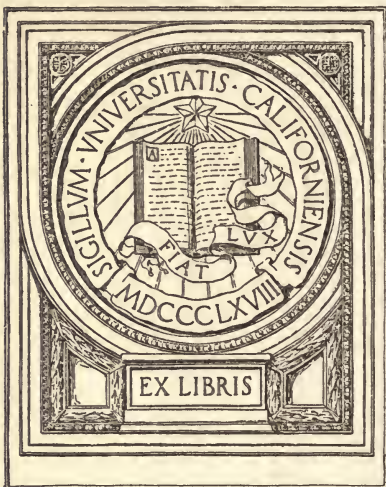


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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN STUDIES
IN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
NUMBER 14

BRITISH CRITICISMS OF AMERICAN
WRITINGS, 1815-1833

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF ANGLO-AMERICAN
LITERARY RELATIONSHIPS

BY
WILLIAM B. CAIRNS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

MADISON
1922

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PREFATORY NOTE

This paper is virtually a continuation of the author's monograph on *British Criticisms of American Writings, 1783-1815*, and completes a study of the British attitude toward American literature during the first half century of the independence of the United States. As was noted in the preface to the earlier work, the author hopes at some time to make a study of the response of America to this trans-Atlantic criticism, and perhaps to glance at the American reviews of British publications during the same period.

The present monograph has been made somewhat more minute and inclusive than its predecessor, partly because greater thoroughness was practicable, but chiefly because the period which it covers is more significant to the student of American literary history. The object has been not so much to present the well-known theories and leanings and prejudices of distinguished literary groups like those which contributed to the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, but rather to ascertain so far as possible the consensus of opinion that prevailed among the reading public of Great Britain. For this reason attention has been given to the great number of minor and often short-lived literary periodicals that flourished, or at least that were enthusiastically brought into being during the period under consideration. It is true that at times the searcher after bits of out-of-the-way criticism has feared that he was acquiring the spirit of the collector of omnibus tickets and other useless trifles; but in a study of national impressions few critical articles are so insignificant as to be without some value. It is not wholly illogical to follow a passage from the *Edinburgh Review* with an extract from the *Lady's Pocket Magazine*, provided the source is clearly indicated so that the reader may assign to each its true weight. As in the earlier study, the fact that

many of the periodicals are rare, and are covered by no general index, has been a reason for giving copious extracts. The works consulted have, with few exceptions, been found in the joint libraries of the University of Wisconsin and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the Library of the University of Cambridge.

CHAPTER I

LITERARY CONDITIONS, 1815-1833

The eighteen years from the close of the second war with Great Britain to the end of the first half century of recognized national existence constitute an important period in the development of American literature. According to some historians the real independence of the United States, as distinguished from formal and political independence, was not achieved until the second war with the mother country. Even those who regard this statement as extreme will admit that after the second peace there was a stronger national feeling, more of a disposition to regard the nation and the government as definitely established things.

In literature, the new settling down of the American people showed itself in the appearance of the first group of American writers¹ who are universally known to intelligent Americans to-day. Franklin's writings are, it is true, deservedly read; but to few persons is Franklin primarily a man of letters. Several great eighteenth century Americans, like Jonathan Edwards, and the patriots, are recognized as of special importance in their various fields. Other writers, like the Hartford Wits, Freneau, and Charles Brockden Brown, though important in the literary history of their country, find to-day few general readers. But the period from 1815 to 1833 saw the rise not only of new authors, but of a new spirit in writing—an increased tendency toward what for want of a better term is sometimes styled "pure literature." Both Europe and America were growing weary of the discussion of the rights of man and the basis of political institutions which had occupied so much time for fifty years; no American publicists rank as writers with those of the Revolutionary time. Theological controversies raged, partic-

¹Irving had of course published earlier his Addisonian essays and the *Knickerbocker's History*; but real recognition of his merits did not come until the appearance of the *Sketch Book*.

ularly in New England, where the Unitarian movement was overthrowing the old Calvinism; but these were technical, and apart from the main currents of popular thought. Though publication of Dwight's chief works during this period made him seem more of a contemporary than he was, and though Channing came into prominence before 1830, the religious and theological writings of the time are not so important as those of the two preceding centuries. Science seems to have been less closely associated with general literary culture than in either the preceding or the following generation. There were scientists enough, and they wrote technical accounts of their work; but there was no Franklin in America; and in England popular magazines devoted less attention to applied and experimental sciences than the *Gentleman's Magazine* had done in the later eighteenth century. On the other hand, the day of Huxley and Tyndall and Darwin, and of poets like Tennyson, who introduced so much of scientific thought into serious literature, was all in the future.

It was an essayist, Irving, a novelist, Cooper, and a poet, Bryant, who formed the center of the new group of American writers. All three of these are familiar to every American schoolboy, and notwithstanding change of taste, and the greater achievement of their successors they are not neglected by his elders. Two of them, Irving and Cooper, won almost as much recognition in Europe as at home. Bryant's fame has been more closely confined to his own country, yet even in his day his work was noticed abroad.

Contemporary with these three greater men were a number of lesser writers who are significant of movements in American literature. Paulding, Neal, Halleck, Drake, Pierpont, Payne—to mention but a few—though now but little read, were worthy of comment in their own day. Before the close of the period, Poe, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Whittier had already appeared before the world in printed volumes, and Emerson and Holmes were known as young men of promise. The form that American literature evolved later in the great flowering years of the nineteenth century was implicit in writings produced before 1833.

In England, the same eighteen years formed a period of remarkable literary achievement. A glance at a chronological table shows the richness of the time. In 1816, the first year fully covered in the present study, there appeared Jane Austen's *Emma*, Byron's *Childe Harold* (Canto III), *Siege of Corinth*, and *Prisoner of Chillon*, Coleridge's *Christabel*, Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini*, Scott's *Antiquary*, *Black Dwarf*, and *Old Mortality*, and Shelley's *Alastor*; in 1825 came Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*, Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*, Scott's *Betrothed* and *The Talisman*; in 1833, Bulwer's *Godolphin*, Browning's *Pauline*, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, Lamb's *Last Essays of Elia*, and Tennyson's *Poems*. These were by no means exceptional years. The names of Keats, Moore, Campbell, Crabbe, Wordsworth, Southey, De Quincey, Landor, Hood and others which do not chance to appear in the above list may serve as additional reminders of the character of the period.

It is significant in a study of literary criticism that this brilliant age was one of conflicting schools and unsettled literary standards. All the literary life of Keats, and most of the significant literary life of Shelley and Byron, and of Scott as a novelist, fell within this half generation. There survived from an earlier time formalists like Campbell, classicists like Landor, apostles of a new romanticism like Wordsworth and Coleridge. Before the close of the period men as diverse as Macaulay, Carlyle, Bulwer, and Disraeli had made themselves known in prose, while Tennyson and Browning had begun to attract attention by their verse.

As might be expected, and as will be shown in the next chapter, these conditions led to a great mass of critical writing. The triumph of the great quarterlies, the rivalry of the monthlies, the rise of the literary weeklies, and the experimental founding of numerous other journals which devoted more or less space to literary criticism will be traced in the next chapter.

Between 1815 and 1833, then, Great Britain, with an extraordinary mass and diversity of literary production at home, and with a heightened faculty for literary criticism, was passing judgment on what proved to be in a sense the beginnings of recognized American literature.

others in which she was already doing her share to supply the world. But after all, the most irritating thing about the charges was their approximation to truth. It was of no use to point out, as was repeatedly done, that they were not quite literally true; that even at the time, Englishmen were reading the *Sketch Book* by thousands; that Benjamin West, long president of the National Academy, was born, and received his early training, and achieved his first successes in America; that Benjamin Thompson had done important work in science before he came to London to found the Royal Institution, and went on to the Continent to continue his varied and useful career; that Franklin made significant discoveries in physics, a branch of science which the reviewer seems to take care not to mention. Attempts to reply by the citation of details like these only called attention to the general truth of the charge that America had as yet produced no great body of literary and artistic work. A writer like Sydney Smith knew how sensitive Americans were over this fact, as nations and individuals are always acutely sensitive over anything that seems to imply crudity and ill-breeding; he knew, also, judge of human nature as he was, that nothing is harder to endure with equanimity than an ill-natured statement of unpleasant truths. The editors of the *Edinburgh* were probably right in saying that they had no especial hostility to America. In their judgments on the literary quality of the few American books that they reviewed they were on the whole as favorable as posterity has been. They were willing to draw Whig political morals from America, praising religious toleration, and admitting that America was well and cheaply governed. But their fairness in these matters only heightened the complacency with which, when domestic diversions failed, they amused themselves by baiting the new nation.

Jeffrey is reported to have said to Scott, at an early period in the history of the *Edinburgh*, "The *Edinburgh* has but two legs to stand on. Literature is one, but its right leg is politics." The same remark might, with even greater truth, have been made of the *Quarterly*, which according to tradition was founded in protest against a political article written by Jeffrey himself. The consistent hostility of the *Quarterly* to America

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The *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* reviews stand in a class by themselves, but several other so-called reviews and other journals mostly occupied with criticism are important. The greater number of these were monthlies.⁴

The *Eclectic Review*, which had been published since 1805, was continued throughout the period. It paid a considerable amount of attention to American writings, both literary and informational. Though it seemed inclined to be suspicious of American institutions, and to resent some things in the American attitude, it was not unfair in its literary judgments; and in the later years it was inclined to praise anything of American origin, sometimes excessively. Though it reviewed works of all sorts, it had a predilection for religious books. The *British Review and London Critical Journal*, which continued until 1825, was a solid periodical, with church leanings, and though it printed few reviews of American books, was friendly enough to America. The *European Magazine and*

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London Review, which also continued to 1825, had by this time lost the hostility which characterized it in the eighteenth century. For some time after 1815 it had little to say on American writings, and later it dealt mostly with conspicuous figures like Irving. On the other hand the *Monthly Review*, which during the early years of the century had been extreme in its praise of things American, lost some of its enthusiasm, and though not really unfriendly, was sometimes inclined to cavil. An occasional article was, however, quite in the old manner. This review, also, had relatively little on American subjects for a few years after 1815. It lasted until 1828. The *British Critic*, which ran to 1825 as a monthly, and one year longer as a quarterly, was strongly Tory and pro-Church. At first it had no good word for America.⁵ After 1820 its tone changed somewhat, and by 1826 it was friendly. Irving was praised whenever he was mentioned. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* between 1815 and its death in 1819 contains almost no reviews of American literary works. The few references to America in connection with books of travel, etc., show the same marked hostility which was manifested in earlier numbers of the same journal. The *Critical Review*, which survived only to the middle of 1817, supported the American side in regard to the causes of the War of 1812, and though severe on American books, was on the whole not unfair.

The *Monthly Literary Register*, and the *Monthly Censor*, both short-lived journals running through parts of the years 1822 and 1823, printed a considerable number of long and serious reviews of American books, but were relatively unimportant. The *Monthly Critical Gazette*, which appeared from June 1824 to June 1825, was bitterly hostile in its reviews of American

⁵Even the indexes of the early volumes of the *British Critic* show the bias of the journal. That for 1820 contains such entries as: "Americans, have no partisans in England"; "Americans, inordinate vanity of the"; "Congress, absurdity and vanity of the." The use of this device was not confined to the *British Critic*. The index of Volume XXIX of the *Quarterly* contains: "Great Desert of the Mississippi"; "Knavery (American), instances of"; "Rowdies, a new class of American citizens." It is hard to conceive a reader searching the index for some of these items; and the articles to which they refer do not always bear out what is implied in the entry. Volume XXVII includes the references, "Inns, filthiness of in America"; "Kentuckyans, anecdotes of the barbarity of."

writings. There is some ground for the suspicion that its estimates of books were influenced by the houses that published them, and by political leanings. The *Retrospective Review*, which ran from 1820 to 1827, has but one article on American literature,⁹ though that is of unusual value.

The *Westminster Review*, founded in 1824 as the organ of the utilitarians, and edited first by Sir J. Bowring and later by J. S. Mill, was, on principle, extravagant in its praise of everything that it considered genuinely American. It attacked Irving, however, as a man who had truckled too much to the English ruling classes. In the later years of the period the *Westminster Review* was republished in Philadelphia.

The *Gentleman's Magazine* continued throughout the period, but was of much less importance than in its earlier years. Its few notices of American books, though not especially significant, were inclined to be friendly to America. Another long-established magazine which survived until after 1833 was the *Monthly Magazine and British Register*. Its literary reviews usually favored American authors, though not indiscriminately. The *New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register* lasted only until 1820. In the last two years of its existence it had a considerable number of reviews, some of them very sound and well-written.

The *Scot's Magazine* became after 1817 the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany*, and as such continued to 1826. Even in earlier years the literary department of the *Scot's Magazine* was not especially strong, and in the later time its reviews counted for little.

The most important of the magazines was *Blackwood's*, established by business competitors of the publisher of the *Edinburgh*, and conducted by a group of brilliant young Tories of the Scottish capital. The *Magazine* was in no strict sense a rival of the *Review*, but its supporters hoped to weaken the domination of the older journal by offering, monthly, lighter and more interesting material. Lockhart, Wilson (Christopher North), and Hogg were associated with it at first, and Maginn joined them a little later. In 1824-6 John Neal, who was in

⁹*Koningsmarke*, IX (1824) 304.

Europe at the time, contributed to *Blackwood's* a series of articles on American literature and on other subjects connected with America. Neal's slashing style and the somewhat sensational nature of his utterances fitted well with the manner of *Blackwood's*, though it must have been evident that the writer of these anonymous articles was an American. Before and after the Neal episode the magazine printed no great number of reviews of American books. The *Noctes Ambrosianæ* in the number for February, 1831⁷ contains some not unfriendly remarks on American poetry. In general, the attitude of the magazine, outside the Neal papers, is mildly patronizing though not notably hostile. After the early days of the *Sketch Book*, *Blackwood's* commendation of Irving was but lukewarm, perhaps because he was so much praised in other quarters.

The *London Magazine* was founded to rival *Blackwood's*, and was an organ of defense for the "Cockney School," which was a pet aversion of Lockhart and Wilson. The bitter rivalry between the English and the Scotch magazines led to the duel in which Scott, the first editor of the *London Magazine*, was killed by Christie, a friend of Lockhart. Hunt, Hazlitt, Lamb, Keats, and De Quincey were among the early contributors to the *London Magazine*. This group of writers was always well disposed toward America, and some reviews of American books are extravagant in their praise. Commendation of Irving is sometimes at the expense of Scott, toward whom the *London* was, naturally, not very friendly, but whom it was not easy to attack directly.

Colburn's New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal, of which Thomas Campbell was editor from 1821 to 1830, devoted considerable space to American books, and usually gave them high praise, though one article⁸ says that America has no literature, and is not likely to have one. Some of the more enthusiastic reviews are of works published in England by Colburn; and their adulation is so intense and so indiscriminating that the motives of the writer may well be questioned.

Fraser's Magazine, founded in 1830 with Maginn as editor and Coleridge, Thackeray and Carlyle among the contributors,

⁷P. 506.

⁸XXI (1827) 412.

came too late in the period and devoted too little relative space to American matters to be of importance in this study. The first number of *Fraser's*, however, contained an interesting, though mildly patronizing article on American poetry. The *Metropolitan*, a monthly which began publication in 1831 and which numbered among its contributors Campbell and Montgomery, reviewed before 1833 a considerable number of American books.

A large number of literary weeklies were started between 1815 and 1833, particularly in the last three years of the period. These were of various kinds and qualities; the best were ably edited. They give brief notices, and even reviews of books that would not be made the subject of articles in the quarterlies, and that might even escape notice in the monthlies. As indications of the feeling of the intelligent reading public as a whole they are especially valuable.

The *Literary Gazette* was established by William Jerdan in 1817, and was first published by Henry Colburn. George Crabbe, Miss Mitford, and Barry Cornwall contributed prose and verse. It was intensely anti-American—unusually so for a periodical that drew no political or religious arguments from its hostility. Its criticisms were in general not very profound, and its reviewers were likely to attempt the ironical and the facetious. For some years the number of American books that it noticed was remarkably large. It began the republication of the *Sketch Book* from the American serial parts, but desisted when the author gave notice that he wished to bring out the book in England. Being thus committed to Irving, the *Gazette* usually spoke well of him; and it praised some of Cooper's novels. There was, indeed, some lessening of hostility after the first eight or ten years, though the old virulence was occasionally shown.

The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*, published from 1819 to 1828, also contained a great amount of American material, though the articles tended, especially in the later years, to be synoptic rather than critical. The journal was uniformly friendly toward America, though it drew no political or other lessons from the American system; its praise of writers was often extravagant. The *Museum*, which flourished

in 1822-4, contained a considerable number of solid reviews, and was likely to praise American work and to make much of the desirability of cordial relations between England and America. The *Literary Examiner*, edited by Leigh Hunt, a successor of the earlier *Examiner*, ran for six months in 1823, and contained one interesting article on an American subject, a review of *Königsmarke*.

The *London Weekly Review* began publication on June 9, 1827—whether by accident or design, on the same day as the *Literary Gazette*—and continued for a little less than two years. Its friendliness for America may be connected with the fact that it was liberal in politics. It was a solid quarto weekly with a good number of reviews. In several articles it replied to attacks made on American writers by the *Literary Gazette*.

The *Athenæum*, the most important of the literary weeklies, began its long career in 1828. From the first it gave a considerable amount of space to American material. The tone of its reviews was often patronizing, but it can hardly be described as systematically unfriendly, especially after the first year or two. The *Athenæum* was in a way a rival of the *Literary Gazette*, and this fact might have inclined it to speak fairly of America.

The *Literary Guardian*, another weekly review begun in 1831, and continued for less than a year, contained a number of American reviews, mostly fair and friendly, one on Irving extravagant. The *National Omnibus and General Advertiser* was also begun in 1831, and at first showed some promise in its literary department, but cheapened greatly before its demise in a little more than two years. The many notices which it gave to American books were likely to be favorable. The *Spirit of Literature*, a still more short-lived weekly published in 1830, is unimportant, though typical of the journals which affected great fairness, but which were obviously bitterly hostile.

The *Edinburgh Literary Gazette or Weekly Cyclopaedia* (1823), the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette* (1829-30) and the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* (1828-32) each contain criticisms of a number of American books. The *Journal* was especially interested in American writers.

In Liverpool the *Kaleidoscope*, which ran in various forms from 1818 to 1831, was a provincial paper with literary interests. It reprinted serially almost all of the *Sketch Book*, and continued to boast, on every possible occasion, that it had introduced Irving to England. Its assumption of a sort of proprietorship over American literature is amusing. It reprinted from time to time other American material, and indulged in considerable criticism.

The *Dublin Literary Gazette*, which was begun as a weekly in 1830, and was continued monthly as the *National Magazine*, was a serious and scholarly journal with sane notices of American books.

Of the many church and religious periodicals it may be said in general that the organs of the Established Church were often suspicious of the new republic, while dissenting journals were more likely to look favorably on America, and hence on American literature. The *Christian Observer*, however, though supporting the Church of England, was most cordial to America. Its cordiality was recognized by the fact that it was at the same time reprinted both in Boston and in New York. It contained few reviews of purely literary works. The *Congregational Magazine*, under its various *aliases* had little more of strictly literary criticism. The same may be said of the *Monthly Repository* (Unitarian) until near the very close of the period, when it turned more to literary matters.

The periodicals mentioned in this chapter form but a small part of those examined in the preparation of this study, and some of them are less important than others that are passed unnoticed. A complete list will be found in the appendix.

CHAPTER III

THE ATTITUDE OF GREAT BRITAIN TOWARD THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF AMERICA

A. COMMENTS IN PERIODICALS

General comments in British periodicals on American customs, American education, and American literature ranged from the extremes of panegyric to the most bigoted condemnation. Really useful generalizations concerning the attitude of Great Britain toward America could be made only after the examination of a great number of utterances. It may be well, however, before considering more detailed criticisms, to glance at a few representative comments on national conditions as a whole. By grouping these in chronological periods of about five years each, a slight change in attitude may be traced.

Between 1815 and 1820 the War of 1812 was still fresh in mind. This fact made for intense feeling regarding America—not, however, necessarily hostile feeling, since the American cause had the support of many British liberals. Until the appearance of the *Sketch Book* at the very close of this five-year period, America was doing little in literature to engage the attention of English critics. The *Critical Review*¹ announced that as the War was over it would from time to time notice such American books as were not rancorously political; and spoke pleasantly enough of America. The battle of the periodicals on and over America was generally renewed. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*² protested that English writers who were hostile to America “are no legitimate part of the English public,” and that “many of the writers in question are not Englishmen, but *anglicized Germans*, who

¹5th ser., II (Nov. 1815) 553.

²XLI (March 1816) 140.

are preferred for such dirty work." A year later the *Critical Review*³ complained that the *Analectic Magazine* and the *American Portfolio* were too ready to keep international animosities alive, and regretted that material dissensions had extended to literature. The writer could not refrain, however, from volunteering the observation that "Nothing, according to our views, can more obstruct American improvement than the absurd persuasion, in defiance of all truth and philosophy, that she has acquired an extent of knowledge which renders her as independent in her literature as she is in her government." Remarks of this sort, no matter how true, were likely to do quite as much to perpetuate international animosities as were the articles complained of by American magazines. The *Scot's Magazine*⁴ printed a communication from "M.F." giving a list of some forty titles of standard American works, and remarked on the curiosity of English readers regarding American literature. It is an evidence of increasing interest in the subject that some periodicals, among them the *Edinburgh Observer*,⁵ conducted regular departments on American literature, in which were printed extracts from books and periodicals, criticism, etc.

Many of the opinions expressed regarding American affairs were based on a *a priori* assumption rather than on observation, or even thorough investigation of authorities. For example the *British Critic*⁶ is firm in the belief that only evil can come from a government with the religious, civil, and political institutions of the United States, and predicts that "The federal compact is not likely to last long." It is no surprise, therefore, to find it speaking with absolute certainty of present and future conditions:

The Americans have no national literature, and no learned men. We say not, that there are no persons amongst them who make books, and exercise the other functions of the scribbling brotherhood. The work now before us [Bristed's *America*] for example, is completely American, in paper, printing, composition, and spirit; coarse, bombastic, and bitter. The talents of our transatlantic

³5th ser., V (Jan. 1817) 91.

⁴LXXXIX (Feb. 1817) 95.

⁵I (Sept. 1817) 37.

⁶n.s. X (Nov. 1818) 491.

brethren shew themselves chiefly in political pamphlets, a species of production which the popular nature of their government cannot fail to multiply in peace and in war. They have an immense number of newspapers, too, federal and democratical; and they have repeatedly attempted, but without success, to support one or two Reviews. As yet they want both readers and writers. . . .

The Americans are too young to rival in literature, the old nations of Europe, and they will never write with the simplicity and pathos, which have adorned the birth of learning among all indigenous people. The inhabitants of the United States will never have to boast of a native poetry, or a native music. . . .

They have, therefore, neither history, nor romance, nor poetry, nor legends, on which to exercise their genius, and kindle their imagination. In truth, there is no room amongst them, for such men as an Alfred, a Chaucer, a Spencer [sic], a Bacon, a Newton, or a Locke; and, until their continent shall have been once more submerged in the waters of the ocean, there cannot possibly be such men in America; for the laws that immortalize the great monarch just mentioned, are not wanted there; the peculiar circumstances of society, which give charms to our early poets, can never be experienced there; and that singular condition of science, which called forth the astonishing powers of the philosophers, whose names we have recited, has gone by, not to return again, until the nations of the earth, if we may be permitted so to speak, shall have been visited once more with a renovation to liberty and knowledge, after another night of barbarism, servitude, and ignorance.

An article *On the Means of Education, and the State of Learning in the United States of America* in *Blackwood's*⁷ purports to be based to some extent on observation, but in reality the author sees things as he is sure they must be. He describes the American as "intellectually and morally savage, and at the same time powerful as a perfect knowledge of all the artificial means of increasing strength can make him"; and charges that education is prized only for its practical value.

It is rare that a child destined to live by the labours of his hands, cannot find the means of acquiring quite as much book learning, as will be useful to him in his business, and often a great deal too much to allow him to remain contented with his lot and place in life. . . .

But in all that relates to classic learning, they are totally deficient; there is not one, [academy] from Maine to Georgia, which has yet sent forth a single first rate scholar; no, not one since the settlement of the country, equal even to the most ordinary of the

⁷IV (Feb. 1819) 546.

thirty or forty, which come out every year from Schule Pforta, and Meissen. . . This arises from bad masters, and a bad method of study. . . . They are mere language masters, not scholars; The object of learning is misunderstood in America, or rather, it is valued only as far as it is practically useful. . . .

In the south part of the country, particularly in Carolina, it used to be the custom to send children across the Atlantic to be educated; the city of Charleston is still illumined by a constellation of their European formed scholars; and every one knows what an influence they have had upon the society of that place—what an elegance, and grace, and polish, they have given to its manners.

American colleges are said to “have nothing to redeem them,” being “in fact schools, and . . . bad schools,” where “the time not spent at the classes, is divided between eating and drinking, smoking, and sleeping,” and where students who are graduated at twenty “have not then acquired, what might be acquired at twelve.” Medical education is pronounced the best in America; legal education “is very wretched”; and clerical education is dubious. Libraries “are for the most part pitiful.” “Everything else, which belongs to education, may be described negatively; they [sic] exist not.” The critic concedes, however, that Americans are not necessarily deficient in natural ability; and proceeds to give a summary view of American literature in which he remarks: “Franklin is their only philosopher whose discoveries have been of much importance to mankind; and if the whole stock of their literature were set on fire tomorrow, no scholar would feel the loss.” “There is nothing to awaken fancy in that land of dull realities.” “The fact is undeniable, that hitherto they have given no proof whatever of genius in works of invention and fancy.” “As to fine arts, America is just about where she was when first discovered by Columbus.” As he approaches the end of the article the critic says:

First that classical learning is there generally undervalued, and of course neglected; secondly, that knowledge of any kind is regarded only as a requisite preparation for the intended vocation in life, and not cultivated as a source of enjoyment, or a means of refining the character; and thirdly, that the demand for active talent is so great, and the reward it receives so sure and so tempting, as invariably to draw it away from retired study, and the cultivation of letters.

Yet the conclusion is that "England never had a rival but America," and America "will disprove the charge of intellectual inferiority whenever proper cultivation of the mind shall cause it fully to develop its faculties."

The very title of an article in the *British Review*⁸ on the *State of Literature, Religion, Slavery, etc. in the United States of America* illustrates the uncomfortable way in which critics loved to remind the new country of one of her chief weaknesses. The article itself is not especially unfriendly. It gave reasons why more pure literature was not being produced in America, and praised much that had been done in science, history, etc., as well as the general diffusion of education in America. Of the much discussed subject of Americanisms it said:

We are decidedly of opinion, that many of the words and phrases objected to are vulgarisms, which are never used by any good writer; and that many are good old English words which have long since become obsolete; while some are provincialisms, carried out by the early colonists, and others have become in some degree necessary from differences in the state of society, and in the political institutions of America.

A review of the *Sketch Book* in the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany (Scot's Mag.)*⁹ begins by saying:

England and America are both at this moment supplied, in a great measure, with a literature of Scottish manufacture. We should not be much surprised were we to live to see the day when we, in our turn, shall be gaping for new novels and poems from the other side of the Atlantic, and when, in the silence of our own bards and romancers, we shall have Ladies of the Lake from Ontario, and Tales of My Landlord from Goose-creek, as a counterpart to those from Ganderclough. For our part we have no kind of aversion to this augury.

In the period from 1820 to 1825 discussion of the literary and cultural conditions of America was at its height. This was due in part to the appearance of several reports of British travellers, and of several irritating attacks on America in the magazines, in part to the interest aroused by the *Sketch Book*,

⁸XIV (August 1819) 48.

⁹V (Sept. 1819) 206.

the early romances of Cooper, and other works of American origin, such as the *Specimens of the American Poets*.

The most famous and the most irritating of the attacks on America in the British reviews was the conclusion of Sydney Smith's article on Adam Seybert's *Statistical Annals of the United States* in the *Edinburgh*. This has been quoted in the preceding chapter.

Of the formal defenses of America perhaps the best known was Robert Walsh's *Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain Respecting the United States of America*, which, though it antedated Sydney Smith's article, was reprinted in England early in 1820, and widely remarked upon. The *Edinburgh*¹⁰ published a cleverly written reply of nearly forty pages, in which it assumed an air of injured innocence, protested against being classed with Tory slanderers like the *Quarterly* in its attitude toward America, and insisted that it had on the whole been fair and that it had been less severe on America than on evils at home. It justified in some detail the proportion of praise and blame in its remarks on American writers, manners, etc. Of the animus of various passages—like the paragraphs just quoted from Sydney Smith—it could of course say nothing except to repeat its protestations of friendliness, but it insisted on the essential accuracy of all its statements of fact. To the section of Walsh's pamphlet in which the author unfortunately tried to offset slanders on America by abuse of England the *Edinburgh* made a dignified, and on the whole an effective reply.

Among the more moderate comments was that in the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*,¹¹ which had always been friendly toward America, but which expressed the opinion that Walsh's book was useless and in bad taste—a needless stirring up of animosity. It conceded the annoying unfairness of English travellers, but said every one knew they were unfair; and accused Walsh of taking seriously what was meant as burlesque. The *Monthly Review Enlarged*¹² began its article on Walsh's protest in similar tone, admitting that Amer-

¹⁰XXXIII (May 1820) 395.

¹¹XLIX (March 1820) 114.

¹²XCIII (Nov. 1820) 297.

ica had just cause of complaint at the treatment received from some English critics, but objecting to Walsh's method of reply as calculated to increase dissension. It then proceeded to a long and interesting discussion of American poetry, some of which will be summarized in a later chapter.

A typical review of the harsher sort was that in the *British Critic*:¹³

It looks ill for Mr. Walsh's cause, however, that in this country, where every desperado has his protectors, and the greatest miscreant has his partizans, there is no one to think favourably of his beloved states; and seriously speaking, it is a singular fact that the public journals of Great Britain, which are seldom found to agree in anything, differ very little in their expressed opinions of North America. Whig and Tory are equally hostile to the rising Republic. Mr. Tierney and Lord Grey have as little kindness in their hearts, as their most determined antagonists, when they speak of American manners and institutions. The Edinburgh Review is as inimical as the Quarterly. . . . A man does not go into court with a very good grace to seek redress for any injury he may have received from the strife of tongues, when placed in circumstances which make it necessary for him to confess that nobody speaks well of him, and moreover that a great variety of persons who never agreed on any point before have consented to traduce his character and undervalue his attainments.

The reviewer made much of the old charge that the Americans were descended from convicts, etc., and said by way of summary:

The subjects of attack, as practiced against the United States by the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, are, generally speaking, their want of literature—ignorance of science and the arts—barbarism in their manners, and savageness in their amusements and contests—arrogance and haughtiness, with an over-weening self-conceit—intoxication, dirt, and slavery.

The reply to Walsh in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹⁴ is in rather bad temper, though it pretends to be judicial. It considers it strange that American authors have made attacks on themselves a national, not a personal matter; charges, somewhat irrelevantly, that American travellers in England are ill-educated and boorish; and ridicules the defense of American

¹³n.s XIII (March 1820) 395.

¹⁴I (1821) 145.

innovations in language. Nearly half the preface to this volume was, however, taken up with a discussion of the feelings of England and America and an apology for the article just cited—the editor evidently being moved by a protest on the part of Everett.

The editor has no desire to excuse himself for one article, which has given offense, rather too justly, on the other side of the Atlantic. He inserted it without reflection, but had observed its unfairness and felt dissatisfied with himself for having published it, long before the fair and temperate reply which Mr. Everitt [sic] made to it had reached him. . . .

But the Americans are told that they should be satisfied with our full acknowledgments of their virtues. And so they would have been, no doubt, if the compliments from our press had not come to them so bedaubed with inconsistent aspersions, as to resemble oranges that have been dipped in the kennel. . . . With all this we tell them, however, that one must not be offended, because it is our way to caricature and gibbet Kings and Queens, and Bishops, for the popular entertainment, forgetting that the Americans have nothing to do with our treatment of Kings and Bishops and that our literature should be as dissimilar as possible to either gibbets or caricatures. Farther, we enjoin their silence and good humor. The charms of silence we illustrate by harangues on their soreness and irritability; and we suggest their vulgar manners, their scanty literature and the prospect of their language being for ever amenable to our correction, as themes on which they may meditate during their pleased and pensive taciturnity.

But we admire the writings of Washington Irving, and, it might have been added, the pictures of Lesley, and of the American Newton. And this is a pledge of our perfect liberality. So thinks the Editor's friend, but not so the Editor. For the Americans have gone before us in this species of justice, having praised our British books abundantly, and yet without obtaining credit for entire freedom from prejudices. . . .

When she has spoken of those whom she thought her great men, and mentioned Patrick Henry, it has been contemptuously asked, in one of our most popular publications, "Who is he?" The memory of Patrick Henry is deeply respected by his countrymen. . . . Whether we choose to call him great or not he was a bold and distinguished man. His name is inwoven in his country's history, and ought to have been known to every one pretending to write about America. . . .

America is told that she will always find friends in England, from the party which supports the republican side of our mixed constitution. . . . Is not every English royalist interested to dem-

onstrate, in his demeanor towards America, that Monarchy creates more courtesy of manners, than Republicanism?

It is prophesying at random to speak of the future dependence of the American language and literature upon ours; and it is unfair to deride their future prospects of fame, which are neither contemptible nor chimerical. In maintaining real rights, let us be resolute; but not in bandying irritating and useless speculations.

Much of the preceding quotation has reference to utterances in other periodicals, particularly the *Edinburgh*. It is interesting to observe how many British editors were willing to admit that most journals except their own were unfair to America.

Many reviews of American books are more or less controversial in tone, or if they affect a judicial poise are so worded as to be more irritating than a direct attack. For example, an article on the *Sketch Book* in the *British Critic*¹⁵ after giving a little faint grudging praise and digressing at every turn on the faults of America, summarizes its statement of attitude as follows:

For ourselves, we will not affect to say, that we feel at present either respect or affection for the national character of the Americans. The Americans have no right to the friendship and good opinions of Englishmen: for at almost every period since the first American war, they have sided too often in overt acts, and always in secret affection with the enemies of this country. . . . if they are now made to feel the scorn which their conduct well merited, let them complain not of the writers of Great Britain, but of those miserable demagogues who have so long guided public opinion on the other side of the Atlantic.

The reviewer of the *Sketch Book* in the *Quarterly*¹⁶ indulges in the usual discussion of American literary and political conditions, takes pains to drag in slavery, and says patronizingly:

We wish well, and have always wished well to America. We sincerely hope she may become wiser as she grows older; but, as a first step toward improvement, we have always thought it indispensable that she should learn to divest herself of that over-weening self-conceit, which has filled her with such exaggerated ideas of her own importance in the scale of nations, by seducing her into a belief that she might enter the lists with England. . . .

America has constantly evinced in her conduct toward England a spiteful and insulting spirit. What is done here is not looked

¹⁵n.s XIII (June 1820) 645.

¹⁶XXV (April 1821) 50.

to as a model of imitation and example in the generous spirit of emulation; but there is an ill-natured disposition animating all her efforts to equal us.

And this of the English language as used in America :

In America there is but one dialect. But to have this dialect likened, and even preferred, to the pure language of England, reminds us of the critical judges in the fable, who decided that the squeaking imitation of the pig was more natural than the real squeak of piggy himself.

*Blackwood's*¹⁷ in its criticism of *Bracebridge Hall* protests against too liberal a treatment of America :

"The *primum mobile* of the day," as Byron says, "is cant": and the existing species most prevalent and most disgusting, is the cant of liberality. . . . And now there's not an essayist, or an editor, that will not fawn on America—that will not compare her pretty infantine authors to the eloquent thinkers of our own country—and that will not condemn some drudge of a contributor to tack together a memoir of Patrick Henry. . . . The population of our island is overgrown, and almost outnumbered by a crowd of offsets and burrs—Cockneys, and critics, and travellers, and radicals, that, possessing no national interest, are incapable of a national feeling. These are the *theophilanthropists*, the lovers of the human race, whose voice is to be heard from every synod of ragamuffins,—and who seem to declare the sentiments of England to him who cannot enter into the silent and thoughtful spirit of the English people. . . . Let us remember that no nation has ever been great, that, in comparison with itself, did not hold the rest of the world in contempt. . . . And if it be alleged that they would not go so deep—that it is merely civility and courteousness they recommend, we tell these Chesterfields on a large scale, these arrangers of etiquette between nations, that, with a few exceptions,—there has been sufficient civility between the people, unless, indeed, nothing short of absolute hugging will satisfy them. . . . If the American journals abuse us, who cares for that, who reads them, or hears them? And as to our own periodical works, they have never applied to the whole continent of America one-half of the obloquy and reproach that has inevitably fallen to the share of any single name of notoriety among us. Then, in the name of wonder, let us hear no more of this stupid cant, about good feeling, and civility, and philanthropy—one sermon is quite enough upon the text. And let Mr. Irving, Mr. Campbell, and others, who have taken a fancy to the subject, be told, that their amicable preachings, by turning dis-

¹⁷XI (June 1822) 688.

cussion directly upon the mutual opinions of the nations, are calculated, more than the most envenomed libels, to excite hostility, and to widen the breach.

An article on American Poetry in the same issue of *Blackwood's*¹⁸ but probably by another hand, is equally outspoken, though in a slightly different manner:

We love independence in others, as well as in ourselves; a generous rivalry, nay, even a generous enmity, are things that we love, knowing, that between people so opposed, there is a mutual respect and admiration; while between the imitated and the imitator, the master and the follower, though there be a seeming bond of union, yet rancor is sure to lurk at the bottom. . . . in spite of all the recent *palaver* of the English press, (and philanthropy in print is ever to be suspected,) John Bull looks upon the Yankees, and is looked upon by them, with an ambiguous sort of feeling, that can by no means be called *love*. "*Tarnational Tories*" as we are, we look with all the vanity of self-importance down upon our quondam sons; and it is as well to tell them this flatly with English frankness, as to dissemble for a time, and then let it burst forth,—a black flood of long-retained spleen.

The Yankees appear to us a testy and quarrelsome race. . . . In Philadelphia and other towns frequented by the French exiles, society has rapidly degenerated, both in morals and manners, from its pure English origin.

After these two articles just cited *Blackwood's* is silent regarding American matters until John Neal appears in its pages in 1824. Neal's criticisms, erratic as they were, must have had considerable influence. Those who took him for an Englishman must have been impressed by his knowledge of American affairs, and have been more readily inclined to accept his judgments on this account. Those who recognized him as an American were ready to consider his eccentricities typical of his nation, and were especially ready to believe anything that was derogatory to America. An article entitled *North America. Peculiarities. State of the Fine Arts. Paintings*,¹⁹ which from internal evidence was probably by Neal, replies to an article in the *North American Review*, maintaining that English travellers were not unfair, that they reported what they saw because it was interesting, and did not pretend to portray the better society. It also defends British reviewers,

¹⁸P. 684.

¹⁹XVI (1824) 129.

saying they are as fair as possible to American literature; that they attack English writers, and cannot be expected to leave America immune. If this is really the work of Neal he has succeeded admirably in mastering the irritatingly patronizing tone of the British critic at his worst—as in a remark on American military achievements, in which he speaks of “the celebrated battle of—God knows where—for, without affectation, we cannot remember a single action in the field, nor, if we heard the name of one, could we tell which party claimed the victory!”

Two general comments from Neal’s series of articles on *American Writers* in *Blackwood’s* for 1824-5 are worth quoting:²⁰

With two exceptions, or at the most three, there is no American writer who would not pass just as readily for an English writer, as for an American, whatever were the subject upon which he was writing, and these three are Paulding, Neal, and Charles Brockden Brown. . . .

The truth is that our Transatlantic brethren—fruitful as they certainly are in a sort of stubborn oddity—a kind of unmalleable humour; abounding, as they certainly do, in what may be called respectable absurdities—have nothing outrageous in their nature; little or no raw material, of their own, for generous, broad, rich caricature; no humour, worth working up; no delicious drollery; little or nothing, in themselves or their habits, for good-natured misrepresentation.

In concluding the series Neal, writing of course as an Englishman, avows feelings of brotherhood and good wishes toward America, and announces that his object has been to bring a reconciliation between the two peoples. He repeats the charge that American periodicals, especially the *North American Review*, toady to British opinion.

Even reviews that were on the whole favorable often contained statements that without intentional hostility showed a contemptuous or a condescending spirit. This is but mildly illustrated in the *Monthly Censor*²¹ where a critic after much genuine praise of Irving, expressed his surprise on first finding that the *Sketch Book* was the work of an American “because

²⁰XVI, 305; XVII, 48.

²¹I (Aug. 1822) 353.

we had never seen anything from the American press (in the department of the *Belles Lettres* at least), which savoured so much of taste and refinement."

The critic of the *Pioneers* in the *Monthly Literary Register*²² agrees with an earlier writer in *Blackwood's* that much praise of American writings is in bad form for an Englishman:

Previously to the arrival of Geoffrey Crayon, we had been accustomed to regard the productions of our Trans-Atlantic brethren with a supercilious eye; but from the moment that the writings of Mr. Irvine [sic] became popular, it has been the fashion to admire and extol American literature. This is all very well in its way. . . . All that we complain of is the prevalent disposition, which some would dignify by the epithet of *liberal*, to exalt foreign at the expense of native talent—to elevate the former above, and to sink the latter below, its just level. There is bad taste in this, as well as bad spirit.

The *Magazine of Foreign Literature*²³ says in its review of Logan:

The literary attempts of the Americans are in every way interesting, and if they compel us to laugh at them the fault lies not with us. They are in their perfect infancy; their authors have at present neither experience enough to fall in with the taste of the nation, nor genius enough to direct it. Still the irresistible impulse of scribbling, and the encouragement which is offered to literary aspirants where the competition is so inconsiderable, produces books with tolerable rapidity. The authors, without models of their own, are often too proud to form themselves upon those of other countries which the sanction of ages has rendered classical, or they have not the skill to see the wisdom and the necessity of doing so. They have no foundation of their own to build on—nothing can come of nothing—and the consequence of their perverseness or blindness is, that all which they attempt of originality is an heterogeneous mass of unskilled plagiarism, while those of them who have drank from those deep wells of inspiration which are to be found in the labours of past ages, have attained success proportioned to their talent and exertions.

The author of a review of *Tales of a Traveler* in the *Universal Review*²⁴ is perfectly sure what America is like, and sure of the glories of the *British Empire*; so sure, in fact, that he

²²III (March 1823) 218.

²³I (April 1823) 102.

²⁴II (Nov. 1824) 259.

sees in the imitation of England by America one of the chief virtues of the latter. Travelers in the New World have not, he admits, always been complimentary in their reports.

But of what is a tourist to write but of what he sees; and what American, to be trusted on his oath, will deny that ninety-nine hundredths of native existence consists in tavern life, in squatters and boors, cotton-planters, colonels and captains selling gin, and setting the example of its deglutition, and judges brutal, brawling, and shooting each other. For what else can the state of society be in any such country?

Mr. Irving has been charged with an original determination to purchase popularity by flattering England. But this he has denied, and we owe it to the feelings of an honourable man to believe him. What wonder is there, if he should have been struck with so noble and unmatched a spectacle of human society? What portion or period of the world has presented a combination at once so magnificent and lovely, of external power and internal happiness; a domestic policy so simple, unoppressive, and conformable to the habits and spirit of the people; such unwearied vigour of industry and invention, of commercial enterprise, and of knowledge, graceful and profound. England sits at this hour on a throne, the most glorious to which a beneficent Providence ever led a nation, a dominion not over the wildness and scattered barbarism of a Russian desert, not over the feeble and broken savagery of Asia, but over the great intellectual divisions of the world. She is, at this hour, the arbiter of Europe

Nothing can be more natural, than that a stranger should be peculiarly struck by this matchless aspect of power and beauty, nor that his surprise should be the more vivid and his descriptions the more animated as he came from a country signally different from England.

The charges of borrowing from English literature are allowed, but with as little blame. From what other source has any American borrowed his ideas? From what other source can any American borrow? He has no native literature. He has even no material for the foundation of a native literature. What visions, what exalting ancestral recollections can the wand of poetry summon from the rude traffic of exiles with savages, from sectarian bickerings and Indian massacre, from the unhappy life of fugitives struggling with the difficulties of a strange and unpropitious land, or from the brutishness, squalidness, and ferocity of the wigwam.

It was men like the author of the passage just quoted who accused Americans—sometimes not unjustly, to be sure—of bombastic and spread-eagle patriotism.

One more passage which places America definitely in the scale of civilization may be quoted from the review of *Brother Jonathan* in the *Literary Gazette*.²⁵ The second paragraph implies the requirement, so often made by foreign critics, that an American book should present chiefly the peculiarities of American life:

America has hitherto had little or no originality in her literature; or, to speak more properly, she had [sic] done nothing but copy. Unlike other nations, she had not worked up her way gradually from barbarism to civilization; she had no religion, no manners, and, above all, no language, essentially her own. Peopled chiefly by the fanatic, the adventurer, and the criminal, bringing with them the usages and tongue of their mother land—exposed alike to want, and danger—literally forced to live by the sweat of their brow—the farmer, the husbandman, and the woodsman, had little time, and less inclination, for literary pursuits.

The deluge [of the late war] has passed, and, like most deluges, has probably left a rich and fertile soil, which needs only to be cultivated to yield a glorious harvest; but, as yet it is almost in a few of her novels alone, that America has shown anything like originality of talent. The one before us is what an American novel should be: American in its scene, actors, and plot; curious as a picture of language and manners; and interesting as a tale of deep passion, and belonging to a very striking period of the world's history. There is much of power and much of interest in these volumes.

There is occasional affectation of phraseology, a little of grandiloquence, somewhat of coarseness, but altogether the wheat is in far greater plenty than the tares; and it is a work no one could read through without acknowledging the writer's powers.

Supporters of the American side of the controversy, or at least advocates of a conciliatory attitude, were not wanting. The *Investigator*²⁶ placed at the head of its department of "American Literature and Intelligence" the motto "Why strive ye together, are ye not brethren?" and commented editorially on the aptness of the text. The *London Magazine and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review*²⁷ gave its views of the reasons for opposition to America:

The great popularity of Mr. Irving's Sketch Book has excited considerable interest on the subject of American literature. Previous-

²⁵IX (July 9, 1825) 434.

²⁶I (May 1820) 156.

²⁷II (Nov. 1820) 503.

ly to the publication of that admirable miscellany, the literary compositions of our trans-Atlantic brethren had only provoked the spleen and contempt of the British critics. The northern Rhadamanthus, and his more malignant rival of the south, generally concurred in its condemnation, differing only as to the *causes* of its inferiority. The 'Edinburgh' attributing it to their mechanical and mercantile habits and avocations; while the 'Quarterly' ascribed it to the stupidity which they, in common with all nations who are in the least hostile to our virtuous ministers and their wise and politic measures, must necessarily possess. Since the appearance, however, of the 'Sketch Book,' the tone of our haughty reviewers is somewhat altered, inasmuch as they find themselves (strange to tell) unable to discover the causes of a non-existent effect.

The *Museum*²⁸ expresses the hope that Irving, on his return to America,

will inform his countrymen that they must not judge the genuine feelings of Englishmen by the effusions of a raillery, or the bitterness of a spleen, which are no more indicative of the disposition than they are of the literature, of England; and which, in fact, afford about as correct a criterion of the latter as the caricatures in the shop in St. James street give to the rest of Europe of the state of the fine arts of this country.

The *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (*Scot's Mag.*)²⁹ after praising the *Knickerbocker's History* makes a confession:

In common, we believe, with many of our countrymen, we did believe that there was something in the constitution of American society unfavourable to the development of literary genius, that the form of their government presented an insuperable barrier to the formation of a standard of taste among themselves, while their absurd and inveterate prejudices prevented them from studying our own classics, and endeavouring to transfuse their spirit into such compositions as they might afterwards undertake; that the establishment of an aristocracy, and a court, were indispensable to a national literature; and that, for ages to come, America busied in draining her swamps, rooting out her immense forests, and cultivating her waste lands, would no more think of manufacturing her own literature than her own hardware.

The reviewer goes on, however, to speak of his pleasure at the development of letters in America, and at the increasing literary friendliness of the two countries.

²⁸I (June 1822) 83.

²⁹VII (Dec. 1820) 543.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*³⁰ says in a review of *A New England Tale*:

We are desirous, however, of this opportunity, most cordially to offer those kindlier feelings towards America and her writers which Mr. Irving bespeaks for them so eloquently well, and to reciprocate those *amicabilities* which he has shown for our country and for us. We feel that both sides have much to forgive and forget, and greatly do we lament that the hour of reconciliation should be retarded, and that unfriendly prejudices should be still encouraged by the contemptuous sneers and the bitter sarcasms of the first Literary Journal in the world.*

*We allude to the *Quarterly Review*, every Number of which teems with sarcastic bitterness towards America and her literature.

The *British Magazine*³¹ in a criticism of *Koningsmarke* dwells on the relationship between the literatures of the two countries:

We cannot help looking with great anxiety at the progress of literature in America, and we feel some pride when we observe the steps which it has recently taken towards distinction . . . notwithstanding the jealousy which, although in some degree subsided, exists to a large extent on almost every other subject, the people of both countries agree, as they ought and must do, to admire the literary works of each other, and to avail themselves of the advantages which they may mutually afford. What person, unless he possessed some previous knowledge of the fact, could tell, upon reading the greater and the better part of Mr. Irving's works, that he was not an Englishman? It is as notorious that his writings have had a certain beneficial effect upon the literature of the day in both nations, as that those of the author of *Waverley* have also produced the same result. The works of Mr. Cooper, the author of *The Spy* and *The Pioneers*, are only inferior to those of Mr. Irving among American authors; and it may reasonably be inferred that they would never have been written but for the novels of the Great Unknown.

The reviewer of Dwight's *Theology* in the *Christian Observer* predicts a great future for American literature, and censures writers who stress the defects of America—pointing out the fact that plenty of discreditable things might be said of England.

The greater number of discussions of American books were

³⁰XCII (Dec. 1822) 542.

³¹I (Dec. 1823) 447.

readily distinguishable as friendly or unfriendly toward America, but some were evidently written with a genuine desire to hold the scales impartially. The review of the *Sketch Book* in the *New Monthly Magazine*,³² though surely not flattering in its picture of American life, was undoubtedly written with candor:

Elementary knowledge is pretty generally diffused throughout the United States; but accomplished scholars are rarely to be found among the native Americans. . . . The poverty of their colleges, and the inattention of their government to the promotion of learning, are calculated to repress the increase of instructors. Hence, although most of the Americans read, few can appreciate literary productions; and as these are amply supplied from Great Britain, there remains but little encouragement for the exertion of the small portion of native genius, which the unpropitious state of the country suffers to attain a productive maturity. Great mental vigour is nevertheless evinced in many of their periodical works.

The editor of *Specimens of the American Poets* speaks pleasantly but wisely of the conditions of poetic production in the United States:

The labours of the mechanic and the artisan produce only a negative effect on the mind; they simply retard the acquisition of knowledge, but they substitute no interest inimical to it in the mind, But from his earliest initiation into the mysteries of commerce, the young merchant is taught to consider riches as the boundary of his hopes. . . . We have had poets from the loom and the plough, but none from the counter.

To America these few observations are more particularly applicable. She is strictly and essentially a mercantile country. . . .

Amongst so active-minded and ambitious a people, a love of literary superiority is sure to obtain a place. In throwing off their dependence on the old world, they naturally wish to free themselves from all obligations, and they seem to acknowledge with some degree of unwillingness the literary dominion which the mother country still exercises over them. But while they are unable to deny the value of the intellectual benefits which they receive from us, they endeavour to supersede the necessity of such supplies, by forcing their own literature to a precocious maturity. The motives of this attempt are perhaps patriotic and honorable, but the step is unwise. . . .

The anomalous situation of America has placed her in a dilemma. She must either read, admire, and imitate our English writers, and

³²XIII (March 1820) 303.

thus probably remain for ages without a distinctive and national literature of her own, or she must abandon and abjure those foreign models, and thus run no inconsiderable risk of acquiring a rude and degenerate taste. The latter alternative is in general, however much they depart from it in practice, the theory of the Americans, especially of their poets.

The reviewer of *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene* in the *Magazine of Foreign Literature*³³ was a little inclined to minimize the importance of the literary attempts of a few years preceding:

The present state of American literature does not seem likely to afford much employment for our critical labours. The paucity of interesting works, of any kind, and the total absence of all attempts at the higher flights of literary composition in the United States, preclude the hope of our making this feature of our miscellany very extensive. Still, as matters of curiosity, notices of American books will always, we trust, be in some degree interesting, if it be only for the purpose of marking the progress of the spirit of that nation.

The *Retrospective Review*³⁴ in its article on *American Literature* inspired by *Arthur Mervyn*, lays down the safe principle that "*Patriotism* (if that be the word) should at *no* time be sufficient to operate against the interests of learning. It is neither high philosophy nor good sense to admit political prejudice, at *any* time, into our discussions upon general literature." A long, and on the whole a sound and well-tempered discussion of literary conditions follows:

We are disposed to maintain, at present, that the literature of America is beginning to assume a better and somewhat peculiar character. It is not like the efforts of a young language, breaking out into poetry and fiction. It is neither rude nor refined, pastoral, sylvan, nor romantic. But it has something of the taint of civilization about it (if we may so express ourselves), something of the vulgarity which belongs to cities, but beginning fast to mix with the healthy freshness of the woods and waters into which American society is gradually spreading.

We are of opinion, that the reproaches which have been cast upon the literature of the Americans are not altogether deserved.

³³I (March 1823) 51.

³⁴IX (1824) 304.

The *European Magazine*³⁵ contains a *Brief Sketch of the Present State of Literature* in America, signed *Octavius*, written with as much remoteness as an article on the literature of the moon might show, but speaking very favorably of American writings and American publishing. The *Congregational Magazine* evinced its interest in American affairs by conducting through the year 1825 a department, "American Miscellany," in which it gave notices of new books and extracts from them.

Since the first attainment of American independence Englishmen had been sensitive over the purity of the language. Several of the articles already quoted in this chapter have spoken of Americanisms. An *Essay on Americanisms* by Pickering, who predicted that in time the languages of the two hemispheres would become so differentiated as to be mutually unintelligible, called forth some comment. A correspondent of the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*³⁶ who signed himself "S. E." said:

Nothing, perhaps, so well exhibits the state of American literature as the attempts that are made to form something like a new language, or rather to add some new words to it, and to alter the meaning of others. This has generally been done very clumsily. The French words which they have Americanized, have seldom been happily selected, and the extended meanings of English words, have generally been unnecessary, and sometimes ridiculous.

The *New Monthly Magazine*³⁷ remarked very sensibly that changes in language, though less rapid, would have taken place even if the colonies had remained English; and added that Americans had coined few new words, but had retained those which had become obsolete in England, and had given new meanings to others. He further insisted that the language of conversation was not a fair basis of comparison. Yet he tacitly assumed that the usage of contemporary London must be the standard, and that any forms which departed from this were inferior. In conclusion he amused himself by a few doggerel lines into which he worked a number of Americanisms such as "brash," "slump," "prairie," "succotash." A com-

³⁵LXXXVII (May 1825) 398.

³⁶II (Sept. 30, 1820) 630.

³⁷XIV (1820) 629.

munication to the *Newcastle Magazine*³⁸ from an Englishman resident in America remarks on the great uniformity throughout the country, and on the whole on the purity of American speech. This the writer ascribes to the continual movements of Americans.

By 1825 the novelty of the first work of Irving, Cooper, and their contemporaries had worn off, and between 1825 and 1833 American literature was no longer a mere curiosity. It had not, however, wholly won respectful recognition. Despite the existence of some actual achievements it was often judged, or its very existence was denied, on preconceived grounds. Evidences of persistent bitterness against American men and institutions may be seen in articles like that on Bishop Hobart's *Discourse* in the *Quarterly Theological Review*,³⁹ which goes far out of its way to say: "As for the immortality of such men as Jefferson and Monroe, their bankruptcy and obscurity in this age must be felt by a man of Dr. Hobart's sagacity but ominous evidences of their heirship to honour in any age to come." Again, the *Quarterly*⁴⁰ defends General Ross from the charge of vandalism in burning the capitol at Washington by arguing that an American library and American works of art could not have been worth preserving. The *Christian Review and Clerical Magazine*⁴¹ gave a full analysis of the American character as it conceived it:

At present, the national character of the Americans appears strangely contrasted with that of every other people in the universe. To us, we confess, it seems to possess more negative than positive excellence. It is devoid of servility, but we suspect it has little of the enthusiasm of freedom; it is not debased by luxury, but it has little of the manifestations of a glowing charity; it is not darkened by superstition, but it has few beamings out of poetry; it is free from moral stains, but is not widely marked by the deep line of moral feeling. The Americans, in short, are a people whose virtues seem more the result of calculation, than the growth of inward principles; who deserve respect, but who, in their collective character, we seldom think of loving or venerating; and to whom we should look as useful allies both in peace and war, but whom we should never regard as likely to perish with us in the contest. . . .

³⁸I (May 1821) 555.

³⁹IV (June 1826) 1.

⁴⁰XXXVII (March 1828) 512.

⁴¹II (Oct. 1828) 450.

That the national character of America is pretty nearly what we have supposed it to be, is shown by the state of literature among them; for most certain it is, that no very strong moral feelings, or deep and passionate dispositions, can exist among a people, without their seeking some mode of expression. In finding, therefore, its literature almost entirely consisting of English reprints, we have a very striking exemplification of what we have just been saying.

One of the most interesting instances of *a priori* reasoning from purely imaginary premises is found in a discussion of language in America in the *Monthly Review*:⁴²

The fancy, pickpocket, and vulgar slang of Great Britain continues to increase in America and New Holland, and it may ultimately sap the foundations of our noble classical language. Prize-fighters, sharpers, and other vagabonds, transported to the former, as they are now to the latter country, for various violations of the law, generally arrive, if they live long enough, at stations of considerable eminence in the colonies. They no longer retain (as it would not be for their interest) the manners and propensities which caused them, whether they would or no, to quit their native shores; but one thing they retain, and extend; namely, their vile language. This, forsooth, is a legacy given to their families; it becomes the popular language, because it emanates from the most numerous and respectable class.

At home, this abomination has no effect on the genuine language of the realm; books, literature, &c., and a learned community, far outnumbering the ignorant and vicious, keep it in its proper place.

The *Edinburgh Review*⁴³ in an article on Channing's *Sermons*, expresses, though in no virulent form, a doubt as to the effect of free institutions on thought: "And here we will state a suspicion, into which we have been led by more than one American writer, that the establishment of civil and religious liberty is not quite so favorable to the independent formulation, and free circulation of opinion, as might be expected." The *Athenæum*⁴⁴ is of the opinion that the Americans cannot produce history:

The last good thing that we look for at the hands of our transatlantic brethren, is a history. They may write political treatises, *ad infinitum*, though most of them are too weighty (with truths or something else) to cross the Atlantic; there is no reason why they

⁴²XI (1829) 453.

⁴³L (Oct. 1829) 125.

⁴⁴III (Feb. 11, 1829) 84.

should not now and then indite a decent sermon; they have produced novels not a few; but it will be long, very long indeed, before they will produce a history. A nation which has no past life, whose inhabitants have no recollections beyond the generation immediately preceding them, are ignorant in general of the classics, and have never cultivated those habits of reflection upon the history of their own minds, which (if that habit ever existed without national feelings) might supply the want of them:—such a nation must be content to dispense with this important branch of literature.

It is well, however, for the Americans to practise composition of this kind, though they cannot hope to arrive at any great success in it.

As to the actual existence of literature in America some critics had definite opinions. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁴⁵ says:

To talk of the literature of America, is to talk of that which has no existence. Nor is it in the nature of things that this should be otherwise. . . . and it may be reasonably doubted whether, in a much more extended period, the people of the United States will be able to take rank with the nations of Europe most distinguished for literature.

This, to be sure, is not in keeping with the usual attitude of this journal. The *Athenæum*⁴⁶ concludes an article on *America and American Writers* with the frank statement: "We do not believe that America has a literature; we do not see that it has the germs of one; we do not believe that it can have one till its institutions are fundamentally changed." The writer graciously concedes, however, that he sees no reason to doubt that Americans may change their institutions when they realize their mistake. Later⁴⁷ in a review of Miss Mitford's *Stories of American Life*, the same journal discusses the same question at greater length:

The literary independence of the Americans is far from being so complete as their political, for as yet they possess no national literature, and invariably regard ours as appertaining also to them. By national literature we do not merely mean works written by Americans; but a literature that appeals directly to the national feelings—is founded on domestic incidents, illustrates or satirizes domestic manners, and, above all, administers to the just pride of a nation,

⁴⁵XXI (Oct. 1827) 412.

⁴⁶[II] (Oct. 1829) 637.

⁴⁷[IV] (Feb. 19, 1831) 115.

inspires a feeling for the national glory, and inculcates a love of country—a literature which foreigners may admire, but none can feel, in the deep sanctuary of the heart, but a native. Of course this is said generally, and all that we wish to be understood by it is, that the Americans possess no body of authors whose *esprit de corps* is national. . . .

This want of originality in American literature is, we think, likely long to continue . . . at least it will continue until a dozen or two minds such as the authors of *Knickerbocker* and the *Pioneers*, shall shed the radiance of their genius over the infant literature of America—giving confidence to the admiring millions of their countrymen, by winning golden opinions from Europe;—and until they have impressed a marked and distinctive feature by their united power. Mr. Sprague's Ode, noticed in No. 170 of this paper, had something of this nationality, and was not therefore the less welcome to us.

The judgment and opinions of Americans themselves came in for occasional criticism and condemnation. An article on *North American Review on Lord Byron's Works and Pinkney's Poetry* in the *London Magazine*⁴⁸ not only takes an American critic to task, but makes him responsible as a representative of his country.

This is the article of a clever man, who is thoroughly impregnated with cant, and possessed of a taste decidedly American; that is to say, a taste (the prevalent one of the country) for extravagance and inflation. In his criticisms on Byron's poetry, it is perfectly curious to observe how he fastens on everything tumid and exaggerated, and rejects with contempt passages which have here been esteemed of matchless spirit and beauty. A thought rapidly, simply, and familiarly expressed, is manifestly found insipid by the North American Critic who delights in the grandeur which borders on bombast.

The whole article is especially ill-natured.

The critic of Alexander Everett's *America* and Nicholas Biddle's *Eulogium of Thomas Jefferson* in the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁴⁹ objects to the extreme patriotism of the authors whose works are under review:

We cannot, as Englishmen, approve of numerous expressions to be found in these pamphlets, nor, indeed, of the whole strain of the

⁴⁸n. s. IV (Feb. 1826) 224.

⁴⁹IX (Nov. 17, 1827) 725.

language made use of by their writers. A love of country and independence may go far to justify the high tone of feeling and language here adopted, but we who wish to separate truth from these its accompaniments, cannot follow our authors, to quite such an extent as they would willingly lead us.

An article on the current issue of the *American Quarterly Review* in the *London Weekly Review*⁵⁰ begins by taking sides with America against hostile British critics, but condemns the *American Quarterly Review* for an undue exhibition of national feeling:

It is not many years since the very mention of the literature of America was the signal for a joke. In an article on the subject in a popular magazine (we believe Blackwood's) it was thought sufficient to say, in order to dispose of the criminal in a summary manner,—“They have also another poet called Dwight, and his Christian name is Timothy.” Such critics as these, however, have now begun to shove up their distorting spectacles, and to stare with their own gooseberry eyes on the literary phenomena of the transatlantic world. . . . The literature of America must be essentially one of imitation for some time to come. In her citizens, however, who take a lead in these matters, we expect something more than mere literary expertness—we expect a philosophical calmness and a republican honesty in argument. Those expectations are grievously disappointed in the work before us. There is a perpetual recurrence to topics of national soreness, and the most paltry circumstances bearing thereon are caught up with a schoolboy heat. . . . Out of the most unfeigned good will towards the American Review, we recommend the *collaborateur* who furnished this boyish article to be dismissed. In other respects the number possesses very great merit.

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁵¹ objects to the spirit of Hall's *Letters from the West*, and reads the author a lecture on filial duty:

We do not like the spirit in which this book is written. An American has a right to be as patriotic as he pleases; but he has no right to be arrogant or impertinent towards that country from which he and his nation have originally sprung. It is true that North America is now a great and an independent state; and it is also true, that it has not unfrequently been made to suffer under the taunts of narrow-minded and illiberal Englishmen, who visited it with feelings of chagrin and disappointment simply because they

⁵⁰II (March 15, 1828) 168.

⁵¹I (Dec. 1828) 85.

were no longer able to call it their own. But this spirit is rapidly dying out, and ought never to have been encouraged. At the very worst, however, it was more justifiable on the part of any of the inhabitants of the mother country than of those of its quondam colony. They long stood in a relation to each other somewhat similar to that of parent and child; and even yet Great Britain is entitled to all the respect which maturity naturally obtains from youth, and to the superior weight which a long-established and admirably balanced constitution must give to her political principles and opinions, over those of a people still raw and inexperienced in the art of government. It is to Great Britain, indeed, that the United States owe everything.

An article on the current number of the *North American Review* in the *Spirit of Literature*,⁵² while not in itself very important, is representative enough to quote at some length. Of the reply of the *North American Review* to strictures in the *Edinburgh* it says: "In this article, the complacency with which our Transatlantic brethren regard the progress made by their country in literature and science is remarkably conspicuous." It admits some improprieties on the part of British critics, but charges Americans with absurd pride and sensitiveness; and ridicules the charge that criticism of literature is exciting enmity between the two countries:

We may express ourselves as freely as we please with regard to the merits of Racine or Corneille, or La Place or Guy Lussac, without any fear of exciting a war with France; or the Americans may, if they choose, place Franklin on a par with Newton (as they do, in fact, in the article before us), compare General Brown with Wellington, and assert the superiority of Cooper to Sir Walter Scott, without there being any risk of our being tempted into a single allusion to the strength of our navy or the valour of our army; the practice of the English and the French is, to leave all such absurdities to be corrected by the laughter of mankind. Not so is it with the Americans: if you tell them that they cannot write as good poetry, or solve a mathematical problem as cleverly as some other people, they will give you for answer, that that is a question which must be left to the fleets and armies of the two nations to determine! To the Americans has the rare distinction been reserved of making the estimation in which the public men of a country are held a ground of national quarrel! This feeling of the Americans is, insooth, much to be regretted, because it . . . retards the arrival of that time so much to be desired, when, upon taking up a

⁵²I (Sept. 18, 1830) 329.

work of interest in the English language, we shall not inquire whether the author is a native of England or of America; and when a British reviewer may comment upon the productions of America, without being suspected of designing to sow discord between the two countries. That a disposition to do ample justice to American literature exists in England, is fully testified by the success which writers of talent from the other side of the Atlantic have obtained in this country . . . Witness Irving and Cooper in literature, —West and Leslie in art. . . .

If we could suppose for a moment that an English writer of ability were to compose a novel upon an American subject—were to take, for instance, the disgraceful invasion of Canada in the late war—were to depict the repeated defeats which the Americans sustained at the hands of a tithe of their numbers, the surrender of their armies, and the other disasters which attended that famous attempt at conquest, which terminated in their being not able to defend their own territory—can it be believed that such a work would be received with kindness in America . . . ? No; it would be considered a national insult. . . . Turn from this picture, and look at the manner in which the English have received and welcomed the productions of the American novelist. Cooper, a writer who may be said chiefly to occupy himself in depicting the conflicts between his countrymen and the English—those at least in which his countrymen have been successful. Has that circumstance induced the nation, whose defeat he delights to describe, to refuse him the applause and reward due to his genius? Has it not, on the contrary, hailed his appearance, together with that of other gifted Americans, as a sure token that the United States will, ere long, possess a literature of which she may justly feel proud; that a true literary taste will arise, which will drive the Pauldings and the Neals to utter despair. . . . We may safely say, that no instance can be produced, in which the claims of American authors of celebrity have been treated with neglect or severity in England. One review may perhaps speak with harshness, but justice is received from another. Indeed, the fact is, that if the circumstance of the author of a work being an American is at all alluded to, it is mentioned as a motive to treat his productions with more kindness and indulgence than if they owned an English origin.

The *Monthly Review*⁵³ in an article in which it praises Slidell's *Year in Spain*, says of American literature in general:

It is not among the least of the pleasures which we have derived from the perusal of them, that they have afforded to us a remarkable indication of the return of our American brethren to the "Wells of English undefiled," and of their abandonment of that ambitious

⁵³n. & i. ser. [XVI] (April 1831) 533.

phraseology which has so long tarnished their compositions and limited them to an ephemeral popularity. We do not of course assert that this has been the case with all their authors; their Coopers and Irvings form brilliant exceptions in a crowd of motley aspirants, though *they*, indeed seem to belong more to ourselves than to the land of their birth. But American literature, as such, has hitherto exhibited nothing destined to the enjoyment of a permanent fame, beyond the essays contained in the *Federalist*, which again date so near the separation of the two countries, that they may be said to constitute part of our political philosophy. In almost all the departments of writing the native archives of the Union as yet present a woful show of empty cases. They have no history worth reading, not a canto of poetry, no memoirs, no collections of speeches, no miscellaneous works of amusement, very few travels, and not even a single good sermon.

This, it should be remembered, was written so late as 1831.

Articles friendly to America were of different sorts. Some took the American side in the pitched battle with British critics; some merely praised American works; and some attempted a more philosophical consideration of American literary affairs. The first issue of the *Athenæum*⁵⁴ opened an attack on the reviewers, and particularly the *Quarterly* reviewers. It pronounced Lockhart quite as bad as Gifford, though in another way.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁵⁵ replying to *The Tone of British Criticism* in the *North American Review*, lectures the American critic on his lack of calmness, but protests that the hostile British reviews are not representative:

The reviewer has here lost his temper, and, in his wrath, he has allowed himself to magnify the delinquencies of a few scribblers into a token of national jealousy. We deny most unhesitatingly that articles in half-a-dozen reviews and newspapers are to be taken as expressing the sentiments of Great Britain. . . . We may laugh at some peculiarities of Trans-Atlantic growth; but is that a proof of hatred? . . . Lastly, we deny that there is any the least cause for jealousy. America is capable of becoming more than we can conceive; but the great mass of the people are conscious only of the present, and are not easily stirred by contingencies. Again, *free* America all-powerful though she be, is like Brahma in the state of contemplation, her energies cannot be di-

⁵⁴[I] (Jan. 1828) 10.

⁵⁵IV (Sept. 4, 1830) 154.

rected outwards. To enable any portion of her to act aggressively, (and it is only of a power likely to become hostile that nations are jealous,) she must be split down into smaller states, and these must be organized after a different manner. Situated as we now are, our little cock-boat would sail round her huge hulk before she could set her sails. We repeat it, there is no jealousy or ill-will harboured by the British public toward America, and the complaints of the reviewer, had they been made in a calmer mood, would have convinced us he harboured the very feelings he was imputing to others.

In his selection of instances of this jealousy, the reviewer has been rather unhappy. He condescends only upon the paper in the *Edinburgh* on Dr. Channing's works, and a later article in the *Scotsman* newspaper. The former, we agree with him, evinces a paltry and contemptible spirit. We said so at the time it appeared, and we say so again. We will go farther, and say that the tone assumed by the *Edinburgh Review* towards America has been uniformly shuffling and disreputable. But the paper in the *Scotsman* is neither an attack upon America, nor composed in a spirit of covert ill-will towards that country.

A review of Neal's *Authorship* and *Rachael Dyer* in the *Englishman's Magazine*⁵⁶ says:

American writers, deficient neither in observation nor experience, have assured their countrymen that the English people regard them with irreconcilable dislike. In doing so, they may not be aware that they completely subserve the end for which the mercenaries employed by the spoilers of that very people pursue their obliquitous vocation. They have mistaken the babble of a pitiful coterie for the voice of a high-minded community—the squeal of a rat for the roar of the Lion. We fancy that a cause may be assigned for this absence of discrimination. Some small creature, shrouding his insignificance under the wings of a review once insolently inquired,—“Who reads an American book?” The chatter of the popinjay was instantly mimicked by all the pilferers of opinion, and the idiotism was echoed and re-echoed in the bye-ways of imbecility, until an answering swell of indignation pealed across the Atlantic.

Every lover of letters admires the fruits of American genius; but with these, books published by Americans have been less frequently identified than their friends could wish. The intellectual adventurers of the States have too often preferred an humble coasting adventure in St. George's Channel, to a bold cruize on the majestic ocean, that pays dignified obeisance to their native shores. . . .

“Who reads an American book?” Not we—half so often as we

⁵⁶I (April 1831) 65.

desire. We cannot cheat ourselves with the Sketch-book or Columbus, the Pilot or the Red Rover, for unhappily we have ascertained that Geoffrey Crayon was cradled in an ivy-mantled cot at the skirt of a village kirk, in the county of Devon, and that the Travelling Bachelor first drew his nautical breath on the little ex-sovereignty of Man.

The article is somewhat bombastic, and the magazine in which it appeared ran for but one volume. Its very presence, however, in an early number of such a periodical, shows how great was the interest in American literature.

A review of Brown's novels in the *British Critic*⁵⁷ begins: "We are not disposed to remark the popularity which the lighter works of American literature have lately attained in this country." It insists that it is unreasonable to hold writers responsible for political delinquencies, or to hold the present generation responsible for the past; and that Americans should be judged, not by the utterances of ill-bred English travellers in America, but by American travellers in England. These, while sometimes inquisitive, are of a sort to be approved. The *Lady's Magazine*⁵⁸ introduces its review of Cooper's *Borderers* by saying:

Although the people of Great Britain, and the citizens of the United States of America, seem to have no great affection for each other, and are mutually censorious and satirical, the interchange of literature is constant and friendly. We receive with pleasure the productions of the American press, and we send over, in addition to the standard works of our earlier writers, copies of all the valuable publications of modern times. We readily acknowledge the talents of an Irving, respect the intellectual powers of a Channing, and are amused and interested by the novels of Cooper. The last-named writer evidently improves in his progress, and every new work from his pen is therefore read with avidity.

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁵⁹ remarks somewhat pessimistically: "It is strange how similar the style of political writing is in the democratical Union of North America, and in the more monarchical states of Europe. The real cause of this is the utter want of great practical statesmen in either."

⁵⁷II (April 1826) 53.

⁵⁸n. s. X (Oct. 1829) 512.

⁵⁹III (Jan. 26, 1830) 369.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁶⁰ grows extravagant in praise of the *Remains* of the Reverend Edmund D. Griffin:

These volumes furnish us with a very interesting view of the character and style of the literature which at this moment prevails in America. It is impossible to read them without being struck with the classical purity of taste which is cultivated in the Colleges, and which the best writers who have received their education in these seats of transatlantic learning, have recently displayed. Indeed the improvement is at once so remarkable and so rapid, that Great Britain had need look well to herself if she would maintain her superiority.

An article in *Blackwood's*⁶¹ on Irving's edition of Bryant's *Poems* makes much of the common elements of the two national literatures.

The treasures of our literature have been widely spread, and are every year spreading more widely over America; and theirs is winning its way among us, and indeed all over Europe. It is delightful to see how the spirit of ours is every where interfused through theirs, without overpowering that originality of thought and sentiment which must belong to the mind of a young people, but which among those who own a common origin, is felt rather by indescribable differences in the cast and colour of the imagery employed, than discovered in any peculiar forms or moulds in which the compositions are cast.

Owing to the peculiar conditions of America, "Her poets must be inspired by Hope rather than by Memory, who was held of old to be the Mother of Muses." A later article in *Blackwood's*⁶² on the *Remains* of the Reverend Edmund D. Griffin, moralizes in a different and a slightly flippant fashion on international amenities:

All nations, great and small, having any distinctive character of their own, may be said to hate each other, not with a deadly but a lively hatred . . . no good son of the state can be a citizen of the world. . . .

So far, then, from deprecating national jealousies, dislikes, animosities, and hatreds, we have always been anxious to contribute the little that lay in our power to their successful cultivation. . . [But] All national prejudices, therefore, we would extirpate and fling into the sea. By prejudices we mean false judgments formed before taking means within our reach, that would have enabled us

⁶⁰XXXVI (April 1832) 145.

⁶¹XXXI (April 1832) 646.

⁶²XXXII (July 1832) 91.

to form true. . . . The two countries cordially hate and love each other, according to the laws of nature. And all that we have to do is to preserve these feelings, respectively, in proper proportion, so that England and America, flourishing in amicable animosity, and inspired with reciprocal respect, command for aye the admiration of all the rest of the world. . . .

As for the literature of the Americans, we have always spoken of it more highly than any other European journal.

B. OPINIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

Little need be said here regarding the attitude of individual British authors toward America. Some consideration has been given to the views of the older men of the period in the author's *British Criticisms of American Writings, 1783-1815*, Chapter II.⁶³ Of the writers who later came into prominence many were connected with periodicals, and expounded their views in these. Others, even among those who knew something of American writings, are not known to have expressed themselves at all. Private opinions, revealed later by the publication of letters and diaries, are interesting, but could have had no great influence on the writings of their own day.

The relation between Scott and one or two Americans has been mentioned in the earlier study. Scott suffered much annoyance from American travellers of questionable breeding, who regarded him as an impersonal curiosity, and took his hospitality for granted. On the whole, he bore his inflictions well, and was a helpful friend to Irving and others whom he considered worthy. In a letter to Miss Edgeworth⁶⁴ he remarks, "They are funny people, the Americans"; and on February 24, 1824, he writes to the same correspondent:⁶⁵

I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honourable love of their country and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postpone-

⁶³Among the writers named in that chapter are Crabbe, Cowper, Blake, Coleridge, Gifford, Campbell, Scott, Byron, Moore, Shelley, Leigh Hunt, Landor, Lamb, and Godwin.

⁶⁴Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, p. 517.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 520.

ment of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling.

The letter continues with praise of the *Pilot*, which will be quoted elsewhere. Scott spoke well, on the whole, of Cooper, though some little misunderstanding arose between them over a proposed arrangement for the publication of Scott's works in America. Cooper, like some other Americans, was irritated by certain passages quoted—in at least one instance misquoted—by Lockhart in his *Life of Scott*—private and perhaps temporary expressions of feelings which Sir Walter would have had the tact not to give to the world. According to the list of Scott's critical writings in Margaret Ball's monograph, *Sir Walter Scott as a Critic of Literature*, Scott wrote no reviews of American books.

Wordsworth seems never to have paid much attention to American writings, and little to American thought. In a letter to Edward Moxon, 14th July, 1820, he writes: "We have had Mr. Bryant, the American poet, and a friend here"; but he says nothing of the conversation, which might naturally have turned toward American themes. Emerson's visit, which is described in his *English Traits*, was paid in 1833, but of this, also, there is no record on Wordsworth's part. Coleridge, after the failure of the Pantisocracy scheme, probably had little concern with America, and made few references to American literature. The antagonism of Southey to America is well known. That the opinions expressed in his review articles were genuine is shown by a passage from a letter to Caroline Bowles, August 4, 1833:⁶⁶

I hope the Monster has sent you Captain Hamilton's *Men and Manners in America*. . . . The book will amuse you, but it will leave a very painful feeling concerning the Americans. The

⁶⁶*The Correspondence of Robert Southey with Caroline Bowles*, edited by Edward Dowden, p. 279.

other day we had a New Englander here, from whom I gathered that what may be called the gentry in America live in the fear of the multitude; that they dread the progress of democracy, yet are afraid to utter a thought in opposition to it; and that no man, however rich, dares maintain an establishment the cost of which would exceed £2000 a year. The best private-library in the United States is said to be that of Professor Ticknor, a correspondent of mine, and a very interesting person; it is not so large a library as my own!

He tells me that, in proportion to the population, madness is more frequent in America than in England, and that the most frequent cause is political excitement—ambition among a people where every man thinks every office to be within his reach, and where some kind of election is always going on. This is a sad picture; yet, in America, the better minds look with alarm upon the course which we are taking in England. Ticknor, in his last letter hints at the possibility that the changes and chances of this world may bring me and mine to Boston. I think this country, whatever be the evils that await it, has less to go through than the United States. We shall save more from the wreck than they can hope during many generations to build up.

Byron was always pleased with the praise which his poems received in America, and reciprocated by expressing, in general, kindly feelings toward the New World. He was especially well impressed by Irving, whom he seemed to value for intrinsic merit, and not merely as a foreign literary curiosity.⁶⁷ Although Leigh Hunt's ancestry was connected with America, he was apparently not concerned with American writings. During the earlier years of the period, while he was associated with the *Examiner*, he showed a slight interest in American political affairs. Keats's letters to his brother George, who had emigrated to America, say less about the intellectual life of the new country than might be expected, but one is interesting:⁶⁸

Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectibility Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off—I differ there with him greatly—A country like the United States, whose greatest men are Franklins and Washingtons will never do that. They are great men doubtless, but how are they to be compared to those our countrymen Milton and the two Sidneys? The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims, the other sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles. Those Ameri-

⁶⁷See letters to Murray, in *Letters and Journals*, V, 94, 373 and 472.

⁶⁸*Letters of John Keats*, edited by Sidney Colvin, p. 175.

cans are great, but they are not sublime. Man—the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime. Birkbeck's mind is too much in the American style—you must endeavour to infuse a little spirit of another sort into the settlement, always with great caution, for thereby you may do your descendants more good than you can imagine. If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your Children should be the first American poet.

In general, Keats seems to have had no high idea of America, though there are indications that this attitude is in some degree pose.

No significant comment made by Shelley on American literature after 1815 has been found. Moore apparently continued little of the interest which might have been aroused by his visit to the United States in 1803-4. Campbell's attitude toward the United States is reflected in the *New Monthly Magazine*, of which he was editor. In general, he was friendly toward the new nation, but thought it would be long before it could produce a distinctive literature. It was through a letter of introduction given him by Campbell in 1817 that Irving first met Scott.

Several Americans who met Proctor have recorded their opinions of him, but his views of them and of their contemporaries are not available. De Quincey is known to have read later writers like Emerson and Hawthorne, but it is doubtful if he knew much concerning their predecessors.

Hazlitt's position may be inferred from the fact that he was connected first with the *Edinburgh Review*, and later with the *London Magazine*. Northcote, in his reports of conversations with Hazlitt, 1826-7, records:⁶⁹

I asked if he had seen the American novels, in one of which (the *Pilot*) there was an excellent description of an American privateer expecting the approach of an English man-of-war in a thick fog, when some one saw what appeared to be a bright cloud rising over the fog, but it proved to be the topsail of a seventy-four. N——— thought this was striking, but had not seen the book. 'Was it one of I———'s?' Oh! no, he is a mere trifler—a *filligree* man—an English *litterateur* at second-hand; but the *Pilot* gave a true and unvarnished picture of American character and manners. The storm,

⁶⁹Hazlitt's *Collected Works*, VI, 385.

the fight, the whole account of the ship's crew, and in particular of an old boatswain were done to the life—everything

Suffered a sea-change
Into something new and strange.

On land he did not do so well. The fault of American literature (when not a mere vapid imitation of ours) was, that it ran too much into dry, minute, literal description; or if it made an effort to rise above this ground of matter-of-fact, it was forced and exaggerated "horrors accumulating on horror's head." They had *no natural imagination*. This was likely to be the case in a new country like America, where there were no dim traces of the past—no venerable monuments—no romantic associations; where all (except the physical) remained to be created, and where fiction, if they attempted it, would take as extravagant and preposterous a shape as their local descriptions were jejune and servile. Cooper's novels and Brown's romances (something on the manner of Godwin's) were the two extremes.

The following passage from an article by Hazlitt in the *London Magazine* of September 1820, apropos of the actor Kean's visit to America, is concerned especially with the stage, but shows the author's opinions of the intellectual condition of the country:⁷⁰

We also fear that the critical soil of America is slippery ground. Jonathan is inclined to the safe side of things, even in matters of taste and fancy. They are a little formal and commonplace in those parts. They do not like liberties in morals, nor excuse poetical licenses. They do not tolerate the privileges of birth or readily sanction those of genius. A very little excess above the watermark of mediocrity is with them quite enough. Mr. Kean will do well not to offend by extraordinary efforts, or dazzling eccentricities. He should be the Washington of actors, the modern Fabius. If he had been educated in the fourth form of St. Paul's school, like some other **top-tragedians** that we know, we should say to him, in classic terms, *in medio tutissimus ibis*. 'Remember that they hiss the Beggar's Opera in America. If they do not spare Captain Macheath, do you think they will spare you? Play off no pranks in the United States. Do not think to redeem great vices by great virtues. They are inexorable to the one, and insensible to the other. Reserve all works of supererogation till you come back, and have safely run the gauntlet of New York, of Philadelphia, of Baltimore, and Boston. Think how Mr. Young would act,—and act with a little more meaning, and a little less pomp than he would—who,

⁷⁰Hazlitt's *Collected Works*, VIII, 473.

we are assured on credible authority, is that model of indifference that the New World would worship and bow down before.' We have made bold to offer this advice, because we wish well to Mr. Kean; and because we wish to think as well as possible of a republican public. We watch both him and them 'with the rooted malice of a friend.'

Miss Mitford, who did much to popularize American writings in England, numbered among her correspondents Miss Sedgwick, N. P. Willis, and George Ticknor; and at a later period James T. Fields, Whittier, and Bayard Taylor. She seems to have had a genuine admiration for much in American literature, though she cared little for Irving. In a letter to Miss Sedgwick⁷¹ she praises *Redwood* and the *New England Tale*, and continues:

Cooper is certainly, next to Scott, the most popular novel writer of the age. Washington Irving enjoys a high and fast reputation; the eloquence of Dr. Channing, if less widely, is perhaps more deeply felt; and a lady, whom I need not name, takes her place amongst these great men, as Miss Edgeworth does among our Scotts and Chalmerses.

The collection of American tales which Miss Mitford edited was hackwork, and while she took some part in the selection she recognized that she was selling the use of her name. She writes:⁷²

They have been, of course, really selected by me from an immense mass of material; and the first work especially, will be really very good—characteristic, national, various, and healthy—as different from the "Sketch Book" (which in my mind, is a pack of maudlin trash) as anything you can imagine. Mr. Talfourd earnestly advised my doing this. He says that the thing will not in the slightest degree interfere with my own works, and that it was an easy way of getting money, though I never worked harder in my life than in wading through the mass of MSS. and letter-press to make the selection.

Judging by references in his works Landor was probably less interested in America at this time than earlier. His somewhat unfortunate acquaintance with N. P. Willis did not begin until 1834. The views of a number of English essayists like James Mill, Gifford, Wilson, and others are best learned by re-

⁷¹Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, *Life of Mary R. Mitford*, II, 303.

⁷²*Ibid.*, II, 296.

calling the critical journals with which they were associated. Many other writers doubtless expressed themselves regarding America, but their individual utterances are so much less significant than the mass of periodical criticism that they may well be ignored.

On summary view of the eighteen years from 1815 to 1833, it may be seen that the prejudices arising from the War of 1812 were fresh for a time; and that a little later the appearance of the early work of Irving and Cooper tended to command for American writings an attention not, as will be seen in later chapters, unmixed with respect. Late in the period both the animosities of the war and the interest aroused by the novelty of American writings had subsided, and England seemed settling into the attitude of distrust and slight disdain which characterized her views of America for so much of the nineteenth century. Avowed hostility to America and American institutions had decreased. Open attacks were fewer, and cases of flagrant misrepresentation were not numerous; but on the other hand there were fewer warmly partisan defenses of America and panegyrics on her institutions. Earlier admirers and detractors were alike replaced to a considerable extent by fairer, but unsympathetic critics. Most reviewers gave to American writings all the praise they deserved, but they so mixed with this a modicum of censure that the flavor of the whole mass was tainted. Moreover, many of them, intentionally or unintentionally, spoke in a complacent tone which was more irritating than the open expression of contempt. Americans did not need to be so thin-skinned as they were accused of being to feel hurt at British criticisms, yet they were at a great disadvantage when they tried to formulate their grievances; for the most painful utterances were not falsehoods, but unpleasant truths introduced irrelevantly, or given undue emphasis.

CHAPTER IV

IRVING

The first production of an American author to gain general recognition in England as a work of pure literature was the *Sketch Book* of Washington Irving. Some of Franklin's writings were, it is true, widely read; but Franklin was thought of as a statesman and a scientist, rather than as a literary man. The works of Charles Brockden Brown attracted some slight attention when they were first published, but their greatest vogue in England came later. Some American works on theology, many on politics, and some on science, travel, and exploration were well known in England, but none made its way solely because of its literary merit. Irving, himself, had been mentioned in England before the *Sketch Book*. A London reprint of *Salmagundi* had appeared in 1811, and had been made the subject of a long article in the *Monthly Review*. Scott had praised the *Knickerbocker's History* in 1813,¹ though so far as is known it was not reviewed by any British journal until after the advent of the *Sketch Book*.

Irving came to England in 1815, shortly after the close of the War. At first he was occupied in business, though he found time to meet a number of men of letters, notably Campbell and Scott. It was not until late in 1818 that he again turned his attention to writing; and the first part of the *Sketch Book*, containing four pieces, was not published in America until May, 1819. Copies must have found their way to England with reasonable promptness. The author apparently first saw his own work in print some time in July. In the issue for August 24² the *Kaleidoscope*, or *Literary and Scientific Mirror*,

¹See the author's *British Criticisms of American Writings*, 1783-1815, pp. 84-86, 13.

²II, 25.

a slight literary weekly published at Liverpool, reprinted *The Wife* with the following editorial note:

The following affecting extract from a work recently written by an American gentleman of great talent and celebrity, is copied from one of the latest New York papers. Its perusal gives us a high relish for a sight of the original, the whole of which, if not too long, we think we should be inclined to give in weekly portions, in the *Kaledoscope* [sic]. If this paragraph should be seen by anyone in the habit of receiving the most recent American publications, we shall not despair of gratifying our readers with the entire work, of which we now proceed to lay before our readers the following specimen.

To the selection is prefixed a note from the *Hudson Whig* crediting the tale to "that elegant scholar, George Washington Irving."

This was probably the earliest publication of any part of the *Sketch Book* in Great Britain. In its issue for September 25, 1819,³ however, the *Literary Gazette* reprinted *The Voyage*, *Roscoe*, and *The Wife*,⁴ introduced by the following somewhat confused note.⁵

The following production has been handed to us by an able friend, who tells us that it is the work of a very intelligent native of America, just arrived from New York; 'to whom,' he adds, 'I put a thousand questions, begging to know of him something of the general and particular taste of literature in America, whether the taste of that people corresponded with the taste of ours, as to favourite English authors, &c. &c. I mentioned the *Literary Gazette*, and said, I was sure that some specimens of American talent would be liked in its columns, to which he replied, that though they condescended to pirate from us, he dared not suppose that they had anything to tempt reprisals. * * * * On the eve of his departure from the American shore, he sent for, among other literary trifles, to beguile an idle hour on the voyage,—*The Sketch Book*, from which I have obtained permission to copy the extracts now offered for your acceptance. * * *'" We shall be much mistaken if they do not give a high idea of trans-atlantic talent.

³III, 617.

⁴The only other sketch in Part I of the *Sketch Book* was *Rip van Winkle*, which, somewhat oddly, the editor chose for omission.

⁵The punctuation, including the quotation marks and the asterisks, is that of the original.

According to a statement made by the editor of the *Literary Gazette* in a later review of the *Sketch Book*⁶ Irving sent a note saying that he intended to publish the entire work in England, and the *Gazette* abandoned further reprints in deference to his wishes. Whether he made a similar request to the *Kaleidoscope* does not appear. There is no evidence of such action either in the journal itself or in the biographies of Irving. It is quite possible, indeed, that the Liverpool publication never came to his notice. At all events this enterprising little folio reprinted virtually all of the *Sketch Book*, and on every possible occasion referred complacently to its service in making the essays and tales accessible. In introducing the second instalment, October 5, 1819,⁷ it said:

In the present volume of the *Kaleidoscope*, page 25, we gave an extract from a new American work, written by the celebrated George Washington Irving. We then observed that the perusal of his sketch of the 'Wife' gave us a high relish for a sight of the original work; and we have since commissioned a friend to procure us the work itself in America, with the intention of giving it entire in weekly portions of the *Kaleidoscope*—Our friend, by whose assistance we expected thus to gratify our readers, has not yet arrived in New York; we are enabled, however, to accomplish our object sooner than we contemplated by the help of the *Literary Gazette*, the editor of which has, it seems, been put in possession of a copy of the *Sketch Book*. We trust it is his intention not to *mutilate* so excellent a composition; and not suffer any political ties to interfere with a duty the *public* will naturally expect from him.

In the next issue⁸ it printed the *Roscoe* with the following comment:⁹

The following sketch would have been inserted in the last *Mercury*, had we not been most earnestly requested to withhold it by a gentleman whose wish, upon such an occasion, carried with it more weight than a positive prohibition. The motives of delicacy which interfered with its appearance in the *Mercury*, would also have suppressed its insertion in the *Kaleidoscope*, had not the present chapter formed the continuation of a work which we had previously announced our intention to give entire (in weekly portions, whenever

⁶IV (April 8, 1820), 228.

⁷II, 49.

⁸P. 56.

⁹It should be remembered that Roscoe was a citizen of Liverpool. The *Kaleidoscope* again reprinted this sketch on the occasion of Roscoe's death, IX (July 5, 1831) 417.

we could obtain access to the original). We are fully aware that there are circumstances, which, at the present moment, conspire to strengthen those objections, which the subject of the following sketch is known generally to feel towards any public display of the qualities that have endeared him to his native town and the country at large; feeling convinced, however, that the article will be generally copied into the public newspapers, whether we forbear to transcribe it or otherwise, we must decide not to deprive our readers of a treat to which they have a prior claim.

Then followed a hiatus in the reprints until December 28,¹⁰ when the editor was able to give *Rip van Winkle* with the following announcement:

The three first numbers of this celebrated work may be found in the present volume of the *Kaleidoscope*, pages 25, 49 and 56,—The copy from which we transcribe the present sketch has been just received from a friend, who procured it for us in America; and we believe we may state with truth that it now appears for the first time in this country.—We can promise our readers considerable amusement by the continuation of this singular, ingenious, but we must add, unequal performance.

Not only did the London edition bring no end to the piracy—though after a time the reprints, which continued almost weekly until June, 1820, ceased to announce the selections as “Never before published in this country”—but the thrifty editor was pleased to say on September 26, 1820:¹¹

It was with pleasure and surprise, in which we trust our readers will participate, that we found upon a second examination of the latter part of the *Sketch Book*, recently published in London, that two or three of these masterly compositions had escaped us, at the time we made the collection which appeared in the second volume of the old series of the *Kaleidoscope*. Amongst the pieces still in reserve is the following most admirable sketch, conceived in the happiest moments, and written in the best style of an author, whose talents we may be thought to overrate, when we venture to express the opinion that he is without any rival in the peculiar species of composition which distinguishes the *Sketch Book* of Geoffrey Crayon. What Churchill invidiously observed of Holland may be applied to America, as identified with our favourite author:—

*Genius is of no country, her pure ray
Shines all abroad, as general as the day;
Foe to restraint, from place to place she flies,
And may hereafter in Columbia rise.*

¹⁰II, 97.

¹¹n.s. I, 97.

It is indeed most singular, that an American should have acquired a more intimate knowledge of English habits, manners, and peculiarities, as well as of the characteristic features of the country itself, than we find evinced by our own native authors. He alternately reminds us of Goldsmith, Addison, and Grose the humorous antiquarian.

This new series of reprints was continued through October. For more than a year the *Sketch Book* furnished one provincial journal with its chief stock in trade, and the editor's persistence probably indicates a response on the part of his readers, as his fulsome praise shows his own judgments.

✓ Reviews of the *Sketch Book* began to appear almost as soon as did the reprints. The *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (*Scot's Magazine*) for September, 1819,¹² after a discussion of the state of American literature in general says of the *Sketch Book* itself:

Although there are in it, no doubt, several marks of the childhood of literature, such as, affected imitation of the weaker and more sickly parts of our pathetic writers, still it shows, in many passages, an aspiration after an excellence which is by no means unattained. It proves to us distinctly, that there is a *mind* working in America, and that there are materials, too, for it to work upon, of a very singular and romantic kind. Mrs. Grant had before shown us, in her fine spirited sketch in *the American Lady*, that the reminiscences of that country might at least go "sixty years" back, and that, when we got to that period, we came into a very peculiar character of society, almost as curious and interesting as anything described in *Waverley*. In this work before us there is a short fanciful tale which gives us a notion of what may be made of such materials.

The article closes with two sketches reprinted in full; and two more are given in the next number.

Blackwood's, in an article by Lockhart¹³ *On the Writings of Charles Brockden Brown and Washington Irving*, expresses surprise that the *Sketch Book* should have first appeared in America, and says that it should be republished in England.¹⁴

¹²V, 206.

¹³See Pierre M. Irving's *Life of Washington Irving*, II 451.

¹⁴Scott doubtless inspired this article; and Scott was at the time endeavoring to help Irving to make satisfactory publishing arrangements in Great Britain. He also, in the autumn of 1819, suggested Irving as editor of a proposed Tory newspaper to be established in Edinburgh. (Lang, *Life and Letters of Lockhart*, p. 226.)

He goes on: "Nothing has been written for a long time, for which it would be more safe to promise great and easy acceptance"; and after quoting *The Royal Poet* comments: "It is, we think, very graceful—ininitely more so than any piece of American writing that ever came from any other hand, and well entitled to be classed with the best English writings of our day."

The *New Monthly Magazine* for March, 1820,¹⁵ devotes much space to a rather unfavorable picture of literary conditions in America, but speaks well of the *Sketch Book* as "calculated to improve our opinion of American literature." The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* for March 18¹⁶ quotes with approval from Lockhart's article in *Blackwood's*, comments, as was usual, on the sketch *English Writers on America*, and praises both *Knickerbocker* and the *Sketch Book*. The taste of the critic may be inferred from the fact that he chooses for illustrative reprint *The Broken Heart*.

The reviews already mentioned were based on the stray copies of the American edition which had reached England. After the appearance of the London reprint of the first volume, some time in March, 1820, notices were still more numerous. The *Literary Gazette* for April 8¹⁷ refers to its earlier reprinting of some sketches, and praises the work, though with a reservation in case of *English Writers on America*.

Except in a paper on English Writers we discover no trace of the less pleasing side of the American character. There the author (page 108), complains as we conceive without reason, boasts without foundation, and threatens without effect. . . Surely Mr. Irving has by this time dismissed the last slight touches of that impression which induced him to fancy that an American author would meet with an unfair reception from a British public . . . for his *Sketch Book* has been quoted most widely, and every voice has been raised to hail the appearance of a performance so honourable to its author, and so creditable to his native land. In that opinion we cordially join.

An article in Volume II, in the issue for July 25¹⁸ is in similar tone.

¹⁵XIII, 303.

¹⁶II, 176.

¹⁷IV, 228.

¹⁸p. 465.

The *Investigator* for May, 1820¹⁹ in installing a department "American Literature and Intelligence" animadverts to the paper on *English Writers*, which it says contains "too much truth." It strongly commends the *Sketch Book* as a whole, which it credits to "Mr. Washington Irvine." The *British Critic* for June²⁰ is hostile to America, but gives some faint and grudging praise to Irving and his work.

6-15
The book is not one of very great pretensions. . . . the impression which remains upon the mind after reading it, is extremely slight. Such as the impression is, however, it is quite in favour both of the book and the writer . . . However, these "Sketches" are really in many respects clever; and they have the additional recommendation of being (what certainly has the merit of variety) an American production.

After ridiculing the eulogy on Roscoe as extravagant, and saying that *Rip van Winkle* "is told pleasantly enough," the reviewer makes the paper on *English Writers on America* the text for a long recital of American faults, and continues:

65 } With respect to the entertainment which we derived from these several compositions, we do not feel disposed to speak very highly. But we think the fault lies much more in the fault inherent in all professedly sentimental compositions, than in the ability of the writer.

In the *Edinburgh Review* for August²¹ Jeffrey begins an article on the *Sketch Book*:

Though this is a very pleasing book in itself, and displays no ordinary reach of thought and elegance of fancy, it is not exactly on that account that we are now tempted to notice it as a very remarkable publication,—and to predict that it will form an era in the literature of the nation to which it belongs. It is the work of an American, entirely bred and trained in that country—originally published within its territory—and, as we understand, very extensively circulated, and very much admired among its natives. Now the most remarkable thing in a work so circumstanced certainly is, that it should be written throughout with the greatest care and accuracy, and worked up to great purity and beauty of diction, on the model of the most elegant and polished

¹⁹I, 156.

²⁰n. s. XIII, 645.

²¹XXXIV, 160.

of our native writers. It is the first American work, we rather think, of any description, but certainly the first purely literary production, to which we could give this praise; and we hope and trust that we may hail it as the harbinger of a purer and juster taste. . . .

The critic goes on to praise the author's character, judgment, and taste, though he cannot keep from complaining :

The manner perhaps throughout is more attended to than the matter; and the care necessary to maintain the rhythm and polish of the sentences, has sometimes interfered with the force of the reasoning, or limited and impoverished the illustrations they might otherwise have supplied.

On the whole, the notice was a favorable one; and in judging of the slight acidity which may be detected in some of the praise it may be remembered that the preceding number of the *Edinburgh* had contained the reply to Walsh's strictures on English criticisms, and that the subject of Anglo-American literary relations was a trifle sore.

The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*²² praises Irving especially for his thorough knowledge of English manners and English character. The *Edinburgh Monthly Review* for September²³ speaks of Irving's success as

an encouragement to hope for a better understanding between them [the British] and their transatlantic neighbours, than has for some time past existed. In saying this, we have no hesitation to admit that the praise of the advance towards good-fellowship is due to the author; and we shall be content to claim for ourselves the negative merit of being neither insensible to the excellencies of temper and talent which have prompted and enabled him to attempt it nor ungrateful for the benefits which are likely to result from its accomplishment.

The article continues :

He is altogether a most agreeable writer—full of fancy and warm thought—alive in every sense, and at every nerve, to the beauties of nature—just to the fair demands, and liberal to the failings of his species; but by no means void of that spirit which makes a man what Dr. Johnson called a "good hater"; and far less a victim to that spurious sentimentality which can find an apology for every vice. He is a lover of the antique in national history, by

²²II, 194 and II (Aug. 1820), 546.

²³IV, 303.

the way, no ordinary excellence in an American. . . . His sketches, moreover, put us in mind of some of the best papers in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, but it is to convince us that in several respects he excels them.

But, with all his excellencies, "Mr. Crayon seems to us defective in taste, and in consequence to degenerate at times into common-place vulgarities." The critic cites as examples of "gross caricatures which could have been looked for only in the portfolio of a venal libeller, or the window of a dealer in low prints," the fox-hunting vicar, and (somewhat oddly) the contrast between the nobleman and the vulgar rich man at church. Of this last he says: "Besides their coarseness and vulgarity, there is a degree of invidiousness in such portraits, to which a man of high spirit would disdain to afford a tenement in his breast. We dislike them the more, because, as they cannot have been drawn for any individuals, they must be conceived to be either copied from the worst authorities or to be intended for likenesses of genera and species. Either supposition is disadvantageous to the painter." Except for this one outburst, so clearly indicative of the writer's church and party sentiments, the notice is throughout a favorable one.

The *London Magazine and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review* for September,²⁴ a relatively unimportant journal, indulges in some amusingly high-flown praise:

It is not often that we are called upon to perform a task so pleasing as the present. . . . Mr. Crayon is a young man of superior abilities and holds out a real prospect of success. The rainbow of his promise is even now throwing its beams across the sky; and from the varied refulgence of its hues, we augur an auspicious meridian. His style is founded on the good old essayists of our youth. . . . It [the *Sketch Book*] came recommended to us as the modest peace-offering and first fruits of American sensibility; and we received the stranger with delight. Our joyous anticipations were immediately set vigorously to work; and, in the enthusiasm of our hope, we expected great marvels of America. We trusted she would in future be as much allied to us in genius as in good will; and that, though oceans rolled between the sister countries, "they twain might be as one flesh." . . . Mr. Crayon, as we have before observed, promises great things; and while the Leviathan of Cockneyism is wallowing about in the filth of his

²⁴II, 281.

popular opinions, we are happy to see a young man who is likely by his exertions to resist the encroachments of the monster, and dissipate the charm of novelty that has so long hung about him. . . . All that the purest imagination could conceive is to be met with in the pages of the *Sketch Book*. . . . He has all the wit, the playfulness, and the ease of Addison, with an infinitude of feeling that the *Spectator* could never attain.

After this panegyric it is not surprising that the reviewer chooses extracts from the more sentimental pieces, *The Broken Heart* and *The Pride of the Village*.

The *Monthly Review* for October, 1820,²⁵ pronounces Irving's pieces too finished for crayon sketches, and says that "Without aspiring to the highest merit of strength and originality in design, they are intitled to the praise of elegance in execution." The article, which is largely taken up with a discussion of the mutual relations of England and America, seems in places a trifle patronizing in tone. It makes comparisons, to Irving's disadvantage, with Roger de Coverley at Westminster Abbey, and Goldsmith at Eastcheap, and concludes:

This writer is probably a young man, and in that case his enthusiasm should excite our envy rather than our censure; otherwise, we should say that he is a little too romantic, and that he festoons his descriptions somewhat gaudily with epithets and apostrophes. On the whole, the attitude of the review is one of guarded kindness.

In November, 1820, the *British Critic*²⁶ says of the second volume:

The volume before us displays at least equal talent with the first; we have read it through, and in spite of a good deal of mistaken taste and misdirected talent—misdirected, we mean, only from a too frequent endeavour to be making something out of nothing; for, on the score of feeling and morality, the work is unexceptionable;—we feel most happy in renewing our acquaintance with the author.

After complaining of too close a following of Mackenzie the critic advises the author:

Our author is an American, and therefore, perhaps, may not understand the present feeling in this country, among people of

²⁵XCIII, 198.

²⁶n. s. XIV, 314.

good sense, with respect to this matter; perhaps this is his best apology: but we sincerely hope, that a further residence in this island will induce him to take for the future a more manly line of composition. . . . If he will only keep apart from all "blue stockings," and should be so fortunate as not to become infected with slang and vulgar opinions, such as we are sorry to say, he is almost sure, in one degree or other, to imbibe, if he mixes intimately with any except the very highest literary society, in this country at the present day, he may make himself in the history of American literature, not unlike what Addison is in our own; and higher praise or stronger incitement, we know not that we could easily hold out.

Westminster Abbey is pronounced "altogether a very childish and indifferent performance"; the *Christmas Sketches* are "long and not particularly entertaining"; *Little Britain*, on the other hand is "very agreeable and humorous"; and *John Bull* is praiseworthy. In view of the extreme and persistent anti-Americanism of the *British Critic* the conclusion is remarkable:

We would gladly believe, and will take our author's word for the fact, that a country in which the author of these Sketches received his education, and formed his opinions, cannot be deserving of all the bitter sarcasm and reproach, which writers in this island have heaped upon it. For our own parts, we hope to see the day, when all animosities and mean jealousies between this country and that of our author, will be sunk in oblivion. A few such writers as this before us, on both sides of the Atlantic, would do more to promote this happy consummation, than could be effected, possibly, by events of apparently much greater moment.

The *Monthly Magazine or British Register* for November²⁷ in a brief notice of the second volume characterizes the *Sketch Book* as:

A work which we consider not only very superior to the usual productions of trans-atlantic genius, but one which bids fair to rank high among the best classical writings of our own country.

The article further praises Irving's solidity as well as his lighter qualities. In a discussion of the *Edinburgh Review* in the same issue²⁸ the *Sketch Book* is again referred to:

²⁷ L., 362.

²⁸ L., 304.

Undoubtedly it is the most gentlemanly work that has yet reached us from the other side of the Atlantic; but there is another, a "Life in Pennsylvania," which we think the production of a superior mind: indeed, few works in the English language have of late years appeared written with more terseness and elegance, than the historical memoir alluded to, . . . But to return to the "Sketch Book," it is chiefly valuable to the Americans as a work of taste; it must flatter them to see a native production so generally esteemed for the minor intellectual qualities of composition, phraseology, and style. In point of merit, Mr. Geoffrey Crayon does not rank above the common scale of ordinary gentlemen, but he has all the good manners, urbanity, and self-possession which the character requires, and more good humour than many gentlemen have the happiness to display. ✓

When the *Quarterly Review* at length noticed the *Sketch Book*, in April, 1821,²⁹ it did so in a typical article, with grudging, patronizing praise, and the introduction of irrelevant asides on all sorts of matters, even slavery.

This is one of the best samples which we have yet seen of American literature; for though it is, as indeed it professes to be, of a light and unpretending character, it is good of its kind; full of imagination, and embellished with a delicacy of feeling, and a refinement of taste, that do not often belong to our transatlantic descendants. . . . 50

'The Wife' is pretty; but we doubt whether it is natural, and are sure it is not English nature. There is an affectation in the sentiment and an artificial smartness in the getting up of the incidents. . . . 'English Writers on America,' written for the most part in a spirit of good sense and moderation which could scarcely be expected from an American,—even when intended for publication on this side of the water. There are some traits of national obliquity. . . . 52
53

The 'Broken Heart' is very affecting, and the 'Boar's Head' is very dull. We should have been glad to see more of English society and English manners in the 'Sketch Book.' . . . 55

'Westminster Abbey,' however, reminds us too strongly of the Spectator's visit to the same place: it has, besides, certain fictions to which the writer ought not to have stooped; and the Christmas article, which is confessedly rather a compilation from the histories of former times than the result of actual observation, is spun out beyond all bounds. The dinner in particular is *overdone*. 58

The reviewer judiciously pronounced *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Rip van Winkle*, and *The Spectre Bridegroom* the

²⁹XXV, 50.

best things in the book; though he naively assumed that the description of the Van Tassel homestead was that of a typical American farmhouse. He condemned the author for making so much of *Roscoe*, found *Little Britain* tiresome, and said "We could willingly dispense with *Philip of Pokanoket*." He considered Irving "very happy in what is called *sentimental* description." Some passages of the article which comment on America in general, but which have no particular relation to Irving, will be quoted in another place. In conclusion:

The author before us is the best writer of English, in our estimation of that term, that America has produced since the era of her independence. He seems to have studied our language—where alone it can be studied in all its strength and perfection—in the writings of our sterling old authors.

The foregoing criticisms of the *Sketch Book*, published within a year of the appearance of the London edition, differ widely, as might be expected; but they agree in accepting the collection as a work to be reckoned with. On the whole, they judge it on its merits, and not merely as a freakish emanation from a barbarous land, and they extend to it a welcome rather more cordial than might be expected. Before the middle of the year 1821 it had become generally known and was everywhere referred to. In May, 1821, an ingenious correspondent of *Blackwood's*, William Bainbrigge, contributed the theory that "the American tale of *Ripvanwinkle* [sic]" must have been drawn from the *Life of Epimionidas* [sic] by Diogenes Laertes, and gave an extract in support of his contention.³⁰ Reprints of favorite sketches were common in the lighter magazines.³¹

³⁰The continued vogue of the same tale is shown by the production at the Adelphi Theatre, London, in 1832, of "a new romantic drama called *Rip Van Winkle, or, the Helmsman of the Spirit Crew*, by a Mr. Bernard. The first performance is noticed in the *Athenaeum*, [V] (Oct. 13, 1832) 668. Apparently the play was but moderately successful. This was not the first of the tales to be dramatized. In the "Theatrical Journal" department of the *European Magazine* for July, 1821 (LXXX:81) mention is made of a farce at Drury Lane entitled *The Spectre Bridegroom, or a Ghost in Spite of Himself*, said to be based on the *Sketch Book* tale. The critic says "We cannot highly praise the piece," but considers it "sufficiently amusing to have a moderate popularity."

³¹Many of the reviews already noticed gave one or more sketches complete as illustrative extracts. The reprints in the *Literary Gazette* and the *Kaleidoscope* have already been mentioned. Among others printed at this time and a little later are: *English Writers on America* and *Rip Van Winkle*, in *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (*Scot's Magazine*)

Irving also seems to have attracted a train of followers, if we may judge by the number of English works which are described by critics as imitations of the *Sketch Book*.³²

Criticism of the *Sketch Book* after the early months of 1821 was usually in connection with one of Irving's later works, for which it naturally furnished a standard for comparison. John Neal, in his *Blackwood* articles, discusses it with a mixture of extravagant praise and petty fault-finding. N. Ince, a correspondent of the *Olio* for October 23, 1830,³³ exaggerates Irving's difficulties in getting a hearing in England, and maintains that the *Sketch Book* would probably never have been known if *Blackwood's* had not called attention to it.

Bracebridge Hall was the eagerly awaited successor of a book which had come as a surprise, and had achieved a nationwide popularity. As such it was promptly reviewed by every literary periodical, and extracts from it were reprinted far and wide. When it appeared Irving was probably at the acme of his fame in England; he was certainly at the point where his every word induced the greatest amount of critical comment. In a letter quoted by his biographer he rejoiced that Gifford, then literary adviser to Murray, thought *Bracebridge* better than the *Sketch Book*. Murray published it on May 23, 1822, and it was reviewed only two days later, May 25, in the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*.³⁴

There is no writer of the present day, who has reached the summit of literary fame by such rapid strides as Mr. Washington Irving. It is true his talents had been somewhat neglected in the United States, or he would never have written a second book before his first had been reprinted in England. . . .

That an American should write English well is not very surprising, but that a gentleman born and brought up in the United States,

II (Oct. 1819), 317; *The Pride of the Village* in *Lonsdale Magazine*, 263, June, 1820; *The Wife*, in *The Hive*, I (Feb. 1823), 285 (given without credit); condensed versions of *The Wife*, *The Widow and Her Son*, and *Rip van Winkle* in the *Ladies' Monthly Museum*, Imp. ser. XXIV: 121, XXV: 121, and XXVI: 181, 1826-7, respectively. These selections in the *Museum* are all signed "D. D.", though the first is credited in a footnote to the *Sketch Book*.

³²One of these, *The Life and Remains of Wilmot Warwick*, edited by his friend Henry Vernon, is noticed in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*, XXIV (Dec. 1828) 520.

³³VI, 282.

³⁴IV, 321.

should not only possess an intimate acquaintance with our best and earliest writers, and the very curiosities of literature; but that he should know so much of the local customs and peculiarities of England as Mr. Irving does, is really astonishing, when we consider how short a time he has been in this country, and how very ignorant we often are of these customs ourselves.

Of Mr. Irving as a writer, public opinion has already decided so strongly in his favour, that it is unnecessary for us to add anything to what we have already said, in the reviews of his former works. He is the Goldsmith of the age, and frequently recalls [sic] to our recollection that best of English writers.

The new work is said to possess "full as much interest and more variety than the *Sketch Book*." In connection with this article and in succeeding issues of the *Chronicle* are several long extracts.

Other reviews followed promptly. The *Literary Gazette* for June 1³⁵ gave luke-warm praise, saying that the book was not so good as the *Sketch Book*, but had some merit. The *Museum* of the same date³⁶ is somewhat more commendatory. The editor of the *Kaleidoscope* (Liverpool), who had before printed all the *Sketch Book* in his columns, began on June 11³⁷ with some pieces from *Bracebridge Hall*, praising the new collection and calling repeated attention to his part in introducing Irving to English readers.

An article in *Blackwood's* for June differs greatly in tone from that which greeted the *Sketch Book*.

Now, the fact is, that the critical works of respectability praised the *Sketch Book* with justice, but bestowed on it no very extraordinary commendation. It was the talkers, the *blues*, who took up the theme—elevated it to the skies, and who now seem hugely inclined to precipitate it from its height of fame.

While the critic finds some commendation for *Bracebridge Hall*, he considers it inferior to its predecessor. He objects especially to the character of the Squire, whom he does not consider as a true model of an English gentleman. *Annette Delarbre*, however, "is indeed exquisitely beautiful, and displays stronger powers over the pathetic than are evinced, even by the *Sketch Book*."

³⁵Vl, 339.

³⁶l, 83.

³⁷n. s. II, 385.

Mr. Irving is evidently an amiable and a well-meaning man; and we like him the better for the good-natured vanity which he betrays, in asserting that his philanthropic labours have been crowned with success. That England has of late evinced friendly sentiments towards America, there can be no doubt; but as those sentiments were chiefly marked by the reception of the *Sketch Book*, it is evident that they preceded that talented work, and that the success of Mr. Irving's book was more owing to our liberal feelings, than our liberal feelings to Mr. Irving's book.

The most striking passage in the article, a strong protest against too much tolerance for things American, will be quoted in another place.

By July, 1822, most critical journals were ready to notice *Bracebridge Hall*. The greater number of criticisms make comparisons with the *Sketch Book*, and the majority pass the judgment, which posterity has on the whole affirmed, that the earlier work is the better. Many of them also discuss the accuracy of Irving's portrayals of English life—some fairly, some with an undue sensitiveness, and some with an utter failure to understand that the Squire and his household were not supposed to be typical figures of 1820.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*⁵⁸ is among the journals which think that Irving has not succeeded so well on this as on former occasions:

We must premise, however, that although the author's delineations are full of humour, and gentlemanly pleasantry, as sketches of society in England, the volumes are comparatively worthless, as no one ever heard of a family residing in any part of these united kingdoms at this present time, whose peculiarities and traits of character bear any sort of resemblance to the sketches which Mr. Irving has professed to give of them. He can only have read of such persons in old books of a hundred years standing; no such beings exist now a days.

After giving illustrative quotations the article concludes:

Mr. Irving's modesty attributes his success to his being an American. For some part of it he is doubtless indebted to this circumstance, but he is a gentleman of too great talents not to have made a considerable impression on our "reading public," even though he had been a *native*.

⁵⁸XCII. 54.

*Irving's
Sketch
Book*

The *European Magazine*³⁹ prefers *Bracebridge* to the *Sketch Book*, and indulges in extravagant, misdirected praise.

To deny its merits, would be to acknowledge ourselves devoid of all taste and feeling. The characters described in "Bracebridge Hall" present us with the most beautiful and, at the same time, with the most faithful models of primitive English manners, judging of them from the remains which are still among us. . . . Even Sterne did not possess the art of exciting imagination in so powerful a manner. . . .

There are few writers of the day perfectly free from the use of hacknied modern phrases; but in the author of "Bracebridge Hall" we cannot trace even a vestige of them. . . . His style is that of natural and unaffected eloquence. . . .

The great merit of "Bracebridge Hall" is the exquisite delineation of character, or rather of manners. . . . Our author is nowhere a copiest; that he takes his images and descriptions from nature alone, and that he always views nature with the inspired eyes of painting and poetry.

The *Monthly Literary Register*⁴⁰ in a very thorough analysis bestows praise only less flattering than that in the *European Magazine*, but qualifies it by numerous exceptions. It says: "We acknowledge him at the head of his class. We crown him as the prince of modern essay-writers"; and, "Considered by itself *Bracebridge Hall* is equal, in its line, to any book of the present day." The style, however, is pronounced questionable in places, and the characters suggest too closely those of the *Roger de Coverley Papers*. The *Stout Gentleman* and *Annette Delarbre* are especially commended.

In the *Literary Speculum*⁴¹ a reviewer who signs himself "H" bestows much detailed praise, in slightly over-rhetorical language. After saying that "few writers in this age of literary fraud and quackery possess so much genuine merit, or have so honourable a claim to distinction as the author of the *Sketch Book*," the critic comments at some length on the difficulties which Irving encountered in making his way in England.

At length, fortunately, the zealous praise of Christopher North (it is good to have friends everywhere) drew attention to his

³⁹LXXXII, 55.

⁴⁰I, 192.

⁴¹II, 118.

neglected volume,—the result could not be doubted, for it only needed to be read, and its success was certain. The public have made amends for their former indifference.

In speaking of “the zealous praise of Christopher North” the writer may have had in mind the article by Lockhart in *Blackwood's*. He asserts that *Bracebridge Hall* is “fully equal, perhaps superior to his former efforts,” and continues:

The writer has the rare merit of combining the graceful ease and unaffected pathos of the Spectator, with the elegant playfulness and irresistible naïveté of the Citizen of the World. The charm of Geoffrey Crayon's style is its beautiful simplicity. . . .

It remained for the author of the Sketch Book to revive the good old style of our early essayists, and although a stranger in the land, to write purer and more unmixed English than the present generation has been accustomed to hear. Modern readers and critics had grown so used to the “sound and fury” the nondescript heaping together of words, the strange mingling of all the tongues of Babel, which unintermittingly issued from the press, that the memory of that simple yet noble, succinct yet expressive language in which Jeremy Taylor and Lord Clarendon wrote, was fast fading from amongst us. We were becoming, in words at least, a nation of mere charlatans, our dialect was empty and unmeaning as the prating of a parrot, when Geoffrey Crayon, or the notable somebody who wishes to preserve his incognito under that name, poured out his spirit over the rubbish of our literature, and recalled our attention to those glorious models of composition, which were the pride and boast of our ancestors.

The reviewer concludes with a personal tribute:

For my part, I can truly say, that I would rather be the author of the Sketch Book and *Bracebridge Hall*, than of five-sixths of the poetry and nearly all the prose, published since the year 1800.

Less important notices in the *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*⁴² and the *Ladies' Monthly Museum*⁴³ both commend *Bracebridge* highly.

The *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany (Scott's Magazine)*⁴⁴ predicts general disappointment with the work, not because of falling off of merit, but because expectations are high, and the novelty of the subject has worn off. It interprets *The Stout Gentleman* as a satire on the Radcliffe school. The

⁴²LIII, 548.

⁴³Imp. ser. XVI, 40.

⁴⁴XI, 91.

New Edinburgh Review (successor to the *Edinburgh Monthly Review*)⁴⁵ is one of several journals to claim credit for making Irving known in Great Britain. It announces that it is not disappointed in *Bracebridge Hall*, though it raises some interesting objections. For example, it finds parts of *The Stout Gentleman* "to savor of indecency"; and though it gives credit for a "kindly attitude toward England," it says that "Mr. Crayon, swayed perhaps by certain American prejudices, has spoken rather disparagingly of the General." The article, twenty-five pages in length, abounds in extracts and running comments.

Even the provincial periodicals give attention to the new work. The *Literary Melange, or Weekly Register of Literature and the Arts* (Glasgow) in the issue of July 10⁴⁶ reprints an English review, and in this and succeeding numbers gives several of the favorite sketches, including *The Stout Gentleman* and *Annette Delarbre*. The *Leeds Correspondent*⁴⁷ speaks well of the book, though it thinks that Irving is not free from "the degrading style of the Turf and the Ring." It chooses for reprint sketches of *Ready-Money Jack* and *The School-Master*.

Slightly later notices continue in much the same strain. The *Monthly Censor, or General Review of Domestic and Foreign Literature*⁴⁸ waxes enthusiastic:

Every body who is in the habit of reading the best publications of the day, will be glad to see the name of Geoffrey Crayon again. . . . His "Sketch Book" established a reputation for him in the republic of letters, of which he may well be proud; his new work has more than confirmed it; and perhaps there never was an instance in which a young author paid so much attention to the hints of criticism, or of one whom lavish praise has not spoilt in the least degree.

Bracebridge is said to avoid the fault of over-luxuriousness sometimes found in the *Sketch Book*.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁴⁹ is very kindly toward Irv-

⁴⁵III, 151.

⁴⁶P, 54.

⁴⁷IV (July, 1822) 185.

⁴⁸I (Aug. 1822) 353.

⁴⁹XCVIII (Aug. 1822) 400.

ing, praising his descriptions and his characterizations, and quoting extensively. It hints at the author's limitations in this diffuse sentence:

He is not unconscious of his present elevation in the region of literature—but he must be cautious: we greatly doubt whether he has strength of pinion to soar higher: he is evidently fluttering his wings without rising; and perhaps it would be better to repose awhile and renovate his strength, than flutter till he flags.

An article in the *London Magazine*⁵⁰ though nominally a review of *Bracebridge Hall*, deals more with the *Sketch Book*, which it thinks the better work. It regards Irving as in great danger of being spoiled by success. Of *Bracebridge Hall* it says: "The attempt to continue a narrative through a series of essays is, perhaps, the main fault of this book:—the characters seem to dawdle and hang about without a purpose, while the title of the chapter is being fulfilled." As is so commonly the case, *The Stout Gentleman* is chosen for praise. ✓

The *British Critic*, which, in earlier years, at least, had usually found nothing but contempt for all things American, was always enthusiastic in its welcome of Irving. One remark in the passages quoted below leads to the suspicion, perhaps unfounded, that it loved him the more because he was the one American writer that the *Westminster Review* condemned. The following comments on *Bracebridge Hall*⁵¹ are typical.

We need only say, that the style and taste, as well as the matter of the present, as of all our author's compositions, is of the best kind. To say that they are extraordinary, when considered as the production of a person born and educated on the other side of the Atlantic, would be neither gracious nor just; for they are strikingly so in themselves. Without this qualification, viewing his productions as compositions only, we much doubt whether we could name any contemporary writer whose attempts, in that light species of writing, of which the first model in our language was furnished by Addison, would easily stand a comparison with those of this American essayist. It may seem strange to bring Addison and a citizen of New York together in the same sentence; and certainly had we been asked which of all our writers would probably be the last, whom our Transatlantic descendants would be likely to emulate with success, it would have been the author of the *Spectator*. In

⁵⁰VI (1822) 436.

⁵¹n. s. XVIII (Sept. 1822) 299.

spite, however, of the apparent improbability of the fact, so it is.

The great recommendation of the work before us, consists in the admirable delineations of character with which it abounds. . .

U We freely confess that if America would only give us the writer of *Bracebridge Hall* and the *Sketch Book*, we would give them in return Mr. Malthus and Mr. Ricardo, and Jeremy Bentham, into the bargain. . . .

For our own parts, we heartily congratulate them [Americans] upon the possession of a writer, whom England, in the best days of her literature, might have been proud in acknowledging; and hope most sincerely, that he is only the forerunner of a race of writers who will hereafter enrich the language. For whatever separation may have taken place between the countries in politics and government, their literature must of necessity be ours.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁵² finds the style of *Bracebridge Hall* not so pure as that of the *Sketch Book*, and the work in general inferior. It concedes that "*The Stout Gentleman* is a capital quiz," and "*Annette Delarbre* is beautifully told"; but "His best tales are not original," and

The squire is a pedant, the general a militia-man, the yeoman a cockney. Yet with all this, the work is exceedingly well written, and entertaining: it is a pity that the author did not add to its intrinsic talent, that truth to nature, which a little time and observation might have enabled him to do.

The *Eclectic Review*⁵³ after boasting of its part in calling attention to the *Sketch Book*, says of *Bracebridge Hall*, "Had it appeared first it would have been thought the cleverer work of the two," and attributes to it "a deeper vein of thought, a wider range of reflection than characterized the earlier sketches." This article gives high praise throughout. It persistently spells the author's name "Irvine."

In a slow-moving and long-winded criticism the *Edinburgh Review*⁵⁴ praises *Bracebridge Hall*, which, notwithstanding the popular verdict to the contrary, it thinks quite as good as the *Sketch Book*. It finds a little too cloying a sweetness now and then, though it compares the melody of some of Irving's sentences to "the delicious cadences of Addison." It considers

⁵²V. 65. This somewhat perfunctory review is signed "O."

⁵³XIX (1823) 233.

⁵⁴XXXVII (Nov. 1822) 337.

whether Irving is over-kindly and philanthropic, but gives its final verdict in the negative.

The *Scottish Episcopal Review and Magazine*⁵⁵ gives a favorable notice, complaining only that

in some of his descriptions, however, of rural life and antique manners, it is clear that Mr. Irvine [sic] writes from the impressions made on his mind by books in early youth, rather than from what he has actually seen. Sir Richard [sic] De Coverley is ever present to his imagination.

The *Quarterly Review*⁵⁶ in an article on *Salmagundi*, *Knickerbocker's History*, *Bracebridge Hall*, and *Tales of a Traveller* gives on the whole high praise to *Bracebridge Hall*, in which it especially commends the description of manners. The *Stout Gentleman* is, it says, "a most amusing specimen of that piquant cookery which makes something out of nothing."

Though separate numbers of *Bracebridge Hall* do not stand out so distinctly as do those of the *Sketch Book*, many of them were reprinted in various journals. *The Stout Gentleman*, *Annette Delarbre*, and some of the pleasanter sketches of English characters were the favorites.⁵⁷

From the reviews that have been summarized and quoted it is clear that *Bracebridge Hall*, though often adjudged inferior to the *Sketch Book*, was well received in England; and the author held his place in the world of letters, a celebrity fairly well approved by conservative critics, as well as by less discriminating readers. Both the public and his publisher, Murray, were insistent in their demands for something more. This came in the form of *Tales of a Traveller*, which appeared in London on August 25, 1824. It had been prepared for the press hurriedly, and under conditions not the most favorable, and it was probably the most uneven of the author's works. Moreover, much of it was in forms in which Irving did not

⁵⁵III (Sept. 1822) 429.

⁵⁶XXXI (March 1825) 473.

⁵⁷A few of these reprints, aside from those given in connection with reviews and notices already mentioned, were: *Annette Delarbre*, in the *Hive*, I (Dec. 1822) 227, (Feb. 1823) 260; *England and America*, in the *Plain Englishman*, III (1823) 420; *Ready-Money Jack*, in *Repository of Modern Literature*, I (1826) 65; *The School-Master*, *Ibid.*, p. 65; *The Stout Gentleman*, *Ibid.*, p. 106; *The Stout Gentleman*, in the *Selector—a Cabinet of Prose and Poetry* (Newcastle) II (Sept. 8, 1827) 673.

excel. He, himself, seems to have been proud of it. He wrote as it was published: "I think there are in it some of the best things I have ever written"; and he was consequently saddened by the coolness with which it was received. Most present-day critics are probably in agreement in ranking it as inferior to the *Sketch Book*, though the better parts of it are perhaps more to modern taste than is much of *Bracebridge Hall*. When it appeared, Irving was no longer a novelty. Even if he had fully maintained his earlier standard, a reaction against him would probably have come. The new book offered many points for telling attack by reviewers who enjoyed hostile criticism; and when some of the earlier notices set the fashion of fault-finding, others quickly followed. There was considerable praise; but the weaknesses and defects of the author were more penetratingly searched out in the reviews of the *Tales of a Traveller* than they had been before.

The *Literary Gazette* on August 28, 1824,⁵⁸ but three days after the date of publication, sounded the prevailing note of much of the criticism.

Geoffrey Crayon, alias Washington Irving, is a popular writer, and some of his papers have been so highly estimated as to cause his name to be mentioned along with those of Britain's most distinguished essayists. The *Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall* are the foundations of this celebrity, and the former especially continues to be read with undiminished pleasure. . . . The present publication, though light and agreeable, certainly falls short of our expectations.

The ghost stories are neither very novel nor very good; some of them are complete baulks, an offense to the lover of real unrealities not to be forgiven.

The *German Student* is pronounced the best thing in the first division, and *The Young Robber* "the highest wrought tale in the collection."

The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* of the same date⁵⁹ is rather more favorable, saying that all the tales "are excellent in their way"; though in a continuation of the review⁶⁰ it decides that the longer narratives, especially *Buckthorne*, are tedious.

⁵⁸VIII, 545.

⁵⁹VI, 545.

⁶⁰P. 563.

Washington Irving is, like Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott, an author whose works we take up with a feeling of anticipated admiration, rather than of criticism; and, perhaps, of the three, Mr. Irving the least frequently disappoints us. The reason is, probably, that, although he has not the hereditary fortune of the one, or the acquired thousands of the other, he is less ambitious of deluging the world with his productions, and takes more pains in maturing them.

The illustrative selections given are *The Literary Dinner*, *The Story of the Young Robber*, *The Young Italian*, and *Kidd the Pirate*—a varied assortment.

The *Lady's Magazine* for August⁶¹ also bestows praise, albeit faint.

The reputation which Mr. Irving (for we will call him by his real name) has already acquired, not only in the States of the American Union, but also in Great Britain, where the literary efforts of his countrymen were long treated with feelings bordering on contempt, would secure the favorable reception of this new product of his active pen, even if it had less merit than it really possesses. . . .

Upon the whole, we think ourselves bound to recommend these volumes to the favorable notice of the public. If their varied contents do not comprehend the highest degree of excellence, they are generally amusing, sometimes instructive, and never contemptible.

It is interesting to note that this lady's magazine is "particularly pleased with the *Young Robber*," and prints all the revolting parts in full.

Criticisms followed fast in the next three or four months, so that almost all of the formal reviews of the *Tales of a Traveller* appeared before the close of January, 1825. The majority of these were, in varying degrees, unfavorable. Even the *Kaleidoscope*, which had for months existed, so to speak, on Irving, joined in the clamor against its former idol. On September 14⁶² it says: "We have only dipped into this work; but we have seen enough of it to enable us to say, that it is decidedly inferior to the *Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*." The next week,⁶³ the *Kaleidoscope* copies from the *Examiner* a harsh article which says that Irving has been censured "for that absolute submission to the drawing-room," and for "this excess of Chesterfieldian discipline so singular in a native of

⁶¹n. s. V, 484.

⁶²v, 85.

⁶³p. 93.

the United States," and adds, "this confirmed spirit of imitation being in truth a sort of American mocking-bird." The critic then goes on to show how these charges are justified by the *Tales of a Traveller*.⁶⁴ Notwithstanding the defects of *Tales of a Traveller* the editor seems pleased to reprint from it *The German Student*, *Tom Walker*, *The Bold Dragoon*, and *A Literary Dinner*.

More important periodicals than the *Kaleidoscope* were equally severe, if less ungrateful. The *European Magazine* for September⁶⁵ laments that a man of Irving's intellectual achievements should "fritter away his genius" on works for mere amusement.

Geoffrey Crayon was worthy of better employment than even his Sketch Book afforded him; and [that] to quit it, as he has done, for something much inferior, betrays a precocity of decay, which, whether of tact or intellect, is truly disappointing and deplorable. . . . The "Tales of a Traveller" have been for some time expected, and to so high a pitch had risen the public curiosity, that, when they appeared, the trade, as a periodical has expressed it, "nearly swallowed them." And readers too, will do well to *swallow* them likewise. An oyster-eating kind of perusal, without chewing, and especially without ruminating, on them, is all they will bear without being found nauseous. This censure no *dullness alone* could justify; but, strange to report of Mr. Irving's compositions, there is a vein of equivocating ribaldry pervading the whole of these two last volumes, that cannot be too strongly reprehended. . . .

Even the most refined and pathetic of the tales are not without a taint. It is true, the obscenities are most carefully veiled, but even that prudery is meretricious.

In a sound and discriminating article the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (*Scot's Magazine*)⁶⁶ finds the work inferior to its predecessors in many little matters, none of great importance, which taken together make it disappointing. "Invention," it decides, "seems to be the quality in which he is most deficient." In conclusion, it says of the *Tales of a Traveller*: "Its chief fault, we think, arises from the adoption

⁶⁴A footnote to this article repeats the accusation of "an ingenious correspondent" that Irving copied a passage in *Knickerbocker* word for word from Franklin; and raises the question whether this is his only plagiarism.

⁶⁵LXXXVI, 251.

⁶⁶XV (Sept. 1824) 325.

of certain classes of subjects, unsuited to the powers of the author."

The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁶⁷ devotes to the new collection a slightly patronizing review in which the name of the author is uniformly spelled "Irwin." "The stories themselves are not much, either for novelty or matter; the style is everything; and, as far as prose can be said to resemble poetry, it is like the poetry of Campbell." The tales lack genius, energy. *The Belated Travelers*, it is charged, is imitated from "Monk" Lewis. The *Ladies Monthly Museum*⁶⁸ speaks flatteringly of Irving's earlier work, but says of the book in hand: "We have, however, been sadly disappointed. These 'Tales' are most of them very dull, and some of them very improbable."

The *Metropolitan Literary Journal*⁶⁹ accuses Irving of going almost wholly on his reputation. It finds no originality in the tales, saying, "There are but two marked incidents throughout the book, which we can remember, as what we had not calculated on long before our arrival at them." It makes detailed charges of borrowing, saying that much of the robber tales, including *The Young Italian*, was taken from "*The Fatal Revenge*, by Dennis Jasper Murphy," in the *Minerva Library*, the work of the Reverend Mr. Maturin. It sees other indebtedness to Lord Orford, Mrs. Radcliffe, and "Monk" Lewis—"the story and even the style of the *German Student*" being from the last-named. *Buckthorne* follows Smollett, Fielding, Cruikshank, and Pierce Egan; and—a *reductio ad absurdum* of the extreme charges—the *Money-Diggers* is after Scott. The reviewer finally asks:

What, then, have we left to justify the homage paid to the talents of this trans-atlantic genius. We answer, his purity of sentiment, and his almost perfection of style!

Even in style the author has improvements to make. But, Above all let him shun tale-writing; it is not his forte—let him write reflections, which are—and he may one day fill a sphere, from which he would have to look down at a long distance upon this abortive attempt—he may then become a splendid writer, to lift, to

⁶⁷LVIII (Oct. 1824) 261.

⁶⁸Imp. ser. XX (Oct. 1824) 222.

⁶⁹I (Oct. 1824) 538.

elevate, and to ennoble the mental feeling of his youthful but aspiring country!

For the first time Irving was exposed not only to charges of improper borrowing, but to other irritating personal attacks. The *Monthly Critical Gazette*⁷⁰ begins its article:

Geoffrey Crayon, otherwise Washington Irving, wrote a book, which was published originally in America and re-published in England, called the *Sketch Book*. That work obtained a degree of popularity sufficient, in his own opinion to constitute *Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*, a celebrated author; and the result of such celebrity is generally a fresh attack upon the purse of the public.

The reviewer takes seriously the facetious remarks in "To the Reader," on the morals to be derived from the stories, and accuses the author of failing in his purpose. He condemns all the tales, but is especially severe on the *Buckthorne* series. He finds an unwarranted and particularly ungentlemanly slur on an existing British house⁷¹ in the reference to the firm of publishers with a long name in the account of the *Literary Dinner*. After quoting from this sketch he says:

Now, in all this childish dream, or execrable trifling, there is not the most distant resemblance to any character or scene of real life: and as a *jeu d'esprit*, what is its value? As an attempt at wit is it not most contemptible? . . . Then, again, the respect of Mr. Crayon for literature, and his amiable sympathy with the humble labourers in that thorny path of life, must strike every reader.

"As to the crew at the lower end!"—what fine feelings this passage elicits! In the next paragraph, he again remarks, "Among this *Crew of questionable gentlemen* then seated below the salt, my eye singled out one in particular." We would now seriously appeal to the whole literary world and ask, whether there can be produced in print a more striking specimen of supercilious conceit or impudent ignorance than the foregoing? . . . Though it may possibly impose on the uninformed classes of people in America, or even in Great Britain, [it] can only disgust the minds [sic] of every gentleman in the slightest degree acquainted with the real state of LITERARY SOCIETY in London, especially those who have really had the honour of sitting at the table of those respectable publishers who are thus grossly alluded to by *the length* of their firm.

⁷⁰I (Oct. 1824) 465.

⁷¹This was undoubtedly the Longman's. The firm name was at one time "Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green"; at a later time "Longman, Green, Roberts, Longman, and Green."

From this sample of one *Class* of these *Tales*, a fair judgment may be formed of the puerility and absurdity of the rest . . . and, in short, the honest discharge of our duty compels us to say, that we have not for a long period past, met with so bare-faced a specimen of *book-making*, presented to the public in such a costly style of paper and typography.

The animosity underlying this attack may arise from business jealousy of Murray, Irving's publisher.

The critic of the *London Magazine*⁷² though he gives the highest praise to the *Sketch Book*, and goes out of his way to rank it above the work of Scott, says: "I found little in his *Tales of a Traveller*, but the style, to admire"; and again, "Not one of these stories is of the reflective character." The work is said to have been done hastily and to order; the character of the Irish Dragoon is denounced as offensive. Such commendation as Irving receives in this article seems to be rather at the expense of Scott than because of his own merits. An article in the *Universal Review, or Chronicle of the Literature of All Nations*⁷³ deals largely with the English estimate of literary conditions in America, and will be quoted later. Though it says that *Tales of a Traveller* is not inferior to the *Sketch Book*, it censures detail after detail. The reviewer sees in the introduction "the puerilities and affectations of a writer surcharged with blue-stocking praise." He decides that Irving cannot tell a tale, and prefers the "foreign romances" because "there the colors are mixed by many a preceding hand, and the fashionable artist has only to dip his pencil with common dexterity." On the other hand, "His descriptions of London life are decidedly unfortunate; for the double reason that as the picture of the past they are not original, and, as of the present, they are not true." Of the *Literary Dinner* it is said: "With a volume of Goldsmith in his pocket, Mr. Irving might have written this, and all that he hazards on London manners, in the central swamp of Illinois. The American stories are infinitely the best in this work."

The two most notable hostile reviews are those in *Blackwood's* and in the *Westminster Review*. In *Blackwood's* for

⁷²X (1824) 401.

⁷³II (Nov. 1824) 259.

September⁷⁴ the "Letters of Timothy Tickler" devotes ten pages to the *Tales of a Traveller*.

In the next number of the Quarterly, there will be, *inter alia*, a fine puff of Washington Irving's "Tales of a Traveller" because Mr. Irving's publisher is Mr. Murray,—and there will also be a puff of it in the Edinburgh;—first, because Mr. Irving is an American, and, secondly, because his book is not of the kind to interfere at all with any of Mr. Constable's own publications. . . .

He [Irving] has no inventive faculties at all, taking that phrase in its proper and more elevated sense. He has never invented an incident—unless, which I much doubt, the *idea* of the Stout Gentleman's story was his own;—and as for inventing characters, why, he has not even made an attempt at that.

In *Tales of a Traveller* itself the critic is greatly disappointed. He finds nothing in the first three parts that many London hackwriters might not have written without leaving England. The fourth,—the American—part really pleases him, and he advises the author to stick to American subjects, saying that *Knickerbocker* is still his best work. John Neal, in his *Blackwood* series on American writers⁷⁵ is very severe on *Tales of a Traveller*, and makes much of "indecencies" which he fancies he finds in it.

The *Westminster Review*⁷⁶ made the appearance of the *Tales of a Traveller* the occasion for an attack on Irving so characteristic of the periodical, and so well illustrative of the way in which political prejudices colored literary criticisms in unexpected ways, that it must be quoted at length:

Although it may not have occurred to many of our readers to imagine it, gentle Geoffrey's fame was occasioned by the fact of his being a *prodigy*; a prodigy for show—such as *La Belle Sauvage*, or the learned pig; up to the time of Geoffrey, there were no Belles Lettres in America, no native *litterateurs*, and he shot up at once with true American growth, a triumphant proof of what had so long been doubted and desired, namely, that the sentimental plant may flourish even in that republican soil. "Such elegance, such correctness, such sensibility!" (exclaimed the tender reading-room loungee), "And all this—who could have believed it—the work of a native American!" The surprise that a Chinese should express himself in pure English, could not have been greater than that such

⁷⁴XVI, 294.

⁷⁵XVII, 65.

⁷⁶II (Oct. 1824) 374.

a production should come from such a quarter. This was the origin and foundation of Geoffrey's fame; its extension and continuance rest altogether on different grounds, and furnish a striking instance of the truth of an observation made by us in a preceding number, that a certain share of celebrity may always be attained by any writer who, in good set terms, will eulogize existing institutions, and fall in with existing prejudices.

After a long condemnation of the upper classes in England, who are held responsible for false taste in "polite literature, art, etc.," the reviewer continues:

Poetry and romance—tales and tours—light essays and lighter letters—stuff that he who runs may read, without the trouble of adding one idea to his already limited stock. Nothing that can excite controversy, nothing that can occasion dissatisfaction; all pensive, *gentlemanly*, and subdued; all, trifling and acquiescent as a drawing-room conversation: prevailing errors in morals and legislation carefully upheld, or at best, left unnoticed, prevailing follies alone, in dress or address, lightly reprehended: a little pathos, a little sentiment, to excite tears as a pleasurable emotion for those who see them on no other occasion: a little point and a little antithesis to tickle the ear and divert the attention from the lamentable deficiency of solid matter. Such is the precious ore that occupies the leisure moments of the literary portion of the Somebodys, and among them it is, that Geoffrey's reputation has attained and preserves the proudest eminence. For the meridian of their intellect and disposition, his productions are calculated with admirable precision. Nothing vigorous or original, nothing that can require thought or excite dissent; the means for bespeaking attention, a correct imitation of ancient models, the means for conciliating esteem, a manifest preference for ancient institutions. . . .

In Geoffrey we esteem the acquirement of such tastes inexcusable, and calling for the severest reprehension; indeed, our author furnishes a striking instance of the mischievous effects occasioned by an exclusive culture of the faculty of imagination, and a conclusive proof of the extent to which it is destructive of the power of judgment. Geoffrey was born in America, unshackled with the prejudices and interests which more or less fetter the intellect of every European.

The critic goes on to portray the ideal conditions which Irving has seen in America, and the poverty and corruption that he has known in England; "and yet, with this before his eyes, the ignorant and puling sentimentalist has a manifest preference for British institutions!" On a later page he cites

passages to sustain his charges, though he finds Irving too cunning to express preference openly.

Geoffrey is indisputably feeble, unoriginal and timorous; a mere adjective of a man, who has neither the vigour nor courage to stand alone, though it were but for a moment; from the beginning he has looked up for support, not of the strongest and most desirable, but of the most conspicuous and prominent kind, and this support he has found in the applause of the Somebodys. Now, in America, Geoffrey found that everybody was his compeer; that there were few Somebodys, and that Nobody was out of the question.

He, therefore, resorted to Europe, and, by divining and imitating pretty accurately the prevailing tastes and habits of the Somebodys in this quarter of the globe has succeeded in gaining their goodwill in spite of his transatlantic extraction and in ultimately procuring for himself a reception as one of the set. It is evident, indeed, that the splendor and stateliness of European monarchies, the smooth varnish and empty dignities of European nobility, and the antiquarian associations called up by the recollection of their early history must have turned the poor republican's brain. But how weak must be the intellect, how depraved the disposition, that can be so affected by the mere surface of things. . . .

Never may she [America] be cursed with a race of sonnetteers and sentimentalists, or sacrifice one line of what is instructive in literature to the empty jargon of Belles Lettres. She has succeeded so well in the useful, that we have no desire to see her exchange them for the fine arts.

After this it is not surprising that the reviewer sees nothing whatever to praise in the *Tales*, which he considers far inferior to the *Sketches*. In conclusion, he says of the author:

He lives upon the snubs of such people, and would strike out his best passage, dilute his best argument or recant his sincerest opinion, in the fear of losing the next invitation to dinner he may expect from Grosvenor Square.

The reviews which praised were more moderate than those which blamed, and not all of these were from magazines of the highest rank. The *Eclectic Review*⁷⁷ pronounces the *Tales of a Traveller* not inferior to Irving's other work, yet after praising the author's style, imagination, and humour, it proceeds to point out many defects. The tales are said not to be skilfully contrived, and to want satisfactory conclusions. The earlier writings have been pure, but:

⁷⁷XXIV (1825) 65.

In the present volumes he displays a levity and sometimes stoops to a vulgarity, which must pain a serious, and disgust a delicate mind. If Mr. Irving believes in the existence of Tom Walker's master we can hardly conceive how he can so earnestly jest about him: at all events we would counsel him to beware how he conjures in that name lest his own spells should prove fatal to him.

The *News of Literature and Fashion*⁷⁸ in a nominal review which really consists of two selected tales with an introductory note, says, "This new production of Mr. Irving's pen is inferior to none that has yet issued from it." A reviewer in the *Imperial Magazine*⁷⁹ seems afraid of saying anything definite. Though he pronounces the *Tales of a Traveller* inferior to the *Sketch Book*, he speaks of "A style which Addison himself would not have been ashamed to own." For reasons which he does not make clear he identifies the fox-hunting squire with the Stout Gentleman in *Bracebridge Hall*. The *European Review*⁸⁰ speaks at length of the significance of Irving, but its specific criticism of *Tales of a Traveller* is rather trite, though on the whole favorable.

The *Quarterly Review*⁸¹ in a summary review of four of Irving's works, already referred to, finds the *Buckthorne* section of *Tales of a Traveller* excellent, and thinks it shows that Irving "might as a novelist prove no contemptible rival to Goldsmith." It adds that "too much praise, indeed, cannot be bestowed on the moral tendencies of *Buckthorne*. Throughout the whole of the ludicrous incidents with which the tale abounds, Mr. Irving has never once abused the latitude which the subject afforded him, and of which Goethe has made such filthy use in 'Wilhelm Meister.'" The section *The Money-Diggers* meets with less approbation. Diedrich Knickerbocker, the reviewer says, "begins to grow somewhat super-annuated." *The Young Robber* is condemned as a tale which should never have been written, and which should be expunged in a second edition.

The *Tales* were well suited for reprint as separate selections, and many of the articles cited include one or more of them

⁷⁸I (Sept. 1824) 237.

⁷⁹VII (Jan. 1825) 82.

⁸⁰V (Edinburgh, 1824) 124.

⁸¹XXXI (March 1825) 473.

complete. They seem, however, to have been copied less freely elsewhere than were the sections of the *Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*.⁸²

The fame which Irving gained from the *Sketch Book*, *Bracebridge Hall*, and *Tales of a Traveller* naturally turned the attention of English readers to his earlier writings. Even the first of these, the *Jonathan Oldstyle Papers*, which he had contributed to the *New York Morning Chronicle* while still in his teens, was discovered and put forth by an enterprising London publisher. Both Irving and his friends naturally regretted this; and though the *Papers* passed through at least two editions, few of the important magazines noticed them. The *Monthly Critical Gazette*⁸³ said they were of no interest, and protested against the unfairness of printing them without the author's consent. It took apparent satisfaction, however, in assuming that a satiric description of the manners of a New York theatre audience was to be taken seriously, and said that it "may, indeed, somewhat flatter the self-love of John Bull, in reflecting on the comparative degrees of social refinement in the two countries." The *Kaleidoscope* also pronounced the *Papers* unimportant, but printed two of them.

Salmagundi, a series of Addisonian essays to which Irving was the chief contributor, was first published anonymously in New York in 1807. As has already been mentioned, it was reprinted in London, without the authors' names, in 1811, and was noticed in the *Monthly Review*. Another unauthorized edition, with Irving's name attached, seems to have appeared in London late in 1823. At the same time Irving, in Paris, revised the proof-sheets for an edition by Galignani. The fame of Geoffrey Crayon was then at its height, and the work, though juvenile, out of date, and local in its allusions, attracted considerable attention. It was not, however, honored by a separate article in any of the leading magazines. The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁸⁴ says that *Salmagundi* is "partly local, but there is such an identity between the Eng-

⁸²Among those which have been noticed are *The Young Robber*, in the *Hive*, IV: 339, and *The Bold Dragoon* in *The Selector*, IV (Sept. 27, 1828) 721.

⁸³I (June, 1824) 93.

⁸⁴V (Dec. 1823) 790.

lish and American customs, and their general character, however differing in some points, that the localities present no difficulty to the English reader"; and adds: "We doubt not *Salmagundi* will become a favorite dish." The *Literary Museum*⁸⁵ makes the appearance of the book an occasion to praise the other work of the author, and says: "There is a juvenile spirit—a freshness, an audacity about these nefarious acts of humor and pathos perfectly intolerable." The *Literary Sketch-Book*⁸⁶ speaks in much the same tone.

At a later time *Salmagundi* was occasionally mentioned in general articles on Irving's work. The *Quarterly Review*⁸⁷ characteristically praises it because it satirizes—and so proves the existence of—weaknesses and vices in American society.

The Knickerbocker's History of New York, Irving's first independent work of value, had been published in America in 1809. It was not wholly unknown in England even before Irving had made a name there; and the success of the *Sketch Book* naturally brought it to notice. The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁸⁸ in its article on the *Sketch Book* mentions *Knickerbocker* as a work which displays "much true genius," in spite of its local nature, and expresses the hope that it may be reprinted in England. Lockhart joins *Knickerbocker* with the *Sketch Book* in his article in *Blackwood's* for July⁸⁹ and praises it as highly as its successor, if not at so great length. The first English edition, brought out by Murray in the latter part of 1820, when the vogue of the *Sketch Book* was at its height, was widely noticed. Most of the comments were friendly, though, as has often happened when a fresh bit of American humor reached England, the critics were not always sure what to make of it. Some persisted in searching for hidden meanings, and others drew from it conclusions as to American society. An article in the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁹⁰ is on the whole very favorable, saying the

⁸⁵II (Dec. 20, 1823) 805.

⁸⁶I (Dec. 1823) 275.

⁸⁷XXXI (March, 1825) 473.

⁸⁸II (March 18, 1820) 176.

⁸⁹VII, 360.

⁹⁰II (Oct. 7, 1820) 640.

work "is now printed for the first (though we venture to predict not the last) time in this country," and continues:

It is a *jeu d'esprit*, which under the semblance of a History of New York, from the creation to the time of its becoming an English colony, gives a humorous and at the same time a philosophical view of the state of society as it exists at present, with many ingenious observations on the causes which have rendered the United States so heterogeneous in her laws, manners, customs, and population.

The article concludes:

We wonder that Mr. Irving has not turned novel writer, since he evidently possesses that fertility of imagination, that knowledge of human nature, and that power of description, which would ensure him success.

The *Literary Gazette*⁹¹ also praises the work, but thinks the fooling is carried too far.

Much humour, neat observations, on men and on human actions, a drolling way of treating subjects of every kind, and a sportiveness of fancy mingled with some originality, and a good deal of aptness for the ridiculous, are its characteristic traits. May it not seem paradoxical to add, that we have been fatigued by the perusal of this clever volume? . . . Nearly 600 honest octavo pages of jest and play, is entertainment beyond the stretch of human faculties to relish. . . .

Had Mr. Irving contented himself with such bounds as De Foe, as Swift, as Voltaire, prescribed to themselves, we think he would have been more effective.

The *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany (Scot's Magazine)*⁹² discusses *Knickerbocker* in a long and flattering review.

Written by a person of keen observation, pointed sense, and solid learning—qualities which are made to tell with double effect from the happy vein of ironical humor which pervades and enlivens the whole work, and which while it is divested of every particle of malevolence, is managed with a dexterity and address sufficient to convince every reader that, if ridicule be not the test of truth, it is the only certain and infallible exposé of absurdity, folly, and wickedness. Less various and for that reason probably less amusing than the 'Sketch-Book,' the work before us is more of a sustained

⁹¹IV (Oct. 21, 1820) 674.

⁹²VII (Dec. 1820) 543.

effort; and if it betrays less versatility of talent, it unquestionably displays more power.

The author has continued, with singular skill and effect, to intermingle, with his burlesque narrative, the most profound reflections of political wisdom. . . .

Together with its predecessor [the *Sketch Book*] this book certainly forms an era in the history of Transatlantic literature, as it is the first indigenous effort of real taste of which America can boast. . . . Honest Diedrich Knickerbocker, at a moderate estimate, is worth a whole congress of Joel Barlows. But his merits will be the less surprising, when we advert to the models on which he has obviously formed himself. He appears to have studied, and fully appreciated, the purest, most finished and most classical authors of this country, and to have inspired a portion of the *mens divinior*, which glows in every line of their imperishable works; and, hence his style is, in a great measure, exempt, not merely from the flagrant faults, but even from the vicious peculiarities that appear in broad prominence on the works of his countrymen. Here and there, indeed, a stray *Yankeeism* peeps out. . . . but in compensation we meet and are offended with no bombast—no affectation—no pedantry—no dogmatism—no perpetual laboring and straining to be fine, learned, witty, and sarcastic.

The *London Magazine and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review*⁹³ gives much fulsome praise to Irving, and prints long extracts from *Knickerbocker*, though it offers no very significant criticisms of the book. The *New Monthly Magazine*⁹⁴ mentions the *History* in a brief favorable notice.

A writer in the *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁹⁵ seems not to know that this is an earlier work than the *Sketch Book*. He decides that Irving's "forte is the satirical," and is pleased that "there is not a particle of ill-nature in the whole book." The author, he thinks, took Swift as a model, but avoided Swift's nastiness. The *Edinburgh Monthly Review*⁹⁶ makes a rather clumsy attempt to treat the book lightly, extolling *Diedrich Knickerbocker's* merits as an historian. It nowhere settles down to a serious discussion, but its judgment is apparently favorable. The *British Critic*⁹⁷ takes the position that unless the *History* is a satire on some persons it is flat;

⁹³II (Dec. 1820) 577.

⁹⁴XIV (Dec. 1820) 686.

⁹⁵XCIV (Jan. 1821) 67.

⁹⁶V (Feb. 1821) 232.

⁹⁷n. s. XV (March, 1821) 261.

and finds that an Englishman cannot understand the satire except in the first book. Of the author it says:

We could point out many faults, however, but by some means or other, we feel almost a personal kindness for the author, and it would grate harshly upon our feelings to speak of him in any way, except that of commendation. . . . We feel confident that he will never write anything, but what will do him credit, both as a gentleman and a scholar. Amidst a great deal of mistaken taste, which abounds in all his writings, we have never perceived a sentence that was not morally pure and right.

Knickerbocker was occasionally referred to in later articles on Irving. *The Quarterly Review*⁹⁸ says: "Of the point of many of the allusions contained in this political satire, partaking of the style of Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, and in which more than one president of the United States figures, we may much lament that we are not fully competent to judge." The remark just quoted was very likely based on a statement of Neal, who in his *Blackwood* article⁹⁹ says: "In the three Dutch governors we could point out a multitude of laughable secret allusions to three of the American chief magistrates (Adams, Jefferson, Madison)—which have not always been well understood, anywhere, by anybody—save those who are familiar with American history." Neal continues in his usual fashion: "In a word, we look upon this volume of *Knickerbocker* . . . as a work honourable to English literature—manly—bold—and so altogether extravagant, as to stand alone, among the labours of man." For a foreigner bewildered by a piece of American humor, Neal was not the best of guides.

The *Tales of a Traveller* closed one group of Irving's writings. The next group, which was associated with the author's sojourn of some years in Spain, included the *Life of Columbus*, *The Conquest of Granada*, the *Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus*, and the *Alhambra*. The *Life of Columbus* was published by Murray early in February, 1828. Advance copies seem to have been judiciously distributed, and the book was commended before it appeared. The *Literary Gazette*¹ refers to Irving as "our American country-

⁹⁸XXXI (March 1825) 473.

⁹⁹XVII (Jan. 1825) 48.

¹XII (Feb. 2, 1828) 65.

man," and says of the *Columbus*, of which it promises a formal review later :

This work will appear in the course of the ensuing month; and, from what we have seen of it, we are persuaded it will give Mr. Washington Irving a prodigious increase of fame. The novelty of fact exhibited, in treating a subject popularly conceived of as trite and exhausted, will command wonder,—only to be explained by the circumstances which have given the author access to public as well as private archives, hitherto "a fountain shut up and a book sealed." The chaste and nervous elegance of the style, and the liberal and truly philosophical cast of thought and sentiment, are what no one need be surprised with, who has read some of his previous writings: but this performance is every way a more elaborate one than any of those, and of higher pretensions,—pretensions which we have no doubt the world will pronounce to be justified in the result.

The faithful *Kaleidoscope*² quotes from the *Literary Gazette*, again tells the story of its reprinting of the *Sketch Book*, and gives a long extract from an advance copy of the new book. The *London Weekly Review*³ says that it should not have supposed Irving suited to historical composition, but he has risen to his subject. The story is well told, the characters are admirably painted, and while the book is somewhat too long it has few needless reflections. It "unquestionably entitles its author to rank among the ablest historians of the age."

More formal reviews, when they appeared, naturally dealt with content and scholarly quality rather than with style. The article in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁴ is chiefly informational, with long extracts from Irving. A paragraph of criticism at the end is commendatory, complaining only of a few Americanisms. The *London Magazine* for the same month⁵ is far less favorable in its review. It objects at some points to Irving's view of Columbus, and it questions his fitness for the task he undertook.

Mr. Irving has here written an agreeable book; somewhat too prolix, and in many places feeble; but, on the whole, four pleasant

¹VIII (Feb. 12, 1828) 265.

²II (Feb. 1828) 81, 97, 115.

³XXII (March, 1828) 238.

⁵n. s. X, 281.

volumes, which would be much pleasanter if they were only three. The chief and pervading fault of the book is that absence of all manly opinion—that skinless sensitiveness, that shuddering dread of giving offense, by which all the former productions of this writer are marked. In a book of tales and essays this defect, though sometimes laughable, is seldom offensive, but in a work aspiring to the rank of history, it is felt strongly in every chapter.

There certainly has been no lack of research in the preparation of this work; but its result has scarcely brought anything more to light than had already been recorded, and in our own language, by Robertson and many others.

The article, which extends to forty-four pages, concludes:

With regard to Mr. Irving's publication, we question whether it was needed; and its execution, though generally creditable, is scarcely sufficiently felicitous to carry through an unnecessary work. Mr. Irving has no vigour of style, and still less of thought; and there is a *fade* tone of common-place running throughout.

The *Monthly Review*⁶ thinks but little better of the biography. Of Irving and his book it says:

With generous principles and pure intellectual tastes, he unquestionably unites literary talents of no common order. . . . It is needless to say, that he has produced a very amusing and elegant book.

But beyond this sincere tribute to Mr. Irving's general merits and ability as a writer, and to the felicitous display of his style in the particular instance before us, we have no higher praise to bestow upon the results of his labour.

Continuing, it complains that the work is prolix, that the author has not made the best use of recent Spanish materials, and that he is too partial to his hero.

The *Gentleman's Magazine* for April⁷ discusses at some length the question whether Columbus deserves credit as the real discoverer of America, and speaks pleasantly in a general way of Irving. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁸ in a long article occupied mostly with abstracts, speaks well of "this very full, and accurate, and readable piece of biography." It is concerned, however, over some of the moral aspects of Columbus's personality, and says: "We should like to see an-

⁶n. s. VII (April 1828) 419.

⁷C, 338.

⁸n. s. (April, 1828) 407.

other American, Dr. Channing, handle Columbus's character—Mr. Washington Irving is too ready to extenuate and apologize." The *Eclectic Review*⁹ on the other hand, praises Irving for his abstinence from moralizing, and says: "Mr. Irving has exercised his accustomed tact in the management of his work. There is no affectation of research, though there has evidently been a careful and extensive canvassing of original materials and a diligent examination of illustrative documents."

The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*¹⁰ comes strongly to the defense of Irving. In particular, it objects to the belief that serious history cannot be expected of a writer who began as an essayist.

That Mr. Irving will be no less successful, must be the conviction of all who impartially examine the beauties of style, the profundity of reflection, the extent of research, and the pure and lofty feeling which he has brought to a task upon the accomplishment of which we earnestly congratulate him. . . .

We cannot part from these volumes without congratulating Mr. Washington Irving on the high station which he has taken as an elegant and accurate historian—a station from which it is not in the power of the ignorant or captious critic to remove him.

The *Edinburgh Review* does not notice the *Life of Columbus* until September, 1828,¹¹ but in the issue for that month it gives it the place of honor, and praises it with unwonted cordiality. It says: "This, on the whole, is an excellent book; and we venture to anticipate that it will be an enduring one.

. . . We mean . . . that it will supersede all previous works on the same subject, and never be itself superseded." Readers may, the reviewer thinks, be disappointed at the lack of Irving's ultra-finished style, but this is really a merit. The author is said to give too much detail of Columbus's early years, and to be at his best in picturing the "innocence and gentleness of the Indians." Most of the illustrative extracts are chosen for their content, but some, to show Irving's picturing power.

⁹XXIX (1828) 224.

¹⁰X (1828) 118, 184.

¹¹XLVIII, 1. This article was reprinted in *The Extractor*, I, (1829) 211.

The fact that Irving's constituency included many uncritical readers of lighter literature is evidenced by the notices of the *Columbus* in the most popular magazines. The *Ladies' Monthly Museum*¹² gives the book a favorable, if not a very intelligent, review. The *Lady's Magazine*¹³ says: "It does not appear that he has made any important discoveries, with all his zeal and diligence; yet we must allow that he has produced a work of considerable merit, which is recommended by an agreeable style, and by perspicuous and accurate details."

These casual readers were doubtless better pleased with Irving's abridgement of the *Columbus*, published by Murray in his *Family Library*; and so, for that matter, were many of the more serious critics. The *Athenæum*¹⁴ says that there was too much detail in the early version, but pronounces the abridgement "among the most beautiful specimens of biography in any language." The *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*¹⁵ had been disappointed, on the first appearance of the *Columbus*, that Irving had found so little that was new, and considered that the new volume was reduced to "its proper dimensions." The *Dublin Literary Gazette*¹⁶ said extravagantly: "It combines the elegancies of the imagination with the sterling solidity of truth. Seldom has a writer, long accustomed to wander uncontrolled through the fairy enchantments of fiction, entered upon the beaten path of rigid facts with so good a grace." The *Eclectic Review*,¹⁷ the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*,¹⁸ and the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*¹⁹ all spoke briefly but favorably of this shorter version of *Columbus*.

The *Conquest of Granada*, which was published in London in May, 1829, contained the results of much research, and is said to be accurate in its main statements of fact. Instead of writing a straightforward history, however, Irving threw his material into the form of the supposed chronicle of an imaginary Monk, Fray Antonio Agapida. The wisdom of this de-

¹²XXVII (March 1828) 170.

¹³n. s. IX (March 1828) 145.

¹⁴[III] (March 13, 1830) 148.

¹⁵II (March 1830) 167.

¹⁶I (March 13, 1820) 162.

¹⁷IV (1830) 97.

¹⁸III (Mar. 13, 1830) 161.

¹⁹n. s. VIII (April 1830) 151.

vice was discussed by nearly every critic of the book; and the prevailing verdict was that the narrative suffered from the fact that it was neither pure history nor pure romance.

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal* in its leading article for June 6, 1829,²⁰ assumes that Fray Antonio is a real character and complains that Irving has fallen too much into his way of thinking, and is unfair to the Moors. Except for this mistake the review is sane and judicious, praising the style, but complaining of some monotony in the narrative. The *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*²¹ objects to Fray Antonio, and says:

The book is elegantly written and highly entertaining—still we do not think Mr. Irving's forte lies in history. . . . Nothing can be more beautiful than the Sketch Book and Bracebridge Hall, or more caustic with humour than Honest Knickerbocker. His present volumes are too highly coloured and wear too much the aspect of romance to be accredited as sound and sober truth.

The *Monthly Review*²² also condemns the fiction of Fray Antonio. It begins its article by quoting a sentence in which Irving speaks of the conquest of Granada as "a stately and heroic drama," and carries out at length the figure of a play with much tinsel and tin armor.

It is not a tale full of lofty and portentous meaning. . . . Mr. Irving, in fact, seems to have been afraid of his subject; he shrinks from appearing boldly in so serious a field; he shelters himself under the pasteboard shield of some fictitious historian, and like the discreet Bottom, while roaring like any nightingale, assures the ladies that he is only in jest. . . .

After this exordium, the benevolent reader will be surprised when we tell him that it appears to us exceedingly probable that he will like the work all the better for the faults we have pointed out. Inspired by the example of our intelligent and talented neighbours of France, a taste of [sic] history appears to be rapidly springing up in this country; but it is still only in its infancy, and refuses the strong meats which are adapted to its riper years. The 'Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada,' therefore, is well calculated for the present period in literature, though it will never procure for its author a place among historians. . . . We ought to say farther, that in its historical facts it is as correct as a history; and that in its scenery and incidents, it is as striking and interesting as any romance we ever read.

²⁰II, 1.

²¹I (June 1829) 71.

²²n. & i. s. XI (July 1829) 430.

The leading article in the *London Magazine* for June, 1829,²³ is a queer, strained review of the *Conquest of Granada* by a man who has some sort of religious obsession, and who apparently mistakes the whole temper of the work. The critic complains of the fiction of Fray Antonio because the Moors were a great people, and "the awful extinction of such a people well merits to be spoken of in earnest, and not under a mountebank disguise." He concedes that the conception of Diedrich Knickerbocker was apt in the *History of New York*, but feels that a similar device was not fitting in the *Conquest of Granada*. With a complete innocence of Irving's irony he condemns the author for quoting opinions of Spanish churchmen derogatory to the Moors, and continues: "It may be thought that we are too hasty in condemning Mr. Irving—but *we* have read the whole book; and it is written throughout in that spirit of carelessness of human suffering, which of all others, we think most deserves to be condemned." Many citations are given to prove Irving inaccurate in detail, and especially to show that he tends "to produce a love of war." "He has written to represent the coldest, the most cruel, the most bloody sentiments of Superstition, as the feelings of the purest, the noblest, *the most humane* of religions." In conclusion: "Judging thus, we think we are passing a sentence almost unduly lenient, when we say that we regard this work to be written in a spirit narrow and evil."

The *Monthly Repository and Review*,²⁴ which had heretofore confined its notices of American books to those with a religious bearing, took up the *Conquest of Granada*, and praised it unstintedly:

There is more spirit and power in this book than in any which Mr. Washington Irving has yet put forth. It is as good as the old ballad of Chevy Chase, and readers, whose age of chivalry is not yet gone, will find it stir their souls like the sound of a trumpet. The style is as quaint and graphic as that of the Old Chronicles which the author has imitated. The subject is, in every sense, a striking one; the materials seem to have been collected with great diligence; and the story is put together most felicitously. So well told a tale, whether of truth or fiction, we scarcely remember to have read;

²³d ser.. III, 529.

²⁴n. s. III (July 1829) 502.

and we doubt whether any historical romance can be named which can compete in interest with this romantic history.

The varnish of chivalry has been of late pretty well rubbed off. If Mr. Irving yet loves it well, and has perhaps lackered it a little, he has, at the same time, not omitted to record the ignorant fanaticism, the calculating ambition, the covetousness, treachery, and cold-blooded cruelty, with which its shining qualities were alloyed. Nor is the antidote the worse for not being made conspicuous by the formality of a commentary, or for having only appended to it the very naive reflections of Fray Antonio Agapida.

The *Lady's Magazine*²⁵ speaks pleasantly of the book; and so, except for disapproval of the false narrator, does the *Eclectic Review*²⁶ in an article which also discusses the *Alhambra*.²⁷

To the *Quarterly* for May, 1830,²⁸ Irving contributed an unsigned review of his own book, for which, according to his biographer, he received a check for fifty guineas. It was doubtless more common in 1830 than in 1920 for an author to review his own books, yet Irving's action seemed hardly above censure, even at that early date. His apologists excuse him on the ground that the article was requested by Murray, that it was intended to clear up certain misconceptions that had arisen regarding Fray Antonio Agapida, and that it did not directly praise the work. Why he did not print any necessary explanations over his own signature does not appear; nor is it clear why he complied so readily with this request of Murray's when he had before refused contributions to the *Quarterly* because of its hostility to America. In view, however, of his punctiliousness in other matters of literary and business ethics it is fair to assume that there were circumstances which justified his course in this instance.

The *Voyages of the Companions of Columbus* was compiled from material collected in connection with the *Life of Columbus*, and was issued in Murray's *Family Library*. The comments which it elicited were mostly brief, though in some instances they were supplemented by long extracts. Probably

²⁵n. s. X (Aug. 1829) 423.

²⁶3d ser. VIII (1832) 1.

²⁷The number of the *Literary Gazette* containing a review of the *Conquest of Granada* is missing from the file in the British Museum, and the article has not been available for this study.

²⁸XLIII, 55.

the most important review was that in the *Athenæum*,²⁹ which praised this "delightful book" for its "elegance, spirit, and simplicity," but objected that "it is neither biographical nor historical," and complained that "Mr. Irving's narratives want connexion." The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*,³⁰ the *Gentleman's Magazine*,³¹ and the *Monthly Magazine*³² discussed mainly the content, and said little of the literary workmanship. The *Atlas*,³³ and the *Monthly Review*³⁴ spoke pleasantly of Irving, and made little comment on the particular book in hand.

In the *Alhambra* Irving turned again to a work of pure literature, as distinguished from history or biography, and again made a popular appeal to the readers whom he had first won by the *Sketch Book*. The subject and the plan of the work were well suited to his powers; and while the fame of the collection has not, in America at least, kept quite so bright as that of the *Sketch Book*, it is still recognized as one of his most characteristic works. On its first appearance it was widely noticed, in journals of all sorts; and the praise which it received in almost every review was often mixed with little derogatory comment.

The *Literary Gazette*³⁵ discussed at length Irving's position in the world of letters, and spoke highly of the romance, the imagination, and the fantasies of the *Alhambra*. After long extracts it concluded: "Again and again we say this is one of the most delightful works of the time." The critic of the *Literary Guardian*³⁶ writes extravagantly of Irving's rank as an author, beginning: "Washington Irving is decidedly the first English prose-writer of the day." From the *Alhambra* itself he gives long extracts with short favorable comments. The *Athenæum*³⁷ also discusses the author in general before coming to the work under review, saying that he has "polished elegance" but lacks "simplicity and vigour"; that "His American

²⁹[IV] (1831) 9, 51.

³⁰V (Jan. 22, 1831) 63.

³¹CI (Feb. 1831) 143.

³²n. s. XI (May 1831) 571.

³³VI (Jan. 23, 1831) 60.

³⁴n. & l. s. (XVI) (Feb. 1831) 244.

³⁵XVI (April 28, 1832) 257.

³⁶II (May, 1832) 65, 82.

³⁷[V] (May 5, 1832) 283.

characters far surpass all his other delineations"; and that "We know of few who can equal him in the art of transferring living and breathing flesh and blood to his canvass." In conclusion it says: "We are not sure that the 'Tales of the Alhambra' will augment the fame of Washington Irving: they will, however, detract nothing from it, and that is high praise."

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*³⁸ praises both the description and the narrative in the *Alhambra*, and says: "To our taste, these are two most delightful volumes." The notice, however, seems a trifle perfunctory. Two less important periodicals, the *National Omnibus*³⁹ and the *Day*⁴⁰ both comment favorably on the book. The *Omnibus* describes it as "A Sketch Book, in short, resembling his former one in style, but richer in its contents." The same journal says that although Irving is just starting for America he will not remain long, because "he has been too much petted in the circles of European aristocracy."

The *Westminster Review*⁴¹ treats Irving and his new book in a manner far different from that which prevailed in its article of a few years before. In justification of its almost unmixed praise it says: "They are greatly mistaken who imagine that the luxuries of sentimentalism—when they can be afforded, as in advanced stages of civilization, and when they are not of a kind to enervate—may not be reconciled with an enlightened view of the doctrine of utility."

The *Monthly Review*⁴² devotes an article of twenty-six pages to the *Alhambra*, in which it says:

These volumes . . . will be very soon forgotten by everybody who reads them, those only excepted who may feel an uncharitable pleasure in comparing the minor and perishable productions of a man of genius, with the early efforts of his mind, upon which his reputation has fixed its permanent character. Not one of his works has tended in the slightest manner to increase the fame which he derived from his original "Sketch Book."

³⁸XXXVI (June, 1832) 242.

³⁹II (May 4, 1832) 138.

⁴⁰II (May 19, 1832) 20.

⁴¹XVII (July, 1832) 132.

⁴²n. & i. s. II for 1832: 221.

It pronounces the work a little better than the *Tales of a Traveller*, and continues:

Though upon the whole a mediocre affair, there are here and there some sketches in these pages which remind us of the hand of the master. . . . If upon the whole the reader will be disappointed, it will be because he sees that the author evidently still possesses the same power to charm which he originally exhibited, though he has not thought fit to exercise it with the same industry. He has got into idle, lounging, dreaming habits, which render him rather too careless of his literary fame.

Of Irving's Spanish writings in general it says:

Neither have we the means of calculating the number of volumes which he may even now be meditating upon the literature, antiquities, mountains, manufactures, laws, and wines of that romantic land, for he seems to have the art of splitting into a thousand forms a collection of matter, which other travellers would be contented with cramming into one journal.

After all this adverse criticism it is surprising to find that the passages chosen for illustration are mostly of a sort to be praised, and that the final effect of the article is not one of hostility.

The *Royal Lady's Magazine*⁴³ prints a review of the *Alhambra* in which Irving is credited with almost every possible literary virtue. Internal evidence shows that it is clearly copied, without acknowledgment, from some American source.

The reviews of separate works of Irving already quoted will give a good idea of the British estimates of the author; and some references to Irving will be found in the chapter on *The Attitude of Great Britain toward the Intellectual Life of America*. Several classes of comments on Irving the man and on his work as a whole may, however, be noticed and illustrated here.

When the *Sketch Book* and the republished *Knickerbocker's History* first attracted attention in England the author was welcomed in some quarters with an effusiveness almost amusing, especially as it was often accompanied by the expression of surprise that so civilized a writer could come out of America. An excellent example of an enthusiastic article of this sort is

⁴³V (Jan. 1833) 30

found in the *London Magazine and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review*⁴⁴ which says:

He is, in truth, a surprizing young man; a profound thinker; an acute observer; a humorous narrator. Generally speaking, his taste is pure; his style vigorous, often poetical; his irony unsurpassed; seldom tedious, never cloying; rich, without surfeit; humorous, without coarseness; and philosophic, without pedantry. To say this of an American, is no small measure of praise. . . .

We could pass months in his company, improving as the time went on, and anxious for it being prolonged, that we might enjoy the continuance of such a feast of reason and a flow of soul. . . . Carrying ourselves in idea to that America of which he is a native, we must rejoice at the intellectual growth to which this child of her soil has attained, and glory in the progress which literature has made, and still continues making amongst our neighbours.

Similar uncritical praise was frequently bestowed throughout the next ten years, sometimes by periodicals of the better class. The *Literary Museum*⁴⁵ says in a review of *Salmagundi*:

We confess that we regard Mr. Washington Irving with a very evil eye. We owe him a grudge, firstly for being an American, and presuming to write in the very best and purest style of the English language; secondly, that he has dared to rival our standard writers, in wit, humour, pathos, and characteristic description; thirdly, lastly, and worstly, that not content to remain in his own country (where we suppose he had as much honour as falls to the share of any prophet), he has come over here, reaped a rich harvest of laurels on our native soil, robbed us of our birthright, and contrived to have his name inserted in the scroll of fame as the first essayist of America, and in the very foremost rank of those of Britain.

The *European Magazine* for March, 1825,⁴⁶ has as its leading article a *Memoir of Washington Irving, Esq.*, which contains many mis-statements, some of which seem to have been made for the purpose of showing the author to better advantage. The writer is especially anxious to save Irving from the social taint of being a tradesman:

Some uninformed, or—what is worse—half-informed writers have stated rather incorrectly that Washington Irving was formerly engaged in commerce. The fact is this. Having a deep interest in the estate of some relatives of his, who were unfortunate in their specu-

⁴⁴II (Dec. 1820) 577.

⁴⁵II (Dec. 20, 1823) 805.

⁴⁶LXXXVII, 197.

lation, he quickly repaired hither from the continent, not only to advance his pecuniary claims, but to give the falling firm whatever support it could receive from his personal exertions, at such an overwhelming crisis.

In the criticism which follows the biographical sketch the writer says: "Mr. Irving has been styled 'The Goldsmith of his age,' but we should rather call him 'the Campbell of prose.'" This comparison, which was also made by other English reviewers, is carried out at some length.

The return of Irving to pure literature with the publication of the *Alhambra* in 1832 gave occasion for another series of flattering comments. The *Literary Gazette*⁴⁷ said: "What Columbus was to the American continent, Washington Irving has been to American literature. . . . England owes him a deep debt of gratitude, and so does America." After speaking of him as being the first to awaken kindly feelings between the literary circles of the two countries, the reviewer continues:

We must remember what he found Transatlantic literature, and compare that with its present position. Ten years ago we should have asked "Can any good thing come out of Galilee?" Now we look to American literature and feel that it only wants time to take its stand by our own. One circumstance, too, we cannot but especially mention,—the liberal and enlightened tone Washington Irving has always taken in speaking of the two countries. . . . There never was a writer whose popularity was more matter of feeling, or more intimate than the one whose pages are now before us; perhaps because he appealed at once to our simplest and kindest emotions. . . . The pathos of his serious is as irresistible as the comic of his lighter ones. If the definition be true, that the distinction between wit and humour is, that humour is closely allied to pathos, humour is the characteristic of our author; and if to this we add, that wit smacks of bitterness, which humour does not, we shall still more clearly describe the style of the author of the *Sketch Book*. With him, the wine of life is not always on the lees. An exquisite vein of poetry runs through every page.

A week later the *Literary Guardian*⁴⁸ went still further in an article that may stand as the last and the most extreme example of this sort of criticism:

⁴⁷XVI (April 28, 1832) 257.

⁴⁸II (May 5, 1832) 65.

Washington Irving is decidedly the first English prose-writer of the day. To false, narrow-minded, national pride, this conviction may be unwelcome; but no less certain it is, and unwillingly though it may be allowed, allowed it must be. What a tantalizing consideration, that a state quarrel about the tax on a pound of tea, and a state quarrel, too, in which we had no voice, should have cancelled for ever our compatriotism with such a genius as this, and fixed to one of the choicest pillars of our literature, the standard of a foreign rival, nation! Why, when they separated the growing offspring from the mother land, could they not take from them the language as well as the name of Englishmen, and so save us from the reproach of this anomaly? Such might be the "whim-whams" of a churlish, narrow-minded worthy, but to the liberal man, proud of his mother-tongue, and no less proud of his brother flesh, how glorious the bright bond of union, the imperishable link of fame which thus unites the father-land with the offspring colony! Emulation, fair and above board, is all we would run counter to such renown; and the liberal, good-natured manner in which Mr. Irving invariably treats of his ancestral territory, must remove the possibility of unkind rivalry, or illiberal opposition. . . .

England boasts many great names in her literary annals, and a mighty host of good men and true now flock under the standard of genius within this one little island. Not a few of them are pre-eminent in their several lines; some for poetic fervour; some for beautiful imagery; some for elegance; others for strength and nervousness, of language; some are admirable for their conception and originality of material; some for the exquisite polish of their working-up; some in history; some in fable; some in epic, and others in essay, claim the palm of excellence; but in none are each and all of these qualifications so eminently united as in Washington Irving.

It was frequently complained that Irving followed English authors too closely, that he was un-American—that is, not expressive of pre-conceived notions of American social crudity. The author of an article on *American Poetry* in *Blackwood's*⁴⁰ diverges somewhat from his subject to remark:

Geoffrey Crayon is an American born, and has written with a taste and elegance, 'tis true, not often rivalled even in England: but, that for a great deal of his perfection he is indebted to a long residence in this country, few will deny. His life of Campbell is written in very bad taste; and the History of New York, in spite of some humorous traits, is often both very indecorous and very dull.

Had English critics a meditated design of deteriorating American literature, and of emasculating it of all originality, they could not have pursued a better course than the one they have done, of laud-

⁴⁰XI (June, 1822) 684.

ing firmly the "Sketch Book," and recommending it as a model to the author's countrymen. . . . The beauties of Irving become rank defects, when we consider him as one of the aboriginal writers of a country.

The *Retrospective Review*⁵⁰ says in the course of a very rambling criticism of *Arthur Mervyn* that Irving "is, indeed, a very agreeable writer; but he has scarcely the *power* either of Charles Brockden Brown, or Mr. Cooper, or of the author of *Koningsmarke*. He is almost too polished for a native of the woods and savannahs. . . . Mr. Washington Irving is, perhaps, the best of [the imitators of Addison]; but we should scarcely call him a very masculine writer."

The idea that Irving's style is not expressive of America is again put forth by *Bolster's Quarterly Magazine*⁵¹ in a note prefixed to the reprint of a sketch of Thomas Campbell, originally compiled by Irving for a Philadelphia edition of the poet.

We cannot avoid observing that Mr. Irving's pellucid and polished style, so honourable to his country, since it gives so favourable an idea of her literary *existence*, and so widely different from Brocden [sic] Brown's undiluted and inartificial vigour and truly republican *raciness*, seems too softly bland, too *courteously* beautiful, to belong to a sturdy American. It may not be improper to hint that a monarchy would be found more congenial to the exercise of his talents.

An example of the review which ascribed Irving's fame to incidental causes rather than to his merit is found in the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*.⁵²

✓ We hardly know of any writer who is so universally read, and so little censured; he seems to have bought golden opinions of all men, though we think he has given them plenty of dross for their gold, or, to say the least of it, mere tinsel. But so the fact is: the Americans admire him because he is an American; the Scotch and Irish, because he is not an Englishman; Mr. Murray, because he writes what will sell; and the English, because it is the fashion.

The author of an article on *America and American Writers* in the *Athenæum*⁵³ is unpleasantly personal in his reflections on Irving:

⁵⁰IX (1824) 304.

⁵¹I (Feb. 1825) 28.

⁵²LVIII (Oct. 1824) 261.

⁵³[II] (Oct. 1829) 637.

"Knickerbocker's History of New York" was an honest and manly attempt to found an American literature. . . . What may not grow from a beginning so prosperous! And what has grown? What has become of Knickerbocker himself? Sertorius deemed it a better thing to be a private man in Rome than a king elsewhere. Mr. Irving thinks it is better to be a private man out of his own country than a king in it. The reputation of a second-rate essayist, or a twelfth-rate historian, here, is worth more to him than that of a creator in America! Do we regret that a man of genius should adopt such a rule of life? Do we regret that he does not prize the God given strength above every other enjoyment, and that he is content to sacrifice so much of it, as every man must do who deserts the soil where it was meant to be exercised, and to become often feeble, mawkish, effeminate? Do we regret that he had not strength of mind to hold fast in the vocation to which he was evidently summoned, and on which he so nobly entered, even though he could see no present fruit of his labour, and though he had no society, as here, with which to sympathize, cheered on by the inward reward of his labours, and in weaker moments, by a distant glimpse of immortality? Deeply, most deeply, do we regret it! But on whom should the blame rest? Who taught him the lesson? Where did he learn that literature is a mere article in the market to be bid and bargained for like any other—a commodity which it was hoped he would make staple in America, the price of which was the crowns of the publisher, or the smiles of the mob. His country told him so; it was infused into him with his republican milk; he was bound by every maxim of the American polity to believe it! And believing it, we believe there are not many countries, save his own, in which persons will be found to blame him for preferring the smiles of the mob in May-fair to those which would have greeted him in the saloons of New York.

Besides the reviews which are so one-sided as to suggest partisanship, there were a few which seemed to attempt a purely judicial estimate of the author and his works. One of these, in the *European Review*⁵⁴ after saying that Irving has developed a style impossible to a man with wholly English or wholly American training, continues:

It partakes much of the mixed origin of the American people—of Dutch painting, superstitious legends, and ghost stories. It has not a little of the wildness of American scenery; and it occasionally displays traces even of the bold and savage disposition of the Indians,—to whom, and their wrongs, Mr. Irving, whenever he has occasion to advert to the subject, is much more disposed to do jus-

⁵⁴V (1824) 124.

tice, than we fear is the case with the majority of his countrymen. In as far, again, as his style and manner are English, they have more analogy to the antithetical wits of Queen Anne's reign, than to the writers of the present day.

The *Quarterly*⁵⁵ in an article already quoted, considers Irving's chances of success as a novelist:

It may be doubted, perhaps, whether Mr. Irving would succeed in novels of a serious and romantic cast, requiring, as they do, heightening touches of the savage and gloomy passions. . . . But there is a class of novel for which he possesses every requisite: the art of blending the gay, the pensive, and the whimsical, without jarring and abrupt transitions, so as to take by surprise the stubborn reader, who resists the avowed design of making him wretched, is so rare a gift, as to have compensated in the case of Sterne, for want of plot, and digressions which often degenerate into stark nonsense; and combining as Mr. Irving does, so large a share of the indescribable humour of Sterne with a manly tone of moral feeling, of which the latter was incapable, we are convinced that moderate labour and perseverance might enable him to make material additions to our literature in the style to which we allude.

Judicial also, though less favorable in his verdict is William Hazlitt, in *The Spirit of the Age, or Contemporary Portraits*, (1825) where he appends a brief discussion of Irving to an essay on Lamb.

Mr. Washington Irvine's [sic] acquaintance with English literature begins almost where Mr. Lamb's ends,—with the Spectator, Tom Brown's works, and the wits of Queen Anne. He is not bot-tomed in our elder writers, nor do we think he has tasked his own faculties much, at least in English ground. Of the merits of his *Knickerbocker* and New York stories, we cannot pretend to judge. But in his *Sketch-Book* and *Bracebridge Hall* he gives us very good American copies of our British essayists and novelists, which may be very well on the other side of the water and as proofs of the capabilities of the national genius, but which might be dispensed with here, where we have to boast of the originals. Not only Mr. Irvine's language is with great taste and felicity modelled on that of Addison, Sterne, Goldsmith, and Mackenzie; but the thoughts and sentiments are taken at the rebound, and as they are brought forward at the present period, want both freshness and probability. Mr. Irvine's writings are literally *anachronisms*. He comes to Eng-land for the first time; and being on the spot, fancies himself in the midst of those characters and manners which he had read of in the

⁵⁵XXXI (March 1825) 473.

Spectator and other approved authors, and which were the only *idea* he had hitherto formed of the parent country. Instead of looking round to see what *we are* he sets to work to describe us as *we were*—at second hand. . . . Instead of tracing the changes that *have* taken place in society since Addison or Fielding wrote, he transcribes their account in a different handwriting, and thus keeps us stationary, at least in our most attractive and praiseworthy qualities of simplicity, honesty, hospitality, modesty, and good nature. This is a very flattering mode of turning fiction into history, or history into fiction; and we should scarcely know ourselves again in the softened and altered likeness, but that it bears the date of 1820, and issues from the press in Albemarle street. This is one way of complimenting our national and Tory prejudices; and coupled with literal or exaggerated portraits of *Yankee* peculiarities, could hardly fail to please. The first essay in the *Sketch-Book*, that on National Antipathies, is the best; but after that, the sterling ore of wit or feeling is gradually spun thinner and thinner, till it fades to the shadow of a shade. Mr. Irvine is himself, we believe, a most agreeable and deserving man, and has been led into the natural and pardonable error we speak of, by the tempting bait of European popularity, in which he thought there was no more likely method of succeeding than by imitating the style of our standard authors, and giving us credit for the virtues of our forefathers.

In the *Plain Speaker*⁵⁶ (1826) Hazlitt remarks with a gratuitous display of feeling:

A splendid edition of Goldsmith has been lately got up under the superintendence of Mr. Washington Irvine [sic], with a preface and a portrait of each author. By what concatenation of ideas that gentleman arrived at the necessity of placing his own portrait before a collection of Goldsmith's works, one must have been early imprisoned in transatlantic solitudes to understand.

A man of Hazlitt's experience surely knew that matters like this are usually ordered by the publisher.

⁵⁶*Collected Works*, VII, 311n.

CHAPTER V

COOPER

The second American writer to attract particular attention in England was James Fenimore Cooper. In many critical journals from 1822 to 1833 he occupies even a more prominent place than does Irving—partly because he was a more prolific writer, and partly because his works, at least his frontier stories, were more unusual, and to the popular mind better representative of America. Moreover, during a great part of this time Cooper was in Europe, where he was unfortunate enough to gain the reputation of being somewhat blatant in his expressions of Americanism; so that an element of personal and political hostility was sometimes injected into the criticism even of his non-political works.

Cooper's novel *Precaution* was published in America in 1820. It was the first of his writings, great or small, to be given to the press; and at the time he was more than thirty years old, and wholly unversed in the ways of authorship. *Precaution* was a story of English society life, purporting to be written by an Englishman, and conveying the moral that persons about to marry should consider particularly the religious faith of their future partners in life. It belongs to a class of fiction now long out of fashion. Cooper's biographer, writing nearly forty years ago, speaks as if it were a failure from the first. Yet it had a remarkable history, which is not fully explained. The story, as has been said, was written as if by an Englishman, and was published anonymously in New York. It was reprinted by Colburn in London, also, of course, without an author's name. There is a tradition that the London publisher believed it to be the work of an English lady of rank. How this could well have been true, if the book were reproduced from a copy with an American imprint, is not easy to see; but whatever the pub-

lisher knew, none of the English reviewers of the tale seems to have had any idea of its transatlantic origin. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹ said:

This work will please both young and old. The former will like it because it is full of marriages, and the latter because it inculcates, in every page, the value of *precaution* in entering on the matrimonial state. . . .

As, however, it is always more agreeable to commend than to censure, we will gladly leave our examination of the author's style, to enter upon his delineation of character—in which we think him extremely happy, and likely to become still more so, when the habit of writing shall enable him to express his conceptions with facility equal to their spirit. . . .

The Jarvis family, the Challertons, and the Moseley's are all well drawn, and sufficiently distinguished from each other, without any unnatural attempts at forcible contrast. The incidents keep up an equal, if not a very forcible degree of interest, and altogether, the author displays talents for novel-writing which will undoubtedly secure him the approbation of the public, if, in his future works, he can divest himself of a certain formality of style, which perhaps is, in the present instance, occasioned by too great an anxiety, that none of his "usefulness" shall be lost for want of being set forth with, what he may conceive, becoming sententiousness and diction.

Colburn's Magazine might be suspected of partiality; but the *Gentleman's Magazine*² gives equal commendation:

This is a spirited performance although not equally so throughout; as a work of entertainment it claims a distinguished place amid this species of publications. It is no small praise to say, that it will repay the attention requisite to its development; for, in the multiplicity of characters to which we are introduced some confusion and obscurity must arise; yet these characters are well sustained; and upon the whole, the story is conducted with ease and consistency through various scenes in domestic life, all tending to prove the great importance of early education, in cultivating religious and moral principles.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*³ is less favorable. The reviewer says: "Although the plan of this novel may be regarded as good, yet it is not sufficiently developed to be useful." He further complains that some of the incidents are improbable,

¹ III (March, 1821) 132.

² XCI (April, 1821) 345.

³ XCV (June, 1821) 211.

and that there are errors in English, some of them "daring defiances of common grammar." The charges against the English may be explained by the fact that the proof-reading on the American book was execrable, owing perhaps to the author's inexperience; so that Cooper himself said, in his preface to the second edition, that whole passages were rendered unintelligible. But this English criticism raises a more interesting question than that of stylistic purity. Cooper's experience in England before 1820 had been limited to a few days of shore leave in London when, in preparation for a commission in the navy, he was serving as a common sailor on an American ship anchored in the Thames. How was it that while the American visitor today is often perplexed over minor matters of rank and usage in the English social system, this inexperienced writer could manage his company of nobles, gentry, clergy and military men and make no blunder that would betray to Englishmen themselves his alien origin? In this respect, at least, *Precaution* was an achievement; and it is also interesting as one of the few American works that was reviewed exactly like any English book.

With the *Spy*, Cooper began his long list of novels with American settings. The *Spy* was a tale of the American Revolution, and as such naturally showed the British troops and their commanders in a light not always flattering. This fact seems, however, to have militated little against its popularity in England. It was published there in 1822, but a few months after it appeared at home, and was widely reviewed.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁴ lists the *Spy* under "New Publications," and gives it as "By the author of *Precaution*," but makes no comment. A little later the *Monthly Censor*⁵ speaks with great fairness of its treatment of matters on which an Englishman might well be sensitive:

The period to which this novel refers is one of the most unfortunate and least honourable to Britain, in modern history; to America it is the reverse; and as the work is apparently the production of a native of the latter country, with a due share of national partiality, the English reader will not always fully enter into the feelings of the author, and will hardly forgive the preference which he shows. The tale is well chosen for the purpose of conveying an idea of the

⁴ VI (April, 1822) 173.

⁵ I (June, 1822) 114.

character of the warfare, and the habits of the republican army. It abounds with variety of incident; and possesses the higher merit of inculcating no principles except those of honour and morality. We know not whether its portraits of American manners be correct; they are certainly not very inviting.

At about the same time the *Monthly Literary Register*⁶ prints a curious review which, almost without exception, praises the novel for the things which later critics have pronounced weakest.

With some of the characters in this novel we are particularly pleased. The laughter and liberty-loving Frances is equal to most of the fair forms which have been held up to our admiration by some of the best writers in this class of literature. The quiet portraits of Mr. Wharton and Miss Jeannette Peyton are well drawn. . . . There are scenes of great pathos and sentiment in the book. There is likewise a pleasant sprinkling of the gay and humorous—for which we are principally indebted to the company of a Scotch doctor of medicine, who is the surgeon of Major Dunwoodie's troop, Betty Flanagan, (the widow of a trooper,) who follows the camp, and an American Serjeant Hollister. These personages are evidently favourites with the author, and, when such is the case, they can hardly fail to be so with the reader. . . .

The martial descriptions naturally occurring from the scene of the story are well given. . . .

It is likewise no small praise to add, that the best interests of virtue and religion are practically advocated in its pages. The sketches of American scenery and manners are touched with an able hand; and the style throughout is light and agreeable. . . . Some of the dialogues, however, are too long—the Doctor, for instance, is with us too often: . . . there is this fault, that we see no distinct hero in the piece. . . . This general fault, however, is redeemed by the talent of the author; and we sincerely recommend *THE SPY* to the acquaintance of our readers.

The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁷ predicts increasing popularity for the book in Great Britain, and says the author "has proved himself a worthy successor of the author of 'Carwin' and 'Edward [sic] Huntley.'" It continues: "The *Spy* is truly a national tale, and is founded on some events which occurred in that noble struggle by which America became independent." Furthermore, "It possesses no ordinary

⁶ I (June, 1822) 121.

⁷ IV (July 6, 1822) 421.

merit," and "in the interest of the plot, the vigour and liveliness of its description, and in the correct delineation of the various characters, the *Spy* is one of the best novels that we have met with."

The notice in the *New Edinburgh Review*⁸ illustrates the condescending manner of criticism which applies different standards to English and to American writers.

This publication has two claims to our notice—it is an American work of fancy, and it is a tale of America. Its absolute merit might not otherwise have attracted our attention; for it is as well to say at once that it must not be measured by the gigantic standard, of such compositions, appealed to in this country. But we should have hailed it, even had it possessed less merit than it does, both because it is a lively picture of American life, and because it is another offering to the muses, in a country where *that* culture is too new to have as yet greatly improved national manners and sentiments, or shed much of its benign influence either on domestic or foreign relations. The "Sketch Book" has roused us, on this side of the water, to a new interest in the progress of transatlantic talent, taste, and genius. From internal evidence, we can judge that "the *Spy*" is by a different hand, and we are glad of it; for we love to see, not only the proofs multiplied of the intellectual and moral exaltation of the American people, but the channels diversified for the kindly flow of that genuine sympathy between the mother country and her forisfamiliar offspring, for which a generous rivalry and cordial intercourse of genius and taste is but another name. It is, therefore, we should hold American *failures*, [sic] even worthy of our attention, and every attempt entitled to our critical aid and indulgent judgment.

After a summary of the story, and long extracts, the article proceeds with a searching analysis of the author's qualities, which was probably not intended to be unfriendly. It decides that the story is not very interesting, but adds: "We are, nevertheless, disposed to ascribe to it a very considerable share of merit, and, although in some places it is rather forced, upon the whole, it carries the reader agreeably along from its commencement to its conclusion." It considers that "The author appears, however, to care less about a representation of American manners, than an exaltation of American character," though it concedes that "The picture, if overcharged, will at

⁸ III (Oct. 1822) 345.

least serve the purpose of a standard for the American character in the future, and, we may add, we could not wish our own countrymen likewise a better example." Cooper is said to be unfair in the portrayal of English characters. There are serious defects in his plot, and "None of the events chosen are of a striking kind"; "there is not one grand passage in the three volumes." There is also "a considerable deficiency in poetical thought." Of Harvey Birch, it is admitted, "The conception is new." Finally, "Had not the Scottish [sic] Novels led the way, it would never have been imagined."

The *Ladies Monthly Museum*⁹ begins a review: "This is an American novel, a species of literary commodity which a few years ago was very rare, and, at the same time, very worthless. But the case is now materially altered." Continuing, it compares Cooper with Smollett, as was often done in discussions of the sea tales, and praises his work, but complains:

In almost all the productions of American intellect, which it has fallen to our lot to examine, there has been a certain coarseness both of sentiment and expression, indicative of the general state of society in the country in which they originate. This forms the principal drawback on the merit of these volumes, which, though not equal to the fascinating narratives of Mr. Washington Irving, will not suffer from a comparison with those of his coadjutor, the author of *Koningsmarke*.

Later references to the *Spy* occur incidentally in articles on other subjects, and in reviews of groups of Cooper's novels. John Neal, in his comments on American writers in *Blackwood's*¹⁰ is characteristically off-hand, saying: The *Spy*—the most popular novel ever produced in the country, by a native, is very good—as a whole: but rather too full of stage-tricks and clap-traps. The disguises; the pathos; the love-parts; the heroines—are all contemptible. In other matters, it is a capital novel." The *British Critic*¹¹ in a long article on eight novels by Neal, Paulding, and Cooper, calls the portrayal of Colonel Wellmere ridiculous, but adds: "With the exception of this piece of bad judgment, Mr. Cooper, though touching on inflammable matter, has not over-stept the limits of that rea-

⁹ Imp. Ser. XIX (March, 1824) 158.

¹⁰ XVI (1824) 415.

¹¹ II (July 1826) 406.

sonable partiality to his own country which he may fairly be allowed to feel." The reviewer especially commends the portrayal of Harvey Birch, saying with astuteness: "An inferior author would not have avoided making him much too gentlemanly for his business; but Mr. Cooper has kept him strictly down to his humble rank, and yet rendered him the most interesting person in the book."

A later edition of the *Spy* in Colburn's series of *Standard Novels* called forth a number of comments, mostly brief. The *Monthly Review*,¹² in a notice of several volumes of the series, says of the *Spy*: "Though unequal in its style and interest, it, nevertheless, deserves a place among modern standard novels." The *Atlas*¹³ says:

In some respects 'The Spy' is the best of COOPER'S novels. It presents a constant succession of dramatic, or rather melo-dramatic interest, and the series of events and mysteries with which it teems is kept up with unabated excitement to the last page. But it was ill-written. The manner of the author was occasionally stiff, and the dialogue was over loaded with uneasy expletives. In this edition those faults have been pretty generally amended, so that we have the original story in all its excellence, pruned of the deformities of style with which it was confessedly chargeable.

No collation has been made to show whether the new Colburn edition had been amended in any particular, but it is probable that there were no changes other than ordinary proof-reader's alterations in punctuation, etc. The notice in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹⁴ contents itself with praising the typographical form of the book. An article on the *Water-Witch* in the *Spirit of Literature*¹⁵ speaks of the *Spy* as the only novel in which Cooper has successfully handled humor, and adds:

In the "Spy" Mr. Cooper found the secret of his strength. It lies in being Yankee to the back bone. His own countrymen, of course, like him the better for it; the French, Germans, and other *continentals*, take pleasure in it; and it is no disrecommendation with the English. His occasional abuse of the latter has the same

¹²n. and i. ser., Vol. II for 1831; (May) 145.

¹³ VI (May 22, 1831) 348.

¹⁴ XXXIII (Jan. 1831) 254.

¹⁵ I (Oct. 30, 1830) 425.

effect. There is, perhaps, no more salable commodity in the world than abuse of the English.

The reviewer somewhat amusingly characterizes Birch as a man of low morals because he was guilty of deceiving the British.

According to the traditional account of its origin, the *Pilot* grew out of a discussion between Cooper and a group of friends over the identity of the Great Unknown. Cooper was insistently for Scott; his friends maintained that Scott could not have written the technically nautical parts of the *Pirate*, which had just appeared. Cooper, on the other hand, argued that the *Pirate* was just the sort of sea novel that a landsman would write; and to show how an experienced sailor might handle his material he wrote a novel himself. That he succeeded in producing a story very different from the *Pirate* is indicated by the fact that English critics of this book seldom compared him with Scott, but rather with Smollett—whom he may resemble in vividness, but not at all in plot, purpose, or temper.

The *Pilot* appeared almost simultaneously in England and America. The memory of John Paul Jones, who, though never named, is obviously the hero of the tale, still seemed opprobrious to many Englishmen; yet, as in case of the *Spy*, few critics allowed prejudices of this sort to warp their judgments of the work. The *Literary Museum*¹⁶ in one of the earliest reviews of the *Pilot*, passes a friendly, but on the whole a very sane judgment:

The work, though blending history and fiction together, is drawn with so vivid a pen, as to approach nearer the former than the latter; and if not equal to the works of the author of *Waverley* in beauty of delineation, it is scarcely inferior in point of interest to the best of that favourite author's productions. There appears to be a freshness in Mr. Cooper's writing which we seldom meet with (nor can scarcely expect) in the present day when the fields of literature rarely present an uncultivated spot. We do not compare Mr. Cooper with our favourite Smollett; but it is no mean praise to say, that in many points he approaches nearer to that powerful writer than any author of the day. Like Smollett, his forte lies in sketching the stronger passions of our nature, and especially those which predominate in the character of seamen. His writings exhibit far more in-

¹⁶ III (Jan. 31, 1824) 61.

vention, than accuracy or judgment in filling up; he is consequently not so successful as Mr. Washington Irving in beauty of style and purity of diction. But he is at the same time exempt from the coarseness of some of his countrymen.

The *Literary Gazette*¹⁷ is faint in its praise, apparently not because the critic wishes to damn the book, but because he does not quite know what to make of it, and feels safer in being non-committal. He thinks it "will do credit to this class of literature in America"; and he finds "with a good deal to censure, much to praise. The story, for example, is altogether improbable; but some of the characters are admirably drawn." He finds the character of the Pilot, however, extravagant; and he remarks: "It was to be expected from an American writer, that all the Americans who figure on his pages should be heroes; and so they are." Long Tom, whom he designates as "the lower class hero of the piece," is "not unworthy of the pen of Smollett." In conclusion, the reviewer says: "In defiance of probability and many blemishes, there is so much force and originality in these volumes, that we dare say they will float for some time on the tide of public favour before they sink into Davy's Locker."

The notice in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹⁸ is almost wholly favorable. It characterizes the story as "a fine sea-piece, painted with a bold and vigorous pencil, [which] does great credit to the writer's powers, both of description and sentiment," and continues: "Although he has chosen the same element for the subject of his sketches which has furnished Smollett with so many happy delineations, yet there is nothing of the copiest in Mr. Cooper's pages." The only unsatisfactory character is the Pilot himself; "there is too much *Byronism* about him, if we may be allowed the expression." Long Tom is pronounced worthy of Scott.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*¹⁹ speaks of Jones as a pirate, and complains that the book tends "to perpetuate feelings of national animosity." The literary criticism is not, however, unduly biased:

¹⁷ VIII (Jan. 31) 77, and (Feb. 7, 1824) 83.

¹⁸ XII (March 1824) 123.

¹⁹ CIII (March 1824) 330.

The main object of the work is to display the character of that celebrated marauder, which is drawn and supported with skill; . . . The other characters are also ably delineated and spiritedly maintained, but, though a love-episode is introduced, the whole is such a decided naval picture consisting of so much actual nautical operation and manoeuvre, that we apprehend it will not be acceptable to the generality of novel-readers. For ourselves, however, though the writer defies the critics as mere *lubbbers*, we can assure him that we have perused it with professional relish, and hail him as a thorough *seaman*; but we must add that if the manners and discipline of his officers be correctly represented as American, they are not such as prevail in the British navy.

Two years later²⁰ in the same journal a reviewer of the *Last of the Mohicans* incidentally remarks: "His *Pilot* is unquestionably the best romance of nautical adventure which our times have produced; and there is one scene in that tale—a sea-fight—which, if he had never written another line, would alone distinguish him for a writer of powerful description."

The *Universal Review*²¹ is slightly patronizing and slightly oracular. The last sentence of the following paragraph suggests the question whether the reviewer knew of the *Spy* and the *Pioneers*:

Mr. Cooper, an American, who has been engaged in the sea service, is the author of these novels; and they are among the best productions of the kind, which that new land has sent forth to redeem its literature from the stain of mediocrity. Several of the scenes are well wrought; and some of the characters ably drawn. . . . Smollett is evidently the author's prototype, and we may give him the highest praise he could hope for, when we say, that in some instances he approaches his model. Whenever he lands, however, he is out of his element.

The *Lady's Magazine*²² also makes comparisons with Smollett, but says, "yet the American writer is not a copiest, or a servile imitator." As was not unfrequent, it regards Long Tom as a far more successful character than the Pilot. The *British Critic*²³ in an article already quoted in connection with the *Spy*, likewise praises Long Tom, as well as the thrilling sailing pass-

²⁰ n. s. II (June, 1826) 122.

²¹ I (May 1824) 382.

²² V (Aug. 1822) 445.

²³ II (July 1826) 406.

ages, and finds the *Pilot* himself unsatisfactory. A reviewer of the *Water-Witch* in *Spirit of Literature*²⁴ pronounces the plot of the *Pilot* bad, but approves of Long Tom.

The appearance of the *Pilot* in Colburn's *Standard Novels* elicited brief notices from the *Atlas*,²⁵ the *Gentleman's Magazine*,²⁶ and the *Monthly Review*.²⁷ The two first named are perfunctory, and the last is indifferent:

We are certainly no admirers of the "Pilot," and we candidly confess that we have made many attempts to read it, but never could succeed. We know others who have been placed in a similar predicament. But still the "voice of fame" has lauded this work to the skies; and though we cannot admit that, in this instance at least, it has been "unerring" it has convinced many readers that the "Pilot" is a capital novel.

In view of the relative importance of the *Pilot* among Cooper's works, and the interest in a story of the sea that might naturally be expected of Englishmen, the criticisms of the romance are a little disappointing, both in number and in seriousness.²⁸ Scott's comment in a letter to Miss Edgeworth²⁹ dated February 24, 1824, though not published at the time, is interesting:

I have seen a new work, the *Pilot*, by the author of the *Spy* and *Pioneer* [sic]. The hero is the celebrated Paul Jones, whom I well

²⁴ I (Oct. 30, 1830) 425.

²⁵ VI (March 20, 1831) 188.

²⁶ CI (1831) 609.

²⁷ n. and l. ser. Vol. II for 1831: 145 (May).

²⁸ The *Hive* III (1824) 324, prints one of the sea-fights from the *Pilot*, crediting it to "An American"; the *Drama*, n. s. I: 271, mentions a dramatization of the *Pilot* acted at the Adelphi theatre, London. This notice implies that it was a poor piece. Scott notes in his diary for Oct. 21, 1826 (Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, p. 640): "Hurried away to see honest Dan Terry's theatre, called the Adelphic, where we saw the *Pilot* from the American novel of that name. It is extremely popular, the dramatist having seized on the whole story, and turned the odious and ridiculous parts, assigned by the original author to the British, against the Yankees themselves. There is a quiet effrontery in this, that is of a rare and peculiar character. The Americans were so much displeased, that they attempted a row—which rendered the piece doubly attractive to the seamen at Wapping, who came up and crowded the house night after night, to support the honour of the British flag. After all, we must deprecate whatever keeps up ill-will between America and the mother country; and we, in particular, should avoid awakening painful recollections. Our high situation enables us to condemn petty insults, and to make advances towards cordiality. I was, however, glad to see Dan's theatre as full seemingly as it could hold.

²⁹ Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, p. 520.

remember advancing above the island of Inchkeith with three small vessels to lay Leith under contribution. . . . However, the novel is a very clever one, and the sea scenes and characters in particular are admirably drawn; and I advise you to read it as soon as possible.

Of the five "Leatherstocking Tales" on which so much of the fame of Cooper rests, the *Pioneers*, the *Last of the Mohicans*, and the *Prairie* appeared before 1833. The *Pioneers* had been published by Murray in 1823, a little earlier than the *Pilot*. The *British Magazine, or Miscellany of Polite Literature*³⁰ recalls the success of the *Spy* and comments on the promptness with which Murray has published this work, before saying:

Putting Geoffrey Crayon aside—who, by the way, is as little of an American in all his writings, save one, as we ourselves—the author of the *Pioneers* is the most original and the best author that the United States of America have produced. Besides possessing many requisites which fit him for the vocation of a novelist, he has had the discretion and the good taste to seek the materials of his tales in those scenes and characters of his native country which have been hitherto unexplored, and which add to their intrinsic attractions the rare charm of perfect novelty. . . . In Mr. Cooper's descriptions we are at once presented with characters and habits so probable, and so like to the modes into which such society as that of America would most probably fall, that their authenticity is believed at once, and their singular originality is in the highest degree amusing. The scenery of the remote settlements is too extensive and too monotonous to give much room for pleasing description, but the inhabitants of those districts are full of variety.

The usual charge of indebtedness to Scott appears in this form:

It is in every respect an imitation of the author of *Waverley*; and if Mr. Cooper is beneath the Great Unknown in information, in polish, and in skill, he approaches him nearer than any of his other imitators, in originality of subject, and in the spirit with which he has executed his task.

The article on the *Pioneers* in the *Literary Gazette*³¹ is of the sort which that periodical often devoted to American works, with faint praise expressed, and much condemnation implied. It says that "Vivid pictures of American scenery, customs and

³⁰ I (April, 1823) 65.

³¹ VII (Oct. 18, 1823) 661.

people, give the *Pioneers* an interest which is not to be found in the tale itself. . . . It is rather as a series of animated sketches, which would do credit to any tourist's note-book, than as a novel, that the work before us is entitled to commendation." "Some of the characters," the critic admits, "are very well drawn," and "are touched with much comic power"; and some of the scenes "are excellent in their humour." Among the selections included in the article are the descriptions of such erratic characters as Ben Pump, Remarkable Pettibone, and Dr. Todd, introduced by the remark: "We must add to these passages two or three portraits, not likenesses, we trust, for the credit of American countenances, just as a sample of this author's taste for painting the human face divine."

A very rambling review in the *Newcastle Magazine*³² says of the *Pioneers*: "This is one of the most interesting novels we ever read; and considering that many months have not elapsed since the *Edinburgh Review* asked in a tone of sarcastic triumph, 'Who reads an American book?' it is one of the most remarkable specimens of literary proficiency that ever crossed the Atlantic to be republished and admired by the mother country." It predicts that the *Pioneers* will be more valued than the *Spy* "in proportion as its subject is more peculiarly American"; and objects only to a few Americanisms.

Neal, in his *Blackwood* notes on American writers³³ devotes a few scrappy comments to the *Pioneers*, characterizing it as "a heavy piece of repetition in all the best characters: some noble scenes; and a pretty considerable share of lead. Leatherstocking is true—we have known such a fellow." The *British Critic*³⁴ in its discussion of a group of American novels mentions the *Pioneers* as "the work which English taste seems generally to distinguish as the best of Mr. Cooper's series of novels," and says "It has secured for him, by tacit consent, an admission to those rights and honours of our own body corporate of literature, of which no other American except Washington Irving can boast." Later in the same article the reviewer says that the *Pioneers* with its frontier life,

³² III (Jan. 1824) 35.

³³ XVI (1824).

³⁴ II (July 1826) 406.

imparts a dignity to the ordinary occurrences of life, which the Germans, with Goethe at their head, in vain attempt to transfer to an old country full of butchers, bakers, and gens d'armerie, and frowzy plebian indulgences.

In an infant state of society like that described in "The Pioneers," the character of the old hunter stands out, as it is intended to do, in bolder relief than any of the other persons, including the beautiful and high-spirited Elizabeth Temple herself. Like Birch the pedlar, and Tom Coffin, he is the real hero of the scene in which he appears; and, indeed, the points of resemblance between the seaman and the backwoodsman are numerous, in spite of their totally different vocations. Both are original conceptions of men engaged in hardy and adventurous pursuits, but as undebased by the contact of their species as was Adam in his primitive simplicity.

Though the *Pioneers* seems to have been widely read in England, the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*³⁵ in a notice of a second edition remarks on it as a work "very little known in this country, but written as everybody knows who attends to these matters, by the author of the *Prairie*." The article continues: "The story is quite a subordinate matter, though always directly subservient to this main purpose—to exhibit the progress of a 'clearing'"; and says that "The attempts at humour are of the Smollett cast, and not unsuccessful." In 1832 the *Kaleidoscope*,³⁶ which had reproduced so much of Irving's work, gave a long cutting from the *Pioneers* with a favorable but unimportant note on Cooper.

A nominal review of the *Water-Witch* in the *Spirit of Literature*³⁷ discussed briefly each of Cooper's novels that had appeared. It considered the *Pioneers* as less successful than the *Spy*, though it could give no satisfactory reason for the inferior ranking. It said: "This tale contains more sketches of the manners and customs of America than all the rest of these novels put together; and we cannot but regret that the want of patronage and experience drove the author back to the 'blood-and-thunder system.'"

On the appearance of the *Last of the Mohicans* in 1826 the *Literary Gazette*³⁸ was for once thoroughly friendly toward an American book:

³⁵ n. s. IV (July 1827) 84.

³⁶ n. s. III, 313.

³⁷ I (Oct. 30, 1830) 425.

³⁸ X (April 1, 1826) 198.

This is not the first time we have had to express our very cordial approval of Mr. Cooper's productions; and the volumes before us will, we think, do anything but diminish the just reputation of the American novelists. Never was the character, the original and interesting character, of the native Indians so well, so truly, and so vividly drawn as in his pages. . . . The narrative part of the present work is wrought up with unfluctuating interest; but certainly the skill with which the characters are drawn and developed, is where the author's talents have been the most strikingly successful.

The article concludes: "If unabating interest, vivid portraiture of character, most admirable scenic description, if these are criterions of talents, we may then most cordially recommend the *Last of the Mohicans* to our readers."

The *Panoramic Miscellany: or Monthly Magazine and Review*³⁹ classes the *Last of the Mohicans*, perhaps inadvertently, under "Domestic Literature." It remarks that the Indian furnishes admirable literary material, and says:

The author of the present work appears to have been fully aware of this; and, in availing himself of the knowledge derived from history, tradition, and personal observation, has presented the world with a work abounding in originality. In his preface, indeed, he disclaims all pretence of invention, and professes his work to be "a mere narrative." But, however, [sic] this may be, or in whatever proportions fact and fiction may be mingled, it is, at any rate, a narrative so well worked up, that the narrator is entitled to claim all the merit of authorship. . . .

We consider these volumes, therefore, as supplying a desideratum, not only in *novelist*, but in historical literature.

Hawkeye, the writer of this article pronounces "a masterpiece of delineation seldom equalled."

The *London Magazine* for May, 1826,⁴⁰ attacks Cooper in three or four pages of cheap and slangy ridicule which, judging from internal evidence, were probably written by John Neal. A short sample will be sufficient:

The "Last of the Mohicans" is clearly by much the worst of Mr. Cooper's performances. He has for several years past littered annually, and in fecundity at least, if in no rarer quality, has proved himself a genuine descendant of his great English father, beyond the salt-water lake.

³⁹ I (April 1826) 533.

⁴⁰ n. s. V 27.

The *Monthly Review*⁴¹ in a long article which will be quoted elsewhere, says of the *Last of the Mohicans*: "These adventures are conceived with vivid invention, and the circumstances are told with amazing animation and force of description." The chief defect is that "The second volume resembles the first, and the third is a repetition of the second"; and "The *denouement* is altogether rendered needlessly *tragical*." The *New London Literary Gazette*⁴² speaks of the increasing fame of Cooper, and pronounces him, while not equal to Scott, superior to most of his imitators. Of the *Last of the Mohicans* it says: "Whoever reads this beautiful tale cannot fail to admire it." The *Liverpool Repository*⁴³ is strongly impressed by Cooper's respect for religion. It remarks that he perhaps excels Scott in giving "information and instruction," and that he does not bandy about Biblical texts as Scott sometimes does.

The reviews of the *Prairie* were not very numerous, or, on the whole, very important. The articles in the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*,⁴⁴ the *Liverpool Gazette*,⁴⁵ and the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁴⁶ all consist mostly of selections. They speak of the interest inherent in the material Cooper has chosen, and compliment him on his success in handling it. The *Literary Chronicle* says:

The author of the *Spy* and the *Pilot* is of a school all his own, both by the ingenuity of his narrative and the beauty and freshness of his descriptions. His great excellence, however, is in the touches with which he gives prominence to the features most peculiar to the people he characterizes, or the scenes he describes.

In direct opposition to the view of Cooper's characteristics taken by the *Literary Chronicle* is the opinion expressed in the *Monthly Review*,⁴⁷ which says of the romances: "Their prevailing defect is in their *dramatis personae*.—They have no moral characteristics, and their physical peculiarities, aided by costume and artificial manners, shew them like men in a mas-

⁴¹ n. s. II (June 1826) 122.

⁴² I (Aug. 25, 1827) 182.

⁴³ I (July, Aug., 1826) 384, 448.

⁴⁴ n. s. III (June 1827) 650.

⁴⁵ XI (June 2, 1827) 340.

⁴⁶ IX (1827) 291, 345.

⁴⁷ n. s. V (July, 1827) 426.

querade." Dr. Batt is especially condemned. The same article finds defects in the plot of the *Prairie*, and thinks the whole rather flat, though it approves the portrayal of the Indians, and the descriptions. A writer on *Tales of Indian Life* in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁴⁸ discusses Chateaubriand's *The Natchez*, and Cooper's *Prairie*. Of Cooper he speaks admirably, but with discrimination, saying, "He has small portion of that sympathy with the beautiful, none of the delicacy, none of the humour, none of the chivalrous grace, which belong to the novelist of Scotland; but his pictures of scenery are more vast, more vivid, more true"; and, "He is not [Nature's] priest, but her secretary and copiest." The critic further praises Cooper's descriptions, and complains of his lack of humor. Another writer in *Colburn's*, the author of the sketch of Cooper in the series "Living Literary Characters,"⁴⁹ says that "A large proportion of the critics have decided in favor of 'The Prairie' as the finest of all the American novels." Other incidental references to the *Prairie* in *Colburn's*, perhaps from the same hand, take a similar view. The *Spirit of Literature*⁵⁰ in a review of the *Water-Witch* pronounces the *Prairie* very bad in all respects.

The *Spy*, the *Pilot*, and the three *Leatherstocking Tales* already mentioned are the early romances of Cooper which have best endured the judgment of time. Some of the tales which now seem unimportant received even more space in the critical journals. Those which appeared before 1833 were *Lionel Lincoln*, the *Red Rover*, the *Borderers*,⁵¹ the *Bravo*, the *Heidenmauer*, and the *Headsmen*.

Lionel Lincoln, which came out a little before the *Last of the Mohicans*, was an historical novel of the Revolution, and was planned to do for Massachusetts what the *Spy* had done for New York. It was, relatively, a failure in America, and neither its political implications nor its literary merits were likely to win it friends in England. Within a few months of its appearance it was reviewed in the *Literary Gazette*,⁵² the

⁴⁸ XX (1827) 77.

⁴⁹ XXXI (1831) 356.

⁵⁰ I (Oct. 30, 1830) 425.

⁵¹ This was the title given in England to *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*.

⁵² IX (March 5, 1825) 149.

Nepenthes,⁵³ and the *Monthly Critical Gazette*.⁵⁴ All these notices renew the comparison between Cooper and Scott. The *Literary Gazette* accuses Cooper of having too good an opinion of himself, ridicules him for his display of patriotism and for his presumption in speaking of Lexington and Bunker Hill as "battles," and pronounces the plot improbable. The *Nepenthes* criticises the lack of truth to nature in the character-drawing, but on the whole commends the book, describing Cooper as "the nearest representative of the Great Unknown that has ventured to tread in the same line." The *Monthly Critical Gazette* begins by saying that Cooper "is as popular among his countrymen as Sir Walter Scott has been in Great Britain," and after granting that the *Spy* and the *Pilot* show genius of the very first order continues: "We lament exceedingly that he has been induced, from any motive whatever, to commit a sort of suicide upon his own literary reputation, by smothering upon this occasion the original genius with which nature has gifted him, in order to become a servile copiest of what has ever been considered and proclaimed by us to be a bad model." The reviewer further charges the romancer with rekindling political animosities against Great Britain. John Neal, in an article on *Late American Books*, in *Blackwood's*⁵⁵ is severe in his denunciation of the tale. The reviewer of the *Water-Witch* in *Spirit of Literature*⁵⁶ thinks the plot of *Lionel Lincoln* is bad on the whole, and says: "It is singular enough that the author, all throughout most zealous for the honour of his country, makes in this novel an idiot and a madman two principal actors in the cause of American independence. Pretty supporters, truly!" *The Gentleman's Magazine*⁵⁷ gives a new edition in Colburn's *Standard Novels* a brief notice, with a little praise for Cooper in general rather than for this particular book.

The *Red Rover*, the second of the sea tales, was a worthier piece of work than *Lionel Lincoln*; and indeed some modern critics would insist that it belongs in the same class as the *Pilot*. The earliest English notices seem to be those in four

⁵³ I (March 12, 1825) 68.

⁵⁴ II (April 1825) 457.

⁵⁵ XVIII (Sept. 1825) 317.

⁵⁶ I (Oct. 30, 1830) 425.

⁵⁷ CII (Sept. 1832) 629.

London journals⁵⁸ which bear the same date, December 8, 1827. The *Literary Chronicle* says the work "will exalt the reputation even of the author of the *Pilot*"; though it holds that Cooper has no power except in sea tales; "His landsmen are weak and shadowy creatures." The *New London Literary Gazette* is on the whole friendly. It decides that the new work has beauties of the same order as those of the *Pilot*, but not in the same degree. It pronounces the heroes and heroines unnatural, though the subordinate characters are well sketched; and it thinks the nautical descriptions over-done. Both the *Literary Gazette* and the *London Weekly Review* devote more space to Cooper's work in general than to the book under review. The former thinks the *Red Rover* superior to the *Pilot*, in spite of the fact that the ending of the story is as bad as it could well be. The *Weekly Review* says: "The *Red Rover* is one of the best novels of the present day, notwithstanding that the plot is defective, and the principal characters are commonplace"; and "The author of *Waverley* may have written better, but he has also written worse tales than the *Red Rover*." A notice in the *Lady's Magazine*⁵⁹ is perfunctory and unimportant; it inclines to be favorable. An article in the *London Magazine*⁶⁰ is somewhat patronizing, but praises Cooper for his pictures of the sea and his sailor characters. Its final judgment is that the *Red Rover*, as a story, "is undoubtedly a puerile affair . . . ; but the portions of it which are good at all, are truly admirable displays of power." The leading article in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* for August 29, 1829⁶¹ discusses seven of Cooper's novels, and ranks the *Red Rover* as the best of all. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁶² praises with some extravagance, pronouncing the book "the work of a master-hand," and saying that the descriptions of the storm and of the sea-chase "have never been equalled."

The American novelist is Sir Walter Scott's perfect equal in very many respects. For the most part they both of them act wisely

⁵⁸ *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*, IX, 770; *New London Literary Gazette*, I, 417; *Literary Gazette*, XI, 787; *London Weekly Review*, I, 419.

⁵⁹ n. s. IX (Jan. 1828) 13.

⁶⁰ n. s. X (Jan. 1828) 101.

⁶¹ II, 170.

⁶² n. s. V (Feb. 1828) 187.

and warily; they work on their own grounds, and keep within the limits of their own experience. . . . He [Cooper] could not have written the tales of Scott, nor could Scott have written those of Cooper. Sir Walter has indeed ventured, and in the opinion of numbers talked learnedly of storms and battles; but it must be a grudging, or a timid, or a despicable spirit that refuses to admit Cooper's superiority.

The criticisms of the *Water-Witch*, the next of the sea tales, may well be considered in connection with those of the *Red Rover*, though the *Borderers* intervened between the two books. The tone of some of these criticisms is accounted for by the fact that Cooper's controversial writings and utterances had come into notice in England, and critics who were influenced by personal and political considerations approached his romances with an adverse predilection.

A long review in the *Athenæum*⁶³ is devoted largely to Cooper's work in general rather than to the *Water-Witch*, which it fears "will not realize our readers' expectations." The article in the *Spirit of Literature*⁶⁴ also gives more space to other works of Cooper than to the one that is being reviewed. Of this it has a poor opinion. It calls the *Water-Witch* a mere 'doppelganger' of the *Red Rover*;—which, to be sure it describes as "certainly a first-rate novel"; makes much of Cooper's tendency to repeat himself; attacks the moral ideas of the chief characters in the story, as regards smuggling; and accuses the author of introducing English characters for the mere sake of making them wicked. Indeed, the work is, in the view of the writer, "one which will lower Mr. Cooper's fame, and which is wholly unworthy of the public patronage."

The review in the *Literary Gazette*⁶⁵ is very typical of that journal. It begins by saying that "A very romantic but interesting narrative, a mystery well kept up, and two or three exciting scenes written in Mr. Cooper's best manner, will ensure 'a wet sail and a flowing sea' to the *Water-Witch* on the tide of public favour." It complains, however, as did several other reviewers, that "The whole mummery of the *Water-Witch* . . . carries absurdity to its extent." After remarking that

⁶³ [III] (Oct. 23, 1830) 658.

⁶⁴ I (Oct. 30, 1830) 425.

⁶⁵ XIV (Oct. 23, 1830) 685.

smugglers are really very debased persons, but Mr. Cooper makes his smugglers gentlemen, it continues, in explanation: "We believe the secret of this lies in the commerce they injure being British." Further extracts will show more clearly the tone of the review.

In an American writer, a predilection for his own land, a wish to uphold her excellence, is not only justifiable—it is commendable: but let this be done in good faith, and not by false, malicious and underhand attacks on another country. In every page Mr. Cooper's hostility to England breaks out: her religion, her laws, her loyalty, her national pride, are incessantly held up for ridicule and insult.

When historical personages are depicted, we are now accustomed to look for historical accuracy; and we see no reason why Queen Anne should have a cousin conjured up merely to be abused. . . . We think Mr. Cooper's sneers at a country which he may thank for all his literary success, are equally contemptible and ungrateful. We have only one question to ask—If, as he asserts, America has taken the lead in the march of improvement, what brings him on this side of the Atlantic? We quote his own words and ask, "Under a system broad, liberal, and just," as that of America, how does it happen that an American author brings out his work with an English publisher, and looks to an English public for fame and profit?"

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁶⁶ says of the *Water-Witch*:

Many of the characters in this novel are, taking them as individual sketches, admirably conceived. The Alderman, the sailing-master in the cruiser . . . are splendid and masterly portraits. The *Water-Witch* too is a most beautiful contrast to the ship of the *Red Rover*. . . .

Still, with all these recommendations, we must say that there is a want of originality and of pervading depth of feeling in the texture of the story. The involvement of the plot is an arbitrary decree of the author—it does not seem to spring necessarily from the workings of human passions. . . . The great charm of this novel, as in others of the author's best unquestionably derives itself from his unequalled conversance with the power and presence of the great waters—from the magical sway he exercises over the spirits of the sea. This is a department of literature which he has struck out for himself, and in which he knows no equal. . . .

Let him only seek to people his water-borne palaces with beings as real as his elements. Let him be on the waters what Sir Walter is on the land.

⁶⁶ IV (Nov. 6, 1830) 290.

In conclusion: "Take him for all in all, Cooper will ever rank among the best novel-writers of the age."

The *Atlas*,⁶⁷ after a comparison between Cooper and Scott says that all the sea novels of Cooper are much alike, and goes on:

Still there is a fascination in the descriptions of the deep, and the arts of nautical life, that cannot be resisted. Although the *Water-Witch* is a counterpart of the *Red Rover*, it is nevertheless perused with new pleasure. The power with which the scenes on the waste of waters are depicted, and the living interest with which Cooper invests every particle of a ship, as if it were all an intelligent being, cannot be excelled, and has never been reached by any author with whom we are acquainted. For these qualities his novels will live with the language, for we may look in vain elsewhere for pictures so vivid, so faithful, and so intelligible.

When we last had occasion to speak of this gentleman, we observed that he had considerably improved in the art of managing his plots. Here is a fresh proof of it. The plot of the *Water-Witch*, destitute as it is of novelty, is cleverly contrived. It is sufficiently well put together for giving a purpose to the sea scenes, which is its principal value; and it is not deformed by those vulgarisms and perplexities in relation that spoiled the *Spy*, which is the best of all his novels, dramatically considered. . . .

The parting scene on the beach is highly dramatic, and well wrought. We cannot close these volumes without expressing our admiration of the regularity of the narrative.

The superstitious machinery of the story is pronounced rather cheap, but the criticism closes on a note of commendation.

The *Monthly Magazine*⁶⁸ agrees with several other critics that the *Water-Witch* is much like the *Red Rover*, but says: "The novelist of the seas—produce what he will in the shape of tales—must always be readable; not that he ever makes a good tale, but because he paints his own element, and all that floats upon it, so admirably."

In the *Family Magazine*⁶⁹ *Camden* (an American novel) and the *Water-Witch* are discussed in "The Literary Coterie," a dialogue after the manner of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. *Camden* is preferred, because the author "is not so anti-English as

⁶⁷ V (Nov. 14, 1830) 747.

⁶⁸ n. s. X (Dec. 1830) 699.

⁶⁹ II, 281.

Cooper, who paints every Englishman in black, keeping all his gay colours to bedeck his favourite Americans."

But the *Water-Witch* is a work of much higher pretensions than *Camden*, and, as the scene is laid in the early part of the 18th century, when the interests of America and England were united, . . . our *amor patriae* is not offended, as it is in the *Spy*, the *Pilot*, &c., by unjust allusions to the land we love. The story too is interesting, the incidents are well-selected, the characters well drawn, and the scenes on the ocean—Cooper's own element—are spirit-stirring and exciting in the highest degree.

A review in the *Gentleman's Magazine*⁷⁰ seems, so far as can be judged by internal evidence, to have been written by some one who was ignorant of the American authorship of the book. The patriotic conclusions drawn from the tale are in amusing contrast to the remarks of some other critics. "Greater actions," the writer observes, "are to be found among the British sailors during one single war, than in the whole *Iliad*"; and in particular: "In incident this novel has frequently all the grandeur of an epic poem. . . . No critic in regard to this fine novel, can be addressed with 'Cease rude Boreas, blustering railer,' but long before he has gone through it, he and all readers will break out involuntarily with 'Rule, Britannia, Britannia rule the waves.'" An article on *American Life and Manners* in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁷¹ praises the *Water-Witch* along with a half-dozen other American works.

The *Wept of Wish-ton-wish*, or as it was named in England the *Borderers*, was not from the first one of Cooper's most popular works, though it had elements of strength. Reviewers of the book who were well-disposed toward the author spoke mainly of his earlier writings, while others made comparisons to the disadvantage of the tale. The *Athenæum*⁷² pronounced the two first volumes of the *Borderers* Cooper's dull-est, "and yet his capacity for being dull is not small"; in the last volume it found some merit. Of the characters it said: "All the civilized beings introduced into this novel are feeble, tame, and unsatisfactory," though "In his Indian characters

⁷⁰ CI (Aug. 1831) 152.

⁷¹ XXXI (1831) 42.

⁷² [II] (Oct. 14, 1829) 642.

Mr. Cooper is as successful as ever." Two years later the dramatic section of the same journal⁷³ noticed the *Wept of Wish-ton Wish*, as played at the Adelphi theater in London—evidently without knowing that the book from which the play was adapted had already been reviewed under another name. The critic said: "It is to be hoped, for the sake of those who have read or may hereafter read the novel, that what remains is better than what is abstracted. The story may have been clearly told in the book, but in that case the dramatist has got into a terrible tangle in winding it off."

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁷⁴ calls the *Borderers* the least successful of Cooper's works, though it finds a few things to praise. The *Lady's Magazine*⁷⁵ says the author "evidently improves in his progress, and every new work from his pen is therefore read with avidity," but refrains from more specific comment on the book in hand. The *Ladies' Museum*⁷⁶ says in somewhat similar fashion that "the last one is certainly quite as powerful and entertaining as any of its predecessors." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*,⁷⁷ which in view of the fact that the house of Colburn was publishing so many of Cooper's works might be suspected of favoritism, praises the author in general, gives a summary of the *Borderers*, but makes no comparison with other tales. In a later article⁷⁸ on *American Life and Manners* which considers several American works of fiction, *Colburn's* praises the *Borderers* with the rest.

One result of Cooper's stay of seven years in Europe was the production of three novels, the *Bravo*, the *Heidenmauer*, and the *Headsmen*, the scenes of which were laid in Venice, Germany, and Switzerland respectively. The first of these, the *Bravo*, attracted much notice in England, partly because it was, after *Precaution*, the author's first venture in the treatment of an European scene, partly because Cooper's political and controversial writings were making him a topic of discussion. Some of the reviews, among them those in the *Literary*

⁷³ [IV] (Dec. 3, 1831) 788.

⁷⁴ II (Oct. 17, 1829) 271.

⁷⁵ n. s. X (Oct. 1829) 512.

⁷⁶ II (Nov. 1829) 290.

⁷⁷ XXVII (Dec. 1829) 508.

⁷⁸ XXXI (1831) 42.

Guardian and the *Athenæum*, complained of the advance puffing of the book; but if the *Bravo* received more commercialized criticism than was usual, the fact is not evident at this distance in time. One of the early favorable notices is that in the *Literary Gazette*.⁷⁹ The reviewer thinks that change of scene has been, on the whole, a good thing for Cooper. He draws an interesting comparison between Cooper's response to Venice and that of Byron, saying that Byron saw the glories of the city, while Cooper saw the other side. Of the *Bravo* itself he remarks:

The interest is most dramatically excited and sustained, and the scenes invested with that vivid reality which constitutes the great charm of Mr. Cooper's narratives. . . .

Mr. Cooper indulges in divers political digressions, whose whole and sole object is to prove that everything went wrong in the world till America set the example of right. . . . What can induce him to linger on this side the Atlantic? To be sure, that is no business of ours; all we have to do, is to assure our readers, that among the many productions of Mr. Cooper's prolific pen, few are more vivid in interest, or more original, than the *Bravo*.

The *National Omnibus*⁸⁰ also comments on Venice as a field for romance, and says: "We are quite inclined to rank the 'Bravo' among the best of his productions, if not to call it the very best." The *Literary Guardian*⁸¹ in a rather unimportant review, also commends the book highly, though it finds fault with certain mannerisms, and complains of the puffing in other journals. Another relatively unimportant and slightly flippant notice in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁸² is less favorable. It says: "The ocean-child must back to his sea. Like his own *Tom Coffin*, he cannot keep his feet upon land." A long article on the *Bravo* in the *Athenæum*⁸³ is devoted mainly to a discussion of Cooper in general, and will be quoted elsewhere. It pronounces the new romance inferior to all the author's earlier works, describes the character of Jacopo as "unnatural and improbable," and complains that the book was made more

⁷⁹ XV (Oct. 15, 1831) 657.

⁸⁰ I (Oct. 21, 1831) 137.

⁸¹ I (Oct. 22, 1831) 51.

⁸² VI (Oct. 1831) 251.

⁸³ [IV] (Oct. 22, 29, 1831) 688, 702.

for the moral than for the story. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁸⁴ is even more extravagant than usual, calling the *Bravo* "one of the finest, and we hope one of the most natural portraiture of humanity, that novelist ever drew; a picture that we can only contemplate with admiration and tears; and that has no parallel that we recollect in the wide world of romance, not even in Harvey Birch, whom, in his destiny, he most resembles." The article continues:

Everything in Venice is new to him—and what is the result? Why everything is new to us; that we read, or rather devour, every sentence of the three volumes, every syllable of each description and digression, as if we had never heard a word about Venice before. . . .

Some of the historical and political details will be the dull parts of the work in the general eye; but they are valuable, and necessary to the effect to be produced. Let us honestly avow, in conclusion, that in addition to the charm of an interesting fiction to be found in these pages, there is more mental power in them, more matter that sets people thinking, more of that quality that is accelerating the moral movement of the world, than in all the Scotch novels that have so deservedly won our admiration.

The following paragraphs indicate the judgment of the *Monthly Magazine*⁸⁵ on the purpose of the book, and its artistic quality:

Mr. Cooper writes like a man—that is, with a direct and intelligible object. His fictions spring from facts, and mingle with realities. All his scenes are essentially historical—the spirit of them is truth, while the details are imaginary. He makes that use of the past for which alone it is worth reverting to—teaching the world to eschew crimes by showing their odious consequences. Venice was a republic in name, and, detestable as the principles on which it was administered were, Mr. Cooper is anxious none of the detestation which attaches to its history shall be thrown upon his own America, because she too is a republic. Never were two things, indeed, under the same name so utterly unlike. . . .

Mr. Cooper is as much at home on the lagunes and canals of Venice, as in the harbour of New York, and the scenes furnish him with abundant opportunity of describing matters connected with his *native* element. . . . Mr. Cooper's only want is a little gaiety—something to cheer the sombre, and lighten the general *weight* of his execution.

⁸⁴ XXXIII (Nov. 1831) 485.

⁸⁵ n. s. XII (Nov. 1831) 561.

The *Westminster Review* for January, 1832,⁸⁶ devoted to the *Bravo* a twelve-page article which is interesting because of the philosophical and political bias with which this periodical approached any work. It began by saying that Cooper had succeeded best in portraying free life, and had hitherto failed utterly with urbane life; hence the title and the scene of the new book would cause it to be viewed askance. He has, however, notwithstanding some defects of plot, made this story of Venice one of his best works, by his manner of treatment.

Whenever he conducted us into towns, and to the habitations of what were intended to be civilized men, we found our preconceived notions of American refinement realized—and those were not favourable to the supposition, that he could succeed in delineating the complicated mechanism and fastidious delicacies, which distinguish the manners of the inhabitants of an Italian city. . . . Literature scarcely contains at once so genuine and perfect a character as the Trapper in the Prairie. . . . The scenic descriptions of Mr. Cooper's tales of the sea, are superior even to those contained in his woodland narratives, and, notwithstanding its glaring deficiencies when he intrudes into the drawing-room and the society of women, we yet prefer the "Pilot" to any of his [sic] successors. Long Tom and the Ariel contribute to this partiality. . . . Nature in sublime and unadorned simplicity, is where Mr. Cooper reigns. Those who do not love to watch the workings of men's hearts when uninfluenced by conventional forms, actuated by genuine honesty, and the dictates of unsophisticated, as well as uneducated, humanity, can take no pleasure in Mr. Cooper's delineations of character. Nor can any enter warmly into the interest of his stories, who do not love the many forms of the visible universe. . . .

Fortunately he has redeemed himself, and the "Bravo" stands side by side with the "Mohicans," the "Prairie," and the "Pilot," and may even claim to pre-eminence among them.

. . . His narrative is based upon passions, not manners; upon the eternal feelings of the human heart, which do not change with climate, and are independent of the modifications of society. . . . The *Bravo* displays all the energy, all the singleness of purpose, and a greater grandeur of design, than is usually painted by its author. We also trace a greater degree of refinement and grace, in those portions of his work, where these qualities were before found to be painfully wanting; which we, with our Trans-Atlantic prepossessions, are willing to attribute to his visit to our old world. He seems half afraid of this himself. We commend,

⁸⁶ XVI, 180.

as infinitely laudable, his desire to recommend his volumes peculiarly to his own countrymen. He evidently feels that they will be startled and displeased that he, their national author, should desert his native continent, and turn his back on the America which fostered his early talents. He presents his book therefore to his countrymen as a picture of social misfortunes and political crimes, which could never have birth under a free government, and bids them read, believe, and hug themselves in their happier state.

Of the technical qualities of the novel, the reviewer remarked: "Most of Mr. Cooper's stories . . . narrate an escape and a pursuit, either complicated or single . . . and the 'Bravo' is distinguished by similar traits." Among the faulty parts are the conversations, some of which are "needlessly spun out and trivial," and others are "involved and tedious dialogues." "Some of the minor parts of the story also are treated in the most slovenly manner, so that the author does not seem to have understood his own intention, and by no means renders it clear to his readers." A still more serious defect is "the melodramatic colouring which is too often adopted, and a use of words which destroys the force and elegance of the expressions. An 'eye' is called an 'organ,' a 'hand' a 'member.'"

The *Heidenmauer* is probably a work of less intrinsic merit than the *Bravo*, and it was less widely discussed in Great Britain. The *Literary Gazette*⁸⁷ and the *National Omnibus*⁸⁸ praise it most highly, the former saying: "Certainly Mr. Cooper loses no attraction on new ground." On the other hand the *Literary Guardian*⁸⁹ finds that "Mr. Cooper is by no means so successful in European land stories, as he is in American and sea life." The *Athenæum*⁹⁰ is still less favorable, saying:

"The *Heidenmauer*' has been puffed until we sicken at the very name, and, on examination, it turns out to be but indifferent. Cooper is a powerful writer, but his power is limited; and he is nothing if not on the ocean or in the wilderness. His 'Bravo' fell still-born and 'The *Heidenmauer*,' if alive beyond the hour, will be but a rickety bantling.

⁸⁷ XVI (July 14, 1832) 435.

⁸⁸ II (July 20, 1832) 226.

⁸⁹ II (Aug. 4, 1832) 250.

⁹⁰ [V] (July 28, 1832) 485.

Perhaps the best review of the *Heidenmauer* is to be found in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*.⁹¹ A part of this article which deals with Cooper's merits and limitations will be quoted in another place. The *Heidenmauer* is said to fail because "The story flags and is uninteresting. The characters are dim and undefined as those of a magic lanthorn. The long yarns with which the story is continually interrupted are neither valuable in themselves nor in their place where they stand." This is not because Cooper is off American ground—human nature is the same everywhere; but "He has laid hand to work without sufficient preparation; in the second place he has attempted to make of the novel what it never can become." Again, "He does not know and he does not *feel* Germany. . . . It is not that the American imagination cannot reflect back European modes of feeling; it is only that it has not been long enough in contact with them to catch their impress." The scope of this particular tale is considered unfortunate because interest in a novel arises "out of the collision of individual minds. The rise and fall of opinion, and the fate of empires. . . . are too cold and abstract to interest in detail." Fault is also found with Cooper's ultra-Americanism, and with an element of coarseness in his work: "We can make great allowance for our friends of the United States considering the provocation they have received; but Mr. Cooper's exaggerations really begin to grow as offensive as Mrs. Trollope's." The main thesis of the article is that the *Heidenmauer*—which is called "Mr. Cooper's worst"—is not worthy of the author.

The *Headsman* was published in 1833, and doubtless continued to be reviewed after the close of that year, at which date this study ends. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁹² ranks it ahead of the *Heidenmauer*, and worthy of a place beside the *Pilot* and the *Prairie*. The *Monthly Review*⁹³ in an article on four "Novels of the Season," says: "There are many powerfully written scenes in these volumes, to which the fine fancy and command of expression which characterize the author have communicated a peculiar feature of attraction."

⁹¹ I (Sept. 1832) 660.

⁹² XXXIX (1833) 229.

⁹³ Vol. III for 1833, p. 530 (Dec.).

The *Athenæum*⁹⁴ finds some things to commend, though it says: "We are not without our suspicion, that in pleading the cause of love as a leveller, and of hereditary right in the executioner of Geneva, he is supporting the cause of liberty, and satirizing hereditary titles of all kinds." The article concludes:

The beauties of the narrative are numerous: all is earnest, tender, and impassioned: and the characters of Maso and Aldeheid, have the original and natural air so strongly impressed in all the productions of the author. The fault is in the conception of the story: the taint of the headsman's occupation can neither be sweetened nor purified; it lies like a nightmare in the narrative; and gloss it as Cooper might with love, and all that, the public would have pronounced Aldeheid degraded, had she married into a family such as that of Balthazar.

In contrast to the opinion just quoted is the democratic view taken by a writer in the *Metropolitan*.⁹⁵ This critic finds many things in the book to praise, yet he says that Cooper

misses a great victory. He had the power, equally with the first captain of the age, of reading the world "a great moral lesson"; but we fear that he has been too much a sojourner in the old world, has become fascinated by its antique prejudices, and its feudal pomp; and, renouncing those healthy associations, the spring-tide growth of his young, glorious, and great country, has truckled to worn out and despicable tastes, and feared to wed the supposed Headsman's son, who is an heroic personation, to the lady of his love, until he had recourse to the common-place expedient of making him the son of a great prince, and thus sparing his autocratic readers the misery of contemplating the solecism of a *mésalliance*. "Oh, what a falling off was there!" . . . We did not expect this from an American, and least of all from American Cooper.

The reports of British travelers in America, the British reviews of such reports, and the reaction in America to both the reports and the reviews offer material for a separate study, which might be as long as the present one, and which would reveal even more of excited feeling and international bitterness. It is to such a study, rather than to this, that Cooper's *Notions of America, Picked up by a Traveling Bachelor* might properly belong. The book, which appeared in 1828, was written to correct false impressions of America which Cooper

⁹⁴ [VI] (Sept. 7, 1833) 593.

⁹⁵ VIII (Oct. 1833) 36.

found prevalent in Europe, and particularly in England. Real English travelers had so often printed false and misleading descriptions of America that Cooper determined to create a fictitious English traveler who should tell the truth—as Cooper saw it. The plan was doubtless unwise, as was Irving's use of an imaginary narrator in the *Conquest of Granada*. Moreover, Cooper was rarely conciliatory in manner, and the book contained many passages that might well irritate Englishmen. There are plenty of indications that many Englishmen were irritated. Cooper's biographer says,⁹⁶ "Cooper's attack was never forgotten or forgiven. From this time there was a distinctly hostile feeling manifested toward him in many of the English periodicals." Yet a candid examination of the reviews that have been found in the course of this study shows that Cooper's defenders, or at least those who were determined that he should have fair play, were quite as numerous and as persistent as his detractors. The controversies aroused by the book were largely on political and economic matters; and a partisan journal was almost committed in advance to the view it should express. Though the *Notions* was reviewed at least as widely as any of the novels, and was seriously discussed in periodicals which, like the *Edinburgh Review*, ignored the author's fiction, its purely literary characteristics elicited relatively little comment.

One of the earliest and most hostile reviews appeared in the *Literary Gazette*,⁹⁷ written probably by Jerdan. It said:

The title of *Notions*, though vague, is nevertheless, not misapplied to these volumes, if we allow, as we must allow, their author to be the very pink of notional writers. [Quotes in footnote Johnson's definition of *notional*.] . . . The *Notions* themselves are certainly pretty considerable specimens of bursting inflation, overweening vanity, and measureless boasting. We have often and often censured the propensity for this silly indulgence, so common in the English character; but the arrantest egotism and rankest braggartism of John Bull, are modesty and diffidence when compared with these qualities in his offspring Jonathan.

Much of the article was devoted to ridicule, which now seems

⁹⁶ Lounsbury, *Life of James Fenimore Cooper* (American Men of Letters series) p. 106.

⁹⁷ XII (June 21, 1828) 385.

weak and flat. Interspersed are passages which show something of bitterness, like the following: "But we are firmly persuaded that every sensible mind in America will feel disgust and contempt for the nonsensical farrago of eulogy and panegyric contained in these two volumes"; or this:¹ "Let Mr. Cooper stick to his novels and romances, if he does not wish to discredit the land of his birth, and make himself a common laughing-stock."

It may have been that the *London Weekly Review*⁹⁸ loved the *Literary Gazette* less rather than that it loved Cooper more, but in its next issue it entered whole-heartedly into the contest:

It is by no means surprising that the *Literary Gazette*, which considers it complimentary to term a man a "Jacobite" and "a high churchman," as the case of Mr. D'Israeli, should lose no opportunity of calumniating and libelling a writer of liberal principles. We therefore trust that Mr. Cooper will regard the attack of this slavish and malignant publication as a compliment, and as a sure sign that he has effected his purpose. But we acknowledge that, in many respects, he lies open to attack. His very title is objectionable, as containing a *slang* term, which (in the sense in which he uses it) good taste has long ago banished both from polished composition and discourse. He has been injudicious, also, we think, in the form into which he has chosen to throw his work. . . . To make the matter worse, he has had the misfortune to imagine himself capable of humour. . . . To complete the catalogue of his imperfections, his style is coarse, affected, and obscure; and his remarks frequently exhibit considerable conceit and arrogance. In spite of all this, Mr. Cooper's book is the best book that has yet been written on America. Our readers have not now to learn that we ourselves possess liberal principles, and have, consequently, a leaning towards all liberal writers; but we trust we have never shown ourselves blind to their defects, or been disposed to exaggerate their merits. . . . It certainly is not in itself a perfect picture of American character, society, manners or scenery; but it furnishes the reader with materials which will enable him to come to a tolerably correct conclusion upon each of those subjects, and in the meanwhile will amuse him exceedingly.

The reviewer returns to the article in the *Literary Gazette*, which he assails for its display of prejudice and of literary ignorance.

⁹⁸ II (June 28, 1828) 404.

Reviews which followed in rapid succession made widely varying comments, though few were wholly and bitterly condemnatory. The *Monthly Review*⁹⁹ regards it as natural that Cooper should uphold his country, but thinks his device "vain and shallow." The *Notions*, however, "is certainly one of the best *apologies* for the United States which has yet been published." The critic makes a point of Cooper's writing, or rather having his imaginary narrator write, as a nobleman to persons of title, and says: "There is, if we may say so, a strong spice of aristocracy in his democracy." The article concludes:

His volumes contain, as we have seen, a great deal of information, and a vast quantity of exaggeration. They are prosy, and often very dull. . . . Most of the letters are, in truth, dissertations, in which the perfections of the United States are viewed through a magnifying glass, that gives to a beetle the dimensions of an elephant. The defects of the country, and of its institutions and habits, are all either concealed or palliated; and a vapouring, puerile tone, is held on every national and disputed point, which, however, is too absurd to injure the great and growing community, whose cause he has so indiscreetly advocated.

The *Lady's Magazine*¹ is pleasant, though not obsequious in its comments. One paragraph runs:

The writer is Mr. Cooper, the novelist, whose defense of his countrymen has exposed him to severe attacks from the Tories of Great Britain. He is undoubtedly a partial and prejudiced advocate; but these zealots are the last persons who ought to blame him; for what men, in any country, are more partial and prejudiced than *they* are? We confess that we do not admire the general character of the Americans; but we wish to see fair play.

The *Christian Review and Clerical Magazine*² prints a long and heavy article, the writer of which did not, apparently, know the author of the *Notions*, or even recognize it as the work of an American.

The work which has furnished us with these extracts, is, we strongly suspect, the production of a foreigner of distinction at present resident in England. It is evidently not written by a native of this country, as both its style and general tone of sentiment have

⁹⁹ n. s. VIII (Aug. 1828) 465.

¹ n. s. IX (Sept. 1828) 467.

² II (Oct. 1828) 450.

all the peculiarities which distinguish the works of continental writers on men, manners, and politics. . . . Its author is . . . a determined admirer of whatever seems opposed to the old fashions of European states. He loves sentimentalism. . . . It may be read with pleasure, and a certain degree of profit, but must not be taken as a guide in a close examination of American concerns.

The critic gives the unknown author credit for genuine interest in the welfare of mankind, but thinks him misguided.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*³ naturally adopts the liberal point of view. It opens its article by attacking the critics who were politically prejudiced against America, saying: "For years past, every high Tory publication, from the *Quarterly* down to *Blackwood*, has laboured to increase the spirit of dislike to America, among the partizans of their own man-degrading doctrines. . . . These remarks are prompted by the injustice which has been dealt out to the author of the present work, by that class of publications to which I allude. Every paragraph that displays the writer's patriotic vanity, or that is obnoxious to censure, has been selected and strung together as a specimen of the whole work—as genuine criticism!" The reviewer takes up the faults that have been charged against Cooper, admits some, extenuates others, and concludes: "We possess no other work from an authentic source, which contains so much truth about America."

The *Westminster Review*⁴ begins a twenty-page article by saying: "Of the literary merit of Mr. Cooper's work, we cannot but remark, in passing, that the style is very bad." It accepts the author, however, as a high authority on the state of affairs in America, and its comments on the content of the book are favorable. A brief notice of the *Notions* in the *Eclectic Review*⁵ is non-committal and unimportant. A review of the *Notions* and Basil Hall's *Travels in the United States* in the *Baptist Magazine*⁶ is friendly to Cooper, though it is clearly prejudiced by the fact that the United States has not an establishment. The *Edinburgh Review* had also grouped together Halls *Travels* and the *Notions* in an article which appeared in

³ XXIII (1828) 164.

⁴ X (1829) 51.

⁵ 3d ser. II (1829) 389.

⁶ XXII (Jan. 1830) 23.

June, 1829. The writer evidently was annoyed by Cooper's manner, and resented American boasting, though his attitude could hardly be described as hostile. He remarks that novelists rarely succeed in dealing with facts; and calls Cadwallader, the American friend and adviser of Cooper's travelling bachelor, "about the most disagreeable personage we ever came across, either in life or upon paper." It should be remembered that the *Edinburgh* had noticed none of Cooper's novels, and that this article is in no sense a *literary* review.

It is, indeed, noticeable that Cooper's novels received little attention from several of the more solid and of the more conspicuous periodicals. The *Edinburgh Review*, as has been said, had no article on them before 1833. The same is true of the *Quarterly*, which, however, said incidentally in a review of Scott's *Lives of the Novelists*¹:

If we except two or three of the works of Mr. Cooper, we do not believe that any of these imitations [of Scott] will be remembered a few years hence; and yet we are far from considering that American writer as the ablest man that has imitated the great novelist of our time. His superiour success is owing to the superiority of his materials; he has employed a style of delineation which he could never have invented, upon a fresh field, and which [sic] is of still higher importance, on a field of manners and feelings familiar to his own observation. His *Spy*, *Pioneers*, &c., may be classed there-upon, though *post longum intervallum*, with *Waverley*.

The only conspicuous comments on the romances in *Blackwood's* were brief notices in Neal's articles. Neal was also undoubtedly responsible for one criticism in the *London Magazine*, which journal also contained a rather unfavorable review of the *Red Rover*. It is hard to account for this neglect, for all incidental references go to show that Cooper was accepted as a real fact in the literary world—not merely as the author of temporary "best sellers," but as a phenomenon of interest, and probably of permanent importance. No doubt different causes operated in different periodicals. The ponderous articles of the *Edinburgh* were rarely devoted to single novels, as were the notices in the literary weeklies; and no important collective edition of Cooper called for a summary discussion. Moreover,

¹ XXXIV (Sept. 1826) 337.

Cooper was more of a storm center of criticism than was Irving, partly because his work came more directly into comparison with that of Scott, partly because his personality was less genial, and he showed less tact in his reference to international affairs.

Great divergence of opinion is noticeable in the comments on separate works, as is shown in the preceding pages; an even greater divergence, if possible, may be seen in the opinions regarding the author's qualities and the significance of his work as a whole. Among matters for perennial discussion by critics were Cooper's alleged imitation of Scott, his intense Americanism, the indigenous American qualities of his work, and the question whether he was at his best on the frontier or at sea. Several general comments, arranged approximately in the order of their publication, may show the nature of the first reception accorded Cooper, and the development of British feeling toward him. Before proceeding to these, however, a comment in a private letter from Miss Mitford,⁸ dated March 5, 1824, though not published at the time, may be given as of interest:

Pray have you read the American novels? I mean the series by Mr. Cooper—"The Spy," &c. If you have not, send for them, and let me hear the result. In my mind they are as good as anything Sir Walter Scott ever wrote. He has opened fresh ground, too (if we may say so of the sea). No one but Smollett has ever attempted to delineate the naval character; and then he is so coarse and hard. Now this has the same truth and power, with a deep, grand feeling. I must not overpraise it, for fear of producing the reaction which such injudicious enthusiasm is calculated to induce; but I must request you to read it. Only read it. Imagine the author's boldness in taking Paul Jones for a hero, and his power in making one care for him! I envy the Americans their Mr. Cooper. Tell me how you like "The Pilot." There is a certain Long Tom who appears to me the finest thing since Parson Adams.

In a long article, nominally a review of *Arthur Mervyn*, but better described by the running title "American Literature," the *Retrospective Review* for 1824⁹ said: "Mr. Cooper, the author of *The Pioneers*, is a young man of high and undoubted talent. There is a freshness and vivid beauty in some of his

⁸ *Life of Mary Russell Mitford*, edited by Rev. A. L. L'Estrange, II, 177.

⁹ IX, 304.

scenes, which may challenge competition with *any* writer of the present day. He is much more dramatic than Brown; but he has not the same power over the passions, and scarcely the same burning and impetuous strength of narration. . . . The fault of both writers is that they make too much for *points*." On a later page the reviewer quotes a passage from the *Pioneers*, and comments: "If there be a scene of more interest than this in any of the novels of the present day, we can only say that we do not know it."

John Neal, in his *Blackwood* article on American Literature in 1824, devotes little more than half a page to Cooper.¹⁰ He first compares Cooper's work with his own:¹¹ "There are *Neal* and *Cooper*—both of them have stolen [Brown's] catamounts, and played the devil with his Indians. *Neal*, however, is content with 'catching the idea'—and working it up, till it scratches his own fingers. But *Cooper*—so far as he can—steals the broom ready made!" Later he says, in the note-book manner in which much of the article is written: "*Cooper*—novelist: formerly a midshipman in the United States Navy . . . style without peculiarity—brilliancy, or force—very much improved of late; considerable dramatick power; very fine talents in filling up a picture:—imitates the great Scotch novelist—not so much in any one thing—as altogether." In conclusion: "Mr. C. is a man of sober talent—nothing more. There are no fine individualities about him."

The *Monthly Review*¹² presents well a common view of Cooper's relation to Scott, and his use of native American material for romance.

The "American novels" have rapidly been acquiring a character quite as distinctive of its kind as that which our great northern magician has created for the narrative fiction of his country. Doubt-

¹⁰ XVI, 415.

¹¹ These articles by Neal are of course, in one sense, not at all British criticism. They were, however, printed in a prominent British periodical, and were written as if by a British critic. The fact that the author's real nationality must have been evident, when joined with his apparent familiarity with American writings, and the editorial endorsement implied by publication in *Blackwood's* must have made the articles influential in molding public opinion. In more than one instance later reviewers in other journals may be detected in the act of displaying as their own bits of misinformation clearly stolen from Neal.

¹² n. s. II (June 1826) 122.

less, but for the example of the author of *Waverley*, we should never have heard of the American historical tale; and nothing would be more absurd than to imagine any equality of inventive genius, between the gifted spirit who has originated the most delightful class of modern romances, and the most successful of his imitators on either side of the Atlantic. But very considerable praise is still due to more than one of the American novelists for the tact and good judgment which have led them to borrow no more than the rules of their art, and to apply them to the fabrication of materials which were their own proper and incontestible possession. It is their peculiar merit to have seen, that the neglected records of their early colonial and of their later national history abounded in a wild and unusual cast of romance; and that by their hands alone could these be wrought up and blended appropriately with the colourings of native habits, costume, and scenery. All this they have assumed for a sufficient fund of curiosity and interest; and it constitutes also a sufficient, as it is their only, title to originality. They have boldly undertaken to sketch the manners and characters of their ancestors, but a generation or two removed, either as colonists contending in desperation for property and life against the encroaching Frenchman and the fiercer Indian, or as citizens proudly struggling for national rights and republican independence. These sketches none but themselves would desire to select, or would be free to execute with dramatic keeping and accuracy; and yet even to them the subjects have every facility of fiction. For in America a single age of revolution and independence has changed the whole aspect of society, and thrown back the occurrences of a mere half century past into the distant obscurity and romantic light of antiquity. . . . The style and expression of their paintings are those of the author of *Waverley*: but the subjects, and characters, and grouping of their stories, are their own. Their productions are not mere bungling copies of their great master, but rather pieces executed only after his best manner and often with a free and spirited design.

The *British Critic* for July, 1826¹³ in an article from which comments on some of the separate romances have already been cited, discusses matters similar to those considered in the preceding selection :

If not superior in natural genius to the author of "Seventy-six," Mr. Cooper far excels him in all points of judgment and good taste. Possessing a new and a wide field of interest in the manners and legends of his native country, and the strongly marked features of the wild tribes who are now gradually disappearing from its forests,

¹³ II, 406.

he has succeeded in preserving a character of originality, while forming his style almost professedly on that of the author of 'Waverley.' Like him, Mr. Cooper discards all unnecessary sentiment, and makes no more use of love than is necessary for the conduct of his plot. . . . And generally speaking, he appears to have caught from the study of the Waverley novels that vigorous and manly tone of feeling, which perhaps is their most peculiar trait, and to have learnt to apply those principles of contrasted light and shade, of mirth and gravity, which most truly answer to the checkered character of human existence. . . . We cannot bestow too marked praise upon a style of writing, which, without the slightest tinge of callous optimism, exhibits the real stuff that human life is made of, and tends to keep the reader in love and charity with his own kind. Such is the peculiar merit of "Arthur Mervyn," a tale on which we have already remarked; whose tone of sentiment, so unusual in a disappointed man, we hope Mr. Cooper will continue to follow under happier auspices.

The *London Weekly Review*¹⁴ begins a criticism of the *Red Rover* with a long and would-be profound discussion on the methods of story-telling, and comments on Cooper's technique:

We have been led into these remarks by the volumes before us, in one or two passages of which the peculiarities of the egotistical style of novel-writing are carried to an extent almost ludicrous; . . . In one place, near the beginning, in the midst of the battle incidental to the commencement of business, he stops the narrative to assure his readers that he (Mr. Cooper) is not partial to drinking spirits in the forenoon! But there is also another sort of egotism, perhaps in courtesy we ought to designate it by the venerable name of patriotism, which pervades the work. The tale is essentially American; it is not addressed to the human, but to the Yankee mind. In throwing off the old prejudices of Europe, our transatlantic brethren should beware of fettering themselves with new ones; liberality, when all on one side, is illiberality.

The *Literary Gazette*¹⁵ says in an article on the *Red Rover*:

The most original, as well as most interesting of transatlantic writers, Mr. Cooper is, if not quite the founder, at least at the head of American romance. If we except Brown, whose genius, from his early death, was but a tree of promise too soon destroyed, but who at least opened the rich veins of the mine which others were to work; and the unknown author of Logan, Seventy-six (which contained some most vivid sketches of scenes during the American

¹⁴ I (Dec. 8, 1827) 419.

¹⁵ XI (Dec. 8, 1827) 787.

war,) and Brother Jonathan, three of about as extraordinary works as ever appeared—full of faults, but still full of power; if we except these, there is no rival near Mr. Cooper's throne. Three of his novels, the *Pioneers*, the *Last of the Mohicans*, and the *Prairie*, are as valuable for their historic accuracy as they are interesting in point of detail—the Indians, those Romans of savage nations, the semi-barbarous back-settlers, and the gradual steps of civilization, were drawn with the hand of a master.

The estimates of Cooper in the *Literary Gazette* were, it may be remarked in passing, very various, though it was inclined, on the whole, to speak well of the novels. It praised highly the *Bravo* and the *Heidenmauer*; its review of the *Water-Witch*, already quoted, was more inclined to be carping in tone, though it commended the tale for many things. Its review of the *Notions of the Americans* will be recalled as very bitter; and in an article on the works of several other American writers¹⁶ it goes out of its way to remark that “the noise and hammering of the great American *Cooper* has begot a sort of prejudice against the country, which unreflecting people fancy to be filled with literary Parolles resembling this exceedingly rabid Yankee.”

The fact that the firm of Colburn and Bentley became interested in the publication of Cooper's novels gives rise to the suspicion, perhaps unfounded, that the lavish praise of the author in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine* may partake somewhat of the nature of puffing. The *Magazine* prints in the department “Notes of the Month”:¹⁷

Cooper the Novelist.—There is more fancy and originality in Cooper than in four-fifths of the novelists of the time. The power of making so much of such simple materials: the truth and freshness of his pictures; the thrilling interest which the reader feels in his descriptions; the very reality of the tempest and battle, in which we seem to be partakers at the moment,—are some marks of the excellence and genius of the writer. . . . How long the world tolerated the unfaithful representations of similar subjects from writers who know nothing of them . . . Cooper has mingled with the war of the elements he describes, and shared in combats; and he has only told us what he saw and felt—this is everything.

¹⁶ XII (Aug. 23, 1828) 530.

¹⁷ XXII (1828) 387.

The next year¹⁸ in a review of the *Borderers* it says: "To talk of Mr. Cooper's merits as a novelist, would be nearly as antediluvian as to commemorate Sir Walter Scott's. His title to rank in the first classes of the historico fictitious literature of the day is every where admitted, and nobody, of course, dreams of disputing claims so satisfactorily and so recently established." The article concludes: "One of Mr. Cooper's main excellencies is the effective delineation of the frank manners and figurative style of the Indians, and here he is δέινοτατος ἕαυτον." In 1831 *Colburn's* devoted the fourth of a series of sketches of "Living Literary Characters" to Cooper.¹⁹ The writer considered Cooper especially fortunate in that Scott had popularized the novel, and that America furnished the best of subjects. He continued:

No writer of the times has taken a wider range in his view of human nature, or looked more deeply into the heart. Few know better how to seize the strongest point of interest, and no one can work it out more judiciously. If his plots fail in carrying you irresistibly along "on the wings of the wind," his skill in the delineation of character is sure to work its charm and fascination about you.

. . . We never met with novels—(and we have read all that were ever written since the creation of the world,)—of a more absorbing character, or more fatal to the female propensity of skipping the digressive portions. Every word of Mr. Cooper's narratives is effective or appears so while you read—and yet he does not scruple to describe an object, in the most elaborate and uncompromising terms, three or four times over in the same work, if it be necessary that the reader should have an accurate outline of it before his eyes. There is a profusion, but no waste of words, in his style, which is, "without o'er-flowing, full." It is clear, varied and distinct. . . . All is action, character, and poetry. You see, in the images, which he conjures up, every accessory of the scenes, however insignificant. . . . His characters are of all classes, and if not equally well-drawn, impress us, at the first glance, with a conviction that they are drawn by an acute observer of life. His characters . . . are all picturesque persons, and have some mark and likelihood about them. . . . There is scarcely one character of any rank or importance that does not present some indication of this deep knowledge of our nature in the finest of its forms; and there are many in the range of his productions, that are conceived in the

¹⁸ XXVII (Dec. 1829) 508.

¹⁹ XXXI (1831) 356. The authors previously treated in the series were Scott, Mrs. Norton, and the author of *Paul Pry*.

very spirit of that knowledge. And as it is difficult to select instances from the cloud of creatures,—composed alike of the high and the humble, the stern-featured and the humorous,—that comes floating upon our recollection, we would instance a whole class, and refer to the refined power and delicacy which he has displayed in his delineation of the female character. There is at times (let it be said with reverence) an almost Shaksperian subtlety of perception in his female pictures—a majesty, and yet a gentleness, not unworthy of the highest mind, while contemplating the holiest objects that Nature has fashioned.

The leading article in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* for August 29, 1829,²⁰ after speaking of the difficulty of the British in understanding and dealing fairly with America, discusses at some length Cooper's relation to his literary material:

The objects which there present themselves to an author's eye, the passions likely to be awakened in his breast, are *as yet* of a kind more likely to call forth and afford materials for minds like that of a Fielding, a Smollett or an Akenside, than for genius of a higher order. . . .

We do not mean to assert that Cooper is a kind of Fielding or Smollett. He is a denizen of his own age, as they were of theirs. . . . Cooper has all that nationality, the want of which is so often alleged as a reproach to American literature. His reflections, it is true, are such as might be made by a native of any country of European descent; but how can nations, sprung from one common stock, formed by the influence of science and literature, possessed by them in common, and owning one common religion, fail to have a close family likeness? When we say that he is national, we mean that his characters are the growth of America; that the mountains and streams which he describes, the forests that rustle in his pages, all the phenomena of earth and air, are American; that his principles, feelings, and prejudices all lead him to embrace, on every occasion, the cause of America. His language is copious and easy; but we may add, that the structure of his sentences is not infrequently careless and incorrect.

The *Athenæum* was never especially well disposed toward Cooper, and in its frequent expressions of dislike for America and American institutions it sometimes chose him as a sad example. In an article on *America and American Writers*,²¹ from which comments on Irving have already been quoted, it says:

²⁰ II, 170.

²¹ [II] (Oct. 1829) 637.

All the world admits that he is a copyist; only some of the world are pleased to say that though in the works themselves his imitation is very evident, yet in selecting the subjects of them he has shown great *originality*. Yes, precisely the same originality as the settlers whom he is so fond of describing, displayed in choosing one bit of the wilderness for their log-houses, instead of another. Originality consists, we apprehend, in creating good things, talent of selection in finding places to put them in. It is the substance of his thoughts, therefore, and not the scite of them which must determine Mr. Cooper's claims to a high order of excellence.

The same article goes on at length to discuss "the distinction between belonging to a school, and being the plagiarist of its founder"; and shows its animus in the remark: "Nor should we care to examine minutely whether this be the case or not, if the disputant had no farther end than to prove Mr. Cooper a great novelist. But when it is endeavored thence to console the Americans with the notion that they have in them all the seeds of a great literature, it is but a part of common honesty to unmask the deception." The critic then takes the unusual ground that Scott did not inspire Cooper, since "*we do not think it possible* that he can exercise the sort of influence which this opinion supposes." Scott does much for the reader, "but we never met any one who affirmed that these emotions, or descriptions, or characters had begotten any new ones."

The review of the *Water-Witch* in the *Athenæum*²² says that, "Mr. Cooper is decidedly and deservedly a popular writer. He and Mr. Irving are the pillars that support the infant fabric of American literature." It praises especially his treatment of the sea, but considers that he is not so good on land; and points out further weaknesses: "In short, when Mr. Cooper holds communion with nature, either on the ocean or in the desert, he maintains his ascendancy; but the instant he mingles in artificial society, and would depict manners rather than nature, he falls from his 'high estate.'" Again, "The attempt to give point to dialogue, and pungency to expression, by employing monotonous exclamations, is puerile, and betrays the weakness of an author's graphic resources."

A long review of the *Bravo* in the same journal²³ has much to say of Cooper's attitude toward America:

²² [III] (Oct. 23, 1830) 658.

²³ [IV] (1831) 688, 702.

We rejoice in her increasing wealth and spreading splendour—we rejoice, too, in the paintings of her Leslies and her Newtons, and we open the books of her Channings, her Irvings, and her Coopers, as gladly as we do the works of British hands. Nor do we love her children the less, that they vaunt a little of the surpassing charms of their mother—we are very national ourselves, and we love to see it in others. All feeling and impulses nevertheless have their limit, and so must nationality. In what Mr. Cooper manufactures for the American market let him consult the taste of his customers, and be as fiercely national as he pleases; but it is a little too much to bring his prejudices and caprices to the market of London. We are far from thinking such conduct is pleasing to the Americans themselves; they could not but take it much amiss were an English author to write bitterly against them, and print his satire in Boston or New York; and such author would probably be gouged by a Kentuckian, scalped by a half-blood, or have the merits of a new rifle tried on him by a backwoodsman. We are thinking now more particularly of Cooper's *Notions*, as he called them of a *Traveling American* [sic], though in almost all his works the same unwelcome sentiments abound, and induce us to imagine that the author is a compound of the eternal grumble of John Bull, the selfishness of Sandy, and the "slang-whang-slick-away-to-eternal-smash" school of the hot-blooded Yankee.

With these very serious drawbacks Cooper is, nevertheless, an author whom we love: he has a fine conception of character—a true eye for the picturesque—and an art in employing his many-coloured materials, at once striking and original. His heart is alive to all emotions, whether of heroism or pathos—of tenderness or of sorrow. In naval pictures he is much too minute for our taste; yet there is a truth and clearness which get the better of all dislike, and in the result he triumphs. If he is great at sea, he is still greater when he has his foot on his native shores: in the American wilderness he is without a rival.

The Ladies' Museum,²⁴ though it is not a periodical noted for its criticisms, has in its review of the *Borderers*, well anticipated later judgments on Cooper's excellencies and limitations. It commends his power in painting the Indians and the sea.

But when he quits these scenes, which no novelist but himself has successfully trodden, his deficiency as a painter of manners becomes evident. He is awkward in a drawing-room, and of polished life he knows but little. His humor is particularly dull, and his wit is by no means exciting. . . . His novels, however, are always read with interest—they relate to untried scenes, and the

²⁴ II (Nov. 1829) 290.

last one is certainly quite as powerful and entertaining as any of its predecessors.

The *Atlas*,²⁵ in a review of the *Water-Witch* returns to the comparison between Cooper and Scott, saying: "There is an air of pretension and effect about Cooper's novels, which contrasts strikingly with the ease and simplicity of Sir Walter's. . . . You cannot read Cooper without admiring his genius—when you read Sir Walter all your sympathies are engaged on behalf of his fictitious personages. This is a distinction between a genius that is universal, and, as it were, unconscious, and one that is circumscribed, and by that fact enabled to make a greater display of its triumphs."

*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*²⁶ in a long article from which specific criticisms of the *Headsman* have already been quoted, attempts to summarize many of Cooper's characteristics.

In attempting to present us with a quiet landscape he is apt to be diffuse; he darkens council with a multitude of words. . . . But in portraying nature in her hour of storm, he is unequalled by any author of the day. He is inspired, carried beyond himself. . . . We know not in the whole range of literature so vivid and true a picture of the stormy sea and its power as in the loss of the Bristol ship in the *Red Rover*, none so engrossingly exciting as in the preservation of the American frigate off a lee-shore in the *Pilot*. . . . The mistake of the top-sail of the British man-of-war for a cloud, and the sombre emerging of the hull from the mist, is one of the most overpowering instances of the moral picturesque we have yet met with.

There are two ways of scanning human character—by acute analysis; or by a delicate tact, wedded to a ready imagination, which jumps at the conclusion, nine times out of ten, with as much success as the other. The latter is the faculty most suited to the historical novelist. . . . Within a limited range Cooper's tact in catching the distinctive peculiarities of human character is unsurpassed. His long *Tom Coffin*, and his *Master Fid*, and his thousand and one "Niggers," are delightful as they are original. *Harvey Birch*, *Hawk's-eye* [sic], *Mrs. Flannagan*, his soldiers and marines, and his *Dutch Padroons*, are real existences. But, when we ascend in the scale of humanity, we find this intuitive power fail, and that of moral analysis, which few men possess to such a degree of clearness and power, is laid under requisition by our author to supply its place. His *Washington* is the finest and truest

²⁵ V (Nov. 14, 1830) 747.

²⁶ I (Sept. 1832) 660.

picture of that man of men we have met with. . . . Still it is but a portrait. It wants the vitality which the genius of Cooper has bestowed upon the characters which bustle around it. . . . Still more unlucky are his attempts to portray the female character in its loveliness. His sense seems dead. There is not one of his lovely women—always excepting “the Wept of Wish-ton-Wish,” who is not positively repulsive.

CHAPTER VI

POETRY

American poetry from 1815 to 1833 attracted less attention in England than did American essays or American fiction during the same period. This was, if the judgment of time may be trusted, deservedly true. Except for songs and fugitive pieces the only poems written between these dates which are now read are those of Bryant.

Bryant has never gained a great following in England; and although he was recognized in America, even by 1833, as the peer of Irving and Cooper, he held no such position abroad. The amount of his verse written in these early years was relatively small, and the quality was not such as to appeal to the English temper, or to satisfy critics who looked for something "distinctly American" in every transatlantic production. Before Irving kindly aided in bringing out a small volume of his poems in London in 1832, he was known to Englishmen only by scattered pieces, either in collections of American poetry, or fugitive in the periodicals. *Specimens of the American poets; with Critical Notices and a Preface*,¹ London, 1822, which contains selections from Pierpont, Paulding, [Halleck], Dabney, Maxwell, Bryant, Eastburn, Sands, and a group of lesser writers, gives high praise to Bryant, and says of *Thanatopsis*: "Without any intention to overrate the excellence of these lines, it may be confidently asserted that there are few pieces in the works of even the very first of our living poets, which exceed them in sublimity and compass of poetical thought."

Many reviews of this collection comment on the poems of Bryant that it contains. The *Literary Gazette*² credits him

¹From a review in the *Kaleidoscope* (Liverpool) it appears that this was edited by a son of William Roscoe.

²VI (May 18, 1822) 306.

with more genius than any of his contemporaries. The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*³ says: "The 'Ages,' by Bryant, is a masterly sketch, and displays the marks of an eminently poetical mind; and in some of his other pieces there is great beauty and sublimity." The *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*⁴ reprints four of the selections from Bryant, with the comment: "We have no hesitation in assigning to him the superiority over all his countrymen of whom we have any knowledge." The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁵ finds an odd master for Bryant, but praises him: "Mr. Bryant's poems exhibit much genius; and, if instead of remaining a servile imitator of Lord Byron's style, he would allow his own powers free scope, we think that he gives promise of finer poetry than any that America has yet produced. His *Thanatopsis* is a masterly sketch." The *Kaleidoscope*⁶ reaffirms the common judgment that "Bryant is, without a question, before all his poetical compeers; and in the *technicalities* of structure, not less than the felicity of his thoughts, and the majesty of his moral, defies all competition on the other side of the Atlantic. His poem of the *Ages* ought to immortalize him *cis, ut cetera*; and his *Thanatopsis* has all the sublimity of Young, without his excess of antithesis." *Blackwood's*,⁷ which makes the *Specimens* the excuse for a long article on *American Poetry*, says: "William Cullen Bryant is no mean poet. And if he be a young man, we should not be surprised at his assuming one day or other a high rank among English poets."

No separate review of an early American edition of Bryant's poems has come to hand, but a notice of *Poems*, by Sumner Lincoln Fairfield, in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁸ concludes: "Why does not Mr. Bryant, to whom this volume is dedicated, favor the public with some more of his beautiful poems? The small collection which he lately gave to the world was so very creditable to himself and his country, that we should be sorry to find him laying down the lyre."

³ IV (May 18, 1822) 312.

⁴ LIII (May 1822) 313.

⁵ C (Jan. 1823) 28.

⁶ III (Feb. 4, 1823) 249.

⁷ XI (June, 1822) 684.

⁸ IX (Dec. 1823) 555.

John Neal, in his series of comments on American writers in *Blackwood's*⁹ treats Bryant with his customary roughness:

This gentleman's poetry has found its way, piece-meal, into England, and having met with a little of our newspaper praise, which has been repeated with great emphasis in America, is now set up among his associates for a poet of extraordinary promise. . . . Mr. B. is not, and never will be, a great poet. He wants fire—he wants the very rashness of a poet—the prodigality and fervour of those, who are overflowing with inspiration. Mr. B. in fact, is a sensible young man of a thrifty disposition, who knows how to manage a few plain ideas in a very handsome way. . . . Some lines, (about fifteen or twenty,) to a "WATERFOWL," which are very beautiful, to be sure, but with no more poetry in them than there is in the Sermon on the Mount, are supposed, by his countrymen, "to be well known in Europe."

A general article on American writers in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*¹⁰ contains this comment:

Bryant, though wanting perhaps the acute sensibility of Perival, is on the whole his superior in vigour and originality. He is much esteemed in his own country. . . . Bryant is a strong, bold thinker, and evidently indulges the poet's best ambition—the wish to be more distinguished for his conceptions than his execution.

The article also quotes *Thanatopsis*, "the intellectual beauty of which would not have disgraced Byron."¹¹

An article on *American Literature* called forth in the *Retrospective Review*¹² by Arthur Mervyn gives little space to Bryant, though it places him at the head of American poets. Its most significant comment is the following: "Mr. Bryant, who

⁹ XVI (1824) 304.

¹⁰ II (Aug. 8, 1829) 130.

¹¹ This article also quotes *The Gladness of Nature*, and on page 152 the same journal reprints from one of the annuals *June*, without knowing the author. Many of Bryant's poems are given in whole or in part in the reviews of the *Specimens* already cited, and many others were floating about in the periodical press. Among those that have been noticed before the appearance of the London volume of 1832 are: *Thanatopsis*, in *Monthly Repository of Theology*, XVIII (Aug. 1822) 509, (credited to Bryant and the *Specimens of the American Poets*); *To a Waterfowl*, in *Methodist Magazine*, XLVI (Apr. 1823) 275, (credited to "—Bryant, an American Poet"); *O Fairest of the Rural Maids*, in *Lady's Pocket Magazine* [III] (1827) 54, (no credit); *The African Chief*, in *Gentleman's Pocket Magazine* for 1827, p. 51 (no credit); *August*, in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*, XXXII (1831) 447.

¹² IX (1824) 304.

stands certainly first upon the American Parnassus, copies the style of Lord Byron in his Spenserian poems, and in his blank verse reminds us at once of both Wordsworth and Cowper."

Irving wrote for the English edition of the *Poems* a highly complimentary, though not a fulsome introduction; and his name probably did much to ensure serious notices of the collection in most of the critical journals. With some exceptions in both directions, these notices were respectful, but not enthusiastic. The *Athenæum*¹³ refers to an earlier review of Cheever's *Commonplace Book of American Poetry*¹⁴ in which it had preferred Bryant to Dana, though it ranked Dana a close second; but in the later article it was content to quote in full Irving's dedication, and several poems. The *Literary Gazette*¹⁵ says: "There is much taste, much feeling, much grace in this work; perhaps its chief fault is, that it is not sufficiently American." The *National Omnibus*¹⁶ pronounces Bryant's the best of seven volumes of poetry which it considers together, and indulges in some rather gushing praise. The (*Wesleyan*) *Methodist Magazine*¹⁷ says of the poems: "Most of them are eminently beautiful, and will be read with great delight by those who are 'wedded to immortal verse' [sic]"; and, after quoting Irving's preface: "The author has an exquisite perception of the beauties of nature; and his scenery is purely American. Few of the pieces are on sacred subjects; but those few are admirable of their kind."

The *Metropolitan*¹⁸ devotes a long and somewhat amusing article to the *Poems*:

We hail the appearance of this publication with satisfaction of no ordinary kind. . . . Mr. Bryant's poems have the charm of novelty. . . .

We think, with Mr. Irving, that these poems are "gems," that their own merits are their best passport. The poetry of Bryant, though "essentially American," is pure as respects style: the language is that of the best writers of the English tongue, and is an excellent model for the author's countrymen. . . . The beauties

¹³ [V] (March 3, 10, 1832) 143, 155.

¹⁴ [IV] (Dec. 10, 1831) 795.

¹⁵ XVI (March 3, 1832) 130.

¹⁶ II (March 9, 1832) 77.

¹⁷ LV (April 1832) 269.

¹⁸ III (April 1832) 110.

are various and original, the defects trivial. Bryant is a name of which America may justly be proud. His volume proves to us that if the sterling spirit of poetry be evaporating here,—if that which has charmed our fathers, and been the delight of the most generous part of our existence, no longer finds admirers, or degenerates into that boarding-school sentimentality which is so prevalent at present, we may turn to a nation sprung from our own loins, for the refreshing spring to invigorate us, and find in American literature, as refinement increases there, a fount of imaginative delight unconnected with that corruption of works of fancy, the modern fashionable novel. From the wilds of America, we may extract the honey so delicious to the taste and so vivifying to the soul, which the "old country" will have ceased to furnish.

In conclusion, the critic commends "the spirit of piety," and says, quite oblivious of the fact that Bryant had been for some time the editor of a New York daily newspaper: "He who dwells in the bosom of nature sees the Deity everywhere."

The *Monthly Review*¹⁹ takes Bryant's *Poems* as a text for a long article on *American Poetry*, quotations from which will appear elsewhere. It dissents strongly from Irving's ranking of the poems, saying: "Had that gentleman not been an American, it is quite impossible that with his excellent taste, and his undoubted acquaintance with the poetical treasures of this country, he could have sincerely entertained any such opinion." It pronounces Bryant inferior to Dana, and in some respects to Percival, and thinks the work of none of these writers is above the average of verse in English annuals. The *Ages*, the reviewer says, "flows in lines sufficiently elaborated and polished, but cold and unexciting." "The most poetical production in this volume is, beyond all comparison, the address to 'The Evening Wind.' The critical reader will, however, perceive, that the topics selected for illustration of the subject seem to have been industriously sought for: they do not appear to have arisen upon the imagination in that vein of fervid conception, which always characterizes poetry of the highest order."

*Blackwood's*²⁰ treats the *Poems* in an interesting and on the whole a judicious, though not an over-favorable review. It finds some fault with Irving's praise of Bryant. It commends espe-

¹⁹ n. and i. ser. [XIX] (April 1832) 490.

²⁰ XXXI (April 1832) 646.

cially the poet's use of blank verse. As to his Americanism, it complains:

It seems to us, that by leaving out a very few allusions to objects living or dead, not native with us, it might be read to any familiar lover of nature, without his imagination being moved to leave the British isles, and fly to America. . . . Is the scenery it paints as American as the scenery of the *Task* is English—and of the *Seasons* Scottish? If it be—then there is little difference between the character of the Old World's aspect and of the New. But we feel that there is much difference—and that distinctive—while we are reading the novels of Cooper.

The *Foreign Quarterly Review*²¹ devotes to Bryant's *Poems* a seventeen-page article—the first notice of anything American to be found in this journal:

We have reason to hail with satisfaction such creditable productions of American authorship as the volume before us. . . . In reading their [American] works we are irresistibly led to associate them with those of England; and we yield easily to the temptation of adding their literary laurels to swell that vast aggregate of glory which illuminates the annals of the English language. Yet though the American writer is in many respects identified with ourselves, there is on the other hand much that renders him distinct. . . . With respect to the author before us, we agree in opinion with the distinguished editor, that his descriptive writings "are essentially American . . ." Though a contributor to "the common treasury of the language," Mr. Bryant must still be regarded as a foreigner; and in that capacity his productions fairly bring him under the notice of this Journal—a notice more willingly recorded, because our remarks will be rather those of eulogy than of censure.

The ensuing article is sane and sound, praising the poet's best qualities, and pointing out, though with no undue emphasis, his faults.

The *Lady's Magazine*²² is over-enthusiastic in its praise:

How rich a treat to the reviewer, satiated by the smooth, musical verbiage, and the indefinite faults of modern poetasters, to open a volume full of genuine melody and original genius.

On the *Lines to a Waterfowl* it makes this interesting comment:

²¹ X (Aug. 1832) 121.

²² imp. ser. I (Dec. 1832) 271.

When this noble burst of melodious rhythm, natural picturing, and true religious feeling [To a Waterfowl] was first given to the mother-country, by Hone's fine taste in his *Every-day Book*, it created a sensation in the reading world. It was anonymous; and the question went round—"Who is the author?" Many ascribed it to Moore; but the absence of all flimsy sentiment and garish trickeries soon invalidated such appropriation. Cooper afterward headed some of the chapters in his American novels with quotations from this poem, and appended to them the name of "Bryant." Yet, in the face of this acknowledgment, Cooper was, by many persons, considered the author; nor was the matter fully settled till Washington Irving, this last summer, edited Cullen Bryant's poems, which conclude with this exquisite gem.

Of Bryant's contemporaries, few if any poets aroused more comment in England than did James Kirke Paulding. Paulding's collaboration with Irving in *Salmagundi* helped to make him known after the author of the *Sketch Book* was in the public eye; and the *Backwoodsman* satisfied English notions of what an American poem should be, at least so far as subject is concerned. As early as August, 1819, the *British Review*²³ said in the course of a long discussion on American literary conditions in general: "But the most recent, as well as the best specimen of American poesy is unquestionably the 'Backwoodsman' of Mr. Paulsen [sic], to whom the transatlantic critics have awarded the highest place among their native poets. His versification is uniformly smooth, and animated with glowing sentiments of liberty, according to the *American model*." The *New Monthly Magazine*²⁴ coupled the *Backwoodsman* with a burlesque American review of a poem (probably imaginary) entitled "T'other Side of Ohio, by J. Oldfield"; and assumed that Paulding wrote his poem to show prospective American emigrants that the frontier was not a paradise. It pronounced it "One of the most favourable specimens of native poetical ability that we have yet been presented with by transatlantic genius." The *Kaleidoscope, or Literary and Scientific Mirror*²⁵ introduces a selection with the following note:

²³ XIV; 48.

²⁴ XIII (Feb. 1820) 143.

²⁵ II (March 28, 1820) 148.

The following lines are an extract from the "Backwoodsman," a poem by Mr. Paulsden [sic], a native of the United States, to whom American critics, it seems, allow the palm of transatlantic superiority. . . . The poetry, in the passage below has a tang of Goldsmith, and is singularly free from the tumid and falsely-florid manner which has hitherto characterized the Anglo-American muses. The concluding paragraph, allusive to the silence of the American solitudes, is peculiarly forcible.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*²⁶ in an article on Walsh's *Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain respecting the United States of America*, remarked of Paulding: "'The Backwoodsman' possesses considerable merit, and is curious from the subject and the manners which it portrays." The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*²⁷ has some praise for the *Backwoodsman*, saying that the tale, though almost too simple, is well told, and that the renegade and the savage are well portrayed.

Attention was more widely drawn to the *Backwoodsman* when it was included in *Specimens of American Poetry* (1822), though it was there accompanied by an editorial note which complained of Paulding's taste. Several of the reviews of this collection comment on the poem and its author.²⁸ The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*²⁹ which had spoken well of the *Backwoodsman* the year before, prefers Paulding to Pierpont, and says that his "work is, at all events, characteristic of his country." The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*³⁰ passes this judgment: "Mr. Paulding is a stern democrat both in his politics and literature, and he delights in expressing himself boldly and carelessly without paying too nice a regard to the laws of taste and the canons of criticism: he, however, possesses great poetical feeling and a keen perception of the beauties of his native country. Some of his descriptions are very striking and vivid." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*³¹ calls the *Backwoodsman* "a poem which first gave the idea to Eng-

²⁶ XCIII (Nov. 1820) 297.

²⁷ LII (Oct. 1821) 226.

²⁸ Nearly all the reviews of the *Specimens* which comment on Bryant (see pp. 158-9) have at least a word on Paulding.

²⁹ LIII (May 1822) 313.

³⁰ IV (May 18, 1822) 312.

³¹ VI (June 1822).

lish readers, that American writers could be poetical, and which abounds with vivid and poetical descriptions." The *Kaleidoscope*³² and the *Monthly Review Enlarged*³³ in their notices of the *Specimens* speak well of Paulding. The *Literary Gazette*³⁴ is less favorable.

The *Retrospective Review*³⁵ in its article *apropos* of *Arthur Mervyn* says in its discussion of American poetry: "Mr. Paulding seems to be in high esteem with his contemporaries, and he probably deserves it. We can readily believe that he is a vigorous writer. Nevertheless, his style is at present much too laboured and artificial . . . nor is the tendency of his language extremely poetical." He protests, the reviewer complains, against copying of English writers by his countrymen; yet "the style of his own verse is essentially *English*, and not English of the loftiest character. . . . He may do much if he will: but whether he will do much while he disregards the great models in his *own* language (for what does he write but English?) must remain for the present a problem." The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*³⁶ notes in an article on several American literary works: "Mr. J. K. Paulding has attained considerable literary celebrity in America, but we believe he is more appreciated as a prose writer than as a poet. . . . Paulding's style is rough and harsh, but full of shrewd sense and careless humour. He is a thorough democrat, and as such affects to despise what is polished and courtly." The *Athenæum*³⁷ reviews the *Backwoodsman* in 1831, perhaps on the occasion of a new edition. It makes the not unusual criticism that the tale is too long drawn out by commonplace incidents; but it pronounces the strictly American parts, such as the scenes among the Indians, well done, and says: "The author of these volumes does not want either for strong sense, or powers of description."

The only work of FitzGreene Halleck which seems to have attracted much attention in England before 1833 was *Fanny*;

³² III (Feb. 4, 1823) 249.

³³ C. (Jan. 1823) 28.

³⁴ VI (May 18, 1822) 306.

³⁵ IX (1824) 304.

³⁶ II (Aug. 8, 1831) 131.

³⁷ [IV] (Aug. 27, 1831) 549.

and since this was published anonymously in America, and appeared anonymously in the *Specimens of the American Poets*, it did not serve to introduce the author's name to England. At least two reviews of the poem appeared in November, 1821. The *Monthly Review Enlarged*³⁸ says:

We have here a transatlantic imitation of Beppo and Don Juan, though the *ottava rima* is changed for the six-line stanza. The allusions to persons and places, and the satire on them are so entirely local, that we can neither appreciate them nor be interested by them; and both justice and charity, perhaps, should induce us to suppose that, from this circumstance, the poem may have more merit in the eyes of New-York readers than in those of Londoners. Certain it is, however, that we can discover no high beauty in the poetry, nor any great poignancy in the satire; though we have often met with worse versification, particularly from the servile herd of imitators.

A brief notice in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*³⁹ is no more severe than the foregoing, but is written with the smugness that characterizes other references to American works in this journal at about the same time:

This is one of the numerous imitations of Don Juan with which the press has been lately over-run. . . . The story is a mere nothing. Some of the stanzas possess wit, but it is wire-drawn, and wants originality. As a transatlantic performance, however, we wish not to judge it fastidiously; . . . We are sorry that the Americans are so early beginning to indulge in a propensity for this kind of satire. . . . An undue propensity to it has ever been the vice of *polished* nations and therefore we should not *yet* look for it in America.

The Editor of *Specimens of the American Poets* was more favorably disposed toward *Fanny*, saying: "This sprightly little poem is one of the cleverest efforts of the American Muse"; and some of the reviewers of his collection shared his opinion. The *Kaleidoscope*⁴⁰ reprints from some contemporary a review which says: "Next to Bryant, as well for his powers as for his variety, we do not hesitate to rank the anonymous author of *Fanny*, which, along with its many obvious blemishes, unites in it almost every promising *essential* to poetic excellence." An

³⁸ XCVI, 323.

³⁹ III, 579.

⁴⁰ III (Feb. 4, 1823) 249.

article already several times quoted, in the *Retrospective Review* for 1824⁴¹ also names Bryant and the author of *Fanny* as beyond doubt the best of the American poets. On the other hand, the *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁴² in its review of the *Specimens*, speaks slightly of *Fanny*; and the *Literary Gazette*⁴³ takes a middle ground, pronouncing "the story poor, but the composition clever."

The moral and religious tendencies of the Reverend John Pierpont, and the fact that many of his shorter poems seemed especially fitted to drift about as fugitive verse⁴⁴ made the name of this poet well known in Great Britain, though the more serious critics never treated him as a figure of great importance. As early as February, 1819, the *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁴⁵ gave a rather unfavorable notice of the *Airs of Palestine*, objecting to the egotism and to the versification, and saying: "We are well disposed to receive an American poet handsomely: but there must be bounds even to the national courtesies of literature." In its long discussion of the state of literature in America the *British Review*⁴⁶ remarks that "The 'Airs of Palestine' by Mr. Pierpoint [sic] (who has recently been nominated minister of a Presbyterian church at Boston) have some claims to indulgence, from the benevolent motive which led the author to compose them, though we cannot assign them so high a rank in the scale of excellence as some of our contemporaries." The editor of *Specimens of the American Poets* makes the comment that "Upon the whole, Mr. Pierpont is per-

⁴¹ IX, 304.

⁴² C (Jan. 1823) 28.

⁴³ VI (May 18, 1822) 306.

⁴⁴ Selections from Pierpont are given in connection with several of the reviews mentioned in the text. A few of the many other poems reprinted are the *Hymn*, "O Thou, to whom in ancient time," in *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, XLVIII (Oct. 1825) 720; *Hymn for the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of Charleston*, *Ibid.* LIV (Feb. 1831) 144; *Hymn for the Bunker Hill Celebration*, in *Monthly Repository*, XX (Dec. 1825) 757; same *Hymn*, in *Christian Reformer*, XI (Dec. 1825) 392; other hymns, *Ibid.* XI: 84 and 224; *Charleston Hymn*, *Ibid.* XVII (Feb. 1831) 57; a *Hymn* in *Christian Remembrancer* XV (May 1833) 307. An interesting notice in the *Monthly Review*, n. & i. ser. XIV (1830) 306 (Norfolk), of *The American New First Class Book*, re-edited by E. H. Barker, Esq., of Thetford, a school textbook by Pierpont, shows that that author was known in England for other things than poetry.

⁴⁵ LXXXVIII, 207.

⁴⁶ XIV (Aug. 1819) 48.

haps one of the most *correct* of all the American poets, and if he does not attempt so much as his compeers, he generally displays more taste and judgment." Almost all the reviewers of this volume mention Pierpont, most of them with but guarded praise. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁴⁷ observes that he has "a very florid and ornamental style, varying from the old school of poetry only in some occasional flourishes, which cannot be considered as an improvement." It dismisses the selection from the *Airs of Palestine* with praise, "if the admission may be tendered as praise of an American poem, that it might pass undetected for good English currency." The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁴⁸ echoes the editor of the *Specimens*: "There is considerable harmony in his versification, and he is considered the most correct of all the American poets . . ." The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁴⁹ reverses its earlier judgment, to the extent, at least, of finding no fault. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁵⁰ and the *Kaleidoscope*⁵¹ both speak pleasantly of Pierpont, while the *Literary Gazette*⁵² calls the *Airs of Palestine* a "dull poem," though its versification is "the best that America has furnished." The *Athenæum*⁵³ complains that Pierpont is not represented in Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry*, which it is reviewing. John Neal, in his *Blackwood's* comments on American writers says of Pierpont: "He is in the rank of Beattie, Campbell, and all that class."

The *Yamoyden* of Eastburn and Sands was given in the *Specimens of the American Poets* as by "J. W. Eastburn and his friend," and none of the reviewers of the book supplied the missing name. In connection with the poem the editor remarks: "One principal cause of the incorrectness of style, and want of polished taste which the American poets display, may doubtless be discovered in the very early age at which they are accustomed to present their publications to the world." The

⁴⁷ LIII (May 1822) 313.

⁴⁸ IV (May 18, 1822) 312.

⁴⁹ C (Jan. 1823) 28.

⁵⁰ VI (June 1822).

⁵¹ III (Feb. 4, 1823) 249.

⁵² VI (May 18, 1822) 306.

⁵³ [IV] (Dec. 10, 1831) 795.

*Monthly Review Enlarged*⁵⁴ also dwells on the juvenile and imitative character of the work: "Yamoyden is a parody or transfusion of Sir Walter Scott, creditable to the imitative powers of the author, then a boy, but without one gleam of originality." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine* gives an odd mixture of inaccuracy and praise. It prefers to Bryant "Mr. Eastburne [sic] and his friend who has taken a part in the composition of 'Yamaden [sic], a Tale of the Wars of King Philip.' The stanzas of this modest anonymous assistant are replete with beauty of sentiment, and display a harmony of numbers far beyond what the generality of American writers have yet attained command of." The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁵⁵ refuses to consider Eastburn among American poets because he was born in England.

Two years before the appearance of the *Specimens* the *Investigator*⁵⁶ had taken up *Yamoyden* in its department of "American Literature and Intelligence," and had given long extracts and much praise. Nathan Drake, M.D., in his *Evenings in Autumn* (1822) devotes two readable essays⁵⁷ to *Yamoyden*. Like the editor of the *Specimens* he does not know Sands's name, though he evidently prefers his share in the composition. He finds "the impress and animating principle of true genius; passages, in fact, of splendor and beauty which might redeem much greater defects than any which he will be called upon to pardon here." In the second essay, after long quotations he says: "The style and versification are manifestly formed in the school of Sir Walter Scott, frequently exhibiting very happy specimens of a bold, free, and yet harmonious rythmn [sic], and occasionally, as might be expected from the circumstances attending the construction of the work, discovering instances of slovenly diction, and imperfect metre." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁵⁸ prints a note signed J. W. G. on the death of Robert C. Sands. It condemns Mrs. Trollope for her attempts to make the character of a New York editor odious,

⁵⁴ C (Jan. 1823) 28.

⁵⁵ IV (May 18, 1822) 312.

⁵⁶ II (April 1821) 170; in VI: 173 Eastburn's poem, the *Hebrew Mourner* is reprinted.

⁵⁷ Vol. I, Nos. 1 and 2.

⁵⁸ XXXVII (1833) 499.

and seems to imply—though on what ground is not clear—that her “Hannibal Burns” was intended for Sands. The contributor speaks of personal acquaintance with Sands, and commends him highly as a man and a writer.

The *Specimens of the American Poets* also includes nine poems by Dabney and nine by Maxwell, and a group of fourteen pieces of miscellaneous poetry, including Allston’s *Paint King*. The editor gave Dabney some qualified praise, saying “The war-songs, which are curious as specimens of American feeling, will be found very bold and spirited”; and again: “Mr. Dabney’s style partakes of all the characteristic faults of his countrymen’s—carelessness, roughness, and occasional want of good taste.” Maxwell is pronounced a disciple of Waller. Most reviews of the *Specimens* have little or nothing to say of either of these two poets. *Colburn’s*⁵⁹ groups them together as imitators. On the other hand an article on American literature in the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁶⁰ two years before the appearance of the *Specimens* had chosen both Dabney and Maxwell for especial notice, saying: “Mr. Dabney is a man of information and reading, and a poet much above mediocrity: there is a considerable depth of thought in his writings, and a freedom and ease of expression highly creditable to him: while the sentiments which pervade his poems are just, moral, and pure.” Unlike other critics, this writer does not find him imitative: “Mr. Dabney does not seem to have taken any of our living poets as his models, and we hardly know with whom we should compare him: making all due allowances for his inferiority, we think he approaches nearest in style and manner to Campbell. On the whole, Mr. D. certainly merits protection and encouragement from his countrymen.” Maxwell, though adjudged not quite equal to Dabney, is accorded considerable praise, and is represented by a selection which “almost equals some passages of Lord Byron in pathos.” Fault is found, however, with the bombast of his patriotic poems, and with his use of “sprigh” as an Americanism. On the whole, the small vogue of Dabney and Maxwell in England seems to have been at its height about 1820. The *Monthly Re-*

⁵⁹ VI (June 1822) 269.

⁶⁰ XLVIII (Jan. 1820) 505.

view Enlarged for November of that year⁶¹ in its long article on *Walsh's Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain*, says: "The Poems of Mr. Richard Dabney certainly possess more originality of thought, and display more of the hand of a poet, than any other trans-Atlantic composition which we have seen"; but comments on the "carelessness and inequality which mark the composition of a young author," and on the "immature taste." On a later page the same article goes on: "We have read with considerable pleasure a small volume by Mr. Maxwell, which contains what we should call agreeable poetry, without any pretensions to the sublime, but written in an easy and lively style." The critic says of Allston: "It is certainly to be admitted that he handles his pencil with more skill than his pen, for his poems are specimens of a very fatiguing mediocrity of talent, and require no small share of patience in the perusal." This judgment of the relative value of Allston's work as painter and as poet was probably the prevailing one in England. He was on terms of close friendship with several English men of letters—among them Coleridge and Wordsworth—who seem never to have thought of him as a writer. Notices of his poems are few. The long article on *American Literature* in the *Retrospective Review* for 1824⁶² favors him with some praise; it also speaks pleasantly of Dabney and Maxwell.

Percival was the subject of frequent comment in English journals, and was sometimes ranked at the head of American poets. In 1822 *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁶³ praised his *Clio*, but advised him not to imitate English writers so closely. The *Kaleidoscope*⁶⁴ quoted from "a late American paper" some high praise of the poet, and gave *To Seneca Lake* as a specimen. The *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*⁶⁵ reviewed the London reprint of Percival's poems, saying, "We have seen many specimens of American taste and genius, but

⁶¹ XCIII, 297.

⁶² IX, 304.

⁶³ VI (Aug.) 364; with its penchant for misspelling American names *Colburn's* calls the poet *Perceval*.

⁶⁴ III (March 18, 1823) 300.

⁶⁵ LVII (June 1824) 437.

we think this work one of the most favourable"; and adding in regard to *Prometheus*:

There is a tinge of that religious mysticism which, perhaps for another century, must be indulged among the descendants of the gloomy fanatics who first peopled New England, and whose prejudices still restrain the free exertion of American intellect. But for this drawback, the Poems would bear comparison with the most tasteful productions of the mother country.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁶⁶ says of the same collection:

We have selected the Poems which appear at the head of this article; because, though not of equal excellence with the nobler strains of Bryant, or some of those of Bancroft, as given in the before-mentioned Specimens, they yet boast a degree of merit far superior to that of any entire pieces hitherto published on this side of the water. . . .

The Doctor's poetry, though elevated with occasional bursts of true genius and passion, presents some of the most startling and terrific pictures of a powerful but fervid imagination, of contempt and hatred of mankind, of scepticism, of suicide, and of the "darkest painter's horrors," that we recollect to have ever contemplated. To some minds, in some moods, these pictures have their charms, . . . and, as they boast but too potent and dangerous a spell, we would fain exorcise the imaginations both of the poet and his readers. . . . Deeply fraught with poetry and passion as some of his pieces indisputably are, we think that in this "moody madness" of the poet's brain he has gone much too far: we fear to sympathize with him; we shiver and tremble as we read; yet we feel his power. . . .

The prevailing faults of the writer's poetry appear to consist in the florid and pompous style, which is unfortunately so much affected by some of our young modern poets.

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁶⁷ in a leading article on several American books, remarks that "the four poets of greatest eminence which America at present possesses, are Percival, Bryant, Paulding, and Halleck" and continues regarding Percival:

Without possessing a mind of the very highest order, Percival's poetry is nevertheless of that kind which cannot fail to attract and please. He often *thinks* deeply, and always *feels* acutely; he has an intense perception of the beautiful—more than of the sublime—

⁶⁶ CIV (July 1824) 315.

⁶⁷ II (Aug. 8, 1829) 130.

in nature; and his style is a sort of compound of that of Shelley and Wordsworth,—the latter of which poets, we may remark in passing, seems to be a decided favourite with the Americans. On the whole, we cannot help thinking Percival infinitely superior to the great crowd of poetasters with which this country is at present infested, and are surprised that his works are not better known among us.

The *Monthly Review* in its discussion of Bryant's *Poems*⁶⁸ mentions Percival as a poet "whose range is said to be bolder and higher than that of Bryant, but inferior to the latter in all the requisites of polished diction." Neal, in his *Blackwood* articles,⁶⁹ makes the odd remark that Percival is "among poets, very much what Geoffrey Crayon is among prose writers." Percival's shorter poems were often printed in journals of all grades.⁷⁰

Many of N. P. Willis's poems also floated about in the newspapers and magazines.⁷¹ Formal criticisms of Willis were, however, few. The *Literary Gazette*⁷² groups his volume of *Sketches* with several other American works, and pronounces his verse promising but immature. *Fraser's Magazine*⁷³ makes his *Fugitive Poetry* the occasion of an article which is mainly concerned with literary conditions in America. Of Willis himself it says:

Among their poets, Mr. Willis perhaps holds one of the most conspicuous stations; and by the specimens of his poems which we shall lay before his readers, it will, we are of opinion, be seen that, however commendable may be his productions, and how fair may be the prospect which they hold out for a future plentiful and rich harvest, they are not, of themselves, of a first-rate order. They are, notwithstanding, conspicuous for tenderness, and taste, and occasional bursts of passion, and a vein, narrow enough, we admit, of philosophy. They also manifest an amiable and excellent heart, as

⁶⁸ n. & i. ser., [XIX] (April 1832) 490.

⁶⁹ XVII (1824) 186.

⁷⁰ A few of many such reprints are: In *Kaleidoscope* n. s. II: 324, *The Coral Grove* (no author named); *Ibid.* (July 2, 1822) p. 412, *Lines*, ("Softly the moonlight"); *Monthly Literary Register*, II (Oct. 1822) 236, *Star of my heart*; *Gentleman's Pocket Magazine* for 1827, p. 212, *To a Butterfly*; *Ibid.* p. 333, *The Contrast*.

⁷¹ Among those noticed are, in *Gentleman's Pocket Magazine* for 1830, p. 145, *Unwritten Poetry*; in *Edinburg Literary Journal*, II (Nov. 6, 1830) 294, *The Soldier's Widow* (taken from a London annual); *Ibid.* V (April 30, 1831) 282, *The Wife's Appeal*.

⁷² XII (Aug. 23, 1828) 530.

⁷³ I (Feb. 1830) 8.

they contain many pictures of youth, and innocence, and beauty, and early affections. But there are, throughout, many conceits.

Six pages of selections from Willis's poetry are also in most instances praised. A writer in the *Eclectic Review*⁷⁴ thinks Willis the best of the poets represented in a new volume of selections.

J. A. Hillhouse elicited little remark in England, but when he was mentioned he was taken seriously. The notice of *Hadad* in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁷⁵ is typical of that journal, even to the misspelling *Hadod* :

There are many poetical and pleasing passages in this poem, which, as a specimen of transatlantic dramatic composition we can recommend to our readers. The subject is from the Old Testament. The characters are numerous; but there is, unfortunately, that want of energetic interest and unflagging excitement so necessary in all pieces written for the stage; and in which very few in our day, in any country, have succeeded. *Hadod*, however, does its author credit.

In his *Essays in Autumn*, Nathan Drake, whose comments on *Yamoyden* have already been quoted, bestows extravagant praise on Hillhouse's *The Judgment, a Vision* :⁷⁶

Like the productions of Glynn and Bruce, the poem of Mr. Hillhouse is written in blank verse, and with a skill in its construction which evidently proves him to have studied the best masters in this difficult style of versification with singular assiduity and success. In the grouping and management of his subject, however, he has a claim to originality, and has given to his poem a character, which, as distinguishing it from the works of his predecessors, may be termed the *picturesque*. So fully and forcibly, indeed, has he brought forth his figures from the canvass, and frequently, with such grace and beauty of effect, as to impart an interest to the subject which the general and overwhelming nature of its detail, as exhibited in the efforts of preceding writers, had altogether failed to produce.

Of an apostrophe to the Evening Star :

Numerous as have been the addresses to this lovely planet, there is not one which can compete with this, if regard be had to the awful magnitude of the occasion; and few, which, in point of execution, can be deemed more pensively sweet and impressive.

⁷⁴ n. s. X (July, 1833) 1.

⁷⁵ XXI (Jan. 1827) 7.

⁷⁶ II, 100; No. XV.

The name of Edward Coate Pinkney—often misspelled—is occasionally found in articles on American poetry, and some of his shorter pieces were reprinted. In an article on *North American Review on Lord Byron's Works, and Pinkney's Poetry the London Magazine*⁷⁷ attacks him, not so much for his own sake, as for the chance of objecting to praise which the *North American Review* has bestowed upon him. Of certain lines in the *Toast*, "I fill the cup" it says: "Such sheer nonsense as the stuff printed in Italics could hardly obtain a place in the columns of the most contemptible newspaper; and such unmeaning trash is quoted by the first critical journal of America with high commendation!"

R. H. Dana was another poet more often named for comparison and contrast than on his own account. The verdict of the *Monthly Review*⁷⁸ that he "has a bolder and a more poetical genius than that of Bryant" has already been cited.

Three early American poetesses, Marie Gowen Brooks, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, and Hannah F. Gould seem to have been well known in England. Of these, Mrs. Brooks was taken most seriously. Southey, it is well known, praised her highly. The *Literary Gazette*⁷⁹ gallantly reviewed her *Judith, Esther, and Other Poems*:

Productions of a female and of a stranger! our severer judgment would be reluctantly exercised on these poems; fortunately it is not what we are now called upon to use. In this little volume there is much of sweetness, much of poetical feeling; a harvest which, weeded from the tares left by haste, and carelessness, would be one, we think, of both promise and produce. [sic]

We must say of them what belongs to most of the transatlantic poetry—why are they not more exclusive, more national? America has that bright heaven, that magnificent earth, which would seem to fit it for the poet's birthplace: surely there is inspiration in her rich, deep forests, her noble rivers; yet but too much of her poetry is but the echo of that from another land: this should not be. Let there be an Atlantic between their songs as between their shores; let the American bard forget the lillies, roses, and violets of the European Muses; let his lyre be devoted to his own peculiar feelings; let it seek for imagery in its native woods and skies,—and glorious will be its awaking. Still we must say of this lady, at a pe-

⁷⁷ n. s. IV. (Feb. 1826) 224.

⁷⁸ n. & l. ser. [XIX] (1832) 490.

⁷⁹ X (Dec. 9, 1826) 776.

riod when female genius is asserting itself in a way to make the proudest of the other sex tremble for their long-fancied superiority, that she seems to us to be deeply imbued with the true spirit of poetry. In composition she has a good deal to correct; in conception and imagination she is already often admirable.

British reviewers seem to have taken no hint from the pen-name, Marie del Occidente, over which *Zophiel* appeared in London in 1833, and to have been ignorant that the first canto of the poem had been published in Boston eight years earlier; at all events they make no comment on the nationality of the author. The *Athenæum*⁸⁰ was somewhat half-hearted in commendation:

There is some fancy and some pleasing poetry in this little volume—but the author wants vigour of imagination for the original flight meditated: there are, however, many graceful passages, many fine thoughts, and enough of power to induce us to wish that a theme of a domestic character, with the scene at our own door, had been selected.

The *Monthly Review*⁸¹ was impressed by the sex of the author:

The origin of the present poem, together with its authorship, appear to be buried in complete obscurity, and we are merely enabled, from the graceful and delicate spirit which is infused into it, to conjecture that it is the emanation of a female mind.

We recommend the work as a very favourable specimen of the exalted state of cultivation which the female mind has attained in the present auspicious era.

The *British Magazine*⁸² gives a brief non-committal notice, saying: "The poem will please those who like these wild mixtures of human and superhuman, classical and oriental; and the notes contain a variety of very curious and fanciful opinions, chiefly on mythological subjects, evidently derived from extensive reading."

As early as 1815 the *Critical Review*⁸³ speaks charitably of Lydia Huntley's *Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse*:

We understand that these Poems are the production of a very young Lady, who has acquired by her own exertions the advantages

⁸⁰ June 29, 1833, p. 418.

⁸¹ August 1833, p. 576.

⁸² IV (Nov. 1833) 554.

⁸³ Fifth Ser., II (Nov. 1815) 544.

of education, and by her unremitting industry (as the mistress of a Female Seminary) has rescued herself from a state of unmerited indigence, and been enabled to hold out the hand of affectionate succour to her distressed relatives. Her Poems are among the very best hitherto produced by the American Muse.

There seem, however, to have been few critical notices of Mrs. Sigourney's numerous volumes; though the *Christian Observer*⁸⁴ reviews her edition of Hannah More's Works, and pronounces her comments on Mrs. More a "little extravagant, and almost too personal." Her poems were, however, paid the compliment of frequent republication, especially in the religious and the ladies' magazines.⁸⁵ The *Athenæum*⁸⁶ in its review of Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry*, praises her for her religious quality.

A writer in the *Athenæum*⁸⁷ pays Hannah F. Gould a half-hearted compliment: "We have dipped into five and twenty volumes [of American writings] within these last ten days; and this collection of poems by Miss Gould is the only one deserving notice; and even this, small as it is, contains a great deal that is valueless." This article apparently furnished material for comments in the *Boudoir*⁸⁸ and the *Royal Lady's Magazine*⁸⁹ for the following month. Both of these echo the criticism, and print the same four poems as illustrative selections. Fugitive poems by Miss Gould are occasionally found in the less important journals.

The *Literary Remains* of Lucretia M. Davidson were solemnly reviewed by Southey in the *Quarterly*.⁹⁰ It was the opinion of the laureate that in the poems of this infant prodigy "there was as fair a promise of future excellence as ever genius put forth." Fully as interesting as the article is a letter from Southey to Caroline Bowles, August 17, 1829:

⁸⁴ XXVIII (Jan. 1828) 45.

⁸⁵ A few instances are: in the *Kaleidoscope*, n. s. I (Dec. 19, 1820) 196, *The Creator*; *Christian Reformer*, XVII (Nov. 1832) 516, *The Western Emigrant*; *Baptist Magazine*, XXIV (Dec. 1832) 524, *The Baptism*; *Lady's Pocket Magazine*, (1830) p. 227, *The School*; *Ibid.*, (1831) p. 99, *The Rose*; *Ibid.*, (1832) p. 30, *The Princess of York*; *Ibid.*, (1833) p. 41, *The Indian's Burial of His Child*.

⁸⁶ [IV] (1831) 812.

⁸⁷ [V] (Aug. 25, 1832) 546.

⁸⁸ [I] (Sept. 1832) 381.

⁸⁹ IV (Sept. 1832) 85.

⁹⁰ XLI (Nov. 1829) 289.

I shall draw some tears from your eyes, dear Caroline, by the history of a young American poetess which I am just finishing for the next *Quarterly Review*, and have, indeed, this moment broken off, that I may not longer delay writing to you. You are a cruel writer, for you imagine tales which I, with all my love for the writer, and with all my admiration for the passages that catch my eye, cannot bear to read, though thirty years ago I should have devoured them. In my future fiction I will make everybody happy as far as I can, for the sake of making myself so while I write, and will tell no sad stories, unless they are true ones, as this is. She was a beautiful creature, who died at the age of seventeen, the victim of over-excitement, like Kirke White.

The most notable New England poets of the mid-century had made scarcely a beginning before 1833. Still, in the latest years of the period the name of Longfellow is occasionally met with, though he elicited no individual criticism. The *Athenæum*⁹¹ prints with praise his *Hymn of the Moravian Nuns* at Bethlehem, though the editor is ignorant of the author. Two months later⁹² in its review of Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry*, the *Athenæum* says:

Mr. Longfellow is an especial favorite of ours. His "Hymn of the Moravian Nuns" at the consecration of Pulaski's banner, (published in a former number of the *Athenæum*) is one of the most spirited lyrics in the language; and there are several others in this volume worthy to be its companions. His poems were all written, we understand, during his hours of relaxation, while a student in college; and we regret to learn that the duties of an active profession have compelled him of late to neglect the muse.

The *Monthly Review*⁹³ extracts from the *Literary Souvenir* some fifty lines of verse beginning,

The moons of autumn wax and wane; the hollow sound of
floods

Is borne upon the mournful wind; and broadly on the woods

with the introductory comment:

We believe that we have been principally induced to extract the following lines by the consideration that they appear to have been written by a North American. It is gratifying to us to find that

⁹¹ IV (Oct. 1, 1831) 634.

⁹² Dec. 10, 1821, p. 795.

⁹³ n. & l. ser., XV (Dec. 1820) 562.

our kinsmen in blood and language, at the other side of the Atlantic, are making at length, some strides towards the idiomatic tone of our poetry. The author, Mr. G. Whittier, paints the grief of an Indian girl, assumed to be the last of the aboriginal inhabitants of Newfoundland.

These lines are not found in any poem included in the Cambridge edition of J. G. Whittier and dated before 1831.

Minor volumes of American verse seem to have been attractive to English reviewers, who looked on them sometimes as curiosities and sometimes as phenomena of real significance. A few representative criticisms may be cited. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁹⁴ gives a notice of B. H. Judah's juvenile Byronic *Odofriede, the Outcast*: "Though strangely defective, considered as a regular and complete performance, abounding in false sentiment and exaggerated character, yet there are individual passages full of richness of fancy and poetic diction, which go far to redeem the general failure of the piece." The article speaks pleasantly of the promise of American poetry. Another juvenile volume, *Poems*, by Sumner Lincoln Fairfield, is more severely handled by *Colburn's*.⁹⁵ The *Literary Gazette* for February 21, 1824,⁹⁶ treats with long-drawn-out contempt two volumes: *Eugenia, or Early Scenes in Cumberland*, by Marshall, and *The Pleasures of Poverty*, by Solomon Southwick—animosity being shown not so much in unfairness to the poems as in paying so much attention to them. The author of *Eugenia* seems to have irritated the reviewer by laying stress on the happiness of simple life in America, and by a tribute to Napoleon. A description of a pompous banquet, quoted from the *Pleasures of Poverty* gives opportunity for this fling: "We presume that the manners and enjoyments of the aristocracy in Mr. Southwick's native land are here drawn from the life; and truly if it be so, the joys of scanty meals must be preferable to those of refined society." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁹⁷ is half-complimentary, half-patronizing in its notice of *Rural Hours, a Poem*, a little gift-volume by Garit Furman: "The writer is one of those who have amused

⁹⁴ LIII (July 1822) 549.

⁹⁵ IX (Dec. 1823) 555.

⁹⁶ VIII, 115, 116.

⁹⁷ XII (April 1824) 173.

hours stolen from mercantile pursuits, and spent upon his farm, in turning into verse the most prominent scenes of rural life. We are rejoiced to find, that in so young, though great and rapidly increasing a nation, temporary relaxation from concerns which must occupy unceasingly the time of those who do not make literature an affair of life, are thus elegantly and pleasingly devoted." The *Monthly Critical Gazette*⁹⁸ reviews *The American Mariners: or the Atlantic Voyage. A Moral Poem. To which is prefixed, a Vindication of the American Character from the Aspersions of the Quarterly Reviewers*. After an introductory discussion which concludes with the prophecy that when America reaches maturity "possibly . . . she will then be ripe for splitting into more monarchies than Europe contains," the critic says:

It is a rambling, desultory story, written after the manner of Falconer's *Shipwreck*. That it contains some indifferently good poetry, we will not be so unjust as to deny. It is exceedingly long, and abounds with praises of American valour and beauty, with praises of American scenery, with praises of American trees, shrubs, and plants; of everything American from the jaguar that roams the forest, to the veriest vermin that riot in the peasant's garner. Everything is seen through the distorted medium of nationality and prejudice.

The *Athenæum*⁹⁹ reviews favorably Sprague's *Ode Pronounced before the inhabitants of Boston 17th September, 1830*, and compares it with "the small weak stuff with which we are favored upon such occasions." Later in the same volume¹ the *Athenæum*, in its review of Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry*, says that Sprague's "productions are characterized by a purity of thought and simplicity of language, as rare as they are valuable." The *Spirit of Literature*² ridicules an article on Sprague in the *North American Review*, saying: "Mr. Sprague holds a high rank among American writers, and we think not undeservedly; but the object of this present article is to prove him a poet." The *Eclectic Review* ranks Sprague second only to Willis in the list

⁹⁸ I (Aug. 1824) 255.

⁹⁹ [IV] (Jan. 29, 1831) 66.

¹ P. 812.

² I (June 5, 1830) 32.

of American poets represented in a new volume of selections. In the preceding volume the *Eclectic*⁴ had noticed *The Religion of Taste, a Poem*, by Carlos Wilcox, a Newport minister who had died young. The *Athenæum*⁵ in its review of Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry*, praises and quotes from Wilcox's descriptive poems.

No account can be given of the great number of poems by lesser American authors which, with and without credit, floated about in the British newspapers and magazines. The church papers and the ladies' and other lighter magazines were especially likely to maintain departments of poetry, and, as might be expected, had a penchant for short moral and sentimental pieces. The *Christian Reformer* gave space to much American verse, including selections from Bryant, Pierpont, and Mrs. Sigourney, and also such pieces as "On the Death of Two Lovely Twin Sisters, who died within a short space of each other at Exeter, New Hampshire,"⁶ and "Address to the Evening Star, by Richard Nisbit, a lunatic in the Pennsylvania Hospital."⁷ The *Lady's Pocket Magazine* also gave many short American poems, chosen, on the whole, from the better authors. The *Kaleidoscope* was less discriminating in its choice. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register* published at intervals from 1816 to 1820 "Collections from American Literature" which, though more largely prose, contained a good number of poems. A little later the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review* contained a similar department, "Americana." Others among the many periodicals that printed considerable American verse were the *Investigator*, 1820-21, the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 1825-1832, and the *Imperial Magazine*. The *Christian Observer*⁸ prints a communication on American sacred poetry and illustrates by some thirteen specimens. Other American poems were often sent to editors by persons who chanced to have them in their possession. Thus, the *Spirit and Manners of the Age*⁹ prints *Recollections* by Willis Gay-

⁴ X (July 1833) 1.

⁵ IX, 180.

⁶ [IV] (Dec. 1831) 812.

⁷ IX (July, 1823) 241.

⁸ X (April 1832) 132.

⁹ XXVIII (Feb., April, 1828) 98, 252.

¹⁰ n. s. II (Dec. 1829) 938.

lord Clark, with a note: "The above poem is the production of one of the most distinguished poets of America. It has been kindly forwarded for insertion in 'The Spirit and Manners of the Age.'"

Collections of American poetry other than the *Specimens* already several times referred to elicited no great amount of comment. Kettell's *Specimens of American Poetry* was reviewed in the *Literary Gazette*¹⁰ and the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*.¹¹ The latter says: "Certainly the Americans are not a poetical people; are they too prosperous, too calculating, or what is it that hinders them? These volumes do not possess, generally speaking, poetry of even a fifth rate order; but there are some entertaining biographies, and they give a very exact idea of the state of literature in America." The *Christian Remembrancer*¹² gives a notice of *American Poetry, Religious and Moral, selected from the most popular Authors*, a miniature volume issued in London. It thinks that a better selection might have been made from American writers, though "the present collection is at once pleasing and pious, and is well adapted for a present to a young person. To any one, the beautiful and affecting simplicity of Bryant and Flint, the manly numbers of Willis, and the piety of Percival, have many charms; and the strains of Mrs. Hales, Mrs. Sigourney, and Mrs. Gilman are fit companions for the numbers of our Hemans and Howett." The *Eclectic Review*¹³ comments on a collection of English poetry, said to be the first to include American authors. The *Athenæum*¹⁴ devotes two articles to Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry*. It praises Cheever's intention, but condemns his lack of plan, and regrets certain omissions. In the second notice it says: "Most of the selections in this volume are of a devotional cast, and unite unaffected piety with the pure spirit of poetry. It is very creditable to the character of American literature, that, notwithstanding its narrow limits, it should contain so many examples of intellect

¹⁰ According to the index, XIII (1829) 483. This number is wanting from the file in the British Museum, and has not been available for use in this study.

¹¹ I (Aug. 1829) 182.

¹² XV (May 1833) 268.

¹³ 3d ser. X (1833) 1.

¹⁴ [IV] (1831) 795, 812.

devoted to the service of religion, and no instance of genius prostituted to gild vice or ornament immorality." It concludes: "We have given sufficient examples to prove that the stores of American poetry are varied and valuable; and that many of the Trans-Atlantic bards must, ere long, take their station beside the standard poets of Great Britain."

A few British critics found occasion, incidentally, to refer to earlier American versifiers. The *Gentleman's Magazine*¹⁵ says bombastically:

If in Barlow's Columbiad (the only American Epic which has appeared) the description of these deadly engines of modern warfare be thought not altogether consonant with the dignity of Epic—it may here be generally asserted, that his failure in this respect is nothing extraordinary, and that whatever be the particular beauties or excellencies of that Poem, its aggregate merits are by no means such as to preclude fresh efforts upon the great and eventful subject, or damp the emulative aspirings of future sons of genius, who, allured by its splendor and novelty, shall tune their invigorated muse to celebrate at once the unparalleled circumstances which attended its discovery, and the assemblage of everything sublime in creation which America holds out to view.

The *British Review*¹⁶ speaks with measured praise of Dwight and Trumbull. The *Monthly Review Enlarged*¹⁷ in its article on *Walsh's Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain*, mentions Barlow and Dwight as fairly well known in England. In the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*¹⁸ Shepherd and North discuss American poetry:

SHEPHERD: Ken ye onything about American Poetry, Mr. North?

NORTH: Not so much as I could wish. Would all the living best American bards send me over copies of their works, I should do them justice. I respect—nay, I admire that people, James; though perhaps they don't know it. Yet I know less of their Poetry than their Politicks, and of them not much. . . .

NORTH: I have lately looked over—in three volumes—Specimens of American Poetry with Critical and Biographical Notices, and have met with many most interesting little poems, and passages of poems. The editor has been desirous of shewing what had been achieved under the inspiration of the American Muses before the

¹⁵ LXXIX (Aug. 1819) 125.

¹⁶ XIV (Aug. 1819) 48.

¹⁷ XCIII (Nov. 1820) 297.

¹⁸ *Blackwood's* XXIX (Feb. 1831) 230.

days of Irving and Cooper, Pierpont and Percival, and thinks, rightly, that the lays of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, the poets of the Western world, are as likely to bear some characteristic traits of national or individual character, as those of the Minnesingers and Trouvers or the "Gongorism of the Castilian rhymesters of old."

North goes on to speak of Anne Bradstreet, Jane Coleman, and Ann Eliza Schuyler, giving sketches of their lives and bits of quotation, until interrupted by supper. From Anne Bradstreet he quotes three stanzas of *Contemplations*. The dialogue continues:

SHEPHERD: Oh! man, but they're bonny, incorrect, sweet, simple lines thae—and after sic a life as Anne Bradstreet led, can there be ony doubt that she is in heaven?

NORTH: In my mind none.

The foregoing comments on individual writers show fairly well the animus of British critics of American verse. Other pertinent discussions will be found in the chapter which considers the general attitude of literary England toward America. A few varied remarks on American poetry, as distinct from other forms of literary endeavor, may be in place here. They will be given in approximately chronological order.

The *British Review*¹⁹ takes up a list of seventeen heterogeneous American books under the title *State of Literature, Religion, Slavery, Etc. in the United States of America*. The article is impartial, and shows a considerable knowledge of some things in America—in view of which knowledge blunders of spelling like Paulsen (for Paulding) and Pierpoint are the more surprising. Of poetical conditions the reviewer remarks: "In poetry, the productions of the Trans-atlantic muse are neither very numerous nor very excellent. The muse of poetry, indeed, seems with difficulty to have made her passage across the Atlantic; and not yet to have recovered her sea sickness. With the few exceptions which we shall presently state; we have seen no specimens of American genius, which in any degree make good their claim to be considered as *genuine* poesy. In fact, the state of society is not favourable to its production." The writer goes on to say that "The national songs of the

¹⁹ XIV (Aug. 1819) 48.

Americans breath any thing but the spirit of poesy," and quotes some very bad examples.

"The Enquirer" No. XXX in the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*²⁰ discusses the question "What has been the Progress and Success of American Literature and Poetry?" After a general consideration of the nature and the history of poetry the writer comments on the undue deference in America to the literary judgments of England, and decides that Americans "are not of a poetical character"; perhaps because they are too mercantile. In another paragraph he concedes, however, that "In the poetical department of literature, the Americans seem to have been tolerably successful." Although in the form of a thorough and serious discussion, the article is not especially significant.

In its article on Walsh's *Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain*, from which individual criticisms have already been quoted, the *Monthly Review Enlarged*²¹ says:

One of the great characteristics of all the American poetry which we have perused is a want of depth both in thought and feeling; and the next most striking peculiarity is the absence of all consistent taste. . . . The origin of this fault is undoubtedly to be found in the want of that more solid and classical erudition, and that more complete acquaintance with the great masters of the poetic art, which are indispensibly necessary to the formation of a genuine and correct taste. The Americans have not yet been taught to drink at the springs of learning, but fly to the shallow streams, from which they are content to imbibe a portion of the sacred fountain. They are attached, also, to every kind of lighter literature; and their minds consequently acquire a frivolity which unfits them for the exercise of any deep and powerful emotion. When their theme is American virtue or American valour, their better judgment is sure to desert them, and they burst forth with some inflated and high-sounding panegyric on themselves and their peculiar excellence. . . the naval engagements in which they have been successful seem more peculiarly to awake their lyre.

There is, the critic says, no "super-eminent American poet," partly because most American writers devote only their leisure to poetry, partly because they must contend with English as well as with American rivals, partly because the ease of print-

²⁰ XLVIII (Jan. 1820) 505.

²¹ XCIII (Nov 1820) 297.

ing urges them to come before the public very young. American poetry has "no originality of character." It is "English in all but sterling merit, and in a few instances where some unfortunate *Americanism* escapes to declare in what hemisphere it was born. The American authors in general have followed in the steps of our most successful poets."

The Preface to the *Specimens of the American Poets* is devoted mostly to a consideration of American literary conditions in general, and to criticisms of individual poets. In poetry, "The standard of excellence is measured by English estimation." In its review of the *Specimens* the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*²² furnishes a good example of a common sort of kindly, half perfunctory criticism:

The poetical attempts of the Americans have hitherto been known to us only by their failure and by the severity with which our critics have attacked them, and, it must be allowed, not without reason, whenever they found a sufficient opportunity. Under all this weight of discouragement, that great nation has been as active in improving her talents and refining her taste, as in advancing her political prosperity; and she may now boast of possessing bards, whom she may present with pride and confidence to their rivals on this side the Atlantic. . . . We may safely pronounce, that the mine from which so many beautiful and valuable materials have been drawn, must be intrinsically rich. . . .

In point of literary dependence, America seems to be still a British colony, and to draw her supplies, in a great degree, from the mother country. She has not yet thrown off the yoke of criticism; but, on the contrary, humbles herself under it, even to the discouragement of her native genius. . . . As far as regards the English reader it [this] has an unfortunate tendency. To him the imitation of English style and sentiment, to which it inevitably leads, is vapid and uninteresting; and he asks for those demonstrations of national spirit and character, which would be regarded by the trans-atlantic critic with indifference or contempt.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*²³ in a review of Fairfield's *Poems* repeats the complaint that so many American verses are juvenile affairs because,

It is only in early youth, and before they become entangled in the engagements of society, that the bards of America are in the habit

²² LIII (May 1822) 313.

²³ IX (Dec. 1823) 555.

of indulging their poetical inclinations; and it is to this cause, very principally, that we attribute the inconsistencies and imperfections which may be observed in their works.

In its long article on *American Literature* the *Retrospective Review*²⁴ dismisses poetry lightly: "In respect to the poetry of our friends the Americans, little can at present be said. Their verses are too like our own to call for particular mention." Some of the comments on individual authors have already been quoted.

*The Monthly Review Enlarged*²⁵ in its review of Percival's *Poems*, says:

Nothing, we imagine, can afford us a more striking proof of the rapid strides made by our trans-Atlantic brethren from independence to all the arts of polished life, than the number of good writers who have recently sprung up among them. We have taken several opportunities, in late years, to discuss the merits of some of these candidates for literary fame, and especially the poets; "*Specimens*" of whose best productions were not very long since selected and published in our own country. (See M. R. for Jan., 1823, p. 28.) There surely can be no prouder testimony to their growing merits, than that which has thus been offered to them by a nation, superlatively abounding as ours does in every species and variety of poetic excellence. . .

The first issue of *Fraser's Magazine*²⁶ takes N. P. Willis's *Fugitive Poetry* as the text for a careful dissertation on American Poetry:

The moral condition of America has not, hitherto, been very favourable to Poetry in general—and infinitely less so to the drama. The discovery of the country—the progress of society—the scale of their universal policy and economy, have been the result of mature deliberation and deep-searching reason. Neither fancy nor imagination—nor yet enthusiasm—have had anything to do in the past transactions of the country. . . It was only when political ferment had, in North America, subsided somewhat into a calm, that genius appeared and commenced its wanderings over the fields of tradition and romance. But tradition with the people is not of the oldest standing—at least such tradition as at all concerns them to treasure up in their memories; and their romance is not that wild—fantastic—exuberant—enthraling romance of childhood or youth,

²⁴ IX (1824) 304.

²⁵ CIV (July 1824) 315.

²⁶ I (Feb. 1830) 8.

but of full-grown age and of years of discretion. They lack, therefore, one grand and never-failing source of excitement possessed in so eminent a degree by the nations of Europe—the undefiled well from which the rhapsodizing sons of western song have, time out of mind, drank down draughts of inspiration. The poetry and literature of America, consequently, must owe their origin to refinement. To produce them, the public mind must be fully formed—the public taste fully developed—the public character fixed and decided beyond the possibility of change or fluctuation. Refinement always weakens the natural vigour of the brain, and tames down the floridness and the salient humours of the imagination. This may account for the backward condition of American poetry, and may explain why they have not had men, eloquent in their several capacities, gifted with fiery thoughts—dealing in the forcible expression of a pregnant fancy—fraught with energy, and the command of oratorical power.

The *Athenæum*²⁷ in its review of Cheever's *Common-Place Book of American Poetry* discusses the apparent neglect of American verse in Great Britain:

The Americans complain bitterly, and with some appearance of justice, that their poets have been undeservedly neglected by the people of England: this they ascribe to envy, to jealousy, to the affected contempt for everything American, once so fashionable among our literary coxcombs—forgetting that Irving and Cooper and Channing furnish indisputable proof of the respect shown to transatlantic talent. Were we disposed to follow the prevalent opinion, we might account for this neglect more plausibly by saying that poetry of every kind has ceased to be popular in England.

This explanation, however, the writer considers inadequate. He continues:

The greater and by far the better part of American poetry is of the class usually called occasional and fugitive; the unreadable 'Columbiad' is almost the only attempt that has been made to produce a standard poem; and to this cause principally must be attributed the ignorance of our countrymen on the subject.

A few weeks earlier²⁸ the *Athenæum* had paid tribute to American poetry in general, and had advised American poets "to forget the strains of their ancestors in this little isle."

The *Literary Gazette*,²⁹ reviewing Irving's edition of Bryant's poems, comments in florid style on the promise for poetry in

²⁷ [IV] (Dec. 10, 1831) 795.

²⁸ [IV] (Nov. 26, 1831) 766.

²⁹ XVI (March 3, 1832) 130.

America, though it concedes that the achievement is as yet small. "A world of fresh and eager thought, of deep and impassioned feeling, is to be found in the occasional poetry of the American newspapers; and there is that poetical feeling abroad, which, though born of, nevertheless precedes poetry." The review of the same work in the *Monthly Review*³⁰ is more serious, though not at all favorable in tone:

The pervading fault of all the American verses that we have ever seen, is the extreme scantiness of their imagery, the want of original and vigorous thought, and of musical rhythm. They have always appeared to us to be rather the echo of poetry than poetry itself. . . . They seldom reflect the feelings of busy life, or even the domestic affections with any degree of energy. We have, it is true, amongst them many allusions to the happiness of home, and the endearing connexions which sweeten and exalt the toils of life; but we find in them no passion, no strains that touch the soul.

It must be admitted that the range of American genius—that is to say, of genius which would be ambitious of producing verses strictly American—is limited within a circle which is destitute of some of the most essential elements of poetry. It is, for instance, without the associations of antiquity. . . .

The American poet, supposing him always desirous of establishing an indigenous poetical literature, is altogether precluded from availing himself of classical associations. Only think of a writer representing Jupiter as paying a visit to Bunker's Hill! or Cupid playing among the groves of Connecticut! or Zephyr breathing over Schenectady! . . .

But do we say that an American is incapable, from the very nature of the soil on which he was born, of writing good poetry? By no means. We think, for the reasons already given, that, supposing an equality of genius, it is more difficult for an American to excel in that fine art, than for a European, because the former is limited to a new continent, while the latter may range at will over an old world, every step of which is "storied." So much the greater therefore should we deem the merit of the American who, notwithstanding the natural obstacles against him, has been able to climb "The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar." His misfortune is that his reputation will be always of a comparative character. . . . He may be the first, or one of the first, of his race at home, as Bryant is said to be; but as soon as he comes here to contend with our Byrons, our Campbells, our Moores, to say nothing of our elder poets, he sinks into insignificance.

³⁰ n. and i. ser. XIX (April 1832) 490.

The article concludes: "No poetical star has yet appeared in that hemisphere above the third or fourth degree of magnitude."

In conclusion, it may be said that contemporary American poems and American poets were generally praised as highly as they deserved to be, though not always with discrimination. Though there was an occasional prediction that America "would soon rival England in the favor of the Muses," most conservative critics decided that the outlook for poetry in America was poor. Among the reasons commonly assigned for this poverty were the commercial tendencies of the United States, the lack of background and tradition, the undue subservience to English standards and models, and the youth of most American writers.

CHAPTER VII

FICTION, DRAMA, MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

A. FICTION

The criticisms of James Fenimore Cooper have been considered in a chapter by themselves. Among other American novelists and romancers well known in England were C. B. Brown, J. K. Paulding, John Neal, and Miss Sedgwick. The collections of shorter tales edited by Miss Mitford elicited much comment, and reviews of stray novels by American authors of trivial importance were not uncommon.

The romances of Charles Brockden Brown were republished in England and reviewed by some of the magazines in the earlier years of the century.¹ It is doubtful if they were much read at that time, and after the first reviews little was said about them until a new London edition appeared in 1822. Lockhart, in his article on Brown and Irving written for *Blackwood's*² at the solicitation of Scott, says that Brown's novels are to be found in every circulating library, but have never received their just deserts. He continues:

We earnestly recommend these novels of Brown to the attention of our readers. In all of them, but especially in *Wieland*, they will discover the traces of a very masterly hand. . . . There are scenes in *Wieland* which he that has read them and understood them once, can never forget—touches which enter into the very core of the spirit, and leave their glowing traces there forever behind them.

The *New Monthly Magazine*³ devotes an article to Brown:

If *Wieland*, or Arthur Mervyn, or Edgar Huntly [sic] were now to be for the first time ushered into the world with some such magical addition as "by the Author of *Waverley*" on the title page, we doubt

¹ See the author's *British Criticisms of American Writers, 1783-1815*, pp. 91, 92.

² VI (Feb. 1820) 554.

³ XIV (Dec. 1820) 609.

not that every reader would be in raptures with their beauties, and every babbling critic tendering his tributary stream of shallow admiration of the writer's powers. But it was the fate of those works, when first reprinted in this country, to issue from one of the common reservoirs of sentimental trash, and, consequently (as we imagine) to share in the general contempt. . . . The genius of the man certainly deserved a different destiny.

The critic shows Brown's indebtedness to Godwin, but adds:

We must, however, add, that this imitation (though inveterately persevered in throughout) is managed with all the ease, skill, and copiousness of an original manner. Certainly the English seed has not degenerated in the foreign soil in which it has fallen.

Brown's characters, it is said, are not created for the purpose of giving a picture of social life in America, but nevertheless they show many distinctive American traits.

A collection, *Carwin and Other Tales*, and Dunlap's *Memoir of Brown* apparently were published in London about the same time, and called forth a number of reviews, the first of them early in 1822. Part of the vogue of Brown at this date was no doubt due to the fact that Irving had aroused an interest in all things American. The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁴ introduces its criticism of the *Memoirs* by saying:

Whatever may be said of the genius and progressive civilization of the people of the United States, it cannot be denied that they have produced two authors, whose talents would have done honour to the brightest age of English literature; these are Charles Brockden Brown and Mr. Washington Irving.

Of Brown and his biographer it says, with oddly misplaced praise of the latter:

His acquirements, his labours, and his exemplary virtues were such as to entitle him to an important niche in the literary history of the nineteenth century. The memoir of this really clever writer and truly amiable man is written in so pleasing a style, that it must be read with interest even by those to whom the name of Brown may scarcely be known; but those who have dwelt with rapture on the simple pathos of his pen, will be glad to know something of an individual who, though he has not attracted the world's gaze in his life time, is destined to have his memory associated with the most pleasing recollections.

⁴ IV (March 9, 1822) 148.

Apropos of the same work, *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine* says, somewhat extravagantly:⁵

Ormond, Arthur Mervyn, and Edgar Huntley . . . were entitled to as high a rank among the literary productions of America, in point of powerful description, truth of sentiment, and striking situations, as that which has been so willingly assigned in our own country to the numerous volumes which, under the name of the "Author of the Tales of My Landlord" have imposed a kind of obligation on the public to read them, whether they come forth in the sterling worth of original genius, or the more questionable form of old chronicles modernized, and forgotten stories revised. To Brown the praise of full originality is amply due: he pillages no records but those of his own observation, he seeks no aid from affected quaintness of phraseology, or curious adapting of ancient manners to modern comprehension. He is uniformly grand, yet simple, moral and affecting. . . . His fame will probably chiefly rest on his *Wieland*, his *Arthur Mervyn*, and his *Edgar Huntley*; all productions of extraordinary genius, not so much rewarded in their native country, and not so universally known in this, as they deserve to be; but the Americans are slowly beginning to find out, that taste and literature may be subjects of national pride, as well as steam-boats and navigable rivers; and Englishmen are in general ready enough to do justice to merit, when they are once convinced of its existence, whatever nation it may belong to; we therefore hope, that between both countries, Mr. Brown's posthumous fame will at least receive that tribute of admiration which ought to have been more properly rendered to his living exertions.

The article in the *Monthly Censor, or General Review of Domestic and Foreign Literature* is more perfunctory.⁶

The title of *the American novelist*, affixed to the name of the subject of these memoirs, is strongly indicative of the infant state of literature in the country in which he flourished. . . . His works certainly display considerable power of writing, and are often successful in creating a mysterious interest, but the want of the higher qualifications of a discriminating taste, a nice perception of character, and adherence to nature, render them but indifferent models, and shew the author's standard of excellence not to have been very well placed.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁷ gives moderate praise to Dunlap. Brown's merit, it is said,

⁵ VI (April 1822) 172.

⁶ I (Sept. 1822) 399.

⁷ XCIX (Oct. 1822) 154.

consisted chiefly in that keen sensibility and quickness of sensation, which fitted him to describe with energy and effect, if not with nature and truth, the operation of the higher passions; and to rivet the attention of his readers by his enthusiastic and sometimes exaggerated delineations of character. His great defect appears to have been, what is often a concomitant of unpruned genius, a want of common sense in matters of taste and feeling;—or of that propriety of sentiment, which enables a writer to distinguish the nice shades that sometimes separate the sublime from the ridiculous, the awful from the disgusting, and the sensible from the sententious. This deficiency occasionally led the novelist into a stately pomposity of expression which he mistook for dignity; and into an exaggeration of sentiment, which assumed in his eyes the shape of deep feeling. . . . Another most glaring sin in this author's novels is a carelessness so extreme, as not only to strike but to offend even the rapid reader of such *kill-time* publications. Characters are introduced evidently for an ulterior purpose, but are neglected and forgotten, as in the instance of Mrs. Wentworth in "Arthur Mervyn"; inexplicable coincidences are contrived.

Other notices of the *Memoirs*, relatively unimportant, are to be found in the *Kaleidoscope*,⁸ and the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*.⁹ An article in *Blackwood's*¹⁰ evidently by Neal, credits the work to "William Dunlop" but gives no significant comment.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹¹ praises *Carwin and Other American Tales*, as it had praised Dunlap's *Memoir* the month before:

That these productions are only fragments, all who read them will regret; at the same time they will rejoice that of a writer so original, so interesting, so moral, and so instructive, even thus much is added to the productions with which he has already enriched the stores of works of the imagination.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*¹² considers together the collection and the *Memoir*.

In reviewing this production of an American Author, we cannot but feel happy that we are enabled to bestow upon it great commendation. It appears, in fact, to be a pledge of better days, a

⁸ n. s. II (June 11, 1822) 390.

⁹ LIV (Oct. 1822) 254.

¹⁰ XVIII (Sept. 1825) 317.

¹¹ VI (May 1822) 222.

¹² XCII, 622, Supl. 1822.

sort of watery sunbeam endeavoring to break its way through the dense clouds which have so long obscured the literary hemisphere of that quarter of the globe. . . .

The fiction is undoubtedly ingenious, we should rather say extraordinary, and in many places there is spirit in the conversation, and elegance in the detail, but still there exists a vagueness, an ambiguity throughout the whole, which is far from satisfying the mind of the reader. . . .

Still, with all these drawbacks, Carwin and the accompanying Tales are well worth perusal, as the beauties certainly outbalance the defects. . . .

There are few, we are inclined to believe, who have not read with delight the former productions of this ingenious writer; to such our present commendations will no doubt appear superfluous. But to those who have not experienced that pleasure, we would recommend the present work as holding the first rank among American writings, and a respectable place among the literary productions of our own country.

The critic speaks of reading the *Memoir* with feelings of

pleasure at beholding portrayed the splendid progress of that Western star to the summit of knowledge and literary honours, and regret at knowing, that it had scarcely attained that height ere its rays, which else had delighted and vivified the world, were quenched in everlasting darkness; of pleasure at being made acquainted with a character so truly amiable, firm in attachment to his relatives and friends, and truly kind and humane to strangers; of regret that the life of so good a man should have been rendered miserable by ill health and pecuniary difficulties.

An interesting article in the *European Magazine*¹³ is commendatory, saying: "He who can read *Calvert* without interest, has little of human nature in him"; and, "The story of Jessica is simply told, and the first indications of love beautifully portrayed." Less important, mostly favorable, notices of the book are found in the *Monthly Censor, or General Review of Domestic and Foreign Literature*,¹⁴ and in the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*,¹⁵ which says, "These pieces alone, had Brown never written any thing else, would have stamped him as a man of first rate genius."

A long article on American Literature in the *Retrospective Review*,¹⁶ already several times quoted, is nominally a review

¹³ LXXXV (Jan. 1824) 55.

¹⁴ I (July 1822) 235.

¹⁵ IV (July 13, 1822) 455.

¹⁶ IX (1824) 304.

of *Arthur Mervyn*, although the novel and its author are not reached for many pages:

Charles Brockden Brown was the first writer of prose fiction of which America could boast. . . . He grounded himself upon the manner of Godwin. . . . But Brown had no power over character: he dealt only with events: that is to say, with sickness, and death, and peril; with hair-breadth escapes from tigers and savages; with defiles and rocks, and the boundless wilderness. The hero of his tale was merely an object set up to connect these things, or make them probable. In himself he was often little better than a phantasma or a madman. . . . His talent for stirring the expectation of the reader, and keeping his anxiety alive from first to last, throughout some hazardous encounter, or mysterious event, can scarcely be paralleled in the history of fiction. His portraits also of American life are absolutely alarming:—they are bare, comfortless, uncivilized. We see the rafters, the coarse dress, the little hoard of corn, the poor cottage built hastily of logs; and on the outside we hear the howling of wolves and panthers, the rustling of the rattle-snake, and the quiet tramp of the murderous savages going on their way to execute some hideous revenge. We look for the walls of a town, and the poor-house, as a refuge against violence and want. It is not solely, however, in woods and huts that Brown luxuriates; he takes us often into cities, and makes us amends with fevers and assassinations for the forest wonders which we have left behind. . . . Upon the whole, this author may be considered as one of the best writers of romantic narrative (we give up character) that the present age has produced. There is scarcely anyone, indeed, who is so eloquent as he often times is; and not one who can excite such breathless apprehension or so sublime a solitary fast. The only incidents that can be compared with those of Brown are the scene under the cliffs in the "Antiquary" and that between the two ladies and the panthers in the "Pioneers."

Neal, in his *Blackwood* articles on American Literature¹⁷ gave some space to Brown:

This was a good fellow; a sound, hearty specimen of Trans-Atlantic stuff. . . . He had no poetry; no pathos; no wit; no humour; no pleasantry; no playfulness; no passion; little or no eloquence; no imagination—and, except when panthers were concerned, a most penurious and bony invention—meagre as death,—and yet—lacking all these natural powers, and working away in a style with nothing remarkable in it—except a sort of absolute

¹⁷ XVI (1824) 304.

sincerity, like that of a man, who is altogether in earnest, and believes every word of his own story—he was able to secure the attention of extraordinary men, as other people (who write better) would that of children. . . .

You feel, after he has just described a thing—and you have just been poring over the description, not as if you had been reading about it; but as if you, yourself, had seen it; or, at least—as if you had just parted with a man who *had* seen it—a man, whose word had never been doubted; and who had been telling you of it—with his face flushed.

Neal also attacked America for its neglect of Brown, saying that there had never been a second American edition of his works, but that England had taken them up, and this had led to absurd American praise: “We¹⁸ licked him into shape; they have slobbered him.”

The *Newcastle Magazine*¹⁹ in its review of the *Pioneers* remarks that “Brown is really a noble writer”; and that the charge that he imitated Godwin “was made, we conceive, by shallow-pated persons, who are not inclined to allow anything like original merit to an American.” It concedes, however, that “there are accidental resemblances, we admit,—resemblances so great, that one cannot help seeing that Brown admired Godwin; but Brown’s style pleased us in many passages more than Godwin’s.”

The *British Critic*²⁰ gives one of the most thorough and judicious reviews of Brown’s novels. The selections that follow dwell especially on the author’s merits, but his defects are fully and fairly pointed out:

Had this attention [to American writings] been awakened some twenty or thirty years ago, poor Brockden Brown, whose works will first come under our notice, would not have pined under the neglect which is said to have been his portion in America. Though we do not feel the unqualified admiration for this writer which some have suddenly conceived, and though his productions bear marks of hasty and irregular composition, they bear the stamp of original genius. His style and notions seem very much formed upon those of Godwin, whose “Caleb Williams” was probably his model, and whom he frequently resembles in the abrupt and un-

¹⁸ It must be remembered that Neal was writing, anonymously, as an Englishman.

¹⁹ III (Jan. 1824) 35.

²⁰ II (April 1826) 53.

satisfactory nature of his conclusions, in the total absence of all humour and playfulness, and in the startling vividness with which he embodies many improbable situations.

Of *Wieland* the critic says:

There is throughout a total disproportion between causes and effects, motives and actions, situations and feelings; and the characters though in many instances ingeniously wrought up to a sort of metaphysical standard existing in the author's mind, have very little of the sound savour of reality. . . .

In spite, however, of the defects of "*Wieland*" and its unfinished and dissatisfying character as a whole, it is an ingenious and high-wrought specimen of the Udolphic school. Its "*speciosa miracula*" (in English called white bears) are of a nature which impress themselves vividly on the recollection, and are related with a startling earnestness well adapted to transfer the fears of the imaginary narrator to the minds of nervous readers. No purpose more important than this should seem to have been contemplated by the author.

Brown's other romances are reviewed in much the same way. In *Ormond*, it is said, "The petty domestic details so important to the poor, acquire, in the hands of the author, (who we fear, had cause to understand them too well,) a dignity which it is very difficult to impart." Especial praise is given to the yellow fever episode in this volume. *Arthur Mervyn* is pronounced "decidedly the best written of Brown's novels, and that in which our approbation meets with the least of drawback." The author's method is thus discussed:

And generally it may be remarked of Brown, that the wish to appear as it were an eye-witness of the actions of his characters has led him into many details, which, while they give a circumstantial air to the narrative, are quite irrelevant to the main bent of those characters, or the moral and interest of the story. Had he bestowed half the trouble on making conclusions to his tales, which he threw away upon trivial traits and descriptions, the whole would have been more perfect, and his readers better satisfied. Perhaps, however, most of his faults were those of the time, country, and class of society in which he lived, and of the circumstances of neglect and depression under which he died. Unhappy himself, he seldom cared about making a generally happy conclusion to his works of fiction; which no doubt were usually hurried to the press "unappointed and unanneled." Poor and destitute in a country where the aristocracy of wealth predominates, he could have hardly possessed those means of introduction to the higher

classes of society, which would have taught him to correct and soften down coarsenesses which after all less frequently occur than might have been expected. And accustomed as he was (we speak it more in sorrow than jest) to drudge in the spinning jenny of a magazine, he naturally acquired the habit of leaving long threads in his woof, which were to be taken up and worked upon at some more convenient opportunity which never occurred. We particularly allude to several unexplained mysteries, and rough sketches of character, which he obviously intended to develop more fully. . . . But these are slight flaws in the general texture of Brown's works, whose merit, as well as their date, will establish him as the founder of the romantic school of American literature. In the power of impressing vividly on the reader's mind whatever he chooses to describe, and in the almost intuitive knowledge of the female heart, in all its tenderness and devotion, its doubts and jealousies, and its April smiles and tears, he probably never will be excelled. Peace to his ashes! We fear that as countrymen of Otway and Chatterton, we have no right to censure the neglect which is said to have broken his spirit, and brought him to the grave in the prime of life.

The *Athenæum*²¹ bestows high praise on *Edgar Huntley*, which had appeared in the series, *Standard Novels*:

It is justly observed, in the Biographical Memoir prefixed to 'Edgar Huntley,' "that to read for the first time one of Brown's best romances, is a memorable circumstance in an intellectual life." Among all the distinguished writers of whom America can boast, there is not one who takes so deep and fearful a hold of the feelings of the reader as Brockden Brown; and though he dallies too much with the improbable to satisfy the after-judgment, the first feeling on reading one of his novels is not likely to be forgotten.

Thomas Hood refers to *Edgar Huntley* in the last lines of his poem *The Fall*:

It's Edgar Huntley in his cap and nightgown, I declares,
He's been a walking in his sleep, and pitch'd all down the stairs!

Hood's familiarity with Brown is shown by a remark in a letter probably of 1823²² in which he follows some formal phrase with the words, "as Browne [sic] the novelist, would say."

The chief prose works of James Kirke Paulding to be reviewed between 1815 and 1833 were *Koningsmarke, or the*

²¹ [IV] (Dec. 3, 1831) 785.

²² Jerrold, *Thomas Hood, His Life and Times*, p. 139.

Long Finne, about 1823-4, *John Bull in America*, about 1825, and *The Dutchman's Fireside*, about 1831. The *Literary Gazette*²³ treats *Koningsmarke* as something of a curiosity:

A critic and reviewer is reduced to the greatest straits for food: some are absolutely starved to death, while the majority are compelled to sustain the cravings of nature on garbage and offal. . . . We, too, are obliged to travel far and wide in search of prey,—even to New York in the new world. . . .

Koningsmarke is, we think, altogether the most amusing novel which has crossed the Atlantic. It is of the Knickerbocker cast, and often witty as well as humorous, though sometimes inclined to coarseness, and not always polished in style. The author is a man of talents.

Of the satires on Scott the critic says: "As they are more in sport than malice, they produce no further animadversion than a wish that the censorer would do as much and as well as the censured." The length of the citations in the article is excused with the complacent remark that "there is, perhaps, no other copy of the work in England."

The *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*²⁴ naively accepts the last statement cited from the *Literary Gazette*, saying as it quotes the article: "Driven to our wit's end for some new work to work upon, we gladly avail ourselves of the review of a book in a celebrated London journal; and more especially because we understand that there is no other copy of the book in these dominions, but that possessed by the journal from which we quote." Nevertheless, the *Literary Examiner*²⁵ reviews a London edition of *Koningsmarke*. The critic, who signs himself "Q," credits the work in some degree to the influence of Scott, says that the author cannot tell a story, and continues:

The entire merit, therefore, consists in American village character and incident, in emulation of *The Pioneers*, and in occasional happy description of the wild nature and aboriginal strength of feature of the savage. . . .

Upon the whole, while we can give no extraordinary praise to this production, it exhibits an occasional power of description, and still more, a considerable portion of light and easy humour, which makes it bearable and even entertaining. Walking in the track of the

²³ VII (Oct. 4, 1823) 626.

²⁴ I (Oct. 1823) 322.

²⁵ [I] (Nov. 1823) 325.

author of *The Pioneers* and *The Spy*, the power displayed, as in most cases of imitation, is very inferior. Upon the whole, however, the tone is good, and the feeling manly; and we hold it to be a good sign that the American writers are looking out for *Stories*, in the annals and tradition of their comparatively young antiquity, rather than attempting to delineate the factitious gentility and worn-out associations of European society, like Geoffrey Crayon. It is for every country to furnish the chief sources of its own characteristic delineations: and the productions of the late C. B. Brown, the *New York History* of Crayon aforesaid, and the tales of *The Pioneers* and *The Spy*, already alluded to prove that neither *material* for this branch of inventive and descriptive composition, nor adequate power to use it, is any longer a desideratum in Anglo-America.

The *Literary Museum* for October 18, 1823,²⁶ had also devoted a long article to *Koningsmarke*, saying:

Koningsmarke is another valuable accession to the literature of America. It is not equal to *The Pioneers*, either in the originality, variety and force of its characters, or in the happy description of manners and natural scenery; but it is, nevertheless, a clever, spirited, and amusing novel. . . .

Some of these sketches are very much in the style of Knickerbocker's *History of New York*, and, indeed, we doubted for some time whether the writer were not Mr. Irving himself. . . .

We have been considerably in doubt, whether we ought not to regard this work as a kind of ironical satire on the novels of Sir Walter Scott. . . . But there is so much truth in the delineation of the characters, that we have finally decided it is written in good faith, spite of its sneers, sarcasms, and irony. The style is very like that of Mr. Irving, in his humorous history of New York, though perhaps a little more deformed by vulgar expressions. The author is evidently used to composition, and writes with great facility. Altogether, it is a clever, amusing, and interesting novel, which does great credit to the author's talents, and to the literature of America. We hope that some of our enterprising booksellers will reprint it.

The *British Magazine, or Miscellany of Polite Literature*²⁷ though an unimportant and short-lived periodical, gave a review of *Koningsmarke* that is both interesting and significant:

The anonymous author before us appears to be one of those easy writers, who, with no originality either of style or sentiment, can happily catch the graces of other authors, and yet not incur the

²⁶ II, 657.

²⁷ I (Dec. 1823) 447.

charge of plagiarism; so that his tale resembles, in some degree, the works of the three writers we have mentioned [Irving, Cooper, Scott] and yet is no otherwise indebted to them than men in general are for those accomplishments, that *savoir vivre*, which they acquire by the observation and society of persons of wit and breeding. . . . We congratulate our transatlantic friends (if we may yet call them so) upon his appearance, and ourselves upon the good taste and good sense which has caused its [sic] republication in England. . . .

The chief fault in the novel is an excessive fondness for the ludicrous, which sometimes betrays the author into absurdities; he is, however, upon the whole, very amusing, and his work may be considered as an important addition to the small stock of American literature.

The article last quoted is reprinted without credit in the *Repository of Modern Literature*.²⁸ The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*²⁹ pronounces *Koningsmarke* "the best comic novel that has crossed the Atlantic." The *Ladies' Monthly Museum*³⁰ is somewhat shocked by the book. It complains that "the reputation obtained by Sir Walter Scott, as a writer both of poetry and prose, seems to have excited the jealousy of the Anglo-American literati, who have made repeated attempts to lessen his well-earned fame." It refers to the *Lay of the Scottish Fiddle* as "an ill-natured parody," apparently without knowing that it is by the same author as the work it was reviewing, and says *Koningsmarke*,

seems plainly to have been designed as a covert satire on the amusing productions of the *Great Unknown*. We do not, however, mean to assert that the author of "Koningsmarke" has pursued his alleged purpose in an unwarrantable manner. His allusions to the obvious faults of "Waverley", "Kenilworth", "Quentin Durward" *et hoc genus omne*. are generally made in a good-humored tone; his satire, if not very poignant, is neither coarse nor malignant; and, if it should fail to reform the errors of the novelist, it cannot, we conceive, excite any feelings of irritation in his breast. . . .

The style is good; the characters are skilfully drawn, though somewhat too highly coloured; and the incidents, such as they are, show a strong talent for observation, and much imaginative power in the narrator. The chronological discrepancies and contempt of probability, in which the author indulges, are parts of his system,

²⁸ II (1823) 479.

²⁹ VI (April 10, 1824) 231.

³⁰ imp. ser. XIX (Jan. 1824) 32.

and therefore it would be useless to point them out. Perhaps the want of originality in some of the characters may be excusable, on the same score. . . .

But we have one serious objection to make to the present work, which is that its pages are profusely sprinkled with profane expletives. Many of these indeed are unintelligible to the English reader; and appear to serve no other purpose but to raise the volume's price a shilling.' But there are others which are plain enough, and which, exclusive of their wickedness, are extremely gross and disgusting. We particularly allude to the vulgarities put into the mouth of Ludwig Varlett. If, indeed, such a scene as this be intended as a correct representation of American manners, we can only express our surprise that any person should obtrude, on the notice of the public, so disgraceful a trait in the character of the nation to which he appears to belong.

The *Monthly Review*³¹ finds similar fault, saying that "the greatest objection, which we have to make against this novel, respects the continued stream of forced jocularities, amounting almost to flippancy, which runs through it; and the miserable nature of the plot. . . . A more lame, aimless, and pointless story cannot well be imagined." It concedes, however, that the author's efforts at the portrayal of American life and scenery "are by no means despicable." *Koningsmarke* was published anonymously, and even critics who were familiar with Paulding's earlier writings seem to have been unaware that he was the author. The *British Critic*³² ascribes it to Verplanck. It praises the story on the whole, but objects to the author's habit of going out of his way to attack Scott, especially as he has in some respects imitated him. It concludes the discussion: "Having done Mr. Verplanck the justice to select for quotation the best parts of his work, we must beg to observe that a little more good taste, and a little less presumption on points to which we have already alluded, are indisputably necessary before his writings can obtain that currency in the mother country which is confessedly the surest passport to the approbation of his own."

Though *John Bull in America* is not exactly a novel, the criticism that it elicited may well be considered here. The *Literary Gazette*³³ was favorably impressed by it:

³¹ CIII (April, 1824) 442.

³² II (July 1826) 406.

³³ IX (April, 1825) 243, 263.

This is a *genuine* and very clever *jeu d'esprit*, and we have been exceedingly entertained with it. It is written, we have reason to believe, by Mr. Paulding. . . . The gist of this new volume is to repel by ridicule such observations on America and Americans, as have appeared in so many recent travels, and been distasteful to the people of the U. S.; and, especially, to satirize the Review of Faux's Travels in the Quarterly Review—which paper, by the way, was suppressed in the American reprint of that periodical. In this design, we think the writer has been very happy. . . . But what we like best in the book is the spirit and humour in which it is begun and ended. There is no sourness or acrimony . . . he has never degenerated into spleen or abuse. Now we are not pronouncing gravely which side carries the most of truth with it, or is best sustained in its allegations, but viewing Mr. P. as an American, espousing the cause which naturally courted his aid, we are quite willing to confess that he has handled his weapons with excellent temper, and with uncommon dexterity. The caricature we consider to be perfectly fair,—his prejudices not offensive, and we promise even the most national of our readers a hearty laugh at the droll exaggerations of John Bull's peculiarities, and the grotesque incidents which arise out of them.

The reviewer was evidently greatly pleased—perhaps appeased—by the caricature of a Frenchman whom Paulding introduces.

The *News of Literature and Fashion*³⁴ in a well-tempered article signed "B" pronounces the satire,

A very agreeable extravagance; and written, notwithstanding its stupendous excesses in the way of story-telling, with more delicacy of humour than we are usually fortunate enough to recognize in our transatlantic brethren. The book seems to have been *excited* or created by the severity and unfairness which the author accuses the Quarterly Review of manifesting in every article it publishes relative to American literature, morals, and politics; and affects to record the observations, made after a journal fashion, of an English aristocratic traveller in the United States. Our prejudiced and unfortunate countryman is a *caricature*, we may add (looking to the title of this little work), *of course*. But there are many touches of great truth, unfortunately, and poignancy, in the drawing. . . .

Upon the whole, we can recommend our readers to undertake a perusal of this volume, as that which will amuse them heartily at the expense of a few national follies which Englishmen are always candid enough to acknowledge, and just enough to recognize, when faithfully depicted by others.

³⁴ II (April, 1825) 254.

The *Lady's Magazine*³⁵ speaks pleasantly of the work, saying that the best way to answer English sarcasms against America is by ridicule, as Paulding has done. The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*³⁶ briefly praises the book and the spirit in which it is written. In general, the favorable comments on the skit show the British willingness to take a joke at their own expense. Only Neal, in *Blackwood's*³⁷ accuses Paulding of being personally bitter because the *Quarterly* had attacked him.

The *Literary Gazette*³⁸ again leads the reviewers on the appearance of the *Dutchman's Fireside*, though this time it is not favorably impressed by Paulding's work. It finds the book very bad as a novel; the story old; the style "often inelegant and florid"; and what is worse, the author pokes fun at an English character. But, "we now proceed to what constitutes the merit these pages possess; they often illustrate American characters and scenes, as those only can who are familiar with what they describe." The critic then quotes at length a highly-drawn sketch of Timothy Weasel, evidently as that of a typical American. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*³⁹ gives long extracts and rather meaningless comment: "The characters, though skillfully, are not very vigorously sketched, but the tale is elegantly told, and full of incident. We have perused it with much pleasure." The *Monthly Review*⁴⁰ in an article on *Recent Novels*, says:

'The Dutchman's Fireside' is no tale of Holland, as the reader might fancy from the title, but an attempt at a picture of early American manners, after the fashion of "The Memoirs of an American Lady" which were written by Mrs. Grant, of Laggan. If we were to say that the copy is worthy of the model from which it is drawn, we should much exaggerate its merits. At the same time, it would seem occasionally to represent, with sufficient exactness, the habits and tastes of those days, such as they prevailed amongst the emigrants, and descendants of emigrants from Holland, who dwelt on the banks of the Hudson. If the author have not converted a pebble into a gem, the fault is not so much to be imputed to his workmanship, as to the nature of the material upon which his labour

³⁵ VI (April 1825) 226.

³⁶ LXI (May 1825) 358.

³⁷ XVIII (Sept. 1825) 317.

³⁸ XV (July 23, 1831) 466.

³⁹ VI (July 30, 1831) 68.

⁴⁰ n. and i. ser. (Sept. 1831) p. 119.

has been bestowed. He is, indeed, open to the remark of having chosen a subject for his theme, which could hardly be expected to be much in unison with English ideas.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁴¹ gives two notices of the *Dutchman's Fireside*, the first in connection with Jones's *Haverhill*. The earlier one praises Paulding, but complains of his prejudice against the English. The second article, probably by another critic, compliments the free painting of men and scenes, and finds the work "both entertaining and instructive." *The Westminster Review*⁴² succeeds remarkably in praising Paulding for the wrong things:

The author of this tale is Mr. Paulding, one of the pleasantest writers of the new world of Transatlantic English. His style is chaste and elegant: sufficiently ornamental to be agreeable, and in no point sinning in the prevailing sin of America, viz. exaggeration. Mr. Paulding is neither too elaborate like Irving, nor diffuse like Cooper, nor wild, and all but frantic, like Neal; he is just, neat, fanciful, and descriptive. . . .

In short, we may conclude this brief notice by stating, that this Tale is an exception to tales in general, and is as much worth reading for its style, its moral remarks, and vivacious descriptions, as for the interest of the narrative, the striking character of its personages, but, above all, for its correct and spirited views of Red-Indian manners and morals.

At the very close of the period under consideration *Cobbett's Magazine*⁴³ reviews Paulding's *The Banks of the Ohio, or Westward Ho!*, which it calls "a genuine piece of Yankey." It continues, "Mr. Paulding excels most in sketching character; he is not equal to the American novelist, par excellence, either in the sustaining of his dialogue or in his descriptions. But he has produced a very readable volume." *The Literary Gazette*⁴⁴ prints a notice of *Westward Ho* in *Harper's Library of Select Novels*, praising the work, except for the choice of insanity as a subject, and saying of the author: "Mr. Paulding is one of the most graphic and spirited writers that America has produced. He delights in the back woods, in the hardships, difficulties, and dangers of the early settlers; and what we like him

⁴¹ XXXII (1831) 364, and XXXIII (1831) 378.

⁴² XV (Oct. 1831) 491.

⁴³ II (Nov. 1833) 337.

⁴⁴ XVII (Aug. 31, 1833) 547.

all the better for—even though it leads to an occasional sneer sent across the Atlantic—he is enthusiastic on the merits of his own country.”

Three novels by John Neal—*Logan, Seventy-Six*, and *Brother Jonathan*—were read and criticised in England between 1820 and 1830; and in the closing years of the period under consideration some slight notice was given to *Rachael Dyer*, and *Authorship, a Tale*.

The *Magazine of Foreign Literature*⁴⁵ places the author of *Logan* in the group of American writers who fail because they are too proud to form themselves on English models:

It would be difficult, indeed, to guess what end he purposed to accomplish by his singular work. It could not be to amuse his readers, because it is unintelligible; if he wished to frighten them he has failed of his end, for he only makes them laugh. . . . We laugh not with him, but at him. His style is the most singular that can be imagined—it is like the raving of a bedlamite. There are words in it, but no sense. . . .

The incidents are such as fill a sick man's dream. . . . We have taken some pains to inquire who the author may be, but without success;—it is, perhaps, as well that we are in ignorance of his name; the knowledge must be painful, as we have no doubt that the poor gentleman is at this time suffering the wholesome restraint of a straw cell and a strait waistcoat. If he is not, there is no justice in America.

The review concludes: “Absurdity is sometimes more amusing than wit; the author's folly has been a source of much mirth to us, and we trust it may contribute to that of our readers.”

Very different in tone is a notice in the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁴⁶ which considers *Logan* as a Minerva Press novel, and says nothing of the name or the nationality of the author.

'Logan' is a novel purporting to be written by a descendant of the celebrated Mingo chief, who relates his own history in a manner which is no bad imitation of the abrupt but startling eloquence of the much-abused Aborigines of America. The story, too, possesses considerable interest, and the work will be no discredit to the

⁴⁵ I (April, 1823) 102.

⁴⁶ V (April 26, 1823) 282.

shelves of a modern circulating library, improved as they have now become.

The same journal⁴⁷ gives an early notice of the Baltimore edition of *Seventy-Six*, in which it raises the question whether the author may not be ranked with Irving, Brown, and Cooper, and continues: "There is, indeed, an occasional abruptness in the style but the effect on the whole is not displeasing; and 'Seventy-Six' may be considered as a work which will meet with many admirers; and which no lover of fiction should omit to read." The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁴⁸ is disturbed by the peculiarities of the novel.

It is rude and boisterous; every chapter being covered with blood, or heaving with the throes of lacerated flesh. The style, too, is affectedly precipitous; and its metaphors as incongruous as those of the poets of the Lakes. In addition to the regularly formed oaths, which are very numerous, the name of God is invoked in every page; and in such a manner as to make it difficult to discover whether the author meant to pray or to swear.

The *Magazine of Foreign Literature*⁴⁹ refers to its earlier judgment that the author of *Logan* is insane:

He is not yet in a straight waistcoat. He has written and published another novel; and a London bookseller, with that desperate sort of courage which is nearly allied to madness, has republished it here. As it is in every respect a curiosity, and by no means destitute of interest, it may answer the purpose of the latter very well.

. . .

The style [is] a delightful jumble of bad English, worse German, superfine Irish, and elegant American. . . .

If the author would only condescend to write intelligibly, and agreeably to the rules which govern other persons, he would yet, we think, notwithstanding his eccentricities, become eminent as a novelist. . . .

There are a great many things to make us laugh in these volumes; the author's coarseness is often ridiculous, and always disagreeable. The conversation which he puts into the mouths of ladies and gentlemen is of that description which, in England, is only used by costermongers and hackney-coachmen, and their fair partners. The incidents are impossible, the style inflated, and the grammar deplorably vicious: and yet, with all this, there is so much talent,

⁴⁷ V (June 28, 1823) 409.

⁴⁸ LV (July 1823) 545.

⁴⁹ I (July 1823) 308.

so much of surprisingly amusing madness, that we cannot blame it as we ought.

The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁵⁰ is well-disposed, but not enthusiastic:

[*Seventy-Six*] relates to the unfortunate contest between this country and the American colonies which raged in the year *seventeen hundred and seventy-six*. We know not that any good purpose can be answered by recalling the events of that lamentable warfare, vividly and painfully as they are here depicted to the eye, by one who certainly must have been an actor in them; and whose sentiments are so violently anti-Anglican, and anti-monarchical, that they by no means soften the effect produced by his delineations.

Still the interest excited by this tale, and the command over our feelings which the writer exerts, are very far from trifling and ordinary. His energies are somewhat rough, indeed, but they are powerful; like much of his vast continent, not cultivated but fertile, not polished but naturally impressive; his battle pieces plunge us into the midst of them; [sic] and his hero is "every inch" a hero. . . .

The language of this narrative is often inelegant and peculiar.

Brother Jonathan seems to have called forth more comment than either of its predecessors. The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*,⁵¹ which had spoken with some favor of *Logan* and *Seventy-Six* became enthusiastic.

The work displays a vigour and pathos which are only to be found in novels of the first rank. In *Brother Jonathan*, there are scenes which the 'Great Unknown' might be proud to acknowledge; and the whole construction and management of the story is such as no person but an author possessing powers of the first order could have executed.

The attitude of the reviewer toward American institutions is shown in his praise of the people of New England for their devotion to freedom. He concludes: "We are sure our readers will agree with us, that there are few novels—few indeed, which display so much talent or possess such a fearful interest as *Brother Jonathan*."

The *Lady's Magazine*⁵² as usual gives many extracts and says nothing unfavorable, though its praise is not very significant:

⁵⁰ CII (Oct. 1823) 212.

⁵¹ VII (July 16, 1825) 449.

⁵² VI (July 1825) 421.

We do not expect the high features of romance in tales connected with so new an establishment as the republic of the United States: yet pleasing and striking stories may be drawn by a man of talent from the varied incidents of American life and society; and the present author has contrived, by skilful management, to keep up a continuity of interest, instead of diffusing languor over the feelings of his readers.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁵³ recognizes the identity of the author, saying, "These volumes are, it is said, the production of an American gentleman, who has contributed a series of articles on the literature of his country to the pages of one of our well-known periodical publications." It pronounces *Brother Jonathan* better than *Logan* and *Seventy-Six*, though still too extravagant: Of the characters it says: "His heroes and heroines, though worthy citizens of the United States, possess passions, and beauty, and language more powerful, more transcendent and more lofty than ever fell to the share of creatures not born in the land of romance. . . . Upon the whole, we regard *Brother Jonathan* as a work of a very mixed character, though displaying throughout the marks of great intellectual power." The *Ladies Monthly Museum*⁵⁴ says that the "striking delineations of New England manners are interesting as well as amusing, notwithstanding their coarseness." The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁵⁵ decides that "this novel, though published in Edinburgh, is, we have reason to believe, written by an American." It assumes that the object of such writers is "to communicate to strangers, by living pictures, a knowledge of the manners, habits, characters, and transactions of their countrymen of this present and former time." It finds that "in this work there are some traces of genius; . . . however, his work as a representation of life, is a failure." The plot is confused, the characters are contradictory and absurd; the descriptions and some of the dialogues have merit; "but the general character of the style is that of exaggeration." The *Dumfries Monthly Magazine*⁵⁶ also praises the descriptions, finds fault with the structure of

⁵³ XV (Aug. 1825) 362.

⁵⁴ XIII (Aug. 1825) 102.

⁵⁵ CVII (1825) 484.

⁵⁶ I (Aug. 1825) 172.

the plot and the unreality of the incidents, and assumes that Neal portrays actual American life: "'Brother Jonathan' is the first publication of the kind that introduces us to anything like an accurate and Waverley-novel-kind of acquaintance with the inhabitants of the great continent—aborigines as well as colonists."

The *British Critic*⁵⁷ in the first of a series of two articles on American novels, says that Neal "has evidently formed his style on that of Brown in his wildest vagaries."

The characters described in Brown are downright men and women, whom, with all their weaknesses and eccentricities, we are almost sure we know or have known. Neal's dramatis personae are for the most part stalking moody spectres with glaring eyeballs and inflated nostrils, towering above the common height, and exhibiting the play of their muscles and veins through their clothes in the most trivial action; atrocious two-legged nightmares such as might have been engendered in the brains of Edgar Huntley, if he had washed down his raw panther collop with new Yankee rum, and slept in the reeking skin.

His able article on American writers, in "Blackwood's Magazine," as well as much in his novels, shows him to be well worth the trouble of breaking in; and since, to judge from the conclusion of "Logan," he is so jealous of English criticism, we will content ourselves with a matter-of-fact abstract of the said novel, the first of his works, and thus let him review himself.

Later the critic speaks of Neal as a Quaker broken loose.

In the second article of the series⁵⁸ he again has much to say of Neal. The most serious fault which he finds is that the reader cannot follow the story, or make out the relations of the characters to each other. He devotes most attention to *Seventy-Six*, in which he thinks the accounts of the treatment of American prisoners must be untrue, and remarks that Neal is inconsistent with his own professions in reviving offensive matters from the war. He raises the question whether the novelist in some passages is not "bantering himself and his own style of expression." He finds Jonathan Peters "an obvious plagiarism of Carwin." Of Neal's eccentricities and improbabilities he says:

It is provokingly unaccountable that an author of the strong sense and acuteness evinced by Mr. Neal's articles in Blackwood, should

⁵⁷ II (April 1826) 53.

⁵⁸ II (July 1826) 406.

thus persevere in outraging truth and nature; that with the power of conceiving and vividly executing characters of the stamp of the elder Oadley and his son Archibald, he should wilfully devote three huge close-printed volumes to the adventures of profligates, misanthropes, maniacs, liars, and louts, for such are the serious personages of "Brother Jonathan." We are really at a loss to divine any thing like a moral or a leading idea in the book. . . .

In the more familiar and every-day parts of the book, where nothing superfine or miraculous is attempted, the author is himself again. We are not only introduced to the wrestling matches and quilting frolics of the country, and divertingly jumbled in a stage waggon, passengers, pigs, gunpowder, hardware and all, but, which is better and more difficult, fairly seated round a New England fireside, a genial scene, we conceive, of that rough old-fashioned kindness which marks our common origin. . . .

The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*,⁵⁹ in printing a poem, *The Birth of a Poet*, by John Neale [sic] pays this compliment:

We doubt whether sufficient justice has hitherto been done in this country to the talents of the author of "Brother Jonathan." His book is full of vigour and originality, making you feel at every page that you have to do with one who thinks freely, boldly, and efficaciously. It contains descriptions of scenery, and illustrations of the natural passions of the human heart and soul, worthy of that prodigious continent, whose hills are mountains, and whose mountains are immeasurable,—whose streams are rivers, and whose rivers are seas,—whose woods are forests, and whose forests are eternal. The verses we have now the pleasure of presenting to our readers, do credit even to the novelist.

The *Englishman's Magazine*, a short-lived periodical of little importance, gives to its review of Neal's *Authorship, a Tale and Rachael Dyer*⁶⁰ the title *England and the United States*. It bestows unstinted praise on Neal, who "exults in the name of Yankee, and Yankees should be proud of him." This article is bombastic enough to have been written by Neal himself. The *Westminster Review*⁶¹ in its review of Miss Mitford's *Stories of American Life*, says, "There is no mistaking the hand of John Neal, whilom during his sojourn in England a collaborator of half our periodicals, and the author of some half hundred of unreadable romances." Some fairly severe criticism of Neal

⁵⁹ I (May 9, 1829) 336.

⁶⁰ I (April 1831) 65.

⁶¹ XIV (April 1831) 395.

follows. The *Monthly Review*⁶² describes *Authorship, a Tale* as "a common love story of our own Isle of Wight," and finds it of little moment.

There can be little question that part of Neal's vogue as a novelist after 1824 was due to his articles on American literature in *Blackwood's*, and to his comments on himself. In the opening article of the series⁶³ he names himself, with Brown and Paulding as one of the only three American writers who would not pass just as readily for English. He also praises himself in his discussion on Brown; and in the appropriate place in the alphabetical list he devotes eight pages to himself, in contrast to about a half page given to Cooper. Much of this discussion is given in quotation marks as the author's own judgment of himself, and it mingles some condemnation of faults with the praise. In a later article in *Blackwood's*⁶⁴ he asks the question, "Where shall we go for a North American story? Is there such a thing on earth?"; and answers in a footnote: "Yes, BROTHER JONATHAN is a real North American story; and Redwood, we have reason to believe, is another, and a very good one." Englishmen were only too ready to accept his assertion that the roughness, oddity, and turgidity of his writings were distinctive American characteristics, and that his grotesque characters were truly representative of American life. He was one of the earliest of several Americans who were heartily welcomed because they conformed to the Englishman's uncomplimentary notions of what an American writer should be.

Notices of Miss Sedgwick's *New England Tale*, *Redwood*, *Hope Leslie*, and *Clarence* were numerous, though they were often concerned more with literary, social, and religious conditions in America than with the particular work of fiction in hand. The critic of the *Museum*⁶⁵ thinks *A New England Tale* owes its existence to the example of Irving:

We apprehend the great and merited success of Mr. Irving has contributed to produce the interesting little Tale which forms the

⁶² n. and i. ser. (July 1831) p. 438.

⁶³ *Blackwood's*, XVI (1824) 304.

⁶⁴ XVIII (Sept. 1825) 317.

⁶⁵ I (Nov. 16, 1822) 468.

head of our present article. . . . We believe this volume to be the production of a female pen, and are disposed to class it with the admirable Moral Tales of Miss Edgeworth; to whom it is with great propriety dedicated. We do not say it is equal to the best productions of that amiable moral pilot; but the 'New England Tale' is equally well adapted for the meridian of 'Old England.' . . .

Though we perceive a few Americanisms in the language of this little work, as well as certain indications that it is a first effort; yet we have no hesitation in asserting, that the pure vein of religion and morality (without any bias of Sectarianism) which is inculcated in these pages, must insure the 'New England Tale' a favorable reception in the *family* libraries of Old England; and, we hope, stimulate the amiable author to continue her moral labors.

The *Literary Gazette*⁶⁶ finds the author's source of inspiration in Scott rather than in Irving: "Had the Scottish novelist never existed we should in all probability never have seen this tale, which, looking on him for a model is one of the best-constructed things of the sort which has been wafted to us across the Atlantic." It praises the story for its descriptions of American manners, and predicts that "though the whole is overloaded with the lecturing habit now so common to works of fiction, the volume will, we think, be extensively read in this country." The *Gentleman's Magazine*⁶⁷ considers the *Tale* especially adapted for the moral edification of "female readers":

The graphic talents of the author of the volume before us are of no common order. Her "New England" story has been extremely popular in her own Country, and we shall be greatly mistaken in our anticipations if it be not equally well received here. It has a healthy spirit pervading it, which is highly favorable to its longevity, and we can safely recommend it to our female readers as a work of good taste and sound morals; inculcating forcibly, and illustrating admirably, those difficult lessons of genuine practical religion, submission to the Divine appointments, and the necessity of sacrificing every selfish feeling and indulgence on the altar of Christian duty.

The *Monthly Literary Gazette*⁶⁸ is decidedly, if unintentionally patronizing:

We are now free to admit that it entails no discredit on the partiality which encouraged it at home. In the crowded area of

⁶⁶ VI (Nov. 16, 1822) 721.

⁶⁷ XCII (Dec. 1822) 542.

⁶⁸ II (Dec. 1822) 574.

London publication, it might, indeed, have never struggled beyond the presentation copies of a first edition—such is almost every day the undeserved fate of many of its equals; but among a people who are not yet glutted with even literary failures, and whose chief literary pride lies in books *to be published*, we cannot wonder that the respectable talent of the "New England Tale" has speedily become visible, and as speedily prized and rewarded. . . .

The style of the tale is unassuming, yet may be justly called appropriate, and often elegant. It exhibits no disagreeable Americanisms, and the greatest fault we observed, was an injudicious and pervading transposition of the adverb from its dutiful place after the verb. . . .

Altogether, we are well pleased with the tale. . . . and we can recommend it as an interesting specimen, in its way, of the progress of American literature.

This reviewer, like many others, refers to the author as "he."

The author of an article in the *Monthly Censor*⁶⁹ is less well pleased than are most critics with the religious aspects of the tale. He lays down the proposition that fiction should be restrained by religious feeling, but that this "should be implied rather than professed." He then complains that in this tale "there is little interest to excite, or incident to amuse, but much of religious differences to harrass or perplex"; and he thinks that "if the state of religious opinion is such in 'New England' as this volume states it to be, it is at a fearful ebb indeed." In conclusion he says, "We are not willing to set the present down as a specimen of the state of literature among the descendants of our mother country on the other side of the Atlantic." *The Ladies Monthly Museum*⁷⁰ classes the *Tale* as "ethic fiction," i. e. "the delineation of the manners, character, and customs of a country or people, through the medium of feigned narrative," and says: "The fair authoress has occasionally imitated some of our most celebrated novelists; and as might have been expected, not very successfully. The most valuable, as well as the most amusing parts of her work are those which describe the manners of her native land." The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁷¹ regards it as "a favorable specimen of American talent and feeling," and says farther: "Some

⁶⁹ II (Jan. 1823) 112.

⁷⁰ imp. ser. XVII (Jan. 1833) 41.

⁷¹ CI (May 1823) 105.

objections have been made in America to its religious character, but we do not see any good grounds for such imputations"; and, "We have remarked a few *Americanisms* in these pages, but they are generally put into the mouths of the inferior characters, and cannot therefore be justly made objects of criticism." The *Literary Gazette*⁷² pronounces *Redwood* a "simple but pleasing tale with much of nature and beauty," but devotes most of its review to a discussion of American literary conditions. The *Ladies Monthly Museum*⁷³ and the *Lady's Magazine*⁷⁴ give complimentary notices of this novel. The *Metropolitan Literary Journal*⁷⁵ also finds the story valuable chiefly for the portrayal of American life.

We have, in the novel before us, a fresh specimen of AMERICAN LITERATURE. The Preface, which is dated so recently as June, 1824, at NEW YORK, [a proof of the quick-sightedness of our London publishers] contains some remarks worthy of general diffusion. . . .

The good sense and liberal sentiments of the author displayed in his preface prepared us to expect a fair and candid view of the "living" manners, and prevalent opinions of the Americans; exhibited in a tale of the present times—and we have not been disappointed. His descriptive talents have also been successfully excited, and we are made as familiarly acquainted with American scenery as with the Americans themselves.

In conclusion, *Redwood* is said to be "a work which reflects honour on its author, and does ample justice to America."

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁷⁶ praises the style of *Redwood*, and predicts for the author a place with Brown and Cooper. The *Monthly Literary Gazette*⁷⁷ gives hearty praise, saying that the author "proves himself to be a sensible, well-informed, entertaining, and liberal-minded companion. . . . His preface was exactly to our taste; the commencement of his tale at once riveted our attention, and charmed our imagination; and the further we proceeded together, the more we were pleased with our new acquaintance." The critic does not altogether approve the handling of the religious element; but he

⁷² VIII (Aug. 7, 1824) 501.

⁷³ imp. ser. XX (Aug. 1824) 164.

⁷⁴ V (Sept. 1824) 475.

⁷⁵ I (Sept. 1824) 453.

⁷⁶ XII (Oct. 1824) 459.

⁷⁷ II (Jan. 1825) 183.

finds the characters "such genuine portraits of American men and women, that we become as intimately acquainted with the good people, as if we had accompanied the incomparable MATTHEWS on his late *trip to America*." The book is "one of the best productions of this class of *American Literature* that has ever appeared." One is tempted to ask, perhaps unjustly, whether the fact that Miller published *Redwood* was in any way connected with the appearance, in a periodical usually hostile to American writings, of so favorable a review.

The notices of *Hope Leslie* seem to have been less numerous than those of the preceding volumes, and less significant. The *London Weekly Review*⁷⁸ praises it: "This is a very superior novel. The scenes, characters, and events, are new and striking, and the style, though occasionally inflated, is on the whole, spirited and agreeable." The review in the *Literary Gazette*⁷⁹ consists of long extracts and rather perfunctory comment: "This is a very pretty tale, but containing material of which much more might have been made; . . . as it is, there is evidently a want of power to manage a rich imagination." The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁸⁰ which credits the tale to a man, finds some slight faults with the story, but is on the whole commendatory.

Clarence appears to have been less favorably received than any one of the three earlier novels. The *Athenæum*⁸¹ is unusually severe, and somewhat flippant, characterizing *Clarence* as "an American story, if story it can be called. . . . The authoress is also, as we are informed, of the Land of Freedom, and although not without a slip-slop sort of cleverness, we are sorry indeed that we must use the *freedom* of saying, that she ought not to have troubled herself to try novel-writing." The *Literary Gazette*⁸² complains that there are "no striking characteristics," that the story is "old-fashioned," and that the author displays ignorance of English customs and manners; but admits that if it be a first attempt it shows some promise.

⁷⁸ I (Dec. 1, 1827) 404.

⁷⁹ XI (Dec. 22, 1827) 820.

⁸⁰ n. s. V. (Feb. 1828) 192.

⁸¹ [III] (July 31, 1830) 472.

⁸² XIV (Aug. 7, 1830) 507.

The *British Magazine*,⁸³ however, finds the story interesting, and likes the author none the less for some American prejudices. The critic of *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁸⁴ discovers in *Clarence* a mine of information concerning the social conditions and customs of New York:

An American novel, and by an American lady—the first female writer among the natives heard of here, we believe, and certainly the first who makes her *début* under the auspices of a leading publisher. . . . The tale itself, though not without interest, and often very effectively told, is a matter, of inferior consideration; for both incident and complication are of the stuff of English romances; the real value of the production—and real value it really has—lies in the portraiture it exhibits of society under new forms and new influences. It supplies at least a specimen of the manners of what is regarded as *good* society in the first state of America; presented by one, whatever may be her own station, whose every page proves her to be an intelligent and cultivated person. . . .

The production is genuine American, and peculiarities of the country peep out at every turn; not of mere idiom or illiterate coarseness—there is no *guessing, concluding, or calculating*—but of terms established by custom, and not yet superseded by fashionable imitation—thus, the drawing-room and the boudoir are still the parlour, and a splendid bookseller's, a fashionable bookstore. . . . The ladies, the most refined, we observe, use a breadth of language that will not, by and by, we suppose, be more tolerated in New York than in London—"O my dear soul," cries one lady to another, where "My dear," would be as much as would escape from English lips. "I know a thing or two," says another—meaning that she had too much tact to commit such a blunder, &c. More gesticulation, or rather, a more undisciplined giving way to emotion, is indulged in—such as when, on a very slight occasion, a young lady covers her face with her hands to hide her embarrassment. Whatever want of refinement, however, may appear occasionally in phrases and gestures, there prevails a genuine reserve, and unartificial decorum, in matters of conduct and sentiment. Profligacy is not treated with levity. . . . The current literature of London and America is a common topic; but the coupling of Halleck and Bryant with Moore and Byron, as names equally well known and equally prized, sounds strangely on an Englishman's ear. The heroine is an admirable sketch—spirited, frank, active, and essentially lady-like; and indeed the tale, independently of all considerations of value arising from faithful descriptions of living characters, as a novel, is worthy to class among the best of our own.

⁸³ II (Dec. 1830) 471.

⁸⁴ XXX (Sept. 1830) 366.

Miss Mitford's collections of American prose tales invited many general discussions of prose fiction in the United States and occasional comments on individual stories. Most critics, as usual, valued American fiction chiefly for its revelation of American manners. The *Atlas*⁸⁵ said of the first of the collections, *Stories of American Life*:

We are, on the whole, disappointed in this work. It certainly leaves an impression of character on the mind, but then it is vague, rambling, and crowded with evanescent traits. . . .

What we complain of is, not that the American writers have herein painted their countrymen in such giddy outlines, but that they have not painted them more graphically than they have been already painted in England.

. . . The issue of a patient perusal of the three volumes is, that we have read a pleasant collection of stories, of different degrees of merit, in which Yankees, and back-woodsmen, and Red Indians, are made to play their parts with no better effect, and frequently with less, than they do in our own annuals, which are concocted in the narrow ways of this muddy metropolis. The style, too, of these trifles generally betrays the want of power or of experience. . . . They are American in all senses, we cheerfully admit, and may be read for the sake of seeing how Yankees choose to describe themselves, and of showing to us mere English with what justice we are sometimes accused of caricaturing our friends in the United States.

The *Athenæum*⁸⁶ remarks toward the close of a long commentary on American literature: "We had hoped from Miss Mitford some collection that, good or bad, would be strongly impressed with nationality . . . but . . . the specimens in her herbal are all gathered from the garden—she never ventures into the bye-lane or dark tangled forest—she seeks only what is beautiful, not what is new." The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁸⁷ speaks pleasantly of the collection, and of the "kind and liberal spirit" in which the editor has worked. The *Monthly Magazine*⁸⁸ praises the volume as "beyond all question entitled to class with any collection of tales which fills similar volumes with our own native productions"; and adds: "Good sound sense with nothing of the lack-a-daisical runs through

⁸⁵ VI (Jan. 30, 1831) 74.

⁸⁶ [IV] (Feb. 19, 1831) 115.

⁸⁷ V (Feb. 26, 1831) 132.

⁸⁸ n. s. XI (Feb. 1831) 222.

the whole of the pieces, and in this respect they might have been written all by one person." The *Westminster Review*⁸⁹ classifies the tales according to subject:

The American life described in these volumes is of three kinds, the historical life, or life sixty years ago; border life, that is, the life of the outer settlements; and city life which embraces pictures of manners as they exist in New York, Philadelphia, and the great towns. Sketches of the latter kind are the least interesting here, inasmuch as the manners of good English, and good American society, differ only by shades; and the departure from modes we habitually consider correct, simply communicates an impression of vulgarity or pretension. The distinctions are too minute to be an object of curiosity, and yet considerable enough to offend a fastidious reader.

The *Literary Museum and Critical Review*⁹⁰ applies a moral standard, saying: "We have heard these tales condemned, but on what earthly account we cannot divine. They are simply but chastely told; and in general their moral intention is so marked . . . that they cannot fail to be productive of much good." The critic of the *Literary Gazette*⁹¹ finds much fault with the collection. His hostility may be explained by the presence in one of the tales of a passage which he says no English editor should have selected—a passage which compares the English and the French in the early Indian wars to the advantage of the latter. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁹² groups the collection with several American novels, and praises it.

The comments on Miss Mitford's second collection, *Lights and Shadows of American Life*, were of less significance. The article in the *Athenæum*⁹³ is non-committal, consisting mostly of selections chosen to show the peculiarities of American life. The *Literary Gazette*⁹⁴ says, "We are delighted with these volumes; the stories they contain are varied, graphic, and thoroughly American"; and mentions with especial commendation Paulding's *The Politician*. The reviews in the *Literary Omni-*

⁸⁹ XIV (April 1831) 395.

⁹⁰ I (June 1831) 72.

⁹¹ XIV (Nov. 27, 1831) 767.

⁹² XXXI (1831) 42.

⁹³ [V] (June 2, 9, 1832) 351, 365.

⁹⁴ XVI (June 9, 1832) 358.

bus,⁹⁵ the *Literary Guardian*,⁹⁶ and Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*⁹⁷ are all favorable, but unimportant.

Two collection of tales for children, *American Stories for Little Boys and Girls*, and *American Stories for Children under Ten Years of Age* were generally praised for their moral teachings. Distinctly complimentary reviews of one or both these volumes are found in the *Literary Gazette*,⁹⁸ the *Athenæum*,⁹⁹ the *Monthly Magazine*,¹ the *Metropolitan*,² and the *Imperial Magazine*.³ The notice in the *Atlas*⁴ is pleasant, but not enthusiastic. The *Royal Lady's Magazine*⁵ says: "Although we have better of native growth, they are admirably calculated to promote a taste for literature in the younger branches." The *Monthly Review*⁶ stands almost alone in condemning the selections:

We much wish that instead of editing the productions of transatlantic writers, Miss Mitford had composed tales of her own for the amusement and instruction of her juvenile friends. There are many things in these volumes which we think extremely unfit to be read by children under the age she has specified. We would refer particularly to the vulgar dialect in which some of the characters introduced are made to speak, and the coarse sentiments they are made to utter.

John Pendleton Kennedy's *Swallow Barn* was reprinted in England. The *Literary Gazette*⁷ said of it: "There are some amusing sketches of American country life in these pages, which have the attraction of travel in countries little known; but as a novel they are deficient both in story and interest." The extracts chosen were descriptions of crude life in America. The reviewer in the *National Omnibus*⁸ took it—or affected to take it—as the work of a British traveller in America.

⁹⁵ II (June 15, 1832) 187.

⁹⁶ II (June 16, 1832) 168.

⁹⁷ XXXVI (Aug. 1832) 340.

⁹⁸ XVI (Jan. 29, 1831) 72.

⁹⁹ [V] (Jan. 28, 1832) 60.

¹ n. s. XI (March 1831) 338.

² III (Feb. 1832) 46.

³ 2nd ser. II (April 1832) 191.

⁴ VI (Feb. 27, 1831) 140.

⁵ I (March 1831) 171.

⁶ n. and i. ser. [XVI] (March 1831) 468.

⁷ XIV (Aug. 18, 1832) 517.

⁸ II (Aug. 24, 1832) 269.

He considered it "principally readable for the accounts of American habits and ceremonies" and found that "There is, however, much character and peculiarity about the author's style, with an occasional incorrectness of idiom and expression, and even grammar that almost teach us to doubt the author's acquaintance with his native tongue, or whether he is veritably a John Bull." The *Monthly Magazine*⁹ while ignorant of the author's name, recognizes that he is an American.

The work before us is written with considerable vivacity of humour by a man of no common talents, and we have derived much pleasure from a perusal of this Virginian tale, which, in addition to the enjoyment of its airiness and elasticity of style, and the pleasant variety of its characters, affords us an insight into country manners and customs in America with which we were, heretofore, but imperfectly acquainted.

The *Tales of the Glauber Spa* by Bryant, Paulding, Miss Sedgwick, and others, is the subject of an article in the *Athenæum*,¹⁰ parts of which will be quoted later. The tales themselves are spoken of as "pretty, rather than powerful." The *Literary Gazette*¹¹ characterizes the same volume as "a pleasant and various collection."

After Cooper had won recognition in England, interest in American fiction was general, and many novels and shorter tales now forgotten were reviewed, often with considerable favor. Most of these were published anonymously. No author's name is mentioned in connection with any of those listed below before Francis Berrian. The *Literary Museum*¹² gives moderate but apparently good-humored praise to *The Spectre of the Forest*, saying: "There is a large portion of that strength of outline which distinguishes several of the late American works." The *Monthly Critical Gazette*¹³ commends *A Winter in Washington; or Memoirs of the Seymour Family* for the usual reason. "It is, indeed, a very puerile fiction; and will bear no comparison with the productions of Washington Irving or Cooper. It is, besides, overloaded with the cant of religion.

⁹ n. s. XIV (Sept. 1832) 348.

¹⁰ July 20, 1833, p. 472.

¹¹ XVII (Aug. 31, 1833) 547.

¹² II (Dec. 6, 1823) 774.

¹³ I (June 1824) 91.

. . . Notwithstanding this blemish, and some other defects, 'A Winter in Washington' is well worth perusal, as a faithful, if not lively, exhibition of American manners and character." The reviewer takes comfort in finding that life in Washington "may possibly appear to many of the luxurious inhabitants of England, as little better than barbarous." The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*¹⁴ speaks of *A Peep at the Pilgrims* as an American novel with no uncommon incidents, but pleasant pictures of New England. The *Literary Gazette*¹⁵ dismisses *Memoirs of a New England Village Choir* with the remark that it was hardly worth republishing in England, though it had some good qualities; and adds: "An American Miss Mitford would be a very original and delightful person." The *Literary Gazette*¹⁶ bestows on Timothy Flint's *Francis Berrian* only a quatrain:

O, Mr. Flint,
The Deuce is in't;
A Flint without fire
No one can admire.

Mrs. Child's collection, *The Little Girl's Own Book*, is the subject of a pleasant half-column notice in the *Athenæum*.¹⁷ The same periodical also reviewed Mrs. Child's *Mother's Book*¹⁸ and *The Mother's Story Book, or Western Coronal*, which it ascribed to her with apparent hesitation. It said, "We have, we believe, written Mrs. Child into something like a European reputation"; and esteemed her highly. The *Literary Gazette*¹⁹ characterized the *Legendary*, edited by N. P. Willis, as "a very agreeable specimen of American periodical tales of forests, lakes, villages, etc." and added, "Altogether, we consider the *Legendary* to be a volume of a very superior class." The same journal²⁰ spoke pleasantly in a brief note of *Peter Parley's Tales about Natural History*—a work which, if not exactly fiction, cannot well be classified elsewhere.

¹⁴ LIX (May 1825) 360.

¹⁵ XIII (Sept. 19, 1829) 615.

¹⁶ XVII (Dec. 21, 1833) 808.

¹⁷ [IV] (May 14, 1831) 311.

¹⁸ [V] (March 3, 1832) 140.

¹⁹ XII (Dec. 27, 1828) 820.

²⁰ XVI (Dec. 22, 1832) 809.

Short American tales were often reprinted in English periodicals, and occasionally an American novel. The *Kaleidoscope* for 1827²¹ gives in installments Mrs. Rowson's *Charlotte Temple*, which it not quite accurately ascribes to America. The same journal²² reprints "from an American paper" *The Devil's Mill*, a story of the Hartz mountains. The next year²³ it takes from the *Token*, by way of the *Literary Gazette*, *A Bridal in the Early Settlements*. Beginning in November 1829²⁴ it publishes serially *What is Gentility, a Moral Tale*, which the editor says was presented to him by the "publisher, a very respectable bookseller of Washington." In his judgment, "The work has no high pretensions to literary merit, although occasional passages are to be found in it which are very well written. It is the moral which induced us to republish it." In 1831 the *Kaleidoscope*²⁵ gives in two installments *The Dead of the Wreck* by William L. Stone, taken from the *Atlantic Souvenir*. Since it first filled its columns from the *Sketch Book* the *Kaleidoscope* had given much space to American writings. Though during the four years covered by the foregoing incomplete list it doubtless published more American fiction than any other English journal it was by no means the only one to make such selections.

A few British comments on the state of American fiction may be given here. They will be supplemented by many passages in the chapter on general literary conditions during the period. The *British Review*²⁶ in a long article on the *State of Literature, Religion, Slavery, &c. in the United States*, passes fiction with the remark that "Of Novels, there are but few of native invention; and of these none possess sufficient merit to claim a notice." This was before Cooper was known, and before the revival of interest in Brown. By 1823 the *Ladies' Monthly Museum*²⁷ could recognize the beginnings of American fiction:

²¹ VII, beginning at p. 341.

²² VII (March 13, 1827) 291.

²³ IX (Sept. 2, 1828) 69.

²⁴ X, 137.

²⁵ XI, 223, 226.

²⁶ XIV (August 1819) 48.

²⁷ imp. ser. XVII (Jan. 1823) 41.

Old England has long furnished the novel-reading public of the United States with a supply of amusement. It is but lately that America has returned the favour in kind. Few publications, indeed, of any description have appeared on the other side of the Atlantic, which could excite sufficient interest in the breasts of Europeans to admit of their being reprinted with advantage.

America has of late, however, produced several works of "ethic fiction." A few months later the *Literary Museum*²⁸ went further:

It is time for us to discontinue our sneers against America. Setting aside all the other more substantial claims to national eminence, she has at length entered upon a course of honorable rivalry in works of fancy. The novels and romances published in America for some years past, if they are greatly inferior in number, are certainly not much so in excellence, to those which have issued from our own press. With the exception of Sir Walter Scott, perhaps there has been no British novel writer for some years past at all equal to Mr. Cooper, the author of *The Spy*, and *The Pioneers*. The talents of Washington Irving are well known, and though somewhat overrated, are nevertheless of a very high order.

In 1824 the *Literary Gazette*²⁹ said in its review of *Redwood*:

America begins to be prolific in Novels. To this branch of literature her authors seem almost exclusively to devote themselves. In history, in philosophy, with the brilliant exception of Franklin—himself a host—their labours (if they have laboured) have not crossed the Atlantic: we have seen but little of their poetry, and that little but very indifferent: Irving has redeemed their character as essayists; but it is in novels chiefly and of late, that they have been more or less interesting, as they have given the feelings or depicted the manners of a nation, certainly England's most attractive neighbour. "The Spy," "The Pioneers," were well-written sketches of character and scenery. "Seventy-Six" painted revolutionary scenes with an energy and freshness often worthy of its subject; and "The Pilot" we have but lately mentioned in terms of commendation. *Redwood* is another production from beyond the seas; it is a simple but pleasing tale with much of nature and beauty.

In reviewing the same work the *Lady's Magazine*³⁰ expressed a similar opinion:

²⁸ II (Oct. 18, 1823) 657.

²⁹ VIII (Aug. 7, 1824) 501.

³⁰ V (Sept. 1824) 475.

During the last ten years, the Americans seem to have made a greater progress in literature, and more particularly in works of fiction, than in the fifty preceding years. Some of their writers display considerable talent; and, if they have not the vivacity of the French, or the erudition of the English or the Germans, they appear to possess inventive powers, a respectable portion of judgment, and a keen spirit of observation and research.

The *Monthly Magazine*³¹ attempts to summarize the situation in 1831:

How long, or rather how short a time it is since Americans depended wholly on reprints of our works, and now we are ready to return the compliment and reprint *theirs*. Browne [sic], Cooper, and Miss Sedgwick are the only *names* yet familiar among novel readers—for Washington Irving's subjects are almost all English—but in addition to these now pretty well known writers, the Americans have annuals, magazines, and other periodicals, which embrace some of the most popular productions of the most popular living writers in the world of the west. Verplante [sic], Paulding, Hall, Neale [sic], Barker, Willis, &c.—all men of renown, and mighty in their hemisphere.

The *Westminster Review*³² in its article on Miss Mitford's *Stories of American Life*, philosophizes as usual:

If our brethren of the west were not formerly much given to flights of the imagination, it was because they had something else to do. Now that there are numbers of people sufficiently rich to be idle, they are letting their fancies grow; now that the nice operations of judgment are sufficiently cared for by others, the imaginative and poetical may be permitted to roam among the indefinite regions of the wild and wonderful. The progress of civilization enables Jonathan to keep his author. . . .

The great abundance of lawyers and newspaper editors in the United States, naturally throws up considerable off-shoots of poets and novellists. However paradoxical it may appear, no branch or profession is more addicted to poetry and romance than the law. . .

They have already their Scott in Cooper; they have their fashionable novelist in the author of Clarence; they have had their Godwin in Browne [sic]; and the tribe of annualists is far outshone by the writers of the stories in the collection before us. . . .

It is very plain, that the authors of fiction in America can never be stopped by the want of a due supply of the materials which usually form either the foundation or the ornaments of this description of literature.

³¹ n. s. XI (Feb. 1831) 222.

³² XIV (April 1831) 395.

One of the latest judgments expressed during the period was that of the *Athenæum*³³ in its notice of the *Tales of the Glauber Spa*. This article is especially frank in its recognition of the fact that English readers wanted chiefly the novel and the sensational elements in American fiction:

The shorter, as well as the longer tale, common to Europe, has been produced by our brethren in America with considerable success. In conception, they sometimes want the higher flights of imagination which distinguish the stories of their island sires; but in dramatic life and graphic detail, we are less sure of our superiority; we have met with tales from the States which have moved us to mirth and to tears, and which still keep possession of our fancy. The volumes before us contain eight tales of various merit: some are stories of Europe and her beauty and her chivalry—others are of the great western wilderness; the latter we like most—not that they exhibit more talent than the others, but because they unfold to us new views of life and manners, and show us something which we have not before contemplated. The authors who write for the English market should consider that we are a pampered people; that we have had a surfeit of the most delicious viands; and that we can swallow no more, unless it comes to us in the provoking shape of a devilled lark, or some such savoury morsel, enough to make a dead man gape. It is upon this principle chiefly that we prefer the 'Last of the Mohicans' to all the other works of Cooper: all that it tells us is new, at least to us; it is less so, of course, to the people of the States.

B. DRAMA

There was little American drama written before 1833, and much of that was of a sort which might well excite ridicule. During the period under immediate consideration, almost the only important American dramatist—if indeed he deserves the name—was John Howard Payne, who was for some years a prolific translator and adapter of plays for the London stage. In October, 1817, the *Theatrical Inquisitor and Monthly Mirror*³⁴ reviewed *Accusation: or the Family of D'Anglade*, which he had adapted from the French. It commented on the credit really due to the skilled adapter,

³³ July 20, 1833, p. 472.

³⁴ XI (Oct. 1817) 289.

who coming to his work with a perfect knowledge of the demands of his national [sic] Theatre, lays upon himself the task of moulding the incongruous and the foreign, of invigorating the feeble, and inspiriting the dull, into the shape and interest that attract the tastes of England. The praise is higher, if over this there is thrown the living hue of genius, and the understanding raised and charmed by beauties unsought-for by the original author. Mr. Payne, a writer already known to the public by some excellent productions, has in the present instance increased his literary distinction. . . His arrangement of the scene is admirably *theatric*, his additions happy, and his language of a rank entirely above the usual *vulgar tongue* of translation; it is at once forcible and refined, expressive and elegant.

It would seem from the foregoing quotation that the reviewer did not know that Payne was an American. The article calls on the dramatist for some original work, saying, "Though we must admit his title to the first rank among translators, we should prefer seeing him aspire to a loftier and more difficult distinction." It also commends Payne for publishing his work as a translation and adaptation, while a Mr. Kinney, who had prepared an even less original version of the same play, had named himself as author.

It was over Payne's *Brutus*, first performed by Kean at Drury Lane early in December 1818, that there raged a short but almost ludicrously intense controversy. This was conducted largely in the *Morning Post* and other newspapers, but it extended into the magazines, and had some literary importance. In the preface to the printed version of the play Payne said: "Seven plays upon the subject of *Brutus* are already before the public. Only two have been thought capable of representation, and those did not long retain possession of the stage. In the present play, I have had no hesitation in adopting the conceptions and language of my predecessors wherever they seemed likely to strengthen the plan which I had prescribed." The real question at issue was whether the borrowings were too great to be excused even by this inclusive acknowledgment. Payne was assuredly not a great poet; and *Brutus* was very much of a mosaic of lines from other men. He was, however, a successful creator and adapter of acting plays; and while none of its predecessors had been successful upon the stage, his version had a long run at Drury Lane, was

widely played in the provinces and in America, and continued to appear from time to time in the repertoires of tragedians of distinction until late in the nineteenth century. It would seem, at this distance, that while he could claim little merit as an author in the ordinary sense of the term, he deserved full credit for being the creator of a highly successful stage piece. It would also seem that the statement quoted from his preface was made in good faith, and that there is no reason to suspect him of fraudulent claims, even though his indebtedness was greater than some casual readers at first supposed. In the controversy there was probably something of theatrical, literary, and international jealousy; and there was perhaps something of chagrin on the part of critics who at first praised the piece, and then discovered that it was largely borrowed from sources with which they might be supposed to be familiar.

The *Theatrical Inquisitor and Monthly Mirror*³⁵ for December 1818, though it pointed out defects, especially in unity and in the introduction of love-elements not contained in the historical story, was on the whole decidedly favorable and made no reference to borrowings. The following detached passages are significant:

This Gentleman had not, before, produced anything which could raise our expectations of this novelty to any extravagant pitch. With the exception of a translation or two, we believe this is his first dramatic work. We had heard of him as an actor but not as a poet, and we were therefore perfectly free from prepossession in his favour, or otherwise. . . .

The grandest and most effective incident in the piece is, undoubtedly, the last, the judgment pronounced by *Brutus* on his son; in this there is something awful, astonishing; it produces precisely that kind of feeling which is termed the sublime. . . .

We must give Mr. Payne credit for having accomplished this in a masterly manner. . . .

The Poetry is by no means of the highest order; force has evidently been more studied than elegance or richness. . . . It is evident that the writer has not been used to poetry, and that he has attempted it here, because he dared not produce a tragedy without some show of it. . . .

There is, however, considerable ingenuity in the construction of the dialogue.

³⁵ XIII (Dec. 1818) 449.

In the January issue, however, the same journal³⁶ said that when the earlier review was written the patchwork nature of the composition was not known, and commented in part:

It is not transcribed from these in whole acts and scenes, nor always in whole speeches, but the lines which compose it are to be found in the works we have named. We do not see that this should at all prejudice the production in public estimation, or detract from the merit of the managers, in producing it. But when we see it published, and the words "BY JOHN HOWARD PAYNE" we cannot withhold our tribute of reprobation from so base a falsehood. . . . Had Mr. Payne contented himself with the merit which belongs to him, that of a judicious compiler, he would have done well; but when he dares assume that of an author, he excites contempt and abhorrence. Had he been a man who could have been suspected of such a work, it might have passed, but his own shallow capacity protects him from every imputation of the kind. The insipid translation of "*the Family of Anglade*" were a sorry predecessor of such a work as BRUTUS. The money he has pocketed by this barefaced and scandalous piracy and imposture let him exult over; but as to fame or reputation, he has plunged them down an abyss from which they can never rise. He may, as many other foreign quacks have done, carry the spoil out of the country; but he will carry with him the aversion and contempt of every literary character in it.

In this tirade no mention was made of Payne's acknowledgments in his preface; the reference to *The Family of Anglade* is in strange keeping with the laudatory notice of that play already quoted from the *Inquisitor*; and the comments on the quality of the verse do not wholly harmonize with those in the review of a month earlier. It may be asked whether humiliation at the discovery of unrecognized borrowings, or the discovery of Payne's nationality, had anything to do with the sudden change in tone.

A somewhat similar change was shown by the *Edinburgh Reflector* which in its issue of December 16³⁷ contained a long article on the Drury Lane play, evidently written by some London dramatic critic. This dismissed as unimportant the charges of plagiarism which had already been made, saying:

We believe, however, there is a play of VOLTAIRE'S on the subject, which is acted on the French stage; and the newspapers speak of

³⁶ XIV (Jan. 1819) 71.

³⁷ I (Dec. 16, 1818) 209.

one by LEE, to which Mr. Payne, they guess, has had recourse. We must confess, with due critical honour, that we never read it; neither can we say that we discern the usual characteristics of Lee in the style of the new tragedy. If, as the town seems to understand, it is considerably indebted to other productions, we should rather think that its greatest obligations are to some French writer, though we can hardly think VOLTAIRE; for its chief merit is stage effect; the language and sentiment, with the exception of the scene in which *Brutus* exults over the fallen senate of *Tarquin*, and execrates his astonished son, have not much more ardour than originality.

The effect, however, upon the whole, is managed with great skill.

. . . .
The reader will easily imagine many interesting scenes out of this story, besides the one we have just mentioned; and as far as a certain theatrical tact goes, Mr. HOWARD PAYNE has shewn great taste, judgment, and feeling, in making the most of them. At present, we cannot compliment him farther, nor would we perhaps desire it if the piece is so much of a compilation as it is said to be. But he is young; and the perceptions which now enable him to dispose the materials of others to the best advantage, may hereafter teach him to see for himself.

Before the close of the month *Brutus* had been performed at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and the *Reflector*, in its issue of December 30³⁸ says:

This tragedy was performed here for the first time on Monday last. We have, in a former Number, given an account of the plot, and also the opinion of a celebrated London Critic upon the merits of the piece. It is our lot to differ with this writer in the present instance, or rather, we are compelled to deal less leniently with the tragedy than he has done . . . there is such a poverty of language and of imagery throughout. . . . The author seems not entirely ignorant of stage trick, and of stage effect, but the destruction of the statute of Tarquin by Jove (i. e. the property man) is rather too much. His selection of a concluding scene, however, was very happy.

The critic now decides that the success of the play at Drury Lane must have been due almost wholly to Kean's acting.

The *European Magazine*³⁹ gives a flattering notice of the play, calls it "a very attractive drama," and names as the author "Mr. John Howard Payne, a young gentleman of much actual merit, and of great future promise." It makes no mention of

³⁸ P. 225.

³⁹ LXXIV (Dec. 1818) 531.

his nationality. The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁴⁰ was less moved by the quarrel than were the theatrical journals. After quoting Payne's acknowledgment of indebtedness, and saying that the work is hardly to be considered original, it continues: "We will grant, however, that Mr. Payne has evinced a degree of judgment, dramatic conception, and power of poetic expression, which is certainly creditable to him." It decides that while Kean is largely responsible for the success of the play, Payne has done his work well. The *New British Lady's Magazine*⁴¹ thinks the play was largely from Cumberland's, but seems to consider that Payne's acknowledgment frees him from censure, and adds: "He has, however, considerable merit in adapting the whole for the stage, as well as in the higher character of a poet, where his own conception appears." The *British Critic*⁴² is severe on the play, but says nothing of the nationality of the author.

The *British Stage and Literary Cabinet*⁴³ in its review of January 9, characterizes the piece as "literally a lucky hit," and says, "Whether it be Mr. Payne's or Mr. Cumberland's, it is undeniable that as a stage exhibition it has great attractions." It promises, however, to investigate the charges of plagiarism. In a later issue⁴⁴ it finds Payne guilty, and passes judgment without mercy. "The fact is, that scarcely any part of the piece is his composition . . . he is the most arrant plagiarist the present age has produced." The admission of indebtedness in the preface is characterized as "equivocating, jesuitical." The critic's estimate of the play also seems to have changed somewhat:

The language is very unequal; sometimes flowing and nervous; but often weak and prosaic. The incidents, though in one or two places trenching upon the province of melodrama, are for the most part striking, and naturally produced; nor will we deny that Mr. Payne has displayed much ingenuity in fitting together the disjointed scenes he has torn from their parent stocks—But again and again we repeat, that nothing but Kean's delightful acting would

⁴⁰ LXXXVIII (Jan. 1819) 90.

⁴¹ II (Jan. 1819) 39.

⁴² n. s. XI (Jan. 1819) 75.

⁴³ III (Jan. 9, 1819) 10.

⁴⁴ P. 40.

have carried it through; and that to him, and to him alone, is its success owing.

That the matter was considered of some real literary importance is indicated by the fact that a year after the newspaper controversy was at its height the *Quarterly*⁴⁶ published a slashing review of *Brutus*, saying of its author, "He appears to us to have no one quality which we should require in a tragic poet. . . . It is enough to say conscientiously, that we cannot find in the whole play, a single character finely conceived, or rightly sustained, a single accident well managed, a single speech, nay, a single sentence of good poetry." The reviewer makes no reference to the fact that Payne was an American, but at this date he could not have been ignorant of the fact. Strange to say, it was to the *Theatrical Inquisitor*⁴⁸ that a champion who signed himself "Vindex" contributed a long and spirited article entitled *Mr. Howard Payne and the Quarterly Review*. This attacks the *Quarterly* on general and varied grounds. It defends Payne's choice of subject, dramatic construction, etc., and charges that certain defects are due to the fact that the author "was cut off by the jealousy or ambition of an individual actor [Kean] from any other object but that of aggrandizing his peculiar part." It accuses the *Quarterly* of inaccuracy in charging Payne with undue obligation to Cumberland and others for merits which it itself denies that these dramatists have; points to the success of the play; and says in conclusion: "I . . . believe these critics to have been swayed against Mr. PAYNE and his production by that hireling hatred of human liberty, for which their pamphlet is distinguished. 'Brutus' abounds in excitements to democratic virtue," etc.

The *London Magazine and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review*⁴⁷ devotes a long and serious article to *Virginia, or Patrician Perfidy, an Historical Tragedy in Five Acts*, by Payne, still in manuscript.

The work before us, by Mr. HOWARD PAYNE, is in our opinion very far superior to it [Webster's *Appias and Virginia*], and decidedly

⁴⁶ XXII (Jan. 1820) 402.

⁴⁷ XVI (Feb. 1820) 128.

⁴⁸ II (Dec. 1820) 601.

the best that has ever been written on the subject; for imagination, for feeling, for poetry, for energy, it is inferior to few plays which our age has witnessed. That it is chiefly borrowed from Webster is no objection to it; and though it may confer on the adapter a slighter claim to the laurel of Tragedy, it at least entitles him to the gratitude of those to whose entertainment or whose interest it might have conduced. . . .

Were not the partiality and senseless stupidity of the managers of our theatres fully known and frequently experienced, it might surprise us to learn that this tragedy has actually been rejected by both of them. At Covent Garden the deep rugged production of Mr. Knowles, and at Drury Lane the mawkish insipid catlap of Mr. Barlow, have both been preferred to it.

This review, like many others, does not speak of Payne as an American. Such an article on an unpublished work necessarily has the appearance of special pleading, though the magazine does not seem to be one likely to lend itself to the exploitation of a grudge.

In connection with these criticisms of plays may be mentioned a review of *Memoirs of J. H. Payne*, and *Lispings of the Muse*, by Payne, in the *British Stage and Literary Cabinet*⁴⁸ for April, 1817. At this time Payne, who was about to appear at Covent Garden, was known as an actor rather than as a dramatist. The criticisms of his acting from American papers are, the reviewer says "in one respect curious and interesting, as affording means of forming an estimate of the state of the drama and dramatic criticism in the new world; a few of them are well written, the remainder mere balderdash." The poems in the *Lispings of the Muse* are spoken of as trivial; but the author is said to have "published an edition of 'Lover's Vows' in which the best portions of the translations of Thompson and Mrs. Inchbald are connected and combined, so as to form a play superior to either."

The *Mirror of the Stage*⁴⁹ gives an account of the performance at Covent Garden of *Clari, the Maid of Milan*, but does not name the author, and makes no reference to *Home, Sweet Home*, for which, alone, the play is now remembered. The *British Stage*⁵⁰ comments on *Thérèse, the Orphan of Geneva*:

⁴⁸ I (April 1817) 74.

⁴⁹ II (May 19, 1823) 140.

⁵⁰ V (March 1821) 68.

"(freely translated from the French) altered and adapted to the English Stage, by John Howard Payne." It decides that as this was prepared solely for the stage it is hardly to be judged by literary rules, but adds: "We may, however, remark, that the translator has performed his office very respectably; and that the principal faults of the language are traceable to the original."

The *British Stage*⁵¹ for January 1821 contains a notice of *Pocohontas*, a new play at Drury Lane:

"Pocohontas" is called "a new American Play." Whether this means that it is the work of a Yankee Doodle, or merely has reference to the scene of action, we know not; but, if it be in verity the production of an American, it will not do much toward lessening the heavy weight of obligation which their drama is under to ours.

On the whole, surprisingly few American plays were reviewed. The *Literary Gazette*⁵² made merry in rather cheap fashion over *A Tale of Lexington; a National Comedy founded on the Opening of the Revolution*, by Samuel H. B. Judah:

But we have now before us a publication which, claiming to belong to the national drama of America, and having been highly successful in that point of view, we confess astonishes us not a little, especially as emanating from that party which rails the sorest about prejudices and misrepresentations. As the *Tale of Lexington* is also the *first production*** of the American dramatic school which has reached our shores, it may not be inexpedient to bestow more time in making the public acquainted with it than its merits would otherwise demand; and if we cannot help treating it less gravely than its importance as the foundation of a great nation's drama seems to require, we trust we shall be excused,—for, after all, everyone has a right to laugh at a "Comedy." . . .

Of the American Shakespeare, Samuel B. H. Judah (the termination of whose name is rather tragical than comical,) the renown had not reached us when this volume was put into our hands. Who or what he is, therefore, we know not. We only know him, through his own Preface, to be the Magnus Apollo of New York theatricals, and, through his printed transit hither, the popular founder of dramatic poetry in the New World. And a new world it is in this species of writing.

**We have, we believe, the only copy of this piece which has found its way to London.—Ed.

⁵¹ V (Jan. 1821) 17.

⁵² VIII (Jan. 24, 1824) 49.

As the *Tale of Lexington* was a prose drama the reference to "dramatic poetry" was wholly inappropriate. The reviewer resented unfavorable representations of British soldiers; and he interpreted the roughness and rude simplicity of the Americans, which the dramatist had emphasized for effect, as evidences against America and the American system. The play doubtless deserved most of the ridicule that was heaped upon it—or more accurately, it did not deserve notice at all. The animus of the article is the significant thing.

The *London Magazine*⁵³ contains an article on *American Dramatists* dated at Philadelphia and signed "S," which gives a detailed list of American plays and their authors, with considerable description and comment. Notwithstanding informational articles of this sort, and the attention given to Dunlap and other Americans who had earlier attempted the drama, *Fraser's*⁵⁴ in its article on American poetry in 1830 dismisses the drama as hardly worthy of comment. A few sentences may be quoted: "Rant and bombast are the favourite styles." "A drama called 'Rosa,' by a young printer, is indited, however, in a pure style, which for America is extraordinary." "Enough, however, for their drama. We do not commend what we have extracted: but, as Mr. Coleridge would say, they are psychological curiosities, as being produced in America."

Dunlap's *History of the American Theatre* was the subject of several reviews. The comments in the *Literary Gazette*⁵⁵ were favorable. The *Olio*⁵⁶ finds a *History of the American Theatre*—which must be Dunlap's, though no author is named—interesting because it has so much on English actors. The *Metropolitan*⁵⁷ praises the work in some oddly stilted phrases:

We do not say that the style of the language is very ornate, yet are the remarks uniformly sensible, and evince not only much knowledge of the world, but considerable literary attainment. But, in our eyes, this work is less valuable as a record of the histrionic art in America, than as a running commentary upon the tastes and manners of the Americans themselves. . . .

⁵³ n. s. VI (Dec. 1826) 466.

⁵⁴ I (Feb. 1830) 8.

⁵⁵ XVI (Dec. 8, 1832) 771.

⁵⁶ X (Feb. 2, 1833) 428.

⁵⁷ VI (Feb. 1833) 42.

To all classes who may seek amusement, we can conscientiously say, that if they take up these volumes they will not find disappointment; and if they do not obtain instruction as well as pleasure, we will then assert that they have read with prejudice, if they, in return, will concede that we have not eulogized with prepossession.

The *Monthly Review*⁵⁸ devotes to the *History* a twenty-five page article, which seems to have been written to show that both English and American drama were in a bad way. It quotes one of Robert Treat Paine's prologues as worthy of Pope and Johnson, and concludes with high praise for Dunlap, "the staunch and uncompromising supporter of genuine virtue." It says little, however, on the literary quality of American plays, or on that of the *History*. Dunlap's *Life of Cooke*, the actor, had been reviewed at length in the *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁵⁹ for 1816,—condemned in point of style, but praised "as a work of entertainment." The *Meteor, or General Censor*⁶⁰ expressed great disappointment in the same biography, but did not indicate its specific faults.

C. ESSAYS AND ORATIONS

Aside from the work of Irving, few important prose essays were written in America between 1815 and 1833 which could not well be classified under some special head—religious, political, scientific, etc. Some earlier writings of this sort were occasionally reprinted, or criticised. The *Gentleman's Magazine*⁶¹ contains a pretended letter from Philadelphia which is in reality Francis Hopkinson's essay on *White-Washing*, with an introductory paragraph. The *Kaleidoscope*⁶² prints Hopkinson's burlesque examination on a salt-box, crediting it to Professor Porson.⁶³

⁵⁸ 1833, page 151.

⁵⁹ LXXIX (April 1816) 375.

⁶⁰ London, 1817, p. 127.

⁶¹ XCI (May 1821) 399.

⁶² VIII (March 4, 1828) 296.

⁶³ *The Spirit of Literature* I (July 4, 1830) 204, under the heading, "Notes of a Reader" makes a virtual charge of plagiarism of the *Salt-Box Examination* against Professor Porson of Cambridge. It asserts that the piece appeared in England in the *Literary Journal* for July 11, 1818—a periodical edited by "Mr. E. A. Kendall and Mr. C. F. Partington, of the London Institution," and that it was there credited to Professor Porson, and announced as a burlesque on the Oxford system of examinations. Porson

Bits of Franklin's writings were reprinted with great frequency; and the *Letters* and the *Memoir* by W. T. Franklin which were published during this period were noticed in almost every critical journal.⁶⁴ Some of the interest in Franklin and his work was still political; but as the "many-sided" writer fits into so many categories it may be as well to consider here all the comments that his writings elicited.

The forthcoming publication of the Franklin manuscripts was announced in the *Monthly Repository of Theology*⁶⁵ which repeated the story that William Temple Franklin had been bribed to suppress the papers, and rejoiced that the report was incorrect. Reviews of the collection of *Private Correspondence* were numerous in the early months of 1817, appearing in the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*,⁶⁶ the *Literary Gazette*,⁶⁷ the *Critical Review*,⁶⁸ the *New Monthly Magazine*,⁶⁹ and the *Monthly Review Enlarged*.⁷⁰ All these praised Franklin, some judiciously, some extravagantly. The *Literary Gazette* characterized him as "a man whom we must esteem as ranking in the first classes of philosophy, literature, and politics, even in spite of political differences." The *New Monthly Magazine* says: "It would be extremely difficult to pitch upon any published correspondence of an eminent literary character, that could be put in competition, for the variety, importance, and entertainment of the contents, with the present volume."

The *Monthly Review Enlarged* says that the character of Franklin, unlike that of many public men, will bear microscopic examination.

The *Edinburgh* reviewed the correspondence in August, 1817.⁷¹ The opening sentence of the article runs: "In one

had been librarian of the London Institution, and this contains Carey's *American Museum*, which in February, 1787, had published Hopkinson's satire. The version in the *Literary Journal* is said to be a word for word reprint, except that the section on mathematics—which was Professor Porson's specialty—was omitted.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of earlier English criticisms of Franklin see the author's *British Criticisms of American Writers, 1783-1815*, Chap. VI.

⁶⁵ XI (Nov. 1816) 689.

⁶⁶ XLII (Jan. 1, 1817) 545..

⁶⁷ I (Jan. 25, 1817) 6.

⁶⁸ 5th ser. V. (Jan. 1817) 49.

⁶⁹ VII (Feb. 1817) 56.

⁷⁰ LXXXIII (May, June, 1817) 20, 133.

⁷¹ XXVIII, 275.

point of view, the name of Franklin must be considered as standing higher than any of the others which illustrate the eighteenth century." He was genuinely great in different kinds of endeavor. The reviewer praises his understanding and his character, making much of the fact that he "was a man of a truly pious turn of mind." Of style, he says:

We have said little respecting his language, which is pure, and English. A few, and but a few, foreign expressions may be traced, and these French rather than American; as for instance, *influential*. Indeed, we cannot reckon him more as an American than an European. He lived so much among us, frequenting the best society, cultivating the habits, and conversant with the authors of the old World, that the peculiarities of the New, neither as to language nor character, seem to have retained any impression upon him. Those peculiarities, moreover, have been exceedingly increased since the separation. We can offer the Americans no better advice, than to recommend to them a constant study of Franklin; of his principles and his political feelings, as well as his composition.

Almost the only unfriendly article is to be found in the *British Critic*⁷² which at this time was hostile to everything American. This makes the charge that Franklin had no literary taste, that he earned his fame by the application of very ordinary qualities, and that he practiced "quackery and imposture, solely from vanity."

In the presence of men of really superior cast, among our Burkes and our Johnsons, Franklin would have dwindled into his proper dimensions; but with the world in general, it is sufficient for a person to have pretensions, and to insist upon their being admitted; and if they happen to be literary pretensions so few are capable of instituting an enquiry. . . .

He has left us some memoirs written by himself; and to say nothing of the very ordinary style of the composition, of the common places and sillyisms, with which they are distinguished, we think we hardly remember a more preposterous production. It breaks off at the time when he reached four or five and twenty, but contains 190 pages, giving us an account of the various characters of the journeyman printers with whom he, at one time or another, had the honour of working with, [sic] and other such like particulars, which nothing but a most extravagant opinion of the interest which he supposed mankind to take in his concerns, could possibly have induced him to record. . . .

⁷² n. s. VII (1817) 239.

If we except the abstemiousness of his life, and the exemplary industry which he displayed in every period of it, we really cannot bring to mind any single quality, or action mentioned by him, that is entitled to praise, while we see a great many of both which even the most charitable judges must unequivocally condemn.

The review quotes *The Whistle* and *The Handsome Leg*, and says of them:

We think our readers will admit that although they are not such as a common-place man, such as Franklin really was, need be ashamed of having produced, yet that they are such as a man of superior talents, such as Franklin pretended to be, and we have no doubt thought himself, would have no reason to be proud of.

The *Memoirs of Franklin*, consisting of the *Autobiography* with a continuation by William Temple Franklin, contained so many tempting passages that some reviews were made up chiefly of quotations. This was true of the articles in the *New Monthly Magazine*,⁷³ and in the *Monthly Review Enlarged*.⁷⁴ The review in the *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany*⁷⁵ is complimentary to Franklin, but not indiscriminating. The *Literary Gazette*⁷⁶ describes the book as "one of the most useful, instructive, and entertaining publications, that the world has received within our memory"; and finds that Franklin was

without any meanness or lowness of style; for he is strong without being coarse, and simple without being meagre, and intelligible without being rude or unmindful of the better arts of composition. Upon the whole, few, if any, of the moderns, have so nearly approached the ancient school as Dr. Franklin, in the abundance of his matter, the depth and originality of his thoughts, the occasional playfulness of his fancy, and the variety and accuracy of his views on all the subjects upon which he ventured to appear as an author.

A dissenting opinion is expressed in the *British Review*⁷⁷ which commends W. T. Franklin for not publishing before because the letters would have caused ill feeling, and regrets that he did not suppress some passages. The critic devotes

⁷³ VIII, 511; IX, 239; X, 53 (1818-19).

⁷⁴ LXXXV (May 1818) 25, and LXXXVIII (March 1819) 409.

⁷⁵ II (April 1818) 351.

⁷⁶ II (March 7, 1818) 145.

⁷⁷ XI (May 1818) 381.

many pages to Franklin's lack of religion, and has much to say of his limitations:

Self-taught in religion, he became a fatalist, a deist, a doubter of revelation; self-taught in morals, he had to learn by his own losses, that it is for the good of society that man should be honest; self-taught in science, his attention was called away from original researches, by the necessity of reaching through his own unassisted efforts, the very conclusion, at which others had arrived long before.

The *Autobiography* is said to be "the best and most amusing part of the volume, in spite of a vulgarity and coarseness of style which is not to be found in his other writings. He says indeed himself that men do not dress for private company as for a ball; but this will not be admitted as an excuse for dirt and slovenliness." The closing sentence of the article runs: "But religion and virtue—true virtue—owe him nothing."

*Blackwood's*⁷⁸ for February, 1822, says by way of incidental reference:

Whatever may be our opinions of Franklin with respect to his public conduct, he certainly is one of the most original independent minds on record. In his lighter productions, we know of no one, except indeed Goldsmith, who can lay an equal claim with him to the epithet of *genuine*. The little parable of his quoted by Home, is perhaps, the only imitation of inspired writing in our language that deserves to be tolerated.

An editorial footnote, however, gives warning that "our respected correspondent is not aware, that Benjamin stole this beautiful Apologue almost verbatim from Jeremy Taylor."

The *Athenæum*,⁷⁹ the *Literary Gazette*⁸⁰ and the *Monthly Review*⁸¹ agree that the collection of Franklin's *Familiar Letters* edited by Jared Sparks contains little of great value, though all say that anything by Franklin is worthy of notice. The *Congregational Magazine*⁸² is of much the same opinion, though it finds some things in the letters to praise:

This is a very singular little volume: though the papers it contains are very few of them of any sort of importance to the world,

⁷⁸ XI (Feb. 1822) 169.

⁷⁹ 1833, p. 495.

⁸⁰ XVII (Aug. 24, 1833) 534.

⁸¹ Oct. 1833, p. 239.

⁸² IX (Oct. 1833) 632.

they are, on the whole, extremely interesting. The fact is, they let us thoroughly into Franklin's domestic and private character. . . . They every where exhibit traits of Franklin's character, his practical wisdom and sagacity, his playfulness, his wit, his simplicity, and his benevolence. Many of them are expressed with all the simple elegance and concise energy which mark his published writings; and some of them are not unworthy of comparison even with the beautiful letters of Cowper.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁸³ contains an article on the same collection which makes an interesting comparison between Franklin and Walpole.

C. J. Ingersoll's *Discourse Concerning the Influence of America on the Mind* was the subject of a fairly favorable notice in *Colburn's*⁸⁴ and of a panegyric in the *Westminster Review*.⁸⁵ The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁸⁶ comments on the difficulty of ascertaining the exact truth as to America and her institutions, and thinks that Ingersoll boasts too much to be helpful.

Mr. Ingersoll is an American, and in comparing his country with that of Europe, he almost invariably gives the preference to the former. This may, to a certain extent, be excused on the score of patriotism; but, in such an investigation, the strictest adherence to the truth would be more commendable. That America is making rapid strides in literature and science we readily admit, and her institutions are certainly favourable to it; but when Mr. Ingersoll asserts that 'the American list of discoveries is quite equal to the English,' he must be aware that he is asserting what it is impossible to substantiate.

It was the religious work of W. E. Channing that attracted most attention, but his *Thoughts on the Power and Greatness of Napoleon Bonaparte* was often praised in England. The *Literary Gazette*⁸⁷ gave it considerable space in its article on *American Publications*, and said, "Dr. Channing himself is a host." The *British Magazine*⁸⁸ said on the appearance of Channing's *Importance and Means of a National Literature*, "Dr. Channing's merits have gained for him the almost unani-

⁸³ XXXVIII (1833) 457.

⁸⁴ XII (Oct. 1824) 457.

⁸⁵ II (Oct. 1824) 554.

⁸⁶ VI (Sept. 18, 1824) 592.

⁸⁷ XII (1823) 530, 583.

⁸⁸ I (June 1830) 467.

mous suffrages of the critical press of England." The *American Common-Place Book of Prose* was praised in the *Lady's Magazine*,⁸⁹ and more significantly in the *Literary Gazette*.⁹⁰ The latter says :

Altogether, though many things appear in this volume which have apparently been promoted rather in compliment to their nationality than to their genius, yet are they all creditable to the talents of the country; and though the title-page proclaims this to be a "common place-book," we are bold to pronounce an opposite verdict, more honourable to the patriotism and literature of America, by declaring that it is by no means common-place. Even as an index (with examples) of between sixty and seventy authors, it must be very acceptable to the English reader.

Few American orations, aside from those with a political or a religious bearing, seem to have attracted attention in England. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁹¹ gives a very formal notice of an academic address delivered by DeWitt Clinton at Schenectady: "This is an impressive and elegant discourse. . . . The address is written in pure English style. . . . and we have perused it with much pleasure." The *Westminster Review*⁹² discusses orations by Webster, Everett, and Sprague in an article headed *United States*, and quotes a number of bombastic passages in support of its theory that "violent exaggeration is the character of American literature at the present day." The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁹³ praises Daniel Webster in a long review of his *Speeches and Forensic Arguments*. The *Eclectic Review*⁹⁴ considers a bicentennial address by President Quincy as better adapted to New England than to England, where "we like a speech to be a speech, and writings to be in the tone of written composition."

⁸⁹ n. s. X (Feb. 1827) 102.

⁹⁰ XII (Dec. 13, 1829) 789.

⁹¹ XII (April 1824) 172.

⁹² V (Jan. 1826) 173.

⁹³ VI (Aug. 20, 1831) 105.

⁹⁴ V (1831) 292.

CHAPTER VIII

HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, TRAVEL

American histories, journals which furnished the materials for history, biographies, and works of travel often touched on political matters; and judgments on them, in the years just following the War of 1812, were likely to be colored by political considerations. It is the plan of this study to ignore the endless discussions of international differences, except so far as they are significantly concerned with genuine literary criticism.

During the period under consideration there were few formal histories of sufficient importance to attract attention abroad. David Ramsay's *History of South Carolina* is pleasantly reviewed in the *Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*,¹ which says: "It is considered as a standard book by the inhabitants of South Carolina, is written with much simplicity, and, from every part of it, it appears that the author deserves to be considered as an impartial historian." The criticism, however, gives the impression of being written only as a justification for the printing of the long extracts which follow. The review of Adam Seybert's *Statistical Annals of the United States of America* in the *Edinburgh Review*² is notable chiefly because it contains the famous query, "Who reads an American book?"

The *History of the United States* by Salma Hale, of New Hampshire, attracted more notice. The *Panoramic Miscellany*³ gave it a friendly review. The political leanings of this journal may be inferred from the fact that it expressed the belief that England, as well as America, was better off for the independence of the United States. Whether by design or inadvertence, this review is listed in the index under "domestic" literature.

¹ I (Feb. 1817) 45.

² XXXIII (Jan. 1820) 79.

³ I (Feb. 1826) 230.

The *Monthly Repository of Theology*,⁴ also praises the patriotism and the fairness of Hale's treatment. The reviewer is ignorant of the author's name, but this is given later⁵ by an American correspondent. The article on the same history in the *Monthly Review*⁶ is notable for its warm and apparently genuine expression of kindly feeling toward America, and its condemnation of the style of the book, which is said to owe too much to English and American predecessors. The author is, however, commended for his fairness, except toward the end, where he apparently irritated the reviewer by his accounts of American exploits during the War of 1812. In this connection may be mentioned a review in the *Antijacobin Review*⁷ of a book written by William Janes, a Nova Scotian, in reply to American claims of naval victories during the war. Janes mentions among American works Low's *History of the War*, and Clark's *Naval History*, and frankly characterizes the authors of both as liars. The *Athenæum*⁸ gives brief and unimportant notices of successive parts of Hinton's *History and Topography of the United States*. Among books which furnished materials for the historian were Dr. James Thatcher's *Military Journal* covering the period of the American Revolution. This is criticised in the *Literary Gazette*⁹ in an article that is unfriendly, and somewhat unfair in treating this personal journal as if it were a formal history.

Although few true histories were written in America during the first third of the nineteenth century, there were many biographies of importance, especially toward the close of the period covered by the present study. Two of the most important works of this sort, Irving's *Life of Columbus*, and his *Lives and Voyages of the Companions of Columbus*, have been considered in another chapter. The most significant class of American biographies was composed of those which recounted the careers of earlier American statesmen; next in importance were those which treated of American writers and other citizens

⁴ XXI (Feb. 1826) 103.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 746.

⁶ n. s. L (March, 1826) 291.

⁷ LII (May, 1817) 209.

⁸ [IV] (1831) 359, 816; [V] (1832) 412.

⁹ VI (Oct. 18, 1823) 660.

of distinction. There were also autobiographies; and a few studies, like Bush's *Mohammed*, of which the subjects were not Americans.

J. H. Sherburne's *Life of Paul Jones* was the subject of several reviews. The *Monthly Review Enlarged*¹⁰ announced that the time had come for a fair estimate of Jones, and treated both the man and the book reasonably, though with no great admiration. The *Gentleman's Magazine*¹¹ maintained the more traditional British attitude, first asserting that Jones was an Englishman, and that any training that he showed must be credited to England—then proceeding to minimize his claims to fame. The *Eclectic Review*¹² also gave a brief article to this work.

The American biography which was most widely read in England was Randolph's *Memoirs of Jefferson*. This was noticed in many periodicals during the autumn of 1829 and the early months of the year 1830; and as the four volumes did not all appear at the same time many journals devoted two articles to the work. Almost all of these criticisms were concerned with Jefferson's place in history, but most of them also commented on his prose style, and on the literary skill, or want of skill, of his biographer. The *Athenæum*¹³ begins by saying:

This work (we guess) will long remain a record of the plain times of Washington and Franklin, and a monument the more lasting from its unpretending modesty to the memory of a worthy fellow-labourer with the immortal Tells and Stauffachers of transatlantic story. . . . It may knock from off the stilts of their enthusiasm some worthy souls who idolize into monsters of refined sentimentality the champions of American Independence. And it may possibly change the vein and check the pride of other disputants, who find exceeding fault with Thomas Jefferson and his compeers, for omitting to graft upon their country's constitution such blessings as the tithes, the licensing system, and the game laws.

Of a quoted passage it says:

In tone and taste (almighty monosyllables) they cannot but grate harshly on a musical ear. In substance, too, there are one or two sentences liable to shock, and that perhaps not unreasonably, well-

¹⁰ CVIII (Sept. 1825) 48.

¹¹ XCV (Nov. 1825) 427.

¹² XXVII (1827) 341.

¹³ [III] (Jan. 1830) 2, 19.

regulated spirits. And there are things which, though we think them correct in themselves, are not by any means conciliatory to many a cherished prejudice.

The *Monthly Review*¹⁴ is especially severe on Randolph:

Our time has been sadly wasted over these volumes. It is the editor's unenviable distinction that he has contrived one of the most repulsive schemes of biography that has ever oppressed the literature of any country. He has been only careful to gather up every scrap of paper that he could discover bearing the handwriting of Thomas Jefferson, and this he has religiously preserved for public inspection, without ever appearing to be conscious that it mattered whether the contents were a state dispatch or an invoice for a washer-woman. The whole is a scene of chaos. . . . Imperturbably phlegmatic, through the long night of two thousand pages and upwards, our editor never once opens his lips, and since Mr. Jefferson himself was not in a condition to tell us that he died, the abstemious Mr. Randolph cautiously declines to supply the omission.

Of Jefferson himself, however, the critic takes a favorable view:

We have never been able to discover in the men, who had the immortal honour of laying the foundation of American independence, any of those grand characteristics which would entitle them to the name of Great. They had no master intellect amongst them—no overwhelming mind capable of striking out some original path for its own illustrious and solitary career. But they possessed qualities immeasurably more estimable; they had to a man the precious virtue of true loyalty to their country; they were reared up in the simplicity in which alone genuine patriotism can thrive. . . .

As one of those admirable characters, Thomas Jefferson deserves to have his name honourably handed down to posterity.

The *Edinburgh Review*¹⁵ is on the whole not unkindly in its treatment of Jefferson as a man, thinker, and patriot, though it points out some of his limitations. Its article is somewhat freer from underhanded insinuations than are most of its discussions of American matters at this period. Of style it says little. The *Westminster Review*¹⁶ is characteristically enthusiastic: "This is one of the most important publications ever presented to the world. In the catalogue of the benefactors

¹⁴ XIII (March, 1830) 277.

¹⁵ LI (July, 1830) 496.

¹⁶ XIII (Oct. 1830) 312.

of mankind, few deserve so high a station as Thomas Jefferson." The reviewer goes on to praise Jefferson, not only for helping to lead the Revolution, but for saving the United States from a constitution too near like that of England. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹⁷ also has high praise for Jefferson personally and politically, though it regrets that he continued so bitter in his judgments of the Federalists. It commends the tone of his *Autobiography*, and its lack of egotism.

The great concern that was felt over Jefferson's religious views was most forcibly expressed by the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*:¹⁸

We know, from the testimony of a respectable American periodical (for we have not read the book ourselves,) that in these volumes he is exhibited as a disbeliever in divine revelation—nay, a scoffer of the lowest class, whose ribaldry and impiety are disgusting in the extreme. We conceive it quite a duty to warn the unwary.

Of the many other reviews of the *Memoirs*, those in the *Monthly Repository and Review*¹⁹ and the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*²⁰ are distinctly favorable, though the latter complains that, in view of Jefferson's hostility to Great Britain, "We do not know that we have encountered, in the whole course of our critical experience, a work so calculated to put our partiality to the test as this now before us." The *Monthly Magazine*,²¹ the *British Magazine*, *A Monthly Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*,²² and the *Christian Reformer*²³ are also, on the whole, well-disposed—the last-named pronouncing Jefferson as "upon the whole, the wisest *statesman* which the United States have produced." The *Literary Gazette*²⁴ though not hostile, is a shade less friendly. In a second article²⁵ it quotes with apparent satisfaction a passage which implies that Washington did not believe in Christianity. The *Edinburgh Literary*

¹⁷ XXIX (1830) 269.

¹⁸ I (March 1830) 260.

¹⁹ n. s. III (Dec. 1829) 865; IV (Feb. 1830) 123.

²⁰ III (Feb. 6, 1830) 83.

²¹ n. s. IX (Jan. 1820) 81.

²² I (1830) 148.

²³ XVI (1830) 20, 277, 321, 374.

²⁴ XIII (Nov. 14, 1829) 740.

²⁵ XIV (Jan. 2, 1830) 4.

*Gazette*²⁶ also speaks respectfully, but not enthusiastically of Jefferson and of his biographer. It complains, however, that "the President's style of composition is heavy and clumsy, and abounds with Yankeeisms, at least modes of expression scarcely English." In a later article²⁷ it is somewhat more severe, both on Jefferson's style and on his significance in history. Of the former it says: "As to reading it is about the heaviest that we have ever had the misfortune or courage to encounter"; and, "All the easy gracefulness which forms the great charm of letters between friends is wanting." In another connection it remarks: "Mr. Jefferson may have had some talents; but we have not been impressed with any great respect for his character as a citizen, or his qualities as an enlightened statesman." The *Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal*²⁸ concedes that Jefferson's private character may have been good, but it is very severe on his opinions, especially his religious opinions.

Another important biography of an American statesman was the *Life of Gouverneur Morris* by Jared Sparks. This was reviewed in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*,²⁹ the *Foreign Quarterly Review*,³⁰ the *Monthly Review*³¹ and the *Athenæum*.³² All these speak well of Morris, the *Foreign Quarterly Review* saying, "It is almost hard upon us to hold such a man as Gouverneur Morris in the light of a foreigner." Except for some praise in the *Athenæum*, Sparks's work is almost ignored. Another biography edited by Sparks, the *Memoirs of the Life and Travels of John Ledyard*, was reviewed in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*³³ and the *Monthly Magazine or British Register*,³⁴ on the whole favorably, though the *Monthly Magazine* complains of Sparks's "somewhat heavy style." The *Life of John Jay*, by his son, William Jay, led to an encomium on that statesman by the *Athenæum*³⁵ which, how-

²⁶ I (Nov. 1829) 454.

²⁷ II (Jan. 1830) 57.

²⁸ I (Jan. 1832) 538.

²⁹ XXXVI (Aug. 1832) 337.

³⁰ X (Oct. 1832) 441.

³¹ November, 1833, p. 445.

³² June 15, 1833, p. 369.

³³ XXIV (Oct. 1828) 429.

³⁴ n. s. V (April 1828) 412.

³⁵ Sept. 21, 1833, p. 631.

ever, says little about the quality of the biography. In March, 1823, the *Magazine of Foreign Literature*³⁶ printed an exceedingly bitter partisan review of William Johnson's *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene*. It asserts that Greene "arrived at command in the American army as many other worthless men also did." It accuses Johnson of partisanship, ridicules his English, and concludes: "reminding our readers that this is not the production of an inexperienced or uneducated American, but that the author is one of the *magnates* of the land, we gladly take leave of this enlightened trans-atlantic justice." A few months later the same journal³⁷ is fair in its treatment of Tudor's *Life of James Otis*, praising the author's spirit and on the whole his manner, and speaking well of Otis. Henry Wheaton's *Life, Writings, and Speeches of William Pinkney* was the subject of an informational article in the *Monthly Review*,³⁸ which arrives at the conclusion that "Mr. Pinkney was a useful and industrious public character; but he had no claim to that brilliant reputation which his biographer has endeavoured to attach to his memory."

A typical example of the *Quarterly's* treatment of a man who had no political connections is found in the review of Cadwallader Colden's *Life of Fulton*.³⁹ This villifies Fulton in various ways, and credits the invention of the steamboat to Jonathan Hulls, who made a drawing in 1737.

A few collections of American biography were known in England. Delaplaine's *Repository of the Lives and Portraits of Distinguished American Characters* was condemned by the *Critical Review*.⁴⁰ The spirit of the article may be inferred from the objection to the inclusion of Hamilton because he was not a native of America. A *Gallery of American Portraits* by George Waterson was noticed by the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*,⁴¹ and the *National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans* was commended in the *Literary Gazette*.⁴²

³⁶ I (March, 1823) 51.

³⁷ I (Oct. 1823) 474.

³⁸ n. s. IV (1827) 542.

³⁹ XIX (1818) 347.

⁴⁰ 5th ser., V (March, 1817) 293.

⁴¹ VI (Dec. 10, 1831) 336, and VII (Jan. 14, 1832) 21.

⁴² XVII (Dec. 28, 1833) 818.

An Edinburgh reprint of *Memoirs of a Life Chiefly Passed in Pennsylvania*, a volume of Revolutionary and other reminiscences, dedicated to Dr. Benjamin Rush, was the recipient of many notices. The *Quarterly Review*⁴³ flayed it without mercy, casting slurs on the author because his mother at one time kept a boarding-house, and saying, "We scarcely remember to have met with an emptier pretension to literature." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁴⁴ adopts a similar tone, though it is less scurrilous. The *British Critic*⁴⁵ speaks with contempt of the style of the work—which had, it must be confessed, little literary merit. The reason for the intense dislike of the *Memoirs*, is, however, probably explained by a passage from the *Literary Gazette*.⁴⁶

We confess, that to us the employment of many hours on the story of the American revolution and succeeding politics appears little better than a waste of time. How Mr. Higgins, or Wiggins, or Spriggins; or Wilson, Johnson, Thomson, or Robison, acted in the *Seventy-six*, are of all bye-gone facts to us the most indifferent, and we care not if they had never been ascertained and unfolded. But as a specimen of prose composition, of a pleasant and gentlemanlike style, of honourable sentiments and a sound impartial understanding, this Memoir deserves to be considered as one of the most able productions of the American press.

After quoting a passage on General Lee the reviewer continues: "The story proceeds about persons of still less mark or likelihood and not worth a *Rush*, particularly such as the dedication refers to." The *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁴⁷ mixes a little praise with its censure. The *British Review*⁴⁸ and the *Imperial Magazine*⁴⁹ are fair and friendly enough.

Bush's *Life of Mohammed*, one of the few American attempts at a biography of a great world figure, was favorably reviewed by the *Athenæum*.⁵⁰ The *Literary Gazette*⁵¹ patronized it, complaining especially of its Americanisms. Two years

⁴³ XXVI, 364.

⁴⁴ VI (Feb. 1822) 72.

⁴⁵ XVII (March 1822) 301.

⁴⁶ VI, 21.

⁴⁷ XCVIII (May 1822) 106.

⁴⁸ XIX (March 1822) 52.

⁴⁹ IV (April 1822) 382.

⁵⁰ July 20, 1833, p. 473.

⁵¹ XV (Sept. 3, 1831) 565.

later⁵² it gave the work a second notice—no doubt inadvertently—with much more praise.

Books of travel written by Americans during the early nineteenth century may be roughly divided into three groups: those which dealt largely with life and manners in the older sections of the country; those which presented the results of explorations and discoveries in the newer regions; and those which described extra-American scenes. Most works in the first-named class were concerned to some extent with the controversies which arose over the pictures of American life given by English travellers. This literature of English travel in America was, as has elsewhere been remarked, the cause of endless misunderstandings and recriminations, and probably did more than any other one thing to aggravate feelings of irritation between the two countries. References to some of the earlier works written in reply to unfavorable English portrayals will be found in the author's *British Criticisms of American Writings 1783-1815*; and Cooper's *Notions of a Travelling Bachelor* has been treated in another chapter of this study.

Before the consideration of the semi-controversial works mention should be made of a few comments on earlier writers of travel. *Blackwood's*⁵³ for 1825 discusses the *Journals* of Madam Sarah Kemble Knight, who made a trip from Boston to New York in 1704, and gives long extracts. An edition of Dr. Timothy Dwight's *Travels* about 1823 drew much attention to that voluminous work,—attention not all confined to the journals which were most interested in the Doctor's religious views. The *Quarterly Review*⁵⁴ pronounces it the most important of Dwight's writings, and treats it, for an American work, with much respect, though it objects to the author's political and social theories, and grasps eagerly at any admissions of evils in American society. The *Eclectic Review*⁵⁵ devotes nearly thirty pages to the *Travels*. The *Christian Observer*,⁵⁶ the

⁵² XVII (July 20, 1833) 458.

⁵³ XVIII (Oct. 1825) 422.

⁵⁴ XXX (Oct. 1823) 1.

⁵⁵ XX (Nov. 1823) 385.

⁵⁶ XXIII (May 1823) 289.

Repository of Modern Literature,⁵⁷ and the *Investigator*⁵⁸ are wholly commendatory. The *London Christian Instructor*, or *Congregational Magazine*⁵⁹ and the *Methodist Magazine*⁶⁰ accuse Dwight of being too partial to America, but speak on the whole favorably. Most of these articles contain long extracts.

Among the controversial literature of travel is a review in the *Literary Panorama and National Register*⁶¹ of *Remarks on the Review of Inchiquin's Letters, published in the Quarterly Review; Addressed to George Canning, Esq., By an Inhabitant of New England*. The article is not bitter, though it opposes the American view. The *Literary Gazette*⁶² is violent in its denunciations of *Views of Society and Manners in America . . . By an Englishwoman*, which it credits to "a red-hot American, deeply imbued with bitter feelings against England, and competent to no task but to that which he has here executed, namely, the compilation of a blind and laboured panegyric upon everything transatlantic; a sort of reply to Fearon and other writers who have spoken truth." The quotations made by the critic, though favorable to America, can hardly be considered hostile to England; and it seems by no means certain that the work was not, as the title-page maintained, the work of an Englishwoman. The same journal⁶³ objects to *The Americans, by an American in London*, which is "signed by C. Colton, who proves himself to be precisely one of those writers whom the good sense and intelligence both of England and America ought to repudiate. His object is to refute Mrs. Trollope and Captain Hall; and he argues the matter in an acrimonious and silly personal manner." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*,⁶⁴ on the other hand, calls the same work a "very lively and manly publication, from a writer of undoubted veracity, of competent knowledge, and whose every page and every line is a refutation of the recent falsehoods put forth against his country"; and adds, "We are rather

⁵⁷ I (1826) 20.

⁵⁸ VIII (Jan. 1824) 61.

⁵⁹ VI (1823) 204, 260, 366.

⁶⁰ XLVI (1823) 177, 818.

⁶¹ II (July 1816) 587.

⁶² V (1821) 513.

⁶³ XVII (May 25, 1833) 329.

⁶⁴ XXXVIII (1833) 359.

curious to see what the 'Quarterly' will do with it. . . . Mr. Colton's book is too *piquant* not to be read, too reasonable not to be believed." Two comments on *American Sketches, By a Native of the United States*, the first from the *Literary Gazette*,⁶⁵ the second from the *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁶⁶ may be quoted without remark:

If want of incident, pointless burlesque, vulgar anecdotes vulgarly told, can make a book discreditable to the writer, these pages are discreditable. And the matter is made little better by poetry original only in points of strange coarseness.

We know not of any recent publication better calculated to engage pleasingly the mind, than these American Sketches. They are light, yet pithy; agreeable without formality; and are written in a style consonant with their subjects.

The *Literary Chronicle* further compliments the author as a "good fellow," and one who can see faults in America and the Americans. The *Eclectic Review*⁶⁷ gives extracts from the same book, and announces that it abstains from criticism because the author is imitating faults found in recent English writings.

Among miscellaneous works of travel are Tudor's *Letters on the Eastern States of America*, of which Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*⁶⁸ says that the author is not a man of genius, but his "language is of a remarkably pure, perspicuous, and English cast"; and *A Summer Month, or Recollections of a Visit to the Falls of Niagara and the Lakes*, credited to "a Mr. Dalton," by the *Literary Gazette*,⁶⁹ which speaks good-naturedly of the work as "slight but rather pleasing."

Judge James Hall's *Letters from the West* should be grouped with the writings that have a controversial bearing. Indeed, it was the West which Judge Hall knew, the region of the new settlements, which furnished much of the material for slurs cast upon America by Mrs. Trollope and others. English readers failed to discriminate between different sections of the country, and assumed that the necessary crudities

⁶⁵ XI (April 14, 1827) 233.

⁶⁶ IX (March 24, 1827) 180.

⁶⁷ XXVIII (1827) 83.

⁶⁸ VI (July 1822) 315.

⁶⁹ VIII (Feb. 1824) 116.

and makeshifts of the pioneer were typical of the manners and the conveniences of all America. So the English reviewers of Hall did not recognize that much of what he described was as novel to the dwellers on the Atlantic seaboard as to them; and they also failed, in some instances, to catch the import of his humor, and took his jests for earnest. Especially were they troubled by his title. Since he lacked the formal dignity of an English judge, they inferred that he must be a mere buffoon, and that the society which would tolerate him in his position must be wholly base. In justice to the critics it must be conceded that Hall had a tendency to be flippant, and that his literary recreations were not examples of classic repose. Still, most of the English strokes at his faults missed their mark.

The *Literary Gazette's* review of the *Letters*⁷⁰ is in the vein usual to that journal, beginning, "Another American overflow of conceit," and closing "vulgarity can hardly go further." The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁷¹ lectures the author, in a passage which will be cited elsewhere, for his lack of reverence for England. It complains of the "trifling and almost juvenile tone of writing," and concludes: "Judge Hall has a great horror of the Quarterly Reviewers; should they notice him at all, we suspect that horror will not be diminished." This last prophecy was probably fulfilled; for the article in the *Quarterly* for April⁷² rambled even more widely than usual from its subject to say things uncomplimentary to the United States. It accused Hall of being a land-jobber as well as a judge—though it offered no evidence in support of its accusation; maintained that his account corroborated the worst that English travellers had said regarding America; cited all sorts of detached bits which were uncomplimentary to the country; and closed with a wholly irrelevant charge that Americans were "tuft-hunters" when they came to England. This was one of the articles that wholly failed to appreciate Hall's humor. The *Monthly Review*⁷³ expresses astonishment that a Judge should write travels. It complains that his composition "is forever upon stilts," and says:

⁷⁰ XII (Nov. 15, 1828) 722.

⁷¹ I (Dec. 27, 1828) 85.

⁷² XXXIX (April 1829) 345.

⁷³ n. s. IX (Dec. 1828) 502.

Traces of ability may be discovered now and then, and though, of course, the national vanity of the republican breaks out in every page, we cannot but admire, though we have no reason whatever to envy, the bold and independent tone in which he treats matters of public interest on all occasions. Perhaps the most disagreeable feature in his book is the air of puerile levity which pervades it. Our judge is a man of gallantry.

*Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁷⁴ also comments on the difference between Hall and an English judge, and complains of the ornateness of his style:

But Judge Hall is strongly imbued with innumerable transatlantic prejudices against the land of his sires. He is every inch an American. We can partly forgive him his prejudices, because many of them have afforded us much mirth. . . . But much of what Judge Hall sets down is useful, sterling sense, though a certain part of John Bull's family may call it prejudice. . . .

There are also facts of a nature to awaken serious reflections in the European politician; and Judge Hall's nationality, though often ridiculous, is never offensive, for it is accompanied with much truth, an hilarity of spirits, a vivacious manhood, and it is without personal rancour.

The *London Weekly Review*⁷⁵ is patronizing in its treatment, saying, "We are sorry to observe, that with a large share of frivolity the young man appears to mingle a considerable portion of prejudice against England"; and further: "The author is young, lively, amusing, but affected and ignorant, and you laugh at him at least as often as at his jokes. He is a republican but has not sufficient intellect to perceive the beauty and majesty of republican institutions." The *Lady's Magazine*⁷⁶ adopts a similar tone: "Although we are sorry to observe, that the honorable author has not sufficient talent or learning to write well, or the judgment which would studiously avoid absurdity of remark, yet we meet with some communications in the volume not altogether contemptible." The *Eclectic Review*⁷⁷ calls the *Letters* "sad trash."

A later work of Western reminiscences, Timothy Flint's *Recollections*, receives more lenient treatment than usual from

⁷⁴ XXIV (Dec. 1828) 518.

⁷⁵ II (Nov. 15, 1828) 721.

⁷⁶ n. s. X (Feb. 1829) 73.

⁷⁷ 3d ser. II (1829) 391.

the *Quarterly*,⁷⁸ though the critic insists that the author corroborates Mrs. Trollope, and chooses for quotation detached passages discreditable to America.

Journals and reports of exploring expeditions in the West were naturally criticised for content rather than for literary quality, though remarks on the style were frequent. Lewis and Clarke's *Travels*, some earlier reviews of which were mentioned in the author's *British Criticisms of American Writers, 1783-1815*, continued to be noticed. A long leading article in the *Eclectic Review*⁷⁹ for February, 1816, is reasonably favorable, though the critic expressed regret that the expedition was not accompanied by some one with the imagination and the power to see and report things effectively. The *Literary Panorama and National Register*⁸⁰ is inclined to find minor faults with the *Travels*, which it says is "as fruitful of facts as it is barren of remarks upon them." A correspondent of the *Christian Observer*⁸¹ is chiefly concerned because the *Travels* makes no mention of the Sabbath, and says, "It is doubtful whether amongst the whole crew a *Bible* was to be found."

The *Monthly Literary Register*⁸² reprints the *North American Review's* article on *Schoolcraft's Travels*, with a commendatory note. The *Eclectic Review*,⁸³ in a long article, comments on the parsimony of the United States in fitting out government expeditions, but speaks well enough of the book. The editors of the *Eclectic Review*, seem to have been much interested in American exploration, or else they found long extracts from the explorers' reports convenient for filling space. A leading article of twenty pages in the issue for June, 1823,⁸⁴ treats a London reprint of Edwin James's *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains*. The *Repository of Modern Literature*⁸⁵ gives to the same work a pleasant notice, which, however, gives evidence of being taken from some other periodical. *The Narrative of an Expedition*

⁷⁸ XLVIII (Oct. 1832).

⁷⁹ V (Feb. 1816) 105.

⁸⁰ IV (May, 1816) 191.

⁸¹ XVI (April 1817) 231.

⁸² II (Oct. 1822) 203.

⁸³ IV (Dec. 1825) 473.

⁸⁴ XIX, 481.

⁸⁵ II, 382.

to the Source of St. Peter's River, etc., a government report, furnished material for long articles in the *London Magazine and Review*⁸⁶ and the *Monthly Review Enlarged*.⁸⁷ The latter says: "In some instances the style is idiomatic, and words are also introduced which are foreign to the English language: the word bluff is of frequent occurrence: it imports a perpendicular range or escarpment of rock." The *Edinburgh Review*⁸⁸ makes four works of American exploration the basis of an article entitled *Louisiana*.

In connection with accounts of Western travel may perhaps be grouped books on the Indians, who continued to be of great interest to English readers. B. B. Thatcher's *Indian Biography* and his *Indian Traits* were both highly praised, for content and style, by the *Athenæum*.⁸⁹ The latter work was also commended by the *Monthly Review*⁹⁰ and the *Literary Gazette*.⁹¹ The *Eclectic Review*⁹² discusses Hunter's *Memoirs of Captivity among the Indians*.

Of the books of travel by Americans abroad, those which gave impressions of England were most carefully scrutinized. The *Quarterly Review*⁹³ in an article credited to Southey, says some kind things about Professor Silliman's *Travels*, though the context is all hostile to America. The *Quarterly's* review of Paulding's *Sketch of Old England by a New England Man*⁹⁴ is ironical in treatment, but sometimes fails to recognize Paulding's own irony, and to distinguish between his blunders and his intentional humorous exaggerations.

Dr. Richard Rush's *Narrative of a Residence at the Court of London* was widely read and commented upon. Rush had been inclined to favor the English, and his book won welcome in unexpected quarters. The *Athenæum* says:⁹⁵

It is a most courteous rebuke to the petulance of Mrs. Trollope. Were an author to abandon his mind to the task, he could draw such

⁸⁶ n. s. I (April 1825) 571.

⁸⁷ CVIII (Oct. 1825) 113.

⁸⁸ XXXII (July 1819) 231.

⁸⁹ March 1833, p. 178; Oct. 12, 1833, p. 679.

⁹⁰ August 1833, p. 509.

⁹¹ XVII (July 6, 1833) 424.

⁹² XX (1823) 173.

⁹³ XV (July 1816) 555.

⁹⁴ XXX (June 1824) 519.

⁹⁵ May 8, 1833, p. 308.

a picture of the rudeness and vulgarity of England, as would make us the scorn of civilized Europe, and yet say nothing but what was founded in truth—there are sins of omission as well as of commission.

The *Edinburgh Review*⁹⁶ praises the author for his fairness and his conciliatory attitude, and compares him with Cooper: "Literary mischief-makers, who, from want of sufficiently distinguishing between real life and novels; have made savages of their gentlemen in the one, and gentlemen of their savages in the other, have laboured also to persuade their countrymen that their victorious independence is a barb forever rankling in our bosoms." Even the *Literary Gazette*⁹⁷ couples the work with some *Observations by a British Traveller in America*, and makes Rush all that a gentleman should be, and his protagonist the opposite. After quoting at length Rush's goodnatured account of various annoyances to which he was subjected, it remarks, "A regular John Bull would not have been reconciled to the affront during a courteous residence of six months." The *Monthly Review*⁹⁸ calls the book "A very pleasant personal narrative," and also considers it highly creditable that the author did not take offense at slights and annoyances which he was forced to endure. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁹⁹ also contrasts the *Narrative* favorably with English books on America. The most hostile review was that in the *Quarterly*¹ which condemned Rush for reporting diplomatic conversations, spoke of the work as "trivial," and added: "It certainly does not strike us as the production of a superior intellect." The tone of the article is very patronizing. The *Westminster Review*² adopts the attitude that might be expected, finding fault because Rush was so favorably impressed with the Court and English society, and at the same time pointing out that his comment on certain English usages showed the absence of these things at home. The *Foreign Quarterly Review*³ also complains that the

⁹⁶ LVII (July 1833) 449.

⁹⁷ XVII (May 11, 1833) 289.

⁹⁸ June 1833, p. 240.

⁹⁹ XXXVIII (1833) 229.

¹ XLIX (July 1833) 322.

² XIX (Oct. 1833) 177.

³ XII (July 1833) 209.

work is trivial, and that so much of importance is omitted, but finds much to commend: "The tone of Mr. Rush's work is very creditable to him. . . . His style is unpretending and good. We have frequently observed that Americans write very good English."

Col. Ninian Pinkney's *Travels through the South of France* had been widely discussed before 1815.⁴ A second edition was noticed by the *Monthly Review Enlarged*⁵ which says that further information confirms the impression that Pinkney was inaccurate, though not wilfully so.

The leading article in the *Quarterly* for February, 1831,⁶ is a long review of Alexander Slidell's *A Year in Spain*. This is wholly cordial and complimentary, perhaps the more because the author lays no claim to education or literary finish. The *Monthly Review*⁷ also bestows praise not at all to be expected of this journal at this time:

Had the author not announced his country on the title page, and permitted his name to be disclosed in the *Quarterly Review*, which trumpeted forth loud praises of his work before it appeared in public, we should never have supposed that it was written by any other than an Englishman. There are, indeed, two or three sentences, towards the close of the second volume, which might have convinced us of our mistake; but in all other respects, we should have easily believed that these volumes were the production of one of our own countrymen, thoroughly versed in the idiomatic simplicity of our language, and the best style of our literature.

If there be many 'young Americans' brought up among the rising generations, as Lieutenant Slidell appears to have been, these national deficiencies are not likely to remain long unsupplied. The style in which he writes is perfectly free from affectation. It never mounts upon stilts, or betrays the slightest tendency to that arrogance which is so exceedingly disagreeable in the works of some of his countrymen. It is civilized and European in its mode of expressing notions, and speaking of institutions and customs, which are not American. This is a great step for a republican to make who has, we presume, lived chiefly at the other side of the Atlantic, and has been altogether educated there. We are pleased

⁴ See the author's *British Criticisms of American Writings, 1783-1815*. Another favorable review, not there listed, was that in the *Critical Review*, Fifth ser., I (Feb. 1815) 184.

⁵ LXXXI (Sept. 1816) 104.

⁶ XLIV, 318.

⁷ n. and i. s. [XVI] (April 1831) 533.

to recognize in his work so general a conformity to the taste which prevails in England, not because it is that to which we are most inured, but because we believe it to be founded upon the best models.

The *Atlas*⁸ is also enthusiastic over the book. The *Athenæum*,⁹ though not hostile, is more moderate in its praise, and finds the author's observations "only skin deep."

The *Athenæum*¹⁰ makes much sport of E. C. Wines's *Two Years and a Half in the American Navy*, a book of travels by a school-master on a man of war, who evidently saw little ashore during his cruise. The *Literary Gazette*¹¹ is more favorably impressed, though it takes exception to some of Mr. Wines's remarks on British naval pride.

Among minor and miscellaneous works of travel which received notice were *Essays, Descriptive and Moral, on Scenes in Italy, Switzerland, and France, By an American*, which was commended by the *London Christian Instructor and Congregational Magazine*¹² because the writer takes a religious point of view. John White's *Voyage to Cochin China* was well spoken of by the *Eclectic Review*.¹³ The *Monthly Review*¹⁴ devoted to *Sketches of Turkey in 1831 and 1832, by an American*, a long article with many extracts and much praise. Of American travellers in general it says:

Were we to judge of the American character by the specimens with which we are acquainted of their European travellers, we should not hesitate to regard it as entitled to no small degree of respect and esteem. . . . In the works of these various authors we discover not merely a remarkable degree of intelligence, industry, and ability, but a moral tone, an elevated spirit of liberality and forbearance, a general determination to be impartial, such as reflects the greatest credit on their principles. Superadded to this eulogy ought to be the praise for the uniform good humor or rather the constitutional suavity of temper which characterizes every work comprehended in our notice.

⁸ VI (March 27, 1831) 218.

⁹ [IV] (Feb. 26, Mar. 5, 1831) 135, 146.

¹⁰ Jan. 26, 1833, p. 51.

¹¹ XVII (Jan. 19, 1833) 39.

¹² VI (June 1823) 311.

¹³ XXIII (1825) 86.

¹⁴ Nov. 1833, p. 316.

In the autumn of 1833 the *Athenæum*¹⁵ printed a brief note on *Outre-Mer*, interesting chiefly because it connects Longfellow with the period under discussion.

This fanciful work is from the *American Press*—the author imagines himself making a tour in France, and relates his adventures in cities, on river banks, and in castles hoary and dilapidated—in an easy and picturesque way. As he promises more of his rambles, we shall examine his merits more in detail when we meet again.

¹⁵ Oct. 19, 1833, p. 696.

CHAPTER IX

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS WRITINGS

No attempt can be made in this study to consider the almost innumerable notices of American political pamphlets, state papers, and public documents which appeared in British periodicals between 1815 and 1833. Most of these notices had no literary significance; and they indicated less clearly than similar utterances in the earlier period the feeling in Great Britain toward America. Many of them were written with economic and commercial opportunities chiefly in mind; others summarized and criticized in the manner of the impartial historian. Some, of course, expressed national hostility, and some brought out the contrast between defects in English government and virtues that the critic discovered in the American system.

Even in the years just following the War of 1812 much of the comment was fair and friendly. To take an illustration or two almost at random—the *Critical Review*¹ for September 1815 said of *An Exposition of the Causes and Character of the Late War with Great Britain*, "This state paper (for it is understood to be official) resounds highly to the credit of the American government," and went on to praise its fairness. The *Dublin Examiner*² said of President Madison's *Message*:

We have hardly ever perused a paper, of the same length of Mr. Madison's *Message*, from which we derived an equal degree of pleasure. Not, that there is anything very peculiar, or captivating, in the style of this composition; on the contrary, it is homely in the extreme, and, in many parts, betrays considerable carelessness in the writer: neither is it remarkable for any profound views of political society, any sagacious conjectures, or any uncommon

¹ 5th ser. II, 263.

² II (Dec. 1816) 101.

anticipations of the future prosperity and happiness of America; but it is a candid and faithful exposition of the state of a free nation, rising with incomparable rapidity to the highest summit of greatness.

Criticisms of a few more general political works may be mentioned. *Constantine and Eugene, or an Evening at Mount Vernon, a Political Dialogue*, was reviewed in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*,³ which, as might be expected, ridiculed both the ideas and the style. *Europe, or a General Survey of the Present Situation of the Principal Powers, with Conjectures on their Future Prospects, by a Citizen of the United States* was reviewed in both the *Monthly Literary Register*⁴ and the *Eclectic Review*.⁵ The former concludes its discussion:

The work, in its composition, shews evident symptoms of a powerful and a classical writer, but it is too much tainted with that turbid style, in which the Americans are all too apt to indulge. . . . It contains many very profound observations and enlightened speculations, mixed, however, with some fantastic theories and hasty opinions, and upon the whole, must be considered as a production every way deserving of public attention.

The *Eclectic Review*, though hardly hostile, finds much to condemn.

Another work of a similar title attracted attention some six years later. *America: or a General Survey of the Political Situation of the Several Powers of the Western Continent, with Conjectures on their Future Prospects, by a Citizen of the United States* was ridiculed by the *Literary Gazette*,⁶ and severely scored by the *Athenæum*.⁷ The *Monthly Review*⁸ praised the style, but found fault with the ideas.

We must do him the justice to acknowledge that his essay, however objectionable it may be to an Englishman in several respects, is marked by ability of the very first order. Since the publication of those admirable dissertations which were collected in "The Federalist," we have not seen any political composition from the pen of an American, that can at all be compared with this. The

³ LV (Sept. 1819) 52.

⁴ I (May 1822) 3.

⁵ XVIII (1822) 464.

⁶ XII (Sept. 20, 1821) 592.

⁷ [I] (1828) 722.

⁸ n. s. IX (Oct. 1828) 192.

style is idiomatic, and thoroughly English, formed in our best school. . . . He has a courteous method of expressing his notions, which in some measure veils their deformity, and palliates their erroneousness; but as a genuine Yankee braggadocio, he differs in no respect from Mr. Cooper.

In conclusion, the critic said: "We take leave of him, however, with unfeigned respect for his talents, which are calculated to raise him to distinguished eminence in his own country."

New editions of earlier American state papers brought out comments from time to time. Thus, the *Monthly Review*⁹ devoted to the *Federalist* ten pages of the highest praise. The *Foreign Quarterly Review*¹⁰ in criticising Gallatin's *Considerations on the Currency and Banking System of the United States* speaks most highly of Gallatin.

Notices of American works that had a religious bearing were too numerous and of too little literary significance to be listed in detail. Only a few representative articles of different types may here be mentioned. Partly as a matter of general curiosity, and partly on account of a missionary spirit, the religious state of the New World was of great concern to Englishmen. English travellers had much to say on it; and periodicals of all kinds published church statistics, and items of religious news. Reviews of American religious writings were common, and were often colored by the denominational predilections of the reviewer. Thus, the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*¹¹ discusses *American Unitarianism; or a brief History of the Progress and Present State of the Unitarian Churches in America* in a way that shows its hostility to Unitarianism. The *Monthly Repository of Theology*¹² speaks with enthusiasm of the *Christian Disciple*, published at Boston, and is pleased with the larger number of theological works being issued in the United States. Religious revivals in America were the subject of much comment. The Reverend Calvin Colton's *History and Character of American Revivals*

⁹ n. s. III (1826) 516.

¹⁰ X (Aug. 1832) 214.

¹¹ XXIII (Nov. 1815) 455.

¹² XVI (May 1821) 309.

of Religion was reviewed in the *New Baptist Miscellany*,¹³ and W. B. Sprague's *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* in the *Baptist Magazine*.¹⁴ Both these papers were favorably disposed toward revivals. More conservative denominational journals took a different view.

The development of the American Episcopal Church was of great interest to English churchmen, though the emotions with which they regarded this child of the British establishment were varied. The belief was often expressed that America was in a bad way religiously, and that only a state church could bring her relief. In the absence of such an establishment the Episcopal church was regarded as the institution which offered most hope of aid. A typical article is the review of the *Journals of the General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* in the *Christian Remembrancer*.¹⁵ This begins with impressions of America:

Although we have formed and avowed a very unfavourable opinion respecting the moral and religious prospects of the North American Republic, it can hardly be supposed that we are indifferent to its fate. . . . Their situation, from the day in which they afforded a receptacle for our convicts to that in which they established their present formidable power, has been perplexed and difficult. . . .

The political encroachments and injustice, of which so many specimens are visible, plainly prove that the United States will be a plague to others as well as to themselves.

It bitterly attacks all other sects in the United States, shows the spiritual needs of the country, and hails the Episcopal Church of the United States as "the only body which is, in any measure, calculated to fulfil these high destinies." It is perhaps natural that the writer of such an article should minimize the differences between the English and the American *Prayer-Book*. Other critics resented strongly the changes made by the American revisers.¹⁶

¹³ VI (June 1832) 235.

¹⁴ XXV (Feb. 1833) 71.

¹⁵ II (April 1820) 228.

¹⁶ Among many articles on religious matters which might be of interest to the special student are one on *North American Episcopacy* in the *Brit-*

An address entitled *The United States of America Compared with some European Countries, Particularly England*, in which Bishop Hobart of New York commented adversely on certain characteristics of the English Church aroused much discussion. Bishop Hobart had recently been entertained by English bishops, and his strictures were objected to not only as unfair, but as an inappropriate return for hospitality. On the other hand dissenting and liberal church journals found much comfort in his criticisms. The *Christian Observer*¹⁷ though not bitter, thought the Bishop showed poor taste. The *Quarterly Theological Review*¹⁸ was more severe on the discourse:

We can account for the existence of such a document from such a person, but on the supposition of a national antipathy equally melancholy and irreconcilable. We have here a man of gentlemanlike habits,—nay, of considerable intelligence,—nay, of the sacred profession,—nay, of Episcopal rank, actually signaling his first appearance in the American pulpit, on his return from the hospitality and marked attentions of the British Clergy, by a laboured, most unmeasured, and most unfounded attack on the established church of England.

If Dr. Hobart has been unhappily placed in the formidable alternative of sacrificing the conventional honour of society, and the still more delicate honour of his cloth, to the sovereign mandate of his majesty the mob; we must lament that he should have been so tried. But still more repugnantly should we believe, that Dr. Hobart had *volunteered* this offensive publication.

The *Repository of Theology*¹⁹ naturally approved of the parts of the discourse that objected to an establishment, but protested against an occasional criticism of England in general. It concluded its discussion, "His address is truly affectionate and Christian, resembling what we have read in the discourses of some of the primitive bishops of the church, who spoke from the chair of instruction as fathers amongst children." The

4th Review XXI (Feb. 1824) 467, and a review of an address by Bishop White of Pennsylvania in the *Christian Remembrancer*, VI (Nov. 1824) 658.

¹⁷ XXVI (Oct. 1826) 611.

¹⁸ IV (June, 1826) 1.

¹⁹ XXI (Sept. 1826) 542.

*Congregational Magazine*²⁰ also enjoyed the spectacle of a Bishop pointing out the defects of other bishops.

Some of the controversies arising from religious customs in America were amusing. A correspondent of the *Monthly Repository of Theology*²¹ who wrote from Cambridge and signed himself "Cis-Atlanticus" was perturbed because English dissenting ministers accepted honorary degrees from American colleges:

I am prompted to ask, what must be the rank of Dissenting dignitaries, when "Brown University in Rhode Island," can confer an honour upon them? I write, Sir, purely for information; and any of your Correspondents will oblige me who will instruct me how many of the titled Dissenting divines derive their honours from the United States; what mints of academic dignity there are besides "Brown University in Rhode Island"; whether Columbia in Carolina, Louisville in Ohio, Onion-Point in Indiana, Big-Creek in Missouri, &c. transmit diplomas into Great Britain; and how many years lands must be reclaimed from the Chickesaws or Cherokees in order to qualify them to manufacture literary patents of honour.

. . . . I have always understood that it is a constitutional principle that the King is the fountain of honours in Great Britain, and that no titles can be lawfully assumed here, which do not flow from the crown, immediately or through the channel of some establishment under a Royal charter. If I am correct in this principle, it must be inconsistent with his oath of allegiance for any British subject to take, without the King's special license, a foreign title or degree, and any one doing so is guilty of *petty treason*.

The *Christian Remembrancer*,²² in its review of *Standard Works Adapted to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States*, edited by W. R. Whittingham, was patronizingly severe on the editor, though it gave a formal sugar-coating of compliment at the end of the article. Whittingham dared to retort by referring to the *Christian Remembrancer* as "that bigoted high church and Tory periodical," and to wish well to the proposed rival *British Magazine*. This called out²³ an amusingly virulent attack on Whittingham, and more or less on all things American. The editor confessed that he had earlier praised Whittingham, partly because he was an invalid

²⁰ II (Oct. 1826) 539.

²¹ XV (June 1820) 345.

²² III (Jan. 1832) 20.

²³ XV (Feb. 1833) 183.

—“we never discovered any extraordinary talent in his writings”; his theology is of a “schoolboy nature”; yet “with such small pretensions, however, he takes upon himself to rebuke [Bishop Jewell] for inaccuracy of quotations.” The editor further announces that “The name of Tory is with us a hallowed title.” The long article, though somewhat disgusting, is an interesting illustration of the way in which ultra-conservative church journals let their distrust of everything American go so far as to make them distrust even American Episcopalianism.

Despite the doubts which many conservative Englishmen had regarding the religious condition of the United States, American theologians were recognized by dissenters and by many liberal churchmen, and English editions of American theological and religious works were numerous. A reprint of Cotton Mather’s *Essays to Do Good* was praised by the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*²⁴ and the *Baptist Magazine*,²⁵ and a synopsis of the *Desiderata* from the *Essays* was given with commendatory comment in the *Christian Observer*.²⁶ A reprint of part of the *Magnalia* was reviewed in the *Eclectic Review*.²⁷ A *Life of Jonathan Edwards* was noticed in the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*,²⁸ which said: “The name of *President Edwards* is highly esteemed, wherever it is known; and where is it not known? All who are acquainted with his admirable writings will number him amongst the *greatest, best, and most useful* men of this age.” A new edition of the *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will* was reviewed in the *Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal*²⁹ and the *Congregational Magazine*,³⁰ and an edition of the *Narrative of the Revival of Religion in New England* was praised by the *New Baptist Miscellany*³¹ and the *Imperial Magazine*.³² *The New Baptist Miscellany*³³ describes Ed-

²⁴ XXXIV (July 1816) 270.

²⁵ VIII (July 1816) 295.

²⁶ XXIII (June 1823) 359.

²⁷ XX (1833) 277.

²⁸ XXIII (Dec. 1815) 500.

²⁹ I (Sept. 1831) 235.

³⁰ VIII (March 1832) 165.

³¹ III (Aug. 1829) 355.

³² XI (Oct. 1830) 932.

³³ V (May 1831) 200.

ward's *History of Redemption* as "distinguished throughout by the profoundness and originality of its views, the extent of its historical information, and the felicitous illustrations which it supplies of the wisdom of the divine dispensations."

The American theologian who attracted most attention was Timothy Dwight. Dwight was almost universally praised as a man and as a Christian, even by those who could not accept parts of his system of belief. The *Christian Guardian*³⁴ speaks highly of him in connection with his *Memoirs*. His *Theology Explained and Defended* was noticed by the *London Christian Instructor or Congregational Magazine*³⁵ and the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*.³⁶ A London edition in five volumes—said to have been one of three London reprints of the complete work in one year, besides an abridgment—was almost extravagantly praised by the *Christian Observer*.³⁷ "Never did a theologian measure the length and breadth of the expanded regions of revelation with less need of dependence upon the achievements of his predecessors." The reviewer commends his breadth and his fairness when he opposes Episcopalianism. The *Christian Review and Clerical Magazine*³⁸ devoted a long laudatory article to the same work. A Glasgow edition was noticed in the *New Baptist Miscellany*,³⁹ which said:

It is to be found we imagine in the studies of most ministers, and stands in the book-case of many private christians. Few systems of divinity have been more popular or more deserving of popularity. . . . It is not profound, it is not critical, it is not abstruse, but it is remarkably perspicuous, always evangelical, for the most part true to scripture, in many passages forcible and eloquent.

The [*Wesleyan*] *Methodist Magazine*⁴⁰ was almost alone in being lukewarm in its praise of this work:

He was an American Divine, who wrote the English language with greater elegance, correctness, and force than the generality of his

³⁴ XV (Sept. 1, 1823) 351.

³⁵ III (Jan. 1820) 30.

³⁶ XXIX (Feb. 1821) 68.

³⁷ XXV (May 1825) 294.

³⁸ I (Jan. 1827) 50.

³⁹ V (Sept. 1831) 373.

⁴⁰ LIV (Oct. 1831) 701.

countrymen. His creed was Calvinistic; his views of experimental religion very defective; and on no subject does he appear to have been a profound thinker. . . . As a book of reference, however, the work may be useful to those who have not access to extensive theological libraries.

An abridgment of the *System of Theology*, published under the somewhat odd title of *Beauties of Dwight*, was favorably noticed by the *London Christian Instructor, or Congregational Magazine*,⁴¹ the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*,⁴² and the *Baptist Magazine*.⁴³ Various collections of Dwight's sermons were widely noticed. Of an Edinburgh edition of one of these the *New Baptist Miscellany*⁴⁴ said:

No intelligent reader of those volumes can fail to be gratified with the independence of mind, the acuteness of judgment, the vigour of imagination, together with the vast richness and felicity of style, which they display. . . . We like him better as a sermon writer than as the composer of a system of divinity. His views are generally correct, but not profound.

The [*Wesleyan*] *Methodist Magazine*⁴⁵ protested that it did not agree with President Dwight's peculiar sentiments, but conceded that "In these volumes will be found some of the finest specimens of pulpit eloquence that the English language affords." Other reviews of sermons by Doctor Dwight will be found in the *Congregational Magazine*,⁴⁶ the *Edinburgh Theological Magazine*,⁴⁷ the *Baptist Magazine*,⁴⁸ and the *Christian Observer*.⁴⁹ Dwight's *Treatise on the Sabbath* was reviewed by the *Eclectic Review*,⁵⁰ and the *New Baptist Miscellany*.⁵¹ The *Baptist Magazine*⁵² also published in eight instalments an *Essay on the Writings of Dr. Dwight*.

If the irreligious may be grouped with the religious, mention should be made of Thomas Paine, who was now remembered

⁴¹ VI (Dec. 1823) 665.

⁴² n. s. I (Dec. 1823) 503.

⁴³ XVI (Aug. 1824) 341.

⁴⁴ II (July 1828) 279.

⁴⁵ LI (Oct. 1828) 694.

⁴⁶ n. s. IV (Oct. 1828) 531.

⁴⁷ III (June 1828) 334.

⁴⁸ XX (Dec. 1828) 559.

⁴⁹ XXIX (June 1829) 366.

⁵⁰ 3d ser. III (1830) 480.

⁵¹ IV (1830) 430.

⁵² XXII (1830) 133 *et seq.*

not so much as a political writer, but as an opponent of conventional Christianity. His biography by John S. Harford was written for the purpose of discrediting his opinions by showing his personal weaknesses. That he was still believed by the orthodox to be a power for evil is shown by the fervor of this book and of the reviews that it inspired. The article in the *Christian Observer*⁵³ repeats with gusto the worst stories regarding Paine's private life. *The Edinburgh Monthly Review*⁵⁴ shows its indignation in a fifteen-page article of which the following is a sample:

It may appear strange to some of our readers, that we should assist in dragging the memory of the profane and execrated being, whose name is given above, from that deep oblivion into which they may suppose it has long since been precipitated by a load of crime and infamy, such as hardly any other name has been fated to sustain. . . . We admit it as a general rule, therefore, that the memory of those whose principles have been so base, that they cannot even be scanned without contaminating the intellect, or whose actions have been so atrocious that they cannot be reviewed without lacerating the feelings, is best allowed to repose in the dark cemetery of guilt and oblivion, and that the instruction to be derived in such cases, from contemplating the headlong career, and watching the appropriate fate of crime, is, even when the delinquency and punishment are commensurate in this lower world, dearly purchased at the double expense of a defiled imagination and an agonized heart.

But there are cases in which this calm and scornful neglect will not suffice, and in which the spirits of the vile corruptors of the species will not be forgotten into their original nothingness. There are cases where the tomb has closed upon their loathsome carcasses in vain, and their genius still continues to walk abroad in all the majesty of mischief. . . . The pit which was dishonoured by having consigned to it the bones of some stupendous villain, is enlivened by the crowded pilgrimages of his frantic worshippers. . . .

One of the most memorable of this class of wretches was Thomas Paine. . . . We applaud, however, the conduct of Mr. Harford, who has had the zeal and industry to collect some particulars of revolting interest connected with the life of the vulgar apostle of impiety and rebellion, and has made a sort of abstract of his iniquity. . . . The treachery, insolence, callousness—the coarse debauchery—the bestial habits of this most offensive of animals,

⁵³ XIX (April 1820) 266.

⁵⁴ II (April 1820) 434.

are exhibited in colours so simple and yet so lively, that the mind shrinks from the too faithful exhibition.

The contemporary American preacher best known in England was William Ellery Channing, leader of American Unitarianism, who was recognized as a great power, though his theology was objected to by English Unitarians. A reviewer of his *Sermon Delivered at the Ordination of the Reverend Jared Sparks*, writing in the *Monthly Repository of Theology*⁵⁵ for 1819, seemed to know nothing of the preacher; but his fame soon became general. *Blackwood's*⁵⁶ for August 1825 devoted a friendly article to his *Evidences of Revealed Religion*. Channing's non-theological writings came in for considerable discussion, though the tone of the criticism was often determined by the sectarian leanings of the critic. The *Imperial Magazine*,⁵⁷ strongly hostile to Unitarianism, resented Channing's remarks on the *Character and Writings of John Milton* as an impudent attempt to teach England something about one of her own poets. The address on the *Character of Napoleon* flattered British prejudices to some extent, yet it was not so favorably received as some of the author's other works. The *London Magazine*⁵⁸ approved the ideas, but condemned the style: "The Americans probably think him eloquent; the (sic) thinks so himself. This is a pity, for to this notion we must assign the vague and indefinite sentences in which the orator too often sacrifices the sense to the sound." The *Monthly Magazine or British Register*⁵⁹ agrees with the author's views. The *Monthly Repository*⁶⁰ protests against attacking Napoleon's personal character merely because he was in the bad business of being a despot. A correspondent in a later issue of the same magazine⁶¹ answers at length Channing's strictures on Bonaparte. A personal opinion was expressed in a letter from Mrs. Hemans:⁶²

⁵⁵ XIV (Oct. 1819) 635.

⁵⁶ XVIII (Aug. 1825) 160.

⁵⁷ VIII (Oct. 1826) 962.

⁵⁸ n. s. X (Feb. 1828) 233.

⁵⁹ n. s. V, (March 1828) 306.

⁶⁰ n. s. II (May 1828) 340.

⁶¹ n. s. III (Feb. 1829) 200.

⁶² *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Felecia Hemans by her Sister*, p. 152.

Dr. Channing has lately published a very noble essay on the character of Napoleon, occasioned by Sir Walter Scott's *Life of that dazzling but unheroic personage*. I wish you may meet with it; I am sure that the lofty thoughts embodied by its writer, in his own fervid eloquence, could not fail to delight you; and his high views of moral beauty are really freshening to the heart, which longs to pour itself forth in love and admiration, and finds so little in the every-day world whereon such feelings may repose.

Reviews of sermons and collections of sermons by Dr. Channing are to be found in the *Christian Reflector and Theological Inquirer*,⁶³ the *Christian Reformer*,⁶⁴ and the *Monthly Repository and Review*.⁶⁵ Several of these notices find fault with the Doctor's theories at one or another point; but most praise the sermons, though for different qualities. The *Christian Reformer* is especially struck by their boldness, and the *Monthly Repository* by the "perpetual tendency to enhance our self-respect."

Notices of Channing's sermons were not confined to the church journals. The *Westminster Review*⁶⁶ grew enthusiastic over them:

We deviate from our usual course in noticing a pulpit oration. The great mass of such compositions are so ignoble and commonplace. . . . But the sermons of Dr. Channing form a splendid exception to the ordinary character of ecclesiastical eloquence. They are so full of novel and of elevating views conveyed in a language emphatic and majestic, like the finest passages of Milton's glorious prose; they create in the mind such sentiments of admiration for the author, such benevolent desires, such glowing convictions, such upward aspirations, that we cannot but hail every new occasion which brings us in contact with his beautifully-toned affections, and his rich and powerful mind. . . . Dr. Channing was the first man, whose bold and mighty breathings dissipated the delusive mist of fame which hung around the brow of Napoleon. At his reproof the conqueror and warrior was humbled. But it is a far more important task, a higher and a holier calling, to elevate the character of the whole human race, to bring man nearer to his Maker.

A later article in the same periodical says:⁶⁷

⁶³ n. s. I (Jan. 1825) 19.

⁶⁴ XIV (Dec. 1828) 550, and XV (Jan. 1833) 42.

⁶⁵ n. s. III (Feb. 1829) 89.

⁶⁶ X (1829) 98.

⁶⁷ XII (April 1830) 472.

Men of much sturdier talent, and of much more multiform acquirements there have undoubtedly been; and men who have been deservedly held in reputation, not only by the particular religious community to which they belonged, but throughout Christendom. With scarcely an exception, however, they committed the great professional blunder, which he has so happily escaped. They approached revelation as something which was to supersede, or to limit, or to control, the rational faculties: not as something which only acts by them, something which requires, stimulates, and expands them. This is his peculiar merit, his distinguishing characteristic; and by it he has deserved well of his country, and of mankind.

It pronounces Channing "an incarnation of the intellectual spirit of Christianity," and goes on to find all sorts of personal, philosophical and rhetorical virtues—the explanation of so great favor being clearly Dr. Channing's exaltation of reason.

The *Edinburgh Review's* article on Channing's *Sermons and Tracts* characteristically discusses all other American writers before it reaches the collection in hand. It charges that Channing "keeps one eye on both worlds: kisses hands to the reading public all round; and does his best to stand well with different sects and parties." In conclusion it praises a few things in the author's philosophy, and pronounces his criticisms specious and second-hand. The *Athenæum*⁶⁸ in a notice of *The Importance and Means of a National Literature*, speaks pleasantly of Channing and his reputation in England, praises the power and the originality of the pamphlet, but complains of the "endeavour after display." In a later note⁶⁹ the *Athenæum* says: "The eloquence of Dr. Channing requires no recommendation, nor do we like it the worse for being connected with piety." "The Lounger" in *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁷⁰ says after speaking of Channing:

It is high time we should show that we English are willing to be the first echo to an American's praise. The fact is, that when the Americans read our periodicals, they suppose us hostile to them:—no such thing! The Scotch write our periodicals, and it is the Scotch (the last nation in the world to do justice to a new people!) who *abuse* them.

⁶⁸ [III] (May 8, 1830) 281.

⁶⁹ Feb. 1833, p. 120.

⁷⁰ XXVIII (1830) 469.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*⁷¹ devotes an almost purely theological article to Channing's *Objections to Unitarian Christianity Considered*. The *Monthly Repository and Review*⁷² after objecting to some of Channing's ideas, says:

The Repository has never been slow to join a chorus which is more loudly sounded every year; but neither has criticism upon Dr. C's writings been excluded from its pages. In fact, Channing is one of the last men over whom we should take upon us to spread the wing of our protection. . . . His is a perilous station; and he must have a care both of enemies and friends, but especially of his friends. His is one of those names we want to keep holy for the general good of Christendom. . . . He has kindled up more of true ardour, more of virtuous and independent feeling, among us, than all our critical scholars put together.

A notable example of a hostile review is that of *Objections to Unitarian Christianity Considered* in the *Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal*.⁷³

Doctrines the most pernicious and unfounded, when decked out in the brilliant tinselling of a meretricious eloquence, easily call forth the admiration of the undiscerning eye.

. . . . The character of Mr. Channing as a theologian, or as a man of candour, was never high. Of this we are, if possible, more convinced by the perusal of the pamphlet, we have felt it our duty here to notice. A more insidious address to popular feeling was hardly ever penned. We shall content ourselves with showing in a few words its two leading and fatal fallacies, the one of *omission*, the other of *commission*; from which its utter weakness, and what is worse, its total want of moral honesty, will at once be perceived.

Other reviews of sermons and pamphlets by Channing are found in the *Baptist Magazine*⁷⁴ and the *Monthly Repository*.⁷⁵

The Reverend Henry Ware was another New England clergyman favorably known in England. His *Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching* was noticed in the *Eclectic Review*,⁷⁶ the *Christian Reformer*,⁷⁷ and the [*Wesleyan*] *Method-*

⁷¹ CI (May 1831) 433.

⁷² n. s. IV (Feb. 1830) 119.

⁷³ I (Jan. 1832) 570.

⁷⁴ XXII (June 1830) 240.

⁷⁵ n. s. XII (1833) 132.

⁷⁶ XXII (1824) 282.

⁷⁷ XI (March 1825) 99.

ist Magazine.⁷⁸ The last-named periodical says tersely: "Most of the 'hints' contained in this very neat and elegant manual are equally just and important. Young preachers may read the work with advantage; but the price is too great for its size." *Sermons* by Ware was favorably reviewed by the *Monthly Repository*.⁷⁹ The *Monthly Repository* gave much attention to American sermons and collections of sermons. Among reviews and notices in this magazine are one on a sermon by the Reverend John Brazer of Salem;⁸⁰ one on a missionary sermon by J. G. Palfrey;⁸¹ two on sermons by Charles W. Upham;⁸² and one on a volume of sermons by J. Buckminster.⁸³ All these articles are commendatory, some of them highly so. The *Congregational Magazine*⁸⁴ reviews together a collection, *The National Preacher, Or Original Monthly Sermons from Living Ministers* and a volume of *Sermons* by the late Reverend Edward Payson. *The National Preacher* is also reviewed in the *New Baptist Miscellany*.⁸⁵ The *Christian Observer*⁸⁶ began in 1832 a series of articles on *American Divines*, in the introduction to which it protested against English hostility toward America.

Among religious writings of a miscellaneous nature was Jacob Abbott's *The Young Christian*, which went through many English editions. This was reviewed in the [*Wesleyan*] *Methodist Magazine*,⁸⁷ the *Presbyterian Review*,⁸⁸ the *Christian Examiner and Church of Ireland Magazine*,⁸⁹ the *Baptist Magazine*,⁹⁰ the *Imperial Magazine*,⁹¹ and the *Literary Gazette*.⁹² All of these notices were favorable, some of them enthusiastic. The *Literary Gazette* called the book "A work of singular religious and moral value for the young." The

⁷⁸ LIII (Aug. 1830) 548.

⁷⁹ XXI (July 1826) 424; n. s. V (Jan. 1831) 52.

⁸⁰ XXI (June 1826) 350.

⁸¹ n. s. II (March 1828) 184

⁸² n. s. III (Aug. 1829) 565, and IV (Jan. 1830) 45.

⁸³ n. s. V (April 1831) 277.

⁸⁴ VIII (June 1832) 353.

⁸⁵ VI (Aug. 1832) 338.

⁸⁶ XXXII 465 *et seq.*

⁸⁷ LVI (1833) 46, 287.

⁸⁸ III (Jan. 1833) 302.

⁸⁹ n. s. II (Feb. March 1833) 38, 213.

⁹⁰ XXV (May, 1833) 220.

⁹¹ 2nd ser. III (July 1833) 338.

⁹² XVII (Sept. 7, 1833) 568.

Presbyterian Review said: "It has a philosophical spirit in it which is calculated to gratify the most cultivated intellect, a beautiful simplicity, which renders it intelligible to the weakest mind, and a moral earnestness which forces its way into the very depths of the heart." Another book by Abbott, the *Mother at Home*, was noticed in the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*.⁹³ The *Monthly Review*⁹⁴ describes the Reverend Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* as a "profoundly learned and able work, the very creditable production of American intellect." *Blackwood's*⁹⁵ for July 1832 devotes a thirty-page article to the *Remains* of the Reverend Edmund D. Griffin. Griffin was something of a youthful prodigy, a preacher who died at the age of 26. The reviewer does not reach him until after many pages of discussion of American writings in general, but in the end praises both him and his editor enthusiastically.

⁹³ n. s. XI (Oct. 1833) 443.

⁹⁴ Nov. 1833, p. 452.

⁹⁵ XXXII (July 1832) 91.

CHAPTER X

PERIODICALS AND ANNUALS

American literary periodicals found their way to England in considerable numbers, and were watched by English editors as the surest indication of the literary culture prevalent in America. The most important of these periodicals, the *North American Review*, was the subject of much general comment, and separate issues were often noticed, and sometimes reviewed in detail. One of the earliest reviews of the *North American* was in a magazine of no great literary importance, the *Theatrical Inquisitor and Monthly Mirror*.¹

If we may be allowed to form a judgment of the state of the periodical press in America, from a perusal of the specimen before us, the inference is unavoidable, that it is at a still lower ebb than even our own. . . . The "Review of Books" appears to have been composed with somewhat more care and ability, and forms by far the most interesting portion of the work. It chiefly consists of a reply to an article which appeared some ten or twelve months since in the *Quarterly Review*, giving a very unfavourable, but we are not prepared to say an unfaithful, picture of the state of society and manners in the United States.

The reviewer goes on to say that the feeling with which charges of vulgarity are resented shows that they are true; and quotes what is evidently burlesque advice regarding manners as an indication of the unbelievable boorishness of the Americans. Five years later in the *Edinburgh Review*² Jeffrey said in a footnote to a review of the *Sketch Book* that the *North American* "appears to us to be by far the best and most promising production of the press of that country that has ever come to our notice. It is written with great spirit . . . and abounds with profound and original discussions on the

¹ VII (June 1815) 377.

² XXXIV (Aug. 1820) 160.

most interesting topics. . . . The style is generally good, though with considerable exceptions—and sins oftener from affectation than ignorance. But the work . . . is decidedly superior to any thing of the kind that existed in Europe twenty years ago." *The London Magazine*³ under the heading "The North American and Quarterly Reviews" ridicules the Americans somewhat for their sensitiveness, but on the whole takes the side of the *North American* in a controversy over the use of Indian troops by the English in America. An article entitled *American Criticism* in the same journal⁴ is really on the current number of the *North American Review*. It gives notes on some of the papers, and bestows some praise. A correspondent of the *Kaleidoscope*⁵ quotes praise of the *North American* from other English journals, and expresses surprise that it is not found in English reading rooms. That the name of the *Review* was not a household word may be inferred from the following note in the *Christian Reformer*.⁶

This is a Quarterly Journal, in the manner of our Quarterly and Edinburgh. It is compiled with great ability, and may be placed beside the above-named celebrated periodicals. Already, it has raised the standard of literature and taste among our Transatlantic brethren.

*The Edinburgh Literary Journal*⁷ compares the first and the current numbers of the *North American*: "It is a contrast between a heavy imitation of the *Edinburgh Review*, and a work which imitates no other, but expresses, in a spirited and polished style, original views on a variety of interesting topics. This advance it has not made alone, but in company with the whole of American literature." By this time the *Review* was coming to be recognized. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*⁸ said:

No literary performance of the Americans has done so much to wipe away the reproach of imbecillity, supposed to be deserved by their intellectual character and efforts, as the *North American*

³ n. s. VIII, 400.

⁴ d ser. III, 358.

⁵ V (Dec. 14, 1824) 204.

⁶ XII (Dec. 1826) 483.

⁷ II (Aug. 15, 1829) 147.

⁸ XXXVII (Oct. 1829) 422.

Review. It is really an excellent periodical, and we have more than once referred to its pages for reflections more just, and views and opinions more striking, than were afforded, of the same subjects, by the colossal reviews of our own island. We recommend to the editor to confine himself and his writers more to American books and local subjects.

The *Athenæum*⁹ also commented favorably:

This able periodical is doing more to create respect for the literary and intellectual character of the Americans, than any other production that has issued from the press of that country. The editor and writers, it is true, appear to entertain a firm belief that America is the best country under the sun; but as they abstain from foolish and impertinent tirades against the institutions and customs of other countries, their nationality may be pardoned.

Another review of No. LXXIII with considerable praise and long extracts appeared in the *Athenæum*¹⁰ for 1831. *The Spirit of Literature*¹¹ called the *North American* "a journal which is an honour to American literature and scarcely, if at all, inferior to the best publications of the kind which the mother country can boast." Again, the same journal¹² reviewed the latest issue, and quoted commendations of the *Review* from the *Edinburgh*, the *Spectator*, and the *Athenæum*. In the issue for September 18, 1830,¹³ it discussed a reply in No. LXVIII of the *North American* to an attack on America in the *Edinburgh*. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*¹⁴ noticed No. LXVII; and later in the same year¹⁵ it praised No. LXVIII. The *Literary Guardian*¹⁶ commented on the *North American* with No. LXXIII in hand: "This periodical production of our transatlantic friends appears to be most ably conducted, and bids fair to rival in reputation the older established periodicals of the mother country." An article in the *London Magazine*¹⁷ entitled *The North American Review on Lord Byron's Works and Pinkney's Poetry* expresses

⁹ [III] (March 20, 1830) 168.

¹⁰ [IV] (Oct. 22, 1831) 685.

¹¹ I (June 5, 1830) 32.

¹² I (July 1830) 23.

¹³ I, 329.

¹⁴ III (June 26, 1830) 369.

¹⁵ IV (Sept. 4, 1830) 154.

¹⁶ I (Nov. 19, 1831) 123.

¹⁷ n. s. IV (Feb. 1826) 224.

no real opinions of the *North American*, beyond the assumption that it is typical of America and American criticism.

The American periodical which next after the *North American Review* received the most notice was the *Annual Register*—a fact which shows to what an extent the interest in America was curious, almost statistical. The *Literary Gazette*¹⁸ said *apropos* of the *Register* for 1825-6: "It is pleasing to see the epoch of half a century of independence marked by a new literary effort." *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹⁹ discusses the first volume in an article less friendly to America than is usual in this periodical. The *Athenæum*²⁰ takes the appearance of a later volume as the occasion for scoring America and American literature, but says that the *Register* "displays a much more practical, as well as a more Catholic spirit, than we are wont to observe in American publications." The *Literary Gazette*²¹ begins an article on the *Register* for 1826-7:

Accustomed to speak our sentiments without circumlocution, frankly, whether for or against, it affords us much pleasure to notice this volume, which is just imported, with very high eulogy. It is an able performance, and does credit to the American mind and literature. But why should we say American, since the sterling and best works of that country are so entirely English and worthy of the intellect of the mother-land? It is only when presumptuous egotists take it into their heads to imagine that they are new and sublimer creations of a new and sublimer world, that the good sense and genius of the United States are turned into folly and scoff. The work before us is a plain, sound and sensible production, full of information, and (though national enough) of much historical value.

After these words of commendation the article reprints one or two statistical items, and about a page of reports of slaves tortured to death, murders, Indian troubles, etc., and says: "This cento, selected without reference to connexion, is yet characteristic enough of the country."

Among the notices of other American papers and magazines was one of the *American Analectic Magazine* and the *American*

¹⁸ XI (Aug. 25, 1827) 553.

¹⁹ XXI (Oct. 1827) 412.

²⁰ [III] (Feb. 11, 1829) 84.

²¹ XIII (April 11, 1829) 237.

Portfolio in the *Critical Review*.²² The tone, while rather condescending, was not unfriendly. The *Edinburgh Magazine* and *Literary Miscellany* (*Scot's Magazine*)²³ names as "the chief if not the only general periodical journals in the United States": the *Portfolio*, the *Analectic Magazine*, the *Portico*, and the *North American Review*, and gives a brief characterization of each. It also says, "There are besides several Medical Journals and Reviews, conducted by men of great talents, and well supported by the Faculty, in original contributions." The *Literary Gazette*²⁴ speaks with apparent satisfaction of the *Albion*, "a journal devoted to British News and British Politics," founded at New York. Silliman's *American Quarterly Journal of Science* was frequently noticed, usually with some favor. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*²⁵ in "Ourselves, our Correspondents, and the Public"—a department modelled somewhat on the *Noctes*—remarked: "American criticism is very fast improving its principles. The 'Southern Review' puts forth an excellent review of Byron's 'Manfred.'" The *Edinburgh Literary Journal* seems to have been interested in the unusual in American journalism. The leading articles in the issues for September 12 and 19, 1829,²⁶ respectively discuss the *Cherokee Phoenix* and the *New York Evening Post*. A later issue²⁷ comments on the current numbers of the *American Mechanics Magazine*, the *American Annals of Education and Instruction*, and the *American Monthly Magazine*. This editor must have received some of the American magazines regularly, for he several times comments on the *American Quarterly Review*,²⁸ in which he finds much to commend; and he also mentions several other journals.

It is significant of the interest taken by English editors in all American literary attempts that the early annuals and gift-books were carefully reviewed by several journals. No mention has been found of the two first volumes of the *Atlantic Souvenir*,

²² 5th ser., V. (Jan. 1817) 91.

²³ I (Aug. 1817) 70.

²⁴ VI (Oct. 5, 1822) 632.

²⁵ XXXII (1831) 447.

²⁶ II, 201, 215.

²⁷ V (April 23, 1831) 266.

²⁸ V (Feb. 26, 1831) 138; VI (Aug. 20, 1831) 108; VI (Oct. 8, 1831) 209.

the earliest of the American annuals; but the volume for 1828 was reviewed in both the *London Weekly Review*²⁹ and the *Literary Gazette*.³⁰ The former said: "We are pleased to observe that even in the lightest department of literature, our republican brethren are becoming our rivals. The very interesting and elegant little volume now before us is the first Annual that has appeared in America."³¹ The *Literary Gazette* takes a similar tone: "This is a very pretty little volume, and does credit to the taste and gallantry across the Atlantic." It gives the preference to the prose, and says some of the tales "would deserve a place in any Annual." "The poetry is but mediocre; it wants originality, and, worse still, wants character; there is nothing American in it." In August of the same year the *Gazette*³² includes the *Token* for 1828 in a list of "American Publications" which it treats together, and gives it the most space of all, ranking it in many respects with English annuals; and praising especially the prose, which is "possessed of peculiar attractions, as furnishing not only several interesting sketches and tales, but having more of transatlantic freshness about them than is usually found in American works." "The *Token* gives us American descriptions and American embellishments." A few months later the *Gazette*³³ reviews the *Token* for 1829, which it pronounces inferior to English annuals in engravings, "but in all else fully their equal."

It is a very charming little volume, and says much for the taste and talent diffused through American society; for the minds which can produce and appreciate the elegancies of literature, must have before *progressed* through its rougher paths.

We cannot but observe, both with reference to the volume now before us, and other productions of the American muse, how very much the writings of L. E. L. have given their tone to Transatlantic poetry; their style is modelled on the school of which she is the founder: the same vein of metaphysical sentiment; the same wish to give inanimate nature our own feelings, making a sympathy between them, sometimes fanciful, but oftener touching; the same desire to exalt the humanity of love by the refinement of sorrow; the short sketches in blank verse; and much,

²⁹ II (Feb. 2, 1828) 68.

³⁰ XII (March 29, 1828) 197.

³¹ This statement is of course incorrect.

³² XII (Aug. 23, 1828) 530.

³³ XIII (Feb. 14, 1829) 99.

too, of that carelessness of diction, and neglect of action in the narratives, which are among her faults. The earlier American Souvenirs are chiefly composed of selections from her writings; and now that they have brought their own talents to the work, and are giving their Annuals a national character, the same influence is still perceptible; though, we must say, amid her many imitators, they are the only ones that have also their own original features:—if the spirit of song has been awakened by strange music, it awakes to revel in a new and beautiful world of its own.

By the following year advance copies of the American annuals must have been sent to England, for the *Literary Gazette's* review of both the *Atlantic Souvenir* and the *Token*³⁴ for 1830 appeared in November 1829. Indeed, there seems to have been, nominally at least, a London edition of the *Atlantic Souvenir*. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*³⁵ praises the *Token* for 1831:

The *Token*, in point of appearance and embellishment, is very little behind any of our own annuals; and its literary contents though supplied by persons whose names are not familiar to us, are highly respectable, and are not the less interesting that their leading features are strictly national. . . .

For the sake of their own character the Bostonians ought to support the *Token*, for it is a volume whose very exterior tells of pleasant drawing-rooms, well-bred men, and accomplished women; though these have not hitherto been considered the points in which America excels.

Tait's *Edinburgh Magazine*³⁶ prints what is a fairly representative criticism of the *Token* for 1832, praising the binding, paper and typography, but not the engravings, and saying of the literary contents: "Many of the lyrics are pretty; but, somehow, none of them seem native to the soil. They are an echo, repeating what has been heard from this side of the Atlantic. The prose sketches are equal to any thing we have seen in our own annuals." The *Athenæum*³⁷ somewhat oddly praises the engravings in the *Token* and *Atlantic Souvenir* for 1833, but says nothing of the literary contents. An early notice of the 1834 volume³⁸ says:

³⁴ XIII (Nov. 28, 1829) 773.

³⁵ V (Jan. 15, 1831) 45.

³⁶ I (June 1832) 378.

³⁷ March 9, 1833, p. 151.

³⁸ *Ibid* (Nov. 9, 1833) p. 748.

It is a marvel for Boston; but not for London. It has a republican look: it is simple, without show or ostentation; and if it pleases at all must please by the graceful humility of its beauty, like a daisy or a hare-bell: lay it by the side of our more splendid Annuals, and it looks like Brutus or a visit to Sardanalphus.

This pleasantly patronizing tone is not unfair to the American annuals when they are compared with their more finished English rivals. The really remarkable thing is that they should have been glanced at in England at all.

CHAPTER XI

SCIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ETC.

American scientific and scholarly works between 1815 and 1833 had most of them slight literary significance, but all results of intellectual activity in the New World were closely associated in the minds of Englishmen. A great number of the so-called reviews of scientific books and periodicals were made up of summaries and extracts, with slight criticism. In most cases the work of American scientists was treated respectfully. A few reviews and notices, in some of which the critic has taken account of literary quality, may be mentioned as examples.

The *British Review*,¹ commenting on the *Memoirs of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture*, and several other American works, says: "The American agricultural writers are plain, matter-of-fact men, little solicitous about elegance of style or expression in their practical communications. This circumstance will account for the appearance of such words as *progressing, grades, testing*, and the like, which do not sound very harmoniously to the chastized ear of a well-educated Englishman." The *Literary Panorama*² speaks pleasantly of the *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, and of the Academy itself. In another article³ it congratulates the Linnæan Society of New England on the publication of a report "relative to a large Marine Animal, supposed to be a Serpent, seen near Cape Ann, Massachusetts." The sea-serpent was given much space in publications of about this time, and its existence was readily believed.

¹ VI (Nov. 1815) 377.

² n. s. VIII (May 1818) 228.

³ n. s. VIII, 242.

The *Edinburgh Review*⁴ treats, on the whole favorably, of two American works on geology. The interest of the reviewer is evidently economic rather than literary, or even purely scientific. The *Literary Gazette*⁵ in a long serial discussion of *Wilson's American Ornithology* praises both the author's work and the mechanical form of the volumes. Professor Jacob Biglow's *American Medical Botany* was favorably reviewed by the *Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland*.⁶ The *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*⁷ devotes a long article to the *Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society*, which it treats respectfully. The *Museum*⁸ says of *A Complete Historical, Chronological, and Geographical American Atlas*, "The plan on which this Atlas is arranged, is the best and most convenient that has yet been devised for the purpose of reference." The *Athenæum*⁹ says of Flint's *History and Geography of the Mississippi Valley*: "The author of this volume is clear, concise, and impartial in his statements: he loves his country as every honest man should: he opens his eyes to her virtues, nor shuts them on her defects." It again speaks of the author as "a clever, clear-headed man," and adds: "He is moreover honest and eloquent, and the latter is as much his own as the former: he is easy and generally unaffected, and not at all studious to say grand things." The *Imperial Magazine*¹⁰ reviews, favorably, Carey and Lee's *Geography and Statistics of America and the West Indies*. The *Metropolitan Literary Journal*¹¹ adopts the familiar patronizing tone in its note on the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia: "Children are imitative animals; our young relatives on the western side of the Atlantic no sooner hear of any good thing projected on our side the water, than as docile followers of their parents, they adopt it. This is as it should be; else how would knowledge of all kinds be diffused. . . .

⁴ XXX (Sept. 1818) 374.

⁵ II (1818) 625, 644, 660, 677.

⁶ III (Aug. 1819) 319.

⁷ I (Nov. 6, 1819) 385.

⁸ I (Nov. 23, 1822) 484.

⁹ [V] (1832) 787, 823, 840.

¹⁰ V (May 1823) 460.

¹¹ I (Sept. 1824) 485.

This Institute is designed for similar purposes to the various mechanics' institutes in this country; but its objects are more extensive. . . . We congratulate our transatlantic brethren on the spirit which they have displayed." The *Eclectic Review*,¹² which is not given to praising scholarly work in America, speaks well of Harris's *Natural History of the Bible*. Both *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*¹³ and the *Literary Gazette*¹⁴ are most favorably impressed by Thomas Say's *American Entomology*. The *Monthly Review*¹⁵ at the close of a long article devoted mostly to another work, approves Number 1 of the *Monthly American Journal of Geology and Natural Science*, especially because it is undertaken in a "laudable spirit of Christianized philosophy." The *Literary Gazette*¹⁶ in an article continued through a series of numbers, speaks civilly of the *Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society*, and quotes at length from papers on the American Indians. Another long-continued review, occupied mostly with content, is that of Hinton's *History and Topography of the United States* in the *Imperial Magazine*.¹⁷ The critic is not especially friendly to the work under review, or to the United States, but finds comfort in the Whitefield revivals.

Of scholarly works not concerned with natural science the one which elicited most comment was Webster's *Dictionary*. In December, 1829, E. H. Barker wrote to the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*¹⁸ in praise of Webster's work, saying: "I could furnish multitudinous instances of the superior claims of this Dictionary over every other which is in print." The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*¹⁹ was more noncommittal in its notice of Part I of the London-Edinburgh edition:

This is a work which is held in great estimation in America, where it originally appeared. . . . We can easily conceive that a prejudice may exist in this country against an English Dictionary

¹² XXII (1824) 454.

¹³ XV (Oct. 1825) 460.

¹⁴ X (March 25, 1826) 177.

¹⁵ n. and i. ser. Nov. 1831, p. 370.

¹⁶ IV, 691, *et seq.*

¹⁷ 2nd ser. I (1831) 91, 284, 388, 481.

¹⁸ XCIX (Dec. 1829) 516.

¹⁹ III (March 13, 1830) 161.

emanating from America; but we have every reason to believe that Dr. Webster is well qualified for the task he has undertaken. His introductory Dissertation on the origin, history, and connexion of the languages of Western Asia and of Europe, proves him to be a scholar of no mean attainments; whilst we are aware from other sources that he is an acute thinker, and a most laborious investigator. We do not doubt that the work, now in course of publication, will be found an important addition to philology.

The critic of the *Dublin Literary Gazette*²⁰ was more favorably impressed. He saw no reason why American scholars should not do well with the "philosophy" and the orthography of the language, but questioned whether they could judge of the best pronunciation. He commented favorably on the notation of sounds, and on the introduction of scientific terms. The *Gentleman's Magazine*,²¹ speaking through its regular columns, said:

A dictionary of the English language by an American, is an annunciation prone to excite alarm, or ridicule; but nevertheless the fact is such, and we rejoice, because it may tend to prevent American-English from lapsing into that slang to which the late Mr. Mactaggart and others have pronounced it to be in speedy process of approximation. However, Dr. Webster is an author thoroughly competent to the arduous task; and English in intellect and habits of thinking; and the authors whom he uses for his citations are English also.

In conclusion: "That it is an excellent Dictionary is unquestionable."

A reviewer in the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*²² who writes in the first person singular but does not sign his name, does not profess to be able to judge of philological accuracy, but praises the work as a defining dictionary, and considers it far superior to Johnson's. He commends the scientific accuracy, and says: "We cannot but think he will be ultimately regarded as having carried forward English lexicography as much beyond the point where it was left by Johnson, as Johnson himself advanced it beyond the progress

²⁰ I (April, May, 1830) 251, 327.

²¹ C (May 1830) 339.

²² VIII (April 1830) 396.

of his predecessors." The *Monthly Magazine*²³ though conceding that "His suggestions, moreover, on orthography and orthoepy are generally sound; and everything relative to science is indisputably improved," finds much fault with Webster for many of the words he includes, and accuses him of trying to swell the number. It protests, naively, against the giving of the value of ancient coins in American, rather than in English money; and objects to some expressions used in the definitions as Americanisms. The forty-page criticism in the *Westminster Review*²⁴ is scholarly and apparently neither prejudiced nor perfunctory, though the critic is not enthusiastic over the lexicon, which he considers better than Johnson's but not all that might have been wished. He says that the American support given Webster shows anxiety for the preservation of purity of the language; but doubts whether America can produce a wholly adequate dictionary, since the necessary works are not to be had there. *Colburn's New Monthly Magazine*²⁵ in a review of several American tales incidentally remarks: "It is curious that the most important English dictionary, with the most profound and accurate investigation of the origin and principles of our native language published in the present day, should be the production of an American."

Among other scholarly works reviewed is the *Encyclopedia Americana*, of the first volume of which the *Literary Gazette*²⁶ speaks pleasantly, though it is annoyed by the omission of an article on *Heraldry*, and some other republican oddities. Kent's *Commentaries* was discussed in the *Westminster Review*,²⁷ which took advantage of the occasion to point out the advantages of American law and practice over British. Charles W. Upham's *Lectures on Witchcraft* was reviewed in the *Monthly Repository and Review*,²⁸ and a work on *Political Economy* by President Cooper of South Carolina in the *Eclectic Re-*

²³ n. s. X (Aug. 1830) 231.

²⁴ XIV (Jan. 1831) .

²⁵ XXXI (1831) 42.

²⁶ XIV (March 6, 1830) 155.

²⁷ XVI (April 1832) 359.

²⁸ n. s. VI (Aug. 1832) 545.

view.²⁹ In the preceding volume the *Eclectic Review*,³⁰ speaking on two articles in the *North American Review*, has made some general comments on American scholarship:

It is not a little singular that the first critical notice which, we believe, has been taken of the letters of Eunomius, notwithstanding the popular interest attaching to the subject of law reform, . . . should appear in a Transatlantic periodical. But it is a fact that our American brethren whether because they have more leisure, more assiduity and enterprise, or less contempt for what is foreign than ourselves, . . . are very much more attentive to what is passing and publishing in England and all parts of Europe, than Englishmen are to either the literary or the political transactions of countries in immediate juxtaposition with their own.

²⁹ 3d ser. VII (1832) 1.

³⁰ 3d ser. VI (1831) 385.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

The feeling of one nation toward another is usually a complex matter. In great crises like those of war, waves of prejudice—for they hardly deserve a better name—may blind a whole people to either the virtues or the faults of another country; but such wholesale judgments never last long. The question so frequently asked of a returning traveller from Europe: "How do they feel toward us over there?" never admits of a satisfactory answer. Does the "they" of the question mean persons whom one meets socially? or collaborators and rivals in scholarship and business? or the politicians of this or that party? or the editors of this or that journal? or that non-existent generalization, "the man in the street?" Does "us" mean American tourists? or students and business men in Europe? or Americans at home, known, as they are mostly known, through stories and photo-plays? or the government and its foreign policies? Even if the strictest limitation were made, answer to the question would still be impossible, for the feelings which any individual entertains toward a nation are far more complex than those which he entertains toward another individual. An intelligent person is likely to find something in the civilization of almost any nation which he can admire. He is also certain to disapprove certain national traits. Moreover, he almost always finds that individuals whom he meets are not fully representative of their nation as he conceives it, and he is drawn to these or repelled by them as he would be by individuals of his own country. But pervading and modifying all these intellectual judgments and personal responses is a half-recognized sense of nationality. Most normally constituted persons find—though they may be amused at the fact—that for them the world seems to center in their own country; that all

other places are "abroad," and all other people, even when they are met in their own homes are "foreigners." It is probable, too, that the very basis of patriotism is a slight inherent contempt for other nations, their institutions, and their inhabitants; yet the intellect of any reasonable man rejects such contempt as unfair and absurd.

If the feelings of one nation toward another are so complex even in the most humdrum years, those of England toward America were much more involved in the period which has been covered by the present study. The War which came to an end in 1815 was almost unique in the fact that so many citizens of both the contending countries opposed it. Even during the period of hostilities the American cause was warmly supported in British periodicals. At the same time, no real Briton could have escaped a feeling of satisfaction when his nation won a victory, or a feeling of chagrin when she suffered a naval defeat. This conflict between intellectual judgments and patriotic emotions continued after the War.

Literary judgments are always more or less influenced by political, social, and religious prejudices, and this was especially true during the first third of the nineteenth century. Each of the leading literary reviews was regarded as a party organ, and its verdicts on either English or foreign writers were likely to be warped by its party affiliations. At the same time England was in a literary turmoil, with conflicting schools and groups of writers, and conflicting literary theories. Literary partisanship was often more intense than political or religious partisanship.

It was natural that British reviews of any foreign books should be slightly condescending in tone, and should color their expressed judgments according to the political, religious, and literary groups to which their authors belonged. It was especially natural that this should be true when the works under consideration were the product of a people whom the English still regarded as their wayward offspring, and who had hardly as yet established themselves among the nations of the world. Yet it was not very often that British critics stultified themselves by unreasoning hostility to American writings. The great majority tried to be fair, and even those who were most

carping in their comments played the game according to the recognized rules of party warfare.

Not only did most critics aim to be fair, but many of them showed an eagerness to welcome American writings, based in part on mere curiosity as to what things could come out of the wilderness, but in part on higher motives. This eagerness was, however, not wholly fortunate in its results. It led to the employment of a double standard—to the practice of treating American more leniently than English books. It also led, in most instances, to an emphasis on distinctive characteristics in American literature. Critics did not let Americans long forget that until a few years before they had been British subjects, and that all their inherited culture was British; but, illogically, they insisted that the new nation should at once produce a wholly novel literature. This led to excessive praise of works which pictured modes of life peculiar to America, or which developed eccentricities of manner, like the poems and tales of Neal; while writers who followed the great traditions of English literature, and who treated subjects that were abstract or common to both hemispheres, were disparaged. The last tendency is almost as strong today as it was a hundred years ago, and its persistence has been uniformly unfortunate for the literary understanding between England and America.

There was no one spirit which may be succinctly characterized in which Great Britain approached the work of American writers a century ago. To digest and summarize the mass of divergent and conflicting opinion quoted in the foregoing pages would be like an attempt to condense the multiplication table. At the conclusion of this study one can only call attention to the number and the variety of British comments on American writings; to the general intent of British critics to be fair; to the degree to which this intent was frustrated by insular prejudice and party feelings; and, what is most important, to the painfully slow but still perceptible development of a better mutual understanding between men of letters in the two countries.

APPENDIX

PERIODICALS CONSULTED

Note.—The periodicals listed below were examined in the preparation of the foregoing study. A few of those which were clearly of little value were given a somewhat cursory survey, and a very few were available only in imperfect files. In this list no attempt has been made to give with bibliographical accuracy very long titles, or to trace the frequent minor changes of title, or even, in case of periodicals of little importance, to note all changes of form and frequency of publication. Dates given are inclusive. When the title does not make clear the place of publication, and when no place is mentioned, London is to be understood. The libraries in which the periodicals were examined are indicated by the following abbreviations: B. M., British Museum; Bodl., Bodleian Library; Camb., Library of the University of Cambridge; W., combined libraries of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin. Many of the journals are to be found in more than one of these libraries; though most of those read in the Bodleian are not in the Wisconsin libraries or in the British Museum.

The Academic, a Periodical Publication Comprising Original Essays, Reviews, Poems, &c., &c. Liverpool. Vol. I. Jan. 15-Dec. 21, 1821. B. M.

Anti-Jacobin Review. Vols. XLVIII-LVI. Jan. 1815-Aug. 1819. W.

Argo. Nos. 1 to 6. Dec. 1822-Feb. 1823. B. M.

Athenæum. [Vols. I-V.] Jan. 2, 1828-Dec. 29, 1832. B. M., W.

Atlas, a General Newspaper and Journal of Literature. Vols. V, VI. 1830-1831. Bodl.

Augustan Review. Vols. I-III. May 1815-Dec. 1816. B. M.

Ayrshire Magazine and West Country Monthly Repository. Irvine. Vol. I. Aug. 1815-July, 1816. B. M.

Ayrshire Miscellany, or Kilmarnock Literary Expositor. Vols. II-XVII (incomplete file). 1818-1821. B. M.

Baptist Magazine. Vols. VII-XXV (incomplete file). 1815-1833. B. M.

- Bath and Bristol Magazine, or Western Miscellany.* Vols. I-III. 1832-1834. B. M.
- Bee; or the Collector of Literary Sweets.* Nos. 1, 2, March 1833. B. M.
- Belfast Magazine, and Literary Journal.* Vol. I. Feb.-July, 1825. B. M.
- Bennet's Glasgow Magazine.* Vol. I. July, 1832-June, 1833. B. M.
- Bible Magazine and Theological Review.* Vols. I-V. 1815-1819. B. M.
- Biographical Magazine.* Vols. I, II. 1819-1820. Bodl.
- Blackwood's Magazine.* Edinburgh. Vols. I-XXXIV. 1817-1833. W.
- Bolster's Quarterly Magazine.* Cork. Vols. I, II. Feb. 1826-Oct. 1827. B. M.
- Bon Ton Magazine, or Telescope of the Times.* Vol. I-VI. May 1818-Apr. 1821. B. M.
- Border Magazine.* Berwick. Vols. I, II. 1831-1832. W.
- Boudoir, or British Magazine of Literature, Music, The Fine Arts, Fashions, etc.* Vol. I. Jan.-Dec., 1832. B. M.
- Brazen Head.* Nos. 1 to 3. April, May 1826. B. M.
- British Critic.* Vols. III-XXIII, n. s. Jan. 1815-June, 1825, and Vols. I-III, 3d ser. 1825-1826. B. M.
- British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record.* Vols. I-III. Jan. 1827-Apr. 1828. B. M.
- British Lady's Magazine and Monthly Miscellany.* Vols. I-V and Vols. I-II n. s., Jan. 1815-May 1818. B. M.
- British Magazine, A Monthly Journal of Literature, Science and Art.* Vols. I, II. Jan.-Dec. 1830. B. M.
- British Magazine and Monthly Register of Religious and Ecclesiastical Information, Parochial History, and Documents Respecting the State of the Poor, Progress of Education, &c.* Vols. I-IV. 1832-1833. W.
- British Magazine, or Miscellany of Polite Literature.* Vol. I. 1823. B. M.
- British Review and London Critical Journal.* Vols. VI-XXIII. 1815-Nov., 1825. B. M.
- British Stage and Literary Cabinet.* Vols. I-VI. Jan. 1817-Feb. 1822. B. M.

- Caledonian, A Quarterly Journal.* Dundee. Vol. I, part of Vol. II. June 1820-Oct. 1821. B. M.
- Caledonian Magazine and Review.* Dundee. Vol. I, parts 1 and 2 of Vol. II. July 1822-Feb. 1823. B. M.
- Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory.* Vols. I-IV. 1829-1832. W., B. M.
- Cambridge Quarterly Review and Academical Register.* Vol. I. Mar.-July, 1824. B. M.
- Catholic Magazine and Review.* Birmingham. Vols. I-VI. Feb. 1831-Dec. 1835. B. M.
- Censor; an Entirely Original Work Devoted to Literature, Poetry, and the Drama.* Vol. I. Sept. 6, 1828-April 4, 1829. B. M.
- Chameleon.* Vols. I-III. 1832-1833. Bodl.
- Christian Examiner and Church of Ireland Magazine.* Dublin. Vols. I-XI and Vols. I, II n. s. July 1825-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Christian Guardian and Church of England Magazine.* Bristol and London. New and Enlarged Series, Vols. VII-XXV. 1815-1833 (incomplete file). B. M.
- Christian Herald.* Edinburgh. Vols. I-VIII and Vols. I, II n. s. Jan. 1814-Dec. 1823. Bodl.
- Christian Monitor and Theological Review.* Vol. I. Dec. 7, 1826-June 23, 1827. B. M.
- Christian Observer.* Vols. XV-XXXIII. 1816-1833. B. M.
- Christian Reflector and Theological Inquirer.* Liverpool. Vols. I-V and Vols. I-V n. s. Aug. 16, 1819-Dec. 1829. B. M.
- Christian Reformer: or New Evangelical Miscellany.* Vols. I-XIX. 1815-1833. B. M.
- Christian Remembrancer; or the Churchman's Biblical, Ecclesiastical and Literary Miscellany.* Vols. I-XV. Jan. 1819-Dec. 1833 (incomplete file). B. M., Bodl.
- Christian Repository: a Magazine and Review.* Vols. I, II. June 1825-March 1826. B. M.
- Christian Review and Clerical Magazine.* Vols. I-III. Jan. 1827-Oct. 1829. B. M.
- Christian's Pocket Magazine.* Vols. I-VIII. May 1819-June 1823. B. M.
- Classic Wreath.* No. 1. Nov. 24, 1832. B. M.

- Cobbett's Magazine: a Monthly Review of Politics, Science, Literature, and Rural and Domestic Pursuits.* Vols. I, II. Feb. 1833-May 1834. B. M.
- Coila Repository and Kilmarnock Monthly Magazine.* Vol. I. Aug. 1817-Aug. 1818. B. M.
- Colburn's New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal.* Vols. I-XXXIV. 1821-1833. W.
- Companion.* Vol. I. Jan. 9-July 23, 1828. B. M.
- Congregational Magazine.* Vols. I-IX. 1825-1833. B. M.
- Co-operative Magazine and Monthly Herald.* Vols. I-IV and Nos. 1-4, Vol. I, n. s. Jan. 1826-Nov. 1830. B. M.
- Correspondent: Consisting of Letters, Moral, Political, and Literary, between Eminent Writers in France and England.* Vol. I. 1817. B. M.
- Cottager's Monthly Visitor.* Vols. I-XIII. Jan. 1821-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Country Constitutional Guardian and Literary Magazine.* Bristol. Vol. I. Nov. 1821-May, 1822. B. M.
- Critic, a Monthly Magazine.* Nos. 1 and 2. April, May, 1832. B. M.
- Critical Review, or Annals of Literature.* Fifth series. Vols. I-V. Jan. 1815-June 1817. B. M.
- Day, a Journal of Literature, Fine Arts, Fashions, &c.* Glasgow. Vol. I, part of Vol. II. Jan. 2-June 30, 1832. B. M.
- Diamond Magazine.* Vol. I. June 1831-April, 1832. B. M.
- Dissenter's Magazine for Yorkshire and Lancaster.* London. Vol. I. March 1832-Jan. 1833.
- Drama, or Theatrical Pocket Magazine.* Vols. I-VI and Vol. I, n. s. May, 1821-[1825]. B. M.
- Dramatic Argus.* Dublin. Vols. I, II. Nov. 28, 1824-Feb. 10, 1825. B. M.
- Dramatic Magazine.* Vols. I, II, part of Vol. III. March, 1829-April 1831. B. M.
- Domestic Visitor.* Vols. I-IV. March 1828-Dec. 1831. B. M.
- Dublin and London Magazine* (Robin's London and Dublin Magazine). Vols. I-III. March 1825-June 1827. B. M.
- Dublin Examiner, or Monthly Journal of Science, Literature, and Art.* Vol. I, part of Vol. II. May 1816-Jan. 1817. B. M.

- Dublin Family Magazine: or Literary and Religious Miscellany.* Vol. I. April-Sept. 1829. B. M.
- Dublin Inquisitor.* Vol. I. Jan.-June 1821.
- Dublin Literary Gazette: or Weekly Chronicle of Criticism, Belles Lettres, and Fine Arts.* Vol. I. Jan. 2-June 26, 1830. B. M.
- Dublin Magazine, or General Repertory of Philosophy, Belles-Lettres and Miscellaneous Information.* Vols. I, II. Jan.-Dec. 1820. B. M.
- Dublin Monthly Magazine.* Vol. I. Jan.-June 1830. B. M.
- Dublin University Review and Quarterly Magazine.* Vol. I, Part 1. Jan. and April 1833. B. M.
- Dumfries Monthly Magazine and Literary Compendium.* Vols. I-III. July 1825-Dec. 1826. B. M.
- East-Lothian Literary and Statistical Journal.* Haddington. Vol. I. July 1830-June 1831. B. M.
- Eclectic Review.* Vols. III-XXX n. s. and Vols. I-X 3d ser. Jan. 1815-Dec. 1833 (incomplete file). Bodl., B. M.
- Edinburgh Catholic Magazine.* Vol. I. April 1832-Sept. 1833. B. M.
- Edinburgh Christian Instructor.* Vols. XIV-XXVI and Vols. I, II n. s. (incomplete file). Jan. 1821-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Edinburgh Literary Gazette, or Weekly Cyclopaedia.* Vol. I. May 21-Nov. 21, 1823 (incomplete file). B. M.
- Edinburgh Literary Gazette.* Vols. I, II. May 16, 1829-July 10, 1830. B. M.
- Edinburgh Literary Journal, or Weekly Register of Criticism and Belles Lettres.* Vols. I-VI. Nov. 1828-Jan. 1832. W.
- Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* (continuation of the *Scot's Magazine*). Vols. I-XVIII. Aug. 1817-June 1826. W., B. M.
- Edinburgh Monthly Review.* Vols. I-V. Jan. 1819-June 1821. B. M.
- Edinburgh Observer and Town and Country Magazine.* Nos. 1-3, Sept. and Oct. 1817. B. M.
- Edinburgh Philosophical Journal.* Vols. I-XIV. 1819-1826; continued as *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal.* Vols. I-XVI. 1826-1833. W., B. M.

- Edinburgh Reflector: a Weekly Political and Literary Miscellany.* Vol. I. July 1-Dec. 30, 1818. Bodl.
- Edinburgh Review.* Vols. XXVI-LVIII. 1816-1833. W.
- Edinburgh Spectator, a Journal of Literature and the Fine Arts.* Feb. 15-April 7, 1832. B. M.
- Edinburgh Theological Magazine.* Vols. I-IV. Jan. 1826-May 1829. B. M.
- Edinburgh University Journal and Critical Review.* Vol. I. Jan.-March 1823. B. M.
- Englishman's Magazine.* Vol. I, part of Vol. II. April 1831-Oct. 1832. B. M.
- European Magazine and London Review.* Vols. LXVII-LXXXVII. Jan. 1815-July 1825. W.
- European Review, or Mind and its Productions in Britain, France, Italy, Germany, &c.* Edinburgh and London. Nos. 1-6. June 1824-Jan. 1826. B. M.
- Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle.* Vols. XXIII-XXX and Vols. I-XI n. s. Jan. 1815-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Extractor: or Universal Repertorium of Literature, Science, and the Arts.* Vols. I, II. Nov. 1828-July 1829. B. M.
- Falkirk Monthly Magazine.* Vol. I. Feb.-May 1827. B. M.
- Family Magazine.* Vols. I, II. 1830-1831. B. M.
- Foreign Quarterly Review.* Vols. I-XII. 1827-1833. W.
- Foreign Review.* Vols. I-V. 1828-1830. W.
- Fraser's Magazine.* Vols. I-VIII. Feb. 1830-Dec. 1833. W.
- Freebooter.* Vol. I. Oct. 11, 1823-April 3, 1824. Bodl.
- Friend.* Dublin. Vol. I. Dec. 1, 1829-Feb. 1830. B. M.
- Friends' Monthly Magazine* Bristol. Vols. I, II. Nov. 1829-Dec. 1831. B. M.
- Gentleman's Magazine.* Vols. LXXXV-CIII. 1815-1833. W.
- Gentleman's Pocket Magazine and Album of Literature and Fine Arts.* Vols. I-IV. 1827-1830. B. M.
- Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine and Annals of Philosophy.* Vols. I-V. Jan. 3, 1824-Sept. 2, 1826. B. M.
- Gleaner's Portfolio, or Provincial Magazine.* Lewes. Vol. I. Aug. 1818. B. M.

- Gospel Magazine and Theological Review.* Vols. X, 2nd ser. and I, II, 3d ser. 1815-1817. B. M.
- Gossip.* Vol. I. March 3-Aug. 11, 1821. B. M.
- Green Man, or Periodical Expositor.* Vol. I. Oct. 31, 1818-Sept. 11, 1819. B. M.
- Hermes: a Literary, Moral, and Scientific Journal.* Liverpool. Vol. I. Nov. 2, 1822-May 10, 1823. B. M.
- Hero: an Original Weekly Publication.* Vol. I-IV. 1822-1825 (?). B. M.
- Hibernian Review.* (first published as *The Moon Review*). Dublin. Vol. I. 1830. B. M.
- Hour in the Study, by the Wisdomite Club.* Vol. I. 1816. Bodl.
- Imperial Magazine: or Compendium of Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Knowledge.* Liverpool. Vols. I-XII and Vols. I-III, 2nd ser. 1819-1833. B. M.
- Independent, a London Literary and Political Review.* Vol. I. Jan. 6-March 31, 1821. B. M.
- Inquirer.* Vol. I. April 1822-April 1823. B. M.
- Inspector.* Vols. II, III. 1826(?)-Oct. 1827. B. M.
- Investigator.* Vols. I-VIII. May 1820-Oct. 1824. B. M.
- Investigator, or Monthly Expositor on Prophecy.* Vol. I-III. 1831-1833. B. M.
- Iris, a Journal of Literature, Science, and Amusement.* Vol. I, II. Jan.-Dec. 1825. B. M.
- John Bull Magazine and Literary Recorder.* Vol. I. July-Dec. 1824. B. M.
- Juvenillia,* No. 1. Feb. 11, 1833.
- Kaleidoscope, or Literary and Scientific Mirror.* Liverpool. Vols. I, II and Vols. I-XI n. s. July 28, 1818-Sept. 6, 1831. Bodl., B. M.
- Kilmarnock Mirror and Literary Gleaner.* Vol. I. Oct. 1818-May 1819. B. M.
- Knight's Quarterly Magazine.* Vols. I-III and Vol. I, No. 1, n. s., June 1823-Aug. 1825. B. M.
- Ladies' Monthly Museum.* Vols. I-XXVIII, improved ser. Jan. 1815-Jan. 1828. W., B. M.
- Ladies Museum.* Vols. I, II. 1829. W.

- Lady's Magazine, or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex.* Vols. XLVI-XLIX. Vols. I-X n. s. and Vols. I-V improved ser. 1815-1833. Incomplete. B. M.
- Lady's Pocket Magazine.* [Vols. I-IX.] 1825-1833. B. M.
- Leeds Correspondent, a Literary, Mathematical, & Philosophical Miscellany.* Vols. I-IV, Jan. 1814-Oct. 1822 (irregular). B. M.
- Leeds Literary Observer, a Repository for Original Communications in the form of Essays, Narratives, Critical Observations, Reviews, Etc.* Vol. I. Jan.-Sept. 1819. B. M.
- Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South.* (By Leigh Hunt, Byron, et. al.) Vols. I, II. 1822, 1823. B. M.
- Literary and Statistical Magazine for Scotland.* Edinburgh. Vols. I-IV. Feb. 1817-Aug. 1820. B. M.
- Literary Beacon.* Vol. I, part of Vol. II. June 18-Sept. 31, 1831. B. M.
- Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review.* Vols. I-X. May 22, 1819-May 10, 1828. B. M.
- Literary Examiner: Consisting of the Indicator, a Review of New Books, and Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse.* (Edited by Leigh Hunt). Vol. I. July 5,-Dec. 27, 1823. B. M.
- Literary Gazette: and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, Etc.* [Vols. I-XVII.] 1817-1833. B. M.
- Literary Guardian and Spectator of Books, Science, Fine Arts, the Drama.* Vols. I, II. Oct. 1, 1831-Aug. 4, 1832. B. M.
- Literary Melange, or Weekly Register of Literature and the Arts.* Glasgow. Vol. I. June 19, 1822-Jan. 29, 1833. Bodl.
- Literary Museum and Critical Review.* Glasgow. Vol. I. April 1831-March 1832. B. M.
- Literary Museum and Register of Arts, Sciences, Belles Lettres, Etc.* (Earlier, *The Museum, or Record of Literature, Etc.*) Vols. I, II, and part of Vol. I, n. s. Jan. 1822-Feb. 7, 1824. B. M.
- Literary Panorama and National Register.* (Later merged with *New Monthly Magazine.*) Vols. I-IX, n. s. Oct. 1814-July, 1819. B. M.

- Literary Sketch-Book; for the Edification and Amusement of all Ranks of Society.* Vol. I. Aug. 1823-April 1824. B. M.
- Literary Speculum. Original Essays, Criticism, Poetry.* By Various Hands. Vols. I, II. Nov. 1821-1822(?). B. M.
- Liverpool Magazine and General Provincial Miscellany.* Vol. I. Jan.-Nov. 1816. B. M.
- Liverpool Repository of Literature, Philosophy, and Commerce.* Vol. I. Jan.-Dec. 1826. B. M.
- London Christian Instructor and Congregational Magazine.* (Continued as Congregational Magazine, *q. v.*). Vols. I-VII. Jan. 1818-Dec. 1824. B. M.
- London Magazine.* Vols. I-X, I-X n. s. and I-III, 3d ser. Jan. 1820-June 1829. Bodl., B. M.
- London Magazine and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review.* Vols. I-III and Vol. IV, Part 1. Jan. 1820-July 1821. B. M.
- London Review.* Vol. I, No. 1, Feb. 1829. Bodl.
- London Spy: a Weekly Magazine of Instructing and Amusing Literature.* Vols. I-III. May 14, 1831-1832. B. M.
- London University Magazine.* Vols. I, II. 1829-1830(?). B. M.
- London Weekly Review and Journal of Literature and the Fine Arts.* Vol. I-[III]. June 9, 1827-April 25, 1829. B. M.
- Lonsdale Magazine, or Provincial Repository.* Kirkby Lonsdale. Vols. I-III. 1820-1822. B. M.
- Loyal Reformers' Gazette.* Glasgow. Vols. I-III. May 7, 1831-Feb. 23, 1833. B. M.
- McPhun's Glasgow Magazine.* Nos. 1, 2. Nov. Dec. 1824. B. M.
- Magazine and Review of Literature, Science, and the Arts.* Vol. I. (?). Jan.-May, 1830. B. M.
- Magazine of Foreign Literature.* Vol. I(?). March-Oct. 1823. B. M.
- Magnet, or Plymouth Monthly Magazine.* Vols. I, II. Oct. 1822-Sept. 1823. B. M.
- Manchester Iris, a Literary and Scientific Miscellany.* Vols. I, II. Feb. 2, 1822-Dec. 27, 1833. B. M.

- Manchester Magazine. The Chronicle of the Times and Provincial Magazine.* Vols. I, II. 1815, 1816. B. M.
- Mentor, or Edinburgh Weekly Essayist.* Vols. I, II. May 24, 1817-May 16, 1818. B. M.
- Meteor, or General Censor: Comprising Satirical and Humorous Essays.* Vol. I. 1817. Bodl.
- Methodist Magazine . . . being a Continuation of the Arminian Magazine, first Published by the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* Vols. XXXVIII (n. s. Vol. XII)-LVI (3d ser. Vol. XII). Jan. 1815-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Methodist Magazine, Conducted by the Camp-Meeting Methodists, Known by the Name of Ranters, called also Primitive Methodists.* Leicester. Vols. I-XI and Vols. I-III n. s. Jan., 1819-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Metropolitan: a Monthly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts.* Vols. I-VIII. May 1831-Dec. 1833. B. M.
- Metropolitan Literary Journal and General Magazine of Literature, Science, and the Arts.* Vol. I. May-Dec. 1824. B. M.
- Metropolitan Quarterly Magazine.* Vols. I, II. 1826. B. M.
- Miniature Magazine, or Epitome of the Times.* Vols. I-III. June 1818-Jan. 1820. B. M.
- Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction.* Vols. I-XXII. Nov. 2, 1822-Dec. 28, 1833. W.
- Mirror of the Stage.* Vols. I-V. Aug. 12, 1822-Dec. 13, 1824. B. M.
- Monthly Censor, or General Review of Domestic and Foreign Literature.* Vol. I, part of Vol. II. June 1822-Feb. 1823. B. M.
- Monthly Critical Gazette.* Vols. I, II. June 1824-June 1825. Bodl.
- Monthly Literary Advertiser.* 1815-1833. B. M.
- Monthly Literary Register and Review of the Fine Arts, Sciences, and Belles Lettres.* Vols. I, II, part of Vol. III. May 1822-April 1823. Bodl.
- Monthly Magazine: or British Register.* Vols. XXXIX-LX, and Vols. I-XVI, n. s. (incomplete file), Feb. 1815-Dec. 1833. B. M.

- Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature.* Vols. X-XXI, and Vols. I-VII, n. s. 1815-1833. B. M.
- Monthly Review.* Vols. LXXXVI-CVIII and Vols. I-(XXIV), n. s. 1815-1833. W., B. M.
- National Magazine.* Dublin. Vols. I, II. July 1830, (April) 1831. B. M.
- National Magazine and General Review.* Vol. I. Nov. 1826-May 1827. B. M.
- National Omnibus and General Advertiser.* Vols. I, II, and part of Vol. I, n. s. April 1, 1831-July 12, 1833. B. M.
- Nepenthes, or Liverpool Weekly Correspondent and Journal of Fashionable Literature.* Vol. I. Jan. 8-Dec. 24, 1825. B. M.
- New Baptist Magazine and Evangelical Repository.* Vols. I, II. Continued as *New Baptist Miscellany*, Vols. I-VI. Jan. 1825-Dec. 1832. B. M.
- New British Lady's Magazine; or Monthly Mirror of Literature and Fashion.* Vol. II. Jan.-June, 1819. B. M.
- Newcastle Magazine.* Vol. I, and Vols. I-III, n. s. Sept. 1820-Dec. 1824. B. M.
- New Edinburgh Review.* Vols. I-IV. July 1821-April 1823. B. M.
- New European Magazine.* Vols. I-IV. July 1822-June 1824. B. M.
- New Evangelical Magazine and Theological Review.* Vols. I-IV (incomplete file). 1815-1818. B. M.
- Newgate Monthly Magazine, or Calendar of Men, Things, and Opinions.* Vols. I, II. Sept. 1824-Aug. 1826. B. M.
- New London Literary Gazette, and Journal of Science and Fashion.* Vol. I. June 9-Dec. 8, 1827. B. M.
- New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register.* Vols. III-XIV. Jan. 1815-Dec. 1820. B. M.
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