merely to describe the mountain region of New Hampshire, is all aglow with a glad

inspiration drawn from the ardent soul and teeming mind of the writer. Charles T. Brooks would generally be classed as a translator, but being a poet, he has so translated the novels of Richter that he has domesticated them in our language. Such translations are greater efforts of intelligence and imagination than many original works. Horace Mann's reports as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education rank with legislative documents, yet they are really eloquent treatises, full of matter, but of matter burning with passion and blazing with imagery. *Substance and Shadow*, by Henry James, might be classed either with theological or metaphysical works, were it not that the writer, while treating on the deepest questions which engage the attention of theologians and metaphysicians, stretches both theologians and metaphysicians on the rack of his pitiless analysis, and showers upon them all the boundless stores of his ridicule. Miss Mary A. Dodge (Gail Hamilton) might be styled an essayist, but that would be but a vague term to denote a writer who takes up all classes of subjects, is tart, tender, shrewish, pathetic, monitory, objurgatory, tolerant, prejudiced, didactic, and dramatic by turns, but always writing with so much point, vigor, and freshness that we can only classify her among "readable" authors. Margaret Fuller Ossoli, scholar, critic, teacher, translator, metaphysician, philanthropist, revolutionist, a pythoness in a transcendental coterie, a nurse in a soldiers' hospital, a martyr heroine on board a wrecked ship—we can only say of her that she was a woman. There is a delightful book entitled *Yesterdays with Authors*, by James T. Fields—a combination of gossip, biography, and criticism, but refusing to be ranked with either, and depending for its interest on the life-like pictures it presents of such men as Hawthorne, Dickens, and Thackeray in their hours of familiar talk and correspondence. There is also one work of such pretension that it should not be omitted here, namely, *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy, based on the Doctrine of Evolution*, by John Fiske. It is mainly a lucid exposition of the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, with the addition of original and critical matter. The breadth and strength of understanding, the fullness of information, the command of expression, in this book are worthy of all commendation. The curious thing in it is that the author thinks that a new religion is to be established on the co-ordination of the sciences, and of this religion, whose God is the "Unknowable," he is a pious believer.

In conclusion, we can only allude to the intellectual force, the various talents and accomplishments, employed in the leading newspapers of the country. During the past thirty years these journals have swarmed with all kinds of anonymous ability. Though

the articles appeared to die with the day or week on which they were printed, they really passed, for good or evil, into the general mind as vital influences, shaping public opinion and forming public taste. It would be difficult, for example, to estimate the beneficent action on our literature of such a critic and scholar as George Ripley, who for many years directed the literary department of a widely circulated newspaper. The range of his learning was equal to every demand upon its resources; the candor of his judgment answered to the comprehensiveness of his taste; the catholicity of his literary sympathies led him to encourage every kind of literary talent on its first appearance; and he was pure from the stain of that meanest form of egotism which grudges the recognition of merit in others, as if such a recognition was a diminution of its own importance. The great development, during a comparatively recent period, of the magazine literature of the country has had an important effect in stimulating and bringing forward new writers, some of whom promise to more than fill the places which their elders will soon leave vacant. It would be presumptuous to anticipate the verdict of the next generation as to which of these will fulfill the expectations raised by their early efforts. That pleasant duty must be left to the fortunate person who shall note the Centennial Progress of American Literature in *Harper's Magazine* in 1876.

BOSTON.

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE.

## ALMOST TOO LATE.

A CROSS the road waved the wide bushy tree-tops of the great cemetery, and close by, on the right, ran the railway which enters New Haven by the old canal from the north. Where Mary sat at a front window of the tall factory near the Scientific School, her deft fingers could check, aid, or ease the machine before her, and the portions of a watch formed themselves with clock-work regularity, while her mind traveled out over the trees without a care for the mechanical labor which was going on. Had any one leaned near enough to overcome the roar of the shop, he might have heard her talking to herself—a habit she had got from living too much alone.

"No, no, no," she was saying; "I can not ask Stephen, under any circumstances."

But, in spite of her preoccupation, the moment a bell on a tower near by rang out a quarter past eleven, the vagrant mind had telegraphed the fingers, the fingers had slipped a band, and the machine rested for a moment. Mary looked up, with some of the far-off expression still on her face, but expectant. And not without cause, it would seem, for the figure of a young man in a straight black coat passed along the grassy

raised path under the cemetery wall, and when abreast of Mary's window, looked up at it eagerly. Neither made a sign. The young man passed on toward the school with bent head, as he had come, but with a spring in his walk, as if he believed in life, while the young girl smiled to herself as she pulled the India rubber runner, and set her machine going again. It was in spring, and the birds sang.

And so they loved each other, of course. Stephen, who had just graduated, and was now the new tutor at the Scientific, had lately begun to drop any pretense to the contrary with himself. But Mary? Did she like any body—her mother even, with whom Stephen had been boarding for the last year? Was there any one in the world on whom she bestowed more than a passing thought? both Stephen and Mrs. Lagarde would sometimes ask themselves, when a fresh whim of indifference or rebellion seemed to have nullified the work of weeks of mute attention. Perhaps she was like her father, the late Lagarde—inventor and hopeless struggler against the ignorance of manufacturers and the rapacity of capitalists—whom Stephen had never seen. People called her pretty, but dull. Stephen, who taught natural history, knew that she was a chrysalis containing something great, but whether a great moth of night or a butterfly, was to him an all too momentous question.

"Well, I do declare, Mary," said Mrs. Lagarde that day, when her daughter came flinging in the kitchen door, and threw herself into the rocking-chair near the window, "if you don't look all tuckered out! You're always a-thinking, thinking, as if your head would split; but what it's all about, the Lord only knows. Some say it isn't thinking at all, for thinking is good for people; but you are noways helped by it, as far as I can see."

The truth was, a remark of a neighbor, repeated to her, rankled in Mrs. Lagarde's mind. She was reported to have said, "My little six-year-old is a smarter girl than that big Mary of the widow Lagarde's." But Mary stared out into the little garden and answered no word, and the mother went on with her work as if she were used to get no answer.

"Have you seen Mr. Churchill to-day?"

"I can not do it, mother," said Mary, raising her head. "He's nothing to me, but somehow I can't ask him. He's different. Don't you understand?"

"I might if—"

"Oh, I know what you are going to say. Please!"

"Mr. Churchill is a good-looking young man, don't you think so?" said Mrs. Lagarde, after a short silence.

"Good-looking? No, indeed—head poked out like this all the time, and a thin face.