

"A NEW COUNTRY."

WHAT is a new country? Perhaps we need not inquire too closely, since I admit that these United States are the country in question at present. Nor would I pretend to offer a cavil-proof definition; I would only premise that the real newness of a community is not to be measured mainly by its age in years, nor, as Malthus points out, by the number or even the density of its population. It is rather the ratio of the population to its available means of support that has to do, for good and evil, with its complete development, that brings into play in civilized communities the competitions, the vices, and the virtues which make up the complex character of a modern society. Redundance of population is thus a relative thing; it is not a question merely of the census returns, of thousands or millions of people, but also of the amount of subsistence that is easily available. I say easily available, because, as we know, there is always a class of people in cities who would rather beg or starve there than go into the country for work; like Rinaldo, they cannot bear to "lose sight of the cupola," even though they know, unlike the Florentines of the fifteenth century, that they could live much better in some place from which the city is not visible.

In a community that is young in years redundance of population may occur as a result of immigration or of natural increase, and even a thinly settled region may be as much overpopulated as the cities. The Highlands of Scotland, for instance, as Malthus tells us, were, even when he wrote, "probably more redundant in population than any other part of Great Britain;" and in our own thinly settled country we find regions where the same condition begins to appear. The census of 1870 shows that for ten

years before that date people were quitting the sterile hills of New England and seeking the towns and cities. The entire population of some States, as Maine and New Hampshire, diminished during the decade; and it would seem that we are approaching the limits of population in the East.

But the West, the boundless West! Well, when we talk of the West we need a good orographical map in hand, such as the Germans make. Such a map, and the testimony of travellers who have no transcontinental railway bonds to sell, will show us that there is comparatively little more room for population west of the Mississippi valley. The geographers estimate the whole area of these United States and territories at about three and a half million square miles, an area not greatly less than that of China or of Siberia. But from this area we have to deduct a full million of square miles in one "block," nearly a third of the whole, for the vast mountain region that lies west of the Mississippi valley. From the eastern slopes of the Rocky mountains to the western wall of the Sierra Nevada, nine hundred miles from east to west in the latitude of San Francisco, and from Mexico all the way to Canada, twelve hundred miles from north to south, the larger part of the country is a howling wilderness; and not only this, but an ir reclaimable wilderness. Explorers and surveyors tell us that most of this region is a *malpais*, an unwatered country of barren mountains and sterile highlands, a domain of minerals and of snow, and that its mere elevation makes it unsuitable for the habitation of an agricultural people. Much of it is a full mile too high in the air for the ripening of crops in our latitudes. The territory of Wyoming contains 97,000 square miles, and not a foot of it is less than four thousand

feet above the sea-level. The lowest valley of Utah, "except possibly a few of the sunken deserts of the South," is higher than the average summits of the Allegheny mountains; and Nevada is hardly lower than Utah. We know that in South America whole communities live and cultivate their crops at much greater elevations than these; but it is in regions that are also much nearer the equator and proportionately warmer. The writer just quoted says: "At the Navajo farms in Arizona I have seen icicles six inches long on the rocks, only three hundred feet above the fields, on the 18th of June; and in 1871, when the Indians had with great labor brought forward a crop of corn and planted young orchards, on the night of May '31, a storm of sleet froze every plant and tree solid to the ground. . . . If there were no other causes, elevation alone would render half the far West unfit for the farmer."* And General W. B. Hazen tells us from his own observation, in "The North American Review" (January, 1875), that "the western limit of our agricultural lands has already been reached by settlements along the frontier, from the Rio Grande to the 49th parallel of latitude." "From the 100th meridian to the Sierra Nevada mountains, a distance of twelve hundred miles, there is not more than one acre to the hundred that has any appreciable value for agricultural purposes, or that will for the next hundred years sell for any appreciable sum. Moreover, for one hundred miles before reaching that meridian there is comparatively little good land." And he adds: "The phenomena of the formation and rapid growth of new, rich and populous States will no more be seen in our present domain."

No; the westward-rolling tide of population is already beating against the limits of our habitable domain; and there, except for a scanty population of miners and graziers, the proud wave must be stayed. Doubtless our

habitable country is to be much more thickly settled than at present. But this does not imply that our population is to rival that of India or China.

Climate, and other things which could be treated only in a technical essay, are against us; and each new census falls short not only of the popular expectation, but of the estimates of experts made in advance. While we are still distant from the limit of our population, we are probably much nearer it than we suppose. We people continents by steam-power nowadays; and the process has been carried on so rapidly in America that our immigrants are already returning in considerable numbers to Europe.

But this question must not detain us. Let me ask another that is allied with it; namely, How old is the American character to-day?

People say that the American character is unformed; and it is a fashion with some to say that there is no American character as yet. I do not think so; the national type seems to me quite as definite as most others. Like any other, the American character is of course undergoing constant change and development, for growth has no fixed limits in its processes, and we speak roughly when we speak of its stages. But our character seems to me to have gained its features. No nation of equal size was ever developed so rapidly. The fusing process goes on as in a blast-furnace; one generation, a single year even, transforms the English, the German, the Irish emigrant into an American. Uniform institutions, ideas, language, the influence of the majority, bring us soon to a similar complexion; the individuality of the immigrant, almost even his traits of race and religion, fuse down in the democratic alembic like chips of brass thrown into the melting pot. The resulting character seems to me a definite alloy; and its homogeneity is a guaranty that the nation is to remain one as long as the Federal Government shall retain the least efficiency. It is

* J. H. Beadle, "The Undeveloped West."

hard to see what cause of civil war should arise among a people so homogeneous in language, customs, and ideas as ourselves. We are one as no other great nation of Christendom is; and it seems unlikely that domestic quarrels, as about tariffs, or in this late age any discussion between Catholic and Protestant, should become bitter enough to bring about any secession wars. Predictions are dangerous, but what is there for us to quarrel about, unless a dictator should try to make himself our king some day?

Now this means, in a word, that the chief features of the American character are already developed, and are likely to remain for a long time what they are to-day. Should I try to mark any definite periods in a process so continuous and delicate as the growth of a character, I would say that the time of the Declaration of Independence was its plastic epoch, the moment when crystallization took place in the turbid solution; or, reverting to the apter figure of organic growth, that the American character entered upon its youth at the Revolution, as it will reach its majority at our centennial of 1876.

The young national character was in a large part composed of mutinous factors, three in number: "The persecuted Puritans fled to New England, the oppressed Catholics to Maryland, the defeated cavaliers and royalists to Virginia." Lord Clarendon said, long before the Revolution, "The colonies are already hardened into republics." Still, the fact of allegiance remained, and much of its spirit; and it was not until the spirit of allegiance was fairly driven out by the first war of secession that the spirit of democracy took its place.

But this spirit, though it was not new to the American character, did not become its dominant trait until the time of the Revolution; it was not even a dominant agency in forming the characters of those who led it. The leaders of the Revolution were af-

ter all British colonists; they were the descendants at no long remove of English parents. They were trained in English speech, habits, and traditions, were governed by English laws, and owned allegiance to British sovereigns during youth and mature manhood for years before they thought of rebellion. Now no characters are more distinct from each other in a political point of view than his who owns allegiance to a personal sovereign and his who refuses allegiance, but acquiesces in the rule of a majority. I do not say which is the better frame of mind; I simply point out the great distance between the two. Americans have made the transition from one to the other within the century that began in 1776. Before that time, in spite of their restlessness and the fast growing spirit of democracy, they were proud of their allegiance; since that time they have been proud that they shook it off.

The American colonists, then, as far as I learn, for I speak under correction, considered themselves as essentially English, just as English colonists consider themselves to-day. Was Thackeray the less an Englishman for being born in Calcutta? He would have been little of an Indian after all, had these provinces revolted, and if he had cast his lot with successful rebels. No, we must not forget the Anglicism, if I may so call it, of our colonial ancestors. The English character was ripe in the Revolutionary fathers themselves. The leading spirits of those days were mature men when the great rebellion broke out. In 1776 Washington was forty-four years old, and Franklin, a venerable man of seventy, had already lived seventeen years in England. Jefferson, who loved art, and John Adams, who disliked it, were respectively twelve and twenty years past their majority.

These men, indeed, were born in America; they lived mostly here, and here they died. But is this the whole account of the matter, the spirit of it

as well as the letter? I think I have said enough to show that it is not; that they might be claimed for England as well as for America. A fair-minded objector would, of course, admit the strong American elements which entered into the character of these men—their spirit of independence, their belief in popular government (though Washington had far less democratic views on this question than are current among us nowadays), and the new conditions of society and nature which surrounded them. But an Englishman might add that these were not the chief elements of these great men's characters; that their ability, honesty, talent came of English culture, and that the credit of their careers was quite as much due to the mother country as to the colony in which they were born.

If this be a fair statement of the case, and the true American was not developed until the Revolution, we are a younger people by a hundred years or so than we are wont to think ourselves. The true American was not developed until American institutions were established. He is a creature at least as recent as the Declaration of Independence; and the proper centennial of the American character, as well as of the national independence, will not arrive until the year 1876.

But this, again, is a difficult subject. To study our youth and its development, is a question for a historian. It will be more to the purpose here to look at some of the faults which we are accustomed to lay to the score of our being "a new country," and to ask how far the old excuse is valid. No phrase is more commonly or more loosely used. We shall find, I think, that some of our oldest communities are characterized by what we call the faults of national youth; that some of our youngest communities are quite old enough to do better than they have done; and that some of our deficiencies should set us to thinking not so much about youth as about original sin.

I will take up the most familiar charge, the one which we lay the least to heart—that of our deficiency in the fine arts—and the familiar answer to it which most of us accept; namely, What can you expect of a young country? Give us age, people say, and we shall create quite as much beauty as Europe has created.

How far is this answer a sound one? In the first place, we must remember that some of the arts in which we are reproached for deficiency are not flourishing anywhere as they flourished in the days of the great masters. Architecture in particular has fallen on evil times, and fares almost as poorly in Europe as in America; for its creative eras are past.

I was criticised the other day, in "Appleton's Journal," in that eloquent American vein which always instructs and improves me; and my critic complained that I took too much interest in the "big and useless buildings" of Europe, and too little in what he called "the stirring and significant facts of the present." Well, perhaps I am wrong in my sympathy with the doings of the old, dark days; and I am glad to be reminded, as my critic reminds me, of the beauty of modern American life, of "the living activities of a restless and conquering people," and, to use his phrase again, and of the interesting historical fact, that we Americans were "the first to establish the broad principles of civil and religious liberty." It is pleasant to learn, as my critic says, that "all these strong, and wise, and progressive, and emancipating things" are to weigh down the balance in our favor, as against the mere æsthetic achievement of Europe. Yet critics have maintained—I will not say critics with as much delicacy of perception as the one to whom I am now indebted, nor with as much feeling for what gives honor and lasting remembrance to a community—but some have held, according to their light, that the fine arts are things of quite paramount concern and importance; and I confess that I am still

inclined to the same opinion, in spite of the refined persuasion of my censor. At least we may be permitted to look back with something of curious interest upon the times when magnificent building seemed spontaneous, as in that epoch of cathedral building which culminated in France between the years 1180 and 1240—when the finest pointed architecture that the world has seen sprang up like an efflorescence. No more gothic cathedrals are now possible, perhaps even desirable; for the men that would have builded them and prayed in them, had they lived in the thirteenth century, are now, as we know, interested in railroads or other matters quite distinct from art or prayer—in "the stirring and significant facts of the present," as my critic so justly says. The spirit of the old age, as we name it rather vaguely, the æsthetic sense, the political and religious needs, which created the cathedrals, are gone, and will not return. I do not say that good architects are lacking; the deficient public taste—that is the serious thing. For architects, probably more than any other class of artists, are stringently held to the taste of their employers; and if either hotels or temples are to be raised to the Philistines, and by them, they will certainly display the taste of Canaan, and not of Italy or France. The modern architect gives us what he must, and he gives us less of himself than the painter gives; for the purchaser does not yet insist on telling him how to mix his colors.

No; we do not wish great architecture now, and we shall not have it. We want good railway bridges, tunnels, and stations, and all the "strong, and wise, and progressive, and emancipating things" of the day; not palaces, cathedrals, or galleries. Should the democratic movement go much further in Europe or America, we may get our Louvres, Pinacotheks, and Metropolitan Museums burned down some day; and even after the "emancipating" division of property shall have been made, it is conceivable that

no citizen may have any gallery, however small, of his own.

Meanwhile one thing is quite clear: that neither years nor centuries will provide America with gothic cathedrals. Those of Europe are her individual contributions to art and history, and will remain distinctly hers, like the discovery of oil painting, of gunpowder, or of the new world which is still essentially her colony. Probably we shall have our own antiquities, even architectural, if ever we begin to build durable edifices. But they will not repeat the great buildings of older times.

Do we fully appreciate our lack or the European's advantage in the matter of the old art which is constantly before his eyes, and remote from ours? Would that we had such reminders of ancient beauty! It is a serious thing that so few of these old works are present with us to feed our reverence and imagination; for in their absence we learn to scorn reverence and imagination, to take an interest that may perhaps be, after all, too exclusive, in "the stirring and significant facts of the present." Where, for instance, shall we find such another monument as the one that is erecting at Washington? Other people are building poorly enough; but it is reserved for Americans to dedicate a shot-tower to the saviour of his country.

Our architecture, however, affords one of the less important charges against us in the matter of the fine arts. Foreigners, and our best critics at home, agree that our great poets, painters, dramatists, and composers have founded no schools as yet. What is the reason of this fact? I for one am tired of hearing it explained by the circumstance that we are a new country. Is youth, then, an excuse for defect in the creative energies? This is a new reproach for youth. It might excuse the faults of a nation if the nation were one that had emerged recently from deep barbarism; but we did not; we came from the bosom of a high civilization; and we claim, in-

deed, in moments of expansion, and when we are not in the apologetic mood, that we have an equal heritage in the old world culture. The true patriot will declare that we inherit all the endowments of the European mind, while we enjoy, in addition, the inestimable advantages of democratic institutions.

Now which is the true claim? Are we endowed with the possessions of antiquity, the young heir to all the wisdom of the old world; or are we the prodigal son, with a possible future of swine-tending and pork-packing before us?

Few persons, I suppose, will deny that during our own century the Europeans have surpassed us in the fine arts. Even within our own memory, what poems, dramas, and novels have they given us; what statues, symphonies, operas, and what men of science! It is a great list of names, theirs of this century: Goethe, Byron, Wordsworth, Beethoven, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Thorwaldsen, Delaroché, Turner, Balzac, George Eliot, Humboldt, Darwin—familiar names like these flow from the pen. Not that I would disparage our great men; I make the trite comparison only to point out a reason, which may not be trite, for the fact that each of the leading nations of Europe surpasses us in the amount of its higher intelligence. I cannot hope that the explanation will be received with much favor, for it is not a pleasant one; it is, namely, that we are lacking, as a people, in sensitiveness to the things of the mind, and in consequence, that we are not full heirs of the past culture of Europe. On the contrary, we are out of sympathy with the past culture of Europe—with its thoughts, creeds, methods of working, ideals, and mental temper; nor will any mere growth in age give these to us any more than it will give us gothic cathedrals. What we may do in art is to be done in a different spirit from them if done at all. Our æsthetic temper was not formed under a benign

star. Even our most eminent public men in some instances hated art, and said that they hated it. Here is an interesting case. In 1818 a French sculptor, M. Binon, wrote to John Adams, requesting permission to take his portrait in marble. This was the famous ex-President's answer: "The age of sculpture and painting has not yet arrived in this country, and I hope it will be long before it does so. I would not give a sixpence for a picture by Raphael, or a statue by Phidias."*

Is it easy to think that a civilized person wrote these words? If they are reported rightly, they imply defect in humanity; certainly no educated European would have uttered them. It was sayings like these that led Lamartine and other civilized foreigners to complain of "la brutalité Américaine." If the ex-President of the United States "would not give a sixpence" for Raffaele or Phidias, need we wonder that his countrymen show something of the same feeling? Even my critic of "Appleton's Journal," with all his fine historical feeling, could remind me, and apparently with satisfaction, that "We have no slumbering universities where the rubbish of the past may be idealized or worshipped."

But if we claim, on the contrary, that we are fully *au courant* with the modern European mind, what becomes of our favorite plea, the excuse of national youth? Do not let us be illogical if we can help it. If we fully share the old world's resources, and have in addition the inestimable advantages of the ballot, and other things about which we hear on the Fourth of July and on other days, why have we not outdone the old world's doings, and got beyond the need of excusing ourselves as a new country?

I think that both of these reasons are far from accounting for the facts. We have not the wisdom, the resources, the example, the opportunity, the stimulus of the old-world culture;

* American Supplement to L. Viardot's "Wonders of Sculpture," N. Y., 1873.

what we have is not merely something newer, but something quite different from all this.

Carlyle wrote thus in 1843 of the Concord Transcendentalists: "A strange, chill, almost ghastly dayspring strikes up in Yankeeland itself; my transcendental friends announce there, in a distinct, though somewhat lankhaired, ungainly manner, that the Demiurgus Dollar is dethroned." A generation of men has past and come since the "Dial" period to which Carlyle refers; but it is not yet clear either that the "Dollar is dethroned," or that it has been the main source of our spiritual slowness, æsthetic and other. Is it not quite as much a lack of the feeling for beauty, a deficient sensitiveness toward deformity? The two are different things; we may admire a beautiful building and yet not be offended by an ugly one. And if we do not love beauty less than other nations, it seems to me that we tolerate deformity more.

Let me draw my first illustration of this negative trait from the appearance of our country in its longest settled parts, as contrasted with that of European communities of no greater age. We need not go to the backwoods to show that the æsthetic sense is a little dull among us. I will leave the log-house region out of the question, and take a picture from New England; and I will imagine a critical foreigner to see it, rather than any one predisposed to praise the American landscape. Such a traveller will recall, as he sets out, some pictures from his journeyings in the old world; the journey from Lyons to Geneva perhaps, from Dresden to Strasburg, from Berlin to Paris, or any other of those routes which charm the eye for a day and the memory for years. He recalls them now for comparison's sake; he remembers handsome towns and villas, distant hills crowned with castles, and trim railway stations that flash beneath his eyes, sending up in summer time the scent of flowers from their bright little gardens; the variety

of carefully cultivated crops, which make the whole landscape seem a spacious palette, charged with tender colors, and the finish of the landscape in almost every part, even where it is not beautiful; the smoothing away of deformities, the care shown even where taste is deficient. He will also remember the picturesqueness of the homes in almost every part of western Europe; the solid look of the houses, the little gardens near them, the bright patterns of color in the pictures that they make, the trim beds of vegetables, the well kept hedges, and above all the comfortable and solid look of the houses themselves, that seem built for a lifetime's occupation, and to have been taken, as one still takes a bride in old-fashioned countries, to have and to hold until death. These picturesque houses may be less comfortable or healthy than ours—I say nothing about that; but they are more beautiful; those who build them and live in them have striven to win some charm from nature, to throw some glamour of the ideal around them. Their efforts toward ornament are often crude or feeble; yet, especially in France and Italy, these cottages are the homes of people who care for beauty.

Thus much will our foreign visitor remember as he takes the morning train, let us say from New York to Boston, *via* Springfield. What will he see from the car windows as he passes through the heart of New England, a region that has been settled for two hundred years and more, and by people who have been for generations in circumstances of affluence as compared with the peasant communities of Europe? Here are the homes of the best type of American citizens, the oldest and purest product of our institutions; here live people who would compare favorably in point of means and intelligence with any country community of the old world. Our visitor will not expect to find cathedrals or splendid cities here; America, as my critic justly says, "has not

erected so many big and useless buildings" as Europe. But one should look for tasteful houses, attractive gardens, good roads, finished cultivation of the land; these will be the obvious proofs of the typical democrat's thrifty virtues. These good people will surely have found time, during their two centuries of settlement, to create some domestic beauty, to cover up the parched and barren outlines of their landscapes, to redeem the cold tints of their hills.

What, however, will our observant foreigner see? Conning the New England guide-book, he gets away from the city and from the villages of Westchester county, and finds himself in Connecticut, moving along at thirty miles an hour upon the train which he had seen advertised the day before as "a lightning express." Are these people not yet old, or rich, or luxurious enough, he asks, that they cannot yet build railways sufficiently solid to ride on at sixty miles per hour, like their English cousins? As he passes the New England boundary line he will examine the landscape with renewed interest. It is not a beautiful land through which he passes. It is sterile and rocky, and scarred with frosts; it is cold in color seven months in the year. The bones of it stick up through the grass, and the sward seems dry and harsh to a traveller that remembers the green plains and valleys of Europe. But our visitor will excuse the unfriendly climate and the sterile soil; nor will he blame the country for the absence of ancient monuments. But where, he will ask, are the picturesque and beautiful homes? He will not see them at every turn of the road. I say nothing of the remoter nooks of the country, the "quiet and flowery inlets" which the inland tourist may find in New England. From the railway, near which most of the population is gathered, he will see hamlets, villages, towns, composed of square, slight wooden houses, built with yellow pine brought twenty thousand

miles from Oregon, and painted white. Perhaps it is well, he reflects, not to build in stone till one can build well; but how many more centuries first?

He will hardly accept Mr. Emerson's good-natured apology for the "frame houses" of New England—namely, that stone is ill suited as a building material to a climate whose frosts are rigorous—for he will perhaps remember that the towns of southern States are also builded in wood, and those of northern Europe in stone. He will observe, too, that the New Englanders have not found time in their two centuries to pull down the rail fences. They have had more important affairs on hand since the seventeenth century, when they settled here—"the living activities" of a restless and conquering people. When New England has completed her conquests, might we hope that she would spare a little time for making the face of the country beautiful? For now it is disfigured by the rickety lines of the fences, with their scraggy hedges of weeds and runaway vines. Things appear which are hardly to be excused either by climate, youth, or poverty; neglected gardens, grown up with shivering grasses, among which a few hardy dahlias or lilies hold their own; squalid kitchen gardens come into view, paths in disorder, thickets of untrimmed trees in the most conspicuous places, avenues of ragged underbrush along the roads; but if our traveller should speak of these features of the landscape to his neighbor, he will be assured that these are the beauties of nature, and that nature's brambles are better than well-dressed walks and borders.

It is the creed of the region. In New England there is a school of philosophers who enjoy the grapevine, but not the grape. I am describing what I have noted on the spot, both in New England and in France, and I think that my ingenuous reader will bear me out in the comparison. My reader who may not be fond of logic will at once point out that there are ugly

places in France and beautiful ones in New England, to which I heartily assent. But we are considering the rule and not the exception. I do not pretend to have counted all the squalid houses on the Ligne de l'Ouest, or all the attractive spots between New York and Boston, and I know that much has been said, and justly said, about New England's beauty.

Sir Charles Dilke, for instance, a determined English democrat, with an accurate eye for comparison, comes to America and declares that "in all England there is no city which has suburbs so gray and venerable as the elm-shaded towns around Boston." This is instructive, the "elm-shaded towns around Boston" being mostly built of pine wood. He goes to Connecticut, and finds, as he expresses it, "districts . . . that seem to have been there for three centuries at least." But the wood-built towns in these "districts," or even those that are built in considerable part of brick, as Salem, do not seem quite so gray and venerable to the resident democrat as they seemed to Mr. Dilke.

What does the traveller see, in point of fact, when he arrives for the first time in Boston, with his guide-book in hand, and a mind prepared for the enjoyment of these "suburbs so gray and venerable"? He will find, I trust, better things in Cambridge, for instance, than mere grayness and venerableness. Certainly nothing is likely to strike him more forcibly, if he be familiar with the appearance of old towns in Europe, than the arrant newness of Cambridge. Are these wooden houses, he will ask, the historic buildings of which Dr. Holmes, Mr. Lowell, and other zealous writers have told us? A sort of chillness strikes through him on finding that the antiquities of Cambridge are mostly in yellow pine. When I was last there they were pulling down some of those historic clap-boards for purposes not wholly unconnected with the kindling of fires. Many of the streets were and are still unpaved,

and the sidewalks, after a settlement of more than two centuries, afford in many parts nothing more substantial than a pine plank for footing; while in rainy weather the mud lies ankle deep in the thoroughfares of the historic city. It is not compactly built; it extends over a large area full of open spaces, a charming thing in the summer, when people have gone away from home. But in the winter these distances, the deep mud, and the lack of cabs, keep people away from each other, and social intercourse languishes from sheer want of the first conveniences of town civilization. In two hundred years these good people have not learned how to get comfortably to each other's houses. A visitor arriving in Cambridge in midwinter, and unfamiliar with Mr. Dilke's valuable observations upon the place, would be as likely to fancy himself in a new country as an old one, in a howling wilderness as in a venerable town of mediæval Europe.

No; our good New Englanders, in spite of their many virtues, and of the admirable literary work they have done, which all admirers of true originality must cherish, are not quite venerable yet, either in the appearance of their buildings or in the decline of their creative powers. Let us rather hope that that virile force, that creative energy, may "ever live young." But I hasten to add, lest I should be charged with disrespect for the age and the other merits of New England, that most of our communities are open to blame not unlike that which we may ascribe to her; and particularly, not to wander too far from my theme, that the oldest American cities are still, like her, in the crudeness of their youth as relates to certain important æsthetic matters. New York is such a city; and the mellow repose of Philadelphia, for all its years, is not wholly "gray or venerable" as yet, nor quite secure from the acerbities of criticism. Let me instance what I mean by an example from New York. New York is an older city than Boston, yet it has not

perceptibly more of a mediæval look. Few parts of it, like the suburbs of Boston, are really "gray and venerable." It will be safe to say that the love of beauty in art is not the first characteristic of the New Yorker. Nothing shows this more clearly than the unimproved and neglected state of the suburbs. One Sunday morning last spring I crossed the North river to the Palisades at Weehawken, to gather the early violets that grow on the cliff. It is a beautiful approach. The precipice loomed blue and poetic as the ferry boat drew near its foot. The crows sailed around its brow, and between their cawings one might fancy that he heard the last echoes of the shot by which Alexander Hamilton fell, near these heights, in the days of our grandfathers. It is a historic suburb. It is but a few minutes' sail from two of the richest and largest cities of the continent. It is one of the best sites for building in the country, commanding one of the finest views; and surely one might expect to find the finest houses in the United States on these cliffs. Such a site would be preserved almost anywhere in Europe for grand parks or beautiful lawns. It would be beautified by the utmost power of art.

What did I find instead on landing? A foul hillside, covered with rubbish shot down from the "happy homes" above, again to quote a phrase from the critic to whom I owe so much—the homes of people who have used this cliff from time immemorial for a dumping ground. Coarse boys were scrambling through the wood, and trampling the violets under foot; there was decay, foulness, neglect of all the lovely resources of the place. Such are Weehawken heights to-day, and such they will continue to be, I dare say, for a century more. Possibly one of these trampling boys may become President yet, and tell us that "he would not give a sixpence" for Phidias or Raffiella.

No, we can hardly plead youth for faults like these. It is rather a deficient

sense of beauty, a deadness to deformity. Canada is not an older settlement than the United States; in many parts it is younger; yet Canada has solid buildings and handsome monuments, and takes care of her fine landscapes. Quebec has the picturesqueness of the old world itself. One feels that Raffiella and Phidias were valued at more than sixpence by those settlers.

But space for further instances is lacking me. Those that have been given are of features that are quite wrongly, as I think, ascribed to the newness of the country. Let me conclude by giving a case that really does come of that reason—the domestic institutions of Utah. Mormon polygamy is the product of two main factors: the positive cause is the pouring of colonists into an empty and sufficiently fertile country; the negative cause is the absence of law to control their passions. In other new colonies law, or public opinion when law is wanting, acts as a check upon population. Mormonism made a religion of the sexual instinct. The Mormons are the true pioneers, the apostles of the desert; they went out to fulfil the democratic mission, to fill the wilderness with voters. Never was a religion more clearly invented to justify conduct. Mormonism was developed from the first cell, so to speak, under scientific observation. The opportunity of license was given, and nature herself seemed to call for it. No law existed to protect it; a religion was invented to excuse it, to sanctify polygamy. The Mormon faith and practice of to-day are the result of these factors, and we can see without difficulty how it has sprung, in the modern phrase, from the environment. Polygamy represents, in the vulgar and older phrase, nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; and the Mormon creed excuses the engerness of man to come to nature's aid in the matter. But as soon as the desert shall have been peopled, Mormonism must disappear. It will soon be impossible in Utah, as it is to-day

in New York. When the opportunity for polygamy shall have passed away, Mormon commentators will find out that the gospel which supported it was false. The future moralists of Utah will then revert, with sincerity equal to that of to-day, to the ethics that obtain in all densely-populated communities; they will then, as moralists have done in all ages, formulate the experience of their kind in precepts, more or less wise, for present guidance, and like the moralists of the rest of Christendom, they will then find their main themes of discourse in the opposite extremes of practice from polygamy; namely, in celibacy and infertility.

Mormonism was then a necessity of the situation in which it was developed. Its followers, moving further and still further west as the conditions changed around them, from Missouri to Illinois, from Illinois to the Rocky mountains, did simply what retreating herds of buffaloes or tribes of wild Indians did, and for similar reasons. Their way of living comes of the savage state; it was not compatible with a dense population, and it must disappear, like the buffaloes and the Indians, in the presence of a higher civilization. Slowly, through such disappearances, the United States will cease to be a new country.

TITUS MUNSON COAN.

TWO SONNETS.

I.—ARIADNE.

FAR glimmering at the faint-blue verge of morn,
 Dim sail, and lessening over dreamy seas,
 With sorrow a lifetime's tears could not appease,
 I watch in my great desolateness forlorn
 How unto mistier distance thou art borne,
 And mistier on the blithe pursuant breeze
 That scorns my passionate gazing with the scorn
 Of heaven's serene-souled Immortalities!
 O prisoning naxos and the strange, harsh love!
 O tyrannous Fates to whom I crouch a slave!
 O sound and sight that sting me like a jeer,
 While, merciless in the blank broad skies above,
 Cold Zeus seems watching, and I bitterly hear
 Poseidon's mockery in the breaking wave!

II.—CLYTIA.

So, hearkenest thou, long-scorning god, at last?
 What tremor of mysterious change is here?
 Do with me as thou wilt: I shall not fear,
 Face, bosom, arms toward thy splendors cast.
 Nine suppliant expiatory days are past,
 Barren of all food for my body's cheer—
 Nine days of many a fierce desirous tear,
 Vigil and woful agony and fast!
 Do with me as thou wilt: I thrill to feel
 Most fervid breathings from thy luminous lips—
 Not kisses, but the fiery dreams of such—
 And lo, while under them I dizzily kneel,
 Grown plastic as a blossom to their touch,
 Garment-wise from my soul the woman slips.

EDGAR FAWCETT.