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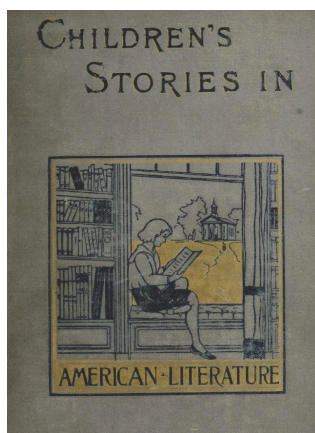
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Transcriber's Note: original spellings have been retained, with the following exception: on page 106, the title "[WILLIAN DEAN HOWELLS](#)" has been corrected to "WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS". The following words are found both with and without hyphens in the original: farm-house, common-place, re-lived, school-boy, home-life, school-life, sweet-heart(s) and every-day. The following word is spelled in more than one way in the original: idyll/idyl.



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Children's Stories

IN

AMERICAN LITERATURE

1861-1896

BY

Henrietta Christian Wright

NEW YORK

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1909

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CHAPTER I

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

1824-1892

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In a certain American classic there is a picture of a boy standing in the shadow of an old warehouse and living, in imagination, a day that belonged to another generation. The boy was George William Curtis, and it was in his charming book, *Prue and I*, that he embodied this experience of his boyhood. In the pages which describe the past glories of Providence the author is picturing his native city, and reproducing with an artist's touch the atmosphere which surrounded his childish days.

At that time Providence was sharing the fate of many New England seaport towns whose importance was passing away. The old, red, steep-roofed brick storehouses were falling into ruins, the docks were crumbling away, and the business part of the town was almost deserted. In place of a fleet of great East India merchant-vessels moored to the big posts, there were only a few insignificant sloops idly rocking with the tides. Instead of the shouting and confusion of unloading, there was but a group of idle old sailors gathered in the warehouse doors.

But to the boy-dreamer who looked on, the silence and shadow of the old stores seemed like those of royal treasure-houses. There were still to be seen piles of East India wares—oriental stuffs, dyes, coffees, and spices whose fragrance brought Arabia and China to the senses. Occasionally a chance ship drifted into the harbor, and for a few hours the Providence wharves lived their old life. Once when this happened, young Curtis crept along the edge of the dock after the unloading was over, and at great risk leaned over and placed his hand against the black hulk. And thus, he records, he "touched Asia, Cape of Good Hope, and the Happy Islands; saw palm-groves, jungles, and Bengal tigers, and the feet of Chinese fairies."

From the gloom of the old warehouses he would very often go to the sunny fields that lay upon the hills back of the town, and watch some sea-bound ship, taking it for a type of his fortunes, which should sail "stately and successful to all the glorious ports of the future." The picture is bright and beautiful with the pure hopes of youth. It is good to know that the dream of the boy was a prophecy of the noble life it realized.

Providence was the home of young Curtis until his sixth year, when, with his elder brother, Burrill, he went for a time to school at Jamaica Plain, near Boston. From some fragments of description written many years afterward we learn that this experience was a pleasant one. The school was provided with large play-grounds, play-hours were long and study-hours short. Near by was a pond for boating and fishing, and beyond the village were groves for nutting and picnics. The master's wife always took tea with the boys, and the master himself was a good-natured man with a great fondness for playing practical jokes. Once when he knocked at the dormitory door during an exciting pillow-fight, the boys turned the joke upon him by putting out the lights, and, pretending that they thought him one of their schoolmates, pounded him so unmercifully that he was glad to rush from the room.

But there were serious moments, too, in life. In one of these Curtis, then about seven, arrayed himself in ministerial garb and solemnly preached a sermon, from the landing of the stairs, upon the consequences of evil-doing. Perhaps it was from the text of this sermon that he a little later wrote a treatise on murder, which, he said, always started with Sabbath-breaking; the Sabbath-breaker became in turn a user of profane language, then a thief, and so went downward by easy gradations until he committed murder. Such grave subjects, however, only occasionally depressed the spirits of this happy flock of boys. Curtis said that possibly they did not learn anything at this school, but that they had plenty of good beef.

There was a very deep love and sympathy between the Curtis brothers, and their life at Jamaica Plain, and afterward when they returned to Providence, is reflected in the work of later years where the picture of the brother is sketched with a loving hand.

While they were still very young boys they heard in their school-room, at Providence, a lecture by Emerson, who was then beginning to be known as an essayist and lecturer. Into these hearts, which had just left childhood, the words of Emerson fell full of gracious inspiration. He became their teacher of noble thoughts, their leader into the realm of moral beauty. Much as the page of chivalric days looked up to his chosen knight, they revered with boyish hero-worship the great teacher. He gave them the best things that Puritanism could bestow, and he became a far-reaching influence in their lives.

The Curtis family removed to New York in 1839, and the Providence school-days came to an end. But above all others Curtis always called Emerson his teacher; another tribute to the master to whom American thought owes so much.

The new home was in Washington Square, then the upper part of the city, with the open country not far away. The best-known people of the day—writers, artists, musicians, lovers of all art—found their way to the Curtis home. This companionship, together with systematic study, fostered rapid intellectual growth; the boys made progress, but city life did not entirely please them. About this time the Community of Brook Farm was founded by the men destined to be among the intellectual leaders of America. Every member was pledged to help with the manual labor, and to contribute his share toward the intellectual life. It was a dream of the old Utopia, where life was simple and happiness abounded. The Curtis brothers begged their father to let them go and share this ideal home, and he consented. Although they went as boarders and did not become actual members of the community, its life was theirs. Here, where Emerson, Hawthorne, and Dana ploughed and hoed and planted, the two boys did their share. They drove cows, raked hay, and pulled weeds in the morning; in the afternoon they studied German, chemistry, and music; in the evening they danced or sang, had theatrical representations or talked philosophy.

Young Curtis absorbed the healthy atmosphere of this unconventional yet inspiring life, as he breathed the air from the dewy meadows and wild-rose hedges. It was a part of the hope and aspiration of youth brought down to actual touch, and he formed here more than one abiding and uplifting friendship.

The charm of the life did not quite dissolve when the brothers returned to New York, for within a few months they were again in the country as inmates of a farmhouse near Concord. Here they did farm work, made their own beds, cultivated a little garden, joined a club of which Emerson and Hawthorne were members, and, in fact, lived and did quite as they pleased. It was camp life with some of the discomforts left out and some privileges added, and it was an idyllic existence for a youth who did not know just what he should make of life, but who had determined that he would make of it something noble.

While at Concord Curtis wrote two charming little stories that may be called a prelude to his literary career. One of these tales is that of the strange sights seen by a little girl who possesses a pair of magic spectacles. It is full of the poetic grace of a genuine folk-story. In the

chapter on Titbottom's Spectacles in *Prue and I*, the same *motif* is used. Neither of the stories has ever been published.

His career was still undecided when, in his twenty-second year, Curtis sailed for Europe and a trip to the East. Although calling no college his Alma Mater he was still the representative cultivated young American of his day. He was well read in the German, Italian, and English classics, appreciated the best music, was a student of æsthetics, and had an earnest and intelligent interest in politics. He believed that America, as embodying the idea of self-government of states, had a mission to the world. In his soul he consecrated his best powers to the service of humanity, and he was ready, when the moment came, to serve it without thought of cost to himself. The ocean travellers of those days took passage in packet-ships, and Curtis was forty-six days in crossing to France. He spent four years abroad, making the usual tours. He kept a diary, which became a record of charming interest, but most of which remained unpublished. During this time he sent letters to the *New York Tribune*, devoted to the public questions of the day. The fact that he chose to write thus, while surrounded by the Old World impressions, shows the trend of his mind toward the higher political interests in which he became a leader.

During this trip Curtis seems to have made up his mind to a literary career. Soon after his return he began to lecture, and a little later went on the staff of the *Tribune*. *The Nile Notes of a Howadji* is the record of a trip up the Nile, and was the first book that Curtis published. Like Longfellow's *Hyperion*, it has more than a literary value as being the actual experience of one who was to become prominent in American literature. In these chapters the author did not aim at literal description. He was rather the happy traveller transcribing for absent friends the pictures of the lands they have so often visited together in imagination.

He made himself story-teller to the fireside group, and scene after scene was sketched with faithful hand. To this young dreamer Egypt still remained the land of wonder and inspiration, though its temples lay in ruins and its people had sunk to the lowest level of humanity. There is a wondrous charm in his sympathy with that great past, and in his appreciation of the ideals of the race whose art and science laid their mark ineffaceably upon the world. The paintings in the pyramids and tombs of the common people, illustrating the victories of the kings, the occupations of the lower classes, and even the games of the children, all pictured in colors still fresh, had a wonderful fascination for the young traveller. In gazing at them he forgot the Egypt that he actually saw and seemed to touch hands with a vanished race.

It throws a bright light on the character of the author to see him thus able to make that old inspiration his own. Without the *Nile Notes* we should never have known so well the ambitions of his young manhood when he was a dreamer of dreams. The chapters on the every-day occurrences of the trips are also full of interest, and touched with the author's characteristic humor.

The natives called all travellers howadji—shopkeepers—for such they conceived to be the occupation of the wandering Europeans and Americans who visited their land. To the native imagination the howadji was a being created to bestow bakshish, or alms, to buy bits of mummy bones, or even whole mummies, and to be cheated upon every occasion. Curtis refused to be cheated, gave bakshish only to the "miserable, old, and blind," and struck his followers dumb by insisting upon doing nothing for long hours but sit gazing upon a pyramid or ruined temple.

The journey up and down the Nile occupied two months, and the record of it will always be interesting as embodying the experiences of the Nile traveller in 1848. The literary charm of the book is great, many of the passages being in reality unrhymed poems of peculiar beauty. This volume was published in the spring of 1851, and was well received. There was an English edition which received many flattering notices, and this success confirmed the author in his determination to make literature his profession.

Mr. Curtis's next book, *A Howadji in Syria*, continued his journeyings in the East through Syria and Palestine. It is written in the style of the earlier work, and partakes of the same charm.

His third book, *Lotus-Eating*, had originally appeared in the *Tribune* as a series of letters written during a summer's journeyings through the Berkshire Hills, at Newport, and other sea-coast places, and at Niagara. This book is in Curtis's most delicate vein. *Lotus-Eating* was illustrated by Kensett, one of the most popular artists of the day, and a warm friend of the author. Both text and drawings recall to-day the grace and beauty of some old miniature in its quaint setting, a reflection of another and more picturesque age.

The *Potiphar Papers* followed *Lotus-Eating*, and showed Curtis in the light of a teacher of manners and morals to what was called the best society. The Potiphar family was a picture of the rich American without cultivation, and with no other ambition than to live in finer houses, have better horses, and give more expensive dinners than the rest of the world. In a series of letters by Mr. and Mrs. Potiphar and their friends the author shows the folly of such silly ambitions.

But the book which brought Mr. Curtis the most fame, both because of its artistic excellence and high literary value, is that charming idyll, *Prue and I*. In these pages the hero is an old book-keeper who lives in a humble way in an unfashionable street. But the book-keeper counts himself rich because of his many castles in Spain, whither he often travels, and about which he writes many delightful descriptions. There are other characters in the book who also own castles in Spain. Titbottom, the under-book-keeper, and Bourne, the millionaire, share and share alike in this wonderful property, which one is never too poor to own, and never too rich not to desire. Each one tells stories in which Moorish palaces, marble fountains, moonlit balconies, West Indian sunsets, and tropical flowers are woven into an arabesque of color; but somehow all suggest a dreamy-eyed boy lying upon a sunny hill-slope watching an East Indian merchantman sail out of Providence harbor and fade away into a dim horizon.

There is one sweet and touching chapter called "My Cousin the Curate," in which Curtis pays loving tribute to the character of his brother Burrill. In the pages "Sea from Shore" is found that charming description of Providence in his youth, and "The Flying Dutchman" is the immortal legend transformed anew. Throughout the book are many pictures of the New York of forty years ago; what was then fashionable in manner, dress, and appointment; the favorite actor, the most popular opera, the newest book, all are gossiped about by the old book-keeper who looks on. The descriptions, with their quaint fancies and poetic rendering, are alike rich in retrospective value.

Both the *Potiphar Papers* and *Prue and I* appeared first serially in *Putnam's Monthly*, of which Curtis was for a time associate editor. Five years after the publication of his first book Mr. Curtis took a position on *Harper's Magazine*, and inaugurated the Easy Chair. These delightful papers, which now are collected in several volumes, included criticisms on art, literature, music, social events, and similar

topics, and were a never-ending source of interest and delight to his audience. Like that of Holmes, in the *Atlantic*, it was a purely literary office, and it showed, as no other review could, the wide intellectual sympathy of the editor. The Easy Chair was conducted for thirty-eight years by Mr. Curtis, being discontinued at his death.

[pg 16] In 1863 Curtis accepted the position of editor of *Harper's Weekly*. Perhaps no other American writer has ever been in such peculiar touch with the people as was the editor of the *Weekly* at this time. It was not a purely literary sympathy, for from the beginning his interest in public questions was reflected in the editorial page. Whatever vexing problem faced Congress, whatever measure in relation to government or reform was before the people, was used as a text by the lay preacher of the *Weekly*. The most unbounded respect was his, even from those whose opinion differed from his own, while his admirers learned to wait for the cool judgment and the wise word which never failed. Mr. Curtis was a strong friend of the anti-slavery cause, and both before and during the war he unflinchingly advocated its rights, though his course cost him more than one personal friend. During this period as a lecturer and delegate to conventions he reflected the creed of the national party. He was nominated for Congress and accepted the nomination, though he anticipated the defeat that awaited him in a State where his party was weak. Throughout the entire struggle he stood side by side with the great reformers, one of the most interesting figures of that stormy period.

[pg 17] Perhaps the public movement with which Mr. Curtis's name will remain most closely associated is the Civil Service Reform Commission, of which he was the first president and always the leading spirit. The object of this commission was to obtain legal power to advance all Government clerks and employees by regular promotions, in place of the political patronage which then obtained. This campaign for purer public service was begun in 1871, and from that time Mr. Curtis's work for it was unceasing, until the hopes of the reformers were fulfilled by the passage of the Civil Service Reform Law, which led the way in time to the needed reform.

[pg 18] From the beginning of his literary career Mr. Curtis had been known as a lecturer of singular power. His lectures embraced a wide variety of subjects, some of the most famous being those delivered before colleges and at the meetings of the Chamber of Commerce in New York. Seventeen of these addresses alone were devoted to the civil service reform cause. His orations on the "Reunion of the Army of the Potomac;" on "Wendell Phillips;" "James Russell Lowell;" "Burns;" "The Puritan Principle;" "The Duty of the American Citizen to Politics," and other varied topics indicate the wide scope of this work. The abiding affection which he had inspired in the people at large made him one of the favorite orators at many commemorations of national importance. His orations and addresses are collected in thirteen volumes, and, with the *Harper's Weekly* editorials, form a scholarly review of one of the most interesting periods of American history.

[pg 19] Mr. Curtis's home was on Staten Island, where he died, in 1893.

CHAPTER II

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

1825-

[pg 20] The first recollections of Richard Henry Stoddard, like those of so many of our American men of letters, are of the sea. He was born at Hingham, Mass., a little seaport town, where his ancestors had lived for generations, and whence his father, Captain Stoddard, sailed away in his ship one day never to return. Somewhere between New York and the coast of Norway the brave little brig in which Captain Stoddard had invested all his fortune went down. Perhaps it struck an iceberg, or in the darkness of the northern sea mists came into collision with another vessel; no one ever heard its fate, and the widow and fatherless children only knew that to them had come that bitter portion which the sea gives to so many of its followers. For the first few years of his life young Stoddard had hardly any settled home, his mother moving from place to place, whenever a chance of bettering her fortunes presented itself. For a year or two he was at his grandfather's house at Hingham, which was situated on a hill overlooking the ocean, and below which was the graveyard where generations of seafaring folk lay buried. Among the memories which shine out from these earliest years are those of the old church at Hingham, where he solemnly sat in the old-fashioned high-backed pew, and of the admiring friends who, perhaps, on that same Sunday afternoon, pressed round him while he gravely recited one of Watts's hymns or some other of the pieces of which he had store. There is also a remembrance of a trip to Boston in his grandfather's schooner, an adventurous voyage no doubt to the small seafarer. From Hingham he went to live in several other New England towns, never staying long in one place, and settling at last in Boston, from which place, in his tenth year, he removed to New York on his mother's second marriage.

[pg 21] In all his sojournings he had never been quite out of sight and sound of the sea, and it was from this teacher no doubt that he learned to be a worshipper of beauty. Years afterward, when he began to translate his thoughts and emotions into verse, we find much of it touched with that indefinable, haunting mystery which is found only in the poetry of sea-lovers. And this quality is no doubt a reminiscence of those childish impressions which sank into his mind and became a part of it.

[pg 22] Stoddard's life in New York was varied in experience, although he had for the first time a settled home. The family was poor, and Stoddard went to school or became a bread-winner alternately, as their fortunes ebbed or flowed. At the age of fifteen he found himself confronted with the fact that the boy who eats bread and butter sometimes has to help pay for it to the extent of all his small might, and young as he was even then, he had no notion of shirking his duty. He became first the office-boy to a firm of two young lawyers, who had few clients, but who, nevertheless, advised him to forget poetry and study law. He worked for a time in a newspaper office; then he became book-keeper in a factory. For three or four days he tried earnestly to become a blacksmith, and at last, after much shifting of scene, he settled in a foundry and learned the trade of iron-moulding.

But to his mind the actual boy neither copied lawyers' briefs, nor handled an anvil, nor moulded iron. For in that world which he had created for himself he did nothing the livelong day but think and write poetry. Sometimes the poetry would be scribbled down in the short noon recess, but oftener the hours of the night were given to writing, rewriting, correcting, and revising the verse which he was sure must lead into the pleasant ways of life at last.

[pg 23] Whatever odd moments he had that were not given to writing poetry were spent in reading it. Out of his small salary his mother allowed him a little spending money, and with this he bought books. Usually they were second-hand volumes, picked up on streetstands, but occasionally a new book found its way to the library, which grew year by year, and was a mute record of the boy's ambitions. In this way Stoddard became familiar with the best English poetry, and so got an education not then to be had in many schools.

[pg 24] After several books of manuscript poetry had been filled and destroyed, for he seems to have understood that this writing was only a training, he at last ventured to offer a poem to a weekly magazine, which accepted it, and the young poet actually saw himself in print. About the same time he received some encouraging criticisms from the poet N. P. Willis, who saw a little volume of his manuscript. His most valuable acquaintance at this time was Mrs. Kirkland, the editor of a magazine, who not only praised the young poet, but bought some of his work for her magazine. Other successes followed, and finally Stoddard had saved enough money to have a volume of his poems published; although he only sold one copy of these poems, which was published under the title *Footprints*, it yet tended to help him materially, for it brought him to the notice of literary people. Like many another poet, Stoddard owed much of his success to the kindly and generous sympathy of older and successful writers. This little volume led to his being introduced to the best literary society of New York, and that was of inestimable value to the then unknown poet. In 1852, being then in his twenty-eighth year, Stoddard published a second volume of poems, and a year later, through the influence of Hawthorne, he obtained a position as clerk in the Custom House, a place which brought him an assured income, and yet gave leisure for his literary work.

In this same year he published two dainty volumes for children, *Fairy Land* and *Town and Country*. They are full of delightful humor and show the poet in one of his happiest moods.

[pg 25] The life of Stoddard has been emphatically that of the poet and student. His whole career has been colored by one ambition, the highest that can govern any writer, to succeed in his chosen calling and do honor to American literature. Besides his poems, which have passed through many editions since the appearance of his first little volume, he has been connected with various newspapers and has been the editor of a magazine. Among other things he has also edited *Griswold's Poets of America*, *The Female Poets of America*, an edition of the *Late English Poets*, and a collection of reminiscences of well-known writers known as the Bric-a-Brac Series. Since 1880 he has been editor of the literary department of the *New York Mail and Express*.

To all this miscellaneous work Stoddard has brought the trained intellect and artistic perception of the poet and student, and he has stamped much of it with more than an ephemeral value. His work on the *Mail and Express* is a weekly review of the literary work of the world, and is a good summary of the intellectual field of the day.

[pg 26] Some of the finest examples of his poems are found in the collections, *Songs of Summer*, *The King's Bell* and *The Book of the East*. Single examples, such as the *Vanished May*, *Up in the Trees*, *The Grape Gatherer*, *Dead Leaves*, show his sense of beauty, mingled with the old Greek love of the earth, in perfect poetic union. In these moods he is a true descendant of the early poet worshippers of nature. *Wratislaw*, the story of a little hero prince, whose brave spirit wrought noble deeds in the days when the Turk overran Europe, is a beautiful specimen of the poet's art in dealing with legendary subjects. So also is his *Masque of the Three Kings*, in which the old Bible Christmas Story is told anew. *A Wedding Under the Directory* is a quaint picture of a day, relived by another generation. In 1876 Stoddard was asked for a poem to celebrate the opening of the Centennial Exposition, and responded with his *Guests of the State*, a noble composition, full of that large sympathy, which made the occasion a memorable one in the history of the nation.

[pg 27] The fact that most impresses one in regard to his work is his intense feeling for beauty. And in this sense one can trace his literary career from his earliest years. Such a nature must have unconsciously been nurtured in those exalted moods which are revealed only to the poet born. Through all his best work there is an undertone which is felt rather than seen, and which hints of a deeper current underneath.

Some of his most charming work appears in transcriptions of the poetry of the East—love-songs of the Tartar and Arab, of the Persian and the Slav. With true poetic sympathy he has wrought these pictures of Eastern life into English verse that reveals all their own wild force and fire.

Stoddard's life has been spent almost entirely in New York. As he has devoted all his talent to his chosen work, so he has reaped the reward that comes from such high endeavor, and won in its best sense the poet's fame.

CHAPTER III

EDWARD EGGLESTON

1837-

[pg 28] In all the stories which relate to the settlement of the United States none are more interesting than those which tell of the experiences of the pioneers who fought face to face with the Indians in the valley of the Ohio.

[pg 29] From the time when Daniel Boone and his companions followed Indian trails across the Alleghenies and settled Kentucky, until far beyond the period of the Revolution, the history of every settlement on the frontier was one of bitter warfare with the red men. Before he could build his house or prepare the land for tilling, the frontiersman had to erect a block-house to protect the settlement against his wily foe, and very often this fort-like structure was the home for weeks at a time of the entire community. Whether the pioneer felled trees, broke up the new ground, sowed, tilled, or gathered his crops he worked ever with his rifle by his side. And the housewife, busy with spinning, weaving, and other family cares, never went to her door without an anxious glance to see that no lurking enemy was near. Very often, too, in spite of all precaution, the smoke rising from his burning dwelling would be the first warning that the settler would receive, and he would hasten home to find his wife and children slaughtered or carried away into captivity.

It required brave hearts to found homes on the frontier, where even nature gave only in return for hardest toil, and still braver ones to

work steadily on in the face of treacherous Indian foes. But the pioneer of the Ohio Valley did not know fear, and his record of honorable accomplishment has made him a famous character in the story of his country.

[pg 30] An old block-house of this region, the first that was erected on the Indiana side of the Ohio, was built by Captain Craig, a noted pioneer, who won renown both as a fighter against the Indians and as a leader in the little band of settlers. It was men of this class, resolute, brave, and self-sacrificing, which redeemed the Valley of the Ohio from nature and the red man and made it habitable.

And although the struggle went on for years, it ended at last in peace and prosperity for the pioneers. The Indians retreated toward the Mississippi, thriving little villages grew up around the old block-houses, and the outlying country, rich in valuable timber or meadow lands, was as free from danger as the valleys of the Connecticut or Hudson.

[pg 31] In Vevay, Ind., one of these little villages, about four miles from the old block-house, was born on December 10, 1837, Edward Eggleston, a grandson of Captain Craig. His father, a descendant of a Virginia family which had won honor in the Revolution, was a prominent lawyer of Vevay, where the boy lived until his third year. The family then removed to the old Craig homestead, and in this region, so rich in historic memories, young Eggleston spent six of the most impressionable years of his life. As he was a delicate boy, school life occupied a very small part of his time, though books were always interesting to him. He above all implored to be taught to write, and almost as soon as he knew how to write he began to express his own thoughts, of which he had many. But the best education he could have had for the work he was to do was obtained from the still lingering picturesqueness of Western life, which surrounded him everywhere.

[pg 32] Life was still primitive enough in the Ohio Valley, and the interests of the people were so closely allied that they seemed almost like one large family. If a man wished to build a house or barn, he summoned his neighbors to what was called "a raising," when all worked to raise the building on its foundations. The crop of corn was husked at a "bee," to which all the country lads and lasses came, and after dividing into two companies, worked hard till one or the other won the race by husking the last ear first. A supper in the farm-house kitchen and a dance in the barn would follow, when the guests would separate, to meet perhaps the next night at another "bee." Wood was chopped, logs rolled from the forests to the river, where they were floated down to the sawmills, and every other kind of farm work done in the same way. In the households the women had spinning and quilting "bees," and, in fact, from the oldest to the youngest, each member of the community felt that he had its interests at heart.

[pg 33] While the frontier life had developed a certain class who were rough in manner and careless in morals, the greater part of the people were Methodists, and were sincerely and enthusiastically devoted to their religion. In those widely scattered communities churches were almost unknown, and services were held in the school-rooms or at private houses, as might be most desirable. The ministers were as a rule men of character and force, descendants in the next generation of stalwart Indian fighters and frontiersmen, and into their work they put the same energy which their fathers and grandfathers had used in winning homes in the wilderness.

[pg 34] These Methodist ministers were called circuit-riders; they had no settled parish, but each one had charge of from fifty to one hundred parishes, which they were required to visit as often as possible. With his saddle-bags and rifle the circuit-rider would travel from village to village, claiming hospitality from the families under his care, who always welcomed him gladly, placed their houses at his disposal, and if the meeting was to be held in the school-house, stood ready to guard him from the attacks of any of the rough class who might try to interfere with him. The circuit-rider was undoubtedly the greatest influence for good known to the Ohio Valley, and his respect and esteem were sought by all. He did his work well, infusing into the daily life of his followers an earnest desire for right-doing and a hunger for spirituality which had a lasting effect upon the characters of the builders of the Middle West. One of Eggleston's first memories must have been that of the circuit-rider riding up to the door of his grandfather's house and dismounting, while the heads of the family stood ready to welcome him with respectful courtesy. And the mind-picture photographed thus vividly was to be reproduced later and form a unique contribution to American literature.

[pg 35] From the old homestead the family removed to Vevay on the death of Eggleston's father, and here in his tenth year the boy began his school life in the little school-house which has become so familiar to his readers. The scenes and incidents of this experience are retold in that charming volume, *A Hoosier School Boy*, with so loving and faithful a touch that no one can doubt that they are the personal memories of the chronicler. The ambitions of these boys, whose greatest desire was to have an education, their hopes and disappointments, their misunderstandings with their teacher, and their manly apologies, their schoolboy games and plays, are all a part of Eggleston's own experience. The school-house is a memory, not a creation, and into it really walked one day the veritable little Christopher Columbus, with his tiny voice and thin legs, to shame all the big boys by reading better than they. Little Christopher Columbus did not know that his biographer sat watching him with admiring eyes, and no one dreamed that this episode was afterward to be incorporated into that charming book. Eggleston's boyhood, like that of Howells, was full of the energetic influence of the young West, an influence which, after building homes in the wilderness and bringing civilization to take the place of savage conditions, kept bravely to its work of developing the frontier.

[pg 36] The youth of that period received only those things for which he strived. Education, the boon more desired than anything else, was hard to obtain. The country schools were either taught by old fogies, who ruled with birch and rattan, or by young men, to whom teaching meant only a means to livelihood while preparing for some other work. Here and there throughout the country were scattered a few academies where the higher branches were taught, but only a few boys had the means to avail themselves of the privilege. The boy of the Ohio Valley fifty years ago knew very early that his own will and strength must win for him in the battle of life; and this knowledge brought into play the best forces of his nature. Underneath the carelessness of boyhood generally lurked an earnest desire to become useful to his generation, and to this ambition Eggleston was no exception.

[pg 37] Life meant much to him early, and at nine years old the village school at Vevay knew no better pupil than the delicate boy who had already begun to learn that the patient endurance of ill-health must be one of his greatest teachers. A few weeks at school would be followed by many months of sickness, but his purpose never faltered. During one of these periods of ill-health he was sent to stay for some months in a backwoods district, where life was still in the rudest stage. Shut off from books, Eggleston gathered from this experience stores of valuable knowledge. Although only twelve years old, he was a student of human nature, and the unfamiliar scenes became picture-stories of the lives of the rough men by whom he was surrounded. Many years after he reproduced the memories of these days with a faithfulness which showed how vividly they had impressed him. There is, indeed, in all his work the same charm that is

found in the poetry of Whittier, and which makes so much of it seem like a translation of the moods and feelings of boyhood.

Besides studying, Eggleston was always busy writing. He was still a young boy when his first contribution appeared. A country newspaper had offered a prize for the best composition by a schoolboy under fifteen, and he resolved to obtain it if possible. He was not at that time in school, but was acting as clerk for a hardware merchant. The editor, however, assured him that this would not debar him from the competition. Thereafter every spare moment was given to the composition of an essay on the given subject, and to Eggleston's great joy he won the prize, although his employer had from that day suspicions as to the real value of a clerk with a literary turn of mind.

Not very long after, being again at school, he won high praise from his teacher for a little essay on *The Will*, which, although full of imitations of the writers he had been studying, still showed much promise. At that time there were no railroads connecting the East and the West, and the newspapers and books from the Atlantic coast were a long time in reaching the frontier. There grew up, therefore, in the Ohio Valley a little coterie of native writers, who represented the best thought and culture of the region. Their poetry, fiction, and essays were gladly welcomed by the Western newspapers, which often devoted pages to this literature, and the writers thus gained much local fame. The teacher who so kindly encouraged young Eggleston was one of the best known of these Western writers. Although she found fault with every other sentence of the little essay on *The Will*, she still saw its merits, and to Eggleston, who had admired her fame for years, her praise was very sweet. It was a great inspiration to him at the moment, and the faithful criticism which she continued to give was of inestimable value to the future novelist.

When he was seventeen Eggleston went to Virginia to visit his father's relatives. Here he had a year's experience of Southern plantation life. This easy, luxurious existence was a great contrast to life in the Ohio Valley, but, although Eggleston appreciated it, his instincts remained true to the wider freedom of the country of his birth. He was destined to be the chronicler of the true story of much of that Western life, and nothing could ever detract from its vital and enduring charm. One of his Virginia uncles, who was rich and childless, wished to adopt him, but Eggleston refused, and returned home richer for the experience and for the few months' training from an excellent Virginia school, but still devoted heart and soul to the interests of the West.

A year later he was sent to Minnesota, in the hope that the climate might benefit his health, which seemed completely broken. He was threatened with consumption, and knowing that he had but this chance for life, he threw himself desperately into the rough frontier work, which kept him out of doors continually. He drove oxen to break up new ground, wading through the wet prairie grass at day-break, and broiling under the noonday sun. He felled trees, rolled logs, and acted as chain-bearer for a party of surveyors. He fought a troublesome cough and fever with the same determination, and in a few months his youth and pluck had turned the scale, and he was on the road to health. He now set out to walk from Minnesota to Kansas, and it is a pity that he kept no journal of this experience.

A delicate boy travelling through the Western frontier for over two hundred miles, he must have met with many unique adventures. He slept at night in hunters' cabins, rough country taverns, little log-houses of settlers, and sometimes out of doors under the shelter of friendly logs and ties. He lived on the rude fare that supplied the wants of the hardy backwoodsmen, and his companions were oftenest those rough spirits who found in the excitement of frontier life a congenial atmosphere. But the journey was accomplished, though on reaching Kansas he was not allowed to enter its borders because of the unsettled state that society had been thrown into by the political troubles. Turning eastward, Eggleston resolved to travel home on foot. When near the end of his journey his money and strength both nearly gave out, and he was indebted to two friendly strangers for the two dollars necessary to reach home. He arrived at the house of his nearest relatives in such a tattered condition that the maid almost refused him entrance, and his half-brother was for some moments in doubt about allowing the relationship. This experience ended Eggleston's boyhood. The next year, being not yet nineteen, he put into execution a long-cherished plan. Knowing that his health would never allow him to enter college, he put that wish aside, and filled with a desire to make of life a noble achievement, he became that ideal of the young West, a circuit-rider.

In entering the ministry Eggleston was fulfilling the hope of his life. To one of his education and training the Methodist minister of the day represented the ideal of self-sacrifice and spiritual aspiration; he was a soldier of Christ, ready to fight, conquer or die, in his Master's service, and to him the warfare seemed glorious. Eggleston took up his new duties as the youth of old assumed the honors of knighthood. It was a solemn dedication of his young life to the service of humanity and the acceptance of a trust which he faithfully fulfilled. The Methodism inherited and shared by the generations to which Eggleston belonged did for the West what Puritanism accomplished for New England—it made the every-day life an impulse toward right-doing, and in this it laid strong and deep the foundations of noble character and loyal citizenship. The republic owes much to this valiant army of workers which Eggleston now joined, burning with a desire to devote his whole feeble strength to the common cause.

We can picture him thus, a delicate boy, riding from place to place, be the weather what it might, finding his home among the members of his scattered flock, suffering discomfort and often danger, anxious, yet fearing nothing but that he might fail in his duty.

His first charge included a circuit of ten places, which he visited at intervals. He carried his wardrobe in his saddle-bags, and as he never for one moment gave up his determination to become a scholar, nearly all the time he spent on horseback was passed in reading and study.

Much of Eggleston's experience as an itinerant Methodist minister is reproduced in *The Circuit Rider*. The Ohio Valley in Eggleston's youth was the border-land of town and village life, all the great country westward being occupied only by Indians or by rough settlements of hunters, traders, and miners. This place between, where the civilization of the East met the wild life of the West, was the scene of *The Circuit Rider*, into whose pages are wrought many striking incidents of those successful times. The heroes of the book are two youths, Kike and Morton, sons of valley farmers. Both are turned from their wild lives through the influence of one of those Methodist ministers so familiar to their times, and both renounce all worldly ambitions to enter upon the life of the circuit-rider. The story is touchingly in sympathy with the experience of the humble country folk who figure in its pages. Their home life and their spiritual struggles alike appeal to our interest; we are present at their merry corn-huskings and apple-paring bees, at their prayer-meetings, and camp-meetings. Each scene has the value of local history, and nowhere in American literature is there a more soul-stirring picture than that which traces Kike awakening to the high conception of a life of self-sacrifice.

Eggleston's own experience as a circuit-rider came to an end after six months, as his health broke down completely under the strain, and

[pg 45] he was obliged to return to Minnesota. The invigorating air and freedom from care again worked their charm, and in a short time he was once more engaged in preaching. His work now was on the Minnesota frontier, where the Indians still lingered, forming a large part of the population. The white settlements and Indian villages all along the Minnesota River soon became familiar with the face of the young preacher, who walked from place to place shod in moccasins, and who brought into their rough lives the only refining and uplifting influence that they knew. We can see the groups gathered round him while he gives his word of advice or encouragement, the scene recalling an episode in the career of Eliot, and reflecting a phase of American life that has forever passed away.

[pg 46] But Eggleston's fame as a preacher soon made him in demand in the larger towns, and less than two years after he entered the ministry he accepted a call to the city of St. Paul. From this time his life was spent almost entirely in cities. Owing to his poor health he was often obliged to give up his duties as a minister and take up whatever work presented itself as a means of support for his family. He had in the meantime begun to write regularly for various religious papers, and had successfully accomplished some editorial work.

In 1870, when Eggleston was in his thirty-fourth year, he accepted a position on *The Independent*, and left the West for his new home in Brooklyn. Although later years were again devoted to preaching, this was the beginning of an uninterrupted literary life, which has continued to the present day.

[pg 47] His first important book, and the one which brought him instant recognition, was *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, which was written as a serial for the periodical *Hearth and Home*. Almost immediately after its publication in book form it was issued in England, France, Germany, and Denmark, and everywhere it was received with the greatest favor. With true artistic instinct, Eggleston had gone for the material of his book to the old familiar life of his youth. The scenes which lingered in his memory when touched by his trained hand became vivid pictures of new and peculiar interest. This revelation of the picturesqueness of Western frontier life appealed to all, and the vital humanity which throbbed through its pages touched every heart.

This book which made Eggleston a novelist showed him, also, the probable place for his own contributions to American literature. He became the novelist of the river frontier and prairie life, which so fortunately for our literature lingered long enough to make its lasting impression upon his youth. The titles of his successive books show this life in many aspects. From the ideal reproductions of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, and *The Hoosier Schoolboy*, in which we walk hand in hand with childhood, through all the graver problems of adult life we still follow the fortunes of the class that Eggleston's art has made typical.

[pg 48] One of the most interesting of his books is *The Graysons*, the story of a young law-student who is accused of murder, and whose acquittal is obtained by Abraham Lincoln who pleads his cause. This introduction of Lincoln into fiction was made by request, and the incident is cleverly made to illustrate the keenness and sagacity of the great statesman even while an obscure lawyer in an obscurer Western town.

Among Eggleston's juvenile works *The Schoolmaster's Stories for Boys and Girls*, *Queer Stories for Boys and Girls*, *A First Book in American History*, and a large amount of miscellaneous matter all indicate his sympathy with the heart of childhood, and his ability to enter into the questions and interests which make up the child-world. They are genuine boys and girls who walk through his pages. Perhaps the book which shows Eggleston at his best is *The Circuit Rider*, with its fine insight into those spiritual problems which interest all humanity. *Roxy* is another delineation of character, which, in its story of the struggle between right and wrong in the human heart, suggests the old Puritanism of New England.

[pg 49] Besides his novels Eggleston has accomplished a great deal of work on historical subjects, which has appeared in various magazines and periodicals, and he has in preparation a history of the United States to which he has already devoted much time in research in the great libraries of the world. Some school histories and a good portion of miscellaneous matter must also be included in his work. His distinctive contribution to American literature is his reproduction of a phase of American life which has now passed away, but which has a unique value for the student of history.

The latter years of Eggleston's life have been spent mostly in New York, where he now lives.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

1829-

[pg 50] Charles Dudley Warner was born in Plainfield, Mass., in that lovely and picturesque region which has become celebrated in American literature as the birthplace of William Cullen Bryant. The country has scarcely changed since those early days when the boy Bryant used to wander over its fields and hills and hear in the neighboring forests the cries of the wolves and bears which made their home there. The Warner family belonged to the farmer race, which at that time made up the larger part of New England life. The father was a man of fine tastes, having a good library and being in frequent correspondence with people in various parts of the country who were interested in the public questions of the day. But while Charles was still a very young child his father died, and the family was broken up for some years. [pg 51] The boy was taken to the home of an aunt, who owned a homestead on the Deerfield River, and it is here that his first recollections centre. The lad's first school was in one of those little school-houses which have been described in the verses of Whittier and Bryant, and his life may in every respect be said to have corresponded to that so lovingly portrayed in "The Barefoot Boy." This life makes a boy healthful and manly, and the close communion with nature fosters those poetic impressions to which the young mind is so susceptible. Warner was happy in the care of his aunt and an older cousin, but there was one great drawback to this otherwise contented life. At the Deerfield farm-house there were no books except the Bible and one or two religious works, and to a book-loving boy this was a great deprivation. [pg 52] The family held to the strict observance of the New England Sabbath, which extended from six o'clock on Saturday evening to six o'clock on Sunday evening, and though much of this time was occupied with church-going, there were many hours in which a book would have been a boon. The imaginative child, however, has always a little kingdom of his own to which he may retreat when

disappointed with the actual world, and in this fairy realm Warner spent many a happy hour planning and dreaming of the future. He was but repeating the experience of so many other New England boys in whose early days seems to have lain the best training for the intellectual life.

But a lack of reading does not make a boy poor when he has at command the fruits of meadow, field, and wood; when trout-streams exist for him alone; when sunny days and rainy weather alike have their special joys, and when nature is forever watching a chance to teach him lessons of truth and beauty. The atmosphere of this quiet, uneventful life was an influence for good—an influence which Warner afterward gratefully appreciated.

[pg 53] Many a boy whose actual life has been bounded by the narrow confines of farm life has had his first glimpse of the world beyond through the pages of a book. In Warner's case this book was the *Arabian Nights*, which his seat-mate brought to the little school-house one day and hid amid the other boyish treasures in his desk. A district school-teacher cannot see all that happens in his restless kingdom, and the urchin had more than one stolen glance into the wonderful book while he was supposed to be studying his spelling or doing sums. And what an ideal world this was which the young discoverer had thus sailed into! Here were genii, fairies, enchanted carpets, valleys of diamonds, and masquerading peddlers who gave "old lamps for new." In this realm, which the geographies so ignorantly omitted to mention, farm work and even farm pleasures had no place. All was glittering, dazzling, beautiful! Every day held new adventures, and one's intimate friends owned miles of treasure-houses and inexhaustible mines of wealth. When school was done Warner succeeded in borrowing this treasure, and hurrying home, announced to his aunt and cousin that he had found "the most splendid book in the world." Imagine his surprise and disgust when these relatives, after an inspection of the precious volume, said, gravely: "No, you cannot read this, Charles, it is not true."

But the boy evidently thinking that in such cases aunts and cousins were as fallible as primary geographies, carried the book to the barn and hid it in the hay, and there spent many an hour devouring the enchanting tales.

Another book which he began at this time was *Cook's Voyages Around the World*, the second volume of which had drifted somehow up to the old farm-house door. These two books with the Bible were absolutely all that Warner knew of the vast treasures of literature while he remained at the Deerfield River farm.

[pg 55] But life broadened into wider channels when in his twelfth year he was taken by his mother to Cazenovia, N. Y., and placed in the academy there. The life at Deerfield had been that of the river, and fields, and woods, but at Cazenovia Warner became emphatically the studious boy, to whom books and study meant more than anything else in the world. At the academy he was fortunate in his boy acquaintances, and there he made friendships which have lasted through his life. One of his friends was the son of a bookseller, in whose shop Warner was allowed to browse at will. And here he learned to know Irving and Cooper, Hawthorne, Prescott, and Bryant, and the other writers who were founding American literature. This education which went on outside the academy was also greatly stimulated by the talks and discussions on literary matters between him and his comrades. And by and by, as always happens in the case of boys who read and read, they all began to write. Their first efforts took the form of poetry, which somehow always seems to the boyish mind the easiest thing to write, and thenceforth much of their interest in life lay in listening to and criticising one another's verses. One of these boys while still a youth wrote that celebrated song of how

In their ragged regimentals
The old Continentals

[pg 56] rallied to the defence of American liberty in the stormy days of the Revolution.

Another has since become a famous scholar in literature and the arts, whose name is known to two continents. Warner himself, who soon forsook poetry for prose, can date his literary career from these days when his chief ambition was to write and to write well. It was his habit then and long afterward to walk up and down his room while writing and repeat the sentences over and over, changing and polishing them until they sounded rhythmic. The study of the best poetry of America and England still went on steadily, and the boys often played a guessing game as to author and verse. Sometimes the giver of the verse would slip in a couplet of his own, and then laugh at the wild guesses which placed his effusions among the English classics.

[pg 57] One of the most luminous memories of Warner's youth is that of a visit to Irving at Sunnyside, whither he went under the guidance of one of these early friends. The famous author received his young admirers kindly and gave to Warner an ivy-leaf from the vine which had grown from a slip plucked from the cottage of Burns's "Bonnie Jean." Neither giver nor receiver foresaw, then, the link that was to be established later by Warner's biography of America's first great man of letters.

In 1851 Warner was graduated from Hamilton College, which he entered from Cazenovia Academy, taking the first prize for English. He had already become somewhat known to the literary world through contributions to the *Knickerbocker* and *Putnam's Magazine* and from occasional visits to New York, when he became for a time a member of that Bohemian world in which the younger generation of writers lived.

[pg 58] But although he had made a good beginning, literature was exchanged two years after his graduation for the wild life of the Mexican frontier, whither he went with a surveying party in 1853. After this experience he studied law and practised it in Chicago for a few years. But in 1866 he returned to his first ambition, and became editor of the *Hartford Press*, which a year later was incorporated with the *Courant*. Warner made of this newspaper one of the best-edited journals of its class, and in its conduct won an enviable reputation as an editor.

A year or two later he took his first journey to Europe, and on his return contributed those papers to the *Courant* which in 1870 made their appearance in book-form under the title *My Summer in a Garden*. It is in this little volume that Warner struck that vein of humor which makes his work a delight to his large audience.

Another book which added greatly to his reputation at this time is that called *Saunterings*, which contains his impressions of Europe in this first journey. Very much of Warner's work has for its background his journeyings in Europe and at home. His *Winter on the Nile*, *In*

the *Levant*, and *Notes of a Roundabout Journey in Europe* are among his most delightful reminiscences of foreign travel, while *Studies in the South*, *Studies in the Great West*, and *Our Italy*, show his wide familiarity with the scenes of his native land. He is a sympathetic, cultivated traveller, by whom new impressions of art and social life are appreciated, but who, nevertheless, sees all things through that half-humorous light which delights American readers. He is never too learned to extract fun out of a pyramid or cliff dwelling, and, though an ardent patriot, he has no hesitation in laughing at the foibles and eccentricities of his countrymen. His characterizations of foreign and home life possess all the flavor and freshness of the mind which looks at life from a new point of view. He is the author of some charming essays, printed as *Back Log Studies* and *As We Were Saying*, and he has published several successful novels. If he is not a creator in the realm of art, he is a keen observer and man of the world, deeply interested in his fellow-travellers. His records of his impressions, although thrown into the form of novels, are valuable chiefly for their sympathetic view of every-day life.

One of our author's most charming books is that reminiscence of his childhood, *Being a Boy*. Here we have the actual life of the New England boy sixty years ago. All the little humble incidents of farm life, all the simple pleasures, the delights of fishing and nutting, of maple-sugar gathering, and the first party are noted with a sincerity that makes the little narrative genuine history. Whittier read this book more than once, and said it was a page out of his own life-story. Outside its literary merit it is valuable as one more truthful picture of the simple life of New England; a life whose healthful duties and pleasures left wide spaces for the soul to grow up to noble conceptions of manhood.

Besides his other work Mr. Warner has contributed a department to *Harper's Magazine*, and has made some valuable additions to the social science papers of the day. He has also served on the commission for establishing prison reform, and he is well known as a successful lecturer. Throughout his career he has followed mainly the lines laid down for himself in his student days, and has bounded his ambitions by the literary life. Since 1867 his home has been at Hartford. One of our most successful humorists, he is also a striking example of those earnest toilers whose work well supports the dignity of American literature.

CHAPTER V

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

1833-

Out of the many New England country boys who dreamed day-dreams one came back in manhood to his early home and confessed that some of his dreams had come true. This was not strange, for it is generally the youthful day-dreamer whose after-life is fullest of accomplishment. Nature, who is so wise a teacher, sends in these dreams such a vision of the future that the soul is even then eager to press forward to its realization. Sometimes this vision is obscured later by ambitions that are ignoble; in such cases it fades away and is lost, like youth itself. But the larger number of those who do the world's noblest work is made up of men and women who received in childhood some such revelation of the meaning of life. If with the day-dream comes a sense of the beauty of nature—of the melodies which thrill through the songs of brook, and bird, and forest aisle—and a desire to reproduce them, the boy is apt to become a poet. Such a boy was Edmund Clarence Stedman, born at Hartford, Ct., in 1833, being the son of a merchant in comfortable circumstances.

When he was two years old Stedman was taken to Norwich to live with a great-uncle, and it was with this pretty village, with its elm-shaded streets and old colonial mansions, and with its outlying fields and pasture lands, that his earliest associations are connected. In his poem, *The Freshet*, there are many touches which recall his boyhood, and which are in a sense biographical. The pictures of the group of boys standing on the bridge or wading through the alder thickets to the deep channel, where they fished and swam, and of the spring freshet when the river rolled on like a flood, carrying cakes of ice, lumber, rails, hay, and cattle along, are both scenes from the actual experiences of the poet's youth. Throughout all his work one hears, indeed, an ever-recurrent note that tells of early days; sometimes the note is sad and sometimes gay, but always it is touched with that regret which clings to the past.

The uncle with whom Stedman passed his youth was an eminent lawyer and a man of learning. Very careful attention was paid to the boy's education, as well as to the home life, which was carried on after the strictest New England fashion. But Stedman, like other New England boys, was all the better for this discipline. It developed strength and endurance of character, a manliness of temper, and an indifference to the minor ills of life, and this is invaluable training for any poet. Stedman entered Yale at sixteen, and immediately became known as one of its cleverest freshmen, though he rebelled often at the discipline. He was a brilliant member of the college literary circle and a contributor to the *Yale Literary Magazine*, which bestowed a prize upon him for a poem on Westminster Abbey.

But his record as a scholar did not blind the college authorities to his faults, and in his junior year the faculty suspended him for some boyish escapade, and he never returned. Twenty years afterward, however, when Yale had reason to be proud of his fame as a man of letters, she called him to her halls and conferred upon him his degree in the presence of an assemblage called together to see him thus honored both as man and poet.

The immediate result of his leaving college was a determination to begin life for himself, and at the age of nineteen he became editor of the *Norwich Tribune*. The new venture was at once successful. Two years later he took charge of the *Winsted Herald*, and conducted it so successfully that it speedily acquired the fame of being one of the cleverest newspapers published outside the great cities. But gratifying as this must have been, the young editor sighed for new fields, and in 1852 he removed to New York and became a contributor to *Harper's* and *Putnam's Magazines*, and a short-lived periodical published under the name of *Vanity Fair*. Stedman was now twenty-one years old. He had married, and as his magazine work could not support him, he returned to journalism. His first important literary success, as in the case of Lowell and Holmes, was based upon the publication of a political poem.

The newspapers had just given to the world the story of John Brown's capture of Harper's Ferry, and North and South alike were bitterly excited over the event. This plain farmer was the most humble of the anti-slavery leaders, yet his name was destined to be the war-cry of the North for four years. He had, with a force of men, marched to the fortress of Harper's Ferry with the avowed purpose of

starting a military crusade against slavery. The garrison, under the impression that a large force was attacking, surrendered without a struggle, and John Brown marched in and took possession. The fort was retaken in a few days, but the event produced the most extraordinary agitation all over the country. Every newspaper published an account of it, and it was feared that the most serious results would follow.

[pg 67] What should be done with John Brown himself became a burning question, the South clamoring for his death and the North demanding his acquittal. While his fate was still under discussion there appeared in the *New York Tribune* a remarkable poem, in which all the feeling of the moment seemed crystallized. Stedman was the author of this poem, and no one but a true poet could so have entered into the spirit of the old hero, to whom inaction seemed a denial of principle.

[pg 68] "How John Brown Took Harper's Ferry" is a ballad full of fire and force. Stedman's power is shown in his fine appreciation of the unselfish frenzy which possessed the old man and led him to offer himself as a martyr in the cause he had espoused. One of the most stirring ballads produced by the war, it will always hold a prominent place in the lyric poetry of America. In less than two years after its publication the author found himself war correspondent of the *Tribune*, following the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac in its first campaign. The South had decided that the question of slavery must be settled by the sword, and the country was in the midst of civil war.

Another poem published in the *Tribune* about the time of the John Brown episode showed the versatile talent of the new poet. This was "The Diamond Wedding," a satire on the marriage of a young society girl to a wealthy Cuban planter. A list of his gifts to his promised bride appeared in the daily papers, and sounded like a catalogue of the treasures of Haroun-al-Rashid. Stedman's poem struck the popular fancy, which was also pleased by the publication of a song on the charms of "Lager Bier." Encouraged by this friendly eulogy, he published a volume of poems under the title *Poems Lyric and Idyllic*. It is in this volume that "The Freshet" occurs, and also, among several other good examples, the poem "Penelope," in which the old Greek legend is retold in beautiful verse, which not only showed Stedman's mastery of blank verse, but also his fine scholarship.

[pg 69] Stedman followed the fortunes of the army throughout the war, his letters to his journal forming a valuable contribution to the war literature of the day. He saw the first famous Battle of Bull Run, when the Northern army was forced to retreat, and when it seemed for the time that the war would be carried into the North. A reminiscence of his experience in camp and hospital, on march and battle-field, is found in his long poem, "Alice of Monmouth." But, although this poem possesses passages of remarkable beauty, it does not show Stedman at his highest reach. This is attained in those shorter lyrics, which are so spontaneous, so full of natural poetry and so perfect in art that they seem to spring unconsciously from the soul. One cannot help regretting that our poet has not given us a more generous measure of them. One of the most perfect of these lyrics, "The Doorstep," is full of that tender regret which breathes through all the poet's work a treasured memory of happy youth. "Country Sleighing" is another song of nature, full of the dash and breezy story of the country winter season. Again in "Holyoke Valley" the poet still looks backward to his boyhood, and gives, through the music of poetry, one more bright picture of the past. Among his other poems may be mentioned the ode delivered before the graduating class of Dartmouth College in 1873, called "The Dartmouth Ode," and a beautiful and touching tribute to Horace Greeley, delivered at the request of the Printers' Association at the unveiling of the bust of Greeley in Greenwood Cemetery. Among other poems of occasions are the fine lines, "Gettysburg," delivered at the reunion of the Army of the Potomac in 1871, and a monody on the death of Bryant, delivered at the Century Club, New York.

[pg 71] Outside his poetry Stedman is known as a most conscientious and scholarly editor of the work of other writers and as a critic of original and thoughtful mind. He has edited, in conjunction with Thomas Bailey Aldrich, a choice selection of the works of Landor, and in 1875 he began the publication in *Scribner's Magazine* of a series of critical articles on the poets and poetry of the Victorian Age, which forms one of the most valuable works of criticism in our later literature. Following this came a volume of essays, called "The Poets of America," and one entitled "The Nature and Elements of Poetry"—a critical and imaginative study. He has edited also *The Library of American Literature*, and an anthology of Victorian poetry, and made a scholarly translation of the Greek idyllic poets. In all his literary productions Stedman shows not only his fine poetic gift, but the sound literary judgment and attainments of the scholar, and his work forms a valuable contribution to American letters.

Stedman has passed the greater part of his life in New York, whither he returned soon after the war, and where he has found opportunity not only to write books but to be a successful business man.

CHAPTER VI

BRET HARTE

1839-

[pg 73] One of the favorite stories told by the men who had conquered Mexico and Peru was that of a region of fabulous wealth, situated somewhere in the region of the Sierra Madre Mountains, and ruled by California, a white queen of divine origin. There, it was said, were hidden mines of unexhaustible treasures, where emeralds, diamonds, and rubies were as plentiful as gold and silver. There, also, the rain and dew watered the most beautiful valleys in the world; the climate was beneficent, and it was suspected that there would be found that magic fountain of life, for which the brave De Leon had sought in vain. Many bands of adventurers, bold of heart and full of hope, roamed the valleys and toiled through the mountain passes in search of this wealth, but their effort was unrewarded. The mountains kept their secret, and no glimpse of diamond mine or wondrous fountain or beautiful queen was ever revealed. At length the quest was given up. The Spaniards built homes around the missions established by the priests, and with the help of the Indians they tilled the soil, planted vineyards, and were content with the plentiful annual harvests. Gradually little villages grew up and the country became settled. But it remained Spanish, many of the inhabitants being descendants of those old adventurers who had first come hither in search of gold.

For three hundred years peace and content reigned in the valleys; then, in a moment, all things were changed, as if by magic, by the

discovery of gold in the Sacramento Valley. California had, by the treaty with Mexico, which ended the Mexican War, become a part of the United States. The news of the great discovery had to be carried by sailing-vessel around Cape Horn to the East, but no sooner was it received than there began a wild rush for the Pacific coast. These adventurers were not dressed in doublet and hose, like the Spanish cavaliers, nor did they sail in those gaily decked vessels with which the old Greeks loved to propitiate fortune. They came instead from every class, and they travelled in any conceivable conveyance that could be placed on wheels; many, indeed, went on foot, for the voyage was long and expensive, and the overland route was in the main preferred. Every country in Europe sent emigrants to swell the numbers of the gold-seekers, and soon the prairies and plains of the West seemed alive with the wagon trains, which kept close together from fear of the Indians.

When the gold-fields were at last reached they were soon taken possession of by the adventurers, who had turned soldiers in a common cause. Their camp-fires gleamed from valley, and hill, and mountain pass, and the entire country was turned into a great camp.

Many of the towns of California had been deserted in the first rush, and as the tradespeople, farmers, and mechanics were equally engaged in the search for gold, all other business was for the time being paralyzed. It became almost impossible to buy the ordinary articles of food and clothing, and any chance vessel which was willing to dispose of its cargo might do so at fabulous prices.

Wigwams, tents, brush-huts, and log-houses served as dwellings for Americans, Mexicans, Germans, Frenchmen, Austrians, Hollanders, Chinese, and men of other nationalities, who lived and worked side by side, shared one another's hopes and disappointments and successes, and made it apparent that in the miners' camp at least all men were brothers.

During the early years of the California emigration, when the first excitement had abated, but while all the picturesque elements of the life still remained, there came to the gold-fields a bright boy, who had left his home in Albany, N. Y., to better his fortunes in the West. This was Francis Bret Harte, whose father had been a teacher in an Albany seminary. The boy himself tried teaching on his arrival, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and he turned his attention to mining. And here, because he was a poet, he saw many things that escaped the eyes of others. Here, where the cultivated man of Oxford or Harvard University worked with pick and pan beside the German peasant and unlettered Chinese, he saw a new picture of life, but still a true picture, because it reflected human nature. His finer sense grasped the poetry, the courage, and the heroism that often inspired this eager search for gold. He understood how the hope of the common laborer and the dream of the scholar might spring from unselfishness, and he saw that here, as on other fields, battles were lost nobly as well as nobly won. He saw, too, that as years went on all the foreign elements which made up the California of that day would blend to furnish a unique page of American history. And because it is the office of literature to record history, he believed that whoever should preserve in prose and verse the every-day scenes of that strange life would be doing valuable work.

His life at the mines was hardly more successful than had been his school-teaching experience, and by and by he became a compositor in a printing-office. Soon afterward he composed his first article in type without previously writing it down, and so his literary career began. A little later he entered the office of the *San Francisco Era*, then an important newspaper on the Pacific slope. While in this position he published anonymously a few sketches of life on the frontier. These stories, so full of the genuine flavor of the mining-camp, attracted some attention, but no one dreamed that they heralded a new voice in American literature. Ten years after the discovery of gold a magazine was organized in California under the title *The Overland Monthly*, and Bret Harte was made its editor. In the second issue of the magazine he published his story, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," which showed how rich was the material that lay in the life of the far West and revealed the impress of a master hand in literary composition. In California, however, the story was not very popular. There the people who read at all found their enjoyment in the books and magazines familiar to cultivated society. Into the miners' camps came copies of *The Edinburgh Review* and *Punch*, but the true meaning of the life of which they themselves formed a part had not yet been presented to these eager adventurers.

But in the East "The Luck of Roaring Camp" was received with enthusiastic praise. *The Atlantic Monthly* at once offered to buy similar sketches from the author—who had not made himself known—and other periodicals and reviews spoke generous words in favor of the young adventurer into this new world of art. Bret Harte became famous almost in a day, and henceforth it was his task to fulfil his boyish dream and put into literary form those records of an experience that was rapidly passing away. Sketches, stories, poems, and novels followed closely upon one another. He left no phase of this many-sided life untouched, and the series grew at last into a faithful record of the most picturesque and romantic episode of American history. What diverse characters came to the writer's side and claimed his attention as he wrote! Sometimes it was a miner who had failed in his quest; sometimes a Mexican *ranchero* with his light heart and merry love-song; sometimes a convict who had escaped from prison and was trying life anew in the freedom of the camps. Often it would be a little child who would seem to tell its story to this ever-listening ear,—a waif, perhaps, who had drifted into that wild company, which yet kept its reverence for the innocence of childhood. More than once the hero of the occasion would be one of those wild beasts who found their homes in the vastnesses of the mountain forests, a grizzly, watching with a dignified sense of his power the incomprehensible antics of man, or a coyote slinking along a dusty road. For each and all the author became a faithful chronicler, and because he had the true poet's insight he became more than a mere chronicler. He lifted all this motley assemblage forever out of the common-place of their rough lives and showed that each was still real man or woman and genuine kin to his race. Only a great artist could have done this. Only genius could have so looked beneath the exterior and found there the living signs of the brotherhood of man; the same genius which saw but a humbler brother still in the ugly shape of Bruin, and to whom the lazy coyote became only a "begging friar" living righteously upon the largess of others.

As a background to his stories Bret Harte paints in scenes of extraordinary natural beauty. He shows us, under the sunlight or wrapped in storms, still set in their own atmosphere of loneliness, the rude camps and settlements, the rivers and cañons, which are the haunts of his characters. The writer is, indeed, the poet of nature as well as of the heart, and can reach easily her varying moods.

Among the most interesting of the stories which relate to child-life are "A Waif of the Plains," the story of two children who were separated from their party during the overland march to California; "The Christmas Gift that Came to Rupert," the history of a drummer-boy; "Wan Lee," the life of a little Chinese boy in San Francisco; "The Story of Mliss," a miner's child, and "The Queen of the Pirate Island," a delightful conception, possible only to that land of bold adventure and tempting treasure. Perhaps it would not be out of the way to include among these juvenile chronicles the story of "A Boy's Dog" and the delightful experience of "Baby Sylvester," a fascinating bear cub, who was adopted by a young miner, and fed on the only milk that ever reached the settlement—for which service Adams' Express made special trips. He could play tag, roll down hill, take the cork out of the syrup-bottle with his teeth, dance, and shake

hands, and when he arrived at maturity he was still faithful to his friends, and showed an ugly temper only to such human beings as annoyed him.

[pg 82] Bret Harte's poems, like his prose, preserve the varying conditions of early frontier life. They include also many verses written during the Civil War, among which "John Burns of Gettysburg," "Caldwell of Springfield," "The Reveillé," and "How Are You, Sanitary?" are the most notable. Here, too, is found that exquisite little idyl, "Battle Bunny," the story of a white rabbit which was scared from its hiding-place and took refuge in a soldier's bosom as the two armies faced each other before battle.

Some of his best verses are written in the dialect of the camps, and are full of his own delightful, distinctive pathos and humor. "Jim," "Dow's Flat," "Plain Language from Truthful James," "Babes in the Wood," and "The Hawk's Nest" are among those that thus reproduce some characteristic incidents of the wild life. His poem, "The Heathen Chinese," was not intended for publication, but was written as a harmless skit for the amusement of two or three comrades. When a sudden exigency of the magazine dragged it from the reluctant author's portfolio, from Maine to California a delighted public laughed over it, but Mr. Harte himself has always lamented the fate that based so much of his literary reputation on a bit of unfair doggerel.

[pg 83] Although he has spent years abroad, both as United States Consul to different European cities and as a traveller, Bret Harte's work remains distinctly American. The collection of stories now numbers nearly thirty volumes; most of the titles, as *The Schoolmistress of Red Gulch*, *Snow-Bound at Eagles*, *Two Men of Sandy Bar*, and *Tennessee's Partner*, indicate the scene or nature of the sketch.

He is the historian of one of the most interesting movements in the progress of the United States—a movement which began while California was still a land of Mexican traditions, of grain and cattle-raising, and ended only when it took its place as one of the most important States of the Union. No one but an eye-witness could have written this history faithfully, and American literature owes one of its greatest debts to the man whose genius has thus illuminated the pages of the nation's life.

CHAPTER VII

BAYARD TAYLOR

1825-1878

[pg 84] When William Penn stood under the trees and made his famous treaty with the Indians there was in his company a young Quaker, whose descendants continued for generations to be honored citizens of Pennsylvania. As time went on the family mixed its Quaker blood with that of some neighboring German Lutherans. In the seventh generation from the days of Penn its most famous offspring, Bayard Taylor, born at Kennett Square, in 1825, was as nearly German as Quaker, and it was the German blood, no doubt, which gave his nature its strain of poetry and romance.

[pg 85] The Taylor family were simple farmers, and the home life was plain, though the thrift of both father and mother secured the children every comfort. The mother's one desire was that her children should become quiet, respectable members of a community that their name had honored for generations. But to the fourth child, Bayard, this ambition always seemed narrow. His earliest memories of himself were connected with longings to flit as far beyond the home nest as possible.

At four years of age he became a reader of books, passing in due time from Peter Parley to Gibbon, and learning Scott and Campbell by heart, as well as copying long extracts from their works. Kennett Square possessed a public library, volume after volume of which was devoured by young Bayard. When he was seven years old he set himself gravely to the business of writing poetry, placing his own verses with much satisfaction among his copied extracts from the great poets.

Fond as he was of books, he was yet a genuine child, who delighted in playing tricks, and had a very real terror of a piece of lonely woodland that he had to pass through on his way to school.

[pg 86] He was an out-of-doors boy, too, and spent hours in swamp and field making collections of frogs and baby turtles, eggs, and mineralogical specimens. Among his other interests was a fondness for drawing. He illustrated his own little manuscript book of verses, and made pictures for the poems of his favorite authors. But his chief passion was a desire to travel.

Books of travel and descriptions of foreign lands were read and re-read and almost learned by heart. When called upon to write compositions at school he invariably chose for his theme some imaginary adventure in a strange country, or some fanciful description of a remote corner of the earth, whose name alone was familiar to him. Long afterward, in speaking of this desire of his childhood, he said that he envied the birds their wings, and would have given his life to make an ascent in a balloon.

[pg 87] His father had no sympathy with these boyish fancies. He intended to make a farmer of Bayard, and he scolded vigorously over his son's nonsensical ambitions. But farm service and farm life were distasteful to the boy. He often shirked his duties, and his mother frequently set him small tasks about the house, out of pity for his intense dislike of the work of field or garden.

When he was fourteen Bayard was sent to Unionville Academy, where he received his last and best school training from a competent and earnest teacher. He studied Latin, French, and mathematics, and among the young countrymen who came there for study he found two or three friends whom he kept for life.

[pg 88] When he was fifteen, with two of these friends he walked from Unionville to the Brandywine, noted as the scene of one of the famous battles of the Revolution. This little journey, the first flight of the boy into the world, made a deep impression upon him. More than ever he longed to breathe the air of wider skies, to learn the lessons taught by the art and history of the past, and to offer to the world's work some contribution, perhaps, which should not be valueless. He wrote a brief, but vivid, description of his little trip, which was published

in the *Westchester Register*, a local paper of some repute. It was the first time he had seen his name in print, and its appearance thrilled him with hope.

A year later the *Saturday Evening Post*, of Philadelphia, printed his first published poem, "The Soliloquy of a Young Poet." Like Longfellow, he himself had carried his first offering surreptitiously to the newspaper office. As he read that the verses of "Selim," his pen name, had been accepted, he seemed to stand on air.

There is no more attractive picture of ambitious and noble youth than we get of Bayard Taylor at this moment. From childhood he had dreamed dreams far beyond the imagination of ordinary children. He had read poetry with his heart full of admiration for the men who could turn life to such golden uses. He gave the simple and innocent worship of his young soul to the famous authors who had taught him the meaning and riches of art. A letter which he received from Dickens in reply to one of his own brought him the greatest joy, and any whisper from the great world beyond his own delighted him.

At seventeen he finished his course at Unionville Academy and went back to the farm. But in his heart he was devoted to the literary life. From his own confessions we know how he consecrated himself to this work, cherishing a vision of high achievement and a hope that in the great march of life he might not be found laggard.

Winning his father's consent to his learning the printer's trade, he worked for two years in the office of *The Village Record*, of Westchester. During this time he studied Spanish, continued German, and wrote poems, which appeared in *Graham's Magazine*. But Bayard Taylor, while setting type in the office of *The Village Record*, was in spirit far away from the quiet Pennsylvania town, meditating voyages of discovery into new worlds, and when he published his first volume of poems, in the early part of 1842, the venture was a bid not so much for fame as for funds to start him on his travels.

The little book, under the title *Ximena; or, the Battle of Sierra Morena, and other Poems*, was published by subscription. He sent copies to Lowell and Longfellow, whose approval he coveted, signing himself their "stranger friend." The book did not bring in money enough for a European journey. But the poet was young and strong and possessed indomitable perseverance. He had often walked the thirty miles that lay between his home and Philadelphia, and he felt that he could walk through Europe. At any rate, he meant to try it. After many disappointments he secured two or three engagements to write newspaper letters from abroad, receiving some pay in advance, and with this, added to another small store, he sailed for England, taking a second-cabin passage in July, 1844.

Now began as interesting and romantic a career as even our poet could have desired. Two friends joined him in his pilgrimage. Both were like Bayard Taylor himself, young, strong, and ambitious. When they caught sight of the Irish coast, after a voyage of nearly four weeks, it seemed to them that they had entered another world. Dressed in student's cap and blouse, with knapsack on back and pilgrim staff in hand, Bayard Taylor made the tour of Europe. Like a true vagrant, he wandered hither and thither as his fancy led him. For six months he studied German in Frankfort, living in the family of a burgher, and sharing with them their feasts and holiday merriment in true German fashion. Though poor in purse, he was not too poor to reciprocate their many kindnesses to him and his friends, and he tells a funny story of a Christmas gift bestowed upon their kind hosts. It was decided to make the worthy Germans a present of a carpet, such luxuries being unknown to the frugal household. The young students laid it down at night after the family had gone to bed, but in the morning they were somewhat dismayed to find that the housewife could not be induced to step upon it. It required much argument to persuade her that the gift was meant for service, and it is likely that she would have abandoned her sitting-room while the carpet remained had not the donors insisted upon its use.

From his strain of German blood, perhaps, Bayard Taylor took more kindly to German life and thought than to any other. As he journeyed through the old picturesque towns, and wandered by the banks of the rivers, that had been famous since the times of Cæsar, he felt fall upon him the spirit of romance and mystery which seemed ever to brood over this land. He loved the people with their simple lives and solid intellectuality, and the legends and stories which clustered around their mountains and forests seemed to come to him like reviving memories of his own experience.

In the spirit of the old wandering bards he made his way through the sombre forests of the Hartz Mountains, and rejoiced like a young viking that he was able to ascend the Brocken in a raging storm.

All this time he was studying hard at German, preparing himself unknowingly for one of the great labors of his life. All this time, too, he was pressed for money. Travelling through Austria, crossing the Alps, visiting Italy, he found it always necessary to earn his daily bread. Sometimes he lived on six cents a day, and thought bread, and figs, and roasted chestnuts sumptuous fare. Once his shoes were so worn that they would not bear him another step, and he had to wait five days at an inn until a letter came with remittances from his publishers. Again he was so poor that he could take only deck passage on the voyage from Italy to France, and made the trip with his knapsack for a pillow, drenched to the skin and suffering horribly from seasickness.

But he accomplished his desire. When he returned home, after a two-years' absence, he found that his letters in the *New York Tribune* and other papers had won him sufficient fame to warrant their publication in book form. N. P. Willis, the never-failing friend of young authors, wrote a preface, and *Views Afoot* came out under as pleasant auspices as could be desired, and passed through six editions in one year.

The appearance of this book marked the beginning of that larger literary life to which Bayard Taylor aspired and which he attained. A great and immediate satisfaction came to him now through friendly letters from older writers, who gave the book generous praise and welcomed the young author cordially to their guild. During a visit to Boston made at this time Bayard Taylor was overwhelmed with delight at the kind reception given him by Longfellow and the other men whose friendship he had always longed for. The publication of his poem, "The Norseman's Ride," a few months later brought him a letter from Whittier, and marked the beginning of a friendship which lasted through life.

After an unsuccessful attempt at publishing a county newspaper in Pennsylvania, Bayard Taylor decided to try his fortunes in New York.

The city still retained many of the characteristics which made it a congenial home for literary workers in the days when Irving and Bryant,

Cooper, Halleck, and Drake were winning their fame.

[pg 95] The wealth and fashion still centred in the lower part of the town in broad, old-fashioned streets, whose houses were noted alike for their culture and hospitality.

New York then, as now, led the newspaper work of the country, and the younger writers were glad of positions on the dailies and weeklies. Bayard Taylor obtained a position on *The Literary World* at five dollars a week, and earned four dollars more by teaching in a girls' school. But he had already won a fair start in the literary field, and his friends looked on his success as assured. Their faith was realized; within a year Taylor was advanced to a position of twelve dollars a week on the *Tribune*, while writing articles for magazines.

From this time Bayard Taylor's literary life divides itself into that of traveller, newspaper writer, lecturer, novelist and poet.

[pg 96] Scarcely had he won his place in New York when he was sent by the *Tribune* to California to visit the newly discovered gold regions and report the life of the mining camps. Bayard Taylor was the prince of those literary free lances, the newspaper correspondents, who start on adventures as wild and full of danger as those encountered by knight or soldier of old. Civilization owes much to these men, always ready and full of pluck, and who count danger of small moment in pursuit of duty.

Bayard Taylor sailed from New York for California by way of the Isthmus of Panama, taking from June till August for the journey. He immediately threw his lot in with the miners, sharing their dangers and privations, and became the poet of the California emigration as Bret Harte afterward became its historian. He slept often on the ground with his saddle for a pillow, toiled through ravines, traversed forests, encountered Indians and wild beasts. In Mexico, on his return, he had an adventure with robbers.

[pg 97] But he had caught the spirit of that marvellous outburst of energy which in a few years transformed the thinly inhabited Pacific slope into a region of towns and cities, whose aggregated wealth was almost beyond credence. The record of what he saw, published under the title *Eldorado; or, Adventures in the Path of Empire*, was a picturesque and valuable contribution to the literature of the gold discovery.

The next year found him again upon his travels. This time he fulfilled an old dream by visiting the Orient. His excellence as a reporter of things comes from his power to merge his own personality in that of the people he met. As soon as he entered a foreign land he ceased to be Bayard Taylor, American traveller, and became Arab, Bedouin, or Turk, as the case might be.

[pg 98] On the Nile it seemed he must have lived always in Egypt, and he was served by his boatmen with peculiar reverence, as if they recognized in him a higher genius of their own race. In Damascus he dressed in the Syrian costume and smoked his pipe sitting cross-legged upon the roof-top. In Constantinople he wore even the Arab burnouse and turban, and was addressed in Turkish when he went to his bankers for money. At another time he was denounced as an infidel by an Arab who saw him drinking water on a fast-day. He himself rejoiced in the strange Oriental life, whose customs and habits of thought appealed to him so strongly. He called himself a worshipper of the sun, and says that standing in an Eastern garden of flowers he took off his hat to the god of day like a veritable Parsee. In India he became in spirit a Hindoo, and visited temples and shrines like a devotee. Still loyal to the mountain-tops, he climbed the highest point of the Himalayas accessible in the winter season, and drank in the solemn and majestic beauty of that region of mystery.

Under orders from the *Tribune*, he crossed Asia overland and joined the United States squadron at Shanghai, where Commodore Perry gave him the post of master's mate that he might witness the opening of the ports of Japan to the commerce of the world. Finally he sailed from China for New York by way of Cape Horn, reaching home two years and six months after his departure.

[pg 99] Three years later he was again on his wanderings. After a short visit in Germany he started for the north and travelled through Sweden, Denmark, and Lapland. He travelled hundreds of miles by reindeer, penetrating far within the Arctic Circle that he might enjoy that wonder of the north, "a day without a sun." A year after, he was in Greece breakfasting on "honey from Hymettus," and began learning Greek that he might better appreciate the marvels of this land of beauty. In the same year he visited Russia, returning to America in 1858.

After this, travelling occupied less of his time, although he again made a tour of Europe, and as a representative of the *Tribune* visited Iceland during the celebration of its millennial anniversary.

Iceland, the land of old memories and songs, impressed him strongly. This little country, which had preserved its national life for a thousand years, had still the vigor of the old viking days, when its sailors ventured without compass or chart to the coasts of America, and its poets sung its heroes' praises in verse that has become classic.

[pg 100] Taylor's reputation had preceded him here, and he was called the "American Skald" by the enthusiastic people.

As a lecturer, Bayard Taylor's fame was based upon the widely diffused reports of his travels which had appeared for years in newspapers, magazines, and book form. He published thousands of letters and eleven books of travel, the most famous of these volumes including *A Journey to Central Africa; The Lands of the Saracen; A Visit to India, China, and Japan; Northern Travel*, and *Travels in Greece and Russia*.

[pg 101] Through these publications he had won a name which, in the intervals of life at home made him the most popular lecturer of his day. He delivered hundreds of lectures on his travels, his enormous capacity for hard work making this possible even in the midst of serious literary tasks. Moreover, he had been building up gradually a reputation as a novelist and poet. His first novel, *Hannah Thurston*, is an American story of manners, the characters of which are drawn from Pennsylvania life, although the scene is supposed to be laid elsewhere. This novel was successful in America, and appeared in German, Russian, and Swedish translations; but it is doubtful whether its fame was not due more to the author's popularity than to its own merit. The second novel, *John Godfrey's Fortunes*, was much more individual and characteristic. In this were incorporated certain experiences of the author's own literary life. There is a certain vitality about these reminiscences that will always make them agreeable reading. *The Story of Kennett*, the third novel, is the most interesting of all. It is largely a history of the village life of the author's boyhood, into which are woven many incidents of local history. The tricks which the Quaker boys play upon their sober-minded father and the account of the runaway match were family history, while the descriptions

[pg 102] of scenery, the thousand memories of boyhood, and the tender handling of the subject all reveal the loyal affection in which the author held the past. One other novel, *Joseph and His Friend*, with some short stories contributed to *The Atlantic* and other magazines, sums up Bayard Taylor's work in fiction. While these novels were successful in their day, they are perhaps the least valuable of Bayard Taylor's work. His newspaper letters and his books of travel alike are full of that personal charm which made the author one of the most popular men of his day. They have, besides delightful touches of color and light, a ready *camaraderie*, and a genuine sentiment.

But neither in fiction nor tales of travel did the author aspire to the greatest achievement of his life. His boyish dream had been to be a poet, a younger brother of Goethe, and Shakespeare, and his best work is unquestionably his verse. Unequal though he is, yet Bayard Taylor possessed the true poet's gift. His chief fault lay in over-production. He wrote volume after volume of poetry which brought him reputation but not critical approval. His beauty-loving nature seemed to find poetry everywhere, and to demand its expression.

[pg 103] Much of his verse passes before the eye like sunlit pictures. This is especially true of the *Poems of the Orient*. Here the traveller, charmed by his surroundings, has turned poet, and plucked from rose-garden and riverside a glowing wreath of song. The very breath of the Orient flows through these poems, which express a genuine inspiration. "A Boat Song of the Nile;" "An Arab Warrior;" "Kilimandjars; or, a Russian Boy;" "Desert Hymn to the Sun;" "The Arab to the Palm," and "A Bedouin's Love-Song" indicate by their titles the progress of the poet's pilgrimage through the lands whose romantic history had haunted his youth. In these and other ballads Bayard Taylor showed the temper of the genuine lyricist. Among the shorter poems "The Song of the Camp" has won a place in the heart of the people.

[pg 104] The longer poems embrace pastorals, tragedies, masques, and a drama. All show careful workmanship, for Bayard Taylor always approached his art with a feeling that it demanded the best that he could give. Many descriptive passages unvaryingly of great beauty are found scattered through this work, which is pure and lofty in conception. Among these longer poems "The Masque of the Gods" and "Lars, a Pastoral of Norway," are perhaps the most successful.

One of the great ambitions of Bayard Taylor was achieved in his translation of Goethe's *Faust*. To do this work he had for years studied every available source of knowledge. His familiarity with German was thorough, his sympathy with German thought complete. No man of his generation was so well equipped for the work, and he succeeded in producing a poetic, faithful, and spirited translation of the great original.

One other ambition, the writing of the life of Goethe, he was not allowed to accomplish. When apparently only in the midst of his career he died suddenly at Berlin, whither he had been sent as Ambassador from the United States. His early death was felt to be a serious loss to American letters, as his accomplished work seemed to promise still higher achievement.

[pg 105] Bayard Taylor's American home was for many years at Kennett Square, where he built a charming manor-house, noted for its hospitality as well as for the distinguished guests who visited it. He had a social and loving nature, and easily won and kept the friendships which he so dearly cherished. The poets Stoddard and Stedman were his lifelong intimates. His boyish desire to be admitted to the circle of men of genius found its realization in the place he held in the hearts of the greatest men of his day.

His other and higher youthful hope—to perform nobly his part in life—was also fulfilled. No man could have been freer from selfish and mean undertakings than was he. Whether in his literary work or in his diplomatic service he was ever guided by one principle—that life and its gifts were to be put to their best uses, and that the measure of noble purpose was the measure of the man.

CHAPTER VIII

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

1837-

Perhaps the most faithful story of a boy's life ever written is given to us in *A Boy's Town*, a transcription of the home history of William Dean Howells, from his third to his eleventh year. The "Boy's Town" was Hamilton, O., whither the family had removed from Martin's Ferry, the birthplace of our author, and this picture of a Western town at that period has thus a unique value.

[pg 107] The greatest charm of this book is found in the utter absence of anything like an effort at story-telling proper. There are no hair-breadth escapes and few adventures, but one feels throughout the genuineness of this revelation of a boy's hopes and fears and ambitions. The narrative is in the impersonal form, and yet there is a fascinating *camaraderie* at once established between author and reader. "When I was a child" is the note that sounds throughout, and this magic suggestion colors the story with that reality which children love far beyond anything else.

These child pictures show us the home-life and the heart-life of the writer as nothing else could. The family belonged to the well-to-do portion of the community, the father being perhaps better read than most of his neighbors. Both father and mother were wise in the best sense for their children's good. Of fun and frolic there was plenty, but there was also the firm counsel to check all selfishness and mean ambitions, to nourish regard for others, and above all to teach right doing because it was right. Reading between the lines we see that this father and mother, with their high conceptions of duty and their constant example of earnest living must have moulded the character of their children on broad and noble lines.

[pg 108] There is a delightful little confession of how the boy was once somewhat ashamed of his father, because in the paper which he edited he opposed the Mexican War. The leading people of Hamilton were in favor of the war and the children took sides in the issue. General Taylor, the hero of the hour, was the hero of the larger portion of the Hamilton boys, and Howells keenly felt the bitterness of unpopularity. But a little later he appreciated his father's bravery in battling day after day for a principle, though it made his paper unpopular and affected his business interests. When General Taylor was nominated for President, the paper strongly opposed his

candidacy, because of his well-known sympathy with the cause of slavery. To favor the anti-slavery cause meant often to lose one's friends and position, yet the little paper became the organ of an anti-slavery crusade. Long before election day Howells had ceased to be ashamed of his father, and had come to admire his stalwart independence and his unselfish heroism in fighting for what he considered right. Such an example as this made home counsels a living creed and wrought in the children of the family a desire to bend life to high uses.

[pg 109] About this time Howells first heard the *Biglow Papers*, which his father read aloud as they came out in the Boston paper, and the famous Hosea became an intimate in the family, and there seems after this never to have been even the slightest distrust of his father's judgment.

[pg 110] From these pictures of home life we see the Hamilton of Howells's childhood as the typical Western town of the day which had not yet quite outgrown the period of frontier life. All around the town were log cabins, which served as the outposts of the unbroken forests beyond, and it was to the forests that the boys looked for their inspiration when thinking of the ambitions of later life. They were all determined to be—if not real Indians, since nature had so cruelly denied that—yet at least Indian hunters and slayers. Periodically, there were companies formed for the extermination of the red man, and the highest joy was to go off by themselves for a day's camping in the woods, and try to forget that they were the children of uninteresting, civilized white people. Howells began school when he was still very young, attending first a small private school, and later the public school of the town. Nothing occurred to him in his school-life of such importance as the amazing discovery that he could make poetry by rule. He found this out one day as he was fumbling the leaves of his grammar, and he accepted the statement that poetry could be made by rule just as solemnly and unequivocally as he would have accepted a similar statement in regard to magic. From this time he never ceased until he had mastered the rules of prosody—a word which, in itself, must have sounded like an incantation. He wrote verses with the most indefatigable zeal, and he had the uncommon joy of being able to see them in print, for standing upon a stool in his father's printing office, he set up the type himself, and, no doubt, watched the presses afterward with all the responsibility of ownership. Verse-making, which had often been tried before, now assumed a greater interest, and before very long the young author was busy upon a tragedy founded upon the stern discipline of one of his school-teachers. [pg 111] The teacher was to be the tyrant against whom the boys were to revolt, much in the same way as Spartacus and the gladiators revolted against their Roman masters. The drama was finished, but never acted by the school-boy company selected for the parts. This, however, did not discourage the young author, who still continued writing poetry.

A part of the family education consisted in the father's reading aloud to the home circle in the evening. In this way Howells became acquainted with Moore's *Lalla Rookh*—which was the first poem he ever remembers. Dickens's *Christmas Stories*, Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, and some of the best English novels became familiar to him at the same time. The first books outside his school-books that he read himself were Goldsmith's *Histories of Greece and Rome*. A little later his father gave him *Don Quixote*, and one of his literary ventures was a romance founded upon the *Conquest of Granada* as related in the pages of Irving, and which he read over and over without tire.

[pg 112] In fact he was always reading, and from his very young boyhood he may be said to have been always writing; whatever other occupation or share of active duty became his, seems in his own mind to have been outside his real mission, which was that of writing. In this he persisted always, so that he may be said to have grown up into authorship.

[pg 113] Outside the home and school life were the never-ending and varied experiences of ordinary boy life. There were muster and election days, when the boys watched the soldiers drill with solemn joy, and straightway inaugurated military companies among themselves. There were Christmas holidays, which the boys celebrated, for some reason unknown to Eastern boys, with guns and pistols, firecrackers, and torpedoes. There were Easter-day, when they cracked their colored eggs together in a game of win and lose; and April fools' day; and the annual May party, when the girls took the lead and the boys were content to play a secondary part; and Fourth of July celebrated with processions and speeches and the usual noise. What would have seemed strange to a New England boy was the absence of any Thanksgiving Day, of which Howells did not even hear the name in childhood. Occasionally travelling shows and circuses came to Hamilton, and sometimes a theatre company, and at such a time the Howells children, owing to their father's newspaper connection, were fortunate in being provided with tickets that lasted throughout these short seasons of joy. Besides these amusements there were nutting and shooting in the forest, fishing in the Miami River, swimming in the canal and canal basins, and the summer and winter sports in due season, many of which held still that flavor of wildness which suggested the early frontier life.

[pg 114] When Howells was ten years old he left school and began to learn the printer's trade in his father's office, and not very long afterward the family removed to Dayton; *A Boy's Town* ends with an account of this removal, and a pathetic little picture of how homesick Howells became for the old home. So homesick indeed was he that there was nothing to do but let him return there for a visit, a remedy which cured him so effectually that he no sooner reached Hamilton than he started back for Dayton, possessed by a feeling even stronger than homesickness, and that was mother-sickness. At Dayton Howells and his elder brother helped with the new paper which their father had bought. They worked at the compositors' cases, and when it was sometimes necessary would rise early in the morning and help distribute the papers. Their education was carried on by their father in the evening, and he also superintended the reading in which the boys now indulged on a somewhat larger scale. One chief delight of the children at this period was the number of travelling theatre companies which visited Dayton; very often the best talent of the country was to be found among the strollers, and it was in this way that Howells became very well acquainted with the Shakespearean drama, and with old English comedy, as well as with the actors and actresses who had attained, or were destined to attain, an honorable celebrity. [pg 115] The Dayton home was a happy one, where the intellectual growth kept steady pace with the physical. But financially the paper was not a success, and the family was obliged to seek another home.

Howells and his father walked from Dayton to the new home, driving the cow and talking philosophy. This period of his life is preserved in Howells's charming book, *One Year in a Log Cabin*. It is a delightful transcription of the idyllic life of the woods. The little log cabin was almost as primitive as those built by the early settlers. The children helped the father cover the walls with newspapers and glaze the windows; the great open fireplace, where all the cooking was done and where the bread was baked in a Dutch oven set on the coals, was a new and delightful joy to them; so was the unbroken forest, around which still clustered memories of Indian warfare. At night these memories, mixed with the Indian tales which the boys read insatiably, made the bed-time hour one to be dreaded.

[pg 116] With true American indifference to circumstances the family life went on in the same grooves. The manner of earning the living was

different, but the study and reading continued, the father still acting as teacher. In his book, *My Literary Passions*, Howells has told us the books that charmed him above all others as a boy. These were Goldsmith's *History of Greece*, *Don Quixote*, and Irving's *Conquest of Granada*. As he read these books he was for the time being an Alcibiades or Don Quixote as the case might be. So powerful was his sympathy with all heroic deeds that in reading Irving he could never decide whether he were Moor or Spaniard. His boy friends—especially one who had worsted him in a school-boy battle—had infinite respect for his knowledge of the ancients and referred to him for information with a deference that must have been soothing. He says that later he rather liked the Romans better than the Greeks, because they were less civilized, and more, in fact, like boys.

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For the want of space a large part of the family library still remained packed in barrels, and rummaging in these one day Howells came upon the poems of Longfellow. It was his first introduction to that poet, who was thereafter associated with the happy memories of this forest home. A life so close to nature left its own mark upon mind and soul, and this is seen in that rare quality, the idealization of childhood, which runs through the pages of *One Year in a Log Cabin*.

This glimpse of frontier life seen through eyes still young, has a charm like that of Longfellow's reminiscent poems of youth, or Whittier's transcriptions of his boyhood, in which the perfume of childhood still lingers around the deeper experiences of the man.

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The log-cabin life gave place to newspaper work and another season in the printing office at Columbus. Between sixteen and seventeen a love for reading Shakespeare possessed Howells, and with a young friend, also given to verse making, he would spend afternoons in the country while they alternately read the tragedies and comedies of the great dramatist. And so, although his education was desultory, by the time he was twenty he was well read in the English classics, and had besides a good knowledge of American literature.

Before very long Howells became known as one of the cleverest young newspaper writers of the West. He also began to publish verses in the newspapers. A trip down the Mississippi to St. Louis gave him a new experience of life, which he embodied in a poem, *The Pilot's Story*, a picture out of the history of slave life. This poem was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in which other poems from time to time appeared. About this time Howells published a book of poems, in which were included the verses of a young poet friend, and very slowly he began to gain a reputation for good verse making.

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When Lincoln was nominated for President Howells was asked by a Columbus publishing house to write a life of the candidate. For this he received one hundred and sixty dollars, and he could conceive no better use for it than to enlarge his knowledge of the world. He accordingly made a trip to Montreal and Quebec, stopping, on his return, at Boston.

Here he became acquainted with James Russell Lowell, then editor of the *Atlantic*, with Oliver Wendell Holmes, and with other writers of note, who received the young author with kindness, and whose encouragement at that time was of the utmost value. In his twenty-fifth year Howells received from President Lincoln the appointment of United States Consul to Venice, where he lived for the next four years, making, in the meantime, trips to other places of interest, and familiarizing himself with Italian literature. The result of this experience is found in his charming book, *Venetian Life*, which was published in London in 1866, and in the volume, *Italian Journeys*, published in New York a year later. These two volumes mark the beginning of the serious work of Mr. Howells's life. Although only sketches of the every-day life of modern Italy, they are yet full of that peculiar quality which later was to stamp his fiction and give it a high place in American literature.

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Upon his return to America Howells lived for a short time in New York, and did work for the *Times*, the *Tribune*, and the *Nation*. But being offered the assistant editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he removed to Boston.

A pleasant summary of his experience as a resident of Cambridge is found in his book, *Suburban Sketches*.

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He began his career as a novelist in 1871, and assumed the editorship of the *Atlantic* a year later. Since then his works have succeeded each other rapidly, his fame growing steadily from year to year. While busy with his novels he has found time to produce two volumes of verse, which include his earlier poems and those written since. In these poems, many of which show the finest poetic feeling, we have a new view of the successful novelist. Here may be seen his early susceptibility to natural scenes, as well as the more emotional side of his character. Some of these earlier poems are full of that reminiscent charm in which the hope, the ideality, and the unaccountable sadness of youth shine out with tender grace. The later poems also are replete with that susceptibility to feeling and impressions which can find fit expression only in verse. All his poetry may, in fact, be said to be transcriptions of those moods of mind which come and go like day-dreams, and which yet show the author's mind in a clearer and truer light.

Some papers on Italian literature, the conduct of the Editor's Study in *Harper's Magazine*, and other miscellaneous work have run side by side with the preparation of Mr. Howells's novels. Out of the numberless stories told for the amusement of his children, he has collected a dozen or so under the title *Christmas Every Day and Other Stories*, and made a most charming contribution to juvenile literature.

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Howells's gift above all others is to take the ordinary occurrences of life and make them interesting. To him the commonplace appeals as a very large part of actual life, and he has found his inspiration in dealing with mankind at large rather than with unusual personalities or incidents. His theory is that character and experience are the result of growth, and of that slow growth which is built moment by moment and day by day. Human life thus running on from hour to hour presents to him a picture of the real struggles, conquests, or defeats of the soul in the common relations of life, and his long series of novels are but histories of the battles won or lost by people whose experiences are never extraordinary but only such as are met by the larger part of mankind. To him those rarer idealizations which appeal to the genius of Hawthorne or Poe are forced out of sight by the actual contact with the many thousands who march on monotonously day after day and yet whose experience sums up the moral achievements of the race.

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This series of novels began with the publication of *Their Wedding Journey* in 1871, the success of which determined Howells's career as a novelist. This delightful little ending to an old love story was followed by *A Chance Acquaintance*, in which were incorporated some charming impressions of Canadian travel. None of the succeeding works has been cast in quite so light a vein.

Throughout these character studies, which now number many volumes, there runs the earnest seriousness of the man who is in sympathy with the aspiration, and yet whose large charity can make him easily tolerate the defects of mankind.

Sometimes the novel treats of the experience of an individual and is the history of a commercial success, as in *The Rise of Silas Lapham*; or of an intellectual struggle, as in *The Minister's Charge*; or of a crime, as in *The Quality of Mercy*; very many of the later works deal with those social questions which are now under the consideration of every earnest thinker.

In his *A Traveller from Altruria* Howells has treated one of these questions with unsparing hand. It is in these and similar books that one sees the Americanism of the author and is made to feel his interest in the highest welfare of his native land.

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Mr. Howells has in *The Mouse Trap and Other Farces* given us some delightfully humorous situations treated with all the delicacy of his art. In his *Modern Italian Poets* he has embodied the experience of twenty years' study of a century of Italian poetry, in a series of essays showing remarkable appreciation and insight. Some miscellaneous work in lighter vein shows still the genial fellowship which Howells always establishes between himself and his readers. With the exception of the different periods passed abroad, Mr. Howells has spent his life since leaving Ohio in Boston and New York, in which latter city he now lives.

The generous nature of the man is shown in his wide intercourse with his fellow-men in all grades of social life. His studies of human nature reflect always his own point of view, from which he sees man struggling ever with difficulties and discouragements, yet pressing patiently on toward higher levels.

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CHAPTER IX

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

1849-

In the year 1866, a little girl left her birthplace in Manchester, England, and came to America to live. Her new home was in Eastern Tennessee, and thus her first impressions of America were connected with great mountain ridges reaching up to the sky, miles and miles of unbroken forest, and an unending succession of wild flowers which decked wood and stream with ever-changing beauty. These surroundings made the child supremely happy, for all her life she had longed for great out of door spaces to breathe in, great trees to play under, and flowers so plentiful that one could not count them; so the new home seemed enchanting.

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Manchester, where her life had been theretofore spent, was one of the great manufacturing cities of England, and all day long the smoke from the tall factory chimneys hung over it and shut out the sky, while the streets were given up mainly to the dwellings of the operatives, or buildings connected with the commercial life of the place. Here and there, however, were pleasant little squares and streets, where the people of the better class lived, and one of these squares had been the home of the child, Frances Hodgson, who, until she came to America, tried very hard to "make believe" that the trees in an English square represented a forest, that the clouds of smoke were real clouds, and that the rose-bushes, lilacs, and snowdrops of the garden opened into vistas of tropical bloom.

Many years after, when this little girl had become a woman and had children of her own, she wrote a book in which she put many pictures of this Manchester life; both the real world and the dream world, in which, like all imaginative children, she often wandered. And here we learn that, as far back as she could remember, she was given to making up stories—and, with the assistance of her dolls, acting them in the privacy of the nursery—about everything that she heard or read, or that in any way touched her own life.

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This naturally led to writing the stories down as soon as her little fingers could manage it, and she seems to have had a very droll time in trying to procure the paper so necessary for the work. Old exercise, or account books, which still held a few pages untouched by butchers' and grocers' accounts, were her principal resource, and it was in one of these she inscribed her first poem while she was still such a little child that even the memory of what it was about soon passed away from her. Another poem, written on a Sunday evening when the family were at church, she remembers better. It was a stormy evening, and she started out to write a sad poem about loneliness, but her melancholy gave out at the end of the first stanza, and with childish adaptability she forthwith turned it into a funny poem. It had enough cleverness to attract some praise from her mother upon her return from church, which so delighted the young author that it laid a little seed of desire to do still better things; it is possible that it was this very little seed which grew and bloomed at last into some very beautiful flowers of literature. At any rate, from this time the writing of stories went on quite indefatigably; whether they won praise or blame the practice must at least have been useful in developing a power for sustained effort and a persistence under difficulties, for outside the lack of paper there was also the harsh and biting criticism of two brothers, whose souls were devoted to cricket and who thought themselves quite ill-used in having a "romantic" sister.

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But in her younger sister, Edith, and in a few schoolmates, Frances found an audience which would listen with delight to her tales, whether written or told, from day to day in the intervals of lessons. It is probable that these stories showed little if any literary promise. They were in the main tales of romantic lovers and sweet-hearts, who bore a suspicious resemblance to the heroes and heroines of Scott, Dickens, and the novels published in *Blackwood's Magazine*; but their composition made an agreeable occupation for her active little mind, and rendered her happy, and this was a great deal.

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After their removal to America, which was brought about by the desire of the mother to better the fortunes of her fatherless boys and girls, Frances continued her story-telling and story-writing, having still the sympathetic sister as auditor. And one day when the two girls were conjuring plans for helping the family finances it suddenly occurred to the young author to write a story and submit it for publication.

But this was a formidable task, for Frances was absolutely sure that no editor would accept a story not written on foolscap paper, and this she neither possessed nor had the means of getting. Where could she obtain the money to buy this paper? The sisters pondered and pondered this difficult problem, and at last they hit upon a joyful solution. Two little mulatto girls whom they knew were making money

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by gathering and selling the wild grapes which grew in abundance in the neighboring woods. Negotiations were entered upon with these children, who promised to sell also the grapes which Frances and her sister might gather. In this way money was obtained for the foolscap paper, and as that had been the most difficult part of the business the story was soon dispatched to the magazine, with a modest note to the editor telling him that the author's "object" was "remuneration."

This venture was not entirely successful, the editor of the magazine being willing to accept the story but not to pay for it. Frances therefore asked for it back, and having still enough grape money left to purchase the needed stamps, she promptly dispatched it to another editor. The story was a little romance of English life, some of its scenes having actually been written while the author still lived in Manchester, and the new editor had some doubts as to its originality. He therefore laid a little trap for the young girl, and wrote to say he would reserve judgment until he could see another story from the same hand. Frances replied with a new story that was American in character, and this versatility seemed to convince the editor that he had really discovered a new story-writer; he sent thirty-five dollars for the two tales, and the girl's life as a fully fledged author began.

Other stories appeared rapidly during the next few years, and the reputation thus gained was greatly increased by the publication in 1872 of *Surly Tim's Trouble*, a dialect story. A year later the young author married and made a trip to Europe. Perhaps the home of her childhood thus revisited brought back early scenes with new force; perhaps the memory of them had always lingered in the impressionable heart, at any rate the first great success of the author, now Frances Hodgson Burnett, came with the publication of *That Lass O' Lowrie's*, a story of Lancashire life. Years before, while still a little girl "making believe" that her real world was all that her dream world appeared, she had noticed, with a child's sharp intuitions, a certain factory girl who used sometimes to wander into the square, and who somehow seemed different from her companions. Although this girl was never "made into a story" yet her personality lingered in the child's consciousness, and in later years stepped out from the land of shadowy memories and became the Joan Lowrie of the book. She was changed from a millhand to a collier's daughter, and the scene was laid in one of the English coal districts. It was the love story, pure and sweet, of this uneducated girl of the mines and the young overseer, whose position both as regards birth and education was far above her own. And it was told with such sympathy, such directness and force, that it appealed to its audience as a real story of actual life. The author had indeed long since ceased to "make up stories." Her imagination had become instead a magic lamp revealing to her the possibilities and experiences of the lives that touched her own. Sometimes a little glimpse would suffice to show her what lay behind, sometimes two or three scenes would arrange themselves so vividly as to indicate the whole drama, but always at the bottom of the story could be seen a foundation of truth.

In *That Lass O' Lowrie's* the colliers speak that Lancashire dialect which Mrs. Burnett had learned surreptitiously as a child, either by listening to the factory people as they passed the gates of the square in which she lived, or by stolen visits to their homes in the back streets. The dialect and its idioms had a fascination for her; she and some of her little friends learned it with much greater enthusiasm than they devoted to their French, and when no one was listening they held long conversations and talked as the "back street" people talked. It was an accomplishment that served well in after years, and Mrs. Burnett's power for the picturesque reproduction of scenes unfamiliar to her readers is no doubt due in some measure to her self-training of ear and eye in her old life at Manchester.

Another interesting story of English life is *Haworth's*, in which the hero is one of those dreamers of dreams, lucky enough to realize his ambitions. One or two of the characters in this book give Mrs. Burnett an opportunity to indulge in that delightful sense of humor which lights nearly all her work, and which shows her keenly alive to the comedy of life.

Perhaps her touch is nowhere more faithful than in her story of American life, *Through One Administration*. And in *A Fair Barbarian* she shows an equal power of picturing the contrasts of American and English life.

In her charming juvenile book, *Piccino*, Mrs. Burnett tells how *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, her first phenomenally successful child's book, "grew." It was really a life study of her own little boy, whose sweet and merry disposition, thoughtful sayings, and infantile wisdom made him the delight of the house. His odd little views of American and English life suggested to her the idea of a story in which a little American boy should be brought into contact with aristocratic English life. How well she succeeded is evinced by the enormous circulation of the book, which went through edition after edition, and by its adaptation into one of the most successful dramas of childhood.

Giovanni and the Others is in itself a collection of beautiful stories of childhood, with whose dreams and hopes Mrs. Burnett is always in such loving sympathy.

An ideal child's book is *Sara Crewe*, the story of a little orphan girl whose miseries are turned to joys by fairy fortune. This small heroine is one of the most fascinating of the author's productions. She is so real, so pathetic, so much a simple, ordinary little girl, perplexed with the troubles that often visit the young, yet bearing through it all that infinite child faith in goodness and love.

Little St. Elizabeth, *Piccino*, and *Two Little Pilgrims' Progress* are also interpretations of the child mind. In all her work it is this power of sympathy which moves her to the highest efforts of her art. In that charming autobiography of her childhood, *The One I Knew the Best of All*, the reader is struck by this note of sympathy which sounds in her earliest recollections. Whether at play in the garden, or perched upon the shelf of the old "secrétaire," reading tales out of *Blackwood*, or listening to the factory people in the back streets, or weaving romances for the amusement of her little friends, the child was always for the moment intensely alive to the situations she had created. She lived thus in many worlds, moved among many scenes strange to her own experience, and learned early that one of the best things in life is to forget one's own self in the experiences of others.

This power of self-forgetting, this art of wandering through realms of thought unknown to actual touch, are the chief factors that make Mrs. Burnett's productions living characters, whose interests fascinate, and whose fortunes become for the time our own.

Mrs. Burnett calls Washington her home, but she also lives much abroad. One great sorrow of her life was the loss of her son Lionel, the older brother of Little Lord Fauntleroy. Perhaps it is this which has touched some of her work for children with a subtle sadness. This has found its best expression, however, in the desire to give practical aid to the many boys whose fortunes have been less fair than those of her own sons, and who owe much to her generous sympathy with their need. It is a pleasant thought that this dark shadow should have turned into the sunshine which has lighted many young lives that without it would have been shadowed too.

CHAPTER X

THE SOUTHERN STORY WRITERS

One of the functions of literature is to record the story of the home life of a nation. In the United States this life has developed under very varied conditions, and the stories of East, West, and South all differ widely from one another. New England society was made up of different elements from those which composed that of the Southern plantation or the Western mining camp; yet the picture of each community is interesting and valuable.

Among the most interesting of these stories of social conditions are those relating to the South. Here many different pictures are presented, and American literature has been fortunate in being able to have them transcribed at first hand.

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This has been done by the men and women whose memories go back beyond the war, and yet who were still young when the South began that great effort of rebuilding, which has made its recent history one of such splendid achievement. These stories of the South before and immediately after the war could only have been written by Southerners. Every word and incident, every scene and finished picture, is full of that child love which only the native born can feel; the same love which sacrificed all in the dark days of the war, and which still cherishes with passionate devotion the memory of the past.

Under such inspiration the literature of the new South comes to us full of tender meaning. Its writers give to us the recollections that are most sacred to them, and we have in them not only a picture of Southern life, but a revelation of the heart. All the broken, childish memories of plantation songs, folk-lore tales, and negro superstitions that floated in the mind for years are here crystallized into form, and make a record of vital and enduring value.

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Much of this literature has been thrown into the form of the short story, and among the most delightful of these writers is Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnston, the historian of the "crackers," or poor white people of middle Georgia. Colonel Johnston was born in Hancock County, Ga., in 1822. His father was a large planter, and his earliest years were spent upon the farm. This life differed in many ways from the usual life of the plantations. Usually the poor whites of the South were looked down upon and despised because of their ignorance, poverty, and shiftlessness. But in the regions of middle Georgia the conditions were different. The poor white was still ignorant and shiftless, he was often lazy, and he was never very successful, but in some way he managed to make himself respected. The life of the planters here was very simple. Their children played with those of their poor neighbors and negroes, and in this happy community of interests young Richard spent the most impressionable years of his life. His intimates were the little black and white children, who, though different in birth, knew as well as he the secrets of wood and stream. With them he set traps, fished, played games, went to mill, and shared his holiday joys and presents. When some wandering master would open a school for a few weeks in the neighborhood, Richard would attend hand in hand with the little "crackers." Together they struggled over reading, writing, and arithmetic, and when the teacher was surly and unjust, as often happened, they endured together his harshness and cruelty.

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In this atmosphere the boy learned to know the fine elements of character that often lay beneath the rough exterior of his poorer neighbors; here too he imbibed that sweet and broad humanity which breathes through all his work and makes it seem the presentation of a nature exceptionally noble.

In his series of stories called *The Dukesborough Tales*, Colonel Johnston has described one of those country temples of learning so familiar to his childhood. *The Goose Pond School* is a memory of one of those ill-conditioned creatures who, under the pretence of teaching, made miserable the lives of the ten or twenty children committed to their charge. Happily this specimen of instructor was rare, even in Colonel Johnston's youth, when corporal punishment was thought so essential to good discipline. This story, containing so much tenderness and sympathy, is a revelation of the heart of the boy who treasured it so many years. The picture of the little hero struggling with injustice, disgraced in the sight of his mates, and yet enduring it all bravely for the sake of his mother, shines out in the bright lights which the author loves to throw upon the character of the humble "cracker."

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Another reminiscence of youth is found in *The Early Majority of Mr. Thomas Watts*, the scene of which is laid in Powelton, whither Colonel Johnston's family had removed. Powelton had an excellent school conducted by a staff of New England teachers. Boys and girls sat together and learned the same lessons, and Richard Malcolm Johnston was one of the most promising pupils, and began here the serious study for that ripe scholarship which he attained. The types of character which abounded in Powelton have passed into literature, *The Dukesborough Tales* being but so many transcriptions of the different personalities found in this little hamlet of one hundred and fifty inhabitants. It is evident that the boy who was studying mathematics and Latin so diligently, who was first on the playground and the leader of all boyish escapades, was beyond this a student of his fellow-beings. *The Dukesborough Tales* could only have been written by one familiar from childhood with the originals. For beside the art which gives them a high place in literary composition, they are full of the flavor of the soil.

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From Powelton Johnston went to college, and after he was graduated studied law. For ten years he practised in the circuits of northern and middle Georgia, travelling from court to court, much in the same way that the circuit preachers of the West discharged their duties. It was an experience full of charm for the young lawyer who always found human nature so interesting. Many funny incidents relieved the monotony of the law business, while constant companionship with the country people made a valuable study for their future historian. The circuit lawyer, like the circuit rider, has now passed away; but his picturesque figure is preserved in the records of Colonel Johnston's memory, and his likeness, traced amid his unique surroundings, has found a permanent place in our literature.

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In 1851, in his thirtieth year, Colonel Johnston accepted the professorship of *belles lettres* in the State University of Maryland. Four years later he started a boys' school at his plantation, where he endeavored to put in practice certain ideas which he held of broader education. He was over fifty years old when he began writing those stories of Georgia life which have made him one of the leading writers of the South.

But his whole life had been really an education for this work. He had had a soldier's training in the field of fiction—the practical experience, and the hand to hand touch with the life he described. All his characters are genuine. He lived with them as boy and man, and he knew their hearts as only such a close companion could. This absolute fidelity to nature, combined with the finest artistic perception, makes of these stories *genre* pictures of rare value. They are, moreover, touched by that homely love which shows the artist native born.

Almost with the first presentation of this life Colonel Johnston became famous. His stories succeeded each other rapidly, and the several collections of them have an assured place. *The Dukesborough Tales; Mr. Absalom Billingsbee and Other Georgia Folk; Two Gray Tourists*, and others of the series alike illustrate the author's happy gift for producing unique and picturesque character studies.

Besides his work in fiction, Colonel Johnston has written, in conjunction with a friend, a history of English literature; he is also the author of a life of Alexander Stephens, a biography of great value. His genial personality pervades all his work, and makes the kindly humor, the generous heartiness, and the exquisite sympathy but a reflection of his own rare nature.

Among the children who walked the streets of New Orleans immediately after the war, and noted the changes that were rapidly transforming the old city, was one bright-eyed girl who was destined to become one of its most interesting historians. Born of mixed Irish and Southern blood, she had inherited from both races the qualities that go to make up the story-teller. The everyday, yet constantly changing scenes of her childhood were picturesque and wonderfully interesting, for New Orleans, above all others, was the city of contrasts.

In the French quarters still dwelt the aristocratic Creole families, descendants of the original settlers, who had retained for generations the traditions of the French race. In the business portion could be seen the typical Irish and Yankee face mingling with the Southern American. Along the wharves and in the market the Italian emigrants vended their wares, and everywhere swarmed the negro, the birthright of the old city, since the beginning of slavery.

Long after the girl had reached womanhood, the recollections of home and street and school still remained vivid, and ever more and more they began to weave stories in her mind. At first she was hardly conscious of this, it seemed so much like the old pictures of her childhood which had come and gone at will; but by and by the characters in the stories began to say and do things quite independently, as if they were real people, and at last, because they seemed to insist upon it, they were written down.

They were none of them exactly true stories, being nearly all made up of different scenes fitted in together, but they were exact pictures of the life of New Orleans as the author had seen it, and in this they had a value all their own.

Lying close beside these impressions were others of maturer years, spent in the country districts of Arkansas, among those village types which are as curious and interesting in their way as the typical New England villagers. And presently, these unique personalities stepped out from the shadowy fields of memory, and also began weaving stories about themselves. As in the case of the others, they were not exactly true stories, yet they were all things that actually happened, or might have happened, in the lives of the Arkansas country folk, and they verified the old adage that no life can really be, or seem to be, humdrum, if but the proper observer appears to record it.

It was inevitable that these stories should also be written down, and gradually they began to appear in the different periodicals. They were well liked, and by the time they had grown into bulk for a volume, their author, Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart, had won a name as one of the most interesting local historians of the South.

The stories which deal with the street scenes of New Orleans and with old plantation life are full of color and picturesque effect, and they are all vividly true to life.

Whether Mrs. Stuart is describing an Italian fruit vender's booth, as in *Camelia Riccardo*, or the little bare hut of an old negro, as in *Duke's Christmas*, each touch is faithful to the life; there is, moreover, in the tales of negro life that same subtle blending of humor and pathos which characterizes the race itself, and makes of the little sketches genuine life history.

A *Golden Wedding*, a story of a man and his wife who were separated before the war and only re-united in old age, is one of those