LITERATURE IN THE SOUTH SINCE THE WAR.

By Thomas Nelson Page.

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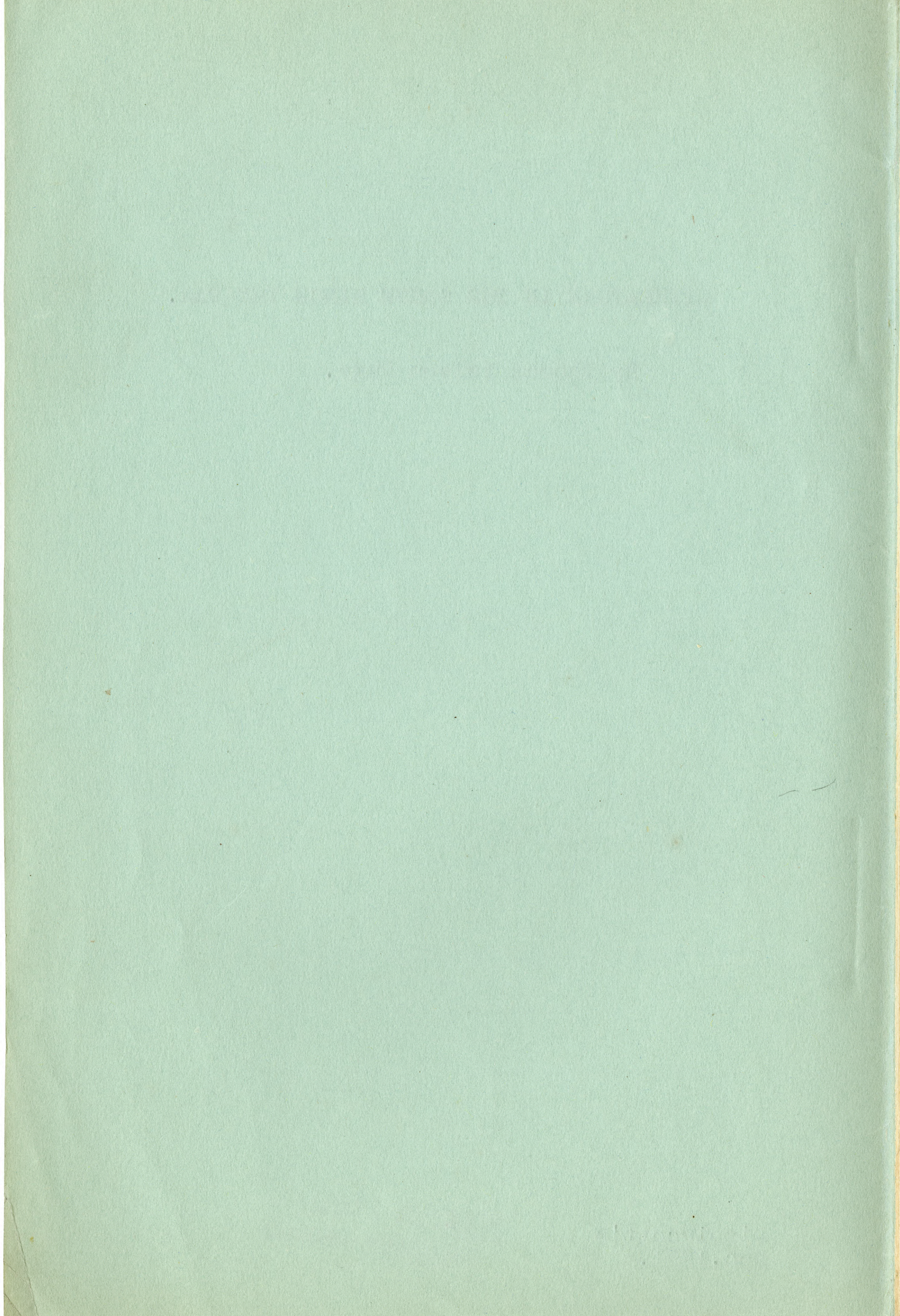

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NOTHING can better illustrate the wants of the South in the department of literature than an inspection of those publications which appeared during the period covered by the civil war, when she was thrown entirely on her own resources. Agriculture had so completely dwarfed manufacture that the South could not make paper reasonably fit for books, and the product of the mills of the South was so inferior that a Confederate publication is known at sight.

So largely had the South depended on the North for her supplies of books and stationery that at the outbreak of hostilities the Southern accounts with the single house of J. B. Lippincott & Co. are said to have amounted to nearly a half-million dollars.

When communication between the sections ceased, the South was compelled to manufacture books, as it was to manufacture tin cups and cannon. The book-firms in the cities accordingly from necessity of the time became publishing-houses. The Presbyterian Board of Publication, West & Johnston, J. W. Randolph, George L. Bidgood, and Nash & Woodhouse were the publishers of Richmond. The first year of the war and a portion of the second were devoted exclusively to publications of a military character, and more than a dozen works of a most martial kind were published by West & Johnston during this period, and had so rapid a sale that the demand could not be supplied, whilst Randolph and Nash & Woodhouse were also busily engaged. During the second year the demand began for works somewhat less martial and more literary than Manuals and Treatises on Fortifications or the Laws of War, and of Search and Neutrality, and to meet the demand the publishers were sometimes in straits. West & Johnston in 1862 republished Beverley Tucker's novel "The Partisan Leader," which had been twice before published and had been suppressed for politico-social reasons. They also published a novel or novelette entitled "The Southern Spy," by Edward A. Pollard, and a history of "The First Year of the War," by the same author, which was subsequently continued year by year and was eventually amplified and republished as "The Lost Cause: a New Southern History of the War of the Confederates." The same firm published Miss Evans's Novel "Macaria, or the Altars of Sacrifice," which was dedicated "To the Army of the Southern Confederacy," and speedily ran into an edition of some sixty thousand. They also published a number of other novels, such as "De Vere," by Henry W. Hilliard, "The Rivals," "Up and Down in the World," and reprints of several works, supposed to be sensational enough to suit even a soldier's taste, such as "East Lynne," "Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles," "No Name," etc.

Every printing-establishment in the city was kept busy. The great obstacle was scarcity of paper, the mills in Richmond, Raleigh, etc., having first to supply the government, which in time needed a good deal of paper for money.

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The difficulties which beset a publisher during that period may be imagined from those attending the issue of "Les Misérables," which West & Johnston brought out in 1864. In the first place, a copy could not be obtained within the Southern Confederacy : so a blockade-runner was commissioned to secure one. Then, all the scholars being in the army, or else engaged in nursing the wounded, or taking care of their children, the only translator who could be found was a vagrant captain, who cheerfully undertook the task, stipulating, however, that his first payment should be in advance and should be in gold. This instalment, which was thirty dollars, and was equivalent to twelve hundred dollars of Confederate money, having been, after much trouble, secured and paid him, he bowed himself out, and, as the publisher subsequently had reason to suppose, kept on until he was beyond the limits of the Confederacy. The publisher thereupon fell back on a reprint published in New York which he was so fortunate as to secure, and, eschewing further translation, set to work with a pencil and scissors, and, having a due regard to the scarcity of paper and to the impropriety of republishing over his name in the Confederate capital such sentiments as that stating John Brown to have been greater than Washington, brought forth on greenish paper manufactured from raw cotton an expurgated copy which Victor Hugo would hardly have recognized, and which shortly became known by the name of "Lee's Miserables."

The scarcity of new books during this period unquestionably had much to do with the new impulse which literature received subsequently.

Even before the war the increased interest in literature at the South, resulting largely from the reputation of Poe and the influence of Simms, Hayne, Thompson, Cooke, and a few others, had induced the booksellers to advertise that by reason of the greater demand for books they had reduced their prices, and could offer books as low as they were sold in the large cities of the North. There was, indeed, a marked change in the literary spirit of the South in those latter years. Poe's literary fame was piercing the fogs with which his personal habits and hostile biographers had almost enveloped it; Cooke and Simms, Mrs. Terhune, and others, were writing steadily, and were finding Northern publishers and beginning to secure Northern readers for their work,—when suddenly the war-cloud burst.

There may be conditions when the mental powers are elevated to a state of exaltation altogether above their common level,—when mediocrity is uplifted by forces extraneous to itself and assumes the power and the province of inspiration.

Such a time was the period of the civil war. During this crisis the fervor of the South burst forth in passionate utterance, assuming generally, as was natural, the lyrical form.

Several collections of this expression of the popular feeling have been made, such as Simms's "War Poetry of the South" and Miss Emily V. Mason's collection of "Southern Poems of the War." A considerable number of the poems possess not only force, but merit of a high order; whilst a fair proportion of them are by their manifest sincerity and feeling raised above the plane of mediocrity. Some, indeed, are poems which, notwithstanding the local significance which

narrowed their scope, and despite the perils of unceasing quotation and of hackneyed application, will make their place permanent in the literature of America.

Randall's "Maryland, my Maryland" was the first in point of time, and is second to none in its martial ring. It was, as the author says, written "one sleepless April night in 1861," at an old wooden desk in a second-story room at Poydras College, on the Fausse Rivière, in Louisiana. It was an inspiration, as was the selection by Miss Cary, now Mrs. Burton Harrison, of the ringing tune "Lauriger Horatius," with which stirring strain it became immediately the Marseillaise of the Confederacy.

Other poems worthy to be claimed as literature which were the direct offspring of this fervor are John R. Thompson's "Ashby," "Stuart," and "The Burial of Latané," John Esten Cooke's "Band in the Pines," Lucas's "In the Land where we were Dreaming," Hayne's Hymns, Timrod's ringing Bugle-calls, Ticknor's "Virginians of the Valley," inscribed to his brother-in-law, Captain William N. Nelson (who in editing Ticknor's poems substituted General Lee's name for his own), and his "Little Giffin of Tennessee," Father Ryan's "The Conquered Banner" and other threnodies, Maria La Coste's "Somebody's Darling," Mrs. Preston's Elegies, Innis Randolph's songs, John Dickson Bruns's Christmas Hymn, and many other poems, some claimed by the authors, and others thrown off in the fever-heat of patriotic fervor and never claimed.

After the war came a period of confusion and chaos. The South was cut off from even that measure of intercourse with the North which there had previously been. For the first time in her existence, the impulse to literary action and the conditions for such action met.

The South recognized the benefit that the North had derived through the medium of her greater literary activity and by reason of her facilities of publication. She writhed under the sense of standing dumb before the world in her hour of defeat. She felt the need of some advocate to assume the public defence of her action at the bar of posterity; she craved some perpetual memorial of her sacrifices. Yet another motive which impelled her was the want of bread, and the necessity to utilize every faculty for its procurement. Agriculture was prostrate; commerce had not yet been born. Literature was a possibility.*

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* It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss critically the literary work which has been produced by the South since the war, but rather to indicate what has been effected and to explain its genesis from conditions which might appear to a casual and superficial observer rather repressive than fostering.

Criticism which is not both candid and complete is not merely worthless, but is dishonest. The limits of space forbid any attempt in this paper at a complete criticism; personal reasons prevent a comparative discussion. The writer is bound to some of the present authors of the South by ties of family connection, to others by ties of personal friendship, to all by bonds of sympathy. He knows, as the public which reads and criticises their work from the simple stand-point of literary quality does not know, the disadvantages under which many of them have labored,—on the part of some, the lack of original education, so bravely overcome, on the part of nearly all, the bitter poverty, the want of encouragement, the lack of opportunity. He knows the bravery of the

After the war the women were the first to recognize the opportunities of the situation. Women had written before the war, and had attained pecuniary success. Miss Evans had written her novel "Macaria" during the war, and it had sold to the number of sixty thousand copies. It was natural, therefore, that whilst the men were courageously working the old worn fields, women, unfitted for this, should attempt a new enterprise.

"Marion Harland" (Mrs. Terhune), whose home was at the North, had been writing during the war, and was the first after its termination to attempt a work which should exhibit the fortitude and heroism displayed on both sides. Her "Sunnybank," which was framed as a sequel to her first novel, "Alone," was published in 1866, and must be awarded the honor of being the first work to utilize the romantic material of the war without gross partisanry. This was followed during a half-dozen years by as many other works, all of which are good, and some notably so.

Mrs. Jeffrey, who had published in 1857 "Poems by Rosa," in 1871 issued a volume of poems, which was followed ten years after by another volume, "The Crimson Hand, and Other Poems." Her novel "Marah" was issued in 1884.

In 1867 three books by Southern women appeared,—one the "Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War," by Mrs. John W. McGuire, of Virginia; the others, two novels, "Four Oaks," by Mrs. E. W. Bellamy, over the name "Kampa Thorpe," and "St. Elmo," by Miss Augusta J. Evans, who shortly afterwards became Mrs. Wilson. The Diary was not written for publication, and for this reason was worthy to be published. One of the scenes related, depicting a ride in a stage-coach in which a young woman named "Kitty Grim" was compelled to ride on the front seat, became famous. The work has just been republished. The novels were written for publication. "St. Elmo" was extraordinarily successful, and received much praise and much condemnation. It perhaps deserved both. It exhibited force choked by a perfervid imagination and entangled in extravagance of language. Yet it brought its author so much reputation that three years later she is said to have sold the copyright of "Vashti" for fifteen thousand dollars. "Four Oaks" was more sedate. It was written too much on the old lines, but it was natural, and contained a promise of further and better work. Subsequently this promise was in part redeemed by "The Little Joanna."

In 1870 a new writer appeared, under the *nom de plume* of Christian Reid, whose first book, "Valerie Aylmer," contained perhaps

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struggle they have made, the fortitude with which they have borne, and the earnestness with which they have aspired. Many of them have educated younger brothers and sisters, have supported relatives, and helped the poor. He knows that wherever they have fallen short of excellence it has been a sorrow to them, and that they have persevered with a high-hearted endeavor which evokes his sympathy if the result has sometimes failed to secure his literary approval. For these reasons he does not propose to discuss critically the merits and defects of the works of these authors. Yet, since he cannot express an opinion which is not a candid one, wherever he speaks he gives his deliberate judgment.

more promise than any which had preceded it; though it, like the others mentioned, was subject to the fatal fault of being laid on the old lines of English society in reflection. It became immediately generally popular, and its success inspired Miss Fisher—now Mrs. Tiernan—to follow it with a series of novels, all of which were well conceived and well written. It was quickly followed by "Morton House," a novel which was first published as a serial in *Appletons' Journal*, "Mabel Lee," "Ebb Tide," "Nina's Atonement," "A Daughter of Bohemia," "Carmen's Inheritance," "A Gentle Belle," "Hearts and Hands," "A Question of Honor," "The Land of the Sky," and a half-dozen others,—the last of which is "Philip's Restitution," recently published. "A Cast for Fortune" appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* in April, 1890.

Had Miss Fisher utilized her knowledge of Southern character as well as she has her familiarity with Southern scenery, and given pictures direct from Southern life instead of tempered through the medium of English society, in place of having opened up merely the beautiful "Land of the Sky" which lay in the mountain-regions of her native State, she might have had the honor of having led the way into that untried domain of Southern literature where untold treasures lie awaiting the coming of the future master. As it is, her novels were a distinct advance on most of those which had preceded them, and her success was an inspiration to others.

Meanwhile, throughout the South, others, who through all the dark days had striven and struggled for recognition, with the dream of a literature ever in their hearts, had not been idle. Cooke was writing hard, and, with the inspiration of the heroic struggle just ended, produced his best works, novels and historical biographies.

Simms, who had been not only the most prolific of Southern writers, but also the patron and friend of all who possessed literary aspiration, notwithstanding the destruction by the Federals of his lovely home "Woodlands" and of his large and valuable library, and notwithstanding the most irreparable loss which can befall man,—the loss of her who is at once the inspiration and the reward of all endeavor, —wrote on manfully until 1870, when death brought him the reward for a brave, earnest, and kindly life.

Henry Timrod, the son of William H. Timrod (himself a man of poetical aspirations), who had written poems of merit, was known as a poet before the war, and had brought out a small volume of poems in 1860. During the war he was correspondent of the Charleston *Mercury* and editor of the Columbia *South Carolinian;* had written some of the most martial poems of the war, and had made himself a name throughout the South. Although broken in health, he continued his work after the war. His poems were collected, but it was too soon after the wounds were made for the author of "Spring," of "A Cry to Arms," of "Charleston," and of a "Hymn for Decoration Day" to find a Northern publisher; and the Northern magazines were not yet open to Southern writers. His health failed, and he was so desperately poor that he declared he would cheerfully exchange all he had written for one hundred dollars. In 1867 he was invited by a publisher to

visit the North, and there was a bare intimation that the visit might result in bringing him recognition. He was, however, too poor to take the trip, and he died of consumption on the 6th of October, 1867,—a man who under different conditions might have set the world a-listening. Five years after his death his poems were published by E. J. Hale & Son, of New York, with a sympathetic sketch of the author by his old school-mate and life-long friend, the kindly Hayne.

Meanwhile, the older writers of the South were endeavoring to institute a movement which should enable the South to utilize and receive the benefit of her intellectual forces. The demand was apparent and imperative. The result was the birth of several new literary periodicals at the South, the brief life of which was but fresh evidence that the South was not yet prepared to sustain a literature of its own.

The Land we Love, in Charlotte, North Carolina, even under the direction of General Hill, a man whom the South delighted to honor, languished with its pathetic name from 1867 to 1869.

The New Eclectic, holding out the promise of a higher class of literature than could be obtained from mere provincial sources, was started in Baltimore in 1868, but expired in 1871.

The Southern Magazine, in the same city, first appeared in 1871. It made a distinct claim for Southern patronage, and became confessedly the vehicle of Southern literary ability. Paul H. Hayne, Sidney Lanier, Richard Malcolm Johnston, and others, rallied to its support; but, notwithstanding their efforts, it failed in 1875, for want of patronage.

About the same time, in the same city, *The Southern Review,* making a similar claim for Southern recognition, met a similar fate. The other magazines mentioned might have perished under even more favorable conditions, for, notwithstanding the contributions of some men of genius, they were generally indifferent; the *Review* under better auspices would have survived. It was, in the writer's opinion, the most virile Review which has appeared on this side the Atlantic. It was edited by Dr. A. T. Bledsoe and by his accomplished collaborateur, his daughter, Mrs. Sophy Bledsoe Herrick; but, notwithstanding the ability it displayed, it came to an untimely end in 1878, an additional sacrifice to Southern apathy towards Southern literary work.

Meantime, if the Southern readers had been apathetic, the Southern writers had not been idle. Without reward and without encouragement, they uncomplainingly wrote on. The conditions for a literature had sprung into being. A civilization had been overthrown by a convulsion. An heroic past had been created. Defeat had come only after the most portentous struggle of modern times. An age of romance had suddenly sprung into being.

The poets amid its "bare ruined choirs" sang of the South and its balm-laden breezes. The ivory palaces were destroyed, but myrrh, aloes, and cassia still breathed about their dismantled ruins. Hayne, Lanier, Thompson, Mrs. Preston, Father Ryan, and others, all unheeded, sang to their own hearts of the odorous and leafy South.

Hayne, amid his "immemorial pines" at Copse Hill, chanted the sweet thoughts they whispered to his pure and sympathetic heart.

Nature unfolded herself to him in her gentlest moods, and, in a simplicity which to one less noble might have been poverty, he hymned her praise with a content which was more than wealth. Hayne is distinctively the Southern poet. No one else except Lanier has any claim to divide this honor with him. His work will live, and his fame will increase, as the South which he so loved comes to a fuller knowledge of herself and a truer appreciation of that which is noblest in her.

Lanier was compelled by the exactions of life to seek a professor's chair in a climate too severe for his delicate organization, although within his well-beloved South. Here, however, he found a life which fostered his powers, and the intellectual spirit prospered, if the body failed.

He wrote a romance whilst yet a youth, but it was rather a wild prose poem than a novel. He also edited with ability and sympathetic treatment several of the old romantic writers' works, reducing them to adaptability for an age when time is of some value. "The Boy's King Arthur," "The Boy's Froissart," "The Boy's Mabinogion," and "The Boy's Percy" evince the skill and the sympathy of one imbued with the spirit of the age of romance, yet comprehending the temper of the present; whilst his work on "The Science of English Verse" and "The English Novel and the Principles of its Development" prove him to have been both a scholar and a man of deep and original thought. It is, however, as a poet that Sidney Lanier will be known. He is distinctly next to Poe among the Southern poets. In his own class he is unequalled by any American. He died too young, but not until he had proved that a great poet could come from the South. Wasted by disease, a prisoner within close walls, bound by the hot chains of fever, he went back in the spirit to his well-beloved South. "The little green leaves would not let him alone," and, as the last rays of life's sunset fell upon him, he hymned the sunrise of an immortal poesy.

John R. Thompson, of Virginia, had stood among the first of the old writers of the South as an essayist, literary editor, and critic. He was sent to England during the war to conduct a journal for the purpose of stimulating sympathy with the Southern cause. After the Confederacy fell he found literary occupation in New York as editor of *The Evening Post.* His works were never collected in a volume, and when he died he left his friend Mr. R. H. Stoddard as his literary executor; but, beyond a few extracts from his diary, which were recently published in this magazine, none of his writings have yet been brought out in permanent form.

Meantime, another Virginian writer had discovered the untold wealth which lay to hand in the unwritten life of the South. Like these, he was compelled by the exactions of poverty to grind in the treadmill of journalistic work for bread. As a humorist, under the ill-conceived name "Mozis Addums," he had prior to the war a reputation which should have been associated with his real name. His best efforts were intrusted to the ephemeral columns of a local newspaper, and it was not until after his death that the works of George William Bagby were published in book-form.

His "How Rubinstein Played" is now famous. It was tossed off and printed in a daily paper, and it was not until after it had become celebrated and was claimed by several aspirants for fame that its true author thought of asserting his authorship. His "Old Virginia Gentleman" is a beautiful and pathetic portrait of the last of the Cavaliers; and this and his other sketches, such as "My Uncle Flatback's Plantation," "Fishing in the Appomattox," etc., are the most exquisite bits of Southern life in *genre* ever drawn. When after his death some of his works were published by Whittet & Shepperson, of Richmond, Virginia, the *Revue Bleue* of Paris deemed them worthy of a full and exhaustive critique.

What Bagby did for Virginia, Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnston has done for Georgia, or at least for one class in Georgia.

In the *Southern Magazine* during its struggling existence Colonel Johnston contributed that remarkable series of Georgia sketches which was subsequently brought out by Harper & Brothers under the title of "Dukesborough Tales." As he humorously says, he was over fifty years old before he knew he could write. The humor of these sketches is inimitable. Colonel Johnston is the Hogarth of Georgia. He has, since the new era, been in great demand, and some of his recent stories have been published under the somewhat indifferent title of "Mr. Absalom Billingslea, and Other Georgia Folk;" also a collection entitled "The Primes and their Neighbors," and a book of essays, "Studies, Literary and Social." "Old Mark Langston" and "The Widow Guthrie" are his only novels yet written; but the writer who admitted that somehow he could never be rough to his women owes it to Southern women to write a novel of the old Southern life of which they formed so essential and beautiful a part. It may illustrate the improved condition of Southern writers to state that whilst the sixteen or seventeen stories in "Dukesborough Tales" would readily bring the author now several thousand dollars for original magazine publication, besides the royalty they would yield him afterwards as a volume, he received for nine of them but one hundred dollars, which was paid for the copyright of what is perhaps the best volume of Southern sketches ever written.

These writers, having been so unwise or so unfortunate as to select for their medium of communication Southern magazines, failed to reach the eye of the outer world. Another Southern writer, however, was more sagacious than these. Down in New Orleans a young man began to tell the romantic stories that came to him among the old houses and gardens of that ancient haunt of gayety and romance, and he told them with supreme art. The fast-fading time of the Annexation gave up its memories; the secluded quarters of the exclusive Creole yielded their charming secrets; the streets and closes, the levees and the purlieus, all furnished quaint material to his hand.

It is charged that his stories are not true to Creole life. The writer well knows that cultivated Creoles do not speak a *patois*. For purposes of art, however, the proportions of prosaic fact may be modified, the lines thrown into perspective. These pictures may thus not be true to Creole life, but they rise into the high plane of ideality; they are true

to human life. The author of "Posson Jone" and "The Grandissimes," since the time when his delineations of social romance in the days of the Annexation brought him the applause of the American reading world, has drifted into what the South, which understands its own economical conditions and recognizes their difficulties, cannot but deem grave errors. He has been assailed on account of these with that vehemence which has ever characterized the attacks made by the South, whether on the field of battle or in the arena of forensic discussion. Much, however, must be forgiven to sincerity. The heart that made possible the characters of Aurore, of Raoul, and of Dr. Sevier must have depths of tenderness as surely as the brain which conceived them has genius. The writer reprobates Mr. Cable's theories of politico-social economy as unsound and unsafe, but he will never cease to be proud that, whatever direction Mr. Cable's philosophy may assume, his literary genius is the offspring of the South. When Mr. Cable first began to write, the present vehicles of literary work, the great monthlies, were still closed to Southern authorship. It is said that "Posson Jone" was respectfully declined by more than one of the leading magazines, because it dealt with a drunken parson, and finally appeared in a periodical of less note. It made the author's reputation: it should have made it had he never written anything else. It was followed by a number of other stories, all of which exhibited the same quality of power combined with the same artistic treatment. These were subsequently issued in his volume entitled "Old Creole Days." After these came successively his novels "The Grandissimes," "Madame Delphine," and "Dr. Sevier," which established his reputation as one of the novelists of the day, and later "Bonaventure," "The Creoles of Louisiana," a work on Prison Reform, and a volume of essays dealing with the race question. His later work, like that of some others, has not come up to the standard of his earlier, the artist being in danger of becoming merged in the professional apostle.

Meanwhile, about the time Mr. Cable commenced to publish, two young men in the South began to be known. One was a young Mississippian, who struck a new vein; and although he passed away in New Orleans at the age of twenty-six, yet Irwin Russell in his negro-dialect poems had already exhibited rare genius, and had laid bare a lead in which others have since discovered further treasures. His cantata "Christmas Night in the Quarters" is the best delineation of negro life yet written, and is pitched on an artistic key which contains a suggestion of the possibilities possessed by the old life of the negroes as a field for either music or romance. The young discoverer had dreams of developing this mine, and related with delight his plans, which embraced, among other things, a complete novel illustrative of that life. Had not his career been suddenly terminated, there is no telling what his brilliant genius might have accomplished. His poems have recently been published in a slender volume by the Century Company.

The second was a young editor in Georgia, who was already known as an inimitable reproducer of negro dialect in songs and short sketches. He wrote a series of sketches embodying in a strikingly novel form the quaint stories which used to be told in the flickering firelight by the old

"mammies" or "uncles" in the old times before the war. The stories caught the ear of the South, and touched a chord which opened wide the doors of memory. With "Uncle Remus" and "Miss Sally's Little Boy," whoever came across them lived over again his own childhood, laughed over the stories, told with inimitable fidelity and art, which he used to hear at the fireside "in the dear remembered days," and wept a little also over the memories that they recalled.

The stories were published in book-form in 1882, under the title of "Uncle Remus, his Songs and his Sayings: The Folk-Lore of the Old Plantation," and at once made Mr. Harris famous. The North noted the strange fact that the South was reading a Southern book; it studied the unknown dialect, and recognized through its difficulties the unmistakable hand of the master. It is not for its ethnological value that Mr. Harris's work is prized: any laborious student with sufficient industry and zeal might have collected and collated the folk-lore, and have made of it a proper volume for the upper shelves of public libraries, and an interesting study for other students of ethnological science. It is not for its dialect, accurate and entertaining as we find it in the hands of a master of sound; for a true ear and familiarity with the inflection of the negro place a fair phonetic reproduction within the attainment of any one,—a fact which recent magazine literature abundantly testifies.

The true secret of the power and value of Uncle Remus and his "Sayings" lies in the artistic and masterly setting and narration. Notwithstanding the impediments of a language unfamiliar to the eye and difficult to the unaccustomed tongue, Joel Chandler Harris has through this medium reproduced and perpetuated a picture of Southern life absolutely true. Reading "Uncle Remus," we are not studying animal myths nor learning phonetic arrangements; we are translated bodily to the old man's fireside in his cabin, listening with "Miss Sally's Little Boy" to Uncle Remus himself as he tells us stories the merit of which as stories springs directly from the fact that Uncle Remus knows them, is relating them, and is vivifying them with his own quaintness and humor and impressing us in every phase with his delightful and lovable personality. Mr. Richardson in his work on American Literature has not deemed Harris's work worthy of mention; but in the estimation of the writer the fidelity with which his books have preserved the folk-lore of the Southern cabins in its verisimilitude of coloring, tone, and substance, and the genius with which he has reproduced the Southern civilization which is the "setting" he has employed for his characters, constitute Mr. Harris's work perhaps the most valuable contribution to Southern literature that has yet appeared. Uncle Remus is now known the world over.

Mr. Harris has written, besides his first book, several volumes,—"Nights with Uncle Remus," "A Rainy Day with Uncle Remus," "Mingo, and other Stories," "Free Joe and the Rest of the World," "Daddy Jake the Runaway," etc.

About this time, in a magazine which for a long period had been regarded as the organ of that department of literature the home of which is Boston and the standard of which is Bostonian, and into

whose columns the admission of a Southern writer was popularly imagined to be more difficult than to get a camel through the eye of a needle, appeared a series of stories so fresh, so artistic, so virile, that the American reading public at once recognized the rising of a star. They copied no predecessor, they claimed no resemblance, but were instinct with the breath of the mountains of Tennessee. They did not bring the scenes to the reader, but carried him to the mountains and showed him them as if he viewed them with ocular vision. The name of the author—Charles Egbert Craddock—was unfamiliar to the world. No one knew anything of him, not even the newspaper correspondents; but he stamped on every page the undoubted mark of genius. This much was assumed: he wrote too well to be a Southerner; yet, as he knew the mountaineers and the mountains as they could be known only by one who has lived among them and has taken them into his life, it was surmised that he was an engineer who had been thrown among these scenes whilst looking after mineral interests, in which the region is peculiarly rich. He was invited to visit Boston, —possibly in the hope that upon an investigation he would be discovered to be a Bostonian. He went, and, when he arrived, Charles Egbert Craddock was found to be a young lady from Tennessee, bearing the historic and honored name of Murfree. The discovery that the author of "Silas Marner" and "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story" was a woman created hardly a greater sensation.

"Drifting down Lost Creek," "The Star in the Valley," "The Dancin'-Party at Harrison's Cove," and all that remarkable series of stories which were published under the felicitous title "In the Tennessee Mountains," were shortly followed by the novel "Where the Battle was Fought," and the long story "Down the Ravine," and these were succeeded by "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountain," "In the Clouds," "The Story of Keedon Bluffs," "The Despot of Broomsedge Cove," and "In the 'Stranger People's' Country," all of which possess the same elements that characterized the first stories she wrote.

Just as Miss Murfree became famous, another story—or more properly a novel—of mountain-life appeared, which was quite as remarkable as hers, the scene being laid in the mountains of North Carolina. The name, "Oblivion," is possibly not so happy as those which Miss Murfree selected; but no novel yet produced by the South is superior to it, and only one or two equal it in merit. The author wrote as "M. G. McClelland," and for some time it was supposed that this was a man, so masculine was the work, so free from all sentimentalities, so true in its literary ring. It transpired, however, that M. G. McClelland was Miss McClelland, a young lady of Virginia.

Since "Oblivion" appeared, Miss McClelland has published the following novels: "Princess," which was her first work, "A Self-Made Man," "Madame Silva," "Jean Monteith," "Ten Minutes to Twelve," and "Manitou Island."

During this period a general awakening had taken place in the South, and many writers besides those already named had asserted their claim to recognition, some of them on grounds which do not

admit of denial. Miss Elliott, of South Carolina, had written a novel entitled "The Felmeres," which is notable for its boldness in departing from the beaten track in its conception, and for being the first of the later novels founded on the struggle made by materialism and agnosticism against the established faith, the fine treatment of which theme in "Robert Elsmere" and "John Ward, Preacher" has given Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Deland their fame. Miss Elliott's book had in it a guarantee of future work of a high order, which is realized in her new novel, "Jerry." "Jerry" was sent to a publisher, who, after accepting it, was so impressed with it that he felt the author should first have the benefit of magazine publication. He accordingly sent it to a magazine, reserving to himself the right of subsequent publication.

Colonel Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, who had begun to publish before the war the works which have since made him well known as a writer on archæological and historical matters, as early as 1867 began with a History of the Chatham Artillery, which he has since followed up with many other historical works of value, including historical studies of the Southern Indians, a History of Georgia, in two volumes, a Life of Commodore Tatnall, and a Life of Hernando de Soto.

Miss Mason had edited "The Journal of a Young Lady of Virginia in 1782," and had written a "Life of General Robert E. Lee," as early as 1871.

Mrs. Mary Spier Tiernan, of Maryland, had written two novels, "Homoselle" and "Suzette," both of which have much force and evince the new tendency of recent Southern writers to utilize the material educed by the life with which they were familiar and to rely less on the old models. Miss Mary Tucker McGill had written her record of Southern women, and a history of Virginia, and was writing character-sketches of Virginia life. John S. Holt, of Alabama, in 1868 had published his novel "The Life of Abraham Page," and had followed it in two years with "What I know about Ben Eccles," which in turn was followed by "The Quines."

Miss Randolph had written her "Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson." Mrs. Louisa Clarke Pyrnelle had written a sketch of plantation life entitled "Diddie, Dumps, and Tot," which has not in either tenderness or humor been surpassed by any Southern story.

Armistead C. Gordon, to whom the writer of this paper owes a special debt of gratitude for his example and literary sympathy, had been, with no thought of recompense, contributing to local magazines stories of Southern character, such as "African William" and "Envion," which, although slight, are of exquisite delicacy, and exhibit a finish that is art and a pathos that is beyond art.

Many of these writers exhibit a richness of resource and a delicacy of feeling united to a vigor of treatment which place their work on a higher plane than the work of the older writers. It is in a truer and a better key. They have left the old, and are working on new lines with a freshness that is inspiring. They no longer copy old models in reflection, but write from Nature herself with a heartiness and a breeziness which are contagious.

It cannot be said that more credit is due to any one of these writers than to the others for this new departure. They all began about the same time; they lived far apart; and their work is generally so different and so original that no imitation and but little similarity can be discovered. They appear to have been animated by one impulse, and, whether in the mountains of Tennessee, the midlands of Georgia, under the magnolias of Louisiana, or amid the hills of Piedmont Virginia, to have written out of their hearts what Nature interpreted.

By this time the South had obtained recognition. The great monthly magazines which had become the vehicle of transmission of literary work were not only open as never before to Southern contributors, but welcomed them eagerly as a new and valuable acquisition. Under this fostering influence numbers of writers arose in the once silent South and demanded recognition, until the attention of the reading world was directed to this section, long deemed sterile, as giving the greatest promise to be anywhere found of future literary accomplishment.

They are not confined to any one locality, but are distributed throughout the land. As the young pines spring from the exhausted fields, so all over the South young writers without assistance and without other encouragement than that of their own literary impulses have appeared in regions which have lain fallow for a century. As has been happily said, "it is as if some fairy prince had broken through the hedge and kissed the sleeping princess into life."

Chief among these later writers are Professor James A. Harrison, Miss Frances Courtenay Baylor, Mrs. Burton Harrison, Miss Magruder, Lafcadio Hearn, Miss Amélie Rives (now Mrs. Chanler), Miss Grace King, H. S. Edwards, James Lane Allen, W. W. Archer, R. T. W. Duke, Jr., Miss M. Elliot Seawell, Miss Katharine Pearson Woods, Matt Crim, and Miss Viola Roseboro'.

Miss Baylor is the author of one of the cleverest studies of the day, "On Both Sides," which she followed quickly with "Beyond the Blue Ridge," a story of mountaineer life, which attracted much attention, and with a sweet child's story, "Juan and Juanita." In some of the work of "On Both Sides" Miss Baylor has displayed her real genius. No one can read the book without feeling that it is the work of one who possesses the highest quality of the novelist, the power of characterization.

Mrs. Burton Harrison has written "Golden-Rod," a romance of Mount Desert in its days of romantic simplicity, "Helen Troy," "Women's Handiwork in Modern Homes," "The Old-Fashioned Fairy-Book," and a work for children entitled "Bric-à-Brac Stories." She has also for some time past been engaged in critical work; and more recently she has produced a novel of Virginia life, "Flower de Hundred," and a story, "The Anglomaniacs," the last of which attained exceptional popularity. Perhaps this, better than anything else she has done, shows her real genius.

Miss Magruder began her career as a novelist a few years since, with a novel, "Across the Chasm," which was a story of unusual interest and giving promise of further and better work. She has

since been writing at her leisure other stories of social life, all of which have met with success. Two of her novels, "At Anchor" and "Honored in the Breach," were published in this magazine.

Lafcadio Hearn's work possesses a quality which is essentially original. Whatever he writes is impressed with a warmth which testifies the force beneath. He has opened for us a new field; and the luxuriant growth which has sprung up therein to enchant all lovers of the beautiful is more due to his treatment than to the inexhaustible richness of the virgin soil.

T. C. De Leon has taken a high place among Southern writers. His best-known works are "Creole and Puritan," a stirring novel published in this magazine, "The Puritan's Daughter," and "Four Years in Rebel Capitals."

Miss Grace King by her work maintains the reputation of Louisiana. Her short stories gained her a reputation before she essayed anything more pretentious. "Earthlings," a novelette recently published, renews the promise made by "M'sieur Motte" and "Bonne Maman."

Miss Woods's book "Metzerott, Shoemaker" is an adventure in a new field, and exhibits unusual ability.

The most noted of the younger writers not only of the South but of America is Mrs. Amélie Rives Chanler. She is primarily a poet, and her poems possess a finish which her prose has not yet attained, but she is more widely known as the author of a number of striking short stories and the now famous novelette "The Quick or the Dead?" The chief qualities of her writing are its vigor and its fearless originality; and if it exhibits a tendency to too much exuberance, and the treatment is sometimes so bold as to be startling, her work often impresses with the conviction that such demerits as there may be are those of haste, of inexperience, or of a mind which rebels against the conventionalities. She is at present among the quicksands of successful authorship, and in danger of being misled into sacrificing through hasty and unconsidered work, for an ephemeral popularity, powers which, properly husbanded, might give her a high and lasting place in our literature.

Professor James A. Harrison is one of the most distinguished scholars of the South, but he is equally well known as a writer whose work is of the most varied kind, embracing Greek history, a work on Anglo-Saxon poetry, works of travel, a history of Spain, a translation of Beowulf, and a series of sketches of Louisiana life, besides other scholarly works. Since the appearance of his "Greek Vignettes," in 1878, he has been steadily adding to his reputation. His work, no matter what his subject, invariably bears the stamp of force, originality, and learning.

Mr. Virginius Dabney has written "Don Miff," a work which it is difficult to class, but which is absolutely original in its conception and is a valuable discussion of the old Southern life. His son, Professor Heath Dabney, has recently contributed to Southern literature a short history of the French Revolution. His sister, Mrs. Smedes, has given evidence of the possession of the family gifts in a work of a

different character: her "Memorials of a Southern Planter" is one of the best and most valuable contributions to the literature of the South.

Miss M. Elliot Seawell, of Virginia, has recently brought out three novels of Virginia life,—"The Berkeleys and their Neighbors," "Hale-Weston," and "Throckmorton." All of these stories, which are written in a finished style, exhibit unusual ability, as do her prize story "Little James," and her latest, "Midshipman Paulding."

J. A. Macon, one of the best of the dialect writers, has just passed away, but his "Terpsichore in the Quarters" and other poems will survive. A friend said of him, "He never did anything wrong in his life."

H. S. Edwards, of Georgia, James Lane Allen, of Kentucky, W. W. Archer, A. C. Gordon, and R. T. W. Duke, Jr., of Virginia, Matt Crim, and Viola Roseboro', have as yet written only short stories or poems, but the stories they have written are a striking and valuable part of the new literature of the South, and their work possesses a distinctive value much beyond its immediate object, for it portrays in true colors, without exaggeration, and with artistic finish, the romantic and fast-fading life of the old South. James Lane Allen has in his stories touched the high-water-mark of Southern literature. He has not been surpassed by any, even by Cable or Miss Murfree at their best. His work has a special quality of its own.

Besides these writers, nearly all of whom have taken fiction as their chosen field, there are others who have produced admirable books of a different class. Notable among these are Woodrow Wilson, author of "Congressional Government," a work recognized not only in this country, but also in Europe, as an authority; Mrs. Corbin, who has recently written an admirable Life of Commodore Matthew F. Maury, her father; Philip A. Bruce, whose new work "The Plantation Negro as a Freeman" is the most complete and at the same time the calmest and most philosophic analysis of the character of the negro race as it exists in the South which has yet been published; Alexander Brown, author of "The Genesis of the United States," which has given him a place among the best historians of the age; and Lyon G. Tyler, the biographer of the Tylers. These works are written in a style which entitles them to be included in any article on recent Southern literature, and they give promise that the South will not hereafter in her literary work confine herself to fiction.

With some exceptions, poetry in the South under its new conditions has not kept pace with prose. Robert Burns Wilson, of Kentucky, has, after Lanier and Hayne, taken a more distinctive position as a poet and reached a loftier altitude than any one else in the South. Dr. John A. Wyeth, who uses the reed as well as the scalpel, and has lately shown what the Southerner can do as an historian, William H. Peck, a novelist as well as a poet, G. H. Sass ("Barton Grey"), Amélie Rives, Judge Logan E. Bleckley, of Georgia, William H. Hayne, Charles Washington Coleman, Jr., Judge R. T. W. Duke, Jr., and others, have all displayed ability, and poetic imagination coupled with a facility in verse which promises more than it has yet accomplished,

and several have struck the note which proclaims the poet. All of these writers have taken heart of grace, and nearly all are in the first blossoming of their spring, writing with an earnestness, an ambition, and a courage which betoken future success, and taking as their models no longer the old squared and ruled pictures of a book-taught foreign civilization, but the very lineaments and form of Nature herself. Mrs. Preston and Mrs. Piatt have struck a noble key, and will be regarded hereafter as the best women poets the South has produced. Southern literature must reach a higher plane than it has yet reached, before they shall be surpassed.

The charge has been made that the Southern writers are narrow in their scope and restricted in their limitations,—that in their work they are inclined to be too local in their characterization; and sneers are made at the amount of dialect-writing which is indulged in. Fritz Reuter wrote in dialect, and it is admitted that his books are among the best imaginative works in German literature. Burns wrote in dialect; Scott employed it at his convenience; Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot recognized its value. Whilst it has unquestionably been carried to unwarrantable excess, most of the Southern writers have used dialect simply as the vehicle to convey local color, and, marked as is the realistic, it is subordinated in their work to the romantic.

In whatever garb these young candidates for literary honors may present themselves, whether in the jeans and buckskin of the mountaineers, in the tattered garments of negro dialect, in the faded raiment of Creole patois, or in the fashionable attire of pure English, it matters little, so they but win the prize of fidelity to truth; if they have reproduced Nature, either realistically, or as she may be elevated through the imagination into the higher realms of ideality,—if they have touched the heart of humanity,—they will each one have struck a chord in that harmony whose mission is to elevate and purify society.

If these writers have as yet confined themselves generally to the delineation of those scenes with which they are most familiar, it is a good sign. It is the first step towards true success. In time, with larger knowledge and more extended intercourse with the world, the powers which have pictured so well and perpetuated so admirably the fast-fading life of the South under her old conditions will, if need be, give more extended views.

To the writer, this fidelity to truth united to a high imaginative quality in the work of this new school of writers at the South is the most encouraging sign which the time manifests of the coming of an American civilization of a high order.

The happy union of the realistic with the romantic in this school to which is due so much of the success their work has attained is owing largely to the knowledge of the inner life of the South which the writers possess, the authors who have attained note being, with only one or two exceptions, members of old families.

Upon a survey of the conditions which at present exist, it appears to the writer that the South now presents a field for literature such as cannot be elsewhere found.

The influence of the Southern life is apparent in the work of a

number of authors not of Southern origin. Mrs. Burnett was a Southerner when she wrote "Louisiana;" Judge Tourgée has impliedly acknowledged his indebtedness as a writer to the romantic element in the Southern life. The Egglestons are Southerners, and their gifts are the pure products of the South, though their themes are more generally of the West. F. Hopkinson Smith is a Southerner, and all the good in his "Colonel Carter of Cartersville" is of the South.

Maurice Thompson, although not a Southerner by birth, is a Southern writer. Octave Thanet testifies to the inspiration of the Southern life; and even Miss Woolson, who fails to find the treasure of the inner life which lies deeper than her somewhat scornful gaze reaches, by her work bears witness to the value of the material it furnishes.

The literature which has been produced at the South during the last three or four years does not appear to the writer up to the standard of that which a few years since attracted the attention of the reading public to that section as giving promise of a renaissance which should surpass all that had gone before. There is an apparent tendency to copy old work,—to utilize old timber,—to produce a great deal,—in a word, to fall from the standard of artistic literary excellence to that of magazine availability. It is within the province of only prophecy to foretell what writings will survive, but this much is sure: more than one promising literary reputation has been slain by a successful book; and if our writers are ambitious to attain a permanent place in our literature they have need to stop their ears to the voice of the siren Temporary Popularity, and get back, at whatever cost, to the firm and safe ground where, with fear and trembling, with patient labor and earnest striving, they worked out their salvation and attained the excellence which lifted their early work from the dead level of mediocrity to the plane of true literature.

If they will but take heed, they have before them a future of which the country shall be proud; for that an American literature will be is as certain as that this nation will continue to survive, with all its vital and vitalizing elements.

In the South, as has been already observed, the conditions for a literature now exist as perhaps they do not exist in any other country or section. An heroic past is already assuming the proper romantic perspective for a literature. The forces which existed and which in the past created a race of orators and polemical writers of the first rank continue to exist, and are still potent. The conditions which limited the application of those forces have changed. The South perfectly understands and appreciates the value of literary work, and recently, for the first time in its history, has comprehended the fact that it has a life worth preserving and possesses a power fully equal to its preservation.

Thomas Nelson Page.