as well as autonomy; and though he did not go all lengths with
the national party, he was decided in his feeling that Sweden
was unjust to her sister kingdom, and strenuous for the principles
of the Norwegian leaders.

But, as I have said, poetry was what his ardent spirit mainly
meditated in that hour when I first knew him in Cambridge,
before we had either of us grown old and sad, if not wise. He
overflowed with it, and he talked as little as he dreamed of any-
thing else in the vast half-summer we spent together. He was con-
stantly at my house, where in an absence of my family I was living
bachelor, and where we sat indoors and talked, or sauntered
outdoors and talked, with our heads in a cloud of fancies, not
unmixed with the mosquitoes of Cambridge: if I could have
back the fancies, I would be willing to have the mosquitoes with
them. He looked the poetry he lived: his eyes were the blue of
sunlit fjords; his brown silken hair was thick on the crown which
it later abandoned to a scholarly baldness; his soft, red lips half
hid a boyish pout in the youthful beard and mustache. He was
short of stature, but of a stalwart breadth of frame, and his voice
was of a peculiar and endearing quality, indescribably mellow
and tender when he read his verse.

I have hardly the right to dwell so long upon him here, for he
was only a sojourner in Cambridge, but the memory of that early
intimacy is too much for my sense of proportion. As I have hinted,
our intimacy was renewed afterwards, when I too came to live
in New York, where as long as he was in this dolce lome, he hardly
let a week go by without passing a long evening with me. Our
talk was still of literature and life, but more of life than of litera-
ture, and we seldom spoke of those old times. I still found him
true to the ideals which had clarified themselves to both of us as
the duty of unswerving fealty to the real thing in whatever we did.
This we felt, as we had felt it long before, to be the sole source of
beauty and of art, and we warmed ourselves at each other's
hearts in our devotion to it, amidst a misunderstanding en-
vironment which we did not characterize by so mild an epithet.
Boyesen, indeed, out-realisted me, in the polemics of our

It was some years before the Boyesen summer, which was the
fourth or fifth of our life in Cambridge, that I made the ac-
quaintance of a man, very much my senior, who remains one
of the vividest personalities in my recollection. I speak of him in
this order perhaps because of an obscure association with Boyesen
through their religious faith, which was also mine. But Henry
James was incommensurably more Swedenborgian than either
of us: he lived and thought and felt Swedenborg with an entirety
and intensity far beyond the mere assent of other men. He did not
do this in any stupidly exclusive way, but in the most luminously
inclusive way, with a constant reference of these vain mundane
shadows to the spiritual realities from which they project. His
piety, which sometimes expressed itself in terms of alarming
originality and freedom, was too large for any ecclesiastical
limits, and one may learn from the books which record it, how
absolutely individual his interpretations of Swedenborg were.
Clarifications they cannot be called, and in that other world
whose substantial verity was the inspiration of his life here, the
two sages may by this time have met and agreed to differ as to
some points in the doctrine of the Seer. In such a case, I cannot
imagine the apostle giving way; and I do not say he would be
wrong to insist, but I think he might now be willing to allow that
the exegetic pages which sentence by sentence were so brilliantly
suggestive, had sometimes a collective opacity which the most
resolute vision could not penetrate. He put into this dark wisdom the most brilliant intelligence ever brought to the service of his mystical faith; he lighted it up with flashes of the keenest wit and bathed it in the glow of a lambent humor, so that it is truly wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible. But I have only tried to read certain of his books, and perhaps if I had persisted in the effort I might have found them all as clear at last as the one which seems to me the clearest, and is certainly most encouragingly suggestive: I mean the one called Society the Redeemed Form of Man.

He had his whole being in his belief; it had not only liberated him from the bonds of the Calvinistic theology in which his youth was trammelled, but it had secured him against the conscious ethicism of the prevailing Unitarian doctrine which supremely worshipped Conduct; and it had colored his vocabulary to such strange effects that he spoke of moral men with abhorrence, as more hopelessly lost than sinners. Any one whose sphere tempted him to recognition of the foibles of others, he called the Devil; but in spite of his perception of such diabolism, he was rather fond of yielding to it, for he had a most trenchant tongue. I myself once fell under his condemnation as the Devil, by having too plainly shared his joy in his characterization of certain fellow-men; perhaps a group of Bostonians from whom he had just parted and whose reciprocal pleasure of themselves he presented in the image of "simmering in their own fat and putting a nice brown on each other."

Swedenborg himself he did not spare as a man. He thought that very likely his life had those lapses in it which some of his followers deny; and he regarded him, on the æsthetic side, as essentially commonplace, and as probably chosen for his prophetic function just because of his imaginative nullity: his tremendous revelations could be the more distinctly and unmistakably inscribed upon an intelligence of that sort, which alone could render again a strictly literal report of them.

As to some other sorts of believers who thought they had a special apprehension of the truth, he had no mercy upon them if they betrayed, however innocently, any self-complacency in their possession. I went one evening to call upon him with a dear old Shaker elder, who had the misfortune to say that his people believed themselves to be living the angelic life. James fastened upon him with the suggestion that according to Swedenborg the most celestial angels were unconscious of their own perfection, and that if the Shakers felt they were of angelic condition they were probably the sport of the hells. I was very glad to get my poor old friend off alive, and to find that he was not even aware of being cut asunder: I did not invite him to shake himself.

With spiritualists James had little or no sympathy; he was not so impatient of them as the Swedenborgians commonly are, and he probably acknowledged a measure of verity in the spiritistic phenomena; but he seemed rather incurious concerning them, and he must have regarded them as superfluities of naughtiness, mostly; as emanations from the hells. His powerful and penetrating intellect interested itself with all social and civil facts through his religion. He was essentially religious, but he was very consciously a citizen, with most decided opinions upon political questions. My own darkness as to anything like social reform was then so dense that I cannot now be clear as to his feeling in such matters, but I have the impression that it was far more radical than I could understand. He was of a very merciful mind regarding things often held in pitiless condemnation, but of charity, as it is commonly understood, he had misgivings. He would never have turned away from him that asketh; but he spoke with regret of some of his benefactions in the past, large gifts of money to individuals, which he now thought had done more harm than good.

I never knew him to judge men by the society scale. He was most human in his relations with others, and was in correspondence with all sorts of people seeking light and help; he answered their letters and tried to instruct them, and no one was so low or weak but he or she could reach him on his or her own level, though he had his humorous perception of their foibles and disabilities; and he had that keen sense of the grotesque which
often goes with the kindliest nature. He told of his dining, early in life, next a fellow-man from Cape Cod at the Astor House, where such a man could seldom have found himself. When they were served with meat this neighbor asked if he would mind his putting his fat on James's plate: he disliked fat. James said that he considered the request, and seeing no good reason against it, consented.

He could be cruel with his tongue when he fancied insincerity or pretence, and then cruelly sorry for the hurt he gave. He was indeed tremulously sensitive, not only for himself but for others, and would offer atonement far beyond the measure of the offence he supposed himself to have given.

At all times he thought originally in words of delightful originality, which painted a fact with the greatest vividness. Of a person who had a nervous twitching of the face, and who wished to call up a friend to them, he said, "He spasmed to the fellow across the room, and introduced him." His written style had traits of the same bold adventurousness, but it was his speech which was most captivating. As I write of him I see him before me: his white bearded face, with a kindly intensity which at first glance seemed fierce, the mouth humorously shaping the mustache, the eyes vague behind the glasses; his sensitive hand gripping the stick on which he rested his weight to ease it from the artificial limb he wore.

The Goethean face and figure of Louis Agassiz were in those days to be seen in the shady walks of Cambridge to which for me they lent a Weimarish quality, in the degree that in Weimar itself a few years ago, I felt a quality of Cambridge. Agassiz, of course, was Swiss and Latin, and not Teutonic, but he was of the Continental European civilization, and was widely different from the other Cambridge men in everything but love of the place. "He is always an Europæer," said Lowell one day, in distinguishing concerning him; and for any one who had tasted the flavor of the life beyond the ocean and the channel, this had its charm.

Yet he was extremely fond of his adoptive compatriots, and no alien born had a truer or tenderer sense of New England character. I have an idea that no one else of his day could have got so much money for science out of the General Court of Massachusetts; and I have heard him speak with the wisest and warmest appreciation of the hard material from which he was able to extract this treasure. The legislators who voted appropriations for his Museum and his other scientific objects were not usually lawyers or professional men, with the perspectives of a liberal education, but were hard-fisted farmers, who had a grip of the State's money as if it were their own, and yet gave it with intelligent munificence. They understood that he did not want it for himself, and had no interested aim in getting it; they knew that, as he once said, he had no time to make money, and wished to use it solely for the advancement of learning; and with this understanding they were ready to help him generously. He compared their liberality with that of kings and princes, when these patronized science, with a recognition of the superior plebeian generosity. It was on the veranda of his summer house at Nahant, while he lay in the hammock, talking of this, that I heard him refer also to the offer which Napoleon III. had made him, inviting him upon certain splendid conditions to come to Paris after he had established himself in Cambridge. He said that he had not come to America without going over every such possibility in his own mind, and deciding beforehand against it. He was a republican, by nationality and by preference, and was entirely satisfied with his position and environment in New England.

Outside of his scientific circle in Cambridge he was more friends with Longfellow than with any one else, I believe, and Longfellow told me how, after the doctors had condemned Agassiz to inaction, on account of his failing health, he had broken down in his friend's study, and wept like an Europæer, and lamented, "I shall never finish my work!" Some papers which he had begun to write for the magazine, in contravention of the Darwinian theory, or part of it, which it is known Agassiz did not
accept, remained part of the work which he never finished. After his death, I wished Professor Jeffries Wyman to write of him in the *Atlantic*, but he excused himself on account of his many labors, and then he voluntarily spoke of Agassiz's methods, which he agreed with rather than his theories, being himself thoroughly Darwinian. I think he said Agassiz was the first to imagine establishing a fact not from a single example, but from examples indefinitely repeated. If it was a question of something about robins for instance, he would have a hundred robins examined before he would receive an appearance as a fact.

Of course no preconception or prepossession of his own was suffered to bar his way to the final truth he was seeking, and he joyously renounced even a conclusion if he found it mistaken. I do not know whether Mrs. Agassiz has put into her interesting life of him, a delightful story which she told me about him. He came to her beaming one day, and demanded, "You know I have always held such and such an opinion about a certain group of fossil fishes?" "Yes, yes!" "Well, I have just been reading -----'s new book, and he has shown me that there isn't the least truth in my theory"; and he burst into a laugh of unalloyed pleasure in relinquishing his error.

I could touch science at Cambridge only on its literary and social side, of course, and my meetings with Agassiz were not many. I recall a dinner at his house to Mr. Bret Harte, when the poet came on from California, and Agassiz approached him over the coffee through their mutual scientific interest in the last meeting of the geological "Society upon the Stanislow." He quoted to the author some passages from the poem recording the final proceedings of this body, which had particularly pleased him, and I think Mr. Harte was as much amused at finding himself in touch with the savant, as Agassiz could ever have been with that delicious poem.

Agassiz lived at one end of Quincy Street, and James almost at the other end, with an interval between them which but poorly typified their difference of temperament. The one was all philosophical and the other all scientific, and yet towards the close of his life, Agassiz may be said to have led that movement towards the new position of science in matters of mystery which is now characteristic of it. He was ancestrally of the Swiss "Brahminical caste," as so many of his friends in Cambridge were of the Brahminical caste of New England; and perhaps it was the line of ancestral *pastors* which at last drew him back, or on, to the affirmation of an unformulated faith of his own. At any rate, before most other savants would say that they had souls of their own he became, by opening a summer school of science with prayer, nearly as consolatory to the unscientific who wished to believe they had souls, as Mr. John Fiske himself, though Mr. Fiske, as the arch-apostle of Darwinism, had arrived at nearly the same point by such a very different road.

VI

Mr. Fiske had been our neighbor in our first Cambridge home, and when we went to live in Berkeley Street, he followed with his family and placed himself across the way in a house which I already knew as the home of Richard Henry Dana, the author of *Two Years Before the Mast*. Like nearly all the other Cambridge men of my acquaintance Dana was very much my senior, and like the rest he welcomed my literary promise as cordially as if it were performance, with no suggestion of the condescension which was said to be his attitude towards many of his fellow-men. I never saw anything of this, in fact, and I suppose he may have been a blend of those patrician qualities and democratic principles which made Lowell anomalous even to himself. He is part of the antislavery history of his time, and he gave to the oppressed his strenuous help both as a man and a politician; his gifts and learning in the law were freely at their service. He never lost his interest in those white slaves, whose brutal bondage he remembered as bound with them in his *Two Years Before the Mast*, and any luckless seaman with a case or cause might count upon his friendship as surely as the black slaves of the South. He was able to temper his indignation for their oppression with a humorous perception of what was droll in its agents and circumstances;
and I wish I could recall all that he said once about sea-etiquette on merchant vessels, where the chief mate might no more speak to the captain at table without being addressed by him than a subject might put a question to his sovereign. He was amusing in his stories of the Pacific trade in which he said it was very noble to deal in furs from the Northwest, and very ignoble to deal in hides along the Mexican and South American coasts. Every ship's master wished naturally to be in the fur-carrying trade, and in one of Dana's instances, two vessels encounter in mid-ocean, and exchange the usual parley as to their respective ports of departure and destination. The final demand comes through the trumpet, “What cargo?” and the captain so challenged yields to temptation and roars back “Furs!” A moment of hesitation elapses, and then the questioner pursues, “Here and there a horn?”

There were other distinctions, of which seafaring men of other days were keenly sensible, and Dana dramatized the meeting of a great, swelling East Indiaman, with a little Atlantic trader, which has hailed her. She shouts back through her captain's trumpet that she is from Calcutta, and laden with silks, spices, and other orient treasures, and in her turn she requires like answer from the sail which has presumed to enter into parley with her. “What cargo?” The trader confesses to a mixed cargo for Boston, and to the final question, her master replies in meek apology, “Only from Liverpool, sir!” and scuttles down the horizon as swiftly as possible.

Dana was not of the Cambridge men whose calling was in Cambridge. He was a lawyer in active practice, and he went every day to Boston. One was apt to meet him in those horse-cars which formerly tinkled back and forth between the two cities, and which were often so full of one’s acquaintance that they had all the social elements of an afternoon tea. They were abusively overcrowded at times, of course, and one might easily see a prime literary celebrity swaying from a strap, or hanging uneasily by the hand-rail to the lower steps of the back platform. I do not mean that I ever happened to see the author of *Two Years Before the Mast* in either fact, but in his celebrity he had every qualification for the illustration of my point. His book probably carried the American name farther and wider than any American books except those of Irving and Cooper at a day when our writers were very little known, and our literature was the only infant industry not fostered against foreign ravage, but expressly left to harden and strengthen itself as it best might in a heartless neglect even at home. The book was delightful, and I remember it from a reading of thirty years ago, as of the stuff that classics are made of. I venture no conjecture as to its present popularity, but of all books relating to the sea I think it is the best. The author when I knew him was still Richard Henry Dana, Jr., his father, the aged poet, who first established the name in the public recognition, being alive, though past literary activity. It was distinctively a literary race, and in the actual generation it has given proofs of its continued literary vitality in the romance of *Espíritu Santo* by the youngest daughter of the Dana I knew.
acquaintance. On a Sunday he would appear coming out of the post-office usually at the hour when all cultivated Cambridge was coming for its letters, and wave a glad hand in air, and shout a blithe salutation to the friend he had marked for his companion in a morning stroll. The stroll was commonly over the flats towards Brighton (I do not know why, except perhaps that it was out of the beat of the better element) and the talk was mainly of literature, in which he was doing less than he meant to do, and which he seemed never able quite to feel was not a branch of the Show Business, and might not be legitimately worked by like advertising, though he truly loved and honored it.

I suppose it was not altogether a happy life, and Keeler had his moments of amusing depression, which showed their shadows in his smiling face. He was of a slight figure and low stature, with hands and feet of almost womanish littleness. He was very blonde, and his restless eyes were blue; he wore his yellow beard in whiskers only, which he pulled nervously but perhaps did not get to droop so much as he wished.

VIII

Keeler was a native of Ohio, and there lived at Cambridge when I first came there an Indianian, more accepted by literary society, who was of real quality as a poet. Forceythe Willson, whose poem of "The Old Sergeant" Doctor Holmes used to read publicly in the closing year of the civil war, was of a Western altitude of figure, and of an extraordinary beauty of face in an oriental sort. He had large, dark eyes with clouded whites; his full, silken beard was of a flashing Persian blackness. He was excessively nervous, to such an extreme that when I first met him at Longfellow's, he could not hold himself still in his chair. I think this was an effect of shyness in him, as well as physical, for afterwards when I went to find him in his own house he was much more at ease.

He preferred to receive me in the dim, large hall after opening his door to me himself, and we sat down there and talked, I remember, of supernatural things. He was much interested in

IX

The most devoted Cantabrigian, after Lowell, whom I knew, would perhaps have contended that if he had stayed with us Willson might have lived; for John Holmes affirmed a faith in the virtues of the place which ascribed almost an aseptic character to its air, and when he once listened to my own complaints of an obstinate cold, he cheered himself, if not me, with the declaration, "Well, one thing, Mr. Howells, Cambridge never let a man keep a cold yet!"

If he had said it was better to live in Cambridge with a cold than elsewhere without one I should have believed him; as it was, Cambridge bore him out in his assertion, though she took her own time to do it.

Lowell had talked to me of him before I met him, celebrating his peculiar humor with that affection which was not always so discriminating, and Holmes was one of the first Cambridge men I knew. I knew him first in the charming old Colonial house in
which his famous brother and he were born. It was demolished long before I left Cambridge, but in memory it still stands on the ground since occupied by the Hemenway Gymnasium, and shows for me through that bulk a phantom frame of Continental buff in the shadow of elms that are shadows themselves. The *genius loci* was limping about the pleasant mansion with the rheumatism which then expressed itself to his friends in a resolute smile, but which now insists upon being an essential trait of the full-length presence to my mind: a short stout figure, helped out with a cane, and a grizzled head with features formed to win the heart rather than the eye of the beholder. In one of his own eyes there was a cast of such winning humor and geniality that it took the liking more than any beauty could have done, and the sweetest, shy laugh in the world went with this cast.

I long wished to get him to write something for the magazine, and at last I prevailed with him to review a history of Cambridge which had come out. He did it charmingly of course, for he loved more to speak of Cambridge than anything else. He held his native town in an idolatry which was not blind, but which was none the less devoted because he was aware of her droll points and her weak points. He always celebrated these as so many virtues, and I think it was my own passion for her that first commended me to him. I was not her son, but he felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault, and he seemed more and more to forgive it. After we had got upon the terms of editor and contributor, we met oftener than before, though I do not now remember that I ever persuaded him to write again for me. Once he gave me something, and then took it back, with a self-distrust of it which I could not overcome.

When the Holmes house was taken down, he went to live with an old domestic in a small house on the street amusingly called Appian Way. He had certain rooms of her, and his own table, but he would not allow that he was ever anything but a lodger in the place, where he continued till he died. In the process of time he came so far to trust his experience of me, that he formed the habit of giving me an annual supper. Some days before this event, he would appear in my study, and with divers delicate and tentative approaches, nearly always of the same tenor, he would say that he should like to ask my family to an oyster supper with him. “But you know,” he would explain, “I haven’t a house of my own to ask you to, and I should like to give you the supper here.” When I had agreed to this suggestion with due gravity, he would inquire our engagements, and then say, as if a great load were off his mind, “Well, then, I will send up a few oysters tomorrow,” or whatever day we had fixed on; and after a little more talk to take the strangeness out of the affair, would go his way. On the day appointed the fish-man would come with several gallons of oysters, which he reported Mr. Holmes had asked him to bring, and in the evening the giver of the feast would reappear, with a lank oil-cloth bag, sagged by some bottles of wine. There was always a bottle of red wine, and sometimes a bottle of champagne, and he had taken the precaution to send some crackers beforehand, so that the supper should be as entirely of his own giving as possible. He was forced to let us do the cooking and to supply the cold-slaw, and perhaps he indemnified himself for putting us to these charges and for the use of our linen and silver, by the vast superfluity of his oysters, with which we remained inundated for days. He did not care to eat many himself, but seemed content to fancy doing us a pleasure; and I have known few greater ones in life, than in the hospitality that so oddly played the host to us at our own table.

It must have seemed incomprehensible to such a Cantabrigian that we should ever have been willing to leave Cambridge, and in fact I do not well understand it myself. But if he resented it, he never showed his resentment. As often as I happened to meet him after our defection he used me with unabated kindness, and sparked into some gayety too ethereal for remembrance. The last time I met him was at Lowell’s funeral, when I drove home with him and Curtis and Child, and in the revulsion from the stress of that saddest event, had our laugh, as people do in the presence of death, at something droll we remembered of the friend we mourned.
At Cambridge the best society was better, it seems to me, than even that of the neighboring capital. It would be rather hard to prove this, and I must ask the reader to take my word for it, if he wishes to believe it. The great interests in that pleasant world, which I think does not present itself to my memory in a false iridescence, were the intellectual interests, and all other interests were lost in these to such as did not seek them too insistently.

People held themselves high; they held themselves personally aloof from people not duly assayéd; their civilization was still Puritan though their belief had long ceased to be so. They had weights and measures stamped in an earlier time, a time surer of itself than ours, by which they rated the merit of all comers, and rejected such as did not bear the test. These standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them; most Americans have no standards of their own, but these are not satisfied even with other people’s, and so our society is in a state of tolerant and tremulous misgiving.

Family counted in Cambridge, without doubt, as it counts in New England everywhere, but family alone did not mean position, and the want of family did not mean the want of it. Money still less than family commanded; one could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame, or shame at all, for no one was very rich there, and no one was proud of his riches.

I do not wonder that Tourguénief thought the conditions ideal, as Boyesen portrayed them to him; and I look back at my own life there with wonder at my good fortune. I was sensible, and I still am sensible this had its alloys. I was young and unknown and was making my way, and I had to suffer some of the penalties of these disadvantages; but I do not believe that anywhere else in this ill-contrived economy, where it is vainly imagined that the material struggle forms a high incentive and