Chapter Five

SATIRICAL AND POLEMICAL FICTION

The tensions which precipitated and accompanied the establishment of the independent United States, the growth of its political parties, and the awakening of national and regional feelings produced at one level the Declaration of Independence and the Federalist papers, and at another a flow of oratory and a mass of satirical and polemical writings. Although most of the oratory evaporated, the writings remain. Most of them, violently partisan pamphlets and broadsides or abusive newspaper contributions, merely testify to the heat which the debated issues generated. But a few of the satirists and polemicists used literary means and achieved literary effects not irrelevant to a discussion of the contemporary American novel.

1. John Bull and Brother Jonathan

Francis Hopkinson, Jeremy Belknap, and James Kirke Paulding, three American authors who expressed their opinions of Anglo-American relations, used “the pleasing and popular form of an allegory” and followed one and the same model, Arbuthnot’s John Bull. Of these writers, Belknap (1744-98) was the most moderate. Though in The Foresters he adopted the Arbuthnot personifications consistently and borrowed various other details from his model, his satire is only in appearance a “sequel to the history of John Bull the Clothier,” as its title page has it. Belknap’s view of the conduct of the British and the Americans (the “foresters”) was very much conditioned by the historian’s approach; and as a result, The Foresters strikes the reader less as a satire than as allegorical history with an American bias. Thirteen of the eighteen letters contained in the final edition of
1796 deal with the development of the British colonies in North America, letter 14 introducing the national phase. The last letters added in 1796 abandon the major issues and the consistent forward sweep of the narration to hint at less inspiring aspects: the Genet affair and the Georgia speculations.

That Belknap owed much to Arbuthnot is obvious:

...The foresters had a respect for their old master and landlord, and when they had anything to sell, they always let him have the refusal of it, and bought all their goods of him. But though he called himself their father, and his wife their mother, yet he began to abate of his parental affection for them; and rather looked on them with a jealous eye, as if they were aiming to deprive him of his claim and set up for independence. Had he been contented with the profits of their trade, as was certainly his interest, they might have remained his tenants to this day; but ambition, avarice, jealousy and choler, inflamed by bad counsellors, have wrought such a separation, that it is thought Mr. Bull will go mourning all the remainder of his days, and his grey hairs will be brought down with sorrow to the grave. (pp. 99-100)

The one quality, however, which above all made Arbuthnot's *John Bull* successful—its caustic vividness in the treatment of a controversial subject—is replaced in Belknap's allegory by a far milder tone. There is less originality in Belknap's handling of the dispute between Britain and America than in his manner of humorously characterizing the various colonies, but this remains a subordinate feature within his historical presentation.

The Arbuthnot asperity was adequately caught and disciplined to a lesser robustness and bitterness by Francis Hopkinson (1737-91) in *A Pretty Story* (1774). This short pamphlet devotes two chapters to the Magna Charta and the settlement of North America before detailing, in five more chapters, the various measures which, from the late 1760s onward, step by step increased the distrust and antagonism between Britain and the colonies. *A Pretty Story* was written in time to be read by the colonial delegates assembled in Philadelphia to discuss their grievances against the English Parliament. Hopkinson concluded his pamphlet with a reference to the measures taken against
Massachusetts after the Boston Tea Party in a sentence left meaningfully incomplete: “These harsh and unconstitutional Proceedings irritated Jack and the other inhabitants of the new Farm to such a Degree that ********** Caetera desunt” (p. 197). The thirteen asterisks evidently called on the colonies to provide a continuation. Hopkinson’s point was more than merely opportune and highly topical: by going back in his first chapter to the old British rights of the individual, the author added to the significance of the immediate issue that was in everyone’s mind, raising it above the level of political bargaining. This effect was helped, too, by leaving the parties without proper names (except for “Jack” or Massachusetts): there are on the one hand the nobleman, his wife and the steward, and on the other the noblemen’s sons. The combination of the general with the precise and topical, a feature of all allegorical presentation, is ingeniously and thoroughly realized in *A Pretty Story.* The title itself expresses an irony which in the pamphlet is sensed in the shifts from the general to the particular, for they emphasize the shortsightedness and final insignificance of the temporary rationalizations behind which essential values are being betrayed. Political hypocrisy is thus revealed by the account of the situation after the French and Indian Wars:

But now the Nobleman’s Wife began to cast an avaricious Eye upon the new Settlers; saying to herself, if by the natural Consequence of their Intercourse with us my Wealth and Power are so much increased, how much more would they accumulate if I can persuade them that all they have belonged to us, and therefore I may at any Time demand from them such Part of their Earnings as I please. At the same Time she was fully sensible of the Promises and agreements her Husband had made when they left the old Farm, and of the Tenor and Purport of the Great Paper. She therefore thought it necessary to proceed with great Caution and Art, and endeavoured to gain her Point by imperceptible Steps. (pp. 187-88)

Hopkinson’s last chapter naturally showed the colonies united. Having shared the troubles of settling the country, the colonists sympathize with the people of Massachusetts, “assuring them that they looked on the Punishments and Insults laid upon them
with the same Indignation as if they had been inflicted on themselves, and that they would stand by and support them to the last (p. 196). At a later period Belknap presented the United States as evolved out of individual settlements and therefore varied: symptoms of dissension were to be expected.

Nor do the regions and interests of the United States appear unanimous in *The Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan* (1812), by James Kirke Paulding (1778-1860). Congress is described on one occasion as being “almost always of at least seventeen different opinions”; later “Mrs. Jonathan” debates without achieving anything: “So she went on for a whole six months at least, chattering away every day to a different tune. Sometimes she talked like a farmer, at others like a tobacco planter, anon like a boatman, or a distiller of whiskey...” (pp. 81-82). On the eve of a new war the New England states scorn Jonathan’s appeal to assist him as seconds against Squire Bull (chap. 15). One party supports Bull, another is in favor of Beau Napperty, whose portrait is drawn as follows:

He wore... a three coloured cockade, as large as an ordinary target, and a three coloured plume higher than all the rest of him put together, so that when the wind blew he was so top heavy he could not stand without some ballast in his pockets. ...His sword [was] of such immeasurable size that every body wondered how he could drag it along. In fact it was the general opinion that he would in time exhaust himself in the trailing of this unwieldy toasting iron. (pp. 22-23)

The first of the sixteen chapters sketches the history of the settling of the colonies and the winning of their independence; the rest of the book presents the three main aspects of the contemporary situation: (1) Squire Bull’s proud and proprietary attitude concerning the sea-trade and the impressment of Jonathan’s rowing crews, which he justifies with his fight with Beau Napperty; (2) the latter’s cunning and ambitious nature; and (3) the regional diversity and political discord of the farmers on Jonathan’s “Bullock’s Island,” with a special dig at the shrewdly acquisitive and restless tenants of Yankeeland. Bonaparte and Congress notwithstanding, it is Squire Bull who is the chief target of Paulding’s characteristic barbs. The book ends aptly on
the hopeful suggestion that Bull may yet revise his attitude toward Jonathan. Although his immediate purpose was as limited and urgent as Hopkinson's had been forty years earlier, Paulding failed to achieve his precursor's concentration and economy. His tone, to be sure, is nearer even than Hopkinson's to that of the original John Bull, humorously rough and hard-hitting; yet Paulding did not succeed in channeling his powers so consistently as Arbuthnot had done, or as had Hopkinson within the tighter framework of his witty summing-up.

The form of the allegory imposes upon the writer using it a fair measure of control; indeed only a skillful practitioner can preserve some liberty of movement within its limits. A writer is therefore likely to refuse to submit to such formal restraint if he feels that it may hinder him from saying what he has to say with all the force he thinks appropriate. The indignation given vent to in A Journal of a Young Man of Massachusetts (1816) is not unlike Paulding's resentment of things British. The Journal does not adopt the guise of an allegorical satire: it is a straightforward narrative, with perhaps a hint of fiction in its outward aspect. The work is attributed to, or at least assigned to the editorship of, Benjamin Waterhouse, the physician (1754-1826); it has been described as "so vivid and lifelike that it must have been written or dictated by a participant in the events described." It seems probable that the basis of the Journal is hard fact, colored not by deliberate fictitious borrowings and elaborations but rather by the resentment which the original narrator felt: "I have made it a point of honor, a matter of conscience, and a rule of justice, to adhere to the truth; and am contented the British reader should say all that fairness admits to soften down the coloring of some pictures of British barbarity, provided he does not attempt to impeach my veracity" (p. 227).

The contents of the Journal are summarized on its title page, where the "young man of Massachusetts" is described as "late a surgeon on board an American privateer, who was captured at sea by the British, in May, eighteen hundred and thirteen, and was confined first, at Melville Island, Halifax, then at Chatham, in England, and last, at Dartmoor prison." The indignant accounts of ill-treatment suffered by the American prisoners and
of attempted escapes betrayed by "secret informers among our crew, perhaps some Irish, Dane, or Dutchman" (p. 106), are "interspersed with observations, anecdotes and remarks, tending to illustrate the moral and political characters of three nations," that is to extol the American virtues and expose the vices of Britain and France. Not surprisingly, considering the character of the Journal, its merits as literature and fiction are slight. One point must be made here, however: part of the author's reaction against his idea and experience of the British is also aimed at what he has come to consider the Federalist delusions of his native New England concerning Britain. The pro-British prejudice which he acquired there is just what Paulding criticized in John Bull and Brother Jonathan. Ironically, the author, so contemptuous of British chauvinism, filled his own book with American claims to superiority over the English. He so zealously expressed his resentment at the British and pro-British that he made of his Journal a document not unlike those travel books by English tourists whose hasty and unflattering conclusions angered many touchy Americans in the first decades of the nineteenth century. From the general education provided in New England to that region's splendid autumn (pp. 39-41, 139), and from the wealth and freedom enjoyed by the Americans to the chastity of their womenfolk (pp. 16, 142), the author praised the advantages of his nation over others and found nothing to criticize at home.

Waterhouse, or whoever wrote the Journal, might be called an (involuntary) American traveler in England, whose report is a retaliation upon the work of some British travelers in America. Royall Tyler (1757-1826), who in 1809 published The Yankey in London, was only an imaginary tourist. The fourteen letters that make up his book are allegedly chosen from the correspondence of an American with his Boston friends. They good-humoredly make fun of some of the political, social, and literary aspects of English life. The author visits the House of Commons and the House of Lords and has a word or two to say about the English weather. Women's fashions are ridiculed and warned against, and so are "medical, mechanical, and culinary quacks." The writer voices his concern over linguistic affectation and the
decadence in literary taste (p. 179). He rejects the Boswellian type of biography and its inclusion of irrelevant anecdotic material; he deplors the fuss made over the mystification in the cases of Macpherson and Chatterton, obscuring as it does the genuine literary merit of their work. The author, who evidently ridicules American foibles, too, indicates his general attitude in a chapter on "Prominent traits in the English character" (letter 43, pp. 145-65). He pronounces the English vain, conceited, and convinced of the unparalleled excellence of their government, army, liberty, and climate, and then abruptly confesses that his estimate was meant as a joke: "...If I could in serious mood asperse a great people in this manner, I should abhor myself, and feel degraded from the rank of intelligent beings, and reduced to a level with English travellers... Amid all their weaknesses, and all their follies, they have many men, and very many women, many achievements and many virtues, of which they may justly be proud without the imputation of vanity" (p. 165).

Adopting the convention of the *Lettres persanes* and similar models, Tyler vividly created the impression of having witnessed the scenes he described. His sound reflections on various literary subjects gave additional plausibility to his sketches—for example, of the House of Commons and the House of Lords—even though his mask of seriousness could be seen through. The author's very first letter gives an inkling of his mood; it contains an account of his conversation with a lady novelist whose only novel "had passed the ordeal of taste in all the circulating libraries, and was actually the last book the great Burke ever read, indeed, some said he expired with it in his hand" (p. 15).21 In view of this lightness of manner, it is not to be supposed that *The Yankey in London* was looked upon as an authentic report.22

Charles Jared Ingersoll (1782-1862) committed himself more seriously than Tyler to the defense of some aspects of American life, against British as well as Continental judgments. *Inchiquin, the Jesuit's Letters* (1810) would not have aroused such heated discussions across the Atlantic23 if the author's views had not been supported by an earnest sound of conviction and had not appeared to be well substantiated. The tone of the pamphlet is
not objective throughout, though: at times Ingersoll uses superlatives and high praise, for instance, concerning American oratory or the religious sense and the morals of the Americans. The last of Inchiquin's five letters from Washington states that "setting aside two, or perhaps three, of the most enlightened empires of Europe, the literature, arts and sciences of the people of the United States of America, are equal, and their general information and intelligence superior, to those of any other nation." This assertiveness, however, is at odds with the general sense of proportion and moderation displayed in the book as a whole. Concerning American literature, the author made no exaggerated claims, pronouncing it to be "rather solid than shining" (p. 126); he found Barlow's *Columbiad* distinguished for its conception and acceptable as to its technical qualities, but definitely lacking in poetic originality and greatness. Ingersoll maintained that what some foreign observers called faults were rather assets at the present stage of America's development (pp. 112-13).

Prefixed to the supposed Jesuit traveler's account, there were three letters addressed to Inchiquin by three different correspondents, each of them expressing prejudiced opinions on the unenviable state of America. These letters, which echo and exaggerate the condescending views of the United States held in Europe, contain in themselves enough contradictions to undercut the scornful treatment of America very ironically. Thus, the Belgian who writes the first letter finds himself caught by the French conscription, symptomatic of an unenviable state of affairs. The second letter comes from a Frenchman, who lists the brilliant achievements of France; his burst of nationalistic praise leads him unguardedly to propose effecting American unity by means of the French language and (French) Roman Catholicism. Inchiquin's brother-in-law, the Irishman Clanrickard, who lives in London, laments his relative's fate: Inchiquin has first been sent to France and must now go to America, while he, Clanrickard, is allowed to enjoy the benefits of England—that is, poverty, the fear of being robbed, and the need for protection. And he concludes:

The American federation, I suppose, cannot maintain itself
According to the best judgment I can form of the prospects of that distracted country, the crisis is not very distant, when it will implore once more the protection of a parent state, which it has ever studied to outrage. Notwithstanding all the injuries that have been received from those despicable freebooters by this magnanimous nation, I believe the cup of reconciliation is not yet exhausted. (pp. 28-29)

Ingersoll's point was just that "the best judgment" formed at a distance was not good enough. But the man advising his friend about to leave for America was unfortunately typical of the European attitude and even of the books about America by men who had been there but were blinded by "the operation of national prejudice" (p. 138 n.). Ingersoll singled out "Anacreon" Moore among the vilifiers of America, but he was thinking of the various nations that at one time or another had judged his country unfairly. His counterattack is strengthened by Caravan's letter (pp. 33-50), included in Inchiquin's first letter from Washington. The Jesuit himself states that the aspect of the federal city is America at its worst (p. 31) and may well give the uneducated and the rash a poor impression of the United States; one must achieve detachment in order not to be over-impressed by Washington as described by Caravan. To generalize from these observations reveals more about the observer than about the country observed; only in the observer's imagination, Inchiquin added, was it barely settled and civilized, furnished with inadequate housing and roads, and peopled mostly with hunters and duelists for whose taste horse races and camp meetings have been designed as exciting spectacles.

2. Federalist New England versus Jeffersonian Republicanism

Among the satirical fiction employed in the warfare between Federalists and Republicans, a large majority speaks on behalf of New England Federalism against the Republicans. It is not difficult to understand why there should be such a one-sided body of partisan satire. New England was far more of a unity than the other regions, not only politically speaking (in that respect
Virginia had equal strength) but also owing to a literary tradition which was there to support the political stand. Since Federalism was the political line of gentlemen, and since gentlemen were literate and articulate, the New England Federalists knew how to speak their views forcefully and skillfully. In addition, the person of Washington may have acted as a restraining influence on the Republican satirists during the era in which the predominance of the Federalists made them objects of satire par excellence. Washington perhaps called Freneau a rascal because attacks against his person as pointed as Freneau's were comparatively rare.

Freneau's *Letters on Various Interesting and Important Subjects* (1799) express the Republican point of view. These twenty-four letters by "Robert Slender, O.S.M.," that is, "One of the Swinish Multitude," were dedicated to "the Freemen, the Lovers of Liberty, the Asserters, the Maintainers and Supporters of Independence throughout the United States," the "true republicans" (p. vii) of his country—meaning, of course, the Republicans of Jefferson. We must suppose these readers to be as naïve in ways worldly and political as Slender himself, who cannot conceive that Christian rulers ever abuse their power and is baffled by the long and glorious words bandied about by politicians. Though unsophisticated and inclined to shrink from loud arguments, the "true republicans" hold their own. Their convictions help them to resist even "a deep laid, well concerted and organized plan, to influence the people into federal ideas at the next election" (p. 21). In Pennsylvania they saw through the propaganda against the Republican Thomas McKean which accused him of being a "democrat" and "an enemy to our mother country, Great Britain," and of having "as president of Congress, signed the instrument of all our woes, the Declaration of Independence!" (p. 28). Freneau's trenchant style and occasional use of the colloquial phrase undoubtedly rendered his Robert Slender a lovable or hateful figure. But Freneau, convinced though he was of the rightness of his cause, was not supported by an assent so active as that of the New England Federalists. No one thought of him as the "first American master of belletristic prose" in an age when to be "the leading journalist...of Jeffersonian and
French democracy" could easily be interpreted as a serious offense, if not downright treason, by the eloquent speakers of the opposing party.

Freneau was described as “a poet remarkable only for the quantity of verse which he has written” by Benjamin Silliman, the author of Letters of Shahcoolen (1802), who on the other hand praised the Connecticut Wits for their efforts to raise American literature to the level of English writing. The summary dismissal of Freneau is one of the clues to the Federalist outlook of Shahcoolen which also colors his denunciation of Mary Wollstonecraft (letters 2 to 4), who is described as a revolutionary monster of viciousness, hostile to all traditions of religion and morals. Silliman thought he could detect symptoms of her demoralizing influence in the fashions adopted by American women, and in their tendency to play cards, swear, and take up skating. He then sketched a prototype of the virtuous American woman. To Silliman the “false philosophy” of Mary Wollstonecraft was merely one aspect of the “philosophical reveries of the present day.” Shahcoolen’s last letters therefore contain a “Dialogue with a modern Philosopher” (pp. 138-52), intended to expose the foolishness of a man to whom “republicanism” and “modern philosophy” (pp. 138-39) mean the same thing; a misguided person who can think that the advent of Jefferson’s first administration is a step forward toward securing the democratic liberties, “while the minions of monarchy and aristocracy are skulking into private life” (p. 139). This modern philosopher is allowed freely to expound his views, for, of course, any sane (that is, Federalist) reader will reject them, together with the related ideas of Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft. The zeal of Silliman’s satire of the “Rights of Woman” and “Back to Nature” programs completely overshadows his discussions of poetry in general and American and Indian poetry, and the Song of Solomon in particular. The reader puts down Letters of Shahcoolen with a distinct impression of some of the notions—political, social, and moral—which Federalist New England attributed to Jefferson and his Republican supporters.

Fragments of the History of Bawlfredonia (1819) represents the views of those New Englanders who could not forgive Madison.
for "his" war and thought of him as a plague divinely appointed:

When Heaven, in vengeance for our sins, permitted this little man to ascend the throne, and plunge our country, unprepared, into a most bloody war, he withdrew the national troops from the defence of Asylumonia. When the prowess of our citizens had convinced our enemy, "that we could conquer though our king should fly," Pigman patched up a treaty of peace, in which he "remembered to forget" to secure to the fishermen of Asylumonia, the privileges which had been guaranteed to them by all former treaties. (p. 134 n.)

The complicated apparatus of mystification which obliquely ensures that the History of Bawlfredonia should be recognized as a satire of American Republicanism states that its subject is a country discovered about 1789, not far from Botany Bay. Accidentally sailing into Asylum Harbour, some surviving members of a French crew settle there among the inquisitive inhabitants of Asylumonia. One of them, M. Traducteur, later translates the History. His manuscript makes its way to Baltimore, where the editor gets possession of it. The seven fragments which he publishes contain so many similarities to American history, the editor says in his introduction, that people will think it is a mere satire of the United States and its leaders, but such an idea must be dismissed as ridiculous because "the immaculate purity of the characters, the transcendent intellectual powers which all our great men have possessed, both for civil and martial government, and the unparalleled prosperity to which they have, especially of late years, raised this flourishing commonwealth; all these, I say, set them far above the loftiest flights of the shafts of satire" (p. 13). Bawlfredonia is a name derived not from the original discoverer but from one who bawled loud enough to appear capable of such a discovery. Having given an account of the discovery, the author in the next two sections relates how Blackmoreland and Asylumonia were settled and then broke with their mother country. Fragments 4 to 7 are devoted to Tom Anguish, Thomas Tammany Bawlfredonius, and Pigman Puff, and their efforts to discredit religion and undermine the Federal authority. The author speaks chiefly
in tones of either offended and offensive anger or pronouncedly ironical praise. Now and again he refers sarcastically to the Republican way of interpreting the separation of church and state: to him this interpretation appears as a Macchiavellian distinction between the commercially or politically expedient and the morally justifiable, and also as an excuse to abolish the Christian religion altogether. He comments on the Republican reaction to the Sedition Act of 1798, remarking that when in power the Republicans arbitrarily used some of its provisions, even after it was invalidated. There are allusions to Jefferson’s Illuminatism, to Paine’s influence among the Republicans, to the Virginian aristocracy and dynasty of national leaders, and to slavery, upheld by Jefferson contrary to his own obviously hypocritical statements.

To his satire of the Jeffersonians the author added some ironical remarks concerning man generally. The Republicans are not alone in failing to apply the moral test to some of their decisions; long before they existed questionable arguments were used—for example, to justify the importation of slaves: “Even if they are men, our business is not to consider the sin, or the duty of the matter, but the policy. If that can be settled, we have no more to do. The church may think of the rest” (p. 63). Referring to the presidential candidates of 1797, Adams and Jefferson, the author wrote that “the better informed and more discerning men of the nation, weighed both these great men in the balance, and pronounced them wanting” (p. 148).

Some of the anti-Republican points made in the History of Bawljredonia within the perspective of American history and human nature occurred a few years earlier in The Adventures of Uncle Sam, in Search after his Lost Honor (1816), by the pseudonymous Frederick Augustus Fidfaddy, Esq. To heighten his effect, the author made some use of the nomenclature of Arbuthnot, Belknap, and Paulding, speaking of the American presidents as chief stewards, of Congress as Uncle Sam’s wife, and mentioning Bull; Napoleon becomes a Bunyanesque Appolyon. His own inventions are not too witty: General Hull, for example, is “Count Scratch-us-off,” and General Smyth, “Count Smite-us-off.” The United States is turned into an allegorical
table whose thirteen legs have been increased by five apparently unequal ones, so that it now stands rather insecurely. In some chapters the writer chose to use a biblical style; in the one presenting Jefferson, called "Thomas, the Magician," one passage refers to the Sedition Act and the *Notes on Virginia*:

53. And it fell out in the stewardship of John, that he made a decree saying thou shalt not speak evil of the rulers of thy people; thou shalt not lie. And the thing displeased Thomas and he said the decree is not good, so he destroyed the decree and said thou mayst lie; but thou shalt not speak the truth against the rulers of thy people.

57. And he wrote a book containing many wise sayings and much wisdom; for he spake of mountains and rivers and fishes; and of trees from the Oak that maketh the beams of ships, to the Tobacco plant that burneth before the nostrils.

The main object of Fidfaddy's attack, however, was the War of 1812, into which the United States had been rushed. He devoted ten of his twelve chapters to it, lamenting Madison's ambition, and the ineptitude of the army leaders, and deploring that none of the issues advanced to justify the war were settled by the Treaty of Ghent. The ignominy of the American flight from Washington moved him to elevated strains:

Is there an American heart unwounded at the recollection! Or have we lost all distinction between virtue and vice... Has a repetition of the act of bowing our necks, with a sinic servility, to the burden of shame, neutralized our feelings and blunted our perceptions? Why did not the verdant sod that covers the ashes of Washington burst asunder. But no! Had his pale ghost met the shameless fugitives with the stern upbraidings of a seraph, they would have dodged regardless along, "let us live to enjoy our offices" would have been the answer. (pp. 123-24)

An issue which angered the Federalists particularly was the naval disarmament ordered during Jefferson's administration. Fidfaddy did not fail to stress that whereas the armies frequently proved incapable of enforcing their generals' "proclamations," the American warships obtained many victories: the "genius of Columbia presided over the destinies of our little Navy... scattering laurels with the discriminating wisdom of a sage" (p. 63).
Meanwhile, the Quixotic campaigns on land only caused disputes among the commanding officers: "...They threw the charges of 'incapacity' and 'cowardice,' with such rapidity to each other, that our Uncle sat, rolling his huge eyes, first at one, then at the other, like a kitten, watching the pendulous motion of a ball of yarn..." (p. 74). 41

The War of the Gulls; an Historical Romance (1812), by Jacob Bigelow (1786-1879) and Nathan Hale (1784-1863), also ridiculed General William Hull's efforts on land and praised Isaac Hull's successful action at sea. A pamphlet of thirty-six pages, it meant to show that the Americans had gullibly allowed themselves to be misled by the shortsighted naval and foreign policy of the Republicans. It made a point of stressing that General Hull was a Republican—so why expect victories on land? But on the Atlantic,

The federal Hull
Gave chase to John Bull,
And was soon along side of the thundering Guerrier;
With his balls and his powder
So thickly he plough'd her
She sunk a mere wreck, and the Gulls ne'er sung merrier.

This is the second of four stanzas which conclude the pamphlet 42 and offer as parting advice:

... if we must be gulls
O let us be sea-gulls,
And give up our conquests to Bidwell and Gannett.

In some quarters there was an acute consciousness of the divergence of views separating the various subdivisions of the country, and it was feared that the forces of dissension might eventually disrupt the unity of the new country. The Reverend William Jenks (1778-1866) imagined in 1808 what the situation might be like seventy years later. His Memoir of the Northern Kingdom, allegedly "written A.D. 1872" and published at "Quebeck, A.D. 1901," saw the United States split into three regions. Looking back from an imaginary future, the author of the
Memoir remembers how the Southern States, under the leadership of Virginia, seceded from the United States. They had leaned more and more toward France, whence came many immigrants, chiefly officers. Among these was Napoleon’s brother Jerome, who married a young lady from Baltimore and whose son was designated to rule the Southern kingdom. In the face of Southern dissidence, New York and New England formed a union with closer ties and a more centralized administration, choosing a President elected for life. But the royal government of Canada turned against the Northern States; at length the Canadian king married the daughter of the Northern States’ president and effected a personal union between their countries. Meanwhile, only the Middle States remained true to the republican idea, but their center of gravity shifted toward the interior of the country. The Memoir begins by advising the “Illinois Republicans,” those descendants of the truly democratic Americans of the late eighteenth century, to reestablish a monarchy or to accept annexation to the Northern Kingdom. A monarchy, after all, is a natural form of government—thus runs the argument of the sceptic in matters of democratic self-government and mutual concessions:

...The truth is, no man is indifferent to personal honours, however he may for the present, and most probably for the sake of obtaining a more abundant share in future, affect to despise them.

In principle then, by far the greater part of the United Americans were republican. In manners the most influential among them were generally aristocratick. But I do not impute this circumstance to them as Americans, or as republicans, but as men. It is human nature, and we cannot expect to change that nature merely by the form of government.  

Jenks’s point was not, it may be assumed, that the American experiment in republicanism was absolutely doomed to fail; but he wanted to make clear that the United States could not stand a further weakening of its interior ties. The Southern States’, and especially Virginia’s, Gallophilia, as well as the individual Republican leaders’ ambitions, threatened to destroy the nation and to render the very idea of the democratic state
suspect. In this sense the Memoir is really “an anti-Jeffersonian tract of considerable felicity.” Yet although Jenks’s preferences were Federalist, his work reveals a rather moderately partisan attitude. It is the more regrettable that the author did not make a more skillful use of the device of historical anticipation.

A further example of the anti-Republican fictional writings of New England attracts attention by means of features other than partisan satire. This is the anonymous The Yankee Traveler, or the Adventures of Hector Wigler (1817). The book attacks Jefferson too, but not, however, the political figure so much as the “philosopher” and “Illuminatus.” Jefferson is mocked for his scientific pretensions and his rejection of the Christian faith, the result of his reading of Rousseau, Shaftesbury, Hobbes, Condorcet, Godwin, and Paine, all of them the villains of the New England Federalists. Among those who, like the narrator, visit “Thomas Conundrum” at “M—o,” we find a philosopher of the New French School, called Nihil, and a fat doctor from New York, Van Stufflefunk. Nihil, a fervent supporter of Mary Wollstonecraft’s ideas, woos a Mrs. Wimble who poses as Miss Wimble. Another assembly of “Conundrumites” gathers at an inn, a locale indicative of their moral character, apparently, just as much as their various callings or the name of one among them, the Hon. Judge Bubble.

The inn provides the storyteller with a helpful way of naturally introducing a group of characters; the same function can be assigned to the coach which in The Yankee Traveller takes the party of pilgrims to Monticello. The storyteller rather than the satirist is also in evidence in several elements of episodic action. The hero has been staying with his Jeffersonian uncle Humbug, whom he suspects of really being his father. He finds himself prompted to leave Humbug’s farm when his uncle marries again and begins fathering children upon his young Dutch bride. He leaves in the company of the pedantic schoolmaster Whack when the latter is involved in a case of doubtful paternity and assists him in outwitting and knocking out Squat, the true father of the child laid at Whack’s door. When the policy of “Mundungus,” or Madison, plunges the country into the War of 1812, Hector becomes a soldier; he is disappointed at not being made a
sergeant, and must suffer for expressing his disappointment too rebelliously. The treatment of such adventurous passages is more to the author's credit than his handling of the satirical situations; he writes at times with the zest of Smollett. His book unfortunately breaks off very abruptly with Hector's discomfiture in the army, and *The Yankee Traveller* remains a mere hint of the possibilities of blending satire and the novel.\(^{51}\)

There is little fiction and not much genuine satire in *The Life and Travels of Father Quipes, otherwise Dominick O'Blarney* (1820), a pamphlet attributed to John MacFarland.\(^{52}\) This scurrilous piece of writing was aimed by a politician at a local rival. Two equally unattractive pictures—of the attacker and of his victim—emerge from its pages. The former was apparently fond of political invective and was generally quarrelsome, attributes which would seem to provide adequate equipment for penning a *Father Quipes*. Quipes, who might be a relative of Freneau's Father Bombo and Brackenridge's Teague O'Regan, candidly describes himself as an illiterate Irish upstart, given to exploiting and mocking those who have helped him. He has come to America as the victim of a press-gang. The account of his rise through imposture and slander is occasionally interrupted by episodes illustrating his naïve ignorance of the polite ways of the world. The oblique undermining of the character is very clumsily done; it is nevertheless recognizably akin to the *Jonathan Wild* type of biography and to the sketches of characters like Simon Suggs, Senior and Junior, or Ovid Bolus.

Of the satires that have been discussed in this chapter, it is clearly Freneau's that most successfully combines an original conception with good writing. Each of the other works is decidedly inferior to Robert Slender's *Letters*; the *History of Bawlfredonia* is perhaps more unified and more truly humorous than the others.

### 3. Letters from America

Many writers of the eighteenth century used the concept of the foreign observer whose testimony has a corrective function: it
should open the eyes of the inhabitants of the country he visits to errors and affectations to which they have grown accustomed. The *Letters of Shahcoolen* were introduced by their publisher with a reference to Montesquieu's and Goldsmith's imaginary travelers. The *Lettres persanes* and *The Citizen of the World*, however, have a vaster scope than Silliman's *Letters* and point out a greater variety of national foibles. Shahcoolen limited his view to two subjects: American literature and, more importantly, a combination of political radicalism and religious anti-traditionalism; his personal outlook branded the work, making it a partisan satire of Jeffersonian Republicanism.

Samuel Lorenzo Knapp (1783-1838) published in 1817 *Extracts from the Journals of Marshal Soult*. The pretended French marshal, now living in the United States, claims that he has always taken a great interest in America and promises to be an impartial observer and thus more reliable than most travelers from Britain and France. He starts out from Boston, visits Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire, and concludes that the American republic will prove more durable than others: the resources of the country are immense, and its democratic structure is the natural outcome of organic conditions. The diarist sketches various eminent New Englanders as well as his idea of the North American Indians: "The native savages were of gigantic stature, fleet in motion, capable of sustaining incredible hardships of cold, fatigue and famine, accustomed to war, glorying in blood and death, and fearlessly bidding defiance, and breathing vengeance for their real or imagined wrongs." In his account of the career of a local politician, the author uses the manner of a novelist describing the sad fate of one of his heroes: "...Misfortune followed misfortune, until 1784, found him involved beyond the hope of redemption, and he retired to a country seat, avoided the world, and in a few years fell a victim to sensibility" (p. 94).

In the following year Knapp dropped the disguise of the Frenchman to adopt that of "Ali Bey," but *Extracts from a Journal of Travels in North America* (1818) covers very much the same ground again. A "Translator's Advertisement" promises another description fairer to America than the travel books writ-
The Calvinists are led by their peculiar temperament to draw mankind in dark colours. They would make us believe that we are a very wicked and worthless race of beings, deserving of all manner of punishment—which it would seem we are now undergoing, for they insist upon it that there is nothing in this world but sorrow, misery and sin.

The other party are less saturnine—they look upon man to be a pretty clever sort of a being naturally, with many good and some bad principles in his nature, either of which he is at liberty to cultivate, and which he does cultivate according to the force of temptations, and the predominance of a good or a bad education. As to the world, although disfigured with much misery and vice, they still think that the balance is in favor of happiness and virtue. And they do not see the advantage or propriety in painting the world or its inhabitants in darker colours than truth requires. Much less allowable do they deem to draw the character of the Almighty according to the gloomy imaginations of men, without regard to revelation.  

Ali Bey goes on to criticize manners and fashions, the education of young girls and the corruption of civil servants, hypocrisy in matters of church attendance and humanitarian activities. After giving his American friend an opportunity to air his grievances about the American "literary inferiority" (p. 100), the visitor concludes, in his most successful satirical passage, that the Bostonians might be won over to Islam if certain conditions were respected:

The Imaums and Fakirs selected for the high trust of sowing the seed of truth in this benighted land, must be men of talents, education and address. They should be invested with all the splendor that money can command. Their mosques should be magnificent and richly endowed. With these prerequisites a few able Imaums would find no difficulty in attracting, first to their drawing rooms and then to their mosques, all the fashionables and literati of the city. The example of these, always contagious, would soon influence the middle and lower classes. With a good voice and commanding manners, with funds sufficient to
Neither of the series of *Extracts* has uncommon merits, though perhaps a livelier fancy animates the second. A better book than either had used four decades earlier the idea of establishing a bridgehead for a foreign power in some part of the United States. Knapp was possibly inspired by Mehemet, the central figure of *The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania* (1787), but his books do not reflect the high spirits of Peter Markoe (ca. 1752-92). A slight yet entertaining production, *The Algerine Spy* was written at a time nearly as critical as the year 1774, when Hopkinson’s *A Pretty Story* appeared. Markoe’s aim, too, was similar to Hopkinson’s: he meant to underscore the necessity of a radical change in the system of government in America. If the Federal powers were increased, defections like that of Rhode Island or troubles like Shays’s Rebellion would hardly occur any more, and certainly would no longer mean any real danger to the country. Mehemet suggests offering the protection of Algiers to Rhode Island, but speedily drops this plan when he becomes aware of the unity of purpose manifested by the other states, as well as the endless resources, physical and governmental, of the United States.

Mehemet finds little to blame in the republican spirit and democratic provisions of the country. He is puzzled by the Quaker meeting he attends, though he does not fall asleep as Franklin had done. He hopes that the American universities will not ossify like their European models. Mehemet trusts that no nationalistic considerations may lead the Americans to abandon their neutrality, for it is plain to him that “they are too strong to be conquered, and too weak to think of conquering others.” When he is struck with the businesslike air of many Americans or the manner in which fashions establish their rule, his reflections are much like those he made during his stops at Gibraltar and Lisbon—on Occidentals generally, not on different nationals. At times he shows hostility to the French, whom he describes as objects of “hatred and contempt” (p. 13), as vain, chauvinistic, and exaggeratedly fond of dancing. A ball, though, presents
him with the delightful opportunity of watching Western dancing for the first time:

...In the course of their fooleries, I thought I perceived a degree of mystic morality. The lady at times fled from the gentleman, as if she was offended; whilst he, from the hope of appeasing her anger, followed her with becoming tenderness; but deeming her implacable, and conscious of his own dignity, gives over the pursuit and flies from her. She, justly apprehensive of losing him entirely, follows him in turn; a reconciliation ensues, and their hands are reunited. (pp. 48-49)

Everything considered, human weaknesses such as fashions and social affectations do not count so much as the aggregate of good will which operates, for example, in the American "popular assemblies, who are more studious to increase the happiness of the people than to create enemies" (p. 114). Mehemet, therefore, is not at all unhappy when he is told that he is in disgrace at the court of Algiers, that his estate has been confiscated, and that his wife has eloped with his chief gardener, a slave. "No longer either a slave or a tyrant," he is now "at once a christian and a Pennsylvanian...doubly an advocate for the rights of mankind" (p. 126). On a note of strained rhetoric, he finally addresses Pennsylvania: "...Open thy arms to receive Mehemet, the Algerine, who...hopes, protected by thy laws, to enjoy, in the evening of his days, the united blessings of FREEDOM and CHRISTIANITY" (p. 129).

The virtues of the American—or at least, the Pennsylvanian—republic, to which Mehemet so heartily subscribed, escaped the notice of an alleged Frenchman whose observations reached the public in The Hermit in America on a Visit to Philadelphia (1819). Robert Waln, Jr. (1794-1825), who invented the Hermit, made him speak instead of "beaux and belles, dandies and coquettes, cotillion parties, supper parties, tea parties."59 This one-sided preoccupation seems understandable to some extent, since the Hermit is about to leave on a voyage into the interior of the world from which he might conceivably not return.60 The Hermit's peevish remarks tire the reader the more quickly because they are helped by neither originality nor wit.
Hardly more original than Waln’s Hermit, but at least less cantankerous, the Chinese traveler employed by George Fowler in *The Wandering Philanthropist* (1810) speaks as a serious and well-meaning prophet warning a people against the possible serious consequences of what to them are mere foibles and trifles. Occasionally he also praises some of the institutions and achievements that come under his observation. He deplores extremes of partisan spirit but notes the advantages of a two-party system. The treatment of the natives of the New World appears appallingly cruel and brutal to him; however, he finds their status and opportunities in the United States not unsatisfactory. He has no sympathy whatever with the slaveholders of the South and does not understand how their protestations of natural rights can be reconciled with the treatment they often give their slaves. Hypocrisy and hollow phrases strike him when he visits Congress and attends a Fourth of July celebration. He finds, like Brackenridge’s *Farrago*, that “the loudest professions” are considered the mark of “the best patriot” and derives from his observation another conclusion *Farrago* would have agreed with: “The great defect of an hereditary government is the despotick power which rulers exercise over the people; the great defect of an elective government is the despotick power which the people exercise over rulers” (p. 193). He particularly resents “the invincible prejudices that have existed in this country against original productions” (p. v). He comments on this in an indignant passage that is all the more striking because it follows words of praise for the rise of science and general education in the country, and a panegyric of George Washington bristling with the superlatives so readily applied to the first president in Fowler’s days (pp. 110-11). The author drops his usual moderation in one more case: when he paints a picture of the sublimity and variety of the American landscape. Here Fowler’s language, which is otherwise adequate to his purpose, fails him, and his attempt to render the grandeur he has experienced only results in an amateurish pseudo-Radcliffean accumulation:

In other places I found myself enclosed in long and deep vallies where the awful heights which surrounded me almost obscured
the light of day. Here towering trees of every description grow in crowds, and spreading out in their wild and natural magnificence, their limbs are so thickly entwined as almost to defy the approach of light, and in the midst of day to enshroud the darkness of night. The awful cliffs looked down upon me and seemed to threaten to crush me to pieces. The craggy rocks rose one above another, and hung over the dreadful precipice. Here immense trees have been torn up by the roots, and falling spread devastation among others, plough up the ground and are dashed into a thousand pieces. (pp. 133-34)

In his preface Fowler states that fancy must play a part “in so diversified a subject” (p. iv) as he is attempting, but there is little sign of its influence in The Wandering Philanthropist. James Kirke Paulding knew how to use fancy more freely, just as he commanded the wit and originality so sadly lacking in The Hermit in America; he also assisted them with comic vigor. At the beginning of his Letters from the South, in a “historical” chapter inspired by the same spirit of burlesque that sparked off the History of New York, Paulding demonstrated why the American Indians must be considered the ancestors of the Europeans:

The Indians are much given to high play; so are the fashionable people abroad. The Indians neglect their wives; so do the fashionable people abroad. The Indians are mighty given to long pompous harangues; so are the fashionable orators abroad. The Indians are great smokers; so are the Dutch and Germans. The Indians are fond of high sounding titles, such as Iron Cloud, Negro Legs, Jumping Sturgeon, Big-eared Dog, Shifting Shadow, &c; so are the fashionable people abroad. The Indians are great beggars; so are the Italians. They are deep drinkers, like the Germans and English; they are smoky and dirty, like the Russians; great dancers, like the French; proud and lazy, as the Spaniards; and as vain as all these put together. Certainly all this shows a common origin; and the logical conclusion to be drawn, is, that a people like the Indians, uniting in themselves the various and distinguishing characteristics of the principal nations of the earth, must be the great common ancestor of all.

Again and again Paulding repeats the need for more intellectual independence on the part of the Americans. His Letters, though ostensibly from the South, urge the people of all the different
states and counties, and of town and country, to overcome their mutual prejudices. He voices, too, the concern expressed earlier by Markoe over the neglect of agriculture now that commerce and industry are encouraged everywhere. Here and there he allows himself to pause for the description of some historic site or a striking view, modestly attempting, perhaps, to supply a picture of one of those many beauties of America that, according to him, had not yet found their poet:

In descending the mountain, we...saw, what seemed a vast and interminable waste of waters, spreading far and wide, and covering the whole face of the lower world. The vapours of the night had settled in the wide valley, at the foot of the hill, and enveloped it in one unbroken sheet of mist, that in the grey obscurity of the morning looked like a boundless ocean. But as the sun rose, a gentle breeze sprung up, and the vapours began to be in motion. As they lifted themselves lazily from the ground, and rolled in closer masses towards the mountains, the face of nature gradually disclosed itself in all its varied and enchanting beauty. The imaginary sea became a fertile valley, extending up and down, as far as the eye could reach. In the midst of the green foliage of oaks and solemn pines, were seen rich cultivated lands, and comfortable farm-houses, surrounded by ruddy fields of clover, speckled with groups of cattle grazing in its luxuriant pastures, or reposing quietly among its blossoms. Still, as the mists passed silently away, new objects disclosed themselves, with a sweet delay, that enhanced their beauty. Here was seen a little town, and near it a field, animated with sturdy labourers. (1:107-8)

Whereas Fowler, in the passage quoted before, composed a picture out of "sublime" materials which remained intractable to his powers of description, Paulding's imaginative grasp produced a more harmonious result, both with the unusual spectacle in the first part of his landscape and the more familiar one, rather like a genre painting, which follows and forms a contrast to it. Paulding, however, refused to take himself too seriously in the role of the painter in words; and therefore, in another context of lyrical admiration, we find him pricking the balloon of his mood by introducing in the same scene the preoccupation of his geology-minded companion, who "had somehow or other heard
of a parcel of oyster or muscle shells, bedded in a rock somewhere in this neighborhood, which made his hobby-horse to caper and curvet, and kick at such a rate, that he could attend to nothing else" (1:177). Such touches, which transform the literary notion of a traveler into the feeling that he exists or the wish that he should exist, were beyond the other authors of "letters from America." Paulding, without being a great writer, at least knew and used his craft. He could convey his ideas and impressions to his pages, and was able to keep his subject alive and to avoid pretentious writing.

Paulding also refrained from inventing mysterious and elaborate circumstances "explaining" the genesis of the work he published. His title page simply stated that the Letters from the South had been "written during an excursion in the summer of 1816." George Tucker (1775-1861), in the manner of the other writers discussed in this chapter, added to the title of his Letters from Virginia (1816) "translated from the French," and prefixed a "Translator's Preface" to the Letters, saying among other things: "It is unnecessary, I suppose, to explain by what accident they came into my possession, because all will see that I have just as good a right to be lucky as another man" (p. v). In spite of the irony obviously aimed at a current convention, Tucker maintained the pretense which that convention implied by having the writer address his letters to different correspondents: those dealing with love to his girl friend, the descriptive and gossipy ones to her brother, and the reflective letters to their father. With these correspondents the writer of the letters, supposedly an opponent of Napoleon like them, has spent the first years of his exile from France. He deplores the existence of slavery in Virginia and comments on the indifference of the public toward native poets such as Richard Dabney. In a dream the times when marriageable young girls had to be imported are recollected: he sees them offered for sale on some market, like any other merchandise, and occasionally causing disappointment and dissatisfaction to those who have acquired them. A Virginian friend of his disapproves of the Yankees because "they love money a little better than their own lives" (p. 38). But the visitor thinks this charge not much more serious than the Vir-
ginians' "gluttony," which influences even their judgment of people, as a gentleman's praise of Washington shows: "I knew the General mighty well. That was a fine man indeed. It would have done you good to see him eat a sheepshead!" (p. 117).

That the *Letters from Virginia* should have been attributed to Paulding is understandable, for their banter is not unlike that of the *Letters from the South*; moreover the remarks on the English travelers also suggest the possibility of Paulding's authorship (pp. 46-51, 147). There are in the two series of letters similar opinions on Yankee shrewdness, too, and the tone of Tucker's reflections about Fourth of July orators recalls Paulding's satirical voice: "These are men who set up once a year, (generally in very hot weather), to proclaim their independence with a loud voice, and abuse the British 'con amore'. In fact they sometimes carry their malice so far, as to vent their spite upon the very language they speak in, its unoffending parts of speech, and innocent rules of syntax, only because they are English" (p. 207).

The question of American standards of oratory also occupies some space in *The Letters of the British Spy* (1803), by William Wirt (1772-1834). With him, the subject obviously had a particular importance. When he speaks of "divine eloquence," he appears to be thinking of an ideal of complete communication between any artist and his public. The passage, famous in Wirt's days, about the blind preacher is a revealing illustration of Wirt's conception:

But when he came to touch the patience, the forgiving meekness of our Saviour, when he drew, to the life, his blessed eyes streaming in tears to heaven—his voice breathing to God, a soft and gentle prayer of pardon on his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—the voice of the preacher, which had, all along, faltered, grew fainter and fainter, until his utterance being entirely obstructed by the force of his feelings, he raised his handkerchief to his eyes, and burst into a loud and irrepressible flood of grief. The effect is inconceivable. The whole house resounded with the mingled groans, and sobs, and shrieks of the congregation. (p. 56)

The sympathetic harmony of the preacher and his flock is ac-
complished through a forceful appeal to, and play on, the listeners' emotions or "sensibility." This is something which Wirt himself repeatedly attempts. He does so when drawing attention to the wrongs the Indians have suffered at the hands of the invaders and conquerors of Virginia, and again in his rhapsodizing over the broken steeple among the ruins of Jamestown, so suggestive of the past and of the march of time: "...As I look at it, I feel my soul drawn forward, as by the cords of gentlest sympathy, and involuntarily open my lips to offer consolation to the drooping pile" (p. 51).

The writer acknowledged that he was a disciple of Sterne (p. 50), but the author of *Tristram Shandy* was not his only model: the British Spy also expresses the wish that every family should read a few numbers of the *Spectator* daily, for "what person, of any age, sex, temper, calling, or pursuit, can possibly converse with the Spectator, without being conscious of immediate improvement?" (p. 79). The combination of Sterne's sensitive whimsicality with Addison's urbane soundness of mind and soul, which Wirt had in mind and attempted to realize in the *British Spy*, may have been an example that many of his contemporaries tried to follow. Unfortunately, neither were the two individual models easy to imitate, nor was the combination easily achieved. The Addisonian essay could become drab and dull, and the Sternean manner turn into mere mannerism. It was due in part to mistaken efforts at equaling Sterne and others that the very "style of modern productions" which Wirt objected to came into fashion:

The writer who contends for fame, or even for truth, is obliged to consult the reigning taste of the day. Hence, too often, in opposition to his own judgment, he is led to incumber his ideas with a gorgeous load of ornaments; and when he would present to the public a body of pure, substantial and useful thought, he finds himself constrained to encrust and bury its utility within a dazzling case, to convert a feast of reason into a concert of sounds; a rich intellectual boon into a mere bouquet of variegated pinks and blushing roses. (p. 81)

In addition—and Wirt knew this when he wrote of *Tristram Shandy* that it was a book "which every body justly censures and
admires alternately” (p. 50)—Sterne’s style could be felt to express a moral attitude vaguely related to the deistic and radical notions exposed by the British Spy and potentially no less harmful than them: “. . . The noxious weed of infidelity, has struck a deep, a fatal root and spread its pestilential branches far around. I fear that our eccentric and fanciful countryman, Godwin, has contributed not a little, to water and cherish this pernicious exotic. There is a novelty, a splendor, a boldness in his scheme of morals, peculiarly fitted to captivate a youthful and an ardent mind” (p. 59).

A biographer of Wirt wrote of the *Letters* in 1832: “They were composed in a great degree for diversion of mind, with little care, and with still less expectation of the favourable reception they met at the time, or of the popularity they retained afterward.” Popular and widely read they were, though some critics praised them only cautiously, and it is difficult to understand today why they should have been so successful.

4. American Spectators

William Wirt’s delight in the humorous responsiveness of Yorick to his environment was shared by Joseph Dennie (1768-1812). One of Dennie’s “Lay Preacher” essays admonished his readers to believe, with his “predecessor Sterne, that comfortable assertion, worth a million of cold homilies, that every time we smile, and still more every time we laugh, it adds something to the fragment of life.” The “Advertisement” prefacing the 1796 edition of *The Lay Preacher* mentioned the author’s models, stating that “the familiarity of Franklin’s Manner, & the simplicity of Sterne’s proved most auxiliary to his design. He, therefore, adventured their union” (p. iv). Certainly an American could consider Poor Richard as honorable and helpful a precedent as Sir Roger de Coverley; Sterne’s “simplicity,” not so obvious a model, was presumably derived from the informality of Yorick’s sermons. In his own sermons the Lay Preacher treated a variety of subjects, recommending to his readers the virtues of a simple and industrious life in the seclusion of the country and warning
them to beware the tempting theories of Jefferson and of Paine, "that infidel in religion, and that visionary in politics" (p. 19); one may easily be taken in:

Very suddenly have most of our political fashions past away. Britain has been called a mother, a hag, a sister or a fiend. Our rulers are perpetually wrangling concerning the garb of government. Some, from Geneva or Virginia, affect the broad mantle of republicanism, which covers a multitude of sins. Others prefer French manufacture of the Paris cut. A few, perhaps, wish to import materials from England, but there is a good warm well made, easy garment, made to fit any one, called Federalism, which the Lay Preacher actually prefers to his own canonicals, and prays may be constantly worn, and an unchangeable mode. (pp. 71-72)

Dennie delighted his readers by his pleasant merging of humor and commonsensical preaching, and by his style, easy and figuratively sententious. In 1801, when Dennie had left New Hampshire to settle in Philadelphia, some of the work which he had done in Walpole, N. H., was included in the miscellany called The Spirit of the Farmer's Museum, and Lay Preacher's Gazette. Apart from anti-Jacobin denunciations and satires, the American material included some humorous pieces. There is in the collection a fair proportion of literary criticism which tends to be conservative but testifies to taste and solid standards. Ossian is censured, but so is Pope; Addison's prose is praised, and so are American writers like Mrs. Morton ("Philenia"), Robert Treat Paine, and Dennie's collaborator and friend Royall Tyler. There are parodies of Mrs. Radcliffe and Della Crusca, and one of Charlotte Smith as a representative of the European writers distinguished for "the judicious use of epithets": the fashion of regularly decorating each noun with an adjective disfigured the page of many writers of verse or prose, in England as well as in America.

A series of essays with a more limited scope and little distinctive merit appeared anonymously in the New York Morning Chronicle in 1802 and 1803: Letters of Jonathan Oldstyle, by Washington Irving (1783-1859). This juvenile production begins on an Addisonian note, introducing an old gentleman who
deplores certain fashions adopted by the ladies of the day and regrets the passing away of familiar customs, especially with respect to engagements and weddings. Oldstyle disapproves of the freedom accorded to married ladies: "...What husband is there but will look back with regret to the happy days of female subjection" (p. 10). His last letter contains remarks on the ungentlemanlike fashion of the pistol duel. The majority of Oldstyle's letters discuss the shortcomings of the New York theater—the playhouses, the choice and quality of the plays, the merits of productions and performances, performers, playgoers, and critics. It is a very vague and shadowy, slightly cranky, character that emerges through the Oldstyle Letters, an affectedly stylish old gentleman.78

His pale identity is effectively shown up by the better-profiled actors playing a part in Salmagundi; or, The Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq. and Others (1807-8). This series is the joint work of Washington Irving, his elder brother William (1766-1821), and James Kirke Paulding, their brother-in-law. The authors introduced themselves to their contemporaries as monitors and critics of manners; at the same time they intimated that theirs were only facetious roles.79 The fact may have required stressing in view of the morally apologetic tone of much fiction by American writers, who wanted to be taken seriously. True to their pose, the authors later complain that their strictures are not attended to (2:275); but they evidently enjoyed themselves enormously during the best part of the year of the life of Salmagundi.80 In the very first number they created the three "columnists" and "gossip writers" called Launcelot Langstaff, Esq., William Wizard, Esq., and Anthony Evergreen, Gent. Langstaff, reporting from his "Elbow-Chair," introduces collaborators and individual objects of satirical comment. Wizard, an old bachelor remarkable for his confirmed oddities and perhaps a direct descendant of Jonathan Oldstyle, offers criticism on theatrical productions, poems, and style. Evergreen attends social functions and gives forth his views on the fashions and follies to be observed there. In addition the trio mobilizes informants with different viewpoints. Pindar Cockloft, of Cockloft Hall, represents with his family the habits and ways
of thinking of a country squire's household. Mustapha Rub-a-Dub Keli Khan, a successor to Markoe's Algerine Spy, reports on those aspects of the political and public life which strike a foreigner. Jeremy Cockloft, Jr., goes traveling and offers observations on New Jersey or Philadelphia.

The variety of contributors, however, is a mere external effect of *Salmagundi*, for they all display or imply a common denominator: a mellow and by no means doctrinaire conservatism in manners and ideas which finds plenty to ridicule in the changing features of the local scene. The mockery is perhaps least gentle and tolerant in some passages of the political satire conveyed by the Mustapha letters. These speak in a Federalist idiom, as, for example, when the American system of government is being discussed:

...Some have insisted that it savors of an aristocracy; others maintain that it is a pure democracy; and a third set of theorists declare absolutely that it is nothing more nor less than a mobocracy. The latter, I must confess, though still wide in error, have come nearest to the truth. To let thee at once into a secret, which is unknown to these people themselves, their government is a pure unadulterated LOGOCRACY or 'government of words'. (1:126-27)

Mustapha compares Jefferson's proclamations to a cock's crowing on discovering a worm and concludes: "Oh, Asem, Asem! on what a prodigious great scale is every thing in this country!" (1:135). This last sentence, a burden to many of Mustapha's communications, expresses the spirit that also informs the sketch of a politician rewarded for his cringing party loyalty with a suitable post, a sketch entitled "the rise, progress and completion of a LITTLE GREAT MAN" (2:324). Generally, however, a tone of kindliness is more in evidence than such wry severity. The treatment of the Cockloft material is typical of the good-humored manner of *Salmagundi*. The "propensity to save every thing that bears the stamp of family antiquity" (1:111) is mentioned; there is a passage warmly praising bachelordom (1:115) and a delicately ironical portraiture of Barbara and Margery Cockloft, the latter of whom "seemed disposed to maintain her post as a
belle, until a few months since; when accidentally hearing a
gentleman observe that she broke very fast, she suddenly left off
going to the assembly, took a cat into high favor, and began to
rail at the forward pertness of young misses" (1:117).

We cannot be quite sure who wrote the various contributions
of *Salmagundi*. William Irving is generally supposed to have
written the verse; and it seems probable that Paulding wrote the
Mustapha correspondence, and Washington Irving, the Wizard
pieces. The authors naturally collaborated on many parts of the
work, maybe exchanging suggestions or proposing changes here
and there. On the evidence of what was to follow from the pen
of Washington Irving and Paulding, the sketch of Pindar Cock-
loft—"of the true gun-powder temper; one flash, and all is over"
(1:33)—might be an exercise anticipating William the Testy in
*A History of New York* or Peter Piper in *Koningsmarke*. One is
readier to assign to Irving the "Chronicles of the Renowned and
Ancient City of Gotham" (2:354-60) and "The Little Man in
Black" (2:361-70), who in a few strokes becomes a living pres-
ence in the reader's imagination:

...The busy community of our little village was thrown into a
grand turmoil of curiosity and conjecture—a situation very
common to little gossipping villages—by the sudden and unac-
countable appearance of a mysterious individual.

The object of this solicitude was a little black-looking man,
of a foreign aspect, who took possession of an old building,
which having long had the reputation of being haunted, was in a
state of ruinous desolation, and an object of fear to all true
believers in ghosts. He usually wore a high sugar-loaf hat with
a narrow brim; and a little black coat, which, short as he was,
scarcely reached below his knees. He sought no intimacy or
acquaintance with any one; appeared to take no interest in the
pleasures or the little broils of the village; nor ever talked,
except sometimes to himself in an outlandish tongue. He com-
monly carried a large book, covered with sheepskin, under his
arm; appeared always to be lost in meditation; and was often
met by the peasantry, sometimes watching the dawning of day,
sometimes at noon seated under a tree, poring over his volume;
and sometimes at evening gazing with a look of sober tran-
quillity at the sun as it gradually sunk below the horizon.
(2:361-62)
On the whole, *Salmagundi* is remarkably sophisticated when compared with other American writings of that early period. The three authors' fair and easy talent combined with their lively spirits and buoyant inventiveness. The three gentleman-writers also seem to have taken the responsiveness of the public for granted; if for one whole year they found enough encouragement to maintain their roles as well-bred entertainers, their readers must be assumed to have been numerous.

At any rate, more than ten years later the memory of the enjoyable achievement of *Salmagundi* encouraged Paulding to attempt on his own a continuation of it. But he was not well-advised in this undertaking. Instead of recapturing the former success, he only managed to produce a diminished echo of the earlier series. He should have learned from his own observation that, since it is the same subjects that return in satires of manners and society, a change of form and tone was all the more necessary. Paulding's tone in the second *Salmagundi*, however, recalls precisely that of the first. The sparkling inventiveness which made for sufficient variety in the earlier series had deserted Paulding; and the imaginary new collaborators, providing information on New England and Virginia and suggesting further contrasts, do not sufficiently alter the scope and style of the miscellany. A few touches are entertaining enough, as, for example, the neglected Muses' letter which bears only seven signatures because "their sister Melpomene disappeared from the world about the time Otway died, and their sister Thalia has never been heard of since the news of poor Mr. Sheridan's death" (1:135). The modern reader is likely to find Paulding's essay on "National Literature" at the end of the second volume of more interest than the rest. For it expresses, on the eve of the international recognition of Irving and Cooper, a writer's personal view of the literary situation in the United States, a situation marked by the uninspiring dictates of fashion and by indifference to some individual efforts that were worthy of attention and support because they at least potentially offered encouragement for the generations to come.

Another collection of essays that probably owes something to the first series of *Salmagundi*, and certainly much to Addison
and Goldsmith, is William Wirt's *The Old Bachelor.* Here we find again the nostalgic and romantic features of the same author's *Letters of the British Spy.* The Old Bachelor comments on the happiness of Switzerland forty years earlier, which derived from the simplicity and serious hard work of its inhabitants as well as from their sound education. His moralizing views are expressed through the picture of a novel-addicted girl, brought to her senses by regular duties in the household; he also paints the consequences of gambling, which include the temptation of suicide. His gentle irony lights on the professions, then shifts to narrow-mindedness in religious matters; and the occasional use of some imaginary correspondent's indignant or approving comment serves to stress several of the remarks made by the Old Bachelor. The latter, characterizing himself, writes: "I am a bachelor, as Molière's Mock Doctor was a physician; 'in spite of myself. For the last five and twenty years of my life, I have not failed to dispute this point of dying a bachelor, once a year, with some charming woman or other; but as in every case the lady was both judge and party, I fared as it might have been expected; I lost my suit" (p. 1). Later he draws a picture of his gaunt appearance and of his nose and chin that "have sallied out, like two doughty champions, to meet in mortal combat" (p. 46). Having pointed out some deficiencies in the educational practices of Virginia, he quotes his adopted son's view concerning women, "perfect by nature" but "crippled by education" (p. 186). Occasionally Wirt reverted to the emotional tone characteristic of some of the most popular passages of the *British Spy;* thus, when watching and listening to a young girl playing the harp, the Old Bachelor is deeply touched "to mark the fine contour of her figure, her striking attitude, her eye of heavenly blue, raised to the cornice and rapt in all the sublimity of inspiration, while her 'eloquent blood' undulating over 'her cheek of doubtful die' speaks to the heart with more emphasis than even the melody of her lips!" (p. 8). Generally, however, there is more detachment in his attitude, in spite of his longing for the good old times; and he impresses the reader as a likeable person living in the present with definite convictions and a pleasing manner.

[121]
There appears to be a continuity from *Jonathan Oldstyle* via *Salmagundi* and *The Old Bachelor* to Irving’s *Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819-20).\(^7\) At first sight, the more or less serious spirit of conservatism and, to a lesser extent, the ways of the satirist appear to give these various collections of essayistic opinions a marked affinity. Bracebridge, Senior, and the country squire in his pew, of *The Sketch-Book*, are cousins of Launcelot Langstaff and Pindar Cockloft; and the author who, in *Salmagundi*, introduces “a Poem with Notes, or rather Notes with a Poem” (1:70) must be related to that other writer, in “The Boar’s Head Tavern, Eastcheap,” who conceives of the Shakespeare scholar producing volumes of commentary (3:221). Yet the old-time observer, wryly expressing his bafflement at new-fangled notions, may become more than a convenient literary device in the hands of the satirical writer. The reader of *The Sketch-Book* quickly senses the sincerity of Crayon’s nostalgia and also detects a peculiar sense of the past and the transience of men and things, a sense which causes the writer to look for modes of living with, and assimilating, the fact and the external manifestations of the passing of time.

Crayon, realizing that “Europe held forth all the charms of storied and poetical association” (1:7), turns his back on America and travels across the distance in time and space in order to look at the real face of the Old World. The voyage itself to the other side of the Atlantic loosens his native country’s hold on him, and he enters a condition of altered sensitivity. His is from the first a “sentimental journey” in which he may allow his attention to be captured by mere incidents and its energy to be transmuted into forces of the imagination and sympathy. Beyond the physical dangers of the storm, he shares with voyagers less lucky than he the terrors of a shipwreck and the grief of losing, with their life, the love of others. In England he enjoys a spirit of companionship with nature and with the essential features of the people that inhabit the country, a spirit kindled by “rural life” and still at times inadequate, as in his encounter with the widow who mourns her son.

Such sorrow is rendered less heart-rending and easier to sympathize with by customs and traditions like those painted and
referred to in “Rural Funerals,” for they establish a community across the ages that transcends the mere rites to become a community of feeling. Both joyful celebrations and commemorations of sorrow, in themselves transitory, also counteract the passing of time, rendering the past tangible and visible and making it possible to return to it. Thus the travelers aboard the stagecoach enter, each in his own way, into a festive mood which is the continuance of the festive spirit of Christmas, as it has been experienced by countless others before them. To some it will be a season of cheerfulness qualified by earnestness, to others it will carry all the joys of what was soon to be Dickensian jollity, joys which are sensed in the excitement of the schoolboys on their way home and will be realized in the convivial gathering at Bracebridge Hall.

Geoffrey Crayon, the voyager and foreigner hospitably received, shares man’s past by reliving it in the imagination and by readily going along with others who make a point of keeping it alive. He reveals a particular sensitiveness to efforts to verbally record the memories and to give a narrative body to what is remembered. Then he steps forward to repeat and to mediate. Thus he becomes the narrator of Rip Van Winkle’s story when it has “settled down precisely to the tale” which he offers to his readers, or he invites them to join him in listening to “The Spectre Bridegroom: A Traveller’s Tale.” Before beginning to narrate “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” Crayon remarks that visitors to Sleepy Hollow soon imbibe the “visionary propensity” of its inhabitants, thus preparing his readers for the suspension of disbelief that they will have to practice if they are to follow his account of Ichabod’s experiences.

“The Spectre Bridegroom” requires the American reader to follow the narrator far back into the past of a distant country, but in “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” he remains on his side of the Atlantic and within one generation. The relative remoteness in time and space does not matter so much; what is important is an imaginative response to the interaction of the transient and the durable in order to come to terms with the past. It is not just formal customs and traditions that survive but their very spirit too, for our fundamental values are
durable and live on from the past into the present. Roscoe, in this view of things, illustrates the permanence of the cultivated mind which expresses itself through his stoical fortitude and his disregard of personal misfortunes, as well as his belief in human prevailing. Woman’s fine nature provides a counterpart to his manliness: she who inspired *The Kingis Quair* is not really different from Leslie’s wife, and their integrity and wholehearted devotion are found again in “The Broken Heart” and “The Pride of the Village,” determining the fate of their heroines.

Living with, and assimilating, the past, then, does not mean withdrawing from the present and becoming absorbed in the contemplation of what was; but neither must the past be totally ignored. Imaginatively speaking, the past may be richer; so it proved for Irving and, in another sense, for Ichabod Crane. The present engages our attention practically, as a matter to be attended to; and so Katrina Van Tassel engages the rival attention of Brom Bones and Ichabod Crane. The girl is, like Brom Bones, the product of a rich past; but they are both of them so saturated with its spirit as to be no longer conscious of it or aware that it must soon end. For Ichabod Crane, to whom the past is all too powerfully suggestive, transforms the defeat at the hands of his rival into a successful adjustment to different conditions. It is his future, as *A History of New York* had stated and “Rip Van Winkle” repeats, that is to be the future of the country: the Yankees are to have their way, not the Dutch. Irving, conscious of man’s past, which informed the narrative traditions he rendered so successfully, remained an American, a citizen of a country where “a remote period” meant “thirty years since” (6:55). His “Prospectus” and “Author’s Account” make plain his attachment to his native country and “the dearest wish of his heart to have a secure and cherished, though humble, corner in the good opinions and kind feelings of his countrymen” (1:iv). In “English Writers,” and also in “The Angler” (7:41), he asked for fairness toward America. His portrait of John Bull at times comes dangerously near to betraying signs of that very condescension his compatriots were inclined to detect in British judgments on the United States.

His commitment to the country of promise imposed upon the
gentleman given to adventurous excursions into the past a certain restraint. Indulging in daydreaming, he had to be sure of remaining aware, as it were, of the border line separating actual concerns from imaginary experiences. Some reservations are seen to operate against the fascinations of the past. One, which is employed only occasionally, is the writer’s fancy, rather freely playful in “The Art of Bookmaking” or “The Mutability of Literature.” Another check is his absorption in the contemplation of a peaceful landscape, such as the following description from “Rural Life in England”:

Nothing can be more imposing than the magnificence of English park scenery. Vast lawns that extend like sheets of vivid green, with here and there clumps of gigantic trees, heaping up rich piles of foliage. The solemn pomp of groves and woodland glades, with the deer trooping in silent herds across them; the hare, bounding away to the covert; or the pheasant, suddenly bursting upon the wing. The brook, taught to wind in natural meanderings or expand into a glassy lake—the sequestered pool, reflecting the quivering trees, with the yellow leaf sleeping on its bosom, and the trout roaming fearlessly about its limpid waters: while some rustic temple, or sylvan statue, grown green and dank with age, gives an air of classic sanctity to the seclusion. (2:128)

There is, however, one guard keeping the past within its bounds which is entirely characteristic of Irving and his literary attitude: his irony. Irving’s humor is throughout tinged with an element of defensiveness which, however nearly imperceptible it may become, gives it an ironic twist. Whether directed at himself or at others, it is seen from the beginning to the end of The Sketch-Book. It operates in “The Author’s Account of Himself” (1:5-10), whose opening paragraphs carry implications of the relative importance of things and events to different individuals, and it is manifest in Crayon’s report on his uneasy role as leveler of differences between the factions of “Little Britain” (7:93-123). It is present, too, in the warning which concludes Knickerbocker’s manuscript of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” the tale that in later editions stood at the end of The Sketch-Book: a “cautious old gentleman” having expressed his scepticism con-
cerning some points of the tale, the storyteller replied, “Faith, sir, as to that matter I don’t believe one-half of it myself” (6: 120).

In spite of the irony, there remained for Irving and his readers the important willingness to half-believe. How important that was is shown in the unsympathetic question of the listener who, having heard the story, wanted to know, “What was the moral of the story, and what it went to prove” (6:119). Most of the writers of fiction since Irving’s birth had asserted—and often meant to show through their work—that there must be a moral to every story. That the moral could be a thing of only relative merit and reliability, the American spectators smilingly demonstrated. It was Irving who, as a graceful entertainer and excellent craftsman, began to encourage through his art a belief not in the story’s moral or its usefulness but in the importance of using the past and the imagination. 92

5. Quixotic Travelers and Fabulous Voyagers

In the writings discussed in the two preceding chapters, some traditions or conditions furnish material for personal observations, often ironically suggestive and satirical in method; these fictional writings are nonetheless sober in conception and execution. The present chapter is devoted to books of a more subjective and distinctive character that derived from their authors’ pronounced views on specific subjects and the imaginative freedom and skill with which they approached their subject matter.

Modern Chivalry, the unwieldy book modeled on Don Quixote which Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816) worked upon for nearly thirty years, appeared in various installments between 1792 and 1815. 93 To say that Cervantes’s work was the model for Modern Chivalry requires some qualifying. 94 At first Brackenridge intended to write a verse satire aimed at a political opponent, and drew on the Hudibrastic model and the conception of the knight-errant at odds with his surroundings. The misunderstandings between his knight, Captain Farrago, and Farrago’s fellow citizens derive from the erring practices of the latter, not
from any mistaken notions of the captain. It is he who is essen­tially sane, and the world in which he lives that has become crazy, as he says himself: "...I hope I shall not be considered as resembling that Spaniard in taking a wind-mill for a giant. ...It is you that are the Don Quixottes in this respect, mad­caps...." (p. 783).

Now it is true that Farrago's sanity is that of an idealist: being quite clear in his mind about his country's constitution and in­stitutions, he wants them to be applied with optimal thorough­ness and effectiveness. In this sense he is indeed a cousin of Don Quixote, who came to pursue not one ideal of romantic and chivalric purity but simply the ideal. Farrago's servant, the Irish­man Teague Oregan, is a parallel to Sancho, and reminds the captain again and again of the sober realities of life and human frailty. Teague, however, never assumes the function of the guardian at times attributed to Sancho or to such an American counterpart as Betty, Dorcasina's maid in Mrs. Tenney's Female Quixotism. It is always Farrago who is master, while his servant is not a mediator between his standards of consistency and the public level of erratic impulsiveness, but rather a representa­tive of that impulsiveness—often at its most amoral and irrespon­sible. Teague is, of course, the narrative hero of the book, par­ticularly in its first part, when the possession of him, as it were, makes him an object of dispute between Farrago's wisdom and the people's will. As long as the concerns of the people and of the captain converge in his person, it is he who ensures Modern Chivalry its liveliness and three-dimensional effect of comedy. Later Teague becomes increasingly a mere representative of the irrational masses, and Farrago is faced less and less with the Irishman's individual pranks, resulting from his appetites or the malleability of his ambitions. If in the earlier stages of the novel Farrago is a fatherly guide and guardian who can efficiently help Teague to overcome his weaknesses and temptations, he is afterward pushed into the role of a doctor who rightly diagnoses the anonymous cancers of demagogy and anarchy, yet is not allowed freely to administer his remedies.

If the second part of Modern Chivalry is less interesting than the first, the fault lies both with Brackenridge's management of
it and with the subject that forms its substance. Starting from his own partly emotional experience of political life, the author succeeded in the first part of his book in transcending its personal significance and in embodying antagonistic forces in individual figures which he related to the nature of man. But he failed in a far more difficult task in the latter part of *Modern Chivalry*. He was incapable of expressing, in the terms of a narrative, his political and civic concern over a crucial issue: the discrepancy between the high aim of the democratic experiment and the demands made on man by the means of its realization, on the one hand, and the cumulative inadequacies of a body of men, on the other. He failed because to him there were two tasks to be undertaken at the same time, each of them really depending upon the completion of the other: the promises of democracy and the Constitution had to be fulfilled, and the people had to be made conscious of these promises and of the fact that they would not be realized spontaneously. Since in *Modern Chivalry* the captain maintains his efforts to enlighten his fellow citizens, and they just as stubbornly remain unappreciative, the overall structure of the book—a record of the apparent alienation of the people and its leaders—might be interpreted as expressing the author's aristocratic prejudices. If he had any, he probably shared the suspicions of Virginia leaders like Jefferson, but not the more reactionary views held by many Federalists, particularly in the last decade of the eighteenth century.

A glance at the parts employed in the composition of *Modern Chivalry* shows that, even more than *Don Quixote*, Brackenridge's book is made up of individual episodes and lacks a proper plot. These episodes expose one main theme and incidentally a few subsidiary ones: the main theme is democracy in theory and practice; various human foibles, which also condition the abuses of democracy, form the subsidiary themes. *Modern Chivalry* was written during a period which was widely believed to herald a decisive improvement of the human condition, moral, social, and intellectual. That improvement was to be accomplished through secular and social, not religious and individual, means. In the light of such views *Modern Chivalry*, a commentary on one experiment in secular and social reorganiza-
tion, was also an illustration of perfectible human standards and attributes.

It was that second aspect that lent itself to treatment in the form of a fictional narrative, and therefore the subsidiary themes, embodied chiefly in the personage of the ever-tempted and readily relapsing Teague Oregan, became the most lively individual ingredients of Modern Chivalry. At the end of his first paragraph, the author suggestively refrains from sketching Teague: "I shall say nothing of the character of this man, because the very name imports what he was" (p. 6), that is, an Irishman and, considering his station in life, an illiterate one. He proves serviceable in the very manner of Sancho, though, when his master is attacked by a racetrack mob; but from chapter 2 on, it is Farrago's duty to look after his servant. He finds Teague in danger of becoming some party's candidate for a seat in the state legislature and in consternation attempts to make the people see how utterly unfit the Irishman is for such a trust:

This young man, whose family name is Oregan, has been my servant for several years. And, except a too great fondness for women, which now and then brings him into scrapes, he has demeaned himself in a manner tolerable enough. But he is totally ignorant of the great principles of legislation; and more especially, the particular interests of the government.... You are surely carrying the matter too far, in thinking of making a senator of this hostler; to take him away from an employment to which he has been bred, and put him to another, to which he has served no apprenticeship: to set those hands which have been lately employed in currying my horse, to the draughting bills, and preparing business for the house. (pp. 15-16)

The basic situation in which Teague is to be found again and again has thus been sketched: it is that of a man impelled by interest and ambition to aspire after positions for which he is not qualified, with the aggravating circumstance that his candidacy may not have been his idea in the first place. Such an inclination is a dangerous liability, as Brackenridge may have observed himself. But people may well disagree with Farrago and hold that "it is better to trust a plain man like him [Teague], than one of your high flyers, that will make laws to suit their
own purposes” (p. 16). In the context of politics and administration, Teague and the imaginary opponent which Farrago’s interlocutor sees as an alternative (implying that someone very much like the captain might be that rival) conjure up an early instance of the distrust of the “egghead.”

Finding that he cannot change the voters’ minds, the captain addresses himself directly to Teague. Because he knows him well, he paints a disturbing picture of a politician’s duties and of the attacks from various quarters which he must expect, and concludes with an appeal not to reason but to sentiment, for Teague’s sense of honor is a sentimental affair and not a matter of integrity:

...I would not for a thousand guineas, though I have not the half of it to spare, that the breed of the Oregans should come to this; bringing on them a worse stain than stealing sheep; to which they are addicted. You have nothing but your character, Teague, in a new country to depend upon. Let it never be said, that you quitted an honest livelihood, the taking care of my horse, to follow the new fangled whims of the times, and to be a statesman. (p. 17)

The pattern of the mutual relationships between Farrago, Teague, and various bodies once established, Brackenridge’s inventiveness does the rest. The unfortunate servant becomes eligible for membership in a philosophical society and is seriously considered for posts as different as those of a preacher and a fake Indian chief negotiating a new treaty. After a couple of abortive affairs and an attempt at becoming a lawyer, Teague accompanies his master to Washington. There he is popular at the alehouse and among the ladies, who “thought him a plain, frank, blunt spoken Irish gentleman; not harrassing them with deep observations, drawn from books, or an ostentation of learning; but always saying something gallant, and complimentary of their persons, or accomplishments” (p. 228). Appointed a federal excise officer, Teague is tarred and feathered by the irate inhabitants of a western district and in this strange condition again attracts the attention of the philosophical society. He is sent to France, nearly executed under Robespierre, and then encouraged to write his autobiography. He temporarily assumes
diabolical appearances as little in keeping with his amoral naïveté as the various posts suggested for him, and later is quite undeservedly considered a hero too:

... The declivity of the hill was such that he found it impossible to arrest himself, being under the impetus of the projectile motion which he had acquired; and seeing nothing before him but death from the tomahawk of at least sixty Indians, and nevertheless being unable to stop his career, no more than could a stone projected from the precipice, he raised the tremendous shout of desperation; which the savages mistaking for the outcry of onset, as it is customary with them when they are sure of victory, to raise the war-whoop; magnifying the shout, by their imaginations into that of a large party overtaking them, they threw away their packs and scalps, and made their way towards the Indian country.... (p. 596)

Teague basks in the sunshine of popular favor and, because he has allegedly taught a cat to speak, becomes the principal of a newly established academy of animals. When he is dissatisfied with the job, the people suddenly lose their interest in him; but they just as abruptly support him again as soon as it is rumored that he has found the philosophers' stone and that Farrago (by then governor of a settlement in the West) opposes the plan of using it to produce gold and silver. In the end, while Farrago is tolerated in his office by the people, Teague returns to his master and the position that was his at the beginning of the story. Back in the governor's house, he also shares Farrago's bachelorhood: "Teague, as we have seen, had been heretofore much in request with the ladies; and still more so from the late reputation of his generalship, and the display of his tumbling at the camp-meetings. But the circumstance of his having taught a cat to speak, was against him; for no woman would like to have a tell-tale of such domestic animal. *It would render it unsafe to have a cat about the house*" (p. 800). Teague himself emerges essentially unchanged from the trials he has suffered and from the catalyst's role which he has been playing unintentionally. Very much in the foreground in the first part of *Modern Chivalry*, especially until his exile in France, he constantly precipitates the events that cause Farrago to alter his
estimate of the democratic system and its sovereign. Teague provides the narrator with the very stuff out of which grow the preposterous incidents he gets involved in; it is rich material, for Teague is the embodiment of typical human conduct and not an individual character. Teague’s adventures in turn require the author to use a style and language of comic vigor and sarcastic asperity.

Teague’s experiences reflect back upon the measures and manner adopted by Farrago to restrain both his servant and those that use and influence the person of the Irishman. The captain’s principles are too firmly anchored to be swayed by what happens to his servant and his surroundings; he only learns to be more and more tolerant. As opposed to the range of Teague’s serio-comic impersonations and the contrasts revealed by his quick changes of mind, Farrago’s attitude therefore appears as stability itself. His is the firmness of conviction that seeks through action to realize the promises and possibilities of his beliefs. On the contrary, Teague’s entertaining variety is a passive thing, the result of animal impulses and extraneous influences. A motley figure, the victim of circumstances and environment, Teague often appears designed for the stage rather than the novel. His Irish brogue is an eminently stageable feature, apart from being an instance of his imperviousness to any educating influence.

Teague’s vitality, embroiling him in improbable adventures, prevents his master from undue theorizing and helps the reader over dull stretches of Modern Chivalry. If Teague can be called the narrative hero of Brackenridge’s novel, it is obviously Farrago that is its intellectual hero. He is introduced as “a good honest man; and means what is benevolent and useful; though his ideas may not comport with the ordinary manner of thinking, in every particular” (p. 22). He dissents from the established opinion of dueling and of a duelist’s honor. Common sense conditions his view, and even Teague, who is not the brightest lad, can be convinced by the captain that the custom of the duel is nonsense. Admittedly Farrago paints its dangers in rather strong colors, but his servant would probably also have agreed with his sober answer to a challenger:

[132]
Sir, I have two objections to this duel matter. The one is, lest I should hurt you; and the other is, lest you should hurt me. I do not see any good it would do me to put a bullet through any part of your body. I could make no use of you when dead, for any culinary purpose, as I would a rabbit or a turkey.... As to myself, I do not much like to stand in the way of any thing that is harmful. I am under apprehensions you might hit me. That being the case, I think it most adviseable to stay at a distance. If you want to try your pistols, take some object, a tree or a barn door about my dimensions. If you hit that, send me word, and I shall acknowledge that if I had been in the same place, you might also have hit me. (p. 52)

Farrago's various attempts at courtship testify both to his modesty and to his unfamiliarity with the uses of the day. In the question of slavery, he uses some heavy irony to explain that there cannot be anything morally wrong with it, since "humane and just persons...promote and support the evil" (p. 138).

It is, however, on matters of government and politics that Farrago is heard most frequently. He once states that "power is the great law of nature; and nothing but the pacts or conventions of society can contravene it" (p. 135). Such pacts and conventions are continually liable to be circumvented in the universal attempt at securing and accumulating power. The individual candidates as well as the parties are after power, and an observer can easily see through their maneuvers. Why, for example, should a candidate offer whiskey to those who will support him? In Congress, listening to opposing votes on a bill, Farrago is dismayed at the facility with which obviously biased views are uttered to ensure the success of one party: one representative denounces a bill as contrary to nature, causing snow "in the heat of harvest, and dog days in winter"; he is answered that on the contrary, its effects will be to "moderate the sun's heat, and the winter's cold" (pp. 123, 124). The whiskey candidate's honesty is as little to be trusted as the congressmen's, whose position is determined by the observation that "in a deliberative assembly, it is difficult to be honest. Party will not suffer it" (p. 436).

In a democracy power should lie with the people and not with individuals or any section of the country; but how is this
to be safeguarded if the people are not sufficiently informed of their rights and of the ways to secure them, and if an "uninformed spirit of reform" (p. 416) prevails among them because politicians and parties promise improvements but forget to mention that they can be realized only at the cost of unreasonable sacrifices? A specific instance of the appeal to the masses is mentioned significantly at the very beginning of Farrago's journey through the country: a conjurer explains to the bewildered captain the principle that favors the inferior rival of a deserving candidate: "...There is a certain pride in man, which leads him to elevate the low, and pull down the high" (p. 19). As though consoling himself, the author adds: "...Let no man who means well to the commonwealth, and offers to serve it, be hurt in his mind when some one of meaner talents is preferred. The people are a sovereign, and greatly despotic; but, in the main, just" (p. 21). That sovereign, "as liable to the impulse of passion, and as open to the insinuations of flatterers as an individual tyrant" (p. 382), whose "power unbalanced, is but the despotism of many instead of one" (p. 740), has less and less to recommend it in the eyes of Farrago. The people even discuss including the animals among the citizens and giving them the right to vote: "...A man with a strong voice in particular called out that it should be so. A bull happening to roar, and a horse neigh at the same time, it was called out that it was the voice of the people" (p. 712). They consider the necessity of electing some of the animals as their representatives, for "it did not occur to them until suggested, that the representative is chosen, or in contemplation of the constitution, supposed to be chosen for his superior knowledge and information over that of the constituent" (p. 665); the suggestion of course must have come from someone like Farrago, or Brackenridge.

As Brackenridge thought that he had himself been vanquished by an adversary who did not possess the required superiority, he returned to this point repeatedly in relating Teague's adventures. At the same time he continually stressed through Farrago the demands which democracy made, with the electorate and the legislators, not only upon the understanding of the principles of government but also upon every individual's integrity. He be-
lieved in American democracy, but he was also aware of man's fallibility; though he thought that a true democracy was possible, he never lost sight of the dangerous tendencies, latent or visible, in the American experiment. His civic and legal mind was constantly at work, planning and weighing, but it did not function separately or abstractly: it joined forces with an imaginative and artistic talent aroused by the observation of the human shortcomings which could endanger the realization of the democratic plan.

In an early chapter Brackenridge wrote: “We have seen here, a weaver a favoured candidate, and in the next instance, a bog-trotter superseding him. Now it may be said, that this is fiction; but fiction, or no fiction, the nature of the thing will make it a reality” (p. 22). In a page that was not published until 1815, more than twenty years after the first volume of Modern Chivalry, there occurs a related passage which illustrates the disillusioned, though not bitter, tone of the author, even while he is defending himself against charges of undue severity and implausible exaggeration:

... It has been thought by some, that the incidents have been all common and natural, that there is nothing improbable in them; and that the triteness of occurrence, rather than the unusual, and extravagant, ought to be the objection. What extraordinary can there be, say some, in such a creature as Teague O'Regan receiving appointments to office, or being thought qualified for the discharge of the highest trusts? Do we not see instances every day of the like? Is it possible to say how low the grade of human intellect that may be thought capable of transacting public business?... Some have been forward enough to tell me, that, so far from my bog-trotter being a burlesque upon human credulity, and pretension to office, that the bulk of men in office are below even his qualifications; and that if I were to go into any deliberative body, and pull out the first man that occurred to me, nine times out of ten I would find that I had a Teague O'Regan by the tail. I have no idea that things are just brought to this pass, notwithstanding there may be colour for the allegation. (p. 674)

The passage suggests that Brackenridge had been conversing with some of his readers and profiting from their remarks. If
such was the case it must have been gratifying to an author who wanted his book to be read by "the people. It is for them my book is intended. Not for the representatives of a year or four years, but for themselves. It is Tom, Dick, and Harry, in the woods, that I want to read my book" (p. 471). What inducements did Brackenridge offer to Tom, Dick, and Harry, in order that they should read his *Modern Chivalry*? The comedy of Teague's adventures doubtlessly amused many readers, and it still is one of the truly enjoyable achievements of early American fiction. Others may have relished the opposition between the West and the cities of the East which is implied in the confrontation of Teague and Farrago, or the burlesque of the American experiment that may have been aimed at in the description of the new settlement under the captain.\textsuperscript{100} What is certainly very attractive about *Modern Chivalry* is the feeling of being in touch with its author. His presence is, of course, felt in the sincerity and seriousness of his opinions and the plan of the entire book. Brackenridge also appears as a cultured gentleman, well read and in general very much at ease with his material and resources,\textsuperscript{101} who frequently steps forward to address his readers after the manner of Fielding, pleasantly offsetting whatever impression of forbidding severity or even pompousness some of his reflective pages may have caused. Though in the days of Brackenridge many reviewers spoke out only when they wished to damn a book and left their judgments rather vague where there was something to be said in favor of some writer, the conclusions of the *Monthly Anthology* seem sound enough a century and a half after they were written: rather unsatisfactory as a formal narrative, *Modern Chivalry* (whose author wished "to regulate the inordinate spirit of ambition") "may be read without disappointment, and even with much satisfaction, by those, who would beguile a vacant hour with amusement, and he that reflects on the argumentative parts, may draw from them no small improvement."\textsuperscript{102}

In England, but in the United States as well, there were many readers in the 1820s who discovered Irving's *A History of New York* (1809) only by way of the later *Sketch-Book*;\textsuperscript{108} if to them Irving was identified with Geoffrey Crayon, they may well have
been surprised at meeting him again in the shape and spirit of Knickerbocker. But though there were some striking differences between the two, the attentive reader could not fail also to detect features common to their books. To be sure, Crayon is milder and displays more urbanity than his predecessor, both in the choice of his subjects and in the treatment which he gives them. Yet the very view of things that is implied in Knickerbocker's title draws attention to the historical sense informing or influencing Crayon's approach to his subject matter in The Sketch-Book. The roots of Irving's humor are the same in the two books, and if it seems more vigorous in the History, this is largely due to the cumulating effect of the author's concentration on one group of related subjects.

The reading public probably did not know, but may have guessed, what Peter and Washington Irving originally meant to achieve in A History of New York, for its first book still testifies to their burlesquing intent. When Washington Irving carried on alone the task of writing, he did not simply grow tired of, and therefore abandon, his first motive. What is far more important, he discovered a new interest—or rediscovered an old one—in going back to the times of New Amsterdam. His appreciation of it was such as to keep him going even through the times of grief after the death of Mathilda Hoffman. It was, however, not just the cozy quaintness of the Dutch forebears of New York that appealed to him but the more generally suggestive material which they provided for his imagination: intimations of the nature of the Dutch as well as the Yankees, of features of the contemporary political scene, and, beyond that, of the erratic behavior of man, acting upon momentary impulses and explaining them away by rationalization.

In such a perspective the strictly historical background had merely a relative importance, and its parts could be manipulated by the author to enhance the dramatic and comic function of other elements entering into his pseudo-chronicle. The three Dutch governors of New Amsterdam, therefore, turn out not as portrayals of their actual prototypes but as "humours"; they are tested on circumstances of their terms of office that are particularly appropriate to demonstrate their main feature or are
somehow relevant to a further significance with which the author wishes to invest them. Thus William the Testy, while retaining all the marks of his fiery nature, also functions as a caricature of some conceptions and attitudes of Jefferson. His predecessor, Walter the Doubter, is seen as a representative of that Dutch deliberating procrastination which finally, under the last governor, is to prove fatal to New Amsterdam. That last ruler, Peter Stuyvesant, the Headstrong, may be said to enjoy more of his creator's sympathies than do his two forerunners. In the end, though it is plain that his arbitrariness and stubbornness have not contributed to preparing the town for resistance, the reader feels that Peter stands for more than the prerogatives of the original settlers and the force of historical inertia. The country gentleman he becomes after the disappearance of the Dutch colony is in the line of the conservative Cocklofts and Bracebridges, whose very oddities increase their likableness as human beings.

It is plain, too, that certain of Peter the Headstrong's idiosyncrasies must be ascribed to his gubernatorial experience with subjects not always amenable to common sense or certain weighty decisions. The mob (viewed with intense suspicion by the Federalists of Irving's day) has been in existence since the times of William the Testy, and the expression of its will has been encouraged by William's frequent changes of opinion. Under Peter the mob becomes a positive nuisance not so much because of what it wants for the good of the res publica but because it can be influenced very easily:

The patriotic address of Burgomaster Roerback had a wonderful effect upon the populace, who, though a race of sober phlegmatic Dutchmen, were amazingly quick at discerning insults; for your ragged rabble, though it may bear injuries without a murmur, yet is always marvellously jealous of its sovereign dignity. They immediately fell into the pangs of tumultuous labour, and brought forth, not only a string of right wise and valiant resolutions, but likewise a most resolute memorial, addressed to the governor, remonstrating at his conduct. (2:222)

As Peter gains by being contrasted with his subjects, the Dutch themselves fare quite well when compared with the Yankees.
True, the people of New Amsterdam have their weaknesses, but these have been rendered endearing by the patina of age. And since the New Englanders are judged from the vantage point of Dutch habits, they appear as grasping upstarts, as squatters with no respect whatever for the rights of others. Their interpretation of the liberty of conscience is characteristically narrow-minded: "... 'Liberty of conscience'... they now clearly proved to imply nothing more, than that every man should think as he pleased in matters of religion—provided he thought right" (p. 170). The Yankees therefore proceed with severity to suppress the dissenters, that is, all those who do not think right. At this point Knickerbocker himself defends the Yankees' attitude, stating that it very much resembles the behavior of all groups of people toward rebellious individuals and has the merit of being an unambiguous statement of belief.

The successive cancellation of charges against individuals or groups serves less to moderate Irving's censure than to reestablish a sense of balance and proportion in the self-righteous reader. The same effect is also achieved when Irving directs his satirical darts alternately at rather sinister or at innocuous objects, as when he shifts from the subjects of bigotry and witch-hunting to that of the New England custom of bundling. The leveling of all mankind to the same common denominator is clearly hinted at when the History relates how that Yankee usage, hitherto unknown and therefore considered strange by the Dutch, fails to become naturalized among them: "Among other hideous customs they attempted to introduce among them that of bundling, which the dutch lasses of the Netherlandts, with that eager passion for novelty and foreign fashion, natural to their sex, seemed very well inclined to follow..." (1:105). If Irving's contemporaries enjoyed his ridicule of the phlegmatic Dutch colonists (or felt called upon to protest against it) and recognized all the details of the satire on Jefferson and the "mobocracy," the modern reader is likely to relish other features more than the topical ones. The demeanor of the three governors of New Amsterdam really depends little on their being Dutch, but much on the fact that they are actuated by individual traits of character. The Dutch dismay at the encroachments of the
Yankees, the Swedes, and the English results from the human love of property; it reminds the reader of a parallel situation, that of the natives at the time of the Spanish, and also Dutch, intrusion into their territory. The invaders formulate spurious theories in order to justify their claim to the lands they conquer, such as those of "the right of discovery," "the right of cultivation," and "the right acquired by civilization" (Book I, chap. 5). This last privilege is declared particularly important, because it signifies that the natives are to profit from, and be improved by, the coming of more enlightened people; these, the historian however records, "introduced among them the comforts of life, consisting of rum, gin and brandy," and "used every method, to induce them to embrace and practice the true religion—except that of setting them the example." Indeed, "the cause of Christian love and charity were so rapidly advanced, that in a very few years, not one fifth of the number of unbelievers existed in South America, that were found there at the time of its discovery" (1:52-53, 54).

Judgments and practices cut either way then. In the case of the proprietary rights and the brutality of some acts of colonization, Irving made his point with an almost Swiftian acerbity. He supposes that explorers from the moon, who have discovered the earth, report to their ruler; the sequel must be imagined as follows:

At these words, the great man in the moon (being a very profound philosopher) shall fall into a terrible passion, and possessing equal authority over things that do not belong to him, as did whilome his holiness the Pope, shall forthwith issue a formidable bull,—specifying, "That—whereas a certain crew of Lunatics have lately discovered and taken possession of that little dirty planet called 'the earth'—and that whereas it is inhabited by none but a race of two legged animals, that carry their heads on their shoulders instead of under their arms; cannot talk the lunatic language; have two eyes instead of one; are destitute of tails, and of a horrible whiteness, instead of pea green—therefore and for a variety of other excellent reasons—they are considered incapable of possessing any property in the planet they infest, and the right and title to it are confirmed to its original discoverers.—And furthermore, the colonists who
SATIRICAL AND POLEMICAL FICTION

are now about to depart to the aforesaid planet, are authorized and commanded to use every means to convert these infidel savages from the darkness of Christianity, and make them thorough and absolute lunatics. (1:62-63)

From the moment Irving concentrates on his Dutch subject matter and deals with individual figures like the three governors—or with Hudson himself, the miles gloriosus Van Poffenburgh, and Antony Van Corlear, the trumpeter so much admired by the ladies—he sticks to a tone of genial mockery and tolerant humor (which he is not averse to using on himself and his techniques). Like Fielding and Brackenridge, the author of A History of New York enjoys explaining to his readers the possibilities and advantages of his craft. A virtuoso and complete master of his material and means, he points out the functions that may be assigned to a thunderstorm he has been describing:

...The storm was played off, partly to give a little bustle and life to this tranquil part of my work, and to keep my drowsy readers from falling asleep—and partly to serve as a preparation, or rather an overture, to the tempestuous times that are about to assail the pacific province of Nieuw Nederland—and that overhang the slumbrous administration of the renowned Wouter Van Twiller. It is thus the experienced play-wright puts all the fiddles, the french horns, the kettle drums and trumpets of his orchestra in requisition to usher in one of those horrible and brimstone uproars, called Melodrames—and it is thus he discharges his thunder, his lightning, his rosin and salpetre, preparatory to the raising of a ghost, or the murdering of a hero. (1:165)

The mock-heroic battle between Peter the Headstrong and Jan Risingh, during which “the rocks burrowed in the ground like rabbits, and even Christina creek turned from its course, and ran up a mountain in breathless terror” (2:143), is bracketed by remarks of the narrator: he must not change the course of the historical events in his pages, but he can allow the defeated party to hit their adversaries a few good blows before they are overtaken by their fate. The narrator’s role is more important than often realized, for it is for the sake of his record that the great

[ 141 ]
of this world attempt to distinguish themselves. At one time Irving pictures his readers at his mercy:

If ever I had my readers completely by the button, it is at this moment. Here is a redoubtable fortress, reduced to the greatest extremity; a valiant commander in a state of the most imminent jeopardy—and a legion of implacable foes thronging upon every side. The sentimental reader is preparing to indulge his sympathies, and bewail the sufferings of the brave. The philosophic reader, to come with his first principles, and coolly take the dimensions and ascertain the proportions of great actions, like an antiquary, measuring a pyramid with a two-foot rule—while the mere reader, for amusement, promises to regale himself after the monotonous pages through which he has dozed, with murders, rapes, ravages, conflagrations, and all the other glorious incidents, that give eclat to history, and grace the triumph of the conqueror. (1:191-92)

Irving not only re-created the individual figures and events of his history but also lovingly stopped to paint features of its background. He praised the Hudson landscape as it appeared to Peter the Headstrong. When he conjured up the romantic first sight which Hudson had of Manhattan, he relied on the contrast between his picture and the one his readers could be expected to be familiar with, and described as a striking addition to the peaceful scene the appearance of a savage before the eyes of the startled sailors:

The island of Manna-hata, spread wide before them, like some sweet vision of fancy, or some fair creation of industrious magic. Its hills of smiling green swelled gently one above another, crowned with lofty trees of luxuriant growth; some pointing their tapering foliage towards the clouds, which were gloriously transparent; and others, loaded with a verdant burthen of clambering vines, bowing their branches to the earth, that was covered with flowers. On the gentle declivities of the hills were scattered in gay profusion, the dog wood, the sumach and the wild briar, whose scarlet berries and white blossoms glowed brightly among the deep green of the surrounding foliage; and here and there, a curling column of smoke rising from the little glens that opened along the shore, seemed to promise the weary voyagers, a welcome at the hand of their fellow creatures. As
they stood gazing with entranced attention on the scene before them, a red man crowned with feathers issued from one of these glens, and after contemplating in silent wonder the gallant ship, as she sat like a stately swan swimming on a silver lake, sounded the war-whoop, and bounded into the woods, like a wild deer, to the utter astonishment of the phlegmatic Dutchmen, who had never heard such a noise, or witnessed such a caper in their whole lives. (1:72)

Another passage, descriptive of "the fairy hour of twilight" which allows the fancy to work upon objects indistinctly seen, thus "producing with industrious craft a fairy creation of her own" (2:96-97), suggests to the reader an analogy with the results of Irving's own fancy, busy in the twilight of the traditions of New Amsterdam. In *A History of New York* as in *The Sketch-Book*, Irving responds gratefully to the spell of the past; yet there is a difference between the two books. In the *History* the author's humorous attitude was spontaneous, called forth by a subject to which he responded with youthful buoyancy and whose main features at the same time made for a proper distance between the writer and his work. In *The Sketch-Book*, however, the sympathetic nostalgia which Geoffrey Crayon experiences requires him to be on his guard so as not to be too much affected by it, to temper his reaction with a measure of coolness. In spite of the fanciful tone of parts of the later book, some products of Irving's exuberance, which fit so well in Knickerbocker's *History*, would have been foreign to Crayon's record: the treatment of the Yankees, for example, or that passage rendering the heroic mood on the eve of the war between the Dutch and the Swedes, in which Irving's prose turns into blank verse and sounds like an epic of chivalry:

The gallant warrior starts from soft repose, from golden visions and voluptuous ease; where in the dulcet, "piping time of peace," he sought sweet solace, after all his toils. No more in beauty's syren lap reclined, he weaves fair garlands for his lady's brows; no more entwines with flowers his shining sword, nor through the live-long lazy summer's day, chaunts forth his love-sick soul in madrigals. To manhood roused, he spurns the amorous flute; doffs from his brawny back the robe of peace, and clothes his
pampered limbs in panoply of steel. O'er his dark brow, where late the myrtle waved; where wanton roses breathed enervate love, he rears the beaming casque, and nodding plume; grasps the bright shield and shakes the pondrous lance; or mounts with eager pride his fiery steed; and burns for deeds of glorious chivalry.

But soft, worthy reader! I would not have you go about to imagine, that any preux chevalier thus hideously begirt with iron existed in the city of New Amsterdam—This is but a lofty and gigantic mode in which we heroic writers always talk of war, thereby to give it a noble and imposing aspect....

(2:68-69)

If later Irving felt inclined to apologize for his disrespect of history, and his particular subject in A History of New York, what he offered his readers in 1809 was nonetheless a very enjoyable book, at least to lovers of lively, imaginative, and humorous writing.

Later readers of this type who took the Duyckinck’s advice and read A General History of Connecticut (1781) by Samuel Peters (1735-1826), may well have found it rewarding too. Of course Peters meant a large part of his History to be taken seriously, whereas Irving’s was only a pretended chronicle; but once this has been established, there appear to be quite a few similarities between the two books. There is a first slight resemblance in the discussion of the proprietary rights (with due allowance for the difference of tone). A number of Yankee features are prominent among the themes of the two histories, the custom of bundling being singled out for special consideration in each case. The criticism of Puritan fanaticism by the Loyalist clergyman, angrily denouncing the Connecticut blue laws, has its counterpart in the ridicule of Dutch conservatism and slowness in Irving’s History. It becomes difficult to push the analogy between the two books any further, however, except in one important point: they share a tradition of humor that is not unrelated to the tall tales of the frontier. The explanation offered by Irving of the name “Antony’s Nose,” which designates a cliff on the Hudson, is fantastic enough to be placed next to Peters’s anecdote of the frogs of Windham, Connecticut, which terrified the town one night in 1758, as they traveled from their dried-out
pond to the nearest river: "The consternation was universal. Old and young, male and female, fled naked from their beds with worse shriekings than those of the frogs. The event was fatal to several women. The men, after a flight of half a mile, in which they met with many broken shins, finding no enemies in pursuit of them, made a halt, and summoned resolution enough to venture back to their wives and children...." A similar flavor is found in several other passages of A General History of Connecticut. There is one that recounts how a caterpillar invasion laid waste the country but was succeeded immediately by a providential abundance in pigeons, which allowed thirty thousand people to subsist for three weeks (pp. 154-55). In describing a particularly narrow spot the Connecticut River has to pass, Peters reports, "Here water is consolidated, without frost, by pressure, by swiftness, between the pinching, sturdy rocks, to such a degree of induration, that no iron crow can be forced into it" (p. 127). A further instance of fiction that is not out of context in an account of Calvinist intolerance presents the exotic whip-poor-will to Peters’s English-reading public:

The Whipperwill has so named itself by its nocturnal songs. It is also called the pope, by reason of its darting with great swiftness, from the clouds almost to the ground, and bawling out 'Pope!' which alarms young people and the fanatics very much, especially as they know it to be an ominous bird. However, it has hitherto proved friendly, always giving travellers and others notice of an approaching storm, by saluting them every minute with 'Pope! Pope!'... The superstitious inhabitants would have exorcised this harmless bird long ago, as an emissary from Rome, and an enemy to the American vine, had they not found out that it frequents New-England only in the summer, and prefers the wilderness to a palace. Nevertheless, they cannot but believe it to be a spy from some foreign court, an agent of anti-christ, a lover of persecution, and an enemy of protestants, because it sings of 'whipping', and of the 'pope', which they think portends misery and a change of religion. (pp. 257-58)

Brackenridge, Irving, and even Peters retained their distinctive allegiances to America in spite of the disillusionments, minor or major, which they experienced; but their tempered attachment
THE EARLY AMERICAN NOVEL

could not engender any glowing vision of the future of America such as is embodied in the pseudonymous Celadon’s *The Golden Age: or, Future Glory of North-America* (1785). The early date of its publication perhaps in part accounts for its utopian zeal, which may also owe something to the spirit of the visionary allegories that influenced its form. *The Golden Age* borrows conventional features from the fictional style of the age to set forth a number of ideas characteristic of the revolutionary and constitutional climate of the late eighteenth century. It praises the “matchless sagacity” of the United States and the role the country is to play as a refuge when “the poor, the oppressed, and the persecuted will fly to America, as doves to their windows” (p. 9). More soberly, it assesses the physical advantages of the country and the benefits that may derive from a democratic confederation. Celadon maps out the states one day to be occupied in the southwest by the Negroes and the Indians, respectively called Nigrania and Savagenia, and foresees the establishment in the West of “a French, a Spanish, a Dutch, an Irish, &c. yea, a Jewish State” (p. 12). The original assertion of the providential guidance granted the United States, and revealed to Celadon because of his devoutness as well as patriotism, is restated in the outline of New Canaan, “populated with Jews converted to Christianism, more zealous than the lukewarm Christians of the day” (p. 13), and destined to be the wellspring of a general renewal of the Christian faith: from western America it shall spread over the whole continent, and then the entire globe.

The second part of Celadon’s vision is given him on a mythical summit “in the centre of North-America,” overtopping all the other mountains, “in figure like a broken globe. And for circumference about thirteen geographical miles.” The description is further elaborated:

The trees which adorn its towering summit, are clad with unfading green.—Cedar, pine, laurel, &c. are the principal product of the irriguous soil. It put me in mind of the famous Helicon, so often celebrated by the poets, as the native residence of the muses.—Especially, as I perceived several limpid springs bursting from its sides, and flowing in fertilizing meanders through

[146]
Then the Angel washed my eyes with a crystalline elixir, which he carried in a pearly phial. Whereupon I found my visive faculty amazingly strengthened. So that I could distinctly view the whole continent from shore to shore. (p. 10)

The final paragraph metaphorically completes Celadon's removal from worldly experience into a realm of supernatural fantasy.

This is also the world of other dream books whose action is set in distant lands or planets. One of these is George Fowler's *A Flight to the Moon, or The Vision of Randalthus* (1813). The inhabitants of the moon, whom Irving called Lunatics, are named Lunarians by Fowler:

Their complexion is of a beautiful golden cast; their cheeks and lips are tipped with a lively red; their eyes blue; and their golden hair oft falls down their shoulders in beautiful ringlets. There is great symmetry and delicacy in their shapes and features; and they move with inimitable grace. . . . They are feelingly alive to all the virtues which we possess; but angry looks never distort the beauty of their features, nor even passion, pollute the purity of their hearts. They are extremely quick in their motions, and equally quick of apprehension. They are fonder of music, painting and poetry, than philosophy and abstract studies, which they say only tend to bewilder the mind without either amusing the fancy or adding to the comforts of life.  

Randalthus himself is very much in sympathy with these sensitive and artistic beings. This is apparent in what he says, and especially in the way in which he expresses his opinion. He belongs to the sentimental school of writing. When he speaks of the emotional harmony between his moon hosts and himself, he seems to be describing a love feast; and remembering what he felt at the Lunarians' welcome, he writes: "...Let me, through the ages of eternity, cling to the dear reflection, that the Lord of the universe then bent from his awful throne, and beheld the brilliant scene with joy" (p. 38). This is a tone very different from that of either Brackenridge or Irving, and yet it may have similar results. Thus it serves to increase the sense of disillusionment which Randalthus experiences as he becomes aware of the Lunarians' reaction to his account of the earth and its inhabi-
tants. He has first felt superior to his hosts because their scientific knowledge strikes him as primitive, but he reconsiders when he understands that they would think it shameful to be so constantly involved in wars and disputes as the terrestrians (pp. 29, 45). He undergoes a disillusionment similar to Gulliver, who from a giant among the people of Liliput was turned into a diminutive creature in Brobdingnag: mysterious and majestic in appearance, after a while Randalthus stands revealed as a despicable human being. How ridiculous man's pretensions are becomes plainer still after he has been taken on a flight above the moon and into the universe, which leads him into the sun: he discovers that the outer layer of flames can be traversed and that the sun is inhabited by creatures in a number of ways similar to the Lunarians. The latter's sensitive mildness is with them replaced by a more vivacious temper: "They sometimes fall into a momentary passion; but it is soon over" (p. 182). Their main attributes are cheerfulness and a patient acceptance of such evils as must beset them. These evils are balanced by a blessing: "...The gods could not form man from imperfect matter without some alloy to his happiness; but gave him woman to remove the evil, and afford a balm to his every sorrow" (p. 182). The examples of contentment bear fruit with Randalthus, for when he finds his adventures to have been a dream only, he promptly derives a lesson from his experience: "I...thought it my duty to be satisfied on the world on which I was destined to exist" (p. 185).

The banality of Fowler's fantasy is possibly due to the fact that he may originally have planned to write only the first part of his "flight to the moon"; his book is entertaining, but only so long as it relates the shock of Randalthus's disillusionment. The hero's further adventures on and around the moon merely repeat this experience. The only new elements which they introduce are a series of contrasting thumbnail sketches of various countries and an ecstatic description of an ice-scape seen from the top of a moon summit. Even here the author fails: he must confess that the description is beyond his powers to conclude.

Sobering reflections were in store for the pseudonymous Captain Adam Seaborn, too, when he ventured on a voyage into the
interior of the world. *Symzonia; a Voyage of Discovery* (1820) combines a satire of John Cleves Symmes’s “Theory of Concentric Spheres, demonstrating that the earth is hollow, habitable within, and widely open about the poles” with features strongly reminiscent of *Gulliver’s Travels*. Having managed in 1817 to enter the earth at the South Pole, Seaborn lands with his crew in a country which he calls Symzonia, “out of gratitude to Capt. Symmes for his sublime theory.” He frequently converses with the ruler of the country, the Best Man, but his gradual revelations about man’s nature and the condition of the external world at length determine the Best Man to have nothing whatever to do with Seaborn’s fellow beings. Seaborn renders the Best Man’s conclusion in the following words:

...It appeared that we were of a race who had either wholly fallen from virtue, or were at least very much under the influence of the worst passions of our nature; that a great proportion of the race were governed by an inveterate selfishness, that canker of the soul, which is wholly incompatible with ingenuous and affectionate good-will towards our fellow-beings; that we were given to the practice of injustice, violence, and oppression, even to such a degree as to maintain bodies of armed men, trained to destroy their fellow-creatures; that we were guilty of enslaving our fellow-men for the purpose of procuring the means of gratifying our sensual appetites; that we were inordinately addicted to traffic, and sent out our people to the extreme parts of the external world to procure, by exchange, or fraud, or force, things pernicious to the health and morals of those who receive them, and that this practice was carried so far as to be supported with armed ships. (p. 196)

The Symzonians’ opinion of the terrestrians is even more unflattering than that of the Lunarians; but both testify to the high ethical standards of those who hold them. The Symzonians and Lunarians have other things in common: they need less sleep than the humans, they have fewer and less-demanding wants, and they do not place so much faith in knowledge and in scientific and technical attainments. This last point is made clear by the system of government adopted in Symzonia. The Best Man is assisted by a council chosen from among the “worthies,” that
is, representatives selected for their goodness, their usefulness, or their wisdom (or learnedness): among the hundred members of the council, fifty-five are "Good," forty "Useful" and only five are "Wise," these five being scholars and learned men. The distrust of the "Wise" is referred to again when the Best Man mentions a war-engine devised by one of them, Fultria, for he thinks that the dangerous enemies it was designed to fight may have been simply invented by Fultria to create an opportunity for showing off his skill. In spite of their neglect of technology, however, the Symzonians have built an "aerial vessel" that impresses Seaborn very strongly (though he refuses to admit it) (pp. 113-14). More remarkable than this airship, the war engine invented by Fultria has attributes that seem to anticipate twentieth-century developments:

...It was a vast machine moved upon wheels, and rendered of but little specific gravity, by means of the apparatus employed in their air vessels, by the help of which it could, in an emergency, be raised into the air for a short time, to cross rivers or broken ground.

It was propelled by means of a great number of tubes, projecting very obliquely through the bottom near the ground, through which air was forced with such prodigious violence, that the resistance of the earth and atmosphere impelled the machine forwards: in this way it was moved with astonishing velocity. From all sides of this engine a great number of double tubes projected, through which two kinds of gas were caused to issue. These gases uniting in the extremities, produced a flame of intense heat, like that of our compound blow-pipe on a large scale, which flame, according to tradition, was ejected with such force, as to consume everything for half a mile in every direction. The interior of the machine was sufficiently capacious to admit men enough to direct its motions and prepare the gases, and also the materials and apparatus necessary to their production. (pp. 168-69)

This invention was intended to scare the inhabitants of Belzubia at a time when they appeared to threaten Symzonia. When Seaborn tries, in his account of the earth, to establish distinctions between the various nations, he compares the British to the Belzubians. Earlier he has proudly shown his hosts the works
of Shakespeare and Milton, but after studying them, the Symzonians have found them to display all the unpleasant attributes characteristic of certain Symzonians that had to be banished from their country. By his behavior, Seaborn only bears out the low opinion which the Symzonians have formed of the externals. The Best Man has asked him not to take back any of the pearls found in the interior of the earth, so as not to arouse the externals' cupidity; but Seaborn smuggles a handful out of Symzonia all the same: “This deviation from what was expected of me, will, I trust, be excused by my external friends, when they remember that I have been much addicted to commerce, and consider the force of habit, and the security with which the operation could be performed” (p. 212).

The author of Symzonia skillfully uses the satirist's trick of cutting down to size an overly self-assured and self-righteous person by reversing his imagined superiority into a similar position of inferiority. The author displays only average ability in his writing, but the character of Seaborn himself is cleverly contrived. The captain is not, as often is the case in Swiftian satires, a neutral representative of the body of people to be criticized; on the contrary, his very actions and general shiftiness exemplify the weaknesses which he is trying to pass over in silence.121 The parts of the story concerned with the voyage to and from Symzonia are conventional features of the tale of adventure.

The clarity of the satirical design of Symzonia, the ease of Irving's writing and humor, and the seriousness and comic sense of Brackenridge are all conspicuously absent from The Oriental Philanthropist, or True Republican (1800), by Henry Sherburne, unidentified except for his name. The book opens with a defense of the fable-like fictitious tale, which can “rebuke and reform . . . adolescence, or even riper years,”122 and a verbose passage of praise for “Constantia” or Mrs. Judith Sargent Murray. It also contains in its first chapter an address to America: “Happy American States! so richly adorned with sons and daughters of refined genius and exalted virtue! happy in thy illustrious chiefs, statesmen and legislators, whose fame rebounds through every region of the globe!” (pp. 6-7). Since the final chapter prophesies America's future, a time when the country will be a universal
model of humanity and virtue, the intervening story of an island where perfection reigns might be thought to be applicable to America. It remains, however, only a vague and rhapsodical fantasy, inspired by some tradition of the Oriental tale and abounding, like the fairy tale, in exemplary beings and supernatural powers. Ostensibly, its hero is Nytan, son of a Chinese emperor, but he depends entirely on a diffuse higher being of unlimited power and benevolence named Ravenzar. Nytan is first the victim of a plot in China which has nothing to do with the utopian fairy tale about Ravenzar's island, the true republic of the future. He is then sent to various countries to spread the gospel of Ravenzar; in one instance, facing a hostile African audience, he wins them over on the spot by a naïve discourse on altruism: “A new light sprang up in each mind. Numbers convinced, (and now angry only with themselves) immediately retired from public business. They retired to reflect, and reform. The sacred influence spread. The flame of celestial love was enkindled. And thousands of bright genius’ soon became gloriously active in noblest deeds of fame which Heaven itself records” (pp. 199-200). Eloquence is mentioned but not felt in a passage that describes how Persia is converted to religion, virtue, industry, and happiness, apparently by spreading tracts on these subjects. Apart from using such elements as queens threatened by their enemies and saved through Nytan's or Ravenzar's influence, and lovers separated and unexpectedly reunited, the author also attempted descriptions of factitious Oriental splendor, and finally let one newly arrived on Ravenzar's island prophesy: “Soon shall...bliss and glory universal reign! Pride, lust and jealousy, hatred and dire contests shall then forever cease! Celestial love shall dwell—forever dwell in every breast!” (p. 205)

When Sherburne wrote *The Oriental Philanthropist*, the promise of American fiction was perhaps not much more substantial than this prophecy. Within a few years, however, the efforts of the pioneers Brackenridge and Brockden Brown were to be assisted by Irving; and by 1820 a number of authors, though not outstanding individually, had contributed to strengthen the con-
fidence of American writing. The satirists in particular did their best to keep fiction alive and in touch with the realities of life.

1. For the entire revolutionary period, see Bruce I. Granger, *Political Satire in the American Revolution, 1763-1783*.


3. Serialized in the *Columbian Magazine* (June, 1787-April, 1788), *The Foresters* appeared in Boston as a book in 1792 and with additions, including a clavis allegorica, in 1796; references are to the latter edition. Quinn, *Fiction* (p. 5), and H. R. Brown, *The Sentimental Novel* (p. 70), consider Belknap's use of the letter form in the two Boston editions as evidence of the vogue of the epistolary novel.


6. Cf. the review in the *Monthly Magazine*: "If...Dr. Belknap has not displayed as much humour, nor delineated with equal fidelity, the manners of common life; if there is not, in this 'sequel,' the same just observance of allegorical propriety, nor the same colloquial spirit and animation, as may be found in the original tale; yet the writer of the former has avoided the low vulgarity and occasional obscenity; faults which, we think, deform the pages of the latter...Dr. Belknap has maintained a style free and familiar, yet chaste and correct, throughout his narrative" (p. 438).

7. The text of the first Philadelphia edition of 1774 (there were three of them) was reprinted with notes by Benson J. Lossing, under the title *The Old Farm and the New Farm* (New York, 1857). References here are to one of the few complete 20th-century reprints of the 1774 text, in Walter C. Bronson, ed., *American Prose* (1916). The Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings by Francis Hopkinson (1792), offers a revised and tamer version (1:65-91).

8. As Quinn suggested (*Fiction*, p. 4), the nobleman is a character rather than an allegorical type.

9. Hopkinson's allegory *A New Roof*, in favor of the Constitution of 1787, is another instance of his skill in this manner of treating a controversial subject (*Miscellaneous Essays, 2:282-319*).


11. Paulding certainly laid himself open to censure like that of Bristed (Resources, p. 305), who reproached him for blindly attacking and belittling whatever came from England; it was *The United States and England* (1815), that most outspokenly expressed Paulding's Anglophobia.

12. Paulding's works, such as *Sketch of Old England* (1822), *Koningsmarke* (1823), and *John Bull in America* (1825), equally demonstrate that this was an inherent weakness, rather than a result of his Anglophobia. Paulding was easily carried away by his ironical exuberance, whether his subject was British institutions, fashions in literature, or the characteristics of Frenchmen, and British tourists in America.
13. Wright, *American Fiction*, item 2673; cf. the biographical notice prefixed to the edition of the *Journal in Magazine of History* 5: Extra No. 18 (1911). Waterhouse was 59, not a young man, in 1813, but his patriotism seems to warrant that he would have vigorously patronized the *Journal*. There were five issues in 1816; references are to the first edition. A comparable book, with more pronounced but rather unfortunate literary pretensions, is William Ray, *The American Tars in Tripolitan Slavery*, “containing an account of the loss and capture of the U.S. frigate ‘Philadelphia’; treatment and sufferings of the prisoners; description of the place; manners, customs, &c. of the Tripolitans; public transactions of the U.S. with that Regency, including Gen. Eaton’s expedition, interspersed with interesting remarks, anecdotes, and poetry on various subjects, written during upwards of 19 months’ imprisonment and vassalage among the Turks.” Reprinted in the same series as the *Journal* (1911).

14. The American prisoners were confined below deck: “All the air and light came through the hatch way, a sort of trap door or cellar way. In this floating dungeon, we miserable young men spent our first night in sleepless anguish, embittered with the apprehension of our suffering a cruel death by suffocation. Here the black hole of Calcutta rose to my view in all its horrors; and the very thought stopped my respiration, and set my brain on fire” (p. 29).

15. Both the *Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen* (1779) and Freneau’s “The British Prison-Ship” (1780) are superior to the *Journal*, from a literary point of view. Freneau’s essay “The Philosopher of the Forest,” 5(1781), subtitled “Containing some particulars relative to the Island of Snatchaway,” lists among characteristic features of England: a captain who rescues shipwrecked people but robs them before setting them ashore; men proud and ambitious, greedy, selfish, contemptuous of “Fickle-land,” or France; an aristocratic order; a general lack of liberty; “almost perpetual executions of criminals”; no charity: a large number of eccentrics. See *The Prose of Freneau*, pp. 212-16.

16. “...My family were of that party in Massachusetts called Federal; that is, we voted for Governor Strong, and federal Senators and Representatives; our Clergyman was also federal, and preached and prayed federally, and we read none but federal newspapers, and associated with none but federalists...We believed entirely that the war was unnecessary and wicked, and declared with no other design but to injure England and gratify France. We believed also that the whole of the administration, and every man of the Republican party, from Jefferson and Madison, down to our——was either a fool or knave. If we did not believe that every republican was a scoundrel, we were sure and certain that every scoundrel was a republican...” (pp. 63-64).

17. The *Journal* is itself an expression of that touchiness, and could not have contributed to alter the English opinion of America.


19. The principle of selection might have been counted upon to explain the rather haphazard progress of the writer through his topics. Yet, as G. Thomas Tanselle has pointed out, the various opinions gradually combine into a unified view (*Royall Tyler* [1967], pp. 192, 204).


21. The novel has all the marks of fashionable fiction, including “an immense black forest of twenty aged trees; two crazy castles; three murderers—
a trap-door with rusty bolts; a bloody key, ditto dagger; two pair of broken stairs; a sheeted ghost; a ghostly monk, and a marriage," as well as "the elegant expressions 'pleasing anguish,' 'delightful despair,' and 'heart-rending felicity';...the phrase 'subterraneous matter in the clouds,' which she had introduced into a thunderstorm" (p. 15).

22. Letters, by William Austin, the creator of "Peter Rugg," was such an authentic commentary on things British, and, by comparison, on things American too.

23. See in the Quarterly Review 10(1814):494-539, a review of Inchiquin's Letters that was actually a virulent attack, "a compilation, from Cobbett and from various travelers, of the worst charges against American morals and manners, public and private" (W. B. Cairns, British Criticisms of American Writings, 1783-1815, p. 87). Two Americans replied anonymously in 1815: Paulding (The United States and England) and Timothy Dwight (Remarks on the Review of Inchiquin's Letters). The exchange reads like the talk of small boys trying to out-boast each other. It is true that in 1814 and 1815 feelings were embittered by the war. But the review of Inchiquin's Letters in the Port-Folio shows that in 1811 already this defense of America was received with satisfaction: "A work of this kind has been long wanted—long a desideratum in American Literature." The reviewer found fault only with its comparative shortness, and commended its "argument, style, matter and manner" ([3d] New ser., 5[1811]:300-17, 385-400).

24. Inchiquin, p. 133.

25. Watterston was another writer who held an unflattering opinion of the travel books; he put this view into the mouth of an English lord: "We have been deceived, my lord, by the ignorance and misrepresentation of men who called themselves travellers; and who, I find, were totally unacquainted with the American character, and totally ignorant of the American Constitution. On such sources as these you must not depend for correct information;—they are fallacious and deceitful, false and exaggerated. Those who have furnished this information are men, you know, my lord, who have either been bribed to calumniate and detract, for an object with which you cannot now be unacquainted, or the refuse of society, ejected from our prisons, without intellect, without knowledge, and without honor" (Letters from Washington [1818], p. 8).


27. "Federalism is the politics of a gentleman, and of a lady, but Republicanism is the low cant of the vulgar." This opinion was attributed by Benjamin Waterhouse to New England Federalists; it concludes the passage quoted in part in note 16, above. Cf. L. P. Simpson, "Federalism and the Crisis of Literary Order," AL 32(1960):253-60.

28. They were the more willing to do so because they combined conservative American views of the role of the writer (as a defender of the moral order and rational means of expression and communication) with their distinctive condemnation of writings that could be said to "condone rebellion of any kind against the existing social order" (R. B. Davis, Jefferson's Virginia, p. 259).
29. These essays appeared in the *Aurora* from March to October 1799 and were reprinted in book form in 1799; references are to this edition. For a discussion of the Slender *Letters*, see Lewis Leary, *That Rascal Freneau* (1941), pp. 307-11.

30. See H. H. Clark, “What Made Freneau the Father of American Prose?” *Trans. Wis. 25* (1930): 39-50, especially p. 39. Clark's study refers also to other prose writings besides the *Letters*, in particular to the “Philosopher of the Forest” papers. These have not been collected in their entirety, but a number of them are included in *The Prose of Freneau* (1955). Marsh ranks the “Tomo-Cheeki” essays higher than the “Philosopher” (p. 10) among the non-political essays; both of these series are, however, more derivative than the Slender contributions and lack a speaker as distinctive as Robert Slender himself.


32. Livingston, Linn, and Hopkinson are mentioned, together with the Hartford Wits.

33. See above, note 3, to chap. 4.

34. “What, but a distempered civilization, has rendered it criminal to obey the dictates of nature in promiscuous concubinage? Why should I be confined to one woman, while the whole animal world beside, obey the impulse of passion, and seek gratification, wherever it may be found? Why should I be compelled to support and educate those beings, whom my physical energies operating according to the established laws of nature, without the assistance of mind, have produced? I am no more accountable for their existence, than the mountains for the cedar, which it bears, or the stream for the wheel, which it turns. As therefore the cedar is cut down, and the mountain does not mourn; the wheel is removed, but the stream continues to flow; so those beings may be born, grow up, and die without any claims to my assistance, and with no title to my love, or my grief” (pp. 141-42).

35. Attributed to an unidentified Jonas Clopper and perhaps printed in Baltimore. See Wright, *Fiction*, 1: item 551.

36. For “Asylumonia” read “Massachusetts, New England”; for “Mr. Pigman Puff” read “Madison”; for “Blackmoreland” read “Virginia”; for “Tom Anguish” and “Thomas Tammany Bawlfredonius,” respectively, read “Paine” and “Jefferson.”

37. The measures adopted against the natives also must somehow be justified: “…They comforted themselves, and appeased their consciences, (if they had any,) with a declaration, that the people, whose property they destroyed, were savages; and deserved to have their towns burnt, because they had been so untaught as to object to a free intercourse with their females. It was asserted that women ought to be held in common, and that for any one man to appropriate to his sole use a woman, who was capable of making many happy, was an unpardonable sin, inasmuch as it tended to decrease ‘the sum of human happiness’” (p. 33-34).

38. V. L. Parrington, Jr., in *American Dreams: A Study of American Uto-
pia (1947), discusses Clopper's work in the larger framework of utopian
writings.

39. The Adventures of Uncle Sam, pp. 18-19. Similar biblical echoes occur
in a Frenau satire on Adams in 1797 (The Prose of Frenau, pp. 380 ff.) and
in Gilbert J. Hunt, The Historical Reader, “Containing the Late War between
the United States and Great Britain” (New York, 1819) (see the extract in

40. General Hull addresses the Canadians, the “People of Snowfields,” in
vain; thereupon, “finding the stupid inhabitants of the Snowfields, so dilatory
about accepting the blessings of Liberty and safety,... with the most nettlesome
indignation and precipitate activity he pulled up stakes and recrossed
over to the territory of Uncle Sam” (p. 52).

41. The generals accusing one another are Smyth and Dearborn.

42. The War of the Gulls, pp. 35-36.

43. Jerome Bonaparte married Elizabeth Patterson in 1803.

44. Memoir of the Northern Kingdom, p. 26. The pamphlet was reprinted

45. DAB 10:54.

46. There is a Federalist bias in the author’s remarks on American li-
iterature; he ranks as its best works John Adams’s Defence of the American Con-
stitution and the Discourses on Davila, and John Marshall’s Life of Wash-
ington.

47. The satires here discussed were written from three to ten years after the
end of Jefferson’s second administration, and yet their authors still felt obliged
to spend quite a bit of energy in bitter comments on his failings.

48. This physician is probably a caricature of Samuel Latham Mitchill,
scientist, supporter of Jefferson, and author of Picture of New York, which
started Peter and Washington Irving on the parody that was finally to turn
into Knickerbocker’s History of New York (see above, under the heading
“Quixotic Travelers and Fabulous Voyagers,” Chapter 5, part 5.). The same
S. L. Mitchill is presumably the “Samuel Ell Centumvir” to whom Clopper
dedicated his History of Bawlfredonia, listing his achievements and his fame,
“dignitas centum societates [sic] sustinens.” Mitchill favored the idea of re-
placing the name “America” with “Fredonia.”

49. The Conundrumites include an apothecary, a money-lender, a cobbler,
a pettifogger, and a fiddler.

50. As in the fairy tale, the stepmother figure causes many a hero and
heroine to leave the paternal home; Brockden Brown’s Arthur Mervyn and
Watterston’s Glencarn are two other examples taken from the American
fiction of the age.

51. “It is a cross between a satire upon contemporary scholarship, or rather
the American Philosophical Society, and the politics of the period on the one
side, and a romance of roguery on the other” (Earl L. Bradsher, “Some
pointed out that The Yankee Traveller could be looked upon as “reacting
against the pellucid purity of the average woman’s novel of the period and
the smug virtue-rewarded type such as the popular Two Shoemakers.” We
might add that it has affinities to a book like The Adventures of Jonathan
Cormcob (see below, in “The Novel of Adventure,” Section IV). Bradsher’s
claim that The Yankee Traveller is well written seems exaggerated.

52. The only (imperfect) copy of Father Quipes is in the Library of Con-

[ 157 ]

53. For information about Knapp see the reprint of Knapp's *Lectures on American Literature* (1829), under the title *American Cultural History*. Siliman's *Letters of Shahcoolen* used to be attributed to Knapp; the copy in the Harvard College Library has on its title page the penciled note, "By Samuel Lorenzo Knapp."

54. The book was published in the "touchy" decade when Americans looked with suspicion on books of "Travels in the United States."

55. *Extracts from the Journals of Marshal Soult*, "addressed to a friend: how obtained, and by whom translated is not a subject of enquiry," p. 38. For the appearance of the Indian in American fiction, see Chapter 16, "Strands of History."


57. See Sr. M. Chrysostom Diebels's *Peter Markoe*. Her brief reference to *The Algerine Spy* places Markoe in the tradition of the apologists of democracy who make fiction the vehicle of their views; as such Markoe is a precursor of Brackenridge.


60. This is an allusion to Captain Symmes's proposal to prove his own theory that the earth could be entered at the poles. See below, the discussion of Symzonia, pp. 148-51.


63. See above, in "John Bull and Brother Jonathan," for the discussion of another aspect of Paulding's work (Chapter 5, part 1).

64. *Letters from the South*, 1:9-10. In a later letter Paulding pronounces the American, and especially the Yankee, to be a nomad, much like the Indian, an attribute which of course has quickened the settling of the continent (1:83).

65. Jay B. Hubbell, *The South in American Literature*, p. 250, sees no reason to doubt Tucker's authorship of the *Letters*; see also Robert C. McLean, *George Tucker: Moral Philosopher and Man of Letters* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1961). *Letters from Virginia* (Baltimore, 1816), has also been attributed to Paulding (by Foley), and in the copy in the Harvard College Library there is the penciled note, "The author of this book is Mr. Maxwell of Norfolk. He was educated at Yale College and is well known to Mr. Sherman, Preceptor of Bacon academy at Colchester."

66. Markoe also varied the recipients of his observer's letters.

67. Jay B. Hubbell considers Tucker's remarks on slavery a sufficient reason for the anonymous publication of *Letters from Virginia*.


69. Cf. Tucker's "Translator's Preface" to the *Letters from Virginia*: "I hope
the reader will believe that I understand how to write long winding sentences of the most fashionable and soporific construction" (p. vi).

70. Tucker was to detect an influence of deism, atheism, Godwin, and Paine on the students at William and Mary College: "The usual consequences soon followed. Idleness, intemperance, profanity, and in short, dissipation of almost every kind and name, leading not unfrequently to duels of death, prevailed and triumphed" (Letters from Virginia, p. 150).

71. The Letters of the British Spy, 10th ed. (New York, 1832), p. 50. Wirt himself had no high ambitions; see the letter quoted by Hubbell, The South in American Literature, p. 237. To Ticknor, Wirt was simply "the author of The British Spy, etc.," when he first met him in 1815, and if he was not too favorably impressed, this was no doubt in part due to the expectations fostered by Wirt's literary fame (see George S. Hillard, Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor, 9th ed., 2 vols. [Boston, 1878], 1:33). In 1832, too, John Pendleton Kennedy dedicated his Swallow Barn to Wirt and, clearly referring to the British Spy, marveled how easily success had come to him (ed. W. S. Osborne [New York and London: Hafner, 1962], p. v).

72. "There is some liveliness of fancy, and a sparkling style in the effusions of this writer: there are many marks of a juvenile [Wirt was thirty-one years old when the British Spy appeared] and undisciplined pen, and in most of his recitals we have found that degree of interest and amusement which it was probably the whole intention of the writer to afford" (Literary Magazine, and American Register 1[1804]:261).

73. The Lay Preacher; or Short Sermons, for Idle Readers, p. 40. Dennie published his first "Lay Preacher" essay on October 12, 1795. There were to be 118 of them. A second collection was published five years after Dennie's death by John E. Hall in Philadelphia, 1817; the two volumes, containing 36 and 28 essays respectively, have been edited by Milton Ellis. Before 1795 Dennie wrote another series, begun in 1792; these Farrago essays, 29 in number, have not been collected. For Dennie, see Milton Ellis, Joseph Dennie and His Circle.

74. "The essays of the 'Lay-Preacher' were afterwards collected in a volume, which is, I believe, the most popular work on the American continent" (Davis, Travels, p. 204). Of course Dennie's audience, as Teut Riese has reminded us (Das englische Erbe in der amerikanischen Literatur), differed considerably from that of Addison and Goldsmith, whose readers had at least an upper middle-class sophistication; most of the "Lay Preacher" essays were written for the Farmer's Museum of Walpole, N.H., whose title may fail quite to define the public it catered to yet indicates that it was not a London coffee-house audience.

75. The Spirit of the Farmer's Museum, p. 155 (a specimen of "Pennsylvania Dutch").

76. The lines from the New England primer, "The cat doth play,/And after slay," allegedly become an entire Smith sonnet, beginning with the following quatrains: "Child of lubricious art! sanguine sport!/Of pangful mirth! sweet ermin'd sprite!/Who lov'st, with silent, velvet step,/ to court/The bashful bosom of the night." (pp. 290-91)

77. The nine letters of Oldstyle were published between November 15, 1802, and April 23, 1803. Letters 2 to 9 were republished in New York in 1824; references are to this edition; S. T. Williams edited the New York edition for the Facsimile Text Society in 1941, with the uncollected first letter. John Lambert, Travels through Lower Canada, and the U.S. of North America, reprinted
THE EARLY AMERICAN NOVEL


79. “Our intention is simply to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town and castigate the age....We are all three of us determined beforehand to be pleased with what we write....We are laughing philosophers, and clearly of opinion, that wisdom, true wisdom, is a plump, jolly dame, who sits in her arm-chair, laughs right merrily at the farce of life,—and takes the world as it goes” (Salmagundi, 1:4).

80. Salmagundi was published in 20 numbers from January 24, 1807, to January 25, 1808. The intervals were of about a fortnight or less in the first half of the year, and after the long summer break (June 27-August 14) tended to become longer, probably because the authors were beginning to tire of their enterprise.

81. The portrait of Langstaff in no. 8, April 18, 1807 (1:145-51), is said to be that of Dennie, whom Washington Irving had visited some time earlier. See Ellis, Joseph Dennie and His Circle, chap. 10.

82. It has often been pointed out that Salmagundi foreshadows a number of features of A History of New York and The Sketch-Book.

83. Salmagundi was rather well received. One reviewer wrote: “This [satirical] design is executed with so much spirit, wit, genius, elegance, and humour, as to place the Salmagundi on the same height of excellence with the effusions of Rabelais, of Swift, of Addison, and Voltaire” (Monthly Register, New York, 3 [August, 1807]:150); the reviewer further commended the authors for the variety of their tones. Lambert, who described a New York parade that may have been the very one which Mustapha depicted, praised Salmagundi and reprinted a big chunk of it (Travels, 2:144, 203, 234-349).

84. Salmagundi. Second Series.

85. Langstaff, irritated by certain features of the fashions in vogue, discovers to his surprise, when looking at an old picture, that half a century earlier there existed affectations in dress as ridiculous as the contemporary ones (1:91-103).

86. The “Old Bachelor” essays began appearing in the Richmond Enquirer in 1811 and were collected and published in book form in 1814; references are to this edition. They include occasional contributions from others besides Wirt, who however “managed the enterprise and wrote most of the numbers” (Hubbell, The South, p. 238). See also Davis, Jefferson's Virginia, p. 280.

87. The Sketch-Book appeared in seven numbers in New York; in later editions the order of the papers was altered. For the English edition in book form Irving included the two Indian papers, written for the Analectic Magazine, and they became a part of The Sketch-Book from then on. The pagination is continuous to the end of the four numbers published in 1819, and begins again in V and in VII; quotations are given with the number of the issue and the page.

88. This tale is an instance of “sportive Gothic,” to use the term coined by Oral S. Coad, “The Gothic Element.”

89. Those tales with the appearance of the fashionable sentimental story may have been based, as is the case with “The Wife,” on authentic facts
known to Irving (see Edward Wagenknecht, Washington Irving, p. 176). These he preferred to treat in a serious manner, whereas apparently for legendary, less immediate material, he adopted a lighter and more freely imaginative treatment.


91. William L. Hedges rightly insists (Washington Irving, p. 128) that there are implicit comments on America in many of Crayon's observations on England, and more generally, that Crayon's "responses to people and places are as important or more important than the people and places are in themselves" (p. 146).

92. Irving's letters show that he had a clear conception of his writing and his career. See, e.g., the letters to Ebenezer Irving, March 3, 1819; Brevoort, July 10, 1819; Scott, September 25, 1819, in all of which he stresses his need for leisure. In his letters to Brevoort, March 3, 1819, and December 11, 1824, he explains his preference for the fanciful and the short tale; there may be a certain amount of retrospective rationalization here, though. Godwin's opinion of *The Sketch-Book*, incidentally, is put in terms that would not have pleased the American Irving: "Everywhere I find in it the marks of a mind of the utmost elegance and refinement, a thing as you know I was not exactly prepared to look for in an American" (letter to James Ogilvie, September 15, 1819, quoted by P. M. Irving, 1:422).

93. Brackenridge probably began writing Modern Chivalry in 1788. The first three volumes of Part I were published in 1792-93, Vol. IV followed in 1797. Material then accumulated by fits and starts as circumstances spurred Brackenridge's imagination, and two more volumes came out in 1804-5. The revised version of 1815 contained an additional volume. References are to the 1937 edition by Claude M. Newlin. See Newlin's introduction, and his *The Life and Writings of Hugh Henry Brackenridge*. Daniel Marder's *Hugh Henry Brackenridge* (Twayne, 1967), is a sound brief study. Lewis Leary's edition of *Modern Chivalry* contains the portions published from 1792 to 1797.

94. John R. Hendrickson, "The Influence of Don Quixote on Modern Chivalry," a Florida State University dissertation (1959), traces many details of Brackenridge's "plan, character portrayals, and situations" to his great model, and concludes on a close kinship in the two writers' purpose. (See *DA* 20[1959]:661.)

95. Farrago himself wishes to appear more sober than Jefferson: "Do you take me for Jefferson! You are mistaken if you think I have so good an opinion of you. I would ill deserve your confidence if I made your whims my guide; or regarded popularity obtained in such a way. It never came into my head, because I had got the chair of government, there was a millenium about to come, when all men would do justice, and there would be no occasion for judges and lawyers; nations could be coerced by proclamations; and no war would ensue" (p. 783).

96. The inventiveness was active about 1770 when the undergraduates Freneau and Brackenridge wrote "Father Bombo's Pilgrimage," probably firing one another to think up improbably picaresque adventures. See Newlin's biography of Brackenridge, pp. 15-21, and Lewis Leary, "Father Bombo's Pilgrimage," *PMHB* 66(1942):459-78. In the introduction to his edition of *Modern Chivalry*, Leary rightly ascribes the survival of the novel to its lively episodes, straightforwardly told (p. 18).

98. The *Monthly Anthology* 5(1808):501, reproached Brackenridge for having concentrated on "low and illiterate" characters, but added, "his talent for drawing them is vigorous." Both the fault and the merit are considered by Leary to be part of the American touch operating within the European framework of the picaresque *Modern Chivalry* and linking the novel up with, e.g., *Georgia Scenes*. Leary also more questionably thinks that Brackenridge treated the quixotic journey as a quest, and as such finds it related to *Huckleberry Finn* (Introduction, p. 15).

99. In this passage and in the references to the philosophical society traces of the former collaboration with Freneau might be detected. See some of the "Tomo Cheeki" essays and the "Pilgrim" essay, VII ("A Challenge Received and Rejected"), in *The Prose of Freneau*.


101. Brackenridge's pretense of writing only a model of style (that could not be criticized since it created new standards), and treating his subject matter as of secondary importance, was responded to appreciatively by at least one contemporary reader: "There are two particulars in which we cannot agree with Mr. Brackenridge—that his stile is a model of perfection, and that his book consists entirely of nonsense" (*Columbian Magazine* 6[1792]:125).


103. "A History of New York, from the beginning of the world to the end of the Dutch dynasty. Containing among many surprising and curious matters, the unutterable ponderings of Walter the Doubter, the disastrous projects of William the Testy, and the chivalric achievements of Peter the Headstrong, the three Dutch governors of New Amsterdam, being the only authentic history of the times that ever hath been, or ever will be published. By Diedrich Knickerbocker" (1809). All references are to this edition. A revised version appeared in 1812, and Irving made more considerable changes when preparing the 1848 edition. See *Diedrich Knickerbocker's A History of New York*, ed. Stanley Williams and Tremaine McDowell; and Clarence M. Webster, "Irving's Expurgation of the 1809 History of New York," *AL* 4(1932):293-95. Scott was an early discoverer of *A History of New York*; see his letter to Brevoort (April 23, 1813), in which he warmly praises the book, its Swiftian parts equally with its Sternean touches (quoted in Hubbell, *American Life*, 1:244-45).

104. "Book I. Being, like all introductions to American histories, very learned, sagacious, and nothing at all to the purpose; containing divers profound theories and philosophic speculations, which the idle reader may totally overlook, and begin at the next book." The Irving brothers, who apparently collaborated only on the opening book, were parodying *A Picture of New York*, by Samuel L. Mitchell (*New York*, 1807).


107. Laird (see above, n. 105), and Wagenknecht (*Washington Irving*, p. 172) find in Stuyvesant features which they call tragic but which, though serious enough, hardly deserve this appellation.

108. "...By incessantly changing his measures, he gave none of them a fair
trial; and by listening to the clamours of the mob and endeavouring to do every thing, he in sober truth did nothing...Lucky was it for him that his power was not dependant upon the greasy multitude, and that as yet the populace did not possess the important privilege of nominating their chief magistrate. They however, like a true mob, did their best to help along public affairs; pestering their governor incessantly...” (1:254-55). Cf. Irving's letter to Mary Fairlie, May 2, 1807, in which he complains of having been dragged into campaigning (for the Federalists) and shaking hands with the mob (quoted in Hubbell, Literature, 1:230).

109. William L. Hedges in Washington Irving, makes the point that the History, like Swift’s satire, stresses the relativity of judgment; the point applies to other books treated below, too (e.g., A Flight to the Moon, Symzonia).

110. The sense of this passage and related satirical pages certainly connects A History of New York with writings such as The Celestial Railroad, The Monikins, The Confidence-Man (Hedges, Irving, p. 88).

111. The Monthly Anthology 8(1810):123-24, called it “the wittiest our press has ever produced” and praised its “lively flow of good natured satire.” John Bristed (p. 359) was warmly appreciative of both Salmagundi and A History of New York. An Account of Abimelech Coody (New York, 1815), though a satire of Verplanck, who had criticized Irving’s ridicule of the New York Dutch, disapproved of the History, calling it “really intolerable” and protesting against its mixture of history and fiction. F. L. Mott ascribes the early success of the History to the pre-publication announcements about the “man in black,” but thinks that the book was too expensive (at $3 a copy) to become a bestseller (Golden Multitudes, p. 70).

112. Evert A. and George C. Duyckinck, Cyclopaedia of American Literature, 2 vols. (New York, 1855), 1:191: “Looked at as history, we may say it is unreliable; but regarded as a squib, which the author almost had the opportunity of writing with quills plucked from his writhing body, and planted there by his over-zealous brethren of Hebron, it is vastly enjoyable and may be forgiven. The General History of Connecticut is as good, in its way, as Knickerbocker's History. The full-mouthed humorous gravity of its style is irresistible. Its narrations are independent of time, place and probability.”

113. The trumpeter Antony Corlear's nose, freshly washed, reflects the first ray of the sun “hissing hot” into the Hudson, where it kills a large sturgeon.


115. A Flight to the Moon, p. 11. For Fowler's earlier The Wandering Philanthropist, see above, in “Letters from America,” Chapter 5, part 3.

116. "Ahl why do I attempt to describe my feelings? The copious tears falling on my paper blot out my words, and bid me renounce the fruitless attempt. Surely not more delicious are the emotions of the saint, who, having literally burst the chains of death and escaped the persecutions of a bigoted or blood-thirsty world, beholds the gate of heaven opening to receive him, sees the light of the countenance of the Great Eternal, hears the melting sounds of golden harps, the joyful acclamation of innumerable hosts of angels; and meets all the joys of ever-lasting felicity” (pp. 96-97).

117. This is the title of a book “compiled by Americus Symmes, from the writings of his father, Capt. John Cleves Symmes,” Louisville, Ky., 1878.

118. J. O. Bailey suggests that Symmes himself was the author of Symzonia and was praising himself in referring to his “sublime theory” (see “An Early American Utopian Fiction,” AL 14(1942):285-93; and the introduction to the facsimile ed. of Symzonia). But it seems clear that the phrase is used ironi-
THE EARLY AMERICAN NOVEL

ally; it also occurs on pp. vi and 77, and echoes in expressions on pp. 20, 42, 104. The note of irony is sounded from beginning to end. In the very opening paragraph of his narrative, Seaborn announces that he means to discover new worlds, since the known world has had "its every thing investigated and understood"; but how well things are understood is brought home in the statement, "having...discovered that air and water are much the same elements, and are governed by much the same laws, at sea as on shore" (p. 22). There is possibly irony, too, in the reference to Fulton (see following note), and certainly in the passages of pseudo-scientific accuracy (pp. 60, 61, 229-30), as well as in the reason given for the publication of Symzonia: "...I heard that Capt. Riley had obtained some pecuniary relief, by publishing a book of Travels, containing accounts not much more marvellous than those which I could relate of Symzonia" (p. 246). The reference is to James Riley, Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig 'Commerce' (New York, 1816).

In his introduction to The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (Hill & Wang, 1960), which establishes Poe's probable debt to Symzonia, Sidney Kaplan calls Seaborn "one of the champions of Symmes" (p. xiii). He raises the important point of the white coloring of the Symzonians, as representing perfection; but this is only part of the story, for Seaborn notes the analogical difference "negro : white man" and "white man : Symzonian," that is, the white man may be superior to the negro but he must admit that he is inferior to the Symzonian. This establishes a parallel to the Swiftian pattern of sobering realization, with its analogies "Liliputian : Gulliver" and "Gulliver : Brobdingnagian." We may apply this to the significance of Seaborn's (and Symmes's) scientific ingenuity: it is remarkable enough in the human perspective, but it must not be taken too seriously because in the superior Symzonian view it merely teaches its own questionable value. Contemporary references to Symmes in works of fiction are to be found in Robert Waln, Jr., The Hermit in America; and George Watterston, The L— Family at Washington (1822), which introduces a wild young man about to join Symmes on a journey into the interior of the earth, "a wild-goose chase" (p. 159). Seaborn himself intimates that this view of things is wide-spread (p. 228). The Symmes theory is still alive: see the advertisement in the New York Times Book Review (October 2, 1966) for Dr. Raymond Bernard, The Hollow Earth, Fieldcrest Pub. Co.

119. There is probably an allusion to Fulton in this name. In his Advertisement Seaborn acknowledges that his voyage was made possible through the Symmes theory and the "application of steam to the navigation of vessels, for which the world is indebted to Fulton" (p. vi).

120. The British are also accused of having provisionally claimed discoveries in unknown parts of the world, so that any actual discovery will leave them the rights of first claimants.

121. When asked about the system of government in his country, Seaborn is careful "to say nothing about the qualities for office, nor of the means resorted to to obtain preferment" (p. 148); see also his craftiness in resolving to publish his memoirs. Seaborn is consistently vain of his vast knowledge (pp. 105, 180, 224, 247), which in some cases, he implies, is superior to Symmes's; he boasts of being a greater man than Columbus, who discovered only a continent, while he has discovered a whole unknown world (pp. 96-97). He despises his fellow-beings, his crew and the credulous public (pp. 46, 48-49, 51-52, 92-93, 247), and is altogether too unsavory a character for Symmes to have used to propagate his ideas. Seaborn's dishonesty is the more serious as he clearly perceives the moral excellence of the Symzonians (p. 205).
122. *The Oriental Philanthropist*, p. 3.

123. Contrary to the opinion expressed by Tremaine McDowell in "Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century American Novel," *SP* 24(1927):383-402, Sherburne relies on sensibility to some extent, both in his manner and in the use of certain plot-elements; see the quotations in the text and such a passage as Selina's joy at not having to part from Amelia, whom she has just met (p. 128).