EMERSON'S CONTEMPORARY REPUTATION:
AN INTERPRETATION OF LITERARY
OPINION IN ENGLAND
AND AMERICA,
1836-1882

By

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PREFACE

The critical evaluation of a great writer varies from era to era and often serves as an interesting indicator of the shifting of literary standards in a particular period. Realizing this fact I decided to make a survey of critical opinions of Emerson's reputation in his own time. I have not attempted to point out the shifting literary standards since Emerson's time, but have given some attention to Emerson's Twentieth Century reputation in the concluding chapter. My purpose is merely to record ideas expressed by as large a number of literary critics as possible, rather than to trace the intellectual processes by which these men arrived at their ideas.

I have first devoted a short chapter to the study of Emerson's life and followed it by a consideration of his reputation among his contemporaries during the Age of Transcendentalism, during the period of his greatest lectur ing, and in his last days when he was known as the Concord Sage.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Dr. Hans H. Andersen, who suggested the subject of this thesis; and to Dr. Cecil B. Williams, whose kind suggestions, scholarly supervision, and never-failing

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CHAPTER I

EMERSON IN HIS SETTING

The Twentieth Century takes the literary importance of erson for granted, giving little thought to how and when d why this eminent writer arose to fame. Although there re some outstanding people among Emerson's ancestors, none them were famous as writers. Before taking up the detailed ory of the growth of his contemporary reputation, it is sential to give some attention to his background and also his early life.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born May 25, 1803, in Boston, ssachusetts. He came from a long line of pioneers, triots, and ministers who are considered great Americans, d some of them were founders of Concord, Massachusetts. had a minister among his ancestors in every generation r eight generations back, on one side or the other.[1] lph L. Rusk, in his Life of Emerson, states that "during l but about forty-three of Concord's one hundred and venty-nine years of existence, the preachers in the town's lpit had been Ralph's ancestors with the one exception of ra Ripley."[2] It seems, however, that Ripley was almost

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[1] J. W. Higginson, Contemporaries (Boston, 1900), p. 1.

[2] Ralph Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York, 949), p. 47.

Emerson because Ralph Waldo's grandmother, who was the dow of William Emerson, the Concord minister, married him. lph Waldo spent much of his time in their home, and later ew the character of Dr. Ripley "with exquisite felicity in sketch read before the social circle of Concord."[3] The etch was published in the Atlantic Monthly in November, 31.

Emerson's middle name, Waldo, was said traditionally come from one of the Waldenses who were condemned by the pe as heretics during the Middle Ages.

Rusk says that Edward Emerson of Newbury, father of seph Emerson of Maldon, contributed Ralph's middle name marrying into a New England Waldo family whose forebears the direct male line were supposed to have migrated from e Netherlands to England during the reign of Elizabeth, to cape religious persecution.[5]

Some of the greatest religious men in the history of erica were ancestors of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Edward Bulkely, lph's ancestor in the sixth generation before his own, cording to tradition once saved Concord from an attack by e Indians because the red men feared the minister's prayers.[6] e Reverend Peter Bulkely, Edward's father and one of Emerson' dest American ancestors, was esteemed by all well-informed

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[3]Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 84), p. 14.

[4]Encyclopedia Americana, X, 287.

[5]Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 49.

[6]Ibid., p. 47.

rsons as one of the founders of Concord. He had been driven t of England by Archbishop Laud's persecution of the non-nformists, and came to New England with a group of followers out 1635. They came to a friendly understanding with the dians of the Musketaquid country and gave the name of ncord to their new home.[7] Peter Bulkely is also given edit for establishing the Christian church in Concord. By is line of ancestors Emerson was related to the Noble glish family of Saint John, of which Pope's brilliant friend lingbroke was a member.

Ralph's great-grandfather Joseph Emerson was known as the nister of Malden. He settled in Malden in 1721, and within short time married Mary Moody, the daughter of Samuel Moody ' York. Samuel Moody was an eccentric preacher, who re-tedly would not permit an offended parishioner to leave his urch.[8] It is also said that he rescued some of his members om the alehouses on Saturday nights.

The name Moody was represented for Emerson by his Aunt ry Moody Emerson, his father's sister, who had more to do th his intellectual and spiritual training than any of his her early instructors. She was a lover of literature, well rsed in Plato and Cicero.[9] She was also a good writer and ed her talent to defend the religion of John Calvin and to

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[7]Ibid., p. 47.

[8]Rusk, The Life of Emerson, p. 48.

[9]Van Wyck Brooks, The Life of Emerson (New York, 1900), . 10.

buke what she regarded as the poor, pale, unpoetical humani-
rianism of the new day.[10] She often listened to discussions
literature by her brother William and his friends, such as
lliam Ellery Channing, Judge Story, Daniel Webster, and
ckminster. She held nothing but scorn for their new Unitari
ctrines, but she was very much interested in their discussio
literature and science. According to Brooks, one day in
10 she sat and listened to one of their discussions which
de her aware of the many opportunities that lay ahead for
e younger generation of her time. She thought immediately
her nephews and determined that they would not be "mere
es of men." She wanted them to be spiritual monarchs after
e ancestral pattern.

Daniel Bliss was another important ancestor in the line
Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was a great grandfather, seem-
gly not very much appreciated by William Emerson, Ralph's
ther. He was caught in the revivalist excitement stirred
by Whitefield. Ralph's father, who was a little more
beral in his theological views than most ministers of his
me, dismissed Bliss as a follower of Whitefield.[11]

William Emerson, the author's father, was born in 1769,
e son of the William Emerson previously mentioned, and was
aduated from Harvard in 1789. He had quite a financial
ruggle almost all his life. When he married, he was

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[10]Ibid., p. 8.

[11]Rusk, The Life of Emerson, p. 47.

stor of the little church at the village of Harvard. He was
ver satisfied with the church because it did not support him
equately, and because he thought there was too much parish
ssension. In 1799 William Emerson accepted the pastorate
the First Church in Boston. In January, 1803, he was
pointed chaplain to the Senate of the Commonwealth. His
putation as pastor of the First Church in his early years
ere was enough to warrant the publication of half a dozen
more of his sermons. It seems, however, that the sermons
blished were by no means masterpieces. He did have a good
putation as a preacher according to the opinion of many of
s contemporaries. He had a melodious voice, a clear enun-
ation, and an agreeable pulpit manner. James Russell Lowell
ther spoke of him as a handsome, graceful, and gentlemanlike
rson.[12] He founded the first social library in Harvard
llage and also established the library of the Boston
henaeum.[13] He died in 1811, leaving his widow with six
ildren and no means of support.

Ruth Haskins, the wife of William Emerson and the mother
Ralph Waldo, like most mothers of great men, seems to have
en a superior woman. She was obliged to take boarders in
der to help educate her children. She was a very religious
man, and there is evidence that she was sincere in her
ith and practice. Rusk states that there was a serious

[12]Ibid., p. 12.

[13]Ibid., p. 3.

ligious tone in her resolutions, letter, prayers, and
urnal entries. "Once she copied a precept of self-reliant
ne, 'In things of moment, on thyself depend.'"[14] No doubt
erson's liberal views and ideas of self-reliance were
ggested to some extent by both his parents.

Ralph Waldo was sent to the Latin school at the age of
n. When he was seventeen he entered Harvard, obtaining
s lodging free in return for carrying messages for the
esident. He also earned much of the cost of his board by
ting as waiter at the college commons.[15] With such a
rong clerical background in his ancestry, it was naturally
ought that young Waldo was destined for the pulpit. He
s carefully educated in Boston and Harvard with that in
ew. He was under such eminent teachers as Edward Everett
Greek, George Ticknor and Edward Channing in literature,
d Caleb Cushing in mathematics.

Edward Everett was a new professor of Greek at the time
erson was attending Harvard. He was considered a superior
acher, but some of his attributes which influenced his
udents might perhaps be interpreted as weaknesses. There
s a prevailing idea, which perhaps had its origin in
ethe, that "eloquence does not teach," and is out of place
the lecture room. Whether Everett agreed with this idea
not clear, but he certainly embellished his sermons and

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[14]Ibid., p. 6.

[15]Ibid., pp. 64-66.

blic addresses with flowers of rhetoric.[16]

Brooks describes Everett as one whose "every word made picture, whose every gesture was the movement of a sorcerer's nd."[17] Emerson was very fond of sermons and orations and s quite carried away with Everett's swelling phrases. He arned many beautiful expressions from Everett's sermons and metimes was able to repeat more than half the sermon he had ard the day before. It is quite possible that Emerson was eaming of becoming a preacher and orator patterned after erett. Certainly this great man was an outstanding inuence upon the thinking of Emerson.

Edward Tyrrel Channing, teacher of literature at Harvard, s another great influence upon Emerson. He was not condered a notable writer or scholar, but he proved to be an cellent teacher. When he appeared for his inaugural in cember, 1819, students gave him little honor. His address s an attack on the old-fashioned bombastic oratory. He oke well of the oratory of ancient Greece, but showed that ss passion and more deliberation and reflection were needed appeal to the modern world. He thought that feeling and agination were not to be excluded but must be used with dgment. Channing expressed the need of an orator perfectly tted for the age. Whether Emerson heard his inaugural dress we do not know, but it is quite possible that he

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[16]Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[17]Brooks, <u>The Life of Emerson</u>, p. 31.

ther heard or read it. At least we know that he was taught Channing and must have learned many oratorical ideas from m. Channing undoubtedly helped to rid his students of the rst effects of Everett's intoxicating pulpit eloquence. the long run his influence upon Emerson out-weighed Everett'

George Ticknor, professor and literary historian, when mpared to Everett, is considered a better scholar. When he s Emerson's teacher of literature, he had just returned om Europe where he had learned much about educational thods and school administration. He saw that the educationa stitutions in America were much inferior to those in Europe d began an era of reform in American education.

Emerson listened to the eloquent lectures of Ticknor d observed that his audience, according to Rusk,

> rmly acknowledged the force of delineation when the great luge of the French language, sweeping down all the feeble rriers of ephemeral dialects, carried captive the languages d literature of all Europe.[18]

erson kept an outline of Ticknor's lectures on what he beled the second and third epochs of French literature, om 1515 to 1778. The orderliness of his outline was quite usual. It is believed that he may have used a syllabus or preliminary set of notes. On the left-hand page he would tline the basic facts, and on the right hand he would plify these and add critical judgments which did not seem

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[18]Ibid., p. 79.

be his own. No doubt the echoes of Ticknor's learning nained in Emerson's memory.

Emerson jotted down in his diary choice bits from Ticknor d on May 2, 1821, he reported that the course of lectures s finished. He summarized Ticknor's remarks and came to e conclusion that the French intellect was "sick." He ought the literature was not national, but that it conformed the rules and spirit of the court of Louis XIV.[19]

Of Caleb Cushing we know but little. Perhaps this is cause Emerson was a very poor student in mathematics. In erson's Journal, October 15, 1820 he wrote as follows:

more fortunate neighbors exult in the display of mathatical study, while I ... esteem myself abundantly comnsated, if with my pen, I can marshal whole catalogues nouns and verbs, to express to the life the imbecility felt.[20]

A footnote in Emerson's Journal states that he wrote to s elder brother William, just before entering college, that "did not think it necessary to understand mathematics and eek to be good and useful."[21]

Emerson did not stand high in general scholarship in llege, but he was noted in his certain abilities and took izes for declamation and dissertations. One of his classtes, Josiah Quincy, wrote thus of his college days:

Emerson, I regret to say, there are but few notices in my urnal. Here is the sort of way in which I speak of the n who was to make so profound an impression upon the thought his time. I went to the chapel to hear Emerson's dissertion: A very good one, but rather too long to give much

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[19]Ibid., p. 80.

[20]Emerson, Journals, 1820-1872, I, 67.

[21]Ibid., p. 67, footnote.

easure to the hearers. The fault, I suspect, was in the
arers. . . . It seems that Emerson accepted the duty of
livering the poem on class day, after seven others had
en asked who positively refused. So it appears that, in
e opinion of this critical class, the author of the
oodnotes" and the "Humble Bee" ranked about eighth in
etical ability. . . . In our senior year the higher classes
mpeted for the Boylston prizes for English composition.
erson and I sent in our essays with the rest and were
rtunate enough to make the two prizes; but--alas for the
fallibility of academic decisions! Emerson received the
cond prize. . . . He was quite unobtrusive, and only a
ir scholar according to the standard of the college
thorities.[22]

According to Rusk, Emerson rated number thirty in a ass of fifty-nine. This rating was determined by a final amination bearing heavily upon the allied subjects of moral ilosophy, metaphysics, and theology. It is quite possible at his rating would have been even lower had it not been r his record of good conduct.[23]

Emerson graduated from college in 1821, and two years ter he began studying for the ministry at the Harvard vinity School. He was under the direction of Dr. William lery Channing, an outstanding Unitarian. Other outstanding achers in the Divinity School were such men as Henry Ware, ofessor of Theology, and Andrews Norton and John Graham, ofessors of Sacred Literature.[24] Unitarianism was the minating form of belief in the more highly educated classes the town of Boston and at the University of Cambridge at e time Emerson began his studies in Divinity. We do not

[22]Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, pp. 45-46.

[23]Rusk, The Life of Emerson, p. 84.

[24]Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 53.

ɔw much about Emerson's religious beliefs when he entered e Divinity School, but it is obvious that he was closer to itarianism than to any other religion of his time.

The strong opposition to Calvinism in the Emersons was rst seen in Ralph Waldo's father William. The liberalism nt a little further in Ralph Waldo and his brother William. lliam Emerson, the brother of Ralph Waldo, had previously gun his study of Divinity, but found himself wrapped in ubts and difficulties and refused to pursue his studies rther. Ralph Waldo found himself in a similar situation d made the following statement concerning himself: "If ey /his instructors/ had examined me, they probably would t have let me preach at all."[25]

In addition to the education Emerson received from llege and the Divinity School, he did a lot of independent ading. He deferred to books, however, only so far as they owed by their spiritual inspiration that throughout history e mind is one. Emerson thought that the purpose of litera-re was to stimulate the faculty of thinking. He read what eased him. He thought that the books that had pleased nerations of readers were the most profitable to read. a book had pleased many readers, he thought it must be least readable. Emerson approved the reading of famous oks, although he did not think one should approach them as

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[25]Ibid., p. 53.

assics, but rather with the same familiarity with which we ad the daily newspaper. He felt that the reader of Plato's crates could know him just as one could know a "Yankee rmer."[26]

Oliver Wendell Holmes gives the following bit of in-rmation regarding Emerson's own reading:

loved the study of Greek; was fond of reading history and ven to the frequent writing of verses. But he thinks that e idle books under the bench at the Latin school were as ofitable to him as his regular studies.[27]

seems from this statement that Emerson was somewhat like mes Russell Lowell, who read books of his own choice in eference to those prescribed by the faculty.[28]

From the abundant allusions and anecdotes in his lectures seems that his favorite books were the Greek Classics, the ble, Plato, Shakespeare, Montaigue, Milton, and Goethe.

Ralph Rusk made the following statement concerning erson's reading:

early as January of 1820, he was reading about, if not in, e Greek philosophers, with an eye to a Bowdoin Prize. He ready knew Xenophon and Plato as the biographers of Socrates e philosopher with whom he was mainly concerned, and he got mething from Diogenes Laertius. The whole picture of Greek story and Greek thought became clearer to him. He saw crates as a moralist, reviewed the conflicting notions of e Socratic daemon, and made what he could of the impressive ama of the Philosopher's death.[29]

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[26]Samuel McChord Crothers, Ralph Waldo Emerson. ndianapolis, 1921), pp. 181-186.

[27]Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 43.

[28]Milton Ellis et al., A College Book of American terature (New York, 149), p. 385.

[29]Rusk, The Life of Emerson, p. 78.

John S. Harrison in his study of Emerson came to the
ıclusion that Greek thought was the greatest factor in
ırson's intellectual development. He says that Emerson
ıw heavily from Thomas Taylor's complete translation of
ıto. He also states that Emerson was quite familiar with
ılor's translations: The Select Works of Plotinus and
the Theology of Plato, by Proclus; The Commentaries on
Timaeus of Plato, by Proclus; The Mysteries of the
ptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians, by Iamblichus, The Life
Pythagoras, by Iamblichus, to which is added a collection
Pythagoric sentences; and the treatise On the Nature of
Universe, by Ocellus Lucanus.[30]

Harrison also states that during Emerson's visits to
ıland, he constantly inquired of the men he met whether
ıy had read Taylor, and he seems to have been disappointed
ıt the English people knew so little about him.[31]

A survey of Emerson's reading from the years 1819 to
'3 has been made by Kenneth Walter Cameron. During these
ırs Emerson borrowed approximately a thousand books from
Harvard college library, the library of the Divinity
ıool of Harvard, and the Boston Athenaum. The library
ıords that Cameron examined show that Emerson read exten-
ıely in Shakespeare, Priestley, Montaigne, Francis Bacon,

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[30]John S. Harrison, The Teachers of Emerson (New York,
.0), p. 5.

[31]Ibid., p. 8.

.eridge, Plato, Locke, Hobbes, Schleiermacher, Goethe, and ıe.[32]

After Emerson had studied at Harvard Divinity School for 'ee years, he was approbated to preach by the Middlesex ıociation of Ministers in 1826. Because of ill health, he l not enter immediately upon his public duties, but spent ; winter following his approbation in Florida. On his ;urn to New England he preached in New Bedford, North- ıpton, Concord, and Boston. On March 11, 1826, Emerson ; ordained as a colleague of the Reverend Henry Ware, ıister of the second Unitarian Church in Boston. About rear and a half later Dr. Ware resigned and the pastoral ;ies fell upon Emerson.

In September, 1829, Emerson was married to Miss Ellen ıisa Tucker. Their married life was brief, as Mrs. Emerson əd of consumption in February, 1831.

Emerson soon became troubled with doubts regarding his ties as a minister, and, as sincerity seemed to be his lding star, he felt that he must proclaim these doubts to s congregation. In September, 1832, he delivered a sermon the Lord's Supper, in which he stated his scruples against ninistering such a rite. Thus he had reached an impasse: s congregation were unwilling to give up the rite, and his nscience would not allow him to continue administering it.

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[32]Kenneth Walter Cameron, Ralph Waldo Emerson's Reading. aleigh, North Carolina, 1941), pp. 11, 49.

ɜn he realized the situation, he promptly, although some-
ɪt reluctantly, resigned.

1833 Emerson visited Europe for his first time.
ɜre he met Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle, and formed
ɜ lifelong friendship with the last-named.

In the winter of 1833-34 he returned to the United States.
this period of his life, Emerson lived with Dr. Ripley in
ɜ "Old Manse" and began his career as a lecturer.

The information supplied in this chapter indicates that
ɜrson was descended from ancestors of such talent and
ɪievements as to promise some special accomplishment. His
ɪtemporaries would expect him to be great since so many of
s ancestors had been great. However, Emerson, after start-
g out in the clerical tradition of his family, found himself
ɪble to conform to the pattern. He risked security and
putation to become a rebel in thought and word. Thus the
putation that he eventually achieved was not something
ɪt could have been predicted in advance, by himself or
hers. He might have fallen from early fame into permanent
sfavor and eventual obscurity. Actually, as is well known,
became one of the most famous men in America, and despite
ch criticism, he acquired a considerable part of his rep-
ation during his own lifetime. It is the purpose of this
esis to examine the evidence of how he impressed his own
e--to point out the nature and extent of the growth of his
ntemporary reputation.

After Emerson resigned from the ministry of his church
Boston, he became an ardent Transcendentalist. Since
ınscendentalism was a dominant movement in America at
.s time and Emerson's role in it is a prominent one, this
.losophy and Emerson's part in it will be discussed in
› next chapter.

CHAPTER II

EMERSON AND THE AGE OF TRANSCENDENTALISM

Of great importance in any study of Emerson is the
inscendental Movement, which reached its height in New
gland in the decade 1836-1845. Emerson has become re-
gnized as the American leader in this movement. This
ipter will be devoted to a study of Transcendentalism
America, Emerson's special role in the movement, and
s significance in his whole career. In discussing
inscendentalism perhaps some attention should first be
ren to Unitarianism, which was a forerunner of this
rement.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the chief exponent of Trans-
ndentalism in the United States, began his career as a
itarian Minister. Other Transcendalists who had been
itarian ministers were George Ripley, W. H. Channing,
S. DeWight, and C. P. Cranch. The Unitarians, headed
Channing, were very strongly opposed to the doctrine
Calvinism. What their belief actually was is not clear,
cause they were too open-minded to adhere to any par-
cular creed. They belonged to the school of Locke, which
scarded the doctrine of innate ideas and kindred beliefs.

Calvinists believed that man is innately evil, and unless in his sovereignty elects individuals to salvation they eternally doomed. This idea, according to Channing, made unjust. "It is plain that a doctrine which contradicts best ideas of goodness and justice cannot come from the t and good God, or be a true representation of his racter."[1]

This teaching of the Calvinists Channing believed was se and misrepresented God completely. If the Calvinistic a was right, then God was unfair in his dealings with kind. That God would look upon the ruined race of man- d and out of his own good pleasure choose certain ones to saved and withhold his grace from others who were no more orthy than the ones he had chosen, seemed to Channing to absurd. "... Nor does justice change its nature, so that cannot be understood, because it is seated in an unbound d."[2]

In opposition to this doctrine that man is innately l, the Unitarians believed that man is innately good. y believed in free thought in religion. They were strongly osed to dogmatism because they had seen it in the minds of theologians who had opposed them. Also they respected human mind and believed that men had the right to think themselves.

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[1]Milton Ellis et al., A College Book of American terature (New York, 1949), p. 144.

[2]Ibid., p. 148.

intellectual among them were at liberty to entertain
ws which an orthodox mind instinctively shrank from; to
d books which an orthodox believer would not have touched
h the ends of his fingers. The literature on their
les represented a wide mental activity. Their libraries
tained authors never found before on ministerial shelves.[3]

This respect for the human mind was carried over into movement of Transcendentalism and perhaps brought about idea of self-reliance as taught by Emerson.

Transcendentalism may be defined as an attitude growing of a reliance on the intuition and the conscience. Its erents believed that there is within the nature of man some-ng which transcends human experience--an intuitive and sonal matter, to be established by the individual rather n by the church. They believed that man is divine in his right. This idea led to the belief that self-trust and f-reliance are to be practiced at all times, and that to st self is really to trust the voice of God speaking uitively within man.

This movement gained ground in America from meetings of mall group who came together to discuss the new thoughts the time. Their chief interests were the new developments theology, philosophy, and literature.

Among the most famous of the transcendental leaders in rica were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, s Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, George Ripley,

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[3] O. B. Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England w York, 1876), p. 114.

H. Hedge, James Freeman Clark, Elizabeth Peabody, Theodore ker, Jones Very, and W. H. Channing.[4]

Transcendentalism had its beginning in Europe but perhaps e greater progress in America than in any other country.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant was dissatisfied h the state of philosophy in his time because he felt that human mind had not been given proper consideration. He ertook to transfer contemplation from the objects that aged the mind to the mind itself. Kant made a distinction ween the terms _transcendental_ and _transcendent_. He applied _nscendent_ to such ideas as he believed were beyond the ge of any possible experience. He designated as _trans-dental_ those elements which were necessary constituents of erience, but which could not come from sense perception. English philosopher, Locke, had maintained that intel-tual action is limited to the world of the senses. Kant ieved that the soul has ideas which are not due to the ivity of any of the senses. He thought that everyone has idea of time and space although no one has ever felt, ted, seen, eaten, or smelled them. Kant called this idea intuition or transcendental form. Frothingham said:

> transcendental philosophy is the philosophy that is built these necessary and universal principles, these primary s of mind which are the ground of absolute truth. The remacy given to these and the authority given to the truths t result from them entitle the philosophy to its name.[5]

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[4]William Thrall and Addison Hibbard, _A Handbook to erature_ (New York, 1936), pp. 443-444.

[5]Frothingham, _Transcendentalism in New England_, p. 13.

Kant believed that his analysis had established the in-
ɜndent dominion of the mind, had confronted the idealist
ı the reality of an external world, and had confronted
sceptic with laws of mind that were independent of ex-
Lence. Kant felt that man was committed to an unswerving
uncompromising loyalty to himself.

Transcendentalism in New England was largely indebted to
t. For Emerson, Thoreau, and the majority, however, the
ɜhings of Kant arrived in the writings of Coleridge,
Lyle, and Wordsworth.[6]

Transcendentalism perhaps had existence in New England
ɔre 1836, but according to Frederick Ives Carpenter, this
the year of its actual beginning.[7] This beginning was
Emerson's first book, <u>Nature</u>. At first this book was far
n a popular success. It was effective, however, in the
ıs of those who were beginning to think as Emerson did.
s book was very philosophic and full of poetic thoughts.
was too vague for popular comprehension, and the time was
ripe for its full appreciation. Orren Henry Smith says
t it took five years to sell five hundred copies of it
the United States.[8] Oliver Wendell Holmes stated, however,

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[6]Thrall and Hibbard, <u>A Handbook to Literature</u>, p. 443.

[7]Frederick Ives Carpenter, <u>Emerson Handbook</u> (New York,
3), p. 132.

[8]Orren Henry Smith, <u>The American Scholar Self-Reliance</u>
<u>pensation</u> (New York, 1893), p. 7.

t "Higginson tells us it took twelve years to sell five ired copies."[9] Holmes also supports the idea that the guage of the book is above the comprehension of the rage reader: "There are sentences in 'Nature' which are exalted as the language of one who is just coming to him-f after having been etherized."[10] Holmes also stated t the book "was vague, mystic, incomprehensible, to most those who call themselves common-sense people."[11]

Testimony of his contemporaries indicates that Emerson's tings were too obscure for the average mind. That this true is indicated by a statement in the Century magazine 1881:

people who write essays about Emerson, said a friend to once, would only stop saying fine things about him and l us what he means, they might persuade some of us scoffers read him.[12]

Mr. Cooke states that Transcendentalism was the great ement of the first half of the Nineteenth Century, but ually was not well understood by the majority of the people Emerson's time: "... Yet it is not very generally under-od except by its votaries, the rest of the world thinking too abstruse or unintelligible to deserve much attention."[13]

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[9]Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 4), p. 92.

[10]Ibid., p. 93.

[11]Ibid., p. 91.

[12]"Ralph Waldo Emerson," Century, I (February, 1882), 622.

[13]George Willis Cooke, Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1881), 390.

le Cooke realized the fact that Emerson's Transcendentalism not very well understood by most of the people of his e, he did not feel that it was in any way Emerson's fault. pointed out that Transcendentalism is actually one of the est of human philosophies and remains unchanged, "except the coloring given by the spirit of each successive age, n its appearance in the earlist records of India...." s philosophy is old, according to Cooke, and has been ied down through many ages, but he felt that Emerson had e the best job of all time in explaining and presenting se ideas. He stated concerning Emerson:

is only just to say that Mr. Emerson grasped this thought n more intelligence and imagination than any of our other nkers. To him it was no dark unknowable, but the eternal rce of life and light, illuminating and giving real existe to everything.[14]

le Cooke felt that Transcendentalism was not a new philphy he made it clear that Emerson was no "copyist." He arded Emerson as a man with a mind of superior imagination of great original power.

A review of Mr. Cooke's book on Emerson was published The Nation in November 1881. It is stated in this periodical t Mr. Cooke had made a thorough study of his subject, but perhaps praised Emerson too highly. Little attempt, ording to the article, was made to point out any weakness Emerson or any defects in his philosophy.[15]

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[14]Ibid., p. 390.

[15]H. W. Holland, "Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson," Nation, XXXIII (November, 1881), 396-397.

Whether Cooke praised Emerson too highly as a Transcen- talist is disputable, but it is evident that Emerson had e a good impression upon Cooke.

In regard to the criticism of Emerson's obscurity, the *tury* article quoted above also stated that James Russell ell felt that Emerson's writings were too great to be lained in ordinary language.

> ell, to be sure, has had his laugh at those who want an tion of Emerson "in words of one syllable for infant minds"; plain people who were puzzled about the oversoul were l, for their comfort, that the ideas of the reason could be translated into the language of the understanding.[16]

n Lowell's explanation it is obvious that some of Emerson's temporaries in the literary world knew that his writings e obscure. They seem to think, though, that this ob- rity was the result of unfamiliarity with his point of w.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, however, praised *Nature* because was obscure. "Nature is the Book of Revelation of our nt Radulphus. It has its obscurities, its extravagances, as a poem it is noble and inspiring."[17] Holmes pointed that Calvin had omitted the book of the *Revelation* from commentary because of the obscurities, but this certainly not mean that the book was not great.

Mr. Bowen, a professor of Natural Theology and Moral losophy in Harvard University, found *Nature* very difficult

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[16] "Ralph Waldo Emerson," p. 622.

[17] Holmes, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, p. 103.

ead and stated that the book was "a contradiction in
lf."[18]

Carlyle said in his letter of February 13, 1837:

little azure-colored 'Nature' gave me true satisfaction.
ad it, and then lent it about to all my acquaintance that
a sense for such things; from whom a similar verdict al-
came back. You say it is the first chapter of something
ter. I call it rather the Foundation and Ground-plan on
h you may build whatsoever of great and true has been
n you to build. It is the true Apocalypse, this when the
n Secret' becomes revealed to a man. I rejoice much in
glad serenity of soul with which you look out on this
rous Dwelling Place of yours and mine, --with an ear for
Ewigen Melodien, which pipe in the winds round us, and
r themselves forth in all sounds and sights and things;
to be written down by gamut-machinery; but which all
t writing is a kind of attempt to write down.[19]

ealize from Carlyle's words that he, like Holmes, felt
t Emerson was obscure simply because he was great.

In August, 1837, Emerson had an opportunity to apply
ideas of his book, Nature, in a very important place.
was asked to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard,
he responded with "The American Scholar." This address
a translation of Nature into specific terms. He suggested
t American scholars establish an original relation to the
verse of Philosophy and the arts; that they turn from
ope and all dead cultures and explore the possibilities
the New World. Emerson taught in this address that the
olar is "Man Thinking." His duty is first to know Nature,
nce all power and wisdom come, then to make himself one

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[18]Ibid., p. 104 (Quoted from the Christian Examiner,
anscendentalism," January, 1837).

[19]Ibid., pp. 104-105.

ith the mind of the past through books, and at last to express himself in action. He should trust himself, for the orld is to be asked to trust him. He further suggested hat man is to sustain himself at an altitude, never defering to the popular cry, but remaining both an aristocrat f the soul and a servant to good men.

> ames Russell Lowell considered this address an event without any former parallel in our literary annals; a scene to e always treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness nd its inspiration.[20]

Oliver Wendell Holmes called this address "our intelectual Declaration of Independence."[21] He also thought hat it was the greatest that had been heard in the halls of arvard since Samuel Adams. Holmes admits that the "grave rofessors and sedate clergymen" did not receive the address oo favorably, but the young men regarded it as a prophet's essage, or the word of the Lord.

> o listener ever forgot that address, and among all the oble utterances of the speaker it may be questioned if one ver contained more truth in language more like that of mmediate inspiration.[22]

rom this quotation it is obvious that Holmes agreed with he young men who regarded Emerson so highly.

Bliss Perry called this address "Emerson's most famous peech." While he admits the fact that this speech did not lease everybody, he informs us that "the entire edition of

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[20]Ibid., p. 107.

[21]Ibid., p. 115.

[22]Ibid.

he address was sold out in one month."[23]

There was quite a stir over this address. It had hardly ied down when Emerson delivered a heavier shot in his dis- ourse before the graduating class of Divinity College, ambridge, July 15, 1838.

Now it was as if he had decided to clear his mind once nd for all of any remaining conviction that the church as onstituted was the place for scholars and prophets. He eclared it dead and helpless, and called upon the future inisters who sat before him to consider what kind of awaken- ng they must undergo before they could hope to touch the iving world. He granted the supreme importance of the eligious sentiment, the importance of the church, with its nstitutions of Sabbath and pulpit; and he admitted that mong the clergy there were exceptions to the generalization e had been forced to make. But he thought that in general odern Christianity, by neglecting the soul, by attempting erely to communicate an old revelation, by refraining from exploration of the spiritual resources now as always existing n the moral constitution of man, had ceased to do its proper ork. He advised the graduating class to seek a new revelati proper to the times, to develop self-reliance, and to under- stand that only in the soul is redemption to be found.

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[23]Bliss Perry, The Praise of Folly (Boston, 1923), p. 1C

The general ideas that underlay the speech, together
th its indictment of the ministerial profession, produced
great shock. Emerson was attacked in the press, and though
me liberal Christians did not definitely attack him, they
;reed that they could never go so far with him.

Even the leaders of Unitarianism drew back in dismay,
.d according to Oliver Wendell Holmes, "the ill names which
.d been applied to them were heard from their own lips as
fitting this new heresy."[24]

Reverend Henry Ware, a former colleague of Emerson's,
.s rather displeased with the address and felt that it
uld "tend to overthrow the authority and influence of
ristianity." In a letter to Emerson, Ware expressed his
.sgivings concerning some of the opinions declared in that
eech.

> must confess that they appear to me more than doubtful,
> id that their prevalence would tend to overthrow the
> thority and influence of Christianity. On this account
> looked with anxiety and no little sorrow to the course
> ich your mind has been taking.[25]

Ware later preached a sermon on "The Personality of
d," which was clearly intended to counteract "pantheistic
nsense" and in which he argued that the denial of person-
lity to God amounts to denial of God. A copy of this sermon
companied by a courteous letter was forwarded to Emerson.

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[24]Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 118.

[25]Elton D. Trueblood, "Influence of Emerson's Divinity
hool Address," Harvard Theological Review, XXXII (January,
939), 49.

ıerson gave the following reply:

could not give account of myself if challenged. I could ›t possibly give you one of the "arguments" you cruelly .nt at, on which any doctrine of mine stands. For I don't ıow what arguments mean in reference to any expression of thought.[26]

›re was the basic difference between the men. Mr. Trueblood ıinks: Ware was a systematic thinker; Emerson a poet, who ›ruck out boldly from intuition and spoke his own mind.

More frankly denunciatory was the attack of Andrews ›rton, retired professor of the Divinity School. His answer ıs an address before the recently formed alumni association ˀ the school, vigorously entitled "The Latest Form of In-.delity."

ıe latest form of infidelity is distinguished by assuming ıe Christian name, while it strikes directly at the root ˀ faith in Christianity, and indirectly of all religion, r denying the miracles attesting the divine mission of ırist.[27]

The Transcendentalists, Mr. Norton asserted, rejected ıstorical Christianity because it gave only second-hand ridence.

ıe dwellers in the region of shadows complain, Norton said, ıat the solid earth is not stable enough for them to rest ı. They have firm footing on the clouds.[28]

ıe Christian Examiner denounced Emerson's address as neither ›od divinity nor good sense. The Princeton Review agreed. We have read it, and we want words with which to express ır sense of the nonsense and impiety which pervade it."[29]

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[26]Ibid., p. 51.

[27]Ibid., p. 53. (An excerpt from Norton's address)

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., p. 54.

year later the same Journal described the address as a
apsodical oration in favor of Pantheism.[30]

In regard to Emerson's Essays, Ralph Rusk states that
he first series of Essays completed its author's ruin in
me eyes, but made his reputation in others."[31] His aunt
ry Moody Emerson was quite disappointed when she read
s essays and asked if "This strange medley of atheism and
lse independence was the real sane work of that man whom
idolised as a boy, so mild, candid modest obliging."[32]

Rusk states that "Felton, the jolly Greek professor,
lied his reputation for good humor when he reviewed the
ssays."[33] He felt that Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance
d intuition would over-turn society and bring the world
chaos.

Edward Everett was in England when Carlyle introduced
erson's Essays. He found it hard to believe that Emerson,
om he had known to be such a clear thinker and beautiful
iter, could be the author of such "conceited and laborious
nsense." He wrote home "that he hoped his nephew and a
mesake, Edward Everett Hale, would keep away from Tran-
endentalism if Emerson's Essays was a sample of it."[34]

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[30]Ibid.

[31]Ralph L. Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson
lew York, 1949), p. 283.

[32]Ibid., p. 283.

[33]Ibid., p. 284.

[34]Ibid.

Thomas Carlyle, who introduced Emerson's Essays to gland in 1841, had a different opinion of him. He said: merson's writings and speakings amount to something...."[35] also said in his preface to Emerson's Essays that Emerson s gaining a reputation in England:

.e name of Ralph Waldo Emerson is not entirely new to England stinguished travelers bring us tidings of such a man; fract-ns of his writings have found their way into the hands of .e curious here; fitful hints that there is in New England me spiritual notability called Emerson glide through reviews .d magazines.[36]

.rlyle no doubt did much to promote Emerson's reputation in gland, but there were many in England, as well as in America 10 were strong opposers of Transcendentalism. John Sterling ote Emerson that in Britain the social prestige of church thodoxy was so strong that there were probably not a hundred rsons outside London who could appreciate the Essays; but for his own part was delighted with them.[37] Rusk says, Iarriet Martineau wrote to America to prophesy a thousand ears of life for the book."[38]

In 1842 an evaluation of Emerson's Essays appeared in ie Dial.

iese Essays are truly noble, they report a wisdom akin to iat which the great of all time have loved and spoken. : is a most refreshing book; and I am sure of its reputat-on with those who make fames and ages.[39]

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[35]Edwin D. Mead, The Influence of Emerson (Boston, 1903), , 186.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 285.

[38]Ibid., p. 286.

[39]"Emerson's Essays," The Dial, II (1842), 432.

is evident that opinions concerning this work of Emerson's re various.

The Dial, a quarterly review which existed from 1840 1844, did much toward the reformation of society in edu- tion, morals, and politics. Its first editors were Margaret ller and Reverend George Ripley. From the very first, how- er, Emerson had great influence in its councils, and ul- mately became its proprietor and editor, associating nry David Thoreau with himself in editing it. Many of e early writings of Emerson, Thoreau, Margatet Fuller, and eodore Parker came out in The Dial. In spite of the fact at there was good literature published in The Dial, it on perished for want of subscribers. This was no doubt cause there were too many people who were afraid of the ilosophy of Transcendentalism. Frederic Hedge, who perhaps uld have been the editor of The Dial, stated that he was fraid to identify himself publicly with the Transcendental- sts lest he be taken for an atheist in disguise."[40] Even rlyle was not too well pleased with this publication. He ated that it was too "ethereal" for him. Later Carlyle saw nprovement over the first publication, but he still felt at there was too much "Soul in it."

According to Willis Cooke The Dial put forth a good deal f "Vaporing and sentimentalism."[41] This conclusion was

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[40]Ibid., p. 276.

[41]George Willis Cooke, Ralph Waldo Emerson, His Life, riting, and Philosophy (Boston, 1900), p. 89.

awn because much that was crude had gone into its pages. ne of its writers lacked solid regard for facts and realities spite of the disadvantages, however, Cooke felt that the plication contributed much toward expressing a truer life l better thoughts. He felt that it was one of the greatest views that had been produced in America and that its in-uence was indeed great. He stated that it was "the first erican periodical to assume a character and aim of its n."[42] Because of this quality of The Dial, Cooke felt at it had stimulated originality and that its fame would crease in the future.

O. B. Frothingham states that "the literary achieve-nts of Transcendentalism are best exhibited in The Dial."[43] goes on to explain that the editors and contributors were e most intellectual people and the best writers in their me. He further adds that Mr. Emerson's "bravest and blest poems" were first printed there. Because of these ntributions Mr. Frothingham felt that The Dial was a perior publication. Undoubtedly it figured importantly the growth of Emerson's reputation.

Mr. Frothingham felt that The Dial had made a great ntribution to his time by the publication of "Ethnical riptures." There were seven of these in all: texts from e Veeshnee Sarma, the laws of Menu, Confucius, the Desatir,

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[42]Ibid., p. 90.

[43]Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England, p. 133.

› Chinese "Four Books", Hermes Tresmegistus, and the ıldean Oracles.[44] Frothingham further points out that in › past access to these Scriptures was possible for only a r, but the publication in The Dial had made them known to ıy people. Because of the unusual literature published in › Dial and because of Emerson's contributions Frothingham .led it a "treasury of literary wealth."[45]

It is certain that many people in Emerson's time did › agree with his philosophy, but we do know that he was ›pected by most of his contemporaries and that he also had great influence upon many of them.

Cooke states that Emerson's real influence came out in › personal relations with many of the finest minds of the ne. He refers to Harriet Martineau, who wrote of him in › Retrospect of Western Travel:

> ›re is a remarkable man in the United States, without know- › whom it is not too much to say that the United States can › be fully known. I mean by this, not only that he has vers and worth which constitute him an element in the esti- te to be formed of his country, but that his intellect and › character are the opposite of those which the influences his country and his time are supposed almost necessarily form. I speak ...of Mr. Emerson. He is yet in the prime life. Great things are expected from him, and great things, seems, he cannot but do, if he have life and health to ›secute his course. He is a thinker and scholar....[46]

rriet Martineau was qualified to make such a statement about ›rson because she saw much of him during her visit to the ıted States in 1835-36.

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[44]Ibid., p. 135.

[45]Ibid., p. 359.

[46]Harriet Martineau, Retrospect of Western Travel, II › York, 1838), 153-154.

Frederika Bremer felt the magic charm of Emerson's in-
.uence, and wrote of it in her Homes of the New World, de-
:ribing her visit to the United States in 1849.

: is in a high degree pure, noble, and severe, demanding as
ich from himself as he demands from others. His words are
:vere, his judgments often keen and merciless; but his de-
:anor is alike noble and pleasing, and his voice beautiful.
ie may quarrel with Emerson's thoughts, with his judgment,
it not with himself. That which struck me most, as dis-
.nguishing him from most other human beings, is nobility.
: is a born gentleman.... I often object to him, quarrel
.th him. I see that his stocicism is one-sidedness, his
intheism an imperfection; and I know that which is greater
id more perfect; but I am under the influence of his magical
)wer. I believe myself to have become greater through his
:eatness, stronger through his strength; and I breathe the
ir of a higher sphere in this world, which is indescribably
:freshing to me.[47]

nerson had much the same influence on Margaret Fuller.
ien she considered the influence that Emerson had upon her,
ie made the following statement:

/ inmost heart blesses the fate that gave me birth in the
ime clime and time, and that has drawn me into such a close
)nd with him as, it is my hopeful faith, will never be
:oken, but from sphere to sphere ever be hallowed.

ien I look forward to eternal growth, I am always aware that
am far larger and deeper for him. His influence has been
) me that of lofty assurance and sweet serenity. I present
) him the many forms of nature, and solicit with music; he
:lts them all into spirit, and reproves performance with
:ayer. With most men I bring words of now past life, and do
:tions suggested by the wants of these natures rather than
/ own. But he stops me from doing anything, and makes me
iink....[48]

According to Amos Bronson Alcott, Emerson's personal
ifluence was wide reaching and great through the charm of

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[47]Cooke, p. 103. (Quoted from Homes of the New World.)

[48]Ibid., p. 105.

s character. This influence has been described by Alcott
 the following words:

rtunate the visitor who is admitted of a morning for the gh discourse, or permitted to join the poet in his after-on walks to Walden, the Cliffs, or elsewhere-hours to be membered as unlike any others in the calendar of experi-.ces. Shall I describe them as sallies oftenest into cloud-nds, into scenes and intimacies ever new, none the less vel nor remote than when first experienced? Interviews, wever, bringing their own trail of perplexing thoughts, sting some days', several nights' sleep, often-times, to store one to his place and poise.... He, if any, must ve taken the census of the admirable people of his time, mbering as many among his friends as most living Americans; iile he is already recognized as the representative mind of s country, to whom distinguished foreigners are especially mmended when visiting America.[49]

Also it is believed that Emerson had a great influence on Walt Whitman. In regard to this opinion John B. Moore kes the following statement:

ierson is the great man who infected Whitman with pregnant ioughts-- A search through Whitman's prose and verse reveals iat no other writer, past or present, had a remotely compar-le influence upon him. Emerson and his writings are never ng out of Whitman's mind-- conscious or subconscious.[50]

According to Horace Traubel, Whitman made the following atement in regard to Emerson:

am always aware that Emerson's personality was the most early perfect I ever came in contact with-- perhaps the st nearly ideal the world has ever known.[51]

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[49]Ibid., pp. 105-107.

[50]John B. Moore, "The Master of Whitman," North Carolina tudies in Philology, XXIII (1926), 83.

[51]Horace Traubel, "Whitman on His Contemporaries," nerican Mercury, II (July 1924), 329.

Apparently Emerson did not feel that he was so great.
felt that he was not adapted for social occasions and
netimes called himself a "kill-joy."[52] Emerson impressed
s friends simply because he was great; he seemed to make
particular effort to do so.

From all the noble things that Emerson's associates
d friends said about him, it is obvious that he was highly
nored by a company of brilliant men and women. During
e Age of Transcendentalism, however, Emerson did not gain
s greatest reputation. Frederick Carpenter states that,
rom 1832 to 1842, Emerson seemed clearly a failure to the
es of the world...."[53] It is evident that many of the
eas Emerson possessed caused some people to doubt him,
t on the other hand, those who were nearer his equal
tellectually, highly appreciated him.

This chapter has dealt with Emerson's reputation during
e period from 1836-1844. In later years he became better
own and also made a greater impression upon the world by
s lecturing.

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[52]Edward Waldo Emerson, The Early Years of the Saturday
ub (Boston, 1918), p. 56.

[53]Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 14.

CHAPTER III

EMERSON THE LECTURER

In the middle period of Emerson's life he was most tive and best known as a lecturer. It was by this means at he became better known and more appreciated. He ined many friends who perhaps would never have known him l it not been for his lecturing. This chapter will give nsideration to the kind of lecturer he was, and to the action of his contemporaries to his lecturing and also Emerson as a man. The reception Emerson received in the fferent parts of America will be pointed out, and also tention will be given to his reputation in England.

Emerson was not an extemporaneous speaker. It was not at he disliked such a method of delivery, for he really mired the man who could speak extemporaneously and well. wrote Carlyle, "I should love myself wonderfully better I could arm myself to go, with the word in the heart and t in a paper."[1] Perhaps Emerson was not so much concerned to whether a man read his speech or gave it extemporane- sly. He felt that the most important thing was to express

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[1]Carlyle, The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and lph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1834-1872), p. 376.

's deep convictions. Apparently Emerson began his lectures a slow and rather spiritless manner. His speech was racterized by an absence of passion. But after he got o his lecture, he warmed to his subject. In the words of ontemporary,

he proceeds, he becomes earnest and magnetic; while the illing intensity of his voice deeply affects and rivets attention of his audience. He is full of mannerisms in ression and in bodily attitude, seldom makes a gesture, has little variation of voice. He secures the interest his hearers by the simple grandeur of his thought, the piration of his moral genius, the conviction and manli- s which his words express, and by the silvery enchantment his voice. The glow of his face and the mobile express- ness of his features, the charm of his smile, add to the erest created by his thought.[2]

An excellent description of Emerson's delivery when he at his best is given in the following newspaper report one of his lectures before the Portman Square Literary Scientific Institution, London, in 1848:

cisely at four o'clock the lecturer glided in, and suddenly eared at the reading-desk. Tall, thin, his features iline, his eye piercing and fixed; the effect, as he stood etly before his audience, was at first somewhat startling, then nobly impressive. Having placed his manuscript the desk with nervous rapidity, and paused, the lecturer n quickly, and as it were, with a flash of action, turned r the first leaf, whispering at the same time, "Gentlemen Ladies." The initial sentences were next pronounced in ow tone, a few words at a time, hesitatingly, as if then emporaneously meditated, and not, as they really were, meditated and forewritten. Time was given for the audience meditate them too. Meanwhile the meaning, as it were, was gged from under the veil and covering of the expression, ever and anon a particular phrase was so emphatically licized as to command attention. There was, however,

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[2]George W. Cooke, Ralph Waldo Emerson (London, 1882), 257.

ning like acquired elocution, no regular intonation, in t, none of the usual oratorical artifices; but for the t part a shapeless delivery (only varied by certain vous twitchings and angular movements of the hand and s, curious to see and even smile at), and calling for n cooperation on the part of the auditor to help out its rtcomings. Along with all this, there was an eminent nomie, earnestness, and sincerity, which bespoke sympathy respect,--nay, more, secured veneration.[3]

One of the most characteristic features of Emerson's ivery was the element of surprise. He was always giving unexpected turn to his thought. He occasionally used s for humor, and practically all of this sort of humor lost in his essays. As he turned the thought over for audience, the little breaks and unexpected quirks he e to the expression illuminated each angle with remark-e vividness. As N. P. Willis puts it:

cadences tell you that the meaning is given, and the erest of the sentence all over, when-- flash! --comes ingle word or a phrase, like lightning after listened thunder, and illuminates, with astonishing vividness cloud you have striven to see into.[4]

s device put meaning in many passages which, in reading, m rather complicated in the essays. However accidental extemporaneous this might have seemed to the audience, was planned beforehand. Emerson was the trained artist sciously using the fine features of his art.

One of the chief sources of Emerson's delivery seems have been his voice. Almost everyone who heard him had

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[3]George Willis Cooke, Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1900), 115-116. (Quoted from Jerrold's Newspaper.)

[4]N. P. Willis, Hurrygraphs (New York, 1851), p. 172.

nething to say about the power and sweetness of his rich
:itone. His ability to hold the attention of an audience
ne in no small measure from his voice. Such a voice was
once a revelation and a surprise to those who had never
ard him speak. Thinking that a voice like that necessarily
ıld come only from a great broad-shouldered, deep-chested
ant, they were amazed to hear it proceed from this tall
ail-looking individual with a narrow chest and sloping
oulders.

Willis, upon hearing Emerson lecture for the first time
1850, wrote as follows:

erson's voice is up to his reputation. It has a curious
ntradiction, which we tried in vain to analyze satisfactorily
an outwardly repellent and inwardly reverential mingling
qualities, which a musical composer would despair of blend-
g into one. It bespeaks a life that is half contempt,
lf adoring recognition, and very little between. But it
noble, altogether. And what seems strange is to hear
ch a voice proceeding from such a body. It is a voice
th shoulders in it, which he has not--with lungs in it
r larger than his--with a walk in it which the public
ver see--with a fist in it, which his own hand never gave
n the model for--and with a gentleman in it, which his
rochial and "bare necessaries--of life" sort of exterior,
ves no betrayal of. We can imagine nothing in nature--
hich seems, too, to have a type for everything)--like the
nt of correspondence between the Emerson that goes in at
e eye, and the Emerson that goes in at the ear. A heavy
d vase-like blossom of a magnolia, with fragrance enough
perfume a whole wilderness, which should be lifted by a
irlwind and dropped into a branch of aspen, would not
em more as if it never could have grown there, than
erson's voice seems inspired and foreign to his visible
d natural body. Indeed, (to use one of his own similitudes,)
s body seems "never to have broken the umbilical cord"
ich held it to Boston, while his soul has sprung to the
ult stature of a child of the universe, and his voice is
e utterance of the soul only.[5]

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[5]Ibid., pp. 170-171.

Lowell wrote of the trumpet sound in the voice as it irred men to action. It awakened young America and called with the assurance of victory. It was always a voice lling men to the noble. Lowell felt that Emerson's in-ience as it expressed itself in that marvelous voice of s was one of the chief forces in enlisting the young men the North to fight for the preservation of the union. never lost its appeal for Lowell. In his essay on nerson the Lecturer," he wrote as follows:

> iave heard some great speakers and some accomplished ators, but never any that so moved and persuaded men as , There is a kind of undertow in that rich baritone of s that sweeps our minds from their foothold into deeper ters with a drift we cannot and would not resist. And v artfully (for Emerson is a long-studied artist in these ings) does the deliberate utterance, that seems waiting r the first word appear to admit us partners in the labor thought and make us feel as if the glance of humor were sudden suggestion, as if the perfect phrase lying written ere on the desk were as unexpected to him as to us.[6]

Oliver Wendell Holmes was attracted by the soothing ture of the "sweet seriousness in Emerson's voice." It s the halcyon silencing the storm and bringing rest and iet:

> remember that in the dreadful war-time, on one of the days anguish and terror, I fell in with Governor Andrew, on s way to a lecture of Emerson's, where he was going, he id, to relieve the strain upon his mind. An hour passed listening to that flow of thought, calm and clear as the amond drops that distil from a mountain rock, was a true penthe for a care-worn soul.[7]

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[6]James Russell Lowell, My Study Windows (Boston, 1893), 402.

[7]Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 34), p. 14.

Emerson was undoubtedly one of the most individualistic ›akers of his age. His delivery was entirely original. allowed that which was peculiarly his own to find express- ı through a delivery which was even more unusual. Not ıtent to follow the general language and general manner of ıer great orators, he expressed what was uppermost in his ı mind in his own manner. The result was that he exhibited his thought and delivery that which must needs have been interesting, engaging, and curious study to every in- .sitive mind.

Lowell, in his essay on "Emerson the Lecturer" (1868), .d:

is a singular fact that Mr. Emerson is the most steadily :ractive lecturer in America.... A lecturer now for some- .ng like a third of a century, one of the pioneers of the :turing system, the charm of his voice, his manner, and ; matter has never lost its power over his earlier hearers, l continually winds new ones in its enchanting meshes.[8]

It seems that Emerson's audiences were not always large, ; they were pretty sure to include an extremely wide range. l classes of people went to hear him. Almost every one his audiences in the large cities offered a cross-section society. He was the sole connecting link of a most varied ›emblage. Day-laborers, craftsmen, professional men, liticians, artists, poets, philosophers, society-leaders, ›amers, all came to hear Emerson. Of course, he had his

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[8]James Russell Lowell, "Emerson the Lecturer," ›at Teachers, ed. Housten Peterson (New Brunswick, 1946), 331.

uliar following, but he had besides a veritable miscel-
y of attentive listeners from all fields. He held their
ention, too. Lowell, in the essay just mentioned, de-
red that he knew of no other person who could "hold a
miscuous crowd in pleased attention so long as he."[9]
re was something about this "Yankee Mystic," this
atonic philosopher from the region of Boston notions,"[10]
t captivated his heterogeneous audience. His most regular
rers generally did not understand all his lecture, but
t they did not understand, they seemed to accept on faith.
mes attributed the broad range of his appeal to his voice
manner. In regard to his audiences Holmes made the
lowing statement:

spoke in great cities to such cultivated audiences as no
er man could gather about him, and in remote villages
re he addressed plain people whose classics were the
le and the Farmer's Almanac.[11]

rever Emerson lectured, it seems that he fascinated his
teners by his voice and manner. The musical quality of
speech pleased those who found his thought too subtle
their wits to follow.

Emerson himself was the chief drawing force for his
liences. Many of his listeners didn't understand his
as but were interested in the man. When they saw him,
ever, they found that he was not a remarkable looking man.

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[9]Ibid., p. 377.

[10]"Literary Notices." Knickerbocker, XXXV (March, 1850),
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[11]Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 291.

was not nearly so much of an exhibit as they had imagined. fact, the Philadelphia Medical Journal declared that f all the persons on the platform, Mr. Emerson was the ast remarkable looking."[12] This perhaps was a disappoint-nt. Here was just a quiet, dignified gentleman of very dinary appearnace. They perhaps felt that the occasion d been advertised beyond its worth and settled down for uneasy hour.

The reason Emerson appeared so ordinary was perhaps at his listeners expected a mad man, and nothing could ve been further from this than the tall clerical-looking cturer. Most of the audience became convinced of their ror as the lecture proceeded. They had not listened to m long before they discovered that this ordinary lecturer d a certain air of majesty about him. He was different, t not as they had expected him to be. He was nobly differ-t. They saw that this was no common individual who was dressing them. On the contrary, he was a man with a great d beautiful soul, who was unconsciously, it seemed, re-aling this soul to them. They no doubt entirely forgot w he looked, or else they realized that they had been ry badly mistaken in their first judgment.

Those who had gone to smile at the eccentricities of is Transcendentalist felt themselves warming under the

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[12]Quoted by Emerson in his Journals, IX, 354-355. have been unable to get the magazine from which the otation was taken.

ell of his eloquence and the train of new and beautiful
oughts his words called up in their minds. When the
cture was over, the audience perhaps had made rich dis-
veries which surpassed anything they had hoped for from
e "Celebrated Metaphysician."[13] Most of them were agreed
at Emerson was a marvelous lecturer with original ideas
l a highly pleasing way of expressing them.

Emerson's lack of consistency, although in keeping with
s philosophy, doubtless weakened the effect of his lectures.
ny of his hearers could not understand how he could be
ncere and yet express such contradictory views. On the
her hand, no one hearing him speak could doubt his sincerity.
ny condemned him, while only a few defended him. One of
e best defenses for his inconsistency is found in the
ickerbocker of March, 1850. An anonymous writer says:

> believe it the same inconsistency a man shows in an excited nversation. He takes one view of a subject; he is deeply red by it; his words come forth strong and glowing; and an hour after we may find him arguing on a different le, and with honesty too.... Still we are disposed to nk, if authors were more honest, there would be far more consistency. Every man who thinks must be conscious of ceedingly different stages of mind in regard to the same ojects. There are times when his metaphysical systems will lt away before his affections and hopes. There are others en Logic fixes the cold limits, and he cannot pass beyond em. At one time his deity seems hardly anything but lofty l eternal principles; at another, he feels his heart close a heart like his own, only infinite in its love and pity. rhaps this is Emerson's self-contradiction.[14]

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[13]Ralph Waldo Emerson, Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson, :I (Boston, 1855), 586.

[14]"Literary Notices," Knickerbocker, XXXV (March, 1850),).

ıtever the explanation might have been for this inconsistency ; audiences came to take it as a part of Emerson.

Professor C. C. Felton, in his article on "Modern ınscendentalism," comments upon the reception given Emerson's :tures in these words:

›y were listened to with delight by some, with distrust others, and by a few with something like horror. Many ıng people imagined they contained the elements of a new l sublime philosophy, which was going to regenerate the ·ld; many middle-aged gentlemen and ladies shook their ıds at the preaching of the new and dangerous doctrine, .ch they fancied they detected under Mr. Emerson's some- ıt mystical and oracular phraseology: While the old and ›erienced saw nothing in the weekly rhapsody but blasphemy l atheism. It was not very easy to make out, from the ·ying reports of hearers, what these discourses really ·e; it was not much easier to say what they were when you . heard them yourself, and the difficulty is not greatly ıinished now that they have taken the form of printed ;ays.[15]

There were many debates over Emerson's lectures, but he ·er participated in any of them. He offered no defence › his ideas. He did not like controversy, and he was al- 's sure, to paraphrase one of his letters to Carlyle, that polemical mud, however much was thrown, could by any ;sibility stick to him. He was purely an observer with- , the smallest personal or partial interest. He merely ›ke of the various questions as a historian, reporting the :ts as he saw them. He did not hesitate, however, to ex- ·ss his opinion plainly and definitely.[16] When his hearers

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[15]C. C. Felton, "Modern Transcendentalism," Knickerbocker, :I (April, 1841), 469. Reprinted from the Christian .miner.

[16]Carlyle, Carlyle - Emerson Correspondence I, p. 221.

erstood his attitude, they were not so prone to judge him erely.

Emerson was the despair of newspaper reporters, for he ected to full reports of his lectures, and objected even their taking private notes.[17] An unfortunate result of h restrictions was that they were likely to misrepresent ideas. Lowell touched on the trouble when he said:

> bother with Mr. Emerson is, that though he writes in se, he is essentially a poet. If you undertake to par-rase what he says, and to reduce it to words of one lable for infant minds, you will make as sad work of it the good monk with his analysis of Homer in the "Epistola curarum Virorum."[18]

P. Willis wrote in one of his notices:

> can only say, of this Lecture on England, that it was, all is which he does, a compact mass of the exponents far-reaching thoughts. . . stars which are the pale-nts of universes beyond . . . and, at each close of a tence, one wanted to stop and wonder at that thought, ore being hurried to the next. He is a suggestive, ection-giving, soul-fathoming mind, and we are glad that re are not more such. A few Emersons would make the ry-day work of one's mind intolerable.[19]

Emerson was also quite a problem for the committees on tures. The members of each committee were generally ill ease until he had finished his engagement in their com-ity. They felt obligated to invite him to lecture before ir lyceum, as to fail to do so was to cause their con-tuents to miss hearing the greatest lecturer in the country. there was no telling what the independent Emerson might

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[17]James Elliot Cabot, A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson ston, 1888), p. 376.

[18]Lowell, My Study Windows, p. 402.

[19]Willis, Hurrygraphs, p. 173.

or say. In a letter to his wife Emerson described a ical instance. The committee at Pittsburgh wanted him to ture immediately after he arrived in the city, but he told m that he lacked a little of having his new lecture completed could not speak at once unless they would permit him to d an old lecture. Cabot quotes Emerson as follows in re- d to this lecture:

it was settled that I should read poor old 'England' once e, which was done; for the committee wished nothing better, , like all committees, think me an erratic gentleman, only e with a safe subject."[20]

In England the committees felt the same way about the tonian. Writing from Manchester, in 1848, Emerson said:

re is opportunity enough to read over again a hundred es yet these musty old lectures, and when I go to a new ience I say, it is a grossness to read these things which have, fully reported, in so many newspapers. Let me d a new manuscript never yet published in England. But the directors invariably refuse.[21]

There was one region in which Emerson could always be e of an audience. The Lyceums of New England never tired him. He was one prophet who had honor in his own native m. He lectured many times before the Concord lyceum. ton, the best city for literary lectures in the country, asionally canceled some of his engagements, but the com- tee always called him back. It was in New England that rson's peculiar audience developed. C. C. Felton, in an icle mentioned earlier, declared that whatever else

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[20]Cabot, A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, II, 567.

[21]Ibid., II, p. 515.

rson's lectures might have done, they had attracted for him
onsiderable following:

thing is very certain, that they excited no little at-
tion among the philosophical quidnuncs of Boston, and
around Mr. Emerson a circle of ardent admirers, not to
disciples, including many studious young men and accom-
shed young women, and that a great impulse has been given
speculations upon the weighty questions of man's nature
destiny.[22]

them Emerson's inconsistencies did not exist. They were
apparent contradictions, not real ones.

Even the Bostonians, however, sometimes objected to his
lity, whim, and affectation," and more particularly to
"great levity of opinion and rashness of speculation on
gravest subjects."[23] Some of them feared that his radical
losophy would destroy religion and corrupt the morals of
Nation. Others felt that he was but a harmless dreamer.
of them could find fault with his personal character,
virtually all were agreed that he was an eloquent speaker
surpassing charm.

Of his reception in New York Emerson wrote:

lectures had about the same reception there as elsewhere:
fine and poetical, but a little puzzling. One thought
"as good as a kaleidoscope." Another, a good Staten Islander
ld go hear, "for he had heard I was a rattler."[24]

Willis declared that he had never seen "a more intellectu-
picked audience" than that which attended Emerson's
tures in New York in 1850. "From the great miscellany of

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[22]C. C. Felton, "Modern Transcendentalism," Knickerbocker,
I (April, 1841), 469.

[23]Ibid., p. 475.

[24]Emerson, Journals, VI (March 18, 1842), 163.

ew York they came selectively out, like a steel filing out

f a handful of sand to a magnet."[25]

f Emerson would come to New York, and invite just that
udience of Listeners-to-reason, with or without pulpit, we
re very sure that he might become the centre of a very well-
hosen society . . . form it into a club or gather it around
pulpit. Either way, New York is the place for him.[26]

merson seemed to have the same opinion as Willis regarding

is reception in New York. He realized that New York was

pen to him any time, but it seems that Boston was his first

hoice.

In the West Emerson was sorely tried. He wrote in his

ournals (January 9, 1856):

his climate and people are a new test for the wares of a
an of letters. All his thin, watery matter freezes; 'tis
nly the smallest portion of alcohol that remains good. At
he lyceum, the stout Illinoian, after a short trial, walks
ut of the hall. The Committee tell you that the people
ant a hearty laugh, and Stark, and Saxe, and Park Benjamin,
ho give them that, are heard with joy.[27]

mmediately after this note, we find Emerson making what

eems a very strange concession for him:

ell, I think with Governor Reynolds, the people are always
ight (in a sense), and that the man of letters is to say,
hese are the new conditions to which I must conform. The
rchitect, who is asked to build a house to go upon the sea,
ust not build a parthenon, or a square house, but a ship.[28]

ccordingly, he seems to have inserted more illustrative

necdotes and stories, some of which had a little humor,

nd, in general, tried to make his lectures somewhat lighter.

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[25]Willis, Hurrygraphs, pp. 177-178.

[26]Ibid., p. 177.

[27]Emerson, Journals, IX, 7.

[28]Ibid., pp. 7-8. (January 9, 1856).

would never consent, however, to tell jokes or funny stories
r the laugh they would bring. It seems that Emerson was
fficiently a master of his chosen form, the lecture, to
ry it enough to hold an audience's attention without re-
rting to the deliberately funny.[29]

The people of the North and West offered him audiences
ich were unlike any he had ever known. Before making his
rst Western tour, he had been accustomed to speaking to
ch more cultivated hearers; at least, the New Englanders
re much more interested in cultural matters than the western
ontiersmen were. That the interests of the two sections of
e country should be different was only natural. New England
d been settled for more than two hundred years, and the West
s just being settled. In New England, the lyceum was made
r Emerson; in the West it came with or followed him. In
w England he supplied a want; in the West he created one.
spite of their rough manners and uncouth ways, Emerson
und much that pleased him in these sturdy frontiersmen, and,
course, there were some highly cultured people even in this
rt of the world. He thought it was a pity that the younger
neration of the West did not care more about lecturing, but
made the best of conditions. In a letter to his wife, he
ote (1856):

find well-disposed, kindly people among these sinewy farmers
the North, but in all that is called cultivation they are

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[29]Henry Demarest Lloyd, "Emerson's Wit and Humor"
e *Forum*, XXII (November 1896), 469.

ıly ten years old; so that there is plenty of non-adoption
l yawning gulfs never bridged in this ambitious lyceum system
ɜy are trying to import. Their real interest is in prices,
sections and quarter-sections of swamp-land.[30]

When Emerson went to England in 1848 to lecture, it was
ɔase of the man's being much more important than his opinion.
was everywhere courted as a social celebrity. As America's
ɪding man of letters and as a friend of Carlyle, he was sure
a warm welcome. In December, 1847, he wrote to Carlyle:

ɪm seeing this England more thoroughly than I had thought
ɜ possible to me. I find this lecturing a key which opens
l doors. I have received everywhere the kindest hospitality
ɔm a variety of persons. . . . I have made some vain attempt
end my lectures, but must go on a little longer.[31]

ɔm these words it would seem that Emerson spoke to large
liences everywhere, and all seemed to be favorably impressed
ɔh his eloquence.

Even the severest critics of his doctrines there as in
ɜrica found no complaints against Emerson as a man. Those
ɔ had heard him lecture, especially those who had also been
le to talk with him, were convinced that his was a great and
ɔd spirit. The people who condemned his teachings wondered
v such a benign personality as Emerson's could advance such
ɜas. Carlyle, in a letter to Emerson, December 6, 1848,
ld: "Of one impression we fail not here: Admiration of
ır pacific virtues, of gentle and noble tolerance, often
ɾely tried in this place."[32] One writer perhaps echoed the

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[30] Cabot, A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson, II, 568.

[31] Carlyle, Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence, II, 186-187.

[32] Ibid., p. 198.

ıtiments of the entire nation when he said: "Emerson is a ənomenon whose like is not in the world, and to miss him is lose an important part out of the nineteenth century.[33]

Judging from the opinions of Emerson's contemporaries, is obvious that he had a great reputation as a lecturer ring the period 1844 to 1866. His method of delivery, the ality of his voice, and his ability to speak, were seemgly well appreciated. Some of his ideas, however, were t very well understood. Transcendentalism seemingly was profound for the average person in both England and erica. Many of Emerson's listeners were no doubt orthodox religion, and his liberalism was a little strange to them. st of Emerson's listeners liked him, however, whether they lly agreed with him or not. This is the period in which erson wrote and published most of his greatest works, but ill did not gain his greatest reputation. He became better own and better understood in his last days.

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[33]Emerson, Journals, VII (1848), 475.

CHAPTER IV

EMERSON THE CONCORD SAGE: 1866-1882

This chapter will deal with Emerson's reputation from 56 to 1882, the year of his death. It will show that erson became more popular during this period, and also will int out the causes of this increased popularity.

As Emerson advanced in age he drifted into quieter ters. He began to write to Carlyle describing himself as old man.[1] In 1866, when Emerson was lecturing in New York, met his son at the Hotel Saint Denis. Here he read to him e poem "Terminus," including the statement, "It is time to old."[2] As he aged, however, his contemporaries became are of his achievements, and honors began to fall upon him. en Harvard University suddenly recognized him as a graduate distinction. His Alma Mater made him a Doctor of Laws in 57 and asked him to be an overseer.[3] This honor certainly owed that Emerson had gained favor. Until this time Harvard l regarded him as a person of doubtful tendencies. It had sliked his intellectual innovation, his "Divinity School lress," and his criticisms of Boston's furtive sympathy

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[1]Phillips Russell, Emerson, The Wisest American ew York, 1929), p. 271.

[2]Van Wyck Brooks, The Life of Emerson (New York, 1932), 290.

[3]Russell, Emerson, The Wisest American, p. 273.

th slavery.[4]

The years between 1866 and 1872 Emerson filled with ctures, raadings, and the preparation of new poems and says for publication. He was aware that the losing of his ace when delivering lectures, or skipping pages, was grow- g upon him; but he seemed to be powerless to prevent these cidents.[5]

Phillips Russell says that when Emerson resumed his ctures in the Middle West, he found himself more popular an before. He seems to think, however, that people came see the man rather than to be filled with wisdom. In mparing Emerson with other lecturers Russell says that he ver held attraction equal to such persons as John B. Gough, ederick Douglass, Anna E. Dickinson, and Benjamin F. Taylor, o were the real lyceum heroes of the period.[6]

According to Russell, Emerson's lectures did not bring high prices as those of other celebrities. At Lyons, Iowa, 1866, Emerson was booked for a lecture at $75.00, although e committee had wanted Wendell Phillips at $110.00.[7]

In 1867 Emerson had a warm reception among the members the St. Louis Philosophical Society, founded little more an a year earlier and already the chief American center of

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 275.

[6]Ibid., p. 274.

[7]Ibid.

egelian thought. William Harris was the leader of this group
 philosophers. He and his men were glad to have Emerson as
ieir great speaker, but "were bursting with their own version
 the gospel according to Hegel."[8]

In regard to Emerson's speech at the dedication of
oldiers Monument on April 19, 1867, Ralph Rusk makes the
ollowing statement:

> n Concord's April 19 he was presumably escorted to the Town
> all, as the handbills promised he would be, by the Concord
> rtillery and by Gilmore's full band. As orator at the dedi-
> ation of Soldiers' Monument on that day, he did his best to
> st the virtues of war and alluded to reconstruction in a
> one little softened by two years of peace. But his tone
> as appealing as he recalled incidents of the conflict, with
> e families of the soldiers as his most interested hearers.[9]

In 1867 Emerson published his book May Day and Other
ieces. Ralph Rusk makes the following remark in regard to
iis book:

> s for the contents, these poems had been read in the family
> ircle and doubtless greeted with an insistent demand for
> larity; and there had been plenty of time for polishing.
> t was true that though almost all of them had been written
> fter the appearance of the first and heretofore only volume
> his verse, a number had been since that book, and so were
> amiliar and could hardly be changed. But except for "Brahma,
> hich had by now an established reputation for impenetrability
> here was little that would annoy the uninitiated reader.[10]

Edward Waldo Emerson says that the Reverend William R.
ger told his father that he esteemed the book very highly.

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[8]Ralph Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York,
949), p. 433.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., pp. 433-434.

stated "that much as he valued the essays he cared more r the poems."[11]

In October, 1869, Emerson presented the first four apters of Society and Solitude to his friend James T. Fields, e publisher. In March of 1870 the book was published. sk says this book sold faster than its predecessors.[12] Its pularity perhaps, was mainly due to Emerson's fame. The me of Emerson had been seen so often, according to Rusk, at people felt the book must be worth buying. Carlyle felt, wever, that Emerson was here his old self and judged the yle "inimitable best--Emersonian throughout." Carlyle did el, however, that the book had too much of the "Over-Soul," e Ideal, the Perfect or Universal and Eternal.[13]

In regard to Emerson's position as Overseer, Rusk gives e following information:

> kept going through at least the formalities of his office Harvard Overseer as faithfully as he could. He had been -elected in 1873 for a term of six years. He had long nce helped collect funds for the Memorial to Harvard's dead ldiers, had even looked over the plans for the curious morial Hall approvingly, and had proudly witnessed the lay- g of the cornerstone. He had solicited donations to the llege when it was poverty-stricken. He had long served, and w still served, on the Greek Committee and other Visiting mmittees of the Overseers as well as on their special mmittees.[14]

In 1870 Emerson delivered at Harvard a course of lectures blished in 1893 as The Natural History of Intellect.

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[11]Edward Waldo Emerson, Emerson in Concord (Boston, 389), p. 236.

[12]Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 442.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., p. 484.

Van Wyck Brooks says that these lectures were delivered a class of thirty students. Emerson, according to Brooks, ped to methodize his thoughts. This he did not do, however, r the beautiful phrases rolled out with as little connection ever, and in the end Emerson confessed that he had failed.[15]

Frederick Carpenter says that this book, which was erson's last book, was influential in developing the prag- tic philosophy. He states:

> ke Pragmaticism itself, Emerson's ideas were of two sorts. e first (and more typically Emersonian) statements emphasize e need of "Action" for the true understanding of "ideas." e second (and more typically Pragmatic) emphasized the in- rumental value of ideas for the rebuilding of the actual rld. The first found clearest expression in Emerson's rly address on "The American Scholar," and in the philosophy the first pragmatic philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce. e second found clearest expression in Emerson's last book The Natural History of Intellect and in the philosophies James and Dewey.[16]

Carpenter also says that the year 1871 saw the trans- rmation of transcendentalism into pragmatism. Peirce and erson were lecturing in the same course of philosophy at rvard. Emerson in one of his lectures made the statement y meta-physics are to the end of use."[17]

This year also was the year of the first meeting of the taphysical Club, "whose discussion [according to Peirce] sulted in the formulation of the idea of pragmatism."[18]

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[15]Brooks, The Life of Emerson, p. 298.

[16]Frederick Ives Carpenter, Emerson Handbook (New York, 53), p. 166.

[17]Ibid., p. 171.

[18]Ibid., p. 172.

is Club seems to have been an informal discussion group ich, according to Carpenter, influenced deeply the future urse of American thought. Not only did Peirce and James long to this club, but also Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., o was the son of a great admirer of Emerson. This Holmes, lled the "Magnificent Yankee," is less known for his prag- tic philosophy than for other things. According to Carpenter wever, he shared with Peirce and James in the formulation Pragmatism. But more important, he was closer to Emerson d stated his indebtedness to him more emphatically than to y other person except John Dewey.[19]

In regard to Emerson's influence upon the younger Holmes, rpenter makes the following statement:

> constant visitor at the Holmes house, Emerson guided young 'endell" in the writing of his first published essay on ato. Later Holmes declared that Emerson had first interested m in philosophy and that the three great intellectual in- uences on his life had been Plato, Emerson, and his friend lliam James. Finally in old age, Holmes asserted that "the ly firebrand of my youth that burns to me as brightly as er is Emerson."[20]

It is not clear what ideas Holmes developed from Emerson, t according to Carpenter, Emerson's affirmation that "all fe is an experiment," and his rejection of tradition and ecedent find application in Holmes. Carpenter also points t that in Holmes' early essay on Plato he attacked the eat philosopher for his lack of connection between ideas

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[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

ıd experimental reality. Also in his essay on "Books" he
ɪpeated Emerson's belief that the authority of the printed
ɪrd and law was not final. Holmes seems to have sometimes
ɪposed the majority, and like Emerson to some degree opposed
ɪmocracy as they saw it functioning in American government.
.t neither ever opposed true democracy, and both emphasized
ıe right of individuals.[21]

John Dewey, the last of the great pragmatists, has been
ɪst enthusiastic in his estimation of Emerson. Although
ɪwey is not a contemporary of Emerson it is interesting that
compared Emerson with Plato in an address delivered in
.icago in 1903.[22] This information bears out Carpenter's
.ea that Dewey was influenced by Emerson. Carpenter also
.ys, "Paradoxically the intuitive 'reason' of Emerson in-
.uenced the mind of Dewey in the creation of a new pragmatic
gic--a discipline which might seem farthest from the interest
either philosopher."[23] He explains that Dewey is like
ıerson in constantly emphasizing "general ways of action,"
rules for "the conduct of life" to be determined by reason-
le probability, rather than particular expediency or practi-
.lity.[24]

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[21]Ibid., p. 173.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 174.

[24]Ibid., p. 175.

Both James and Dewey, according to Carpenter, developed eir pragmatism by way of psychology. They wrote books on ychology and emphasized the supreme importance of mental or iritual facts. In their analyses of psychology they develope ny of the suggestions of Emerson. Emerson's psychology, of urse was not professional, but his approach, according to rpenter, was that of the psychological observer and his inghts were developed and applied by later pragmatists.[25]

It is also believed that Emerson had a great influence on Nietzsche and the Germany of his day. Carpenter says at Nietzsche always carried a volume of Emerson with him en he traveled between 1862 and 1882. He owned four volumes Emerson's works and is known to have borrowed more. He tually composed the first drafts of fragments of his works the margins of Emerson's books. Many of Nietzsche's ntences have been identified as free adaptations of Emerson's cording to Carpenter.[26]

Carpenter says that Nietzche's letters refer to "Our iend Emerson." His notebooks speak of "Emerson the most fted of the Americans. . . ." In 1884 he was having a long say of Emerson's translated into German.[27]

It is most likely, according to Carpenter, that Nietzsche ad Emerson more frequently than any modern writer after ethe; "and he praised him more enthusiastically."[28]

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 247.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

Ideas that Nietzsche drew from Emerson must remain some-
at uncertain, but Carpenter supplies a list of parallels:

erson's idea of "power" was developed enthusiastically by
etzche, who praised the American as a fellow dionysian.
erson's revolt against the ministry and against orthodox
ristianity was repeated by Nietzsche, both in life and in
ilosophy. Emerson's rejection of official goodness was
rried to its logical conclusion by Nietzsche's philosophy:
yond Good and Evil. Emerson's praise of "Self-Reliance,"
d his attack on "society," was carried to the extreme by
etzsche's exaltation of the "Superman" and his attack on
l social institutions and regulations as for "slaves."
erson's revolt against "the dead hand of the past," and
ch of his philosophy of "History," was continued by Nietzsche
erson's praise of intuition and instinct, and his derogation
the conscious will were strongly Nietzschean. And finally,
etzsche's conception of his role as philosopher-prophet,
d the very name "Zarathustra" which he adopted were
ersonian, as was the aphoristic style, and the form of
ose essay which he used to express his ideas.[29]

This list of parallels is impressive, but as Carpenter
ints out there were also radical differences. Whether
etzsche was influenced by Emerson is uncertain, but it is
parent that he esteemed Emerson highly.

In 1871 Emerson made a trip to California, accompanied
his daughter Edith and a number of friends. They left
icago in a private car. George M. Pullman, inventor of the
r bearing his name, saw them off. Emerson's tranquillity
d cheerfulness, even under tiresome conditions, at once
pressed his companions.[30]

Phillip Russell says that Emerson created quite a sen-
tion on this trip by smoking so many cigars. He explains

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Russell, Emerson, The Wisest American, p. 276.

at this enabled him to listen to conversation without taking active part in it. From this time onward, Russell says, erson seemed to talk less, but he found extreme pleasure listening to younger people talk.[31]

At Salt Lake City, Emerson was taken to see Brigham Young. seems that there was no exchange of views between the two, d neither took great notice of the other. When Young learned is was the Emerson of the essays, "he remarked casually that had read them."[32] This meeting of the great Mormon and e famous Concordian seemed to be non-productive, but those esent derived some enjoyment from the contrast between the o men. Russell states:

> e Mormon leader appeared to professor Thayer to have the untenance of some hardy man, like a teamster recently essed up, with his hair roached back from his forehead under me careful barber's fresh ministration; while Emerson was, always, the scholar and gentleman.[33]

In the scenery of the West nothing impressed Emerson so ch as the trees, and especially the pines.

> California he was asked to name a Sequoia Gigantea and se- cted one near Galen's Hospice which he named "Samoset," in mory of the first Indian ally of the Plymouth Colony in ssachusetts.[34]

In San Francisco Emerson read his lecture "Immortality." is lecture he usually reserved for Sundays. Soon after is lecture he began to read a short series of lectures in ctor Stebbin's Unitarian Church.[35]

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[31]Ibid., p. 276-277.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

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In regard to Emerson's San Francisco lectures Rusk makes he following comment:

he San Franciscans were curious about the Transcendentalist. o a writer for the Daily Evening Bulletin he seemed "tall, traight, well formed, with a head constructed on the utility ather than the ornamental principle." He was refreshing to ee in spite of his black garb. His audience, having gathered fter only a few hours' notice, doubtless listened to his firs ecture at Stebbin's church in a mood of determined appreciati is style was thought "entirely colloquial," but people listene ith rapt attention. He apparently made no effort to impress is hearers. According to a local critic who heard the second ecture, they "would not dream that he had said anything durin he whole evening which he thought particularly worthy of bein aid." The manner of the lecturer was much what many of his udiences had observed in recent years. "His notes lie before im-- a bulky mass of manuscript," the San Francisco critic ut it. "On commencing his discourse he fingers them over ackwards and forwards, as if at a loss whether to commence n the first page or the middle; and finally selecting a good tarting point, he begins in a conventional tone of voice to ead. He is so familiar with them that he does not confine imself closely to them. . . . Sandwiched in between his elections from his manuscript are interpolations improvised or the occasion. . . . But the difference between hearing im read his works and reading them one's self is certainly n favor of the latter." In a third lecture he was full of necdote and ended with a tribute to the resources of Cali- ornia.[36]

Emerson postponed further lecturing at San Francisco nd an engagement at Oakland till he could visit some of the atural wonders of the state. After spending nine or ten ays among the mountains and trees of the Yosemite and ariposa regions, Emerson was aghast with admiration. Rusk uggests that there were a great number of Californians illing to encourage him to remain in that mood. When John uir heard that Emerson was in the Yosemite Valley but about

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[36]Ibid., p. 446-447.

) leave, he protested. According to Rusk, Muir made the
)llowing statement: "Do not thus drift away with the mob
ıile the spirits of these rocks and waters hail you after
)ng waiting as their kinsman and persuade you to closer
)mmunion."[37]

Muir tried to persuade Emerson to join him in a month's
)rship with nature. He tried to convert him to the religion
outdoor life. According to Rusk, Muir wrote a new prose
)em on California a few weeks after Emerson returned home.
Iuir was about to 'start for the high Sierra East of Yosemite
ıd 'would willingly' he said, 'walk all the way to your
ncord if so I could have you for a companion."[38]

A few months after Muir's coming to Concord, Bret Harte
rived to visit Emerson. He told Emerson that the passage
. Society and Solitude about learning and religion entering
.e frontiersman's hut along with the piano was false. In
.e words of Ralph Rusk, "Emerson stuck to his guns" and re-
rted that he spoke also "from pilgrim experience, and knew
. good grounds the resistless culture that religion effects."[39]

What Bret Harte made most of among his impressions of
erson according to Rusk, was a "self-indulgence" quite un-
pected in one of Emerson's standing. "He burlesqued the
ncord sage's invitation to a 'wet night' with him, over a
ass of sherry, an invitation that had been hospitably

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[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., p. 448.

[39]Ibid.

phasized with a gesture of the sage's cigar."[40] Rusk rther explains that Harte failed to understand that both e cigar and the sherry had served mainly to cover up erson's shyness.[41] He always found it difficult to meet ople.

Soon after Harte's visit, Emerson left Concord for an-ıer lecture tour. Chicago, in spite of its great fire, ıted him. He was greeted there with mild applause by a ldly-intellectual audience. Rusk says at least one of the lience was impressed by the quaintness of the lecturer's pearance. "Dressed in a clerical garb and wearing his hair ıg. . . , the celebrity from the East had a platform manner ghtly stiff and awakward but that of the true gentleman."[42]

While Emerson was lecturing in Baltimore, soon after Chicago lectures mentioned above, Walt Whitman and n Burroughs, once his enthusiastic disciples, came from hington to hear him. They both felt that Emerson had t much of his old appeal. They agreed that he had made progress in lecturing in many years. They felt that his tures at this time were irrelevant to the problems of ir time of 1872.[43]

After lecturing in Baltimore, Emerson went to Washington. k says that here "he lectured in the G. A. R. Course."

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[40]Ibid., p. 449.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 450.

so he was taken to Howard University for Negroes and was ompelled by an artifice to speak to them." Rusk gives the llowing information in regard to the lecture:

e speech, at least partly extempore, it seems, and an exemely poor one in his opinion, was reported pretty fully the press, much against his will. He quickly began to ceive letters of congratulation. His subject had been hat Books to Read," and his very natural inclusion of his vorite George Herbert's poems among his choice titles ems to have caused a run on that book in shops as far away om the Capital as Boston.[44]

In 1872 Emerson's home was burned. The response of the ople to this loss shows a little of Emerson's popularity ring this time. Miss Elizabeth Ripley received Mr. and s. Emerson into the Old Manse. A room in the Courthouse s given to Emerson as a study and workroom. Assistance l sympathy for Emerson came from every direction. Francis oot Lowell, a college classmate, arrived and left a letter r Emerson. When it was opened a check for $5,000.00 was und. This was a gift from several friends. Dr. Le Baron ssell opened a fund to which the subscriptions amounted to .,620.00. This sum was presented to him by Judge Hoar, as offering of friends who asked to be permitted to assist the rebuilding of his home.[45] Friends as far away as ;land offered to help.

This kindness shown to Emerson at this time increased faith in the goodness of man. It perhaps shows the

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Russell, Emerson, The Wisest American, p. 279.

pularity of Emerson more than it shows the goodness of man.

Emerson's friends felt that a trip abroad would do him od. He did not wish to make the trip at first because of s uncertain health and his changed appearance. He felt at he would hate to meet such men as Ruskin, Huxley, and nnyson in his condition. His daughter Ellen suggested at he make the trip incognito and meet only his son Edward. erson consented to this plan. When he wrote to Charles rton and to Moncure Conway, who were abroad, however, he iled to warn them to be silent. Norton spread the news, d there was no hope for Emerson to go privately.

When Emerson reached England in 1872, he found that the ctrines he had taught there a quarter of a century earlier d not been forgotten. Rusk gives the following information ncerning this reception of Emerson in England:

sides a few of the older intellectuals, such as Carlyle, ere were younger men risen to some importance since Emerson d last crossed the Atlantic who were now his friends or sciples. A small stream of English Peers and Commoners had ng since been flowing through Concord. Max Muller had al-ady begun sending his books there. Matthew Arnold . . . d, it seemed, discovered more lasting value in Emerson than Carlyle. Emerson had maintained his reason, Arnold thought, ile Carlyle had not, and Emerson's popularity would grow th the growth of reason in human affairs. Though Emerson ce asserted that he generally felt himself repelled by ysicists and did not know even their names, John Tyndall, rhaps the last transatlantic visitor he had had at the d Manse, had expended no small amount of enthusiasm on the itings of Emerson.[46]

It is quite obvious that Emerson was very popular in gland and America during this period of his life. Apparently

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[46]Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 457.

found his popularity to be greater than he had expected most everywhere he went.

Emerson toured Egypt, France, Italy, and England. In iro, George Bancroft took him to breakfast with the Khedive. next sailed for Rome, and from there he went to Florence. re he met Herman Grimm and his wife Gisela.

Russell makes the following statement in regard to this eting:

imm, who was a biographer and essayist, had long enter-
ined an intense admiration for Emerson, and now found that
s appearance did not belie his works. He looked at Emerson
long time, and remarked that his photographs did him an
justice.[47]

Emerson next went to Paris, where he met many celebrities.

He and his daughter then returned to London for three eks, where he met a large number of important people, "in- uding Gladstone, Mill, Huxley, Tyndall, Dean Stanley, cky, Froude, Charles Reade, and Browning."[48]

Emerson had numerous invitations to breakfasts and nners. He accepted many of those invitations, but avoided eaking in public except when Thomas Hughes prevailed upon n to appear at the Working Man's College. Two of the idents of this College sent him "sovereigns" to be used in e restoration of his Concord home. At Oxford, Emerson met x Muller, John Ruskin, and others. After hearing Ruskin cture, Emerson was invited to his home. Here Emerson was

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[47]Russell, Emerson, The Wisest American, p. 282.

[48]Ibid., pp. 282-283.

ɔressed by Ruskin's denunciation of the present state of
ːiety. Emerson finally rebuked him, and Russell thinks
ɩt this episode laid the foundation for an attack make on
ɜrson after his return to Concord by the Poet Algernon
ɩrles Swinburne.[49]

After Emerson had received much attention at Chester,
ʼatford-on-Avon, and Edinburgh he sailed for home. His
ʳentieth birthday occurred on the way. A great throng of
ɪple met him at the station on his return to Concord. On
ɩching his own gate Emerson found that during his absence
.ends had entirely restored his home.[50]

After Emerson's return to Concord he was able to give
ʼeral public readings and addresses for a while with his
. vigor and clarity.

In 1875 Emerson produced Letters and Social Aims, which
had promised to a London publisher. This work fatigued
., and James Elliot Cabot was then asked to assist him.[51]

Emerson gave a short address at the unveiling of the
ute Man, at the 100th anniversary of the Concord fight.
s address was given on April 19, 1875, and according to
llips Russell was the last Emerson composed.[52]

Rusk says that in these last years of Emerson's life,
ors, fame, and notoriety came faster, although Emerson

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[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., p. 284.

[51]Ibid., p. 285.

[52]Ibid.

ld little or nothing now to earn them. "In 1876 Lowell's econd series of Among My Books was dedicated to him by way public acknowledgment of a debt."[53]

In 1879 Amos Bronson Alcott organized the Concord School Philosophy.[54] He had hoped to get Emerson to take an tive interest in it but Emerson's infirmities prevented him om doing more than giving an occasional lecture to the udents, one of which was on "aristocracy." According to ssell, Emerson admired personal aristocracy no less than litical democracy, and hoped it would never die out of the iverse.[55]

During this lecturing period at Alcott's School of Phi- sophy, Emerson was sitting daily for Daniel Chester French, e sculptor, who made a full-length seated figure of him, ich was later placed in the Concord Public Library.[56]

During this quiet but steadily declining period Emerson ntinued to read occasional papers in public, but required e supervision of his daughter Ellen to prevent his losing mixing the sheets of his manuscript. Russell says:

> his seventy-ninth [his last] year he read papers before e Massachusetts Historical Society and the Concord School Philosophy. After that, he was content to remain at home, cusing himself from reading or conversing in public because his inability to recall necessary words.[57]

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[53]Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 500.

[54]Tremaine McDowell, ed., The Romantic Triumph (New York, 49), p. 917.

[55]Russell, Emerson, The Wisest American, p. 293.

[56]Ibid., p. 294.

[57]Ibid., p. 295.

On April 27, 1882, Emerson died at Concord. The church
lls of the village tolled seventy-nine times to announce
s death. On April 30, some thousand persons came into
ncord to attend the funeral. Rusk gives the following de-
ription of the burial rites:

e first ceremony was in private, with William Furness, erson's boyhood friend, in charge. Then the funeral party ved from the home to the Unitarian Church, where most of e towns people . . . were waiting. There, since Frederic dge could not come, James Clarke made the principal address. cott read a sonnet. On the way to Sleepy Hollow, village iends from the Social Circle went before the hearse. The ave was on a high ridge, not far from where Thoreau and wthorne lay. Emerson's cousin Samuel Moody Haskins, rector Saint Mark's Church in Brooklyn, read a part of the iscopal order for the burial of the dead and threw upon the wered coffin some ashes he had taken from the fire-place the study of Bush and had mixed with sand and dust from e walk in front of the house.[58]

From this account of Emerson's life during the period of
66 to 1882 it is obvious that his reputation late in life
s greater than it had been during the age of Transcendental-
m or during the years of 1844 to 1865, which were the period
his greatest lectures. This reputation, however, was not
ined by his works during the period of the Concord Sage.
e greatness of his works in previous years had come to be
tter recognized and honor was bestowed upon him somewhat
latedly.

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[58]Rusk, The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 508.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON EMERSON'S CONTEMPORARY REPUTATION

The preceding chapters of this thesis have surveyed the owth of Emerson's reputation during his lifetime. This apter will be devoted to a summary of the material of the eceding ones and an attempt to point out more specifically e significance of the evidence that has been presented.

It is now a well recognized fact that Emerson was a great erican author. No doubt his contemporaries expected him to great because of his background. Among his ancestors were ne of the ablest Americans that our country had then pro- ced. It cannot be said that Emerson's contemporaries ex- cted him to be a great writer, but it is quite possible at they expected him to be outstanding in anything he under- ok since he came from such an important line of ancestors. erson's early life was not very promising, however, for he s not particularly outstanding. In college he showed only little more than average ability. He did take prizes for clamation and dissertation. In 1821 he was graduated some- at above the middle of his class, and after others had re- sed, he was made class poet.[1]

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[1]Norman Foerster, American Poetry and Prose (New York, 47), p. 441.

Emerson was the heart of New England Transcendentalism
i still was apart from some manifestations of it, such as
e Brook Farm experiment. He developed no great philosophi-
l system. He felt that "A foolish consistency is the hob-
olin of little minds."

In 1836 Emerson published his first book, Nature, in
ich he tried to present a better balanced form of religion.
is book, with his address on "The American Scholar" at
rvard in 1837 and the Harvard "Divinity School Address"
338), made Emerson widely known as one who declared a new
ctrine of plain living and high thinking.

The "Divinity School Address" however, seemed to frighten
e clergy. Emerson was called infidel and pagan. This was
ne the rest of his life. The young men, however, felt as
lmes expressed it, "Thus saith the Lord," while the older
n doubted him.[2]

In 1841 Emerson issued Essays, First Series, and in 1844
s Essays, Second Series, from the material of many of his
ctures. With the first volume of his collected essays,
erson was fairly launched on his career. These essays
ken together constitute a fairly complete statement of the
anscendental position. A description of the style of the
rst Series has been given in the following words:

ylistically, they illustrate the Emersonian manner in its
st characteristic aspect: its tendency to reiteration

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[2]Ibid.

.th plentiful, varied illustration rather than logical
·gument; its employment of sparkling paradox, half state-
ınt, and half overstatement; its fragmentary, gem-like
ıntences, both memorable and quotable. When ordinary man
›fers to Emerson, he is referring to this volume.[3]

These essays were quite important and apparently caused
ıe more intellectual to appreciate Emerson more.

From 1842 to 1844 Emerson was editor of The Dial. This
ıs a magazine of the Transcendentalists which helped promote
ıeir philosophy. This publication was well received by the
·eatest scholars of its time but soon died for want of sub-
:ribers.

During the Age of Transcendentalism Emerson became better
ıown and was well received by the literary minds of his time,
ıt the more orthodox people rejected him. He was too obscure
ı his writings for the average mind, but much of his work
ıring this period has survived and has had great influence
›on the literature of America. His work during this period
, least deserves credit for making men think even though
ıey resented his philosophy.

From 1845 to 1866 Emerson was a great lecturer. His
.fetime seemed to be the golden age of public lecturing.
›ssibly Emerson did more to make lecturing a success than
ıyone else. He spoke in cities to such cultivated audiences
ı no other man could gather. He spoke in remote villages
ıere he addressed plain people who only read the Bible and

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[3]Bartholow V. Crawford, et al., American Literature
ew York, 1953), p. 92.

ıe *Farmer's Almanac*. Wherever Emerson lectured he fascinated .s listeners by his voice and manner. His thoughts were ?ten too profound for his listeners to comprehend, but the ısic of his speech pleased them anyway.[4]

Emerson lectured from coast to coast in America and was ell received everywhere he went. It is true that the West .d not appreciate him as much as Boston and New York, but ;ill they liked him. Emerson was also well received in ıgland as a lecturer, finding opposition only from the more ·thodox minds.

The significance of Emerson's lecturing is that by means ? it he reached more people, won friends, and became well ıown. Those who could not understand or appreciate Transcen- ntalism had the privilege of contact with Emerson's person- .ity. They liked him as a man even though they did not ıderstand him.

During the period of Emerson's greatest lecturing he came better known in America and England, but this is not ıe period in which he gained his greatest reputation. Some ıo liked him were afraid to agree with him fully, seemingly cause of the strong hold of orthodoxy.

During the years 1866 to 1882 Emerson became known as ıe "Concord Sage." These years were passed in peaceful mor at Concord. He did nothing that was strictly or even

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[4]Holmes, *The Life of Emerson*, p. 376.

rtly new, though he kept on with his lecturing and to some tent with his writing. Honors were bestowed upon Emerson ring this period mostly because of the work that he had al- ady done. It was at this period in his life that he was re appreciated. More of his books were published and were tter accepted because he was better known and better under- ood. Emerson did gain acceptance in this later period, but s greatest reputation was not gained during his lifetime. lwig Lewisohn states that he believes that the relatively all appreciation which Emerson received during his life- ne was in no way attributable to any lack in the writer nself.[5]

Mr. Lewisohn considers Emerson to be a classic. His finition of a classic is given in the following words:

> classic is simply a writer who has left certain works or en pages which the youth of each generation can and does some instinctive and passionate re-interpretation make s own.[6]

.s he considers that Emerson has done.

Emerson's fame both at home and abroad rests securely on the fact that he had something of permanent importance say, and that he said it with a beautiful freshness which es not permit his pages to grow old. His ideas of Transcen- ntalism may be easily forgotten, but not his ideas that n are exalted creatures and that instinct should be obeyed.

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[5]Ludwig Lewisohn, Expression in America (New York, 32), p. 336.

[6]Ibid.

merson is perhaps not accepted as a philosopher by members f the profession, but no one denies him power and permanence s an author.

A consideration of all of Emerson's works between the ears 1836 and 1882 reveals that he was a writer and lecturer ho deserves credit for making people think even at the price f his own unpopularity.

Emerson's reputation has been greater in the Twentieth entury than it was among his contemporaries. The following tatement by Edward Everett Hale appeared in The Outlook eptember 1, 1900. "It certainly spoke well for the good ense of this country that Emerson received eighty-six votes or his place in the Hall of Heroes."[7]

Bliss Perry states that Emerson's death freed him from a andicap which he had carried throughout his public career. hat is that the "name Emerson was a newspaper joke, a synonym or absurdity and obscurity of thought." After Emerson's eath, his ridiculers turned elsewhere for amusement and the ame "Emerson" began to be more respected.[8]

In February 1883 a review of M. D. Conway's book Emerson t Home and Abroad was published in The Athenaeum. In this rticle the following statement was made about Emerson:

ut all through life he maintained an inward quiet that made raise and blame to him indifferent. He thought his own

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[7]Edward Everett Hale, "Some Emerson Memories," he Outlook LXVI (September 1, 1900), 1045.

[8]Bliss Perry, Emerson Today (Princeton, 1931), p. 130.

thoughts and lived his own life, and was unaffected by what people said of him.[9]

These words probably expressed the opinion of many people in the years immediately following his death.

Some of Emerson's contemporaries found fault with him because he placed so little stress upon the problem of evil. To them it looked as if he had failed to come to close grips with actualities. The Twentieth Century has not objected to this fault as much as did the people of Emerson's own generation. In the words of Perry:

The Twentieth Century, in and out of the churches, seems far less concerned than the Nineteenth Century with theories about sin, and it may prove that Emerson's way of looking up and not down, forward and not back, will be counted practically wise although philosophically inadequate.[10]

Perry felt that Emerson was optimistic and that he possessed an optimism that endeavored to transcend evil rather than deny its existence. "It is an endeavor to find some soul of goodness in things evil. . . .[11]

Perry points out that much of Emerson's material is still vital. Most of the issues which Emerson dealt with have been settled, but, according to Perry, we turn back to Emerson for clarity and wisdom on political and social problems.[12]

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[9]"Conway's Reminiscences," The Athenaeum (February 3, 1883), p. 147.

[10]Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[11]Ibid., p. 106.

[12]Ibid., p. 110.

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