

per books.

You mention Manning the clergyman was quite unexpected, and he went perhaps mad. I am writing every day and I may say every hour, a copy of the first number of my work for America, and it is important I should be here at the time to go if any emergency can be made here for publishing it, as I am bound from Book-calls in the commission that may get lost, I think it worth republishing, and to run at an edition of it without my consent as to get it for the London public - or for shipping in the post. Had I my choice I would rather it should not be republished here until some number appear of which could be given at once to stamp its character.

I am also busy just now preparing more paper to put out. W. H. Knapp, publisher

the actual error between the 2. the day before I came for it I think with a doubtless, I may believe to come down for a few days, but I may need doubtless of I am at this you must get some more papers for me.

I do not wish to mention the reason for my returning down, if though they will concern in my respect to a man in my situation they may appear very liberal to others.

I say these words no more and when a paper at my command she I understand is a miracle.

For my own health and the very best

Your affectionate

W. H.

Washington Irving

Part of a Washington Irving letter

OUR FOREBEARS GO VISITING

By William R. Langfeld

THE British traveler's habit of visiting this country and voicing his opinions in book form has become proverbial. That from the earliest days of our national existence there has likewise been a respectable body of American comment on England, both laudatory and critical, is not such current knowledge. Robert E. Spiller has gathered the gist of this literature into "The American in England", arbitrarily limiting its scope to the years 1776-1835, the period during which America emerged from her colonial state and attained economic, social, artistic, and political self consciousness.

The early American visitors to England were largely students, artists, or commercial, religious, or diplomatic envoys. Later came the tourists and journalists. Early in the century Benjamin West, John Trumbull, Washington Allston, C. R. Leslie, Gilbert Stuart, Samuel F. B. Morse, Stuart Newton, Copley, and the Peales formed

veritable schools of painting and largely influenced English art. They were most favorably received, but the earlier ambassadors had a struggle for the necessary social recognition and the acceptance of the United States as an international factor. Both Jefferson and John Adams were scornful of the English aristocracy and its empty formalities. Adams was austere conciliatory and Jefferson found much material benefit to be derived from the study of British institutions.

Early students sought education in England principally in the sciences, as Benjamin Silliman in chemistry and Benjamin Rush in medicine. From this group came the founders of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York.

Spiller is unprejudiced in disclosing the observations of these travelers and quotes liberally both those favorable and the reverse. In general their democratic independence scorns British caste and the servility of the lower classes. They find the Englishman an inconsistent mixture of friendliness and

GLEANINGS IN EUROPE.

ENGLAND:

BY

AN AMERICAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA

CAREY, LEA, AND BLANCHARD.

1837.

Title page of a volume published anonymously by James Fenimore Cooper. This volume and the Washington Irving letter are in Mr. Langfeld's private collection

reserve, but sincere and honest, and they recognize a natural kinship. They admire the beauty of England's landscape, her wealth and prosperity, but find an appalling gap between the poor and the rich. They are accepted with greater cordiality toward the end of the period discussed. Especially piquant is Harriet Balch's summary of London as "an overgrown elegant place crowded by thousands of people; the one half know not how they are to get the next meal". These people seem to have met most of England's celebrities; the

book is replete with descriptions and anecdotes of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Scott, Lord Jeffrey, Disraeli, and others.

There is a chapter on Irving, the literary ambassador who so thoroughly mingled with England's best and whose personal charm aided in cementing amicable relations. Cooper receives another chapter, concerned chiefly with the farsighted but caustic social criticism contained in his books of travel, now little known and out of print. Willis's sojourn is also covered at length.

The book evinces assiduous research and the painstaking gathering and marshaling of material, much of it hitherto unpublished. Necessarily, the author must exercise discretion in selection and exclusion. Irving's "Lines in Deep Dene Album" are a definite index to his mental attitude, and he was introduced to Mary Shelley by John Howard Payne, but the omission of such data is unimportant. Historical repositories, journals, diaries, letters, private and public libraries, and manuscripts, family records, periodical contributions, and books now unobtainable yield a wealth of information — descriptions of persons and places, of customs and habits of life; social, political, or character analyses. There is a profusion of fact and of incident. The volume has the value of an historical document both in its revelation of the condition of England and of the development of the United States. It has a decidedly literary flavor. It is chatty but solid, engaging without being frivolous, tinged with the romance of travel, and distinctly interesting to read.

The American in England, during the First Half Century of Independence. By Robert E. Spiller. Henry Holt and Company.

SHORT TURNS IN DIVERS PLACES

By Blanche Colton Williams

EVEN to one who has read some twenty thousand short stories, milling through magazines at two thousand a year for a decade, these collections of Mr. Benefield and Mr. Maugham appear uncommonly good. The authors no more resemble each other than "The Chicken-Wagon Family" resembles "The Moon and Sixpence". Mr. Benefield's scene is Louisiana, occasionally New York; Mr. Maugham's, the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, Singapore, the Eastern Ocean. Yet read in succession these volumes provoke the conclusion that the authors are alike in breaking away from worn story patterns. That each uses no extraordinary stuff from which to cut his story adds to his triumph in creating something new and not too strange.

The primary reason for Mr. Benefield's distinction lies in a Louisiana heritage completely realized by his life in New York. Early events and emotions, remembered in a state of tranquillity, he records with something of poetic feeling and rhythm. Carrie Snyder, for instance, disappears down the track, "bravely as with banners blowing", while "a little boy mourned the loss of a friend more loyal than he knew". I do not mean to imply that Mr. Benefield reports actual incidents or portrays living characters. Some years ago when I asked him how he came to write "Miss Willett", he replied that the story had its origin in a show window exhibit where a Negro woman of most forbidding aspect used to demonstrate a folding bed. He noted the exhibit in a book and left it for months. One day when he needed an idea he stared at the scribbled note and experienced the elements of the

story as they floated to the centre of consciousness to join in a more or less complete whole. The story, of New York, shows his way with Louisiana. The significance of such procedure, its value, lies in the lack of conscious effort. Unconscious metabolism does the work. So the black woman of forbidding expression becomes the blonde Miss Willett whose radiance, inspired by the plaster figure, "kept 'em comin' in droves". He has peopled his setting, frequently the town of Crebillon, with simple folk — unfortunate women, unfortunate and villainous men. Small chance here for humor or gaiety. The one exception I recall is that found in Cesar Honfleur, present in more than one story, who is a villain only in thinking himself one.

Most of the tales are, in one way or other, about lovers. The young pair who spend two nights down Bayou Dubac under the chaperonage of Lyd; the engaging couple of "A Fiery Sweetness" brought together officially by the matrimonial bureau and spiritually by the author; the romantic lovers of the "Graveyard Ghouls"; lovers who go out in tragedy, as does Zeb Deakin of "Maybe This is Love". Yet to describe "Short Turns" as a volume of love stories would give a false impression. Rather, in touching the lowly and the fated as he does in the best of the tales, the author establishes a common ground of humanity. Without didacticism or apparent intention, he points out the good there is in the worst of us. "Daughters of Joy", in particular, illustrates the generosity of his intention. Here is a worthy companion to Cobb's "The Lord Will Provide" which, I am given to reasserting, is the most poignant of the Judge Priest group. In "Daughters of Joy" and in "Blocker Locke" are flashed the only surprise endings of the collection. Even