

RELATION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

TO

AMERICAN NATIONALITY.

BY

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Introductory.

America's total contribution to the world's literature when compared with that of many other nations, is both inferior in quality, and insignificant in amount. If American literature should claim our attention through its intrinsic literary value only, the proportion of time which it justly demand from us would be much smaller than it is.

It is not, therefore, simply for the purpose of becoming acquainted with particular authors that we now take up the study of American literature; it is rather for the purpose of studying the relation which that literature bears to our national life.

American literature does not mean merely the literature of the United States, produced since the adoption of the Constitution; it is far older than our national life. In its origin, it was not the voice of a united people and independent nation, but the disconnected and stammering utterances of a straggling line of English colonies, fighting for a foothold along the coast of an inhospitable land.

Of course, the literature is now and has been for more than a century, the product of a politically independent nation. Our intellectual dependence upon England has likewise gradually lessened, and for more than a century we have been moving toward self confidence and independence in literary methods and thought.

Our literature made its first feeble beginnings in a most fortunate time, when, as says Tyler:- "The firmament of English literature was all ablaze with the light of her full

orbed and most dazzling writers, the wits, the dramatists, scholars, orators, singers, philosophers, who formed that incomparable group of men gathered in London during the earlier years of the seventeenth century." When Jamestown was settled in 1607, Spenser had been dead only eight years; Shakespeare was at the height of his powers; Raleigh, a prisoner in the tower of London was engaged on his "History of the World", and Bacon had just commenced his marvelous work, "The Novum Organum".

Our political history is the story of the making of a united and independent nation out of a number of scattered and disconnected colonies. It tells us of the planting and growth of these colonies, of their separate life and interests, of their petty jealousies and distrust; it shows us the focus that brought them nearer together and drove them to concerted action; it relates their united resistance to English misrule, their attempt at a confederation of semi-independent states and the final establishment of a federal government. And in all the account, we are pointed to one continuous and leading motive of our national history,- a progress from diversity toward national unity,- a unity which finds expression in our country's motto.

It is not from history alone, however, that we draw our knowledge of the growth and development of our nation. History merely furnishes us the bare, uncolored facts which, of themselves, however true, have but little power to move us. It is through the literature of the time that we are brought into sympathetic touch with the life, the emotions of the people, and are warmed into interest and enthusiasm.

It is through these written expressions of the lives of our fathers that we learn of their struggles to meet bravely the hardships that confronted them in their new land; to master their inclinations toward fanaticism, narrow-mindedness and superstition; and finally to throw off the yoke of the mother country and declare themselves a free and independent nation.

If we read our literature with this thought in mind we find it an intensely interesting study. But there is still another point from which it may be viewed, and that is the influence which American writers, through their works, have had upon American nationality. It is from this standpoint that the subject has been viewed in preparing the following pages.

In gaining the place which it now holds in the world, our country has passed through two great national periods: the period of the Revolution and the period immediately preceeding and including the Civil War.

I. REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

The literature of the Revolutionary period may be divided into three classes:- the literature of remonstrance, the literature of resistance and the literature of reconstruction.

1. The Literature of Remonstrance.

The year 1765 which witnessed the Stamp Act Congress, the first organized attempt of any magnitude to protest against the measures of Great Britain, marks the opening of

a new era. Viewed from a literary standpoint, the period is unimportant, save that it is distinguished by several orators of great brilliancy. The work of these orators has, in a large measure, been lost; but from the fragments that have been handed down to us, and from the testimony of contemporaries, we know that the speeches of these men must have been full of intensity and fire and that many of them deserve a place among the masterpieces of the world. Chief among the orators of this period are Samuel Adams, James Otis, Josiah Quincy and Patrick Henry.

(a) Samuel Adams (1722-1803) Of Samuel Adams, Hawthorne has said; "He, better than any one else, may be taken as a representative of the people of New England, and of the spirit with which they engaged in the Revolutionary struggle". He was a native of Boston, a member of the Harvard class of 1740, a prominent figure in the Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and two years the Governor of Massachusetts; but it is as an orator that he is connected with the American national spirit. Only fragments of his fiery oratory have come down to us, but tradition mentions him as a speaker to be compared favorably with Otis and Quincy. He was a zealous fighter for Colonial rights and his efforts were not in vain; for he did much toward rousing public sentiment and moving the people to concerted action against English misrule.

(b) James Otis (1725-1783) In 1761, after the act of parliament restricting all manufacturing in the colonies and all trade with other

nations and even with the plantations, a question arose in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts as to the legal right of parliament thus to bind the colonies. The investigation of this case which involved the very questions that were afterwards to be settled by arms, was conducted by the King's Attorney General, and for the colonies by James Otis, a young Massachusetts lawyer. John Adams, who was a witness of the trial, has given us this picture of the oratory of Otis on this occasion: "Otis was a flame of fire! With a promptitude of classical allusion, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him. American independence was then and there born. Every man of an unusually crowded audience appeared to me to go away, ready to take up arms against Writs of Assistance. James Otis, then and there, breathed into this nation the breath of life."

This is probably a more than fitting tribute to Otis' oratory. His speech was certainly a potent effort, but it cannot fairly be said that American independence was born on the utterance of Otis' flaming oration. Independence was a growth, not belonging alone to Otis, Adams, Quincy or Henry; not born at Boston, Philadelphia or Williamsburg. Nevertheless, a great force must have characterized the oratory of one who commanded wild applause wherever he appeared. In the reported speech by Otis, there is less rhetorical elaboration than in the series of

statements drawn up for publication; and his spoken sentences were strengthened by a personal enthusiasm of which we now know only by tradition.

(c) Josiah Quincy (1744-1775) Josiah Quincy completes the remarkable trio of orators that Massachusetts furnished for the patriotic cause. In spite of a slight frame and feeble health, Quincy had a voice of great compass and beauty. His oratory, while not so impetuous as that of Otis, is described as very pleasing and persuasive. His industry was wonderful. He successfully defended the soldiers implicated in the so-called "Boston Massacre", made numerous speeches in town meetings and public assemblies and wrote many stirring articles for the periodicals of his time. In 1774 he was sent on a private mission to England where he accomplished much as a zealous advocate of colonial rights. The writings of Quincy, as preserved in the biography written by his son, are full of force and fire as well as a lofty patriotism.

(d) Patrick Henry (1736-1799) The first voice to call attention back to Virginia was that of Patrick Henry. His fervid speech before the Virginia Assambley of 1765, met to discuss the passage of the Stamp Act, brought him at once into prominence as a remarkable orator. In the torrent of his eloquence he swept all before him. His greatest effort, however, was made in March 1775, in the Virginia Convention met to discuss the question whether the colony should be immediately put into a state of defence. Of this speech we have no verbatim

copy. The draft given us by his biographer contains only the substance of his address, but we know that the effect of his speech was electrical. In a rapid stream of eloquence he swept down all opposition. Pattee says: "His oratory abounded in figurative language, sometimes overwrought, even turgid, full of exaggerations and extravagant rhapsodies; yet when joined with the fire, the energy, the flashing eye, the impassioned voice of the orator, it was irresistible." Henry was strong in his convictions of right and wrong. He believed that loss of liberty, not death, was to be feared; and by his earnestness and energy he succeeded in carrying the doubtful and fearful of his hearers along with the hopeful and confident, in the single purpose to find liberty or death.

2. Literature of Resistance.

This period of American history, so full of romance and heroism, growing more and more dim and vague with every year, has furnished historians, poets, novelists and painters of a later period with a wonderful background for romantic songs and tales and pictures; but it produced no immediate important literary results. With every energy bent on the work of war, there was no force left for literary production. Only one writer need be mentioned and that is Thomas Paine.

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) Until 1774, Thomas Paine was a loyal subject of England and was even an official under the British government. Coming from England with a letter of introduction from

Franklin, he cast in his lot with Americans at a critical time and with the fullest sympathy with its most advanced sentiment. Of this sentiment he became the interpreter and advocate. Up to the battle of Lexington, and even later, the idea of independence had been repudiated by all but a few radicals. Independence was a project threatening the unity of the British empire. But Paine was concerned about the welfare of the people of America. Accordingly he wrote "Common Sense", a pamphlet whose motto might have been: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" It was an out and out call to withdraw from British citizenship and to set up a new government. The circulation and success of this pamphlet was immense. Hundreds of thousands read it. The fabric of loyalty which the people had been sincerely and fondly cherishing, tottered to the fall when this missile crashed against it. The pamphlet laid open before them their unspoken thoughts, their suppressed fears or their secret hopes, as the case might be. Of course the production was received with corresponding delight or dismay, but in either event, it was an effective appeal to abandon the position of remonstrants and suppliants to the throne, and to demand freedom as an independent people. Six months afterwards the response came in the Declaration of Independence. It is too much to say that this climatic pamphlet evolved that famous state paper; but we know that it was one of the great forces which fired the enthusiasm of the people and urged them on toward the final step which carried them from a condition of oppression out into the open air of freedom.

During the same year, Paine published a little periodical called "The Crisis". Its opening words, "These are the times that try men's souls", have become famous. Though this paper appeared at irregular intervals and soon suspended publication, it accomplished much good for the cause.

Declara-
tion of
Independence.
(1776)

There is perhaps no document in our literature that has had so great an influence upon American nationality as the Declaration of Independence. The committee appointed to prepare this document consisted of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert R. Livingston. Jefferson was chosen as the person best fitted to formulate the ideas that were predominant in the minds of the radicals. In his introduction to the declaration, he put aside for the time all the particular grievances that were the immediate causes of dispute, and went back to political principles, which he held to be fundamental and universal. He set forth the rights of Americans, not under the British constitution, but by the laws of nature; he declared that governments were designed to secure men in these rights and that whenever any form of government became destructive to this end, it was the right of the people to alter or abolish it.

The rough draft, as it came from Jefferson's pen, contained a strong argument against the slave trade. The phraseology was carefully revised by Franklin and Adams and the other members of the committee on June 28. The declaration was warmly debated on the day when the resolution to

appoint the committee was passed, - July 2, and also on the third. The clause denouncing slave trade was struck out.

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration was adopted by a unanimous vote of the thirteen colonies. A few copies were printed and published on July 5, authenticated with the signatures of the president and secretary of Congress. Subsequently, August 2, 1776, the Declaration, engrossed on parchment, was signed by the members of Congress, present at the time of signing and two signatures were added later.

This document, more than any other instrument of the time, served to consolidate the opposition to England. The colonies, thenceforth, were bound together in a common cause for which they must stand or fall together.

Songs and Ballads of the Revolution.

Before the beginning of our Revolution, our attempts at poetry had been few in number, generally local in character and inferior in quality. The verse of the new era of our nationality was, at least, abundant in quantity, ambitious in design and distended with a sense of the greatness of its theme. Viewed purely as poetry, the pompous and monotonous epics, or crude ballads of the time appeal but faintly to the readers of today, but they claim attention as an important forward step in our national and literary growth. They reflected and furthered the sense that we are one people, born to a great destiny; and never, perhaps, at any period of our history, has the pride of national greatness so dictated and dominated American Song.

In New England, Timothy Dwight, John Barlow and John

Trumbull were the principle makers of this patriotic verse. In the Middle states it was represented by Philip Freneau, Hugh Henry Beackenridge and Francis Hopkinson, the latter chiefly remembered by his humorous ballad "The Battle of the Kegs". There too Joseph Hopkinson wrote his "Hail Columbia", first sung at the Chester Steet Theater, Philadelphia in 1798. In the South, toward the close of the era, Francis Scott Key composed our other national song, "The Star Spangled Banner", at the time of the bombardment of Fort McHenry, in 1814, when that stronghold was successfully defended from the attack of the British fleet. By authority of President Madison, Mr. Key had gone to the British fleet under a flag of truce to secure the release of his friend, Dr. Beanes, who had been captured by the enemy and was detained on board the flagship, on the charge of violating his parole. He met General Ross and Admirals Cackburn and Cochrane, and with difficulty secured from them a promise of the gentleman's release, but was at the same time informed that they would not be permitted to leave the fleet until after the proposed attack on Fort McHenry, which the admiral boasted he would carry in a few hours. The ship on which Key, his friend and the commissioner who accompanied the flag of truce, were detained, came up the bay and was anchored at the mouth of the Patapsco, within full view of Fort McHenry. They watched the flag of the fort through the entire day with an anxiety that can better be felt than described, until night prevented them from seeing it. During the night they remained on deck, noting every shell from the moment it was fired until it fell. While the bombard-

"The Star Spangled Banner"

ment continued, it was evidence that the fort had not surrendered, but it suddenly ceased some time before day, and, as they had no communication with any of the enemy's ships, they did not know whether the fort had surrendered or the attack been abandoned. They paced the deck for the rest of the night in painful suspense, watching with intense anxiety for the return of the day. As soon as day came, their glasses were turned to the fort, and with a thrill of delight, they saw that "our flag was still there!" The song was begun on the deck of the vessel, in the fervor of the moment when he saw the enemy hastily retreating to their ships, and looked upon the proud flag he had watched for so anxiously as the morning opened. He had written, on the back of a letter, some lines, or brief notes that would aid him in recalling them, and for some of the lines as he proceeded he had to rely on his memory. He finished it in the boat on his way to the shore, and wrote it out as it now stands, immediately upon reaching Baltimore. Every word came warm from his heart, and for that reason, even more than from its poetical merit, it never fails to find a response in the hearts of those who hear it.

"Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last
gleaming,

Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the
perilous fight,

O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly
streaming?

And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still
there.

Chorus:

Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

In the work of all these writers, three points are
noticable:- the length and pretensions of many of the poems;
their recurrent note of patriotism, full of high hopes for
the country's future; and their timid imitations of the
current English poetic forms. Thus we find the poets of
this period declaring against Britain, and vaunting their
independence of her, in verses which show by their careful
conformity to English models our complete intellectual
subjection to the mother country.

3. Literature of Reconstruction.

The period of reconstruction has been called the critical
period of American history. Pattee says: "The thirteen
colonies of America were independent of Great Britain. Al-
though the ringing of bells and the roaring of cannon voiced
their joy, American independence was not altogether assured.
Difficulties almost insuperable still remained. The problems
of war are simple compared with those that follow it. Mere
conquest and destruction may be effected by savages, but
reconstruction is a work of demigods."

The Declaration of Independence was passed with diffi-
culty; the war was prolonged by dissent and disagreement, and
now the plan of union was to be five years in getting itself

adjusted to provincial notions.

This process made a continuation of political literature inevitable. Men who eight years before dropped their pens and picked up their swords, now hung these over the fireplace and returning to their desks, brought out a new installment of political literature whose importance in tiding the new nation over dangerous shoals, cannot be overestimated. The men who contributed to this literature were principally those who had guided the war to its successful issue. There was enough disagreement among them to give zest and point to the writings of all, in discussing the question of changing the confederacy to a union of states.

The leaders of this great debate were John Adams, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson on the side of retaining the government, such as it was, which had carried on the war. The faults of this government are well known. The union between the colonies had been, at best, only a temporary joining of strength to ward off a common danger. The Continental Congress had been a war body simply. It had conducted the war and had contracted enormous debts, but it was powerless to tax the people. The Articles of Confederation were practically useless. Each state had its own commercial regulations. Discord arose which threatened to result in thirteen independent nations along the Atlantic coast.

On the other side were ranged Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison as leaders of the party for the adoption of the Constitution, which had been formulated and submitted to the states, after a long and bitter controversy,

for adoption or rejection.

The "Federalist"

Hamilton, Jay and Madison made the "Federalist" famous as the leading collection of political writings, in this long and violent controversy. The Constitution had been called a "triple-headed monster" and "as deep and wicked a conspiracy as ever was invented in the darkest ages against the liberties of a free people". Evidently someone must arise to its defense and explanation. Hamilton undertook this task with the help of Madison and Jay, in eighty-five short essays, published in the "Independent Gazette of New York", in 1787-8, of which Hamilton himself wrote fifty-one. These papers did for the adoption of the Constitution what Paine's essays did for the Declaration of Independence. The writers did not have the creation of literature in mind so much as the creation of a new government. Incidentally, they accomplished the former purpose while laboring with all their might for the latter, producing not only "the most profound and suggestive series of papers on government that have been written", but also a group of writings which reflects the spirit of liberty, guided and controlled by the wisest law. In addition, the collection has literary values which cannot be overlooked.

The three writers, over the common signature of "Publius" took up such topics as "Dangers from foreign force and influence", "The union as a safeguard against domestic faction and insurrection", "The Militia", "Taxation", "House of Representatives", "Powers invested in the Union". These and other matters were presented fully and so clearly that the citizens of that day had little difficulty in understanding the writer's

grounds for his appeal,- an appeal which, in the end, was effective beyond the immediate constituency addressed.

That these papers were successful in their purpose is established by the fact that the particular community to which they were addressed was induced to do that which the majority had informally declared it would not do. The "Federalist" had a similar efficiency wherever it was read. Other papers were written during the same period, but this collection is preeminent among them all. It marked the culmination of political writing in an age of highest political thought and action. "It was the work of the giants which were in those days", who were also among the framers of the Constitution itself."

Hamilton did a good work in the New York State Convention, at the time of the adoption of the Constitution. After the constitutional convention at Philadelphia had framed the new Constitution, it was sent to the different states to be voted upon by the people. Many of the people were strongly opposed to it. They thought it gave the national government too much power. But in time all of the states decided to adopt it. The man who did the most to convince them of the wisdom of such a course was Alexander Hamilton. In New York his oratory changed a small minority to a majority in favor of the adoption of the Constitution.

II. PERIOD FROM THE SECOND WAR WITH ENGLAND
TO THE CLOSE OF THE CIVIL WAR.

1. Literature of Constitutional Controversy.

The kindred arts of oratory and literature stand in a somewhat peculiar relation to each other. The power of the orator and the power of the writer are similar but distinct. The great speaker, holding his hearers, perhaps by some quality of voice or some indefinable compulsion of manner, may say nothing that will stand the test of literature; the greatest writer on the other hand, able to stir the hearts of thousands by his printed words, if brought face to face with an audience may be incapable of holding the attention of a single hearer. But while the arts of oratory and of literary composition are thus distinct, many great orations outlast the occasion that produced them, and possess a durable quality which places them among the masterpieces of literature. Such is the case with many of the orations delivered at the time of the constitutional controversy between the North and South.

At this time, politics held the first place in the popular mind, and in politics everything turned on the one, great, burning issue, - slavery. Never was there a question that divided public opinion more sharply, nor an issue that was fought with more bitterness.

The two parties were of almost equal strength. New states were admitted in pairs so that the balance between the free and the slave territory might not be seriously disturbed.

(a) John
C. Cal-
houn.
(1782-
1950)

The debates centered about the dangerous doctrine of States Rights. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina was the leader of the South on this question. He carried the doctrine to its extreme. Maintaining that not one of the framers of the Constitution, not even Washington or Hamilton, had contemplated a form of government that would bind a state beyond its will, he contended that the Constitution was merely a compact between states; that the states were bound only so far as they wished to be and that any one of them might repudiate any act of Congress which it deemed illegal or unconstitutional.

Notwithstanding his radical position, the moral purity of Calhoun's life and the honesty of his convictions commanded the respect even of his opponents. His influence was very great. The impress of his severe, illogical mind is upon every great political measure of his time. By his earnestness he was able to convey to the minds of his hearers, his own beliefs; and his influence in consolidating the opinion of the South on this question can hardly be estimated.

(b) Dani-
el
Webster.
(1782-
1852).

The stream of oratory which had been rising for half a century reached its high-water mark in Daniel Webster. His first great speech was delivered in 1820 at the Second Centennial of the landing of the Pilgrims. In 1825, he was the orator at the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill Monument, and during the following year he was chosen to deliver the eulogy on Adams and Jefferson. In 1830, he made the crowning speech of his life in the United States Senate, in reply to an attack by Robert Y. Hayne of South

Carolina.

It has been said of Webster that as a master of pure and vigorous English prose style, he had few equals. His best orations may be studied as models of correct diction and rhetorical finish. His style may be characterized as majestic, vigorous, and as abounding in beautiful word pictures. He was a clear thinker, and his sentences are as clear as his thoughts. His orations lose nothing with time, and are still full of their original force and fire. They hold his readers as the orator held his audiences, and we feel much of the thrill and excitement of the original occasion. It is this quality that brings the work of Webster into the realm of pure literature.

Webster and Hayne Debate. (1830)

Webster and Hayne, between them in the "great debate" of 1830, stated the two ideas of the Constitution, around which the history of the United States was to center for the next thirty years. The fate of the country depended upon the theoretical interpretation of a written document.

At the time of this notable series of debates, the Southerners were rapidly falling behind in point of numbers and they naturally occupied the position which the New Englanders who were now stronger in their alliance with the Westerners, had abandoned. The point really in controversy was the continuance of the protective system which favored the North and did not help the South. Before that issue was actually raised, however, the Southerners strove to separate the Northern allies on the pretext that the Eastern men were hostile to the further development of the West. The opportunity presented itself in the form of a resolution,

the famous "Fort Resolution", for an inquiry as to the disposal of the public lands,- (December, 1829).

Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina stated the views of the Southern men (Jan. 1830); he declared that the people of New England wished to check the growth of the West.

Daniel Webster replied with a speech that effectually disposed of that part of the Southern case.

Hayne returned to the attack. Drifting far away from the subject under discussion, he set forth in luminous phrases, the Calhoun theory of States Rights.

In his splendid rejoinder, Webster stated the theory of national existence. This speech, full of burning enthusiasm, richly deserves the foremost place it occupies among the masterpieces of American eloquence.

Hayne rested his argument on the premises used by Jefferson and the men of New England. The constitution as a compact, the states were sovereign when they formed that constitution, and had retained their sovereignty, although creating another sovereign power. "In case of deliberate and settled differences of opinion between the parties to the compact, as to the extent of the powers of either", Hayne maintained that "resort must be had to their common superior,- three fourths of the states, speaking through a constitutional convention." This appeal could be made by any state for "the federal government is bound to acquiesce in a solemn decision of a sovereign state, acting in its sovereign capacity, at least so far as to make an appeal to the people for an amendment to the Constitution."

Webster's reply to this argument was dramatic in the interest which attended its delivery. The dignitaries of many nations and the notables of our own land assembled to listen to the great constitutional lawyer and orator as he made what is regarded as the greatest speech of modern times. For four hours he argued in defense of the principles of the Constitution. He was fair toward his opponent, yet strong in his own position. He showed that the origin of this government and the source of all its powers is with the people, anticipating Lincoln's aphorism in these words which place the originality of their first utterance where it belongs: "It is, sir, the peoples' Constitution, the peoples' government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people." The entire speech is full of profound reasoning. "The directness of Webster's purpose the irresistible sweep of his argument, his perspicuity and energy, his vigor of reasoning, his calm statement and forceful appeal, the power of his voice and the majesty of his presence combine to place him in the foremost ranks of eloquent men, and crown him as the chief of American orators"

This speech made a lasting effect upon the minds of the people. Many who had been in doubt or indifferent were now fully convinced that the United States was a sovereign power and that their union was not merely a compact between sovereign states; and the opinions of those who had before believed with Webster were strengthened by his earnestness and enthusiasm and the people went away ready to fight and die, if necessary, for the cause of the Union.

2. Literature of the Anti-Slavery Movement.

A. Books and Periodicals.

(a) William Lloyd Garrison.

When, in 1831, Garrison started his "Liberator" in Boston, he had not to his knowledge, a sympathizer in the world. The anti-slavery principle had not one outspoken defender. All political parties either advanced the evil or compromised with it; the Constitution of the United States, in the words of Webster, "recognized slavery and gave it solemn guarantees"; even the church was silent.

Against this wide-spread and deeply-rooted institution, Garrison set himself, single-handed. He was but twenty-four years of age, uneducated and penniless; "his office was an obscure hole, his only visible helper a negro boy", but his demand was the immediate abolition of slavery. He sent broadcast over the land the heroic challenge: "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice--- I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard." He poured into his works all the boundless zeal of the fanatic. He was willing to sacrifice everything, even the Union, to gain his single point.

As a result of his work, the deadness of the public mind was soon fully aroused to life, Mobs assaulted Garrison, wherever he appeared. In 1835 he was dragged through the streets of Boston. Many who had cared little for the freedom of the slaves, now rallied about Garrison to defend freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. The contest became wide-spread and bitter beyond expression.

The writings of Garrison, although very voluminous,

would not, in themselves give their author literary distinction: They were simply a means to an end. Garrison's ringing speeches and scathing paragraphs are now as dead as the issue that called them forth. Yet Garrison will ever hold a high place in the history of American thought and literature.

(b) Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin", was the most potent literary force of the anti-slavery movement. Living for years on the borderland of the slave states and the free, Mrs. Stowe acquired a personal familiarity with slavery. She had long been an ardent sympathizer with the anti-slavery movement, and in 1851 wrote the book which set before the minds of the people, in concrete form, the actual horrors of slavery. The book was published in 1852. The story of its success almost exceeds belief. Seventy thousand copies were disposed of before the critics could write a word; eighty thousand more were ordered faster than the publishers could turn them from the presses. In 1855, the Edinburgh Review declared that "by the end of Nov. 1852, one-hundred and fifty thousand copies had been sold in America, and in September of that year the London publishers furnished to one house ten-thousand copies per day for about four weeks. It was translated into the French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Welsh, Russian, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Polish, Hungarian, Uendish, Wallachain, Romance, Arabic and Armenian languages.

Its influence on the times can hardly be estimated. It did more, perhaps, to precipitate the war than did any other single influence. In vain did its enemies parody its thrill-

ing, sometimes sensational scenes; in vain did they argue that it pictured the exception and not the rule. The masses in the North, believing it an accurate picture of daily scenes in the South, read its pages with growing horror and indignation.

From a literary standpoint the novel has many defects. It often exhibits hasty work; its situations are sometimes melodramatic and its characters conventional; but its very defects increased its popularity, which has not for a moment waned.

B. Oratory.

(a) William Henry Seward (1801-1872).

Chief of the orators outside of New England, during the period just before and including the Civil War, was William Henry Seward of New York. According to the just testimony of his friend, Charles Francis Adams, Mr. Seward did more than any other man to break down in New York the self-seeking, office-hunting "ring" political system of Aaron Burr at one time and Martin Van Buren at another.

Seward, as governor of New York, Senator, and during the Civil War, Secretary of State, was a patriot. His diplomatic caution, aided by personal integrity and knowledge of the philosophy of history, gave value to his speeches.

(b) Wendell Phillips. (1811-1884)

Wendell Phillips became interested in the emancipation of slaves, at the time when Garrison was dragged by a mob through the streets of Boston. He declared on the spot that he would devote his time, his fortune and all his attainments to the down-trodden cause. An opportunity soon

came for him to express himself. In Dec. 1837, a meeting was held in Feneuil Hall, where, among other speakers, the Attorney-General of Massachusetts defended the action of a western mob, which, in a frenzy of resentment, had taken the life of Lovejoy, an outspoken abolitionist who had invaded their part of the country. Wendell Phillips was in the audience. After the speech he made his way to the platform and then and there delivered an anti-slavery oration that carried the audience by storm. From that moment he became the recognized orator of abolitionism. His fierce appeals were heard in every city, and time and again he conquered ^{and captivated} audiences that had gathered with the express purpose of doing him harm.

His manly courage shows itself in such quotations as the following, from his speeches. "We do not play politics; it is a terrible earnest, with life or death, worse than life or death on the issue." "No amount of eloquence, no sheen of official position, no loud grief of partisan friends would ever lead us to ask monuments or walk in fine processions for pirates; and the sectarian zeal of selfish ambition which gives up, deliberately, and in full knowledge of the facts, through millions of helpless human beings, to hopeless ignorance, daily robbery, systematic prostitution, and murder, which the law is neither able nor undertakes to prevent or avenge, is more monstrous in our eyes, than the love of gold which takes a score of lives with merciful quickness on the high seas."

A man with these convictions, fortified by personal courage, by self-sacrifice, by freedom from ambition for wealth

or office, and by the literary and personal arts of the true orator, could not fail to be a power in the land. Conversational in the tones of his voice, but never colloquial in diction, he carried his auditors on the steady, irresistible flow of his speech to conclusions against which their common sense sometimes rebelled when they came to themselves. In subsequent years they discovered that the tide of events had drifted them to positions to which he had led them as in a dream in the days when they had called him hard names. But the memory of his speech, unaccountable in its powers, will always remain with the generation that came under its magic spell.

(c) Charles Sumner.
(1811-1874).

Charles Sumner agreed with the abolition principles of Garrison, Phillips, Whittier and Lowell. He was elected to the senate in 1851 and remained a member of that body as long as he lived. It was here that he did his great anti-slavery work. His speeches were elaborate, logical, clear and eloquent, and he needed no aid to foster them in the minds of his hearers. Twelve compact volumes contain his chief speeches in Congress, and elsewhere and of the legislation which secured to the freed negro their civil rights, Sumner was the parliamentary leader of the abolitionists and his speeches in fulness, method and aptness of treatment, form the most valuable literary memorial of their work. The power of Sumner's addresses did not depart with the occasion that called them forth. They are still full of life and beauty and are an important addition to American literature.

(d) Lincoln and Douglas Debates.

In 1858, Senator Douglas sought a re-election to the senate of the United States. Abraham Lincoln stepped forward to contest the seat. The campaign which followed was one of the most important in the history of the country. In his first address Lincoln startled his hearers and dismayed his party leaders by the outspoken frankness of his language: "Agitation against slavery", he said, "has not only not ceased but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand'. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall, but I expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it --- or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the states,- old as well as new,- north as well as south."

Lincoln and Douglas held a series of joint debates at various interval towns in Illinois, between Aug. 21 and Sept 15. Thousands of the country folks gathered at each place, by wagon or on foot, but no political flags or mottoes were allowed. Each orator presented most strikingly the strong points of his case, and neither the patronizing condescension nor the skillful thrusts of the famous statesman, who was by all odds the readiest debater in th United States Senate, could disconcert, for a moment, his adversary, whose good humor warded off the shafts that were intended for ridicule.

In the course of these debates, Lincoln compelled Douglas to defend the doctrine of "popular sovereignty", and to assert that a territorial legislature could enact laws hostile to slavery and thus completely nullify the Dred Scott decision.

The Democrats won the state election, and the state legislature returned Douglas to the senate; but the admission that Lincoln had wrung from Douglas made the latter's candidacy for the presidency distasteful to the slave-holders, while Lincoln, by his plain speaking, had at one stroke won a foremost place in the Republican party. His "house divided" speech, which had dismayed his friends at the time, proved to have been one of the wisest actions of one of the wisest of men.

Lincoln's speeches had a wonderful effect upon public opinion. If he was greeted by hundreds of people in the towns he visited, he departed with the ringing cheers and the enthusiastic support of thousands. Wherever he went, he made friends, not only for himself, but for the cause he was upholding. America owes to him, for his great work, a debt of gratitude which can be paid in no better way than by upholding and upbuilding the country for which he gave his life.

C. Poetry.

We have seen how the prose writers and the orators of this period helped to arouse the conscience and guide the judgment of men in preparing for the coming conflict. We will now turn for a brief time to the work of the poets,

which was no less effective than that of the orators and prose writers. The two leading poets of this time were James Russell Lowell and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

(a) James
Russell
Lowell.

One part of James Russell Lowell's fame, and in all probability the most enduring part, belongs to the anti-bellum period. Under the influence of the public sentiment aroused by the admission of Texas into the Union, a movement generally regarded as aiming at the extension of slave territory, he wrote "The Present Crisis", revealing at once both the moral earnestness and the poetic fire that was latent within him.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment
to decide

In the strife with Truth or Falsehood for the
good or evil side."

It was indeed a jarring blast, so charged with indignation as to arouse the most apathetic reader in its own day and so full of the spirit of righteousness that its echoes yet ring.

Few men have been more thoroughly and proudly American than Lowell. Few Americans have felt so deeply as he the true ideal of our democracy. He not only loved our country for what it was: he saw its faults and yet rose to the high conception of what it might be in the history of mankind.

Both series of the "Biglow Papers" as well as his burning anti-slavery lyrics during the war and his "Political Essays" published during the war and the reconstruction period, show Lowell's intense patriotism. His noble

"Commemoration Ode", delivered at the close of the war, his three odes published together in 1876 and his ringing address on Democracy mark him as one of the truest Americans of the century.

Lowell says in his "Stanza on Freedom":

"They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak
.....
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

At a time when to be an abolitionist was to invite ridicule and unpopularity, this man, proved himself to be one of those who "dared to be in the right with two or three". Through his work, many men were brought to see the country's condition in its true light; and many more, who had thought with Lowell but had not dared to speak, were encouraged to stand out, declare themselves in sympathy with the cause of abolition and prepare themselves to fight for the cause if it became necessary.

(b) John Greenleaf Whittier

The first period of Whittier's literary career is characterized by his work as an anti-slavery leader. He inherited with his Quaker blood, what he declared to be:-

"A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence

As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own."

He looked upon ^{human} slavery with unfeigned horror, and in 1831, the same year that Garrison established the "Liberator", he became actively and ardently interested in the movement

against this evil.

In 1833 he became one of the secretaries of the first National Antislavery Convention. In 1837 he was in the office of the American Antislavery Society in New York. From 1831 to 1840 he was kept actively busy in charge of the "Pennsylvanian Freeman", in Philadelphia, a journal devoted to the cause of abolition.

In 1836 Congress passed a bill excluding from the United States Post Office all abolitionist publications. Against this bill, Whittier wrote a passionate "Summons to the North".

Seven years later, when the Fugitive Slave Law was enforced in Boston, he wrote a burning address, "Massachusetts to Virginia".

All this work did much toward arousing public sentiment against slavery.

War was utterly abhorrent to his quaker principles; but when war came he greeted it in such spirit as this:

"We see not, know not, all our way
Is night- with Thee alone is day:
From out the torrents troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayer we lift,
Thy will be done!

"Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies!
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done!"

His noblest poem, "Laus Deo", appeared in 1865, when the amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was at last adopted.

At heart, Whittier was no more stirred than the other anti-slavery leaders, nor was he gifted with such literary power as sometimes revealed itself in the speeches of Phillips or as enlivened Mrs. Stowe's novel. But Whittier surpassed all the rest in the impregnable simplicity of his inborn temper, derived from his Quaker ancestry and nurtured by the guilelessness of his personal life.

3. Other Literature of the Civil War.

(a) Prose.

In prose, the chief productions inspired by the war were, without question, two or three addresses delivered by President Lincoln. His address at the dedication of the National Cemetery on the battle-field of Gettysburg, and his first and second inaugural addresses stand with the great orations of the century. Lincoln's oratory is in marked contrast with that of Webster and many others. It contained but little of ornament;- it simply expressed the thoughts of a man whose heart was deeply stirred. His speeches were mostly short and were written with the greatest care, and were carefully revised. Consequently few productions in American literature are more certain of immortality.

Lincoln's
Gettysburg
Address. It would be difficult to find words fitting to describe this noble address. We can do no better than to quote the

inspired words and let them speak for themselves:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, - we cannot consecrate, - we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we may say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Emanci-
pation
Procla-
mation.
(1863)

In 1862, Lincoln became convinced that the emancipation of the slaves, so far as he could bring it about, would be a justifiable means of defeating the Southerners, and would arouse sympathy for the Union cause, abroad. At the same time it would satisfy the demands of an influential body of his supporters in the North and could be justified to his more numerous supporters as a war measure. He waited only for some Union success to justify the step. The opportunity he desired came with the collapse of Lee's invasion of Maryland, and on Sept. 22, 1862, he issued a proclamation stating that on New Years Day, 1863, he would declare free all slaves in any portion of the country which should then be in rebellion against the United States. Accordingly, on Jan. 1, 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

The force and legal effect of this document has been disputed; it is clear, however, that it operated to free the people held in slavery, in portions of the United States, then in insurrection, wherever such portions were occupied by Union armies. It did not abolish slavery, as an institution, anywhere. But it was the declaration of a policy, and in the end the policy found favor. The issue became one of the important questions in the campaign of 1864, which resulted in the overwhelming re-election of Lincoln. The Congress then in being had already rejected the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery throughout the United States. It now, Jan. 1865, accepted the amendment by the necessary two-thirds majority. The amendment was ratified by the requisite number of States and declared in force, Dec. 1865. Slavery was now legally abolished throughout the Union.

Lincoln's
Second
Inaug-
ural.

Lincoln's second inaugural address, delivered March 4, 1865, is one of the pearls of American literature. An account of the event tells us that the night before the inauguration day, had been vexed with a stormy snowfall. The morning, also, was stormy and rainy. By mid-day, however, as if to mark the event auspiciously, the skies cleared and the sun shone gloriously upon the thousands and tens of thousands who had come to Washington to witness the second inauguration of him whom the people had now, long since learned affectionately to term "Father Abraham".

John A. Logan says: "He delivered his address with utterances so just and fair, so firm and helpful, so benignant and charitable, so mournfully tender and sweetly solemn, so full of the fervor of true piety and the very pathos of patriotism, small wonder is it that among those numberless thousands, who, on this memorable occasion, gazed upon the tall form of Abraham Lincoln, and heard his clear, sad voice, were some who almost imagined they saw the form and heard the voice of one of the great prophets. But not one soul of those present, - unless his own felt such presentment, - dreamed for a moment that all too soon, the light of those brave and kindly eyes was fated to go out in darkness, that sad voice to be hushed forever, that form to be bleeding and dead, a martyred sacrifice indeed, upon the altar of his country!"

(b) Poetry.

Among the many poems, other than those heretofore mentioned, called forth by the Civil War and by the events im-

mediately following the conflict are; Whittier's "Barbara Fritchie"; T. B. Read's "Sheridan's Ride"; Stedman's "Cavalry Song"; F. M. Finch's "Blue and Gray"; Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain"; and Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic".

Glancing backward over the literary work which has been briefly reviewed, we see that our literary men and women,- our prose writers,-our orators and our poets have helped, in a large measure to arouse, shape and guide public opinion. We can trace the results of their efforts through the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods, through the stormy period of the anti-slavery discussions and the subsequent years, until the nation was finally moulded into an indissoluble union by the Civil War.

Since so much of this result is due to their labors, we should not only be proud of them, as producers of a great literature, but we should recognize them and praise them for the noble part they played in making our great nation what it is today.

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