

[GEORGE AND SOPHIA RIPLEY]

By

Lisette Riggs

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This dissertation is a biographical study of George Ripley and of his first wife, Sophia Willard Dana. Its purpose in addition to presenting a detailed chronology is to trace the history of thought of the Ripleys, and to analyse their original writings, to describe the editorial career of George Ripley in serving several publishers and four magazines: The Christian Register, the Dial, the Harbinger, and Harper's Monthly Magazine, and to detail his work as literary editor of the New York Tribune.

This dissertation is based upon a first hand examination of all existing manuscript materials to which the author had access, as well as to a survey of printed materials. In Octavius Brooks Frothingham's biography of Ripley, (1882) are printed many letters, the manuscripts of some of which seem to have been lost. Two hundred and forty-nine letters by George Ripley and forty-one by Sophia have been located and used in the preparation of this study. Other unpublished materials are a short autobiographical sketch, two sermons, a commonplace book, the charge books of the Boston Athenaeum and of Harvard College Library, two notebooks, and the account books, and books of minutes of Brook Farm.

Through consultation of the unpublished materials, for the first time it has been possible to follow the sequence of George Ripley's beliefs as he moved from the Calvinism of his childhood through Unitarianism to the broadest theism. Even after his first introduction to the doctrine of the intuitive power of mind, Ripley held to this common belief of the Transcendentalists.

The human mind, he claimed, has direct perception of truths which are in the mind of God. His assurance that all souls, even the humblest, have access to the Deity, filled him with a reverence for man as man. This sentiment, at once religious and social, to a large extent inspired the founding of Brook Farm, and informed many of his essays and reviews. Sophia, impelled by her conscience towards reforming the world, felt repugnance for the dull people in it. She found comfort in Roman Catholicism, which supplied her social work with an emotional attraction not previously present. George, after the failure of Brook Farm, engaged in literary pursuits. He still urged the freedom of the individual, stood against slavery, and asked increased civil rights for women.

As a literary figure, George represented the best American Victorian taste. As a translator of French and German theological and philosophical works, he hastened the flowering of Transcendentalism. His original theological writings show that extreme liberalism which invited attacks from the conservatives; he was the first member of the Transcendental group to be criticized for his views. As an editor of magazines, he generally failed to bring his hopes to fruition, but as an editor of books, particularly of the New American Cyclopaedia, he was more successful. As a literary critic, Ripley followed the conventional patterns of reviewing; his analyses of books gave a new dignity to the newspaper as a medium for literary information.

THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED TO DR. HARRY P. WARFEL

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Readers are cautioned against copying any portion of the letters or other manuscripts quoted, as, with exception of the letters printed in Octavius Brooks Frothingham, George Riley, they are restricted.

CHAPTER I

GREENFIELD

The little town of Greenfield, Massachusetts, in the first years of the nineteenth century, boasted fifteen hundred inhabitants, one church, one public school.¹ To the north and west of this town, the ploughed fields, broken by woods, spread over sharply pitched hills. Here the country was perceptibly more rugged than to the east, and the neighboring villages, such as Shelburne, were over five hundred feet higher than Greenfield. On the east was the fertile Connecticut River valley; the river itself lay a few miles beyond the town. To the south was the junction of the little Green and Deerfield Rivers, which were tributary to the Connecticut. To reach Greenfield from Boston, it was necessary to cross the high, broken country east of the Connecticut, on roads which were, at best, narrow and tortuous. In bad weather they became mud banks, sheets of ice, or snow drifts in due season. Summer offered better travel, but even then one rode for several days through the dust, or

¹ Octavius Brooks Frothingham, George Ripley (American Men of Letters Series, Charles Dudley Warner, ed., Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1892), pp. 2-3. Hereafter, this work will be referred to as Life.

jolted around inside a carriage, before the narrow vistas and sharp outlines of the high country gave place to the more ample horizons and the gleaming Connecticut River.

News came slowly to this beautiful and retired community. The large towns, with the current of intellectual life pulsing through them, were far off, and the difficulties of transportation made them farther still. 1802 was innocent of railroads or steam boats. In 1837, a mounted courier brought the mail from Boston once a week;² in the first years of the century, the citizens of Greenfield must have heard but dimly of the affairs of that city, ninety miles away. Even more remote must have seemed the affairs of distant Washington, the muddy city on the Potomac, where Jefferson presided over the White House, and was sometimes confused with Anti-Christ by the good Federalists of Massachusetts.

Jerome Ripley was a person of no small importance in his community, to which he had come from his native Hingham, after some years in Boston. His country store boasted "Dry and Fancy Goods," the latter term covering a variety of commodities, including liquors.³ He was at various times Justice of the Peace, member of the State Legislature, and Associate Justice of the County Court of Sessions. This body met at Greenfield, the seat of government of Franklin County. There are a few little memorandum books of this scrupulously precise judge in existence. An interesting item, which dates between the years 1797 and 1799, shows the type of case handled by Jerome Ripley, and also the value of money

² Ibid., p. 3.

³ William S. Allen The Ripley Family of Greenfield, a MS. paper read before the Greenfield Historical Society, and lent to me by Mr. Philip Ripley, p. 6. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Ripley Family.

in Greenfield. For a case of assault and battery, he fined one Thomas Miller the sum of fifty cents⁴.

The worthy justice was of a type which was indigenous to the northern United States. He did not correspond to a member of the English middle class, because he recognized none higher except, perhaps, the local minister. He was not a "bon bourgeois", because there is an implication of condescension in the term, and no one condescended to rural New England. Like his community, he was hard working, respectable, and essentially conservative. He feared God, never short-changed anybody, and caused his son George mild amusement by his staunch veneration for Timothy Pickering and the authors of Federalism. Contemporary accounts speak of him as a cautious and amiable man, who minded his own business, was slow to adopt opinions, but once having made up his mind, stuck to it, "though at a cost of temporary loss of popularity, or of a brief interruption of kind feelings on the part of those he loved best".⁵

His wife, Sarah Franklin Ripley, was a descendant of the uncle of Benjamin Franklin. She was a reserved, respectable, New England housewife, who knew all the dogmas necessary to salvation, and the exact number of squash in the family larder. She held to her religious views with the same tenacity as Jerome to his. The family used to assemble for prayers, but not without something like schism. Jerome Ripley was Unitarian, and Sarah Franklin, orthodox⁶. The family were about equally

4 Ibid., p. 6.

5 Ibid., p. 7.

6 Ibid., p. 4.

divided. We have reason to believe that George, the youngest, followed his mother, and Franklin, the third child, his father. A minor triumph seems to have been scored by the Trinitarians, in that the one and only church was orthodox⁷.

The Ripley house was a large one, on the main street. Heavy pillars upheld an overhanging roof. Before the house was a dooryard, with a fence around it⁸. Near it, but not in it, was the store where Jerome Ripley, assisted by his son Thomas, supplied the wants of the Greenfield shoppers. There was nothing unfriendly or solitary about the big house. Jerome and Sarah Franklin Ripley presided over a family dinner table, at which sat eight surviving children, and where relatives and friends were made welcome. In later years, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a distant cousin, visited there, and was cordially entertained. George Ripley, from his desk at Cambridge, looked back with pleasure on the genial household, and wrote Marianne: "I would gladly transport myself thither to enjoy a few days at the good old hospitable mansion."⁹

George Ripley was born on October 3, 1802. He was the next youngest of ten children, of whom eight survived. His brothers and sisters who lived to maturity, all older than he, were Sarah, Thomas, Franklin, Lydia Hebart, Elizabeth Franklin, Harriet, and Marianne. Sarah married Charles Stearns, and remained in Greenfield until 1841, when she moved to Springfield. She was a woman of intense social consciousness. Her strong desire to help the negroes led her, late in life, to leave famil-

7 Life, p. 7.

8 Ripley Family, p. 4.

9 Ibid., p. 7.

lar Massachusetts for the south, where she took an active part in colored missions until her death, in 1871¹⁰. Thomas, the eldest son, and his charming wife, were the center of a cheerful social circle. If George called at his brother's house some afternoon, he would find there a group of young people, enjoying tea and the conversation of his sister-in-law, Susan Clap Ripley¹¹. Serious Franklin Ripley, when he grew up, followed in his father's footsteps, and became a judge, in this case, of the Probate Court. He was the family financier, to whom the others turned, in their later years, for the settlement of wills. Various offices in the local bank, from cashier to president or director, had well fitted him for such tasks¹². Franklin was, like his father, conservative, inflexible, but apparently more outspoken. Lydia Hobart, the fourth child, married the Rev. Bancroft Fowler, and Elizabeth Franklin, David Brigham. Between Elizabeth and George existed a particularly close friendship. The difference in their ages did not lessen the companionship which he felt towards this intelligent and sympathetic woman¹³. Her little daughter, Kate, was the affectionate playmate of Uncle George, when he returned to Greenfield with all the glory of Cambridge about him, for the holidays. Harriet and Marianne were nearest to George in age. Harriet was a quiet and gentle person, who took great pleasure in the mild, natural beauty of trees and gardens, and in the neat, box-bordered

10 Ibid., p. 7.

11 Ibid., p. 8.

12 Ibid., p. 11.

13 Ibid., p. 9.

flower beds and copper beech tree by the house where she later lived as Mrs. Sylvester Allen¹⁴. The academic Marianne, who became a school teacher, seems to have been more likely to sympathize with George in his rather odd youthful ambition "to make a dictionary."¹⁵

Greenfield's one church was orthodox Congregational.¹⁶ The Second Society was not formed until 1816, and the Third, or Unitarian, until 1825.¹⁷ George's father, although Unitarian, was not an incorporator of this society, but Franklin was. By 1837 there were five societies ministering to the needs of less than two thousand people.¹⁸ In the meantime was an era of comparative peace when all shades of religious opinion worshipped under one roof.

The Congregational Church system, of which the one society in Greenfield in 1802 was a member, was as integral a part of New England life as the little white wooden churches were of the New England village scene. Congregationalism was a logical development of the Protestant ideal, in a country where the older families had, on one side or the other, ancestral memories of religious persecution in the mother country. Each individual church exercised the right of private judgment. It sat squarely in the center of its community, and recognized only God as higher. No central authority infringed on its sturdy little individuality, and there was only the loosest sort of federation among the several societies. All were pervaded by much the same tradition, and

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁵ Life, p. 4.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

reverenced the same great names of learned divines of earlier times, such as the great Jonathan Edwards. All traced their ancestry back to the English reformers. But any attempt of one church to impose upon another what it should believe, would have been greeted with wonder.

The minister was chosen by his society, and sometimes dismissed by it. Generally speaking, once installed, the pastor swayed his quiet, respectable, docile congregation. Change in dogma was still actively in progress. The discarding process, begun with the Reformers, had not ended in England. Sometimes a congregation drifted imperceptibly with its pastor into Unitarianism; sometimes the pastor's changing views provoked a similar conscious change in those of his people. The earliest example of a church which, Trinitarian one day, became, by its active determination, Unitarian the next, was that of King's Chapel, Boston, in 1785.¹⁹ The much loved pastor, losing his faith in the Trinity, informed the proprietors that under the circumstances he had no alternative but to depart. The congregation took counsel with itself, and decided to retain their minister at all costs. Accordingly they severed their connection with the Congregational Church, shortened the endings of prayers, and Sundays went on much as before. On the other hand, it sometimes happened that the elders of the congregation decided that the preacher and the younger members were odious with heresy, and acrimonious schism took place. The law would be called in to decide the possession of the church and furniture. Sometimes the newer belief triumphed, whence the paradox that in many New England towns, the First Church is Unitarian, and the Second Church, orthodox. Something of the sort took place in Harvard,

¹⁹ James D. Hart, The Oxford Companion to American Literature (London, New York, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 784.

in 1805, when the elder Henry Ware was appointed Hollis Professor of Divinity and the Trinitarians withdrew with articulate disapproval. These mutterings of warfare, from the Boston battle center, must have come but remotely to Greenfield, where the church was one, and opinion, legion.

The iron hand of Calvinism was relaxing on the theology of New England. Dark visions of total depravity were gradually slipping into the same limbo as identity of religious opinion. Perhaps, in such retired communities as Greenfield, a minister still fed his congregation the traditional brimstone. If so, he was out of keeping with the lessened theological tension. The elders were no longer suspended by thin threads over the mouth of hell. The toddlers were having the benefit of the same lightening of the traditional burden, as the New England Primer was being superseded in the school room by Noah Webster's Reader. There is less grimness in an alphabet which begins,

"A was an Apple-pie, made by the cook,"

then in the older

"In Adam's fall
We sinned all."

If George was lucky, his public school, "a good one" according to Octavius Brooks Frothingham, his biographer, used the milder version.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL

Little is known about George's childhood, and school years. He attended the public school in Greenfield, which probably, like all such institutions in New England, was an unpretentious affair. This school must have been a large one, as it was the only such in Greenfield, a town of fifteen hundred people. There seems to have been some delay of unknown cause connected with the progress of George's education. Although a very good student, he did not enter Harvard until he was seventeen, which was a bit backward for those exacting times. Perhaps the good public school was not of the stuff of which advanced scholars were made. Or, as one begins to suspect from the continuous references to his health in his letters, perhaps poor George was intimately acquainted with every childish disease lurking within miles of Greenfield.

After the public school, George attended the academy of a Mr. Huntington, in Hadley. This was quite a large affair, of one hundred and thirty pupils, and prepared directly for college. Here George made friends with Sylvester Clapp,²⁰ another serious minded scholar, and the two would

20 George Ripley to Sylvester Clapp, Nov. 13, 1819. A.L.S. in the possession of Lisette Riggs.

sit under the trees and rearrange the universe in such long and satisfactory conversations that it was remarkable that things should be very much the same with the world afterwards. Both were very religious boys, a little priggish, and spent much time in earnest discourse on the temptations of life, of which they had no knowledge whatever. Letters to the senior Ripleys from Hadley show what was, perhaps, George's first major frustration. He had set his heart on Yale, and summoned what he considered the most telling arguments in his favor, to impress his father, who was inclined to Harvard.

Hadley, June 16, 1818.

My dear Mother,--....We have a very large school this term, about one hundred and thirty. Mr. Huntington calculates to fit me for college before next Commencement. I suspect that if my health is good I can read the Testament and Minora this term, which is all that is required at Yale. To fail is absolutely impossible. In haste....²¹

Hadley, July 10, 1818.

Honored Parent,--....This quarter expires on the 11th of August, about six weeks from this time. I expect then to have studied the Minora and arithmetic. There will then be only a fortnight before Commencement, and the remaining studies which I need are the Greek Testament and algebra and ancient and modern geography. You will easily perceive that it will be impossible for me to become acquainted with these before the term commences. I may perhaps, with hard study and previous calculations, by a year from next fall be fitted as a Sophomore, if you should conclude to send me to Cambridge. The Commencement at Yale is the second week in September, with a vacation of six weeks. All that I shall be deficient in at the end of the quarter, of the preparatory studies required at Yale, will be the Greek Testament. A knowledge of that I could easily obtain, and before the commencement of the term be well fitted and enabled to have a respectable standing in the class. I think it is altogether necessary for me to know what arrangements are made respecting me, before the expiration of this term. I feel grateful that you are willing to be at the additional expense of educating me, and I hope that I shall duly appreciate the favor. It shall

21 Life, p. 4. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, June 16, 1818.

be my endeavor, by economy and self-denial, to render the burden as light as possible. But I feel emboldened to make the request that, if consistent with your inclinations and plans, I may receive an education at Yale rather than Cambridge. I may be thought assuming and even impertinent to make this request. But, sir, I entreat you to consider the thing. The literary advantages at Cambridge are superior in some respects to those at Yale. The languages can undoubtedly be learnt best at Cambridge. But it is allowed by many, who have had opportunity to judge, free from prejudice that the solid branches may be acquired to as great perfection at Yale. Cousin Henry, who has had some information on the subject, says that for mathematics, metaphysics, and for the solid sciences in general, Yale is the best. The temptations incident to a college, we have reason to think, are less at Yale than at Cambridge.

I remain your obliged and affectionate son.²²

The weighty arguments of his son had as little effect on Jerome Ripley as the elegant scriptive style, for which, no doubt, Mr. Huntington was in large part responsible. To Cambridge George would go, if not this year, the next one.

For some expert tutoring before his entry at Harvard, George was sent to the private school of his distant cousins, Rev. Samuel Ripley of Waltham, and his wife, the famous Sarah Alden Bradford.²³ Tradition has it that this learned woman could at one and the same time rock a cradle, shell peas, hear a lesson in Greek, and study philosophy without neglecting any of these occupations.²⁴ Young Emerson, then seventeen years old, felt for her a respectful admiration which he carried through life. Senator Hear said that she was fit for a chair in any university.²⁵ It was the custom among ministers to augment their income by taking in

²² Ibid., pp.4-5. George Ripley to Jerome Ripley, July 10, 1818.

²³ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁴ Oral tradition at the Old Manse.

²⁵ Ripley Family, p. 12.

scholars and fitting them for college. With such an assistant as his wife, Samuel Ripley's school must have been one of the best.

George made the first stage of his trip to Waltham one hot day in June. As per schedule, he met Rev. Dr. Ezra Ripley, father of his tutor, in Lincoln, and went with him to Concord.²⁶ Dr. Ripley, Emerson's step-grandfather, was the patriarch of Concord. When he brought George to that town, in 1819, he had been pastor of the First Church for forty years, and was to be so for twenty more. Emerson describes him as "a perfectly sincere man, punctual, severe, but just and charitable, and if he made his frown a strait-jacket to others, he wore the same himself, all his years."²⁷

In Concord, George spent the night in the Old Manse, the residence of Dr. Ripley. This solid house stood a little out of the town, on low ground in the valley. Through the back windows glittered the Concord River. There is a slight austerity about the house, which took a strong central personality to overcome, and the coming and going of many people to make cheerful. Dr. Ripley supplied the strong central personality, and the people were rarely lacking. In addition to his own family, his wife had children by her first husband, Rev. William Emerson, and relatives of both families were numerous. Scrupulously the patriarch fulfilled his obligations to his wife's family. Ralph Waldo Emerson's mother had sought shelter with him during one winter of high prices and grinding poverty. He took them in, and when they left, gave them a cow, which Ralph Waldo used to drive to Boston Common.

²⁶ *Life*, p. 6.

²⁷ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Ezra Ripley, D.D." in "Letters and Biographical Sketches," *Works*, X, p. 382

George spent the night and the next morning with his hospitable cousin, and in the afternoon drove with his Cousin Sarah to Waltham, where Samuel Ripley kept his school. For the first time, George came into contact with teachers of the first ability. He was delighted with their methods of instruction, although Mr. Ripley, much less sanguine than Mr. Huntingdon of Hadley, made no secret of his doubts as to George's ability to get into Harvard that year.²⁸ As his house was already full, Mr. Ripley made arrangements for George to stay with a respectable family at a price which gave the young student twinges of conscience--\$3.00 a week.²⁹ George wrote his mother his impressions of the school and of Waltham. In unbelievable priggishness, or simple homesickness, he told that good lady that the town where his cousin was pastor was a pleasant place, but inferior in religion to Greenfield.³⁰

Waltham, June 12, 1819

My dear Mother,--We had upon the whole a pleasant journey, though it was rendered disagreeable by the extreme heat and dust and the number of passengers. We arrived at Lincoln about eight in the evening, where we met Dr. Ripley, who carried us to Concord. There I passed the night and part of the next day, and in the afternoon rode to Waltham with cousin Sarah. She stated the case to Mr. Ripley, who was willing to instruct me, and after an examination expressed his opinion that probably I might enter Cambridge, if not at Commencement, at the close of the vacation. He has a house full of boys, two of whom are to be examined in the fall. The advantages here for being well prepared for college are indeed many. His system of instruction is altogether different from anything which I have ever been accustomed to. It is pretty certain if I had not come here, or to some other similar place, I should not have been fitted for Cambridge this year; and as

28 Life, p. 6.

29 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

30 Ibid., p. 7.

I now as I consider it something doubtful whether I can get in. My boarding-place is at a Mrs. Smith's, a very respectable family. The board is \$3.00 a week,--a large sum. But I trust that eventually it will be cheaper for me than if I had remained at Greenfield. The place is very pleasant, many beautiful walks and prospects, and a good situation for acquiring knowledge, but the religious state of the place is far different from that of Greenfield.³¹

By autumn of 1819, thanks to the good work of Samuel and Sarah Ripley, he was ready for Harvard. He went from his family's house in Greenfield to Boston, where he saw friends of the Jerome Ripleys.³² Thence he went to Cambridge, and entered the class of 1823.

31 Ibid., pp. 6-7. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, June 12, 1819.

32 Ibid., p. 7.

CHAPTER III

HARVARD

Harvard was the storm center of Unitarianism. The newer belief had captured the Hollis Professorship of Divinity in 1805, with the appointment of Rev. Dr. Henry Ware to that post. With audible maledictions, the Trinitarians had retired to the fastnesses of Andover, and founded their Theological School. In 1819, the Hollis Professor was still in Cambridge, and actively teaching, but that year saw the severance of undergraduate Harvard and the Divinity School. It was the latter which was Ware's particular province. He was assisted by Professor Willard, and President Kirkland.

In the college, the professors who made the most active impression on George were President John Thornton Kirkland, Professor Levi Frisbie, Professor Levi Hedge, Professor Edward Everett and Professor Andrews Norton. John Thornton Kirkland was, beyond shadow of doubt, a very ugly man.³³ His features were large and bulbous, and a shining patch of scalp separated the clumps of dark hair on either side of his head. But his features were luminous with intelligence, and his presence provoked

33. An engraving in Justin Windsor ed. Memorial History of Boston (4 vols, Boston, James R. Osgood, 1881), Vol. IV, facing p. 296. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Boston.

thought. From Dr. Kirkland's accession, George claimed, as he looked back many years later, could be dated the mental awakening of Harvard and Boston. The President was less of a speculative philosopher than Professor Frisbie, less of a pillar of scholarship than Professor Norton. He wrote less than Professor Ware, in fact, such was his aversion for putting pen to paper, that he could hardly bring himself to doing it at all. Neither was he, like Professor Everett, regarded as a miracle of foreign culture. It was his function to be a catalyst on a large scale.

Professor Frisbie wrote even less, because straining his weak eyes over paper was painful. His influence he exercised personally, in his lectures on Moral Philosophy. In the class room, he charmed as well as convinced. Looking towards the hazy outlines of his pupils, he persuaded them into those white regions of clear thought which were his habitat. One of the thoughts on which he most insisted was the simple character of the idea of right. This idea, he claimed, arose spontaneously in the soul; it was not derived from anything. It was intuitive. Between the ideas of right and utility lay an unbridgable chasm; Professor Frisbie was the arch foe of Utilitarianism. In his speculations, he departed widely from the sensuous philosophy of Professor Norton.³⁴

There was no question that Rev. Andrews Norton provoked thought, but it was by the ungentle way of contradiction.³⁵ He pricked his students into cerebration, and then bludgeoned them if their expression

34] George Ripley, in Boston, Chapter III, "Philosophical Thought in Boston," pp. 297 ff. This chapter was begun by Ripley, and finished by George Partridge Bradford.

35 Ibid, 299 ff.

was anything less than the clearest of English. Only he could have greeted an eager, palpitating student with the comment, "Mr. Bradford! Your discourse lacked every qualification which a good sermon should have."

This interesting man was as vocal a Unitarian as he was distinguished a scholar. Seven years before, he had founded and edited the short-lived General Repository and Review, which advocated Unitarian doctrines. In contrast to his friend, Professor Frisbie, Morton was Lockean in his philosophy. Any knowledge which did not originate in the senses was to him illusion. The doctrine of intuition into great spiritual truths was Germanic nonsense, was in fact pernicious. Hence, to Morton, textual and historical problems assumed the first importance in the understanding of Christianity. The Scriptures tangibly presented what actual people had experienced sensuously. An audible voice declared to numerous witnesses: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." Norton's earnest endeavor was to ascertain precisely what was to be heard, and precisely what rejected, on the grounds of history. Miracles bore witness to the divine origin of Christianity, and were the only evidence which could be accepted by any sane man.

Professor Edward Everett, professor of Greek, wielded considerable influence over a large portion of the student body. He was regarded both by faculty and undergraduates as the last word in foreign culture, having spent much time in study in Germany. Harvard had, in 1819, no instruction in German, but with the return of Everett, in 1819, the University began to feel an awareness of the countrymen of Kant. A sample

of his influence is manifest in a letter which George wrote his mother, complaining of the food in commons:

Next term, I hope to board in my room at \$2.00, as nearly one fourth of the scholars do. This custom is recently introduced by Professor Everett, who sets the example in imitation of the German universities, whose manners and customs they endeavor to adopt as much as possible.³⁶

Professor Levi Hedge lectured on metaphysics. This professor must have been more than usually objective in his method of teaching, because while he held anti-sensational views, his exposition of Locke inspired Ripley to write home praises of that English philosopher. The son of Levi Hedge, brilliant young Frederic Henry, until 1822, was absorbing the studies, and irritating the authorities, of German universities. His influence was to combine with that of Everett in making the study of German popular among the intelligensia of Boston.

Not a professor at Harvard, but surpassing them all by his influence on the mind of the time, was Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing, the pastor of the Federal Street Church. In 1819, the year of George's arrival, Channing went to Baltimore for the ordination of Rev. Jared Sparks, and delivered a sermon which became the definitive statement of Unitarianism.³⁷ Channing not only asserted belief in one Divine Person instead of three, but described in no uncertain tone the benevolence of God and the excellence of human nature. He rejected the doctrines of total depravity and the fall. To him, no cloud of original sin hung over the intellect, which was capable of recognizing truth; no innate viciousness of the will

³⁶ Life, p. 13, George Ripley to [Sarah Franklin Ripley].

³⁷ William Ellery Channing, D. D., Works (Boston, American Unitarian Association, 1886), "Unitarian Christianity," pp. 369 ff. The Federal Street Church is also known as the Berry Street Church.

deflected it towards evil. The doctrine of the atonement, Channing held, dishonored God; Christ's death was the crown and seal of His teaching, but from the infinite justice of God it bought nothing at all. While Channing did not deny the inspiration of the Bible, he urged that it be used as any other book, by the criterion of reason.

Channing was no formal philosopher. The nature of the reason, he did not dwell on. It seemed sufficient that it was a power in man capable of distinguishing truth from untruth, and good from evil. He accredited the soul with some insight into the Divine Order, but certainly not enough at any time to make Christianity superfluous. On that subject, he wrote James Martineau in 1841, that the spiritualists, (the transcendentalists) were "in danger of substituting private inspiration for Christianity."³⁸ In the 1820's, however, Channing was the leader of the younger men whose radicalism he was one day to have misgivings about. Startling declarations, which paved the way to the more extreme thought, abounded in his sermons:

The religious principle is, without doubt, the noblest working of human nature. This principle God implanted for Himself. Through this the human mind corresponds to the Supreme Divinity.³⁹

The great lesson is, that there is in human nature, an element truly Divine, and worthy of all reverence; that the Infinite which is mirrored in the outward universe, it yet more brightly imaged in the inward spiritual world.⁴⁰

A spiritual light, brighter than that of noon, pervades all our daily life. The cause of our not seeing is ourselves.⁴¹

38 Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1876), p. 112. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Transcendentalism.

39 Ibid., p. 113.

40 Idem.

41 Idem.

And, very significantly, after a discussion of the mind which was in no conflict with the opinions of Locke, "The Mind does not receive everything from abroad."⁴²

If Harvard had liberalized theology by casting off Calvinism, there had been no such liberalization in the rules of conduct. Student upheavals during the early twenties bore witness to the growing unrest, caused by the obligatory puritanical observances with which the place was encumbered. The quality of the enforced piety may be judged from the fact that, as late as 1824, students were fined for "unnecessary walking on the Sabbath."⁴³

42. Channing, op.cit. p. 274.

43. James Bryant Conant, Samuel Eliot Morrison, LeBaron Russell Briggs, Alfred Chester Hanford, William John Bingham, and William Ichabod Nichols, The History and Traditions of Harvard College (Cambridge, Mass., The Harvard Crimson, 1934) p. 20.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDENT RECORD

George's annals at Harvard are meager. He resided on the campus during his four undergraduate years, in Halls which are still standing: Hollis, Stoughton, Massachusetts, and Helworthy.⁴⁴ He attended the prayer meetings of the more pious freshmen when in that class. As a sophomore, junior, and senior, he refrained from mixing in the less prayerful but equally sincere meetings which were held for the purpose of berating the faculty. He ate at steward's commons for the first quarter of his freshman year, then joined in the usual undergraduate complaints about the food, and took his meals elsewhere for the duration of that year, at least. Because of his worries over money he spent as little as he possibly could, and taught a school in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in the winter of 1822-3. He was frustrated in his desire to go to Germany by the anemic condition of the family budget. He mixed in society in Cambridge. In short, his path through the wilds of college life was straight, narrow, and except for academic honors, unexceptional.

44. Harvard University Directories for 1819-20, 1820-21, 1821-22, 1822-23.

Being a good student, during the time that he was in Harvard, George took part in various exhibition and commencement performances. In August, 1821,⁴⁵ he took part in a Latin Dialogue, with Thomas W. Dorr⁴⁶ and John P. Robinson.⁴⁷ This masterpiece, a presentation of Casca, Brutus, and Cassius, had been translated into Latin from Shakespeare. History has not recorded who played which conspirator. In August, 1822, he delivered an English oration, "The Character of Literary Men, as affected by the Spirit of Society."⁴⁸ This speech must have been at least as exciting to his audience as his part in mathematical and astronomical demonstrations, in April, 1823.⁴⁹ The chief record of George's undergraduate success is an honors thesis in mathematics, on the shape of the earth. This product of his senior year, neatly written in his best slant hand on a large, single piece of white cardboard, was accompanied by neat diagrams, and a Latin dedication to President Kirkland.⁵⁰ It proves that the earth is an oblate spheroid, that is, flattened at the poles. The thesis follows the work of Maupertin, chief of the French Academy of Sciences expedition in the early eighteenth century.

45) Exhibition and Commencement Performances for 1821-2 (Harvard, 1821-2).

46) Thomas Wilson Dorr, 1805-54. His election as Governor of Rhode Island, in 1841, by a People's party, was called Dorr's Rebellion.

47) John P. Robinson, later Governor of Massachusetts, is commemorated by James Russell Lowell, A Fable for Critics.

48) Exhibition and Commencement Performances for 1822-3 (Harvard, 1822-3).

49) Ibid.

50) George Ripley, The Figure of the Earth, MS. honor thesis in Harvard College Archives.

Maupertin's measurements were taken in Lapland, and his work was the pioneer investigation in the field. George's figure on triangulation was identical with that of Maupertin.⁵¹

George was graduated first scholar in the class of 1823, and the author of a successful Bowdoin prize dissertation.⁵² One fact enormously facilitated his class standing; his chief competitor, John P. Robinson, had been dismissed for a leading part in certain student disturbances, from which George had held aloof.⁵³ At the commencement exercises, he delivered the English Oration on "Genius as affected by Moral Feeling." For some unidentified feat in his senior year, he received a prize of a two volume edition of *Paradise Lost*.

There are incomplete records of his reading in 1822 and 1823.⁵⁴ Some of the books which he charged out at the Harvard Library may never be known, because of the hurried handwriting of the harassed librarian. Others included: Brown's Moral Philosophy; Middleton's Life of Cicero; Stewart's Disputations; various numbers of the Edinburgh Review, the Quarterly Review, and the Literary and Scientific Review; Carpenter, Sheppard and Sayer on Education; a life of Priestley; Plutarch's Lives; Justin's Erasmus; Bolinbroke on Victory; Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers; Disney's Life of Justin; Disney's Life of Sykes; Doddridge's Lectures, Reid's Works; Whiston's Life of Samuel Clarke; Price's Review of the

51 These data were supplied by Hugh Mitchell, Division of Geodesy, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

52 Life, pp. 18-19, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, July 18, 1823.

53 Life, p. 10, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, May 3, 1823.

54 Charge Books, Harvard University Library, for 1822-3. I found none earlier.

Principal Questions in Morals; Baxter on the Soul; the Eclectic Review, Tucker's Light of Nature. Shortly after his arrival at Cambridge, Ripley found that his studies were easier than he had expected, and that after he had prepared his lessons, he had time to spare. This time he decided to invest in an extensive course of reading,⁵⁵ a habit which lasted throughout his life.⁵⁶ Of the first results of this habit, the Harvard charge books are the partial account.

⁵⁵ Life, p. 17. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, October, 1819.

CHAPTER V

INNOCENT AT HARVARD

Among the practical worries which beset the young student at his entry into Harvard were his studies, his relations with the other students, and the everlasting problem of money. The studies caused no difficulty. He did not immediately realize how difficult the matter of his social relationships would be. The most immediate of his problems was money. This worry could not be disposed of with a shrug. Books were expensive; he shopped around Cambridge until he had found a good number of them, in fairly respectable condition, the relics of impecunious sophomores.⁵⁶ At the steward's commons, he learned that an extra fee called sising was charged for second helpings. His respectable wish to save his father expense made him try hard not to be an expensive student. He was never fined. He was so far from being a valiant trencherman, that his quarterly bill for second helpings was sometimes as little as twenty-four cents.⁵⁷ His great extravagance that winter was \$4.00 worth of

56 Ibid., p. 18, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, October 1819.

57. Harvard Quarterly Books for 1819-20, in Harvard University Archives.

wood.⁵⁸ If he shivered a little in his room at Hollis Hall, it was out of consideration for Jerome Ripley, father of eight. He even considered teaching school in the winter vacation, and for two months after it, but doubted that he could get a really good school, paying as much as \$16.00 a month.⁵⁹

A letter to his mother describes the practical arrangements, and first impressions of Cambridge:

Cambridge, October, 1819

Dear Mother,--At length I have got pretty comfortably established in this seminary, and begin to feel at home. I have had a very confused time hitherto, owing to the perplexities and inconveniences which usually attend a student on his first entrance on a collegiate course; but I now find considerable quiet and tranquillity, and can behold a prospect of profit and improvement. I arrived in Boston the day after leaving Greenfield, and found our friends in health. You probably desire to know concerning my situation and prosperity at this place, but I hardly know what opinion to form myself. As I observed before, the prospect for improvement in learning is favorable. Undoubtedly there are means and privileges here particularly great, such as are enjoyed by no other American college. The course of studies adopted here, in the opinion of competent judges, is singularly calculated to form scholars, and, moreover, correct and accurate scholars; to inure the mind to profound thought and habits of investigation and reasoning. I am in great hopes that my health will be able to endure the exertions necessary to be made. I am not obliged to study at all hard to perform the exercises allotted me. At present our lessons can all be learnt in three, or at most, four, hours. But the diligent student will find something to occupy all his time, and leave not a moment to be spent in idleness. I expect to have some time to read, and if a judicious choice of books is made it may be profitable. The expenses here will probably be nearly as you expected. The commons are charged according to the price of provisions; but there is an extra expense, called sising; that is, if you don't have bread, or butter, or meat, etc., sufficient, you can call for more, and be charged four cents a time. This amounts, when

58: Ibid.

59: Life, pp.8-9, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, November 10, 1819.

it is done no oftener than is absolutely necessary, to, say, \$2.00 a term. The books used in the classes are furnished by the University booksellers, at a discount of twenty per cent., to be charged in the quarter bill. Many second-hand are to be obtained, however, for a trifle. I bought a very good book, the price of which is \$2.80 for two shillings, and one or two others in the same proportion. My washing I have done at \$5.00 per term.

Your affectionate son, G. Ripley.⁶⁰

In regard to his adjustments to his classmates, something went very seriously amiss. George did not find out how far amiss until his sophomore year. The fault was not with his appearance; he was a handsome student with brilliant eyes, and crisp brown hair.⁶¹ His training and tremendously earnest outlook were responsible. Coming from the quiet, ordered Ripley household in Greenfield, the sententious discussions of Hadley, and the serious cramming school of Samuel and Sarah Ripley, he was plunged into Harvard, where the cosmopolitan sons of the large New England cities were fuming at the puritanical restrictions of an earlier age. With these restrictions, George had no quarrel. He regarded his classmates with suspicion, seeing their frivolity and wondering about the quantity of religion in their souls. The Freshman Class was not yet feeling its oats, but by November of the next year, was to express itself in strikes, riots, indignation meetings, petitions, ostracisms, and other signs of student displeasure.⁶² George, who had always a more natural affinity for the government than for the protest, was to be one of the objects of its displeasure. But in the meantime, he was not made unhappy.

60 Life, pp.7-8.

61 Life, p.4.

62 MS. History of the Class of 1823, Harvard University Archives. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Class of 1823.

He found a group of equally serious-minded students, and they held prayer meetings to their hearts' content in one of the class rooms each week, and more on Sunday evenings.⁶³ It took exactly one year for social stigma to attach to the member from Greenfield.

A curious scruple arose in his freshman year, which bothered him for other years to come. As a sample of the thinking which would not commend itself in a group of college students, it has almost unique interest. Poor George stands revealed in all the symptoms of religious measles. Not only was he a practicing prig in his own right, but he was in the unhealthy and unlovely state of mind where he happily looked on all those different from himself as good candidate for hell-fodder. He even contrived to spoil his own solitary pleasure for himself--his studies. There seems to have been a strong ascetic New England strain in George's background, which shrieked, "It's wrong if you like it." Now, George was devoted to his books, and longed to pursue his studies with all the fervor which had never been exercised in card games or coin collections. But the rigid Calvinistic conscience screamed incessantly into his ear, "Isn't it frivolous?" and suggested that he would do better by the next world to be a missionary in this one. George, very worried, wrote in the approved Hadley manner to Sylvester Clapp about this case of conscience:

Cambridge Harv. Univ. Nov. 13/1819

My beloved Friend

I read your affectionate letter of the 1st inst. for which you will accept my sincere thanks. It occasioned very pleasing emotions, to think that I still retained a place in the remem-

⁶³ George Ripley to Sylvester Clapp, November 13, 1819. A.L.S. in the possession of Lisette Riggs.

brance and affections of a friend, with whom I was formerly intimately connected, and in whose society I had experienced the purest enjoyment. The reception of a letter from you, excited many pleasant recollections, and called up associations in my breast of the most grateful and delightful nature. I was forcibly reminded of the pleasant season, which we spent together at Hadley, where, in the pursuit of useful knowledge, and in the cultivation of our intellectual faculties, we, I trust, enjoyed hours & days of satisfaction & pleasure.--But these seasons, are now departed,-- we are separated from many whom we tenderly love, and have entered a new course of life, fraught with trials & difficulties & temptations. Although our present situation is attended with many peculiar trials, it has still, I think, many privileges and sources, of advantage & pleasure, found in no other situation. Being separated from the common concerns of life, and enjoying uncommon facilities for intellectual improvement, we may consider this as the happiest period & situation ~~of~~ our lives. To the mind of any taste, or delicate feeling it will always be delightful, to pursue the paths of learning, & as Horace expresses the idea, "inter sylvas Academi, quarere verum". The labor and exertion which we make for intellectual excellence and greatness, will be richly repaid, if those endeavours are made in subservience to the will of God, & in dependence on him for success. But this is the grand point, in which scholars usually fail. They will ardently & indefatigably pursue the paths of learning, but go on regardless of God & of the importance of making all their attainments tend to his glory. They forget that there is a day, when the children of men, will be judged of the improvement they have made of the faculties & powers, with which God has entrusted them. O, my friend, how great is the folly of suffering, the charms of literature to separate between us & our God. And how unwise a choice, do we make, for what knowledge is worthy to be compared with the knowledge of Jesus Christ? What truths so sublime, what doctrines so pure and elevating as those of our holy religion? Where among the sages of antiquity, shall we search for truth so cheering, so consolatory to the mind of man, as that of redemption by the blood of the Saviour. This truth surpasses all the boasted systems of the heathen Philosophers. And how infinitely important is it that we are interested in the blessings of this scheme of redemption. How unhappy would it be, if after having enjoyed so many privileges, we finally came short of the great salvation. O, let us labour & pray to enter into that rest, which is prepared for the people of God. Let us bind ourselves to the cause of God, & having our interests identified with those of the church, live entirely devoted to him, who has done so much for us,--The prospect of the speedy promulgation of Christianity throughout the world is very encouraging. Glorious things are spoken of Zion the city of God; she will one day arise from the dust, & put on her beautiful garments;--fair as the moon, clear as the sun & terrible as an army with banners, she will move in the greatness of her strength, overcoming all opposition, and spreading light life & blessedness, in all her

progress. The gleaminess and thick darkness which now envelops the Pagan world, will disappear, and a mild radiance will be shed forth from the Sun of Righteousness, diffusing health & purity, & peace. That light begins now to dawn, which will shine brighter & brighter unto the perfect day. A deep interest for the souls of those who are now perishing, from lack of vision, is felt, wherever there are Christians. The church begins to arouse from her former supineness & to exert all her energies in disseminating the pure light of the Gospel. And who my friend, would not desire to be in some measure instrumental in this blessed work? Who, that is possessed of correct views, would not rather wear out his life, like Brainerd⁶⁴ in the service of the heathen, than to inherit the wealth of the East, or to be illustrious as Newton or Johnson in the regions of literature? O, it must be a most happy thing, for one having devoted all the faculties of his mind, all the powers of his nature to the service of his God, to meet in heaven with a throng of Hindoos or Africans, converted to God, through his instrumentality. How abundantly would such a meeting repay all the hardships or sufferings endured in the course of his work!—It seems to be a pleasant thought, that we are permitted to live at this period, when such exertions are used for the prosperity of the church;—and it seems still more pleasant to think that we may perhaps be employed in accomplishing the vast designs of God, in saving a portion of this ruined world. O let us be faithful in preparing ourselves for usefulness. Let us consider the responsibility under which we lie, & the judgment sent, at which we must hereafter meet. May the love of Christ constrain us to follow him through evil report & good report, to take a decided & consistent stand, on the part of the Saviour. Let us often think of one another in our addresses to him, who hears prayer, & may he ever watch over us for good & make us eminently useful in His service.

Concerning my situation at Cambridge,—it is much as I expected. There is but little religious feeling, & the temptations are peculiarly great. There are a few, however, who evidence that they love the Lord Jesus in all sincerity, & who are active in his service. There is a meeting in one of the recitation rooms weekly, & a private meeting also on Sabbath evenings.—~~and~~ person needs a great deal of graces to enable him to conduct with propriety in this place. I trust that we may have your prayers, that God would pour out his spirit here, & make it a source of much good to the church.

⁶⁴ David Brainerd, 1718-47, Calvinist missionary in Connecticut.

I should be very much pleased to receive letters from you, & to carry on a correspondence--I should like to have you write a plan of the course of studies, which you pursue this year. Have you become acquainted with Cannon, a Junior? I have heard him recommended as a very pious man, & have a partial acquaintance with him myself. Please to remember me to Cook, & all my acquaintances at the College.⁶⁵

There was more of the same in July, with the slight variation that Ripley's admiration of Professor Everett made him think, for the moment, that the pursuit of learning was legitimate.

Cambridge, Harv. University July 16 1820

My Dear Friend:

You will begin to think, I fear, that I am quite an unfaithful correspondent, or that my affection for my friends is obliterated by separation and absence. Whatever reasons I may have given, by my seeming neglect, to the justice of these charges, I trust, you will impute to me no unworthy motives, but recollecting the numerous duties which devolve upon any one in College, you will from this source desire an excuse for the delinquencies of your friend.--I long to be favoured, with an interview with you, and to enjoy again some of those delightful conversations, in which, with hearts animated by a Saviour's love, we often engaged. I desire to ask, what is the condition of my friend? Is his soul devoted to the service of God, and does he enjoy sweet and high communion with him? Is he making those acquirements, which shall qualify him for a faithful, learned, and eminently holy ambassador of Christ? In an hours conversation of this kind, methinks even my cold and inanimate heart would be elevated with joy. The communion of saints, is one of those high blessings, which a merciful God vouchsafes to his penitent followers and children, with which he enlivens the dreary gloom of this wilderness world,--which appear as green and fertile spots, upon which the eye delights to dwell, and the mind loves to linger, where [sic] all around is dark, and barren and cheerless. Were it not for the precious boon of heaven, how much less of happiness, would be associated with a religious life. Let us then ardently cultivate this sacred gift, and endeavour to acquire those common principles of love to God, which shall enable us to participate in the communion, which exists among the saints.--I think it of the highest importance, and you doubtless concur with me, that we should preserve our spirituality and active piety, even amid the temptations of a College life.

⁶⁵ George Ripley to Sylvester Clapp, Nov. 13, 1819. A.L.S. in the possession of Lisette Riggs.

It seems difficult to our irresolute and wavering minds to stem the torrent of impiety and open neglect of God, which abounds as well as the coldness of professing Christians, and the unfaithfulness and inactivity of the visible children of God. But the grace of God is sufficient. He preserved Joseph & Daniel & the servant of Cesars [sic] household, pure, in the midst of moral contagion. He upheld Brinerd & Buchanan and our own Mills, and many others whom you will recollect, in circumstances as difficult & trying as our own. And has the faithfulness and covenant love of God, been thus signally displayed in their support & preservation? and shall we distrust it? Oh, No, putting our trust in the living God, let us go forward firm and immoveable, [sic] overcoming all our spiritual enemies.-- The struggle between sin and holiness, in our own hearts will soon be over. The grand controversy will speedily be decided. Our souls will, ere long, receive [sic] their final sentence. Let this thought animate us to live as for eternity, not following the maxims & principles of a vain and ensnaring world, but imitating the example of Christ. Let us be firm and steadfast, and may we meet in that world, where sin is unknown, where holiness is triumphant, where we shall see God face to face, and be forever with the Lord.----

You, inquire concerning our studies. I reply, that the course of instruction and study is continually fluctuating,-- new authors and new branches are often introduced,--but as far as I can ascertain the studies of the two first years are as follows.

Freshmen Year

Coll. Græca Majora
Livy, 5 first books
Horace, Expurgated
H. Grotius de Ver. Rel. Chris.
Excerpta Latina
Legendres Geometry
Lacroix [sic] Algebra
Lowth, English Grammar [sic]
Walkers [sic] Rhetorical D.
Roman Antiquities

Sophomore Year

Majora & Excerpta Finished
Algebra & Geometry Finished
Cicero de Oratore [sic]
Tacitus
Homers [sic] Iliad
Lacroix's Trigonometry
Application of Algebra
Geometry
Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric
Hedges [sic] Logic
Locke on the Human Understanding
Tylers [sic] Elements of History

The system of education in our country is fast increasing, & it is hoped America may produce scholars, who can vie with those of Europe. Mr. Everett, of our University, is exerting an important

influence in improving the literature of the nation. He is a scholar, "a good & ripe one," of almost unbounded erudition. To talents of the most brilliant and imposing cast, he unites intense application & indefatigable industry.

Remember me to my acquaintance at Williamstown, and please to write me as soon as convenient. ⁶⁶

As one may suspect, Ripley had difficulty with his classmates. By the beginning of the sophomore year, he had, with unerring accuracy, made himself one of the fifteen most unpopular men in his class. The immediate cause was one of the student upheavals which were so common in the twenties. After expressing discontent with the government in a variety of ways, the students circulated, one disastrous Sunday in November, 1820, an agreement to leave town. George and a small group of students refused to sign. The annoyance of their fellows made itself known immediately. The non-signers were known as the Blacklist, and put under interdict.

By spring of 1821, George's cause for woe had increased. The insurgent group possessed artists and poets, who went to work with a zeal they never had felt before, and might never feel again. On February ninth, ⁶⁷ the prowess of the artists was plain to behold; the bulletin boards blossomed with caricatures of the Blacklist. One month later, the poets gave evidence of their Muse, and distributed copies of a masterpiece called The Black List Convention. This broadside reviewed the names of the Blacklist, and paid a tribute to each. The last verse had personal interest for George:

66 George Ripley to Sylvester Clapp, July 16, 1820. A.L.S. in the possession of Lisette Riggs

67 Class of 1823.

Then R*ply the pious, as fickle as wind,
 For nine times an hour he changes his mind;
 With pick-nosed W**d, who likewise did appear,
 And W*i*t the old hard head, who brought up the rear.⁶⁸

How George felt about it all is shown in a letter to his mother, two months after the poem burst on the delighted public.

Harvard University, Cambridge, May 15.

My dear Mother,—...We have been subjected to many temporary inconveniences for our attachment to what we consider our duty, and what our own interest and the interests of the college demanded. But good has been eduved from evil. The division has been so deeply rooted, and animosities are so malignant and inveterate, as effectually to prevent much of the social intercourse for which, when Freshmen, we were particularly distinguished. The competition for scholarship has been zealous and energetic, and each party jealous of the other strives to win the prize.

It has been reported by our enemies that the only object of those who opposed the rebellion was to secure the favor of the government, and thereby obtain higher college honors. Now it happens that most of our number are good scholars, and they have endeavored to prove, and have probably succeeded, that if they do receive high honors it will be due to their literary merit, and not to their conduct in this affair. Mr. Dorr, of whom you have heard me speak, is one of the most efficient and worthy members of our party, and is considered by the class as decidedly the first scholar. He, indeed, possesses a powerful mind, and has every faculty of appearing to the best advantage. The tutors say he is the best scholar of his age they ever knew. He will probably spend some years in Germany after he leaves Cambridge, and if his health is spared return one of the most eminent of our literary men. I am happy to consider this man my friend, for the excellences of his heart are not surpassed by the strength of his genius. I look forward with pleasure, though not unmingled with regret, to the close of the first half of my college life. I never expect to be in a state where I can have superior means of improvement and happiness; but the minds of young men, inexperienced and ardent, long for emancipation from the restraints of college and power, to take a more active and more conspicuous part in the great theatre of life. Be it my lot to retire to some peaceful village, where, "the world forgetting, and by the world forgot," I may pass the remainder of my days in study and labor. I love sometimes to

⁶⁸ Black List Convention (Cambridge, March 15, 1821), in Harvard University Archives.

anticipate such a station as this. Where the Lord will appoint the bounds of my habitation I cannot see. My duty, however, at present is plain: diligently to improve the advantages I enjoy, aspire after high intellectual and moral and religious excellence, and do what I can for the good of those around me.⁶⁹

Sylvester Clapp was also regaled with something about the godlessness of Harvard. Through zeal, or wretchedness, or both, George's mind turned again to the missionary field, this time to the Sandwich Islands.

Harvard University June 17 1821

Again, my Dear Friend, has my heart been gladdened by the reception of your affectionate letter, and animated by the consideration, that those with whom I was once peculiarly intimate, have not forgotten me, and, still more, have not forgotten those feelings and sentiments, which constituted the bond of union between us. It is very grateful to hear from Christian friends to learn their prosperity and their advancement in their spiritual course. We feel ourselves invigorated by their example, to press onward, with high and holy resolution, towards the mark placed before us.

I desire very much to see you, and have a good conversation on the various scenes, we have been through, since last together. We should probably find some alteration in each other's views on particular subjects,--but on that which most intimately concerns us, I trust, we could have the same congenial intercourse as before. We should take pleasure in recounting the goodness of our Heavenly Father, amid all the trials and sorrows, that we have met with, and the love of that Saviour, who has hitherto kept our feet from falling.

Your account of the state of religion in your college is to be sure, not the most encouraging,--but I trust, amid the general apathy, some individuals keep alive the flame of vital piety and live near to God. But of this place what shall I say? "No trump of jubilee, announces the resurrection of lifeless souls." Little is said on the subject of religion; Those, who are truly pious, think they do well, if they themselves are preserved, without attempting to influence their companions to turn unto the ways of God.

69 Life, pp. 9-10, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, May 15 [1821].

Of those who come here engaged in the service of God, but few complete their course, without injury. I suppose this is partially the case in every college, but it appears particularly true with regard to this. While all the world is awake around us, while sinners are pressing into the kingdom of God, we are immersed in spiritual sloth.

What are our feelings, when we hear such intelligence as that from the Sandwich Islands? Are not these the times spoken of in the prophets, when the isles shall wait for the law of Jehovah? The most inveterate opposers of missions, must it appears to me, be silenced by these facts. God evidently condescends to bless them, and what is man, that he should oppose the decrees of his Maker.—The prospect to us, is most encouraging. How wide the field for usefulness,—how numerous the calls for exercises of Christian benevolence. The dignity and responsibility of the profession for which we are preparing, is much enhanced by the peculiar state of the world & of the church. O, let us now improve the privileges, which we enjoy. Let us add to ardent and unfeigned piety, excellence of character as men, and deep and solid attainments in learning. Above all, let us be sensible of our own unworthiness, and trust alone in that Almighty grace, which can keep us from falling.

I should like to be informed concerning your studies. Do you find them interesting and profitable and do they allow you much time for general reading? What is the character of the composition, and what is esteemed the standard of scholarship peculiarly, mathematicks or metaphysicks?

Perhaps you will not hear from me again before vacation. I therefore take the opportunity to express the pleasure it would give me to meet you at Greenfield.—I do not know but I mentioned in my last letter, but as I have forgotten, I here repeat the request that you would remember me to Mr. Cannon of the Senior Class, and inform him that I directed a letter to him last winter at Northampton, but have received no answer. ⁷⁰

Instead of the Sandwich Islands, George went to Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in the winter vacation of 1822-3, to teach school. Fitchburg was not one of the early settlements in Massachusetts. If Greenfield had been remote and unsophisticated, Fitchburg was primitive and lonely. George, after a pleasant Thanksgiving in Concord, proceeded to Fitchburg,

70 George Ripley to Sylvester Clapp, June 17, 1821, A.L.S. in the possession of Lisette Riggs.

which is in the northern part of Worcester County, on the edge of the lowland just east of the high central region of Massachusetts. In spite of the primitive character of the community, he seems to have enjoyed himself mixing in the society which the place had to offer, wearing old clothes, and talking about cattle. His school gave a sufficient outlet to his desire to do some moral enlightening. The people with whom he was thrown seem to have taken more kindly to him than did the class of 1823, at Harvard. He sent home a report of his doings in a letter which was considerably more human than its predecessors.

Fitchburg, December 14, 1822

My dear Mother,--It is now a week since I became an inmate in the family of a good, honest, homespun farmer, and assumed the highly important and respectable office of instructing some forty overgrown, dirty, mischief-loving boys in the niceties of the spelling-book and Adams's arithmetic. I have deferred writing until this time for several reasons. I had not become acquainted with the regulations of the mail, etc. I live at some distance from anybody but my "parishioners," who are not of that class who form the Corinthian columns of society; and above all, I find that head and hands and eyes and tongue have their full quota of employment in superintending the economy of my little empire. This is Saturday afternoon, equally grateful, I presume, to the scholars and to "the master," as I am universally called. My situation, although one in which I shall be but a short time, I suppose you wish to be acquainted with. I cannot, however, give you a precise idea of it. It is a school on the outskirts of this town, where nature appears in all its loneliness, and wildness, if not magnificence and loveliness. And it is, upon the whole, a very pleasant school. The scholars have been under good instruction, and are singularly attentive to their studies. I have six or seven great boys, much larger than myself, who study surveying, chemistry, philosophy, etc., so that there is some scope for the exercise of the intellect. Most of them are studying grammar, geography, and arithmetic. I am determined to exert myself and keep a good school. I can certainly, I think, make myself useful here. There is no particular society in my district, but in the middle of the town, two miles off, there are some families whom I shall visit occasionally with pleasure. I could give you a most curious account

of the customs, etc., but it might not be exactly prudent. Suffice to say, I see human nature under forms that I had scarcely dreamed of; still, I get information from it, and there is no knowledge but what is valuable. Three years ago I should have been miserably homesick at such a place, but I have learned to shape myself to circumstances. I conform entirely to the manners of the people, and drink cider and tell stories about cattle with as much grace as ever I figured among the literati at Cambridge. You would hardly know me, with a long beard and dirty shirt, and the worst clothes I can find. So much for Fitchburg. I spent Thanksgiving at Concord, and had a good time.⁷¹

The class of 1823 marked its refractory course with one final upheaval, of such proportions that the authorities, as belligerent as the students, expelled a number of them and suspended others. Some of their friends left out of sympathy for those who had been expelled. George trembled in his boots for fear that the whole class would be ordered out of Cambridge. Never enthusiastic about Greenfield, he had no desire to return there under a cloud. He dashed off two quaking notes home, to prepare them for the worst.

May 2, Friday Evening

My Dear Mother,—...Five of our class were expelled to-day, Robinson among them. The class—that is to say, of course, all but the friends of order—are in a state of infuriated excitement and rebellion. What will take place tomorrow I will not venture to predict. It will not surprise me if all the classes are cut down to those who have uniformly proved themselves the supporters of good discipline. It may be that the whole of us will be ordered to leave Cambridge; in that case, I shall of course come home. If not, in the present exigency it will be impossible to quit. In haste yours,⁷²

May 3, 1823

My dear Mother,—in consequence of the expulsion of four who were distinguished in the attack, the class, or a considerable

71 Life, pp. 14-16, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, Dec. 14, 1822.

72 Ibid., p. 16, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, May 2, [1823].

portion rather, rebelled, and they are all gone. Those who remain are the sober men of both parties. As regards myself, I am so fortunate as to have escaped any censure from the government of the class. True to my old principles, of course, I did not join the mob, and have endeavored to keep myself quiet...⁷³

What the class thought of him for not joining the mob was made very clear in the reappearance of the poem, The Blacklist Convention. In the 1823 edition, George had the same attributes, the same place in the poem, and the same place in the hearts of Harvard men.⁷⁴

73) Ibid., pp.16-17, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, May 3, 1823.

74) Black List Convention, Second edition (Cambridge, April 27, 1823), in Harvard University Archives.

CHAPTER VI.

MENTAL DIRECTIONS

From the records which we have, George's usings concerned themselves almost exclusively with his studies, or with his religion. Politics seem to have made no impression. That subject of almost universal undergraduate interest, the ladies, seems to have occupied him very little. A few entries in his commonplace book are devoted to women. One deals with their education; he takes exception to the views of Adam Smith which were that feminine education was, and should be, aimed exclusively at improving the natural charms; at increasing reserve, modesty, chastity, and economy. Another entry speaks of their refining influence on social gatherings. This item, in view of his later career as a member of the Transcendental group, holds particular interest.

"I must confess," says Hume, and I thoroughly agree with him, in this opinion, "that my own particular choice leads me to prefer the company of a few select companions, with whom I can calmly & peaceably enjoy the feast of reason & try the justness of every reflection, that may occur to me.

But as such delightful society is not every day to be met with, I must think, that mixt companies without the fair sex, are the most insipid entertainment in the world, & destitute of gaiety & politeness, as much as of sense & reason. Nothing can keep them from excessive dulness, but hard drinking:--a remedy worse than the disease."⁷⁵

There is also a poem of Professor Frisbie's, which offers horrid insight into George's literary taste which never freed itself from a yearning after the sentimental. In George's extenuation be it said that he admired Professor Frisbie, and the droopy little lyric was a memento of the departed Professor of Moral Philosophy. The elegant sentiment is that women are like flowers. The entry, undated, may very well have been written down at the Divinity School, where George's mental tension seems to have relaxed a little, and not Harvard. It is one of the few poems which George bothered to copy.

And was this simple flower designed
The emblem of thy modest mind
And couldst thou then content forego
Each blushing tint of Iris' bow?
Couldst thou be past without a sigh
Mid gayer flowers unnoticed by?
Nor wish to fix the admiring eyes [probably miscopied for gaze]
Nor feel the warming breath of praise,
And were humility and truth
The fragrance of thy opening youth?
.....
Alas! thou wast indeed a flower
Born for one little friendship's hour
And scarce that summer half was past
E'er thou wast withered by the blast.
And shalt thou always thus remain
And never, never, bud again?
Ah! no, too delicate to bear
The chilliness of mortal air
'Twas kindest hand that took thee hence
Far from the world's rude influence....⁷⁶

There were thirty-two lines in all.

75 George Ripley, MS., Commonplace Book, p. 11, in Harvard University Library, between 1822 and 1825.

76 Ibid., p. 12. Copied by George Ripley from MS. belonging to Professor Frisbie's widow.

George's taste in literature, in the rare, lighter moments, was sentimental. But the lighter moments were few. In general, George's reading was pious, useful, and abstract. The first two qualities, usually synonymous, were in no way peculiar requirements for a person of the time. The bias of American culture was tremendously religious and tremendously utilitarian. Up to 1850 there were frequent blasts against the reading of novels, which enfeebled the mental powers, created undue mental excitement, wasted the time, etc. ⁷⁷ Anything as frivolous as fiction could only be redeemed by a roaring good moral.

The Quakers put out conversion stories by the dozens, showing the central figure balancing on the edge of the pit. The Sunday Schools retailed the triumph of the virtuous youth or maiden to hundreds of readers. There existed a stern distrust of unproductive activity, i.e., art. The reasons for this distrust were grounded in religious history. The New Englanders were the descendants of those English Puritans who placed thrift among the supernatural virtues, next to Faith. The English Puritans had seen nobility squander fortunes in riotous living, and by almost asceticism, preserved theirs. No wasting, no laziness, no display. By long inheritance, it happened that time and effort were considered in a class with money, and not to be spent lightly. If without money one was no success in this world, without spiritual money one was of no account in the next. The children of the early settlers determined to be of account not only here, but hereafter. They attended multitudinous services, listened to sermons, read others, busied themselves about godly occupa-

⁷⁷ As a sample of the thinking of the time, Rev. William Ellery Channing, D.D., delivering the charge at the ordination of John Sullivan Dwight, in 1934, cautioned the young minister against wasting his time in the reading of novels. George Hapley took part in the ordination.

tions, and, surely, hourly, the golden coin was scored by the angel to their account. Young George, worried about liking books, and seeking a firm basis to rest the liking on, was only in the throes of ancestral recollections of the sinfulness of idleness. The tension was extreme for the student, but the times were tense and serious. The answer to his freshman scruples about the frivolity of all study he found in his readings in the English Renaissance, whose scholars dedicated their studies to the glory of God and the improvement of mankind.⁷⁸

An interesting clue to the formation of George's method of study is shown in his commonplace book. He quotes Gilpin on Cranmer's thoroughness.

"His method of study was calculated for improvement rather than for ostentation. He read few books, but made himself a thorough master of those he did read. A general scholar he thought another name for a superficial one."⁷⁹

Even in his old age, George carefully analyzed the books he read. He differed from Cranmer, however, in that he consumed almost as many books as a dog, bones. Both intensive and extensive reading were habits of his college years.

Religion was George's most serious worry in college. In the division in the Ripley family, George sided with his mother and the Calvinists. His relationship with Sarah Ripley seems to have been more informal than with Jerome, whom he addressed in letters of uncomfortable jocosity, or unmitigated cant. The pious woman seems to have instilled into her young-

78) Commonplace Book, p.3. 1822. p.24. Between 1823 and 1825.

79) Commonplace Book, p.4. 1822.

est a thorough orthodoxy, which was certainly not comfortable in Cambridge. With some foreboding, George had urged his father to send him to Yale instead of Harvard. The talk about temptations, which left Jerome colder than a trout, becomes clear when one remembers that Yale was known to be orthodox, and Harvard the citadel of the heresy of Socinianism, as the Calvinists were wont to call Unitarianism. George, arriving at Harvard, with all his traditional views, and his intense love of these views, stumbled into as hostile an atmosphere as it was possible to find. President Kirkland was Unitarian, and Professor Ware, and Professor Everett. Andrews Norton made the new faith synonymous with sanity, and the magnetic Dr. Channing, in the gentlest way possible, with his glowing sermons, cut the throat of George's favorite doctrines. On this tide of the new faith, George struggled, gasped, submerged, drowned. Of the severity of his struggles, which were not over until his first year of Divinity School, some idea is given in an eye-glazing letter to Sylvester Clapp during the Christmas vacation of his sophomore year.

Greenfield, Jan. 9, 1821

My dear Friend

Having a comfortable seat before my paternal fire side, & unoccupied by college avocations, I attempt, with pleasure to embody a few of my thoughts and feelings, in answer to your very excellent letter, received the close of last term. I did hope, that I should have an opportunity of seeing you, this vacation, but I understand you are so much enamoured of Williams-town, that you take up your abode there, in defiance of the monarch of frosts and snows, who holds his court in awful state & tremendous majesty, on your cloud-capt mountains. I wish you much success in your perilous enterprise, and that you may escape the attacks of this overwhelming conqueror.

The almost unpardonable omission of which you were guilty, when in Greenfield, I am tempted to treasure up against you but

upon better thoughts, according to your sincere acknowledgment, I truly absolve you. --But to be serious, my dear Friend, I very much regret, that you should not have honoured me with a visit, when you were so near, and fervently hope that a similar event will not take place. Though we are separated, by local divisions, let us never forget the pleasant seasons we have spent together, and often let us in spirit meet around the mercy-seat, and implore those blessings from a compassionate God, which we so much need. We are now in that stage of our education, in which we make the most perceptible progress, and our characters daily receiving new accessions, our minds expanding and our views acquiring strength and consistency. How important, is it, that we now take the right direction, and establish and mature those characters, which shall render us happy & respectable in life and above all useful to a world lying in wickedness. The trite remarks, which we often hear concerning the temptations of college life, are, in my opinion, indisputably correct. Indeed they are of a different nature, from what common people apprehend, but they are peculiarly powerful and often destructive of the integrity and peace of individuals. The religious student is particularly exposed to the loss of his most precious interests by contracting a spirit of worldliness and neglect of God. The pleasures of literary effort and intellectual research are singularly fascinating, and without an uncommon degree of vigorous faith and energetick piety, they will fasten themselves so strongly upon our feelings and affections, as to leave us but little interest in the solemn, the overwhelming concerns of our souls.

It is difficult to define the exact bounds of duty, respecting the degree of attention, we should devote to literary pursuits. It is evident, they should not come in competition with supreme devotedness to the cause of Christ, and should be made subsidiary to the interests of religion. To abide by this rule, some think an ardent attachment to letters, must be renounced. We must be content, say they, with mediocrity in the path of learning & seek for high attainments in spiritual excellence. But, are both of these impracticable? Cannot eminent advances in Christian holiness be made consistent with intellectual superiority and literary excellence? I believe they can, -- and further, I believe it is a duty incumbent on all who have their eye fixed on the sacred ministry to be indefatigable in the pursuit of knowledge & seek for high elevation in learning and the utmost improvement their mental powers are capable of, -- & then bring these acquisitions and resources to the foot of the Cross and consecrate them to the service of the Adorable Redeemer.

Let literature be wrested from the hands of the sacrilegious [sic] & profane and devoted to the service of Christ and the

church. This is not visionary and romantick—the most ardent & humble piety is consistent with the highest intellectual culture and the most extensive and varied erudition.

"Piety has found friends, in the friends of science

"And true prayer has flow'd from lips wet with

"Castalian dews."—

It is an unspeakable privilege, that the Most High condescends to employ the feeble instrumentality of man, in the execution of his vast designs. By the little enginery, which we can put in motion, affects[sic] are produced, important as the human soul, and lasting as eternity. Will not this thought stimulate us to persevering efforts, in that cause for which the Divine Redeemer left the bosom of the Father and bled & died? There is something very elevating and solemn in the idea, that we can become cooperators, with the infinite God. And shall we, my friend, when the whole Christian world is awaking to vigorous and harmonious exertion, decline to enlist in the high and holy cause? Let us imitate the example of those high-minded and generous men, who counted no sacrifices too painful, no exertions too arduous, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.—The standard of Christian character begins to be better understood. A cold, lifeless, supine course of conduct, is deemed abhorrent to the genius and spirit of the Gospel. Activity and zeal are required by all men of all parties. Even the frigid philosophy of Socinianism, is putting forth her energies and with determined purpose and intense resolutions, undertakes to destroy the belief of the grand doctrines of our faith and introduce a system of proud morality, falsely called enlightened & liberal Christianity. Many are ensnared by their specious arguments, and with misguided fervour, are labouring for the overthrow of all that we deem evangelical and essential in Christian doctrine.—O, for a spirit of prayer and supplication that the Lord will disappoint the devices of the crafty, and support the interests of truth in our fallen world.

I wish you to write particularly, concerning the prospects of religion in your college. What is done for the missionary cause, & is there is missionary spirit glowing in the breasts of the brethren? Is the standard of vital piety elevated, & have you many preparing for the ministry?

Shall I not hear from you this vacation? A long letter from my friend, will be particularly grateful.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ George Ripley to Sylvester Clapp, Jan. 9, 1821. A.L.S. in the possession of Lisette Riggs.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

In september, 1823, George entered the Cambridge Divinity School in spite of a strong desire to go to Andover instead. The records of his three years as a Divinity student are meagre and unexceptional.

He boarded in Cambridge.⁸¹ His name appears on the list of beneficiaries of the Divinity School, as having received \$130 between the beginning of 1824 and August, 1825.⁸² He attended various Unitarian ordinations, among them, that of Ezra Cusnetz, as Dr. Channing's colleague pastor at the Federal Street Church, Alexander Young's at the New South, and Charles Wentworth Upham's, in Salem. While in the Divinity School, he taught mathematics and natural philosophy as tutor in⁸³ Harvard College. He preached a first, undated sermon before the

81) Life, p.21. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, September 30, 1823.

82) Theological School Schedule, List of Beneficiaries 1824-30, in the Harvard University Archives.

83) George Ripley, MS. sketch of his own life, in the Massachusetts Historical Society. This society will hereafter be referred to as M.H.S.

Divinity School; it proved not to be a success.⁸⁴ At the public exercises of the school on August 18, 1835, he delivered an address on "The Doctrines taught in St. Paul's Discourse at Athens," and at the annual examination of the Divinity School the next year, another on "Pulpit Eloquence." His studies included Greek, Hebrew, Biblical Criticism, Polemics, Metaphysics.⁸⁵ He attended parties in Cambridge, and came back from them to work far into the night on his lessons. He preached at Chauncey Place, and his sermons were successful enough for him to be invited to renew his engagement; at the same time he received an invitation to preach in Baltimore.⁸⁶ Instead of accepting either of these invitations, he accepted a call to the brand new Purchase Street Church in Boston, after having preached there for the four Sundays immediately following the dedication. He attended various social occasions in Cambridge, and returned to cool his brain with his studies for various classes. On May 2, 1826, his engagement was announced to Sophia Willard Dana, daughter of Francis Dana, of Cambridge.⁸⁷ On August 22, 1827, the two were married by Rev. Dr. Holmes, of Cambridge.⁸⁸

Besides the little library which he had begun to accumulate, and the books of his friends to which he had access, George still continued to draw from Harvard. The charge books for his Divinity School years

⁸⁴ Life, p. 24. George Ripley, a letter of which the date and addressee are not given.

⁸⁵ Life, p. 24. George Ripley to "Molly."

⁸⁶ Life, pp. 35-36. George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, August 25, 1836

⁸⁷ Life, pp. 35-36. George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, May 3, 1826.

⁸⁸ The Christian Register, VI, p. 126, August 24, 1827.

record his taking out, in his first year, 1823-4, Barlow's Mathematical Dictionary; Simpson's Fluxions; Gorham's Chemistry; The Monthly Review; The Edinburgh Review; a Latin edition of the works of Aristotle; Schiller's Works; Costard's Astronomy; Vince's Astronomy; works of Demosthenes and Aeschines; the Journal of the Royal Institution; Memoires of Sully, of Voltaire, of Louis XIV; Forbes' Life of Beattie; a volume of Shakespeare; Todd's Milton; Steward's Philosophical Essays; Diogenes Laertius; Stobaeus. Bouterwek's Geschichte;⁸⁹ works of Euripides and Xenophon; a Latin edition of Plato's Dialogues; Darwin's Zoonomia; Beddoe's Hygeia; Everett's Defence; North American Review; Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History; Hume's England; Robertson's Scotland; Benson's First Plantings; Marsh's Michaelis; Percy's Reliques; Milton's Poetical Works; Priestley's Church History; Middleton's Free Enquiry; Burnett's Pastoral Care; Tucker's Light of Nature; Carpenter's Reply; Beekman's Inventions; Potter's Grecian Antiquities; Ditkin's Statistics; Don Quixote; Hutton's Mathematics; Legendre's Theorie des Nombres; Milton's Prose Works; Hollis' Life, a work of Shakespeare; The Edinburgh Review; The Quarterly Review; Newcome's View; Geddes' Prospectus; Cappe's Works; Ramsay's Philosophy; Hartley on Man; General Repository; Chandler's Sermons; Leland on Necessity of Divine Revelation; Reynolds' Works; Cary's Review of English Christianity; North American Review; Keal's Puritans; a Latin version of Athenaeus' Banquet of

89) Frederic Bouterwek, (1765-1828). The work of this German philosopher and man of letters, charged out September, 1824, was the first German title which is charged to Ripley. As it was taken out by C. Francis for Ripley, there is a possibility that Ripley did not use it himself. This possibility, however, seems slight, as if C. Francis is Convers Francis, he could undoubtedly have gotten it for himself. On the other hand, it is the only German title until Nov. 7, 1826, which was also taken out by C. Francis, the next being in Feb. 1827, also taken out by C. Francis.

the Sophists; Kant's Metaphysic, Munsche's Dogmen-Geschichte; Ficinus' translation of Plato's works; Jones' Greek Grammar; another by Smith; work of Metastasio; the works of Euripides, of Lucian, of Thucydides, of Homer; of Aristophanes. In addition to these he must certainly have bought some textbooks, not only for the courses which he took, but those which he taught.

CHAPTER VIII

RIPLEY SURRENDERS THE SWORD

Ripley arrived at the Divinity School under protest. His attachment to the older form of religion may explain his attempt to go to Andover, as second best to a German university, instead of Cambridge Divinity School. The reasons which he gave Jerome Ripley for his preference sound very much like his praises of Yale instead of Harvard. Now Andover was the citadel of the Calvinists, and Cambridge, of the Unitarians. In the first, his religious views, would be strengthened by all the knowledge which the gifted Professor Moses Stuart, antagonist of Professor Norton, could give. On graduation, he would automatically proceed into the orthodox ministry. On the other hand, at Cambridge, his puny sword of Calvinist argument would be knocked out of his hand by the experts, and probably be used to beat him over the head. On his graduation he would be unacceptable to an orthodox flock, and unless he commended himself to the Unitarians, stood a good chance of not graduating at all. Although the two sects were not rigidly severed by the foundation of the American Unitarian Association until 1825, and even thereafter had many

activities in common, Ripley could not but have been aware of the difference in his prospects his choice of a theological school would make. Possibly his views were also colored by the miserable time he had passed with the undergraduates at Harvard, although this consideration seems to have been not the dominant one, from the fact that he urged his father to let him spend a year in graduate study at Harvard before going to Andover. He wrote Jerome Ripley a long letter on the subject:

Harvard University, June, 1823

My dear Father,—As I have never had the opportunity of conversing particularly with you on the course proper for me to adopt on the termination of my connection with the college, I take the liberty of expressing my own views and of requesting your advice. If I were governed merely by the hope of success in life, and perhaps of some degree of eminence, I should by all means endeavor to perfect my education by an elaborate course of study, and a resolution to avoid all thoughts of engaging in the duties of a profession till after a laborious preparation of many years. This plan I am advised to adopt by some in whose judgment I should place high confidence. And were I possessed of a moderate fortune, I believe that inclination and duty would both prompt me to this enterprise, as laying the broadest foundation for future usefulness. The idea of a foreign university would perhaps appear visionary, and in my case I will confess it is entirely so. Still I cannot avoid all regret at beholding the superior advantages which are accessible to our fortunate young men, and wishing myself able to enjoy them. For I know that my peculiar habits of mind, imperfect as they are, strongly impel me to the path of active intellectual effort; and if I am to be at any time of any use to society, or a satisfaction to myself or my friends, it will be in the way of some retired literary situation, where a fondness for study and a knowledge of books will be more requisite than the busy, calculating mind of a man in the business part of the community. I do not mean to say by this that any profession is desired but the one to which I have been long looking. My wish is only to enter that profession with all the enlargement of mind and extent of information which the best institution can afford. In my present circumstances, I cannot reasonably hope for anything more than a sedulous effort to avail myself of what the literary resources we have can give. I wish to study my profession thoroughly. I do not feel prepared to enter upon these important inquiries before a more accurate acquaintance

is obtained with some subsidiary branches. For this purpose I wish to spend a year at Cambridge, in a course of study which I have prescribed for myself, unconnected with any department in the university. I should prefer to pursue my theological studies at Andover, both because I am convinced that the opportunities for close investigation of the Scriptures are superior there to those at Cambridge, and the spirit of the place, much relaxed from its former severe and gloomy bigotry, is more favorable to a tone of decided piety. This is my present opinion of Andover. I might, after more extensive acquaintance, have reason to alter it. The only objection attending this plan is the expense....⁹⁰

Apparently not even Andover's abandonment of gloom influenced Jerome Ripley, for in the autumn George found himself at Cambridge. Once at the Divinity School, he found himself liking it. He admired his professors, the studies were congenial, and his social contacts were vastly more pleasant than at the college. In addition to these pleasant associations he had come under the influence of Dr. Channing. The first mention of Dr. Channing was back in the undergraduate days, at the close of an intolerably platitudinous letter to Marianne, in 1821.⁹¹

By 1823, it seems that Dr. Channing had become a considerable influence. George sought consolation for not having gone abroad by reminding himself and his mother that Cambridge offered every facility for "real improvement", and that Dr. Channing had set it above Göttingen.

Cambridge, September 30, 1823

My dear Mother,—With pleasure I begin the labors of my new situation by informing you of my condition and prospects; and I know that you will rejoice with me in the goodness of Providence which has appointed the bounds of my habitation where I have every facility for real improvement.

90] Life, pp.17-18. George Ripley to Jerome Ripley, June, 1823.

91] Life, pp.11-13, George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, April 6, 1821.

The prospects of our Theological School are so good, and the call in society for a faithful and devoted clergy, who combine liberal views with deep piety, is daily becoming so urgent, that I cannot regret having chosen this place as the scene of my theological investigations. Indeed, it is thought by many competent judges, and among them Mr. Channing, that this institution presents advantages for forming useful, practical clergymen not inferior to the foreign universities. He advises William Emerson⁹² to study at Cambridge rather than at Göttingen, believing that though Germany affords the greatest advantages as far as mere literature is concerned, yet that the best education for a minister in New England, taking into account the moral influence and religious feeling, can be obtained at Cambridge...I am remarkably pleasantly situated, and have everything to my mind. My room is in a brick house,—the south end,—the very last house on the right hand side of the street in which the printing office is. I hope that father will have no difficulty in finding it. It is on the lower floor, about as large as our front room, with two recesses in it; these I have divided off by a curtain from the main room, so as to form closets. I have all Mr. Lincoln's books at my disposal, which, together with the few that I own myself, form a very pretty little library. I feel perfectly satisfied that I have acted according to the will of Providence, as far as I can ascertain it, in uniting myself to this school, and that so far from departing from my religious principles, as some would suppose, I have done that which will tend to their improvement and perfection. I could say much on the emotions which are awakened on commencing those studies to which I have long been looking with fond anxiety and earnest hope. I feel that it is solemn indeed to take any step towards an office involving such responsibility, such infinite consequences. But God will use such instruments as He chooses to promote his truth in the world....⁹³

Around Channing, George grouped other Unitarian ministers, and the faculty of the Divinity School, in a saintly constellation. Their obvious sincerity and their deeply religious feelings more than counterbalanced any mental reservations he had on the subject of their

92! Brother of Ralph Waldo Emerson

93 Life, pp.20-21. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, Sept. 30, 1823. The mention of liberal views is of particular interest in comparison to his letter of Jan. 8, 1821, to Sylvester Clapp, denouncing the "system of proud morality, falsely called enlightened and liberal Christianity." George was undergoing sea-change.

dogmatic views. He mentioned the Divinity School faculty in a letter to his mother.

Cambridge, October 14, 1823.

My dear Mother,--....I am on very different grounds from what I was when an under-graduate. Then I was led on by others; now I am left to my own keeping, and you may judge the weight of responsibility which I must feel. We have exercises in the Hebrew language three times a week, and once a week we present the results of our theological reading and investigations on topics pointed out to us by Dr. Ware. I am besides diligently engaged in Greek and other subsidiary studies; so that my time is more completely and regularly occupied than ever. I hope to make all these attainments subservient to the great cause of truth. I am much disappointed in what I have learned of the religious character of the school, I confess. I had some prejudices against many of its members, who, destitute of the austerity, I had thought to be deficient in the spirit, or religion. But if a more intimate acquaintance has enabled me to judge rightly, the depth and purity of their religious feeling and the holy simplicity of their lives is enough to humble and shame those who have been long professors of Christianity, and had pretended to superior sanctity. We meet morning and evening for devotional exercises, and I have no hesitation in saying that if I have ever witnessed the display of spirituality and seriousness of devotion it is in these little meetings....⁹⁴

In July, 1824, he attended the ordination of Ezra Stiles Gannett as colleague pastor at the Federal Street Church. Dr. Channing delivered the sermon on that occasion, and George's hero worship expressed itself in terms which seem almost ridiculous in their extravagance.

Cambridge, July 18, 1824.

My dear Sister,--....I wish I could give you an idea of the solemnities at Mr. Gannett's ordination, but a description on paper would be so flat and inadequate that I will not attempt it. It was a day of great joy for those who wish to see fervent piety connected with sound doctrine and liberal feelings.⁹⁵ I would, but I cannot, enable you to form a con-

⁹⁴ Life, pp. 22-23. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, Sept. 30, 1823.

⁹⁵ The emphasis on liberalism is a development since his entry at the Divinity School.

ception of the infantine simplicity and apostolic meekness, united with the eloquence of an angel and the spirituality of a sainted mind, which characterize Dr. Channing. His sermon will be printed....⁹⁶

Ripley did not meet Dr. Channing until both attended the ordination of Mr. Upham, in Salem, where Dr. Channing offered a prayer.⁹⁷ By that time, the Federal Street pastor was clearly set down in Ripley's private register of supermen.

Ripley's personal admiration for Channing, and for the other ministers with whom he was thrown in contact, was one of the several elements which contributed to the solution of his major problem, the choice between two forms of faith. Another factor was his instruction, all of which was aimed at preparing for the Unitarian clergy. There were conferences with his professors; no doubt, in some of the time which Ripley spent in Professor Norton's study, the older man performed the holy duty of sniping at George's cherished views. The list of required readings was selected by those who had no doubts that the Unitarian views were correct and all others to be exploded. The change in his religious opinions is shown in a letter of Jan. 26, 1824, to Elizabeth Ripley Brigham, his favorite sister.

Jan. 26, 1824.

My Dearest Sister,

I little thought when I saw you in the vacation, that I should have suffered so long a time to pass away, without writing even a line, but you know how frail are our strongest resolutions and how distant duties are put out of our sight, by the thronging visions that dazzle us; a constant routine of studying and writing on grave & abstract

96. Life, p. 28, George Ripley to "My dear Sister," July 18, 1824.

97. Ibid., pp. 29-31, George Ripley to Sarah-Franklin Ripley, Dec. 10, 1824.

subjects, has almost taken from me the power of making my thoughts flit about me readily, and has given me such a serious and stern cast of thinking, that I have hardly dared trust myself to write a letter, except on business, lest I should weary by my tediousness. I might, as I once thought was absolutely necessary, fill my paper, with the common-places of religion, but I hope we are both of us to [sic] well instructed in the great design of Christianity, to think we can add to its power over our hearts, by repeating day after day & year after year, the established remarks which we can any where [sic] peruse. But still, there is no other subject, as we used to say, comparatively worth an anxious thought,--& there, most certainly, is no other subject, in which we can so deeply & warmly feel together,--upon which our prevailing thoughts are common & our sympathies one. Yes, Dear Betsey, I feel there is nothing to which my heart turns so readily or clings so fervently as the hallowed associations, which are connected with this subject,--nothing, on which, to my dear Sister, I could talk so freely, or feel so sensibly. You know how long and gradually my mind has been turning to what I deem more pure and correct sentiment concerning our common faith,--and you know me too well to believe, that I could hastily tear away those prejudices, which were twined around my very soul. Though you have "fallen on evil days and evil tongues," where the busy spirit of misrepresentation & detraction has been unceasing to blast the character of that class of Christians, with whom I am connected, I know you are not under its pernicious influence, and would still retain feelings of brotherly love, towards those whom you, probably, regard as erroneous, but sincere. It behoves you to be careful, though, what opinions you express of any, whether of approbation or censure. I look back, with deep regret, to much of the conversation of what I deem my days of mistaken zeal for religion, and fear, that the cause of truth has been injured, by the expression of crude, hasty sentiments, concerning things, of which I was utterly ignorant.--I consider the present state of the church, as affording a trying discipline to all Christians. I sympathize most feelingly with many, who, begin to see how destitute of Scriptural foundation, are the views in which they have been educated & with which they identify the dearest hopes & the most sacred emotions, but still are fearful of opening their eyes to the light of truth,--lest in exposing the falsehood of their own System, it should dazzle & bewilder, and destroy their love for vital, experimental piety. But the experiment is going on, by which the Almighty will demonstrate to the nations, that truth and goodness are inseparably connected,--reason & religion go hand in hand & happiness will always & only follow in the train of virtue. I have said thus much on a delicate subject, because I have formerly written in a very different strain, and you might be surprised at the change.

But I would be above disguise or deception & candidly confess that I hold it no mark of weakness or guilt, for me to acknowledge that I think I have more correct ideas on the greatest subject, which can affect the human mind, than I had in the days of youthful excitement and fond prejudice.

I have heard with sorrow of the weak state of your health and the long confinement to which you have been subjected. I here the letter is [torn and patched] to regret or not the determination of your husband to remove to ... [here the letter is torn and patched] it will make a most unhappy chasm in the source of my enjoyment while at Gr. but if it is for your benefit I may not complain. Our happiness is more dependent on other circumstances by far, in my opinion, than on local situation. I shall not know how to give up dear little Kate, who is about half my life, when at home,--but I hope to visit you at Sh. if all things go on well, when I go again to Gr.--which by the way, to return to a subject, which has almost disgusted me, reminds me of somewhat in yr letter, which I don't know, you had any business to say. It was as much a matter of course for me to stay here this vac. as any time. Theological students, always stay, in the long vac. for the most part, & I always gave this idea, & why I should be expected to stop work & be idle for 7 wks, I cannot conjecture,--but enough & too much of this.⁹⁹

An undated letter to his mother shows how thoroughly he had absorbed the most liberal Unitarian sentiments:

Harvard University, Nov. 24th.

My dear Mother,--...I believe the more judicious we become, the less confidence we shall place in some appendage of religion, and the more charity we shall have for others, although

99 George Ripley to Elizabeth Ripley Brigham, Jan. 24, 1826. A. L. S. belonging to Mr. Charles L. Brigham of Blue Mounds, Wis., and deposited in the Wisconsin Historical Society. Hereafter the collection of Mr. Brigham in the Historical Society will be referred to as Br. W. H. S.

we may think widely different from them. In short, true religion is in the heart, & is not connected with any form or any language....¹⁰⁰

Ripley's religious change was complete. At some point between 1823 and 1825, he happily noted in his commonplace book Mosheim's views on the late date of the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁰¹ In May, 1825, he happily wrote his mother about the kindness of Providence, with which Jerome Ripley may have had something to do, in sending him to Cambridge.

100) Life, p.29. This letter is placed by Frothingham under the heading of Divinity School. Frothingham was not always accurate in the chronology of his undated letters. However, as he reproduced in the Life only that portion of the letter which is here quoted, the remaining portion may have determined the date. There is reason to suppose that it may belong to Ripley's undergraduate days, as it is the only letter from the Divinity School dated from Harvard University; all the others which are dated at all, say Cambridge. There is, of course, the possibility that Ripley was in Harvard at the time of the writing of the letter, either using the library, or in connection with his duties as tutor. The tone of the letter does not fit in with the tone of his letters to Sylvester Clapp in his freshman and sophomore years; if it belongs to his junior or senior years, it throws interesting light on the course of his conversion to Unitarianism. He would then be in the position of having come to Unitarianism by deciding that his orthodox dogmas, independently of whether or not they were correct, were of intrinsic unimportance. His letter of Jan. 26, 1824, to Elizabeth Brigham, suggests that he followed the reverse process; he viewed his former beliefs as incorrect and unscriptural before he considered them unimportant. The letter to Mrs. Brigham affords no clue by which to date the letter of Nov. 24th, as George tells her that she has been for some time aware of change in his religious processes, and also that he fears she will be surprised if he writes from the standpoint of his new beliefs.

101) Commonplace book, p. 57.

Cambridge, May 4, 1825.

My dear Mother,---...The prospects of professional success and usefulness appear brighter every day. There is an unexampled call from all parts of the country for our students, and a disposition manifested to hear what we consider more useful and practical, if not more able preaching than can elsewhere be obtained. For my own part, I am more and more grateful to a kind Providence which directed me to Cambridge, where I have learned those views of religion at once so attractive and lovely, so simple, scriptural, and reasonable,---affording such motives to holiness, such consolation in sorrow, such hope in death. I trust I am not becoming a partisan nor a bigot. I have suffered enough, and too much, in sustaining these characters, in earlier, more inexperienced, and more ignorant years; but I have no prospects of earthly happiness more inviting than that of preaching the truth, with the humble hope of being instrumental in impressing it on the mind with greater force, purity, and effect than I could do with any other than my present conviction. I feel bound to my profession,---so much so that you will not be surprised when I inform you that I deemed it right to decline the appointment of mathematical tutor, with an emolument of \$700, which was recently offered me. I presume and hope that none of my friends can regret what may appear at first as a pecuniary sacrifice, but what a broad view of the future clearly convinces me was necessary, and ultimately can be of no disadvantage.¹⁰²

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- 102) Life, pp.31-2, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, May 4, 1825. Ripley says that he declined the appointment, but a MS. autobiographical sketch, in M.H.S., in his own hand, and Frothingham in the Life, both state that while Ripley was at Divinity School he was tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy at the college. The appointment referred to in the letter of May 4, 1825 may have referred to some more permanent place on the faculty, or George may have thought better of his decision, and accepted the post. The latter supposition is the more likely, because in a letter of Dec. 6, 1825 (Life, p.32) to Marianne Ripley, he states, after describing how hard he works, "I am very glad that I accepted the office I am in, as it does not interfere with my professional views, and gives me the consciousness that, instead of being a burden to others, I am making myself useful, and instead of being dependant, I am earning my bread actually by the sweat of my brow, and it gives me the prospect, at the end of the year, of having laid up in this world's good a handsome store, for a boy." The office may very well be that referred to in the letter of May 4, 1825.

CHAPTER IX

STUDY AND SOCIETY

Besides forming views on religion, Ripley formed certain mental habits he never afterwards changed. One was a generous spirit of literary criticism. He jotted down,

There is a sore evil among some men of letters; it is one of the errors of literature; a captious and ungenerous spirit of criticism--a disposition to depreciate the merits of rival candidates for favor.¹⁰³

In his later career as a literary critic, he was nothing if not generous.

Another habit is traceable to Mr. Norton. On October 1, 1823, he wrote his mother that he was working hard instead of playing, and that "Green River Bridge has given way to Mr. Norton's study and the library."¹⁰⁴ The owner of the study imparted to Ripley some of his severe intellectual precepts. One of these was "to read great, original writers only,"¹⁰⁵ and not to bother with anything inferior or derived. This practice with Ripley was lifelong. Somebody's work explaining somebody else, was a type

103) Commonplace book, p. 57

104) Life, p. 22, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, Oct. 1, 1823.

105) Commonplace book, p. 56.

of literature in which he did not indulge; he went straight to the source.

Compared to his abject misery as an undergraduate harassed by the dislike of the class of 1823, Ripley's life at the Divinity School had some of the bliss of the communion of saints. To begin with, he was under less tension himself, and, having learned the difference between austerity and religious outlook, he must have been a great deal simpler to live with. In the Divinity School, "Ripley the pious" was no brand of ignominy. Piety was the order of the day among aspiring ministers. He was admitted to the social life of his colleagues. They joked, discussed the next president, the newspapers, the Greeks, and theories of the soul. He went on little ecclesiastical jaunts, such as trips to ordinations, met everybody, and enjoyed himself hugely. On one such occasion in December, 1824,¹⁰⁶ he had not only the religious pleasure connected with the ordination services, but the social one, of meeting on the same day his hero, Dr. Channing, and his father's, Timothy Pickering.

Being gregarious by nature, George did not limit his social contacts to his fellows. He wrote to his family a great deal about solitude, because he thought he should, and frequently sallied forth to Cambridge parties, which he described in the most human letters he had written up to that time. He attended "parties", talked to the ladies and ate jellies,¹⁰⁷ and came home, quite late, to spend the rest of the night on his lessons.

106) Life, pp. 29-31, George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, Dec. 10, 1824.

107) Life, pp. 26-8, George Ripley to "Dear Mary," Feb. 5, 1824. There is no indication who this might be.

There was, perhaps, another reason why he found Cambridge attractive. At some undated time of his studies, either as an undergraduate or as a divinity student, the tall patrician Sophia Willard Dana had begun to command his attention.

CHAPTER X

SOPHIA WILLARD DANA

Sophia Willard Dana was of the Brahmin caste. Her clan had been prominent in Cambridge ever since the arrival of her great-great-great-grandfather, Richard, from England. In 1740, her grandfather, Francis Dana, had been revolutionary ambassador to Russia, where Catherine the Great, having her own ideas on revolutions, had kept him cooling his heels for two years without recognizing him.¹⁰⁸ In Sophia's father, also named Francis, the sterling qualities of the older Danas seemed to have ebbed, and been replaced by irresponsibility. In 1823, while this Francis was enjoying the sights of Europe, his wife and two daughters held a family war council on ways and means, and decided to keep school for support.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, they moved to Cambridge, and took a little house on Mason Street.¹¹⁰ Two sons, Francis and Joseph Willard, did not live with them

108 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, The Dana Saga (Cambridge, the Cambridge Historical Society, 1941), p. 26.

109 Notes of an interview with Miss Elisabeth Dana, made by Miss Ross Sherman, in 1928. These notes are in the possession of Radcliffe College.

110 Miss Elisabeth Dana to Miss Vivien May Norris, Feb. 15, 1900. A.L.S. owned by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, copy by Radcliffe College.

in Cambridge.¹¹¹

The elder daughter, Sophia, was twenty at the time, having been born in 1803. She had just completed the course at Dr. Parks's school in Boston. In the school opened by the Danas, she was the principal instructress. Her mother and her younger sister, Mary Elizabeth, assisted her by taking charge of conduct and manners, while she dealt out knowledge to the little Cambridge girls whose families were as distinguished as her own.¹¹²

The school was apparently successful, for finding the house too small, they moved, first to 94 Brattle Street, and then to what is now Fay House, in Radcliffe College.¹¹³ Among their interesting pupils were the sisters of James Russell Lowell, Mary Channing, and little Parkmans, Higginsons, Tuckermans, who either boarded or came by the day. Two little boys allowed on the sacred precincts were little James Russell Lowell, in all the infant splendor of embroidered, ruffled shirts, and Edmund Dana, a cousin of Sophia.¹¹⁴ Classes were conducted in the Oval Room, at a large table, at the head of which sat Sophia, with a little boy on either side. The sisters of the little boys, the Lowell girls and Ruth Charlotte Dana, were always glad to watch out for their brothers' well being, and superintend their good behavior.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Notes of an interview with Miss Elizabeth Dana, made by Miss Rose Sherman, op. cit.

¹¹² Miss Elizabeth Dana to Miss May Norris, op. cit.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Miss Elizabeth E. Dana to Miss Vivien May Norris, Feb. 17, 1900. A.L.S. in the possession of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, copy in Radcliffe College.

Sophia came by her scholarship naturally, for the Willards, her mother's family, had produced scholars as steadily as the Danas men in public office. Her maternal grandfather, Joseph Willard, had been President of Harvard, and two uncles instructed there. Sophia's niece, Miss Isabella Dana, even as an old lady, remembered vividly her tall, graceful aunt.

I never heard her called handsome and she probably was not so. But there was something so lovely in her face, that the effect was somehow the same—perhaps the English would have called it countenance. Her exquisite manners, and her low, beautifully modulated voice, added to the charm and her reading to me was a rare delight. To this day I often recall whole sentences from those stories, and the very inflections of her voice.¹¹⁶

George met Sophia while he was either a student in Harvard College or in the Divinity School, probably the latter, as Sophia's immediate family did not move to Cambridge until 1823. He fell very much in love with the distinguished, intelligent, young woman, who was usually described as "stately" and "elegant." She was one of the tall, graceful people who wear their clothes superbly, never have holes in their gloves, and never knock over teacups.

There are few records of the life of the cool, blonde Sophia either before or during her life in Cambridge; only one letter of George's relating to the courtship survives. This letter was written the day after the announcement of the engagement of Sophia Willard Dana to George Ripley. In it, George asked Marianne, his faithful sister, to break the news to Jerome Ripley.¹¹⁷ A year and a half later, when George had established

116) Miss Isabella Dana to Miss Elizabeth Dana, Oct. 1928. A.L.S. in the possession of Professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, copy in Radcliffe College.

117) Life, pp. 34-6, Cambridge, May 3, 1826.

himself in his ministerial career, on August 22, 1827, George and Sophia were married in the Oval Room of Fay House, by Rev. Dr. Holmes, of Cambridge.

CHAPTER XI

BOSTON UNITARIANISM

In 1826, Boston Unitarianism was in its initial period. Its method was that of brilliant, if destructive, criticism. Little mercy was accorded "the beliefs in scriptural inspiration, incarnation, atonement, election, predestination, depravity, fall, regeneration, redemption." The prevailing philosophy among Unitarian divines was Lockean empiricism; their animating mental force was, however, cultivated, deified commonsense. They looked on human nature, and found that it was good. No cloud of primal guilt hung over their souls. Their minds were polished by intensive theological training; native shrewdness was reinforced by a battery of texts, authorities, commentaries, and other weapons from the theological arsenal. They were too new as a self-conscious sect to have fallen into civil war. They retained belief in God, an illimitable, supreme Being, Creator of a material universe, the existence of which was unquestioned, and of a spiritual world, the knowledge of which is found in the Bible. God's benevolence was as unlimited as His grandeur.

He offered personal immortality to all who sought Him, and sent a Messenger to point out the loftiest moral truths. This Messenger, Christ, was not divine, but of more than human stature. He performed miracles and fulfilled prophecies. The older Unitarians indulged in a sunny orgy of rationality, printers' ink, and refutation of the Trinitarians in the Christian Examiner, the nearest thing which the denomination offered to a series of papal bulls.

To George and the young men who followed Channing beyond his fellows, there was something more stirring in the air than the spirit of enlightened criticism. The criticism paved the way; they did not refute its conclusions, they began there. Channing granted to the mind the power of discriminating between the true and the untrue, when presented with the two alternatives.

In some of his utterances he seemed to go further, but he very sincerely feared that private inspiration might supplant Christianity. The younger group began to wonder if mind could not discover as well as recognize. They poured over the writings of German theologians. They burrowed in libraries, in the collections of Harvard and the Athenaeum. They scrutinized the foreign journals. They wandered into the bookshops, and bought imported volumes from under each other's noses. Quietly, unobtrusively, they made ready for the fermentation of thought to follow.

There were a number of Unitarian churches in and around Boston. At King's Chapel, the oldest Unitarian Church, F.W.P. Greenwood presided over his citadel of conservatism, never did anything rash, and made a collection of hymns in the best possible taste. The equally conservative Nathaniel L. Frothingham, at the First Church, studied German, but never obtruded on his congregation any of the subversive doctrines which he found there. Scholarly

Henry Ware, Jr., son of the old Hollis Professor, preached peculiarly winning sermons at the Second Church, while John Pierpont, at Hollis Street, carried on an active campaign against his congregation. Dr. Charles Lowell, father of the poet James Russell Lowell, preached in Lynde Street. John Palfrey divided his time between his Brattle Street pulpit, the North American Review, and a History of New England, all five volumes of which redounded to the glory of Massachusetts. Samuel Barrett preached in Chambers Street, Alexander Young at New South, Lemuel Capen in Dorchester, John Pierce in Chambers Street, Francis Parkman in Hanover Street. Mclish I. Motte was soon installed at Castle Street, and Ralph Waldo Emerson ordained colleague pastor at the Second Church. Towering over them all was the frail, little Dr. Channing who, assisted and later succeeded by Ezra Gannett, made the Berry Street Church the center of Unitarian inspiration.

CHAPTER XII

THE MINISTRY 1826-1841

On August 27, 1826, George Ripley preached at the new Purchase Street Church, which had been dedicated three days before. For the next three Sundays, he preached before this society, and received a call from them in September.¹¹⁸ He was ordained pastor on Nov. 8, 1826, and continued there for fourteen years. Besides preaching at this church, and exchanging with other pastors, his ministerial duties included performing some five dozen marriages,¹¹⁹ and taking part in seventeen ordinations, dedications, or installations. In these, he gave the sermon four times, the charge once, the address to the people once, and right hand of fellowship eight times, and offered the introductory or concluding

118) Christian Register, V, p.136, Aug. 26, 1826. "We understand that Mr. George B. Ripley is engaged to preach for the four following Sabbaths at the new church in Purchase St." The "BF" is an addition on the part of the Register. Ralph Leslie Rusk, ed., The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York, Columbia University Press, 1939) I, p.176, Ralph Waldo Emerson to William Emerson, Sept. 28, 1826, "G. Ripley has rec^d a call at Purchase St." Emerson's reference must have been to the permanent engagement. Hereafter Rusk's work will be referred to as Emerson Letters.

119) The Christian Register, 1826-1841, lists the marriages performed by Unitarian and Congregational ministers in Boston.

prayer three times.¹²⁰ In 1829, he offered the prayer at a meeting of the Sunday School Society.¹²¹ In the same year, he was elected secretary of the Evangelical Missionary Society, which post he held until 1834, when he resigned this office and was elected a trustee.¹²² In 1830, he offered the prayer at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Peace Society.¹²³ In 1831, he offered suggestions at the annual meeting of the Sunday School Society; he urged that they keep up with the times by making every effort possible.¹²⁴ In 1832, he became a life member of the American Unitarian Society, of which he was a trustee from 1834 to 1840.¹²⁵ In 1833 he joined in the debate on the taking of the pledge at a meeting of the Massachusetts Association for the Suppression of Intemperance.¹²⁶ In the same year, he edited the Christian Register, and continued to do so until Aug. 15, 1834.¹²⁷ In 1834, he was one of those to address the annual

120) Ibid., 1826-41, lists the installations, ordinations, dedications, of the Unitarians in and around Boston, and gives the names of officiating ministers.

121) Ibid., VIII, Dec. 19, 1829.

122) Ibid., 1826-41, lists the results of the elections of various church and reform societies in Boston.

123) Ibid., IX, Jan. 23, 1830.

124) Ibid., I, Jan. 8, 1831.

125) American Unitarian Association Yearbooks, 1832-1839, list officers and life members. The fee for life membership of a pastor was usually paid by the ladies of his congregation.

126) Christian Register, XII, June 27, 1833.

127) Christian Register, XI, p.202, Dec. 22, 1832. David Reed, proprietor, publisher and editor, announced that in 1833 he would direct the "business concerns of the paper, and had engaged two gentlemen for the editorial department". On Jan. 15, 1833, Ripley, as "acting editor," wrote O.A. Brownson for articles. A.L.S. Notre Dame University. On Feb. 19, 1834, Brownson wrote his wife that he had dined with Ripley, editor of

meeting of the Sunday School Society.¹²⁸ In the same year, he was a member of a committee appointed by the American Unitarian Society to report on a plan for a systematic organization for improving the moral and religious condition of the poor in Boston through the cooperation of the various churches with the Ministry at Large.¹²⁹ This report resulted in the foundation of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, the same year. In 1836, Ripley was elected Treasurer of the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers.¹³⁰ In 1837, at the Berry Street Conference, he moved that a vote of thanks be presented to Dr. Parkman for his interesting discourse, and at the public meeting which followed, joined in the general remarks about the missions in the west.¹³¹ In the same year, he was elected a member of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others.¹³² In 1838, he received \$206 for missionary services from the American Unitarian Association.¹³³ In 1840, he began the correspondence

the Register, A.L.S. in the possession of Mrs. Thomas Odiorne. In the Register, XIV, p.2, Aug. 16, 1834, Reed announced that he had hired an editor. Ibid., p.14, Aug. 30, 1834, a letter to the editor signed G.R. indicates that Ripley was no longer in that position.

128) Christian Register, XIII, May 31, 1834.

129) Report on a Union of Churches for Benevolent Purposes (Boston, Tuttle and Weeks, 1834), p.4.

130) Christian Register, XV, May 28, 1836.

131) Ibid., June 3, 1837,

132) Ibid., Nov. 11, 1837.

133) American Unitarian Association Yearbook, Vols. 8-14, for 1838. This is undoubtedly the trip to Ohio in 1838 mentioned in Life, p.53, and the same trip on which Sophia Ripley visited Zoar, and described in the Dial in 1840.

with the church proprietors, which terminated in his resignation from his society, in spite of their unwillingness to lose their pastor.¹³⁴

Ripley's publications during the years of his ministry included two tracts on points of religion: The Divinity of Jesus Christ, in 1831,¹³⁵ and The Doctrines of Trinity and Transubstantiation Compared, in 1833.¹³⁶ The former depended on textual criticism, and a manufactured difference between the terms deity and divinity; anything in which God had a hand could be called divine, but the term deity was used only in reference to God Himself. The latter tract was written in the form of a letter to a Trinitarian friend. It pointed out that belief in either doctrine came from literal interpretation of Scripture, but that the doctrine of the Trinity was much more ambiguously stated than the doctrine of Transubstantiation; that both doctrines

134) MS. Records of the Thirteenth Congregational Society, in the possession of the American Unitarian Association.

135) George Ripley, The Divinity of Jesus Christ (Boston, American Unitarian Association, 1831).

136) George Ripley, The Doctrines of the Trinity and Transubstantiation Compared (Boston, American Unitarian Association, 1833). This tract, in offering a choice between Catholicism and Unitarianism, or rather, of those views of religion justified by sound sense working on Biblical matters, is particularly interesting. It shows Ripley as, at the time, a disciple of Channing. Moreover, it is almost prophetic of his later years, when he drifted further and further into a religion unbounded by dogmatism, and his wife, Sophia, at the same time became a Roman Catholic. The flat statements of Father Hecker, close friend of the Ripleys, that Ripley considered becoming a Catholic, but was restrained from doing it in his lifetime by the opinion of his friends, and, dying, sent for Father Hecker, who arrived too late, if more than the confused reminiscences of an old man on the part of Father Hecker, or momentary impulse on the part of Ripley, would show that Ripley was conscious of but two alternatives since 1833. In that case, having been dissatisfied with the extremely latitudinarian developments of later Unitarianism, which placed a formless God among the speculations, he turned to the rigid and concrete outlines of the most authoritarian Christian religion.

had been supported by learned men; that both were once deemed essential to salvation; that both were post-apostolic in origin; that neither was justified by sound common sense, and that his Trinitarian friend, unless he wished to become a Catholic on the spot, had better become a Unitarian. Between 1831 and 1837, he wrote ten articles for the Christian Examiner, the ninth of which, a review of Martineau's Rationale of Religious Inquiry, in 1836, elicited a rebuke from Andrews Norton.¹³⁷ In 1836, Ripley published a series of six sermons, which he had delivered at Purchase Street in 1834, called Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion.¹³⁸ In 1837, he published a sermon on Temptations of the Times.¹³⁹ In 1838, he began the publication of a series of translations by different writers, called Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature. The first two volumes of these, called "Philosophical Miscellanies," selected translations from Cousin, Jouffroy, and Constant, were his own.¹⁴⁰ In 1839, he entered into controversy with his former professor, Andrews Norton, on the subject of intuitive philosophy, and directed at that professor three pamphlets, called "The Latest Form of Infidelity" Examined, A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton Occasioned by his Discourse before the Association of the Alumni of Cambridge Theological School on the 19th of July, 1839, by an Alumnus of that School; "Defense of 'The Latest Form of Infidelity' Examined, A Second Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton, Occasioned by his Defense of "A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity," by George Ripley; and "Defense of 'The Latest Form of Infidelity' Examined.

¹³⁷ Life, pp. 96-97.

¹³⁸ George Ripley, Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion, addressed to Doubters Who Wish to Believe (Boston, James Munroe & Co., 1836).

¹³⁹ George Ripley, Temptations of the Times (Boston, Hilliard Gray & Co., 1837).

¹⁴⁰ George Ripley, Life, p. 97.

A Third Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton, By George Ripley.¹⁴¹ In 1840, he was one of the founders of The Dial, the magazine edited by Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and himself. He contributed two articles: "Orestes A. Brownson's Writings," and "Letter to a Theological Student," as well as several reviews. In 1840, he arranged for the publication of the proceedings at the ordination of John Sullivan Dwight; Ripley had preached the sermon. The pamphlet, which contained the charge, and right hand of fellowship as well, was called Claims of the Age on the Work of the Evangelist, a Sermon Preached at the Ordination of Mr. John Sullivan Dwight, as Pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Northampton, May 20, 1840.¹⁴² In the same year, he published for his society A Letter to the Congregational Church in Purchase Street,¹⁴³ in which he gave his reasons for his resignation from the office of pastor, and also A Farewell Discourse, which contained the correspondence between Ripley and the proprietors of the church.¹⁴⁴

141) (Boston, James Munroe & Co., 1839, 1840 and 1841).

142) (Boston, Weeks Jordan and Co., 1840).

143) George Ripley, A Letter to the Congregational Church in Purchase Street (Boston, Drake's Pamphlets, 1840).

144) George Ripley, A Farewell Discourse (Boston, Drake's Pamphlets, 1841).

CHAPTER XIII

PURCHASE STREET CHURCH

When George Ripley, a fledgling clergyman, preached at the first Sunday's worship in Purchase Street Church, he was greeted with approval by the Christian Register, the Unitarian weekly, as well as by the proprietors of the church. The Register commented on the occasion:

Mr. George B. Ripley, late of the Theological School in Cambridge, has been engaged to preach the four Sabbaths following the dedication. On last Sunday morning he preached a sermon appropriate to the commencement of public worship by a new society, and in a new church. His text was Psalms xxvi, 8, Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honor dwelleth. The church was well filled, and the services gave much satisfaction. The seats will be free until the choice of a minister, and a sale of the pews. If we do not mistake the indications already manifested, a respectable society will be gathered in this edifice, another flourishing church of liberal sentiments will adorn and bless this city, and the persons who, from public motives, aided in erecting this temple will see the fruit of their enterprise in the complete success of the undertaking.¹⁴⁵

Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Ripley's biographer, states that this society was "expressly gathered" for the young minister.¹⁴⁶ As the corner stone

145) Christian Register, V, 138, Sept. 2, 1826.

146) Life, p.36

of the building was laid in 1825,¹⁴⁷ Ripley's second year in the Divinity School, the funds must have been raised even earlier. Hence, the impression that the congregation was called together with Ripley in mind, is utterly untenable. On the other hand, when it came time to choose a pastor, Ripley was apparently the only minister to preach the Sunday service before September 28, by which date, he had received the call from this society.

On September 29, a committee consisting of John Colton, Charles Weihots, and John Ballard sent out the notices of Ripley's ordination on November 8.¹⁴⁸ Before that date, the sale of pews had brought in \$274 for thirty-nine pews, and after the sale, eleven more were taken. The whole number of pews was one hundred and fifty-two, of which forty were in the gallery. After the ordination, the remainder of the pews were offered at auction.¹⁴⁹

The proceedings on November 8 began with the meeting of the Council in the vestry of the church at 9 a.m., and the services immediately followed. The sermon, which was the principal attraction of such ceremonies, was preached by none other than Reverend John Thornton Kirkland, President of Harvard. Rev. Dr. Lowell, of Cambridge, offered the ordaining prayer, and Professor Ware, the charge. Alexander Young and Ezra Gannett, less well known at the time, gave the reading from Scripture and the right hand of fellowship. Samuel Ripley came from Waltham to offer the concluding prayer. The assemblage was distinguished. Dr. Kirkland, who lent an air of distinction to any occasion,

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁴⁸ John Colton, Charles Weihots, John Ballard, MS. notice of Ripley's ordination, to Dr. Tuckerman's Church, Oct. 29, 1826. In the Boston Public Library. This library will hereafter be referred to as B.P.L.

¹⁴⁹ Christian Register, V, Oct. 28, 1826.

...Proceeded to describe with his usual discrimination, richness of thought, and felicitous expression, the character of a Christian minister, the subjects of his instructions, the temper and spirit with which they should be urged, the limitations which the doctrine, that he is not to please men, requires, how far he is expected to have reference to their views and character, and to show respect and tenderness to the weaknesses and prejudices of those to whom he ministers, and concluded with the usual address to the pastor elect and to the society.¹⁵⁰

Two years previously, Professor Ware, in laying the corner stone of the building, had described the future church as "not magnificent."¹⁵¹ Perhaps, as he delivered the Charge to his star pupil, he was reminded of those words. George's temple was a particularly unprepossessing structure, made of stone, with a small belfry on top. It was as homely inside as without.¹⁵² It had been built in a respectable, but declining part of town, too near the water and the old tea wharves.¹⁵³ The pastor and the proprietors had further cause for worry, in that there were three other Unitarian churches not far off. The society, though never greatly burdened by debt, never really flourished. It remained as it had begun, small unostentatious, and respectable.¹⁵⁴

150. Christian Register, V, 178, Nov. 11, 1826.

151. Life, p. 35.

152. Life, p. 35.

153. Life, p. 36.

154. Life, p. 36.

CHAPTER XIV

AN INOFFENSIVE PASTOR

As a Unitarian minister, duly settled over a congregation, George automatically belonged to the American Unitarian Association, and Massachusetts Convention of Congregational (Unitarian) Ministers, and the Berry Street Conference. The membership of the last two was exclusively ministerial. Besides these bodies, it was edifying and appropriate for a young minister to belong to the Evangelical Missionary Society, and the Sunday School Society. There were also the questionable associations. Certain people looked askance at the Massachusetts Peace Society. The Association for the Suppression of Intemperance was not altogether popular, as some of the Brahmins were large brewers and distillers. But Ripley was well aware of the havoc that drink was playing in the lower classes, particularly in the factory towns, where it was the only means open to the workers to forget for a moment that they were so dreadfully tired. He belonged in spite of the unpopularity of the enterprise, and advocated the taking of the pledge, although he tried to make things diplomatically right by suggesting temperance as a means of insuring to shop-owners that their assistants would not steal money to buy drink.

In all these institutions, Ripley, who seldom suggested a measure more radical than a vote of thanks to a speaker for his inspiring discourse, attained a mild prominence. He was secretary of the Evangelical Missionary Society, and wrote very gracious letters transmitting resolutions of thanks to the families of persons who had left money to the cause. A sample of his handicraft along that line is a letter of acknowledgment to Dr. Shattuck:

Boston, 29 Sept., 1831

Dr. George C. Shattuck

Sir--

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Massachusetts Evangelical Missionary Society held this day, the Treasurer having reported the payment by you as Executor of the will of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Derby, of the sum of \$500, bequeathed to the Society, it was

Voted "That the secretary be requested respectfully to communicate to the Executor, their sense of the kindness and attention in the prompt payment of the legacy, and their grateful sense of the liberality of Mrs. Derby, in this very timely addition to the funds of the society.

I take great pleasure, Sir, in announcing the above vote, & beg you to accept the assurance of the great respect with which I am your obedient servant....¹⁵⁵

The most controversial remarks which are recorded of Ripley in the discussions which took place at the meetings of the various societies, was a harangue in favor of the taking of the pledge, at a Massachusetts Association for the Suppression of Intemperance meeting on June 27, 1833. The account in the Register shows Ripley's unhappy use of metaphor on the occasion, and the arguments which he used to convince his conservative colleagues.

155) George Ripley to Dr. George S. Shattuck, A.L.S. in M.H.S.

Rev. Mr. Ripley was decidedly for the pledge, and examined its principle "with reference to its ascertained effects on communities and individuals." He related several anecdotes in point; and among others, the case of an intemperate man in Worcester County, who had signed the pledge and broken it; but the effect of that violation itself had been such as the person himself confessed, that it had completely destroyed the temptation ever after. His venerable friend (Judge Davis) had doubted whether pledging was one of the good old-fashioned customs, and whether it was necessary among a sensible people. He had himself no doubt almost the first act of the Pilgrims was a pledge for mutual protection; and it had been so at all periods in New England--As to its being repugnant to moral liberty or dignity, it was enough for him that it was a deliberative act; that it was universally useful to his fellow-men; and that he had the Apostle Paul's precept that, "if meat offend his brother, then he would not eat it," to the end of the world. He hoped the Society would unite in the pledge, and, in the good old Massachusetts way, give "the long pull, the strong pull, and the pull altogether."

Not being present till after Mr. Ripley had finished his remarks, we have copied them from the report in the Mercantile Journal. From one who was present, we understood that Mr. Ripley remarked further, that the signing of a pledge might be useful in measures to be hereafter adopted. And should a number of gentlemen in our city be of the opinion that our Theater ought to be reformed, or abolished, a very strong influence might be raised, on avowed principles which might be signed pledging a perseverance to accomplish the object. A design of this character would in our opinion, be worthy of the friends of good order in our city, and tend greatly to the preservation of our youth from the haunts of vice and impurity and intemperance. Our merchants and shopkeepers, some of whose clerks and attendants are tempted to pilfer the cash of their employers for the amusements alluded to, might be saved from great losses as well as our youth from ruin.¹⁵⁶

As the measure passed, 18 to 9, Ripley was not the sole defender of this cause.

As a speaker at ordinations, installations, dedications, and other ecclesiastical festivities, Ripley did not appear as often as, for example, Rev. Mr. Parkman, and Rev. Mr. Greenwood, to say nothing of Mr. Channing.

156 Christian Register, XII, p.106, July 6, 1833. Taken from the Christian Watchman, The editorial our near the close indicates that the final sentiments are those of the Watchman, and not Ripley's.

For one reason, he had a distaste for preaching on such occasions; he preferred to compose his sermons for his own society. He stated this distaste in a letter to Brownson, in connection with the installation of the latter, at Canton, May 14, 1834.

Friday Morning

My dear Sir:

I cannot but regret that you wish me to preach your installation sermon as my taste and habits lead me to decline such public services as much as possible. I preach, write and think almost exclusively for my own people; but as these personal considerations ought not to weigh with me, for a moment, if I can oblige another, I will do my best to perform the service you request...¹⁵⁷

The sermon which Ripley preached for Brownson's installation, Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever, he repeated in Philadelphia, Andover, and Plymouth the same year; at Hingham in 1837, at home, at Nashua, and at Salem in 1839, so it was of good service after all.¹⁵⁸

Ripley's sermons seem to have been generally considered dull. Frothingham says of them, "He was lacking in the gift of thrilling speech. His convictions did not fall burning from his lips." While among his friends, he was a brilliant talker; on more formal occasions, he was "unimpassioned, almost cold."¹⁵⁹ His discourses, some of which were quite radical, were delivered in so calm a manner that anything revolutionary in the content was unnoticed. Beneath his sermons lay a bedrock of abstract thought, but he only presented his society with the conclusions, and the morals drawn from these

157) George Ripley to Orestes A. Brownson, n.d.A.L.S. in Notre Dame University.

158) Endorsement on MS. Sermon Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever, in M.H.S., Frothingham collection.

159) Life, p. 52.

conclusions. When, in the discourses later published as Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion, he said that Christianity accorded with the fundamental moral convictions of the human race, the parishioners missed the intuitivism and primitivism lurking in the remark, and thought it was merely a good way of saying that Christianity was very, very fine. When he informed them that Jesus Christ had made it a solemn duty to use common sense in the matters of religion, they must have thought that he was pointing out what they liked to hear about—the irrationality of the Trinitarians. But this sermon carried the principle of private judgment by the light of common sense so far, that Ripley found himself attacking the undue influence of the priestly office. His text, "And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" was capable of interpretation of which his flock missed some of the nuances. Ripley never presented his innocents with the genesis of his thought, only with his conclusions, and presented these in such a calm way that he seemed to ignore completely, any differing opinions.

On one occasion, at least, his sermons aroused enthusiasm. In 1838, on a western trip, he seems to have done his best preaching. Perhaps he felt relief among the less formal westerners, after the close theological atmosphere in Boston. The congregations were very pleased with him, particularly when he preached without notes. A strange manifestation of ^{joy} ~~join~~ with the word as proffered by Ripley, came to him from a gentleman who was the agent of a water transportation company, and sent the Ripleys free passes on the company's canal boats.¹⁶⁰ At any rate, if George had been really deadly, he would not have received the invitations of which he spoke in his Farewell

¹⁶⁰ Life, p.40.

Discourse, from the larger societies, to quit Purchase Street and come to them.

One of Ripley's most ambitious semi-official ventures, in his capacity as a Unitarian minister, was a short editorship of the Christian Register. This weekly newspaper kept its readers posted on the ordained, the installed, the married, and the dead. It summarized outstanding sermons, with liberal praise and copious quotations. Channing was its particular hero; it would have quoted him on the weather. It reflected the lugubrious sentimentality of the time, and frequently gratified the tastes of the reader by a front page story of a virtuous, dying infant. There was a column of secular news, and ample space for bards, good, bad, indifferent, child prodigy. In spite of drawbacks, the Register was a very able and influential little paper. The book reviews were painstaking, the reform articles highly liberal, and the accounts of the proceedings of religious and reform societies, careful and accurate. It sought toleration among all Christian sects, increased civil rights for women, suppression of intemperance, greater justice for the working classes. It opposed slavery, but was a little vague just what to do about it. On December 22, 1832, Reed announced that for the coming year, he had engaged, at large expense to himself, "two gentlemen, of distinguished talents, fine literary taste, and extensive acquirements both in theology and general literature."¹⁶¹ One of these anonymous gentlemen was Ripley. The first number of 1833 contained their address to the public. They assured their readers that their first concern was the promotion of practical religion, particularly Unitarian Christianity; that they

¹⁶¹ Christian Register, XI, p.102, Dec. 22, 1832.

did not court controversy, which was a Riplean woodnote tame; that they hoped the friends of the Register would send in original communications. George went contribution hunting, and wrote to Orestes A. Brownson, the Walpole pastor, whose "pithy, lucid, and direct" style he admired. By return mail he received an article chanting the praises of Channing's sermons. On a visit to Boston, in January, 1834, Brownson had dinner with Ripley at his home. They liked each other, and time passed pleasantly between the logical, dogmatic guest, and the cautious, courteous host. Brownson wrote further for the Register, and attracted some favorable attention, including that of Emerson. By August 16, of the following year, Ripley was apparently no longer officially connected with the paper. Reed announced to the public that he had secured "an able and well qualified Editor," who was, apparently, full-time. Ripley was still on intimate terms with the paper, for when Brownson got himself into hot water, with an address which was interpreted as an argument for the overthrow of society, he appealed to Ripley to straighten the matter out, and explain that he wished

...No reform in the external circumstances, in social or economical relations, any further than shall be considered necessary and effected by an increase of knowledge and virtue in all classes.¹⁶²

Ripley, who had thought highly enough of Brownson to urge him to come to Boston and start an independent society, did him the favor he requested.

In general, the articles in the Register were not signed. Sometimes they were initialed, as were Brownson's. Ripley, on the other hand, preferred his protective coloring, and never left a mark of identification. As editor, he was responsible for the choice of contributions, and for slanting the paper towards a serious advocacy of reforms.

162 Christian Register, X, p.10, Aug. 25, 1834.

CHAPTER XV

READING AND WRITING AND CONTROVERSY.

If the long-suffering librarian at the Boston Athenaeum was afflicted by writer's cramp, Ripley was greatly to blame. During his Boston years, he borrowed over eight hundred volumes. Some of these came from Harvard; by far the larger part of these from the Athenaeum. With exception of about twenty novels, the works could hardly be called light literature. History, particularly religious history, figured largely in the collection, and works of French and German authors larger still. There were as many serious books in the English language as in the other two combined, a good supply of technical books on various subjects, smatterings of travel, and doses of the classics. The biographies were principally of those authors whom Ripley was reading. The list records one venture into Italian, by way of Macchiavelli, with the aid of a dictionary. As Ripley had a highly literate wife, some question arises as to who read just what.

The choice of Herder On Man is unmistakably Ripley's, but no one can say definitely that it was Sophia who sat by the fire toasting her toes and gleefully curdling her blood over The Mysteries of Udolpho. George's tremendous interest in philosophy and religion was such that one may assume that all the French, German, and English books on those subjects were taken out for his benefit, although Sophia, who knew French very well, may have read them also. By 1831, George had pored over Herder, Jacobi, Goethe, Schiller, De Wette, Buhle. His interest in the French authors who followed the intuitive school of philosophy was not less keen.

Some of the titles taken from his readings during the years of his ministry, show the tremendously serious nature of his interests. In 1826, he charged out of Harvard Library the Odyssey; Xenophon's Historia Graeca, Oeconomicus, and Politics; Horace's Sententiae. In 1829, the Athenaeum charged out Sidney's Works; Goethe's Works; The Sketch Book; Butler's Roman Catholic Church; Richardson's Works; Landor's Imaginary Conversations; Buffon's Natural History; Herder On Man. In 1830, he is charged at the Athenaeum with Vivien Gray; Smollet's Works; Degerando; Schiller; Diderot; La Fontaine's Fables; a life of Locke; Schlegel's Lectures; novels by De Foe. In 1831, he charged at the Athenaeum Jacobi's Works; Goethe's Wilhelm Meister; three of Jane Austen's novels; the writings of Jefferson; Franklin's Works; Jean Paul's Levana; Oeuvres de Condillac; works by Voltaire; by Crebillon; by Mme. de Staël; Monboddo on Metaphysics; works by Lessing; by Southey; by Spurzheim. In the same year, he borrowed from Harvard works by De Wette; Godwin's Political Justice; a German work of Buhle's on Natural Philosophy. In 1833, he borrowed from Harvard Kant's Critique of Pure Reason in a

German edition, and two other works by that author; three works by Herder; Eckermann's Erklärung. In the same year, from the Athenaeum, he borrowed works of Klopstock; of Byron; of Rousseau; Cousin's Instruction Publique. In 1834, he borrowed from the Athenaeum, works by Cuvier; Parkinson; Constant de la Religion; works of Burke. In 1836, he borrowed at the Harvard Library works of Spinoza; of Schleiermacher; of Schelling; of Priestley. In 1837, he charged at the Athenaeum Locke Essay on the Human Understanding; Godwin's St. Leon; three more novels of Jane Austen; three works on mathematics; Washington's writings; Hazlitt's Napoleon; Sewell's History of the Quakers. In 1839, he charged out of Harvard Library Buhle's History of Philosophy, in a German edition; a history of Lutherianism; Luther's Schriften; Schelling's Philosophical Works, in a German edition. In the same year, he charged at the Athenaeum a French history; Bowen's History of the Popes; Sismondi's Republics; Wayland's Discourses; Fawcett's Sermons; Palfrey's Sermons; Froissart's Chronicles. In 1840, he borrowed at the Athenaeum Raleigh's History of the World; Brooke's The Fool of Quality; Brantome's works. The most interesting of his borrowings, perhaps, came in 1840 and 1841. Between October 12, 1840, and April 9, 1841, he borrowed thirty volumes on agriculture, in anticipation of his labors as a farmer in West Roxbury.

Behind the intensive reading was undoubtedly a more definite purpose than the mere exercise of learned leisure. When he was ordained to the ministry, he had not settled all his doubts and queries on the subject of religion. There were two things he could do: either postpone his career, and concentrate on the solving of his mental irresolutions, or take up his practical duties as well as he could, and let his worries solve themselves in his spare time. He did not seem to even think

seriously of the first course. In his commonplace book for September 1, 1827, he described his course of action:

To decline active exertion for the religious improvement of man, through any doubts, with regard to the primary truths of religion, would be as unwise, as for an instructor of youth, to neglect the duties of his office, on account of abstract speculations concerning the mind, or for an engineer, to decline the care of his machinery because he might be a convert to Berkeley's sceptical theory of the nonexistence of matter.¹⁶³

The choice was a victory for George the Reformer over George the Wanderer in the Abstract. Perhaps choice is too strong a word. The practical Ripley may never have considered the other alternative for a longer space of time than was necessary to refute it. That he was happy in his round of pastoral duty, his early letters show.

Boston, January 9, 1827.

...My hands are full of labor, and my heart with cares for my own people who, although a little band, demand a great deal of my time and all of my attention. There is a great attention to religion at this moment throughout the city, and I feel it a bounden duty to do what I can to promote it, and to direct the excitement into a proper channel. I administered the communion for the first time yesterday, and admitted nine to my church, for some of whom I feel a peculiar interest, as they have been led to the step under the influence of my preaching. I am gratified at the serious impressions I find produced, because they assure me of the adaptation of rational religion to the needs and sorrows of all conditions of men. It has been preached as a faith merely for men of intellect and taste. It is so, but it also speaks loudly to the poor and uneducated, as I have had ample proof.¹⁶⁴

Boston, February 14, 1827

My dear Mother,--I have little to say about myself but that I am quietly peering about the streets and lanes of the city, dropping the good seeds of Christian truth wherever I find a prepared mind, and once a week enforcing what I say in private

163. Commonplace Book, p.60.

164. Life, pp.39-40. George Ripley to..Jan. 9, 1827.

by a more elaborate argument in public. My society is growing tranquilly by my side. It is now quite an infant, but I hope it will live and advance to the stature of a perfect man.¹⁶⁵

Although Ripley was for some years very contented in the pastoral relation, and his conversion to Unitarianism in the Divinity School had been nothing if not thorough, he had his bad moments. Having both training and tendency for abstract speculation, it was no wonder that at times a group of doubts would come floating into his mind, like a school of barracuda, and nibble at the edges of his faith. He thought of old Samuel Johnson, the prayerful, ponderous, eighteenth century dictator of the coffee shops, and wrote in his commonplace book:

Perhaps Dr. Johnson never composed anything so truly excellent as his prayer against inquisitive & perplexing thoughts. It is so wise & energetic, so philosophical & so pious, that it will afford consolation to many sincere Christians, when in a state of mind to which it is believed, the best are sometimes liable.

"O Lord, my Maker & Protector, who has graciously sent me into this world to work out my salvation, enable me to drive from me all such unquiet & perplexing thoughts as may mislead or hinder me in the practice of those duties which thou hast required. When I behold the work of thine hands, give me grace always to remember that thy thoughts are not my thoughts, thy ways, not my ways. And while it shall please thee to continue me in this world, where much is to be done & little to be known, teach me by the Holy Spirit to withdraw my mind from unprofitable & dangerous inquiries: from difficulties vainly curious: & from doubts impossible to be solved. Let me rejoice in the light which thou hast imparted: let me serve thee with clear zeal, & humble confidence: & await with patient expectation for the time in which the soul, which thou receivest, shall be satisfied with knowledge..."¹⁶⁶

Ripley, who never left the "dangerous inquiries" wholly alone, found himself in a vicious circle. The more he read to find solutions to his doubts, the

165 Life, p.40. George Ripley to Sarah Franklin Ripley, Feb. 14, 1827.

166 Commonplace Book, p.60.

more rather he found for speculation. Just which of the "primary truths" was the most dubious is not said. Subjects which he found engrossing were the nature of God, in Whom Ripley at all times believed, the nature of the soul, and the soul's intuitive knowledge of truth.

The philosophy which interested Ripley was opposed to the English empiricism of Locke, Berkeley and Hume. The first of these thinkers had used as his fundamental principle that there was no knowledge in the mind not previously in the senses. The mind, of course, was able to make combinations of the sensual ideas. Berkeley went so far as to deny existence to anything which was not perceived. God was responsible for printing the impressions on the senses, and did so according to certain rules, the sum total of which was called nature. Hume not only accepted Locke's denial of innate ideas, and Berkeley's rejection of any external universe, but saw no reason to posit the existence of God, nor even our own existence, which left him amid philosophical doubts, with no further avenue for progression. Kant, the great German thinker, irritated by Hume into action, set forth a severe system which admitted impressions on the senses, and also innate ideas denied by Locke. On the level of sensibility, one was aware of time and space, attributes of all sensations, but which were not themselves sensations. The understanding, a faculty which compared, regulated, unified, the sensations, and made them into thought, supplied various ideas of relation, identity, etc. The loftiest faculty, Reason, arrived at general laws, and formed ideas which included the details of the other faculties, the idea of universe, personality, illimitable God. Whether or not there was a world corresponding to this mental one, he refused to suggest. The existence of neither an external nor a spiritual

world could be demonstrated. Having ideas which transcended experience of the soul, of God, man was committed to unswerving fidelity to these ideas, whether or not they corresponded to any exterior reality. Kant's disciple, Jacobi, rebelled at this scepticism, and elaborated an intuitive philosophy which held that these subjective ideas of the Reason implied objective reality. Fichte, a strict follower of Kant, denied the possibility of knowing any world outside the mind. Schelling, disciple of Fichte, took a wide departure from his master's theories. External world and mind existed in the universal soul. Man's consciousness was God's consciousness. Man's reason and the object of thought are united by intuition. The religious writer, Schleiermacher, followed Jacobi. He was not a systematic philosopher. His position was that the soul's sense of the divine, and not dogma or historical record, was the essence of Christianity. The religious sense belonged by nature to man.

In France, Jouffroy translated the Scotch intuitive school, Reid and Stewart, into the language, and Cousin lectured on them. Cousin, a famous eclectic philosopher, held that truth is in all systems, and was to be recognised by its accord with certain unchanging convictions of the human heart. In England, Coleridge muttered obscure words of philosophy, which were part poetry and part Schelling, and Carlyle popularised German literature in the early part of his career, when he was more under the influence of German intuitive philosophers than of German pressure politicians.

Results of Ripley's free-lance graduate study were not long in appearing. Ten articles in the Christian Examiner between 1830 and 1837 we know to be Ripley's.¹⁶⁷ There may have been others. Articles in the Examiner were

167 Life, pp. 93-96. Frothingham used Ripley's MS. lists, now in M.H.S., the Frothingham collection.

rarely signed, sometimes not even initialed. Ripley, in particular, had a passion for anonymity. The articles were "DeGerando on Self Education," in September, 1830; "Religion in France," July, 1831; "Pestalozzi," January, 1832; "Professor Follen's Inaugural," in the same number; "Sir James Mackintosh's Ethical Philosophy", February, 1833; "Professor Marsh's Translation of Herder," May, 1835; "Herder's Theological Opinions and Services," November, 1835; "Schleiermacher as a Theologian," March, 1836; "Martineau's Rationale of Religious Inquiry," November, 1836; "Theological Aphorisms," translated from Ullman, January, 1837. From these articles, one forms a picture of Ripley's beliefs. He had faith in the existence of God, and trusted in the existence of a sensible, external, world around him. Knowledge came through the senses, but not all knowledge. There remained the knowledge that was in the soul, where the power of reason had sympathy with truth in the divine mind. Reason was not itself the divine mind; it was not an Inner Light; it was the crowning human faculty. It was natural in the mind, but not invincible; it required culture. The pressure of outside circumstances accelerated, hindered, or determined the direction of this culture as the case might be. Reason did not lie. In some souls, it burned with the beautiful white flame of gunpowder; in others, it seemed extinguished,¹⁶⁸ but whether dimly or brilliantly, it showed the truths which are unchanging. Christianity was recognized by reason as the highest expression of moral and religious truth. Compared to this testimony, historicity and the testimony of miracles were unimportant.

168 These views on the difference of the power of reason in individuals are also advanced in the sermon, Common Sense in Matters of Religion. There, Ripley speaks of minds as improving with training.

The papers on DeGerando¹⁶⁹ and Pestalozzi show George as interested in education as self-education. Pestalozzi, in particular, advocated progressive methods.¹⁷⁰ In the paper on "Religion in France," Ripley describes the ideal religion as unafraid of science, non-authoritarian, appealing to head and heart, including love of God and of mankind.¹⁷¹

In his review of Sir James Mackintosh's General View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy,¹⁷² Ripley, in reverting to Professor Frisbie, censures Mackintosh for not distinguishing sufficiently well between the ideas of right and of utility. The idea of right, he holds, is simple and intuitive. The second of the two articles on Herder¹⁷³ attributes to Herder the belief that the very essence of Protestantism is conviction, individual examination, and independence. For the old Protestant ideal of private judgment, Ripley was always fighting. Some of Herder's biblical views are reflected in Ripley's own writings; the poetry of the Bible should not be translated into scientific prose, the story of the Creation in Genesis, for example, is the fragment of an Oriental song; prophecies were the utterances of national hopes and wishes, not literal predictions of the future; miracles were not proof of the divinity of Christ's mission; revelation is to every age, but the Biblical times were the richest. The article on Schleiermacher¹⁷⁴ reveals a curious determinism.

169) Christian Examiner, IX, pp.70-107, Sept. 1830.

170) Ibid., IX, pp.347-373, Jan. 1832.

171) Ibid., I, pp.273-293, July, 1831.

172) Ibid., XIII, pp.311-332, Jan. 1833.

173) Ibid., XIX, pp.172-204, Nov, 1835.

174) Ibid., XX, pp.1-46, Mar. 1836.

Ripley did not deny the existence of an external world, nor the pressure of that world on our consciousness. Time, to a large extent, determined what the great men should be. Given the times, it was almost predictable that there should be a Schleiermacher.

The most important of the Examiner articles is the one on James Martineau's Rationale of Religious Inquiry.¹⁷⁵ The English Unitarian sought to put theology on the same plane as other sciences. To do so, it was necessary to draw a line between theology and mythology. The materials for his study of theology were the books of the New Testament, the traditions of the Catholic Church, the creeds of Protestantism, and the decisions of reason in the province of natural religion and in the history of civilization. The only proof of the plenary inspiration of the New Testament, Martineau declared, would be a supernatural audible voice. There was no such proof. Evidence was lacking to concede to either Catholicism or Protestantism, infallibility. The only criterion for judging true religion was reason. Careful scholarship should decide what was Biblical. Reason should reject what was absurd. Between revealed religion, or the ideas of God derived from the miraculous events described in the Bible, and natural religion, or all otherwise derived ideas of God, there was no opposition. The results of Christianity in civilization could only be decided by standards of permanence and universality. By such tests, it seemed that the result of Christianity in civilization was such universal sentiments as the natural equality of men, not in an economic, political or metaphysical sense, but in the religious sense that all are children of one Father, and appointed to one life eternal. Ripley quarrelled

175) Ibid., XXI, pp.225-254, Nov. 1836.

with Martineau's view that the Sacred writers were not supernaturally inspired. He defined natural inspiration as "The power of the soul by which it gains the intuitive perception of spiritual truth," an inspiration common to all men. When perception of spiritual truth transcended the ordinary, supernatural inspiration occurred.

This we believe can be asserted of our Saviour, without any limitation. His soul was a sea of light. All that was human in the Son of the Virgin, all that belonged to his personality as a Jewish teacher, all that marks the secondary, derived, and fallible, in the nature of man, as distinguished from the primitive, the original, the infallible, the divine, was swallowed up, and, as it were, annihilated, in the fulness of the Spirit which dwelt in him, in those kingly ideas of Truth and Good, which sustain the authority of the Eternal Throne, and authenticated the man of Nazareth as the Son of God...¹⁷⁶

Such inspiration is to be judged by its agreement with the primitive and universal dictates of the absolute reason in man. Thus it could be distinguished from superstition and enthusiasm. The natural inspiration which is possessed by all must sit in judgment on the supernatural inspiration which is imparted to an elect few. The Apostles were supernaturally inspired, but not infallible. Their inspiration, being addressed to the soul, was a higher witness than their miracles, addressed to the senses.

The repercussions of that article were not long in coming. Andrews Norton, over in Cambridge, blinked, rubbed his eyes, and seized his pen. He wrote a hot letter to the Christian Register,¹⁷⁷ the editor of which was a friend of Ripley's, and forthwith got it back. He readdressed it to the Boston Daily Advertiser, where it informed the world that he, Andrews Norton, had been surprised and pained by an article in the Examiner. Now he and

176) Life, p.60.

177) The entire controversy appeared in the Christian Register, XV, p.182, Nov. 12, 1836.

other gentlemen of very correct opinions on religious subjects had written for the Examiner, and someone might think that they were in some way responsible for the views expressed in the article on Martineau's Rationale. Further, the expression of such views in public might have dangerous effects on persons reading them; their circulation should be confined to theologians who could judge of them. The view in question was the superiority of intuitive approval as a criterion of truth over the witness of historically supported miracles. "I have no wish to interfere with the rights of free discussion," said Mr. Norton in a fine peroration, but it should not take place in the

Christian Examiner.

Ripley's friend, Reverend Theodore Parker, had seen the storm coming for some time on the matter of intuitive philosophy, and knew from whom. But Ripley had not. Now, when he recovered from his first shock, and it was a severe one, he executed a series of manoeuvres so subtle that they could only have been instinctive. He not only sent an answer to the Advertiser, but addressed a short, touching note to the editor of the Register, thanking him for his personal consideration, but stating that he, Ripley, believed in free discussion, no matter how painful to his feelings the expressions might be. So, would the Register print Norton's letter to the Advertiser, and his own reply. This last mentioned amazing communication was couched in plaintive, almost tearful English. It called attention to his old teacher's superiority in years and attainments. It suggested that Norton was heretical, officious, unjust, Pharisaical, inquisitorial, immoderate, and unenlightened. In gentle, reproachful tones, it invited Norton out to do battle. For the benefit of his former Professor of Sacred Literature, George thoughtfully appended a list of citations

to illustrate the superiority of belief from intuitive corroboration to that from evidence of miracles. From the dead silence in the direction of Cambridge, one judges that Norton did not think highly enough of Ripley's invitation to answer. Ripley followed up his last word with the publication of Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion, in the preface of which he took a slap at Norton, without mentioning him by name. Although Ripley's congregation had not recognized the heretical basis of these sermons, there was no chance that Norton would miss it. But still no reply came from Cambridge.

What changed Ripley over night from a quiet, unobtrusive soul to a warrior? The battle had not been of his choosing. He had not expected it. To Norton, warfare was a native element; to Ripley an innovation. When the skirmish was over, he was a little shaken out of his quiet routine, a little jittery, perhaps a little scared. The nervous excitement caused by his first conflict set up a new unrest not easily allayed.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRANSCENDENTAL CLUB

In the late 1830's, Andrews Norton, the Wares, and the scholarly older group of Unitarians found that a newer and younger clique were occupying places in the sun. Had these young men been content to follow in the footsteps and receive the torch from the hands of the veterans, they would have been gladly welcomed. Their seniors' heads, full of good dreams of supernatural religion which common sense had reduced to the Scriptural essentials, would have rested more easily on their pillows. But the new arrivals threatened to overturn supernatural religion completely, leaving nothing but an intangible collection of moral notions, with which the Saviour had happened to be in accord. If the ancient authoritarian churches were prisoners of superstition, the new group threatened to drift aimlessly on the broad winds of enthusiasm. The iron theologian of Cambridge pulled the covers up over his head to shut out visions which threatened his well earned slumber. Why couldn't all young ministers behave like Mr. Cannett, who assisted his friend Dr. Channing, and

though he lacked Channing's greatness, lacked also his eccentricities? Or like young Mr. Waterson, who allowed no heresy on his precincts? Norton was sincerely worried about the rising tide which threatened to engulf the religion which he, personally, had helped establish by logic and scriptural study on a basis of the soundest probability, if not of certainty. Further, many of the newcomers were pupils of his, and how it rankled to have all the world point at the heretics and say, "Your student, I believe, Mr. Norton?"

If the faces of the new group passed across the ceiling in ominous review, there was a sleepless half hour for Andrews Norton. Any such parade would include Hapley. Norton had expected better things of this star pupil. But the Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion boiled right down to the notorious principle of enthusiasm, that Christianity is right because one is sure it is. Then there was young Emerson, son of a good man and relative of others. He had left the Second Church because he did not like to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Emerson was really Henry Ware, Jr.'s worry, having been at one point his colleague. But in 1836, he had arranged for the publication in this country of the odious book, Sartor Resartus, which made him a general nuisance. Then there was that peculiar man from Connecticut, Bronson Alcott. Under the protection of Channing--poor Channing--Alcott had started a school run on the dangerous principle that knowledge is from within. He had gone so far as to carry on conversations with children on the Gospels, expecting the toddlers to find answers to his questions on morality in their own infant minds. He, Norton, had fittingly described Alcott's book on these conversations, as one third absurd, one third blasphemous, one third obscene.¹⁷⁸ What on earth was that respectable scholar, Mr. Convers Francis, do-

178 Odell Shepard, Pedlar's Progress (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1938), p.194.

ing in that group? Mr. Nathaniel Frothingham had been to one of their sessions, and had never gone again, sensible man. Norton meant what he said, when he cast aspersions on the whole "Teufelsdröckh School". Something might have to be done about these people, some of these days.

But whatever the established Unitarians may have thought of the younger group, the latter did not care. The skies were lifting. On all sides were vistas of endless possibility. As the Protestant Reformers had rejected the constraints of Catholicism, and the Unitarians those of Calvin, so these younger men were putting aside the prejudices and strictures of their elders. Their starting point was with Channing, their terminal somewhere out of sight; so on, into the future.

Most of the younger group were known to each other. They attended the same gatherings, such as the club of Jonathan Phillips, in the Tremont House.¹⁷⁹ Ripley, E.P. Peabody, and Brownson, and William H. Channing would meet from time to time to discuss volumes of Comte's Philosophie Positive, as it came out.¹⁸⁰ Most of them were Unitarian ministers, veterans of the same church celebrations. They had heard each other preach, and had read each others' articles in the same journals. But in 1826, the formation of the Transcendental Club made them a conscious group, instead of a number of brilliant, miscellaneous individuals.

On September afternoon, Ripley, Emerson, George Putnam and Frederic Henry Hedge strolled up to the Willard House from the bicentennial celebration of the founding of Harvard, their mutual Alma Mater.¹⁸¹ The talk of the

179 Life, pp.55-6.

180 Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Memoir of William H. Channing (Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1886), pp.371-6.

181 George Willis Cooke, An Historical and Biographical Introduction to the Dial (Cleveland, The Rowfant Club, 1902), I, p.47. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Cooke.

young ministers drifted from the proceedings of the day to the narrow limits of thought within the churches. The time passed quickly at the hotel; they felt sorry about breaking off their discussion. One of the four suggested that they meet again from time to time for serious conversation, and bring others with them. Ripley, gazing on tall, spiritual Emerson, and round, clever Hedge, thought the idea a fine one, and offered his house for the next meeting. They met at Ripley's on September 19, bringing Bronson Alcott, Convers Francis, and James Freeman Clarke. This meeting was for business.¹⁸² On October 3, they met at Alcott's for conversation.¹⁸³

The meeting at Alcott's was their first real attempt; at Ripley's they had merely discussed procedure and invitations. They had now accumulated Cyrus A. Bartol, newly hatched from the Divinity school, and Orestes Brownson. The first was agreeable, if slightly incoherent; the second, a brilliant controversialist, who used logic mercilessly to the point of bad manners. Convers Francis, the oldest member, presided, and quietly went around the circle for expressions of opinion on the subject of the day, which was "American Genius--the Causes which Hinder its Growth, and give us no First-Rate Productions."¹⁸⁴ The topic was of great personal interest to Emerson, who had a number of theories on the subject, and who had, with his customary unselfishness, been for some time trying to discover symptoms of genius in his acquaintances. From the part of the room where he sat, slouched in his chair, with his long legs wrapped around each other, he dominated the thought of the evening. The group unconsciously drew around him. When the meeting

182 Ibid., I, p.50.

183 Ibid., I, p.50.

184 Cooke, I, p.51.

broke up, they agreed to meet at Brownson's, and discuss "Education of Humanity." Bronson Alcott went to his room to write in his journal that Emerson had said fine things—as usual. 185

Other meetings were at Concord; at Bartol's in Boston; at the house of Caleb Stetson, in Medford; at Francis's in Watertown. Young Theodore Parker joined the group, and came from his parish in West Roxbury to bring his burning social conscience to the discussions. Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody, both good conversationalists, the former brilliant, were invited. Sophia was sometimes present, and sometimes Elizabeth Hoar, or the Sturgis sisters, friends of Emerson. Christopher Pearce Cranch supplied the group's quota of irreverence by drawing cartoons for Emerson's essays and Nature from such texts, suggested by Clarke, as the happy metaphor: "We are lined with eyes, we see with our feet." The young minister, John Sullivan Dwight attended frequently, as did young Thoreau. Dr. Channing came once. Mrs. Samuel Ripley occasionally joined them, as did George P. Bradford, the uncomfortable possessor of what Emerson called the most exquisite conscience in New England. Nathaniel Hawthorne was one of the few non-clerical gentlemen to put in an occasional appearance. 186

Emerson's was not the only voice which sometimes seemed inspired. On some occasions he was distant and uncommunicative, while Alcott, for example, led the discussion, or Margaret Fuller outshone all of them. Ripley had his talents, too, in that line. Parker recorded a conversation between his friend

185 Odell Shepard ed. The Journals of Bronson Alcott, p.73.

186 Cooke, I, p.54.

and Dr. Channing, at the club of Jonathan Phillips, where the transcendentalists often went.¹⁸⁷ The topic was the progress of civilization, and the

conversation, Parker decided, was equal to one of Plato's beautiful dialogues. Neither was the group cowed by the sage of Concord. Ripley took exception to the impersonality of Emerson's conception of God. Brownson was always willing and eager to demolish anybody, and usually did. And Hedge, according to a later report by Langfellow, had enough self-esteem to rise into the air and take off, under his own power, like St. Teresa in ecstasy.

The bias of these meetings was intensely religious. They had all the force of unofficial church services, especially of the services which Emerson conducted at East Lexington, when, after a sermon, if he were disinclined, he would omit the prayer, and allow the congregation to depart not having worshipped. The problems which they discussed were the nature of God, His dealings with the individual soul and with the races; topics were such as "Law, Truth, Individuality, Theology, Revelation, Inspiration, Providence, the Personality of God."¹⁸⁸ Their first topic, the failure of America to produce men of genius, might be a good discussion for economics students, but among the Transcendentalists, all matters had a strong religious glint. Emerson's American Scholar had that cast. The central creed of this churchless sect was that the human soul, by the power of reason, could penetrate truth, by which we meant, could read the divine mind. To do this culture was necessary, not knowledge, but a long process of self-development, of action, self-trust, and scrupulous sincerity. God did not shine out unmasked. The dry crust of custom, prejudice, formalism, lethargy, must be ground down until the soul became a

¹⁸⁷ Life, p.55.

¹⁸⁸ Cooke, I, pp.5203.

bright mirror of deity.

As the intuition was personal with each individual, there were as many types of transcendentalism as of transcendentalists. A broad division among them was in their attitude towards practical matters. There were those whose attention was directed toward the God in the fastnesses of their own mind; there were those who were to a large part claimed by struggle against the evil in society. The goal of the second group was to enable others to share in their freedom from circumstance, that they might be able to follow their vision. The type of the first group was Thoreau. He was a gentleman at large. He made pencils as long as it suited him, tutored in Greek as long as it suited him, and thought he lived on his own divine fire, while Parker was sourly sure that the fire was Emerson's. When the day came, of his choosing, he borrowed a second man's ax, went into a third man's wood lot, and lived by himself in a cabin. The sole splendor of his habitat was three little pieces of quarts, which he pitched out the window one fine day, because he resented the obligation of dusting them. He grew a few vegetables--the Transcendentalists were sentimentally attracted to farming--wrote his book, invited his soul, and, when the day came, left Walden as abruptly as he had come. The winds blew, the hut fell down, and he was off somewhere else, thinking his own thoughts. The type of the other group was Parker. He recognized the pressure of circumstances, which Thoreau did not. He spoke out the convictions of his muscular intellect, and when his colleagues became furious, spoke them louder. He declared war on what he considered the addenda of religions, which imprisoned men's minds. He opposed the restrictions which oppressed the women of the time. The underground railway ran through his house.

On society he threw the blame for the sins of the child born in squalor, and educated in the gutter. Curiously enough, both Parker and Thoreau went to jail in a characteristic fashion, Thoreau for refusing to allow the state's right to collect taxes, Parker for attempting to free a fugitive slave.

Between these two extremes were as many sizes and shapes of individuality as members of the club. Emerson, Elizabeth P. Peabody, and George P. Bradford, began reform with the individual. Margaret Fuller was pledged to a very specific reform, namely wider rights for women. Sophia Ripley, it seemed to Parker, rebuked him for not shrieking at the world's injustices, and warned him of the danger of losing humanity in abstractions. William Henry Channing, Alcott, Brownson, felt that society, as constituted, was unjust.

The differences of the group, however, were counterbalanced by their similarities. They had their starting point in the same psychological belief. They all opposed slavery, even the cool, detached Emerson. They all studied German diligently--except Hedge, who knew it. Poor Emerson, who had resisted Hedge, was bullied into taking lessons from Margaret Fuller. They all believed that Carlyle was their big English brother. In 1835, Ripley wrote Carlyle a foolish letter, which Emerson looked over, corrected, and warned Carlyle was coming. The sage of Concord's feelings about this epistle showed a high degree of critical acumen.

Boston, June 1, 1835.

My dear Sir

I am impelled by a yearning sympathy, to raise my voice to your ear, across the wide waste of waters, over which the music of your soul-melody has sounded to this distant spot. I cannot

address you as a stranger for the revelations of your mind have long been to me a source of the highest inspiration and joy. I have communed with your spirit in the utterance of its deep wisdom, and when I have felt the significance of your mystic sayings, my heart has leaped up with the response, "This unknown Being is my Brother..."

There was considerably more of this, after which Ripley retailed to Carlyle the steps in the development of his hero-worship.

Several years since with only a prophetic sense of the untold treasures of German thought, I read your article on German Literature in the Edinburgh. I was then a babe in this kind of knowledge, but felt at once the strongest sympathy with your views. The cares of life, and its urgent duties, prevented me at that time, from studying in this department with due diligence, but every voice of encomium[sic] on what I considered my morning star, was like words of encouragement from a mother's lips....The magnificent article on Burns came next. I cannot tell the joy with which I hailed it, as the rising of a new light in our dark times. Then came Schiller's Life. By a happy accident--I was the first to discover it in a neglected corner of a Book-seller's shop.... The casual English copy which had come into my hands, was soon diffused through a wide circle of friends....I have no space to tell you of the effect of your different Reviews, which after some time, I learned to ascribe to their true author-- Let me pass them over, and come at once to Teufelsdröck [sic]I regard it as the most significant indication of the present Age. It stands there, alone, a huge, mysterious, magnificent Symbol of the Time upon which we have fallen. It is the cry of the Heart and the Flesh for the Living God. England, my Brother! fellow Spirit of the Eternal,--has for now more than one century, been hemmed in with the Finite, girt around with the brazen walls of Custom. She has had no sense & no soul for the voice of the Infinite, which is sounding forth from this vocal Universe. Your ear has turned itself to catch the Echoes, which come from beyond the shores of Time... 189

After another carload of the same precious metal, Ripley offered Carlyle one of his articles, and his apologies for the intrusion. The personal interviews of the Transcendentalists with their English prophet, were not always successful. But from the enchanted transatlantic distance, they

pictured Carlyle, seated in the center of an idyllic household, uttering oracular words of wisdom borrowed from the German. They sent him their productions, which he tried hard to read, and John Sullivan Dwight dedicated to him a book.

This book was almost the first fruits of their combined ventures, being Volume Three of Ripley's select library, Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature. This collection was a series of fourteen volumes, translated from the French and German. George wrote Convers Francis of the project:

We have plenty of true scholars, studious men, men of taste and skill, in the different parts of the United States, who might do a great service to our own literature, by combining to enrich it with some of the most valuable foreign products. At present, their excellent culture, though a great food to themselves, does little for others, except indirectly, & they pass away without leaving any work on the literature of their country.¹⁹⁰

Emerson suggested that someone do a life of Eckerman, but otherwise had no part in the venture, except to sit off in the middle distance with Alcott, and decide that Cousin was shallow, and any eclectic no philosopher. Ripley's chain gang included his transcendental cronies, Margaret Fuller, Hedge, Dwight, W.H. Channing, Clarke, and the outsiders, C.C. Belton, Samuel Osgood, and C.T. Brooks.¹⁹¹

There was another opportunity for a united front. The Divinity School, hard up for a commencement speaker, in 1838, invited Emerson as a pinch-hitter. The famous address he delivered on the occasion was nothing if not

190 George Ripley to Convers Francis, 1837. A.L.S. in B.P.L.

191 Life, p.97.

a transcendental product. Standing before the Graduating Class, and cool as celery, he advocated nothing less than that the aspiring ministers look into their souls, forget their lessons, and consign learned divines to oblivion. Andrews Norton may well have doubted the testimony of his astonished ears. Certain statements could hardly have slipped by unnoticed:

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the law of the soul....

...The word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is monstrous. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain....

The prayers and even the dogmas of our church are like the zodiacs of Denderah and the astronomical monuments of the Hindoos, wholly insulated from anything now extant in the life and business of the people.

Needless to say, there were repercussions. Henry Ware, Jr., regretfully considered it his duty to preach a sermon in rebuttal. He sent Emerson a copy, and a letter of explanation. The persons in charge of securing speakers, to make no mistake, arranged for Andrews Norton to give the address the following year, which he did. The philippic which he composed for the occasion was aimed directly at Emerson and his cohorts; its temper can be judged from its title, The Latest Form of Infidelity. Norton was nothing if not thorough. The purpose of his address was to refute the whole intuitive school, not only the transcendentalists, but also the Germans back of them. His thesis was, "There can be no intuition, no direct perception, of the truth of Christianity, no metaphysical certainty."¹⁹² The burden of proof for the divine origin of Christianity fell on the miracles of Christ, recorded in the new Testament. To deny this view, was the latest form of infidelity. He then published

¹⁹² Emerson, op. cit., I, pp. 117-151.

his speech, and left the transcendentalists to bury their dead.

Emerson serenely ignored the whole uproar, and continued, in public and private, to say many more of the same things. But his friends lost no time in climbing on Norton's well-clawed back and digging in their finger nails. James Freeman Clarke and Richard Hildreth upheld Emerson's view. Ripley was the most highly verbal. He wrote a pamphlet called "The Latest Form of Infidelity" Examined, A Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton, occasioned by his Discourse before the Association of the Alumni of the Cambridge Theological School on the 19th of July, 1839, by an Alumnus of that School. 194

In it he took Norton severely to task for his bad manners, bad theology, and unscriptural views. He also defended Spinoza against the charge of being an atheist. In a defense of De Wette he set Norton right on some minor points of translating German. The substance of his remarks was that Norton erred in taste in attempting to impose articles of faith on the alumni of a liberal institution; that as few had read Spinoza or Hume on miracles, the discourse was not pertinent; that miracles are no criterion of the soundness of Christ's doctrines for the following reasons: that some are encumbered with historical doubts; that the Jews and early fathers discounted miracles, which could be worked by devils; that there were genuine messengers from God who worked no miracles. He feared that Norton's view on miracles as the sole prop of Christianity would turn Christianity over to the antiquarians, would rob it of its general appeal, and would make vain the faith of those who were Christians because the doctrines appealed to their souls. To make the job really complete, Ripley enforced some of his points

193 Andrews Norton, The Latest Form of Infidelity (Cambridge, J. Owen, 1839).

194 (Boston, James Munroe & Co., 1839).

with quotations from Norton himself, from Channing, and from Henry Ware, Jr.

Norton was back in the fray in no time at all, with "A Defence of 'The Latest Form of Infidelity!'" and George countered with "Defence of 'The Latest Form of Infidelity!'" Examined, a Second Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton.¹⁹⁵ Under prodding from Norton, he shed the alias, and signed the pamphlet by his own name. The controversy had now become very learned, and was fought out on a basis of philology, translation, definition, on the question of Spinoza's religious views. Regretting that Norton had taken the controversy away from the people and given it to the scholars, he corrected his former professor's Latin. Norton's steel cold intellect had made it no easy matter for George to establish Spinoza's freedom from atheism. Parker, disappointed at the trend events had taken, decided to do some writing himself. Norton failed to answer the second letter, so George put out a third letter, clearing Schleiermacher from any stigma of irreligion,¹⁹⁶ and called it a day. Parker, who still wished to say a few words, entered the subsiding battle under the name of Levi Blodgett. It is interesting to note that none of the infidels concerned had ever denied that Christ worked miracles. Emerson occupied the extreme position; he did not care. But Ripley, like his beloved Schleiermacher, fully believed that the wonders had taken place. His position was that they were not the sole evidence for the Christian religion.

This controversy with Norton was a continuance of the earlier skirmish. There was this difference--that Ripley had sought it. The clash in 1836 had

¹⁹⁵ (Boston, James Munroe & Co., 1840).

¹⁹⁶ Ripley, George, "Defence of 'The Latest Form of Infidelity!'" Examined, a Third Letter to Andrews Norton, (Boston, James Munroe & Co., 1841).

gone a long way to demolishing Ripley's nice, warm shell of inoffensive obscurity. The contact with the other transcendentalists had strengthened his conviction, and given him the sense that he had comrades in arms. From the cotton wrapping of the comfortable routine of the Purchase Street Church, he emerged to attend to the arch-foe of transcendentalism. Excitement had replaced caution, and Ripley was ripe for new ideas and new ventures.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DIAL

The Transcendentalists were as literate an assemblage of people as it was possible to find in one group outside the French Academy. Emerson, Ripley, Clarke, Cranch, Parker, Francis, Bartol, W. H. Channing, and Bradford had been through the rigors of the Cambridge Divinity School. Orestes Brownson was a metaphysician of no mean ability. Alcott had long since lost himself in the blue reaches of Platonic thought. Margaret Fuller was herself a liberal education. The book store which Elizabeth Peabody opened in 1840 was no better stocked than her own head. It was inevitable that the group should talk among themselves of how nice it would be if they had a periodical of their own, in which to display their pearls before the Boston public. The remarkable thing was that such a group of prima donnas ever got past the wistful stage into the active.

As usual, the first word of encouragement, once the project was talked of, came from Dr. Channing.¹⁹⁷ Even before the Transcendental Club had become an idea in the minds of Emerson and Hedge, there had been talk of a magazine, to be called The Transcendentalist, in which the elect would discuss philosophy. Channing was quite excited about the idea and Emerson wrote Carlyle of the interest the great Unitarian had shown. Soon Ripley and the other members of the group were urging Carlyle to come, with his wife, to this side of the Atlantic, dispense sweet reasonableness to his brothers of the spirit, and help edit the oracle.¹⁹⁸ Carlyle never came, and the topic temporarily dropped out of sight.

In 1839 the project revived. Alcott had been very much taken with the whole idea, and urged on his friends, now a semi-cohesive group, the idea of a philosophical journal. By comparison with the magazine of the future, he found those already in publication weak and inept. The Examiner he called "timid and conservative," while Brownson's Boston Quarterly Review, although "the best journal now current on this side of the Atlantic,...falls far below the idea of the best minds among us."¹⁹⁹ The club met at Bartol's one day in early September²⁰⁰ to discuss the matter. Margaret Fuller took over the conduct of the afternoon, and laid down a few principles of what a magazine should be, and how it should be run. Alcott suggested that the journal be called The Dial, which was the name of his diary, and the suggestion was as gravely received as offered.²⁰¹ Ripley was very hopeful about the matter; Parker,

197) Cooke, I, pp.56-7.

198) Ibid., I, p.57.

199) Ibid., I, p.59.

200) Ibid., I, p.43.

201) Ibid., I, p.59.

frankly bored. He had no doubts that the journal would see the light of day--Emerson, Hedge, and Margaret Fuller were competent to the job by themselves--but the conversation was not on the abstract plane he preferred. After the meeting, Brownson hopefully went from one transcendentalist to another, to see if he could channel their effort into his already existing journal, which was gasping for just such talent.²⁰² The inner council--Alcott, Emerson, and Margaret Fuller--went into a huddle over the suggestion, and came out shaking their heads. Brownson's dogmatism was too much of an obstacle, and his political relations even more so. With this verdict, even Ripley, perhaps Brownson's closest friend in the group, agreed. While he admired the high idealism of the man, he considered the political parties nothing more nor less than "low activities."

Heraud's Monthly Magazine was coming out in London at the time, and the transcendentalists thought as highly of it as it did of them, which was very highly for it greeted the works of Emerson and Alcott with cries of joy. (By some slip, it attributed Nature to the latter.) The English journal angled for writings by some of the Boston writers, including Dwight and Margaret Fuller, but the matter went no further. Alcott and Ripley had an agreeable talk on the matter. Ripley spoke the praises of the English journal,²⁰³ and fell to wishing that they could have one like it on this side of the Atlantic. Alcott, with all his eagerness on the subject, was having throes of doubt. He saw but few contributors, and

202) Ibid., I, p.59.

203) Ibid., I, p.59.

these were not all free from the influences of the past. But, he decided, such a journal they must have, "for the soul which awaits its scribes."

Emerson's prophetic soul warned him of trouble ahead. He had no desire to be the editor of anything, and felt the course of circumstances dead set against him. He pleaded with Margaret on the subject. He would send his poems and articles, but would do no more. This was positively his last word on the subject. Unless she or Ripley undertook the work, or unless William H. Channing came back, there would be no Dial.²⁰⁴

Margaret, soothing Emerson with kind words, interviewed Ripley, who promised to undertake the business arrangements.²⁰⁵ Then everybody concerned began to total up the number of possible contributors. Emerson's score was twenty, including his private forces of William Ellery Channing, the Sturgis sisters, Thomas T. Stone, who was a friend of Hedge, and Elizabeth Hoar. The more exacting Alcott saw only six besides himself; Emerson, Hedge, Margaret Fuller, Ripley, William Henry Channing, Dwight, and Clarke.²⁰⁶ His mathematics left out George Baneroff and Parker.

There may have been something personal in the latter omission, for Parker, according to Emerson, in a debate had wound himself around the Connecticut dreamer like an anaconda until one could hear the bones crush.²⁰⁷

Margaret Fuller, abetted by Ripley and John Sullivan Dwight, of whom Emerson thought highly, talked the sage of Concord into agreeing to give "active assistance for a year."²⁰⁸ Improvidently, Emerson did not think

204. Emerson Letters, II, p. 85. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller, October 16, 1839.

205. Ibid., II, p. 230, Ralph Waldo Emerson to Elizabeth Hoar, Nov. 4, 1839.

206. Cooke, I, p. 58.

207. Mell Shepard, Pedlar's Progress, op.cit., p. 24.

208. Cooke, I, p. 60.

to have Hilliard, the Concord lawyer, define "active assistance."

Ripley and Margaret Fuller made the rounds of the publishers' offices. They paid alternate visits to Little and Brown,²⁰⁹ where Mr. Brown was interested but wary, his fingers having just been scorched with The American Jurist and Law Magazine. He was far from impressed with the transcendental pair, who seemed to be undecided just how they proposed to circulate their magazine, and were even more indefinite as to the size of the subscription list. The negotiations fell through, and Ripley and Margaret Fuller made the unfortunate choice of Weeks, Jordan, & Co., who were tottering on a financial brink, and subsequently fell over.

Having completed their arrangements with the outside world, Margaret and George turned their attention to the home team, in time to find Emerson sizzling with wrath at Hedge. There had not always been complete harmony in the transcendental fold; Parker was sometimes difficult, and regarded Thoreau with derision; Brownson had made himself unpopular with several, and unbearable to Hedge; Sophia and Margaret loved and admired each other with marked mental reservations; Emerson thought Ripley rather too talkative. But here, for the first time, the chief was showing active signs of hostility. Frederic Henry Hedge, in reply to a request for contributions, had announced in no uncertain terms that he had other matters on his mind. Emerson, who at this point was morally certain that he and the German scholar were not brothers after the spirit, announced to anyone interested that the book would do as well without

²⁰⁹ Emerson Letters, II, pp. 243-249. Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jan. 1840.

Hedge as with him.²¹⁰ For business arrangements, he relied on Ripley, which was not, perhaps, the most astute course, and for material, on Dwight, Parker, Samuel Gray Ward, Thoreau, Caroline Sturgis, Sarah Clarke, Ellery Channing, Thomas Stone, in the order named.

Another trial was in store for Emerson. The publishers and Ripley decided that the Dial must have an introduction. Emerson thought the idea a poor one. However, after Ripley tried his hand at one and Margaret had done the same without satisfaction, the final beating of the drum was left up to Emerson. He submitted several drafts for the others' approval, with the suggestion that they were, perhaps, too fierce. Ripley sent back word, through Margaret, that they were insufficiently so.²¹¹ Margaret, caught between the millstones, eventually sided with Emerson, and hurried out to Concord with contributions for him to pass upon, which made the sage very unhappy, as he had been under the illusion that he was only a contributor.

Towards the end of April, greatly to his perplexity, Emerson received Alcott's contribution of a number of gnomic utterances, separated by titles and Roman numerals, and called "Orphic Sayings." Emerson passed them on to Margaret Fuller, saying "They are better than I feared." He also had an article by Thoreau, called "Persius Aulus Flaccus," which he recommended for the first number. This caused complications, as when Ripley sent the author the proof, the spirit did not inspire Thoreau to read it, so it went in full of blemishes and spots. Ripley, in all probability, wrote the prospectus which announced to the world the purposes of the Dial.

210. Emerson Letters, II, pp.270-3. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller, Mar. 30, 1840.

211. Emerson Letters, II, pp.240-1. Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, April, 1840.

The purpose of this work is to furnish a medium for the freest expression of thought on the questions which interest earnest minds in every community. The pages of this journal will be filled by contributors who possess little in common but the love of individual freedom, and the hope of social progress; and who are united by sympathy of spirit, not by agreement in speculation; whose faith is in Divine Providence, rather than in human prescription, and who trust the living soul more than the dead letter. It will endeavor to promote the constant evolution of truth, not the petrification of opinion...In literature it will strive to exercise a just and catholic criticism, and to recognize every sincere production of genius; in philosophy it will attempt the reconciliation of the universal instincts of humanity with the largest conclusions of reason; and in religion it will reverently seek to discover the presence of God in nature, in history, and in the soul of man.²¹²

Ripley, the official business mind, stood over Weeks, Jordan, arranging for the free copies of the contributors. He came off second best, as he only got twelve for all the writers to divide. Margaret bore the brunt of the heavy work, although she was ill, and her head ached so that at times she could scarcely see the proof.

In July, the Dial made its long awaited appearance. The list of writers, considered in the light of their later careers, was brilliant; Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Thoreau, Parker, Dwight, Ripley, Alcott, the Sturgis sisters, Cranch. Alcott's "Orphic Sayings" caused some mirth among the uninitiate. Actually some of them were highly interesting, although they gave the impression of being a number of texts for the day strung together without the sermons. Some of them bogged down completely.

²¹² Cooke, I. p. 68.

The Actual and Ideal

The actual and ideal are twins of one mother, Reality, who, failing to incarnate her conceptions in time, meanwhile contents herself with admiring in each the complement of the other, herself integrant of both. Always are the divine Gemini intertwined: Pan and Psyche, man and woman, the soul and nature. ²¹³

The leading article was Thomas T. Stone's "Man in the Ages," which Emerson considered a high statement, although a trifle long and marred by occasional carelessness. As the manuscript was very long and closely written, he declined to correct it, but sent it in as it was. ²¹⁴

Margaret Fuller filled in all the gaps herself, which gave her considerable writing to do, as the unpaid contributors did not flock around in large quantities. Emerson went through his treasures, and sent in poems of his first wife, Ellen Louisa Tucker, and of his two dead brothers, Charles and Edward. In the poetry department, the open championship cup went uncontested to the sage, for his now famous poem "The Problem." Ellen Sturgis Hooper's six lines with no title deserved honorable mention. This little work had various characteristics of the transcendental poem stamped all over it. It was a frosty little piece of New England, with considerable austere charm. It had no pretenses, still less artificial prettiness. It was on a general subject, with a strong moral. Perhaps it was less complex than the usual transcendental work.

I slept and dreamed that Life was Beauty:
I woke and found that Life was Duty.
Was thy dream then a shadowy lie?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be ²¹⁵
A noonday light and truth to thee.

²¹³ The Dial, I, p. 98, July, 1840.

²¹⁴ Emerson Letters, II, p. 303. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller, June 7, 1840.

²¹⁵ The Dial, I, p. 71, July, 1840.

There was nothing mellow, bosky, and luscious about the transcendental muse. John Sullivan Dwight was merely expressing the sentiment of his peers when in 1848 he censured Fenryson for devoting too much thought to beauty of form; and Emerson, when he confided to his journal that Fenryson was the "cosmetic poet." Unfortunately for the display of transcendental verses, Emerson's problem did not have a supporting note of universally high quality. Ellery Channing never justified his reputation for genius; Thoreau had been reading Wordsworth to bad effect, and young Samuel Gray Ward took the leather medal with his "Song." The subject of Thoreau's poem was a young man, probably fictitious, who had a lofty moral character.

Lately alas I knew a gentle boy,
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for beauty's toy,
But ever after scanned him for her stronghold.²¹⁶

According to the poem, the boy died before Thoreau had established a firm acquaintanceship with him, which was, perhaps, fortunate for the Dial.

Ripley's article on "Brownson's Writings"²¹⁷ showed how completely Ripley was in tune with the philosophy of the group. He praised Brownson as a scholar who did not value literature as an opportunity for elegant expression, but "as an instrument to help the solution of problems, that haunt and agitate the soul." This principle Brownson had manifested in his writings in the Examiner. Ripley further applauded the other writer for his opposition of the popular doctrine of expediency as the basis of morals, instead of the absolute idea of right. In New Views of Christianity, Society and the Church, said Ripley, Brownson had struck

²¹⁶ The Dial, I. p. 98, July, 1840

²¹⁷ The Dial, I, pp. 22ff, July, 1840

a happy balance between the exclusive principles of materialism and spiritualism. He regarded both spirit and matter as holy in its nature, and earth having the same essential sanctity as heaven. In the past, the principles of spiritualism and materialism had warred against each other. Neither exclusive principle was tenable. Neither might one dispense with all religious instruction, as men could not continue in a state of anarchy. Hence, a new church, which recognized the claims of matter and spirit, was necessary. The results of such a church, which recognized the deathless nature of man, would be the end of slavery and of war, the universality of education and of civil freedom. Industry would become holy, and the cultivation of the earth, the worship of God. In Charles Elwood Ripley saw the best of Brownson's writings. The thesis of the book was that "They who deny to man all inherent truth, place man out of the condition of ever knowing anything of God," for there must be a God within to recognize the God speaking from without.

Most of the contributors to the Dial were unknown, and very reticent about signing their work besides. Some used their initials, some did not. The poetry was supplied from a private portfolio of Margaret Fuller, and the privacy enforced was such that George and Sophia, who helped the editor sort the poems, agreed not to know the names of the writers, and would not enlighten John Sullivan Dwight on the authorship of a poem which he admired.²¹⁸ This attitude toward publicity was, perhaps, one reason why the public was distinctly unimpressed, and subscribers did not flock in droves.

218 Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, Aug. 1, 1840. A.L.S. in B.P.L., Dwight Collection.

Among the transcendentalists, the disappointment over the magazine was very general. Sophia, administering consolation, stated that a number of people, including herself, considered the Dial, "a very charming book,"²¹⁹ which was scarcely the opinion which the makers of the quarterly oracle desired. Miss Peabody damned it with fainter praise still: "It is domestic, giving the every day state of feeling and thought of the writers."²²⁰ There is no effort about it, and much strength." Emerson and Margaret Fuller deplored; Theodore Parker grumbled, particularly at Thoreau's "Persius." Alcott regarded the journal as "a rather worldly and conventional affair." The poor little venture seemed not to have a friend in the world but John Sullivan Dwight.

Ripley, finding no consolation nearer home, wrote the young Northampton pastor a letter of quiet dismay:

You have been the Dial, of course. I hope you like it better than I do. It is quite unworthy, I think, of its pretensions; and unless the everlasting hills, to which we have looked for help, give us something more than this, they had better cease to be parturient.

Dwight responded nobly, collected all the kind things said about the Dial in Northampton and Deerfield, and sent them to Ripley, who felt much better.

In spite of all efforts, the Dial did not prosper. For nothing were Alcott's proverbs and Emerson's beautiful English, as far as the sales public was concerned. Ripley might just as well not have corrected the writings of the sage, and instructed him through Margaret Fuller to dispense with certain prettinesses. The only articles which attracted public notice to the point of selling out complete numbers were those of rash

²¹⁹ ibid.

²²⁰ ibid.

Theodore Parker, when he went after the scalp of some prominent Unitarian. The most offensively successful of these was "The Hollis Street Council." The reverend feud of long standing between Reverend John Pierpont and his congregation had come to a head. For some time the Hollis Street John the Baptist had denounced his flock to their faces for their sins, particularly for the making and selling of liquor. A list of charges was brought against him, including such ominous items as wasting his time in the writing of poems and books; his hymns for pious occasions. The case was referred to a council, of which the Reverend Ezra Stiles Gannett was one. The case was particularly ticklish, as the pastor was obviously guiltless of anything but vehemence, and the congregation was frothing at the mouth. The council, after due deliberation, turned in a verdict which said in effect that the Reverend Mr. Pierpont was innocent as charged, but for whatever he had been doing he should be reproved, so please stop it. Parker's article came out, and the Reverend Mr. Gannett could hardly believe his eyes to read that he was an ally of the rum interests, not to speak of a derelict from the paths of Christian duty. He was highly incensed, and the Dial sold well for a change.

Ripley's further contributions to the Dial were "A Letter to a Theological Student," and several reviews. The letter cautioned aspirants to the ministry against certain very specific and subtle forms of fear. One was the mental suicide of looking to study to support dying opinions, rather than to attain the truth. The other was social; the young minister would be well aware that both the liberal and orthodox clergy never overlooked or forgave any wandering from the straight and

narrow path of acceptable dogmatism. Hence he might linger over safe and threadbare topics, and his sermons would be dull and conventional, instead of vibrant with life. The final admonition was to look to Europe, where "a new life has sprung up from the ashes of a departed faith." The theological student should read Herder's Letters on the Study of Theology, even if he had to learn German in order to do so.

The reviews attributed to George are of the Works of William Ellery Channing, D.D., Francis Palmer's Letter to Those Who Think, Professor Walker's Vindication of Philosophy, Harwood's Materialism in Religion, and Cousin's Oeuvres Completes de Platon. Of these, the most interesting is the review of Palmer's Letter.²²¹ This sincere young man advocated the superseding of Christianity with a system of morality based on intuition and of the economic system with one in which property would have little place, and money, none. His first proposition was a logical projection of the doctrines which the transcendentalists had been advocating for years, and which Professor Norton very justly feared. All the anti-authoritarianism, all the hatred of the dead weight of a traditional past, all the confidence in the mind's inner promptings, came out in Palmer's statement "I am convinced that Christianity is to be superseded, as that has superseded Judaism." This was following the Unitarian protest out into the great white uncharted spaces with a vengeance. It was, furthermore, good Emersonian doctrine and the sage was very much impressed with Palmer. Ripley, whose inexorably logical mind led him where his conservative instincts made him uncomfortable, by a supreme effort, offered a compromise. The voice in the mind was infallible, absolute; it corresponded to the divine. Hence, either Christ's teachings exactly corresponded to both the

221) The Dial, I, p. 153. October, 1840.

divine and human minds, or Christianity stood in the same relation to natural religion as Samaria to Judah. Hence, on those premises, the only possibility of saving Christianity was to declare that the highest expression of the human mind, and the voice which spoke in Galilee were the same. This statement, Ripley made. His difference with Palmer was for supposing that Christianity and the popular religion of society were one.

He also differed with Palmer's economic program, and his answer was in keeping with the creed of his circle of friends. The arrangement of society, Ripley held, would solve no problem, as long as the social ideas remained the same. Abolish money, and men will covet apples. Let ingenuity devise what methods it may, greed would find some means of operation. "The heart must be set right." George's sublime optimism never questioned that men would follow the highest when they saw it. Ideas came first, and then actions. The early Christians were impelled by the strength of their sympathy with their brothers in Christ to bring offerings to a common treasury, from which the wants of the impoverished were supplied. They did not feast while their fellows were hungry; they indulged in no extravagances while their brothers were destitute and suffering. They acted in accordance with the Christian idea, which "is not yet carried out in any Christian institution." George was not opposed to a new order of society, but it must be based on ideals of which everyone was convinced, and not on laws whose force was from without. But what about those who will have nothing to do with Christian or any other altruistic ideals? George never answered that question. It is interesting that this review was written as he was planning to put into practice his ideals of Christian society.

Sophia contributed three articles: "Woman," "Painting and Sculpture" and "A Letter from Zosar." The first was a generalized article with little organization, less stylistic distinction, and appalling paragraphing. 222

Her theme was "All adjusting of the whole sex to a sphere is vain," for character creates the sphere of each. The shadowy inspiration of the poet was not woman but phantom. When the pulpit carped on the religious duties of woman, there was a lack of realism, for religion belongs to individuals, not to male and female. The education of woman is aimed to a tacit understanding that she is only half a human being, an appendage, first to her parents, then to society, then to her husband. Her faculties are developed without balance; in society her powers of observation are fearfully sharpened, but she is so occupied with observing that she never penetrates. Once she is married, she scarcely dares use her powers of observation on her husband. If she is disappointed, she is either crushed, or complains of the lot of woman; if she is not, she thinks her husband perfect, and adds his prejudices to her already large collection. She corrects her differing ideas by his, and losing her own individuality, never gains his respect. Is woman's destiny then to be an aimless adventurer through life? Those who would have it so are not the men, who respect the gently firm, and prefer intelligent affection to submission. They are the weak and ignorant of her own sex. She should be taught to penetrate through externals to principles. "She should be seen, after the first dreamlike years of unconscious childhood are passed, weekly and reverently questioning and encouraged to question the opinions of others, calmly contemplating beauty in all its forms, studying the harmony of life, as well as of outward nature, deciding nothing, learning all

things, gradually forming her own ideal, which, like that represented in the sculptured figures of old Persian sovereigns, should cheerfully and protectingly hover over her." Society should be her relaxation, but not her home. Her highest hours should be her lonely ones. In beautiful and graceful forms she should see revelations of divine beauty. In marriage "her own individuality should be as precious as his love." Friendship throws a genial atmosphere about her path, but she must always walk alone. With the cry that woman's place was in the home, Sophia had no quarrel. The more retired circle of the home called for as much self-discipline as public life. Let one "ennoble household order by seeing the relationship between it and the law which keeps the planets in their courses." With courage, woman should gauge the strength of coming suffering, that she might be prepared to meet it. "Thought should be her atmosphere, books her food, friends her occasional solace." The article concluded with the rhetorical question, "Is this the ideal of a perfect woman, and if so, how does it differ from a perfect man?"

Sophia was almost naive in her refutation of all talk of adjusting a whole sex to a sphere, and then in not only accepting that sphere, but in offering a character pattern to be followed in the acceptance. Unlike Margaret Fuller, she was no legalist. She had little concern for safeguards, for means, for specific grievances. From Emerson, whom she greatly admired, she borrowed her stoical ideal, and many of the accompanying ideas. Her attitude in this article seemed to be one of complete self-dependence, and disregard of circumstances. Yet Theodore Parker found her a more vehement reformer than himself. Apparently Sophia's article was written on the principle of popular nineteenth century guide

books on behavior. When a condition is given, this is how to behave. The condition itself is not discussed. It was when she focused her attention on a condition that Sophia rebuked Theodore Parker for lack of zeal.

The article on "Painting and Sculpture" was even more incoherent, more generalized, and more full of Emersonian echoes than "Woman."²²³

Also, the subject has less universal interest. Sophia viewed sculpture as a summation of all the art which had gone before, as philosophy is of writing, whatever she may have meant by that. Painting she considered fragmentary. The abstractions, clear perhaps in her own mind, became dim and formless in her expression. Knowing perfectly well what she meant, she did not sufficiently sketch it to the reader, leaving him snarling and resentful, while the brilliant and flickering tail light of an idea gleamed ahead through the pages.

The third article, "A Letter From Zoar," resurrected the travels of 1838, when she and George were in Ohio, on a missionary tour for the American Unitarian Association. The description of their experience was vivid, crisp, informative. Sophia would have been a good reporter for some Transcendental Daily Bulletin. The visit to the little religious communities was set down play by play. The habits of the neat, cheerful, thrifty community being unfamiliar to her, there were none of the dreadful lacunae of transitions, which make her other articles hard reading. She and George had been much impressed with the business-like fashion with which the community was run, and with the candor, cheerfulness and faith which they encountered. The head of it, Baumbler, was a shrewd business man, but nothing of a philanthropist, to the disappointment of the Ripleys. He kept himself carefully apart from his community, and was treated with great respect by the industrious, frugal people. Sophia

²²³ The Dial, II, pp.78-ff. July, 1841.

decided against the communism of the place, remarking that many young people had left the security of community life for the pleasures of private property and farms of their own.

The last official business which Ripley attempted for the Dial was to try to disentangle it from the affairs of the bankrupt firm of Weeks, Jordan & Co., its publishers. There was for a moment fear that not only would they lose the subscription list, but the very name, Dial. The publishers were unwilling to proceed with any further printing, unless the bills were contracted in the name of Emerson, the most solvent member of the editorial staff. Margaret Fuller was unquestionably impecunious, and Ripley had, by that time, removed from Boston to Brook Farm. Before the affair was settled, not only Emerson, Ripley, Margaret Fuller, Messrs. Jordan and Weeks had been involved in the matter, but even Mr. Hilliard, man of law of Concord.²²⁴

²²⁴ Emerson Letters, II, pp. 457-8. George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RIPLEYS, 1840

The first few months of 1840 found George and Sophia Ripley filling the role of any carbon copy of a well-behaved Boston minister and his wife. George was liked by his society, and the other ministers thought well enough of him to exchange pulpits readily. Sophia had many friends among the congregation; her wit, courtesy, and distinction of manner made her a welcome addition to social occasions. She gives a pleasant picture of their life at the time in a letter to John Sullivan Dwight on February 19, 1840.

Her opening description of herself is hardly dignified. On a sudden impulse, she went out into the snow, because she remembered little Frankie Dana's prattle connecting snow and God. Her reverie was cut short abruptly when she slid on the sidewalk, and fell flat, fortunately where no one could see. She went home and stayed there with her injuries, reading Balzac. Poor George also had his woes. The cold weather crept into his bones, and he sat by the fire, very rheumatic, and trying to convince Sophia that there was nothing disagreeable about growing old.²²⁵ He received scant sympathy from his spouse, who told Dwight that she

²²⁵ This was strictly a manner of speaking, as he was thirty-seven at the time. In his letters thirty years later, he makes very much the same observations.

... Passed the day on one side of the fireplace sneering, G. on the other groaning,--and not having sufficient musical ear to harmonise these expressions of suffering, the discord was horrible. ²²⁶

Having exhausted the topic of their complaining bones, Sophia sketched the events of the week for Dwight. Marianne Ripley was visiting them, and, at the moment, reading Dwight's sermon. On Wednesday, February 16, they had all gone to Margaret Fuller's conversation, which was so crowded that it turned into a lecture. This Margaret did very well, "though by no means doing justice to herself." The same evening, they went to Emerson's lecture on education, "which, though much better than anyone else could have done, was only the lees of his best things." Emerson is tired, the life is departing from the series, and she is glad they are drawing to a close. Christopher Pearse Cranch spent one evening with them, and expressed on the piano the melancholy feelings aroused by the absence of John Sullivan Dwight. There are mentions of Boston social occasions: a large party at the Watsons, and a reception at Dr. Channing's. On Sunday, Feb. 19, George went off to Dorchester, to exchange pulpits with Rev. Mr. Hall. ²²⁷

These appearances of placid, genial surfaces belied both Ripleys. Sophia's social brilliance had a shell-like quality. Margaret Fuller complained of not being able to establish understanding with the real Sophia, ²²⁸ yet Margaret and the Ripleys were friends, and she gave a course of conversations at their house. Georgiana Bruce, a young English woman of the crowded Brook Farm years, filled her reminiscences with complaints about Sophia's lack of warmth and sympathy. ²²⁹ Amelia Russell, one of Sophia's friends of long standing,

²²⁶ Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, A. L. S. in B. P. L.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oct. 1840. A. L. S. in B. P. L.

²²⁹ Georgiana Bruce Kirby, Years of Experience (New York, G. P. Putnam, 1887).

remembers her intelligence, her wit, and her devotion to duty. There may have been plenty of caviar in Sophia's character, but there was simply no sugar.

For a brilliant conversationalist, she was in some ways inarticulate. She was a natural mystic, but guarded her moments of illumination with reserve, except from the very few. Emerson, who was as cool and reserved as herself, was occasionally the recipient of her account of a moment of revelation or of dismay. Her cousin, Ruth Charlotte Dana, shared with her, many years later, the fervors of a new faith. To John Sullivan Dwight she sometimes partially revealed her mind. Parker was an admired friend, but he remembered her as a social reformer. He wrote in his journal:

Mrs. Ripley gave me a tacit rebuke for not shrieking at wrongs, and spoke of the danger of losing our humanity in abstractions. ²³⁰

There were few who understood that she was a poet. Her quality of reading the unseen into the seen, God into natural scenery, she shared with Emerson. She had also the same ideal as that of the sage,--a practicing stoicism. There was a stern quality in her nature, which was lacking in that of her husband, the genial, expressive pastor of the Purchase Street Church.

That genial and expressive person had fewer reserves than Sophia, and possibly the best disposition in the Transcendental Club. He was the closest friend that stormy Orestes Brownson had in New England;²³¹ or that Theodore Parker had anywhere. He was always on good terms with Hedge, who later in 1846 when other Transcendental friends fell away and the sky was coming down in large pieces for Ripley, sent a contribution to the Harbinger, a paper

²³⁰ Life, p. 111.

²³¹ Young Isaac Hecker, in New York, was a close friend of Brownson.

edited by Ripley, with which Hedge could not have sympathized.²³² Alcott had admired Ripley on his first visit to Boston in 1819, and in 1836, when social and religious Boston had declared war on him, had come to Ripley to find out why. Ripley had performed the hard service of telling his friend that the Boston clergy considered the Conversations on the Gospels an infringement on the theological field; Alcott was not the product of the Cambridge or any other Divinity School, and Ripley knew that the absence of the old school tie scored against the man. Ripley's method of discussion with Alcott was a model of intellectual courtesy. The ultra-transcendental Alcott sometimes had lapses of logic, and Ripley, by his questions, elicited not only what Alcott concluded, but what he felt. Frequently they differed, but Ripley showed the desire to understand rather than to refute. Ripley's nature was highly social. Unlike Hawthorne, he welcomed the society of his peers. He liked having his fellow beings around him, to sympathize with, as well as to polish his brains on.

Unlike Emerson, he was aware of people in masses. He knew that chattel slavery made the South despicable, and wage slavery the North hideous. He had seen the deplorable Irish immigrants, robbed of all they possessed by the sea captains, wandering with unrewarded hope around Boston, the city of the Brahmins. But his answer was not a cry for legislation and plenty of it. Unlike Brownson, he had a complete contempt for political parties, while he shared Brownson's views that the answer to distress was in educating the heart.

As far as the ministry was concerned, he was full of discontent. His voice sounded cold to his own ears. The issues of 1836 were as tame and old as his two tracts for the Unitarian Association, The Divinity of Christ and The Doctrines of the Trinity and Transubstantiation Compared, with their multiplicity of texts, interpretations, citations, authorities, firstlies

²³² Harbinger, III, title page, lists Hedge as a contributor.

and secondlies. He found himself in the position of pouring the dead word into dead ears. Conversation had life; one spoke without fear of cries of heresy. One spoke as an equal, not as a petty pope, cutting arbitrary patterns of theology into minds of dough. But the Purchase Street pulpit was another matter; it was formal and cold. Under the conditions, he questioned the institution of the ministry.

It was not that he had lost his belief in God; his faith was unflinching. Emerson and Alcott seemed to have banished God to some world of abstraction, where He became an unconscious intelligence, a benevolent source of energy, an infinite moral force, an Infinite Being of whom men's minds are finite particles. He found more accord with Brownson's view, as expressed in Charles Elwood. The universe and its maker were separate, according to Brownson, who offered an ingenious theory of creation, with which Ripley was mightily taken. The universe was a volition of God, just as a man's will to raise his arm is a volition of that man. The man and his intention are separate; in the same way the universe and God differ, although the universe is as dependent on God as the volition is on the man.²³³

No, Ripley had not lost faith. He and Parker and others of the transcendental group had enough of it to send them into strange places, with stranger company. One such occasion was the convention of the Millerites and Come-outers at Groton, in August, 1840.²³⁴ Ripley and Parker walked to Concord,

²³³ George Ripley, "Orestes A. Brownson's Writings" the Dial, 1, pp. 23-46, July, 1840. There were flaws in this argument. The universe, if compared to the arm which the man had raised by an act of volition, instead of to the volition itself, would be part of a fine, pantheistic system. But Ripley cited the argument without criticism, which meant, with assent, as Ripley always stated his differences. As Brownson received Ripley's applause for his writings, it is legitimate to judge that they were in accord in regard to the dualism of God and universe.

²³⁴ Henry S. Commager, Theodore Parker (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1936), p. 158.

picking up Cranch on the way, and Alcott in Concord. Dr. Ripley, venerable and authoritarian, cautioned them against being "egomites" and Emerson gave them tea, and bored Parker by talking Dial. In Groton, Parker gave a well-received speech. The Come-Outers, a group from Cape Cod who had come out of all religions, impressed the visitors by their earnestness; the Millerites amused by their mathematical demonstrations that the world would end in 1843. The transcendentalists were not without humor--they enjoyed the strange manifestations of the spirit. But humor was not their purpose in going. Wherever the religious freaks foregathered, there were transcendentalists in the midst, looking for the trace of divine ideas on the minds of the maddest.

Ripley was becoming discontented in the pulpit, because the ministry offered none of the things by which he set store. The meetings of the Transcendental Club had the advantage of giving him opportunity for speculative discussion, and also the deep, social, instinctive pleasure which comes when the conversation between several people improves the minds and the feelings of all. The active reform work which he had been engaged in was directed at certain, specific improvements of the condition of needy people. The greater reform, of educating people from the heart out, could not be done by deadening the infallible instincts of the heart with a weight of formalism. His pastoral relation hindered himself, and helped no one besides.

CHAPTER XIX

RIPLEY LEAVES THE MINISTRY

In May, 1840, the Ripleys went to Northampton for the ordination of John Sullivan Dwight. The sermon was delivered by Ripley, and the charge by Dr. Channing. By a strange coincidence, the same week that marked the opening of Dwight's ministry, marked George's first steps towards closing his. While with Dwight, Ripley composed a letter to the proprietors of Purchase Street, resigning his pastoral charge.

To the proprietors, whose only previous communication from Ripley as pastor had been a report on the respective merits of various hymn-
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 books, the letter caused considerable consternation. They ceased their deliberation about a pew tax to help their ailing budget, and appointed a committee of five to draft a suitable answer. Ripley's letter stressed their chief worry, the lack of funds.

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M. S. Records of the Thirteenth Congregational Church, in the American Unitarian Association. Sunday, April 7, 1839.

Northampton, May 21, 1840.

My Respected Friends

I learn with regret that the pecuniary affairs of the Church are not in a prosperous condition. I also understand that a means of providing funds to meet the expenses is now the subject of discussion.

Under these circumstances I feel that it is due both to you and myself to express my own views with the perfect frankness which has always marked our intercourse--

Our connection was formed in the beginning with a full view of the difficulties which it involved,--the most sanguine friends of the Church were not confident of its success, and on the whole I do not know that our prosperity has been less than we had reason to anticipate. There have always however been many discouragements; and at times these have been so great, that nothing but a sense of the kindness I have received at your hands and the conviction that my best endeavor was due to you so long as they were desired, has prevented me from requesting to be discharged from your service.

I cannot then avoid deeming this the proper occasion to say that if the support of my office should be thought burdensome or inexpedient in the deliberative judgment of your body and the Society, which you represent, it would be my desire to relinquish it. If your interests can be better promoted by other hands I wish that they assume that trust. I have now laboured with you for nearly fourteen years; I have done what I could to accomplish the purposes of our connection; and under the present relation it is not likely that my ministry can be essentially different from what it has been; I do not feel that I can do more in the time to come than I have done in the past. With these convictions I am bound to give you the option of preserving the present connection; it must be a matter of free will and of good will on both sides or it can be procursive of no pleasant fruits. I beg therefore that you will discuss the subject so far as you deem necessary with the same freedom as if the question were now to be taken on my settlement for the first time.

In making this communication I trust too much to your candor to suppose that it will be ascribed to weariness of my duties or a want of attachment to my society. I wish to consult the common good, without peculiar reference to myself. On former occasions I have felt bound to you by ties which I could not prevail on myself to break; the same feeling remains on my part; but I shall cheerfully adopt a different one if I were persuaded that it would meet with your wishes or be to your advantage, and in whatever sphere I might be placed I should not cease to rejoice in your welfare and be grateful for your friendship.²³⁶

²³⁶Ibid. George Ripley to the Proprietors of the Purchase Street Church. Copy. The correspondence between Ripley and the proprietors, but not the accounts of the meetings or committees, is published in George Ripley, A Farewell Discourse (Boston, Drake's Pamphlets, 1841).

The following Sunday afternoon the proprietors accepted the letter of reply drafted by C. W. Cartwright, George O. Smith, J. H. Thayer, Samuel Quincy, and Richard Austin.

Boston, May 30, 1840.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The Undersigned were appointed a committee by the Proprietors of the Congregational Church in Purchase Street at a meeting held the last Sabbath, to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of 21st inst, and to make a suitable reply to the same. In conformity thereto we beg leave to say that it cannot be disguised that funds are, and always have been, so small, that our standing committee have been obliged to use great economy in all of their fiscal concerns, but with such economy and by occasional temporary advances of small sums by our treasurer, for short periods, we have been enabled to meet every exigency; and we trust that in future we shall continue to be able to meet such demands on the Treasury as our necessities may call for, the Proprietors having agreed to advance the Taxes on the twenty per cent. Having thus far successfully encountered the difficulties which existed at the time our Society first sprang into being and having maintained our position about fourteen years during a large portion of which period commercial embarrassment having weighed heavily upon us, we cannot but hope that we shall not only continue to meet our current expenses, but that we shall be enabled to pay off our existing debt, which by relieving us from the charge of about two hundred and fifty dollars annual interest, will add this amount to our means with which to meet our current expenses.

At the present time, about thirty pews belong to the society. Of this number twenty-six yield no revenue, this it is that has produced a want of funds, and the consequent necessity of raising the Taxes; but we hope soon to have these pews occupied, and the income from which in connection with the advance in the taxes will no doubt in a few years enable us to pay off our debt and redeem our property from mortgage. With this frank statement of our pecuniary concerns we hope you will not be discouraged, but that you will consent to continue as our pastor, that we may receive from your office those lessons of instruction which we value, and in our social relations, to receive those marks of kind regard and consolation in private affliction, which you are preeminently qualified to give; and which have always been so given, as to require earnest thanks.

We beg to assure you that we think the continuance of the Society in Purchase Street mainly depends on your continuance as Pastor, and that should you leave, a considerable portion of those who have formed strong attachments for your private virtues, would also leave; and should these events take place, we do not now perceive how the balance of this society could without a very considerable accession of members, grant that support to a pastor which duty and justice would seem to require of them. In closing this communication we are sure that we should do our constituents injustice did we not assure you of their great per-

sonal regard, and that our regard is no less ardent. We therefore hope and trust that you may be listened to in future with the same pleasure and interest with which you were heard at the commencement of your ministry.²³⁷

This frank, generous, troubled letter was written on the theory that the pastor's worry was financial. Perhaps the good proprietors thought that Ripley's resignation was merely a courteous gesture of concern over the church's budget, and that having absolved him of any blame, they might expect him to continue as before. But the transcendentalists, when they heard of Ripley's action, knew that it was the end.²³⁸ Ripley, seeing his flock's concern over the effect his departure might have on the finances, gave them breathing time. He wrote Dwight:

My affairs with Purchase St. are very satisfactory just now. I sent the letter which I showed you. This came upon the Proprietors unexpectedly in the midst of their deliberations, as to the pecuniary condition of the chh. What an absurdity such a phrase implies,—as if the soul, or any combination of souls, could be viewed in money relations. My letter was referred to a large Committee, who reported an answer to this effect, that though the prosperity of the chh in regard to its income, was not so great as could be wished, they might anticipate better times, if I remained; that my departure would deprive the society of such a large proportion of its best members, as to endanger its existence; and that, it was earnestly desired that the present relations should continue. This letter was unanimously adopted by the Proprietors, & duly received by me. The movement has called forth expressions of attachment & interest, from all quarters; and everybody assures me, that my resignation would cause a loss which the Society could ill sustain. Under these circumstances, I mean to give them a breathing-time, in hopes that within a year the separation may take place, under better auspices to all concerned than at present. I shall send them a communication before long, placing our connection on this ground, making it temporary in every respect, and, meantime, as far as I can in such a sphere, carrying into operation my ideas in regard to a free chh. I find, I confess, a discrepancy between my own general views & those which prevail in the chh. that would surprise me, anywhere but in Boston: The mass of our people have no conception of the first principles of liberal Chrt'y. They wish for a priest & a spiritual guide, not to say dictator, rather than for

²³⁷ Ibid., C. M. Cartwright, Samuel Quincy, Richard Austin, Joseph H. Thayer, George G. Smith, to George Ripley. Copy.

²³⁸ Emerson Letters, II, pp. 197-9. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller, May 29, 1840: "What a brave thing Mr. Ripley has done, he stands now at the head of the Church militant and his step cannot be without an important sequel." PP. 297-8 n., Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, May 31, 1840: "Mr. Ripley is most happy about the step he has taken."

a fraternal helper. They would rather be exhorted than enlightened; they prefer the religion of a book to the religion of the soul, and a man of phylacteries and ~~phylacteries~~ [ases has more] value in their eyes than one whose lips have been burned by the Holy Ghost. ²³⁹

On October 3, Ripley greeted his parishioners with a printed letter of some 7300 words, in which he very courteously stated that he was resigning, and gave his reasons for doing so. The fear of heresy confined a preacher to threadbare topics, from which none of his hearers might be thought to disagree. Under such circumstances, "he can never speak with the earnestness and life which become the messenger who bears the Word of God on his lips." ²⁴⁰ He himself had not escaped this restraint.

I was fully sensible that I was suffering from this influence; that I had not strength to resist the formality and coldness which are breathed from the atmosphere of our churches; and that, unless we could all break away from such influences, it was wholly in vain for me to speak any longer in this pulpit I thought that a change in the administration of religion here would be for our mutual advantage. I did not feel at liberty to propose any important alterations in the principles on which our worship was conducted, while at the same time I was certain that without some change my ministry among you could not be carried on with any vital power. ²⁴¹

The questions which had aroused interest in 1826 were those of the Unitarian controversy. But, since then, a new order of ideas had arisen.

The essential principles of liberal Christianity made religion to consist, not in any speculative doctrine, but in a divine life. They asserted the unlimited freedom of the human mind, and not only the right, but the duty of private judgment. They established the kingdom of God, not in the dead past, but in the living present; gave the spirit a supremacy over the letter; insisted on the necessity of pointing out the corruptions of the church, of sweeping away the traditions which obscured the simplicity of truth, and urged every soul to press on to the highest attainment; to forget what was behind, and never to be kept back from expressing

²³⁹ George Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, July 7, 1840, A.L.S. in E.P.L. Letter blotted.

²⁴⁰ Life, p. 68. A Letter to the Congregational Church in Purchase Street.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 68.

its convictions by the voice of authority or the fear of man. A portion of the liberal clergy felt it their duty to carry out these views; to be faithful to their principles; not to shrink from their application, but to exercise the freedom which God gave them in the investigation of truth and the enforcement of its practical results. They could not linger around the grave of the past. The experiences of manhood enlarged the conception of their pupilage. They had been taught that no system of divinity monopolized the truth, and they were no more willing to be bound by the prevailing creed of Boston or Cambridge, than their fathers had been by the prescription of Rome or Geneva. But in these conclusions they were divided from some of their brethren. It was thought dangerous to continue thus the progress which had been commenced. Liberal churches began to fear liberality, and the most heretical sect in Christendom to bring the charge of being so against those who carried out its own principles. They who defended the progress as well as the freedom of thought were openly denounced as infidels²⁴²

The terms of this passage may have been generalized, but few could fail to recognize it as Ripley's autobiography, even to the favorite abusive term of Andrews Norton. In the next passage, the generalization was dropped, and the pronoun "I" took its place. Ripley stated that he did not wish the congregation to share in any heresy which had been imputed to him.

In his preaching, he had never never brought before them philosophical discussions, which had no bearing on character. Neither had he tried to impose his thoughts on them.

I have always maintained that whatever else a minister might do for his people, he could not make his own thought, or prayer, or good life, a substitute for theirs²⁴³

if a more authoritarian manner of preaching has been desired, he can only say, he regrets it. In the church, one should meet on terms of equality, irrespective of birth, rank, wealth, or station.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 68.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 72.

The great fact of human equality before God is not one to let the heart remain cold; it is not a mere speculative abstraction; it is something more than a watchword for a political party to gain power with, and then do nothing to carry it into practical operation; it is a deep, solemn, vital truth, written by the Almighty in the laws of our being, announced with terrible distinctness to the oppressor by his beloved Son, and pleaded for by all that is just and noble in the promptings of our nature. Blame me for it if you will, but I cannot behold the degradation, the ignorance, the poverty, the vice, the ruin of the soul, which is everywhere displayed in the bosom of Christian society in our city, while men look idly on, without a shudder. I cannot witness the glaring inequalities of condition, the hollow pretension of pride, the scornful apathy with which many urge the prostration of man, the burning zeal with which they run the race of selfish competition, with no thought for the elevation of their brethren, without the sad conviction that the spirit of Christ has well-nigh disappeared from our churches, and that the fearful doom awaits us, "Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, ye have not done it unto me." 244

But in these sentiments he has been met with misunderstanding and lack of sympathy. Under such circumstances, it is best to examine their relationship for defects fatal to its existence.

Believing as he does that no church admitted perfect liberty of thought and expression, he would have asked to be discharged before this, if he had not felt peculiarly bound to his society. The letter from the proprietors, and the expressions of the members of the committee, have been of the most kind. Hence he will remain for a limited period. Meanwhile he renounces any pecuniary claims upon them, which is not a voluntary gift of everyone. The system of pew ownership he dislikes because an owner is induced to remain in a church in which he has no interest. The true church which he envisions would be one where all restrictions would be removed, where the minister could speak freely to those for whom he had a message. "The basis of worship in such a church would be feeling, not speculation; the platform would be broad enough to welcome every seeking spirit"

The universe would be their Bible.

He then turned his attention to two classes of reform; that of the individual and that of society.

There is a class of persons who desire a reform in the prevailing philosophy of the day. These are called Transcendentalists, because they believe in an order of truth which transcends the sphere of the external senses. Their leading idea is the supremacy of mind over matter. Hence they maintain that the truth of religion does not depend on tradition, nor historical facts, but has an unerring witness in the soul. There is a light, they believe, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; there is a faculty in all--the most degraded, the most ignorant, the most obscure--to perceive spiritual truth when distinctly presented; and the ultimate appeal on all moral questions is not to a jury of scholars, a hierarchy of divines, but to the common sense of the human race If you ask me whether I embrace every unintelligible production of the mind that is quoted from mouth to mouth as Transcendentalism, I answer, that if any man writes so as not to be understood, be he Transcendentalist or Materialist, it is his own fault, not another's There is another class of persons who are devoted to the removal of abuses that prevail in modern society. They witness the oppressions that are done under the sun, and they cannot keep silence The purpose of Christianity, as I firmly believe, is to redeem society as well as the individual from sin.²⁴⁵

As a Christian, he opposes intemperance, slavery, war. His warmest sympathies are with the poor.

His final word to the congregation was that if they differed from the sentiment of the proprietors, he would go at once; if they did not decline his services on the terms which he had stated, he would stay. Then, with courteous expressions of attachment to the church, he ended the letter.

On October 18, the proprietors appointed a committee to confer with their pastor, which consisted of Richard Austin, George G. Smith, John Ballard and J. H. Newell.²⁴⁶ Charles Cartwright declined to serve. The committee

²⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 84-5.

²⁴⁶ MS. Records of the Thirteenth Congregational Church in the American Unitarian Association.

reported, on November 1, that Ripley had told them he considered it his duty to go, and wished to have this committee dissolved on April 1, 1841. On January 1, 1841, Ripley sent in his final letter of resignation.

January 1, 1841

My respected Friends,

In a communication presented to the society on the 1st of October last, I stated the conditions on which alone, in my opinions, our connection as people and pastor could be continued with mutual pleasure and advantage. While the views and sentiments expressed in the communications has been received in a friendly manner by those to whom it was addressed, I have seen no evidence that they accord with the convictions of a sufficient proportion of the society to warrant the hope of a successful exercise of the ministry under the present relations. I ask leave, therefor, respectfully to resign my office as Pastor of the Purchase Street Congregational Church, and request to be discharged from the performance of its duties after the expiration of the present quarter.

With grateful remembrance of the kindness and candor which have marked your intercourse with me, and sincere wishes for your future prosperity,....²⁴⁷

The resignation was regretfully accepted at a meeting of the proprietors on January 24, and a committee appointed to draft a reply. The committee, consisting of James B. Richardson, George G. Smith, and Josiah K. Jones, submitted a letter to the proprietors, and two resolutions, which were unanimously accepted. The first resolution thanked Ripley for his long and faithful service; the second recommended him "to the Christian world as a Christian Minister in every way worthy and every way qualified to preach the Gospel," ²⁴⁸ and stated regret at his departure. About two hundred signatures were fixed to the document. Ripley continued to preach at Purchase Street until the last of March, when he delivered his farewell

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

discourse.²⁴⁹ In this sermon, he expressed his fondness for the society, his hope to see them from time to time, and his wishes for their future.

He preached once more to this congregation, when he came from Brook Farm to deliver the address to the people at the ordination of his successor, Rev. J. I. T. Coolidge, on January 13, 1842.

²⁴⁹ George Ripley, A Farewell Discourse (Boston, Drake's Pamphlets, 1840).

CHAPTER XX

GENESIS OF BROOK FARM

In the spring of 1841, the chatter over Bostonian tea cups was considerably enhanced by the fact that the respectable Rev. George Ripley had not only resigned his pastoral charge, on grounds that could only be described as eccentric, but had gone to West Roxbury, to found some sort of community, the main pursuits of which were farming and school-teaching. This fact was true enough. But what lay behind it? What were the reasons for Ripley's abrupt procedure, and when did he decide on the scheme?

When Ripley had sent his first letter of resignation to the proprietors, in May, 1840, he still intended to preach somewhere, according to his own principles of free speech in the pulpit. Margaret Fuller, who saw him in Boston at the end of May, told Emerson about a conversation with Ripley.

Mr. Ripley is most happy in the step which he has taken. He seems newborn. The day you went to town with me as we were talking about it, I told him what is thought of him as a preacher, and expressed doubts as to his being able to build up a church here. I told him I hoped when he broke away he would enter on some business and leave preaching, but he said he could not do so without a trial; that he knew as well as anybody that he had never preached, but that he had much he longed to say and was

sure that in suitable relations he should be able to breathe out what was so living in him.²⁵⁰

The idea of a church founded on free inquiry and the right of private judgment was in strong possession of Ripley in July, as his letter to John Sullivan Dwight shows. By September 25, another idea seems to have aroused his imagination. In a letter to William Henry Channing on that date, James Freeman Clarke stated that the prevailing idea of the time seemed to be community life, as suggested by Rapp or Owen: "Mr. Ripley appears fermenting and effervescing to a high degree with these ideas."²⁵¹ On October 1, Ripley composed the ultimatum to his church which he presented three days later. On October 15, he charged out at the Boston Athenaeum his first book on agriculture, and another, eight days later.²⁵² Margaret Fuller talked with both Ripleys and sent her impressions to William Henry Channing.

In town I saw the Ripleys,--Mr R. more and more wrapt in his new project. He is too sanguine, and does not take the time to let things ripen in his mind, yet his aim is worthy, and with his courage and clear mind his experiment will not, I think, to him at least be a failure. I will not throw any cold water, yet I would wish him the aid of some equal and faithful friend in the beginning, the rather that his own mind, though that of a captain, is not that of a conqueror. I feel more hopeful as he builds less wide, but cannot feel that I have any thing to do at present except to look on & see the coral insects at work.

Ballou was with him tonight, he seems a downright person, clear as to his own purposes, and not unwilling to permit others the pursuit of theirs.

Sophia R. read me her letter to you. I told her the truth that I cannot understand her mental processes, and that what she says sounds to me factitious at first, though my confidence in her always prevents my indulging such a thought, I understand her husband much better, though we are so utterly

²⁵⁰ Emerson Letters, II, pp. 297-8 n., Margaret Fuller to Ralph Waldo Emerson, May 31, 1840.

²⁵¹ Edward E. Hale, ed., James Freeman Clarke, Autobiography (Boston & New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1891), p. 133. James Freeman Clarke to William H. Channing.

²⁵² Charge Books of the Boston Athenaeum, 1839-41, p. 24.

dissimilar, and she usually goes higher and sees clearer than he does. I can talk with him endlessly though not deeply, with her I can go only a step, though she loves me & I her, she seldom misunderstands me....²⁵³

According to this calendar, the chief decision of Ripley's life was made in three months. If he had made up his mind by October 1, and Clarke's letter suggests that he had, he must have anticipated a refusal of his stern terms from the Purchase Street Church. This is quite probable, because by September 20, he had begun to doubt the function of the church.

That enterprising spinster, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, in a letter to John Sullivan Dwight, describes the debate at two meetings of the Transcendental Club, and makes clear Ripley's thinking.

...Mr. Ripley had his say--very admirably too--& making no small impression of the reality of the evils he deplores--the key of which is that the ministers & church are upheld in order to uphold a society vicious in its foundations--but which the multitude desire should continue in its present conditions.--Mr. Hedge, on the other side eloquently defended the Church--which (as Catholic) has given a true culture to the imagination in creating Gothic architecture in all its varieties--& painting....& which (as Protestant) was educating the Reason, but he yielded to Mr. Ripley that the social principle was yet to be educated--the Church of Humanity yet to grow--but as another branch from the same trunk--& not on the ruins.²⁵⁴

Ripley hinted such an outlook in his letter to his church.

The method in which he set about solving the woes of society seems now isolated and fragmentary. But in 1840, there were abundant reasons why the idea of a community should occur to a reformer. First, the day and age was one of such experiments. There were a number of religious communities--communities in the strict sense that their government was communistic, which

²⁵³ Margaret Fuller to William H. Channing, Oct. 25-28, 1840. A. L. S. in B. P. L.

²⁵⁴ Elizabeth P. Peabody to John Sullivan Dwight, Sept. 20, 1840. A. L. S. in B. P. L. The meetings were at Parker's and "here" which may be either the family house or the bookshop, but more probably the house.

Brook Farm's was not. One of these, at Zoar, Ohio, had greatly impressed the Ripleys by its order, prosperity, and cheerfulness. There were purely social experiments, such as New Harmony project of Owen's, founded in 1825, which died two years after it was born. Adin Ballou, the apostle of non-resistance, founded the Hopedale Community a year after Ripley founded Brook Farm. Second, the pastoral idea, which had been in charge of Ripley for fourteen years, was not lightly abandoned; he was used to his flock around him, to doing good, assisting, advising. Again, the sentimentality which surrounded the idea of agriculture among reformers and transcendentalists alike, softened the blow for anyone, who, advocating a self-subsistent community, might have baulked at going out among the rutabaga²⁵⁵ and practicing rugged independence.

The idea, once admitted, took complete possession of him. To establish a little community, which should be self-sufficient, whose members would combine manual work and intellectual occupations, whose rules should be only those of the highest morality private and social, whose spirit would be that of brotherly cooperation, would be the setting in concrete form his most cherished ideas. The little children of the community would be guaranteed an education, in which their elders might participate. Class distinctions would be abolished. By eliminating competition, the vices attendant on it would disappear; by substituting for it cooperation, the kindly and Christian virtues would be given a chance to develop. In time the society would increase by the addition of other willing and convinced members. The little state would indeed be a reform from the heart out.

²⁵⁵ Ripley's commonplace book, abandoned for several years, on Nov. 7, 1840, shows his calculations on the profit to be derived from rutabaga.

One of the earliest sympathizers with the project was Dr. Channing.

As usual, the great Unitarian had anticipated the ideas of the younger men.

When Ripley made his decision, Channing had already

... for a very long time dreamed of an association in which the members, instead of preying on one another, and seeking to put one another down, after the fashion of this world, should live together as brothers, seeking not another's elevation and spiritual growth.²⁵⁶

William Henry Channing, however, flatly contradicted the idea that his uncle had suggested the project.

Of course my uncle deeply sympathized with his younger friend's heroic effort, and wished all success to the movement, but he did not encourage it so far as I can understand, for in his judgment, he distrusted the prudence of the enterprise.²⁵⁷

Ripley, however, had several conversations with Dr. Channing on the subject, and received the best wishes of which William Henry Channing spoke.

Along with high dreams of a new and noble state, came awareness of one stern reality. Money. Beyond anything else, Ripley hated to talk about money. He never even used the term, but tried to cloak the vulgar fact and his embarrassment with the longer synonyms. However, money remained the ultimate unshrouvable rock. Provisions concerning it had to be made to finance the project. The plan finally hit upon was a joint stock company, which would pay subscribers five per cent.

The second need of a community was members. Alcott had lost interest in the scheme when he found it did not contain enough of his reforms. Parker distrusted socialism. But of Emerson, Ripley had high hopes. To the sage,

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Life, p. 118, William Ellery Channing to Adin Ballou, Feb. 27, 1841. Although Ripley's decision took place before the writing of this letter, the time elapsed could not be called very long.

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John Thomas Codman, Brook Farm (Boston, Arena Publishing Co., 1894), pp. 200-1.

he wrote explaining his venture, and asking Emerson to become a member.

Our objects, as you know, are to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; to do away with the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions....

An offer has been made to us of a beautiful estate, on very reasonable terms, on the borders of Newton, West Roxbury, and Dedham. I am very familiar with the premises, having resided on them a part of last summer, and we might search the country in vain for anything more eligible. Our proposal now is for three or four families to take possession on the first of April next, to attend to the cultivation of the farm and the erection of buildings, to prepare for the coming of as many more in the autumn, and thus to commence the institution in the simplest manner, and with the smallest number, with which it can go into operation at all....

The step now to be taken at once is the procuring of funds for the necessary capital. According to the present modification of our plan, a much less sum will be necessary than that spoken of in our discussions at Concord. We thought then \$50,000 would be needed; I find now, after a careful estimate, that \$30,000 will purchase the estate and buildings for ten families, and give the required surplus for carrying on the operations for one year.

We propose to raise this sum by a subscription to a joint stock company, among the friends of the institution, the payment of a fixed interest being guaranteed to the subscribers, and the subscription itself secured by the real estate....The sum required cannot come from rich capitalists; their instinct would protest against such an application of their coins; it must be obtained from those who sympathize with our ideas, and who are willing to aid their realization with their money, if not by their personal cooperation....

I can imagine no plan which is suited to carry into effect so many divine ideas as this. If wisely executed, it will be a light over this country and this age. If not the sunrise, it will be the morning star. As a practical man, I see clearly that we must have some such arrangement, or all changes less radical will be nugatory. I believe in the divinity of labor; I wish to "harvest my flesh and blood from the land;" but to do this, I must either be insulated and work to disadvantage, or avail myself of

the services of hirelings, who are not of my order, and whom I can scarce make friends; for I must have another to drive the plough, which I hold. I cannot empty a cask of lime upon my grass alone....

Personally, my tastes and habits would lead me in another direction. I have a passion for being independent of the world, and of every man in it. This I could do easily on the estate which is now offered, and which I could rent at a rate, that with my other resources, would place me in a very agreeable condition, as far as my personal interests were involved. I should have a city of God, on a small scale of my own; and please God, I should hope one day to drive my own cart to market and sell greens. But I feel bound to sacrifice this private feeling, in the hope of a great social good. I shall be anxious to hear from you. Your decision will do much towards settling the question with me, whether the time has come for the fulfillment of high hope, or whether the work belongs to a future generation....

I recollect you said that if you were sure of compeers of the right stamp you might embark yourself in the adventure; as to this, let me suggest the inquiry, whether our Association should not be composed of various classes of men? If we have friends whom we love and who love us, I think we should be content to join with others, with whom our personal sympathy is not strong, but whose general ideas coincide with ours, and whose gifts and abilities would make their services important. For instance, I should like to have a good washerwoman in my parish admitted into the plot. She is certainly not a Minerva or a Venus; but we might educate her two children to wisdom and varied accomplishments, who otherwise will be doomed to drudge through life. The same is true of some farmers and mechanics, whom we should like with us.²⁵⁸

The project almost tempted Emerson to join. It was composed largely of his friends; it put into execution many of his favorite principles. The school, in which the faculty taught the subjects in which they had greatest interest, was an inducement. For a month he remained reluctant to refuse. But at the thought of a society, he felt all his "quills rise and sharpen."²⁵⁹ The reform motive left him completely indifferent, for Emerson was the

²⁵⁸ Life, pp. 307-312.

²⁵⁹ Emerson Letters, II, p. 362. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller.

great apostle of the doctrines that soul is independent of circumstances, and that the existence of matter is in doubt. He had a dislike for reformers, and an aversion for the masses, for whom they labored. So there was no background of enthusiasm for Emerson to counterbalance the practical disadvantages of living in a herd, risking money, and leaving Concord. Finally "and I may almost say penitentially" he sent Ripley his refusal. The disappointed Ripley gathered other friends and collaborators around him for life at West Roxbury; Emerson, at Concord, continued to walk alone.

CHAPTER XXI

EXODUS FROM BOSTON

The milk farm where the Ripleys boarded for the summer of 1840 was a delightful place for the lazy days of summer vacation. West Roxbury was not too far from Boston to prevent their going to the city for the day, but, at the same time, it was in the gently rolling country, where the vistas were wide, and the roads were flanked by trees instead of houses. The farmhouse stood on a little rise of ground, overlooking a broad meadow, through which trickled the grassy little brook which gave the place its name, Brook Farm. Behind the house was a low ridge, made sharply picturesque by outcrops of conglomerate among the lowgrowing bushes. The Ripleys indulged in revery amid the charms of the scenery. A practical farmer would have seen immediately that the ridge was of no conceivable use for farming, and the soil thin. A trucker could have startled them with some information about the rates for hauling from Boston. The Ripleys, having conversation with neither, sauntered along the paths of the countryside and drank in the air of the warm summer afternoons, walked the two miles to Theodore Parker's church, or took a carriage over to Jamaica Plain to see Margaret Fuller.

When the idea of the experiment in a more Christian way of life took form, it was only natural that West Roxbury should return to their minds. George Ripley bought the place in the winter of 1840 from Charles and Maria Ellis and on April 4 of the following year moved out to get the place ready for habitation. Sophia remained in Boston until the last of May.²⁶⁰ With Ripley went Frank Farley and William Allen and a hired girl from Maine. Miss Peabody described the activity going on:

They cleaned the stable arranged the house ploughed and planted--going through the hardest & most disagreeable work they will ever have to do. They also every day milk their cows, and such is the effect of regular feeding that already they give 1/3 more milk than at first.²⁶¹

In a fortnight after their arrival, they were joined by Hawthorne and Warren Burton, Sophia spent three or four days a week there. Marianne Ripley taught school in the next town.

Practical Miss Peabody was very worried about the way the publicity was not being handled. Ripley was reluctant to print a prospectus. But at least on May 11, there would be a meeting in the large Peabody parlor, for the benefit of people combining interest and cash. The chief talking point would be the school.

Sophia, down in Boston, was finding her duties more onerous than Ripley at West Roxbury. She was closing the house where they had been very happy, braving the Boston public, and saying good-bye. She told Dwight:

The nasty public still asks questions sceptically which is rather annoying when we go into the world, and our friends sometimes annoying us still more by speaking

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Elizabeth Palmer Peabody to John Sullivan Dwight, April 26, 1841, A.L.S. in B.P.L.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

of our enterprise as one requiring high, heroic valor, whereas it has never seemed to George & myself anything but the simplest, most every day affair possible. Parting with the Parish (this *entre nous*) has been the hardest, because we could not feel--as the kindest among them seemed to feel, that they were losing their all. Tearless we saw tears flowing all around us--and yet we never loved them so much--loved them better for their weeping--but the relation was false--to each & all & every parting tear was the righting of it, & seemed more like an invigorating dewdrop than an emblem of mourning. Many substantial proofs of kindness & farewell letters were delicately offered in the most affecting way--a few gentlemen presented us with nearly \$500--& the most beautiful garden tools to a larger amount.

For the company at Brook Farm, she had praise and blame. The bouquets went to William Allen, the head man, to Frank Farley, to "our prince princely" Hawthorne, but not even a whiff of one to Rev. Warren Burton, whom she found decidedly without charm, and still less to Lloyd Fuller, Margaret's problem brother, "who has all the Fuller faults (*entre nous* again) without their merits." Soon they would be sixteen, including various children entrusted to their care. At the end of the month, Mrs. Ripley herself went to West Roxbury and the strange experiences which awaited at Brook Farm.

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Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, May 6, 1841, 1841. A.L.S. in B. P. L.

CHAPTER XXII

BROOK FARM CHRONICLE

If anyone had told Miss Marianne Ripley, previous to the beginning of Brook Farm, that she would one day be seen by a crowd of people, walking around a pine grove, dressed as Queen Elizabeth, that good school teacher would have been sadly perplexed. But one fine day she did just that, and her brother, Rev. George Ripley, as Shakespeare, was in the pageant with her. The puritanical lines of her face were softened with excitement, and she beamed with smiles over the crepe paper ruff, which the good little Albany Dutch boy, John Van der Zee Sears, had so carefully constructed. He was there somewhere, as a herald, gorgeous in makeshift splendor. Somewhere, too, was Miss Amelia Russell, a mirror of Bostonian propriety, watching with anxious eyes the young people whom she had spent several good weeks in training to do the minuet. Whatever the guests may have thought, no one of the members of that happy community saw any subject for wonder in the spectacle. Brook Farm was the region where metamorphosis in outlook as well as occupation was the order of the day.

The members of George Ripley's community were gathered together, for the most part, by the same great ideal to lead their lives more

completely and sincerely, in accordance with the highest promptings of their nature, than they could in the world outside. They hoped that the contagion of their example would bring about moral reform, in even a little way, in the society which they found an insurmountable barrier to observance of the most exquisite dictates of conscience, a society in which war, slavery, oppression, and corruption were ingredients. They worked hard, were badly housed and monotonously fed, but had the exuberance of the ideas to which they were devoted, the pleasure of each other's company, and the satisfaction of talking about their most unworldly dreams and most scrupulous principles, without danger of being thought ridiculous. In addition, most of them were young. George Ripley, at the time he began the experiment, was only thirty-nine.

The chronicle of the little community falls into two parts, the "transcendental" and the practical periods. The first and shorter dated from the beginning of work on the place in 1841 to the enlargement of membership in 1843; the latter from that time until 1846, when the enterprise came to an end. There has been a great deal said about the change of the atmosphere of the place after 1843; perhaps it has been overestimated. Although it is undoubtedly true that there was some friction between the first arrivals and the newcomers, who were generally of humbler station, both groups seem to have been animated by dreams and desires of the good life. There may have been, and undoubtedly were, the shiftless, the incompetent and the cynical in the later group, but they were lost in the number of sincere souls, who held the same high hopes as the first group, if they expressed it with less

talent. The same entertainments, the same sacrifices, the same efforts were made during both periods. The highly cultured George P. Bradford may have been considerably more attractive than the honest cobbler Lewis W. Ryckma, but neither Bradford nor anyone else was more earnest and devoted in the pursuit of his ideals.

The examples of cheerful self-sacrifice were George and Sophia Ripley. George chose for himself the hardest of the farm work. Sophia labored for as much as ten hours at a time in the laundry, until her fingers bled. This she varied with general superintendence of the girls, with teaching French in an accent that had been acquired abroad, with an Italian class in which she and Bradford read Dante in the original without a teacher. On rare occasions, she visited her relatives in Cambridge, but never shone more in wit and brilliant conversation among her hereditary surroundings than over the washtubs at Brook Farm, where other workers eagerly gathered around. Of the conversation with which Sophia dazzled the laundry, not a hint remains; of the humor for which her husband was famous and which heartened the farmers in their weary moments, all that remains is a number of wretched puns, which fell into loving minds, and afterwards blossomed horribly forth in the books of reminiscence.

In Sophia there was a painful antagonism between the conscience of one who rejoices in the betterment of herself and others, and the tastes of a sensitive, highly cultured woman. She wrote Margaret Fuller about the problem brother, Lloyd Fuller, and then proceeded to more general topics:

I believe I have no more to say dear Friend, with regard to business arrangements, but I must tell you how well we are all satisfied (I trust without fanaticism) with the success of our experiment. Our life satisfies my conscience better than any I knew--& in time I think may be modified to my taste also--pleasures multiply, good words & kind deeds abound--some among us are truly noble, all mean to be good--& the few who are not what we wish are improving from the action on the part of the others. With these main things right, trials are lightly borne & soon forgotten here the manuscript is torn we have passed through together has terminated I believe in better knowledge of each other--We have all learned a great deal--more perfectly perhaps than in any six months of our lives before. 263

The constitution of Brook Farm, drawn up in 1841, was signed by the stockholders: George Ripley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Minot Pratt, Charles A. Dana, William B. Allen, Sophia Ripley, Maria T. Pratt, Sarah F. Stearns, Marianne Ripley, and Charles O. Whitmore. The official name of the enterprise was the Brook Farm Association for Agriculture and Education. The constitution provided five per cent interest on stock; instead of interest, a stockholder was entitled to tuition for one student for every share of stock. A shareholder might withdraw his stock after twelve months' notice. The officers named were: General Direction, Minot Pratt, William B. Allen; Direction of Finance, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles A. Dana, William B. Allen; Direction of Education, Sophia W. Ripley, Charles A. Dana, Marianne Ripley. At a meeting on October 30, 1841, it was agreed to transfer the property formerly owned in George Ripley's name to the Brook Farm Institution, and do the same with Marianne Ripley's school. Board and tuition for boys was \$4.00 a week, for girls, \$5.00, for

263 Sophia Ripley to Margaret Fuller, Sept. 3, [1841] A.L.S. in H.C.L.

264 Life, pp. 112-5.

children under twelve, \$3.50, exclusive of washing and separate fire; board for members was one year's board for one year's labor; otherwise, \$4.00 a week, including washing; children under ten, half the price.

The little community was harassed by debt. On October 11, 1841, the trustees, Ripley, Dana, Hawthorne and William Allen, executed two mortgages on the place, to the amount of \$11,000, exactly \$500 more than the price named in the deed of transfer.²⁶⁵ To meet the various expenses, the Institute had two main sources of income: the farm and the school. The former consumed the more time and energy; the latter was the chief means of support. George Ripley taught philosophy and mathematics, George P. Bradford, literature; John Sullivan Dwight, music and Latin; Charles A. Dana, German and Greek; John S. Brown, agriculture; Sophia Ripley, history and modern languages; Hannah Ripley, drawing. The primary school was presided over by Marianne Ripley, an experienced school teacher; the infant school was in charge of Abigail Morton. In addition to the classes, lectures were given in the evenings, and the books from Ripley's library circulated freely.²⁶⁶

The personnel shifted almost daily. Hawthorne lasted for an intermittent five months. He admired the lovely scenery surrounding the place, and worked on the manure pile, but found that the latter predominated. George P. Bradford took his departure the year of the enlarged membership. The manner of his going proved his reputation for

²⁶⁵George Willis Cooke, John Sullivan Dwight (Boston, Small Maynard, 1898), p. 54. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Dwight.

²⁶⁶Amelia Russell, Home Life on the Brook Farm Association (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1910), pp. 105-6.

appalling honesty. In all penitence, he called together a number of people to hear his parting confession: that there were times when he would not have bothered to save the life of Charles A. Dana.²⁶⁷ That brilliant young man, whose college career had been cut short by failing eyesight, remained for the duration of the experiment; so did Dwight. Warren Burton left at the end of the first period, to return to the life of a clergyman in Boston. The attractive Curtis brothers, George William and James Burrill, belong to this period, as do the beautiful Mrs. Almira Barlow, Deborah Cannett, and the sharply observant Georgiana Bruce, an English girl. The show-piece, Charles K. Newcome, mysterious and profound, was a young author in whom Emerson tried to find genius. Minot Pratt, the former printer of the Christian Register, was the chief farmer and Ripley's right hand man. He had a strongly poetical side to his nature, and when ploughing often salvaged the wild rose bushes, and planted them along the wayside. This habit of his was strangely symbolic of the delicacies of Brook Farm Agriculture. At one time, Ripley had four members of his family engaged in the experiment: his wife, his sister Marianne, his cousin Hannah Ripley, and his niece Sarah Stearns.

The religion was that of a non-sectarian Christianity. There was no official pastor, and there is no record that Ripley ever preached a sermon or offered a prayer. William Henry Channing, on his frequent visits, filled the place of unofficial chaplain, and the members were free to attend or not, as they wished. Some went to Theodore Parker's

267. Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm (New York, Macmillan, 1909), p. 92.

church in the town, others to Boston. There was the widest variety of belief among the farmers, and they accounted to no one for their religious preferences. Complete religious freedom was the order during the entire course of Brook Farm's existence.

From the outset, the crying need was money. There were mortgages in the beginning, and two more added during the course of the little community. There were expenses for hauling, food, supplies. As early as December, 1841, the situation was serious enough for Ripley to write Emerson and ask him to invest,²⁶⁸ which the sage shrewdly refused to do, although he did pay the expenses at the school of a boy, Francis Brown.²⁶⁹ To Ripley, it must have been nothing less than maddening to have to consider all the angles of the Life Beautiful from the standpoint of dollars and cents. The construction of an ideal community required simultaneously one that would work. While antagonistic to the social structure, it was still dependent on that social structure for existence. While the Brook Farmers denounced competition, they sold their vegetables in the Boston market. While they disliked the system of capitalism, they relied on persons with capital stock. The treasury of the poor little community had either to drink what it could from the tainted well, or shrivel up with thirst.

In the beginning, Brook Farm was a product of transcendentalism, though of the more practical side of transcendentalism than of the

268. George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Feb. 25, 1842, Life, pp. 312-4.

269. George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Feb. 25, 1842, and following letters, A.L.S. in the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, hereafter referred to as R.W.E.M.A.

Emerson variety. Two letters show that Ripley considered himself more closely allied to the school of social thinking which distinguished Brownson, W. H. Channing, and Alcott, than to the Sage and Thoreau. He wrote Emerson, apparently in surprise and pleasure at the coincidence of their ideas.

n.d.

My dear Mr. E.

The first part of your M.S. was given to the printer, & you will have a proof of it tomorrow or next day, I presume.

I cannot refrain from telling you the true joy which your piece has given me. I find in it the clear & beautiful expression of thoughts which have long made me restless,—which forbid me to be happy without the attempt to realize them.

It greatly and pleasantly confirms my faith in the objects for which we are now living, to perceive that the idea in which they are built has taken such strong hold of another mind.

I hope you will yet see some of your visions made substantial in the 'City of God' which we shall try to build—²⁷⁰

The second is to Orestes A. Brownson. After having discussed the subject of young Orestes, a scholar at Brook Farm, Ripley turns to the matter most heavy on his mind. Not until Nov., 1842, had Brownson noticed Brook Farm in his review, and then with the faintest of praise, fainter praise than that of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's encouraging article in the Dial at the beginning of that year. ²⁷¹ He wrote Brownson:

270. George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, n.d. A.L.S. in R.W.E.M.A.

271 Life, pp. 120-6.

I hope that you know me too well to believe that any small thing would diminish my great respect for your intellect, or the sincere friendship I have cherished for you, from the first of our acquaintance. We have truly sympathized as few men have done: you have always quickened my love for humanity: & for no small share of what mental clearness I may have, am I indebted to the hours, of quiet, pleasant intercourse I have enjoyed with you. If I had never known you, I should never have engaged in this enterprise. I consider it as the incarnation of those transcendental truths, which we have held in common, and which you have done much to make me love. To perceive the worth of man as man, to see through the hollowness & injustice of our social conventionalism, and to resolve on the reform of my own household were with me almost simultaneous acts. This resolve attracted kindred spirits--& here we are. This is the not d'emigré of all our movement. Nor can I but feel gratified in seeing lofty political visions embodied in the most truly democratic social state, that I have ever known--small as may be the ground plan of our edifice. You know the keen enjoyment I took in the discussion of the most abstract theories: these theories however all bore on the possible future of humanity; and now in living them, shall I confess, there is an inward delight, such as one would scarce dream of--so great, as to produce a disinclination either to speak or write about them--so much more interior is the daily consciousness of life. With the vivid feeling, that the great revolution in my life plan was the inevitable fruit of the ideas of which you most valued me, I will own to something of disappointment, that you should give us so little sympathy or recognition, when a kindly word would have been cheering, amidst such a tempest of abuse, as fell upon us from the old conservative sky. But never, my dear friend, have I felt estranged from you, or ceased to believe that you would one day come to something like a feeling of paternity for our infant hope. Amply, too amply, I know, have you justified this belief in your recent article. And now what is the part between you & me. Let us live on & love on still; assured that all good words & just works are eternal as God.

Your last article revives my ancient love of metaphysics. As yet, I have only read, not studied it. I mean to give it a fair hearing: & meantime, hope to see you.

As to your questions, it is true that some of our young people are not quite free from nonsense. They unconsciously worship R. W. E. with a too blind adoration, & like that master, express themselves confusedly. They are

pure, simple souls, apparently without an erring instinct; & their beautiful, divine lives would seem to sanction their doctrines. But their practical influence is not bad. Our current here sets all the other way; & as a place of education, for either sex, we are so guarded & balanced by a host of influences, that I apprehend no evil results. You must consult those who have had children here.²⁷²

In 1843, it became evident to the colonists that while their life might be idyllic, their finances were not. Ripley, trying to save his little state, welcomed to it artisans who had not previously been included in the organization, and arranged for setting up workshops. These people, carpenters, shoemakers, craftsmen of various kinds, were of a different group from the original colonists. The Brook Farm Institute for Agriculture and Education had been precisely that, without any provision for industry. There seems, at first glance, something coldly calculating about Brook Farm's willingness to be saved by the exertions of people it had formerly rejected, but, in exoneration of Ripley, it should be pointed out that he had never in theory rejected them. In practice, there had been no facilities for them. As far as considering them as a class was concerned, he was perfectly willing to have them at any time, as his letter of November 9, 1840, to Emerson, indicates. He had envisioned receiving people of humble occupations, so that each might profit by the other's abilities, and that their children might have the benefits of education. The occasion for their admission was the necessity of making the ideal community the workable community as well, but there was no reversal of Ripley's policy in the means by which this was to be brought about.

²⁷² George Ripley to Vestes A. Brownson, Dec 18, 1842. A. L. S. in Notre Dame University.

At the time of the enlargement of Brook Farm, when some of the older members had left and been succeeded by people who were honest, sincere, but without the heights and the depths of the transcendentalists, and the practical side of Brook Farm threatened to dwarf the contemplative, Sophia wrote Emerson a long, incoherent letter. The meaning was often obscured by the sibylline utterance, but revealed a despondency which the Brook Farmers never knew possessed the brilliant, reserved woman.

Brook Farm, July 5

My dear Mr. E

What is it to you that I like the Dial, & what is it to me that you should know it? & yet I cannot but tell you how rich & strong & faithful to its early intentions the last number seems to me. It is really the first Dial we have had. It takes possession of one, haunts one's dreams, & is the first thing we think of when waking. How the writers stand side by side, like Margaret's zodiac of Grecian divinities, "here the sister & queen, there the brother & prince."

What sense & practical American talent in union rare with taste & knowledge & wit do we find in those notes on architecture. What a fragment of a sea journal you have drawn-out, (as we hear) from behind some counter, throwing for the time "Two Years before the Mast", & all of the things of the sort into the background.

Then how true to both sides are Ellery's letters; fresh with the recklessness of earliest youth & yet giving us the results of mature thought. Until told it was so, I believed these letters veritable extracts from those of Ellery & Mr. Ward, when they were college youths, wondering at the extreme manliness of the boys, & now wondering still more at the boyishness of the man.

Margaret's article too is the cream of herself, a little rambling but rich in all good things. Then how regally have you overlooked the English. You can hardly know how, like a blessing such vigorous pages come to ones sitting in solitude & the damps & shadows of evening gathering around the heart at noon day. When we are powerless it is cheering to feel that the age is strong in a few true men & women who can do this age's work & prophecy of the next.

I will tell you how much, not now alone, but always, I feel the want of those around me here who can do the age's work--a want more keenly felt by me than it would be by one who took a standpoint of more divine serenity, but still a real want. We have "great wealth of nature" here as you truly said, & if I mistake not, a free & vigorous atmosphere for it to unfold in, but I daily & hourly mourn--unwise as it was to mourn, at the prodigality with which it is wasted away. I see everywhere around me those who might prophesy of the next age to the present, of eternity to time, prophesying only to themselves, casting their own horoscope, impertinently prying into their own emotions, or intoxicating themselves with the excited emanations of others; feeling the rising & falling of their own pulse, perhaps recounting its variations to the meanest friend. The lives of our best people here, as elsewhere, are narrow & dreaming, or overheated. Clear crystal spring water is not their drink, but sweetened, diluted beverage, perhaps spiced wines. And yet, if they are born to prophecy, will they not in God's own time?

Then though, faithful, like the servant to their allotted task of the hour, how are they rejecting the human side of life, turning their back upon the world's work, even when they believe it must be done, & ennobling it not by the seer's eye & prophet's look, casting their cares upon the merely practical men & women of society--even to the elevating them to a height they have no title to fill, even to rulers in all the external ongoing of life. The movement of working here through the hours & days emits no fragrance, kind hearted as they are, so wrapped & swathed in selfism are they while the narrow garret of the solitary student is filled with the sweetest odours breathing out of every crack & cranny upon the passer by, if he but pursues his lonely strength unconsciously in single-hearted self-forgetfulness. What joy I feel that in the small circle of your nearest friends the craving heart may find such scholars & such writers as we need. So rounded, so strong, so self-subsisting. Did you not like our Cousin C. A. D.'s sonnet addressed to all true heroes? It was an organ tone though a monotone. His life is deep-toned too, though not wide. The other Brook Farm poem was very graceful, a specimen of the best our young men can now produce, while they refuse themselves to deep experience & in place thereof indulge in sentiment. Is this only a stage with the best, or must we open our broad acres to a new race, before we see them wrought & trod by men. The ground-plan & foundation of our structure suits me well. Many traits in the characters of the builders or those who with folded arms only look on, I look at quite reverently almost enviously, it has been good for me, & is still so to be here. I think life could furnish me with nothing better therefore I am content, & ought not to lament if a finished edifice rises here, but I do not despair even

yet. Some may ask, you will not, why I have intruded upon you with this letter. I can only say, just now it was not & now it is written, & after vainly looking for a man or woman where I have most hope to find them care I when I hail someone who appears to me such on the horizon.

Since writing the last lines I have had the pleasure of seeing some true men & women among our Shaker brethren, vigorous in spiritual life, definite in their aims--robust & equal in practice. Do you know anything about them? One of the women--a saint & prophetess might have sat for a picture of Eloisa in middle life. The largeness of the best persons we saw & their open future surprised us. They talked of Mr. Lane & Mr. Alcott's visit as an era in their lives, & brother William Leonard said he was "never so carried away" in his life as by their conversation.²⁷³

With affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Emerson....

On July 29, of the same year, she wrote Emerson again, still incoherent, still obscure, still oracular, but with the definite statement of the struggle between the tastes which shrank from her associates, and the conscience which would give all people a good atmosphere in which to grow, as well as herself.

Sat. July 29, 1843

The good spirit has spoken most cheering words to me through your letters, & I feel moved to tell you that, and at the same time to say something further of the large class of persons of whom we have been just now speaking. The "daguerreotype" as you term it, "of one horse" is the same for all horses, as far as the outline, air, attitude & bearing of my originals are concerned but at some times I have the gift I do not deny it, of dwelling exclusively on some beautiful trait, or divine expression which charms me from the contemplation of the whole; but as a whole, each strikes me as weak and inadequate to life's objects. And this, separate from all self reference, for you can hardly realize how unimportant the result of our undertaking or any undertaking, seem to me, except that of leading the noblest life. As remaking some of the eternal

obstacles to such a life, for myself & others, I chiefly value our scheme, & gratefully accept cooperation; but it is not as cooperators but as men & women that I look on our friends, & demand no more of them for being here, only hoping that a healthier atmosphere may furnish a better chance for vigorous youth. I do not wish or need stronger persons about me here than elsewhere, & am grateful for all the ornamental groups or solitary figures reposing in the shade at noon--or gazing on the setting sun; but why do they not with clear strong vision meet his meridian glance & challenge him to run his race with them? Why not live & move with head erect under his rays instead of waiting for the reflection of the last upon some flower or lake? This worship of beauty & unceasing life search for it is it not, after all, only living in the outskirts of truth. Beauty & truth are sometimes told to us to be one, but my increasing conviction is, that Beauty is the attitude of truth, not truth itself, that we may gaze on it forever, but it will not take us to the center--& that its pursuit & study are enervating crusting some of our strongest spirits. Let us live truly, & we shall be beautiful, for in this sense truth & beauty are one²⁷⁴

An arrival in 1843, as a guest rather than a member, was Albert Brisbane, the ardent disciple of the French philosopher Charles Fourier, whose work he had popularized in the columns of Horace Greeley's Tribune, and his own interpretation of Fourier, called The Social Destiny of Man.²⁷⁵ The system of Fourier was built on the foundation that an all-wise God had decreed an ordered universe. The stars kept mathematically to their courses; there was a fixed hierarchy in plant and animal life. There was the potentiality of order in the social state of man. Rank on rank, these different classes of interacting beings formed a great and universal unity. To achieve the society for which it was intended, the human race

²⁷⁴ Sophia Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, July 29, 1843. A. L. S. in R. W. E. M. A.

²⁷⁵ Russell, op. cit., p. 81.

had progressed through four stages of social structure, of which the last, called civilization, is slowly giving way to a fifth, called guarantism. In this stage of society, the evils caused by the competitive commerce of civilization would be checked by a system of guaranties, or agreements between the different social groups. The young would be guaranteed education and care, the old, provision for their declining years. Labor would be entitled to a suitable wage, and a share in the profits of capital. There was one higher state, called Association,²⁷⁶ in which men would band together in communities called phalanxes, so that each member could follow his chosen type of labor, by which all would benefit. A great advantage of this stage of society would be economy; each community would have but one kitchen, one building to house the body politic, and one nursery to take care of the children. Had Fourier confined himself to practical suggestions, he had much to offer of value. He anticipated such developments as the apartment house, the day nursery, collective bargaining, old age insurance, profit sharing. There was a great deal that was humane in his principles. He placed the blame for sin upon society. His reasons, however, show him as mathematical rather than psychological. He deposited a universe of complete order and then subdivided. Everything that existed had its place, for which certain natural tendencies or passions fitted him. These tendencies are good and make for the universal unity. Thwart them,

²⁷⁶ Fourierists did not call themselves so, but Associationists. In the broadest sense, any persons who advocated living in an association, for moral and economic reasons, were Associationists also.

and the result is what is bad, and makes for disunion. His less well known doctrines were sometimes sheer monumental twaddle. His cosmogony supposed that the heavenly bodies, shedding aromas upon the earth, produce various forms of plant and animal life. With becoming modesty, he announced that his system was not based upon speculation, but upon observation of nature. On this point, some of the members of Brook Farm were sceptical, not to mention the ex-member, George William Curtis, who summed up dissident views regarding the matter when he wrote Isaac Hecker, "Dear Isaac, Nature is very coy, and was probably flirting with good Mr. Fourier."²⁷⁷

The more sensational aspects of Fourier's teaching, such as the cosmogony, were less well known than his social views. Further, they did not cause the derision that they would have caused at any other time, for the air was full of strange visions. Swedenborg was a favorite at Brook Farm. Again, they never considered Fourier infallible in all his teachings, but were free to reject the fantasy. As far as his social theory was concerned, there were many points in common between the views of Fourier and of the Farmers. If they had not believed that society as constituted was bad, they would not have been there. They guaranteed care in sickness, and immunity from labor in extreme age. They believed that all had a right to an education. They shared profits. They preserved the family, but not the private household. They gave women an equal and active share in the government. They opposed enforced labor. They wished to allow everyone to work in accordance with his nature. But a fundamental difference

²⁷⁷ George W. Curtis to I. T. Hecker, Mar. 9, 1845. A. L. S. in the Paulist Archives.

existed in their conception of the relation of God and man. The transcendental view was that the human mind could penetrate truth, which existed in the Divine Mind. The springs for action lay in contemplation, in inner questioning. The individual was free to consult his reason or not, and act or not act on what he saw there. According to the Fourierists, God implanted certain tendencies or passions in every soul which he sent into the world, in just the correct proportions to fit that soul for its niche in the divine order of the universe. Many of the results of the two doctrines were the same. In either case, self trust became an obligation. But Fourierism killed all the spontaneity of the transcendental theory. Once the individual was wound up and set ticking, contact ended.

The fact that Ripley was both mathematical and humanitarian must have contributed largely to his adoption of the views of Fourier. The total unity of the Fourieristic universe, even when broken down into the categories of Fourier, which had no apparent basis in reason or fact, offered no repulsion to the Brook Farm teacher of mathematics. The doctrine that everyone had a place in the sun appealed to his humanity. Long ago he had viewed society with regret; here was a carefully considered statement of the nature of the evil. The ideal society as seen by Fourier had all the qualities of a balanced equation: on one side, all the individuals of the world, with all their individual, divinely implanted passions, on the other, all the different tasks in the world that should be done. The problem was to get the two together. In this, civilization

with its enforced labor was a contemptible failure, and on it rested the guilt of the crimes which good and pure tendencies, perverted, produced.

Sophia, looking for some bond to strengthen the union between those whom her conscience would have her accept, and her tastes reject, looked to community of purpose to form the bond. She wrote Margaret Fuller:

This oneness of purpose, including of course much kind consideration & tolerance, is the closest tie which can bind us to the majority of men, if the conscience, which demands some sort of time, is satisfied in Association, & to Association I purpose to devote my life; all relations but the nearest seem quite small & secondary, in presence of this purpose, except so far as they throw light on its practical workings His [George's] heart warms to association on a great scale, & here I warmly unite to him. ²⁷⁸

The association on a grand scale was to come in the reorganizations of 1844.

In December, 1823, George Ripley, W. H. Channing, and Charles A. Dana, attended an Associationist convention in Boston. The convention was not entirely a Fourierist affair; Adin Ballou was there, urging Christian communism. But the followers of Fourier seem to have carried the day. ²⁷⁹

In January, 1844, the Brook Farm Association published the second edition of its Constitution, with an Introductory Statement in acceptance of the doctrines of the French philosopher on universal and practical social arrangements. The suggestion was advanced that

²⁷⁸ Sophia Ripley to Margaret Fuller, n.d. A. L. S. in W. C. L.

²⁷⁹ Dwight, pp.93-4

Brook Farm be recognized by those in agreement with Fourier as a practical trial of his views. Reorganization began on a much more complex system than had been in use before. The "transcendental" period was over.

The never ending problem of financing the venture precipitated the adoption of Fourierism at Brook Farm. A crisis early in 1843 had resulted in the enlargement. In the autumn of 1843, there was another financial crisis, and grave doubts of their being able to proceed further. Much was expected of the new type of organization, which highly organized the industry of the place.²⁸⁰ There was another inducement, which may have hastened the transition. The New Yorkers, Greeley, Edmund Tweedy, and Marcus Spring, were Fourierists, and in September, 1843, Ripley was looking for "five men in New York City who would dare to venture \$200 each in the cause of social reform."²⁸¹ At some time in the spring, Greeley and Tweedy took stock in the enterprise.²⁸² There are several interpretations of these facts: first, that Ripley's conviction of the soundness of Fourier's system preceded the decision of the New Yorkers to take stock; second, that Ripley allowed Brook Farm to follow the majority opinion of the Brook Farm Association, without whole heartedly agreeing with it; third, that to receive the support of the New Yorkers, he put through convictions which he did not share, which was tantamount to selling Brook Farm down the river. The most convincing picture is that of Ripley sincere but harried by circumstances of the emergency. His later efforts in the behalf of Association were too hard, too self-sacrificing, and

²⁸⁰ Life, p. 189.

²⁸¹ George Ripley to Isaac Hecker, Sept. 18, 1843. A.L.S. in Paulist Archives.

²⁸² John Sullivan Dwight to George Ripley, Mar. 16, 1846. A.L.S. in B.P.L.

too long to admit of any other motive than conviction.

In March, 1845, the Brook Farm Phalanx was incorporated according to the laws of the State of Massachusetts. In the same year, the Associationist Journal, the Phalanx, was edited by Osborne Macdaniel, moved from New York to Brook Farm, and was reissued in a different form as the Harbinger. The latter was a weekly journal of sixteen pages, printed in quarto form. Emerson, whom Ripley solicited for contributions, refused flatly to write for any paper which was committed to a specific doctrine.²⁸³ According to the prospectus, the Harbinger was "devoted to the cause of a radical, organic, social reform", of which Fourier's principle of universal unity was the basis. It would defend its principles "without any sectarian bigotry", in which terms there seems to be a slight contradiction.²⁸⁴ On each volume was a motto taken from the works of Dr. Channing, who had died in 1842:

Of modern civilization, the natural fruits are contempt for others' rights, fraud, oppression, a gambling spirit in trade, reckless adventure, and commercial convulsions, all tending to impoverish the laborer and to render every condition insecure. Belief is to come, and can only come from the new application of Christian principles, of Universal Justice and Universal love, to social institutions, to commerce, to business, to active life.²⁸⁵

Among the contributors to the Harbinger in the course of its existence were Brisbane, W. H. Channing, Cranch, Dana, Dwight, Parke Godwin, Greeley, T. Wentworth Higginson, James Russell Lowell, W. W. Story, Francis George Shaw, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Ellery Channing

²⁸³ Dwight, pp.103-4.

²⁸⁴ Life, p. 179.

²⁸⁵ The Harbinger, I, p.8, June 18, 1845.

the younger, George W. Curtis, and Frederic Henry Hedge. Ripley contributed over three hundred miscellaneous items Francis George Shaw did a translation of George Sand's Consuelo and the Countess of Rudolstadt. The music department was the charge of John Sullivan Dwight and was of very high quality. The book reviews, of which Ripley, Dana, and Dwight were the chief contributors, also set a high standard. The Harbinger contained news of the various Associationist meetings and of Fourier's birthday celebrations; it carefully reported the speeches of Ripley, Dana, Channing, and Dwight. It was the misfortune of the Harbinger that all the articles and editorials slanted to the moral that Association would cure the woes of the world. Andrew Jackson received praise, but was commiserated with for not being an Associationist.²⁸⁶ "The Influence of Machinery" was described as tending to employ fewer persons, hence help the capitalist, while the laborer became the appendage of the machine;²⁸⁷ profit sharing was necessary, and the best method was that indicated by Fourier. The motto on the flag, E Pluribus Unum, was recognized as expressing the principles of Fourier. The general effect of reading such articles, week after week, would be tedium, although some were well written, and the departments varied.

Horace Greeley, editor of the Tribune, was a convinced Associationist, and a friend of Brook Farm. His bitter and numerous personal enemies, had seized the opportunity of attacking Greeley by attacking the little project in which he was interested, as well as

²⁸⁶ Harbinger, I, p. 45, June 28, 1845.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., I, p. 14, June 14, 1845.

the Fourieristic doctrines which he advocated. It was left to Ripley to defend the character of Greeley in the Harbinger. After a particularly vicious attack in the New York Express, Ripley's usual quietly earnest tones became strident:

It is impossible to avoid the conviction in reading the diatribes of the Express, that they are prompted less by a true interest in the cause of human improvement than by a vindictive hatred to the Editor of the Tribune His popularity as Editor has not made him time-serving and treacherous to the cause of humanity. The immense influence which he wields, has not been preserved by a cowardly adaptation of his convictions to the tone of public sentiment. The heart of a brave and genuine man has beat in his bosom, and to its high impulses he has never been false. But this is an unpardonable offense in the eyes of those who have fettered themselves to the dead carcass of conservatism 288

The attitude of the paper towards Fourier was defined by Ripley in answer to the attack in the Democratic Review, the paper of Orestes A. Brownson, who, in the throes of his recent conversion to Catholicism, was even less inclined than usual to tolerance:

We trust that the public will one day understand, that as advocates of Association, Fourier is not our Master, but our Teacher. We do not receive anything because it is set forth in his writings, any further than is sustained by conclusive evidence & facts...With the speculations of Fourier, which are admitted to be of the boldest character, we have no practical concern whatever. We may study his daring speculations on cosmogony, on the relation of the planets, with no purpose but that of mere literary curiosity; and in like manner we may read his descriptions of the possible conditions of society in the future ages of harmony, as if they were nothing but the dreams of a too ardent enthusiast. 289

One of the dreams which Ripley was anxiously repudiating was Fourier's speculations in regard to marriage, which were not to be put into practice until society had reached the perfection towards which it was painfully tending.

288 Ibid., II, p. 60, Aug. 30, 1845.

289 Ibid., II, p. 60, Jan. 3, 1846.

The impact of Fourieristic thought on Brook Farm caused a desire for expansion. Hope grew that more industry would mean more money, and less debt. The ideal social arrangement advocated by Fourier was the phalanx, neatly parcelled off into series and groups. A group was three or more similar persons or objects; a series consisted of related groups. For example, on the occasions when Dana ferried the food from the kitchen to the table, he belonged to the Waiters' Group of the Domestic Series. Brook Farm had too few members for all this higher bookkeeping. An increase of members was desirable. To make this feasible, accommodations had to be provided. Here again, Fourier had thought of everything, and had designed a large, unitary house called a phalanstery, to shelter the members of a phalanx. The Brook Farmers decided to house themselves in such a building, and leave room for others who might join them. Fourier's phalanx was constructed on a basis of at least sixteen hundred persons. This, to the Farmers, was an astronomical figure. There is no precise account of the number of persons gathered under the Brook Farm roofs in the days of greatest expansion, but some idea may be gathered from a description of the already available accommodations. The Hive, the original farm house, contained the community dining room, kitchen, laundry, and reception room; upstairs were dormitories.²⁹⁰ The Aerie, first building constructed after Hopley bought the farm, had a parlor, library, four small dormitories, and a number of rooms.²⁹¹ The prettiest

²⁹⁰ Russell, op.cit., pp. 4-6.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 7. This building was also called the Myrie, or the Ery.

house was the Cottage, shaped like a Maltese cross, containing a parlor and a few bedrooms.²⁹² Gaunt Pilgrim Hall was a double house, with large, bleak parlors, and many bedrooms.²⁹³ The Association hired one small house, outside the domain, called the Nest.²⁹⁴

In the summer of 1844, the Brook Farmers set about the construction of the Phalanstery, a unitary building capable of holding the entire population. It was an oblong wooden affair, one hundred and seventy-five feet long, three stories high, with galleries running the length of the building on both upper stories. Besides a dining room, chapel, parlors, it contained suites of apartments for the use of families, and private rooms. It was designed to house one hundred and fifty persons. By 1846, \$7000 had been spent on it, and it was estimated that \$3000 more would put it into condition. A great amount of effort and sacrifice also went into the construction. The Brook Farmers cheerfully economized on their already Spartan diet, with a great deal of humor, and very little complaint. Then came the Brook Farm tragedy. When work was resumed on the new building, on March 2, 1846, a dance was held in celebration. At quarter before nine, it was discovered that the building was on fire. The dancers, carrying futile buckets of water, rushed out into the snow, and watched the fire spread through the unfinished rooms, where the lathes were unprotected by plaster. All that was rescued was a couple of tool chests. The building was uninsured.²⁹⁵ White with despair, some of the Farmers

²⁹² Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹³ Swift, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁹⁴ Russell, op. cit., pp. 56-7.

²⁹⁵ Godman, op. cit., pp. 192-7; Russell op. cit., pp. 125-6.

crept off to their rooms without speaking. Sophia had to be helped from the scene. George taxed his iron control to stay, see that the firemen were given breakfast, and thank them courteously for their efforts. ²⁹⁶

The frantic meetings of the Central Committee to consider ways and means of continuing the existence of Brook Farm reveal the pitiful resources of the stricken colonists. There was little market for the Britannia ware made on the place; the shoemakers suffered from lack of funds to get good hides; the sash and blind business had neither the storehouse in which to dry wood, nor the money to buy it seasoned; the printers were carrying the load of the Harbinger; the small fee charged guest visitors brought some money, but there was not enough space. Mere important sources of money had been funds of investors, who now were not interested; income from new members who came with property, for whom there was not room, and income from the school. ²⁹⁷

The school had lost caste. The attacks on Association, many of which were prompted by enmity towards Greeley, disciple of Fourier, had frightened some of the parents into sending pupils elsewhere, ²⁹⁸ and the small pox epidemic in 1845 had discouraged the remainder, as well as disorganized the school. ²⁹⁹ The unhappy Farmers, who really loved their Association, cut down once more on their diet. Greeley and the New York well-wishers relinquished their stock, but Dwight found out that the New Yorkers' interest had by this time shifted to the North American Phalanx, at Red

²⁹⁶ Russell, op. cit., pp. 125-6.

²⁹⁷ Codman, op. cit., pp. 207-11

²⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 207-11.

²⁹⁹ Russell, op. cit. 152.

Bank, New Jersey, although Greeley promised the first one hundred dollars he got which did not belong to someone else. Two people sent gifts of money; one of them who sent \$100, suggested with the mathematical interest in multiplying the improbable which marked the Fourierists, that if ninety-nine other people did the same, their worries would be over. But the handwriting was unmistakably on the wall.

However imperturbably George may have conducted himself after the fire, Sophia seems to have suffered some form of breakdown. On April 19, Marianne Dwight, a sister of John Sullivan Dwight, wrote that Sophia had been quite ill, and though better, was far from well.³⁰⁰ Since 1845 or even earlier, a new interest, Catholicism, had entered her thoughts. There is no record how strongly or how early her mind had turned in that direction. There were some Spanish Catholics at Brook Farm. In 1844, both Brownson and Hecker had become members of that church. Whenever the ideas came to her, it seems as if, when one hope disappeared in the blaze of the Phalanstery, the other filled its space in her mind. By autumn, 1846, she was in a state of spiritual exaltation. She wrote her cousin Ruth Charlotte Dana, who "loved to say that she had come into the Church before Newman had made it the fashion",³⁰¹ and described her state of mind:

Your kind letter of invitation to the sea shore came following many kind messages from you, none the less kind because they were all unnecessary for if you had said not a word, & I had a spare day I should fly to you at your new home... It would delight my heart to find two or three days, or even one, to spend with you, but it seems now wholly out of the question,

³⁰⁰ Amy L. Reed, ed., Letters from Brook Farm, 1844-47 (Poughkeepsie, Vassar College, 1928), p. 166.

³⁰¹ Georgina Pell Curtis, Some Roads to Rome in America (St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder, 1909), p. 381.

& I have found such satisfaction in my occupations this summer that I cannot really regret anything I lose by them. I cannot look at them in that point of view. Meanwhile we are not separated. I feel you always near to me. It is true that where there is any sympathy between beings of the same kindred, there is a mystic tie of union that binds them; each soul has a fragrance for the other, that does not breathe from merely selected friendships.

What glorious summer weather we have had, particularly the last two or three weeks. I cannot describe to you the joy of my physical existence those hottest days. It seemed to me I had a glimpse of that mystic state where the body is glorified & the soul aided & supported by it in its highest action. I trod on air, my brain was clear, my spirit serene, no amount of labor was too great for me, four or five hours sleep was all I required. I rose at 4½ & went through the woods & across the fields, a most lovely walk, to the river with the girls, & there we were in the river waiting the sun-rise. All the long eve^s were spent in the woods or walking in the garden....

I have some fine boys with me now, & my school is delightful--Most reverently did I consecrate it at its opening at New Year to our blessed Mother & need I tell you how tenderly she has guarded it ever since. Thank you for the little stamp.-- I wear it constantly as a talisman. On Friday I was in town & could as well as not have heard Bishop Hughes funeral sermon³⁰² & attended high mass--but did not know of it till too late. I saw three or four people who were there....

Can I describe to you my horror when the 1st of Sept came & I found your autumn breviary in my drawer? I hope you have rec^d it safely long since. Do send me a good book to read. I am hungering & thirsting. I want to send you some translations from French associative papers in the late numbers of the Harbinger, showing the position of our Phalansterian friends to the Catholic Church--will you read them? The Harbinger is like a precious shield to me, & I would not see it used for curl-papers, or lamp-lighters, except to light a torch before the Image of our Holy Mother. George has lent me too a remarkable letter from Mr. Brownson to him to show to you.³⁰³

With Brook Farm, things were going as badly as possible. Early the following year, it was too clear that the enterprise was over. Ripley still worked hard on the Harbinger, and to promote the doctrines

302 By this bishop.

303 Sophia Ripley to Ruth Charlotte Dana, Sept. 12, 1846. A.L.S. in M.H.S.

Fourier, gave a lecture on February 4, 1847, called The Grounds of Association in the Spiritual Nature of Man, but for Brook Farm itself, little could be done. On March 4, 1847, at a meeting of stockholders and creditors, Ripley was authorized to let the farm for one year from March 1, for \$350; and the Keith lot for \$100 or more.³⁰⁴ On April 18, at a stockholders' meeting, Ripley was authorized to transfer the property of the Corporation to three trustees, that they might dispose of it at the best possible advantage.³⁰⁵ These trustees were Theodore Parker, George R. Russell, and Samuel P. Teel. At a meeting of the American Union of Associationists, on May 12, Dwight's motions that the Harbinger should be continued at Brook Farm until October first, that the editors be given a salary of \$5.00 a week; that the Association assume the expenses of the Harbinger, and that the Executive Committee make arrangements for the establishment of the Harbinger in New York the following autumn, with an editor in Boston and one in New York, were all unanimously accepted.³⁰⁶ In July, George Ripley was named General Agent, and Parke Godwin editor of the Harbinger for the following autumn. He was to be assisted by Ripley and Dana in New York, and by Dwight and W. H. Channing in Boston.³⁰⁷ On October 30, appeared the last number of the Harbinger to be published at Brook Farm.

In the last spring at Brook Farm, when arrangements had been completed for leaving it, George published in the Christian Examiner his

³⁰⁴ Swift, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁰⁶ Harbinger, IV, p. 176, May 29, 1847.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., V, p. 111, July 24, 1847.

only poem of which there is any record. Even the banality of the piece does not disguise the fact of his obvious sincerity:

THE ANGELS OF THE PAST

My buried days!--in bitter tears
I sit beside your tomb,
And ghostly forms of vanished years
Flit through my spirit's gloom.

In throngs around my soul they press,
They fill my dreamy sight
With visions of past loveliness,
And shapes of lost delight.

Like angels of the Lord they move
Each on his mystic way,--
These buried messengers of love,
These heralds of the day.

And as they pass the conscious air
Is stirred to music round,
And verily a murmur of harmonious prayer
Is breathed along the ground.

And sorrow dies from out my heart,
In exhalations sweet,
And the bands of life which she did part
In blessed union meet.

The past and future o'er my head
Their sacred grasp entwine,
And the eyes of all the holy dead
Around, before me shine.

And I rise to life and duty,
From nights of fear and death,
With a deeper sense of beauty,
And a fuller strength of faith. 308

The wrench of leaving West Roxbury must have been more painful to George than to Sophia, who was being attracted deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Catholicism. In their last month at Brook Farm, she wrote Ruth Charlotte Dana:

308 Life, p. 197.

... I have been very much engaged with teaching & company, & then you are so near me always that I have to withdraw myself from you to write. Julia has by this time written to you, or told you of our pleasant Sunday. I accepted the cross of going with the person of my acquaintance who has always had in the greatest degree that mixture of hatred & contempt for the Catholic Church, so common among Protestants, a person of the coolest, keenest & most subtle intellect, & one who out Emersoned, Emerson, in his scepticism. He, for the first time, on this visit, spoke respectfully of the church: so much so, that I was able to tell him all that was in my soul about it, which could be spoken out; for he has spiritual tendencies, & many other fine traits which have always bound me to him....He warns me however against going any further than merely indulging my sentiments by attending church, talks of the charm being broken if I should enter it &c. all of which proved to me how little one can penetrate into the condition of another merely by intellectual perceptions however acute they may be.... But I have not told you how divinely the service penetrated into my soul last Sunday. It was intensely solemn, sweet & elevating.... Let me tell you something sweet, that I dare not mention to anyone near me. Keep it to yourself dear. My darling Nicolasito is a poet in his feelings, & sometimes writes very pretty Spanish verses. Once last winter he brought a sonnet to me to translate. I never wrote a couplet in my life, but for him who has concentrated upon himself a large share of my sisterly & maternal love I can do almost anything, & under the inspiration of my affection I translated it pretty well. Last week, in the midst of a good deal of hurry & confusion, he brought me some more lines & earnestly besought me to do them into English. I kept them by me for two or three days & could do nothing with them; was about returning them, when early in the morn^g, I said "Our Blessed Mother lend me words, by which I may prepare this little pleasure for thy son, & instantly I put pen to paper & the words flowed into quite harmonious verse to the end without a moment's delay! I told it to N--& I doubt if he ever met with anything in his religious experience which touched his heart so.

We go to N. Y.—Monday (6th)....309

Monday came, the Ripleys took a last look at the farm, and turned their faces toward New York. Only a few stragglers stayed on to finish the affairs of the once populous community. Two years later, on April 12, 1849, the place was sold at auction for \$17, 445. The Brook Farm experiment was over.

CHAPTER XXIII

SLOW DEATH OF THE HARBINGER

It was not the fault of Mr. Allen, well-mannered Yankee publisher of the Harbinger, that he had to fire his foreman four days before the first New York number of that paper went to press. To George, accustomed to the eager cooperation of the Brook Farm printers, this must have seemed a bad omen.. The next morning the substitute made his appearance, "A most demure dolorous looking gentleman....in a very rusty black coat & a very white cravat, looking like a decayed Methodist minister."³¹⁰ This uninspiring gentleman had good references so matters were carefully explained to him, and Ripley went about his business, confident that on Friday, November 5, the paper would be ready for mailing. On Wednesday night Ripley found that practically nothing had been done. "Dire was the haste of Thursday," dire the wrath of Allen, numerous the misprints, and even with the loan of a good foreman they got the paper out two days late.

To Ripley, harassed by unpacking, preparing an office at 9 Spruce Street, and all the cares of being General Agent of the American Union of Associationists, the thing had a nightmarish quality only excelled

³¹⁰ George Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, Nov. 8, 1847, A. L. S. in M.F.L.

by the lank, skinny, dappled appearance of the new edition of the Harbinger.

Ripley's first weeks in New York were disheartening. For the benefit of the faithful Dwight, who was having his own discouragements in Boston, he kept in his letters the same humorous, courageous tone which had cheered the Brook Farmers in their dark hours, but now and then the discouragement broke through.

I need not ask you to write me, often & voluminously,-- I do not mean as an Editor, but as a private individual; for if you feel the desire for communication with old friends as much as I do, your pen will run on all fours. In fact, my life in New-York is just what I expected, slavish & shabby in the highest degree,--I have to sit at the desk in Spruce St. about 7 hours on a stretch, functioning[sic] as a clerk of the Am. Union. I don't go into Broadway at all; & on the whole, I fancy, the life is what Hobbes elegantly calls a "nasty life". With all the perplexities & short-comings of Brook Farm, I miss its freedom & geniality, & were it not for pleasant Flatbush, which is truly an "Oasis in the desert" I would die in the ditch very soon. But satis, superque satis of this. Don't think I am losing my good spirits or my eldermanic proportions.³¹¹

The Flatbush of which he spoke was at that time a village. There George and Sophia had taken a room, and George, looking at the pretty village, tried hard to forget the gray November hills of West Roxbury, the slate gray Hive and Aerie, the dark colored Cottage, and the black ruins of the Phalanstery. By day, he followed the lost cause of Association, trying to spread far and wide the doctrines of Fourier, in the hope that some day, somewhere, a group of people would be able to form a society in which to live useful and complete lives without being warped by the pressure of civilization's injustices. In the evening, he attended the occasional state functions of the Associationists. Occasionally he went on lecture trips to Philadelphia, Cincinnati and other cities.

311. George Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, Nov. 8, 1847. A. L. A. in B. P. L.

The Harbinger was Ripley's particular worry. On him, as the odd job man, fell the work of getting it out. No crisis was as bad as the first one, but he was plagued by a thousand details. He wrote Dwight:

Indeed, we have needed an angel to set us right, for it seems as if all the petty, unexpected, little imps & demons that could be produced, were hovering over the first steps of the new Harbinger, to give it a most annoying trial, on its entrance to the high, brilliant, & powerful life, to which I am sure it is destined.

For example:

First, there was a mistake in measuring the paper....2d. The type was altogether too small. 3. Bad ink. 4. Horrid Press work, done in a hurry & at night. This was partly occasioned by the blunders of that confounded soddologer of a foreman; partly, by the blunders of the compositors, a choir of journeymen & apprentices, as unlike our choice little group of dear Charley & Willard & Co. as Scotch snuff is unlike gold dust.³¹²

The Harbinger staff consisted of Parke Godwin, who wrote editorials, and theatre reviews; Henry James, who did anything; Dana, who wrote the foreign articles and local news; and Ripley whose specialty seems to have been miscellany and addenda. Perhaps there was a beneficent, numbing power in so much hard work. The regrets and homesickness for Brook Farm could be shrouded with dridgery. One morning, however, as he set out to the office, the Association, and the bad-tempered Parke Godwin, he noticed that after a soft, mild rain, the December grass in Flatbush was as green as the Brook Farm meadow in June.

The Harbinger was still a paper with too limited an interest to sell many subscriptions. With almost every article of every issue

³¹² George Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, Nov. 22, 1847. A. L. S. in B. P. L.

slanted to the party line, it had a certain monotony which must have tired its readers. It was in continual need of financial aid, from the affiliated unions, or from the rich friends of Association. Its budget was minimum, and its salaries can be judged from the fact that the weekly pay for the General Secretary, Ripley, and for three editors, Dana, Godwin, and Dwight, totaled \$28.00 each week.³¹³ By October, 1848, there were suggestions for easing the burden on the budget, such as issuing it monthly instead of weekly.³¹⁴

On February 3, 1849, a notice to the effect that a change of form was contemplated in the immediate future, appeared in the Harbinger. On February 10, a notice, signed by Greeley, announced a meeting of the Executive Committee for Wednesday, February 15. Another notice, of the same date, told the readers that after the Executive Committee meeting, the next number of the Harbinger would be of a smaller size, or be published monthly instead of weekly; subscriptions would be completed in the new form. Ripley knew that the new Harbinger would never appear. From Boston, where he was staying, he wrote Parke Godwin, who was putting out the Harbinger and snarling as he did so:

43 Chestnut St. Boston
Feb. 1st 1848 [misdated for 1849]

My dear Godwin

Your pathetic description of your sufferings, under the accumulated burdens that were imposed upon you, was affecting in the extreme, & gave me a lively sense of your readiness to do dare or suffer in a righteous cause. I am glad you did not attempt to alleviate your misery, by looking at Allen over your

³¹³ George Ripley to, Aug. 28, 1848. A.L.S. in B.P.L.

³¹⁴ George Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, Oct. 18, 1848. A.L.S. in B.P.L.

spectacles, pitching the office boys out of the window, drowning Whitley in his own paint pots, or smothering Potter in his enchanting files of old newspapers. In spite of your tortments, you have certainly done justice to the Harbinger during my absence & J.S.D's silence. The jokes are as piquant, the anecdotes as sparkling, the miscellany as readable, & the editorials as fresh, saucy, & esthetic as if you had the whole force, horse, foot & dragoons in the field.

"The dangerous illness" of your "accurate & patient" ally is visible only in the wretched deviltry, which the types are made to enact by our awfully consistant printers. From beginning to end how faithful they have been to their vocation of blundering, & in the next number, I suppose they will give us the swan-song of the Harbinger in some new perversity of type-metal, to the astonishment of an admiring world.

I am sorry the Harbinger is destined to such an untimely end, although I shall not join in any funeral wail at its demise. I have long felt that there was not compactness enough, nor vitality in our movement to authorize any very extensive operations, & that those of us who relied upon it for a support were neither in an enviable or true position. I do not however regret any labour I have bestowed upon it, & taking all things into account, I presume I may cherish the consciousness that I have given to it not less than I have recd. I am sure there are zeal & justice enough, among our friends to make Tweedy good for his very liberal advances, & there are still some small assets [sic] of the Harbinger, in the shape of unpaid subscriptions & amounts due for advertising which I reckon will pay off all the small unsettled balances against us. I wonder if anything has been heard from the \$50, forwarded to Considerant through Osborne McDaniel some time ago. A small invoice of books was ordered for Mr Durent of New Orleans at the same time, from which it is now more than time that we had some returns.

I suppose though the Harbinger has stopped, the office will not be closed at once, at any rate. I must bespeak house-room & hospitality for my traps & exuviae, until my return, which is still quite uncertain, although I hope to be well enough to be in New-York before the close of next week. I am on the mending hand, though my hand mends slowly. The rheumatism proper has left me, but it is followed by a very improper swelling of the wrist-joint accompanied by neuralgia, which occasions a good deal of suffering. My hand is still entirely useless & motionless, except as it is moved by some external force. It represents the not me assuming the right hand as the me.

I do not go in for the plan of attempting to revive the Harbinger in Boston, & can take no part in it, if undertaken. I wish to return to New York, & should like to obtain some employment (preferring a connection with the press) that will enable me to remain there. If any feasible thing occurs to you, pray keep your eye upon it.

Make my best remembrances to Tweedy & James & believe me

Yrs ever faithfully....

Late in March Ripley had a long talk with Godwin and Tweedy. The latter went over the subscription lists, with a distinctly unfavorable result; there was too great a deficiency to authorize proceeding further with the magazine. After much discussion with Henry James, it was decided that Godwin should consult those friends from whom financial aid was expected. The resulting plan was to put out a non-sectarian reform magazine, called The New Times, or something to that effect.

I shall do what I can, [wrote Ripley to Dwight] which Heaven knows, is little enough for the encouragement of the proposed Magazine, but, as it is not to be distinctly an Associative work, but to assume a radical, trenchant, & I fear, destructive character, I confess I cannot give it a very enthusiastic or even cordial sympathy. It is intimated that the tone

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- 315 George Ripley to Parke Godwin, Feb. 1, 1848 [misdated for 1849?] A.L.S. in New York Public Library. This letter and signature are in Sophia's hand. Hereafter this library will be referred to as N.Y.P.L. In Life, p. 198, Frothingham cites Ripley to the effect that he was not notified of the suspension of the Harbinger. If this letter is of Feb. 1, 1849, instead of 1848, the statement of Frothingham is erroneous. There is good reason for supposing the letter to be of 1849. In Feb. 1848, there is no record of any plan to discontinue the Harbinger, but in August 1848, a plea went out to supporters of the paper for assistance, and in October, Ripley told Dwight that plans for reduction in size or change of the Harbinger to a monthly were seriously considered. Again, Ripley was crippled with rheumatism in 1849, as the letter of Mar. 26, to John Sullivan Dwight, indicates. George Ripley was precise about dating his letters, but Sophia, in whose hand this letter is written, was very careless. As it was early in the year, possibly she misdaded this letter which she wrote for George.

of the Harbinger, was too mild, too conciliatory, & hence too negative, until it became sleepy, tedious, & ineffective. As these traits, in my opinion, were the glory & honor of the Harbinger, & made it signally conspicuous above the spouting & spluttering of the reform press in general, I cannot but think a work commencing on opposite principles, would be in danger of hurrying to the devil, both the course which it supports, & the men, whom it enlists. Then, Godwin, as we all know, is too much of a Caliban, or Hannibal, to make cooperation with him pleasant. Indeed, I don't see, although he is really so good & noble at heart, how anyone can work under him, or over him, or with him, without extreme annoyance; & for himself, he decidedly prefers to write or fight (which with him is pretty much the same thing) on his own hook, to join hands with even an archangel. On the whole, if I am able to write anything, I feel rather more strongly drawn to give it to Parker, & have it appear with the patent Boston stamp, than to make it party to this new plot.

We are about leaving Flatbush, & indeed, already we are in N.Y. most of the time at our old quarters in 9th. St. My sister is yet undecided what arrangement to make for herself. Mrs. R. is at work at establishment of her classes, with great encouragement from friends, & good prospects of success. I am still seeking a "sitervation" (how much it looks like starvation, that word) but as yet have had no decent offer, except a partial proposal from Greeley to work nearly the whole night at his office all week long at \$12. I may be induced to accept this, but I fear my health, at least for the present is hardly adequate to the undertaking.

I am attempting to institute a correspondence with several papers, for which I hope to receive 2 to 5 dollars each per week....

I am slowly gaining in point of health. My arm is still in a sling, but begins to protest against the bondage, & call for emancipation.³¹⁶

The successor to the Harbinger was W. H. Channing's Spirit of the Age, with which Ripley had little connection. The Associative movement was dying out in New York, and Ripley realized that for the time, at least, nothing could be done about the cause in which he was so deeply interested. By May he was "literary assistant" on the staff of the New York Tribune, reviewing books and translating foreign material. His reforming days were over and a new career, which was to last until the end of his long life, had begun.

CHAPTER

SOPHIA AND CATHOLICISM

At some time between September, 1847, and March, 1848, Sophia became a member of the Catholic Church. In the ardors of new religious experience, any sense of grief at the closing of Brook Farm was drowned. From the point of view of her religion, she began to regard the associative experiment as unfortunate.³¹⁷ With all the great intensity of which she was capable, she entered into the beliefs and observances of her new church. This venerable institution offered not only the close, hard, central theological reasonings of the Fathers, but also a diffuse, white aura of mysticism. Sophia did not distinguish greatly between the two. Having been long taught in the Emersonian school to fuse the seen and the unseen, her imaginative mind seized at signs and portents. She sat at the feet of priests and nuns, and listened to their oracles, drinking in alike holy wisdom and sheer platitude. For her director she chose militant Bishop Hughes, who had neither the intelligence nor the training of the transcendentalists of her former days, but whose years of dealing with cases of conscience had given considerable practical wisdom. In March, 1848, she went through a curious crisis of conscience, comparable to conversion among

³¹⁷ Life, p. 188

the Methodists. She described it to Ruth Charlotte Dana, who had visited her the previous week.

Sunday mornng I woke long before light, & my thoughts fastened themselves on a subject, I often mentioned to you when you were here, the coldness of the heart in Protestantism, & my own very cold heart in particular. A clear revelation of myself was made to me as never before. I saw that all through my life my ties with others were those of the intellect & imagination, & not warm human heart ties; that I do not love any one & never did, with the heart, & of course never could have been worthy in any relation. Every part of my life was more clearly explained to me than ever before, & I saw what had caused my greatest difficulties & trials. I saw above all that my faith in the church was only a reunion of my intellect with God; that in the region of intellect it was growing clearer and firmer every day; that it filled my imagination completely, & that these fluttering useless joys, that I experienced in common with many other converts from Protestantism, were from a gratified imagination & not a sanctified heart. I saw that faith requires to strike root in the heart, & if the stony soil refuses to receive it, it has nowhere to plant itself & therefore has no root at all. I saw how, all through my life, I had been trying to do good to people to repair the injury of this deathlike coldness, & yet it never brought me into kind & equal relations, & persons never claimed from me little, loving acts of sweetness, but only help in great emergencies. All this did not throw me into an agitated state of mind, nor cause me the least remorse (& this was only one more proof of my icy condition). I looked on it as a dreadful fact that the heart of a human being should be turned to stone. Then, how unworthy was I of the privileges of the church. I determined to make a clean breast of it to my Blessed Director, take this heart out & let him see that it was all of stone; & calmly take the consequences. I supposed he would tell me that he should have known this before, that my Faith could not be worthy the name & until warmth could melt my heart, I was unworthy of the communion of the Blessed Sacrament. The mornng was beautiful, the birds singing, the sun rising as I walked through the still streets; & though I was travelling along with a load heavier than any poor beast of burden ever carried, yet I could not feel wretched, though I thought I ought to be. I entered the sacristy & there, sitting by the confessional, buried in devotion, sat the saintly Bishop Simon, with a few little altar boys waiting to attend him to mass at 7 o'clock. I seemed to breathe the odor of his sanctity with which the room was fragrant. Presently he robed & entered the church, & Mr. Bailey retired from the Altar. The boys said Bishop Hughes would not celebrate mass, but was coming over soon. I trembled a little as I sat by the fire waiting for him. In a few minutes he came, bright & serene as the mornng. I told him all, & more than I have told you, & what do you think he quietly said? "My child, this is not to cause you a moment's uneasiness, or a moment's thought; there is no sin in it, any

more than that you are tall & not short. If you have consented to sin, when you had a moment to reflect on what you were doing, of this repent, for this, ask forgiveness: but that your heart is not tender, is no concern of yours. God does not ask from you what you have not. If you had been bred up in the church, perhaps habit & its various influences would have softened your nature." "Is there no hope now," said I? [sic] "That is not a question for you to ask or for me to answer. Neither you nor I have anything to do with it. It is with God alone. Say to Him Oh God take this poor, cold, heart of mine & make of it what thou wilt. You have nothing more to do." "But" I said, "obedience is the first duty & I am told to love God & my neighbour." "Not with the heart you have not my child, but with the heart you have. Such states of mind are wholly independent of ourselves. And if you had all your way, you would be a seraph, & you do not ask of God to be a seraph surely while you are on earth. This heart of yours is a cross which you must patiently bear to the end if needs be. You suffer in common with many of the Saints. Have you never read of St. Theresa, how she suffered for years with dryness of heart? A heart that melts away in affection even for God is often an obstacle to steadfast fidelity, in his service, & to the formation of the virtues of a heroic character. It is not that which will enable you to resist all the temptations of the world rather than utter a word of untruth. And if all the wealth of the world cannot tempt you from rectitude, let this satisfy you." At these words, which came to me as if from an angel, I passed as it were from death unto life. They were the words of God, & came to me as truth, absolute truth, & how comforting they were I need not tell you....We parted, & just as I entered the pew, Mass commenced.... More than this by Bishop Simon taking our Bishop's place at seven, I had the blessing of his angelical instruction, in his natural voice in a vacant room for nearly half an hour....³¹⁸

After mass, she met Father Hecker, an old Brook Farmer, who was also at the church, and he walked home with her. In the afternoon, she took George to Benediction at the Jesuit church. The sermon was long; a Dr. Larkin refuted the Protestant doctrine of justification for an hour and a half, and the Ripleys nearly fainted with fatigue.

If the days in Flatbush brought nothing but worry and disappointment to George, they were happy ones in many ways for Sophia. She had resumed her old occupation of teaching school. She made friends with a number of her co-religionists of all varieties and descriptions; most of her leisure time,

³¹⁸ Sophia Ripley to Ruth Charlotte Dana, Mon., Mar. 1848.

she sat quiet and still, reading devotional works, or considering the mysteries of Catholicism. To George, full of anxiety over the failing Harbinger, she gave loyal and affectionate support. On certain topics, they were irrevocably divided, but without antagonism. George trailed along in her wake to Mass and Benediction; she attended the Associationist celebrations, particularly those at which he spoke. The Revolution of 1848 in France was blamed in part on the Fourierists, and the charge gladly accepted. She wrote her cousin, Ruth Charlotte Dana.

How Great Fourier times now a days dear! Associationists taking a large share in regulating the late changes in France. Private letters coming from them all the time cheering the brethren here with the assurance that an attempt will now be made for the re-organization of industry. All are in high spirits. Tonight a public demonstration of sympathy is to be made by them ... Mr. Ripley is all engaged in it, & will speak I suppose. The weather spares me the pain of going which I should have done for dear George's sake, if the Bishop thought it best. Perhaps something may be done by the French government, under the sanction of the church, to carry out the parts of Fourier's mechanical arrangements for the benefits of the oppressed. But I never did sympathize in the least with the glorification of the man.³¹⁹

Sarah Stearns, a niece of George's and a friend of the early Brook Farm days, stayed with them intermittently. Sarah was also a recent Catholic. Marianne Ripley's cook, whom Sophia had engaged on the recommendation of the Sisters of Mercy, knew more than either of them about their mutual faith, and the two ladies from Massachusetts took great pleasure in her instructions.

From another source, the husband was receiving the instructions himself. Orestes Brownson, who had entered the Catholic Church several years before, had broken with George for his differing religious opinions in 1847. In June, 1848, he sent Ripley a long letter, full of friendship and definitions of Absolute Reason, to which Ripley replied, that he had never lost

³¹⁹ Sophia Ripley to Ruth Charlotte Dana, Apr. 1, 1848. A.L.S. in H.W.S.

his esteem for Brownson, did not care for controversy, and had no time in which to argue the point of the Absolute Reason.³²⁰ Sophia, seeing Brownson's letters, decided that Brownson was being very forbearing with George. She also found the tone of her fellow convert's review beyond criticism, and felt a harmony with that controversialist which she had never felt before.

On May 15, 1849, Sarah Stearns entered the convent of Mt. St. Vincent. Both Sophia and Sarah were a little shaken at the step the younger woman was to take. To make the farewells easier, Sophia had sent Sarah's little wardrobe on ahead, and both set out as if for an afternoon airing. At Mt. St. Vincent's they were received by one of the religious, who sat with them on the rocks outside the convent. In the quiet talk of the warm May afternoon, and the otherworldliness of the place, Sophia thought of Brook Farm, and the times when she and Sarah had been there together.³²² When she left, she was a little dazed at the absence of the young kinswomen, who had shared her joys in the Catholic faith.

Sophia's Catholicism was by no means exclusively contemplative; it was active. She did some translations of religious works. She threw herself into the varied charities connected with her religion. Hospital work, prison work, work among the insane, she was active in all of them. Her talent for society, combined with the emotion which religion infused into these contacts, must have made her a welcome addition to any group of social workers. Perhaps the charity which commanded her strongest interest was the prison work of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. These devoted women

320 George Ripley to Orestes A. Brownson, June 22, 1848, A.L.S. in Notre Dame University.

321 Sophia Vinley to Ruth Charlotte Dana, July 18, [1848] A.L.S. in M. M. S.

322 Sophia Vinley to Ruth Charlotte Dana, May 25, 1849. A.L.S. in M.M.S. In Aug. 1849, Sarah was in Springfield, but by September of the following year, back at Mt. St. Vincent's. Sarah Stearns was George Ripley's niece.

were a strictly cloistered order, whose work was the reformation of prostitutes. The young women with whom they worked came to them for one of three reasons: they were committed by the courts; they were sent by their families or they came voluntarily. They were taught to sew in order to have some form of livelihood. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd wished to open a convent in New York, but were opposed by Archbishop Hughes, who claimed that the objects of their charity were not worth their efforts. Sophia and the group of Catholic social workers surrounding her knew, from having worked in the Tombs and other prisons of the city, the hopelessness of the women prisoners. Most were immigrants; they were in a strange environment; they were ignorant; they were friendless; they were hungry. The prison term was punitive, not reformatory. The matron of the tombs added her request to those of the social workers, that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd be allowed to open a convent. Reluctantly the Archbishop consented.³²³ Sophia, accordingly, went to work to raise some money for the rent of the convent. On Nov. 1, 1858, the convent was incorporated according to the laws of the State of New York, with Sophia as one of the six trustees.

323 Katherine E. Conway, In the Footprints of the Good Shepherd (New York, Convent of the Good Shepherd, 1910), p.39.

CHAPTER XXV

FROM DRUDGERY TO PROMINENCE

After the demise of the Harbinger, Ripley was faced with the necessity of finding some means of livelihood. His post on the Tribune paid him the munificent sum of \$5 with great irregularity; on one occasion he received \$8. On July 14, he received \$10, which was a steady weekly salary until April, 1850, when he was advanced to \$15, which sum he had received once before. From September 21, 1851, until January 16, 1854, he received \$25, with exception of one week which brought him only \$15. In 1864 and 1865, his salary rose to \$30 a week, and in 1866 to \$50. From 1871 until his death in 1862, the palmy days of his old age, he received \$75 a week. In December, 1849, he was permitted to buy stock in the corporation.³²⁴ The scanty salary of his early days obliged him to supplement his income as best he could. The debts of Brook Farm were heavy on his shoulders. He ground out news items for The Chronotype, The Hearth and Home, The Literary Messenger, The Washingtonian, The Pittsburgh

³²⁴ Life, pp. 206-7.

Commercial, The Columbian, The Charleston Literary Messenger, The Manchester Examiner (English), The Picayune, The Boston Daily Bee, The Globe, and The Southern Literary Gazette. His column in The Chronotype was called "Gossip from Gotham," which indicates its high seriousness. He signed other columns "C.N.E.," "R.N.Y."; in the Tribune he was simply "R." until very shortly he abandoned any identifying mark altogether.³²⁵ He wrote on anything and everything.

To John Sullivan Dwight he described his situation:

I am obliged to work night and day to keep soul & body together; for though I have now several strings to my bow, I get confoundedly poor pay from each, & hence am obliged to keep playing on every instrument within my compass, Jewsharp, penny whistle, trombone, with frequent touches on the brazen kettle drum. I do all the book notices for the Tribune, which, with the time it takes to read books, is about enough for one man,--I have charge of the city news,--& once a week on the arrival of the Steamer, have to work day & night till the translations are got out. My main pecuniary reliance is on my correspondence with newspapers which I have with Boston, Washington, Cincinnati, & New Orleans. I am not expected to do much for the Spirit of the Age, but to be a sort of right hand for Channing's head & heart in his absence. It is very bothering & perplexing to look after it, & eats up a deal of time.³²⁶

³²⁵ Life, pp. 207-8, supplemented by some of the clippings in Ripley's MS. Scrapbooks, in H. C. L. These are very incomplete, and after 1849-50, there are numerous and substantial gaps. The dates are cut off most of the clippings, of which many are endorsed in George's or Louisa A.S. Ripley's hand. It is impossible to tell exactly how complete the list is. MS. Brook Farm Account Book in H. C. L. contains a number of clippings, from most of which the date has been cut, and none of which are endorsed with either the date or name of the paper.

³²⁶ George Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, July 27, 1849. A. L. S. in B. P. L.

In 1850, Harper's New Monthly Magazine began publication, with Ripley as writer of the literary notices, then regular contributor, and finally reader for the publishing company. In 1852, with Bayard Taylor, he edited a compilation, A Handbook of Literature and the Fine Arts, which was his first venture into the encyclopedia field. It was published by G. P. Putnam.³²⁷ When Putnam's Magazine appeared in 1853, he was one of its early contributors. In 1853, J. C. Derby, early in the history of his publishing house, hired Ripley as reader and paid him as much for his services as the Tribune had five years before. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, hopeful and unknown, brought a little book of poetry to Derby, who promptly referred him to Ripley. When the author turned up for the verdict, it proved favorable; Derby published the book, and later hired Aldrich as Ripley's assistant reader.

Ripley, as critic, would be apt to review favorably the books which Ripley, as reader, had recommended. It was a highly desirable arrangement for the publishing house which hired him. The others would be less apt to greet it with joy. In 1856, charges were brought in the press that Ripley favored the publishing companies which hired him. His wrath knew no bounds. He wrote Parker:

I have just received your note, & ought perhaps to defer my reply, until my blood ceases to boil with indignation at the audacious proposal of that wretched Underwood. You say that you have not read the controversy, & hence your sentiment of friendship triumphs over your sentiment of justice. If you make yourself acquainted with the facts, you will perceive that nothing but the most penitent confession--such as I have already received from one of my leading adversaries--could even enable Underwood to approach

³²⁷ Life, pp. 212-15.

my presence in the most distant manner--as to respect or confidence towards him, I never can feel it again. If he is not the most pestilent of villains, he is the most arrant of apes. As a keeper of souls, I wonder, that you can allow him to pass unscathed by your rebuke. Just look for a moment at the course of this man.

Under the disguise of friendship, he charges me with conduct, which if true, would justly ruin & disgrace me, both professionally & personally. The charge is that for the payment of money in the shape of a salary as reader for Harper & Derby, I prostitute my office as critic of the Tribune in favor of their publications. He brings this charge, when I am in the thick of a fight with bitter enemies. He takes unusual pains to spread it on the wings of the press throughout the land. He does this, on his own confession, to revenge himself on me for my neglect of his own publications. He does it, without stopping to ascertain the truth of the charge--nay, as he admits in his note to you, knowing that it was false. Strip his conduct of the flimsy Jesuitical veil, which he now cowardly throws over its infamous features--what was it. Nothing less than the circulation of a damaging falsehood against a man whose friend he professes to be--& that for a vindictive purpose. A more consummate instance of perfidy, malice, & mendacity, I never met with in my life. I loathe & abhor the man--& spew him out of my mouth. The character of Griswold I regard as angelic whiteness in comparison with the black-hearted villainy of Underwood. I have no wish to bring you over to my side, dear Theodore, for I care little for sympathy or approval in this quarrel. I feel humiliated in having been the object of such base accusations, & will meet them only in the spirit of proudest defiance. But I cannot bear that with your love of peace, & your intrinsically amiable disposition, you should be the dupe of such a smooth-faced assassin as this wicked Underwood.

When you were here I told you that I cherished no malice against him, & upon your inquiry, said if he chose he might come to the Tribune Office--but certainly, I supposed he would come with an apology in his mouth, not with an insolent demand for concessions. I beg you to look at the facts in this case, & in spite of your desire to take no sides even with an old friend who has been most cruelly wronged & outraged by an upstart, you will not fail to see the stupendous iniquity of which the man Underwood has been guilty. Much as I abhor Griswold, I would sooner trust him than Underwood, whom I shall ever regard as the sneakingest & nastiest of man....³²⁸

In 1855, a brilliant idea came to Charles Anderson Dana, who was noted for such. He and Mr. Appleton were in Chicago, and Dana suggested that the time was ripe for an encyclopedia. A year later he sold the idea to Appleton's, which agreed to pay 12 1/2¢ for every volume sold. Dana sought out Ripley and offered him half the work and half the salary. Ripley, delighted, applied himself to the direction of the work with his characteristic energy. He sent out a stream of letters to well known authorities in the different fields, asking for articles. For his predominant part in the business details of the New American Cyclopedic, as it was called, he received an additional sum of money from Appleton's. Dana, however, wrote more articles than his partner in the enterprise.³²⁹ The volumes appeared serially, from 1858, and brought the writer a certain mild distinction, few reproaches, and a considerable sum of money. A fellow worker, in Appleton's, estimated that the total sums which the royalties paid the editors, or paid into Ripley's estate after his death, were not under \$100,000 each. There is a little symbolic incident about this, his most prosaic venture. With a copy of his encyclopedia, Ripley paid off part of the debt for groceries for Brook Farm.

His regular book reviews in the Tribune gained him prominence, and also introduced a literary department as a regular feature in American newspapers. Margaret Fuller, who had done reviewing on the Tribune before him, while undoubtedly more gifted, seems to have

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Ibid., p. 193. Whether Dana was or was not the author of the idea is not entirely certain. Frothingham attributes it to Rev. Dr. Hawks. Derby knew Dana, Ripley, and he himself worked for Appleton's, but is occasionally unreliable.

wielded less influence than Ripley, careful analyst, precise grammarian, and leading exponent of the best American Victorian taste. In some points he was exceedingly conservative. His definition of poetry as "the expression of the feeling excited by the contemplation of nature and the intercourse of human beings, in rhythmical forms....in the language of the imagination rather than of the intellect",³³⁰ is only as conventional as the poetry of Bayard Taylor to whom the letter containing this definition was addressed. Ripley and Taylor, whom he occasionally called "My dainty Ariel" were in one accord in their theory that without rhythmical form there was no poetry.

Ripley was perhaps at his best when dealing with the heavier prose works. His fundamental seriousness accorded well with a day which read heavy books earnestly and in large quantity. His reviews of books of philosophy were careful analyses of the theory advanced, and of the language of the author. In his review of Henry James's Moralism and Christianity, he not only carefully set forth a brief summary of James's doctrines, but carefully pointed out to the reader that "the power of using words in a precise and constant sense is one of the rarest of mental endowments", that James, who uses words exactly, is apt to be mistaken by a reader who does not.³³¹

³³⁰ George Ripley to Bayard Taylor, January 5, n.d. A.L.S., Cornell University Library.

³³¹ Weekly Tribune, Mar. 2, 1850.

His love of the sane and normal prevented him from doing justice to Poe. In a review of Lowell, Willis, and Griswold's edition, while he admired the style and the inventive genius, he scored Poe's preoccupation with the gruesome, which he regarded as even more heinous than his lack of moral earnestness:

Unhappily, he has no earnestness of character, no faith in human excellence, no devotion to a high purpose,-- not even the desire to produce a consummate work of art,-- and hence his writings fail to appeal to universal principles of taste, and are destitute of the truth and naturalness, which are the only passports to an enduring reputation in literature. He regarded the world as an enormous humbug, and, in revenge, would repay it in kind. His mind was haunted with terrific conceptions, which he delighted to embellish and work up, by the aid of his preternatural analysis, into the strangely plausible fictions, which at length disgust the reader with their horrible monstrosities.... the effect of his writings is like breathing the air of a charnell house....Mr. Poe luxuriates in the wantonness of his ingenuity, and evokes the most terrific spectres merely for terror's sake. This would be fatal in any kindred spheres of art.³³²

By contrast to Poe, he highly praised Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, to the review of which he gave a large slice of page one.³³³ He quoted copiously from the book, of which he wrote nothing but appreciation. Hawthorne, he pointed out, while he had the same genius for the infernal as Poe, did not confine himself to the improbable, and the work was embellished by copious "bursts of natural feeling". He had more of the same for The House of Seven Gables,³³⁴ The review covered page one of the weekly, rejoiced in the characters, the natural feeling, and even the "fine, comic humor". Hawthorne received one

³³² Ibid., Jan. 26, 1860.

³³³ Ibid., Apr. 6, 1860. Page one in the weekly was a compliment. In the daily, it would have put Hawthorne among the advertisements, where, at a later date, Ripley might doubtless have enjoyed placing him.

³³⁴ Ibid., Apr. 26, 1861.

more favorable review from Ripley, and only one. This was of the Blithedale Romance. Poor Ripley, very much on the spot, did the discreet thing, choked down any wrath he might have felt at having his life's dream used as the starting point for a picture of monomania, deceit, cupidity, self-delusion, and suicide, and reviewed the book favorably. He carefully pointed out:

The story is....made us from large, comprehensive experiences in many spheres, converted by the potent idealism of the writer into grim tragedy; while an occasional picture of the external environment of Blithedale may suggest to the initiated reader a dim, shadowy resemblance of rural life at Brook Farm. One of these is presented in the following passage, which may serve to raise a laugh at the expense of the Arcadians of Brook Farm, in which probably no one will join more heartily than the survivors of that motley and mirthful crew....³³⁵

The appearance of the Blithedale Romance immediately caused speculations as to what Brook Farm was the original of what character. Now to interpret the book as being an exposé of Brook Farm, one might arrive at even the extreme vision of Ripley, as the shaggy, monomaniac Hollingsworth, preying on the affections of the beautiful Margaret Fuller for her money. Reviewers knew better, and those who had visited Brook Farm, or met its chief, knew better, but any speculation at all on the subject would have been too much for Ripley's sensibilities. Both Hawthorne and Ripley were particular to disclaim any actual basis for the story of Blithedale Romance as taking place at Brook Farm. Not only did they make this

³³⁵ Ibid., July 22, 1852.

clear in their printed writings, but also in their private letters. Hawthorne, writing to an unnamed correspondent on October 16, 1852, says: "As regards the degree in which the 'Elithedale Romance' has a foundation of fact, the preface to the book gives a correct statement."³³⁶ Ripley on January 24, 1878, still hounded by the topic, wrote:

37 West 19th Street, Jan. 24, 78

My dear Mr. [erasure]

There are some personal references to Hawthorne in connection with Brook Farm in his posthumous work entitled "American Note-Books", and I do not know of anything better on the subject. With my very cordial congratulations on the brilliant success of the "Literary World", I am ever

Yours faithfully,
G. R.³³⁷

After the publication of the Elithedale Romance, Ripley ceased to promote Hawthorne's genius with all the vigor he had previously employed. In 1853, in a review of Alice Carey's Hagar, he condemned that authoress as:

in the darkest and most repulsive vein of Hawthorne, reminding one of the ghastliest features of the "Scarlet Letter", but without the redeeming touches of natural sweetness and beauty which relieve the somber gloom of that work. Not only does it luxuriate over the records of foul and festering sin, but it throws such a lurid and unnatural glare on the page, that the moral lesson, which is the sole apology for such delineations of perverted passion, is completely neutralized.³³⁸

³³⁶ Nathaniel Hawthorne to...., Oct. 16, 1852. A.L. S. in the collection of the Rev. Dr. Ulysses S. Milburn.

³³⁷ George Ripley to Mr., Jan., 24, 1878. A.L.S. in the collection of Professor Harry R. Warfel.

³³⁸ Weekly Tribune, Jan. 22, 1853.

The second sentence, while it ostensibly refers to Hagar, joins Hawthorne in the same condemnation. Time did not dull the edge of Ripley's Hawthorne-chopping hatchet. In 1860, he reviewed the Marble Faun. Hawthorne's flawless style received due appreciation in the final sentence, as almost atoning "for the saturnine spirit and grim features of the narrative." There was a word in praise of humor, another in praise of Hilda's character, which Ripley considered might be regarded, according to the intention of Hawthorne, as "the loveliest type of American womanhood." But the rest of the review railed against horrors:

The scenery and local coloring of this strange and unnatural story are derived from the impressions of the writer during a long sojourn in Italy; but the characters with which he has peopled his canvas are the genuine production of his somber imagination, and in weird and repulsive feature, bear a strong likeness to many of his previous creations....with whatever admiration the reader may regard the genius of Mr. Hawthorne, he will not easily forgive him for throwing the subtle fascinations of his pen around such a horrible experience as forms the keynote of this story. He will shrink from the stifling air of the charnel house, with which he is oppressed.³³⁹

The selections with which Ripley showed his reader the merits of the book were the murder scene, the burial chant, and the dead Capuchin.

Ripley was unusually kind in his reviewing, particularly to younger writers. He encouraged Melville with reservations regarding the reflective passage "in bad Carlylese", which interrupted his narratives. He bestowed praises on Thomas W. Parsons, Donald Grant

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Weekly Tribune, Mar. 17, 1860.

Mitchell, and George William Curtis, and, more guardedly, on Walt Whitman.³⁴⁰ There was little to say new and different about Browning, Tennyson, Dickens, Longfellow, and Emerson, except mildly to censure Browning for eccentricity, Tennyson for immoral views on the Crimean War, Longfellow for overuse of Indian names, Dickens for his careless construction, and Emerson considerably more severely for his incoherence, both of mind and writing.³⁴¹ Theodore Parker, his closest friend, always received kind words, not only from personal regard, but from admiration for the Boston preacher's fearless reforming zeal.

On very rare occasions he screamed with rage. Superciliousness he could not bear, and the treatment he accorded it makes one sorry that he encountered it, apparently, so rarely. Under the influence of disgust, he was a master of the happy art of devastation. In the summer of 1852, C. Astor Bristed's book The Upper Ten Thousand appeared in print. Ripley glanced, gasped, seized a pen, and ink and rhetoric mingled. He described young Mr. Bristed:

He is perfectly at home in depicting the coxcomby and ineffable silliness for which he seems to possess a natural affinity, that marks out a common enough order of inferior minds, but which he blunderingly ascribes to a peculiar social position. Expanding himself without measure on the mysteries of fast horses, fast men, fast women, flirtations, sherry cobblers, and broiled oysters, he has produced a sort of sporting calendar, which has

³⁴⁰ Howard A. Wilson, George Ripley: Social and Literary Critic (an unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1941).

³⁴¹ Weekly Tribune, Jan. 26, 1850, "Ralph Waldo Emerson: Representative Men."

all the slang of the race-course, with none of its excitement. ³⁴² To speak in short terms, his book is a dead failure.

There was a rich field in his war against superciliousness, where he could combine his patriotism with his dislike of pretension.

In 1859, appeared certain observations on Americans by Thomas Colley Grattan, former consul in Boston. Ripley was so exceedingly irritated that for once he forgot his usual punctilious courtesy and included physical defects in the blast he issued against British travel books, in particular against Grattan's.

A few years before the advent of Grattan on these barbarous shores, Harriet Martineau made a sort of triumphal progress through the land, and her India-rubber ear trumpet became the depository of family secrets, personal griefs, and private gossip, sufficient to furnish material for a large volume of scandalous chronicles. What she heard in the ear in closets, she faithfully proclaimed from the housetops, giving the currency of the pen to the most intimate revelations, and astonishing a crowd of well-meaning simpletons by betraying their good natured frankness. ³⁴³

Grattan was inflicted with the hospitality of Americans, and made their courtesy the target of his criticism.

His flippant and exaggerated criticisms, his enormous self-conceit, his vulgar and ridiculous pomposity, his utter inability to look at anything save in the light of his own prejudices, and his reckless comments on private character, have no parallel among British travellers in this country since the palmy days of Mrs. Trollope, the Rev. Isaac Fidler, and other worthies of the lachrymose-abusive school. Compared with Grattan, Dickens is a paragon of modesty, and the very flower of gentlemanly courtesy....

³⁴² Daily Tribune, Aug. 30, 1852.

³⁴³ Weekly Tribune, April 17, 1852.

The American, according to our ethnologist, is of an inferior order to the European. He is only a bad imitation of an Englishman....³⁴⁴

The Bostonians are partially to blame:

In mistaking Grattan for a gentlemen, they committed a blunder which is not without parallel in all our cities.

Some of Ripley's social beliefs were reflected in the Tribune. When these beliefs accorded with the strong editorial policies, he was free to review even the most mediocre works without restrictions, and the more important books were given all the space necessary to contain the superlatives. Almost without exception, the anti-slavery literature was reviewed favorably and at length. His opening remarks on Uncle Tom's Cabin indicate the content of the columns devoted to Mrs. Stowe:

The high moral purpose of this tragic story serves to divert attention from the vigorous originality and thrilling dramatic effect of its execution.³⁴⁵

As might be expected, George Fitzhugh's Sociology for the South, a carefully written economic argument for slavery, was roundly trounced. The Tribune and Ripley being of accord on the matter of women's rights, such feminist works as Mrs. E. Oakes Smith's Woman and her Needs, Theodore Parker's Sermon on the Public Function of Woman, and T. Wentworth Higginson's Woman and her Wishes were favorably reviewed.

By 1860, Ripley had achieved sufficient prominence to justify a character sketch and personal history in the New York Leader, copied in Littell's Living Age:

³⁴⁴ Idem.

³⁴⁵ Idem.

Of a little more than middle height—say about five feet nine inches—and endowed with that soberly habited plumpness of good condition which literature holds in reserve for the very few who manage to escape early out of that rugged and starved apprenticeship in which so many thousands of her votaries die, into the blest full pay and high auriferous prerogatives of fellow-craftship in the inner mysteries of her most mysterious workshop—this handsome and smiling gentleman, who might pass to the eye as only forty-five years of age, did not know, otherwise derived, add ten years to that figure—this man of pleasant though grave visage, is one of those famous critic authorities before whose Olympian nod even hard-faced publishers bow acquiescent heads, while all acolytes of authordom are expected to fall down and worship....As a critic, he is of the mild type, always inclined to favor youth, and predisposed to judge kindly of any work not offensively pretentious while lacking any compensating merit.³⁴⁶

In the opinion of the New York Leader, and Littell's Living Age, Ripley, one of New York's "permanent celebrities", had arrived.

³⁴⁶ Littell's Living Age, LXVII, pp. 571 ff., Dec. 1, 1860.

CHAPTER XXVI

DARK DAYS

In spite of articles in Littell's and the Leader to the contrary, the Ripleys were very poor. George was still encumbered with the debts of Brook Farm, and exercising all the powers of his brain to pay them. In Sophia he found unfailing support. The Ripleys were deeply devoted. Although they differed in faith, they respected each other's views, and each other's work. George saw the splendid devotion behind Sophia's work; she knew that he labored for her. With the publication of some of the volumes of the Cyclopædia, it seemed to George that he would be able to give her some of the little comforts which had been denied to both so long. But in June, 1860, the blow fell. George was summoned to Greenfield by the death of his brother Franklin. On his return, Sophia informed him of the report of a physician: she had contracted cancer from an injury to the right breast which she had sustained in 1849, when, stooping to pick up some article which had fallen from her dressing table, she had struck against the marble top. An immediate operation was necessary.³⁴⁷ She

³⁴⁷ Life, p. 237.

made a slow recovery, during which her religious ardors were of the greatest comfort to her, and undoubtedly to George, who saw the rest which was brought to her mind. She wrote Ruth Charlotte Dana:

What a cordial to us both were your and your father's letters received on the 3d. Thank him very much for us. Assure him that my activity is completely at rest. All ordinary objects of interest have faded in the distance, and our Lord has led me around to the other side of life, where helpless and passive I find myself lying in the cool shade at his feet. I have not activity enough to say my prayers and find them a painful effort, but am not concerned, for I am assured it is all right.³⁴⁸

That summer brought a deceptive return of strength. The Ripleys went to Staten Island, for a little sea air. She gained in strength, and in October, they made a little journey to Boston and Greenfield. But in November it was apparent that Sophia was dying. George, obliged to work as hard as ever, at the same time cared for Sophia. They had but one room, which was also his study. Early in 1861, she was failing rapidly. Faithful Marianne Ripley stood by George, and Ruth Charlotte Dana came on from Boston. In February, Sophia died, leaving a memory of unselfish devotion. By an odd chance, the Catholic Church in Boston, from which she was buried with all the ceremonies of her religion, was the old Purchase Street Congregational Church where George had preached.

Leaving New York, George went to Brooklyn, and let despair close over him. A letter of this period to John Sullivan Dwight shows his state of mind. Dwight had also recently lost his wife, and the two unhappy men tried to write to each other their profound sympathy.

³⁴⁸ Sophia Ripley to Ruth Charlotte Dana, July 5, 1860. A.L.S. in M.H.S.

George recalled past times:

Neither you nor I can ever forget that pleasant afternoon in Central Park & at the Brevoort House, which was the last festive enjoyment which our dear Sophia ever took part in, & which seemed almost as a preparation for the great sorrow which was so soon to overtake us both. It was only about six weeks from that time when I received the awful announcement, which I could not but regard as the death-warrant; although after you went away, especially in the months of August & September, I was again under the illusion of too fond hopes; and when your great trial came in the departure of that beautiful, that noble One, whom we all so much loved, our sympathy was the keener, the more affectionate, from having, as we then dreamed, had such a narrow escape ourselves. But alarming symptoms soon made their appearance, and before the pleasant autumn had gone it was evident that not another October moon, which she always greeted with a perfectly child-like rapture, was to shine upon us together. From that time, her progress to the "silent shore" was rapid & for the most part, peaceful; & it is just ten months tonight since we closed her precious eyes in the inexpressibly sweet and beautiful sleep which seemed to give a new revelation of the spirit, on the moment of its departure. Everything is now as fresh as if it were but yesterday; & nothing effaces from my mind the images of those heart-rending months, those lonely night-watches, & all those words & looks which grow even more full of pathos in their remembrance than in the reality.

You, my dear Friend, were deprived both of the agonies & the solemn joys of accompanying the One dearest on earth to the very edge of the dark valley; you can therefore recall [sic] more easily the happy scenes of life; & are not haunted by images which give the days & weeks of parting a terrible pathos, of which in our serene, philosophic days, even fancy has no conception. My sorrow is like the grief of the mother who remembers the sufferings of her darling from long watchings; you have nothing between the recollection, of the dearest earthly joys, & the brightest heavenly hopes, to which our human hearts must cling, even when faith is dim and knowledge at utter fault.

I am leading a very lonely life, which is not without a certain stern satisfaction, in claiming so little from society; but the friends who were once dear are dearer than ever; and I suppose it must be taken as a proof of the near approach of age, that the interests of other days seem so much more vital than those of the present....³ 9

Health and sound mind, happily, would not be denied, and George mastered his grief. He returned to New York and took up his literary work as conscientiously as before.

CHAPTER

RENEWED LIFE

In 1865, George went to Washington, at the invitation of the Charles Anderson Danas. The occasion was nothing less than the second inauguration of Lincoln, and a gay party from New York went down together, including George, whose genial nature had begun to assert itself. In a letter to Marianne he describes the expedition detail by detail. There was another reason for his letter. Marianne had been prodding him with sisterly curiosity to know if there was any truth in the report of his engagement to a young girl. George hedged:

I cannot think it can be true, as nothing has been said about it here, although I am very much devoted to Miss Carrie Cranch, & Miss Emily Ames (the former aged nine, the latter twelve), but nothing serious has yet come of it. Our little cousin Mattie I seldom see, & though a nice girl, she is not at all in my line.³⁵⁰

If there were any truth in the report, at least the description of the lady as a young girl would be impossible.

³⁵⁰ George Ripley, to Marianne Ripley, March 12, 1865, A.L.S. in Br. W.H.S.

... If ever I form a new relation, it will be with a woman whose dignity of character, experience of life, & brave endurance of sorrow & suffering fit her to be the congenial companion of my declining years.³⁵¹

The next letter to Marianne is ostensibly about his religious views and the Third Unitarian Society of Octavius Brooks Frothingham, for whom he has reluctantly consented to act as a delegate at the Unitarian convention.

I have very little interest in ecclesiastical politics, & no attraction for the society of the brethren, although I believe with you that Unitarianism contains the germ of valuable truth; chiefly however in its love of progress, & its liberal construction of the traditional religious symbols & records. I still enjoy Mr. Frothingham's admirable services very highly, & am never absent from the Church on Sunday; although my interest is in great part of a social nature, being very intimate with several members & families of the congregation....³⁵²

Near the close of the letter came voluble protests that he had no intention of getting married. At least, he wouldn't unless there was love on both sides. By a remarkable coincidence, he had formed a most beautiful attachment. He described the lady in question:

She is a lady of German birth & education, but a resident of New York for several years, and thoroughly American in her feelings, habits, & manners. She belongs to one of the wealthiest & most respectable families of the mercantile class in Stuttgart, the capital of Wurtemberg; & in her appearance, cultivation, & manners is a lady of the rarest dignity, refinement, & delicacy.³⁵³

351 Ibid.

352 George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Mar. 26, 1856, A. L. S. in Br. W. H. S.

353 Ibid.

This mysterious lady was Louisa Augusta Hoerner Schlossberger, a German, the daughter of Louis Hoerner, of Stuttgart. Her marriage, which had seemed a good one had turned out badly, and her husband had deserted her in New York. She sent her little girl back to Stuttgart, and stayed on in New York, perhaps a little ashamed to return to her father and mother, whose other daughters had all married very well. She was extremely well educated in the polite education of languages and music, the latter of which she taught for a living.

At the home of some mutual friends in New York, the Bigelows, the diminutive music teacher met Ripley, in October 1864. In the middle of the following January, they became engaged.³⁵⁴ According to his friend and biographer, Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Ripley, conscious of his sixty-three years and her thirty, at first wished to adopt her,³⁵⁵ If he entertained such an idea in his lonely brain, he soon evicted it. By October, 1865, the courts had pronounced her husband legally dead. On the 18th of that month, they were married in Octavius Brooks Frothingham's church, in the presence of "a few of our common friends (about two hundred)".³⁵⁶

The immediate result was that George went out into society a great deal, which he liked, as he was naturally gregarious. Being also conscientious, he worked as hard as he could to make up for the time spent in

³⁵⁴ George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Apr. 9, 1865. A.L.S. in Br. W.H.S.

³⁵⁵ Life, pp. 243-4.

³⁵⁶ George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Oct. 15, 1865. A.L.S. in Br. W.H.S.

social occasions.³⁵⁷ In April, 1866, Louisa took her husband further afield than to the houses of their friends. George had never visited Europe, and she desired intensely to take him there, and proudly display her trophy before the Hoerners in Stuttgart.

The trip to Europe seemed to close an epoch in George's life.

He wrote Marianna in a tone of reminiscence:

You remember I presume that it is just twenty-five years (I think this very day) since we packed up our souls and bodies in Mr. Ellis' old wagon & went out to Brook Farm. Who would have thought that such "a strange eventful history," would be the consequence! Next week will also be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Tribune, which we shall celebrate by the enlargement of the paper, & perhaps by a dinner of the proprietors. It completes my seventeenth year of service, two years & a half longer than I was the incumbent of St. Anno Domini.³⁵⁸

On the whole, Ripley's first European trip was a distinct success. He made a few remarks about the Europe of actuality not being a very different experience from the Europe of guide-books. These comments were undoubtedly perfunctory, and in keeping with a time in which Emerson, in discussing the treasures of the soul, kept preaching to his delighted fellow-townsmen that not all the sights of Europe could add anything to the fullness of life in Concord.

The main object of the visit, to make the acquaintance of Louisa's family, turned out very well. The brother-in-law, a French champagne merchant, de Bary, was of the nobility. He took the Ripleys

³⁵⁷ George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Jan. 26, 1866. A. L. S. in Br.W.H.S.

³⁵⁸ George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Mar. 26, 1866. A.L.S. in Br.W.H.S.

to his handsome country house, and introduced them to the fashionable society of Rhien. Then the Ripleys went on to Stuttgart to meet the immediate family.

Mr. Hoerner was a leading merchant of Stuttgart, and he and his wife made much of Louisa's fine, successful, bearded husband, who had a smattering of their language and was the distinguished editor of an encyclopedia. George found Louisa's sister, Madame de Bary, "a very beautiful, stylish woman," very intelligent and well-read, "though nothing of a blue-stocking". He liked his little step-daughter, Carmela, a frail, bright child, but decided to leave her with her adoring grandparents, instead of transplanting her to the other side of the ocean.

Accompanied by Carmela and her nurse, the Ripleys went to Baden-Baden, where Louisa and Carmela went on long walks and drank goat's milk, and George seems to have declined the goat's milk, and written long letters on the Prussian-Austrian war to the Tribune. He also wrote Marianne about the circle of his wife's relatives and friends:

The social circle to which she belongs live in a style of ease & elegance to which I have never made any pretensions, & to which in fact, after my experiences at Brook Farm & in New York is not quite so much in my taste, as roughing it in a plainer way. ³⁵⁹

After travelling in Italy and Switzerland, they returned to America, and took rooms in the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

³⁵⁹ George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, July 25, 1866. A.L.S. in Br. W.H.S.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A DISTINGUISHED MAN OF LETTERS

In June, 1867, the Ripleys wrote Marianne that they had leased the Bancroft house for two years.³⁶⁰ With them lived a Mrs. Long, her widowed daughter, and grandson. After a brief vacation in Orange, New Jersey, they returned to New York, and installed themselves in their new quarters.³⁶¹ Louisa was a brisk, German housekeeper, and sent George off to market every day, which he rather enjoyed.³⁶² She was very fond of society and the Ripleys became familiar figures at the social gatherings of the city. On January 22, they gave an evening party to repay their various obligations, which, it surprised George to find, required sending out two hundred and seventy-five invitations. The affair began at nine-thirty and supper was served at eleven. This meal included boned turkey, quails, partridge, seed birds, jellied tongue, ham, charlottes, ice creams, nougat, glazed fruit, and sundry wines from the de Barys, including champagne.

³⁶⁰ Louisa Ripley to Marianne Ripley, June 23, 1867. A.L.S. in Br. W.E.S.

³⁶¹ George Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Sept. 30, 1867. A.L.S. in Br. W.E.S.

³⁶² Ibid.

A Miss Topp played the piano.³⁶³ George had come a long way since the Brook Farm feasts of reason, squash, and brown bread. He was one of the distinguished literary figures of New York.

In 1869, the Ripleys made a second trip to Europe, during which George wrote a series of letters to the Tribune which considerably enhanced his already substantial reputation. The Ripleys sailed on the Scotia, on May 12, arrived in England, and spent ten days in London. In this city occurred George's great European disappointment. He went hopefully to meet the Carlyle of theory, and met instead the Carlyle of fact, who was in a foul humor at the time. He greeted Ripley by spluttering so many maledictions against the form of government of the United States that the American gave up the attempt at high conversation, and walked quietly out, leaving the seer still spluttering.³⁶⁴ The other London encounters were pleasant. He saw Benjamin Jowett, G. W. Smalley, John Bright, W. H. Canning, J. J. Taylor, James Martineau, John Tyndall, T. H. Huxley, Louis Blanc, Frances Power Cobbe, and Henry Morley. From London they proceeded to Paris, where the dank weather successfully spoiled their fun by giving George a bad cold.³⁶⁵ They went to Baden-Baden, where he recuperated.

As far as the Tribune was concerned, the objective of the tour was the Oecumenical council in Rome. Whitelaw Reid, the managing editor, suggested that Ripley go to Suez for the opening of the canal, but Ripley vetoed the idea.³⁶⁶ To Rome he would go, and no further. He arrived in the Eternal city in plenty of time to make arrangements for information through his connections with the American hierarchy. But all sources were sealed tight.

³⁶³ Louisa Ripley to Marianne Ripley, Feb. 18, 1868. A.L.S. in Br. W.H.S.

³⁶⁴ Howard Wilson, op.cit., p. 156. Swift, op.cit., p. 143 dates this interview incorrectly.

³⁶⁵ George Ripley to Horace Greeley, July 17, 1869. A.L.S. in New York Public library.

³⁶⁶ George Ripley to Whitelaw Reid, Aug. 7, 1869. A.L.S. in New York Herald-Tribune files. Hereafter this collection will be referred to as N.Y.H.-Trib.

In disgust, Ripley wrote Whitelaw Reid:

I have been here just ten days. I came in good season, as I told you I should in my letter of Nov. 15 from Vienna, in reply to your telegram of the 10th, in order to reconnoitre and make myself master of the situation. I at once commenced operations for procuring information, that should give authority and weight to my letters, calling upon such of the clergy as I knew, and delivering some of my numerous letters of introduction, "sounding my dim and perilous way" through an ocean of Catholic reserve and duplicity. Thus far everything has been totally unsuccessful. There is no wish to favor the press, or to facilitate reports. A blind secrecy is the order of the day. The Roman priest hates a journalist more than the devil hates holy water. There are no newspapers to speak of in Rome, and it is difficult to get hold of any of the good European journals.... not a German and hardly a French newspaper being found in the reading rooms or hotels. Up to Saturday night I despaired of being able to obtain even a shred of exact information on which to expatiate rhetorically. I then discovered that the reporter for the Cincinnati and St. Louis Catholic Weeklies (and American Catholic lady who has been for years in Rome, and is in high favor with the Jesuits) had got possession through them of facts and details which would not appear in Roman print for a week at least, and was about to send them to her papers in America, thus ensuring a dead beat on the N. Y. journals. What was to be done? I knew that this lady, who by the way is a very intelligent and trustworthy person (for a Catholic) was anxious to obtain a correspondence with the Tribune and I lost no time in endeavoring to prevent her from using her facilities (which at present I am convinced are exclusive) to our detriment. Without being measly-mouthed, I proposed to her on the spot to furnish me with the raw material which she should get for her own use from the Jesuits, and in season for my letters to be published in the Tribune before hers should reach Cincinnati or St. Louis. I offered to pay her the price of her letters for the same, viz. \$15 in gold each, the agreement to stop at my option. I do not think more than the stuff for 3 or 4 letters will be required, perhaps not even that, at all events without I have got from her, I should not have had straw enough for a single brick. I trust you will unhesitatingly approve of this arrangement, and meet the extra expense. It was absolutely necessary to avoid an ignominious defeat. The matter that I now send you can certainly be relied on. It is absolutely new and will appear only next Saturday in Rome, and will not get into the London papers in time for them to anticipate its publication by yourself. I am still working with several other irons in the fire, and if anything can be got, you may depend on my diligence to obtain it. 367

367 George Ripley to Whitelaw Reid, Nov. 30, 1869. A. L. S. in N. Y. H.-Trib.

The lady reporter proving not as helpful as he had hoped, he was left to his own sources of information. As the proceedings of the council became monotonous, the Ripleys set out for southern Italy, and then back to Germany. In an Italian or German bookshop, he found a volume of Emerson's essays which had been printed in London since Ripley came abroad, Society and Solitude. Ripley was delighted and set down in his journal a long appreciation of Emerson, most of it high praise, but with two harsh criticisms: that Emerson's ideas were fairly commonplace, though clothed in splendid language; and that Emerson was insufficiently methodical to follow a demonstration of Euclid.³⁶⁸ In Stuttgart, he attended a socialist convention. He stayed long enough in Germany to write four letters to the Tribune on the Franco-Prussian War. But in the autumn of 1870, he had had enough travel and the Ripleys found themselves home again.³⁶⁹

In 1872, Horace Greeley ran for the presidency against Grant. He was overwhelmingly defeated, and died soon after. What interest Ripley took in the campaign is unknown. But in the inter-Tribune politics immediately after the death of Greeley, he had the keenest concern. He threw his weight to Whitelaw Reid, whom he admired, in that journalist's struggle for the editorship. In a letter to Bayard Taylor in June, 1873, he reviewed the Tribune crisis of the winter before:

³⁶⁸ Life, pp. 266-272.

³⁶⁹ Life, p. 272.

I do not wonder at your despair in regard to the Tribune crisis in December. We were certainly on the brink of ruin. Even before Mr. Greeley's death, there was an attempt on the part of the trustees headed by Sinclair to discharge Whitelaw Reid, & I may say that it would have been carried, had I not resisted the movement with all the energy which single-handed I could exert. This was before Sinclair's proposal to sell to Orton. I succeeded in bringing over a majority of the trustees to my view that it would be utter madness to take Reid from the helm in such a threatening storm. Then came Sinclair's plot to sell & put Colfax in charge. Neither Reid nor Hay knew what was going on. I found that it was a foregone conclusion on the part of Sinclair to change the proprietorship & management of the paper. Both Orton & himself personally solicited me to retain my position, with the assurance that no change in that respect was contemplated. But I at once decided that my property in the concern would be damaged by the proposed revolution, & insisted that the old internes, including yourself, should have the chance to sell. I informed Reid, Hay, Hooker, O'Rourke, & Fitzpatrick of my determination to part with my shares, & they at once gave it their approval & decided to follow my example. Afterward we thought it might be better to retain a portion of our interest in the gallant old ship, though it should change its captain & owners, & accordingly, with the exception of Reid & Hay, we each held on to one share.

Then came Reid's superb coup d'etat, one of the most magnificent pieces of diplomatic strategy ever achieved by mortal man. From that moment the Tribune was safe. Gloria in excelsis has been singing itself, from the very bottom of my heart ever since. The paper was never half so good as now. It has more than the strength of the old Tribune, without its eccentricity, shall I say without its vulgarity. Everybody speaks well of it. It is paying better than ever, \$100,000 net profits since Jan. 1 (6 mos.).

The contracting of so large a debt (half a million at least) is indeed tremendous. The game involves a terrible risk, but with success, the profit is proportionally immense. If the building is once completed, the rental may safely be trusted for a large contribution towards the expense of the paper, so that a part of the proceeds of that will be clear gain.

There is no reason to doubt of success except the health of Mr. Reid. Every thing apparently depends on him. His conduct is incomparably fine. His qualities for the position are truly wonderful. But should any adverse fate happen to Reid, who is to play out the game which he has opened with such brilliant promise? But we need not think of this. Rather let us look forward with cheerful hope that all the good omens of the present will be fulfilled in the future.

The course of Sinclair has been inconceivably scandalous & disgraceful. Had it not been for his rascally & insane management, the income of the Tribune for the last ten years might have been doubled. I saw for a long time that there was something frightfully "rotten in Denmark," but after repeated exhortations with H. G. at the board of trustees, I found I was only subjecting myself to annoyance without the slightest chance of moving him to wholesome action. His timidity & indifference in that respect will always cast a shade over my memories of that glorified man. ³⁷⁰

At a meeting of the stockholders, after the death of Greeley, Ripley was unanimously elected President of the New York Tribune Association, to which office he was reelected every year until his death in 1880.

370 George Ripley to Bayard Taylor, June 9, 1873. A.L.S. in Cornell University Library.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE GRAND OLD MAN

Ripley's vigorous old age was as full of honor and success as his middle years had been of obscurity and hardship. He had become a landmark, a speaker at banquets. He made the speech at the laying of the corner stone of the new Tribune building in 1874, and addressed Whitelaw Reid on behalf of the Tribune staff at the opening of the building, a year later. His language became florid:

I am today only the spokesman of our young friends, who have requested me to say a few words on this occasion with the wish, I presume, to temper the enthusiasm of youth with the gravity of age; but I shall not indulge in the reflections suggested by long experience, & will say nothing that does not flow fresh and warm from the heart....³⁷¹

In 1874, he received a degree of LL.D. from the University of Michigan.³⁷²

From 1872 to 1876, he worked at the revision of the Cyclopedia,³⁷³ Appleton's half-million dollar project.

371 George Ripley, M.A. Speeches, in H.C.L. A draft of his address for Sat., Apr. 10, 1875.

372 Life, p. 277.

373 Derby, op. cit., p. 132.

The scrupulous fairness with which he conducted the American
Cyclopedia can be seen from a letter to Rev. Edward Abbott:

New American Cyclopedia, Appleton's Building, 551 Broadway,
Feb. 28, 1874.

Your favor of the 23d inst. was received a few days since,
for which I beg you to accept my cordial thanks.

My attention had already been directed to the article
which you enclose, & I am sure that it is quite unnecessary for
me to say to you that the charge of conducting the new edition
of the Cyclopedia in the interests of the Catholic Church is
without even the shadow of foundation. The present edition is
conducted on the same plane as the old one, which is distinctly
announced in the preface of the same, "In order to secure the
most complete justice, in this respect, the various articles
in the work have been entrusted, as far as possible, to writers
whose studies, position, opinions, & tastes, were a guarantee
of their thorough information, & which furnished a presumption
of their fairness & impartiality...Each subject has been
treated in the point of view of those with whom it is a
specialty, & not in that of indifferent or hostile observers."
...Thus the article on "Anabaptists" was written by Rev. Pro-
fessor Cutting, of Rochester University...

This plan, we thought, worked admirably. I have never
heard it complained of before. On the contrary, the Cyclo-
pedia, as far as I know, has been universally commended for
the fairness, the intelligence, & the impartiality of its re-
ligious articles. The same has been most diligently & most
conscientiously followed in revising the present edition. The
Catholics have precisely the same status in it as the other
religious denominations—no less & no more. We have but one
Catholic writer, Dr. O'Reilly, a man of great learning &
liberality, a seceder from the Jesuits, who thus far has never
shown the slightest disposition to favor his Church. He could
not do so however, if he would, as all his articles (as well
as others) are thoroughly examined by Mr. Dana, Mr. Robert
Carter, & myself, besides the scrutiny of two or three other
vigilant revisers before they are finally printed. Dr.
O'Reilly's letter is perfectly innocent—a mere announcement
to Catholic subscribers that the doctrines & ceremonies of
their Church would not be misrepresented although the work
was conducted under such strong Protestant influences.

I beg you however, my dear Sir, to watch us well, & if
after the most careful scrutiny of our religious articles,
you find any marks of partiality, I hope you will summon us

to repentance. There is nothing we aim at more earnestly than to do justice, without partiality or favor, to every branch of the Church as well as every department of science.

I will not close without thanking you for the very intelligent notice of Vols. I-IV, which appeared recently in your columns. Such comments are as instructive & valuable as most newspapers are worthless....³⁷⁴

Besides writing reviews for the Tribune, Ripley frequently wrote obituaries. He had completely taken on the newspaper attitude, dictated by the necessity of appearing in print, that news should go out at the earliest possible moment. His outlook on death, at the Tribune office at least, can only be described as prosaic. On one sad occasion, he wrote:

Dear Mr. Reid

I enclose a brief notice of Mr. Fletcher Harper, who if still living will probably not survive the night. I hope you will find it opportune.

Yours faithfully

G. R.³⁷⁵

37 West 19th St.
Sunday 4 P.M.
May 27, 1877.

An interesting case in point is that of Mrs. Henry Field, a friend of the Ripleys:

13 West 29th St.
Sunday, P. M. 4 oclock
Feb. 28 '75

My dear Mr. Reid

Mrs. Henry Field is not expected to live many hours and may pass away before morning, though I think she will

³⁷⁴ George Ripley to Edward Abbott, Feb. 28, 1874. A. L. S. in H. C. L.

³⁷⁵ George Ripley to Whitelaw Reid, Feb. 28, 1875. A.L.S. in N.Y.H.-Trib.

survive a few days.

The Evening Post will have a long notice, and on account of her peculiar history and position, you may agree with me that it would be well to give a somewhat extended sketch in the Tribune.

I send what I have written in order to be prepared for any event, and if you approve, it might be best to put it in type in season for a proof.

Yours ever faithfully,

G.R.³⁷⁶

The practicality of the outlook would be appalling, if Ripley had no further feelings on the matter. But a letter from Henry M. Field, two weeks after Ripley's memo, shows that there had been another statement of the matter:

2 East 15
March 13, 1875

Dear Mr. Ripley

How can I ever thank you enough for all your kindnesses to me & mine, & especially in your words, so tender & so true, spoken of the beloved dead? It is indeed a great consolation to me in my bitter sorrow, that my dear wife is so justly appreciated by a large circle of friends--& such friends. You & Mrs. Ripley have long been among those whom we esteemed the most, but since this last experience you have a stronger hold than ever on my grateful affection. May you long be spared to each other, & have many years of happiness, is the earnest desire of....³⁷⁷

Ripley's last published writing was his chapter in Justin Windsor's Memorial History of Boston, on "Boston's place in the

³⁷⁶ George Ripley to Whitelaw Reid, Feb. 28, 1875. A.L.S. in N.Y.H.-Trib.

³⁷⁷ Henry M. Field, to George Ripley, Mar. 13, 1875. A.L.S. in Ripley's Scrapbook, in H. C. L.

History of Philosophic Thought." His were the sketches of Kirkland, Levi Hedge, and Norton. The chapter was finished by George P. Bradford. Ripley had been suggested to Windsor by Frederic Henry Hedge, to whose library of translations he had contributed articles on Schleiermacher, and by George E. Ellis.³⁷⁸

Ripley's later years were uneventful. Louisa, who liked traveling as much as he detested it, went to Germany in 1874, to bring back his step-daughter, Carmela.³⁷⁹ Ripley became extremely fond of the girl. He entertained for her, and named her in his will as beneficiary in case of the death of Louisa.³⁸⁰

In 1877, an old Brook Farmer attempted a reunion of the surviving members. Ripley sent the group a message:

Brook Farm may well point to the children who graced her social services so long time ago, and who have since ripened into strong men and noble women, saying, with the modest pride of the Roman matron, "These are my jewels."³⁸¹

Words of appreciation from persons he admired gave him a very real and unsophisticated pleasure. In his scrap book, he wrote down the kind mention which Professor Tyndall had made concerning him to a friend in New York.³⁸²

378 Justin Windsor, to George Ripley, Jan. 23, 1880, A.L.S. in M.H.S.

379 George Ripley to ..., Feb. 14, 1875, A.L.S. in M.H.S.

380 George Ripley, Will, copy in records of the Court of the Surrogate of New York County. Except for three bequests, the estate was to go to Louisa; in case of her death before Ripley's, to Carmela; in case of her death, to her husband, Max Von Grull.

381 Life, p. 154.

382 John Tyndall to E.L. Youmans, Feb. 19, 1875, portion copied in M.S. Scrapbook, in H.C.L.

In his relationship with the Tribune in his later years, he expected special attention, and got it. There is a simple but eloquent exchange of inter-office memos.

37 West 19th St. June 3, 1878

My dear Mr. Reid

... My complaint of the composing room was not that the proof was sent too late, but the carelessness of the person in charge who paid no attention to my written direction to send copy with proof, and who sent up Smalley's London letter instead of the second galley of Bryant, which was ready.

Yours faithfully,

G.R. 383

And on the bottom of the note, in Reid's hand:

Mr. Thompson: Better see who is responsible for this and report to me about it. Mr. Ripley is sensitive to neglects of this kind and they ought to be very careful about him.

W.R.

He was not, however, a stuffy old man. He remained throughout his life particularly sensitive to the feelings of others. He liked to be liked. At the end of a letter to Rev. Edward Abbott, he wrote:

My dear Mr. Abbott, I beg you to believe that your expressions of personal appreciation are accepted in the same spirit in which they are given, & that your youthful enthusiasm is as welcome & beautiful, as if the frosts of many winters had not whitened my head, though I trust they have not chilled my heart.³⁸⁴

There was an even more attractive expression of his kindly feelings.

383 George Ripley to Whitelaw Reid, June 3, 1878, A.L.S. in N.Y. Herald-Tribune files.

384 George Ripley to Edward Abbott, Oct. 20, 1875, A.L.S. in H.C.L.

As he sat waiting for his proofs to be delivered at the assigned minute, the messenger arrived, looking particularly bedraggled, Ripley extracted the story, and wrote Reid about it.

661 Fifth Av. April 3, 1880

My dear Mr. Reid

The young lad who brings my proofs (and who seems to be a nice civil little fellow) was knocked down, kicked, trampled on and otherwise shamefully entreated by a gang of large boys, as he left the Elevated R. R. 4th Av. & 53rd St. last evening at half past 8 o'clock. The gang of boys haunt the locality of the Station in the evening and appear to be watching a chance to do mischief. I fear our little boy may get hurt by the ruffians, as he is not very stout and apparently not much of a fighting character.

Would it be well to substitute an older fellow in his place, big enough to take care of himself, or to send him by the Madison Av. cars; or to give a hint to an M.P. if one should ever happen to be on hand when wanted.

Yours faithfully

G. R. 385

And on the reverse side was written in Reid's hand:

D. W.

What do you know abt. this?

W. R.

He is one of Mr. Thompson's boys, and, as Mr. Ripley says, a nice little fellow. He had not told Mr. Thompson anything about the matter, but Mr. T. will at once take steps to stop the attacks on him.

D. W.

In his last years, Ripley's mind was, as always, intensely active. A little notebook, containing comments on philosophy, in particular on Hartmann's Philosophy of the Unconscious, shows the care with which he analysed much of his reading. He discusses the question of Mind in Nature:

It is admitted on all hands that the cosmic forces of Nature present phenomena that are characterized by Intelligence, Will, & Adaptive Purpose, although without Consciousness....

He offered four explanations of the workings of unconscious mind in nature:

1. They are the immediate effects of the Divine Power & Wisdom= the immediate Action of God,
2. They are the effects of secondary Causes, ordained & continued by God, like Plastic Nature, the Soul of the World, &c.,
3. They are due to qualities inherent in the cosmic Forms themselves, without reference to any other agency, natural or supernatural, material or spiritual,
4. They are the action of an Absolute, Unconscious Power (Hartmann's One & All, corresponding to Spinoza's Substance, Kant's Ding in Sich, Spencer's Unknowable, & the God of Theism, of which all the observed facts are phenomena=representations.)...

Hartmann's problem may be described as "the exposition of the unconscious forces of Nature which act with purpose & intelligence."... Hartmann generalizes the unconscious action as a unitary force; I regard it as the action of the cosmic forces, according to their inherent qualities, without reference to any unitary principle.³⁸⁶

Ripley's philosophical views in his old age included belief in a material and aspiritual principle, and seemed to include that of a conscious God.

³⁸⁶ George Ripley, MS. Notebook, in M. H. S.

The full recognition of mind in contrast with matter, involves two things:--1st that mental processes are conscious processes, and these only; that such processes beyond our consciousness are indicated to us by order, by the adaptation of means to ends.³⁸⁷

The last definitive statement of Ripley's religious beliefs was in 1853, to Theodore Parker, almost thirty years before his death, during all of which years his active, inquiring mind was never idle.

In 1853, he wrote:

I hold to nothing more strongly than that every man should be the founder of his own religion; & hence, where this is done, we can hardly expect any two to stand on the same platform....For my own part, as I presume you can thoroughly understand, the only religion which I believe in is the recognition of the Divine in man & nature. The Good, the Beautiful, & the True is the Holy Trinity which commands the convictions of my intellect, & the adoration of my heart. Hence, I can love & worship Jesus as the incarnation of Eternal Truth, Beauty, & Goodness. Hence, too, I can love & worship all True, Good, & Beautiful men & women, as incarnations of the ineffable, inconceivable Godhead. The adoption of this faith seems to me the turning-point of humanity. I cannot express my sense of its importance to the progress, the salvation, the power, glory, & blessedness of the race. When men receive ~~sic~~ this as a living faith, Satan will faint with mortal sickness, the millenium will dawn upon nations, social harmony will be inaugurated, & this "nasty" world be transfigured into the heavenly Zion. Now, my dearest Theodore, it seems to me that you do not give sufficient prominence to this idea in your theology, & instead thereof take your stand too exclusively on the personality of the Godhead. God is Spirit; hence not Person; or if so in essence, not so to us; for how can we reconcile personality, with infinity; limitation, with non-limitation; existence, with the essence of Being. And practically, how much spiritual damage accrues from

387 Ibid. It must be remembered that Ripley's notes were almost entirely critical, hence this use of the argument from order in the universe cannot be certainly ascribed to him as his; it may be a fragment of analysis from his tremendous reading.

pressing the idea of personality! To most men, God is as much a fetish as he was to the Jews, or Pagans--they place a shapeless idol, more or less refined, in place of the Eternal Trinity,--Goodness, Beauty, & Truth,--in which unless a man believe he shall without doubt perish everlastingly. You found the idea of ethical obligations on the sanctions of a personal God. I place it on the eternal idea of Right in the Soul,--which is infinite. Here, let me say, you debarate from the path of true progress. The vital problem of this age is to bring men to self-consciousness--to initiate in him the knowledge of the divine humanity. Everything that we ascribe to God lives in the Soul of Man. It is as easy to conceive of the self-existence & eternity of the universal divine principle as of that of the fetish, with which most men identify God. This supposition is far more in accordance with the facts of the Universe. And as a matter of argument, you are well aware that the common reasonings of natural theology are broken cisterns which can hold no water. ³⁸⁸

Octavius Brooks Frothingham, whose church Ripley attended, and who was his friend and biographer, indicates that throughout his life, Ripley preserved an indefinite, ethical theism. ³⁸⁹ On the other hand, rather Hecker states that while he was still a Redemptorist, in other words before 1857, Ripley said that when he died he would send for Hecker, and that when dying, he did so, but that the message was not delivered. ³⁹⁰ Brownson, who had set his heart on converting Ripley, states that the critic feared losing his position with the Tribune if he became a Catholic, and that Ripley expressed an intention of joining the Church when he could afford to do so. On the other hand, in Ripley's review of Hecker's Catholicism and Transcendentalism, in 1855, Ripley saw a fundamental opposition between Catholicism and his lifelong belief in

³⁸⁸ George Ripley to Theodore Parker, Sept. 26, 1853. A.I.S. in M.H.S.

³⁸⁹ Life, pp. 229-236.

³⁹⁰ Walter Elliott, The Life of Father Hecker (New York, Columbus Press, 1894).

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the intuitive power of mind. Hecker knew that he was in earnest, and wrote Brownson that Ripley had not understood the book, and that "his demon has got a little the mastery of him." He found some of Ripley's statements ungenerous, but excused them, as Ripley's notice was favorable to circulate the book. Hecker chiefly grieved over Ripley's notice because
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 "it shows not a Catholic tone of mine in him". On the subject of Ripley's final beliefs, neither Frothingham, Ripley's pastor, nor his earnest Catholic friends could be considered impartial. Frothingham, the friend of Mrs. Ripley, was writing an authorized biography, and when he states that Louisa was the only person to whom Ripley, dying, turned, he had reason to believe so. Father Hecker, when he reminisced about the religious views of his dead friend, was an old man. Ripley's remarks, possibly humorous, may have seemed in recollection more serious than they were originally intended.

On July 4, 1880, the old man was dying. Difficulty in breathing, and undoubtedly a fierce pride kept him from his bed. As he sat at his desk, Louisa's face misted out of sight. He had slipped into the same wide spaces as Sophia, his noble friend Theodore Parker, fierce old Andrews Norton, Sarah and Jerome Ripley, his sisters and brothers, and the vanished hopes of Brook Farm.

391 Weekly Tribune, March 17, 1855.

392 Isaac T. Hecker to Orestes A. Brownson, n.d., A.L.S. in Paulist Archives.

Readers are cautioned against copying any portion of the letters or other manuscripts quoted, as, with exception of the letters printed in Octavius Brooks Frothingham, George Riley, they are restricted.

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The most important group of letters of George and Sophia Ripley is in the Massachusetts Historical Society. The Dana papers include almost all the letters of Sophia, and a number of George's. The largest collection of the papers of George Ripley is the Frothingham collection, which include a portion of those used by Octavius Brooks Frothingham in his biography. This is the most valuable single source. The Bancroft papers contain a great number of letters from Ripley. There are also Ripley letters in the Bellows, Dall, Preble, and Shattuck collections. There is a Brook Farm collection, including two account books, book of the minutes of the meetings of the committee, notebooks with the names of the Waiters' Group, and a number of letters. The letters used by Amy Reed in Letters from Brook Farm, 1844-77, are also in the society; Miss Reed did not publish them completely.

The largest single source of letters of George Ripley is the files of the New York Herald-Tribune. There are one hundred and three letters of Ripley, and twenty-five of Whitelaw Reid to Ripley or Louisa A. S. Ripley. Most of these letters are brief notes on Tribune business; some of them are long and valuable.

The Boston Public Library has an extensive collection of the Ripley letters, some of them in the Dwight collection, others in the Brook Farm collection; one in the slavery collection; some in the miscellaneous files. Because of the intimacy between the Ripleys and John Sullivan Dwight, these letters are very valuable.

The Harvard College Library contains the Blacklist Convention, 1821 and 1823; the MS. Commonplace Book; the Directories for 1819-20, 1820-21, 1821-22, 1822-23; the MS. Figure of the Earth; the History of the Class of 1823; the Library Charge Books, 1822-41; the MS. List of Beneficiaries of the Divinity School; the Quarterly Books for 1819-20; 1820-21; 1821-22; 1822-23; the Programs of the Exhibition and Commencement Performances, 1820-23. There are also a few letters of Sophia Ripley in the Margaret Fuller collection, and of George in the autograph and Sumner collections. The manuscripts of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association are on deposit in the Harvard College Library, but controlled by Dr. Edward Forbes, and not by the library.

The Wisconsin Historical Society has a collection of Ripley letters on deposit. These letters belong to Mr. Charles I. Brigham, who also has four letters not in the Society, which relate to Ripley. This collection is very valuable, as it is the only one with letters to various members of Ripley's family other than those in Frothingham's Life.

These are the main collections for material on George and Sophia Ripley. There are valuable letters in the Abernethy Library; the Brown University Library; the collection of Mr. James F. Clarke; the Cornell University Library; Columbia University Library; the Henry Huntington Library; the Johns Hopkins University Library; the Library of Congress;

the collection of Rev. Robert Lord; the collection of Rev. Ulysses S. Wilburn; the New York Public Library; the Notre Dame University Library; the collection of Mrs. Thomas Odiorne; the Archives of the Paulist Fathers; the Pennsylvania Historical Society; the Pierpont Morgan Library; the collection of Mr. Frederic Wolsey Pratt; the collection of Professor Harry R. Warfel; Yale University Library. There are letters relating to Sophia Willard Dana Ripley in the collection of Professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, copies of which are in Radcliffe College. The Boston Athenaeum Charge Books for 1827-41 are a particularly valuable source on Ripley's reading. The American Unitarian Association has a book of records of the Thirteenth Congregational Society; most of the items relating to Ripley were published in A Farewell Discourse. The Association also has MS. Journals of Theodore Parker. There is a copy of the will of George Ripley in the Surrogate's Court of New York County.

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